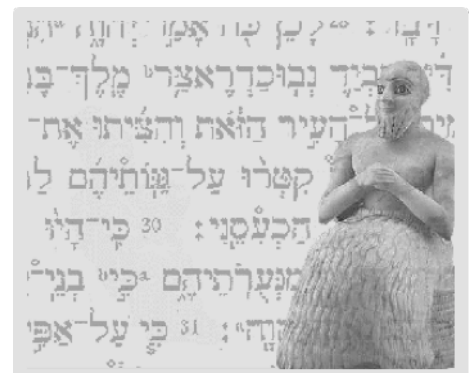


Jerusalem's Survival, Sennacherib's Departure, and the Kushite Role in 701 BCE: An Examination of Henry Aubin's *Rescue of Jerusalem*

ALICE OGDEN BELLIS (ED.)



**JERUSALEM'S SURVIVAL,
SENNACHERIB'S DEPARTURE, AND THE
KUSHITE ROLE IN 701 BCE: AN
EXAMINATION OF HENRY AUBIN'S
*RESCUE OF JERUSALEM***

For Leslie Pearse Dillon
Gifted and Talented Teacher
Walter Williams High School, Burlington, NC, 1963-1967
She taught us how to ask hard questions;
she started many on their paths.

The publication of this volume was sponsored by the Swiss
French Institute for Biblical Studies (IRSB) of the University of
Lausanne

1. Alice Ogden Bellis, [Introduction](#)
2. Alice Ogden Bellis, [Report/Rumor](#)
3. Marta Høyland Lavik, [Are the Kushites Disparaged in Isaiah 18?](#)
4. Song-Mi Suzie Park, [Egypt or God? Who Saved Judah from the Assyrian Attack in 701?](#)
5. Christopher B. Hays, [“Those Weaned From Milk”: The Divine Wet Nurse Motif in Isaiah 28’s Ceremony for the Covenant with Mut.](#)
6. Jeremy Pope, [Sennacherib’s Departure and the Principle of Laplace.](#)
7. Aidan Dodson, [The Rescue of Jerusalem: a View from the Nile Valley.](#)
8. Lester L. Grabbe, [Israelite Interaction with Egypt During the Monarchy: A Context for Interpreting 2 Kings 19:8–13.](#)
9. Alan Lloyd, [The Siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib.](#)
10. K. Lawson Younger, Jr., [Aubin’s The Rescue of Jerusalem: An Assyriological Assessment.](#)
11. Henry T. Aubin, [Responses to Authors](#)

INTRODUCTION

ALICE OGDEN BELLIS

HOWARD UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

In 2002 Henry T. Aubin published *The Rescue of Jerusalem: The Alliance Between Hebrews and Africans in 701 BC* (Soho Press [New York] and Doubleday Canada [Toronto]). Aubin, an award winning Canadian journalist, explores Jerusalem's survival in 701 BCE in the face of an Assyrian invasion of the Levant. Although Aubin is not a credentialed biblical scholar (having only a BA in English literature from Harvard), *The Rescue of Jerusalem* is well documented with more than twenty-five percent of the almost 400 pages (not counting indices) made up of endnotes and over 400 authors referenced. Aubin's thesis is that Egypt's Twenty-fifth Dynasty, composed of Kushites,¹ was instrumental in Jerusalem's deliverance, which allowed Judaism to emerge and later Christianity and Islam.

Additionally, Aubin argues that up until the late nineteenth century some of the West's leading Christian and Jewish thinkers shared this opinion, although it was not a majority view; the advent of European imperialism in Africa may have contributed to the way in which a generally neutral or positive attitude toward Kushites in history changed rather quickly to a more skeptical and sometimes explicitly racist viewpoint that marginalized any Kushite role in the conflict of 701 BCE. Furthermore, although overt colonial-era bias was largely abandoned by the second half of the twentieth century and discernible racism is now entirely

¹ According to David Goldenberg in *The Curse of Ham: Race and Slavery in Early Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 13, in most translations of the Bible the name Kush is written with a c: Cush. This is due to the influence of Latin, which acted as an intermediary between the ancient and modern languages. Today, however, more and more scholars are writing Kush, which reflects the original spelling of the name in pre-Latin texts. I prefer this for consistency, since the phoneme k in ancient Near Eastern languages is transliterated with k and not c. The argument in favor of spelling it Cush is that it is the conventional spelling used by biblical scholars. The argument for spelling it Kush is not only that this is the logical spelling, as articulated by Goldenberg, but it is the spelling that Egyptologists and Nubiologists have used for decades. Biblical scholars have been isolated and might usefully employ the same spelling as those scholars most immediately concerned with the word in question. A practical benefit: uniform spelling would facilitate online word searches.

absent in scholarly treatments, a certain disregard and downplaying of Africans' role in the Levant have tended to linger.

SUMMARY OF THE RESCUE OF JERUSALEM

In Part I, Aubin sketches the background to the events of 701 BCE, including a vulnerable Judah with pre-monotheistic religion, an aggressive Assyrian emperor—Sennacherib, and the Twenty-fifth Dynasty of Egypt, ruled by Kushites, wishing to preserve their own interests by keeping the Assyrians at arm's length. Part II comprises Aubin's six arguments explaining why Jerusalem's rescue should in part be attributed to the Kushites; this can be called the "hybrid" Kushite rescue theory, a term that reflects the unknowable nature of the precise circumstances of the Assyrians' retreat. The cautious term allows for the possibility that Kushite-ruled Egypt's role, while significant, may not necessarily have been *solely* responsible for the retreat and that other factors may also have been at play. (Aubin's response to Christopher B. Hays's essay in this collection reviews some such possible factors.) Aubin's position is that none of the following six arguments, standing in isolation, may be sufficient to be convincing, but that the six together provide strong evidence for such a role. These arguments are:

1. Scholars generally agree that Source B2 (2 Kgs 19:9b–35) is a late, theologically motivated insertion that disrupts the story's flow. If this chunk of text is removed, the Kushite role is much clearer: Source B1 (2 Kgs 18:17–19:9a) says that Sennacherib, the Assyrian emperor, will hear a report/rumor (the issue of how to translate this word will be addressed later) and return to his land (19:7) and then, two verses later in 19:9b, Sennacherib hears a report that Taharqo has set out to fight. Once Source B2 is removed, the natural follow-up is found in 19:36 where Sennacherib leaves.
2. Isaianic oracles (31:8–9, 14:24–25), as well as Herodotus (who says the Assyrians "suffered severe losses during the retreat"), suggest Sennacherib departed under military duress. There may well have been two Egypto-Kushite forces: one met the Assyrians at Eltekeh, which included "the kings of [Lower] Egypt and the bowmen, the chariot corps and the cavalry of the king of Kush," according to Sennacherib's annals: the second may have been the Taharqo-led force advancing "to do battle" with Sennacherib, according to 2 Kings 19:9a. Regardless of whether Kushite Egypt had one military contingent on hand or two, it was the only nation on record with any military forces at all that were ready to combat Sennacherib on the battlefield.
3. In the twenty years after 701 BCE, Sennacherib did not again set foot in the Levant. During that same period, however, the political and commercial interests of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty prospered in that region.

Kushite Egypt's influence in those domains is consistent with it having obtained an advantageous resolution to the 701 conflict.

4. The Twenty-fifth Dynasty was known in the post-701 era for its military prowess, a reputation consistent with success in the 701 conflict. Attesting to this reputation for prowess are an Assyrian text by Esarhaddon (Sennacherib's successor), a Judahite text by Nahum, and a Greek text by Strabo. Furthermore, at a time of later Assyrian aggression (671 BCE), the important Phoenician city-state of Tyre allied itself with the Twenty-fifth Dynasty; it is hard to see how Kushite Egypt could have been seen as a credible ally had it failed in 701.
5. If the Kushites played a key role in Jerusalem's—and Judah's—survival, one might logically expect subsequent biblical writings to present a positive opinion of Kushites. That is indeed what one finds: few, in any, other foreign people receive such favorable treatment. (Aubin's opinion is at odds with the common scholarly view that the Bible shows low regard for Kushites.²)
6. The structural logic of the Rab-shakeh's speech in 2 Kgs 18:19–22 assumes that Egypt was reliable. He questions the Jerusalemites' trust both in Egypt, the broken reed, and in YHWH, whose high places Hezekiah had removed. Many scholars have latched onto the first half of the Rab-shakeh's double object to suggest that Egypt was unreliable, but by implication if Egypt was untrustworthy, so was YHWH. Aubin's unconventional assessment of the biblical writer's treatment of this speech is that *both* were reliable.

Aubin then speculates on how the Kushites might have pulled off a successful challenge to Sennacherib; he says that his scenario should be seen as “musings” that are “playful” and “imaginative,” rather than based on the kind of evidence he has for the six arguments listed above.

Aubin goes on to state that up until the late nineteenth century some Western scholars, often prominent ones, accepted either the hybrid rescue or a full rescue (in which the Kushite-led army was totally responsible for saving Jerusalem). Earlier, in mid-century, Darwinism among other factors may have helped provide the intellectual soil in which this intensification of racial bias grew; by the 1880s, when seven European powers undertook the wholesale colonization of Africa (a rush that included Britain waging a particularly difficult war in Sudan, once the homeland of the Kushites), this intensification became quite manifest. Aubin documents leading Victorian-era scholars' marginalization and often disparagement of the Kushites' place in history. Finally, Aubin shows how the events of 701 helped

² Taking a similar position independently and in a later study is R. S. Sadler, Jr., *Can a Cushite Change His Skin? An Examination of Race, Ethnicity, and Othering in the Hebrew Bible* (New York: T&T Clark, 2005).

shape biblical Zion theology, the belief that YHWH had a special affection for Jerusalem.

RATIONALE FOR THE COLLECTION

It is unusual for a book in biblical studies to be reconsidered fifteen to twenty years later. *JHS* published a short collection: Ehud ben Zvi, ed., "Rereading Oracles of God: Twenty Years after John Barton, *Oracles of God: Perceptions of Prophecy in Israel after the Exile*," *JHS* 7 (2007); London (Darton, Longman, and Todd, 1986), but it is only thirty pages. Sheffield brought out a volume featuring the foundational work of Martin Noth fifty years after his heyday: S.L. McKenzie and M.P. Graham, eds., *The History of Israel's Traditions: The Heritage of Martin Noth* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield, 1994).

The rationale for a book-length collection devoted to Aubin's *The Rescue of Jerusalem* is, first of all, the importance of the issues it raises for the academy and beyond. Because the outcome of the events of 701 had a profound impact on Western history—if Jerusalem had fallen Judaism, Christianity, and Islam would not have later emerged—to say that these events were important is a supreme understatement. Nonetheless, they do not receive the attention this importance would seem to demand in most Hebrew Bible/Old Testament textbooks and histories of Israel. In part this may be because of the siloed nature of the academy. In order to achieve the fullest understanding of these events, the tools of scholars from diverse disciplines are needed. This volume brings together excellent scholars from several fields to consider certain issues that are raised by *The Rescue of Jerusalem*. The hope is that the contributors' ideas will help scholars explore, expand, and move beyond these matters. Sometimes it takes the work of a diligent, intelligent outsider to the academy to see that to which we insiders give too little attention.

This volume is important for another reason. Not only does *The Rescue of Jerusalem* raise issues regarding what may have happened in 701 BCE; it also probes the causes of changes in Western biblical scholarly attitudes regarding the Twenty-fifth Dynasty's involvement in those events. Aubin himself is much too sophisticated a reader of history to posit a single-cause hypothesis. However, his approach does raise important concerns about scholarly attitudes, not only from the past, but also about the ways in which past attitudes have a way of continuing to color later academic discourse when they are not challenged.

ESSAYS

That brings me to the subject of the eight essays in this volume, all of which in one way or another focus on the question of the Kushite involvement in Jerusalem's escape from destruction. The articles are richly diverse in their approaches. Some focus primarily on historical matters and others consider literary-critical issues. Archaeological finds and their interpretation play a role in several of the contributions. Because the sources that we have include Hebrew, Assyrian, and Greek texts, and because the

events involve Judahites, Assyrians, Kushites, and Egyptians, with ancillary involvement of the small neighboring countries, we have called upon specialists in pertinent fields to bring their varied perspectives to bear on the question of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty's involvement in the conflict of 701.

To ensure an impartial “jury,” I have favored specialists who have published no prior opinion supporting the Twenty-fifth Dynasty's influence in Assyria's retreat: this is the case with a majority—five—of the eight contributors. Exceptions were made for three contributors with rich expertise in the history of the period. (Of these, two did not support the idea of a significant Twenty-fifth Dynasty influence in the outcome of the 701 conflict, and one did support it, although his reasoning was quite different from Aubin's.³)

Only one of the contributors, Jeremy Pope, had read *The Rescue of Jerusalem* beforehand. Several of the invited scholars expressed immediate skepticism when informed of the book's thesis; these were ideal contributors, for doubt can be a good starting-point for a well-weighed, impartial judgment.

The biblical scholars all use literary criticism of one variety or another as part of their methodological approach. *Marta Høyland Lavik*, in “Are the Kushites Disparaged in Isaiah 18? Kush Applied as a Literary Motif in the Hebrew Bible,” opens the collection with an investigation of the literary portrayal of Kush. Her research shows that the African power is positively described in the three main parts of the Hebrew Bible. On the basis of an analysis of the rhetoric of Isaiah 18, she demonstrates that, consistent with Aubin's fifth argument for the Kushites having played a major role in Jerusalem's rescue, the Kushites are not disparaged in this text. It is Judah who is judged rather than Kush. As a literary motif, Kush is used in an attempt to persuade the Judahites to trust YHWH more than human powers.

Song-Mi Suzie Park's “Egypt or God? Who Saved Judah from the Assyrian Attack in 701?” uses a similar type of rhetorical criticism in her approach to 2 Kgs 19:9b–35, which again includes a careful unpacking of the theological motivations and artistry of the author(s). Her study of what is called Source B2 (2 Kgs 19:9b–35//Isa 37:9b–36) reveals that it seeks to resolve the theological problem posed in Source B1 (2 Kgs 18:17–19:9a,

³ The three scholars with published views are the following. A. Dodson, “Taharqo, Taharqa, Taharka,” in R.S. Bagnall et al. (eds.), *The Encyclopedia of Ancient History* (Chichester, West Sussex, UK: Wiley & Sons, 2013), who suggests that the Twenty-fifth Dynasty's force “suffered defeat at the hands of Sennacherib of Assyria at the battle of Eltekeh.” A.B. Lloyd, “Book II,” in O. Murray and A. Moreno (eds.), *A Commentary on Herodotus: Books I-IV* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), who proposes that an epidemic—not the Twenty-fifth Dynasty's army—was a key factor in Sennacherib's retreat (343). Favoring that army's influence is L.L. Grabbe, “Introduction,” in L.L. Grabbe (ed.), *“Like a Bird in a Cage:” The Invasion of Sennacherib in 701 BCE* (JSOTSup, 363; ESHM, 4; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003), 138–39, and “Reflections on the Discussion, *ibid.*, 313–14.

36//Isa 36:2–9a, 37), in which Egypt of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty and YHWH are presented mockingly in tandem as the possible saviors of Jerusalem by the Assyrian Rab-shakeh. The biblical author(s) do so by alluding to the exodus events, in particular the final disaster, thus showing that YHWH is in control of foreign countries, especially Egypt. The purpose of the addition of B2 therefore was to maximize YHWH's role. In her support for the parallel relationship between Egypt's army and YHWH in the Rab-shakeh's speech, Park upholds one of Aubin's arguments, in this case the sixth.

Christopher B. Hays uses multiple methodologies in “‘Those Weaned From Milk’: The Divine Wet Nurse Motif in Isaiah 28’s Ceremony for the Covenant with Mut.” Hays states that Aubin’s point of view can be significantly augmented by the recognition that the “covenant with Death” in Isaiah 28 was specifically made with the Kushites and their national goddess, Mut. Recent syntheses of the evidence of Mut’s cult at Thebes allow for a glimpse at how that covenant ceremony might have looked. Finally, the article points out that both texts and archaeology give us examples of the kinds of ritual vessels that might have been used at these festivities, and a Twenty-fifth-Dynasty text actually narrates the ceremonial use of one of them.

We turn now to Nubiology and Egyptology and begin with Nubiologist *Jeremy Pope’s* “Sennacherib’s Departure and the Principle of Laplace.” Pope begins with a thoughtful discussion of social location. He then presents a summary of Aubin’s main arguments. Next he discusses the principle of Laplace, extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence, a principle that he says most contemporary historians no longer follow. This principle comes up in the context of an examination of Jacob Kovel’s review of *The Rescue of Jerusalem*: Pope critiques Kovel’s position by showing that he is basically asserting that in the absence of new empirical evidence, historians should default to current mainstream theories rather than consider new (or in Aubin’s case, reinvigorated) theories, thus necessitating that new or reinvigorated theories be required to meet a higher standard of proof than the one used to evaluate existing theories. Pope goes on to compare F.M. Fales’s 2014 support for the theory that Jerusalem saved itself by surrendering (in Pope’s view the strongest of the several popular explanations for Jerusalem’s survival) and Aubin’s hybrid rescue theory and finds that determining which is correct depends on Sennacherib’s volition, which is impossible to determine. The other approach involves looking at the results achieved for Assyria, the Levant, and Kushite-ruled Egypt over the next quarter century. Pope then considers material that has become available since *The Rescue of Jerusalem* was published in 2002. This specifically includes a reversed chronology for Pharaohs Shabatako and Shabako, which could provide support for Aubin’s theory of a negotiated settlement between Assyria, Judah, and Kushite-ruled Egypt in 701. Pope gives multiple reasons why Kushite Egypt might not have left any extant written records of their role in Judah’s survival and their lack of imperialistic ambitions in the Levant. He concludes by saying of

the various theories relating to Jerusalem's ability to avoid destruction, he slightly prefers Aubin's hybrid rescue theory to Fales's total surrender theory on the grounds that it best explains developments in the southern Levant in the decades immediately following 701 (as per Aubin's third argument).

The focus of Egyptologist *Aidan Dodson's* chapter, "The Rescue of Jerusalem: a View from the Nile Valley," is the reversal of the chronology of Pharaoh's Shabako and Shabatako and its implications for Aubin's thesis. The reversal means that Taharqo's movement with an army from Kush to Egypt to join King Shabatako (described on stelae from the site of Kawa in Nubia) would not have been in preparation for the events of 701, as Shabatako's reign would now be dated (713–705 BCE). On the other hand, Taharqo's age in 701 would be raised to around 30, a more credible age for him to have led a force into the Levant. Dodson views as plausible the prowess of a Kushite-Egyptian military force, based on several historical factors, in support of Aubin's fourth argument. The reversal of the pharaonic chronology may clarify the change in Egypt's foreign policy from appeasement to military engagement. Under Shabatako, the policy was appeasement as can be seen from the extradition of Iamani in 704 BCE. By the time of Shabako, the policy had changed to one of engagement, possibly due to concern about the policy of appeasement and the strengthening of military capability after a half-decade of integration of the economies and armies of Egypt and Kush, giving Shabako more confidence in the outcome of a clash with Assyria.

The last part of the book includes historian of the ancient Near East Lester L. Grabbe, classicist-Egyptologist Alan B. Lloyd, and Assyriologist K. Lawson Younger, Jr. In "Israelite Interaction with Egypt During the Monarchy: A Context for Interpreting 2 Kings 19:8–13," *Lester Grabbe* investigates the question of what happened historically in 701 BCE in Hezekiah's interaction with Sennacherib. First, Grabbe surveys biblical references to Israel's encounter with Egypt, judging which are historical. He then assesses the evidence, including the biblical and Assyrian texts, archaeology, and Herodotus to determine what happened in 701 BCE. Of the four possible theories, he rejects the first outright, that Sennacherib invaded Judah twice. The second position is that the Egyptians were defeated at Eltekeh but engaged the Assyrians successfully a second time. Taharqo may or may not have been the leader of one or both events. The third position is that there was only one encounter, at Eltekeh, which the Assyrians did not win, due to exhaustion. There was a negotiated settlement, in which Judah had to submit. Again, Taharqo may or may not have been the leader of the Egyptian force. The fourth position is Aubin's, which is a combination of the second and third positions. Aubin's position posits two engagements, the second of which Taharqo may have led. Also, importantly, the second may not have been an all-out battle but rather the threat of a battle, resulting in a settlement. Grabbe opts for the third solution, with Taharqo being the leader of the Egyptian forces at Eltekeh; he also suggests, however, the possibility that

the biblical narrator, writing probably half a century or more after the events, happened to remember Taharqo as a well-known Egyptian leader and inserted him into 2 Kgs 19:9. Grabbe concludes, "in the end, I think my view is very similar to Aubin's, if differing on some details."

In "The Siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib," *Alan Lloyd*, unlike Grabbe, discounts Herodotus. He understands the annals to mean that Hezekiah bought off Sennacherib and returned to being a subject kingdom. As for the 2 Kings/Isaiah tradition, he acknowledges that it mentions the approach of the Egyptian army under Taharqo, but feels it returned to Egypt without confronting the Assyrians upon hearing that Hezekiah and bought off Sennacherib and surrendered. Of Aubin's hypothesis, he says, "not proven."

Assyriologist K. Lawson Younger, Jr.'s essay, "Aubin's The Rescue of Jerusalem: An Assyriological Assessment," has three parts. First, he analyzes the evidence from the Assyrian queens' tombs and determines that when properly understood it does not negate Aubin's theory. Second, he considers the question of the identification of the inhabitants of Lachish and argues that Sennacherib's reliefs of the conquest of Lachish do not depict Kushites; the most recent forensic anthropology suggests that the excavated human remains from Lachish are southern Levantines (i.e. Judahites) rather than Kushites. This conclusion neither helps nor hurts Aubin's thesis. Finally, Younger believes that the greatest challenge to Aubin's theory may be in the route proposed by Aubin for Taharqo's army to have taken.

Looking at the eight essays in their entirety, we see that some insightful support for various aspects of this important period of history has been provided, both in the chronological ordering of the pharaohs Shabako and Shabatako, argued independently by Pope and Dodson, and in the literary critical understanding of biblical texts in Lavik's and Park's work. In addition, Hays's understanding of Isaiah 28's covenant with death as being a reference to Mut and the Kushites is enlightening.

At the end of the collection is a response by Aubin; his approach is to pursue an issue touched on by an essayist and to offer fresh insights. His response deals with the relationship between 2 Kings 18–19 and Deuteronomy 7 as well as Exodus 14, scholars' recent treatment of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty's role in the conflict of 701, that to which we in the academy give too little attention, a comparison of the strength of the armies of the New Kingdom and the Twenty-fifth Dynasty, the outcome of the battle of Eltekeh, some scholars' view that Taharqo's army (2 Kgs 19:9) returned to Egypt without confronting Sennacherib, and possible routes that Taharqo's army might have taken to reach Judah.

The eight scholars' independent judgments on the plausibility of the theory that a Twenty-fifth-Dynasty army contributed significantly to Sennacherib's decision to retreat can be summed up as follows. One scholar, Lloyd, rejects the idea outright. One, Younger, is neutral. Six scholars take cautious positions that tilt

in varying degrees toward the positive: Dodson, Grabbe, Hays and Pope give different reasons for seeing the theory's plausibility, while Lavik and Park indicate their separate textual analyses of the Bible are consistent with the theory although their work is too narrowly focused to address the theory as a whole.

Younger's neutrality on the theory is based not on disputing any of Aubin's arguments but on a secondary consideration: he questions the logistical ability of Taharqo's contingent to reach the war zone. Lloyd maintains his pre-existing position without critiquing any of the arguments; he bases his rejection of the theory on a different reading of the Assyrian annals and 2 Kings.

The contributors had been asked to assess any of Aubin's six arguments that correspond to their particular areas of expertise; it is significant that none of the contributors, including Younger and Lloyd, contests any of these arguments. The consensus favors the plausibility of a significant Kushite role in the events of 701. It also shows that scholars working across disciplines and coming from a variety of social locations within academia can shed significant light on a thorny intellectual puzzle.

REPORT/RUMOR

ALICE OGDEN BELLIS

HOWARD UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

In 2 Kgs 19:7 we learn that God will cause Sennacherib to hear a *report/rumor* which will cause him to return home. The word in Hebrew, שְׂמוּעָה (*šemû‘a(h)*), is a simple nominal form built from the verb שָׁמַע (*šm‘*) which means to hear, thus the basic meaning of the noun is something that is heard, a report, news, hearsay, as all the lexicons and dictionaries attest. The issue is what nuance the noun has in this case. BDB and HAL specifically cite this verse and give the noun the meaning of “report” or “news.”¹ James Swanson in the *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Hebrew (Old Testament)* also cites this verse under the rubric “message, report, news, i.e., information (positive or negative), often from another geographical area, or even a divine source, which is announced to others.”² In the *Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*, the verse is listed, but a specific meaning is not attached.³

A survey of English translations found in the online Bible Gateway website indicates that twenty-seven translations use the word “rumor,”⁴ one has “made up story,” and another has “noise,” both of which can be close in meaning to rumor. If these are included with “rumor” the total is twenty-nine. Eleven translations use “report,” while six others use variations on this theme (“[bad] news”—three, “messages”—one, and “tidings”—two). If these are included with “report,” the total is eighteen. But it is not just a numbers game.

Of the translations that are the most familiar to academics, the NRSV, CEB (both liberal Christian), and Tanakh (Jewish) all use “rumor.” NAB (Catholic) and NIV (evangelical Christian) use “report.” So, in spite of the fact that the standard lexicons generally understand this word as “report,” rather than “rumor,” the translations that academics in liberal institutions (other than in Roman Catholic settings) often work with and most frequently

¹ BDB, 1035; L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner (ed.), *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros* (Leiden: Brill, 1985), 985.

² J. Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Hebrew (Old Testament)* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

³ D. J.A. Clines, ed., *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press; Sheffield Phoenix, 1993–2011), 436.

recommend to their students (NRSV, CEB) use “rumor” rather than “report” in 2 Kgs 19:7.

Why does it matter? If the text is read with the word “rumor,” it can raise doubts about the reliability of what Sennacherib hears. Although rumors can turn out to be true, the word “rumor” smacks of gossip, unverified reports, but nothing in the biblical context suggests that the news is unverified. The Oxford English Living Dictionary defines rumor as “a currently circulating story or report of uncertain or doubtful truth.”⁵ Similarly, According to Merriam-Webster’s dictionary, rumor means:

- A. talk or opinion widely disseminated with no discernible source;
- B. a statement or report current without known authority for its truth.⁶

Dictionary.com goes a little further. Its first definition is similar to Merriam-Webster’s:

1. a story or statement in general circulation without confirmation or certainty as to facts:

[Example:] *A rumor of war.*

Its second definition, however, is important for our purposes:

2. gossip; hearsay:

[Example:] *Don’t listen to rumor.*⁷

A third source, Vocabulary.com, defines rumor as follows:

“Gossip (usually a mixture of truth and untruth) passed around by word of mouth.”

It expands upon the definition in this way:

“A rumor is a story which may not be true. Everyone may be talking about the rap superstar who stopped for ice cream in your town, but until there’s proof that it really happened, the whole thing is just a rumor.”

Are rumors ever true? Of course—sometimes word gets out ahead of time, like when a student overhears teachers talking about the early dismissal before it is announced. When the school closes early, the rumor is confirmed. But many other rumors can never be confirmed, so they stay just that, rumors. True, false, semi-true: who knows? The Latin word *rumor*, or noise, is the origin; noise is often all that a rumor is.⁸

The psychology of rumors has been studied extensively, with an implicit definition emerging of rumors as understood frequently to be false, even in academia, as indicated by titles

⁵ <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/rumour>, accessed on 7-9-2018.

⁶ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/rumor>, accessed on 7-4-2018.

⁷ <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/rumor?s=t>, accessed on 7-5-2018.

⁸ <https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/rumor>, accessed on 7-5-2018.

such as *On Rumors: How Falsehoods Spread, Why We Believe Them, What Can Be Done* (emphasis mine), and “Diffusing the Rumor: ‘John Kerry is French,’ i.e. Haughty, Cowardly, Foppish, Socialist, and Gay.”⁹

Sennacherib is the Assyrian emperor. He is the head of multiple fighting forces, presumably with scouts and intelligence officers keeping watch for exactly the kind of scenario that is developing. Calling the word of Taharqo’s movement a rumor weakens the significance of the news. It may not be fake news. It is probably not idle talk or opinion with no discernible source. It could well be based on Sennacherib’s information sources.

As a white faculty member in a historically black university where I received two of my degrees (MDiv and MBA) and have taught for over twenty-five years, I have become sensitized to the ways in which seemingly small actions can have significant impact. Translating the Hebrew word *šemû‘ā(b)* as “rumor” is an example of a subtle bias in translation that can contribute to a marginalization of the Kushites’ place in the Bible.¹⁰ To be sure, a scholar’s use of the word does not necessarily indicate doubt of the message’s validity; it may simply be a matter of conforming to common practice. Nevertheless, “report” is the preferred translation.

⁹C. Sunstein, *On Rumors: How Falsehoods Spread, Why We Believe Them, What Can Be Done* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009) and “Diffusing the Rumor: ‘John Kerry is French,’ i.e. Haughty, Cowardly, Foppish, Socialist, and Gay” by J. Harsin, in R. Given and S. Soule (eds.), *The Diffusion of Social Movements* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 163–86.

¹⁰For more on this perception see Aubin, *The Rescue of Jerusalem*, ch. 13, D.M. Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham: Race and Slavery in Early Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), and R. S. Sadler, *Can a Cushite Change His Skin? An Examination of Race, Ethnicity, and Othering in the Hebrew Bible* (New York: T & T Clark, 2005).

*Translation Table – Report/ rumor, 2 Kgs 19:7**Rumor or equivalent (29x)*

<i>Amplified Bible</i>	LEB
BRG	MSG
CEB	NAS
CEV	NASB
CGB	NC
CJB	NKJV
ESV	NLV (<i>made up story</i>)
<i>Geneva (noise)</i>	NoG
GNB	NRSV
<i>Gods' Word</i>	<i>Phillips</i>
GW	RSV
HCSB	<i>Tanach</i>
ISV	TLV
<i>Jubilee</i>	VOICE
KJV	

Report or equivalent (19x)

<i>ASV (tidings)</i>	NCV
<i>Darby (tidings)</i>	NET
<i>Douay-Rheims</i>	NIRV (<i>news</i>)
<i>Easy to Read</i>	NIV
<i>LB (bad news)</i>	NLT
LCB	OJB
<i>Message</i>	WEB (<i>news</i>)
MEV	<i>Wycliffe (messages)</i>
NAB	<i>Young's Literal</i>

**ARE THE KUSHITES DISPARAGED IN
ISAIAH 18? KUSH APPLIED AS A
LITERARY MOTIF IN THE
HEBREW BIBLE**

MARTA HØYLAND LAVIK

VID SPECIALIZED UNIVERSITY, STAVANGER, NORWAY/
STAVANGER UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL STAVANGER,
NORWAY / STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY, SOUTH AFRICA

INTRODUCTION

In his book, *The Rescue of Jerusalem: The Alliance of Hebrews and Africans in 701 BC*, Henry T. Aubin demonstrates the Kushites' significant influence on ancient Palestine in the late eighth and early seventh centuries BCE, and indicates that biblical scholarship has been and still to some extent is reproachful of this ancient African nation.¹ This, he argues, is peculiar, as the Hebrew Bible "depicts them [the Kushites] in exceptionally generous terms."²

¹ H.T. Aubin, *The Rescue of Jerusalem* (New York: Soho Press; Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 2002), 284. Although trying to be conscious about the preconceptions of my Norwegian theological training and general Western horizon of understanding, I am aware I can never escape the fact that my interpretation is influenced by the fact that I am a female, middle-aged, white Northern European biblical scholar, cf. D.T. Adamo who labeled my reading of his articles about Kush as "Eurocentric," D.T. Adamo, "The Images of Cush in the Old Testament: Reflections on African Hermeneutics," in M. Getui, K. Holter and V. Zinkuratire (eds.), *Interpreting the Old Testament in Africa. Papers from the International Symposium on Africa and the Old Testament in Nairobi, October 1999* (New York: Peter Lang, 2001), 65–74 (70–71).

² Aubin, *Rescue*, 165. There is a contemporary growing interest among biblical scholars for the Kush texts. The Norwegian Professor Knut Holter should be commended for initiating research and for building networks between European/Western and African/African-American biblical scholars: "Today, however, African and European biblical studies can probably be said to share texts in the sense that previously marginalized texts—such as for example African texts, expressing African experiences and concerns—are increasingly being acknowledged as playing a role in biblical interpretation." K. Holter, "Evaluation: Dialogue and Interpretative Power," in H. de Wit and G. O. West (eds.), *African and European Readers of the Bible in Dialogue. In Quest of a Shared Meaning, Studies of Religion in Africa*, (Supplements to the Journal of Religion in Africa, 32; Leiden: Brill 2008), 409–16 (412).

Where Aubin is mainly interested in how the Kushites contribute to *history*, I am primarily occupied with how Kush is applied as a *literary* motif in the Hebrew Bible. As Isaiah 18 accumulates central biblical associations to the ancient African power Kush, it is here used to exemplify how the motif Kush is used in the Hebrew Bible.

In his chapter 13, “Evidence for the Kushites, V,” Aubin presents some texts from the Book of Isaiah which “concern events leading up to the crisis of 701.”³ Although Aubin states that “the prophet is respectful of Kush itself,” he perceives Isaiah 18 (together with chapters 20 and 31) as passages which “show the prophet’s skepticism (not the same thing as negativism) toward the capacity of Kushites to cope with the mighty Assyrians.”⁴ From a literary point of view, does the portrayal of Kush and Kushites in Isaiah 18 really show the author’s skepticism towards them? And is it likely that the Kushites are “potential victims of Judah’s folly?”⁵ In my view, the key to answer this lies in how one understands the functions of the motif Kush, and how one perceives the metaphorical language of Isa 18:5–6; therefore this paper’s title, “Are the Kushites disparaged in Isaiah 18?” The present contribution will show that an investigation of the rhetoric of the text will strengthen Aubin’s claim that the Kushites are sympathetically described throughout the Hebrew Bible.

The biblical text is best understood when its situational references are comprehended.⁶ The functions of a motif are always tied to the motif’s particular context, therefore a brief survey of the Kush texts in the Hebrew Bible is needed.⁷

KUSH IN THE HEBREW BIBLE

The Hebrew Bible contains 56 references to Kush and Kushites.⁸ Some may refer to the Kassites in Babylon, or to a

³ Aubin, *Rescue*, 171–72.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 172.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 173.

⁶ W. Kahl, “Intertextual Hermeneutics—Contextual Exegesis. A Model for 21st Century Exegesis,” *International Review of Mission. World Council of Churches* 89/345 (2000), 421–33 (430): “The biblical text can only be understood in the setting of its cultural, socio-economic and situational references.”

⁷ This general survey is taken from my monograph, *A People Tall and Smooth-skinned: The Rhetoric of Isaiah 18* (VTSup, 112; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 73–81. Reproduced with permission from the copyright owner.

⁸ כוש occurs 30 times, and כושׁי 26 times in the Hebrew Bible, A. Even-Shoshan, *A New Concordance of the Bible* (Jerusalem: Kiryat Sepher, 1983), 527. This presentation is indebted to Holter’s survey of references to African nations and people mentioned in the Hebrew Bible, see K. Holter, “Africa in the Old Testament,” in G.O. West and M.W. Dube (eds.), *The Bible in Africa. Transactions, Trajectories and Trends* (Leiden: Brill 2000), 569–581. See also R.S. Sadler, *Can a Cushite Change His Skin? An Examination of Race, Ethnicity, and Othering in the Hebrew Bible*, (LHBOTS, 425; New York: T & T Clark, 2005), for an overview of this body of texts.

tribal group presumably living on the south-western border of Judah.⁹ Still, the majority clearly refers to the ancient African nation Kush, and Aubin is right saying that the Hebrew Bible in general depicts the Kushites “in exceptionally generous terms.”¹⁰

The literal meaning of the motif Kush points to the African nation known as Kush in Ancient Near Eastern sources, and as Ethiopia in Graeco-Roman sources.¹¹ This land was located south of Egypt between the first and sixth cataracts of the Nile, and throughout the third and second millennia B.C.E. there were close relations between Kush and Egypt.¹² For the better part of a century (in the eighth and seventh centuries BC) Kush governed all of Egypt, and at times parts of Egypt, in what is known as the Twenty-fifth Kushite dynasty. This climax of the history of Kush is close in time to the origin of most of the Hebrew Bible, and it is therefore relevant to ask whether or not this military and political achievement of Kush within Egypt is reflected in one or another way in the literary portrayal of Kush.¹³

References to Kush are found in all three divisions of the Hebrew canon: the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. The

⁹ Cf. S. Hidal, “The Land of Kush in the Old Testament,” *Svensk Exegetisk Årsbok* 41–42 (1977), 97–106. See also R.W. Anderson, “Zephaniah ben Kushi and Kush of Benjamin,” in S.W. Holloway and L.K. Handy (eds.), *The Pitcher is Broken. Memorial Essays for Gösta W. Ahlström* (JSOTSup, 190; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 45–70, and R.D. Haak, “‘Kush’ in Zephaniah,” *ibid.*, 238–51. D.T. Adamo, “Ethiopia in the Bible,” *African Christian Studies* 8 (1992), 51–64 (51) emphasizes an African location of all references to Kush in the Hebrew Bible: “Everywhere the word ‘Cush’ is used with a clear cut identification, it refers to Africa.”

¹⁰ Aubin, *Rescue*, 165.

¹¹ For surveys of the history of the ancient Kush, see B.C. Trigger, B.J. Kemp et al., *Ancient Egypt. A Social History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); D. O’Connor, *Ancient Nubia. Egypt’s Rival in Africa* (Philadelphia: The University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Pennsylvania, 1993); T.G.H. James, *A Short History of Ancient Egypt. From Predynastic to Roman Times* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1995/1998); J.D. Hays, “The Cushites: A Black Nation in Ancient History,” *BSac* 153 (1996), 270–80; L. Török, *The Kingdom of Kush. Handbook of the Napatan–Meroitic Civilization* (HdO, 31; Leiden: Brill, 1997); and J. Pope, *The Double Kingdom under Taharqo. Studies in the History of Kush and Egypt, c. 690–664* (CHANE, 69; Leiden: Brill, 2014).

¹² Traditionally, this relationship has been explained in terms of a superior Egypt and an inferior Kush. More recently, however, it has been argued that the two should be seen as more equal rivals, as “two major powers competing for resources and lands of the Lower Nile.” Cf. O’Connor, *Ancient Nubia*, 2.

¹³ Isaiah 18 most likely alludes to pre-exilic political conditions, and as a text dealing with political alliances presumably in the eighth century BCE it might indirectly refer to the Kushite control over Egypt. By this stance, I put myself in an opposite position from the so-called “minimalists” who hesitate to draw lines between any Hebrew Bible text and what could be called historical conditions outside the texts. My contention is that the Hebrew Bible texts in some or the other way relate to the milieu in which they originated.

motif Kush appears six times in the Pentateuch, of which four are to be found in Genesis (Gen 2:13; 10:6, 7, 8), and two in Numbers (Num 12:1,1). It is used once as a geographical location (Gen 2:13), and five times as personal names. Gen 2:13 reads: “The name of the second river is Gihon; it winds through the entire land of Kush.” As Gihon is the name of a spring in Jerusalem, the reference to the African Kush seems odd. However, an African location is not impossible as there is a strong tradition for relating the name Gihon to the river Nile (cf. LXX Jer 2:18; Ben Sira 24:27).¹⁴ The geographical reference to Kush in Gen 2:13 includes Africa in the world map reflected in Gen 2:13.¹⁵

In the Law there are five more occurrences of Kush, first, three in the Table of nations (Gen 10:6,7,8), where Kush is mentioned first in a series of Ham’s four sons. Kush is here applied as a personal name.¹⁶ Further, vv. 10–12 list several places and cities that the son of Kush established. Of Kush’s stock comes one who is said to be the first to have a great dominion on the earth. Although Kush is here a personal name, Kush is mentioned first in Gen 10:6 probably due to a geographical orientation starting from the far south.¹⁷ The two last references to Kush in the Law are found in a narrative in Num 12 about Moses and his Kushite wife.¹⁸

The former prophets comprises eight references (2 Sam 18:21 (x2), 22, 23, 31, 32 (x2); 2 Kgs 19:9), and the latter prophets twenty-five (Isa 11:1; 18:1; 20:3, 4, 5; 37:9; 43:3; 45:14; Jer 13:23; 36:14; 38:7, 10, 12; 39:16; 46:9; Ezek 29:10; 30:4, 5, 9; 38:5; Amos 9:7; Nah 3:9; Zeph 1:1; 2:12; 3:10). The eight references in the

¹⁴ Cf. T.K. Cheyne, *The Book of the Prophet Isaiah. Critical Edition of the Hebrew Text Arranged in Chronological Order and Printed in Colours Exhibiting the Composite Structure of the Book with Notes* (SBONT, 10; Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1899), 108–109, and E. Ullendorff, *Ethiopia and the Bible* (Schweich Lectures; London: Oxford University Press, 1968), 2–3. Cf. the discussion in C. Westermann, *Genesis 1–11*, (BK, 1/1; Neukirchen Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1974), 297–98, where an African location of Kush is suggested.

¹⁵ Cf. S. Hidal, “The Land of Kush”; K. Holter, “Africa in the Old Testament,” 575, and T. Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden: Genesis 2–3 and Symbolism of the Eden Garden in Biblical Hebrew Literature* (CBET, 25; Leuven: Peeters, 2000), 279–281.

¹⁶ E.A. Speiser, “The Rivers of Paradise,” in R. von Kienle, A. Moortgat et al. (eds.), *Festschrift Johannes Friedrich zum 65. Geburtstag am 27. August 1958 gewidmet* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1959), 473–85 (475), states that Kush in the Table of Nations is an eponym of the Kassites in Mesopotamia. For the same opinion, see J.D. Levenson, *Sinai and Zion. An Entry into the Jewish Bible* (Minneapolis: Winston Press, 1985), 131.

¹⁷ Cf. D.T. Adamo, “The Table of Nations Reconsidered in African Perspective (Genesis 10),” *Journal of African Religion and Philosophy* 2 (1993), 138–43. The table of nations is repeated in 1 Chr 1.

¹⁸ For solutions to why Miriam and Aaron criticizes Moses, see D.T. Adamo, “The African Wife of Moses: An Examination of Numbers 12:1–9,” *ATIJ* 18 (1989), 230–37; Hays, “The Cushites,” 270–80; and Holter, “Africa in the Old Testament,” 569–81 (576).

former prophets are found in two different narratives, both alluding to the military ability of the Kushites. The first narrative (2 Sam 18) depicts a Kushite officer in king David's army (vv. 21–33) reporting Absalom's death to the king (vv. 32–33). The other narrative (2 Kings 19) gives the Kushite king Taharqo a supporting role in the deliverance of Jerusalem (v. 9). Both narratives implicitly refer to Kushites in relation to the people of YHWH, and portray the two individuals from Kush as having important roles in society.

From the twenty-five references to Kush in the latter prophets, the Kushites are featured in various ways. In Isaiah 18 and Jer 13:23 Kushites are described in anthropological terms. The wealth of Kush is alluded to in Isa 43:3 and 45:14. In Isa 20, YHWH's people are warned against trusting Kush. The allusion to a military reputation of Kush is reflected in lists (Ezek 38:5 and Nah 3:9), and in the narrative about the officer Ebed-Melech (Jer 38–39). A comparison between Kush and Israel is made in Amos 9:7 where Israel's exodus from Egypt is compared to other peoples' similar experiences.¹⁹ Kush is sometimes used as a limit of the borders of the world, such as in Ezek 29:10. The opening verse of Zephaniah (1:1) introduces the prophet as the son of Kushi.²⁰ Further, Kush represents the far south in the prophet's geographical orientation (Zeph 2:4–15, v. 12). Kush is mentioned in the context of salvation (Isa 11:11–12; 18:7; Zeph 3:10).

The Writings have seventeen references to Kush and Kushites; three of these are found in the Psalms (7:1; 68:32; 87:4), one in Job (28:19), two in Esther (1:1; 8:9), one in Daniel (11:43), three in 1 Chronicles (1:8, 9, 10), and seven in 2 Chronicles (12:3; 14:8, 11, 12 (x2); 16:8; 21:16). Ps 68:32 [Eng: 68:31] probably alludes to the motif of Kushites bringing gifts to YHWH in Jerusalem: "Envoys will come from Egypt; Kush will quickly stretch out her hands to God." Ps 87:4 mentions pilgrims from different nations, including Kush. Job 28:19 alludes to the wealth of Kush. The two references to Kush in Esther (1:1; 8:9) describe Kush as the south-western border of the world. In Dan 11:43 Kushites are mentioned in the context of wealth and riches. The narrative in 2 Chr 14:8–14 [Eng: 14:9–15] depicting a high number of soldiers is typical for holy war rhetoric: "Now

¹⁹ Cf. D.T. Adamo, "Amos 9:7–8 in an African Perspective," *Orita* 24 (1992), 76–84, R. Smith, "A New Perspective on Amos 9:7a," *JITC* 22, (1994), 36–47, K. Holter, "Is Israel Worth More to God than Kush? An Interpretation of Amos 9:7," in K. Holter (ed.), *Yahweh in Africa. Essays on Africa and the Hebrew Bible* (New York: Peter Lang, 2000), 115–25.

²⁰ R.W. Anderson argues that this reflects a Kushite presence in the land of Israel, cf. Anderson, "Zephaniah ben Cushi," 45–70, while others argue for an African origin of the prophet Zephaniah, cf. G. Rice, "The African Roots of the Prophet Zephaniah," *JRT* 36 (1979), 21–31, and D.T. Adamo, "The Black Prophet in the Hebrew Bible," *Journal of Arabic and Religious Studies* 4 (1987), 1–8.

Zerah the Kushite came out against them with an army of a million men and 300 chariots, and he came to Mareshah” (2 Chr 14:8).

From this survey it is clear that the motif Kush literally refers to an ancient African nation that was located south of Egypt. Non-literally, the motif Kush is in the Hebrew Bible associated with the following: Richness, military reputation, abundance, remoteness, and relation to Zion in eschatological times.²¹

THE PERSUASIVE ARTISTRY OF ISAIAH 18

Most scholars, when interpreting Isaiah 18, go into questions about geography and history—to the expense of describing the text’s persuasive artistry. My purpose here is not to reconstruct historical events Isaiah 18 might refer to, but rather to attend to the text’s rhetorical capacity in my conversation with Aubin’s thirteenth chapter.²² Such a literary analysis can complement a more historically based picture of Kush and Kushites.

Isaiah 18 has puzzled scholars as it does not provide a story told straight forward, but rather delivers its message in what can be likened to a set of photo slides randomly put together. The constant shift in scene, perspective and characters confuses the contemporary reader—as it presumably also did the ancient audience.²³ In v. 1 there is a הוי, “Ah!,” cried out over the land along the rivers of Kush, followed by v. 2 where messengers are introduced and the land and people of Kush are vividly described. In v. 3 “all” who live on earth are encouraged to be attentive when the banner will be raised and the horns blown. In v. 4 the perspective changes again when the only character on the scene is YHWH – who is said to watch intensely and calmly from his dwelling place. In vv. 5–6 the scene is the vineyard where “he” cuts off the quivering tendrils to which the vine attaches itself in order to climb. Verse 7 repeats much of v. 2 and brings the Kushites in focus again, but this time in relation with YHWH Sebaot on Mount Zion. As will be evident, despite these abrupt shifts, an inner logic is grasped when one comprehends the imagery of v. 5.

²¹ Aubin, *Rescue*, 283: “the Hebrew Bible in fact praises the Kushites, treating them as pious exceptions in a pagan world, a people who are drawn to the worship of the Hebrews’ own deity, Yahweh.”

²² A more extensive rhetorical analysis of Isaiah 18 is pursued in my monograph, *A People Tall and Smooth-skinned: The Rhetoric of Isaiah 18* (VT Suppl, 112; Leiden: Brill, 2007). Only what is relevant for the fresh discussion with Aubin’s chapter thirteen is here elaborated on from the monograph.

²³ Several scholars find it difficult to see a coherence between the various strophes of the text, cf. B.S. Childs, *Isaiah and the Assyrian Crisis* (SBT Second Series, 3; London: SCM, 1967), 45; W. Brueggemann, *Isaiah 1–39* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998), 152; and Aubin, *Rescue*, 228.

STROPHE I, vv. 1–2: THE ATTRACTIVE KUSH

Except for one line (v. 2aγ: לכו מלאכים קלים), all of Isa 18:1–2 describes either the geography or the inhabitants of the land of Kush:²⁴

- v. 1a Ah! land of buzzing wings
- v. 1b from along the rivers of Kush,
- v. 2aα sending envoys by sea
- v. 2aβ and in vessels of paper-reed over the waters.
- v. 2aγ Go, swift messengers
- v. 2aδ to a nation tall and smooth-skinned,
- v. 2aε to a people feared from that day and onwards,
- v. 2bα [to] a nation line upon line and down-treading,
- v. 2bβ whose land rivers cut through.

Isaiah 18 opens with a הוי which can be rendered “Ah,” “Alas,” “Ha.” Although it usually expresses some kind of dissatisfaction and pain, it is not as strong as אוי, “woe.”²⁵ הוי occurs in the Hebrew Bible in three different forms of usage.²⁶ First, הוי

²⁴ The translation of Isaiah 18 is mine. When other biblical texts are cited, they are taken from *The New Revised Standard Version*. Not all scholars would agree that Isa 18:1–2 describes Kush. A quite common suggestion is that Isa 18:2 describes Assyria, cf. R.E. Clements, *Isaiah 1–39* (NCBC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980/1994), 164, who cites W. Janzen, *Mourning Cry and Woe Oracle* (BZAW, 125; Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1972), 60–61. See also A. Gileadi, *The Literary Message of Isaiah* (New York: Hebraeus 1994), 149. H. Wildberger, *Jesaja 13–27* (BK, 10/1; Neukirchen–Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1978), 689, however, proposes Kush, and M.A. Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39 With an Introduction to Prophetic Literature* (FOTL, 16; Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1996), 257, suggests Egypt. Another suggestion is that the Medes are referred to in Isa 18:2, cf. E.J. Kissane, *The Book of Isaiah* (Dublin: Browne and Noland, 1960), 198, who suggests that the people referred to in Isa 18:2 are described in Isa 13:17 (the Medes): “there is nothing in the description here which is out of harmony with this [Isa 13:17].” J.N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah. Chapters 1–39* (NIC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 361, also suggests the Medes to be portrayed in 18:2.

²⁵ As the LXX uses the same word to translate both הוי and אוי, this might suggest that there is no essential difference between the two interjections. This is however contradicted by the different syntax of the two words, cf. the statistical survey of G. Wanke, “הוי und אוי,” *ZAW* 78 (1966), 215–18, which is rechecked by C. Hardmeier in H.W. Wolff, *Dodekapropheten 2. Joel und Amos* (BK, 14/2; Neukirchen–Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1969), 284–87. See H.–J. Zobel, “הוי,” *TbWAT* 2:382–83, for a presentation of the statistical survey from Wanke and Hardmeier.

²⁶ This is also suggested by R.J. Clifford, “The Use of *Hôy* in the Prophets,” *CBQ* 28 (1966), 458–64. For the meaning and application of הוי, see also E. Jenni, “הוי,” *THAT* 1 (1971), 474–77.

occurs in funeral laments (cf. 1 Kgs 13:30, Jer 22:18; 34:5).²⁷ In such lamentations הוי is usually followed by a noun indicating the relationship between the person who mourns and the one who is dead, cf. 1 Kgs 13:30: הוי אחי “alas my brother.” Second, הוי can be found in vocative appeals or addresses functioning as a way of getting the attention and expressing either an invitation (Isa 55:1), a moan (Jer 47:6) or a warning (Zech 2:10 (x2), 11).²⁸ Third, הוי appears in prophetic indictments (Isa 10:5; 17:12; 28:1). All three uses of the word הוי may have passed through the minds of the audience of Isaiah 18. By the opening הוי over Kush the audience most likely perceives the speech as a judgment, or at least a warning to Kush. This הוי is, however, somewhat confusing as long as what follows is a positive description of the Kushites (v. 2).

Isa 18:1 alludes to other texts where rivers and Kush are mentioned, cf. Gen 2:13 and Zeph 3:10. The connection between rivers and Kush has the effect of associating Kush with abundance, richness and fertility. But does Isa 18:1 describe Kush or does it refer to a region beyond Kush? Zeph 3:10 has the same wording as is found in Isa 18:1: מעבר לנהרי-כוש, often translated “beyond the rivers of Kush.” The word מעבר (v. 1b) consists of a preposition מן, “from,” and a noun, עבר (masculine singular absolute), which is often rendered “region across or beyond.”²⁹ Most translators therefore render מעבר לנהרי-כוש of Isa 18:1 “beyond” the rivers of Kush without any discussion.³⁰ However, in addition to its most common rendering, מעבר can also be translated “along,” or “on the side of,” cf. 1 Sam 14:4, 40; 1 Kgs 5:4; 7:20, 30.³¹ The word עבר is applied especially of a

²⁷ For this usage, cf. J. Scharbert, *Der Schmerz im Alten Testament*, (BBB, 8; Bonn: Hanstein, 1955), 71.

²⁸ For a study of the presence or absence of a vocative element after the הוי, see D.R. Hillers, “*Hôy* and *Hôy*—Oracles: A Neglected Syntactic Aspect,” in C.L. Meyers and M. O’Connor (eds.), *The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth. Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of His Sixtieth Birthday* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1983), 185–88.

²⁹ Cf. H.-P. Stähli, “עבר,” *THAT* 2 (1976), 200–204.

³⁰ Some scholars treat v. 1b as a gloss, cf. B. Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja übersetzt und erklärt*, (HKAT 3, 1; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1892), 137–39; K. Marti, *Das Buch Jesaja* (KHC, 10; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1900), 147; and H. Donner, *Israel unter den Völkern. Die Stellung der klassischen Propheten des 8. Jahrhunderts v. Chr. zur Aussenpolitik der Könige von Israel und Juda* (VTSup, 11; Leiden: Brill, 1964), 122. J.P.U. Lilley, “By the River-side,” *VT* 28 (1978), 165–71, makes a systematic examination of the use of עבר, supporting and extending the conclusions of B. Gemser, “*Be’ever hajjardēn*: In Jordan’s borderland,” *VT* 2 (1952), 349–55. Lilley translates מעבר in both Isa 18:1 and Zeph 3:10 “beyond,” but regards “beside” acceptable (Lilley, “by the River-side,” 167). He concludes that מעבר “normally means ‘beyond,’ unless the force of *min*, ‘from,’ predominates” (ibid., 171).

³¹ This is also argued by B. Gemser, “*Be’ever hajjardēn*: In Jordan’s borderland,” *VT* 2 (1952), 351: “Thus ‘*eber* signifies undoubtedly “region across, other side” but just as well “region alongside, side.” For the translation of מעבר in Isaiah 18, see BDB. See also *HALAT*, 738, who puts Isa 18:1 under the heading “Seite,” and translates, לנהרי-כוש

riverside region, and according to B. Gemser, **מַעְבַּר לְנַהֲרֵי-כוּשׁ** in Isa 18:1 can therefore be translated “alongside the rivers of Ethiopia” to give an appropriate meaning.³² E. Vogt translates **לְנַהֲרֵי-כוּשׁ** in Isa 18:1: “*in regione iuxta flumina Kus*,” “in the region by/along the rivers of Kush.”³³ Of the commentaries, O. Procksch renders **מַעְבַּר לְנַהֲרֵי-כוּשׁ**, “ein Zugang zu den Strömen von Kusch,” referring to Isa 16:2 and Gen 32:23.³⁴ More recently, J.D.W. Watts, following H. Wildberger, takes the phrase **מַעְבַּר לְנַהֲרֵי-כוּשׁ** as an obvious reference to the African nation Kush.³⁵ This is also presupposed by T. Stordalen who renders **לְנַהֲרֵי-קוּשׁ מַעְבַּר** [šû], “from the region of the rivers of Cush.”³⁶

In v. 2 the motif “river” (together with “waters”/“sea”) is applied literally about the geography of Kush and about the travelling route of the Kushites. When the people living along the rivers of Kush are introduced, they are not explicitly named, but described in a threefold way: 1) by their habit of sending envoys by sea (2a α –2a β), 2) by the look of their bodies (2a δ), and 3) by what their reputation is like (2a ϵ –2b α). According to v. 2 they master the element of water (“sending envoys by sea”), they have a characteristic look – as if their bodies are shining – they are feared, and they are down-treading.

In addition, v. 2 describes messengers travelling to and from Judah. Although not stated explicitly, the messengers most likely refer to human envoys. The terms **מְלֹאכִים** and **צִירִים** in v. 2a α and 2a γ are two groups of messengers, one delegation from Kush and one from Judah. Although the mission’s purpose is not stated, I agree with Aubin that this poetic description of movements over the waters (in v. 2) may indicate diplomatic relations, showing a “common defense strategy” of Judahites and Kushites.³⁷

Summing up: Isaiah 18 opens with a **הוֹי** which is followed by a description of the land of Kush and its inhabitants. In Isa 18:1–2 Kush is associated with abundance (cf. Gen 2:13; Zeph 3:10, here: “whose land rivers cut through”), as the most remote part of the world (here “from along the rivers of Kush”), in anthropological terms (cf. Jer 13:23, here: “tall and smooth-skinned”),

מַעְבַּר, “im Umkreis der Ströme von Kusch.”

³² B. Gemser, “*Be‘ever hajjarden*,” 352. E. Vogt, “*‘eber bayjarden = regio finitima Iordani*,” *Bib* 34 (1953), 118–19 renders **מַעְבַּר (מ)** “on the other side of.” Often, however, Vogt stresses, **מַעְבַּר (מ)** has one of the following nuances of meaning: *iuxta*, “by,” “along;” *prope*, “near,” “close by;” *adiacentem*, “adjacent to;” *latus*, “side” (right or left).

³³ Vogt, “*‘eber bayjarden*,” 118.

³⁴ O. Procksch, *Jesaia I übersetzt und erklärt* (KAT, 9; Leipzig: Deichertsche, 1930), 236–38.

³⁵ See Wildberger, *Jesaja 13–27*, 678–679, who renders **מַעְבַּר**, “im Umkreis,” and J.D.W. Watts, *Isaiah 1–33* (WBC, 24; Waco: Word Books 1985), 244, who translates **מַעְבַּר** “in the region of” the rivers of Kush. Wildberger and Watts both follow Vogt’s suggestion. Their reference to Vogt’s critical note to **מַעְבַּר** is, however, incorrect. It is found in *Bib*, and not in *BZ* as Wildberger and Watts inform.

³⁶ Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden*, 280. See also Aubin, *Rescue*, 172 n. 32 for the same view.

³⁷ Aubin, *Rescue*, 229.

and as having a military reputation (cf. 2 Kgs 19:9; Isa 37:9, here: “down-treading”). This positive description is somewhat confusing as long as a **גוי** is cried out to the Kushites.

STROPHE II–III, vv. 3–4: TAKE NOTICE OF YHWH AND BE QUIET!

From the close description of the land and people of Kush in vv. 1–2, the perspective is widened and more distant in v. 3 which calls the attention of “all who dwell in the world.” The motifs applied in v. 3 (standard, horn, mountains) together with the intense attendance of YHWH (v. 4) give expectations of dramatic events ahead:

- v. 3a α All who dwell in the world,
- v. 3a β and who inhabit the earth,
- v. 3b α when a standard is raised [on the] mountains,
 you shall see,
- v. 3b β and when a horn is blown, you shall hear.
- v. 4a α For thus says YHWH to me:
- v. 4a β I will be quiet and gaze in my dwelling place
- v. 4b α like glowing heat of [the] light,
- v. 4b β like a cloud of dew in [the] heat of harvest.

In a military sense, the **נס**, “standard,” that is set up on a mountain or hill either provides orientation (Isa 13:2; 30:17), marks where the army is to assemble (Isa 5:26), or indicates where the attack is to be performed (Jer 51:12). The **נס** can also serve as a sign of the victor’s claim to possession when the defeat is accomplished (Jer 50:2). Worth noticing is that **נס** is not mentioned in any Hebrew Bible description of battles, it only appears in prophetic emulations of such.³⁸ The setting up of a standard is in 18:3 accompanied by the blowing of a horn.

The meaning of **שופר**, “horn,” is an alarm horn that most likely belongs to a wild goat or a ram.³⁹ From the Hebrew Bible, the **שופר** has at least three interrelated areas of usage: war, warning, and worship.⁴⁰ Subsequently, in v. 3 the **שופר** is used as a

³⁸ Cf. H.-J. Fabry, “נס,” *TbWAT* 5:468–73 (471): “Die Funktion militärischer Feldzeichen ist uns also nur bekannt durch die metaphorisierende prophetische Rezeption des Rituals vom Heiligen Krieg.” In the ancient Near East, however, standards symbolize the gods advancing into battle. See M. Weippert, “‘Heiliger Krieg’ in Israel und Assyrien,” *ZAW* 84 (1972), 460–93 (477).

³⁹ “Die Bestimmung der Tierart ist aber unsicher”, according to H. Ringgren, “שופר,” *TbWAT* 7:1195–96 (1195), see also J. Braun, *Music in Ancient Israel/Palestine. Archaeological, Written and Comparative Sources* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 26.

⁴⁰ Most commonly, scholars distinguish between two forms of usage of the **שופר**, the military and the cultic, cf. I.H. Jones, “Musical Instruments,” *ABD* 4:934–39 (936), and K.D. Jenner, “The Big Shofar (Isaiah 27:13): A Hapax Legomenon,” in H.J. Bosman, H. van Grol et al. (eds.), *Studies in Isaiah 24–27. The Isaiah Workshop—De Jesaja Werkplaats*

signal to make “all” attentive of activities or events expected to be carried out in the (near) future.⁴¹ Along with its literal meaning, the horn's non-literal meaning is being an instrument that signals danger, peace, or theophanies.

Another central motif of Isa 18:3 is **הר**, “mountain.” In the Hebrew Bible, **הר/הרימו** refers to: 1) the topography of Israel (cf. Gen 10:30; Josh 20:7; Amos 4:1; Mal 1:3),⁴² 2) territorial boundaries (cf. Judg 17–18; 19:1), 3) lookout posts/focal points (cf. Isa 40:9; 42:11), 4) asylum for fugitives (Josh 2:16, 22; 1 Sam 13:6; 14:22; Ezek 7:16), 5) the foundations of the earth (Job 9:5; Ps 90:2),⁴³ 6) the connecting link between heaven and earth (Deut 32:22; Jonah 2:7; Ps 104:4–6), 7) sites of theophanies (cf. Deut 4:11; 1 Kgs 19:11–14; Mic 1:3; Ps 18:7 [Eng: 18:6]; 97:4–5),⁴⁴ and 8) the place where (the name of) YHWH dwells (cf. Isa 18:7; Ps 68:16–17 [Eng: 68:15–16]; 78:67–68; 132:13–14).⁴⁵ Non-literally, mountains are older than creation or are among the first to be created (Prov 8:25; Job 15:7), they are binding together the three strata: the netherworld, earth and heaven (Exod 20:4; Prov 8:22–29), and will last forever (Gen 49:26; Hab 3:6). These latter qualities of mountains culminate in the Hebrew Bible notion of mountains as sacred places, and the “holy mountain” – which refers to Jerusalem and the temple mount.⁴⁶ Zion is the place

(Leiden: Brill, 2000), 157–82 (162). Here, the category “warning” is added as the warning to repent seems different from clear contexts of war or worship. However, in a number of instances, all three categories are interrelated, and play on each other.

⁴¹ The opening of Isaiah 18 could indicate that **שופר** (in v. 3) is used to warn Judah about Kush as an enemy. This is suggested by H.–M. Lutz, *Jahwe, Jerusalem und die Völker. Zur Vorgeschichte von Sach 12:1–8 und 14:1–5* (Neukirchen Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1968), 134, and Ringgren, “**שופר**,” 1195.

⁴² Cf. A.W. Schwarzenbach, *Die geographische Terminologie im Hebräischen des alten Testaments* (Leiden: Brill, 1954), and Y. Aharoni, *The Land of the Bible. A Historical Geography* (London: Burns and Oates, 1967), 24–29.

⁴³ For a brief presentation of the same concept of mountains as foundations of the earth in the ancient Near East, cf. E.J. Hamlin, “The Meaning of ‘Mountains and Hills’ in Isa 41:14–16,” *JNES* 13 (1954), 186, and H.G.Q. Wales, *The Mountain of God. A Study in Early Religion and Kingship* (London: Quaritch, 1953), 6–31.

⁴⁴ Apparently, non-Israelites perceived YHWH to be a typical “mountain-god,” cf. 1 Kgs 20:23–28.

⁴⁵ Cf. for instance G. Westphal, *Jahwes Wohnstätten nach den Anschauungen der alten Hebräer. Eine alttestamentliche Untersuchung* (Giessen: Töpelmann, 1908). According to R.J. Clifford, the notion that YHWH dwelt on Mount Zion seems to be a direct borrowing from the Ugaritic epics, cf. R.J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and the Old Testament* (HSM, 4; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), 131.

⁴⁶ Cf. A.J. Wensinck, *The Ideas of the Western Semites Concerning the Navel of the Earth* (Amsterdam: Müller, 1916), 11–12, and H. Schmidt, *Der heilige Fels in Jerusalem. Eine archäologische und religionsgeschichtliche Studie* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck), 1933), 78–102. According to S. Talmon, “**הר**” *TbWAT* 2:459–83 (468), holy places are located on hills and mountains in order to reduce the distance between earth and heaven, “die Spanne zwischen Erde und Himmel zu verkleinern.”

where the name of YHWH dwells (Isa 18:7), and the place where eschatological events will be fulfilled.⁴⁷ In Isa 18:3, הרים serves mainly as a focal point (cf. Judg 9:7; 2 Chr 13:4; Isa 13:2; 40:9; Nah 2:1 [Eng: 1:15]).⁴⁸ This plays however together with the notions of mountains as a connecting link between heaven and earth, and mountains as sites of theophanies.⁴⁹

In the Hebrew Bible, מכון, “place,” is often somewhat inadequately rendered as “dwelling place,” as the word can be translated “fixed or established place,” “foundation.” The term is used about a place which is firmly fixed, which endures and cannot be shaken (Exod 15:17; Ps 89:15; 93:1–2; 97:2; 104:5; Isa 4:5). In all but one occurrence (Ps 104:5), מכון refers to the dwelling place of God, either in heaven or in the temple.⁵⁰ Isa 18:4 does not reveal whether YHWH’s dwelling place is in heaven or in the temple/Zion, but most scholars understand מכון in Isa 18:4 to refer to YHWH’s heavenly dwelling.⁵¹

The attitude YHWH will have in his dwelling place (“quiet” and “gaze”) is explained through two similes. YHWH will be quiet and gaze “like glowing heat of light” (v. 4b α), and “like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest” (v. 4b β). In the Hebrew Bible, שקט, “be quiet,” may be used of YHWH’s inactivity (Ps 83:2; Isa 62:1; Jer 47:6–7), but it is also used to express freedom from annoyance or care (Ezek 16:42; Ruth 3:18), or to express a tense quietness (Ps 76:9 [Eng: 76:8]).⁵² In Isa 18:4, שקט seems

⁴⁷ Cf. S. Talmon, “*Har and Midbar: An Antithetical Pair of Biblical Motifs*,” in M. Mindlin et al. (eds.), *Figurative Language in the Ancient Near East* (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1987), 117–42 (133): “After all previously chosen places had been rejected (Ps. 78:67; 68:15–16), God’s presence finally and definitely came to rest upon Zion [. . .] which he had created for himself (Ps. 78:54).”

⁴⁸ Cf. E. J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah. The English Text with Introduction, Exposition, and Notes*, (NICOT 1–3; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965–1978), 476: “On the mountains a standard of assembly will be raised, for the mountains are a most conspicuous and visible spot.”

⁴⁹ That v. 3 expresses the presence of YHWH in one or the other way is also perceived by Childs, *Isaiah and the Assyrian Crisis*, 45, as he regards this verse as communicating “a picture of Yahweh’s unruffled self-composure which arises from his sense of absolute sovereignty over the whole world.” See also the more recent commentary of B. S. Childs, *Isaiah*, OTL (Louisville: John Knox, 2001), 138.

⁵⁰ J. N. Oswalt, “מכון,” *TWOT* 1:433–34 (434).

⁵¹ Cf. the following selected examples, Wildberger, *Jesaja 13–27*, 691: “Jahwes Sitz, von dem aus er zuschaut, ist natürlich nicht der Zion, sondern sein himmlischer, הִיכָל”; Clements, *Isaiah 1–39*, 165: “from his heavenly dwelling,” and Childs, *Isaiah*, 138: “God views the whole world in calm rest from his heavenly dwelling.” Others, for instance A. Bentzen, *Jesaja 1–39* (København: Gads, 1944), 142, suggests the temple as YHWH’s dwelling place, whereas I. W. Slotki, *Isaiah. Hebrew Text and English Translation with an Introduction and Commentary* (SBBS, 8; London: Soncino, 1949), 86, understands YHWH’s dwelling place as Jerusalem.

⁵² For the rendering of שקט, “be quiet,” in 18:4, cf. HALAT, 1514, “sich ruhig verhalten.”

not to be applied in a positive way.⁵³ Rather, the verb here evokes an atmosphere of tenseness.⁵⁴

The term **נצ**, “glowing,” has the following nuances: “dazzling/glowing” (Isa 18:4),⁵⁵ “bright/white” (Cant 5:10; Lam 4:7),⁵⁶ and “arid/dry” (Isa 58:11; Jer 4:11). In Jer 4:11, **נצ** is used about a wind coming towards Jerusalem, i.e. a judgement is to be expected (v. 12). Both in Isa 18:4 and Jer 4:11, **נצ** evokes negative associations.⁵⁷ In Isa 18:4, **נצ** is understood as an adjective “glowing,” that describes the **חם**, “heat.”

Literally, **עב טל**, “a cloud of dew,” refers to the night mist that vanishes in the morning. The promise of dew is found in contexts of blessings (cf. Gen 27:28), a blessing that brings fertility (Deut 33:13–17, 28) and hope (Mic 5:6 [Eng: 5:7]).⁵⁸ The absence of dew is found in contexts of threats and punishments (cf. Gen 27:39). Hosea frequently uses **טל** in describing the relationship between Israel and YHWH.⁵⁹ Positively, if Israel will return to her God, YHWH will be like the dew to Israel, “he shall blossom as the lily [.]” (Hos 14:6 [Eng: 14:5]). Negatively, like the quick vanishing of the dew in the morning, so is Israel’s covenant love: “What can I do with you, Ephraim? What can I do with you, Judah? Your love is like the morning cloud, like the early dew that disappears” (Hos 6:4).

“A cloud of dew” is in Isa 18:4 used metaphorically to evoke negative associations along two lines. First, in v. 4a α YHWH is referred to at a distance from the earth, and in this second simile of v. 4 (v. 4b β) YHWH’s distant quietness and gazing is compared to a cloud of dew (that vanishes) in the heat of harvest.⁶⁰ Just as the dew goes away in the morning, so will

⁵³ In contrast to this interpretation of mine, cf. E. Bons, “שקט,” *TbWAT* 8:449–54 (452), who suggests that YHWH’s quietness is not of a negative kind: “Positiv sagt Jes 18,4 Gott von sich aus, er wolle ruhig bleiben . . . und zusehen auf seinem Platz, bevor er eingreift (v. 5).”

⁵⁴ Cf. B. Huwiler, *Jeremia und die Völker. Untersuchungen zu den Völkersprüchen Biblischen Theologie* (FAT, 20; Tübingen: Mohr, 1997), 166.

⁵⁵ I. Eitan, “A Contribution to Isaiah Exegesis (Notes and Short Studies in Biblical Philology),” *HUCA* 12/13 (1937/38), 55–88 (65), claims that **נצ** means “sun” in this passage, but this seems less likely.

⁵⁶ Cf. R. Gradwohl, *Die Farben im Alten Testament. Eine terminologische Studie* (BZAW, 83; Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1963), 7.

⁵⁷ Not all scholars interpret these pictures as creating a tense atmosphere, cf. Kissane who sees the heat of the summer’s day and the heavy dews of the night as promoting the growth and maturing of the grape, and “similarly Jahweh promotes the success of Assyria’s conquest of Israel.” Kissane, *Isaiah I*, 199.

⁵⁸ In this text it is said that Israel will mediate the blessing that is granted to all nations, cf. A. Weiser, *Das Buch der zwölf kleinen Propheten* (ATD, 24; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1959), 275.

⁵⁹ **טל** also occurs in descriptions of various human relationships (Deut 32:2; Ps 133:3; Job 29:19; Prov 19:12).

⁶⁰ A different interpretation of these similes is that of Brueggemann, *Isaiah 1–39*, 153–54: “Yahweh is as *constant* as hot sun or as summer cloud—ready, but not to be mobilized by any force or will other than Yahweh’s own” (emphasis added).

the help from YHWH disappear from Judah.⁶¹ Second, just as the cloud of dew literally looks like a veil between the air and the ground, so is it—metaphorically speaking—a drape between YHWH and his people.⁶² In both understandings of this second simile of v. 4, the description of YHWH as being at a distance is what comes across to the audience.

In the literature, there are three interrelated suggestions of how to understand YHWH's quietness in this verse. First, YHWH's quietness is seen as a proof of his superiority: YHWH cannot be distracted or dissuaded by any human being, as he is above the pressures that drive earthly powers.⁶³ Without regard to human plans he will effectuate his fateful plans.⁶⁴ Second, YHWH can be seen as stating an example for the audience and the whole world: as long as YHWH is quiet, they should copy his behavior and not enter into coalitions with one another.⁶⁵ A third solution is that YHWH states an example for Judah in particular. She shall be quiet because YHWH will act on behalf of her.⁶⁶ I find the second and third interpretations most convincing according to how Isaiah 18 as a whole is shaped rhetorically.

⁶¹ J.H. Hayes and S.A. Irvine, *Isaiah, The Eighth-century Prophet: His Time and His Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1987), 256: "Yahweh, will keep his hands off and function as an observer."

⁶² For the suggestion that "clouds of dew" can be compared with veil, see H. Guthe, *Palästina* (Monographien zur Erdkunde, 21; Bielefeld: Velhagen & Klasing, 1927), 49, who refers to Isa 18:4.

⁶³ Cf. Childs, *Isaiah and the Assyrian Crisis*, 45: "Yahweh's unruffled self-composure which arises from his sense of absolute sovereignty over the whole world," and W. Eichrodt, *Der Herr der Geschichte. Jesaja 13–23 und 28–39* (BAT, 17/2; Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1967), 61: "unberührt von dem irdischen Getriebe". See also Wildberger, *Jesaja 13–27*, 691: "Ausdruck seiner unanfechtbaren Überlegenheit über das Treiben der irdischen Mächte."

⁶⁴ Brueggemann, *Isaiah 1–39*, 153–54: "Yahweh will not be hurried or provoked or pressed to any schedule of combat other than Yahweh's own", and A. Laato, "About Zion I Will Not Be Silent:" *The Book of Isaiah as an Ideological Unity* (ConBOT, 44; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1998), 72: "That Yhwh is quiet indicates that the human forces attempt to do something which will not be successful." For a similar view, see Childs, *Isaiah*, 138: "Far above the fever of busy diplomatic intrigue, God views the whole world in calm rest from his heavenly dwelling before he acts."

⁶⁵ Cf. R.E. Clements, *Isaiah 1–39*, 165: "The message must be understood as a clear warning to the king not to listen to, or join with, the plans of the Ethiopian ambassadors." See also Hayes and Irvine, *Isaiah*, 256, who argue that "Yahweh will take the same posture in this situation that Isaiah recommended to Ahaz in the days of the earlier coalition – unsupportive of the revolt (see Isa 7:3–9). The present plan for revolt is to Yahweh only a flash in the pan, insubstantial and passing, like blazing heat in the light of day and dew in the summertime. Given a little time, they both disappear, the heat with the coming of evening and the dew in the light of the sun."

⁶⁶ Cf. Kissane, *The Book of Isaiah I*, 199, Young, *The Book of Isaiah*, 477, G.B. Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Book of Isaiah*, (ICC, 1; Edinburgh: Morrison and Gibb, 1962), 315: "in quietness lies their deliverance (7:4–9; 28:16; 30:15)". See also F. Huber, *Jahwe, Juda*

The idea of not taking any action toward alliances is known also from other texts (see Isa 7:4–9; 28:16; 30:15). If Judah wants help from YHWH, she should follow YHWH's example.

Summing up: YHWH's calmness stands in sharp contrast to the eager activity between Judah and Kush as referred to in v. 2, and functions as an exemplary pattern that Judah should follow. YHWH is not relaxed, he watches the earth intensely like "glowing heat" that makes the air vibrate. Further, just as the dew goes away in the morning, so will YHWH's support withdraw. In addition, the similes (together with what is said in v. 3) function as a threat to the audience about a coming danger.⁶⁷

STROPHE IV–V, vv. 5–6: YOU ARE THE ONES!

Verses 5 and 6 form the rhetorical climax of Isaiah 18, and when the metaphorical language in v. 5 is unfolded, it becomes clear how what – at a first sight – appears randomly put together all of a sudden falls into place and makes sense:

- | | |
|--------|---|
| v. 5α | For, at harvest time, when the bud has been completed |
| v. 5αβ | and [the] sour grape[s] [are] ripe, [and] blossom has happened, |
| v. 5bα | then he will cut off the quivering tendrils with pruning knives, |
| v. 5bβ | and he will turn aside [and] he will strike away the twigs. |
| v. 6α | They will together be left to the birds of prey of the mountains, |
| v. 6αβ | and to the beasts of the earth. |
| v. 6bα | The birds of prey shall summer upon him, |
| v. 6bβ | and every beast of the earth shall winter upon him. |

und die anderen Völker beim Propheten Jesaja (BZAW, 137; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1976), 132, who states that Judah is to be calm because YHWH will act on behalf of her. The same is argued by S.H. Widyapranawa, *The Lord is Saviour: Faith in National Crisis. A Commentary on the Book of Isaiah 1–39*, (ITC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 106: "But for the moment Judah should remain quiet and put all their trust in the LORD (cf. 30:15)."

⁶⁷ Understanding the similes as a warning is also perceived by C.R. Seitz, *Isaiah 1–39* (IBC; Louisville: John Knox, 1993), 148: "God's judgement is to fall "like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest." For a more positive interpretation of the comparisons, see Clements, *Isaiah 1–39*, 165: "The imagery of a calm and pleasant summer evening," and J. Høgenhaven, *Gott und Volk bei Jesaja. Eine Untersuchung zur Biblischen Theologie* (AthD, 24; Leiden: Brill, 1988), 133: "Das folgende Bild ist dem Rhythmus der Natur und des Ackerbaus entnommen: Wie der Sommer mit seiner Wärme und seinen Tauwolken verhält sich Jahwe ruhig abwartend."

There have been various suggestions as to who this imagery is meant to hit. Although not providing an extensive analysis of Isaiah 18, Aubin in his chapter thirteen seems to indicate that the harsh judgement in 18:5–6 in one or another way is related to the Kushites. Aubin is not alone in suggesting this. Most scholars propose Assyria or Kush to be judged in Isa 18:5–6:⁶⁸

“In this passage, Isaiah bids the ambassadors return home: he says they should report back (presumably to the pharaoh) that if the Kushites engage the enemy, their corpses will be left to the “birds of prey and to the wild animals.”⁶⁹

However, there is another, more plausible solution to who are judged in these verses, and the indication lies in the metaphorical language of v. 5. Although the word vine is not explicitly used in v. 5, the mentioning of several parts of the vine—and stages of its growth (נצה, “blossom,” פרה, “bud,” בסר, “sour grapes,” זלזל, “tendrils” and נטישה, “twigs”)—directs the audience towards the scene of the כרם, “vineyard.” The tendrils will be cut off when the plant is still in the process of growing and attaching itself, and the twigs (presumably with grapes) will be cast away to the birds of prey and the wild beasts.

In addition to its literal meaning, vine is applied many times in the Hebrew Bible metaphorically to YHWH’s people, their destruction, and restoration (Isa 5:1–7; Jer 2:21 6:9; Ezek 15:6–8; 17:6–8; Hos 10:1; 14:8; Pss 80:9–13 and 44:3).⁷⁰ Israel is pictured as God’s flourishing grain and blossoming vine (Hos 14:8 [Eng: 14:7]). Besides a collective use of the vine motif as YHWH’s people (cf. Jer 2:21; Ps 80:9–16), the motif of trees as individuals is also applied (cf. Job 15:33; Pss 1:3; 92:13–16; Jer 17:7–8; Ezek 17:1–10; 19:10–14). Positively, the vine, together with the fig, is a sign of peace and prosperity (1 Kgs 5:5 [Eng: 4:25]; Mic 4:4). In ancient Israel, the vine was regarded as a national emblem.⁷¹ The planting of vineyards is a sign of stability and permanent settlement (Isa 37:30 = 2 Kgs 19:29; 36:17; 65:21; Jer 31:5; 32:15; 35:7, 9; Ezek 28:26; Hos 2:17 [Eng: 2:15]; Amos 9:14; Ps 107:37).⁷² Negatively, the vine and its fruit can be used

⁶⁸ For a survey, see Lavik, *A People Tall and Smooth–Skinned*, 179–84.

⁶⁹ Aubin, *Rescue*, 172.

⁷⁰ Cf. C.E. Walsh, *The Fruit of the Vine. Viticulture in Ancient Israel* (HSM, 60; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2000), 2: “Images of vines, vineyards, and grape clusters throughout the Bible are used to convey the nature of relationships between Yahweh and his people.” See also O. Borowski, *Agriculture in Iron Age Israel* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1987), 109: “The vine is used many times by the prophets as a symbol for the people of Israel, their destruction, and restoration (Jer 2:21; 6:9; Ezek 15:6; 17:6–8; Hos 10:1; 14:8; and others).”

⁷¹ M. Zohary, *Plants of the Bible. A Complete Handbook to All the Plants with 200 Full-Color Plates Taken in the National Habitat* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 54: “It appeared on mosaic floors, murals, and portals of synagogues, on pottery, furniture, tombs and coins; even in exile, the Israelites still cherished the grapes of Judah, chiseling their shapes on tombstones in foreign lands.”

⁷² Planting a vineyard and enjoying its fruit were so important that a man could not participate in war before he enjoyed the fruit of his

to describe the devastation of Israel (Joel 1:7, 12). Strongly connected to the vine motif, is the motif כַּרְם, “vineyard.”⁷³ In the majority of cases, the motif “vineyard” is collectively applied about Israel/Judah, i.e. the vineyard is the people of YHWH (cf. Isa 3:14; 5:7; 18:5; Jer 12:10-12; Ps 80:8-9).⁷⁴ In only a few cases, the motif is applied to a nation other than Judah (Isa 16:8 – repeated in Jer 48:32-33 — and Isa 24:13).

Alongside its literal meaning, both individuals and collectives can be portrayed as vineyards in the Hebrew Bible.⁷⁵ There seems to be a distinction between the vineyard as the nation and the vineyard as the chosen possession of YHWH. The latter image seems to be the basic one, and is often limited to the remnant (2 Kgs 19:30; Isa 27:2-6; 37:31; Jer 6:9). The metaphorical use of the vineyard emphasizes YHWH's election of his people, and the privileges that go with this election, more than designating the nation as such. Isa 5:7 is clear about the owner's care for his pleasant plant: “the man of Judah is the garden of his delight.”⁷⁶

Isa 18:5 plays on a common well of associations by mentioning how the tendrils and the twigs of a vine will be cut down and hewn away. The confusion which has held the audience tense through the whole speech is resolved by vv. 5-6. Likening the people of YHWH with a vineyard (v. 5) is a well-known and frequently used metaphor in the Hebrew Bible.⁷⁷ Suddenly the audience understands the message: the not yet ripe grapes are their own premature coalition plans, and the quivering tendrils are the diplomatic attempts of the fragile Judahites to attach themselves to the firm Kushites. When tendrils and twigs are not only being cut off (v. 5), but also devoured by birds and beasts (v. 6), this twofold act of judgment clearly pronounces a harsh doom over the people of YHWH.⁷⁸ Although it is not clear from

vineyard, cf. the law in Deut 20:6. The same view is reflected in Deut 28:30.

⁷³ For a survey of how this term is applied throughout the Hebrew Bible, see H.-P. Müller, “כַּרְם,” *TbWAT* 4:334-40.

⁷⁴ Cf. H. Fisch, “The Analogy of Nature. A Note on the Structure of Hebrew Bible Imagery,” *JTS.NS* 6 (1955), 161-73 (164): “There is, for instance, the image of Israel as God's vineyard [. . .] which clearly has a more than functional purpose.”

⁷⁵ It has long been recognized that the Hebrew Bible applies vegetation metaphors as images for people. In earlier scholarship, see for instance E. König, *Stilistik, Rhetorik, Poetik in Bezug auf die biblische Litteratur* (Leipzig: Dieter, 1900), 100, and *passim*. See also P. von Gemünden, *Vegetationsmetaphorik im Neuen Testament und seiner Umwelt. Eine Bildfelduntersuchung* (NTOA, 18; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993), and Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden*.

⁷⁶ I interpret “house of Israel” and “man of Judah” (Isa 5:7) as a synonymous parallelism, rather than seeing the first as a reference to the northern ten tribes. For a similar view, cf. K. Snodgrass, *The Parable of the Wicked Tenants. An Inquiry into Parable Interpretation* (WUNT, 27; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck), 1983), 76.

⁷⁷ For an elaboration of how metaphorical speech about vine and vineyards are applied throughout the Hebrew Bible, see Lavik, *A People Tall and Smooth-Skinned*, 157-64.

⁷⁸ Cf. Brueggemann, *Isaiah 1-39*, 154: “The shoots and branches

the text whether or not bird and beast refer to an enemy, a power, or YHWH, it is evident that these motifs function as YHWH's agents in the punishment of Judah. The metaphorical speech from the sphere of viticulture is applied to show the Judahites that they in their diplomatic eagerness risk their relationship with YHWH. However, in between the lines the text opens up the possibility that there is still hope – the vine itself with roots is not said to be cut down. This means there is a possibility that the vine can blossom again in the future.⁷⁹

Summing Up: The metaphorical language of vv. 5–6 can be interpreted as follows: Even before the political and military results of an alliance are achieved (before the vine blossom has come to an end, v. 5), YHWH will stop the alliance (the tendrils and twigs will be thrown away and destroyed, vv. 5–6). The calmness of YHWH (v. 4), and his way of judging Judah (vv. 5–6) function to make the people focus on the transcendent power to whom they should cling: YHWH. The audience who presumably thought the Kushites were in trouble as a נִיחָ was cried over them, suddenly understands the judgement to hit themselves.

STROPHE VI, v. 7: EVEN THE STRONG KUSHITES SHALL HONOR YHWH

In v. 7 the scene changes to Mount Zion. The Kushites are again in the centre of attention as v. 7 repeats much of v. 2:

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| v. 7a α | In that time gifts will be borne along to
YHWH Sebaoth |
| v. 7a β | [from] a people tall and smooth-skinned, |
| v. 7a γ | and from a people feared from that day and
onwards, |
| v. 7b α | [from] a nation line upon line and down-tread-
ing, |
| v. 7b β | whose land rivers cut through, |
| v. 7b γ | to the place of the name of YHWH Sebaoth -
Mount Zion. |

It has been a widespread opinion that v. 7 is added to Isa 18:1-6 at a later stage. Reasons and criteria for regarding v. 7 as a later addition, however, have only occasionally been put forward by those who advocate this view. Some scholars focus on what they experience as a change from poetry (vv. 1–6) to prose (v. 7), while others attend to the contents of v. 7, cf. this verse's terminology "Zion," and "YHWH Sebaoth."⁸⁰ The redactor(s) of the

are twice eliminated—first by Yahweh's own forceful verbs of harvest, and then by animals that devour until nothing is left."

⁷⁹ Cf. K. Nielsen, *There is Hope for a Tree. The Tree as Metaphor in Isaiah* (JSOTSup, 65; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), where she investigates the Hebrew Bible's imagery of the tree and emphasizes a tree's ability to grow again when the roots are intact in the soil.

⁸⁰ According to Wildberger, *Jesaja 13–27*, 695–96, Isaiah of Jerusalem did not know the Deuteronomic terminology. Subsequently,

book of Isaiah, however, regarded at some point v. 7 as an integral part of chapter 18 of Isaiah.⁸¹ Tracing the process of growth is interesting, but due to all the factors that are hidden to the modern interpreter, I have chosen the final form of the text as my point of departure. Although they are few, there are examples of scholars who—like me—consider v. 7 as an integral part of Isa 18.⁸²

Together with the repetition of parts of v. 2, v. 7 says that gifts will be brought to YHWH on Mount Zion “[from] a people tall and smooth-skinned [. . .].” The motif **נְשִׂא**, “gift,” appears only 3 times in the Hebrew Bible.⁸³ In the two occurrences in the book of Psalms, the term is applied about gifts offered as homage either to kings or to the divinity.⁸⁴ In Ps 68:30 [Eng: 68:29], **נְשִׂא** are brought to God in the temple in Jerusalem from kings. Only a few sentences further below in the same psalm, Ps 68:32 [Eng: 68:31], the following is said: “Let bronze be brought from Egypt; let Ethiopia hasten to stretch out its hands to God.” Knowing the preceding context (Ps 68:30), the Kushites’ stretching of hands probably means their bringing of gifts to God.⁸⁵ Isa 18:7 has an equivalent in Zeph 3:10: “From along the rivers of Kush my worshipers, my dispersed daughter, will bring my offering.”⁸⁶ The two texts play on each other, but 18:7 clearly expresses that the people from the area of Kush will bring gifts to

v. 7 is added to vv. 1–6 at a later stage. A few pages earlier (*ibid.*, 682), Wildberger argues that the “original” parts of Isa 18 are 18:1, 2a, 2b α , and 4–6a. For a similar view, see J. Jensen, *Isaiah 1–39*, (OTM, 8; Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1984), 164: “Verse 7 is without doubt a later addition and in all probability v 3 and v 6b are also later additions.”

⁸¹ For suggestions about Zion as one of the unifying elements between the various parts of the book of Isaiah, cf. B.G. Webb, “Zion in Transformation. A Literary Approach to Isaiah,” in D.J.A. Clines et al. (eds), *The Bible in Three Dimensions. Essays in Celebration of Forty Years of Biblical Studies in the University of Sheffield* (JSOTSup, 87; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990), 65–84, and R.E. Clements, “Zion as Symbol and Political Reality: A Central Isaianic Quest,” in J. Van Ruiten and M. Vervenne (eds.), *Studies in the Book of Isaiah. Festschrift Willem A.M. Beuken* (BETL, 132; Leuven: University Press, 1997), 3–17.

⁸² Cf. Seitz, *Isaiah 1–39*, 149, who pursues a “unitary reading”, (see p. 147) of Isa 18 as a whole: “Such an interpretation is further strengthened by the final verse (v. 7), which has not misunderstood the preceding oracle [vv. 1–6] but offers a final comment consistent with it.” See also Childs, *Isaiah*, 139: “Verse 7 is not a scribal gloss, but integral to the editor’s intention in shaping the entire passage as a testimony to God’s future rule over the nations of the world.”

⁸³ Cf. G. Lisowsky, *Konkordanz zum Hebräischen Alten Testament* (Stuttgart: deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1981), 1426: Isa 18:7; Ps 68:30 [68:29]; 76:12 [76:11].

⁸⁴ Cf. Wildberger, *Jesaja 13–27*, 694–95, who also refers to Ps 72:10–11, 15; 45:13 in this connection.

⁸⁵ To this text it is observed by Wildberger, *Jesaja 13–27*, 695, that when (what he calls the motif) “Völkerhuldigung” is employed, Kush appears on the scene. Wildberger regards Ps 68:31–33 as dependent on Isa 18:7.

⁸⁶ Kissane suggests that Isa 18:7 may have been influenced by Zeph

YHWH, whereas Zeph 3:10 says that “my dispersed daughter” will bring offerings.⁸⁷ A similar mentioning of Kush in the context of the remnant of YHWH’s people who will be brought home from afar, is Isa 11:11. In Isa 18:7 the tall and smooth-skinned people from along the rivers of Kush are the deliverers of the Ψ , and YHWH Sebaoth on Mount Zion is the receiver. This functions to show a connection between this remote people and YHWH.⁸⁸ As the preposition “from” is lacking in v. 7a β and v. 7b α , it is somewhat unclear whether the people themselves are to be understood as gifts, or if they carry gifts with them to YHWH on Zion.⁸⁹ Despite this minor confusion, it is clear that in v. 7 the Kushites represent the nations that will come to Zion in eschatological times.⁹⁰ Mount Zion is the place where YHWH manifests himself, and the place where all acceptable offerings must be brought.

The Hebrew Bible shows a wide range of connotations to the motif Ψ , “Zion,” with various nuances appropriate to differing historical and theological contexts.⁹¹ Subsequently, this entry can only deal with some of these connotations. The word Zion occurs 152 times in the Hebrew Bible, and its connotations varies from text to text.⁹² The motif is applied in at least four

3:10, cf. *The Book of Isaiah*, 200. Wildberger, *Jesaja 13–27*, 695, J. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB, 19 (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 311, and M.A. Sweeney, *Zephaniah. A Commentary*, (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 16, argue that Zeph 3:10 is dependent on Isa 18:1, 7. Concerning the book of Zephaniah, it is striking that this short book of three chapters has as many as three occurrences of the term “Kush/Kushi” (1:1; 2:12; 3:10).

⁸⁷ For a discussion of whom the “dispersed daughter” in Zeph 3:10 most likely refers to, see E. Ben Zvi, *A Historical–Critical Study of the Book of Zephaniah* (BZAW, 198; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1991), 228–30, with references.

⁸⁸ Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39*, 311, questions who the deliverers of the gift brought to YHWH on Zion are: “The scholiast provides no clue as to whether he understood these Nubians to be Gentiles, proselytes, or diaspora Jews.” It is my contention that the deliverers referred to in v. 7 are the same people as was described in v. 2. For this latter view, see for instance Clements, *Isaiah 1–39*, 166. Watts, *Isaiah 1–33*, 246, and Hayes and Irvine, *Isaiah*, 257 claim that the gifts brought to YHWH come from the Assyrians.

⁸⁹ Cf. Gray, *Isaiah*, 316: “the text of M makes the tribute consist of the people themselves!”

⁹⁰ Cf. Young, *Isaiah*, 478; H.M. Wolf, *Interpreting Isaiah. The Suffering and Glory of the Messiah* (Academic Books; Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1985), 122; Laato, *I Will Not Be Silent*, 7; and Sadler, *Can a Cushite Change His Skin?* 49–53. Not all will consider v. 7 as dealing with eschatological times, cf. J.H. Brangenberg, *A Reexamination of the Date, Authorship, Unity and Function of Isaiah 13–23* (Unpublished PhD Diss.; Ann Arbor: Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary; 1989), 304, who suggests that “[t]he Ethiopians may simply be acknowledging the power of Yahweh and offering thanks for his defeat of their chief rival.” See also Watts, *Isaiah 1–33*, 246, and Seitz, *Isaiah 1–39*, 149.

⁹¹ Cf. the immense selected listing of relevant literature to the Zion material, in E. Otto, “ Ψ ,” *TbWAT* 6:994–1005.

⁹² Cf. L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, *Hebräisches und Aramäisches*

meanings: 1) Literally, Zion refers to a fortress in Jerusalem probably on a ridge in the south-east section of the city during the period before David captured the city from the Jebusites (2 Sam 5:7, 9), and to 2) the hill on which Solomon built the temple, known as the Temple Mount (Ps 78:68–69). Non-literally, 3) Zion refers to the entire temple city of Jerusalem (as the city of YHWH, cf. Pss 132; 137:1; Lam 1:17; 2:6–8; Isa 8:18),⁹³ and last, (iv) Zion – like Jerusalem – is applied about the people of Israel (Isa 51:16; Zech 2:11). The significance of the motif Zion lies not in its topography, but in its theology:

The term evokes a whole range of concepts having to do with the kingship, might, justice, and faithfulness of YHWH and the security and beatitude of those privileged to lodge in his sacred mountain in humility and faith and to witness his (re)enthronement upon it.⁹⁴

Zion is the residence of YHWH, and Zion is a cosmic center. Those privileged to dwell in Zion are secure as they can trust the power of YHWH to master all assaults whether from raw nature or from the rebellious human heart. The city is seen as a place for a stable lifestyle and of permanent relationships (Ps 107:4–7). Like the Garden of Eden, also Mount Zion is described as the source of life-giving waters, and as a place of paradisiacal abundance (Gen 2:6–14; Pss 36:9 [Eng: 36:8]; 46:5–6 [Eng: 46:4–5]; Zech 14:8; Joel 4:18 [Eng: 3:18]). In contrast to the chaotic waters mentioned in Pss 46:3–4 [Eng: 46:2–3] and 65:7–8 [Eng: 65:6–7], “[...] there is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy dwelling places of the Most High” (Ps 46:5 [Eng: 46:4]). The association of rivers and Kush in connection with Zion makes an interesting connection between Isa 18:7 and Gen 2:10–14 where the paradisiacal abundance of life-giving water flows around Kush.⁹⁵ An identification of Eden and Zion is also known from Ezek 28:13–14.⁹⁶ This functions to relate Kush to YHWH from the beginning to the end, from Eden to eschatological times.

Lexikon zum Alten Testament (Leiden: Brill, 1983), 958. For the distribution of these occurrences, see E. Otto, “צִיּוֹן,” *ThWAT* 6:994–1028 (1007). Cf. also F. Stolz, “צִיּוֹן,” *THAT* 2:543–551 (544), who counts 154 occurrences of Zion in the Hebrew Bible, and see also the grammatical study of M. Kartveit, *Rejoice, Dear Zion: Hebrew Construct Phrases With “Daughter” and “Virgin” as Nomen Regens* (BZAW, 447; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2013). For a brief overview of both the Sinai and Zion material in the Hebrew Bible, see Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain*, 98–181.

⁹³ In Lamentations Zion and Jerusalem are used interchangeable.

⁹⁴ J.D. Levenson, “Zion traditions,” *ABD* 6:1098–1102 (1099). See also Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain*, 157, who comments upon Isa 2:2–4 by stating: “With YHWH effectively ruling on his mountain, over the nations, there will be no need for men to fight.”

⁹⁵ Cf. Levenson, *Sinai and Zion*, 131.

⁹⁶ Cf. B.S. Childs, *Myth and Reality in the Old Testament* (London: SCM, 1960), 87: “the prophetic description of Zion as a world-mountain receives its full significance. Zion has become Eden.”

Isa 18:7 expresses the centripetal movement from the nations (here represented by Kush) towards Zion.⁹⁷ The idea that nations shall come to Zion is known in three ways in the Hebrew Bible: 1) the dispersed people of YHWH return by YHWH's power (Isa 11:11–12; Jer 31:8), 2) the dispersed people of YHWH are transported back to Zion by the nations (Isa 60:4–9; 62:10–12; 66:12, 18–20),⁹⁸ 3) the nations come towards Zion and receive restoration together with YHWH's people (Ps 68:32 [Eng: 68:31]). In Isa 18:7, the latter meaning seems to be the most likely. The identification of Zion as YHWH's cosmic mountain is clear in Isa 18:7. That the remote Kushites are welcomed to Zion serves to continue the harsh judgement over Judah as referred to in vv. 5–6, and functions to contrast the two. The Kushites whom the Judahites want to attach themselves to (vv. 1–2) will come to Zion, whereas YHWH's people are metaphorically spoken about as tendrils and twigs that will be cut off, cast away and devoured by the birds and animals (vv. 5–6).

As the motif Kush in v. 7 is applied in a different context from what is the case in vv. 1–2, this repetition functions to develop the motif as the Kushites are no longer seen as attractive coalition partner, but part of the eschatological restoration of the nations that will submit under YHWH at Zion.⁹⁹ The reappearance of what E.J. Kissane calls “the obscure terms of the description in 2d–g” in v. 7 indicates in his view that the writer was not able to identify the nation referred to in the beginning of the text.¹⁰⁰ What is rather the case is that this repetition serves to place the attractive and remote Kushites in a close relationship with Zion and YHWH.

The negative message of judgement in vv. 5–6 has now been replaced by a positive description of how the Kushites “in that time” will bring gifts to YHWH Sebaoth on Mount Zion. As the message of v. 7 is spoken out, the audience can no longer be in doubt that the Judahites will be judged by YHWH (vv. 5–6), and that the Kushites will be welcomed by YHWH (v. 7). Theologically, v. 7 underlines the point that YHWH has the authority over all nations of the world.¹⁰¹ YHWH Sebaoth – the Lord of the hosts, is the ruler of both heavenly and earthly legions. This asserts that no one can compare themselves to the reign of YHWH – also the admired and feared Kushites will have

⁹⁷ Here, “centripetal” refers to the movement of the nations towards Zion. (“Centrifugal” stands for the opposite movement, *from* Zion towards the nations), cf. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39*, 311, who applies the term “centripetal” in this meaning in his analysis of Isa 18:7.

⁹⁸ G.J. Polan, “Zion, the Glory of the Holy One of Israel: A Literary Analysis of Isaiah 60,” in L. Boadt and M.S. Smith (eds.), *Imagery and Imagination in Biblical Literature: Essays in Honor of Aloysius Fitzgerald, F.C.S.* (CBQ.MS, 32; Washington, DC: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 2001), 50–71.

⁹⁹ An opposite view of how the repetition of parts of v. 2 in v. 7 functions, is pronounced by Jensen, *Isaiah 1–39*, 165: “this is out of harmony with the context of the preceding verses.”

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Kissane, *The Book of Isaiah*, 200.

¹⁰¹ For a similar view, cf. Wildberger, *Jesaja 13–27*, 695.

to submit themselves under YHWH.¹⁰² That v. 7 is designed in a way where YHWH Sebaoth frames the verse has the function of letting the deity be in the centre of attention, and not human beings or human plans – whatever they ought to be. This stands in sharp contrast to the message of the rest of the chapter where activity between human powers is described.

Summing Up: The motif Kush envelops the message of Isaiah 18. The repetition of v. 2 in v. 7 functions to make up the boundaries of the poem, and to form an *inclusio* of Isaiah 18 as a whole. The repetition also serves to create a contrast to the negative message towards the Judahites of vv. 5–6, as it re-introduces the Kushites and includes them in the theme of the centripetal movement of the nations towards Zion. In addition, the repetition of parts of v. 2 in v. 7 functions to give a new role to the Kushites in the future.¹⁰³ The depiction of the Kushites as submitting themselves under YHWH at Zion (v. 7) functions to underline the message of v. 4 that the Judahites should trust YHWH and not human powers: Even the attractive potential ally of Judah (vv. 1–2) will have to submit herself under YHWH (v. 7).¹⁰⁴ Judah should take notice (vv. 3–4), and rely on YHWH who is capable of making order out of chaos (Isa 17:12–14).

¹⁰² This interpretation of v. 7 is also held by Wildberger, *ibid.* 696–697.

¹⁰³ For a relationship between what is said in vv. 5–6 and in v. 7, see Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 257: “The presentation of this gift ‘at that time’ associates it with YHWH’s ‘trimming of the shoots’ and indicates that it is the result of the Ethiopians’ witness of YHWH’s punishment of Israel.”

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Widyapranawa, *The Lord is Saviour*, 107.

ARE THE KUSHITES DISPARAGED IN ISAIAH 18?

When reading Isaiah 18 with a special attention to literary devices, one discovers that the text very well can be comprehended as a coherent whole. The constant shift in characters and scenes which causes confusion about who is judged is a deliberate rhetorical strategy which functions to entrap the Judahites:¹⁰⁵

At first glance there seems to be no connections between vv. 5–6 on the one hand, and vv. 1–2 and v. 7 on the other hand. Verse 2 describes a movement *to* the Kushites, whereas in v. 7 the movement goes *from* the Kushites to YHWH on Mount Zion. As already pointed at, v. 7 develops v. 2 and transforms the portrayal of the Kushites as warriors and politicians (v. 2) into a portrayal of the same Kushites as bringing homage to YHWH on Zion (v. 7).¹⁰⁶ An intensifying effect is created from v. 3 to v. 7 as “all” the nations are mentioned in v. 3, whereas one specific nation (Kush) is mentioned in v. 7. The widening of the perspective in v. 3 prepares for what is explicitly referred to in v. 7 when the nations—here represented by the Kushites—are coming to Zion.¹⁰⁷ Likewise, the “mountain” of v. 3 (and v. 6) prepares for the mentioning of one particular mountain—Zion in v. 7. Allusion to Mount Zion is also seen in v. 4. Here, the motif “YHWH’s dwelling place” draws lines to the explicitly mentioned Mount Zion in v. 7—the place of the name of YHWH Sebaoth. Further, the function of the motif “horn” in 18:3 is twofold. It is a warning signal about a judgement that is forthcoming if Judah will not repent (vv. 5–6). At the same time, it signals (together with the standard) that the nations will approach Jerusalem “in that time” (v. 7). Verse 3 gives associations to Isa 11:12 where the standard is lifted in order to announce the coming of the nations to Zion. Along these lines the horn and standard in 18:3 forecast the events which will come “in that time” (v. 7).¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ R. Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1990), 144: “Prophetic poetry is thus very often constructed as a *rhetoric of entrapment*, whether in the sequence of a few lines or in the larger scale of a whole prophecy.” (Alter’s emphasis). A strategy of entrapping the audience to judge themselves is known for instance from 2 Sam 12:1–15.

¹⁰⁶ Brueggemann, *Isaiah 1–39*, 154, does not see this developing portrayal of the Kushites as something positive, he rather perceives it as a weakening: “The Ethiopians are no more ‘swift ambassadors’, but now are reduced to suppliants who come to Jerusalem, not to bargain and negotiate but to submit. The image is of representatives bringing tribute money, the losers placating the winners.” Further, Brueggemann takes v. 7 as irony, cf. p. 159: “They may be ‘smooth and tall’, but now they are defeated and no longer feared near or far.”

¹⁰⁷ This relation between v. 3 and v. 7 is also seen by and F. Buhl, *Jesaja oversat og fortolket* (København: Gyldendalske Boghandel, 1894), 288: “Ethioperne, der nævnes som Repræsentanten for de øvrige Folkeslag v. 3.” See also F. Feldmann, *Das Buch Isaias übersetzt und erklärt* (EHAT, 14; Münster: Aschendorf, 1925), 221, and Wildberger, *Jesaja 13–27*, 694.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Jenner, “The Big Shofar,” 157–82 (173): “In Isa 18:3 it is announced by blowing upon the shofar and raising the standard that a

At first the audience believes that the message is directed towards the nation mentioned in the beginning: Kush. When the tension builds up (vv. 3–4), the Kushites are still in the back of the mind of the audience as no other nation is mentioned by name. However, when the scene of judgment is pronounced (vv. 5–6) the audience identifies with the metaphorical language, and has no other choice than finding themselves in the middle of the act. Eventually the scene from vv. 3–4 makes sense: When the peoples are warned about war, Judah should take notice. As YHWH is quiet, so should the Judahites be (v. 4). If they do not follow the pattern of YHWH, a disaster will follow (vv. 5–6). The imagery of vv. 5–6 is a clear message of not attaching oneself to anyone—not even the strong Kushites—as YHWH Sebaot is the only alliance partner for the Judahites (v. 7). Subsequently, interpreted with view to its rhetorical design, Isa 18 does not bring a message of judgement over the Kushites, but over the Judahites (v. 5).

Summing Up

The way the Kushites and their land are described in Isaiah 18 (vv. 1–2) is overwhelmingly positive, and this is done in order to entice the audience into a rhetorical trap. By focusing entirely on the Kushites' positive reputation, their position as an attractive coalition partner is exaggerated. Both their look and their position (geographically and militarily) are hinted at as invincible. The command to go (in v. 2b) ridicules the intense diplomatic activity from the Judahites of finding a human alliance partner instead of awaiting help from YHWH (v. 4). The command to go to Kush (v. 2b) is further contradicted by the indirect invitation to emulate the model of YHWH's quietness (v. 4).

Throughout his book, Aubin suggests that biblical scholars (together with historians) for a long time have overlooked the Kushite role.¹⁰⁹ A close reading of Isaiah 18 shows how the motif Kush is deliberately used as part of a rhetorical strategy to judge the Judahites and praise the Kushites. In the judgement scene of Isa 18:5–6 the well-known metaphors of the people of God (vine and grapes) are applied. Why, then, have only a minority of interpreters found it likely that the metaphors are used for the Judahites in this text? One can only speculate about the full reason for this. What is certain, however, is that we all approach a biblical text both from our private prejudices and from a more general context bound horizon of understanding.

CONCLUSION

This paper does not give a straightforward answer to the driving question of this volume: How plausible is a Kushite role in Sennacherib's retreat? What it does, however, is to show that as a literary motif, Kush is sympathetically described throughout the Hebrew Bible as politically, economically and military strong. As such, the literary analysis of Isaiah 18 adds credibility to Aubin's

present will be brought to Mount Zion.”

¹⁰⁹ Aubin, *Rescue*, 136.

claim that the Hebrew Bible is favourable towards the Kushites. Even Isaiah 18, which at first glance seems to be “*closest* to truly unfavourable . . . to Kushites” (his emphasis), according to Aubin,¹¹⁰ shows itself to present a sympathetic portrayal of Kush and Kushites.

If one reads Isaiah 18 historically, one can argue that it describes an attempt at negotiating an alliance between Judah and Kush. A literary reading shows that the way some scholars have played down the role of the Kushites in this text does not accord with the positive treatment they are given here and throughout the Hebrew Bible. I agree with Aubin who states that the Hebrew Bible “depicts them [the Kushites] in exceptionally generous terms,”¹¹¹ but it is my contention that the Kushites are depicted this way not *first and foremost* to mirror their literal greatness in ancient times, but to teach the people of YHWH a lesson. Taking Isaiah 18 as an example, the over-all function of applying the motif Kush (with the associations this word presumably activated in the ancient audience) is to ridicule the Judahites who seek human protection instead of in the ultimate power, YHWH. In addition, by placing Kush at Zion (v. 7), the Judahites become aware that there is a special relationship between *both* Judah and YHWH, *and* Kush and YHWH.¹¹² The over-all function of the text’s persuasive artistry is to lead the audience where it should be—in a close relationship with YHWH. The way Isaiah 18 is designed rhetorically does not “show the prophet’s skepticism (not the same thing as negativism) toward the capacity of Kushites to cope with the mighty Assyrians.”¹¹³ Rather, it ensnares the audience to believe that the message is directed towards the power which literally frames the message, the Kushites (vv. 1–2 and 7). However, as the dramatic scene in vv. 5–6 unfolds, the audience recognizes the familiar metaphors of vine and grapes and suddenly relates the message of doom to themselves. This rhetoric of entrapment has a two-fold theological aim: First, to persuade the Judahites to put their trust in YHWH only, and not in any human powers, and second, to envisage an eschatological restoration for the nations—here represented by Kush (v. 7). Verse 7 places the Kushites—a representative for the remote peoples—in subordination to YHWH as “the prophet is in no way upset with Kushite Egypt for what it is, only with what it isn’t—that it is not Yahweh.”¹¹⁴

The analysis of the rhetoric of Isaiah 18 together with the brief survey of the literary portrayal of Kush in the Hebrew Bible does not *prove* anything historically speaking, but such a literary analysis *adds credibility* to Aubin’s assertion that the Kushites may have played a relevant role in the political affairs of the ancient Hebrews leading up to the crisis in 701. The literary portrayal of Kush and Kushites is favourable throughout the Hebrew Bible,

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 171.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 165.

¹¹² Cf. Am 9:7 and Aubin, *Rescue*, 179: “Both peoples have a relationship to Yahweh that is special.”

¹¹³ Aubin, *Rescue*, 172.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 173.

cf. Aubin's chapter thirteen. This shows that the biblical writers *through time* were highly aware of the potent power from the south—whose existence is manifested through considerable archaeological discoveries—and applied this entity as a powerful rhetorical device when they formed their messages to the people of YHWH.

EGYPT OR GOD? WHO SAVED JUDAH FROM THE ASSYRIAN ATTACK IN 701 BCE?

SONG-MI SUZIE PARK

AUSTIN PRESBYTERIAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

This paper examines the literary and theological significance of Egypt in the 2 Kings account of the 701 Assyrian attack. The paper argues that the writers of Source B1 and B2, concerned that entities other than YHWH would be given credit for salvation of Jerusalem, deliberately minimize hints of Egypt's possible involvement in 701.

INTRODUCTION

In an important monograph, Henry T. Aubin argues that scholarship has tended either to overlook or downplay the crucial role played by Kush, which ruled Egypt in the late eighth and early seventh century BCE, in Judah's survival from an Assyrian attack in 701.¹ Multiple accounts of the Assyrian attack in 701 in the Hebrew Bible (2 Kgs 18–19; Isa 36–37; 2 Chr 32:1–23) testify to the significance of this event in the history of Judah. The survival of the country from this attack, in staving off Judah's destruction for over a century, allowed the religion of Israel to incubate and develop. This, in turn, led to the emergence of Judaism and, later, Christianity and Islam. According to Aubin, modern underestimations of sub-Saharan Africa in ancient times have helped obfuscate the positive portrayals of Kush in the biblical text, and therefore led interpreters to miss important textual and historical clues that point to Kush's participation in 701. He lists six arguments to support his conclusion that Kush played a decisive role in the rescue of Zion. This paper focuses on his final argument and the ways it affects the reading of Source B2.

IRONY AND KUSH IN THE FIRST SPEECH OF THE RAB-SHAKEH

Though there are lingering disagreements, the story of the survival of Judah from the 701 Assyrian attack in 2 Kgs 18–20 and Isa 36–39 is generally viewed as composed of three sources: 1) Source A (2 Kgs 18:13–16) describes how Hezekiah stripped the

¹ H.T. Aubin, *The Rescue of Jerusalem: The Alliance between Hebrews and Africans in 701 BC* (New York: Soho Press; Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 2002).

Temple to bribe and placate the Assyrian king, Sennacherib; 2) Source B1 (2 Kgs 18:17–19:9a, 36//Isa 36:2–9a, 37) consists of the first speech of the Rab-shakeh; and 3) finally, Source B2 (2 Kgs 19:9b–35//Isa 37:9b–36) entails the second speech of the Rab-shakeh as well as a description of the miraculous decimation of the Assyrian army by the angel of the Lord. The progression of the sources—Source A, Source B1, and Source B2—according to many scholars, reflects their relative dating.²

As his sixth and last argument defending the importance of Kush in 701, Aubin examines the statements made by the Rab-shakeh, the emissary sent by King Sennacherib of Assyria, in his first speech (Source B1). Aubin argues that the writers of Source B1 purposefully depict the Rab-shakeh as mocking three things in his speech: Hezekiah's trust in Egypt (2 Kgs 18:21), the king's reform of the cult (2 Kgs 18:22), and YHWH's desire and ability to save Zion (2 Kgs 18:25, 29–30). The Rab-shakeh's taunts are proven wrong at the end of B1 when the Assyrian army departs Jerusalem without the successful capture of the city (2 Kgs 19:7–8). Aubin concludes that as the Assyrian king “was wrong to question the soundness of Hezekiah's faith in YHWH,” so he was “wrong to question Hezekiah's dependence on Egypt.”³ Aubin thus reads the Rab-shakeh's charges in Source B1 as indicative of the opposite: That YHWH and Egypt were indeed found to be dependable and thus were instrumental to the survival of Jerusalem in 701.

Without knowledge of Aubin's argument, I made a similar point about YHWH's dependability in my dissertation (and later book), which centered on a close reading of the biblical narratives about King Hezekiah.⁴ I argued that the point of the Rab-shakeh's taunt in Source B1 was to show its ridiculousness. Building on an earlier article by Peter Machinist,⁵ I posited that the placement of these charges in the mouth of the enemy had a theological purpose. Namely, the critique and belittlement of the power and reliability of Judah's deity by the Rab-shakeh allowed the biblical author to argue against and, at the end, nullify these claims.⁶ Aubin's argument supports and adds to my conclusion by extending a similar logic to the accusation about Egypt's unreliability in B1. According to Aubin, the purpose of the Rab-shakeh's claim of Egypt's undependability is to show its error.

² The demarcation of these sources stems from Brevard Child's modification of Bernhard Stade's redactional analysis of the story of the attack: B. Childs, *Isaiah and the Assyrian Crisis* (London: SCM, 1967); B. Stade, “Miscellen: Anmerkungen zu 2 Kö. 15–21,” *ZAW* 6 (1886), 156–89, esp. 172–78. For a summary of the source divisions of 2 Kgs. 18:13–19:37, see M. Cogan and H. Tadmor, *II Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 11; New York: Doubleday, 1988), 240–44.

³ Aubin, *Rescue*, 184.

⁴ S. Park, *Hezekiah and the Dialogue of Memory* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015).

⁵ P. Machinist, “The Rab *Šāqēh* at the Wall of Jerusalem: Israelite Identity in the Face of the Assyrian ‘Other,’” *HS* 41 (2000), 151–68.

⁶ Park, *Hezekiah*, 46–47.

There is, however, one key difference between my argument and that of Aubin's. My reading focused on the theological concerns and messages conveyed in the first speech of the Rab-shakeh (B1). Aubin's reading, in contrast, centers on the decipherment of the historical reality that underlies the depiction of the Assyrian enemy in the biblical text. According to Aubin, the accusations of the emissary reflect something more than just the theological claims of the biblical author. It also elucidates what *really* happened in 701. That is, in contradistinction to the claims in the polemical first speech by the Rab-shakeh, Egypt, ruled by the Kushite dynasty, proved instrumental to Judah's survival of this onslaught. The allegations in the Rab-shakeh's speech in B1, according to Aubin, therefore hint at the historical role played by Kush in helping Judah survive the Assyrian attack.

Aubin's conclusion, though possible, is more difficult to assess. Although he presents an intriguing and thorough argument, the relationship between history and texts, especially ancient one, is complex. It is possible that the literary fiction placed in the Rab-shakeh's mouth about Egypt's unreliability is intended to be ironic, since the text goes on to indicate that Egypt apparently acted contrary to that assertion. Assyria, after all, had to leave Jerusalem without its capture thus proving the falsity of the Rab-shakeh's claim that YHWH commanded Assyria to attack Judah (2 Kgs 18:25). However, though the biblical author portrays the Rab-shakeh as making hubristic and self-serving statements that turn out to be false, it is challenging to decipher whether this indicates that the *opposite of what the Rab-shakeh claimed* was historically accurate.

Alongside the Rab-shakeh's charge that Egypt was a weak reed, the biblical author also puts the literary fiction in his mouth that YHWH commanded Assyria to attack Judah (2 Kgs 18:25), which in the context has a similarly ironic effect. Assyria's departure from Jerusalem without its capture affirms the theological falsity of the Rab-shakeh's accusations concerning YHWH's loyalty to Judah. It shows that the biblical author intended to affirm the opposite of the Rab-shakeh's statements—that is, the deliverance of Jerusalem was caused by actions of the country's deity. Historically, however, we only know that Judah survived in 701 and that biblical writers therefore felt that YHWH proved reliable. Faith claims aside, what really happened, and whether the biblical text reflects this reality is a complicated question with no easy answer. To be fair to Aubin, however, I am only looking at the biblical text in isolation in this essay. In his work, Aubin posits additional arguments, which examine other sources and evidence outside of the biblical text, to support his conclusion about Egyptian involvement in 701.

Indeed, the best we can say is that the Rab-shakeh's accusations show that reliance on Egypt was a live question in Judah in the eighth century; so much so that the writers of Source B1 felt the need to struggle with this issue through and in the text. We can go a bit further perhaps. Considering that Egypt is referenced in Source B1, and, as I will argue later, also in Source B2, it seems likely that Egypt was involved in some way in 701.

Exactly how—whether Egypt’s historical involvement entailed the opposite of the Rab-shakeh’s accusation as Aubin maintains (that is, Egypt proved reliable and its effort led to Assyria’s departure from Jerusalem)—is not clearly discernible in the biblical text.⁷

It is easier to decipher the theological or historiographical implications of the Rab-shakeh’s accusations. Aubin’s argument raises an interesting theological point. The ironic statements of the Rab-shakeh, in placing the query about the reliability of Egypt alongside the question about YHWH’s faithfulness, correlate the two. Thus, Egypt’s dependability and that of YHWH, for some reason, are aligned in Source B1. Moreover, Source B1, as we now have it, does not conclusively distinguish the accusation made about YHWH with that made about Egypt. As a result, because both accusations appear in one harangue, it is difficult to tell which one is truthful and which one is not. Are we to conclude that YHWH proved reliable while Egypt did not? Or should we presume that both were responsible? Why is this distinction so ambiguous? Hence, as Aubin elucidates, a question lingers in Source B1 as to whether both Egypt *and* God should be—contra the accusations of the Rab-shakeh—credited for the survival of Judah.

Aubin’s argument about the irony of the Rab-shakeh’s accusation against Egypt, in correlating YHWH and Egypt, thus raises a deeper question about the theological goals of the writer—a question that I will spend the rest of this essay exploring: Why did the biblical writer align YHWH and Egypt? What did the authors of Source B1 have to gain theologically by hinting that Egypt played some role in 701? If, as Aubin argues, Egypt came to Judah’s aid, why did the biblical writers suggest this in the ironic first speech of the Rab-shakeh in Source B1? Indeed, the writers had much more to lose theologically than to gain by admitting to Egypt’s participation. That is, by acknowledging that Egypt was involved in 701, YHWH’s role in this crucial event was diminished. Why would the Israelite writers want to hint, albeit subtly, that Egypt might have been a participant, perhaps even a co-hero, as Aubin argues, if this made it more difficult to posit that the true savior in 701 was YHWH?

There is, of course, a way out of this conundrum. YHWH can still be the hero if YHWH is portrayed as a deity in control of foreign countries like Egypt. In such a case, Egypt’s role can be credited to YHWH who *made* Egypt interfere in 701. And here, I think, that one of the accusations made by the Rab-shakeh in his first speech in B1 might be the beginning of a subtle attempt by the biblical author to have his cake and eat it too—that is, to give a nod to Egypt’s role in 701, whatever it might have been, while also slyly shifting the credit to YHWH. At 2

⁷ As I noted earlier, this is especially the case if Aubin’s last point is treated in isolation from his other five points, as I do here in this essay. Other essays in this volume examine Aubin’s remaining arguments in more detail.

Kgs 18:25, the Rab-shakeh states that YHWH, himself, commanded Assyria to attack Zion. This accusation is proven false at the end of the Source B1 when YHWH causes the Assyrian king to hear a report and depart Jerusalem (2 Kgs 19:7–8). The report, according to Aubin, might have been the approach of Kushite forces.⁸

In using an act of YHWH, that is, a report, as a possible code word for larger international events (2 Kgs 19:7), and by hinting in the Rab-shakeh's speech that YHWH can indeed control foreign nations and make them heed his command, albeit misinterpreted by the Assyrian emissary as indicative of YHWH's pro-attack wishes (2 Kgs 18:25), the narrative suggests that Egypt's action should really be envisioned as an act of YHWH. It is YHWH who controls Egypt just as he controls Assyria, and so Egyptian participation in 701 was actually YHWH working to deliver Zion through an intermediary.

ALLUSIONS TO EGYPT IN SOURCE B2

According to Aubin, changed historical circumstances and relationships led the authors of the later Source B2 to alter the narrative of the 701 crisis so as to hide Egypt's role in the rescue of Jerusalem—a role that is detectable in the Rab-shakeh's ironic statements in Source B1. By the time of B2's composition (at the earliest, according to Aubin, at some point after 622 BCE), Egypt was now allied to Assyria and therefore viewed unfavorably in Judah.⁹ Indicative of this changed relationship between Judah and Egypt, the Exodus narrative, which Aubin posits was composed at around the same time as Source B2, also portrays Egypt negatively.¹⁰ Indeed, according to Aubin, the destruction of the Assyrian army by an angel in 2 Kgs 19 eerily and unmistakably recalls the ten calamities in Exodus and the drowning of the Egyptian pursuers.¹¹

Aubin argues that B2's revision of the 701 attack, which transformed the rescue of Jerusalem into a miraculous, supernatural act of YHWH was theologically motivated. The purpose of the "revision of the rescue story was to turn it into a vivid illustration of the truth of Moses's instructions."¹² According to Aubin, the point of B2's dramatic conclusion was not to allude to Egypt, *per se*, but to the Exodus event during which God sent "signs and wonders" to deliver his people from a foreign enemy. As God saved Israel through wonders and signs during the Exodus, so the writer of B2 refers to Egypt in order to demonstrate to the exilic audience that God will repeat this salvific act in exile;

⁸ Aubin, *Rescue*, 129ff.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 210.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 212.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 217. Though commonly referred to as the ten plagues in Egypt, the term, "plague," has connotations of disease. As not all of the calamities in Egypt entailed diseases or illnesses, and as there is a lingering debate as to whether divine decimation of the Assyrian army in 2 Kgs 19 consisted of a plague, the language of "plagues" will be avoided in this essay.

¹² *Ibid.*, 219.

that is, save Israel through wonders and signs, if the people would follow the Deuteronomic commandments. According to Aubin, the use of an “identical supernatural agent,”¹³ the angel of the Lord,¹⁴ for both events affirms the theology of the exilic author:

YHWH’s use of the same agent against Assyria that he employed to save the fugitives from the wicked Egyptian army and to vanquish the Canaanite pagans transforms the story of Jerusalem’s survival into a hard proof of Deuteronomy 7’s promise that YHWH “maintains covenant loyalty with those who love him and keep his commandments. . .” (7:9).¹⁵

The purpose of Source B2, therefore, was to reassure the exilic audience that YHWH’s covenant promises still held true.¹⁶ And the revision made by B2 to diminish the role played by Egypt under the Kushite dynasty stemmed not from antipathy toward Kushites, but from these didactic concerns.¹⁷

Though I agree with Aubin about the overall purpose of B2, his conclusion raises a key question: Why would the B2 revisionist writer alter his narrative to allude to another narrative in which Egypt is so prominent—that is, the story of the ten disasters in the Exodus, if his purpose was purely didactic and had little to do with Egypt’s participation in 701? I posit that the ending in Source B2 in which the angel of the Lord strikes down the Assyrian army (2 Kgs 19:35) draws attention to Egypt and its possible role in 701, not to the covenantal promises, *per se*. Indeed, I argue that the writer of Source B2 intentionally alludes to Egypt, not just for didactic purposes, as Aubin argues, but for theological and historiographical reasons. Though difficult to ascertain, the writers of B2 seem to hint at Egypt’s role with the reference to the final calamity, the death of the firstborn, in the Exodus account precisely *because* they wanted to address the debate about Judah’s reliance on Egypt. By alluding to Egypt at the end of source B2, the writers engage this debate by negating any suggestions that Egypt is to be credited for Judah’s rescue in 701.

As scholars have shown, biblical authors, like all good editors and writers of literature, were not immune from tweaking their material to fit their literary and theological agenda. And the

¹³ Ibid., 218.

¹⁴ The Exodus account never explicitly mentions that it was an angel of the Lord who carried out the final calamity. However, the presence of an angel is presumed as Exod 12:23 states that the “destroyer,” seemingly a divine force aligned with God, will enact the deed.

¹⁵ Ibid., 219.

¹⁶ Ibid., 217–19.

¹⁷ Ibid., 218. Aubin writes further that during the exilic period in which B2 was written, a human savior, such as the Kushite army, would not have offered the needed theological resonance nor been deemed “remotely credible” since the Kushites, defeated by the Assyrians on Egyptian soil several decades after 701, “had no presence of any kind in the Mediterranean world” in this period (Ibid.).

writers of Source B2, like those of Source B1, undoubtedly edited and updated their story so as to better align it with their current context and theology. Thus, unsurprisingly, even if Egypt under Kush did facilitate the Assyrian withdrawal from Judah in 701, as Aubin argues, the account in Source B2 revises the story in Source B1 in order to heighten and convey certain aspects of the event they find more appropriate. Like the writers of B1, the writers of the later B2 source, therefore, *purposefully* seem to allude to Egypt. However, these later writers do so in order to address concerns about Judah's reliance on Egypt more fully. Indeed, it is telling that the writers of B2 alter the narrative so as to stress the idea that it is really God who should be credited for the salvation of Zion.

To see the effects of the Source B2, let us look more closely at the ending of Source B2, which Aubin notes, refers to the wonders and signs during the Exodus. As scholars have noted, B2 cleans up and indeed amplifies the theological tenor of the earlier account in B1. So, for example, as Brevard Childs and others have shown, Hezekiah responds to the Rab-shakeh's speech with trepidation, even expressing doubts about God's faithfulness to defend his country in his prayer in Source B1.¹⁸ In Source B2, however, Hezekiah is confident and utterly pious, boldly announcing the omnipotence of YHWH.¹⁹

The slaughter of the Assyrian armies by the angel of the Lord at the end of B2 fits the theological bravado and confidence of this later source. Unlike in B1 where the Assyrian army departs because of a report (2 Kgs 19:7–8), the Assyrians are decimated through a miraculous rampage of an angel of God in B2. Indeed, the God of B2 enacts total revenge: “. . .when morning dawned, there were only dead bodies” (2 Kgs 19:35). Not only does God utterly destroy the enemy army, but he also chases the blasphemous Assyrian king, Sennacherib, back home.²⁰ For daring to challenge God's universal authority, it is intimated that YHWH is merciless toward Sennacherib on his home turf. Adding insult to injury, the killers are his own sons, and they assassinate him in a place of safety—while the monarch is worshipping in the temple of his own god. The manner of Sennacherib's death powerfully affirms YHWH's mastery over all things. As the only true deity, YHWH is able to enact his vengeance anywhere, even in the house of a false god of Assyria. That he does so using Sennacherib's own sons indicates God's sovereignty

¹⁸ Childs, *Isaiah and the Assyrian Crisis*, 98–100; Machinist, “The Rab Šāqēh,” 158; N. Na'aman, “Updating the Messages: Hezekiah's Second Prophetic Story (2 Kings 19:9b–35) and the Community of Babylonian Deportees,” in L. L. Grabbe (ed.), “*Like a Bird in a Cage*,” *The Invasion of Sennacherib in 701 BCE* (JSOTSup, 363; ESHM, 4; London: Sheffield Academic, 2003), 215.

¹⁹ Childs, *Isaiah and the Assyrian Crisis*, 98–100; B. Long, *2 Kings* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 226.

²⁰ C. Chapman, *The Gendered Language of Warfare in the Israelite-Assyrian Encounter* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2004), 148–49.

over foreigners, even members of the king's own family.²¹ The God of B2, as shown by its conclusion, is not above using foreign intermediaries to do his dirty work.

As Aubin correctly notes, the ending of B2 clearly refers to the Exodus account. As I noted earlier, however, I think that it purposefully alludes to one main wonder during the Exodus: the death of the firstborn. The description of this last calamity is described as follows in the Book of Exodus: God, after warning the Israelites twice that on "that night" he would pass through Egypt and strike down both the animal and human firstborn in the land of Egypt (Exod 11:4–5; 12:12), climactically enacts this final revenge at Exod 12:29: "At midnight the Lord struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on this throne to the firstborn of the prisoner who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of the livestock." Though Exod 12:29 states that the Lord, himself, personally struck down the firstborn of Egypt, this narrative, of course, is remembered as God taking on the form of an angel of death or a destroyer (Exod 12:23).

Though the language is not identical, it is clear that the decimation of the Assyrian army in B2 recalls this final divine affliction in Egypt. In both accounts, Israel's enemy is said to have been destroyed or struck down (root *nqb*; Exod 12:12, 29; 2 Kgs 19:35) by God in his destroyer state on "that night." The fact that in Exodus it is the Lord himself who does the killing while in 2 Kgs it is the angel of the Lord need not worry us. As Aubin notes, "[t]he angel of YHWH is like another form of YHWH himself."²² Indeed, it is not uncommon for God and his angel to slip back and forth in identity in biblical accounts (c.f. Gen 21:17; 22:11–12; Exod 3:2, 4).

Moreover, in the account of the ten afflictions in Egypt as well as in B2's narrative of the 701 attack, the depiction of YHWH in his martial state decimating large numbers of foreigners serves as the climax of the tales. Likewise in both tales the lack of respect exhibited by the foreign leaders induces and therefore justifies God's bloodbath. Indeed, the arrogance of Sennacherib in his mockery of YHWH as unable to defend his nation (2 Kgs 19:6, 22) parallels Pharaoh's arrogance and defiant taunt to Moses that he does not know YHWH (Exod 5:2). Classical rabbinic writers also liken the boastfulness and blasphemy of Pharaoh to those of Sennacherib in 701. *Yalqut Shimo'oni* I, 250 states that as "Pharaoh called himself god" so also "Sennacherib called himself god, as it says, 'Who are they among the gods of these countries. . .'"²³ In both cases, the challenges of these foreign leaders put YHWH's divine standing at stake

²¹ Cogan and Tadmor note that in other ancient sources, it is a single son not two who is noted to have assassinated Sennacherib (idem, *II Kings*, 240).

²² Aubin, *Rescue*, 218.

²³ R. Ulmer, "Sennacherib in Midrashic and Related Literature: Inscribing History in Midrash," in I. Kalimi and S. Richardson (eds.), *Sennacherib at the Gates of Jerusalem: Story, History and Historiography* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 347–87, esp. 282.

(Exod 6:7; 7:4–5, 9:16; 2 Kgs 19:6, 22). And therefore, in both cases, YHWH is forced to react in order to salvage his reputation. Indeed, the explanation in Exodus that the purpose of YHWH's wonders is to “to show you my power, so that my name may be declared throughout all the earth” (Exod 9:16) can be compared to Hezekiah's prayer in B2 to avenge Israel so “that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you, O Lord, are God alone” (19:19).

Unsurprisingly, scholars have noticed the similarities between the decimation of the Assyrian army at the conclusion of B2 and the final calamity in Exodus. Marvin Sweeney, for example, writes that not only does the destruction of the Assyrian army by the angel of God recall “the angel of death that destroyed the firstborn of the Egyptians in Exodus,”²⁴ but that B2 might have been deliberately “influenced by the Exodus tradition of the death of the firstborn.”²⁵ Moreover, Sue Sandidge, in a popular book about Exodus, writes that the angel of death that appears in Exodus is likely the same one that killed the Assyrians in 701, thus correlating the two occurrences.²⁶

Indeed, as I argued earlier, classical rabbinic writers also align the two events. Rivka Ulmer writes that midrashic traditions link Passover, the holiday intimately associated with the death of the firstborn in Exodus, with the Assyrian assault in 701. One text, for example, tells of how the Assyrian army was decimated when Hezekiah recited the Hallel Psalms during Passover (Pss 113–118) (*Exod. Rab.* 8:2).²⁷ Likely, the narrative in 2 Chron 30 about Hezekiah's reintroduction of the celebration of Passover led to an association of this holiday with the other key event of Hezekiah's reign, the 701 Assyrian attack. According to Ulmer, *Exod. Rab.* 8:5 further correlates the Passover and the decimation of the Assyrian army by noting that both occurred at the same time, that is, at midnight. Moreover, the Haggadah, the text recited at Passover, states, “The blasphemer threatened to stretch his hand over the desired place [Jerusalem], and You dried his corpses at *night*. . . *it was in the middle of the night*” (Exod 12:29).²⁸ Indeed, the Haggadah has a second reference to the assault in 701. Talking about Pul and Lud, likely a reference to Sennacherib and Assyria, the Haggadah notes: “The fat of Pul and Lud (Assyria) were burned in the burning of the fire on Passover.”²⁹ According to Joseph Tabory, though Pul refers to a par-

²⁴ M. Sweeney, *I and II Kings: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007), 419.

²⁵ M. Sweeney, *The Prophetic Literature: Interpreting Biblical Text Series* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2005), 73.

²⁶ S. Sandidge, *Forty Years in the Wilderness: Moses Leads the Bible's Lost Generation* (Philadelphia: Xlibris, 2005), 60.

²⁷ Ulmer, “Sennacherib,” 364.

²⁸ J. Tabory, *JPS Commentary on the Haggadah: Historical Introduction, Translation, and Commentary* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 2008), 123.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 127.

ticular king in 2 Kgs 15:19, likely Tiglath-pileser III, in the Haggadah, however, it refers generally to Assyria.³⁰ This line, therefore, seems to allude to the “destruction of Sennacherib’s armies as he camped before the city of Jerusalem.”³¹ Martin Sicker, more specifically, interprets this line as an allusion to the decimation of the Assyrian army “by pestilential fever on Passover, during its siege of Jerusalem.”³² As evident, the destruction of the Assyrian army, which is described in B2, parallels the destruction of Egypt’s firstborn at Passover.

The two events are also envisioned as sharing thematic similarities. Ulmer notes that the original “redemption from slavery” exemplified by the Passover narrative in Exodus is viewed as parallel to “the avoidance of renewed enslavement” during 701. Both narratives also appear to share the “destruction of the seed” motif whereby the “seed” referring to progeny (cf. Gen 4:25; 9:9; 13:16; 19:34) is killed by an avenging or offended deity. This motif, which “finds echo in the Passover story of Exodus 11–12’s angel of death, who ‘struck down the Egyptians but spared our houses’ (Exod 12:27),” resonates at the end of Source B2 when “the sword of retribution cuts down the Assyrian king in imitation of the angel’s vengeance, which had destroyed the Assyrian army, but brought life to Jerusalem and its king.”³³

Indeed, Cynthia Chapman shows that the “death of the seed” motif reverberates throughout the biblical text. She argues that although the murder of Sennacherib in the Temple by his sons depicts God as actively pursuing the cowardly fleeing king, Sennacherib’s seed is still left intact in 2 Kings. His son, Esarhaddon, is problematically allowed to transition onto the throne.³⁴ The resolution to this literary “hole” in which the seed of Sennacherib is utterly destroyed, she notes, is found in the Book of Nahum when God announces that he will cut off forever all descendants from the line of Assyria (Nah 1:14).³⁵ If Chapman is correct, a better way to understand the “destruction of the seed” motif in Source B2 is to see it as a reiteration and inversion of this theme that appears throughout the biblical text. The narrative of the ten disasters centers on God’s destruction of the “seeds” of a foreign enemy. Source B2, inversely, concerns God’s use of the “seed” as a vehicle of divine destruction for a foreign enemy. In one story, the “seeds” (Egyptian firstborn) of the foreign enemy are divinely killed. In the other, it is the “seeds” (Sennacherib’s sons or, as Source B1 hints, maybe Egypt) that kills the foreign enemy (Assyrian army and Sennacherib) under the direction of the divine.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² M. Sicker, *A Passover Seder Companion and Analytic Introduction to the Haggadah* (New York: iUniverse, 2004), 141.

³³ T. L. Thompson, *Biblical Narrative and Palestine’s History: Changing Perspectives 2* (Sheffield: Equinox, 2013), 245.

³⁴ Chapman, *Gendered Language*, 147–49.

³⁵ Ibid., 149–51.

As evident, several literary connections indicate a deliberate attempt to correlate the death of the firstborn of Egypt in Exodus with the conclusion of B2 in which the angel of God decimates the Assyrian army and pursues Sennacherib to his home. Like Aubin, I too posit that this connection to the narrative about ten calamities is intentional. However, I think that this correlation is not just for the didactic purpose of asserting the correctness of the covenantal promises in Deuteronomy, as Aubin argues. Rather, as I argued earlier, the main reason for this connection is to hint at Egypt's role in 701, and in so doing, redress a theological problem still lingering in the earlier B1 source.

MESSAGE AND TRANSFORMATION

As I noted earlier, the correlation between YHWH and Egypt in the first speech of the Rab-shakeh in Source B1 created a theological conundrum. Namely, the narrative does not clarify whether both Egypt *and* God should be—contra the accusations of the Rab-shakeh—credited for the rescue of Judah. Source B1, as I noted, gestures towards a solution when it hints that YHWH's powers extend beyond Judah to other countries such as Assyria. Source B1, however, does not fully and clearly come out and make the link that Egypt, like Assyria, is merely God's tool in his grand scheme to save Zion. B1 merely suggests but never fully explores the idea of divine sovereignty over other nations as a resolution to this theological riddle.

The writers of B2 almost certainly would have considered the alignment of Egypt and YHWH in B1 as problematic and thus worthy of editorial redress. Indeed, William Gallagher points to hints of Egyptian aid in Source B1 to argue against the separation of Source B1 and Source B2 as distinct sources:

That B1 would be given even partial credit to Egypt for Sennacherib's withdrawal is dubious because it obscures the clear choice between trusting in Egypt and trusting in God. When B1 and B2 are read as a continuous narrative, however, Egypt is no longer a cause for Sennacherib's withdrawal. On the contrary the narrative then shows that Egypt was ineffectual.³⁶

Though I disagree with Gallagher's final point, he clearly elucidates the unresolved theological issue concerning Egyptian participation in 701 that lingers in Source B1.

Indeed, a careful comparison of the later B2 source with the earlier B1 account indicates that the writers of B2 were troubled by the uncertain theology expressed in B1. The B2 writers seem particularly attracted to two main theological quandaries lingering in B1: The portrayal of the pious Hezekiah as fearful and doubtful of God's salvation, and the rather tepid conclusion in which God sends away the army of the apostate Sennacherib

³⁶ W. Gallagher, *Sennacherib's Campaign to Judah: New Studies* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 158–59. So also I. Provan, *Hezekiah and the Books of Kings: A Contribution to the Debate about the Composition of the Deuteronomistic History* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1988), 124–25.

with a report instead of forcefully punishing the boastful foreign king.³⁷ As I noted earlier, both problems are addressed in B2 through its portrayal of a more confident Hezekiah as well as its depiction of the decimation of the Assyrian army by the angel of the Lord. Considering that the B2 writers seem acutely sensitive to any hints of doubt or disbelief in YHWH's sovereignty and power, it appears likely that the alignment of Egypt and YHWH in B1, which would have diminished the vision of YHWH as the ultimate savior-deity, would have caught the attention of the careful B2 writers.

The theological conundrum created by Egypt's involvement in the defense of Judah seems to be long-standing as well as long-lasting (Isa 30–31; Jer 37:6–10; Ezek 16:26). Isaianic texts from around the eighth century also express unease over Judah's reliance on Egyptian help (Isa 30–31).³⁸ As Aubin notes, Isaiah seems to have viewed dependence on Egypt as theologically troubling and akin to idolatry.³⁹ Also, reliance on foreign aid was viewed as undermining faith in God's salvific role. Indeed, as I noted earlier, this theological unease likely is present in Source B1 as well. It is therefore unsurprising that the writers of B2 would attempt to address more fully, perhaps even try to resolve, this theological problem in their later account.

The writers of B2 address the problem in a subtle yet telling manner. First, instead of hiding the Judahite debate about reliance on Egypt, they instead directly allude to it by referencing the ten afflictions in Egypt in their depiction of the miraculous slaughter of the Assyrian army at the end of their source. As I outlined earlier, several parallels between the calamities in Egypt, especially the death of the firstborn, and the decimation of the Assyrians in B2 clearly show that the writers intentionally connected the two events. Indeed, the conclusion is not the only time Source B2 alludes to the Exodus narrative. Rather, in YHWH's taunting response to Sennacherib in 2 Kgs 19, God ridicules the Assyrian king for claiming to be the one who "dried up with the sole of my foot all the streams of Egypt" (19:24). Considering that God's response is centered on ridiculing Assyria for its pride, the unstated meaning seems to be that it is actually YHWH, not Assyria, who "dried up with the sole of my foot all the streams of Egypt" (19:24). Though the exact referent of this statement is ambiguous, God's mastery over water, especially in Egypt, cannot but recall the water-splitting deity YHWH of the Exodus account.

These connections and allusions have a literary effect. As a result of these intertextual references, the reader is compelled to think of the two stories—that of the calamities in Exodus and the 701 attack—together; or to read one in light of the other. And when both stories are read in conjunction, it becomes clear that they both revolve around an arrogant and defiant foreign

³⁷ Childs, *Isaiah and the Assyrian Crisis*, 98–100.

³⁸ Aubin, *Rescue*, 173.

³⁹ *Ibid.*; Gallagher, *Sennacherib's Campaign*, 172.

leader who refuses to acknowledge YHWH's sovereignty. Pharaoh's statement that he does not know YHWH is mirrored in Sennacherib's blasphemous words, which indicate his lack of recognition of YHWH's authority. By reading the stories together, the acknowledgement and reputation of YHWH as the "only true god over the heavens and the earth" therefore becomes the focal point, the main theological concern, at stake in the 701 narratives. In other words, by connecting the narrative about the ten divine afflictions with the 701 story through intertextual allusions, the B2 writer hints of Egypt's role, but slyly transforms the issue into one of YHWH's power, reputation and sovereignty.

Once the central issue is in place, the writers of B2 then proceed to address this concern, that is, to demonstrate YHWH's power and omnipotence in several ways. As I noted, one of the key parallels between the Exodus account and 701 narrative is the arrogance of Pharaoh, which is reflected in the arrogance of Sennacherib. In Exodus, the pride of Pharaoh is disparaged and the power of YHWH keenly asserted, not only by the climactic decimation of Egypt's firstborn seeds during the final affliction, but also in the ways in which YHWH toys with Pharaoh himself. As scholars have noted, of particular interest is YHWH manipulation or control of Pharaoh's heart. In several places in Exodus, God states that he will harden Pharaoh's heart intentionally so that Pharaoh will refuse to let the Israelites go (Exod 7:3; 10:1, 20, 27; 11:10). By inwardly incapacitating Pharaoh and thus dragging on the unequal fight, God is able to display the range of his skills and powers needed to convince the Egyptians "that I am the Lord" (Exod 7:4). Indeed, this unfair manipulation of Pharaoh's heart is direct retaliation for Pharaoh's earlier arrogant ignorance and dismissal of YHWH: "But Pharaoh said, 'Who is the Lord, that I should heed him, and let Israel go? I do not know the Lord. . .'" (Exod 5:2). YHWH's ability to control the heart of Pharaoh, who was likely divinized, thereby undoubtedly affirms the sovereignty of Israel's god and discredits the arrogance of Pharaoh who is depicted not just as a bad king and ineffectual deity, but as a mere puppet of YHWH.⁴⁰

Through intertextual references, the biblical writers analogize Egypt and Assyria, and in so doing, undermine Egypt's

⁴⁰ Reflecting the theological unease, other places in Exodus state that Pharaoh hardened his own heart (8:15, 32; 9:34), and also more passively and ambiguously, that Pharaoh's heart was hardened (7:13, 22; 8:19; 9:7, 35). Numerous studies have examined the theological implications of God hardening Pharaoh's heart: T. Freitheim, *Exodus* (IBC; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1991), 96–103; David M. Gunn, "The 'Hardening of Pharaoh's Heart': Plot, Character and Theology in Exodus 1–14," in A. J. Hauser, D. J. A. Clines, and D. M. Gunn (eds.), *Art and Meaning: Rhetoric in Biblical Literature* (JSOTSup, 19; Sheffield: JSOT, 1982), 72–96; C. Meyers, *Exodus* (New Cambridge Bible Commentary; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 70–71; N. Sarna, *Exodus* (JPS Torah Commentary; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1991), 38; R. R. Wilson, "The Hardening of Pharaoh's Heart," *CBQ* 41 (1979), 18–36.

agency while asserting that of YHWH. By correlating Assyria with Egypt, the writers of B2 show that just as YHWH controlled Egypt, so he also controls Assyria. Hence, as with Pharaoh in the Passover narrative, so in B2, God, in his taunting response to Sennacherib's blasphemous words, calls out the Assyrian king for his lack of recognition and respect: "Whom have you mocked and reviled? Against whom have you raised your voice and haughtily lifted your eyes? Against the Holy One of Israel" (2 Kgs 19:22). Moreover, the arrogance is redressed in B2 in a similar manner as in the Exodus account. Just as in the account of the ten calamities where God controlled Pharaoh's heart for his own purposes, so in B2, God states that he knows the inward feelings and private activities of Sennacherib: "But I know where you are and when you come and go and how you rage against me" (19:27). As a result, as God controlled Pharaoh like a puppet during the divine afflictions in Egypt in order to demonstrate the extent of his power, so God in B2 will control Sennacherib and make him return like an unruly ox or farm animal (19:28) in order to show everyone the power of the "zeal of the Lord Almighty" (v. 32). Finally, as God overpowered Egypt and its ruler, and destroyed Egypt's seeds, so in B2, YHWH overpowers Assyria and its ruler, perhaps through the intermediary of Egypt. And in so doing, utilize the "seeds" of the foreign enemy (Egypt) to destroy Assyria. For good measure, God also uses Sennacherib's very own "seeds," the king's sons, to enact total revenge on the foreign monarch.

Larger theological messages further bind the two events. As in the narrative about the divinely induced disasters in Egypt, YHWH is also shown in B2 as in control of history. In Exodus 3:18–22, YHWH outlines for Moses his plan to free the Israelites from slavery at the very beginning of Moses's call—that is, before Moses even returns to Egypt—thus showing that the calamities and the Exodus are part of a larger, ordained plan of YHWH. So also in B2, YHWH claims similar omniscient abilities: "Have you not heard that I determined it long ago? I planned from days of old what now I bring to pass. . ." (2 Kgs 19:25). Indeed, as with the narrative of the ten calamities (Exod 3:18–22), according to B2, everything—even the humiliation and the victories of Assyria that Sennacherib falsely takes credit for—has been divinely planned, and thereby to be credited to YHWH: ". . . I planned from days of old what now I bring to pass, that you should make fortified cities crash into heaps of ruin, while their inhabitants, shorn of strength, are dismayed and confounded. . ." (19:25). The omnipotent and omniscient deity of B2 thus mirrors the powerful, pansophic God of the Exodus narrative.

The assertion of such a powerful deity in B2, which becomes evident when B2 is compared and aligned with the account of the ten calamities in Exodus, resolves the question lingering in B1 about whether Egypt or YHWH or both should be credited for the salvation of Zion. In light of the strong theology conveyed in Source B2, the claim that the rescue of Zion in 701

is to be credited to Egypt is shown to be ridiculous and impossible. According to B2, Egypt like Assyria cannot be anything more than a pawn in God's grand scheme to deliver Zion. B2's portrayal of YHWH as an omniscient and omnipotent deity thus makes it impossible to view Assyria and Egypt as anything but tools. The two foreign countries and their leaders are therefore given no room for the volition needed to claim credit either for the destruction or the salvation of Zion.

Perhaps the writer of B2 even posits a negative correlation: By making the reader think of calamities in Egypt and, in particular, the death of the firstborn in Egypt in their description of God's decimation of the Assyrian camp in 2 Kgs 19, the reader is steered away from thinking of Egypt as a possible helper in 701. By connecting the conclusion of Source B2 with the negative portrayal of Egypt in Exodus, Egypt's possible role in the survival of Judah in 701, which Aubin argues is hinted at in Source B1, is shown to be impossible. By alluding to another narrative in which Egypt is characterized as Israel's foe (the Exodus narrative), Source B2, unlike Source B1, thus suppresses any hint of Egypt's participation in 701. In so doing, B2 resolves the theological quandary that was created with the alignment of YHWH and Egypt in the Rab-shakeh's ironic accusations in Source B1.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, as Aubin insightfully points out, the ironic accusations in the Rab-shakeh's first speech in B1 parallel YHWH and Egypt, and in so doing, suggest that the survival of Jerusalem in 701 might have been due, in part, to the efforts of both. The writers of the later Source B2 would have found this theologically problematic as it would have taken away from the portrayal of YHWH as the sole savior of Zion. In order to address this problem, the writers of B2 deliberately allude to the ten calamities in Egypt, and in particular the divine massacre of the Egyptian firstborn in their concluding description of the decimation of the Assyrian army by the angel of God. By alluding to the calamities in Egypt, and in particular, the final punishment, which functioned as divine retaliation for Pharaoh's arrogance, the writers of B2 correlate Pharaoh, the arrogant foreign leader of the Exodus narrative, with Sennacherib, the arrogant foreign leader in 701.

This alignment, as well as other changes in B2, transforms the central issue of the 701 account into a query about the power and omnipotence of YHWH. With this new emphasis, the writers of B2 address lingering questions about the participation of Egypt in 701. By alluding to the calamities narrative in which God controlled Pharaoh's heart, any effort by Egypt in 701 is easily dismissed as another effect of YHWH's control over Egypt. Just as YHWH in Exodus utilized Egypt to show his renown and mastery over this foreign nation and its king, so YHWH in B2 again utilizes Egypt, this time, against Assyria, in order to once again display YHWH's renown and mastery. As God punished Egypt for its arrogance, so he does to Assyria for

its insolence—albeit through an intermediary (Egypt). God, therefore, is shown in B2 as utilizing one foreign nation that he controls, Egypt, to punish another foreign nation he directs, Assyria. Hence, the argument goes that even if Egypt did play a role in Judah's survival, it is really God who should be credited. Egypt's deed must have been accomplished under the aegis, guidance, and plan of YHWH, the puppet master of Egypt.

Moreover, by paralleling Egypt with Assyria through the reference to the divine decimation at the end of B2, Egypt is no longer aligned with God as in Source B1, but paralleled to the foreign enemy, Assyria. Indeed, this parallel might reflect historical reality if, as Aubin argues, Egypt had become Assyria's ally by the time of the composition of B2. By aligning Egypt with Assyria, and by pointing to stories in which both countries are depicted as arrogant, doubtful antagonists of YHWH, any hints of Egypt's heroic role in 701 that remain in B1 are effectively invalidated. B2 overrides any vision of Egypt as a possible helper or savior, which is evident in Source B1. And in so doing, resolves the theological quandary left unresolved in Source B1 about who was the true hero of 701.

**“THOSE WEANED FROM MILK”:
THE DIVINE WET NURSE MOTIF IN
ISAIAH 28’S CEREMONY FOR THE
COVENANT WITH MUT**

CHRISTOPHER B. HAYS
FULLER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

1. INTRODUCTION

Henry Aubin’s argument that an alliance between Judah and the Egyptian Twenty-fifth Dynasty was a crucial factor in the rescue of Jerusalem in 701 BCE¹ rightly drew more attention to the topic, and can be significantly augmented by the recognition that what Isaiah called a “covenant with Death” in Isa 28 reflected the Judahite supplication of the Kushites and their national goddess, Mut. Recent syntheses of the evidence of Mut’s cult at Thebes allow for a glimpse at how that ceremony might have looked, and new reconstructions of the treaty-making ceremony at Tell Tayinat support the idea that ANE alliances were regularly accompanied by rituals. Cultic artifacts found or attested at Mari, Khirbet Qeiyafa, Tell Qasile, and in the Phoenician diaspora supply examples of the kinds of ritual vessels that might have been used at these festivities, and a Twenty-fifth-Dynasty text actually narrates the ceremonial use of one of them.

I am grateful to Jacob Lauinger, Yosef Garfinkel, Matthew Adams, Seth Richardson, Carly Crouch, and Joel LeMon for their advice and stimulating conversation around this essay. All errors and misjudgments remain entirely my own. I am a Research Associate at the Department of Old Testament Studies, University of Pretoria, South Africa.

¹ In many respects, Aubin’s is the best kind of reply that ancient historians, philologists, and biblical scholars could hope for in response to one of our fields’ complex problems. As a former journalist, I am sympathetic with the challenge that Aubin faced, entering a field with vast amounts of data and trying to figure it out. I admire what he achieved in bringing the world of the late eighth century to life for readers with no background in it. Furthermore, Aubin’s motivation, to find an inspiring story for his adopted son “of African descent” has the potential to be widely relevant in a world where racism is still far too strong a force (H.T. Aubin, *The Rescue of Jerusalem: The Alliance Between Hebrews and Africans in 701 BC* [New York: Soho Press, 2002], xv).

2. THE COMPLEXITY OF JERUSALEM'S SURVIVAL

Despite the importance of the Kushites in Jerusalem's survival, it remains important to recognize the complexity of the historical forces in play. The survival of Jerusalem, and especially Hezekiah's remaining on the throne after helping lead a rebellion against Assyria, remain somewhat mysterious; in spite of the rather extensive records of the events, certainty is hard to come by. We are dealing with "mutilated knowledge," as Paul Veyne put it; we are excavating what little we can of a ruined city.² The archaeology of this knowledge is a mess.³

To his credit, Aubin did not enter the conversation naively; he was aware of the issues of sources and redaction that have occupied biblical scholars. Furthermore, in my view, his presentation did enough to demonstrate the conclusion that racism has played role in our field's interpretation of history. Although Aubin's book sometimes painted in broad strokes, it did not deserve the somewhat ill-tempered response from Paul S. Evans that it received.⁴

Now, there are some criticisms that can be raised about Aubin's work. His handling of Assyrian sources would have been better informed with reference to seminal works such as A. K.

² P. Veyne, *Writing History: Essays on Epistemology* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1984), 13. The fuller context is as follows: "History is a city visited for the pleasure of seeing human affairs in their diversity and naturalness, without seeking in it any other interest or any beauty. . . More exactly, we visit what is still visible of that city, the traces of it that remain; history is mutilated knowledge. A historian does not say what the Roman Empire was, nor what the French Resistance in 1944 was, but what it is still possible to know about it."

³ For a concise introduction to the issues, see C.B. Hays, *Hidden Riches: A Sourcebook for the Comparative Study of the Old Testament and the Ancient Near East* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2014), 221–31, and esp. the additional literature cited there.

⁴ P.S. Evans, "History in the Eye of the Beholder? Social Location and Allegations of Racial/Colonial Biases in Reconstructions of Sennacherib's Invasion of Judah," *JHS* 12 (2012), 1–25. Evans made the common error of reasoning that only unalloyed racism is racism when he writes that the doubts about the Kushites' significance "did not emerge out of thin air due to scholars' racism" (8). Of course it didn't. The usual nature of racism is to distort interpretations of facts, not to invent them out of thin air. As for my judgement that the piece is ill-tempered, let one example suffice: It is poor form to criticize another scholar's misspelling of a name (criticizing A.O. Bellis, on p. 8) when one has committed the same error on the previous page (A. Kuenen as "Keuenen" on p. 7). While I will refrain from entering the debate over the history of interpretation, Evans was responding to both Aubin's book and A.O. Bellis, "The Rescue of Jerusalem from the Assyrians in 701 B.C.E. by the Cushites," in K.L. Noll and B. Schramm (eds.), *Raising up a Faithful Exegete: Essays in Honor of Richard D. Nelson* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2010), 247–59. Aubin in turn issued his own 'riposte': "Has Racism Skewed Scholars' View of Kush? A Response to a Critique of *The Rescue of Jerusalem*," accessed on Dec. 14, 2016 at the following:

www.benryaubin.com/wp-content/uploads/2007/02/H.Aubin_Riposte-Aug_2015.pdf.

Grayson's on false Assyrian claims⁵ and K. L. Younger's on the literary shaping of campaign accounts⁶ which emphasize that Assyrian accounts are literary products that do not necessarily present events in order, and are prone to misrepresent unfavorable outcomes. Thus, the Assyrian campaign accounts are reliable for the scope and nature of the campaigns, but not the order of the battles, and sometimes not for the whole story regarding setbacks. This does not undermine Aubin's broader points, though. Furthermore, Evans was, in his own way, overly credulous of Assyrian inscriptions; he was simply mistaken in embracing E. A. Knauf's claim that "Assyrian royal inscriptions (nearly) never lie."⁷

Although Aubin carefully considered the shortage of historical sources from the Twenty-fifth Dynasty, the gaps in Neo-Assyrian annals after 689 also conspire against certitude about whether there might have been more than one Assyrian campaign. For all these reasons, "one is not likely to get any closer to the precise historical truth of the incident without further information coming to light."⁸ I have therefore thought in the past that it is understandable that historians have noted the role of the Kushites without expanding on it. Donald Redford, for example, wrote that they inflicted "an unexpected and serious reverse" on the Assyrians,⁹ and his entry in the *Anchor Bible Dictionary* makes the same point in an accessible venue: the Kushites "battled Sennacherib to a standstill."¹⁰ And there were other prominent recent scholars before Aubin who had already credited the Kushites with a powerful role in 701. Among these are David O'Connor, whose comment that "Egypt's Napatan rulers vigorously resisted Assyrian efforts to invade the Southern Levant..." in his 1992 book *Ancient Nubia*, was not noted by

⁵ A.K. Grayson, "Problematical Battles in Mesopotamian History," 337–42 in H.G. Güterbock and T. Jacobsen (eds.), *Studies in Honor of Benno Landsberger on His Seventy-fifth Birthday, April 21, 1963* (AS 16; Chicago: University of Chicago, 1965). Thus, when Aubin comments (*The Rescue of Jerusalem*, 129) that Sennacherib would not have lied about a defeat, one can object. (There are other reasons not to think that it was a crushing defeat.)

⁶ K.L. Younger, Jr., *Ancient Conquest Accounts: A Study in Ancient Near Eastern and Biblical History Writing* (JSOTSup, 98; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990).

⁷ Evans, *History in the Eye of the Beholder?* 18; citing E.A. Knauf, "Sennacherib at the Berezina," in L.L. Grabbe (ed.), "Like a Bird in a Cage:" *The Invasion of Sennacherib in 701 BCE* (JSOTSup, 363, ESHM, 4; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003), 141.

⁸ C.B. Hays and P. Machinist, "Assyria," in *The World Around the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016), 95. In this we have gone no farther than B.S. Childs, *Isaiah and the Assyrian Crisis* (SBT/II 3; London: SCM, 1967), 120.

⁹ D. Redford, *Egypt, Canaan and Israel in Ancient Times* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 353.

¹⁰ "Kush intervened forcefully and unexpectedly at Eltekeh (701 B.C.), battling Sennacherib to a standstill." D. B. Redford, "Kush (Place)," *ABD* 4:109–111 (110).

Aubin.¹¹ Robert Morkot's 2000 book *The Black Pharaohs* spends pages analyzing the events of 701 before concluding that the Kushites fought the Assyrians to a "stalemate."¹² Even John Bright's classic *History of Israel* (3rd ed., 1981) took the role of the Kushites seriously. I might have said that there is little more that can be confidently said on the basis of the terse and somewhat contradictory accounts. But upon reflection, Aubin has a point that these notes are all quite brief. It is fair to ask why there has not been greater rhetorical enthusiasm on the part of historians.

It would require a finer-grained analysis to determine the exact role of Aubin's book in the already-changing conversation about the Kushites, but it's safe to say that it was part of a larger wave of reassessment. There seems to have been more work in this vein already brewing at the time that Aubin wrote, since still others came out with substantial analyses not long after.¹³ But *The Rescue of Jerusalem* goes farther than other works in challenging older, inappropriate uses of ancient data to fuel modern prejudices about race and ethnicity.¹⁴ At a minimum, Aubin's point that the biblical authors' view of Kushites was *not* generally negative ought to be universally accepted.¹⁵

In my view, the seeming complexity of Jerusalem's rescue needs to be emphasized.¹⁶ A fruitful comparison to the present case is offered by Eric Cline in his recent book *1177 B.C.: The Year Civilization Collapsed*, a detailed new study of the fall of the great powers of the Late Bronze Age. He posits that the collapse was not brought on by a single cause, but by "a perfect storm of calamities": earthquakes, climate change, drought, famine, internal rebellions, failures of international trade, and of course the (unfortunately still mysterious) Sea Peoples. *All* of these forces,

¹¹ D. O'Connor, *Ancient Nubia: Egypt's Rival in Africa* (Philadelphia, PA: University Museum, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), 71.

¹² R. Morkot, *The Black Pharaohs: Egypt's Nubian Rulers* (London: Rubicon, 2000), 217. Admittedly, despite coming to essentially Aubin's conclusion, Morkot's handling and presentation of the biblical and Assyrian data are not as clear.

¹³ The role of the Kushite force is described by K.A. Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 40–42, 50–51. Also, a pair of essays from A. Vaughn and A. Killebrew (eds.), *Jerusalem in Bible and Archaeology* (SBLSP, 18; Atlanta: SBL, 2003), also analyzed the Kushites' activity in the Levant in the late eighth century: J.J.M. Roberts, "Egypt, Assyria, Isaiah, and the Ashdod Affair: An Alternative Proposal" (265–83); J.K. Hoffmeier, "Egypt's Role in the Events of 701 B.C. in Jerusalem" (219–34). Roberts was not aware of Aubin's book at the time (personal communication).

¹⁴ See, for example: R.S. Sadler, Jr., *Can a Cushite Change His Skin? An Examination of Race, Ethnicity, and Othering in the Hebrew Bible* (LHBOTS, 425; London: T & T Clark, 2005); S.T. Smith, *Wretched Kush: Ethnic Identities and Boundaries in Egypt's Nubian Empire* (London: Routledge, 2003).

¹⁵ See Lavik's essay in this collection on this point.

¹⁶ To Aubin's credit, he does grant that "a combination of factors" figured in the Assyrians' disengagement from Jerusalem (*The Rescue of Jerusalem*, 189).

Cline says, led to the breakdown of the network of heavily centralized palace systems. And this is logical, in that the system was well-developed and durable. It is unlikely, on the face of it, that it could be brought down by one or two problems.

Another example of this acknowledgement of complexity in history is Bright's treatment of the emergence of proto-Israel, which he placed under the subheading "The Complexity of Israel's Origins"—to him, only some combination of previous models (roughly: infiltration, conquest, and peasant uprising) seemed sufficient to explain the complexities of the data. Some may judge such treatments wishy-washy, or (in Bright's case) even crypto-fundamentalist in that they seek to preserve the truth value of the biblical text in all its diversity. However, if we conclude that the biblical accounts of these events in any way preserve traditional accounts of real events (as opposed to being late inventions from whole cloth), then the effort to recover the historical complexity underlying them is surely warranted.¹⁷

A similar situation obtains in the case of the Assyrian campaign of 701. The Assyrians were also an imposing force prepared for setbacks and apparently highly successful in weathering them. So in this case, as well, it is only logical to think that it took more than one thing to thwart their plans in Jerusalem. Indeed, Amélie Kuhrt seems wise in her postmodern assessment of the conflicting Assyrian and biblical stories: "both accounts are probably 'true.'" ¹⁸ While I do not intend to import here the whole apparatus of "complexity science," it does seem to me that in the campaign of 701 we are dealing with "a collection of many interacting objects or 'agents,'" which is what complexity science seeks to describe.¹⁹ Simplistic answers have little place in the messy landscapes of human history.

3. THE COVENANT WITH MUT AND THE KUSHITES

Although Aubin may have overemphasized the Kushites' role in his zeal, there is in fact even more data to support their role in the events of 701 than was recognized when he wrote. In a series of publications that appeared after his book, I have shown that the "covenant with Death" in Isa 28:15, 18 is the prophet's allusion to and diatribe against Judah's alliance with Kushite Egypt, as represented by its national/mother deity, Mut.²⁰

¹⁷ In the case of ancient Israel's early encounters with Egypt, Stephen Russell and others have recently sought to untangle how multiple witnesses and remembered experiences were woven together or simply juxtaposed in the Bible. S.C. Russell, *Images of Egypt in Early Biblical Literature: Cisjordan-Israelite, Transjordan-Israelite, and Judahite Portrayals* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009).

¹⁸ A. Kuhrt, *The Ancient Near East* (Routledge History of the Ancient World; London: Routledge, 1995), 2:478.

¹⁹ E.H. Cline, *1177: The Year Civilization Collapsed* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 166; N.F. Johnson, *Simply Complexity: A Clear Guide to Complexity Theory* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2009), 13.

²⁰ C.B. Hays, "The Covenant with Mut: A New Interpretation of Isaiah 28:1-22," *VT* 60 (2010), 212-40; idem, *Death in the Iron Age II and in First Isaiah* (FAT, 79; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 288-315; idem,

To review briefly some essential points of these earlier arguments that the “covenant with *mmt*” involved the supplication of Mut: It is widely recognized that Judah’s pact must have been with an Egyptian power, since the raging flood (vv. 15–19) from which Judah sought protection is a symbol of the Assyrian military (based on Assyrian inscriptions and Isa 8:7). It was not previously clear, however, why that power should be described as “Death,” but this is explained as wordplay: The Hebrew word for “death” (*mmt*) and the Egyptian word for Mut (*mmt*) would have sounded quite similar, and this is precisely the sort of wordplay that the Hebrew prophets seem to have employed.²¹

Mut had periods of great prominence in Egypt especially during the New Kingdom and the Third Intermediate Period, yet she had been relatively understudied within Egyptology until recent decades. Evidence from amulets, personal names, and place names shows that Mut was rather widely known and sought for protection during the Iron Age in the Levant.

Mut’s most basic identity was as a mother goddess (*mmt* is also the Egyptian word for mother), and her worshippers portrayed themselves as suckling at her breast. Among the best examples of this motif in iconography is a silver amulet depicting the Kushite queen Nefrukakashta (Fig. 1). This explains why the prophet described the covenanters as infants “just weaned from milk, just outgrown the breast” in Isa 28:9.

Mut’s cult involved drunkenness, and so Isaiah condemned the drunken Jerusalem leaders as stumbling, vomiting drunks and fools—an image perhaps connected to the previous ones, since small children are also known to be wobbly on their feet and prone to throwing up.²² Even small details such as the reference to flowers (28:1,5) seem to reflect cultic offerings and decorations similar to those that Egyptians dedicated to Mut.

In the praises of her worshippers, Mut was closely linked to kingship, and in particular had a strong protective aspect vis-à-vis the pharaoh and others. As such, she was closely syncretized with Sekhmet and lion goddesses as the avenging “eye of Re” that guarded the king from enemies. As part of Mut’s same protective role, those who rebelled against the pharaoh were burned on her brazier during the Third Intermediate Period in a ritual

“The Egyptian Goddess Mut in Iron-Age Palestine: Further Data from Amulets and Onomastics,” *JNES* 71 (2012), 299–314.

²¹ The best-known example is in Amos 8:1–2, in which a basket of summer fruit (*qāyīs*) symbolizes end (*qēs*) for the people of Israel. See J. M. Roberts, “Double Entendre in First Isaiah,” *CBQ* 54 (1992), 39–48; also I. M. Casanowicz, “Paronomasia in the Old Testament,” *JBL* 12 (1893), 105–67, esp. chart p. 167; E. M. Good, *Irony in the Old Testament* (2nd ed.; Sheffield: Almond, 1981), 121–25; and note the large number of examples from Isaiah in S. Schorch, “Between Science and Magic: The Function and Roots of Paronomasia in the Prophetic Books of the Hebrew Bible,” in S. B. Noegel (ed.), *Puns and Pundits: Word Play in the Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Literature* (Bethesda, MD: CDL, 2000), 205–22.

²² Firsthand experience. See also www.youtube.com/watch?v=cds7ISHawAw (accessed Dec. 12, 2016).

that has survived in textual form. In keeping with this role as guarantor of covenants, Mut is portrayed on the D25 Victory Stela of Piankhy as supervising the pact that the Kushite ruler makes with the Delta peoples.

On the basis of all this, I argued that we have in Isa 28 a record of the prophet's reaction against a Judahite alliance with the Kushites—much as other passages in Isaiah inveigh against Egyptian help (e.g., Isa 19:12–25; 20:1–6; 30:1–5; 31:1–3). The recent Egyptological advances regarding Mut and her cult mean we can now be clear that it even offers an (ideologically refracted) view of how the ceremony might have looked.

For those approaching the issue from fields other than ancient Near Eastern studies, a couple of caveats may be in order: First, I use the term “covenant” somewhat loosely, by necessity. We can say very little about how the understanding between the two nations was ratified, from a literary or documentary standpoint. As is the case with all ancient Near Eastern genres, very few treaties have survived—yet there is every reason to assume that more existed. “Covenant” (*berith*) is the term Isaiah uses, and he probably selected it precisely because it would provoke outrage from some quarters.²³ Other cultures used other terms (such as Akk. *adê*); there is no clear way to distinguish “treaty” from “covenant” from “pact” from “oath” in the view of ancient authors.

Second, to say that the Jerusalemites made a “covenant” with the Kushites by means of a ceremony involving Mut does not mean that *they viewed themselves* as forsaking YHWH. Modern readers, influenced by the exclusive rhetoric of later Deuteronomism, may imagine that the ancients viewed themselves as bound to a single God (and Isaiah himself seems to have believed this). But in general, ancient Near Eastern treaties were overseen by the gods of *both* parties, and so if Kushite representatives came to town and suggested that the court raise a few glasses and get to know Mut better, Hezekiah and his men might have happily embraced the invitation.

The argument has been reasonably well received, although not everyone is fully convinced. In his essay on “Ancient Israel and Egypt” in the *Wiley Blackwell Companion to Ancient Israel*, John Huddleston concluded that it is “an intriguing possibility” that Isa 28 reflects such a covenant, but went on to object that “Egypt is not named in” Isa 28 and there is no “clear, unambiguous language” identifying Mut.²⁴ These are reasonable causes for hesitation, but the weight of evidence continues to accumulate.

In what follows, I would like to delve further into two very important and related aspects of Isaiah's imagery that reflect a covenant ceremony with Mut: her role as mother and Divine

²³ In general, *berith* is used only of YHWH in the Bible, except for Isa 28 and “Baal-berith” in Judg 8.

²⁴ J. Huddleston, “Ancient Israel and Egypt,” in Susan Niditch (ed.), *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Ancient Israel* (Chichester: Wiley & Sons, 2016), 59–60.

Wet Nurse, and the associated role of drunkenness in her Egyptian cult. The key verses are Isa 28:7–9:

וגם־אלה ביין שגו ובשכר תעו
 כהן ונביא שגו בשכר
 נבלעו מן־היין
 תעו מן־השכר
 שגו בראה
 פקו פלייה:
 כי כל־שלחנות מלאו קיא
 צאה בלי מקום: ס
 את־מי יורה דעה
 ואת־מי יבין שמועה
 גמולי מחלב
 עתיקי משדים:

⁷ These, too, stagger from wine and stumble from beer;
 priest and prophet stagger with beer;
 they are swallowed up on account of wine;
 they stumble on account of beer,
 they err in vision,
 they are unstable in judgment.

⁸ For all the tables are full of vomit,
 filth overruns the place.

⁹ Whom will he teach knowledge?
 And to whom will he explain the report?
 To those who are weaned from milk?

To those who have outgrown²⁵ the breast?²⁶

In these verses, the priests and prophets who pursue Mut's protection are compared to infant children; he sees the two as alike in their incontinent and foolish behavior. Isaiah goes on to say

²⁵ Taking עתיק in the sense of "old"; cf. M. Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature*, 2 vols. (New York: Pardes, 1903), 1129–30.

²⁶ In past publications, I have treated these last two cola as rhetorical questions. It seems better, upon reflection, to treat them as simple indicative statements.

that YHWH will speak to them “with derisive speech and a foreign tongue”; one of the phrases mimicking that speech is “*qam-qam*,” which is also used to describe the Kushites in 18:2. The complexities of that verse cannot detain us here, but the connection to the Kushites is stronger than anything offered by alternative theories in which the phrases are the Assyrians’ speech.

At the most basic level, the mockery of the Judahite leaders as babies reflects Mut’s status as a mother goddess. I have previously also demonstrated that her Egyptian worshipers regularly portrayed themselves as suckling at her breast.²⁷ Mut was one of the most popular goddesses to embody the Divine Wet Nurse figure in Egyptian mythology.

In addition, Mut’s cult certainly involved drunkenness. I showed in my earlier essays that in the Twenty-fifth Dynasty and through a wider swath of history, supplicants to Mut inebriated themselves to commune with her and seek her protection.²⁸ Richard Jasnow and Mark Smith wrote that Mut’s devotees were known to worship her with music, feasting, drunkenness, and acts of sexual intercourse, by which means they hope to see her in a vision. This divinity is the eye of the sun god, his daughter, the uraeus who protects him, the visible manifestation of his dazzling brilliance and embodiment of the fiery blast of his heat.²⁹

In Isa 28, the Judahites are portrayed as drunken seekers of Mut’s protective and nurturing breast. Isaiah, however, speaks for YHWH, saying that such infantile bumblerers are not worthy of divine instruction.

Our knowledge of the actual structure of those rituals was limited until recently. Although the extant texts describe festivals of drunkenness on certain regular days, “we should be wary of assuming that [the Mut temple] would have been the only possible venue,”³⁰ or that they were only carried out on festival days. On the basis of texts that call for such activities “every day,” Jasnow and Smith envision these rites having taken place commonly, in public and private spheres alike. Instead, “the use of music, alcohol, and other stimulants to induce ecstatic visions”

²⁷ See note 15 above.

²⁸ For example, a Dynasty Twenty-five stele from Tell Edfu attests to inebriation as a religious practice:

O Mut, celestial and solar goddess, who is the first-ranked in Isheru; He inebriates himself for you, the priest of Amun who resides at Karnak, the one who is known to the king, son of the priest, second class, of Amun, king of the gods, the eyes and ears of the king, Patenf. He rejoices for you. Count him among your servants, those whom [you] love. . .his patron. Protect this man who inebriates himself for the golden goddess.

M.F. Bisson de la Roque, “Complément de la stele d’Amenemhêt, fils de PN, Époux de Kyky” *BIFAO* 25 (1925), 48.

²⁹ R. Jasnow and M. Smith, “As for Those Who Have Called Me Evil, Mut Will Call Them Evil: Orgiastic Cultic Behavior and Its Critics and Ancient Egypt,” *Enchoria* 32 (2010–2011), 36.

³⁰ Jasnow and Smith, “Mut Will Call Them Evil,” 43.

was probably “a regular practice, even a daily occurrence, not something that was restricted to a single day of the year, or even a few days.”³¹ All this supports my intuition to reconstruct a ritual involving the Judahites.

A new essay by Betsy Bryan, excavator of the Mut Temple at Luxor, builds on this work, laying out the contours of inebriation rituals that were practiced at least from the Middle Kingdom through the Ptolemaic Period.³² The temple was reconfigured by none other than the Kushite ruler Taharqo during the Twenty-fifth Dynasty, and continued to host the ceremonies.³³ The excavations have shown that (at least from the reign of Hatshepsut on) there was an area of the temple dedicated to regular drunken rituals.

I offer here an unusually lengthy excerpt from Bryan’s essay, because it resonates so profoundly with the scene in Isa 28:

[D]runkness was an essential element of these rites. Inebriation was the means of accessing the deities; that is the point made in the ostracon: “When they are drunk, they will see the *mrt* goddess by means of the vessel.” In the Medamud hymn, drunkness was achieved in the context of music, dance, and enhanced fragrance from flowers³⁴ and scented oils. By the early morning hours, the celebrants were asleep after inebriation was achieved and at that point other participants awakened them by drumming. The epiphany with the goddess then followed, her own awakening resulting from that of the celebrants [. . .]

Normal rules of social behavior were deliberately set aside in these rituals [. . .] Tomb scenes frequently depict all banqueters holding or being offered wine cups, but just as frequently no food is set before them. Some scenes emphasize the quantity being consumed by showing revelers tossing back whole pouring jars. [. . .] Brussels E2877 is a painting fragment showing a man vomiting into the lap of the guest next to him, while a woman is shown doing similarly in the tomb of Neferhotep. . . Over-imbibing would certainly have resulted in vomiting for some participants, but the addition

³¹ Ibid., 44.

³² B. Bryan, “Hatshepsut and Cultic Revelries in the New Kingdom,” in J. M. Galán, B. M. Bryan, and P. F. Dorman (eds.), *Theban Symposium: Creativity and Innovation in the Reign of Hatshepsut*, (SAOC 69; Chicago: Oriental Institute, University of Chicago, 2014), 93–123. See also A. Gutbub, “Un emprunt aux textes des Pyramides dans l’Hymne à Hathor, Dame de l’ivresse,” in *Mélanges Maspero*: I. Orient Ancien, Quatrième fascicule (Le Caire: Institut Français d’Archéologie Orientale du Caire, 1961), 31–72, esp. 46–55.

³³ Bryan, “Hatshepsut and Cultic Revelries,” 106.

³⁴ Excerpt from the Medamud hymn: “The young women rejoice for you with garlands, the women with the wreath-crown.” J. Coleman Darnell, “Hathor Returns to Medamud,” *Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur* 22 (1995), 54; see further references to bouquets and wreaths on pp. 56–57.

of herbs and plants to the alcohol mixtures would have increased the emetic effects of the drinks—just as it would have enhanced feelings of disorientation and sleepiness.³⁵

Inebriation, flowers, disorientation, and the seeking of a goddess—these were essential elements in the Judahites' covenant with Mut, as portrayed by Isaiah.

Bryan's essay provides much greater depth to this picture in numerous ways, but perhaps the most significant new data concern the "epiphany" of the goddess at the end of the ritual.³⁶ She cites a hymn to Hathor from Theban Tomb 130 as reflecting the connection between drunkenness and the appearance of the goddess. It expresses the hope "that one might be drunk at your perfect sight, O Golden one, Hathor!"³⁷

Still more central to the interpretation of Isa 28, the "presence of the goddess [. . .] enabled a corporate request from the spiritual community."³⁸ Again, my previous work showed that Mut had a strong protective aspect, so that seeking her would have made sense under the Neo-Assyrian threat, but Bryan's new article adduces texts recording actual requests made after the goddess' statue appeared. One, from a Florence Demotic papyrus, reads as follows: "[. . .]ake for me protection(?) . . . [. . .]. . . these against me! Mut is my protection, for I am entrusted to Mut. . ."³⁹ This supplication, with its psalmic overtones (Ps 5:12–13 [MT]; 28:7–8; 91:1–4; etc.), may be something like what the Jerusalem leaders would have prayed to Mut.

Isa 28 is not the only indication in the book of alliances or pacts with an Egyptian power involving the pouring of drinks. Isa 30:1–2 may also reflect the sort of ritual just described. Although it is regularly obscured in translation, the thing the Judahite leaders there are charged with trying to do with Egypt is לעשות עצה . . . ולנסך מסכה—literally "to make a plan. . . and to pour out a pouring."⁴⁰ This is an unusual use of מסכה, which may reflect the unusual ritual to which it refers (Typically the word refers to a cast image—which is perhaps not an impossible interpretation here as well, in light of the ensuing discussion of libation-statues and breast-vessels made of precious metals, but the interpretation works in any case.) The translations, going back to the LXX (συνθήκας), have generally understood that a covenant or alliance is in view—they are accurate, albeit periphrastic: the covenant is sealed by the pouring out of drinks. The LXX translator saw these two texts as related—he used the same term in 28:15 for the 'covenant with death': μετὰ τοῦ θανάτου

³⁵ Bryan, "Hatshepsut and Cultic Revelries," 115.

³⁶ Though, see already Jasnow and Smith, "Mut Will Call Them Evil," 34–36.

³⁷ *ἡν τω ν ρ3γ.τ ἡρ νφρ nbw ἡwt-ἡr*; Bryan, "Hatshepsut and Cultic Revelries," 117.

³⁸ Bryan, "Hatshepsut and Cultic Revelries," 117.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 120; citing Jasnow and Smith, "Mut Will Call Them Evil," 18–19.

⁴⁰ For this less common use of מסכה, see HALOT *ad loc.*, as well as J. Pedersen, *Israel: Its Life and Culture, I–II*, tr. F. A. Mikkelsen Møller (London: Oxford University Press, 1926), 521.

סטטθήααζ. The Rab-shakeh's effort to undermine Jerusalem's faith in 'Egypt' in Isa 36:6–9 || 2 Kgs 18:21–24 also alludes to such a covenant—part of which entailed the provision of horses (סוסים) and horsemen (פרשים; 2 Kgs 18:24; cf. Isa 31:1). All of these passages point to the same period and arrangements: the Judahites sought and made an alliance with the Kushites, and so the Kushites came to Judah's aid in 701.

Furthermore, although Isa 19:12–14 strictly pertains to Egypt's self-governance rather than its dealings with Judah, it reflects a similar recourse to drunkenness on the part of Egyptian diviners and officials:

Where are your sages (חכמיד) now?

Let them announce to you and make known

what the LORD of hosts has planned against Egypt.

The nobles (שרי) of Tanis have been fools,

The nobles of Memphis deluded;

The cornerstone of her tribes

Has caused Egypt to stumble (התעו).

The LORD has poured into her (מסך בקרבה)

A spirit of distortion;

And they shall cause Egypt to stumble (התעו) in all her undertakings

As a drunkard stumbles in his vomit (כתעות שכור בקיאו).

Drunkenness in divination seems to have been central to Isaiah's image of the Egyptians.

In spite of the similarities between the Mut rituals and these multiple passages from Isaiah, some readers may ask why they should believe that a ritual attested in Egypt should have been found abroad. But a consideration of covenant ceremonies in the ancient Near East more generally, one might perceive a considerable momentum toward the reconstruction of formal rituals, including some that seem to have been conducted on a regular basis in the temples of the vassal. Jacob Lauinger, in his recent work on the treaty-tablet found in the temple at Tayinat, has posited that the tablet “continued to be used in an annual *akitu*-ceremony that coincided with the subordinate party's delivery of tribute to Assyria.”⁴¹ This is a very different sort of ritual from what the Mut ceremony involved, but may be relevant in that it shows that the cultic ratification and renewal of a covenant was plausibly a common cultural expectation in the ANE. In light of

⁴¹ J. Lauinger, “The Neo-Assyrian *adē*: Treaty, Oath, or Something Else?” *ZAR* 19 (2013), 99–115. Lauinger adds that his reconstructed ceremony “must remain speculative due to the fragmentary and scattered nature of the evidence from which they are reconstructed.” In other words, the situation is much the same as with Bryan's reconstruction of the Mut ceremony.

the diverse manifestations of Mut's drunken cult that Jasnow and Smith perceived, its employment in a treaty ritual is plausible.

Even Isaiah's critique resonates with Egyptian critiques from the period. The Mut drunkenness rituals were transgressive by design, after all. Bryan points out that the Mut rituals—and similar ones from cultures around the world—were distinguished from social gatherings by the strong emphasis on getting drunk: “The communal drunkenness or extreme drug consumption allows the participants to experience the divine through participation in *behavior that would ordinarily dangerously tempt a loss of civilization (approaching chaos in the Egyptian context)*.”⁴² Isaiah's reaction reflects a strong sense that social boundaries *had* been transgressed, to the point that the Jerusalem leaders' judgment and guidance was profoundly impaired.

There seems to have been a debate about the propriety of such practices even *within Egypt*. In texts from the Ptolemaic period and later, the drunken cult of Mut “is presented as a subject of controversy. There are critics who object strenuously to what they perceive as licentiousness on the part of those who celebrate the rites of the goddess Mut.”⁴³ This is an inference on the part of Jasnow and Smith, on the basis of a repeated, vehement exclamation of the texts, “As for those who have called me evil, Mut will call them evil!”⁴⁴ The speaker also asserts, “Mut is my protection, for I am entrusted to Mut.”⁴⁵ Even in a culture as renowned for its tolerance of religious diversity as ancient Egypt's, the drunkenness festivals dedicated to Mut was (at least in later periods) looked on unfavorably by Egyptians themselves. It is possible that this controversy was a late phenomenon in Egypt, perhaps under Greco-Roman influence, but that would only support the idea that outsiders viewed the orgiastic rituals with revulsion.

4. THE DIVINE WET NURSE: AN EGYPTIAN MOTIF

It might be asked why Mut should be the Divine Wet Nurse (DWN) alluded to in Isa 28:9, rather than some other protective goddess. After all, the next section shows that ceremonies involving ritual breastfeeding were practiced in various places in the ancient Near East. However, a closer and broader look at the DWN motif adds weight to the conclusion that Isa 28:9 refers not only to an Egyptian goddess, but to Mut specifically.

From an iconographic perspective, the DWN is a subset of *kourotrophos* (child-rearer) imagery. (An example of a non-nursing kourotrophic form would be a figure holding a child on the knee.) The DWN image is clearly most at home in Egypt. In her book on the topic, Stephanie Budin concluded that “Egypt is ground zero for Mediterranean and Near Eastern kourotrophic

⁴² Bryan, “Hatshepsut and Cultic Revelries,” 115, emphasis added.

⁴³ Jasnow and Smith, “Mut Will Call Them Evil,” 46.

⁴⁴ *n3 i-ir d bn r-hrwy d Mw. t bn r-rwy*; Jasnow and Smith, “Mut Will Call Them Evil,” 14 (l. 2), 18 (l. 7).

⁴⁵ *Mw.t t3ywy nht.t t3y iwzy hn n Mw.t*; Jasnow and Smith, “Mut Will Call Them Evil,” 18–19 (l. 18).

iconography. It is here that the image has its oldest and longest-lived existence.”⁴⁶ The Egyptian goddess who fulfilled the DWN role depended on the period and the theological predilections of the royalty in power. In that light, there is every reason to think that it was Mut and not another goddess, since she naturally represented the Kushite rulers of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty.

In Egypt, the DWN image most essentially was used to assert that the pharaoh was loved by the gods, and was himself divine.⁴⁷ It was particularly emphasized at three times in his life: 1) in early childhood; 2) at his accession to the throne; and 3) in the afterlife, where it was part of his process of being born into new life. It appears that not only was the pharaoh mythologically portrayed as suckling goddesses at such transitional moments; he may also at times have play-acted the mythology with ritual breastfeeding.⁴⁸

Like many other aspects of Egyptian theology, however, such beliefs and practices were not reserved exclusively for the pharaoh. Indeed, the image is so pervasive in Egyptian culture that a survey of its use must be quite selective. Its earliest textual attestation is the Pyramid Texts from the Old Kingdom (third millennium BCE). Already in the earliest Pyramid Texts—those composed for the pharaoh Unis—it occurs repeatedly (at least twenty-two times by my count), so we have to assume that it was of even greater antiquity, rooted in prehistoric times. From these early texts, we already see the motif associated with numerous goddesses. For example:

“*Isis* will nurture him, Nephthys will suckle him.”
(PT 268/Unis 175)⁴⁹

“Unis’s mother Ipy, give this Unis that breast of yours, that this Unis may transport it to his mouth and this Unis may suck that white, dazzling, sweet milk of yours. Yonder land in which Unis goes, Unis will not thirst in it, Unis will not hunger in it, forever.” (PT 269/Unis 176)

“*Nut* shall give her arms toward him. She of long horn and dangling breast will suckle this Meryre and not wean him.”
(PT 548/Pepi I 495)

“*Selket* has given her arms toward this Pepi and ferried her breast to the mouth of this Pepi. . .” (PT 565/ Pepi I 504)

Even gods could be said to nurse the deceased pharaoh, e.g., PT 41/Unis 29: “Here is the tip of the breast of Horus’s own body:

⁴⁶ S. Budin, *Images of Woman and Child from the Bronze Age: Reconsidering Fertility, Maternity, and Gender in the Ancient World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 35.

⁴⁷ G. Robins, *Women in Ancient Egypt* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1993), 91.

⁴⁸ C.-B. Arnst, “*Naturae imitatio*: Hinweise auf Ritualpraktiken zur Adoption,” in M. Fitzenreiter (ed.), *Genealogie: Realität und Fiktion von Identität; Workshop am 04. und 05. Juni 2004* (London: Golden House, 2005), 165–72.

⁴⁹ For these translations, see J.P. Allen, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts* (WAW, 23; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005).

accept (it) to your mouth: A JUG OF MILK.” This metaphorical use of the imagery with a male subject extended to the human realm as well; for example, in the Middle Kingdom, an army general called himself “a support for old people, a wet-nurse of children.”⁵⁰

One goddess who was associated with DWN imagery and protection early on was Nekhbet, a southern vulture goddess. As the iconography of a Narmer mace head shows, Nekhbet was linked to southern kingship from the earliest recorded history (Fig. 2). Thus she might be seen as a precursor to Mut. Budin argues that the Divine Wet Nurse's link to the southern goddesses was based in the natural realities of the Egyptian landscape:

It is likely that the Divine Wet Nurse had a southern orientation because of conceptual links between the divine milk and the Nile River. Just as the Nile was the life-source for Egypt as a whole. . .so too the milk of the Divine Wet Nurse, as expressed in the inscriptions, gave nourishment and abundance to the king, and literally formed his limbs. The prevalence of the southern goddesses in the early history of this motif (Nekhbet, Mut, Taweret, Anukis), the general absence of specifically northern goddesses early on. . .and the mid- to southern locations of Divine Wet Nurse architectural iconography, all suggest that the ancient Egyptians conceived of their goddess of liquid bounty as closely aligned to the source of the land's liquid bounty.⁵¹

Thus it is essentially Kushite goddesses—those from the land of the Nile headwaters—who are the paradigmatic divine wet-nurses. Nekhbet, too, is found as the DWN in the Pyramid Texts—“Your mother is the great wild cow in the midst of Nekhebt, with white headcloth, wide plumage, and dangling breasts. She will suckle you and not wean you” (PT 412/Teti 228). She is also depicted nursing Sahure (D5) in his tomb complex, while wearing the vulture headdress. The inscriptions accompanying the image read, *nbt pr-wr*, “Mistress of the Divine House,” *nbt ḥ-ntr šm*, “Mistress of the Upper Egyptian Divine Palace,” and *nh w3s nb hyj*, “All life and dominion are by me.”⁵² These statements well encapsulate the DWN ideology of blessing and protection.

In later times, syncretism among goddesses was very prevalent, but different ones took on greater stature in certain periods and contexts. For example, in the New Kingdom, Hathor rose to prominence, especially under the female pharaoh Hatshepsut (r. 1489–69). In one text, Hathor says to Hatshepsut: “I kiss your hand, I lick your flesh, I fill Your Majesty with life and happiness as I have done to my Horus in the nest of Khebt. I have suckled Your Majesty with my breasts.”⁵³ Hathor was commonly portrayed as a cow, emphasizing her lactation, though she was also

⁵⁰ R. Janssen and J.J. Janssen, *Growing Up in Ancient Egypt* (London: Rubicon, 1990), 18.

⁵¹ Budin, *Images of Woman and Child*, 89.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 43–44.

⁵³ B.S. Lesko, *The Great Goddesses of Egypt* (Norman: University of

sometimes syncretized with Nekhbet, the southern vulture goddess.

The Egyptian manifestations of the DWN are countless and diverse, and cannot be surveyed with any comprehensiveness in this context. But even in the midst of the rampant syncretism of goddesses, certain trends may be noted. For example, when Re was linked with Amun in Dynasty 18, Amun's spouse Mut replaced Hathor as wife of the national, high sungod.⁵⁴ Mut saw another surge in prominence under the Twenty-fifth Dynasty. And so in the amuletic image of Mut nursing Nefrukashta, we see the continued manifestation of the southern vulture goddess as DWN across nearly two millennia since the early images of Nekhbet. Above, I noted in passing what I argued elsewhere in greater detail: Mut was the Kushite national mother god, and as such she was the natural one to manifest the DWN motif during the Twenty-fifth Dynasty, the period of Sennacherib's siege.

Despite the fact that by late in Egyptian history, Isis *lactans* became the dominant carrier of the DWN motif,⁵⁵ in the Ptolemaic Temple of Hathor at Dendera, one sees the nursing goddess portrayed with the vulture headdress that was characteristic of the southern goddesses such as Mut (Fig. 3).

Outside of Egypt, the situation was very different. From early Mesopotamia, there are sporadic iconographic attestations of the DWN image, but textual attestations are sparse. One of the earliest is in a broken text by Rim-Sin of Larsa, who toyed with divinizing himself, in which he speaks of nursing a boy.⁵⁶ Later, Marduk may also have been portrayed as offering (and refusing) the breast of his blessing, much like Horus in Egypt, though the text is broken and difficult to interpret.⁵⁷ However,

Oklahoma Press, 1999), 107, citing E. Naville, *Temple of Deir el-Bahari* (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1901) 4:4

⁵⁴ Lesko, *Great Goddesses*, 120.

⁵⁵ F. Dunand, *Isis, mère des dieux* (Paris, Errance, 2000); V.T.T. Tran and Y. Labrecque, *Isis Lactans: Corpus des monuments gréco-romains d'Isis allaitant Harpocrate* (Etudes préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'Empire romain, 37; Leiden, Brill, 1973). Budin objects that "[a]rticles about Egyptian kourtophism generally wind up being about Isis specifically. . . But. . . the early iconography of the Divine Wet Nurse does not pertain to Isis" (Budin, *Images of Woman and Child*, 86).

⁵⁶ W.H. van Soldt, ed., *Letters in the British Museum. Part 2*, (Altbabylonische Briefe in Umschrift und Übersetzung, 13; Leiden: Brill), 53: "Speak to Amurru-tillati: Thus says Rim-Sin. In order to bring light (to) Jamutbalum and to gather its dispersed people the great gods established the foundation of my throne in Kes, the city of my creator. Just as the entire country has heard and rejoiced (about it) and has come and met with me you must also come and meet with me. As soon as you have read my letter come and meet with me. (Then) I will elevate you to high rank. Send me. . . liwwer, a boy whom I had nursed in. . . [rest broken]." I am indebted to Seth Richardson for this reference.

⁵⁷ See E. Matsushima, "Un texte théologique en trois fragments," *Orient* 15 (1979), 5, 9 (ll. 5–6): "whom Marduk has pushed away from his breast and made descend into the *apsi*? (!) *ša ina tulšū Bel iddarsuma*

Enuma Eliš portrayed Marduk in the opposite role, saying of his birth that “He sucked the breasts of goddesses/A nurse reared him and filled him with terror.”⁵⁸ If the divine ruler Marduk was an archetype of the earthly king, this might reflect a DWN mythology akin to Egypt’s, in which the royal heir was seen to suckle the goddesses.

In the Late Bronze Age Levant, the reception of the motif was similarly limited. There is a well-known Ugaritic relief that has been the subject of much reflection, in which a composite goddess suckles two standing male youths, one at each of her breasts (Fig. 4). It remains unclear what specific goddess it represents, if any. The horns and disk atop her head might be an ungainly adaptation of the Hathor headdress, and her curled hairstyle would support the same conclusion. However, her wings would be unusual for an Egyptian goddess, and although Hathor had a very active cult at Byblos, she is unattested at Ugarit. It seems most likely that the image is of a native goddess syncretized with aspects of Hathor.

Ugaritic texts allude to the suckling of Kirtu’s royal heir Yassib, calling him:

<i>ynq . ḥlb a[ṭ]rt</i>	One who will suck the milk of Athirat
<i>mṣṣ . ṭd . btl . [nt]</i>	One who will drain the breasts of the Maiden [Anat]
<i>mṣṣq[ṭ . ilm ...]</i>	The wet-nurses [of the gods (?)]
(KTU ³ 1.15 II 26–28) ⁵⁹	

Since the point of the wider passage is the gods’ blessing of Kirta, and his son’s preparation for kingship, these lines seem to indicate that Ugaritians adopted from Egypt the image of goddesses nursing the royal heir.⁶⁰ Elsewhere, the two minor deities Shahr and Shalim are said to “suck the nipple of the breasts of the Lady” (*ynqm baṣ ḏd ṣt*; KTU³ 1.23:61). Since *ṣt* (‘Lady’) is used for both Anat and Athirat, this text does not help us clarify whether any specific Ugaritic goddess filled the DWN role.

ana aṣṣt uṣṣer[īdu] (based on LKA 71: 5 and dupl. TIM 9 59:5).

⁵⁸ *itinniq-ma ṣerret* ⁴EŠ.DAR.MEŠ/ *taritu ittarrūṣu pulḥāta uṣmalli*; I.85–86; See P. Talon, *The Standard Babylonian Creation Myth: Enuma Eliš* (SAACT, 4; Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2005), 36.

⁵⁹ Anat may also serve as a wet nurse to the offspring of Baal and a heifer in KTU 1.10 iii 26–27. Strikingly, the pharaoh Ramses II called himself *mbr nt*—either “suckling of Anat” or “warrior of Anat”—unfortunately for the sake of clarity, the term could be read in both ways. On all these texts, see N. H. Walls, *The Goddess Anat in Ugaritic Myth* (SBLDS, 135; Atlanta: SBL, 1992), esp. 152–54.

⁶⁰ See H. J. Marsman, *Women in Ugarit and Israel* (Oudtestamentische studiën 49; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 424.

Budin argues that it seems to represent a “universal ‘Great Goddess,’ ” and that if anything one should look to Egypt for her identity.⁶¹

The adoption of the motif in these texts, and of certain Hathoric features in the aforementioned goddess image, would not be surprising in a period during which there was extensive contact between Egypt and the Levantine coast, and ample evidence of Egyptian influence on the coastal cities’ material culture—though in reality the influence cannot have been limited to any one period. As Budin concludes, the LBA Levantine appearances of the DWN in sum derive “directly from the Egyptian,” and are, “in many ways, a continuation of the Egyptian themes.”⁶²

In the Iron Age data, the situation is similar. There are a few visual representations that evoke the widespread Egyptian ones, such as the well-known cow-suckling-calf ivories from Nimrud and Arslan Tash. Most of these nursing images are found within the Mesopotamian sphere, though there is also a Neo-Hittite relief.

In Neo-Assyrian literature, DWN imagery is found primarily in royal oracles. Ištar of Arbela says to Esarhaddon: “I am your great midwife; I am your kind wet-nurse (*mušēniqtaka de`iqtu*)” (SAA IX 1.6:17’–18’). Later, similar words of comfort were issued to Aššurbanipal in Ištar’s name:

You whose mother is Mullissu, have no fear; you whose nursemaid (*tārišsunu*) is the Lady of Arbela, have no fear! I will carry you on my milk like a nurse (*tāriti*). I will put you between my breasts (like) a pomegranate. At night I will stay awake and guard you, in the daytime I give you your milk (*hiḫpaka*). . . . Have no fear, my calf (*muri*) whom I have reared. (SAA IX 7:6)

You were a little one, Assurbanipal, when I left you to the Queen of Nineveh, you were an infant, Assurbanipal, when you sat on the knee of the Queen of Nineveh. Her four teats (*zizū*) are placed in your mouth, two you suck (*tenniq*), two you “milk” (*tahallip*) to your face. (SAA III 13 rev. 6–8)

These texts emphasize protection and comfort for the king and his reign. But unlike in Egypt, there is no indication of an afterlife aspect to the Neo-Assyrian use of DWN imagery. Rather, it is about blessing in this life. Furthermore, these DWN references

⁶¹ Budin, *Images of Woman and Child*, 156–19. Note also the comment of Cornelis Houtman concerning the “Queen of Heaven” in Jer 7, 44: “The question of her identity appears, however, not to be of considerable importance. In the syncretistic world of the first millennium BCE Near East. The title Queen of Heaven was evidently a designation for the universal mother goddess, who according to the time and the place of her worship could have a different character. The use of the goddess’s title without mentioning her proper name may be considered as a symptom of a religious atmosphere in which the qualities of a deity are held to be of more importance than her name.” (C. Houtman, “Queen of Heaven,” DDD², 679).

⁶² Budin, *Images of Woman and Child*, 4.

are again sparse—though, admittedly, so is the corpus of surviving prophetic texts as a whole.

All this is enough to make clear that the DWN was known in the environment of ancient Israel and Judah, but that it had its roots and greatest currency in Egypt. The only other particularly striking occurrences from the Iron Age come from the Neo-Assyrian sphere, and since the Assyrians were the problem in Isa 28, we know that they were not *also* the ones whom the Judahites were seeking for help.

It is thus not a surprise to find Judeans supplicating Mut for protection in this period. As noted in passing above, a significant number of Mut amulets have survived from the Iron Age Levant, found in such locations as Megiddo, Beth-Shean, Beth-Shemesh, and Lachish. These are not, however, native, “Canaanite” forms—those recede already in the Iron IIA.⁶³ Instead, the amulets are Egyptian in form and inscription. Most are not inscribed, but two bear the name Mut. For example, one from Iron IIB Lachish reads: “[words said by] Mut, the lady: [I] give life and protection to the justified.” (no. 24; Fig. 5).⁶⁴

As with the Neo-Assyrian reception, the Iron Age Levantine reception seems to have emphasized the protective aspects of the DWN—protection is the very purpose of the amulets. And given the amulets’ relatively broad distribution, there is no indication that this protection was reserved for royalty.

In sum, if we wanted to ask what sort of deity Isaiah had in mind when he condemned his fellow Judahites as infants just weaned from milk, we might heed Budin’s more overarching judgment: “not only is the kourotrophos motif exceptionally rare in the Levant/Syro-Phoenician context, but. . . *all examples themselves derive from Egyptian prototypes.*”⁶⁵ It was almost certainly an Egyptian goddess—and if so, it can only have been Mut, and it can only have been in a ceremony involving the Kushites.

5. THE RITUALS AND MATERIALS OF NURSING CEREMONIES

Remarkably, it may even be possible to get an idea of the drinking vessels used in the drunkenness rituals of Mut such as those Isaiah condemned. A text from the Third Intermediate Period in Egypt allows a glimpse of another ritual that resonates with Isaiah’s description of the covenant ceremony with Mut. From the eleventh year of Takelot II of Dynasty Twenty-two (ca. 839 BCE), the text is known as The Chronicle of Prince Osorkon (“B”). The Osorkon in question is not to be confused with the numerous pharaohs of the same name during the same general period. This Prince Osorkon called himself “beloved of Mut,”

⁶³ O. Keel and C. Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God in Ancient Israel*, trans. T. H. Trapp (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998), 163–64.

⁶⁴ *mn.t nb(t): dī=(i) ʿnh s3 (n) m3 ʿhrw*. This is no. 24 in C. Herrmann, *Ägyptische Amulette aus Palästina/Israel: Mit einem Ausblick auf ihre Rezeption durch das Alte Testament* (OBO, 138; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag; Göttingen: Vandenoek & Ruprecht 1994), 118.

⁶⁵ Budin, *Images of Woman and Child*, 183; emphasis added.

and seems to have spent his life seeking to succeed his father on the throne; the text reflects the political unrest of the period. Ultimately Prince Osorkon did not succeed, but the chronicle records his comings and goings from the capital city of Thebes and tries to present him positively. One passage reads as follows:

(25) . . . *ḡḡf m-ḥmꜣs [m] ḥ rp.t nṯr.w imy.nꜣs m ršw šspꜣf [mn]d.tyꜣs
n.w dꜣmw snḡḡf m irt.tꜣs [ḡḡsn nꜣf] m 'nh w3s dꜣs nꜣf (26) [qn(i)ꜣs
n]ḥt.nꜣs*

(25) He entered within it (i.e., Thebes) [as] the child of the Maiden,⁶⁶ while the gods who were within it rejoiced as he received her breasts of electrum, suckling her milk so that it enter[ed into him] as life and dominion, while she gave to him (26) [her valor and] her victories.⁶⁷

The text depicts Osorkon, the aspiring king, entering the city in triumph and receiving its blessings by drinking from a vessel shaped like breasts (or perhaps a cult statue; see below) and made of electrum, an alloy of gold and silver. In light of the Egyptian references to the king's being nursed by the goddess upon taking the throne, this is clearly an attempted coronation ritual, or at least a flagrant act of self-aggrandizement by the prince.

The ritual use of breastfeeding is reasonably well-known in Egypt,⁶⁸ but a coronation ritual is not the same as a covenant ritual. What reason is there to think that similar ritual actions might have been adapted to such a use?

In the first place, the common Akkadian word *tulū(m)*, “breast,” is also a term used for a vessel in the Mesopotamian sphere. The *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* describes these vaguely, as “a spout or funnel,”⁶⁹ but the more recent study by Michaël Guichard adds further data and simply calls them “vessels in the form of breasts.”⁷⁰ From Mari come reports of multiple *tulūm* vessels made of silver and gold, and decorated with nipples⁷¹—sounding rather like the electrum model used by Prince Osorkon. One *tulūm*-vessel was dedicated by Zimri-Lim to the

⁶⁶ Ritner says that “the Maiden” (*rp.t*) is a term for Thebes itself.

⁶⁷ R.K. Ritner, *The Libyan Anarchy: Inscriptions from Egypt's Third Intermediate Period* (WAW, 21; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009), 351, 354.

⁶⁸ “The bodily processes of gestation, birth, and breastfeeding were the basis of some elite cultural formulations in visual culture and ritual activities.” C. Riggs, “Body,” *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*, accessed online 4/16/15: <https://uee.ats.ucla.edu/articles/body/?x=77&y=12>.

⁶⁹ CAD T, 469. Similarly, *AHW* (1369) simply gives “Schale.”

⁷⁰ M. Guichard, *La vaisselle de luxe des rois de Mari* (ARM 31; Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les civilisations, 2005), 324. I am indebted to Jacob Lauinger for calling my attention to this volume.

⁷¹ Earlier, Jean-Marie Durand opined that the *tulū* were probably large cups or vases with open tops, though his reasoning seems less than airtight: “Une alliance matrimoniale entre un marchand Assyrien de Kanesh et un marchand Mariote,” in W.H. van Soldt (ed.), *Veenhof Anniversary Volume: Studies Presented to Klaas R. Veenhof on the Occasion of his Sixty-fifth Birthday* (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 2001), 125.

goddess Annunītum at the beginning of his reign (ca. 1775 BCE). The tradition appears to have been long-running, since a similar vessel was dedicated to Nanna by Ibbi-Sin of Ur (r. 2026–2003).⁷² “It is striking,” Guichard writes, “that these vases ‘in the form of breasts’ always appear in pairs. The religious function of this type of vase is underlined by the fact that it seems to have been important to offer to the goddess. . . at the moment one attained the throne.”⁷³ It seems sensible to infer that the practice of symbolically drinking from the breasts of the goddess was sometimes carried out upon a coronation in Mari, as at times in Egypt.

Going a bit farther, it appears that ritual breastfeeding was not merely a general act of seeking blessings and protection from a goddess, but was in certain contexts specifically a symbol of covenant-making. To wit: The phrase “holding breasts” appears as part of a list of forbidden covenanting activities in the Vassal Treaties of Esarhaddon:

If you should come into contact with perpetrators of insurrection. . . You shall not take a mutually binding oath with (any)one who installs (statues of) gods in order to conclude a treaty before gods, (be it) by sett[ing] a table, by drinking from a cup, by kindling a fire, by water, by oil, or by holding breasts (*šibit tulê*), but you shall come and report to Ashurbanipal. . . (SAA 2.6:155, p. 35)

The phrase *šibit tulê* was explained by Wiseman (and adopted in the *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary*) as “(an oath performed by) touching the breast (of the partner).”⁷⁴ That interpretation appears to be mistaken, however. One obvious problem with it is that *tulû(m)* seemingly always refers to the *female* breast, and most commonly in nursing contexts.⁷⁵ I am not aware of any text in which *šibit tulê* appears that offers a narrative clarification of what it meant, nor am I aware of any iconographic representation of treaty-partners in the pose Wiseman suggested.

In light of this data, I suggest that *šibit tulê* instead describes the relationship between the parties in an alliance: the more powerful ruler is imagined as the one who suckled the less powerful, as the gods might. Kinship language for political relationships was the norm in the ancient Near East,⁷⁶ and although this lan-

⁷² Guichard, *La Vaiselle de luxe*, 140. See ARM 10 52:5: *aššum tulê burāšim sa DN. . . ana nadanim ul ritum* “about the golden breasts for Anunītu. . . the *sangûm*-priest. . . said, ‘It is not yet proper to present them, because the throne of the goddess must be built (first).’” Here one might also note the Sumero-Akkadian hymn that refers to Nanna’s “heavy breasts” and associates her with Ištar: E. Reiner, “A Sumero-Akkadian Hymn of Nanâ,” *JNES* 33 (1974), 233.

⁷³ Guichard, *La Vaiselle de luxe*, 324. Author’s translation.

⁷⁴ CAD S, 165 (*šibtu* B, 7b).

⁷⁵ CAD T, 467–69.

⁷⁶ J.D. Schloen, *House of the Father as Fact and Symbol: Patrimonialism in Ugarit and the Ancient Near East* (Studies in the Archaeology and History of the Levant 2; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2001), *passim*.

guage of course tended toward naturalistic adherence to the gender of the parties, there were certain exceptions to that rule (as we saw above with Horus, Rim-Sin, and even an Egyptian general).

Additionally, since ancient Near Eastern treaties were flexible depending on the balance of power between the parties, it is possible that kings of equal stature could be seen as mutually suckling the breasts of a protective goddess. Many of the mamiform vessels in question can only have been intended for two people to drink at once.⁷⁷

In either case, it is notable that “holding breasts” occurs in a list that includes a number of more or less culinary activities: “sett[ing] a table, by drinking from a cup, by kindling a fire.” This inclines us to think that the consumption of drink was intended. In light of this revised understanding, I suggest translating *šibit tulê* with the more technical “latching onto the breast.”

Although goddess worshipers in the Iron Age Levant may not have used precious metals as the Egyptian and Mari rulers did, material culture gives some indication that they knew of ritual practices of this type. I am aware of at least two unusual pottery vessels that could be taken to reflect a cultic practice of ritual breastfeeding. The more overt one is an Iron I anthropomorphic libation vessel from the temple precinct of Philistine Tell Qasile (Fig. 6), which has drinking holes where the nipples would be.⁷⁸ It was deemed by David Ben-Shlomo to have Canaanite (as opposed to Philistine) features.⁷⁹ The second is thought to be from the orbit of Jerusalem itself: a double-lobed pottery form from Khirbet Qeiyafa that excavators also described as a libation vessel (Fig. 7).⁸⁰ Some reserve is warranted, but presumably these items served uncommon, cultic purposes; indeed, they seem impractical for quotidian usage. Although the vessels with pierced breasts are uncommon forms, Mazar noted the prevalence of female forms among anthropomorphic vessels found in Bronze and Iron Age Palestine, and in Late Bronze Age Crete and Mycenae.

The cultic use of these vessels is strongly indicated not only by the aforementioned texts but by the best-preserved cultic item of which I am aware, the so-called “Lady of Galera,” a statue of Phoenician workmanship dated to the eighth century BCE (Figs.

See also C.R. Chapman, “‘Oh That You Were Like a Brother to Me, One Who Had Nursed at My Mother’s Breasts’: Breast Milk as a Kinship-Forging Substance,” *JHS* 12 (2012), 1–45.

⁷⁷ Yosef Garfinkel, personal communication.

⁷⁸ A. Mazar, *Excavations at Tell Qasile, Part 1: The Philistine Sanctuary: Architecture and Cult Objects* (Qedem 12; Jerusalem: Institute of Archaeology, Hebrew University of Jerusalem Press, 1980), 78–81. Note also the other kourtophic figurines from Qasile published by Mazar, “Excavations at Tell Qasile, 1982–1984: Preliminary Report,” *IEJ* 36 (1986), 12–14.

⁷⁹ D. Ben-Shlomo, *Philistine Iconography: A Wealth of Style and Symbolism* (OBO 241; Fribourg: Academic Press, 2010), 55–57.

⁸⁰ Y. Garfinkel, S. Ganor and M. Hasel, *Footsteps of King David in the Valley of Elab* (Tel Aviv: Yedioth Ahronoth), fig. 30 (Hebrew).

7–8). The 18.5 cm-high statue portrays a goddess seated on a throne incorporating human-headed, winged “sphinxes” wearing the double crown of Egypt, and has a top hole into which liquids can be poured, after which they run out through the breasts into a basin. It appears to have served its cultic purpose for as much as two centuries before being buried as grave goods in a late fifth century BCE tomb.⁸¹ The goddess cannot be conclusively identified, but the Egyptian influence (not only in the crowned sphinxes, but in the figure’s hair and dress) is clear. This cherubim-enthroned goddess beautifully illustrates the sort of direct competition to YHWH that Mut also represented in her own time and place.

The analogous vessels from the Levant, then, were almost certainly used to pour libations in ceremonies supplicating a goddess’s blessing and protection, the liquid pouring from the breast openings symbolizing her bounty. Was it wine, assisting the participants in achieving inebriation? Or perhaps the liquid was milk, as the Chronicle of Prince Osorkon (“B”) suggests. Christina Riggs notes that in Egypt, “[w]omen’s procreative ability meant that breast milk and the urine of pregnant women were used in predictive magic and medical diagnoses.”⁸² And during the Third Intermediate period, the cult of Mut certainly involved milk; for example a Twenty-fifth Dynasty stela from Medinet Habu (Cairo JdE 36410) shows the king offering vessels of milk to Amun and Mut.⁸³ The stela is dated to the reign of Taharqo. Ritual use of milk would not preclude drunkenness in the same event.

Despite the Egyptian influence apparent in some of these objects, the examples of breast-shaped vessels in fairly diverse locations and periods means that not all are all attributable to Egyptian influence. The absence of such libation vessels in Israel and Judah during the biblical period is consistent with the thesis that Isa 28 viewed breastfeeding rituals in the covenant with Mut and the Kushites as a heterodox and foreign practice.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The foregoing adds weight to Henry Aubin’s argument that military intervention by the Kushites played a major role in Jerusalem’s survival in 701. The Twenty-fifth Dynasty came to the Judahites’ aid, and it is highly likely they did so under the auspices of a pact sealed by religious rituals. We can now say much more about those rituals. After briefly reviewing the data for Mut as

⁸¹ M. Almagro-Gorbea, “La diosa de Galera, fuente de aceite perfumado,” *Archivo Español de Arqueología* 82 (2009), 7–30; J.M. Blázquez, *Tartessos y los inicios de la colonización fenicia en Occidente* (Acta Salmanticensia 85; Salamanca: Universidad de Salamanca, 1975); R. Olmos, “La dama de Galera (Granada). La apropiación sacerdotal de un modelo divino,” in J. Pereira et al. (eds.), *La necrópolis ibérica de Galera (Granada): La colección del Museo Arqueológico Nacional* (Madrid: Ministerio de Cultura, 2004), 213–37; P.J. Riis, “La estatuilla de alabastro de Galera,” *Cuadernos de Historia Primitiva* 5 (1950), 113–21.

⁸² Riggs, “Body”.

⁸³ Ritner, *The Libyan Anarchy*, 511.

the referent of the “covenant with death” in Isa 28, this article extended the argument about the covenant ritual between Judah and Egypt in light of analogous rituals of supplication for Mut that took place within Egypt. A survey of the occurrences of the Divine Wet Nurse motif throughout the ancient Near East showed that it was overwhelmingly derived from Egypt, and that for the Twenty-fifth Dynasty, the goddess to manifest it would have been Mut. Finally, it was shown that texts attest to breast-shaped vessels that were dedicated to goddesses and had religious purposes, and that certain mammiform vessels from the Iron Age Levant reflect a similar usage.

As the foregoing indicates, there is more assurance than ever that Isa 28 is not the nearly incoherent, redactional mish-mash that it was once taken to be,⁸⁴ nor even a particularly fanciful ideological reshaping on the part of the prophet. From native Egyptian texts, we have records of cultic rituals for Mut that are quite similar to the ones recounted in the Bible. The simplest conclusion is that Isaiah ben Amoz had direct knowledge of them.

Although the need for military aid from the Kushites was surely the primary motivating factor in the Judahites’ pursuit of a “covenant with Mut,” it brought them into contact with a manifestation of an ancient religious idea that was eminently characteristic of the times. Indeed, the Divine Wet Nurse should be counted among the enduring religious tropes that are deeply embedded in human desires and have spanned different religions through history. It endured through later strata of the book of Isaiah and into the Odes of Solomon, the New Testament, and beyond.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ E.g., D.L. Petersen, “Isaiah 28: A Redaction-Critical Study” in P.J. Achtemeier (ed.), *SBL 1979 Seminar Papers*, Vol. 2 (SBL.SP, 17/2; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1979), 101–22.

⁸⁵ Odes 8 and 19; Isa 49:15; 60:16; 66:11–13; cf. Gen 49:25; 1 Cor 3:1–3; 1 Thess 2:5–8. For discussion, see C.B. Hays, “‘Can a Woman Forget Her Nursing Child?’ The Divine Wet Nurse and the God of Israel,” in C. Cornell (ed.), *God and the Gods: The Problem of YHWH’s Ancient Look-alikes* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns; Penn State University Press, 2019), *forthcoming*.



Figure 1. Silver amulet from El-Kurru showing the Kushite queen Nefrukakasha suckling at the breast of Mut (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston 24.928).

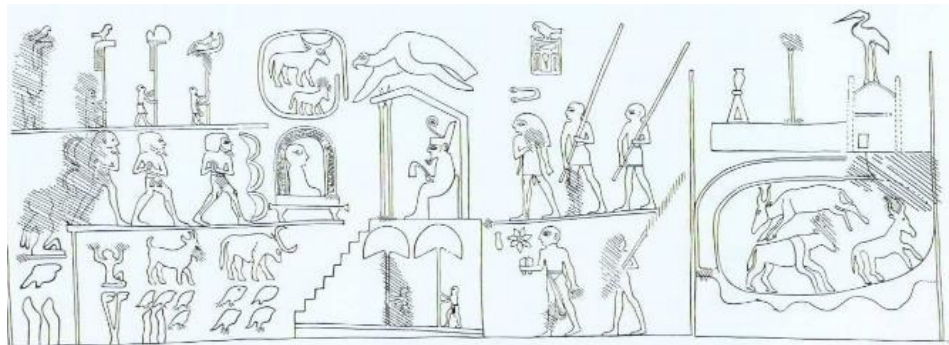


Figure 2. Narmer mace head with Nekhbet, top center. Source: <https://www.narmer.org/inscription/0080>.



Figure 3. Hathor with vulture headdress from Dendera.



Figure 4. Kourotrophic goddess from Ugarit. Detail from carved ivory bed panel (RS 16.056+28.031). Drawing by J.-P. Lange. From Marguerite Yon, *The Royal City of Ugarit on the Tell of Ras Shamra* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 136.

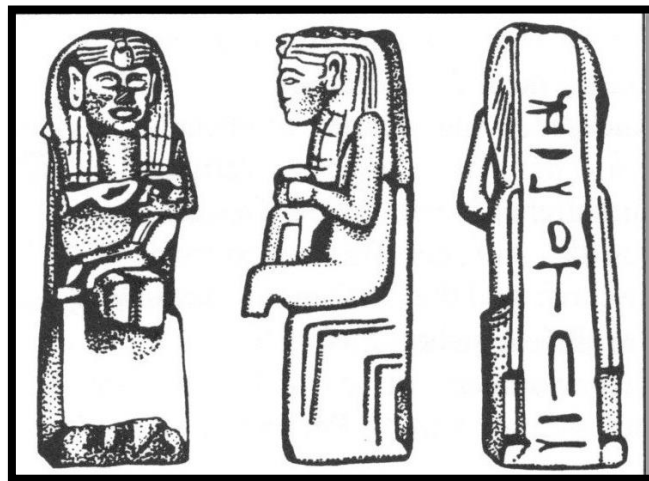


Figure 5. Egyptian-style amulet from Iron IIB Lachish. No. 24 in C. Herrmann, *Ägyptische Amulette aus Palästina/Israel: Mit einem Ausblick auf ihre Rezeption durch das Alte Testament* (OBO, 138; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag; Göttingen: Vandenoek & Ruprecht 1994), 118.



Figure 6. *Statuette from Philistine Tel Qasile. A. Mazur, Excavations at Tell Qasile, Part 1: The Philistine Sanctuary: Architecture and Cult Objects (Qedem 12; Jerusalem: Institute of Archaeology, Hebrew University of Jerusalem Press, 1980), 78–81.*



Figure 7. *Libation vessel from Khirbet Qeiyafa. Y. Garfinkel, S. Ganor and M. Hasel, Footsteps of King David in the Valley of Elah (Tel Aviv: Yedioth Ahronoth), fig. 30 (Hebrew).*



Figure 8. The “Lady of Galera” Luis García [GFDL (<http://www.gnu.org/copyleft/fdl.html>) or CC-BY-SA-3.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>)], via Wikimedia Commons.



Figure 9. The “Lady of Galera” By Relanzón, Santiago (photo) [CC BY-SA 4.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>)], via Wikimedia Commons.

SENNACHERIB'S DEPARTURE AND THE PRINCIPLE OF LAPLACE

JEREMY POPE

THE COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY

THE SOCIAL LOCATION OF A NUBIOLOGIST

“Any study that accents the effect of social location on interpretation must embrace critical analysis of itself and its own social location(s).”

Paul Evans¹

The sheet is now torn and smudged, but my penciled note is still legible nearly two decades later: “He was celebrated by later authors as a military general, though for dubious reasons: he suffered the most devastating military losses to the Assyrians. See 2 Kgs 18:21, Adams 1977:264, Grimal 1992:346–347, Goossens 1947.”² This comment upon the reign of the Kushite pharaoh Taharqo is found in my notes for a lecture that I delivered to undergraduates at Johns Hopkins University in the year 2000. At the time, I was a graduate teaching assistant for a survey course entitled, “Africa to 1800,” and a doctoral student in the Department of History specializing in the modern Sudan and Sahara; the note thus predates my entry into Hopkins’s separate doctoral program in Near Eastern Studies, long before I had even begun

Throughout this article, I have substituted the more neutral term *departure* instead of *retreat* in order to refrain from any *a priori* assumption that Sennacherib’s army withdrew “from enemy forces as a result of their superior power or after a defeat.” The term *retreat* does not require this meaning, but it has acquired this implication across its history of use in military contexts (C.A. Lindberg [ed.], *The Oxford American College Dictionary* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2002], 1158).

¹ P.S. Evans, “History in the Eye of the Beholder? Social Location and Allegations of Racial/Colonial Biases in Reconstructions of Sennacherib’s Invasion of Judah,” *JHS* 12 (2012), 1–25 (24).

² The author-date references given in my lecture note point to W.Y. Adams, *Nubia: Corridor to Africa* (London: Allen Lane, 1977), 264; N.-C. Grimal, *A History of Ancient Egypt* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1992), 346–347; G. Goossens, “Taharqa le conquérant,” *ChrEg* 22/44 (1947), 239–244.

research for an eventual monograph on Taharqo's domestic policy³ and an invited chapter on Kushite foreign policy.⁴ The citations to Adams, Grimal, and Goossens within this lecture note suggest that I raised the enigma of Taharqo's fame, not to defend it, but merely as an ironic comment upon the distortive potential of Classical memory: William Adams and Nicolas Grimal both judged Taharqo a military failure, and Godefroy Goossens explained the Greek image of "Taharqa le conquérant" as a confused and mythic conflation with the feats of other kings. Such was my earliest recorded impression of the Kushite pharaoh at the close of the twentieth century.

Henry Aubin's book, *The Rescue of Jerusalem*, opens with a similar description of his own social location before he began research for the project: he is a journalist who first investigated the Kushite past to find inspirational reading material for his adopted son of African descent.⁵ Likewise, all three extensive reviews of the book published by university scholars within the past decade have highlighted the effect of social location upon interpretation as one of the central issues raised by *The Rescue of Jerusalem*.⁶ In the pages that follow, I will not attempt a survey of the various social locations of other scholars who have contributed to the multidisciplinary and multinational discussion of Sennacherib's departure; those issues merit a book-length treatment of their own. Yet my analysis of Aubin's book here also cannot pretend to interpret the evidence uncontaminated by my own social location, as if speaking with the unassailable "voice of the universe."⁷ Readers should judge for themselves whether my evaluation of ancient Kush has been affected by my racial, national, and gender categorizations as a white American male; to address the effects of my disciplinary affiliation, I will attempt to lay all cards of which I am aware immediately upon the table.⁸

³ J. Pope, *The Double Kingdom under Taharqo: Studies in the History of Kush and Egypt c. 690–664 BC* (Boston: Brill, 2014).

⁴ J. Pope, "Beyond the Broken Reed: Kushite Intervention and the Limits of *l'histoire événementielle*," in I. Kalimi and S.F.C. Richardson (eds.), *Sennacherib at the Gates of Jerusalem: Story, History and Historiography* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 105–160.

⁵ H.T. Aubin, *The Rescue of Jerusalem: The Alliance between Hebrews and Africans in 701 BC* (New York: Soho Press, 2002), xv.

⁶ G. Rice, review of H.T. Aubin, *The Rescue of Jerusalem*, *JRT* 57–58 (2001–2005), 181–92 (183–84, 189–90, 192); A.O. Bellis, "The Rescue of Jerusalem from the Assyrians in 701 B.C.E. by the Cushites," in K.L. Noll and B. Schramm (eds.), *Raising Up a Faithful Exegete: Essays in Honor of Richard D. Nelson* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2010), 247–59 (250–51, 256–57); Evans, "History in the Eye of the Beholder?"

⁷ For the phrase, see esp. K.A. Appiah's comments in *Herskovits at the Heart of Blackness*, directed by Llewellyn Smith, Christine Herbes-Sommers, and Vincent Brown (Berkeley: California Newsreel, 2009), DVD.

⁸ For still other forms of substantive distraction that may affect interpretation of ancient Nubia during the twenty-first century, see S. MacEachern, "African Models in Global Histories," in S. Wynne-Jones and J. Fleisher (eds.), *Theory in Africa, Africa in Theory: Locating Meaning in Archaeology* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 19–37 (26–31); idem,

My view of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty has naturally evolved through research since I first lectured on the subject in 2000 — though perhaps not in obvious or predictable ways. A casual reader might be tempted to assume that Nubiologists like myself would consistently incline toward historical theories that exalt Kush's importance in world history — either as a cynical appeal for research funds, as an indirect means of elevating our own positions within the academy, or as a result of our working relationships with the modern Sudanese. Such boosterism is a legitimate concern: as Egyptologist John Baines has cautioned, we must be wary of “the tendency of many scholars to identify with the societies they study. . .and to write in partisan fashion.”⁹ However, as a rejoinder to this concern we must acknowledge an empiricist critique of postmodern historiography: Paul Evans opines that “the evidences available to historians” will ideally “serve as controls in guiding the range of historical reconstructions.”¹⁰ For instance, the evidence marshaled in my own book downgrades earlier estimates of Taharqo's achievements in Lower Nubia and his hegemony in Lower Egypt.¹¹ It is true that the sources can only testify when the historian calls them to do so,¹² but there are still limits to what they may be coached to say before a discerning jury.

There is also an irony in the assumption that Nubiologists would naturally favor Aubin's arguments, for one of his central claims is that recent and current Nubiologists have failed to adequately highlight Kush's importance to the events of 701 BCE.¹³ If this charge proves justified, it will cast a harsh light upon that lecture that I delivered at Johns Hopkins in 2000. For Nubiologists assessing *The Rescue of Jerusalem*, any partisanship we may feel toward the society we study is therefore pitted against whatever partisanship we may feel toward our academic guild; the two biases do not necessarily cancel one another out, but their opposition in this case should caution against any attempt to predict historical interpretation as a simple function of the historian's social location.

An equally distracting force that may incline Nubiologists like myself against grand historical theories of Kush's global importance is the backlash of extremist critique that has repeatedly

“Where in Africa does Africa start? Identity, genetics and African studies from the Sahara to Darfur,” *JSA* 7/3 (2007), 393–412 (406–7).

⁹ J. Baines, “The Aims and Methods of *Black Athena*,” in M.R. Lefkowitz and G.M. Rogers (eds.), *Black Athena Revisited* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 27–48 (35).

¹⁰ Evans, “History in the Eye of the Beholder,” 4.

¹¹ Pope, *Double Kingdom*, 153–181, 257–274.

¹² As famously articulated by E.H. Carr, *What Is History?* (New York: Vintage, 1961), 9.

¹³ Aubin does not charge *any* recent or current Nubiologists with racial biases that have influenced their interpretations of 701 BCE; instead he asserts that recent and current Nubiologists have too readily accepted the interpretations of their intellectual predecessors. Aubin, *Rescue*, xvii, 182–83, 227, 233–34, 249–50, 264–65, 284; idem, “Has Racism Skewed Scholars' View of Kush?”

followed such theories across the discipline's history. Claims made by Jean-François Champollion and George Hoskins that Kush was the source of Egyptian and even Graeco-Roman culture were repudiated in the middle of the nineteenth century by Richard Lepsius's peremptory counter that Kushite civilization was instead a degraded copy of Egyptian civilization.¹⁴ That Lepsiusian paradigm then hindered our understanding of Kushite cultural phenomena for at least the next century;¹⁵ the tawdry glitter of Classical myth imparted to Kush a reputation as a "graceless fiction,"¹⁶ and this image has yielded only very slowly and incompletely to newer infusions of empirical evidence. Again in the late twentieth century, Bruce Williams's theory that A-Group Nubia's "lost pharaohs" might have preceded the ascendance of Egypt was widely criticized in part because its proposals had been magnified to hyper-diffusionist grandiosity in the North American press, radically polarizing discussions of ancient cultural entanglement and continuity.¹⁷ The polemics that have repeatedly surrounded ancient Kush help to explain László

¹⁴ J.-F. Champollion, "Notice sommaire sur l'histoire d'Égypte, rédigée à Alexandrie pour le vice-roi, et remise à son altesse le 29 Novembre 1829," in H. Hartleben (ed.), *Lettres et Journaux de Champollion le Jeune* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1909), 427–28; G.A. Hoskins, *Travels in Ethiopia above the Second Cataract of the Nile* (London: Longman et al., 1835), v, 72–84; see also M. Russell, *Nubia and Abyssinia* (New York: Harper, 1833), 7–8, 28–30, 139–40. Cf. K.R. Lepsius, *Briefe aus Aegypten, Aethiopien, und der Halbinsel des Sinai* (Berlin: Hertz, 1852), 267; B. Taylor, "The Negro Race," *The Cleveland Herald* 95 (21 April 1852), column B; idem, *Life and Landscapes from Egypt to the Negro Kingdoms of the White Nile*, (London: Sampson Low, 1856), 229–37; R.G. Morkot, "George Hoskins, *Travels in Ethiopia* and the History of Meroe," in D. Fortenberry (ed.), *Souvenirs and New Ideas: Travel and Collecting in Egypt and the Near East* (Oxford: Oxbow, 2013), 98–118.

¹⁵ L. Török, " 'Nubians Move from the Margins to the Center of Their History': The Study of the Kingdom of Kush before and after the *Fontes Historiae Nubiorum*," in P. Steiner, A. Tsakos, and E.H. Seland (eds.), *From the Fjords to the Nile: Essays in Honour of Richard Holton Pierce on His 80th Birthday* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2018), 1–18.

¹⁶ W.L. Hansberry, "A Preliminary Critique of Classical Sources," in J.E. Harris (ed.), *William Leo Hansberry African History Notebook*, Vol. 2 (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1981), 27.

¹⁷ B.B. Williams, "The Lost Pharaohs of Nubia," *Archaeology* 33 (1980), 14–21; B. Rensberger, "Ancient Nubian Artifacts Yield Evidence of Earliest Monarchy," *New York Times* (01 March 1979), A1, A16; W.Y. Adams, "Doubts about the Lost Pharaohs," *JNES* 44 (1985), 185–92; B.B. Williams, "Forebears of Menes in Nubia: Myth or Reality?," *JNES* 46 (1987), 15–26; N. Glazer, "The Rediscovery of Nubia and Kush," in idem, *We Are All Multiculturalists Now* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 57–77 (71, 166–67 n. 11). For more recent discussions of cultural entanglement and continuity, see S.T. Smith, *Wretched Kush: Ethnic Identities and Boundaries in Egypt's Nubian Empire* (London: Routledge, 2003); W.P. Van Pelt, "Revising Egypto-Nubian Relations in New Kingdom Lower Nubia: From Egyptianization to Cultural Entanglement," *CAJ* 23/3 (2013), 523–50; M.C. Gatto, "Cultural Entanglement at the Dawn of the Egyptian History: A View from the Nile First Cataract Region," *Origini: Prehistory and Protohistory of*

Török's assertion in 1998 that "students of Nubian history and culture should be relieved rather than offended" by those few occasions when Kush has escaped public controversy.¹⁸

The publication of *The Rescue of Jerusalem* in 2002 offered to bring Kush once again into the limelight, because Aubin's thesis was unmistakably grand: he proposed nothing less than the deliverance of "Western civilization's most holy city" and the eventual emergence of the "three great monotheistic religions" as the results of a Kushite military intervention during a "watershed in the history of humanity."¹⁹ In order to assess the plausibility of this scenario, Aubin's use of evidence and logic must be carefully distinguished from the observed and anticipated effects of the book's popular reception.

701 BCE: WHAT EXACTLY HAS AUBIN PROPOSED?

Reviews of *The Rescue of Jerusalem* immediately painted its thesis in bold colors. According to the *Montreal Review of Books*, Aubin has credited the ancient Kushites with a "rout of Sennacherib's army" in 701 BCE, and Toronto's *Globe and Mail* announced that Taharqo "conquered the powerful armies of Sennacherib."²⁰ Paul Evans's review published here in the pages of the *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* in 2012 also attributed to Aubin the argument that "the Cushites were victorious over Sennacherib's forces" in a "second battle" after Eltekeh.²¹ The *Toronto Star* was only slightly more circumspect, explaining that the Assyrians of Aubin's story retreated from Jerusalem "knowing they would be thumped" by Kushite armies.²² The grand consequences described by Aubin above are thus coupled in these reviews with an equally grand cause: a Kushite military victory over the mighty Assyrians.

Ancient Civilizations 36 (2014), 93–123; S.K. Doll, "The Royal Mortuary Cult at Nuri, 593–431 BC," *JARCE* 50 (2014), 191–219 (218–19).

¹⁸ L. Török, "A Periphery on the Periphery of the Ancient World? Ancient Nubia in Six New Books on the Middle Nile Region," *SO* 73 (1998), 205 n. 9.

¹⁹ The first of these phrases is quoted from Aubin's brief summary of the book in: H.T. Aubin, "The outcome of Prince Taharqa's military expedition to Judah in 701 BCE," in W. Godlewski and A. Łatjar (eds.), *Between the Cataracts: Proceedings of the 11th Conference for Nubian Studies, Warsaw University, 27 August – 2 September 2006, Part Two: Session Papers*, fasc. 2 (Warsaw: Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology, 2008), 477–82 (481). The second of these phrases appeared in an anonymous review of H.T. Aubin, *The Rescue of Jerusalem*, *Kirkus Reviews* 70/3 (1 Feb 2002), 152, summarizing the emphases of Aubin, *Rescue*, 269–85. The third phrase derives from Aubin, *Rescue*, 21, echoing the judgment of W. McNeill, "Infectious Alternatives," *MHQ: The Quarterly Journal of Military History* 10/3 (Spring 1998), 80.

²⁰ M. Heffernan, "Proto Holy Wars," (review of H.T. Aubin, *The Rescue of Jerusalem*), *Montreal Review of Books* (2002), 20; M. Posner, "The Day the Muslims Saved the Jews," (review of H.T. Aubin, *The Rescue of Jerusalem*), *Toronto Globe and Mail* (29 June 2002), F6.

²¹ Evans, "History in the Eye of the Beholder?," 19.

²² R. Csillag, "Digging Up News in History," (review of H.T. Aubin, *The Rescue of Jerusalem*), *Toronto Star* (13 July 2002), L14.

It may therefore surprise readers to discover the following conclusion stated plainly in the book itself:

No evidence exists that [Egypt's Kushite dynasty] obtained a military 'victory' in the conventional sense of the word. It achieved something better. . . The negotiated settlement gave Egypt the two things it needed: security and commercial access to Khor. It also spared Egypt the need to lay down in the region an onerous military and economic infrastructure. For the pharaoh, a stalemate meant a de facto victory.²³

The Rescue of Jerusalem did not credit the Kushite armies with a rout, a conquest, a victory in battle, or even an imminent thumping, but instead with a "stalemate" resulting in "negotiated settlement"; in Aubin's own telling, grand consequences for world history issued from a rather undramatic cause.

This thesis does not appear to be contradicted anywhere in the book; in fact, the point was then reiterated for emphasis in a later chapter:

I have been careful so far as to avoid suggesting that the Kushite-Egyptian success took the form of an outright (as distinct from de facto) "victory" or "triumph": such terms would assume that after the clash at Eltekeh a major battle (or battles) took place that produced a decisive victory for the pharaonic army.²⁴

Aubin argued specifically that "because of the Assyrian strategy of deploying forces in several areas simultaneously and partly because of the Jerusalemites' success in limiting their besiegers' access to water," an army led by the Kushite general Taharqo²⁵ was

²³ Aubin, *Rescue*, 152. A military victory by the Kushites has been proposed by several other authors (see Table 1 below), including Egyptologist Donald Redford, but Aubin has explicitly disputed those theories: D.B. Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 353; cf. Aubin, *Rescue*, 128–129. For one reason why historians should at least hesitate to assume an outright Kushite conquest of the more populous Assyrians, see n. 170 below; even so, it must be acknowledged that the Twenty-fifth Dynasty enjoyed access also to more numerous *Egyptian* troops, especially those of Upper Egypt.

²⁴ Aubin, *Rescue*, 189.

²⁵ For Taharqo's proleptic appearance as "king of Kush" in 2 Kgs 19:9, see: F. Yurco, "Sennacherib's Third Campaign and the Coregency of Shabaka and Shebitku," *Serapis* 6 (1980), 221–40 (223); K.A. Kitchen, *Third Intermediate Period in Egypt (1100–650 BC)* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1986), 160. His age in 701 BCE is no obstacle; he was at least twenty years old in 701 BCE, and new interpretations would suggest that he could have been considerably older: see n. 131 below. Shea's attempt to explain Taharqo's presence in 2 Kings as proof of a second Assyrian campaign against Jerusalem after 701 BCE relies in part upon Redford's hypothesis that the conflict mentioned in stela Cheikh Labib 94 CL 1013 pitted Taharqo against Sennacherib; however, the stela does not bear any of Taharqo's nomina, and Revez's more detailed study has dated the stela at least one century earlier. W.H.

able to move upon a “modest contingent” of the Assyrians at Jerusalem “sometime well after Eltekeh”; “rather than fight, the Assyrians and their opponents agreed to an arrangement whereby Judah remained viable, although this kingdom shrank in size and paid a heavy penalty to Assyria.”²⁶ Instead of an imminent Kushite thumping of Assyria’s main forces, Aubin described a strategic Kushite advance upon a small Assyrian detachment, an advance that combined with Hezekiah’s defensive maneuvers to nudge Sennacherib’s scattered forces toward a diplomatic solution. Aubin’s proposal was no hedge; in fact, it anticipated Jeremy Black’s call for military historians to focus upon “political tasking” as an improvement over zero-sum analyses of warfare.²⁷ Recognizing some subtlety to Aubin’s thesis, Queen’s University historian Donald Akenson therefore assures the reader: “This is no *Black Athena* headcase.”²⁸ Wary Nubiologists may find little comfort in this remark, for the book has already been distorted for both public and scholarly consumption by the other reviewers quoted above. Yet the more substantive purpose of distinguishing the book’s content from its reception is to clarify the actual claim that Aubin’s evidence and logic were intended to support.

To then identify the novelty of Aubin’s intervention, let us review those few points of evidence that were beyond dispute prior to the publication of *The Rescue of Jerusalem*. There would appear to be a scholarly consensus that Kushite-ruled Egypt had forged an alliance with either Judah, Ekron, or both, in anticipation of the Assyrian invasion of 701 BCE.²⁹ Though it is conceivable that the Kushite royal house could have initiated such

Shea, “Jerusalem under Siege: Did Sennacherib Attack Twice?” *BAR* 25 (1999), 36–44, 64; D.B. Redford, “Taharqa in Western Asia and Libya,” *Erlsr* 24 (1994), 188–91; cf. J. Revez, “Une stèle inédite de la troisième période intermédiaire à Karnak: une guerre civile en thébaïde?” *Cahiers de Karnak* 11 (2003), 535–65, pls. I–IV. For further critique of Shea’s hypothesis, see D. Kahn, “Tirhakah, King of Kush and Sennacherib,” *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections* 6/1 (2014), 29–41 (31–33).

²⁶ Aubin, *Rescue*, 189–90.

²⁷ J. Black, *Rethinking Military History* (London: Routledge, 2004), 128–31.

²⁸ D.H. Akenson, “Did Africa Save Monotheism?” (review of H.T. Aubin, *The Rescue of Jerusalem*), *Globe and Mail* (UK) (01 June 2002), D11. Rawn has analogized Aubin’s *Rescue* to vol. 1 of *Black Athena*, but Aubin criticized Bernal’s theses as “highly speculative.” A. Rawn, review of H.T. Aubin, *The Rescue of Jerusalem*, *The Armchair Classicist: Newsletter and Journal of the Northwest Society for Classical Studies* 5/8 (2002), 9–11 (9); Aubin, *Rescue*, 359 n. 46.

²⁹ Ekron’s appeal to Egypt and “Meluhha” (Kush) is recorded in the Rassam Cylinder: British Museum 22503, ll. 43–45, in K.A. Grayson and J. Novotny, *The Royal Inscriptions of Sennacherib, King of Assyria (704–681 BC), Part 1* (The Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period, 3/1; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2012), 64. Judah’s appeal to Egypt is recorded in 2 Kgs 18:21–24 and possibly also as a rhetorical foil to Yahwistic faith in Isa 18:1–7, 30:1–7, 31:1–3. M.H. Lavik, *A People Tall and Smooth-Skinned: The Rhetoric of Isaiah 18* (Leiden: Brill,

an alliance and actively fomented rebellion, the only surviving evidence describes instead Levantine appeals to Egypt, never the reverse.³⁰ That Egypt under the Twenty-fifth Dynasty chose to honor that alliance with the commitment of troops is demonstrated by the appearance in Sennacherib's annals of an Egyptian army with Kushite charioteers at Eltekeh.³¹ While the immediate outcome of that battle is disputed by historians, several long-term effects are uncontroversial. Archaeological, iconographic, and textual evidence attest to the utter devastation of the Judahite Shephelah but simultaneously to the survival of Judah's capital, Jerusalem.³² From the inhabitants of Jerusalem, only palace women and singers were deported; the town's elites were not executed; and Hezekiah was allowed to retain his throne after sending to Sennacherib a heavy indemnity.³³ In this regard, the Assyrian punishment of Jerusalem was considerably milder than that of contemporaneous Ashkelon and Ekron, as well as that of Samaria two decades earlier.³⁴ Scholars have also agreed that Sennacherib did not advance beyond Egypt's eastern delta, as

2007), 5, 17–22, 81–83, 96–99; P.M. Cook, *A Sign and a Wonder: The Redactional Formation of Isaiah 18–20* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 51–66. For the still heterodox assertion that Egypt's alliance was only with Ekron and not with Judah, see E.A. Knauf, "701: Sennacherib at the Berezina," in L.L. Grabbe (ed.), "Like a Bird in a Cage:" *The Invasion of Sennacherib in 701 BCE* (LHBOTS, 363; ESHM, 4; London: Sheffield Academic, 2003), 141–49 (149 n. 23); W. Mayer, "Sennacherib's Campaign of 701 BCE: The Assyrian View," in *ibid.*, 168–200.

³⁰ See discussion and references in Pope, "Beyond the Broken Reed," 137.

³¹ British Museum 22503 (Rassam Cylinder), ll. 43–45, in Grayson and Novotny, *Royal Inscriptions of Sennacherib*, 64–65.

³² For archaeological evidence, see A.G. Vaughn, *Theology, History, and Archaeology in the Chroniclers' Account of Hezekiah* (SBLABS 4; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999), 22–34, 42–44, 46–47, 55, 58, 72–73, 79; A. Faust, "Settlement and Demography in Seventh-Century Judah and the Extent and Intensity of Sennacherib's Campaign," *PEQ* 140/3 (2003), 168–194 (169–170); I. Finkelstein and N. Na'aman, "The Judahite Shephelah in the Late 8th and Early 7th Centuries BCE," *TA* 31 (2004), 60–79. For iconographic evidence, see Sennacherib's Southwest Palace, Room XXXVI, Slabs 5–13, British Museum images WAA 124906–8, 124911, and WAA Or. Dr. I 58–62 in J.M. Russell, *Sennacherib's Palace without Rival at Nineveh* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 3, 164, 200–207, 253, figs. 3, 84, 108–13, 130. For textual evidence, see British Museum 22503 (Rassam Cylinder), ll. 49–58, in Grayson and Novotny, *Royal Inscriptions of Sennacherib*, 65–66; 2 Kgs 18:13–19:36, and perhaps Isa 1:8.

³³ British Museum 22503 (Rassam Cylinder), ll. 52–58, in Grayson and Novotny, *Royal Inscriptions of Sennacherib*, 65–66; 2 Kgs 18:14–16.

³⁴ British Museum 22503 (Rassam Cylinder), ll. 39–40, 46–47, 58, in Grayson and Novotny, *Royal Inscriptions of Sennacherib*, 64–66; Nimrud Prism D of Sargon II, ll. 25–48, in C.J. Gadd, "Inscribed Prisms of Sargon II from Nimrud," *Iraq* 16/2 (1954), 173–201 (179–80, pls. XLV–XLVI); Khorsabad annals of Sargon II, ll. 10–17, and Sargon II's Great Display Inscription at Khorsabad, ll. 23–25, in A. Fuchs, *Die Inschriften Sargons II. aus Khorsabad* (Göttingen: Cuvillier Verlag, 1994), 87–88, 196–97, 313–14, 344.

neither the Hebrew Bible, the Assyrian annals, nor even Herodotus claim as much.³⁵ In fact, for the next twenty years, Assyrian records do not boast of any attempt to invade either Judah or Egypt, just as Egyptian and Kushite records do not claim any invasion of Judah or Assyria.³⁶ During this span, Assyria received some payments from Ekron and possibly Judah,³⁷ and the Kushite royal house received from the Levant “Asiatic copper,” Lebanese cedar, and viticulturists drawn from the “Mentyu-nomads of Asia.”³⁸ It would therefore seem that both Jerusalem and Egypt avoided their respective worst-case scenarios; at the very least, we may conclude that the actions taken by the Kushite royal house during Sennacherib’s third campaign did not prevent the maintenance of dynastic continuity in Judah, Egypt, and Kush, or the development of commerce between those three regions across the two decades that followed.³⁹

The showpiece of Aubin’s intervention in 2002 was his claim that those actions taken by the Kushite royal house *directly contributed to* the positive outcomes subsequently enjoyed by Judah and Egypt: he views the Kushite role as “essential,” because he believes that the Assyrian withdrawal “would not have occurred without it.”⁴⁰ Yet this theory is by no means new: very similar interpretations had already been advanced by at least thirty-four different authors before *The Rescue of Jerusalem* was published—including several biblicists and macrohistorians, as well as four Egyptologists and four Assyriologists (Table 1).

³⁵ Herodotus (*Hist.* 2.141). For Pelusium’s position within the political map of the era, see Yurco, “Sennacherib’s Third Campaign,” 235; W.R. Gallagher, *Sennacherib’s Campaign to Judah: New Studies* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 250; J.D. Stanley, M.P. Bernasconi, 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), 451–62 (453 fig. 2A–B).

³⁶ For the relevant Egyptian and Kushite records, see Pope, “Beyond the Broken Reed,” 115–130.

³⁷ British Museum K 1295, ll. 5–6, British Museum 50776, l. 1(?), British Museum 98548, ll. 1–3, in: F.M. Fales and J.N. Postgate, *Imperial Administrative Records, Part II: Provincial and Military Administration* (State Archives of Assyria XI; Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1995), 30 no. 33, 42 no. 50; M. Cogan, *Bound for Exile: Israelites and Judeans under Imperial Yoke* (Jerusalem: Carta, 2013), 112–14. British Museum K 1295 and British Museum 50776 (both mentioning payment from Judah) must be treated with caution, however, as neither bears a date.

³⁸ For copper and cedar, see references in Pope, “Beyond the Broken Reed,” 119.

³⁹ Wilkinson’s judgment that the Kushite alliance with Judah and/or Ekron was “disastrous” could only be justified empirically if the invasions of Egypt by Esarhaddon in 671 BCE and by Assurbanipal in 667 and 663 BCE were deemed retaliation for Kush’s intervention against Sennacherib in 701 BCE—*post hoc ergo propter hoc*. T. Wilkinson, *The Rise and Fall of Ancient Egypt* (New York: Random House, 2011), 407. See also Pope, “Beyond the Broken Reed,” 133–35.

⁴⁰ Aubin, “Has Racism Skewed Scholars’ View of Kush?” 2 n. 6, 9.

Table 1: Authors endorsing either the Kushite rescue theory or hybrid rescue theory. Italicized names are my own additions to Aubin's list, with references given in n. 42

date	author	explanation of 701 BCE			
		rescue		hybrid rescue	
		battle	report	battle	report
c. 1200	Radak (Rabbi David Kimhi)		•		
1551	John Calvin			Pelusium	•
1606	<i>Juan de Pineda</i>			<i>Pelusium</i>	
1705	Simon Patrick				•
1730	William Lowth		•		
1776	<i>Christian Friedrich Preiss</i>	Jerusalem			
1785	<i>Johann David Michaelis</i>				•
1793	A.H.L. Heeren		•		
1812	<i>José Antonio Aponte</i>	?	?		
1816	<i>Prince Saunders</i>		•		
1835	George Hoskins	Jerusalem			
1843	Heinrich von Ewald			Pelusium	•
1847	John Gardner Wilkinson	Palestine			
1854	Isaac Mayer Wise			Pelusium	•
1860	William Bevan	Pelusium			
1867	Henry Constable			?	
1871	Philip Smith	Pelusium			
1872	Eberhard Schrader			Eltekeh	
1872	William Graham Sumner				•
1874	Malbim (Meier Loeb ben Jehiel Michael)		•		
1874	Edward Strachey			Pelusium	
1876	William Ricketts Cooper		•		
1901	Lewis Bayles Paton				•
1908	John Edgar McFayden				•
1911	Amos Kidder Fiske	Pelusium ?			
1911	A.H. Sayce			Eltekeh	
1916	<i>Monroe Nathan Work</i>	?	?		
1924	D.D. Luckenbill	Eltekeh			
1978	Chaim Herzog & Mordechai Gichon				•
1980	Frank Yurco				•
1989	D.J. Wiseman			Eltekeh	
1991	William Hamilton Barnes				•
1992	Donald Redford			Eltekeh	
2002	H.T. Aubin				•

Most of these names were provided by Aubin himself in his 2002 book or subsequently in his 2015 article;⁴¹ I have inserted six additional authors in italics to illustrate the wide array of social locations (national, ethnic, and linguistic) from which this theory had been proposed.⁴² As indicated here in Table 1, these authors differ according to whether they considered the Kushites singlehandedly responsible for the survival of Jerusalem (in Aubin's terms, the Kushite "rescue theory") or only partially responsible alongside other factors like Hezekiah's defensive maneuvers (the "hybrid rescue theory" that is favored by Aubin himself⁴³). The list of thirty-four is further subdivided between those who opined that Sennacherib changed the ambitions of his campaign due to the report of Taharqo's approach (as Aubin believes) and others who viewed the Assyrian departure as a direct result of military confrontation by the Kushites—whether at Jerusalem, Pelusium, Eltekeh, or an undisclosed location. Across eight centuries of historiography, it would seem that fewer than ten scholars have posited an outright Kushite conquest of the Assyrians, while three (Calvin, Schrader, and Luckenbill) have deemed their military intervention against the Assyrians a stalemate, but all of the authors shown in Table 1 have credited the Kushite decision to honor their alliance with

⁴¹ Aubin, *Rescue*; Aubin, "Has Racism Skewed Scholars' View of Kush?"

⁴² J. de Pineda, *Los Treynnta Libros de la Monarchia Ecclesiastica o Historia Universal del Mundo* (Barcelona: Iayme Cendrat, 1606), 210; C.F. Preiss, *De causa cladis Assyriorum* (Göttingen: Litteris Barmeieri, 1776), 47–48; J.D. Michaelis, *Deutsche Uebersetzung des Alten Testaments mit Anmerkungen für Ungelehrte: Der zwölftte Theil, welcher die Bücher der Könige und Chronik enthält* (Göttingen: Verlag der Wittwe Vandenhoeck, 1785), 131–32. (For Preiss and Michaelis, cf. Aubin, "Has Racism Skewed Scholars' View of Kush?," 67 n. 280). Laboratoria de Desclasificación Comparada, *Anales de Desclasificación, Vol. 1: La derrota del área cultural n° 2* (Santiago: Laboratoria de Desclasificación Comparada, 2006), 736 (Lám. XLIVb); P. Saunders, *Haitian Papers* (London: Reed, 1816), 219; M.N. Work, "The Passing Tradition and the African Civilization," *JNH* 1/1 (1916), 37–38. This footnote is not the appropriate place for an exposition of each author's position, so readers are welcome to contact me for details. For Aponte's context, see A. Ferrer, *Freedom's Mirror: Cuba and Haiti in the Age of Revolution* (New York: Cambridge, 2014), 303 n. 70. I thank Ada Ferrer of New York University for her generous assistance: personal communication 11 November 2016. *Pace* Stephan Palmié, the conclusion stated in the deposition transcript that "Sanaquerin" was "derrotado por el ángel" appears to have been voiced by the interrogator José María Nerey, not by José Antonio Aponte himself: S. Palmié, *Wizards & Scientists: Explorations in Afro-Cuban Modernity and Tradition* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 118–20. For Saunders's elusive source material, see: L. F. Maffly-Kipp, *Setting Down the Sacred Past: African-American Race Histories* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 305–6 n. 12. I have been unable to find any basis for the attempts of many nineteenth-century authors to attribute similar views to Jose ben-Halafta (*Seder Olam Rabbah*), Bishop James Ussher, and Sir John Marsham.

⁴³ Aubin, "Has Racism Skewed Scholars' View of Kush?" 3–4, 6, 9.

Judah and/or Ekron as an important factor behind Jerusalem's survival.

The true novelty of Aubin's intervention, therefore, lies not in his causal argument about Sennacherib's withdrawal but rather in his lengthy exposition of that argument and its long-term implications: remarkably, of the thirty-four authors who had endorsed either the rescue theory or the hybrid rescue theory prior to Aubin, none had explained in detail the evidence for *and against* those two theories, and only two proponents (Archibald Sayce and Monroe Nathan Work) had joined those theories with any emphasis upon the exceptional importance of 701 BCE to the much longer histories of Jerusalem and global Judaism. In Sayce's case, this emphasis was severely mitigated by the inconsistency of his position and the obscurity of the publication in question.⁴⁴ Monroe Nathan Work, for his part, had even less impact upon the academic *communis opinio* about Sennacherib's third campaign: the historical publications of this African American sociologist during the Jim Crow era seem to have passed unnoticed by his contemporaries in Assyriology, biblical studies, Egyptology, and Nubiology. Thus, whether or not we agree with Aubin's proposed scenario for Sennacherib's departure, it must be acknowledged at the outset that his 2002 book has now elicited in 2019 the first sustained and multidisciplinary evaluation of the Kushite rescue theory and hybrid rescue theory, both of which had already been circulating in scholarly literature for several centuries.

THE PRINCIPLE OF LAPLACE

Based upon the evidence that was available before the book's publication in 2002, Aubin supported his argument for the hybrid rescue theory along six principal lines. First, he used the Stade-Childs interpretation of 2 Kings as a merger of three separate sources (A, B1, and B2) to argue that scribal insertion of B2's theological *longueur* had effectively obscured the causal linkage intended by the author(s) of B1; if the proposed B2 strand were removed in order to reintegrate the disconnected pericopes of B1, YHWH's promise that Sennacherib "will hear a report and return to his own country" and the B1 strand's subsequent explanation that "he received a report about Tirhakah" would be followed immediately by the statement that Sennacherib then "broke camp and left."⁴⁵ Second, Aubin inferred the

⁴⁴ A.H. Sayce, "Introductory Note," in Y. P. Artin, *England in the Sudan* (London: Macmillan, 1911), ix. The similar wording of Sayce's and Work's assessments would nevertheless suggest that the latter may have consulted the former: Work, "Passing Tradition," 37–38. For Sayce's inconsistency, see Aubin, *Rescue*, 254, 261–63; idem, "Has Racism Skewed Scholars' View of Kush?" 50–51.

⁴⁵ 2 Kgs 19:7, 36. Aubin, *Rescue*, 132–38; idem, "Outcome," 478–79. For an alternative interpretation of 2 Kgs, see D. Kahn, *Sennacherib's Campaign against Judah: A Source Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, *forthcoming*), Chapter 7 and Appendix A. I thank Dan'el Kahn for generously sharing his book manuscript with me: personal communication 27 October 2016.

importance of Kushite and Egyptian troops to the Assyrian departure by observing that both the Hebrew Bible and Herodotus's account use military imagery to depict an Assyrian withdrawal.⁴⁶ Third, he argued for a negotiated settlement between Assyria, Judah, and Kushite-ruled Egypt by noting the latter's continued access to Levantine products during the first quarter of the seventh century BCE and the increased use in Judah of commercial weights bearing Egyptian hieratic numerals over the same period; a photograph of these inscribed weights is not shown in Aubin's book or in the volume by Kletter that he cites, so I have provided here a photograph showing two such weights found during excavations at Tel Malhata (Fig. 1).⁴⁷ Fourth, Aubin supported his proposal that Sennacherib would choose to negotiate rather than continue to fight by demonstrating the military achievements of Egypt under Kushite rule—most notably, their successful repulse of Assyrian forces during Esarhaddon's attempted invasion in March of 673 BCE.⁴⁸ In his fifth argument, Aubin proposed the importance of Kushites to Jerusalem's survival in 701 BCE by reinterpreting later biblical passages as favorable portrayals of Kush.⁴⁹ Finally, he turned upside down

⁴⁶ Aubin, *Rescue*, 139–44; idem, “Outcome,” 479. Aubin's use of Herodotus in this context may prove irrelevant if Herodotus was actually referring in garbled fashion to the Egyptians' defeat of Assyria in 673 BCE, for which see n. 48 below. For the conflation of foreign kings in Herodotus's *Histories*, see n. 112 below.

⁴⁷ Aubin, *Rescue*, 149–57; idem, “Outcome,” 480. For the examples shown here in Fig. 1, see also discussion in R. Kletter, “Chapter 8: Scale Weights,” in I. Beit-Arieh and L. Freud (eds.), *Tel Malhata: A Central City in the Biblical Negev*, vol. 2 (Monograph Series of the Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University 32; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2015), 528–44. Judah's adaptation of Egyptian units is reflected most clearly in two facts: (1) So many of the inscribed stones found in Judah correspond to a weight of eight Judahite shekels, an amount equivalent to one ancient Egyptian *dbn*. Such weights were inscribed with the Egyptian hieratic numeral for “ten” (sometimes rotated as shown here in Fig. 1), because the ancient Egyptian *dbn* was equivalent to ten ancient Egyptian *qdt*. The use of Egyptian *qdt* measures is particularly evident in the heavier weights, where twenty-four and forty shekel weights were consistently marked with the Egyptian hieratic numerals for thirty and fifty *qdt*, respectively. (2) The Egyptian hieratic writing of the šs-sign appears to have been used by Judahite scribes in order to produce a phonetic abbreviation for the Semitic word “shekel.” When this sign was juxtaposed with the Egyptian hieratic numeral for “ten,” however, it did not convey that the stone weighed ten shekels but rather ten *qdt* (=eight shekels). As Kletter explains: “The duality of the numerals. . . probably caused fewer headaches to the Judaeans than to modern scholars.” R. Kletter, *Economic Keystones: The Weight System of the Kingdom of Judah* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 118–22.

⁴⁸ Aubin, *Rescue*, 157–63; idem, “Outcome,” 480. For the invasion, see references in Pope, “Beyond the Broken Reed,” 110 n. 18. For the date of March 673 BCE (rather than 674 as posited by Aubin), see D. Kahn, “Taharqa, King of Kush and the Assyrians,” *Journal of the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities* 31 (2004), 109–28 (111, 122).

⁴⁹ Aubin, *Rescue*, 164–79. For a more recent and extensive treatment

the widespread view that the Rab-shakeh accurately likens the Twenty-fifth Dynasty's army to a "broken reed." Aubin argued that the biblical writer presents the Rab-shakeh as referring to that army and YHWH in parallel terms: the Assyrian in the same breath mocks each as unreliable (2 Kgs 18:21-22). Since Jerusalem eventually survived, Aubin concluded that — according to the narrative's logic — not only YHWH but the foreign army must have been reliable indeed.

Yet Aubin was unable to supply the proverbial "smoking gun" —namely, any explicit and unambiguous Hebrew, cuneiform, hieroglyphic, or hieratic testimony to either the "negotiated settlement" or its proposed causes.⁵⁰ In a review of the book published in the *Journal of Military History*, Jacob Kovel, Professor of Construction Management at Central Connecticut State University, summarizes the problem as follows:

Unfortunately, the supporting evidence is mostly a reinterpretation of existing material. The author asks readers to accept his interpretation of the limited source material rather than previous interpretations, while offering no compelling reasons to make the switch. Can his interpretation be correct? Certainly, but more evidence is required if it is to supplant previous interpretations.⁵¹

This is a fair criticism: while the book did marshal several pieces of published evidence that had never previously been used to support the hybrid rescue theory, it did not offer the new archaeological or textual evidence that we ancient historians most desire.

Unfortunately, however, Kovel's presentation of the stakes and epistemology of ancient historical research lends itself to substantial misinterpretation by unwary readers. "Limited source material" is quite the norm for the first millennium BCE, so ancient historians must often resign ourselves to *supplementing*, rather than completely "supplanting," previous interpretations. The issue at stake is not whether Aubin's theory should wholly replace alternative explanations and thereby close debate, but whether it meets the standard for prominent inclusion within future scholarly discussions of 701 BCE. Kovel also constructs a false dichotomy between the hybrid rescue theory and "previous interpretations," when in fact the hybrid rescue theory has long been one of those previous interpretations (see again Table 1); the more accurate dichotomy would instead oppose Aubin's interpretation to what Kovel terms elsewhere in his review the

of these and other biblical verses related to the Kushites, see R.S. Sadler, Jr., *Can a Cushite Change His Skin? An Examination of Race, Ethnicity, and Othering in the Hebrew Bible* (New York: T&T Clark, 2005).

⁵⁰ 2 Kings yields such an account only if one accepts Stade's and Childs's reconstruction of the B¹ strand.

⁵¹ J. Kovel, review of H.T. Aubin, *The Rescue of Jerusalem*, *JMH* 67/1 (January 2003), 217–18 (218).

“current mainstream theories.”⁵² Yet the most problematic aspect of Kovel’s assessment is his implication that historians should default to those current mainstream theories in the absence of new empirical evidence, thereby requiring that new theories (or, in Aubin’s case, reinvigorated theories) meet a higher standard of proof than that used to evaluate current mainstream theories.

In the natural and physical sciences, this assumption is known as the “Principle of Laplace,” often glossed with the axiom that “extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence.”⁵³ The standard of “extraordinary” may indeed be appropriate in nomothetic disciplines such as physics and astronomy, but most professional historians abandoned long ago the search for a universal set of laws governing causality across the human past.⁵⁴ In the case of Sennacherib’s departure, it is by no means clear how the standard of extraordinary should be defined. Would a negotiated settlement between Assyria, Judah, and Kushite-ruled Egypt constitute a more extraordinary resolution to their military conflict than the current mainstream theories positing an epidemic of disease, an undocumented Babylonian rebellion, or Sennacherib’s merciful acceptance of Hezekiah’s surrender? A more rigorous method would instead assess each competing theory by a uniform epistemological standard according to their use of logic and evidence, without granting exemption to any theory on the basis of substantive distractions such as recency or popularity. Aubin gave his own assessment of the current mainstream theories in his 2002 book;⁵⁵ I will now offer some further points about each, many of which were not raised by Aubin. However, one further dimension of my own social location deserves emphasis here: *hindsight*. Seventeen rather eventful years have passed since the publication of *The Rescue of Jerusalem*, so the

⁵² Grouping Aubin’s hybrid rescue theory together with “pre-critical” interpretations would not render this dichotomy any more serviceable, because the great majority of biblicists and theologians supporting the rescue theory and hybrid rescue theory did so long after Thomas Hobbes’s and Jean Astruc’s critical interventions in biblical studies: T. Hobbes, *Leviathan* (London: Andrew Crooke, 1651); J. Astruc, *Conjectures sur les mémoires originaux* (Brussels: Fricx, 1753). Source critical approaches were not adopted simultaneously in Classical Studies, Hebrew Bible Studies, Egyptology, and Assyriology, so any attempt to periodize multidisciplinary theories about Jerusalem according to pre-critical and critical eras would be highly problematic. I thank Heath Dewrell of Princeton Theological Seminary for his consultation on 26 September 2016. Also perceptively categorizing Aubin’s thesis as not revisionist but instead “counter-revisionist” is L. Raphael, “A Black-Jewish Alliance That Worked,” *The Jerusalem Report* (13 January 2003), 49.

⁵³ P.-S. Laplace, *Théorie analytique des probabilités* (Paris: Courcier, 1814), xii.

⁵⁴ The literature on this issue is enormous, but one useful starting point is E. Breisach, *Historiography: Ancient, Medieval, and Modern* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 280–84.

⁵⁵ Aubin, *Rescue*, 117–31, 180–86; see also Aubin, “Outcome,” 477–78.

remarks that follow will no longer review the book itself but instead the relative merits of current mainstream theories, the Kushite rescue theory, and the hybrid rescue theory in light of recent research that was unavailable to Aubin in 2002.

Given the popularity of the epidemic disease theory, a source critical analysis of its origins would seem long overdue. The argument that Sennacherib retreated after a pestilential outbreak has frequently been cited to the Hebrew Bible—not only by journalists reviewing Aubin’s book, but also by biblicists Lewis Bayles Paton and Barry Levy, as well as by macrohistorian William McNeill.⁵⁶ Yet the Hebrew Bible contains no such assertion: the only agents given explicitly by the Hebrew Bible for Sennacherib’s retreat are an unspecified “spirit” רוּחַ (Isa 37:7) and a violent “angel/messenger of YHWH” מַלְאֲכַי יְהוָה (2 Kgs 19:35).⁵⁷ For his part, Aubin cited the first century CE historian Flavius Josephus as an early exponent of the epidemic theory, while Classicist/Egyptologist Alan Lloyd, biblicist Edwin Yamauchi, and Egyptologist Donald Redford have traced that theory to the Babylonian historian Berossus of the third century BCE.⁵⁸ If the attribution to Berossus proves justified, it would give the epidemic theory a more reliable source pedigree than Aubin has acknowledged—not only because Berossus was a native Mesopotamian⁵⁹ living four centuries before Josephus who did not share the latter’s theological program, but particularly because Berossus could read cuneiform and appears to have had access to Babylonian royal chronicles that he seems to have been reluctant to embellish.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Raphael, “Black-Jewish Alliance,” 49. L.B. Paton, *The Early History of Syria and Palestine* (New York: C. Scribner’s Sons, 1901), 260. B. Levy, “How an African Army Saved Jerusalem,” *Montreal Gazette* (01 June 2002), G1-G2 (G2); W.H. McNeill, “Infectious Alternatives: The Plague That Saved Jerusalem, 701 B.C.,” in R. Cowley (ed.), *What If? The World’s Foremost Military Historians Imagine What Might Have Been* (New York: Putnam, 1999), 1–12 (9). This chapter by McNeill is an extended version of his *MHQ* article of the same title cited in note 19 above.

⁵⁷ For the ambiguity of the term in 2 Kings, see the comments of Levy, “How an African Army Saved Jerusalem,” G2. The plague imagery used elsewhere in Zec 14:12–19 is, of course, explicitly directed against *Egypt* and generically against all who would threaten Jerusalem; there is no reason to assume that it referred to Sennacherib’s campaign in 701 BCE.

⁵⁸ Aubin, *Rescue*, 243; A.B. Lloyd, *Herodotus Book II: Commentary 99–182* (Leiden: Brill, 1988), 103–4; E.M. Yamauchi, *Africa and the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 124; D.B. Redford, *From Slave to Pharaoh: The Black Experience of Ancient Egypt* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 92.

⁵⁹ Josephus, *C. Ap.* 1.129 = T3; J. Dillery, *Clio’s Other Sons: Berossus and Manetho* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2015), ix.

⁶⁰ G.P. Verbrugghe and J.M. Wickersham, *Berossus and Manetho, Introduced and Translated: Native Traditions in Ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 8 n. 6; 26; R. Drews, “The Babylonian Chronicles and Berossus,” *Iraq* 37/1 (1975), 39–55 (50–55).

It is therefore worthwhile to examine the Berossus attribution more closely. The discrepancy between competing attributions to Berossus and Josephus arises from the fact that Berossus's *Babyloniaca* is known only through quotations and paraphrases by later authors,⁶¹ including an allusion to Berossus within Josephus's analysis of 701 BCE (FGH 680 7a). The Assyrians' alleged retreat as a result of "plague" (λοιμός) is first mentioned in *Ant.* 10.18–19 as part of Josephus's explanation of the Herodotean claim (*Hist.* 2.141) that Sennacherib had invaded Egypt only to be repulsed by a nocturnal rodent infestation.⁶² Josephus (10.20) then states that Berossus also mentioned Sennacherib but reported that he "campaigned against Asia" (according to Codex Regius Parisinus and Codex Oxoniensis) or "against Asia and Egypt" (according to all other variants). Most of the Greek codices (excepting only Laurentianus V) then include the phrase "he says the following," but no identifiable quotation follows in any of the surviving manuscripts. Begg and Spilsbury have therefore concurred with Niese and Marcus that "a quotation from Berossus has fallen out of the text of Josephus at this point," after which "Josephus resumes the thread of his main story line." Yet even in that sentence presumably used by Josephus to resume his narrative thread (10.21), only the Latin version commissioned by Cassiodorus reminds the reader that Sennacherib's armies were "in danger from a plague," and it is only with the following sentence that all of the Greek codices of Josephus's work declare unanimously that "God inflicted a pestilent disease upon his army during the first night of the siege that destroyed 185,000 [men] along with their leaders and military officers."⁶³ In this way, Josephus combines Herodotus's story of a nocturnal rodent infestation with the 2 Kings account of Assyrian casualties.

The epidemic theory is thus stated first by Josephus (10.18) during his own interpretation of Herodotus's account and then again by Josephus after he has resumed his narrative thread (10.21),⁶⁴ but it does not appear in any direct attribution to Berossus, much less in a quotation from Berossus. It would appear

⁶¹ Dillery, *Clio's Other Sons*, x–xi.

⁶² The problems with interpreting Herodotus's mice as a metaphor for disease have been exposed by many authors and will not be rehearsed here. See Aubin, *Rescue*, 121; idem, "Outcome," 478. For similar critiques postdating Aubin's *Rescue*, see L.L. Grabbe, "Of Mice and Dead Men: Herodotus 2.141 and Sennacherib's Campaign in 701 BCE," in idem, *Like a Bird in a Cage*, 119–140 (136); P.S. Evans, *The Invasion of Sennacherib in the Book of Kings: A Source-Critical and Rhetorical Study of 2 Kings 18–19* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 183 n. 75; D. Kahn, "The War of Sennacherib Against Egypt as Described by Herodotus II 141," *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections* 6/2 (2014), 23–33 (27).

⁶³ C.T. Begg and P. Spilsbury, *Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary, Volume 5: Judean Antiquities Books 8–10* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 211–12, nn. 81–84.

⁶⁴ In Josephus's *War* 5.388, no such rationalization of the 2 Kings "angel" is even attempted: L.H. Feldman, "Josephus' Liberties in Interpreting the Bible in the *Jewish War* and in the *Antiquities*," *JSQ* 8/4 (2001), 309–25 (319).

that Josephus has instead invoked Berossus as a corrective to Herodotus, in order to assert that Sennacherib campaigned against not only Egypt but also Asia during his third campaign (10.19–20).⁶⁵ The epidemic theory *might* have come from Berossus himself, but the surviving manuscripts do not provide evidence for that attribution.⁶⁶ Given Josephus's well-known penchant for proposing disease as a causal factor behind other episodes of his historical narrative,⁶⁷ the explanation of Sennacherib's retreat as a result of disease is best attributed to Josephus in the first century CE, not to any Babylonian archival document consulted by Berossus centuries earlier.

Beyond its Josephan origin, there are additional weaknesses of the epidemic theory that deserve attention. Yurco, Lloyd, Barnes, and McNeill all circumvented the admittedly problematic assumption of an "ethnically specific epidemic (applying only to Assyrians)"⁶⁸ by proposing instead that Hezekiah's efforts to either "tamper" with or to "stop the waters of the fountains" had forced the besieging Assyrians to drink contaminated water.⁶⁹ However, in recent years, an increasing number of scholars have questioned whether a true siege ever took place at all, since the verbiage of the Assyrian annals appears to denote instead a *blockade*, "an encirclement of the urban site by a line of *birati*, 'forts, fortified structures,' which forestalled any attempted breaking out through the perimeter, even though it was theoretically possible for the locals to come out of the *abullu* ('city-gate'), e.g., for parleys with the Assyrian commanding officers such as the ones recorded in the Biblical accounts."⁷⁰ If Assyrian forces were stationed at such distance from the city in a fortified perimeter, rather than concentrated for siege warfare outside its gates, then Hezekiah's manipulation of Jerusalem's water supplies is unlikely to have effected their demise. The impersonal nature of

⁶⁵ Dillery, *Clio's Other Sons*, 269–70. See also E. Nodet, *Les Antiquités Juives, Volume V: Livres X et XI* (Paris: Cerf, 2010), 8 n. 4.

⁶⁶ I thank John Dillery of the University of Virginia for confirming my reading of the Berossus reference: personal communication 07 December 2016.

⁶⁷ S.S. Kottke, *Medicine and Hygiene in the Works of Flavius Josephus* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 151–57.

⁶⁸ Akenson, "Did Africa Save Monotheism?" D11.

⁶⁹ 2 Chr 32:3–4; Yurco, "Sennacherib's Third Campaign," 235; Lloyd, *Herodotus Book II*, 104; W.H. Barnes, *Studies in the Chronology of the Divided Monarchy of Israel* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991), 120 n. 136; McNeill, "Infectious Alternatives" (1999 version), 9–10.

⁷⁰ F.M. Fales, "The Road to Judah: 701 B.C.E. in the Context of Sennacherib's Political-Military Strategy," in I. Kalimi and S.F.C. Richardson (eds.), *Sennacherib at the Gates of Jerusalem: Story, History and Historiography* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 223–48 (246). See also: Knauf, "Sennacherib at the Berezina," 145; Mayer, "Sennacherib's Campaign," 181; C. Uehlinger, "Clio in a World of Pictures: Another Look at the Lachish Reliefs from Sennacherib's Southwest Palace at Nineveh," in Grabbe (ed.), "Like a Bird in a Cage?" *The Invasion of Sennacherib in 701 BCE* (JSOTSup, 363; ESHM, 4; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003), 221–305 (300–301); Evans, *Invasion of Sennacherib*, 161–62; Kahn, *Sennacherib's Campaign Against Judah*, Chapters 2, 4–5.

the epidemic theory may have a theophanous appeal that endeared it to Josephus and to the faithful ever since, but from logical and source critical perspectives it would seem the least defensible of the available explanations.

By contrast, the theory that Sennacherib departed from Jerusalem in order to quell a rebellion in Babylonia or elsewhere is less vulnerable to logical critique but also even less supported by the available sources. Rebellions were a consistent threat across the Assyrian realm,⁷¹ so the pertinent question is not whether a Babylonian threat could have existed but whether that threat was immediate enough in 701 BCE to prompt Sennacherib to downgrade his ambitions for Jerusalem *in media res*. According to Evans, Leopold von Ranke included affirmative evidence (specifically, “Babylonian evidence”) for this “troubles elsewhere theory”; however, Evans then admits in a footnote that “von Ranke (*Universal History*, 79) only alludes to Babylonian evidence without explicitly citing it.”⁷² The only such evidence of which I am aware dates, not to 701 BCE, but instead to the following year after Sennacherib had returned to Nineveh.⁷³ It is at least hypothetically possible that Sennacherib could have received in 701 BCE early and yet urgent reconnaissance of a Babylonian rebellion that would only materialize the following year, but the fact remains that such early reconnaissance is simply not mentioned in the written accounts of Sennacherib’s third campaign, or in contemporaneous loyalty oaths, queries to the Sun-god, or later chronographic texts,⁷⁴ whereas Hezekiah’s indemnity and Taharqo’s advance are both attested in relation to that campaign from multiple textual perspectives.⁷⁵

The strongest of the current mainstream theories would seem to be that which posits Jerusalem’s absolute surrender as the principal cause of the Assyrian army’s departure. Against this

⁷¹ For recent treatments of this theme, see E. Frahm, “Revolts in the Neo-Assyrian Period: A Preliminary ‘Discourse Analysis,’” in J. Collins and J. Manning (eds.), *Revolt and Resistance in the Ancient Classical World and the Near East: In the Crucible of Empire* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 76–89; K. Radner, “Revolts in the Assyrian Empire: Succession Wars, Rebellions Against a False King and Independence Movements,” in *ibid.*, 41–54.

⁷² Evans, “History in the Eye of the Beholder?” 9 n. 38.

⁷³ British Museum 22508, col. iv, ll. 15–26, in Grayson and Novotny, *Royal Inscriptions of Sennacherib*, 97. Sennacherib’s fourth campaign may be assigned with confidence to 700 BCE, because it concluded with the installation of Ashur-nadin-shumi as king of Babylonia, an event dated to the “third year Bel-ibni” in the chronicle of Nabu-nasir to Shamash-shum-ukin (see British Museum 92502, col. ii, ll. 26–31, in A. K. Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles* [Texts from Cuneiform Sources 5; Locust Valley, N.Y.: Augustin, 1975, 77]). I thank Andrew Knapp of Eisenbrauns for his consultation on 12 December 2016.

⁷⁴ I thank Karen Radner of Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München for her consultation on this matter: personal communication 08 October 2016.

⁷⁵ See notes 25, 31, 33 above.

theory, Aubin asked: “If Sennacherib did accept Hezekiah’s submission, why would he not have said so in his annals?”⁷⁶ However, Sennacherib’s annals do claim of Hezekiah that “fear of my lordly brilliance overwhelmed him and, after my (departure), he had the auxiliary forces (and) his elite troops, . . . thirty talents of gold, 800 talents of silver,” and a long list of raw materials, textiles, and weapons, “brought into Nineveh, my capital city, and he sent a mounted messenger of his to me to deliver (this) payment and to do obeisance.”⁷⁷ The Assyrian report of Hezekiah’s indemnity resonates somewhat with 2 Kgs 18:14–16, except that the latter describes that payment *before* detailing the Assyrian blockade of Jerusalem. Moreover, in a publication postdating Aubin’s book, Christoph Uehlinger has posited that a sequence of relief scenes (mostly *sans* epigraphs) from the throne-room of Sennacherib’s palace at Nineveh might show Hezekiah signaling atop the tower of an unmolested Levantine city as Assyrian troops march away to a battle elsewhere (Fig. 2).⁷⁸ The biblical and Assyrian passages may thus be interpreted in at least three different ways: (1) *contra* the narrative sequence of 2 Kings, Sennacherib emerged from his third campaign satisfied with victory, mercifully accepted Hezekiah’s absolute surrender, and then received Hezekiah’s indemnity in Nineveh, as claimed by the Assyrian annals; (2) *contra* the Assyrian annals, Hezekiah’s payment did *not* actually pacify Sennacherib and was therefore *followed* by an *unsuccessful* Assyrian blockade against Jerusalem, as perhaps implied by the narrative sequence of 2 Kgs 18:14–19:36;⁷⁹ or (3) Hezekiah’s payment was a result of the negotiated settlement between Assyria, Judah, and Kushite-ruled Egypt that was spun as a victory by both the Assyrian annals and the 2 Kings account.

Aubin has cast doubt upon the absolute surrender theory on the grounds that it “necessarily implies that the Bible was breathtakingly deceitful” in cynically turning “an abject submission to Assyria into a miraculous intervention” and thereby elevating both Hezekiah and Jerusalem “on a foundation of fraud.”⁸⁰ By contrast, Aubin was more willing to attribute deceit and cynicism to the *Assyrian* annals and reliefs, which, he charged, were “part of the cover-up.”⁸¹ Yet multiple scholars

⁷⁶ Aubin, *Rescue*, 123; see also idem, “Outcome,” 478.

⁷⁷ British Museum 22503 (Rassam Cylinder), ll. 55–58, in Grayson and Novotny, *Royal Inscriptions of Sennacherib*, 65–66.

⁷⁸ Uehlinger, “Clio in a World of Pictures,” 299–302; for an interpretation of the subsequent battle scene (Slabs I–23–25) as a depiction of Eltekeh, see J.M. Russell, *The Final Sack of Nineveh: The Discovery, Documentation, and Destruction of King Sennacherib’s Throne Room at Nineveh, Iraq* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 38. I thank John Russell of the Massachusetts College of Arts and Design for generously providing me with a photograph of Slab I–28 (personal communication 08 October 2016); see also Russell, *Final Sack*, pl. 110 Fig. 72. Unfortunately, the 1990 photograph reveals less than William Boutcher’s 1854–1855 line-drawing, due to the slab’s very flat bas relief.

⁷⁹ Evans, *Invasion of Sennacherib*, 68. For critique of this interpretation, see Kahn, *Sennacherib’s Campaign*, Chapter 2.

⁸⁰ Aubin, *Rescue*, 123–124.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 84.

have observed that the Assyrian annals did not quite fabricate achievements out of whole cloth so much as they magnified “each small mark of prestige” into “the evidence for a grand triumph” (Baruch Halpern’s “Tiglath-pileser principle”).⁸² The circumstances of Hezekiah’s indemnity cannot therefore be determined on the basis of source reliability alone.

Aubin further objected that mercy toward Jerusalem would have been counterproductive for and demonstrably inconsistent with Assyrian imperial policy: “The empire could not have permitted such leniency: it would have sent the wrong message to other restive vassals.” He continued: “Proponents would strengthen their case if they could point to several cases, or even one case, of an Assyrian emperor of this general period showing similar leniency.”⁸³ This challenge laid down by Aubin may be confronted with the model of Tikulti-Ninurta II’s “show of strength” campaign along the Euphrates, in which the king repeatedly arrived at rebel outposts in the evening, camped there overnight, and then accepted the towns’ surrender without bloodshed in the morning.⁸⁴ Tiglath-pileser III likewise seems to have not merely threatened but actually bargained with rebels during a siege of Babylonia, in a manner that has been compared to the Rab-shakeh’s parley at Jerusalem.⁸⁵ In fact, Andreas Fuchs has recently demonstrated that Assyrian siegecraft against a large and fiercely resolute city typically required a minimum of two years, often at great cost to the imperial forces.⁸⁶ In light of these constraints, Mario Fales now proposes that, after crushing Judah’s smaller towns, Sennacherib was then quite content to accept Hezekiah’s surrender and lift his blockade of Jerusalem without ever commencing a siege. In Fales’s estimation, the expedition against Judah was a “complete success” executed “in a conservative vein of foreign policy” and should be compared less to Sargon’s campaign against Samaria than to Sennacherib’s own record against Ashkelon and Ekron.⁸⁷ Fales’s proposal is an intriguing revision of previous surrender theories: it casts Sennacherib, not as the omnipotent absolutist of Assyrian propaganda, but rather as a politician with pragmatic ambitions who

⁸² B. Halpern, *David’s Secret Demons: Messiah, Murderer, Traitor, King* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 126; see also A. Kuhrt, *The Ancient Near East, c. 3000–330 BC*, vol. 2 (London: Routledge, 1995), 476.

⁸³ Aubin, *Rescue*, 123; see also idem, “Outcome,” 478.

⁸⁴ Collection of Antiquités Orientales of the Musée du Louvre, Paris, 4655, ll. 41–124, in A.K. Grayson, *Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Assyrian Periods, Volume 2: Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC (1114–859 BC)* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 169–78.

⁸⁵ N.D. 2632, ob. ll. 5–44, in H.W.F. Saggs, “The Nimrud Letters, 1952: Part I,” *Iraq* 17 (1955), 21–56, pls. IV–IX (23–24, 47, pl. IV).

⁸⁶ A. Fuchs, “Über den Wert von Befestigungsanlagen,” *ZA* 98 (2008), 45–98.

⁸⁷ Fales, “Road to Judah,” 248. See also M. Cogan, “Cross-Examining the Assyrian Witnesses to Sennacherib’s Third Campaign: Assessing the Limits of Historical Reconstruction,” in I. Kalimi and S.F.C. Richardson (eds.), *Sennacherib at the Gates of Jerusalem: Story, History and Historiography* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 51–74 (71).

might even be persuaded to downgrade those ambitions by the complex exigencies of warfare.

Granted, the precedents set by Tikulti-Ninurta II, by Tiglath-pileser III, and by Sennacherib's earlier actions during the third campaign should not be taken as conclusive proof of his ambitions for Jerusalem, because Hezekiah's offenses were arguably much more serious and his resultant punishment surprisingly lighter. Yet those Assyrian precedents and military limitations do at least caution against any assumption that Sennacherib would never have considered mercy toward Jerusalem if he still held some advantage.⁸⁸ We also do not need to assume that the inhabitants of Jerusalem were aware of Assyrian grand strategy; if they dreaded the fate of Samaria and believed the *rab-šaqqē's* threats of deprivation (2 Kgs 18:27), then the subsequent lifting of the Assyrian blockade might very well have appeared to them a *deus ex machina*. In that case, the contradictory spin offered by 2 Kings and the Assyrian annals would not necessarily require any great deceit, cynicism, or fraud on the part of either side.⁸⁹

Fales's 2014 version of the surrender theory and Aubin's 2002 version of the hybrid rescue theory would therefore seem much closer to one another than any author has yet acknowledged: in the first instance, Sennacherib would have withdrawn his blockade upon a presumed vow of payment because the costs of a long-term siege were immediately deemed excessive, whereas in the second instance, Sennacherib would have taken the very same course of action because the *report of Tabarqo's advance* had tipped the costs of a long-term siege from tolerable to excessive. The main point of divergence between Fales and Aubin is the latter's conviction that the Kushite role was "essential," because the Assyrian withdrawal "would not have occurred without it."⁹⁰ The relative validity of Fales's and Aubin's proposed scenarios hinges upon Sennacherib's volition—a subject on which we cannot expect the Hebrew Bible to give informed testimony and cannot expect the Assyrian annals to give forthright testimony. *Faute de mieux*, the best empirical means for determining whether Sennacherib achieved all that he had desired during his third campaign is to assess the consequences for Assyria, the Levant, and Kushite-ruled Egypt over the quarter-century that immediately followed. The section that follows will reevaluate that period in light of recent Nubiological research.

⁸⁸ Pace Aubin, *Rescue*, 123, and idem, "Outcome," 478.

⁸⁹ Pace Aubin, *Rescue*, 84, 123–24. If Eltekeh were indeed a stalemate or Pyrrhic victory for the Assyrians, with heavy losses incurred on both sides, then the biblical claim that the Assyrians departed from the region because they lost an exorbitant number of soldiers (185,000) could plausibly be hyperbole produced by authorial ignorance of circumstances on a distant battlefield, rather than necessarily deception or fraud born of authorial cynicism. 2 Kgs 19:35.

⁹⁰ Aubin, "Has Racism Skewed Scholars' View of Kush?" 9.

AFTER SENNACHERIB'S DEPARTURE

When *The Rescue of Jerusalem* was published in 2002, Aubin's proposal that Assyria, Judah, and Kushite-ruled Egypt had reached a negotiated settlement after Sennacherib's departure was still troubled by certain questions. For instance, why was there so little evidence of Egyptian commercial and diplomatic interaction with the Levant and Assyria datable to the reign of the Kushite king Shabatako during the first decade of the seventh century BCE?⁹¹ Why were there no explicit Kushite or Egyptian propagandistic accounts of their "*de facto* victory" against the mighty Assyrian empire?⁹² And why would Assyria and Egypt, two nations with a history of imperial conquest, mutually agree to forego such ambitions in Judah for the next decade or more?⁹³ As will be demonstrated below, these critiques were more crippling for Aubin's thesis in 2002 than they now appear in 2019, thanks in large part to very recent research that has added valuable nuance to our understanding of the early seventh century BCE.

The paucity of evidence bearing the nomina of Shabatako in the Levant and Assyria was deemed by Aubin a result of Kushite coregency.⁹⁴ Seventeen years ago, coregency theories were *à la mode* for the Twenty-fifth Dynasty, because they seemed to many the best way to reconcile the Egyptian monumental record with Grant Frame's 1999 publication of the Tang-i Var Inscription.⁹⁵ That text was ascribed a *terminus ante quem* of 705

⁹¹ See discussion in Pope, "Beyond the Broken Reed," 116–19, which followed a different chronology than that which I entertain here below.

⁹² As remarked by Evans, "History in the Eye of the Beholder?" 19–20.

⁹³ See discussion and references in Pope, "Beyond the Broken Reed," 132–34, 137–38.

⁹⁴ Aubin, *Rescue*, 74–75, 323 n. 89. Observing that "few contemporary writings. . . deal with Shebitku [Shabatako]," Aubin proposed that it was instead Shabako who retained "ultimate authority over foreign policy and diplomacy during their coregency," as demonstrated by the fact "that it was Shabako's signet impression, and not Shebitku's [Shabatako's], that was found on a seal in Nineveh."

⁹⁵ For coregency discussion preceding Frame's translation of the Tang-i Var inscription, see W.J. Murnane, *Ancient Egyptian Coregencies* (Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1977), 189–90; Yurco, "Sennacherib's Third Campaign"; Grimal, *History of Ancient Egypt*, 346; Kitchen, *Third Intermediate Period*, 556–57 par. 468; 583 par. 527; 589 Table *4. For the Tang-i Var inscription, see G. Frame, "Inscription of Sargon II at Tang-i Var," *Or* 68/2 (1999), 31–57, Tab. I–XVIII; 'A.A. Sarfarāz, "Sangnibištah-i mihi-i Ūrāmānāt," *Majallab-i Barrasiba-i Tārikbi* 3/V (1968–69), 13–20, 14 pls. I thank Hossein Badamchi of the University of Tehran for guiding me through the original publication in Farsi. For the Tang-i Var inscription then interpreted as evidence of a Kushite coregency, see D.B. Redford, "Note on the Chronology of Dynasty 25 and the Inscription of Sargon II at Tang-i Var," *Or* 68/2 (1999), 58–60; K.A. Kitchen "Regnal and Genealogical Data of Ancient Egypt (Absolute Chronology I): The Historical Chronology of Ancient Egypt,

BCE in accordance with Sargon's regnal chronology, and it explicitly named *Šá-pa-ta-ku-u'* (Shabatako) as the "king of the land of Meluhha" (Kush) who had extradited the fugitive Iamani of Ashdod into the hands of Sargon II.⁹⁶ As a result, it suddenly became apparent that Shabatako must have occupied the throne of Kush (and Egypt?) at least sixteen years before the accession of Taharqo. Yet no more than three regnal years are attested for Shabatako on the monuments of either Egypt or Kush,⁹⁷ and his name is not recorded in the evidence from Sennacherib's capital or from Judah.⁹⁸ By contrast, at least fifteen regnal years are attested for Shabatako's presumed Kushite predecessor, the similarly-named Shabako, beginning with regnal Year 2 in Lower Egypt's Serapeum, and Shabako's royal nomina have been found in excavated contexts upon three clay sealings at Nineveh and a jar-seal impression at Megiddo.⁹⁹ In response to the publication of the Tang-i Var Inscription, Dan'el Kahn proposed to stretch the chronology of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty over a much longer period in order to encompass Shabako's fifteen years on the Egyptian throne as well as a subsequent period of sixteen years in which his presumed successor, Shabatako, reigned alone in Egypt but left hardly a mark upon the Egyptian monumental landscape—and no trace at all in Judah or at Nineveh.¹⁰⁰ Redford, by contrast, postulated a seven-year regnal overlap in which Shabako occupied the throne of Egypt while his younger kinsman Shabatako simultaneously governed the Kushite heartland.¹⁰¹ Redford's theory would thereby explain why Shabatako was seldom mentioned upon Egyptian monuments and also how the Kushite kings administered a kingdom stretching over 3,200 kilometers from Sahelian Africa to the Mediterranean.¹⁰²

A Current Assessment," in M. Bietak (ed.), *The Synchronisation of Civilisations in the Eastern Mediterranean in the Second Millennium B.C.* (Wien: Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2000), 39–52 (50–51); J. Von Beckerath, "Zur XXV. Dynastie," *Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur* 29 (2001), 1–6 (4); J.K. Hoffmeier, "Egypt's Role in the Events of 701 B.C. in Jerusalem," 219–234 (227–230).

⁹⁶ See *ll.* 19–20 in Frame, "Inscription of Sargon II at Tang-i Var," 36, 40; for the date, see *ibid.*, 51, and D. Kahn, "The Inscription of Sargon II at Tang-i Var and the Chronology of Dynasty 25," *Or* 70 (2001), 1–18 (1n3).

⁹⁷ Pope, *Double Kingdom*, 263–64, nn. 69–72.

⁹⁸ Cf. discussion of British Museum 84526 in note 134 below.

⁹⁹ British Museum EA 24429, *l.* 1, in J. Leclant, *Enquêtes sur les sacerdoxes et les sanctuaires égyptiens à l'époque dite "éthiopienne" (XXV^e dynastie)* (Cairo: Imprimerie de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1954), 16–18; A. Mariette, *Le Sérapéum de Memphis* (Paris: Gide, 1857), 184; J. Vercoutter, "The Napatan Kings and Apis Worship," *Kush* 8 (1960), 62–76 (65–67); Pope, "Beyond the Broken Reed," 116, nn. 38–39.

¹⁰⁰ Kahn, "Inscription of Sargon II at Tang-i Var."

¹⁰¹ Redford, "Note on the Chronology"; Redford entertains the possibility of that Iamani could have been extradited as late as 705 BCE, but cf. Kahn's comments in note 96 above.

¹⁰² For the latter issue, see discussion and references in Pope, *Double Kingdom*, 1, 276.

Presented with these choices, Aubin modified Redford's coregency theory. Citing the Tang-i Var inscription and Herodotus's assertion that Σεθῶς had fought against Sennacherib (*Hist.* 2.141,1–2), Aubin adopted the popular notion that Σεθῶς was the Greek rendering of Shabatako, who “would probably have been in charge of defending the frontier” while his coregent Shabako “would have overseen the south, retaining ultimate authority over foreign policy and diplomacy,” as reflected in the above-mentioned clay sealings at Nineveh.¹⁰³ Aubin further observed that Herodotus's Aithiopian king Σαβακῶς had vacated the Egyptian throne while still alive (2.139), so Aubin interpreted this passage as an account of Shabako finally ceding power to the regent-in-waiting, Shabatako, at the end of their cotenure.¹⁰⁴ Aubin's solution was not without difficulties: for instance, it did not adequately explain the passage in Sargon's Great Display Inscription at Khorsabad that described Iamani fleeing to “the border of Egypt and the territory of Meluhha (Kush).”¹⁰⁵ Why would a Levantine fugitive have bypassed Egypt in search of political asylum in Kush when a Kushite coregent was already governing Egypt to its northern borders at the time?¹⁰⁶ Moreover, neither Kush nor Egypt has yielded a single example of double-dating by two kings of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty.¹⁰⁷ Nevertheless, Aubin's coregency theory in 2002 accorded reasonably well with published scholarship in Nubiology and Egyptology at that time.

A flurry of subsequent publications have rendered a Shabako-Shabatako coregency much less tenable—but also, as explained further below, much less necessary to sustain Aubin's hybrid rescue theory for 701 BCE. A 2006 study by Dan'el Kahn noted that individual Kushite pharaohs made frequent claims to rule both Egypt and Kush simultaneously; in fact, they stated quite explicitly in their royal inscriptions that they would share the kingdom with no one.¹⁰⁸ The calculations of Von Beckerath

¹⁰³ Aubin, *Rescue*, 75, 94, 323 n. 88. As support for this identification of Σεθῶς, Aubin cited Herodotus, *Hist.* 2.7–8.

¹⁰⁴ Aubin, *Rescue*, 231, 323 n. 89; 384 n. 26, citing also Diodorus's *Bibliotheca historica* 1.65.

¹⁰⁵ Room X, ll. 101–104, in Fuchs, *Die Inschriften Sargons II.*, 220, 348. See also comments of Andreas Fuchs and Hans Neumann as cited in G.P.F. Broekman, “The Order of Succession between Shabaka and Shabataka: A Different View on the Chronology of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty,” *Göttinger Miszellen* 245 (2015), 17–31 (24 n. 33).

¹⁰⁶ K. Jansen-Winkeln, “The Chronology of the Third Intermediate Period: Dyns. 22–24,” in E. Hornung, R. Krauss, and D. Warburton (eds.), *Ancient Egyptian Chronology* (HdO, 83; Leiden: Brill, 2006), 234–64 (259).

¹⁰⁷ For misleading evidence that was determined to be a modern forgery, see R.G. Morkot and S. Quirke, “Inventing the 25th Dynasty: Turin stela 1467 and the construction of history,” in C.B. Arnst *et al.* (eds.), *Begegnungen: Antike Kulturen im Niltal. Festgabe für Erika Endesfelder, Karl-Heinz Priese, Walter Friedrich Reineke und Steffen Wenig* (Leipzig: Wodtke & Stegbauer, 2001), 349–63.

¹⁰⁸ D. Kahn, “Divided Kingdom, Co-Regency, or Sole Rule in the Kingdom(s) of Egypt-and-Kush?” *Ägypten und Levante* 16 (2006), 275–

and Caminos also combine to show that the Kushite kings could have visited the southern and northern limits of their domain in under two months, rendering a coregent unnecessary.¹⁰⁹ As I have argued at length in my 2014 book, the kings of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty governed their “Double Kingdom” of Kush-and-Egypt, not by constructing a bifurcated institutional hierarchy of royal scions and appointees, but instead primarily by courting the allegiance of pre-existing local aristocracies and countenancing their cross-regional integration through diplomatic marriages and ritualized suzerainty.¹¹⁰ Viewed from the perspective of broader Kushite governmental practice, it would therefore seem that Shabako and Shabatako did not double-date any monuments simply because they never ruled simultaneously as coregents. The scarcity of Shabatako’s name throughout Egypt and its absence at Nineveh and in the Levant must be explained by other means.

Aubin’s use of Herodotus also appears less credible in light of more recent research. László Török’s 2014 study of *Herodotus in Nubia* has exposed the folly of attempting to retrofit the Greek historian’s Σαβακῶς and Σεθῶς to the names and reigns of individual Kushite kings attested in the monumental record. Herodotus’s reference to Σαβακῶς voluntarily abandoning Egypt for Kush (*Hist.* 2.139) matches closely—and only—the documented career of the Kushite king Piankhy, whereas Herodotus’s claim that Σαβακῶς killed Νεχῶς, father of Ψαμμήτιχος (2.152), describes exactly the actions taken in 664 BCE by Tanutamani, the final king of the Dynasty, against Necho I, father of Psamtik I.¹¹¹ Moreover, Herodotus attributes to Σαβακῶς a full fifty years upon the Egyptian throne, a figure that corresponds to the approximate *combined* regnal years in which successive Kushite kings held the throne of Egypt.¹¹² The most defensible interpretation of Herodotus’s Σαβακῶς is therefore that he was a composite figure representing the whole of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty in the memory of Herodotus’s Lower Egyptian informants. Σεθῶς, for his part, is never labeled an Aithiopian in Herodotus’s account,¹¹³ and his reign is surprisingly placed well after the termination of Kushite rule, even though he is pitted directly against Sennacherib (2.141). As emphasized recently by Kahn,

92.

¹⁰⁹ J. Von Beckerath, review of N.-C. Grimal, *La stèle triomphale de Pi(ankh)y*, *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 42 (1985), 74; R.A. Caminos, “The Nitocris Adoption Stela,” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 50 (1964), 71–101 (81–84); Pope, *Double Kingdom*, 281; *contra* K.A. Kitchen, “The Strengths and Weaknesses of Egyptian Chronology—A Reconsideration,” *Ägypten und Levante* 16 (2006), 293–308 (293).

¹¹⁰ Pope, *Double Kingdom*, 150, 203, 255, 275–92.

¹¹¹ L. Török, *Herodotus in Nubia* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 78–79; for the argument regarding Piankhy, see first D. Kahn, “Piankhy’s Conquest of Egypt in Greek Sources: Herodotus II 137–140 Revisited,” *Beiträge zur Sudanforschung* 8 (2003), 49–58.

¹¹² Török, *Herodotus in Nubia*, 75–79; Lloyd, *Herodotus Book II*, 91.

¹¹³ As perceptively noted by Evans, “History in the Eye of the Beholder?” 21.

the name Σεθῶς may not correspond to a personal name at all, but rather to the Egyptian title *sm* for the office accorded him by Herodotus: Priest of Ἡφάιστος (Ptah).¹¹⁴ As a result, it is unclear whether Σεθῶς was meant to represent one of the Kushite kings or instead one of their Lower Egyptian vassals, and his repulse of Sennacherib at the Egyptian border town of Pelusium might likewise preserve an Egyptian memory of Esarhaddon's defeat at the borders of Egypt in 673 BCE.¹¹⁵ While these Herodotean uncertainties potentially strip Aubin's hybrid rescue scenario of some of its positivistic specificity, they also liberate it from the Procustean bed of forced synchronicity with an oral history collected by a Greek tourist more than two centuries after the events in question.

If these critiques of coregency and Herodotus threaten to dismantle parts of Aubin's hybrid rescue scenario, other new research may be able to renovate that scenario through a surprising alteration to the conventional chronology of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty. Over the past six years, a series of articles by four different scholars (a Near Eastern archaeologist and three Egyptologists) now proposes to reverse the order of succession between the Kushite kings Shabako and Shabatako.¹¹⁶ The longstanding assumption that Shabako preceded Shabatako derives from the observation of nineteenth-century scholars that the name ṣ3-b3-k3 (Shabako) of the Egyptian monumental record seems a perfect match for Manetho's Σαβακῶς. The king who followed in the Manethonian chronology, Σεβιχῶς, was therefore deemed the equivalent of ṣ3-b3-t3-k3 (Shabatako).¹¹⁷ However, as Bányai, Payraudeau, Broekman, and Jurman have each observed, *both* Σαβακῶς and Σεβιχῶς are potential Greek renderings of either Shabako or Shabatako.¹¹⁸ Given these uncertainties in

¹¹⁴ Kahn, "War of Sennacherib," 25; M. Bányai, "Ein Vorschlag zur Chronologie der 25. Dynastie in Ägypten," *Journal of Egyptian History* 6 (2013), 46–129 (103). The possibility seems to have been raised first by F.L. Griffith, *Stories of the High Priests of Memphis* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1900), 8.

¹¹⁵ See n. 48 above; Kahn, "War of Sennacherib," 26.

¹¹⁶ Bányai, "Vorschlag"; F. Payraudeau, "Retour sur la Succession Shabaqo-Shabataqo," *Nebet* 1 (2014), 115–27; Broekman, "Order"; M. Bányai et al., "Die Reihenfolge der kuschitischen Könige," *Journal of Egyptian History* 8 (2015), 115–80; C. Jurman, "The Order of the Kushite Kings According to Sources from the Eastern Desert and Thebes. Or: Shabatako was here first!" *Journal of Egyptian History* 10 (2017), 124–51.

¹¹⁷ G.A. Hoskins is just one early writer who endorsed this conclusion: *Travels in Ethiopia*, 303–5. For one of the earliest (11th century) and best preserved manuscripts containing this specific passage (Manetho Fr. 66), see the verso facing the page marked as "11" in Codex Parisinus Graecus 1764, one of the Bibliothèque nationale de France's copies of Synkellos's *Chronographia*. For the passage in recent translation, see W. Adler and P. Tuffin, *The Chronography of George Synkellos* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 106–7.

¹¹⁸ Bányai, "Vorschlag," 49; Payraudeau, "Retour," 119; Broekman, "Order," 20–21; Jurman, "Order," 128; see also comments of Bányai,

Manethonian interpretation, Broekman argues, priority should instead be given to the Egyptian and Kushite monumental record in determining the order of Kushite royal succession.¹¹⁹ In accordance with this principle, all four authors propose that Shabatako occupied the throne of Kush *before* Shabako in a revision that would seem to accord better with: the evolution of Kushite royal tombs and burial equipment;¹²⁰ the chronology of temple construction at Karnak and Medinet Habu;¹²¹ the placement of successive Nilometer readings at Karnak's quay;¹²² the evolution of private donation stelae in the Delta and of Apis burials in the Serapeum;¹²³ the sequence of archaizing prenomina chosen by the Kushite kings;¹²⁴ the limited genealogical data available for the Kushite royal family;¹²⁵ the prosopographic chronology of private papyri and inscriptions;¹²⁶ and, most pointedly, a Kushite royal statue from the reign of Tanutamani in Egypt that lists his

Jurman, Kahn, and Broekman (*contra* Jansen-Winkeln) in Bányai, "Reihenfolge," 116–124. Jansen-Winkeln appears to have later withdrawn his objections and endorsed the new Shabatako-Shabako sequence: K. Jansen-Winkeln, "Beiträge zur Geschichte der Dritten Zwischenzeit," *Journal of Egyptian History* 10 (2017), 23–42 (40).

¹¹⁹ Broekman, "Order," 21. For another supporter of Broekman's revision, see also now in this *JHS* volume A. Dodson, "The Rescue of Jerusalem: A View from the Nile Valley," and idem, *The Royal Tombs of Ancient Egypt* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Archaeology, 2016), 115, 149, as well as D. Agut and J.C. Moreno García, *L'Égypte des pharaons: De Narmer à Dioclétien, 3150 av. J.-C. – 284 ap. J.-C.* (Paris: Belin, 2016), 552–55.

¹²⁰ Bányai, "Vorschlag," 76; Payraudeau, "Retour," 120; Broekman, "Order," 21–23; Bányai, "Reihenfolge," 150–58; Jurman, "Order," 130.

¹²¹ Bányai, "Vorschlag," 76–77; Payraudeau, "Retour," 120; Broekman, "Order," 25, 28; Bányai, "Reihenfolge," 171; Jurman, "Order," 131–33, 138.

¹²² Broekman, "Order," 25; Bányai, "Reihenfolge," 172; Jurman, "Order," 139–145.

¹²³ Bányai, "Vorschlag," 86–92; Payraudeau, "Retour," 124–26; Jurman's comments in Bányai, "Reihenfolge," 172–73.

¹²⁴ Broekman, "Order," 27; Bányai, "Reihenfolge," 171; Jurman, "Order," 138–139.

¹²⁵ Bányai, "Vorschlag," 78–81; Payraudeau, "Retour," 118, 120; Broekman, "Order," 28; Bányai, "Reihenfolge," 159–60, 171.

¹²⁶ Bányai, "Vorschlag," 49–50, 84–85; Payraudeau, "Retour," 119; Broekman, "Order," 28; Bányai, "Reihenfolge," 148–149, 170; Jurman, "Order," 129, 133–36. By contrast, Morkot has recently expressed suspicions that "a more detailed knowledge of the Libyan dynasts and Theban officials" might eventually undermine the new chronology, but he has not yet presented evidence to that effect: R.G. Morkot, "The Late-Libyan and Kushite God's Wives: Historical and Art-historical Questions," in M. Becker, A. Blöbaum, A. Lohwasser (eds.), *Prayer and Power: Proceedings of the Conference on the God's Wives of Amun in Egypt during the First Millennium BC* (Ägypten und Altes Testament 84, Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2016), 107–119 (108).

predecessors as Shabako and Taharqo, while omitting Shabatako altogether.¹²⁷

The principal sticking point for adherents to the conventional chronology would appear to be a pair of Kushite royal stelae, one of which states that Taharqo was first summoned to Egypt by King Shabatako, and another of which specifies that this occurred when Taharqo was twenty years old and that he later became king himself “after the falcon ascended to heaven.”¹²⁸ Scholars have long assumed that the unnamed “falcon” was necessarily Shabatako and that Taharqo’s summons north was a call to defend Jerusalem in 701 BCE.¹²⁹ However, there is no mention of the Near East at all in those stelae, which specify only that the young Taharqo was to accompany Shabatako to Lower Egypt (“Northland,” *T3-mḥw*).¹³⁰ Bányai, Payraudeau, and Broekman have therefore proposed that Taharqo was *first* recruited to the north, not in 701 BCE to defend Jerusalem, but instead ca. 712 BCE to annex Lower Egypt under the command of pharaoh Shabatako, who would rule there for only a few years before dying and ceding the throne to Shabako.¹³¹ Such a short reign in Egypt would explain why Shabatako is rarely attested upon Egyptian monuments—and with only three regnal years—while it would allow for his successor, the “falcon” Shabako, a reign matching the fifteen regnal years (ca. 705–690 BCE) attested upon his far more numerous monuments in

¹²⁷ Horemakhet’s Cairo statue CG 42204 (Cairo JE 38580) in Le-grain, *Statues et statuettes de rois et de particuliers*, vol. 3 (Cairo: Institut français d’archéologie orientale du Caire, 1925), 12–13, pl. III; with discussion in: Bányai, “Vorschlag,” 83–84; Payraudeau, “Retour,” 119–120; Broekman, “Order,” 23–24; Bányai, “Reihenfolge,” 149.

¹²⁸ Kawa IV (Khartoum SNM 2678 = Merowe Museum 52), ll. 7–9, in M.F.L. Macadam, *The Temples of Kawa*, vol. 1 (London: Oxford University Press, 1949), pls. 7–8; Kawa V (Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek Æ.I.N. 1712), ll. 22–27, in *ibid.*, pls. 9–10. For a parallel to the passage of Kawa V, see also the Tanis stela (Cairo JE 37488), l. 5, in J. Leclant and J. Yoyotte, “Nouveaux documents relatifs à l’an VI de Taharqa,” *Kémi* 10 (1949), 28–42, pls. I–III (pls. II–III). For a different objection, see Morkot in note 126 above.

¹²⁹ E.g., Kitchen, *Third Intermediate Period*, 157–158 §127, 557 §469; L. Török, *The Kingdom of Kush: Handbook of the Napatan and Meroitic Civilization* (Hdo 31; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 169–70; T. Eide *et al.*, eds., *Fontes Historiae Nubiorum*, vol. 1 (Bergen: Klassisk institutt, Universitetet i Bergen, 1994), 144; Aubin, *Rescue*, 334–35 n. 54.

¹³⁰ Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel*, 353 n. 163; Pope, “Beyond the Broken Reed,” 119.

¹³¹ Bányai, “Vorschlag,” 49; Payraudeau, “Retour,” 8–9; Broekman, “Order,” 29–30; Bányai, “Reihenfolge,” 141–147. This revision would also mean that Taharqo was already a “youth of twenty years” (*ḥwn n rnp.t 20*) when he “came with His Majesty to the Northland” (*T3-mḥw*) c. 712 BCE, per Kawa V (Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek Æ.I.N. 1712), l. 26, in Macadam, *Temples of Kawa*, vol. 1, pls. 7–8; Taharqo would then be a man of approximately thirty-one years of age in 701 BCE, rendering quite moot all previous chronological objections to his appearance in 2 Kgs 19:9. Cf. note 25 above.

Egypt.¹³² The chronological revisions proposed by both Payraudeau and Broekman will need to be tested in the coming years, but they have been taken quite seriously by other leading scholars in the field: a roundtable of ten experts that convened in 2014 to discuss the problem at Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität in Münster concluded with Claus Jurman's judgment that "ich muss zugeben, dass ich die Beweislast mittlerweile eher bei den Befürwortern der Beibehaltung der traditionellen Reihenfolge sehe."¹³³

If the new chronology continues to withstand scrutiny, it could provide support for Aubin's theory of a negotiated settlement between Assyria, Judah, and Kushite-ruled Egypt in 701 BCE. Shabatako's reign would thereby be relocated to a brief period at the beginning of Kushite rule in Lower Egypt between ca. 714 and 705 BCE, easily explaining the absence of his name at Sennacherib's palace¹³⁴ and also Sargon's earlier assertion ca. 706 BCE that Shabatako's Kushite royal predecessors had never communicated directly with the Assyrian royal house.¹³⁵ By contrast, the period covered by the subsequent reign of Shabako from 705 to 690 BCE would then encompass the attestations of that king's name in the Levant and at Sennacherib's palace in Nineveh,¹³⁶ opening the possibility of increased commercial and/or diplomatic exchange between Egypt, Judah, and Assyria during and after the negotiated settlement postulated by Aubin.¹³⁷ Of particular importance in this regard are three clay sealings with Shabako's nomen that were found in Sennacherib's palace at Nineveh, one of which has the rare distinction of bearing both Kushite and Assyrian seal impressions (Fig. 3).¹³⁸ Close

¹³² Pope, *Double Kingdom*, 263–264, nn. 69–72; id., "Beyond the Broken Reed," 116–19; British Museum EA 24429, l 1, in Leclant, *Enquêtes*, 16–18.

¹³³ Jurman in Bányai, "Reihenfolge," 172.

¹³⁴ The sequence *mn-hpr-R'* is found impressed on British Museum seal 84526, but the connection between that name and Shabatako remains insecure: see discussion and references in Pope, *Double Kingdom under Taharqa*, 11, n. 39, and now especially A. Lohwasser, "Zu den Men-Cheper-Ra-Skarabäen der 25. Dynastie," in J. Budka, R. Gundacker, Gabriele Pieke (eds.), *Florilegium Aegyptiacum: Eine wissenschaftliche Blütenlese von Schülern und Freunden für Helmut Satzinger zum 75. Geburtstag am 21. Jänner 2013* (Göttingen: Göttinger Miszellen, Beihefte Nr. 14, 2013), 229–34. Sennacherib's palace was built after the commencement of his reign in 704 BCE, so it is far better method to infer that sealings found in that palace would have been made after that date than to attempt to classify them instead as heirlooms brought over from Sargon II's earlier palace at Khorsabad. Russell, *Sennacherib's Palace*, 1; idem, *Final Sack*, 9.

¹³⁵ Sargon II's Great Display Inscription at Khorsabad, Room X, l. 109, in Fuchs, *Die Inschriften Sargons II.*, 221, 348.

¹³⁶ Pope, "Beyond the Broken Reed," 116.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 119.

¹³⁸ British Museum 84527, 84884, and 1881,0204.352, in A. Layard, *Discoveries among the Ruins of Nineveh and Babylon* (New York: Harper, 1853), 132–134; H.R.H. Hall, *Catalogue of Egyptian Scarabs, etc., in the British Museum*, vol. 1 (London: British Museum, 1913), 290 §§2775–2776;

examination of the backside of one of those three sealings with Shabako's nomen reveals the striated impressions of a cord, which would likely have been used to secure a bag—*perhaps* one containing papyri, cuneiform tablets, or precious objects. The archaeological context of the sealings within Sennacherib's palace would seem to favor royal administrative function, and the juxtaposition on one sealing of both Assyrian and Kushite seal impressions indicates two-factor authentication by both seal owners at the same time (after the clay sealing was applied to the bag and the clay was still moist).¹³⁹ Yet it would be irresponsible to suppose that this particular sealing was affixed to the actual negotiated settlement postulated by Aubin, especially as no written documents were found together with the sealings in that room of Sennacherib's palace. What these three sealings do suggest is that there could very well have been communication between the administrations of Shabako and Sennacherib between 701 and

S. Herbordt, *Neuassyrische Glyptik des 8.–7. Jb. v. Chr. unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Siegelungen auf Tafeln und Tonverschlüssen* (SAAS I, Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1992), 120–21. Erroneously categorized as “jar-stoppers” in R. Giveon, *The Impact of Egypt on Canaan: Iconographical and Related Studies* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978), 123; idem, *Egyptian Scarabs from Western Asia from the Collections of the British Museum* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1985), 166–168; cf. Bányai, “Reihenfolge,” 160.

¹³⁹ Bányai, “Reihenfolge,” 161 Abb. 6. *Contra* the assertion of Layard (subsequently followed by Parpola, Veenhof, and Bányai), Room LXI of Sennacherib's South West Palace cannot safely be assumed a papyrus archive, as only one of the ca. 450 clay sealings found in that room (British Museum 84751) had clearly been impressed upon a papyrus. (Bányai's recent attempt to classify British Museum 84527 as a papyrus seal on the basis of photographs must be checked against a first-hand examination of the object itself in the British Museum.) In fact, Room LXI was not itself an archive room with niche deposits (as claimed by Bányai) but rather a corridor with an inclined ramp whose sealings likely derived from a collapsed room above. The Assyrian seal impression on British Museum 84884 is not clearly that of an Assyrian provincial official, as Bányai's proposed cognate from Dor is not identical and derives from an unstratified context; the Assyrian impression on British Museum 84884 is comparable to those used in private transactions by administrative officials at Assyrian centers. See Herbordt, *Neuassyrische Glyptik*, 16–17, 53–69. Cf.: Layard, *Discoveries*, 153–154, 460–461; S. Parpola, “The Royal Archives of Nineveh,” in K.R. Veenhof (ed.), *Cuneiform Archives and Libraries* (Leiden: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul, 1986), 226 n. 19; K.R. Veenhof, “Cuneiform Archives,” in idem (ed.), *Cuneiform Archives and Libraries* (Leiden: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul, 1986), 2; G. Goossens, “Introduction à l'Archivéconomie de l'Asie Antérieure,” *Revue d'assyriologie et d'archéologie orientale* 46 (1952), 104 n. 1; Bányai, “Reihenfolge,” 160–66. I thank Suzanne Herbordt of the Universität Leipzig for her detailed and generous consultation on these issues: personal communication 27 October 2016.

690 BCE, possibly even conducted through a Kushite royal envoy residing at the Assyrian royal court;¹⁴⁰ as a result, the chronology of Kushite interaction with the Levant and Assyria no longer poses the difficulties for Aubin's theory that it did when *The Rescue of Jerusalem* was published in 2002.

A seemingly more vexing problem for the hybrid rescue theory is the absence of explicit Kushite or Egyptian propagandistic accounts of their "de facto victory" against Assyria. Aubin found this silence puzzling: "Wouldn't it stand to reason, then, that such pictorial or textual evidence would exist for a successful campaign in Judah? People who drive out the world's most powerful army do not keep it to themselves."¹⁴¹ In an effort to remedy this problem, Aubin cited a few apparent exceptions, including references to conflict with "Asiatics" in the Kushite royal inscriptions and an enigmatic relief scene in a Kushite temple at Gebel Barkal that he judged to be a depiction of Assyrian foes.¹⁴² He also astutely noted that Kushite silence cannot be taken as conclusive proof of Kushite failure in 701 BCE, because the Kushite inscriptions likewise make no explicit reference to Egypt's successful repulse of Esarhaddon in 673 BCE, as recorded in Babylonian Chronicle 1 (ABC 1).¹⁴³ Aubin proposed to explain the scarcity of Kushite testimony to such events by citing Psamtik II's later defacement of Kushite inscriptions,¹⁴⁴ the friability of Nubian sandstone, and the submersion of Lower Nubian monuments as a result of the Aswan High Dam.¹⁴⁵ Evans has responded with the following critique: "Aware of the problem of lack of evidence, Aubin suggests there was Egyptian evidence but it has been destroyed. While of course 'anything is possible,' such arguments from silence will convince few and undermine his credibility."¹⁴⁶ While Evans's critique overlooks the

¹⁴⁰ I am very grateful to Suzanne Herboldt of the Universität Leipzig for this suggestion, which is based upon "the evidence from the six other container sealings bearing the same Assyrian seal also from Rm. LXI in the SW Palace that this seal owner was active in Assyrian administrative duties at Nineveh." Personal communication from Suzanne Herboldt dated 27 October 2016.

¹⁴¹ Aubin, *Rescue*, 145. In the second sentence, Aubin is referring to the absence of a *Hebrew* account of *Hebrew* military victory, but the logic would seem to apply to the absence of a Kushite account as well: *ibid.*, 346 n. 24.

¹⁴² Aubin, *Rescue*, 322 n. 81; 351 n. 31.

¹⁴³ Aubin, *Rescue*, 159; see also references in note 48 above.

¹⁴⁴ But see recently C. Koch, "Usurpation and the Erasure of Names during the Twenty-sixth Dynasty," in E. Pischikova, J. Budka, and K. Griffin (eds.), *Thebes in the First Millennium BC* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), 397–413; and brief remarks in A. Lohwasser, "'Nubianess' and the God's Wives of the 25th Dynasty: Office Holders, the Institution, Reception and Reaction," in Becker, Blöbaum, Lohwasser, *Prayer and Power*, 121–36 (130–32). I thank Angelika Lohwasser of Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster for sharing her manuscript with me before its publication (personal communication 11 May 2016).

¹⁴⁵ Aubin, *Rescue*, 145–47.

¹⁴⁶ Evans, "History in the Eye of the Beholder?" 19–20.

conditional tense of Aubin's proposal,¹⁴⁷ both scholars seem to agree that the absence of explicit Kushite testimony to their involvement in the Near East would be an unexpected aberration, suggesting either that the Kushites actually failed in 701 BCE (according to Evans¹⁴⁸) or that their testimonies of at least "de facto victory" might have been destroyed (as proposed by Aubin¹⁴⁹).

Yet I would suggest that the stakes of this argument between Evans and Aubin derive from a misapprehension of two factors: (1) the attested functional scope of Kushite royal propaganda, and (2) the exceptional conditions that have produced our otherwise copious Near Eastern documentation for the events of 701 BCE. With regard to the first of these factors, it must be remembered that royal propaganda generated by ancient monarchies was no more comprehensive than a nightly newscast in its coverage of foreign affairs and policy; royal inscriptions and relief scenes were typically directed to a narrow range of domestic audiences and interests. My own recently-published survey of Kushite references to the Near East concluded that the Kushite monarchy seems to have reserved its detailed historical reportage strictly for Nilotic affairs in northeast Africa; by contrast, the Near East appears in the Kushite inscriptions and reliefs only as an unmarked landscape stocked with copper and cedar and peopled by indistinct "sand-dwellers" (ḥry.w-š) and "Asiatics" (Sṭ.tyw).¹⁵⁰ The examples cited by Aubin are no exceptions to this pattern: those few allusions to the Near East employ the stereotyped verbs and objects of a generic battle between order and chaos¹⁵¹—a far cry from the detailed itineraries, toponymy, and dramatis personae that characterize the Kushite royals' more narrative description of events in the Nilotic world.¹⁵²

Similarly illustrative is the case of the abovementioned relief scene in a Kushite temple at Gebel Barkal (Fig. 4).¹⁵³ The enemy

¹⁴⁷ Aubin, *Rescue*, 145; idem, "Has Racism Skewed Scholars' View of Kush?" 62.

¹⁴⁸ Evans, "History in the Eye of the Beholder?" 19; but cf. Evans, *Invasion of Sennacherib*, 185, as noted by Aubin, "Has Racism Skewed Scholars' View of Kush?" 34 n. 145.

¹⁴⁹ See note 145 above.

¹⁵⁰ Pope, "Beyond the Broken Reed."

¹⁵¹ Aubin proposes that the context of 701 BCE "appears to fit the best" for the statement at Kawa that Taharqo had "restrained the Asiatics," since "words like 'expel' and 'drive out' would be more appropriate for the events of 674." Aubin, *Rescue*, 351 n. 31. Unfortunately, however, the verb in question (*d3ir*) is notoriously hackneyed in royal inscriptions and literary tales; the wide diversity of contexts in which the ancient term appears has tended to obscure, rather than clarify, its precise intended meaning: *WAS* 5:418.3–12.

¹⁵² Pope, "Beyond the Broken Reed," 111–13, 122–23.

¹⁵³ The "west" end of "south" wall of court B 502 in the Great Temple of Amun (B 500) at Jebel Barkal. In addition to Bankes's drawing shown here as Fig. 4, the scene was also copied by Sir John Gardner Wilkinson on his MSS xi. 56, now in the Bodleian Library; see Pope, "Beyond the Broken Reed," 114 fig. 1.

is shown there beardless and apparently shirtless, instead wearing criss-crossed straps on their chests and conical, knobbed helmets on their heads. In 1981, Spalinger suggested that the figures might be Assyrian soldiers of either Tiglath-pileser III or Sargon II¹⁵⁴—and thus a singular example of Kushite royal propaganda depicting identifiable Near Eastern foes as participants in a specific battle abroad.¹⁵⁵ Redford (following Sir Gardner Wilkinson in 1847) proposed instead that the scene showed Taharqo’s “defeat of the Assyrians” in 701 BCE.¹⁵⁶ After weighing the available interpretations of this scene in his 2002 book and again in his 2015 article, Aubin concurred that the soldiers belonged to the armies of Sargon II: “Spalinger’s interpretation stands.”¹⁵⁷ Yet, today in 2019, Spalinger’s 1981 interpretation no longer stands even with Spalinger himself: in a book manuscript currently in preparation, Spalinger concludes instead that the closest parallels for such beardless and shirtless enemy soldiers wearing criss-crossed straps and conical, knobbed helmets are instead to be found among the Kushites’ *African* enemies, as shown in later Kushite art.¹⁵⁸ He therefore argues that the relief scene at Gebel Barkal commemorated a Kushite expansion or raid against a neighboring polity in the south during the early part of Piankhy’s reign. Like the revised chronology outlined above, Spalinger’s interpretation of the Gebel Barkal scene is quite new and must be tested in the years to come, but it already has one significant

¹⁵⁴ A.J. Spalinger, “Notes on the Military in Egypt during the XXVth Dynasty,” *Journal of the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities* 11 (1981), 37–58 (49).

¹⁵⁵ Pope, “Beyond the Broken Reed,” 112–28.

¹⁵⁶ Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel*, 356–57 n. 185. The quotation here derives from J.G. Wilkinson’s handwritten marginalia on the ms referenced in note 153 above, but a similar judgment also appears in his published works: J.G. Wilkinson, *A Popular Account of the Ancient Egyptians* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1854), 1:308–9; idem, *The Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians* (London: John Murray, 1878), 1:94–95, 97. Timothy Kendall and László Török have entertained the possibility that the images might depict Lower Egyptian foes conquered by Piankhy decades earlier: T. Kendall, *Gebel Barkal Epigraphic Survey: 1986, Preliminary Report of First Season’s Activity* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1986), fig. 10; L. Török, *The Image of the Ordered World in Ancient Nubian Art: The Construction of the Kushite Mind (800 BC – 300 AD)* (Leiden/Boston/Köln: E.J. Brill, 2002), 56 n. 67.

¹⁵⁷ Aubin, *Rescue*, 342–43, n. 45; idem, “Has Racism Skewed Scholars’ View of Kush?” 62, n. 265.

¹⁵⁸ A.J. Spalinger, *The Persistence of Memory in Kush: Piankhy and His Temple* (Prague: Czech Institute, book ms in preparation). I thank Tony Spalinger of the University of Auckland for so generously sharing his book ms with me at this early stage (personal communication 17 September 2016) and also Janice Yellin of Babson College and Timothy Kendall of the Jebel Barkal Archaeological Mission for sharing with me their photographs of Begrawiya North 11 so that I could check one of the comparanda cited in that ms (personal communication 16 October 2016). In addition, I must thank Deborah Cantrell of Vanderbilt University for providing to me her expert assessment of the horses depicted in B 502: personal communication 03 April 2013.

advantage: unlike his own previous theory and those of Wilkinson and Redford, Spalinger's current reading of the scene would be fully consistent with the geographic purview of all other narrative Kushite inscriptions across a span of one thousand years.¹⁵⁹ It is certainly conceivable that a future discovery may radically enlarge the attested scope of the Kushite corpus, but the considerable body of evidence already available gives no reason to expect such an outlier.

Any attempt to explain the absence of explicit Kushite testimony to the events of 701 BCE must also acknowledge the exceptional conditions that have produced our otherwise copious documentation for those events in the Hebrew Bible and in later Aramaic, Midrashic, Greek, Syriac, and Demotic Egyptian literature.¹⁶⁰ Viewed against this backdrop, the Kushites' seeming failure to record their own side of the story understandably comes as a surprise to many modern readers, for the battle of Eltekeh has been deemed by some as "the one brief appearance of Kush upon the stage of world history" and the Kushites' rare participation in "a story which evoked the whole world, because the whole world told it—and vice-versa."¹⁶¹ Yet our perception of Sennacherib's third campaign as "the first world event" is a decidedly retroactive distinction generated by a very specific set of regional (not global) circumstances that simply did not extend to Kush.¹⁶² As Seth Richardson has recently explained, the Near East experienced during the latter half of the first millennium BCE "a gaping hole in the political fabric where kingship once had been; the monovocality of royal states had been replaced by the de-centered voices of a punditocracy" across various communities of literate "autonomous elites" throughout the imperial

¹⁵⁹ Pope, "Beyond the Broken Reed," 123–26.

¹⁶⁰ K. Ryholt, "The Assyrian Invasion of Egypt in Egyptian Literary Tradition: A survey of the narrative source material," in J.G. Dercksen (ed.), *Assyria and Beyond: Studies Presented to Mogens Trolle Larsen* (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 2004), 483–510; T.L. Holm, "Memories of Sennacherib in Aramaic Tradition," in I. Kalimi and S.F.C. Richardson (eds.), *Sennacherib at the Gates of Jerusalem: Story, History and Historiography* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 295–324; G.S. Oegema, "Sennacherib's Campaign and its Reception in the Time of the Second Temple," in *ibid.*, 325–346; R. Ulmer, "Sennacherib in Midrashic and Related Literature: Inscribing History in Midrash," 347–88; J. Verheyden, "The Devil in Person, the Devil in Disguise: Looking for King Sennacherib in Early Christian Literature," 389–432.

¹⁶¹ Adams, *Nubia: Corridor to Africa*, 246; S.F.C. Richardson, "The First 'World Event': Sennacherib at Jerusalem," in I. Kalimi and S.F.C. Richardson (eds.), *Sennacherib at the Gates of Jerusalem: Story, History and Historiography* (Leiden: Brill, 2014) 433–505 (464). A similar judgment was expressed by J. Wilson, review of H.T. Aubin, *Rescue of Jerusalem, Quill & Quire* (15 January 2004), <http://www.quillandquiere.com/review/the-rescue-of-jerusalem-the-alliance-between-hebrews-and-africans-in-701-bc/> (accessed 19 December 2016).

¹⁶² For critique of the categorization of this episode as a "world event," see also P.R. Davies, "The Wolf on the Fold Unfolded," *Expository Times* 126/11 (August 2015), 561; and less critically, Rice, review of *Rescue*, 191.

and post-imperial diaspora.¹⁶³ In contrast to Egypt and much of the Near East, Kush never became a province of either the Assyrian, Babylonian, Achaemenid, Macedonian, or Roman empires. The Kushite monarchy instead persisted for more than a millennium, and its royal house and administrative staff appear to have enjoyed exclusive access to literacy and monumental self-presentation for at least the first four centuries of that span.¹⁶⁴ Even if the kings of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty had chosen to exploit their Near Eastern campaigns as domestic propaganda, the political stability then experienced by Kush during the centuries that followed did not produce the autonomous literate elites who would become so instrumental to the memorialization of 701 BCE across the Near East.

In addition to the dearth of evidence for Shabatako's reign and the scarcity of Kushite testimony to their Near Eastern involvement, one final objection raised against Aubin's negotiated settlement questions whether Assyria and Egypt would have mutually agreed to forego their usual imperialistic ambitions in the Levant. Several authors have assumed that, if Egypt had succeeded to any degree against Sennacherib, Egypt's Kushite pharaohs would necessarily have attempted to acquire territory in the Near East during the decades that followed.¹⁶⁵ I have addressed this problem at considerable length in another publication,¹⁶⁶ so I will only summarize my conclusions here, which hinge upon a distinction between the respective political ecologies of Egypt and Kush. While Egyptian foreign policy was often characterized by attempts at territorial acquisition, garrisoning, and sustained military deployment, the history of Kush's Nilo-Saharan heartland over a very *longue durée* of several millennia reveals instead a prioritization of border defense and long-distance trade without attempts at imperial expansion or administrative overrule.¹⁶⁷ The Twenty-fifth Dynasty's repeated emphasis upon copper and cedar imports embodies this same pattern, and the actions taken by each of the Kushite kings are consistent with a desire to maintain the Levant as a buffer zone against the Assyrian threat.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶³ Richardson, "First 'World Event,'" 473, 435, 452, 477 (in the order quoted and paraphrased above).

¹⁶⁴ J. Pope, "Self-Presentation in the Twenty-fifth Dynasty," in H. Bassir (ed.), *Living Forever: Self-Presentation in Ancient Egypt* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, forthcoming).

¹⁶⁵ D.B. Redford, "Sais and the Kushite Invasions of the Eighth Century B.C.," *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 22 (1985), 5–15 (15); idem, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel*, 355; J.A. Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 170; Kitchen, *Third Intermediate Period*, 385 §346, 557 §470; R. Morkot, *The Black Pharaohs: Egypt's Nubian Rulers* (London: Rubicon, 2000), 217; Kahn, "Taharqa," 118 n. 12.

¹⁶⁶ Pope, "Beyond the Broken Reed."

¹⁶⁷ Pope, "Beyond the Broken Reed," 142–61, with particularly frequent reference to D.N. Edwards, *The Archaeology of the Meroitic State: New Perspectives on Its Social and Political Organisation* (Oxford: BAR International, 1996).

¹⁶⁸ See discussion connected here to note 38 above, with references in Pope, "Beyond the Broken Reed," 119. Note also the hypotheses of

Interestingly, Mordechai Cogan and Ernst Axel Knauf have used similar language to describe Sennacherib's Levantine policy: Cogan observes that Sennacherib was not the "expansionist" that his father had been, and Knauf proposes that Jerusalem was spared during the third campaign so that it might be left "flanking Philistia."¹⁶⁹ In nearly every other respect, Assyria and Kush were radically different from one another—in their population sizes,¹⁷⁰ the physical environment of their home territories, the structure of their domestic bureaucracies, and the goals of each state's foreign policy up to that moment in history—yet the possibility remains that the Assyrian emperor and the Kushite pharaoh may have had similar priorities in mind for Jerusalem by the end of the eighth century BCE. If this hypothesis proves justified, then both sides could have been amenable to a diplomatic solution in 701.

CONCLUSION

"Behold, you put your trust in this broken reed, in Egypt; that if someone leans upon it, it pierces his palm and punctures it."

2 Kgs 18:21

"Man is but a reed, the weakest in nature, but he is a thinking reed. . . Our whole dignity consists in thought. . . Let us endeavor, then, to think well."

Blaise Pascal¹⁷¹

How plausible is a Kushite role in Sennacherib's departure? The hybrid rescue theory of a negotiated settlement is certainly plausible enough that I should have shared it with my students during the lecture that I delivered at Johns Hopkins in 2000; by passing over Taharqo as simply a "broken reed," I failed to recognize both the Kushite pharaoh and his Assyrian adversary as thinking subjects of history, men who may have envisioned solutions more complex than heroic victory and abject defeat. I remain unconvinced that Taharqo's Classical reputation would necessarily have derived from any stalemate he might have effected by the report of his advance in 701 BCE, but this reluctance has more to do with the dubious source pedigree of that Classical reputation than with any unwillingness on my part to entertain

Aubin, *Rescue*, 76; idem, "Has Racism Skewed Scholars' View of Kush?" 53–54, 57.

¹⁶⁹ Cogan, "Cross-Examining," 71; Knauf, "Sennacherib at the Berezina," in Grabbe, *Like a Bird in a Cage*, 149.

¹⁷⁰ For the preceding Bronze Age, the population of Nubia has been estimated at 460,000: D. O'Connor, "Early States along the Nubian Nile," in W.V. Davies (ed.), *Egypt and Africa: Nubia from Prehistory to Islam* (London: British Museum Press, 1991), 145–65 (147). For the contested hypothesis of depopulation in Nubia (esp. Lower Nubia) during the first millennium BCE, see discussion and references in Pope, *Double Kingdom*, 153.

¹⁷¹ B. Pascal, *Pensées* (Paris: Guillaume Desprez, 1671), 69.

Kush's influence upon Sennacherib's departure.¹⁷² In fact, of the four main theories advanced in the published literature, I would argue that Aubin's hybrid rescue theory is rivaled in its logical rigor and evidentiary basis only by Fales's 2014 version of the surrender theory;¹⁷³ I cede a slight advantage to Aubin's proposal of a stalemate followed by negotiated settlement, because an Assyro-Kushite compromise seems to accord best with the evidence for Levantine commercial relations during the first quarter of the seventh century BCE.¹⁷⁴

The only truly "extraordinary" feature of Aubin's intervention was not his hybrid rescue theory but rather the fact that he was the first author to combine a close exposition of that theory and its alternatives with a far-sighted emphasis upon the importance of 701 BCE to global Abrahamic traditions. The subtlety of his theory has already been misunderstood and misrepresented by several reviewers,¹⁷⁵ and its grand implications may well produce an extremist backlash like that already witnessed in Nubian Studies during the second half of the nineteenth century and again during the final decades of the twentieth century, a response that could polarize future discussions of Kush's interactions with the rest of the ancient world.¹⁷⁶ Yet, if Paul Evans is correct to assert that "the evidences available to historians serve as controls in guiding the range of historical reconstructions,"¹⁷⁷ then there is at least reason to hope that the substantive distractions produced by interpreters' social locations might yield to even-handed scrutiny of *all* the available theories about this most interesting problem for thought. In the words of Blaise Pascal, let us endeavor, then, to think well.

¹⁷² See again Goossens, "Taharqa le conquérant."

¹⁷³ See note 87 above.

¹⁷⁴ Notes 38, 47, 99, 138–140 above.

¹⁷⁵ Notes 20–22 above.

¹⁷⁶ Cf. notes 14–18 above. For one possible form that such backlash could take, see esp. Glazer, "Rediscovery of Nubia and Kush," 71, 166–67 n. 11, and cf. also the candid predictions of L. Peake, "The Invisible Superpower: Review of the Geopolitical Status of Kushite (Twenty-fifth Dynasty) Egypt at the Height of its Power and a Historiographic Analysis of the Regime's Legacy," in Godlewski and Łatjar, *Between the Cataracts*, 465–76 (473): "Today if one were to approach the average person or even a mainstream historian and, without the preceding argument, suggest that 2700 years ago a black African ruled over one of the two largest and most powerful empires on Earth. . . [w]ords like Afrocentrism or political correctness might be bandied about, with a negative connotation. . . [and] straying into such territory could be anathema to academic reputations."

¹⁷⁷ See note 10 above.



Figure 1. Examples of 1 shekel and 8 shekel weights from Tel Malhata in the Negev, excavations of the late Prof. I. Beit Arie and L. Freund, on behalf of Tel-Aviv University; photographs by Pavel Shargo. The two weights are not shown in relative scale in this image, as they have been magnified independently in order to display the inscriptions as legibly as possible.

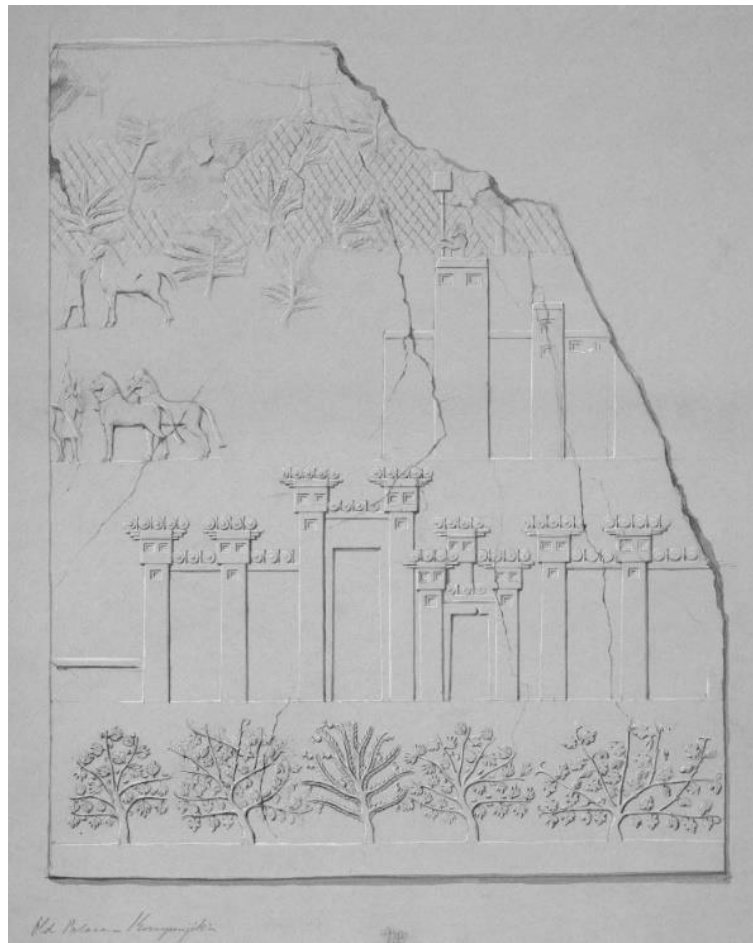


Figure 2. Nineveh, Sennacherib's palace, Room I, Slab 28, 1854-1855, drawing by William Boucher, Or. Dr. VI, 17 (photo: ©Trustees of the British Museum).



Figure 3. British Museum EA 84884: baked clay sealing from Kouyunjik/Nineveh, Iraq, bearing an Assyrian seal impression (at right) and another impression (at left) showing the Kushite King Shabako subduing an enemy. © Trustees of the British Museum. Line drawing at viewer's top left after: H.R.H. Hall, *Catalogue of Egyptian Scarabs, etc., in the British Museum, vol. 1* (London: British Museum, 1913), 290. Line drawing at top right is not Layard's copy of the damaged surface but shows instead a comparable seal impression from: T.C. Mitchell and A. Searight, *Catalogue of the Western Asiatic Seals in the British Museum* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2008), 38.



Figure 4. William John Bankes's drawing from the Great Temple of Amun at Gebel Barkal. William Bankes *Egyptian Drawings MS xv A 28*. Photograph courtesy of Dr Daniele Salvoldi, the Dorset History Centre, and the UK National Trust.

THE RESCUE OF JERUSALEM: A VIEW FROM THE NILE VALLEY

AIDAN DODSON
UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL

The fundamental thesis of *The Rescue of Jerusalem* is that it was the intervention of an Egyptian-Kushite army that proved decisive in causing the Assyrian king Sennacherib to lift his siege of Jerusalem in 701 BCE and return east. This is argued on the basis of the interpretation of data provided by the Old Testament and Assyrian records, rather than anything from Egypt or Nubia – for the very good reason that no material has yet been found there that can be associated with that campaign. The only possible exception has been a pair of texts (on stelae from the site of Kawa in Nubia, see fig. 1) in which the later-king Taharqo looks back on a time in his princely years when he came north “as a youth” from Kush to Egypt with a force of recruits to join King Shabatako.¹ While some have suggested that this was part of preparations for the 701 campaign, there is nothing in the text itself to link the text with the events in question and, as will be discussed below, it now seems that it refers to an occasion at least a decade prior to 701.

¹ Kawa Stela IV (Khartoum, Sudan National Museum 2678), l. 7–9, V (Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek ÆIN 1712), l. 13–14 (I. Eide, T. Hägg, R. Holton-Pierce and L. Török [eds], *Fontes Historiae Nubiorum: Textual Sources for the History of the Middle Nile Region between the Eighth Century BC and the Sixth Century AD*, I [Bergen: Klassisk institutt, Universitetet i Bergen, 1994], 139, 153). For this interpretation, see (e.g.) K.A. Kitchen, *The Third Intermediate Period in Egypt (1100–650 B.C.)*, 2nd ed. (Warmister: Aris & Phillips, 1986), 154–58; 383–86; 557; 584–85.

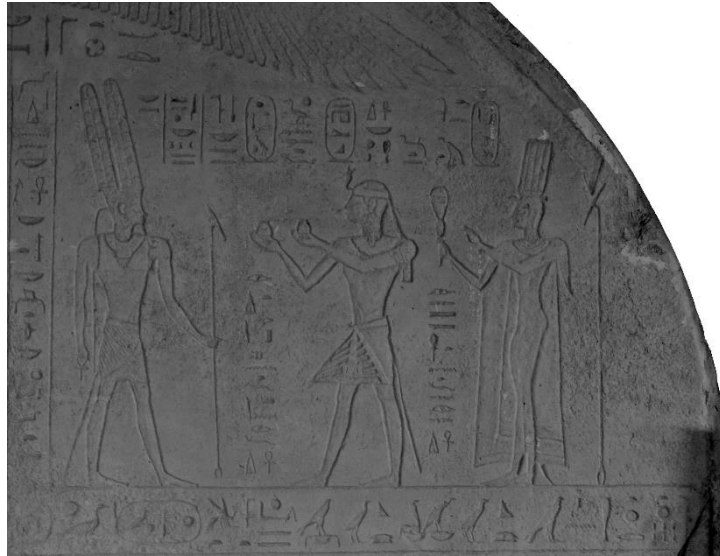


Figure 1. Part of the lunette of one of the two stelae from Kawa in which King Tabarqo describes (inter alia) elements of his princely career, including bringing an army from Kush to Egypt for King Shabatako; the scene shows the king and his mother, Abar, offering to Amun. Kawa V = Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, ÆIN 1712 (author's photograph).

However, even if it had referred to preparations for the 701 campaign, it would have said nothing about the impact and effectiveness of the force once it arrived in Palestine, making it very difficult for an Egyptologist to take an informed view of the role that the Egyptian-Kushite force played. All that one can do is to consider the credibility of the implications of some of *Rescue's* arguments as far as Egypt and Kush are concerned.

Most modern commentators have taken a negative view of the effectiveness of the Egyptian-Kushite forces, with many quoted in Chapter 14 of *Rescue*. However, in no case are such comments based on any unequivocal data; indeed, in most cases they seem ultimately to be a (conscious or otherwise) echoing of an implicitly racist “received wisdom” originating in the late nineteenth century CE, through whose lens what little ancient material with any bearing on the events is viewed (cf. *Rescue*, Chapter 19). In contrast, *Rescue*, suggests that the Twenty-fifth Dynasty possessed “one of the strongest, probably *the* strongest—army in Egypt for many centuries” (p. 74), “[p]ossibly. . . even the strongest army in the entire history of Egypt” (p. 323 n. 85).

Given that nothing is known about the numbers or composition of the Egyptian-Kushite army, such positive views are just as lacking in contemporary objective evidence as the negative assessments. Indeed, there is potentially a danger of circular reasoning: *if* the Egyptian-Kushite army had defeated the hitherto-invincible Assyrians, it *must* therefore have been a force of exceptional quality. In any case, it seems excessive to suggest that it could have exceeded the strength of the Egyptian armies of

the Eighteenth Dynasty, which had been built up through decades of wide-ranging warfare and were supported by an economy that was probably the strongest ever possessed by Egypt—underpinned by the natural resources (especially gold) of Kush (then an integral province of Egypt), which had also provided important elements of the imperial army.

On the other hand, in comparison with the immediately preceding centuries (since the late twelfth century BCE), Egypt and Kush were in 701 once again under a single overlord (although the local kinglets of the preceding century still existed), and thus likely to be a more efficient entity — with the Nubian goldfields once more able to directly underpin the economy and allow the diversion of more resources to the military. Indeed, the civil wars that had plagued Egypt during the later ninth and eighth centuries may have provided a larger reservoir of Egyptians with military experience than had been the case at any time since the New Kingdom, with the possible exception of the brief flowering of Egyptian military power under Shoshenq I in the mid-tenth century.²

The Kushites had also gained experience through Piankhy's campaign into northern Egypt and his successor's re-occupation of the same territory in the decades immediately preceding 701. The capabilities thus demonstrated doubtless built on the military activities that had allowed the Kingdom of Kush to expand out of its Upper Nubian heartland to such a degree that by the middle of the eighth century it embraced southern Egypt, including the Thebaid and the holy city of Thebes itself.³

Taking both national elements together with an invigorated combined economy, there seems no reason to doubt that the Nile Valley could indeed have put together a more credible army than had been the case for a long time. Thus, while to suggest that the Egyptian-Kushite forces deployed in 701 was the “strongest army in the entire history of Egypt” has to be dismissed as unjustifiable hyperbole, there is no reason to doubt that it could have been well-resourced, experienced and, if well-led, effective on the battlefield—even against the Assyrians. It should also be noted that an Egyptian-Kushite army was certainly able to repulse an Assyrian invasion of Egypt in 674, although subsequently defeated in 671 (but still able to regain control prior to a final Assyrian take-over in 664). It is also possible that the failure of Assyria to threaten Egypt for some two decades after 701 could have been a function of respect for Egyptian-Kushite military prowess displayed that year.

In this connection it is perhaps worth noting that by then it had been some time since the Assyrian army had come up against a true nation-state, with an extensive hinterland, rather than the much smaller, city-centered, polities of Syria-Palestine. The

² When Jerusalem has been on the receiving end of Egyptian aggression; for a recent discussion of Shoshenq I's activities in Palestine, updating the picture noted in *Rescue*, see A. Dodson, *Afterglow of Empire: Egypt from the Fall of the New Kingdom to the Saite Renaissance* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2012), 87–95.

³ Cf. Dodson, *Afterglow*, 139–54.

Egyptian-Kushite forces would also have had much shorter supply-lines than the Assyrians, now operating some 600 miles from their homeland, rather than the 150 miles that separated their opponents from the Nile delta.

The Old Testament states that the Egyptian-Kushite forces were led by “Tirhakah, King of Kush”—clearly the Taharqo who ruled from 690 to 664. As the campaign against Jerusalem is securely dated by Assyrian data to 701, this statement has led to various interpretations, including suggestions that there might have been a second campaign, unattested from the Assyrian/Biblical side, or that “Tirhakah,” as the best-known Kushite king, was cited in error for the actual king ruling in 701. However, the general view has been for some time that “King of Kush” is simply a gloss, highlighting that the individual involved, while simply an army commander in 701, was the same man as the Taharqo who had gone on to become king; this still seems the best explanation. Nevertheless, many commentators have queried whether Taharqo was actually old enough to have exercised true operational control of the Egypto-Kushite army,⁴ *Rescue* following the view that he was only twenty years old at the time, with others making him even younger.

It is important to note that the age of Taharqo in 701 is a direct function of broader reconstructions of the history of the Kushite royal family. This accordingly brings us to a point where we need to switch focus to this particular topic, and explore the implications of a radical revision of the history of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty that has been developing since 2013, and which has important consequences for the dynamics of the events of 701 and the immediately preceding decade.

It is worth underlining that prior to the accession of Taharqo in 690 BCE, no events in Egyptian history can be unequivocally fixed in terms of years BCE. Taharqo’s accession date (and thus that of the death of his predecessor) is obtained by adding his unequivocal reign length⁵ to the accession-year of his successor Psamtik I—which is the first Egyptian point in time solidly linked into the known chronology of the broader ancient world.⁶ Before this, all dates depend on the view one takes of the range of variables that can interact to produce an estimated equivalent date—BCE for a given Egyptian king’s regnal year. These variables can include even the relative placement of individuals and events, since there are many cases where the extant data is equivocal in the extreme and can be legitimately read in contradictory ways. Accordingly, scholars can only formulate “working hypotheses” as to such matters, although these may,

⁴ See *Rescue*, 112–13.

⁵ Calculated from the lifespan of sacred bull Apis XXXVII, which died in Year 20 of Psamtik I at the age twenty-one years, two months and seven days, and had been born in Year 26 of King Taharqo.

⁶ L. Depuydt, “Saite and Persian Egypt, 664 BC–332 BC (Dyns. Twenty-Six–Thirty-One, Psammetichus I to Alexander’s Conquest of Egypt),” in E. Hornung, R. Krauss and D. Warburton (eds), *Ancient Egyptian Chronology* (HdO, 83; Leiden: Brill, 2006), 265–83.

through the passage of time and lack of challenge become regarded, especially by non-specialists in the minutiae of Egyptian historiography, as “facts,” in spite of the lack of any definitive proof. As there are no references in Egyptian sources to the events of 701, the identification of who was ruling in the Nile Valley at that time is accordingly entirely dependent on the “working hypothesis” one adopts for the decades preceding Taharqo’s accession (fig. 2).

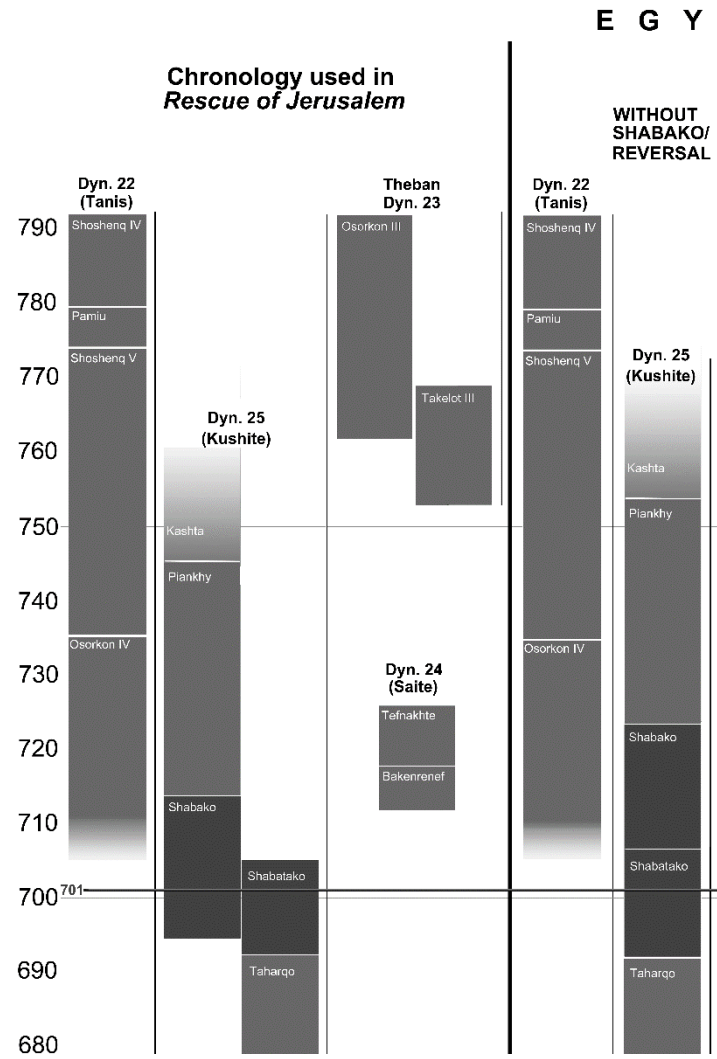


Figure 2. Comparative chronologies for Egypt during the eighth and early seventh centuries (author's graphic).

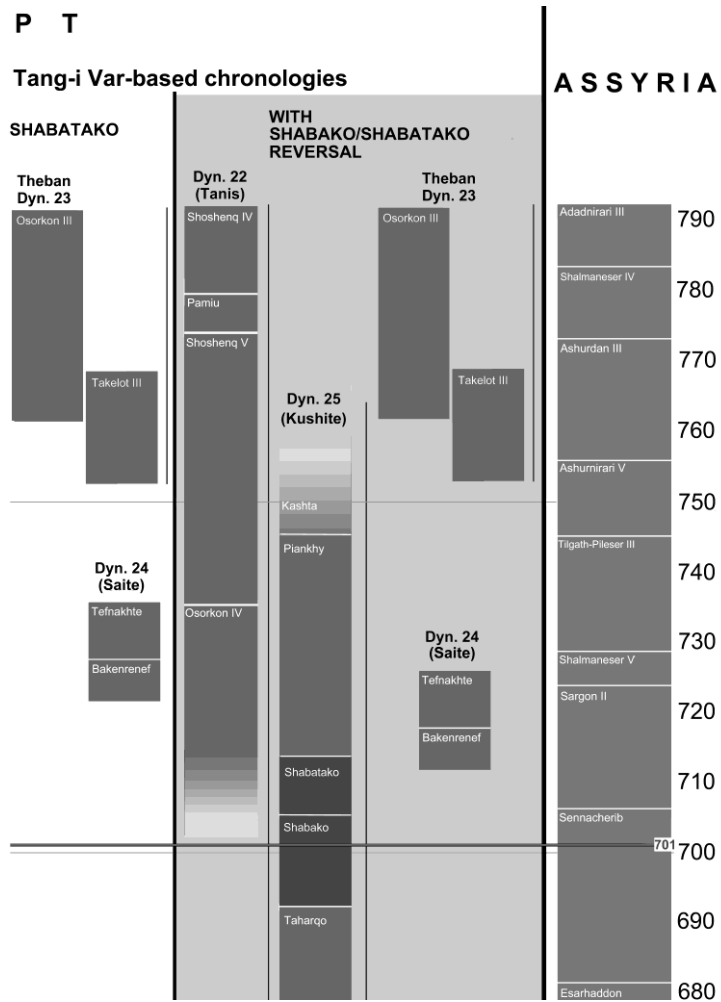


Figure 2 (cont.). Comparative chronologies for Egypt during the eighth and early seventh centuries (author's graphic).

In *The Rescue of Jerusalem*, the hypothesis adopted is that 701 fell during a six-year coregency between Shabako and his eventual successor Shabatako. This order of succession enshrines an assumption, going back to the dawn of modern Egyptology, that these royal names were the respective hieroglyphic prototypes of the Greek forms “Sabacon” and “Sebichos,” placed in that order by the third century BCE historian Manetho. The latter records that “Sabacon” defeated the Saite (Twenty-fourth Dynasty) king “Bocchoris” (Bakenrenef), an event which marked the unification of Egypt and Kush, and has been generally dated on the basis of broader Egyptian chronological calculations to the mid-710s (“c. 712” in *Rescue*). This is usually placed in Shabako’s second year (as both Year 6 of Bakenrenef and a year reported to Shabako’s Year 2 are usually—but perhaps not correctly—attributed to the same burial in the Serapeum at Saqqara).⁷ Since Shabako is known from contemporary texts to have reigned for a minimum of fifteen years, his reign would run down to the end of the eighth century (i.e. just before or just after 701).

On this basis, the succession of Shabatako was long placed at this point, giving him around a decade of reign (albeit unattested in contemporary records beyond his Year 3) before Taharqo’s guaranteed accession in 690. However, the 1999 publication of an April 706-dated text of Sargon II of Assyria at Tang-i Var in Iran, which recorded that “Shapataku, ruler of the land of Meluhha (Kush)” had sent the fugitive ruler of Ashdod, Iamani, in chains to the Assyrian king, upset this scheme. Since “Shapataku” could hardly be other than Shabatako, the beginning of his reign would be pushed back to 707 at the latest. A Shabako-to-Shabatako succession in or before 706 would mean that Shabako’s minimum fifteen-year reign would begin in 722 at the latest—i.e. around a decade earlier than is usually allowed.

Given the direct and indirect consequences of such a change on the history of the eighth century (see further, below), many scholars sought to avoid it by arguing that the text actually indicated that in 706 Shabako and Shabatako were ruling together, either as formal coregents⁸ or with the latter as some form of “viceroy,” ruling Kush while Shabako was in Egypt.⁹ Both options allowed the basic chronological structure to remain undisturbed, with the “coregency” version followed in *The Rescue of Jerusalem*.

⁷ The stela of Shabako is only described verbally in A. Mariette, *Le Sérapeum de Memphis*, I (Paris: Vieweg, 1882), 184, and appears now to be lost; its date and name of the dedicated king cannot be verified. It may be noted that Mariette also notes a fragment bearing the remains of the prenomen of Shabatako in the same room as contained the “Shabako” stela.

⁸ E.g., D.B. Redford, as cited in *Rescue*, 323 n. 87.

⁹ As argued by Kitchen, “The Third Intermediate Period in Egypt: an overview of fact and fiction,” in G.P.F. Broekman, R.J. Demarée and O.E. Kaper (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* (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 2009), 163–64.

Unfortunately, both of these “explanations” lack any independent verification and are replete with problems. Taking the second first, we have no evidence for any office of the kind implied by the “viceroy” theory, leaving aside the question of how/why an Assyrian king would be dealing with a subordinate of Shabako's, whose territory was separated from his by the Kingdom of Egypt, rather than Shabako himself, actually present in said kingdom.¹⁰

As for the question of a formal coregency, there survives no material with double dates of Shabako and Shabatako, nor any representations of them acting together.¹¹ It should also be emphasized that, contrary to the impression generally given by Egyptologists, coregency (whereby a king associated his heir with him on the throne, with full kingly titles, and in some cases his own regnal years) was by no means a provably widely-used institution.

Although proposed for various pairings of kings in modern histories of ancient Egypt, on closer inspection most alleged cases of coregency turn out to ultimately be means of resolving apparent chronological conundra of the kind presented by the Tang-i Var evidence, rather than contemporary data left behind by the putative corulers—i.e. double-dating of texts, or representations of the protagonists acting together (rather than simply appearing separately on a wall or other monument).¹² During the Twelfth Dynasty (twentieth to eighteenth centuries BCE), there is such evidence in the form of double-dates (although even these have been queried by some scholars). However, during the New Kingdom (sixteenth to eleventh centuries), there is actually only *one* wholly unequivocal example of a coregency, involving a female (Hatshepsut) acting alongside a male (Thutmose III), whom she had no normal prospect of succeeding (and whose regnal years she shared). There are also two further coregencies that seem highly likely, but both of these are also anomalous, each involving a coruler (one a female) apparently not in the direct line of succession, nor destined for ultimate independent rule (Smenkhkare and Neferneferuaten).¹³ All other putative ex-

¹⁰ Cf. K. Jansen-Winkeln, “The Third Intermediate Period,” in E. Hornung, R. Krauss and D. Warburton (eds), *Ancient Egyptian Chronology* (HdO, 83; Leiden: Brill, 2006), 258–59, *pace* Kitchen's protestations to the contrary (“Third Intermediate Period: an overview,” 163–64).

¹¹ Turin stela 1467, showing the two kings together, is undoubtedly a forgery (R. Morkot and S. Quirke, “Inventing the 25th Dynasty: Turin Stela 1467 and the Construction of History,” in C.-B. Arnst, I. Hafemann and A. Lohwasser [eds], *Begegnungen: Antike Kulturen im Niltal. Festgabe für Erika Endesfelder, Karl-Heinz Priese, Walter Friedrich Reinecke, Steffen Wenig* [Leipzig: Wodtke und Stegbaue, 2001], 349–63).

¹² For a detailed discussion, see A. Dodson, “The Coregency Conundrum,” *Kmt: A Modern Journal of Ancient Egypt* 25/2 (2014), 28–35.

¹³ For a discussion of these individuals and their likely (albeit controversial) status, see A. Dodson, *Amarna Sunset: Nefertiti, Tutankhamun, Ay, Horemheb and the Egyptian Counter-Reformation*, 2nd edition (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2018), 27–52.

amples are based on subjective analysis of material that is all ultimately equivocal, or possibly even erroneous (e.g., a potentially miswritten date in the case of the proposed coregency between Thutmose III and Amenhotep II).

During the period leading up to Kushite rule, the only known true coregency (i.e., an anticipatory generational transition, not a case of kings of rival lines ruling in parallel, as was a feature of much of the Third Intermediate Period) is that between Osorkon III and Takelot III, attested by a clear father-son double-date (the only such double-date since the Middle Kingdom!) In contextualizing this, one should note that at the time of this unique double-date, Osorkon III was in extreme old age, the coregency having been instituted after Osorkon had held senior positions for some six-and-a-half decades, and was thus probably a “non-standard” arrangement driven by the practical circumstance of the elder king’s senility, rather than supporting the idea that coregency was in any way a “normal” matter.

On the basis of the foregoing, there should be a *prima facie* assumption *against* assuming the existence of a coregency in the absence of representations of rulers acting together or unequivocal double-dates, no matter how tempting the chronological and other drivers might be. Given that this alleged coregency of Shabako and Shabatako was only ever posited to “save” broader chronological assumptions, in the wake of the “Tang-i Var conundrum,” it is methodologically unsound to make it the key underpinning of a working hypothesis for the eighth/seventh century transition.

This seemingly left the unpalatable option of pushing Shabako’s accession back to 722,¹⁴ with donation stela from the Delta showing that he was recognized in that region as early as his Years Two through Six (*720–*716). But, in spite of this, when Sargon II menaced Egypt in 716, it was not Shabako, but “Shilkanni, king of Egypt” (generally agreed to be Osorkon IV of Tanis) who dealt with the Assyrian, and appeased him through a gift of horses. Although it is clear that local kings still continued to exist around Egypt until the end of the reign of Taharqo, the absence of Shabako from an affair of such importance could be seen as very odd.

However, all of this depended on Shabako being Shabatako’s predecessor, and in 2013 there appeared a new study that (inter alia) proposed the reversal of the order of the two reigns,¹⁵ with further papers seconding the new view appearing the following years.¹⁶ All recognized that neither Greek name in

¹⁴ For a reconstruction of the period on this basis, see Dodson, *Afterglow*, 139–68.

¹⁵ M. Bányai, “Ein Vorschlag zur Chronologie der 25. Dynastie in Ägypten,” *Journal of Egyptian History* 6 (2013), 46–129; idem, “Die Reihenfolge der kuschitischen Könige,” *Journal of Egyptian History* 8 (2015), 115–80. It should be noted that these papers make other proposals for the reconfiguration of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty beyond simply reversing the order of Shabatako and Shabatako that are not consistent with the implications of the reversal as developed below.

¹⁶ F. Payraudeau, “Retour sur la succession Shabako-Shabatako,”

Manetho's chronicle, "Sabacon" nor "Sebichos," contained anything that supported the conventional order,¹⁷ and explored the implications of switching the two kings around.

Regarding overall chronology, making Shabako the later of the two kings would make his known fifteen regnal years run from Taharqo's accession in 690 to 705. Not only would this square with the fourteen years given to "Sebichos" in Africanus's version of Manetho,¹⁸ but would place the transition between the reordered reigns after 706, leaving no problem with taking Shabatako's appearance in the Tang-i Var inscription in that year as being an independent monarch. No regnal year higher than the third is known for Shabatako, but giving him the eight years of Africanus's version of Manetho would place his accession around 713, fitting perfectly with the conventional dating for the transition between Piankhy and his successor.

Looking at other material from the period, the reversal of Shabako and Shabatako also has positive results. First, the substructure of Shabatako's pyramid at El-Kurru is of a "cut and cover" type found only among the earliest Kushite royal tombs, including that of Piankhy, and has no trace of decoration. In contrast, Shabako's tomb has a tunneled substructure—a type found in all later Kushite royal tombs—with traces of mythological texts, also as found in later royal tombs.¹⁹ Thus, while the conventional ordering of the kings requires an unexpected architectural regression under Shabatako, the reversal of the kings' order allows a more natural architectural progression to be observed.

Moving to epigraphic matters, Shabatako is not mentioned on the statue of Shabako's son, the high priest of Amun Horemakhet (fig. 3), although Shabako himself, Taharqo and Tanutamun are all included as kings whom Horemakhet served: unless Shabatako was in some way disgraced (for which there is no evidence whatsoever), this absence is very odd. Likewise, at the Small Temple at Medinet Habu, the pylon added during the Twenty-fifth Dynasty (fig. 4) bears the names of Shabako and Taharqo only, suggesting that decoration began under Shabako and was continued under Taharqo: there is no indication of any hiatus under any intervening reign of Shabatako.

NeHeT 1 (2014), 115–27; G.P.F. Broekman, "The Order of Succession between Shabaka and Shabataka. A Different View on the Chronology of the Twenty-fifth dynasty," *Göttinger Miszellen* 245 (2015), 17–31; the following paragraphs summarize key points raised in these papers. J. Pope, writing in the present volume, pp. 119–22, also takes a supportive position vis à vis this proposed reconfiguration.

¹⁷ Indeed, Broekman, "The Order of Succession," 20 n. 18, wondered whether the "n" at the end of the first name might derive from a misreading of a poorly-written Egyptian *tβ*-sign as an n (both are horizontal signs), and thus could support "Sabakon" actually concealing the name Shabatako.

¹⁸ Generally regarded as the least inaccurate of the surviving epitomes of Manetho's now-lost original work.

¹⁹ For Kushite royal tombs, see A. Dodson, *The Royal Tombs of Ancient Egypt* (London: Pen & Sword, 2016), 114–16.



Figure 3. *Statuette of the High Priest of Amun, Horemakhet, son of Shabako; the text on the base names his father, Tabarqo and Tanwetamani, but not Shabatako. From Karnak; Aswan, Nubian Museum, ex-Cairo CG 42204 = JE 38580 (author's photograph).*



Figure 4. *The Twenty-fifth Dynasty pylon of the Small Temple at Medinet Habu; its original texts switch directly from Shabako to Taharqo (author's photograph).*

A further piece of evidence is provided by the texts marking the annual height of the Nile inundation at Karnak, which are arranged in such a way that those of Shabatako would appear to have been carved before those of Shabako. Also at Karnak, in the temple of Osiris-Heqadjet (fig. 5), the God's Wife of Amun Shepenwepet I (daughter of Osorkon III) appears in a portion of the temple decorated under Shabatako, as does her successor, Amenirdis I. Under the normal ordering of kings, Shepenwepet I would be long-dead in these scenes, as Amenirdis I is known to have succeeded her as God's Wife by Year 12 of Shabako,²⁰ i.e. at least three years before Shabatako's assumed accession. If, on the other hand, Shabatako were the earlier king, Shepenwepet I would have been the incumbent God's Wife at his accession, with the probability that the decoration of the temple was underway at the time of Shepenwepet's replacement by the (Kushite) Amenirdis I,²¹ explaining both ladies' presence there.

²⁰ Graffito in the Wadi Hammamat.

²¹ The "Year 12" date is purely a *terminus ante quem*, and says nothing about when the transition between Shepenwepet I and Amenirdis I took place. Since Shepenwepet I had been in office since around 790, and was probably a mature woman at the time, her death around 710 under a re-ordered Shabatako is far more credible than it occurring a decade later under a conventionally-ordered Shabako.



Figure 5. The temple of Osiris-Hegadjet at Karnak, built by Osorkon III and Takelot III, and extended by Shabatako, who is depicted on the façade. The king's cartouches — but not his Horus-name serekh — have been mutilated as part of a persecution of the memory of the Kushite kings under Psamtik II, which may have resulted in the loss of material relating to the events of 701 BCE in Egyptian temples (author's photographs).

Reversing the order of Shabako and Shabatako can thus be seen to resolve a range of issues, and while objections can be raised, none can be regarded as decisive.²² Indeed, addressing them has in many cases actually produced further evidence supporting the revision.

In terms of Egypto-Assyrian relations, the new configuration leaves Shilkanni/Osorkon IV's gift of horses in 716 well before the Kushite return to northern Egypt. The arrival of Iamani in the Nile Valley would coincide closely with Shabatako succeeding Piankhy²³ as the new king of Kush, when Kushite direct control extended no further north than the Thebaid.²⁴

Iamani's arrival may have provided a catalyst for the new king to reverse Piankhy's decade-old apparent policy of maintaining no more than a distant suzerain relationship with the rulers of Egypt north of the Thebaid, under which relations with Asiatic powers had been implicitly left in the hands of these monarchs (e.g., Osorkon IV in 716). Given Assyrian expansionism, and the presence of a Palestinian fugitive at his court, Shabatako may have taken the view that the security of the Nile Valley was best secured by consolidating his power in the far north. It is known that Shabatako was physically in Thebes in his Year 3 and it may be that, having been formally crowned there as King of Egypt, he moved north, dethroned Bakenrenef and became the supreme ruler of the full length of a now-united kingdom of Egypt and Kush.²⁵

²² Summarized by Broekman, "The Order of Succession," 28–30.

²³ Probably as his son, given that Taharqo, definitely a son of Piankhy, refers to himself as one of Shabatako's brothers in his Kawa stelae.

²⁴ Cf. Broekman's comments on Assyrian references to Iamani's flight ("The Order of Succession," 24–25).

²⁵ Although, as already noted, local dynasties, including some of kings, continued to exist in northern Egypt until the end of Kushite rule.

This new status is likely to have been the occasion for Shabatako's change of Horus-name from "Strong-bull-appearing-in-Thebes" (citing part of the domain he had inherited from Piankhy, and perhaps even the latter's predecessor, Kashta), which he was using in Year 3, to the non-geographic "Enduring-of-appearances" that is found on undated, but probably later, monuments—including a statue found at Memphis and now in Cairo.²⁶ Indeed, Shabatako's original titulary is another point in favor of placing him before Shabako in the royal succession, as it follows the expansive minatory style of the kings of the imperial New Kingdom (and imitated by the far less powerful kings of the following Third Intermediate Period). In contrast, a simple archaizing style that had started to be adopted during the middle of the eighth century by kings in Egypt-proper (e.g., by Shoshenq V of Tanis and Osorkon III²⁷ of Thebes) would be the universal mode employed by Shabako, Taharqo, Tanutamun, and the subsequent kings of Egypt and Kush for some centuries. Shabatako's use of an "extended" Horus-name would thus be anomalous if he did indeed reign after Shabako.

On the basis of the reconfiguration of the reigns, Shabatako's preparation for the defeat of Bakenrenef is likely to have been the occasion when the future king Taharqo went "as a twenty year old recruit. . .with His Majesty to Lower Egypt,"²⁸ rather than in connection with the events of 701, as has often been proposed.²⁹ In this case, Taharqo's age in 701 would be raised to something around thirty—a more credible age for an army commander-in-chief, and dealing decisively with the issues noted on p. 136-37.

Another age-issue resolved by the reordering of Shabako and Shabatako concerns Tanwetamani, the son of Shabako and successor of Taharqo. On the conventional ordering, Tanwetamani would have come to the throne some forty years after his father's death; under the reversal, the gap would only have been the two-and-a-half decades of Taharqo's reign.

Shabako's background is not wholly clear. He is usually confidently called a son of Piankhy's predecessor, Kashta, on the basis of a now lost inscription that is recorded as naming the God's Wife Amunirdis I as "King's Sister" of Shabako.³⁰ However, in Egyptian "sister" can refer to a more generalized female

²⁶ CG 655 = JE 27852 (L. Borchardt, *Statuen und Statuetten von Königen und Privatleuten im Museum von Kairo*, Nr. 1–1294, III [Berlin: Reichsdruckerei, 1930], 2, pl.121.

²⁷ It should be noted that *Rescue's* account of the internal affairs of Egypt prior to the advent of Kushite rule, which derives principally from Kitchen's *Third Intermediate Period*, is now obsolete regarding its localization of the Twenty-third Dynasty and definition of its constituent kings; for an updated discussion, see Dodson, *Afterglow*, 114–38.

²⁸ Kawa stela V, l. 16–17 (Eide et al. [eds], *Fontes Historiae Nubiorum* I, 153).

²⁹ On the non-sequentiality of the Kawa narratives, cf. Broekman, "The Order of Succession," 28–30.

³⁰ Other texts include cartouches of Amenirdis's royal "brother," but all have been erased and are unreadable.

relative (even a wife), so this cannot be regarded as definitive evidence.³¹ Manetho states that “Sabichos” was the son of “Sabakon,” and with the re-identification of these kings, it is possible that Shabako was actually Shabatako’s son, although it is perhaps more likely that he was a sibling—Shabako certainly married a daughter of Piankhy.³²

The shifting of the reign of Shabako to a span of 705–690 makes perhaps less likely arguments that the seal-impressions bearing his image found at Nineveh (fig. 6)³³ should be dated prior to 701, and thus unrelated to that year’s events.³⁴

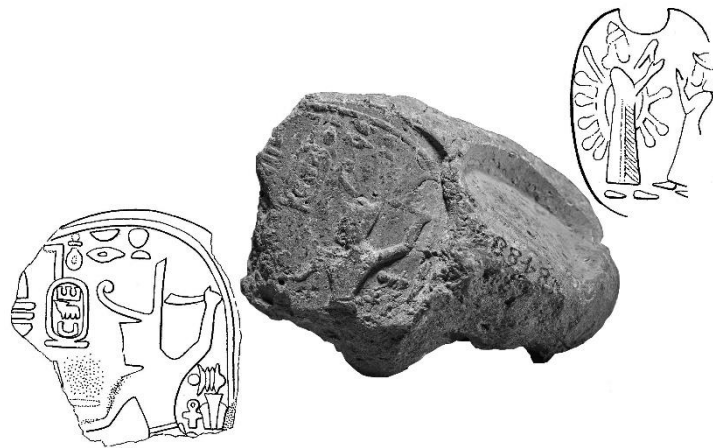


Figure 6. Jar sealing, with one seal-impression showing Shabako smiting an enemy before a [lost] Egyptian god, and another showing an Assyrian before an Assyrian god; 4.75cm × 3.18cm. From Nineveh; British Museum WA 84884 (© Trustees of the British Museum).

³¹ Cf. Broekman, “The Order of Succession,” 30.

³² Against the idea of Shabako being a son of Shabatako is that Shabako would then be succeeded by his nephew (son of Piankhy) Taharqo, rather than by one of his sons (e.g., Horemakhet [pp. 143-44, above] or the later king Tanwetamani). On the other hand, Kushite rules of succession remain obscure, and seem not to comprise simple male primogeniture, as was normal in Egypt. Rather, it is generally held by scholars that a king was succeeded first by his brothers, before shifting to the next generation: if Shabatako, Shabako and Taharqo were all brothers, this would work well, with the throne then going to Shabako’s son Tanwetamani (presumably in the absence of any surviving son of Shabatako). For a discussion of the underlying issues of Kushite succession rules, see R. Morkot, “Kingship and Kinship in the Empire of Kush,” in S. Wenig [ed.], *Studien zum antiken Sudan: Akten der 7. Internationalen Tagung für merotische Forschungen vom 14. bis 19. September 1992 in Gosen/ bei Berlin* [Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1999], 188–94.

³³ *Rescue*, 149–50; now British Museum WA 84527 and WA 84884.

³⁴ Noted in *Rescue*, 352 n. 5.

However, the view that they derive from the sealing of some kind of peace treaty, as espoused in *Rescue*, following many earlier authors, does not seem likely. There seems little doubt that the sealings derive from storage jars, the mud element matching the internal traces found on contemporary undoubted jar-closures,³⁵ in spite of the objections in *Rescue*.³⁶ On the other hand, the fact that these two examples bear both an Egyptian seal-impression *and* an Assyrian one suggests that whatever was once contained in the jar(s) was not a simple trade-item, the second impression implying some verification or approval of the contents by an Assyrian official present in Egypt at the time of packing.³⁷

Accordingly, while the seal-impressions cannot be used to support the romantic idea of their being part of a physical peace agreement (which, to judge from other examples of ancient peace treaties, would have taken the form of an exchange of cuneiform tablets), they may well have formed part of a formal gift exchange that, given the key role played in the exchange of valuable goods in ancient diplomacy, might have accompanied an agreement between the two states. It should be noted that another fragment of Egyptian seal impression is known from Nineveh, giving the name “Menkheperre.”³⁸ This was the prenomen of Thutmose III of the fifteenth century, the name of a Theban high priest of eleventh century—and also a variant prenomen used by Piankhy. Given that Nineveh's prominence dates from Neo-Assyrian times, the latter seems the more likely ascription, thus providing evidence for some kind of exchange between Assyria and Kush some years before 701.

Whether there *was* a formal treaty in the wake of the events of 701 is a problematic question in the absence of any direct evidence, e.g., cuneiform tablets recording such (of which many exist around the ancient Levant), or a copy on an Egyptian temple wall (as survives from the thirteenth century Egyptian-Hittite treaty). One factor that might support such a thing is the fact that it was then over two decades before Assyria and Egypt once again came into conflict, following the deaths of both parties to a putative treaty (although, as noted above, p. 137–38, more

³⁵ See W.M.F. Petrie, *Tanis II, Nebesheb (Am) and Defenneh (Tabpanbes)* (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1888), 72, pl. xxxvi[4].

³⁶ *Rescue*, 352 n. 5, a statement apparently made without understanding the make-up of the sealing. Pope (this volume, p. 121–22) favors the idea that the marks derive from a cord closing a bag containing valuables.

³⁷ Pope (this volume, p. 121–22) puts forward the contrary view that the sealing was done in Assyria, with a resident Egyptian adding the Shabaka seal-impression.

³⁸ British Museum WA 84526; cf. J. Pope, *The Double Kingdom under Tabarqo: Studies in the History of Kush and Egypt c. 690–664 BC* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 11 n. 39, and A. Lohwasser, “Zu den Men-Cheper-Ra-Skarabäen der 25. Dynastie,” in J. Budka, R. Gundacker, and G. Pieke (eds), *Florilegium Aegyptiacum: Eine wissenschaftliche Blütenlese von Schülern und Freunden für Helmut Satzinger zum 75. Geburtstag am 21. Jänner 2013* (Göttinger Miscellen, 14; Göttingen: Seminar für Ägyptologie und Koptologie, 2013), 229–34.

practical issues of military balance might have been involved). However, any consideration of what such a treaty *might* have contained, as is set out in *Rescue* (pp. 150–54), can be no more than sheer speculation in the light of the lack of objective evidence, and *Rescue*'s suggestion there that it might have been a multilateral agreement lacks any supporting parallels.

What, then, can one usefully conclude, from the Egyptian/Nubian point of view, about the thesis put forward in *Rescue*, particularly in light of the highly probable revision of the Kushite royal succession? Starting with a negative, the reversal of the order of Shabako and Shabatako removes the possibility that Prince Taharqo's journey with an army from Kush to Egypt might have been in preparation for the campaign of 701, thus deleting the one potential piece of Egyptian/Nubian data that could directly attest to it. On the other hand, the likely age of Taharqo in 701 is raised to around thirty, making his position as head of the Egyptian-Kushite forces far more credible.

As for the strength and capability of those forces is concerned, the union of Egypt and Kush restored the economic basis of the military power of the glory days of the New Kingdom, while the endemic warfare in the Nile Valley over the preceding decades may well have provided a more martial pool of manpower that might otherwise have been the case. On this basis, and the favorable strategic position of their home territory relative to the Palestinian theatre of operations, there seems no *prima facie* reason to question the ability of Egyptian-Kushite forces to have given a good account of themselves against the Assyrians. Accordingly, *Rescue*'s proposal that it was the Egyptian-Kushite intervention that proved decisive in 701 seems a perfectly reasonable working hypothesis, even if not provable on the basis of extant data.

Regarding the dynamics behind the Egyptian-Kushite intervention, the revision of the royal succession clarifies the contrast between the policy appeasement of the Assyrians implied by the extradition of Iamani in 706 and opposing them militarily in 701. The former will have been the act of Shabatako, who died shortly afterwards, and the latter directed by his successor Shabako. As to why this reversal of policy took place, we have no objective basis for assessment. On the other hand, one might posit a mixture of concern at the long-term efficacy of appeasement, coupled with a strengthening of Egyptian-Kushite military capability following a further half-decade's integration of economy and armies, which could have given Shabako more confidence in a positive outcome of a clash with the Assyrian army.

While this review of what we now seem to know about the Egyptian/Nubian end of the events of 701 thus fails to shed much additional light on what actually took place in Palestine, it does give some potential new insights into the Nilotic background. In doing so, it incidentally illustrates the fact that Egyptian history is far more malleable than is often appreciated by scholars working in adjacent regions, with "standard" reconstructions often obsolescent and/or incorporating far more subjective assumptions than may be warranted. Indeed, this factor

concerning ancient history is by no means restricted to the Nile valley, and is but one of the factors that makes definitive conclusions about *what* happened in the past so elusive, let alone *why*. This of course makes such debates as those enshrined in *Rescue* frustrating—yet strangely stimulating!

ISRAELITE INTERACTION WITH EGYPT DURING THE MONARCHY: A CONTEXT FOR INTERPRETING 2 KINGS 19:8-13

LESTER L. GRABBE
UNIVERSITY OF HULL, ENGLAND

Henry T. Aubin has written an interesting book, his claim being that the reference to the Nubians (Kushites) in 2 Kgs 19:8–13 shows them rescuing Jerusalem from the Assyrians in 701 BCE.¹ I am sympathetic to his overall conclusions, since I independently argued for something similar, though with somewhat different arguments.²

In order to evaluate Aubin's claim, I would like to do two things: 1) put the discussion in context by looking at general references to Egypt and its encounter with Israel and Judah in the books of 1 and 2 Kings. Can we believe everything that the writer(s) of 1 and 2 Kings said about the Egyptians? What about the parallel accounts in 1 and 2 Chronicles? If not, how do we go about evaluating the statements made in the narrative? The first part of the article will focus on that aspect of the question. 2) Then, we shall move specifically to 2 Kgs 19:8–13 and evaluate the statement there for historicity. This will include attention to Aubin's hypothesis that Taharqo was the rescuer of Jerusalem.

EARLIER ENCOUNTERS OF ISRAEL WITH EGYPT³

Egypt is mentioned a great deal in the early books of the Hebrew Bible, but our concern is not with these notices, except to

¹ H.T. Aubin, *The Rescue of Jerusalem: The Alliance Between Hebrews and Africans in 701 B.C.* (New York: Soho Press; Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 2002).

² He kindly provided me with a copy of his book after seeing the volume I had edited entitled, "Like a Bird in a Cage:" *The Invasion of Sennacherib in 701 BCE* (JSOTSup, 363; ESHM, 4; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003). As will be clear, I concluded—independently—in an article in that volume ("Of Mice and Dead Men: Herodotus 2.141 and Sennacherib's Campaign in 701 BCE," 119–40) that the Egyptian army had indeed come to the aid of Judah—or at least marched to oppose the Assyrians under Sennacherib. For the record, my article was originally written and presented at a meeting of the ESHM in the summer of 2000, two years before Aubin's book appeared.

³ This section will especially draw on the work of B.U. Schipper, *Israel und Ägypten in der Königszeit: Die kulturellen Kontakte von Salomo bis zum Fall Jerusalems* (OBO, 170; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999). Also, to a lesser extent on P.S. Ash,

observe that many of these references are probably more fictional than historical.⁴ Yet this fact should caution us that the mention of Egypt in a passage in 1 and 2 Kings needs to be critically studied before accepting it as a true historical datum. An important point made by Bernd U. Schipper is that “already in the Ramesside period it appeared that a policy of external relations is possible only with strong inner relations and, contrariwise, inner instability made an active external policy (e.g., for a campaign) nearly impossible.”⁵ Thus, if a Pharaoh had to devote his energy and resources to resolving internal conflicts, external political activity had to be abandoned.

SOLOMON

Egypt already occurs in the story of Solomon, who ostensibly has good relations with Egypt. According to 1 Kgs 3:1, Solomon is given the daughter of Pharaoh as a wife, and he receives the city of Gezer as a wedding gift from her father—after it had been destroyed! (9:16). Some have identified the king in question as Siamun (c. 986–968), the next to last king of the Twenty-first Dynasty. There are a number of arguments against this interpretation.⁶ Briefly, a relief that some have interpreted as showing an incursion into Palestine by Siamun has probably been misinterpreted, and Siamun is not likely to have made any such expedition to the east.⁷ Although there are some destruction layers in Gezer and elsewhere in Philistia, the cause is not known, and no

David, Solomon and Egypt: A Reassessment (JSOTSup, 297; Sheffield Academic Press, 1999). Note that there is not complete agreement among Egyptologists about the length of reign of various kings, and I have chosen to follow the figures in E. Hornung, R. Drauss, and D.A. Warburton (eds.), *Ancient Egyptian Chronology* (HdO, 83; Leiden: Brill, 2006).

⁴ A good example concerns the Joseph story, which D. Redford addressed long ago, with *A Study of the Biblical Story of Joseph (Genesis 37–50)* (VTSup, 20; Leiden: Brill, 1970). Another example is the exodus: cf. L.L. Grabbe, “The Exodus and Historicity,” in T.B. Dozeman, C.A. Evans, and J.N. Lohr (eds.), *The Book of Exodus: Composition, Reception, and Interpretation* (VTSup, 164; Leiden: Brill, 2014), 61–87.

⁵ “Bereits in der Ramessidenzeit zeigt sich, daß eine Außenpolitik nur vor dem Hintergrund gefestigter Verhältnisse im Inneren möglich ist und—umgekehrt—instabile Verhältnisse im Inneren eine aktive Außenpolitik (wie z.B. einen Feldzug) nahezu unmöglich machten” (Schipper, *Israel und Ägypten*, 12; also see his n. 6 on the same page).

⁶ Schipper, *Israel und Ägypten*, 19–35; Ash, *David, Solomon and Egypt*, 37–46.

⁷ The relief probably picturing Siamun striking a foe is likely a cultic scene, and the supposed double-ax that some have interpreted as Philistine is probably a votive offering (the Minoan double-ax was a cult object, never a war weapon), but it is not certainly even an ax, more likely a Hittite shield (and Siamun certainly never campaigned against the Hittites). See especially Schipper, *Israel und Ägypten*, 24–28; H.D. Lance, “Solomon, Siamun, and the Double Ax,” in F.M. Cross, W.E. Lemke, and P.D. Miller, Jr (eds.), *Magnalia Dei: Essays on the Bible and Archaeology in Memory of G. Ernest Wright* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1976), 389–413.

indications of Egyptian involvement is found in the material culture. It also seems rather unlikely that the Pharaoh would have given a destroyed city as a wedding gift to Solomon. Finally, the main destruction layer in Gezer is probably to be ascribed to Shoshenq I.⁸ Indeed, some argue that Shoshenq's invasion was actually during Solomon's reign rather than after his death.

As for Solomon's marriage to Pharaoh's daughter, many Egyptologists are of the opinion that it is very unlikely since it was clearly the custom for the reigning king to marry his daughters only to those within Egypt itself, not foreigners.⁹ Although some have claimed that this was done during the Third Intermediate Period, no examples of the marriage of a reigning Egyptian king's daughter to a foreign ruler have in fact been found.¹⁰ Schipper mentions two possibilities that might explain this biblical tradition (that the reference was to a building, not a person, or that the person was someone from the court perhaps distantly related to the Pharaoh), but neither allows a literal reading of the biblical tradition or supports the view that Solomon was seen as an equal with the Egyptian king.¹¹ As Ash concludes, "it is best at this time to avoid placing any weight on the reports of Solomon's marriage to an Egyptian princess."¹²

SHOSHENQ'S INVASION OF PALESTINE

According to 1 Kgs 14:25–28 a King Shishak of Egypt came up against Jerusalem in Rehoboam's fifth year and took all the treasures of the temple. This is generally identified with the expedition of Shoshenq I (c. 943–923 BCE), founder of the Twenty-Second Dynasty. All seem to agree that Shoshenq's expedition was a signal event in Israel's history, but precisely what happened on the ground and even when the invasion took place is considerably disputed. The conventional view is heavily informed by the Bible. According to it, Shoshenq's army made a number of destructive raids on various parts of Palestine, destroying many sites in the Negev and even as far north as Megiddo; however, Jerusalem did not fall because the Pharaoh was bought off by Rehoboam.¹³

⁸ Schipper, *Israel und Ägypten*, 28–34.

⁹ El-Amarna tablet 4; cf. Ash, *David, Solomon and Egypt*, 112–119.

¹⁰ Schipper, *Israel und Ägypten*, 84–90.

¹¹ Schipper, "Salomo und die Pharaonentochter—zum historischen Kern von 1 Kön 7,8," *BN* 102 (2000), 84–94. Jeroboam in the Solomon story could also be discussed but is omitted for reasons of space. For an examination of the historicity of the Jeroboam account, see the article cited in n. 27 below.

¹² Ash, *David, Solomon and Egypt*, 119.

¹³ A number of studies have addressed the issue of Israel/Judah and Shoshenq's "invasion" beginning with Martin Noth's study in 1938; for a survey of earlier studies, see K.A. Wilson, *The Campaign of Pharaoh Shoshenq into Palestine* (FAT, 2/9; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005); W. Helck, *Die Beziehungen Ägyptens zu Vorderasien im 3. und 2. Jahrtausend v. Chr.*, 2nd ed. (Ägyptologische Abhandlungen 5; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1971), 238–45; Schipper, *Israel und Ägypten*, 119–32; Ash, *David, Solomon and Egypt*, 50–56; N. Na'aman, "Israel, Edom and

Most have assumed that Shoshenq conducted an invasion of Palestine, that the inscription gives some sort of invasion route, that the inscription can be reconciled with the biblical text, and that the archaeology matches the inscription. There have, nevertheless, been some problems, especially the fact that Israel and Judah are not mentioned specifically, that no site in Judah occurs in the inscription, that the toponyms cannot be worked into any sort of itinerary sequence, and that the biblical text says nothing about an invasion of the northern kingdom. Kevin Wilson has investigated Shoshenq's inscription in the context of other Egyptian triumphal inscriptions and concludes:

- Triumphal inscriptions were designed to extol the Pharaoh's exploits, not provide historical data.
- The reliefs glorify all the exploits of the king rather than a particular campaign.
- The topographical lists are not laid out according to any system that allows a reconstruction of the military route.
- The sites listed may in some cases be those attacked, but others not attacked—indeed, friendly towns and allies—might be listed as well.
- The lists were apparently drawn in part from military records and onomastical lists, which means that some data of value for certain purposes may be included.

The implications of these conclusions are considerable. Rather than recording a particular campaign into Palestine, Shoshenq's inscription may include more than one excursion.¹⁴ This would help to explain the vague nature of the inscriptions that accompany the topographical lists, without clarifying the reasons for or objectives of the "invasion." In any case, the precise nature and progress of the campaign(s) cannot be worked out. More puzzling is the lack of any reference to Judah or Jerusalem as such. The argument is that this was in a section of the inscription that is no longer readable. This argument is still maintained by the latest study of the Shoshenq inscription by Kevin Wilson. It must be said that this argument, while possible, is not compelling. Another obvious interpretation is that Shoshenq bypassed Judah—or at least, the Judaeian highlands—because it did not suit his purpose, and the biblical writer got it wrong. Interestingly, the solution that seems to be agreed on by both Amihai

Egypt in the 10th Century B.C.E.," *TA* 19 (1992), 71–93; I. Finkelstein, "The Campaign of Shoshenq I to Palestine: A Guide to the 10th Century BCE Polity," *ZDPV* 118 (2002), 109–135.

¹⁴ E.A. Knauf, "Was Omride Israel a Sovereign State?" in L.L. Grabbe (ed.), *Abah Agonistes: The Rise and Fall of the Omri Dynasty* (LHBOTS, 421; ESHM, 6; London: T&T Clark), 100–103.

Mazar¹⁵ and Israel Finkelstein and others¹⁶ is that Shoshenq was indeed interested in Judah because of the copper trade. This could make Jerusalem not just a stage in the invasion but its main object (though not Finkelstein's view). This is an interesting interpretation, though one might ask why Shoshenq then pushed on north as far as the Jezreel Valley if he had already reached his objective.

Finkelstein, among others, argues that the main phase of prosperity was post-Shoshenq and that the sites in the south were primarily not destroyed but abandoned.¹⁷ They point out that Shoshenq also does not mention the Philistine cities, which could be significant. He interprets this as evidence for their control of the copper trade. But whether or not that is right, we have to ask why the Philistines were omitted. If the Egyptian expedition was a general attack on Palestinian cities in Israel and Judah, why should the Philistine plain be left out? Could these cities have a particular relationship with Egypt? Or was the Shoshenq operation a more complex one? David Ussishkin makes the reasonable argument that Shoshenq would hardly set up his stela in a ruined city, but suggests that Megiddo was not just attacked but was occupied to become a regional headquarters.¹⁸ To me, this calls for a rethink of how destructive Shoshenq's raid was, as opposed to dominance and intimidation.

A final question is when this raid took place. The biblical text places it under Rehoboam, but some have wanted to put it earlier, under Solomon's time.¹⁹ We do not know within Shoshenq's reign when the excursion took place: some want to place it early in his reign but others prefer later. Too many simply project into Egyptian history the date they have calculated for Rehoboam's reign. Thus, the lack of knowledge about the date of Shoshenq's campaign, its precise nature, and the dating of Solomon's rule all contribute to a great deal of uncertainty.

¹⁵ A. Mazar, "From 1200 to 850 BCE: Remarks on Some Selected Archaeological Issues," in L.L. Grabbe (ed.), *Israel in Transition: From Late Bronze II to Iron IIA (c. 1250–850 BCE): The Archaeology* (LHBOTS, 491; ESHM, 7; London: T&T Clark), 86–120, especially 107–110.

¹⁶ I. Finkelstein, A. Fantalkin, and E. Piasezky, "Three Snapshots of the Iron IIA: The Northern Valleys, the Southern Steppe, and Jerusalem," in L.L. Grabbe (ed.), *Israel in Transition: From Late Bronze II to Iron IIA (c. 1250–850 BCE): The Archaeology* (LHBOTS, 491; ESHM, 7; London: T & T Clark, 2008), 32–44, especially 37–39.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ D. Ussishkin, "The Date of the Philistine Settlement in the Coastal Plain: The View from Megiddo and Lachish," in L.L. Grabbe (ed.), *Israel in Transition: From Late Bronze II to Iron IIA (c. 1250–850 BCE): The Archaeology* (LHBOTS, 491; ESHM, 7; London: T&T Clark), 203–16, especially 205–6.

¹⁹ See the discussion and references in H.M. Niemann, "The Socio-Political Shadow Cast by the Biblical Solomon," in L.K. Handy (ed.), *The Age of Solomon: Scholarship at the Turn of the Millennium* (SHCANE, 11; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 252–99, especially 297–99; Finkelstein, "The Campaign of Shoshenq I," 110.

ASA AND ZERAH THE KUSHITE

Absent from 1 Kgs 15:11–24, which describes the reign of Asa king of Judah, is any mention of Kushites. Yet according to 2 Chr 14:8–14 Asa was attacked by an army of a million men under the command of Zerah the Kushite. With the aid of YHWH he not only defeated the Kushite army but also plundered the city of Gerar and its surroundings and the cattle of local herding peoples (14:13–14). The question is what the plundering of Gerar and the local herdsmen had to do with the Kushites? The style of the pericope matches that of the Chronicler and thus is not likely to be based on an earlier source.²⁰

Some have tried to defend this as authentic even though the DtrH of Kings knows nothing about it. It was once suggested that “Zerah” was a reflex of the name of Pharaoh Osorkon I (c. 922–888 BCE), but Egyptian philologists now refute any connection between the names. In any case, as Schipper points out, there is no evidence from the Egyptian side to support any sort of foreign campaign during his reign. Furthermore, Osorkon was Libyan, while the name Zerah is neither Nubian nor Egyptian but biblical: Gen 36:17; Josh 7:1; 1 Chr 1:37; Neh 11:24. Schipper examined the story in the light of biblical and Egyptian considerations and concluded that 2 Chr 14:8–14 is “in no way a historical document from the ninth century but an example of Old Testament theology from the post-exilic period.”²¹ One suggestion mentioned by him is that a local conflict against Arabic nomads in the region of Gerar has been built up into a huge defeat of Kushites (cf. 2 Chr 21:16).

HOSHEA AND SO, KING OF EGYPT

Hoshea, the last king of Israel, was apparently put on the throne by the Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser III (745–727 BCE). This at least is the Assyrian’s version, even though the biblical account sounds a bit different (2 Kgs 15:30, but compare 17:1–3). At any rate, Hoshea plotted to break free from the Assyrian yoke by appealing to So of Egypt (2 Kgs 17:4). The passage is straightforward and, although it is not mentioned in the extant Assyrian annals, it fits with their statements on Hoshea and the fall of Samaria.²² But who is this So, king of Egypt? Schipper has argued

²⁰ For a discussion of the whole question, see Schipper, *Israel und Ägypten*, 133–139. A comment that the style shows the pericope was completely the product of the Chronicler is found on p. 136.

²¹ Schipper, *Israel und Ägypten*, 133–39 (my translation from p. 139): “Somit handelt es sich bei dem Bericht in 2 Chr 14:8–14 keineswegs um ein historisches Dokument aus dem 9. Jh., sondern um ein Beispiel atl. Theologie der nachexilischen Zeit. . .”

²² Tiglath-pileser had Pekah removed for disloyalty and replaced by Hoshea (H. Tadmor, *The Inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser III King of Assyria: Critical Edition, with Introductions, Translations and Commentary* [Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1994], 140 [Summary Inscription 4, 15*–19*], 188 [Summary Inscription 9, 9–11]). Shameser V conquered Samaria (A.K. Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles* [Texts from Cuneiform Sources 5; Locust Valley, N.Y.: Augustin, 1975], 73 [Babylonian Chronicle 1.i.27–28]).

that the name (Egyptian *Wsrkn*), as well as the historical circumstances of the time, correspond to Osorkon IV.²³ Osorkon evidently felt that he had nothing to gain by attempting to support Hoshea and refused, which made it easy for Shalmaneser V (726–722 BCE) to punish Hoshea. However, a few years later Osorkon did send a military force to help out Hanunu of Gaza who rebelled against Assyrian rule. In this case, the Assyrian king Sargon II (721–705 BCE) defeated the combined forces of Gaza and Egypt, and Osorkon sent a gift (or tribute) of twelve fine horses to Sargon. Osorkon had provided aid to Hanunu for the simple reason that Gaza served as a buffer state between Assyria and his territory in Egypt (which was the eastern part of the Delta).²⁴

EGYPT AND JUDAH AT THE END OF THE MONARCHY

A number of passages show that Egypt interacted with Judah in the late seventh century, including a number of Judahite kings. As the Assyrians began to vacate territory in the west, the Egyptians seem to have followed to replace them, perhaps with agreement between the two powers.²⁵ It is likely that Josiah was an Egyptian vassal. This is why the somewhat enigmatic wording of 2 Kgs 23:29–30 suggests that Josiah was called to account by Pharaoh Necho II and subsequently executed in Megiddo.²⁶ The parallel text in 2 Chr 35:20–24 that makes Josiah engage Necho in battle is most likely a late misunderstanding of what happened.

Judah chose Jehoahaz as Josiah's successor. But Egypt did not approve and removed him after only three months, replacing him with Jehoiakim (2 Kgs 23:30–34). But then Nebuchadnezzar II intervened and made Judah a Babylonian vassal. Jehoiakim was faithful to him for three years but then rebelled. We now know the reason from extra-biblical sources, especially *Babylonian Chronicle* 5 (reverse 5–13). In 601 BCE Nebuchadnezzar fought a costly battle with Necho II which inflicted considerable damage on both armies; indeed, it took the Babylonians several years to recover. It was after this battle that Jehoiakim rebelled. Nebuchadnezzar was not in a position to do much for two years but retaliated by fostering raids against Judah. Then, late in 598 he sent an army against Jerusalem. Apparently, Jehoiakim died in the meantime, and his son Jehoiachin surrendered to the Babylonians after a reign of only three months (2 Kgs 24:1–17).

Zedekiah, the last king of Judah, was placed on the throne by Nebuchadnezzar after his conquest of Jerusalem in early 597 BCE. Yet Zedekiah spent a great deal of effort trying to fend off

²³ Schipper, *Israel und Ägypten*, 149–58; “Wer war ‘Sō’, König von Ägypten? (2 Kön 17,4)?” *BN* 92 (1998), 71–84.

²⁴ Schipper, *Israel und Ägypten*, 151–58.

²⁵ N. Na’aman, “The Kingdom of Judah under Josiah,” in L.L. Grabbe (ed.), *Good Kings and Bad Kings: The Kingdom of Judah in the Seventh Century BCE* (JSOTSup, 393; ESHM, 5: London: T & T Clark), 189–247.

²⁶ See the discussion in L.L. Grabbe, *Ancient Israel: What Do We Know and How Do We Know It?* (2nd ed; London: T & T Clark, 2017), 250–251.

the Babylonians, if the book of Jeremiah is to be believed. The inscription of Psamtik II (595–589 BCE), describing a tour of Palestine by the Pharaoh, fits a situation in which the king of Judah was constantly looking for ways to free himself from the overlordship of Nebuchadnezzar.

When the Babylonians were besieging Jerusalem, the Egyptians were supposed to have assisted Zedekiah temporarily by sending an army, which caused the Babylonians to lift their siege, but the Egyptians withdrew, and the Babylonian encirclement was resumed (Jer 37:4–11). We know nothing of this from either Babylonian or Egyptian sources. The Pharaoh at the time was Apries (589–570 BCE, called Hofrah in the biblical text [Jer 44:30]), yet our knowledge of Pharaoh Apries from native Egyptian sources is deficient. However, we have some information from Greek sources that has generally been accepted by Egyptologists (Herodotus 2.161–69; Diodorus Siculus 1.68.1–6). According to these sources, Apries brought Phoenicia into submission. Jeremiah 27:3 indicates that Tyre and Sidon supported Zedekiah's rebellion. Apries's actions seem to fit into this context.

CONCLUSIONS WITH REGARD TO THE BIBLICAL TEXTS

The references to Egypt in Genesis are likely to be late and fictional, but in the book of Kings and Chronicles are a number of references that could potentially refer to actual historical events:

1. Jeroboam might well have been offered asylum in Egypt, as we know of a number of historical examples from this time.²⁷
2. It is unlikely that Solomon married Pharaoh's daughter, since we have no examples of cases in which Pharaoh's daughter was married to a foreigner.
3. The reference to "So, king of Egypt" in 2 Kgs 16:4 is likely to be a historical reference, probably to Osorkon IV.
4. Zerah the Cushite and his million soldiers (2 Chr 14: 8–14) is probably the invention of the Chronicler. The name "Zerah" is neither Egyptian nor Cushite but biblical.
5. Several encounters of Egypt with Judah in the late seventh and early sixth century are likely to be historical, including the apparent execution of Josiah by the Pharaoh Necho II, the removal of the Judahite king Jehoahaz by the Egyptians, and Zedekiah's several endeavors to gain Egypt's help against the Babylonians.

²⁷ For a discussion of this question, see my recent article, "Jeroboam I? Jeroboam II? Or Jeroboam 0? Jeroboam in History and Tradition," in O. Lipschits, Y. Gadot, and M.J. Adams (eds.), *Rethinking Israel: Studies in the History and Archaeology of Ancient Israel in Honor of Israel Finkelstein* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2017), 115–24.

SENNACHERIB AND 701 BCE²⁸

We have several accounts of Sennacherib's invasion of Judah in 701 BCE. We shall look at some of these, as they relate to possible Kushite involvement. At this point, we can also bring Aubin's thesis into the discussion. His overall thesis is well summarized in the combination of three factors that caused the Assyrians to withdraw, along with a "core scenario" of what he thinks happened.²⁹ Although he disavows holding to the details of exactly what happened, some points are presented as conclusions on other pages (to be noted below with "Aubin," followed by a page number). He also presents six arguments with "Evidence for the Kushites" (chapters 10–14), a number of which I shall address specifically (with "Aubin" and the chapter number) or in general.

SENNACHERIB'S OWN INSCRIPTIONS³⁰

As primary sources Sennacherib's own accounts of his attack on Judah and the West in general are extremely important. Although many of Sennacherib's records have been preserved in whole or in part, they almost all have the same or similar wording, as found well preserved in inscription 22:

(As for) the governors, the nobles, and the people of the city Ekron who had thrown Pađi, their king who was bound by treaty and oaths (ii 75) to Assyria, into iron fetters and who had handed him over to Hezekiah of the land of Judah in a hostile manner, they became frightened on account of the villainous acts they had committed. They formed a confederation with the kings of Egypt (and) the archers, chariots, (and) horses (ii 80) of the king of the land Melihħa, forces without number, and they came to their aid.

(ii 73–81)

In the plain of the city Eltekeh, they sharpened their weapons while drawing up in battleline before me. (iii 1) With the support of the god Aššur, my lord, I fought with them and defeated them. In the thick of battle, I captured alive the Egyptian charioteers and princes (lit. "the sons of the king"), together with the charioteers of the king of the land Melihħa.

(ii 82–iii6a)

I surrounded, conquered, (and) plundered the cities Eltekeh (and) Tamnâ.

²⁸ The following section is heavily based on my article cited in note 2 above.

²⁹ Aubin, *Rescue*, 189–90.

³⁰ Cited from A.K. Grayson and J. Novotny, *The Royal Inscriptions of Sennacherib, King of Assyria (704-681 BC), Parts 1–2* (The Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period, 3/1-2; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2012–2014).

(iii 6b–14a)

Moreover, (as for) Hezekiah of the land Judah, who had not submitted to my yoke, I surrounded (and) conquered forty-six of his fortified cities, (iii 20) fortresses, and small(er) settlements in their environs, which were without number, by having ramps trodden down and battering rams brought up, the assault of foot soldiers, sapping, breaching, and siege engines. . .

(iii 18–27a)

This is straightforward: an Egyptian-coalition force opposed the Assyrian army, which was set on punishing the people of Ekron for deposing their pro-Assyrian king. The two armies met near the city of Eltekeh, and the Assyrians slaughtered the opposing army and captured many of the charioteers and even royal princes (presumably of the Nubian royal house). The narrative suggests that Sennacherib himself was present, though who the Egyptian general was is not stated. He then describes the devastation of Judah. The picture is clear, but whether it is true is another matter. We shall discuss this further below.

THE ARCHAEOLOGY³¹

Much could be said here, but I shall confine my comments to two important but obvious points:

1. Many towns in southern Judah were destroyed at this time, one of the main ones being Judah's second city, Lachish. This confirms the Assyrian inscriptions (above) which speak of forty-six towns and villages being destroyed (though how these are to be counted is difficult at this point).

2. There is no indication so far known that Jerusalem was besieged by the Assyrians, in the sense of having a siege mound thrown up around the city. Although the biblical text has sometimes been read this way (e.g., Aubin makes this assumption [pp. 189-190]), the city was "shut up" by having its communication routes blocked. The nearest Assyrian army seems to have approached no closer than Ramat Raḥel. Jerusalem's supplies were greatly affected by the fighting in the Shephelah area, but no Assyrian troops were camped outside the city's walls. There were no siege ramps, battering rams, or sappers at Jerusalem, such as happened with many of cities and towns of Judah.

1 KINGS 18–19

Although the main story of Sennacherib's attack on Judah is found in these chapters, much of the material is of doubtful historical value. There is general agreement that 2 Kgs 18:13–16 is an authentic—probably contemporary—statement.³² It gives a brief outline of what happened but nothing in the way of detail.

³¹ On this, see the introduction to Grabbe (ed.), *Like a Bird in a Cage*, 3–20.

³² For an analysis of the various sources and a summary of scholarship on the chapters, see Grabbe (ed.), *Like a Bird in a Cage*.

Evaluating some of the rest of the material is not easy.³³ I personally find the account of the Rabshakeh at Jerusalem novelistic in appearance (if I read Aubin correctly, he accepts the biblical picture [pp. 140–141, 183–186]). The real Rabshakeh was second in command to the Assyrian king; there were even times when the Rabshakeh led the campaign while the Assyrian king remained at home. Is it likely that such a person knew Hebrew? Is it likely that he would have come personally to Jerusalem and made public threats outside the walls? Nothing in the other accounts supports this part of the story. How exactly to interpret this account is difficult, but I do not believe things are likely to have happened as described by the text.

Yet Sennacherib's own inscriptions and archaeology show that many of the towns of Judah were destroyed in the areas south of Jerusalem. We also know that although Hezekiah paid tribute to the Assyrians, he was not flayed or impaled but remained on the throne, and Jerusalem was not taken. Why? The answer is given in 2 Kgs 19:8–9: the Rabshakeh found Sennacherib besieging Libnah, "And he [the Rabshakeh?] heard about Tirhaqah king of Kush saying, 'Behold, he has come out to fight with you [Sennacherib].'" As already noted, Taharqo is the key to Jerusalem's salvation, according to Aubin's thesis (Aubin, chs. 11–12). The chapter then ends with the destruction of the Assyrian army by an angel of YHWH, so that Sennacherib withdraws and returns to Nineveh (2 Kgs 19:35–36).

The biblical writer has, therefore, interpreted events as including a divine miracle that has destroyed the Assyrians. How are we as modern historians to understand these passages? Can we accept the reference to Taharqo, as Aubin does? Surprisingly, we might get help from the Greek writer Herodotus.

HERODOTUS

Although Greek accounts are not generally considered the best sources for Egyptian history, there are some exceptions, as we saw above with regard to the Pharaoh Apries. Likewise, the story here given by Herodotus is relevant because it seems to refer to a Nubian king at the time of Sennacherib. Here I agree very much with Aubin that the Herodotus account is an important source (see Aubin, pp. 141–144). It should not be dismissed, as it often is, the main reason being that it seems to be independent of all other known accounts. It reads as follows (2.141):

The next king was the priest of Hephaestus, whose name was Sethos [. . .] So presently came king Sanacharib against Egypt, with a great host of Arabians and Assyrians; and the warrior Egyptians would not march against him [. . .] he fell asleep, and dreamt that he saw the god standing over him and bidding him take courage [. . .] So he trusted the vision, and encamped at Pelusium [. . .] Their enemies too came thither, and one night a multitude of fieldmice swarmed

³³ See further the discussion in Grabbe, "Like a Bird in a Cage," 23, 26, 28–29, and the article in that volume by N. Na'aman, "Updating the Messages," 201–20.

over the Assyrian camp and devoured their quivers and their bows and the handles of their shields likewise, inasmuch that they fled the next day unarmed and many fell. And at this day a stone statue of the Egyptian king stands in Hephaestus's temple, with a mouse in his hand, and an inscription to this effect: "Look on me, and fear the gods."

The first point to notice about this account is that it seems to be independent of any of the other extant accounts about Sennacherib, whether Assyrian or biblical.³⁴ Herodotus states that it came from the Egyptian priests; indeed, it looks very much like a native Egyptian tradition that Herodotus has heard from the priests and has passed on. There are no obviously Grecized features to the story.³⁵ The king's name Sethos does not fit, but Lloyd has argued that it is a corruption of Shabatako (*Š3-b3-ṯ3-ḫ3*).³⁶ If so, Herodotus has preserved the correct succession Shabako (*Histories* 2.137–39: *Sabakōs*) followed by Shabatako.

Unfortunately, this passage is often assimilated to the biblical passage, the account of Herodotus being used to help explain the biblical and vice versa, in a classic case of circular reasoning. The biblical story is often interpreted as a symbolic (pious?) story for a plague, which is of course possible. But then Herodotus's reference to mice is leapt upon as also referring to plague, since we in the twenty-first century know that fleas carried the plague and mice carried the fleas—without much consideration of whether the ancients thought this and, especially, whether Herodotus implies any such thing. I cannot see any evidence that a plague story has been misunderstood by Herodotus; the Greeks were, after all, quite well acquainted with plagues and their traumatic effects, and mice gnawing the leather handles of military equipment is hardly a description of a plague. There is no element in Herodotus's story that could be said to show remarkable agreement with 2 Kgs 19 or Isa 37.

When Herodotus's account is read in its own right, without interpretation in the light of the biblical, it tells us of an Egyptian defeat of Sennacherib. The defeat was not by normal force of arms but entailed some unusual happening. The Assyrian army

³⁴ The possibility has been raised that Herodotus's account represents a development of the biblical account (M. Cogan and H. Tadmor, *II Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB 11; New York: Doubleday, 1988], 251, who cite the PhD thesis of A. Rofé, *Israelite Belief in Angels in the Pre-exilic Period as Evidenced by Biblical Traditions* [unpublished PhD thesis in Hebrew; Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1969], 217). I see no evidence for any connection of the Herodotus narrative with the account in 2 Kings.

³⁵ W. Baumgartner, "Herodots babylonische und assyrische Nachrichten," in idem, *Zum Alten Testament und seiner Umwelt: Ausgewählte Aufsätze* (Leiden: Brill, 1959), 282–331, originally published in *Archiv Orientalní* 18 (1950): 69–106. The statement about a statue in the temple of "Hephaestus" is likely to be Herodotus's own identification of what he thought he had seen in the temple.

³⁶ A.B. Lloyd, *Herodotus Book II: Commentary 99–182* (Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dan l'Empire romain 43; Leiden: Brill, 1988), 100.

was not destroyed but was rendered ineffectual in fighting so that many were killed. Unless we accept the literal statement about the field mice, which few of us would, we would have to think of some extraordinary event in which the Egyptian army was unexpectedly victorious.

BRINGING TOGETHER THE VARIOUS SOURCES

We have four main sources. There are the primary sources of the Assyrian accounts of Sennacherib and the archaeology. Next is the biblical text (a secondary source). Finally, we have the strange story in Herodotus, though even if we cannot confirm it, it appears to be independent of other accounts and yet fits well into what we know from the Assyrian records. All these accounts have to be treated critically and not just taken at face value. When we put the various accounts together, it is possible to come up with several theories about what happened.

1. A once popular hypothesis was that Sennacherib invaded Judah twice.³⁷ This hypothesis is now generally abandoned: neither the biblical text nor anything known from Mesopotamian sources suggests that Sennacherib mounted a second attack on Judah after 701 BCE.

2. According to some, there were two Egyptian encounters with the Assyrians. This explanation is entirely consistent with the reconstructions of several Egyptologists and others. K. A. Kitchen posited a second Egyptian attack (led by Taharqo, the brother of the king Shabatako, as commander) after the initial defeat at Eltekeh.³⁸ The Egypto-Kushite force had been repulsed but not routed. The second Egyptian action came after Sennacherib had divided his forces between Libnah, Lachish, Maresha, and Jerusalem. Kitchen thinks the Egyptians retreated without a major engagement when Sennacherib regrouped. Some have been willing to use the Herodotus account, though others have dismissed it.

A challenging question concerns Taharqo. The Assyrian accounts do not mention him, but 2 Kgs 19:9 puts him in charge of the Egyptian army. We know that Taharqo did not become king of the “double kingdom” of Nubia and Egypt until 690 BCE, reigning until 664 BCE, with a number of encounters with the Assyrians.³⁹ So the reference to Taharqo as “king” is anachronistic. Yet it has been claimed that Taharqo was too young in 701 BCE to have led an army, whether as “crown prince” or the like. The problem depends on the wording of the Kawa Stelae inscriptions that mention his age as twenty. The time when he was twenty has been variously interpreted, but a number of Egyptologists now argue that Taharqo was at least twenty years

³⁷ For a presentation of this theory, with literature and a critique, see the latest edition of Grabbe, *Ancient Israel*, 239–40.

³⁸ K.A. Kitchen, *The Third Intermediate Period in Egypt (1100-650 BC)* (2nd ed; Warminster, Wilts.: Aris & Philips, 1986), 383–86, 584.

³⁹ See especially L. Török, *The Kingdom of Kush: Handbook of the Napatan-Meroitic Civilization* (HdO 31; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 171–84.

old in 701 BCE and could thus have led an army against Sennacherib.⁴⁰

Nevertheless, the thesis does not depend on Taharqo's being the leader of the Egyptian army at Eltekeh, nor does it have to mean that the Egyptian army was composed of Kushites. Much of Egypt was ruled from Kush during the Twenty-fifth Dynasty, including at this time. It is probable that any Egyptian army would have included Kushites but also most likely soldiers from Upper and Lower Egypt as well. While Taharqo was apparently capable of leading this army—and the statement in 2 Kgs 19:9 that he did so (though not as king) is credible—all that is required is that the Egyptian army was there, which the Assyrian inscriptions attest. This thesis makes a lot of sense but hypothesizes a second military engagement for which we have no information. This leads us to a similar but slightly different hypothesis.

3. Another interpretation is possible, however: that there was only the one Egyptian-Assyrian encounter, the one at Eltekeh. For example, D. B. Redford states that Shabako (he argues for this king to be reigning in 701 rather than Shabatako) led a substantial expeditionary force to attack the Assyrians at Eltekeh.⁴¹ He goes on to say,

Even though our sources for Eltekeh are confined to the Assyria records—Egyptian relief and textual material employ stereotyped images of uncertain application—there can be no doubt that it was an unexpected and serious reverse for Assyria arms, and contributed significantly to Sennacherib's permanent withdrawal from the Levant.

F. J. Yurco also takes the interpretation of an Egyptian defeat of the Assyrians seriously.⁴² The Assyrians do not mention a defeat by the Egyptians, but they are not likely to have done so.⁴³ The question of Taharqo is the same as in the previous hypothesis—probable but not necessary—though an Egypto-Kushite army is necessary.

⁴⁰ Kitchen, *The Third Intermediate Period*, 154–161, 552–59. A recently found inscription has been assigned to the reign of Taharqo (D.B. Redford, "Taharqa in Western Asia and Libya," *EI* 24 [1993], 188*–191*). The latest discussion believes Taharqo was at least twenty in 701 BCE: Hornung, et al., *Ancient Egyptian Chronology*, 287–91.

⁴¹ D.B. Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 351–354.

⁴² F.J. Yurco, "Sennacherib's Third Campaign and the Coregency of Shabaka and Shebitku," *Serapis* 6 (1980), 221–40, especially 233–37. In this case, Herodotus is cited, among other sources.

⁴³ It has been argued that the Assyrian inscriptions omit defeats or attempt to turn defeats or standoffs into victories. See A. Laato, "Assyrian Propaganda and the Falsification of History in the Royal Inscriptions of Sennacherib," *VT* 45 (1995), 198–226; also the response by B. Oded, "History vis-à-vis Propaganda in the Assyrian Royal Inscriptions," *VT* 48 (1998), 423–25.

This thesis has now been strengthened by Ernst Axel Knauf's military-historical reconstruction of Sennacherib's campaign.⁴⁴ He argues that Sennacherib's fighting in the Palestinian area had been successful but had also considerably exhausted the Assyrian army's resources. The engagement at Eltekeh came late in the campaign. At this point, it was not a plague (nor field mice, for that matter) that affected the Assyrians but simple exhaustion (even indicated by the wording of the Assyrian inscription, Knauf argues). The result was that, whatever the exact outcome of the battle, the Assyrians then came to an agreement with the Egyptians and Philistines. Jerusalem was not conquered, and Hezekiah was left on the throne, but he no longer had allies and had to submit. He had also lost the important economic and food-producing area of the Shephelah.

4. Aubin's thesis has resemblances to both hypothesis #2 and hypothesis #3. He sees the fight at Eltekeh as not being an outright Assyrian victory, perhaps only a draw (Aubin, pp. 127–29). But he then postulates a second Egyptian force led by Taharqo that relieved the siege of Jerusalem and then marched to confront Sennacherib who had been considerably weakened by this point. There was not a battle but rather negotiation that led to an Assyrian withdrawal.⁴⁵ Part of this fits well with thesis #3 and also remarkably well in its conclusion with Knauf's thesis mentioned above. However, the proposal to have two Egyptian armies encountering the Assyrians on two separate occasions is more like thesis #2. The one area where I would completely disagree with Aubin is his view that Jerusalem was besieged by Assyrian troops, which archaeology does not support.

It seems to me that thesis #3 is the best explanation, according to the data presently known. Granted, the data are skimpy, and it seems that neither thesis #2 nor #3 can be dismissed, but I think the data favor #3. What is clear is that Sennacherib returned to Nineveh without defeating Hezekiah, and his listing of the destruction wrought on Judah and the resultant tribute by Hezekiah only confirm the peculiarity in Hezekiah's being allowed to remain on the throne, with Jerusalem unconquered. An unexpected setback in the fight against the Egyptians could be one of the reasons for Sennacherib's withdrawal without taking Jerusalem. Herodotus's account is a useful piece in the puzzle and must be recognized as such; however, it must not be shaped by biblical scissors before fitting it into place. In the end, I think my view is very similar to Aubin's, if differing in some details. Perhaps the most important difference is that I do not *require* Taharqo in 701 BCE, only an Egyptian army; however,

⁴⁴ E.A. Knauf, "701: Sennacherib at the Berezina," in L.L. Grabbe (ed.), *"Like a Bird in a Cage": The Invasion of Sennacherib in 701 BCE* (JSOTSup, 363; ESHM, 4; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003), 141–49.

⁴⁵ This is most clearly stated in the "scenario" outlined on Aubin: 188–189. Although Aubin is a bit coy about this scenario, I cannot find an earlier clear statement of his thesis. However, this "scenario" seems to be his basic thrust in earlier chapters (see pp. 127–31, 137–38, 139–42, 150–55).

the balance of evidence in my view supports Taharqo as the leader of the Egyptian forces at Eltekeh.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study can be summarized succinctly, in the following brief points:

According to the Bible there were many encounters between Israel and Egypt through history. Those in the Pentateuch are of doubtful historicity; the same applies to Zerah and his million-strong army in 2 Chr 14. But the books of Kings seem to have a number of reliable references (apart from Solomon's marriage to Pharaoh's daughter, which is also very questionable): the asylum of Jeroboam, Hoshea's seeking of So king of Egypt, a number references in Judah's last days with regard to Josiah, Jehoahaz, and Zedekiah.

This suggests that the reference to the Egyptian army led by Taharqo in 2 Kgs 19:9 may be credible and thus give us genuine knowledge about events at the time of Sennacherib's invasion.

Additionally, the account in Herodotus, while having some strange elements, seems to be independent from other accounts and seems also to suggest an Assyrian defeat (however we are to interpret the peculiar cause of this defeat).

Putting these sources of information together from a critical perspective, we still have several possible explanations. One long-term explanation (that Sennacherib invaded Judah a second time after 701 BCE) seems now to be ruled out. Another possibility is that the Assyrians had two encounters with the Egyptian army, winning the first time but being defeated the second time. More likely, though, is that the Assyrian claim of a victory at Eltekeh is exaggerated and that it was either a standoff or possibly even a defeat. In either case, Taharqo might have led this army, though not as king.

The post-invasion situation fits the two main theories: Hezekiah submitted and paid tribute to Sennacherib, showing that the Assyrian threat was still very real. Yet Jerusalem was not taken, and Hezekiah was not executed but left on the throne. Even though territory was removed from Judah (including the especially important area of the Shephelah) and Judah paid tribute, it still seems that the Assyrian army had to return to Nineveh without the victory that their inscriptions envisage.

My view is very similar to Aubin's, differing only in some details, I think. Perhaps the most important difference is that I do not *require* Taharqo in 701 BCE, only an Egyptian army. I believe the balance of evidence supports Taharqo as the leader of the Egyptian forces at Eltekeh; however, there is also the possibility that the biblical narrator, writing probably half a century or more after the events, happened to remember Taharqo as a well-known Egyptian leader and inserted him into 2 Kgs 19:9.

Post Scriptum: Since this article was submitted, a further study has appeared: N. K. Matty, *Sennacherib's Campaign Against Judah and Jerusalem in 701 B.C. A Historical Reconstruction*

(BZAW, 487; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2016), which I have reviewed in *TLZ* 142 (2017), 900-902. It is a good survey of the sources and the possible solutions. It also plausibly suggests that Sennacherib returned to Nineveh because of the threat of a revolt in the eastern part of his empire. However, I feel that it is wrong in dismissing (without good evidence or argument, I may say) the idea that an Egyptian army contributed to the Assyrian withdrawal. The two ideas could easily be combined: Sennacherib suffered a setback when he encountered an Egyptian force but also heard a rumor of a possible revolt back east. The two together would have necessitated Sennacherib's return to Nineveh, though still leaving a small force to continue the blockade of Jerusalem. Hezekiah then submitted and sent tribute to the Assyrian capital, and was thus left on the throne.

THE SIEGE OF JERUSALEM BY SENNACHERIB

ALAN B. LLOYD

UNIVERSITY OF SWANSEA, UK, RETIRED, AND EGYPT
EXPLORATION SOCIETY

“Of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh” (Ecc 12:12). The words of *qobeleth* are particularly apposite to the study of Sennacherib’s assault on Jerusalem. There has been no critical increase in evidence, and yet the matter continues to generate masses of literature in a desperate attempt to reach a definitive narrative acceptable to all. This has not happened yet, and it is never likely to happen. Henry Aubin’s well-documented and thoughtful book on the topic¹ is the inspiration for the current volume, but his thesis that military movements of the Twenty-fifth (Kushite) Dynasty were a crucial factor in causing Sennacherib’s withdrawal from Jerusalem is far from proven, though the *caveat* must be made that Egyptians and Nubians were certainly part of the strategic equation with which Sennacherib had to contend. However, it is important that we should not overestimate the specifically Kushite dimension. The Kushites provided the Pharaohs of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty with troops, but the mix of individuals involved in decision-making at the highest level was probably complex with many Egyptians retaining their old positions. The Twenty-fifth Dynasty army was clearly a mixed force of Egyptians and Kushites, but we have no means of knowing how many Kushite troops were involved or how critical they were.² Furthermore, we know nothing about the decision-making process which got the mixed Egyptian and Kushite army into the campaign. We cannot even establish whether Kushites were the critical agents in promoting the operation. It was a time-honored Egyptian strategic imperative to keep powerful enemies out of Syria-Palestine because they could be dangerous to Egypt. For all we know the Kushite kings may have been pushed into these operations by their Egyptian advisors of whom there will surely have been many.³ As for

¹ H.T. Aubin, *The Rescue of Jerusalem. The Alliance between Hebrews and Africans in 701 BC* (New York: Soho; Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 2002).

² When dealing with the Jerusalem operations in the following discussion the terms ‘Egyptian, Egyptians’ are intended to cover both Egyptians and Kushites.

³ C. Naunton (“Libyans and Nubians,” in A.B. Lloyd [ed.], *A Companion to Ancient Egypt*, I [Chichester: Blackwell, 2010] points out that

Aubin's claim that racism motivated by European imperialism/colonialism is the reason which has prevented scholars from recognizing the critical role of the Kushites, this may well be true of some nineteenth-century scholars such as Sayce, to whom Aubin devotes much attention in Chapter Nineteen, but it is impossible to identify the influence of this factor in modern treatments of the great siege which focus down hard on surviving literary and archaeological sources. This claim will, therefore, be discounted in the following discussion.

Aubin's central thesis is that Kushite military operations were a critical factor in saving Jerusalem from Sennacherib. To establish the validity, or otherwise, of this position the evidence needs a thorough reassessment, and that reassessment needs to be conducted on the basis of the golden rule of economy of hypothesis, i.e., we make the fewest possible leaps in the dark, and those leaps should be as short as possible.

There are six surviving major written sources dealing with Sennacherib's attack on Jerusalem in 701 BCE. The oldest is the annals of Sennacherib preserved on three prisms (RINAP 004, 0015, 0022) which were compiled during his reign at the very beginning of the seventh century.⁴ The second in chronological order is contained in First Isaiah (14, 22, 30, 31, 36, 37), but this chronological position only holds true in the sense that there is a wide-spread view that *some* material in this section of Isaiah goes back to utterances of the eighth/seventh-century prophet. There is no doubt whatsoever that substantial redaction and literary embellishment have taken place at a later date. The 2 Kings 18–20 preserves much material, but it is generally held that this text did not reach its final form until the mid-sixth century BCE. The heavily reliant account in 2 Chronicles 32 is rather later, the book being dated by some authorities between 400 and 250 BCE.⁵ A reference to Sennacherib's campaign in Herodotus (2. 141) dates to the fifth-century BCE, and the account of Josephus

the Kushites maintained control of the Theban area "by securing alliances with established local families and individuals" (126). It is extremely probable that this policy prevailed throughout Egypt.

⁴ A.K. Grayson and J. Novotny (eds.), *The Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period, Part 3* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2012–2014). Accessed via oracc.museum.upenn.edu/rinap.

⁵ The bibliography on the chronology of Hebrew Bible books is vast. For our purposes see, amongst many others, A. van der Deijl, *Protest or Propaganda. War in the Old Testament Book of Kings and in Contemporaneous Near Eastern Texts* (Leiden: Brill, 2013); P.S. Evans and T.F. Williams (eds), *Chronicling the Chronicler. The Book of Chronicles and Early Second Temple Historiography* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2013); P.S. Evans, *The Invasion of Sennacherib in the Book of Kings: a Source Critical and Rhetorical Study of 2 Kings 18–19* (Leiden: Brill, 2009); I. Finkelstein and N.A. Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed. Archaeology's New Vision of Ancient Israel and the Origin of its Sacred Texts* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001); R. Person Jr, *The Deuteronomistic History of the Book of Chronicles. Scribal Works in an Oral World* (SBL, 6; Atlanta: SBL, c.2010); R.A. Young, *Hezekiah in History and Tradition* (VTSup, 155; Leiden: Brill, 2012).

(*Antiquities* 10. 1. 1-5) was composed in the first century CE. There is also some archaeological evidence to support elements of the biblical narrative.⁶

All of the written sources need to be taken with a large pinch of salt. Assyrian royal inscriptions are triumphalist in character and are designed to present the king as operating under the aegis of the god Assur. In RINAP 004 Sennacherib claims:

The god Assur, the great mountain, granted to me unrivalled sovereignty and made my weapons greater than (those of) all who sit on (royal) daises (line 4).

It follows from this conceptualization of war that Assyrian historiography will be theologically orientated and will present royal campaigns as events of unremitting Assyrian success.⁷ The historical record will be determined by what the kings need the past to be, not by what it really was, and there is a literary imperative to present the campaigns in the most powerful and dramatic form. Fundamentally the scriptural record works in the same way. There is no doubt that Hebrew historical records were kept from an early period and that they were quarried for material by writers and editors of the books of the extant Hebrew Bible, but their narratives are dominated and orientated by the requirement to record the vicissitudes of the relationship between the Jewish people and YHWH: when they obey his law, they are successful; when they do not, catastrophe strikes.⁸ All historical events must be made to fit this template, and in pursuit of this rhetorical imperative all narratives are subject to emendation and addition at the discretion of the author. The unpalatable or embarrassing would be ignored, and all narratives were subject to literary embellishment, e.g., speeches are common, though the vast majority could not possibly be accurate historical records. Rather, they take a form and present a content which are appropriate to the situation in hand.

Herodotus's reference is presented as part of the historical section of Book 2 of his *History* but is very much a case of his policy of reporting what he was told by the Egyptians whether he believed it or not, and confusion and the influence of folklore are unmistakable in the relevant passage.⁹ Josephus is heavily reliant on the biblical narrative but has also drawn upon the Herodotean tradition. However, we should always bear in mind that Josephus's treatment of biblical narrative can be disturbingly

⁶ Finkelstein and Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed*, 255–63; Young, *Hezekiah in History and Tradition*, 62–6.

⁷ An excellent example of this trait is provided by the omission from the Assyrian record of the defeat in Egypt during 674 (Young, 2012, 73n27).

⁸ Finkelstein and Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed*, 229–355.

⁹ A.B. Lloyd, *Herodotus Book II, Commentary 99–182* (Etudes Préliminaires aux Religions Orientales dans l'Empire Romain 43; Leiden: Brill, 1988), 99–105.

cavalier. Kenneth Atkinson rightly comments: "Rather than factual chronological historical narratives, Josephus' *War* and *Antiquities* are largely historically inspired works of fiction."¹⁰

The most efficient way to conduct the analysis of this material is to start with the Assyrian record and comment on disparities with other sources as we work through it. In the course of this discussion all the substantive issues raised by Aubin will be addressed, but constant cross-referencing will be avoided. Sennacherib begins by stating that his third campaign was directed at the land of Hatti (Syria-Palestine). His first triumph was the subjugation of Phoenicia, and he then proceeded to receive the submission of cities and kingdoms to the south such as Ashdod, Ashkelon, Joppa, Ekron, Moab, and Edom. The southernmost of these is Edom, though the annals do not state that the Assyrians marched as far as that. However, both Herodotus and Josephus claim that they reached the Egyptian frontier fortress-city of Pelusium, though Josephus is clearly dependent on the Herodotean tradition and has no independent authority. What of Herodotus? The Egyptian king mentioned is Sethos, a name which is probably a corruption of Shabatako who would be the appropriate ruler. We are then informed of an attack by Sennacherib which was defeated by field mice, acting on behalf of the god Ptah/Hephaestus, which ate the quivers, bows (i.e., bowstrings) and shield-holds of the Assyrian army. As a result of this mishap the Assyrians were defeated, a misfortune which is alleged to have taken place at Pelusium, the standard point of entry into Egypt from the East. This account can hardly be taken seriously.¹¹ Clearly it reflects the conflict between Egypt and Sennacherib, but the rest is a piece of folklore/legend fabricated to explain Egypt's deliverance through divine intervention, and the fabricators of the story have inserted Pelusium into the narrative mix simply because that was the classic entry point into Egypt. The tradition cannot stand as evidence that the Assyrian army penetrated that far, especially in the light of the evidence of the annals which know nothing of any such operation.

It is in relation to events at Ekron that Hezekiah, King of Judah, is first mentioned when we are told that rebels in that city had deposed their pro-Assyrian king Padi and handed him over to Hezekiah. Ekron then made an alliance with the Egyptians who sent a substantial force to their aid. The Egyptian agenda in this is the traditional policy of creating pro-Egyptian alliances in Syria-Palestine to keep powerful Near Eastern enemies at bay. This army was heavily defeated at Eltekeh¹² and high-ranking prisoners taken. This was followed by the capture of Eltekeh itself, Tamna, and Ekron where Padi was reinstated. These successes are briefly mentioned in 2 Kgs 18:13, which then goes on to inform us that Hezekiah apologized to Sennacherib, offered

¹⁰ In Pastor, 26.

¹¹ For a detailed analysis see Lloyd, *Herodotus*.

¹² The site has never been established to everyone's satisfaction but a strong candidate in Tell esh-Shallaf (Y. Aharoni, *The Land of the Bible: A Historical Geography* [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1979], 49; Young, 82).

complete surrender, and paid a large tribute which included silver taken from the temple and the palace as well as gold from the temple. We then move to the events surrounding the siege of Jerusalem.

The foregoing narrative of Kings is perplexing. There is no mention in the Assyrian record of any overtures or ransom/tribute paid by Hezekiah at this point. If this episode were historical, we should not expect a siege of Jerusalem to have taken place at all. The Assyrians, in such a situation, would normally rest content with the ransom and the fact that a rebel had returned to the fold. The point in the annals where a large tribute is paid comes at the termination of the siege when the Assyrians are bought off by Hezekiah. It is impossible not to suspect that this latter payment has been transposed in Kings to the location *before* the siege so that YHWH could have a free hand in delivering Jerusalem by His intervention. The siege itself is briefly described in the annals, including the removal of cities which formed part of Hezekiah's kingdom and their reallocation to the kings of Ashdod, Ekron, and Gaza. We are then informed of Sennacherib's departure and are left to believe that he did so because he was satisfied with the massive payment made by Hezekiah and his return to vassal status.

2 Kings has more to say on the reason for Sennacherib's departure. At 19:7 we read, as part of the prophecy of Isaiah, "he (i.e., Sennacherib) shall hear a rumor and return to his own land," and this is clarified at v. 9 when the report reaches the Assyrian king that Taharqo, King of Kush,¹³ had set out to fight him, i.e., according to this account, Jerusalem was saved because Sennacherib withdrew in the face of an Egyptian threat. However, 19:35 preserves a much more famous alternative according to which the angel of the Lord smote 185,000 of the Assyrian army and prevented the capture of the city. 2 Chronicles 32: 20–23 makes no mention of the Egyptian advance, attributing Jerusalem's deliverance entirely to divine intervention, but Isaiah (37), and Josephus (*Antiquities* 10.4–5) both agree on the rumor of an Egyptian counterattack and the incidence of a disaster to the Assyrians which, according to Josephus, was a pestilence (clearly a rationalization, though a plausible one) which killed 5180 on the first night of the siege. We should, however, bear in mind that neither 2 Chronicles nor Josephus has any independent authority on this matter since they are both clearly dependent on the Kings/Isaiah tradition, and the numbers should, of course, be

¹³ The use of the title has given rise to much discussion. The Egyptian king at this point was Shabatako (707–690), not Taharqo (690–64) (dates after A. Dodson, *Afterglow of Empire. Egypt from the Fall of the New Kingdom to the Saite Renaissance* [Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2012], 193), but the discrepancy can easily be explained by assuming that the latter was at the time a prince operating on behalf of the king and that later scribes simply upgraded him. It is possible, but no more, that Kawa stelae IV and V refer to the preliminaries to this expedition (amongst many others see J. Pope in I. Kalimi and S. Richardson [eds], *Sennacherib at the Gates of Jerusalem: Story, History and Historiography* [CHANE, 71; Leiden: Brill, 2014], 117–118).

treated as impressionistic, meaning no more than “a very large number of men.” As for Herodotus (2.141), he ascribes the departure of the Assyrians to a resounding defeat which was caused by field-mice eating the quivers, bows, and shield holds of the enemy force, thus effectively disarming them.

Pace Aubin, we can immediately dismiss Herodotus’s explanation for the withdrawal as pure folklore. As for the alternatives presented by our other sources, we have a number of options from which to choose: we can argue that, since the philosophy of history permeating the Hebrew Bible is that YHWH supports those who trust in him, the divine involvement in defeating the Assyrians is pure fabrication and should be discounted; alternatively, we can argue that it is perfectly possible that an outbreak of something like dysentery did play a part in inspiring the withdrawal. What of the Egyptian counterattack? It is not mentioned in the Assyrian record, but the annals would certainly not want to create even the vaguest vestige of a suspicion that the Assyrians withdrew in the face of a possible military confrontation; they would not have mentioned it even if it existed. A further issue here is the question as to why Jewish tradition would have invented the Egyptian advance if it had not taken place. From the historiographical point of view it would surely have been enough to claim that success was due to the intervention of the angel of the Lord. There are, therefore, good reasons to accept that at the time of the siege the Egyptians were on their way and must be seen as part of the strategic equation. To that extent Aubin’s insistence on their importance is justified.

There is one further issue to which attention should be drawn. Both 2 Kgs 20:12 and Isaiah 39 record a tradition that envoys were sent from Merodach Baladan (= Marduk-apla-iddina II) of Babylon to Hezekiah during a sickness. A recalcitrant Babylon was a recurrent threat to Assyrian hegemony in Mesopotamia and, therefore, a threat to the rear of any Assyrian king operating to the west.¹⁴ The Egyptians were far from being Sennacherib’s only obstacle in maintaining his position in Syria-Palestine and certainly not the most dangerous, though Aubin is quite right to insist that they were a formidable military power. However, the brutal truth in all this activity is that the perils of strategic overextension are ineluctable!

CONCLUSIONS

The two major literary sources available for Sennacherib’s assault on Jerusalem in 701 are the Assyrian annals compiled during his reign and the Kings/Isaiah tradition. Chronicles and Josephus are heavily dependent on the latter and offer little additional information of consequence. Josephus also uses Herodotus, but

¹⁴ For an excellent survey of relations between Assyria and Babylonia see J.A. Brinkman, “Babylonia in the Shadow of Assyria (747–626 B.C.),” in J. Boardman, et al. (eds), *The Assyrian and Babylonian Empires and other States of the Near East, from the Eighth to the Sixth Centuries B.C.*, Vol. 3/2 of *The Cambridge Ancient History*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

the Herodotean narrative is historically worthless and leads Josephus badly astray. The annals and Kings/Isaiah present Sennacherib as an energetic, efficient, and successful campaigner operating in an unstable strategic context, confronted with rebellious subjects in Babylonia and Syria-Palestine and a hostile, militarily capable Twenty-fifth (Kushite) Dynasty in Egypt. The sources offer several explanations for the withdrawal of Sennacherib from Jerusalem. The annals can only reasonably be interpreted as meaning that Hezekiah bought the Assyrians off and returned to the fold as a vassal of Sennacherib. Kings/Isaiah mentions an Egyptian counterattack under Taharqo and implies that this had an effect on the outcome of the siege, but the weight of the narrative comes down heavily on the claim that the Assyrian army suffered major casualties through the action of the angel of the Lord which is interpreted by Josephus as a pestilence, either using an old source or simply rationalizing the biblical narrative. Given the theologically orientated rhetoric of Hebrew Bible historiography, we should treat this claim of divine intervention with extreme caution, though the incidence of an attack of dysentery or some such affliction would not be out of the question since it is the kind of problem which has afflicted many armies both in ancient and modern times. Such an affliction, even if on quite a small-scale, could have been seized upon by Jewish writers as the basis for the tradition that deliverance was due to YHWH's intervention. On balance the account of the Assyrian annals seems the most plausible reason for the conclusion of the siege. Hezekiah simply bought Sennacherib off, and, when Taharqo heard of this, he simply turned round and went home. However, we should not discount the possibility that trouble in Babylonia was in Sennacherib's mind's eye. A swift resolution of his problems in the west would leave him with a free hand to deal with those in the east which were, after all, a great deal closer to home. As for Aubin's thesis that the advance of Taharqo was the critical factor in saving Jerusalem we must invoke the Scottish legal verdict: "Not proven."

AUBIN'S THE RESCUE OF JERUSALEM: AN ASSYRIOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

K. LAWSON YOUNGER, JR.

TRINITY INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY – DIVINITY
SCHOOL

In 2002, Henry Aubin put forth the theory that a Kushite army under the leadership of Taharqo rescued Jerusalem from the Assyrians.¹ Sennacherib's inscriptions clearly document Egyptian and Kushite involvements in the events in the southern Levant in 701 BCE, specifically in the battle of Eltekeh.² If these texts

¹ H.T. Aubin, *The Rescue of Jerusalem: The Alliance of Hebrews and Africans in 701 BC* (New York: Soho; Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 2002). He argues (see esp. pp. 188–190): at the eleventh-hour, as “the army of Ashur was on the verge of obliterating the only remaining Hebrew kingdom, tiny Judah,” this army “drove the invader from the gates of Jerusalem and saved the nation.” Since the Assyrian forces were widely dispersed (besieging forty-six cities of Judah—including Lachish and Libnah), the Assyrian army stationed at Jerusalem must have been a relatively small force and vulnerable. So, not long after the battle of Eltekeh and the conquest of Lachish, Taharqo led a second Egyptian army largely comprised of Kushites which did not utilize the coastal highway, but came to Jerusalem by “the back door” (i.e. a route through Beersheba and Hebron to Jerusalem). Thus, Taharqo took the Assyrians at Jerusalem by surprise and saved Jerusalem.

While Aubin does not argue for a decisive outright victory, he believes that there was a combination of factors that caused the Assyrians to disengage, the most critical one being the disarray of Assyrian forces that made them vulnerable to Taharqo's post-Eltekeh army. The Assyrian besiegers of Jerusalem, a modest contingent, fled. Afterwards, the Assyrians and their Kushite and Judahite opponents agreed to an arrangement whereby, Judah remained viable, although its kingdom shrank in size and it paid a heavy penalty to Assyria.

² Without Sennacherib's inscriptions there would be no knowledge of this battle. I will not rehearse all of the discussions about it here. It will suffice to say that the present consensus of scholarship agrees that while the battle was a tactical Assyrian victory, it was not a strategic victory (i.e. it was a limited victory). Egypt was still a force with which to be reckoned in the region. Sennacherib's texts that mention the battle of Eltekeh are: RINAP 3/1: Text 4, lines 44, 46; Text 15 iii.18', 26'; Text 16, iii.50, 59; Text 17, iii.14 21; Text 18, iii.1; Text 21, i.6'; Text 22, ii.82, iii.6; Text 23, ii.77, iii.5; Text 32, ii.5'; RINAP 3/2: Text 46, line 24; Text 140, lines r.8, 10; Text 142, lines obv. 14', 18'; Text 144, line obv. i.4'; Text 165 iii.32, 39.

are read closely—considering their rhetorical structure and mythological allusions,³ they are successful in their ideological communicative purpose for the Assyrian readership. Yet, as recognized by numerous scholars over the years of critical research, they do not narrate the whole story.⁴ The biblical texts, written with different ideological goals, also do not narrate the whole story of the southern Levantine conflict of 701 BCE.⁵ Aubin’s work is an attempt to bring all the evidence together in order to reconstruct a fuller historical narrative (see note 1).

The purpose of this essay is to assess Aubin’s thesis in the light of ongoing work in the field of Assyriology. However, due to space limitations, I have selected three issues from this discipline that might conflict with or confirm Aubin’s thesis.

1. THE ASSYRIAN QUEENS OF KALĦU: WERE THEY JUDAHITES?

In 1998, a new theory based on excavated materials developed, a theory with which Aubin did not interact in his book. This theory could render Aubin’s thesis unnecessary. Thus, I will address it first. Using evidence from the fantastic discoveries of the Queens’ tombs at the ancient Assyrian capital of KalĦu (modern Nimrud),⁶ the Assyriologist Stephanie Dalley developed a theory about the make-up of the Assyrian royal family that impacted Assyrian foreign policy in the late eighth century BCE.⁷ In addition to many items of jewelry and other grave goods, the exciting discovery of a royal tomb hidden under the pavement of Room 49 in the domestic wing of the North-West Palace (Tomb II) revealed some inscribed objects. Two of these were inscribed “Belonging to Yabâ, the queen and wife of Tiglath-pileser (III), king of Assyria.”⁸ Three other objects—a golden bowl, a crystal

³ See K.L. Younger, Jr., “Assyrian Involvement in the Southern Levant at the End of the Eighth Century BCE,” in A.G. Vaughn and A.E. Killebrew (eds.), *Jerusalem in Bible and Archaeology. The First Temple Period* (SBLSS, 18; Atlanta: SBL, 2003), 235–63; P. Dubovský, “Assyrians under the Walls of Jerusalem and the Confinement of Padi,” *JNES* 75 (2016), 109–126.

⁴ The bibliography is massive. For a start, see the essays in I. Kalimi and S. Richardson (eds.), *Sennacherib at the Gates of Jerusalem: Story, History and Historiography* (CHANE, 71; Leiden: Brill, 2014).

⁵ See the other papers in this volume that address this.

⁶ See M.S.B. Damerji (ed.), *Gräber assyrischer Königinnen aus Nimrud* (Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums 45; Mainz: Verlag des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums, 1999); and numerous articles in J.E. Curtis et al. (eds.), *New Light on Nimrud. Proceedings of the Nimrud Conference 11th–13th March 2002* (London: British Institute for the Study of Iraq in Association with the British Museum, 2008).

⁷ S. Dalley, “Yabâ, Atalyâ and the Foreign Policy of Late Assyrian Kings,” *SAAB* 12 (1998), 83–89.

⁸ See F.N.H. Al-Rawi, “Inscriptions from the Tombs of the Queens of Assyria,” in J.E. Curtis et al. (eds.), *New Light on Nimrud. Proceedings of the Nimrud Conference 11th–13th March 2002* (London: British Institute for the Study of Iraq in Association with the British Museum, 2008),

jar, and an electron mirror—were inscribed “Belonging to Atalia, the queen of Sargon (II), king of Assyria.” These objects were discovered in a stone sarcophagus which contained the bodies of two females; one of which can be identified with that of Yabâ, the other is presumably Atalia’s.⁹ There were also heirloom type objects. Two of these belonged to the Assyrian queen, Bānitu, the wife of Shalmaneser V.¹⁰

Dalley proposed that the name Atalia (twice written ^l*A-ta-li-a*¹¹ and once ^l*A-tal-ia-a*¹²) is the cuneiform transcription of the biblical Hebrew name Athaliah (^l*thyb*[*ʔ*]),¹³ the same name as the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel (2 Kgs 11); and that this Assyrian queen was, in fact, a Judahite princess. She based this on her belief that the Assyrian spellings of this name reflect the Yahwistic theophoric element as the second component (*-i-a; ia-a*). Hence her normalization of the name is Atalyā or Ataliyā.¹⁴ On the basis of this analysis, she concluded:

119–38, esp. 136–38. Text 18: Gold bowl (ND 1989/3, IM 105694), which reads: *šá* ^l*ia-ba-a* MÍ.É.GAL *al-ti* ^mgisTUKUL-A-É.ŠÁR.RA MAN KUR AŠ; Text 19: bowl, reading: *šá* ^l*ia-ba-a* MÍ.É.GAL *šá* ^mTUKUL-A-É.ŠÁR MAN KUR AŠ. A funerary inscription of this queen was also discovered (pp. 119–124, Text 1). See earlier, A. Fadhil, “Die in Nimrud/Kalḫu aufgefundene Grabinschrift der Jabâ,” *Bagdader Mitteilungen* 21 (1990), 461–70.

⁹ See Al-Rawi, “Inscriptions,” 136–38. Earlier publication, A. Kamil, “Inscriptions on Objects from Yaba’s Tomb in Nimrud,” in M.S.B. Damerji (ed.), *Gräber assyrischer Königinnen aus Nimrud* (Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums 45; Mainz: Verlag des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums, 1999), 13–18, esp. 13.

¹⁰ Text 20: gold bowl (ND 1989/7, IM 105698): *šá* ^dU-ti MÍ.É.GAL *šá* ^{md}SILIM-man-MAŠ MAN KUR AŠ (Al-Rawi, pp. 137–138, Fig. 15-y); Text 22 (ND 1989/192, IM 115466): *šá* ^l*ba-ni-ti* MÍ.É.GAL *šá* ^{md}SILIM-ma-nu-MAŠ MAN KUR AŠ (Al-Rawi, pp. 137–138, Fig. 15-aa).

¹¹ Text 21: gold bowl (ND 1989/4, IM 105695): *šá* ^l*a-ta-li-a* MÍ.É.GAL *šá* ^mMAN-GIN MAN KUR AŠ, drawing of a scorpion (Al-Rawi, pp. 137–138, Fig. 15-z; Kamil, pp. 16–17); and Text 23: crystal jar (ND 1989/66 IM 124999): *šá* ^l*a-ta-li-a* MÍ.É.GAL *šá* ^mMAN-GIN MAN KUR *aš-šur*^{ki} (Al-Rawi, pp. 137–38, Fig. 15-bb; Kamil, pp. 16–17). Interestingly, two of the three inscriptions of Atalia have an engraved image of a scorpion at the end of the text (Text 21, Fig. 15-z; and Text 24, Fig. 15-cc; see Al-Rawi, p. 137). For discussion of the use of the scorpion in connection with the Assyrian queen, see M. Stol, *Women in the Ancient Near East*, trans. H. and M. Richardson (Berlin and Boston: de Gruyter, 2016), 531–32; S.C. Melville, “Neo-Assyrian Royal Women and Male Identity: Status as a Social Tool,” *JAOs* 124 (2004), 37–57.

¹² Text 24: electron mirror (ND 1989/194, IM 115468): *šá* ^l*a-tal-ia-a* MÍ.É.GAL *šá* ^mMAN-GIN MAN KUR AŠ, drawing of a scorpion (Al-Rawi, pp. 137–138, Fig. 15-cc; Kamil, pp. 16–17).

¹³ The spelling of the name of queen Athaliah occurs as both ^l*thyb* (2 Kgs 11:1, 3, 13–14; 2 Chr 22:12) and ^l*thybw* (2 Kgs 8:26; 11:2, 20; 2 Chr 22:2, 10–11; 23:12–13, 21; 24:7). The name ^l*thyb* occurs twice as a masculine name (1 Chr 8:26; Ezra 8:7); and the masculine name ^l*thy* occurs once (Ezra 10:28).

¹⁴ Dalley has only slightly revised this argument and changed the

Atalyā was almost certainly the mother of Sennacherib. If she was a Judaeon directly related to Hezekiah, we have a special explanation for the tolerance shown to Hezekiah and to the cult of Yahweh by both Sargon and Sennacherib.¹⁵

Furthermore, Dalley proposed: “. . . we can give a specifically Hebrew etymology to Yabâ’s name too, rather than a more general, West Semitic one”¹⁶ (see below).

Thus, she concluded that since these two queens were Judahites from the same royal family, this explains the generally favorable Assyrian foreign policy towards Judah from the time of Uzziah through Manasseh’s long reign. Being Judahite royal women meant they “would have been related to Ahaz and Hezekiah, (and) so Hebrew would have been spoken in high circles at the Assyrian court, in particular by the children of those queens.”¹⁷ In 2008, Dalley summed up the view this way:

If Ataliyā and Yabâ came from Judah, some implications for understanding events that took place in 701 BC, when Sennacherib invaded Palestine, are considerable, and certain new interpretations can be offered here, using in particular other material from Nimrud and Nineveh, with a view to showing how this two-generation alliance may have affected Assyrian actions against Judah, especially during the reign of Hezekiah.¹⁸

In fact, for her, that Sennacherib treated Hezekiah mildly is a matter for astonishment. She argues:

When the pro-Assyrian Padi, king of Ekron, enchained by anti-Assyrian rebels, was delivered to Hezekiah in Jerusalem, Sennacherib got him back out of Jerusalem, so that he could reinstate him in Ekron. The plain deduction to be made is, that Hezekiah was mainly regarded as a reliable ally of Assyria at that time.¹⁹

normalization from Atalyā to Ataliyā. She states: Ataliyā is “almost certainly Hebrew (although the abbreviated writing of the divine element leaves a small possibility for doubt) . . . Since Samaria had given up its independence by the time Sargon came to the throne, it is very likely that Ataliyā came from the Judean royal family rather than from the deposed rulers of the northern Hebrews of Israel.” See S. Dalley, “The Identity of the Princesses in Tomb II and a New Analysis of Events in 701 BC,” in J.E. Curtis, et al. (eds.), *New Light on Nimrud. Proceedings of the Nimrud Conference 11th–13th March 2002* (London: British Institute for the Study of Iraq in association with the British Museum, 2008), 171–75, esp. 171.

¹⁵ Dalley, “Yabâ,” 97. See discussion below.

¹⁶ Dalley, “Yabâ,” 94; “The Identity of the Princesses,” 172.

¹⁷ S. Dalley, “Recent Evidence from Assyrian Sources for Judean History from Uzziah to Manasseh,” *JOT* 28 (2004), 387–401, esp. 396.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 172.

¹⁹ Dalley, “Yabâ,” 90.

The result was “Sennacherib did not stay to capture Jerusalem. He did not even stay to collect the tribute, admittedly punitive, which followed later.”²⁰

If Dalley's theory is correct, then there is no need for Taharqo and the Kushite army to rescue Jerusalem, because in the end, “Ahaz, Hezekiah and Manasseh were more-or-less reliable allies of Assyria who maintained their kingship despite the Syro-Ephraimite war and Kushite interference . . .”²¹ If Yabâ and Atalia were, in fact, Judahite princesses, then the ramifications would be truly profound.

The only significant modification in Dalley's theory since 1998 has been her withdrawal of the suggestion that Atalia was Sennacherib's mother.²² Since the queen mother of Sennacherib was still alive as attested in a text dated to 692 BCE, this is incompatible with the age attributed to Atalia by the paleopathology report. Both women buried in Tomb II were only thirty to thirty-five years old when they died. Based on textual data, Sennacherib's mother must have lived beyond seventy.²³

Moreover, there is now new evidence for the name of Sennacherib's mother. New research by E. Weissert and E. Frahm may have finally uncovered her identity.²⁴ An inscribed stela from the *Stelenreihen* in Assur (known since 1913 when Walter Andrae published it²⁵) does not read MUNUS.É.GAL or *aššatu/altu* “wife,” but AMA or *ummu* “mother.” Weissert and Frahm propose the following new reading of the text:

(1) ʾša-lamʾ (2) MUNUSʾ Ra-ʾi-ma-aʾ (3) ʾAMAʾ mdr 30-PAB-
ME(Š)-SUʾ (4) MAN ŠÚʾ MAN KUR *Aš-šur*ʾ

“Stela (*šalmu*) of Raʾimâ, mother of Sennacherib, king of the world, king of Assyria.”

Frahm sums up the significance of this new and better reading:

²⁰ Ibid., 91–92.

²¹ Ibid., 93.

²² In 2008, she redrew the suggestion that Atalia was Sennacherib's mother. See Dalley, “The Identity of the Princesses,” 171.

²³ E. Frahm, “Sin-ahhê-erība,” *PNA* 3/1 (2002), 1113–14. S.C. Melville, *The Role of Naqia/Zakutu in Sargonid Politics* (SAAS, 9; Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1999), 21. For the paleopathology, see M. Schultz and M. Kunter, “Erste Ergebnisse der anthropologischen und paläopathologischen Untersuchungen an den menschlichen Skelettfunden aus den neuassyrischen Königinnen-gräbern von Nimrud,” *Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums Mainz* 45 (1998), 85–128; and M. Müller-Karpe, M. Kunter and M. Schultz, “Results of the Palaeopathological Investigations on the Royal Skeletons from Nimrud,” in J. Curtis, et al. (eds.), *New Light on Nimrud. Proceedings of the Nimrud Conference 11th–13th March 2002* (London: British Institute for the Study of Iraq in Association with the British Museum, 2008), 141–48.

²⁴ A re-edition of the stela is in preparation for publication by E. Weissert.

²⁵ W. Andrae, *Die Stelenreihen in Assur* (WVDOG, 24; Leipzig: Nedruck der Ausgabe, 1913), 9–10, no. 4.

If our understanding of the inscription is correct, Sennacherib's mother was a woman called Ra'imâ. The name Ra'imâ, which means "Beloved," is apparently a variant of Raḥimâ, a West Semitic and most probably Aramaic name that was borne, according to Assyrian documents, by both men and women. Hence Sennacherib's "mother tongue" was most likely Aramaic.²⁶

Nevertheless, Dalley's theory rests, in no small way, on her analyses of the personal names inscribed on the objects from Tomb II. In 2002, I demonstrated that the name of the Assyrian queen Atalia does not represent the Yahwistic theophoric element.²⁷ Quite simply the Yahwistic theophoric is never written in Neo-Assyrian this way. When it is the second component of a name, the Yahwistic theophoric in Neo-Assyrian is always written with either an *-u-* sign or an *-û-* sign at the end. Dalley attempts to argue that "Hebrew names written in Assyrian texts show that the name of Hezekiah was written, once only, with a comparable spelling *-ia-a* for the theophoric element for Yahweh."²⁸ This is simply incorrect. In this, Dalley is following Luckenbill's outdated, erroneous transliteration *ḥa-za-qi-ai-a*,²⁹ which was corrected by Borger in 1979 (*ḥa-za-qi-a-a-û*, Bull 2 and 3, line 21).³⁰ It is the reading in the 2014 edition of Sennacherib's inscriptions.³¹ There is not one clear instance where *ia-a* alone is the Neo-Assyrian transcription for the Yahwistic theophoric.

R. Zadok has pointed out another serious issue with Dalley's connection of the name Atalia with the Hebrew personal name: the first component of the name does not properly correspond.³² In the light of the Septuagint's rendering of the name (עַתְלִיָּה), the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel (2 Kgs 11), as Γοθολα, it is manifest that the first element of the name must derive from the root *ḡ-t-l*. The West Semitic phoneme *ḡ* is usually

²⁶ E. Frahm, "Family Matters: Psychohistorical Reflections on Sennacherib and His Times," in I. Kalimi and S. Richardson (eds.), *Sennacherib at the Gates of Jerusalem: Story, History and Historiography* (CHANE, 71; Leiden: Brill, 2014), 163–222.

²⁷ K.L. Younger, Jr., "Yahweh at Ashkelon and Calah? Yahwistic Names in Neo-Assyrian," *VT* 52 (2002), 207–18.

²⁸ Dalley, "Recent Evidence from Assyrian Sources," 395.

²⁹ D.D. Luckenbill, *The Annals of Sennacherib* (OIP 2; Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1924), 77. Oppenheim has: *ḥa-za-qi-a-a-a* (*ANET*, 288). R. Zadok states that *ḥa-za-qi-a-a-a* "must be a misprint" (*The Pre-Hellenistic Israelite Anthroponymy and Prosopography* [OLA 28; Leuven: Peeters, 1988], 302).

³⁰ R. Borger, *Babylonisch-Assyrische Lesestücke*, 2nd ed. (AnOr, 54; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1979), 1:76.

³¹ RINAP 3/2, p. 69, Text 44, line 21: *ḥa-za-qi-a-a-û*. R. Zadok, *The Earliest Diaspora: Israelites and Judeans in Pre-Hellenistic Mesopotamia* (Publications of the Diaspora Research Institute, 151; Tel Aviv: Diaspora Research Institute, 2002).

³² R. Zadok, "Neo-Assyrian Notes," in M. Cogan and D. Kahn; (eds.), *Treasures on Camels' Humps: Historical and Literary Studies from the Ancient Near East Presented to Israel Eph'al* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 2008), 312–30, esp. 327–29.

rendered in Neo-Assyrian as *ḥ* (e.g., the toponym Gaza: Hebrew: גָּזָה; Old Greek: Γάζη; Neo-Assyrian: *Ḫazḫat*). Zadok concludes that “a Hebrew derivation is unlikely,” for Atalia. He suggests an Arabic derivation for Atalia.³³

Interestingly, Frahm analyzed the name Yabâ as “West Semitic or Arabic,” tentatively linking it to the Semitic roots *nby* “to name” or *yhb* “to give.”³⁴ However, he seems to have changed his mind and followed a proposal of Dalley linking the name to Hebrew *yph*.³⁵ Her proposal sees the names Banîtu and Yabâ having the same meaning and hence referring to the same person. She puts it this way:

Banitu means “beautiful” as a female personal name in Akkadian, according to all the main dictionaries s.v. *banû* (contra Radner 1998–99: 265) and this would be an Akkadian translation of Yabâ (Yapâ) which may mean “beautiful” in Hebrew. A good parallel for the Akkadian translation of a West Semitic name, belonging to a queen who uses both names at once, is Naqî'a also known as Zakûtu, as is well known and uncontested.³⁶

On the surface, this appears to be a strong argument. But a closer look demonstrates that Dalley's analysis may not be on target. The dictionaries list *banû* B “be pleasant, friendly (said of face).”³⁷ They also list *banû* A “build, create.”³⁸ In addition, they list the lexeme *banû* A “creator, begetter.”³⁹ The feminine form, *banitu* “Creatress,” is the form found in Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian personal names,⁴⁰ where it fits into a particular name pattern. Thus, Radner's analysis of the name is based on the occurrences of other personal names in the Neo-Assyrian onomasticon with this component, where it is clearly a divine name (written in some cases with the divine determinative, e.g., Bānītu-abu-uṣri, written: MĪ.ḏDÜ-ti-AD-PAB).⁴¹ All of the personal

³³ Zadok, “Neo-Assyrian Notes,” 329. See earlier R. Zadok, “Israelites, Judeans, and Iranians in Mesopotamia and Adjacent Regions,” in J.H. Ellens et al. (eds.), *Theological and Cultural Studies in Honor of Simon John De Vries*, Vol. 2 of *God's Word for Our World* (JSOTSup, 389; London: T&T Clark, 2004), 98–127, esp. 99. The root 'tl occurs fourteen times in the North Arabian dialects. See G.L. Harding, *An Index and Concordance of Pre-Islamic Arabian Names and Inscriptions* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), 55, 405, 617. The root 'tl has been conjectured as occurring in Phoenician-Punic, but this is based on a supposed misspelling in CIS 788.3). See F.L. Benz, *Personal Names in the Phoenician and Punic Inscriptions* (Studia Pohl, 8; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1972), 388; and C.R. Krahmalkov, *Phoenician-Punic Dictionary* (OLA 90, Studia Phoenicia 15; Leuven: Peeters, 2000), 393.

³⁴ E. Frahm, “Iabâ,” *PNA* 2/1 (2000), 485; and “Iapa',” *PNA* 2/1 (2000), 492–93.

³⁵ E. Frahm, “Family Matters,” 184.

³⁶ Dalley, “The Identity of the Princesses,” 171.

³⁷ *CAD* B:90–94.

³⁸ *CAD* B:83–90.

³⁹ *CAD* B:94–95.

⁴⁰ *CAD* B:95, s.v. *banû* A, 1.b.

⁴¹ In addition, the same pattern is observed in personal names with

names listed in *PNA* have this divine name component and follow known patterns in which the divine name occurs. Therefore, the actual evidence argues that the name Bānītu means “Creatress,” not “beautiful.”

Furthermore, there is another significant problem: the word *yph* is not used as a personal name in biblical Hebrew or post-biblical Hebrew sources. It appears in modern Hebrew. Although Dalley⁴² cites a carnelian seal that reads: *lyph bt šm'yhw* “Belonging to Yapāh, the daughter of Šema’yahu,”⁴³ one must be very cautious since, being unprovenanced, this seal may well be a forgery.⁴⁴ The fact that the name *yph* is a modern Hebrew name, and not a surely attested ancient name,⁴⁵ raises suspicions about this seal. It also calls into significant doubt that the Assyrian queen has a Hebrew derived name.

It is still far more likely that Yabâ’s name is Arabic (Yapa’).⁴⁶ During the reign of Esarhaddon, a queen of the city of Dihrānu (modern Dhahran in northeastern Arabia) was called Yapa’ (*ʿia-pa-a’ šar-rat URU.di-ih-ra-a-ni*).⁴⁷ The need to secure relations with the polities on the fringe of the Syro-Arabian desert, who were a threat to the Sargonids, might explain such a marriage. It is perhaps not fortuitous that a stamp seal with a North Arabian inscription was found in Nimrud in Tomb III.⁴⁸

In conclusion, there is no firm evidence of a Judahite origin for either of the Assyrian queens, and it is highly unlikely that Hezekiah was treated lightly as presented in the reconstruction of Dalley. There is “nothing to be deduced from the available evidence as to whether Atalia’s presence and role at the Assyrian court had any bearing on Sennacherib’s approach to the Judahite question in 701 or not.”⁴⁹ Therefore, Dalley’s thesis does not inhibit Aubin’s reconstruction.

the masculine form Bāni-X.

⁴² Dalley, “Yabâ,” 94.

⁴³ R. Deutsch and M. Heltzer, *New Epigraphic Evidence from the Biblical Period* (Tel Aviv-Jaffa: Archaeological Center Publications, 1995), 61 (Text 64).

⁴⁴ Moreover, the first letter of the name *yph* seems to have some kind of “v” engraved into the beginning of the *yod* and looks odd. In any case, the supposed parallel found on two jar handles from Lachish do not read *yphyhw*, but *ryy* [. . .]. See N. Avigad and B. Sass, *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals* (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1997), 248 (Seal 675).

⁴⁵ Postgate also noted that the name Yabâ is not at present attested elsewhere, either in Hebrew or in any other West Semitic onomasticon. See J.N. Postgate, “The Tomb in the Light of Mesopotamian Funerary Traditions,” in E. Curtis, et al. (ed.), *New Light on Nimrud. Proceedings of the Nimrud Conference 11th–13th March 2002* (London: British Institute for the Study of Iraq in association with the British Museum, 2008), 177–80, esp. 178 n. 6.

⁴⁶ Frahm, “Iapa’,” *PNA* 2/1 (2000), 492–93.

⁴⁷ RINAP 4:21, Text 1, iv.64. Cf. RINAP 4:53, Text 8, i.21’.

⁴⁸ See Al-Rawi, “Inscriptions,” 136, Text No. 17 (ND 1989/260B, IM 115554).

⁴⁹ Fales, “The Road to Judah,” 226.

2. THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE INHABITANTS OF LACHISH

This section will address an issue related to the identification of the inhabitants of Lachish at the time of its capture by Sennacherib. There are two interrelated parts to this issue, and Aubin placed them in an endnote, admitting perplexity about how to assess them.⁵⁰

2.1 THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE INHABITANTS OF LACHISH: THE RELIEFS OF SENNACHERIB'S PALACE

The first part is related to the interpretation of the reliefs of Sennacherib's palace that depict the city of Lachish's capture. These reliefs decorated Room XXXVI of his Southwest Palace in Nineveh.⁵¹ See Figure 1 below.

Some Assyriological art historians have interpreted the depiction of some of the inhabitants shown coming out of Lachish as Kushites.⁵² Pauline Albenda presents her analysis of the reliefs this way:

In the aftermath of their defeat, processions of Lachishites, together with captured booty, advance toward the enthroned Assyrian king. At the front of this procession are persons quite distinct from the Judaeans. They are arranged into three groups: two men are naked and stretched upon the ground to be flayed by Assyrian soldiers; several others advance and raise their hands to the level of their face as a sign of submission; and still other men are shown in a sequence of kneeling actions before the Assyrian king, as they implore mercy. Their physiognomy makes it almost certain that they are to be identified with the Egyptian/Kushite foes, since their hair and short beard are composed of rows of tights (sic) curls. These persons wear a plain, long garment reaching to the ankle and are barefooted. Their costume may reveal them to be the charioteers captured by the Assyrian army, and it is quite possible that in this instance the Assyrian artist utilized a single racial type for representing Egyptians and Nubians in the same scene, similar to the usage on the reliefs of Sargon II.⁵³

In the same vein, D. Collon argues that the Judahites who are depicted going into exile with their families are "clean-shaven and wear a strip of cloth wrapped around their head, with the

⁵⁰ Aubin, *Rescue*, 331–32 n. 29.

⁵¹ R.D. Barnett, E. Bleibtreu and G. Turner, *Sculptures from the Southwest Palace of Sennacherib at Nineveh* (London: British Museum, 1998), pls. 338–339.

⁵² D. Collon, "Examples of Ethnic Diversity on Assyrian Reliefs," in W.H. Van Soldt (ed.), *Ethnicity in Ancient Mesopotamia. Papers Read at the 48th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale Leiden, 1–4 July 2002* (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 2005), 66–77, esp. 68.

⁵³ P. Albenda, "Observations on Egyptians in Assyrian Art," *Bulletin of the Egyptological Seminar* 4 (1982), 5–23, esp. 10.

fringed end hanging down on the left (the viewer's) side"⁵⁴ (i.e., a fringed scarf). They also wear a short garment. For him, these individuals are different from the "Nubians," who "can easily be identified by their Negroid features and distinctive short curly hair which the Assyrian sculptors have carefully rendered. . ."⁵⁵ They also wear long tunics.⁵⁶

Dalley understands the difference in the depiction of the Judahites and the Nubians in the Lachish reliefs to undergird her assertion that Judah was let off lightly by the Assyrians. She states:

It is often assumed that its capture was designed to punish Judah for anti-Assyrian activity, and this is of course true; but if we look closely we see that the people being punished, grovelling in front of the king, are Nubians with curly hair and bulbous noses. The king sits remarkably peacefully on his throne, not shown in the traditional way treading on the enemy or delivering the coup de grace, but stately and commanding. Meanwhile Judaeans are depicted leaving the city with their families and possessions. Nubia, therefore, took the blame rather than the Judaeans. From this sculpture we know what Judaeans looked like at this period. They had short beards, and a distinctive helmet or head-dress with long ear-flaps.⁵⁷

However, there are inconsistencies and problems with this interpretation. First, it is clearly contradicted by the depiction of a Judahite man who is leading the oxen who are pulling the cart loaded with his family (Fig. 1, Slabs 8–9) and whose portrayal matches that of the "groveling" leaders in facial features (Fig. 1, Slabs 11–12).⁵⁸ Second, Uehlinger points out that "if the physiognomy of these men should contain negroid features this would pertain for all male Lachishites."⁵⁹ In other words, the facial features of the non-Assyrian adult men seem to be largely the same throughout the relief. Thus, "one cannot accept therefore Albenda's identification of the men wearing long tunics with Egyptian/Kushite foes, even less with captured charioteers."⁶⁰ Third, while major categories of Judahite men can be generally distinguished, there are clear cases of overlap and slight irregularity.⁶¹ For example, in the lower register of slab 11 (Fig. 1), the

⁵⁴ Collon, "Examples of Ethnic Diversity," 66.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 68.

⁵⁶ Barnett suggested that the curly haired, bearded men who wear tunics must be Hezekiah's men who influenced the city to resist, while the men with the peculiar head-dresses are native inhabitants of Lachish." See R.D. Barnett, "The Siege of Lachish," *IEJ* 8 (1958), 161–64, esp. 163.

⁵⁷ Dalley, "Recent Evidence from Assyrian Sources," 387–401, 391.

⁵⁸ Barnett, *Sculptures from the Southwest Palace*, pls. 338–39.

⁵⁹ See C. Uehlinger, "Clio in a World of Pictures," 221–305, esp. 282 n. 150.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ D. Ussishkin, *The Conquest of Lachish by Sennacherib* (Publications of the Institute of Archaeology 6; Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press,

two men who are being stabbed undoubtedly wear the short garment, but they do not wear the fringed scarf. This means that those who are wearing the fringed scarfs may have curly hair that is obscured by the scarfs.

Perhaps the most significant problem is caused by the portrayal of Kushites in other Neo-Assyrian reliefs where they are shown as beardless. For example, in the lower register of the wall reliefs that decorated Room V of Sargon II's palace at Dūr-Šarukīn (modern Khorsabad), there are scenes of the Assyrian campaign of 720 BCE in the Levant.⁶² Among the different battles illustrated in the composition, one episode, extending across two stone blocks, shows foreign foot soldiers in retreat from the Assyrian cavalry. Although the reliefs were damaged in antiquity, one enemy soldier "still retained facial features which resemble those of an Upper Nile Nubian: a *beardless* face with a broad, blunt nose, and small tight curls covering the head" (emphasis mine).⁶³

Another example can be seen in the reliefs of three stelae of Esarhaddon (two from Til Barsib and one from Zincirli).⁶⁴ When Esarhaddon captured the city of Memphis, he carried off to Assyria Ušanahuru (Egyptian: *Ns-ʾInḥrt*), son of the Kushite pharaoh Taharqo. In these stelae, the beardless Egyptian crown prince is pictured along with a second ruler,⁶⁵ held by rope by Esarhaddon. B.N. Porter has observed that the Egyptian prince, "the most spectacular trophy of the recent Egyptian campaign, was Nubian and is clearly identified both by his Negroid features, unusual in Assyrian reliefs, and by the uraeus crown of Egypt that he wears."⁶⁶ Although the scene on all three stelae conveyed the important message of Assyrian dominance in the West, Porter notes that the treatment of the figures represented in the scenes was quite different in the two cities, significantly changing the implications of the visual imagery. Despite weathering, the details in the Til Barsib stelae accord the roped rulers "a certain dignity" so that the Egyptian prince, although kneeling, is "decently dressed in a tunic and is not otherwise demeaned." In the Zincirli Stela (Fig. 2), however, he is shackled at the wrist and ankle, and "the absence of any hemline across the prince's lower leg and his strongly modelled leg muscles suggest he is naked

1982), 109.

⁶² P.E. Botta and E. Flandin, *Monument de Ninive*, Vol. 2 (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1849), pls. 88–100.

⁶³ Albenda, "Observations," 8. See J.E. Reade, "Sargon's Campaigns of 720, 716, and 715 B.C.: Evidence from the Sculptures," *JNES* 35 (1976), 99–102, esp. 100.

⁶⁴ RINAP 4:179–186, Texts 97–98.

⁶⁵ Some scholars identify this ruler with Abdi-milkūti, the king of Sidon.

⁶⁶ B.N. Porter, *Trees, Kings, and Politics. Studies in Assyrian Iconography* (OBO, 197; Fribourg: Academic Press; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003), 71.

except for his royal crown.”⁶⁷ But the point here is that in all three stelae, the Kushite prince is pictured as beardless.⁶⁸

Finally, Aššurbanipal’s Egyptian campaign in 664 BCE appears to be recorded in the reliefs in the throne-room of his royal residence (Room M) in Nineveh, where an attack on an Egyptian city is shown (Fig. 3). While the battle rages, a single procession of warriors shackled at the hands and feet is led out of the city. A few women are also in this procession. Albenda has noted⁶⁹ that the warriors wear “a waist-length jacket and a narrow cloth wrapped around the thighs with its loose ends hanging at the front.” Many of them wear a headdress with “a tall feather on the brow (Fig. 3).” All the warriors are “beardless and have short, curly hair.” They are also shorter in height than their Assyrian captors. A second procession is pictured below and beyond the besieged fortified city. It appears to be the civilian population, men, women and children. In this group, the men are bearded and wearing overcoats. Albenda concluded that “the captive warriors are most likely to be identified with the Kushites, while the civilians must represent the local Egyptian populace.”⁷⁰

From this evidence, one can conclude that since the Neo-Assyrian reliefs picture Kushites as beardless, the individuals depicted in the Lachish reliefs with beards and curly hair are not meant to be understood as Kushites. Perhaps sensing this problem, Collon has suggested that the Assyrian sculptors have given the Kushite men in the Lachish reliefs “short curly beards, perhaps because in Assyrian art only the young and eunuchs were shown beardless.” Thus in his opinion, it is Nubians who are being flayed alive and who are being brought before Sennacherib to be summarily executed.⁷¹ But the Assyrian artists do not have a problem presenting Kushites or Nubians elsewhere as beardless. In fact, this seems to be one of the major identifying traits in the reliefs. This is also true in Egyptian art, where they are consistently depicted as beardless (cf. the granite sphinx of

⁶⁷ Ibid., pp. 73–75. Commenting on the Zincirli Stela, Albenda states: “The portrayal of the Kushite royal figure is closely related to Egyptian Dynasty XXV prototypes, even to the inclusion of the ‘Kushite fold,’ a strong furrow running from the nostril to the corner of the mouth. A further interesting detail is the double raised ridge on the extended back leg delineating the tibia and fibula, a feature that often occurs on Egyptian statuary during this period.” Albenda, “Observations,” 11.

⁶⁸ This is also true regarding Esarhaddon’s reliefs on painted brick fragments from his unfinished palace at Nimrud. Albenda comments: “The foreign soldiers wear either a kilt or loincloth wrapped around the thighs and, occasionally, a jacket. These persons are *beardless* (emphasis mine) and on their clean-shaven head is a tall feather. From Egyptian art works of earlier periods two groups of peoples were known to wear a tall feather on their head—the Libyans and the Nubians.” Albenda, “Observations,” 13.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 15.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Collon, “Examples of Ethnic Diversity,” 68–69.

Taharqo).⁷² There is evidence that the Assyrian royal court was receptive to aspects of Egyptian visual culture and incorporated them into their native art.⁷³ In perhaps an ironic twist of history, fragments of three statues of Taharqo were excavated at Nineveh and his scarab was found at Kalḫu (Nimrud).⁷⁴ The statues, whose bases are inscribed with Taharqo's name, were placed prominently in the entrance gates to the arsenal at Nebi Yunus.⁷⁵ It is very evident that the Assyrian artists consistently portray Kushites/Nubians as beardless. Therefore, in my opinion, a better interpretation of the Lachish reliefs is to see those with beards and curly hair in the reliefs as picturing Judahites, not Kushites—likely the higher ranking Judahites of Lachish.⁷⁶

2.2 THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE INHABITANTS OF LACHISH: FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGY

The second part of the issue related to the identification of the inhabitants of Lachish is contained in the archaeological evidence, specifically forensic anthropology. Assyriological art historians have not typically engaged this subject as it relates to the reliefs. In the 1930s excavations at Lachish, remains were found of more than 1,500 humans in four tombs (Numbers 107, 108, 116 and 120). These tombs were hewn in the Late Bronze Age, but reused following the Assyrian conquest.⁷⁷ Most of the human remains were discovered in Tomb 120.⁷⁸ The bodies were disarticulated and the skulls had rolled from the heap in the center to the edges of the tomb. The jawbones of most of the skulls were not found *in situ*. Some of the remains had suffered burning. Among the bones were potsherds and even a few intact vessels, which indicate a date in the Iron II period.⁷⁹ In two of the

⁷² I. Shaw and P. Nicholson, *The British Museum Dictionary of Ancient Egypt*, 2nd ed. (London: The British Museum, 2002), 281.

⁷³ A.K. Thomason, "From Sennacherib's Bronzes to Taharqo's Feet: Conceptions of the Material World at Nineveh," *Iraq* 66 (2004), 151–62, esp. 159.

⁷⁴ G. Herrmann, *Ivories from Nimrud V: The Small Collections from Fort Shalmaneser* (London: British School of Archaeology in Iraq, 1992), no. 178.

⁷⁵ J.M. Russell, *The Final Sack of Nineveh* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 241, pl. 230.

⁷⁶ I do not think they picture Hezekiah's men from Jerusalem (as Barnett, "The Siege of Lachish," 163), for which there is no evidence.

⁷⁷ A description of the caves appears in O. Tufnell, *Lachish III: The Iron Ages* (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), 187–96.

⁷⁸ In contrast, there was an almost complete lack of human remains from the deposits of Stratum III itself, the stratum destroyed by Sennacherib.

⁷⁹ Eph'al suggested that what we have here is the burial of people killed during the conquest and destruction of the Canaanite city in the twelfth century BCE. See I. Eph'al, *The City Besieged: Siege and its Manifestations in the Ancient Near East* (CHANE, 36; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 32–34. While the tomb may have been hewn in the Late Bronze period, all the published pottery shows forms and decoration that is ninth to seventh century in date. My thanks go to Nava Panitz-Cohen for help in checking this for me.

tombs, animal bones, mostly of pigs,⁸⁰ were subsequently dumped over the human remains.

The remains of 695 skulls were sent to London where they were studied by D.L. Risdon, a British skull expert.⁸¹ There were 360 male skulls, 274 females and 61 children.⁸² It is thus clear that large number of the deceased were civilians and not soldiers.⁸³ However, since none of the remains demonstrated visible trauma in his assessment in Risdon's estimation, he proposed that they were killed by a natural disaster around 700 BCE.

Utilizing craniometrics as practiced in the 1930s, Risdon used metric variables in the now discredited Coefficient of Racial Likeness. He made comparisons between the Lachish skulls and 21 ancient Egyptian and allied series of skulls (particularly the Kerma Egyptian series). Risdon concluded that the Lachish series represented Upper Egyptians, who were residents in Lower Egypt during the Eighteenth Dynasty and who immigrated to Lachish between 1567 and 1320 BCE, remaining endogamous. Thus, the population of Lachish in 701 BCE was entirely, or almost entirely, of Upper Egyptian origin.⁸⁴

Another examination and analysis of the Lachish skulls was conducted by S.O.Y. Keita in 1988.⁸⁵ He examined the skulls metrically, using a multivariate analysis of crania, as well as canonical discriminant functions and metric variables, and omitting those that were either "artificially deformed, female, warped, split, [or] juvenile." Thus, he used only those measurements that he believed were consistent population discriminators.⁸⁶ Keita concluded that the group was fairly heterogeneous, having close

⁸⁰ Seven intact pig skulls and a few fragments were found, which is in contrast to the almost complete lack of pig bones found on the tell of Lachish. D. Ussishkin, *Biblical Lachish. A Tale of Construction, Destruction, Excavation and Restoration* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society/Biblical Archaeology Society, 2014), 321.

⁸¹ D.L. Risdon, "A Study of the Cranial and Other Human Remains from Palestine Excavated at Tell Duweir (Lachish) by the Wellcome-Marston Archaeological Research Expedition," *Biometrika* 35 (1939), 99–166.

⁸² Risdon, "A Study of the Cranial and Other Human Remains," 103.

⁸³ J.R. Zorn, "War and Its Effects on Civilians in Ancient Israel and Its Neighbors," in D. Nadali and J. Vidal (eds.), *The Other Face of the Battle: The Impact of War on Civilians in the Ancient Near East* (AOAT 413; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2014), 79–100, esp. pp. 82–84.

⁸⁴ Although only a year later than Risdon's publication, Keith leveled criticism, but it was largely anecdotal. A. Keith, "The Men of Lachish," *PEQ* 72 (1940), 7–12. However, the conclusion of a subsequent craniometric study supported Risdon's conclusion. See J.H. Musgrave and S.P. Evans, "By Strangers Honor'd: A Statistical Study of Ancient Crania from Crete, Mainland Greece, Cyprus, Israel and Egypt," *Journal of Mediterranean Anthropology and Archaeology* 1 (1980), 50–107.

⁸⁵ S.O.Y. Keita, "An Analysis of Crania from Tell-Duweir Using Multiple Discriminant Functions," *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 75 (1988), 375–90.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 377.

relationships to North African, Egyptian, and Nubian groups, thus lending support to an "Egypto-Nubian presence."⁸⁷

As recently pointed out, these studies were limited by their dependence on craniometrics, most of which are susceptible to environmental factors, and hence are often considered poor population discriminators.⁸⁸ Also, approximately 5% of the Lachish skulls exhibit cranial deformation, an additional hindrance to metric analysis.

In attempts to avoid the difficulties inherent in craniometric analysis, nonmetric traits are often used for affinity assessment. In their 2005 study, Ullinger, Sheridan, Hawkey, Turner, and Cooley used dental nonmetric traits from Lachish and Dothan and compared the data with four other dental sets: a tomb at St. Stephen's monastery in Jerusalem (438–611 CE); Lisht, an Egyptian site south of Cairo (ca. 1991–1783 BCE); a combined Iron Age from Italy (Iron II); and Natufian remains from the southern Levant (ca. 10,800–8200 BCE).⁸⁹

The findings of their study suggest that there are more similarities between Dothan and Lachish than either of them with the other sites. This leads them to the conclusion that Risdon's proposal that Lachish was comprised of Egyptian immigrants cannot be supported. Rather, the current findings support the theory that the people of Lachish were indigenous to the southern Levant,⁹⁰ as Dothan and Lachish were both significantly different from Lisht. The data also indicate that the group at Lachish may be more homogenous than previously thought. Yet, Dothan may have had slightly more Egyptian genetic influence than Lachish. The location of Dothan along a major international highway between Egypt and Mesopotamia (as well as the Mediterranean and Mesopotamia) during the Late Bronze Age may shed light on this finding.

The evidence from this study argues for the inhabitants of Lachish being southern Levantines, not Egyptians or Kushites, though obviously this does not rule out the presence of some Egyptian and/or Kushites at Lachish at the time of its conquest by Sennacherib.⁹¹ In this, it would agree with the analysis of the Assyrian reliefs in 2a (part 1) above. It also does not negatively impact Aubin's thesis; but it also does not add evidence in its favor.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 388.

⁸⁸ J.M. Ullinger et al., "Bioarchaeological Analysis of Cultural Transition in the Southern Levant Using Dental Nonmetric Traits," *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 128 (2005), 466–476, esp. 469. They cite in support: P. Smith, "The Skeletal Biology and Paleopathology of Early Bronze Age Populations in the Levant," in P. de Miroschedji (ed.), *L'urbanisation de la Palestine à l'âge du Bronze ancien* (Oxford: BAR, 1989), 297–313.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 469–73.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 472–473.

⁹¹ At the end of the day, all of these studies are based on extremely limited databases, and therefore have inherent difficulties. Caution must be the keynote.

3. THE ROUTE OF TAHARQO'S ARMY TO RESCUE JERUSALEM AND ASSYRIAN MILITARY INTELLIGENCE

Perhaps the greatest challenge to Aubin's theory is found in his proposed route for Taharqo's army to come rescue Jerusalem in light of the study of Neo-Assyrian military intelligence. In his view, Taharqo led an Egyptian army largely comprised of Kushites which did not utilize the coastal highway, but came to Jerusalem by "the back door" (i.e. a route through Beersheba and Hebron to Jerusalem).⁹²

The problem is not in the segment of the route from Beersheba to Jerusalem; it is in the route of the Egyptian army to get to Beersheba. The Sinai Peninsula is a significant buffer between Egypt and the rest of the Fertile Crescent. There were three possible routes that armies could take to cross the Sinai Peninsula, though two of these were not very good options: (1) the northern, coastal route from Tjaru (Tell Hebua) to Gaza, the so-called "Ways of Horus" or "the Way of the land of the Philistines"; (2) the central route from Tell el-Maskhuta through the Wadi Tumilat to Beersheba, the so-called "Way of Shur"; and (3) the southern route from the Suez area (Tell Qolzum) to Abu Gada to Ezion-geber (Elath),⁹³ the so-called "Way of the Wilderness" (modern: Darb el-Hagg).

The most used route was undoubtedly the northern, coastal road.⁹⁴ Its length is ca. 250 km and it was a difficult route for a number of reasons.⁹⁵ First, far and away the most significant challenge was the scarcity of water which affected men and animals. Second, food and fodder were nowhere to be found in the desert; they must be brought along. The Egyptian army had to develop supply mechanisms. Third, the climate is problematic. From March to June, there can be *hamsîn* winds which can last several days and render the advance along the route impossible and survival questionable. Fourth, a dangerous feature of the geography of the Sinai is quicksand.

The second and third routes were rarely used because the scarcity of water was greater than the coastal route. In addition, their terrain was much more difficult with a number of moun-

⁹² Aubin, *Rescue*, 188–190.

⁹³ This route was used by Ramesses III in a *razzia* to Tayma in the Arabian peninsula. See C. Somaglino and P. Tallet, "A Road to the Arabian Peninsula in the Reign of Ramesses III," in F. Förster and H. Riemer (eds.), *Desert Road Archaeology in Ancient Egypt and Beyond* (Africa Praehistorica 27; Köln: Heinrich-Barth-Institut, 2013), 511–18.

⁹⁴ See J.K. Hoffmeier and S.O. Moshier, "A Highway out of Egypt: The Main Road from Egypt to Canaan," in F. Förster and H. Riemer (eds.), *Desert Road Archaeology in Ancient Egypt and Beyond* (Africa Praehistorica 27; Köln: Heinrich-Barth-Institut, 2013), 485–510.

⁹⁵ Spalinger's excellent discussion details these concerns and more for the movement of an army on the coastal route. See A.J. Spalinger, *War in Ancient Egypt* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), 33–45. See also I. Eph'al, *The Ancient Arabs: Nomads on the Borders of the Fertile Crescent 9th–5th Centuries B.C.* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1982), 138–42.

tainous areas that had to be crossed. Moreover, without reasonable support from the native Arab population, all three routes could prove devastating to any army traversing them.

However, the real challenge for the use of the coastal route to get to Beersheba in the context of 701 BCE would be in moving off this route near Gaza to travel to Beersheba. Although we do not know much about the activities of the Assyrian military intelligence during the 701 campaign, based on what is known about it from other regions, it is highly likely that such a movement of the Kushite army under Taharqo would not have gone undetected.⁹⁶ This would be particularly true on account of Sennacherib's apparently loyal vassal Šil-Bēl, the king of Gaza, who surely would have been a source for intelligence on the Egyptian army. In fact, the source for the report to Sennacherib recorded in 2 Kgs 19:9 that Taharqo was marching out to fight against him⁹⁷ may well have come from Šil-Bēl, although there would be two other possibilities. It might have come from other intelligence sources developed in the region since the time of Tiglath-pileser III. Or, it might have come from the interception of secret correspondence. In any case, any movement of the Egyptian army from the Gaza region to Beersheba—the evidence seems to indicate—would have been noted.

The alternative route would have been the central route, “the Way of Shur.” This route was much more difficult than the coastal route which raises real doubts about the Kushite army using it. In pharaonic times, it was used for some small razzias. Even with a smaller contingent of Assyrian troops blockading Jerusalem, would the route support a sufficient army of Kushites to relieve Jerusalem? Taking this alternative route would have been a very risky move with great potential for disaster. Any one or a combination of the difficulties of the route might have destroyed the Kushite contingent. Furthermore, the issue of detection by Assyrian intelligence would still apply. If the Assyrian military became aware of a Kushite move on this route, the possibility was great that the contingent could have been intercepted, cut off and wiped out. If the biblical text is giving accurate information about the report coming to Sennacherib, then it also implies that the Assyrian king took action based on this report (at least in the first instance, sending a message to Hezekiah to persuade him to surrender). Thus, it would seem that the Assyrian military intelligence gave Sennacherib enough advance warning to prepare for a response.

⁹⁶ On this issue, see P. Dubovský, “Sennacherib's Invasion of the Levant through the Eyes of Assyrian Intelligence Services,” in I. Kalimi and S. Richardson (eds.), *Sennacherib at the Gates of Jerusalem: Story, History and Historiography* (CHANE, 71; Leiden: Brill, 2014), 249–91. It is very likely that Esarhaddon and Aššurbanipal utilized military intelligence in the region as they executed their respective invasions of Egypt. This intelligence was gathered by spies, traitors, and defectors.

⁹⁷ On this passage, *Ibid.*, 289.

CONCLUSION

In this short essay, I have argued that the evidence from the Assyrian Queens' tombs, when properly understood, does not negate Aubin's theory. Furthermore, concerning the identification of the inhabitants of Lachish, Sennacherib's reliefs of the conquest of Lachish do not depict Kushites; and the most recent forensic anthropology argues in favor of the excavated human remains from Lachish being southern Levantines (i.e. Judahites), not Kushites. Thus, the evidence concerning the identification of the inhabitants of Lachish is neutral with respect to Aubin's thesis. Finally, the greatest challenge to Aubin's theory may be in the proposed route taken by Taharqo's army to rescue Jerusalem, both in the difficulties of the route and what is known about Neo-Assyrian military intelligence.

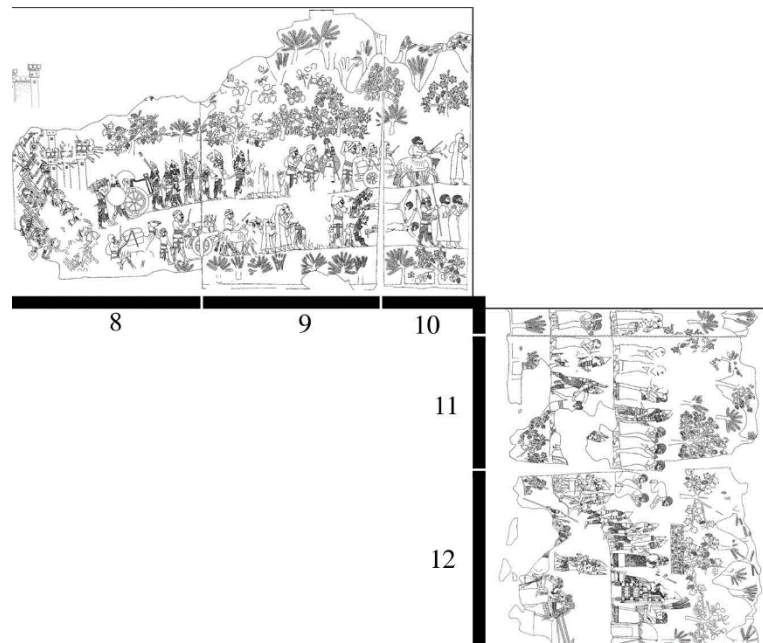


Figure 1. *Sennacherib's Palace Reliefs: Slabs 8–12.*
 Courtesy Christoph Ueblinger, 2003: 276.



Figure 2. *Zincirli Stela of Esarhaddon showing prisoners.* Photo by author.

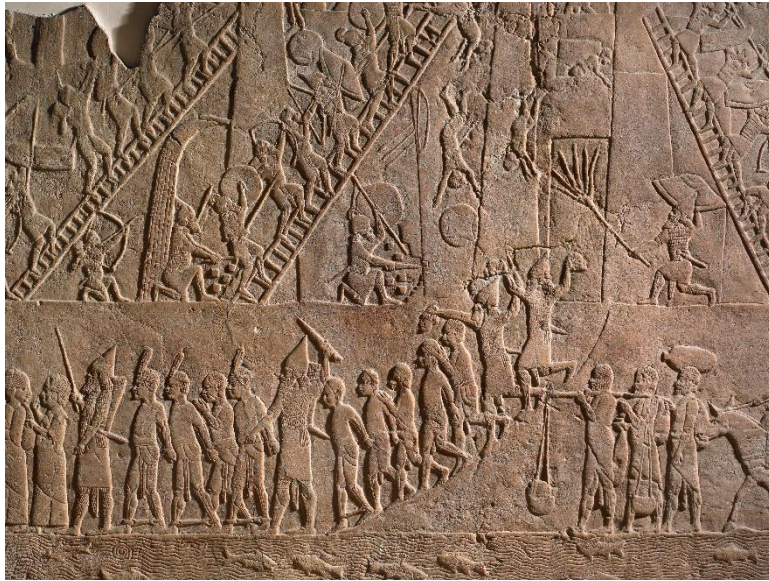


Figure 3. Assurbanipal's sack of Egyptian city. © British Museum with permission.

RESPONSES

HENRY T. AUBIN

MONTREAL

Perhaps in the future there will be some African history to teach. But, at present, there is none: there is only the history of the Europeans in Africa. The rest is darkness [. . .].

H.R. Trevor-Roper, Regius Professor of Modern History, University of Oxford, 1965¹

I am thankful and honored that the editors of *The Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* have authorized assessments of my 2002 book, *The Rescue of Jerusalem*. The real honor, however, goes to the people who are the book's main subject, the Kushites of Egypt's Twenty-fifth Dynasty. The modern world has accorded them little honor for what—if the book's thesis is correct—they may have accomplished in the Levant in 701 BCE.

My profound admiration and gratitude go to project editor Alice Ogden Bellis for shouldering this undertaking at the Journal's suggestion and for carrying it out with such lofty intellectual integrity. She has recruited eight evaluators of the book whose particular areas of expertise make them impressively qualified. As well, she has taken pains to ensure that the overall composition of the panel of judges would inspire broad confidence and not be liable to complaints the "court was rigged" to favor one perspective or another. I am grateful to each of the eight specialists: they have graciously put aside their own enterprising scholarship to consider a book that few of them had previously heard of.

One of the peer reviewers of this collection has suggested that I say something about the "impact" of the book among scholars. That is quickly done: in the short term there was virtually no impact. Some forty copies went out to journals and individual scholars mostly in the fields of biblical studies, Egyptology and Nubiology, and—aside from a solitary review in a journal with little reach into those fields²—there was only silence.³ My

¹ Trevor-Roper speaking to a BBC audience, as cited by K.A. Appiah, "Africa: The Hidden History," *The New York Review of Books*, Dec. 17, 1998.

² J. Kovel, review of *The Rescue of Jerusalem*, *JMH* 67 (2003). The review was generally positive, calling the ideas "extremely well researched" and "well documented," while withholding judgment on the "thought-provoking" thesis (217–18).

³ I should add, however, that the *pre-publication* reception was vastly

subsequent attempts to recycle the book's main ideas in articles submitted to two biblical-studies journals met with chilly receptions. Interestingly, an American scholar at a reputable state university wrote to express admiration for the book, but he said that—given the climate in his department—he could not review it until after receiving tenure. Departing from the norm in academia were positive articles several years after publication by two professors at Howard University, an historically African-American institution with a special interest in black history: the first article, by the late Gene Rice, appeared in 2005 in Howard's academic journal;⁴ the second, an article by Alice Bellis that was included in a 2010 festschrift,⁵ sought to call more attention to the book. In this, it succeeded: the article caught the eye of Paul S. Evans, an Old Testament scholar at McMaster Divinity College, in Canada, whose adversarial assessment of the book's chapters on the historiography of the 701 conflict appeared in 2012. Evans misrepresents the book's actual content in numerous places and looks askance at my social location both as a non-academic who strayed into the territory of experts and as a white parent looking for aspects of African history that might be of interest to his black adopted son.⁶

better. Three distinguished scholars—the world historian William H. McNeill, the archaeological anthropologist Bruce G. Trigger (with experience in Nubia and Egypt) and the Isaianic specialist Ronald E. Clements—generously consented to read the manuscript when approached out of the blue, and each wrote letters in support of the book to publishers who until then had been skeptical about the credibility of such a thesis, written as it was by a non-academic. McNeill and Trigger upheld the thesis; Clements did not, remaining an adherent of the surrender theory, but he endorsed the level of the scholarship. These endorsements were private, however, and had no impact on the book's actual subsequent reception. For more on McNeill's opinion, see n. 66 in my response to Christopher Hays's essay.

The reception outside academia was mixed. *The Rescue of Jerusalem* received numerous reviews (all positive) in Canada, where I am known in media circles; it sold briskly and received the Canadian Jewish Book Award for history. In the United States, the New York publisher sent 130 copies to media and netted one review (in the South Florida *Sun-Times*, positive); the publisher described the book's failure to penetrate the U.S. market as one of the greatest disappointments of his career.

For me, what matters most is not popular sales but the academic world's attention. That is where credibility is tested and where long-term public opinion is formed.

⁴ G. Rice, review of *The Rescue of Jerusalem*, *JRT* 57/58 (2001–2005), 181–92: “Aubin has made a significant contribution to biblical studies by placing Kushite Egypt prominently and justifiably on the stage of Israelite and world history” (192).

⁵ A.O. Bellis, “The Rescue of Jerusalem from the Assyrians in 701 BCE by the Cushites,” in K.L. Noll and B. Schramm (eds.), *Raising Up a Faithful Exegete: Essays in Honor of Richard D. Nelson* (Winona Park, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2010), 247–59: “[F]or those of us who are insiders in the biblical guild, our intellectual location, which I would argue is part of our social location, sometimes blinds us to new ideas” (257).

⁶ P.S. Evans, “History in the Eye of the Beholder? Social Location

Knowing the book's frustrating early years, the reader may better appreciate my gratitude to the *JHS* and all those involved in this project.

To the complaint that I lack scholarly credentials I plead guilty: I have had no academic exposure to ancient history and, aside from a course taken as an undergraduate more than half a century ago with Arthur Darby Nock and two courses with Paul Tillich, I have no academic background in the study of religion. What I do have, however, is what I've learned as an investigative journalist accustomed to wading into such *terrae incognitae* as food oligopolies and globalized corporate interests shaping the transformation of cities: I have learned, first, to steel myself against preconceptions and, second, to follow the evidence wherever it leads. Everyone claims to do the latter, but if you fail at the first, the latter may lead you astray because you'll overlook evidence that doesn't correspond to preconceptions. This is what modern scholarship appears generally to have done vis à vis the Kushite role in the Levant. The assumption that the Kushites, who came from what is now Sudan, would have been incapable of accomplishing much in the world of the eastern Mediterranean appears to have affected many scholars' ability to follow the bread crumbs.

Readers may occasionally find my texts rather critical of aspects of scholarship pertinent to the events of 701. For some, I may be a presumptuous interloper, but I see myself as a witness who has steeped himself in the subject, who supports his critical observation with evidence and who, moreover, is disinterested; that my career has been outside academia means I am free of concerns about tenure, promotion, or of what colleagues might think of me.

Consider this anomaly. Most areas of society—business, politics, law enforcement, religious institutions, school and university administrations, and of course journalism—are subject to review (formal or informal) by outsiders (as distinct from peers), and society generally benefits. The professional study of ancient history, however, has generally been exempt from cool-headed outside review, perhaps in part because of the time (in my case years) required for non-peers to become knowledgeable about specialized areas of study. An outsider's critique of scholarly treatment of the 701 conflict is overdue.

and Allegations of Racial/Colonial Biases in Reconstructions of Sennacherib's Invasion of Judah," *JHS* 12 (2012). Among the errors, Evans states that I claim Taharqo's forces actually defeated Sennacherib in a second, climactic battle (I repeatedly propose a stalemate) and asserts that I write "as if some sort of conspiracy or cover-up is going on" among scholars to obscure Kushite influence (I rule this out explicitly). His main misreading of the book concerns my treatment of the historiography; see n. 99 in my "Response to Jeremy Pope" in this collection. For a rebuttal of these and other misrepresentations, see "Has Racism Skewed Scholars' View of Kush? A Response to a Critique of *The Rescue of Jerusalem*"; unpublished, it may be found at henryaubin.com (click on "History").

TERMINOLOGY AND TRANSLATIONS

Some Nubiologists' recent adoption of the term "Double Kingdom" to denote the realm of Egypt's Twenty-fifth Dynasty is useful, and I will adopt the term in my responses to contributors' essays. The alternative is to say more awkwardly, as I have in the past, "Egypt and Kush," "Kushite Egypt," or "Kush-Egypt"; "Double Kingdom" is more successful than those terms in reflecting that Kush and Egypt were two distinct entities unified under a single government, that of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty.

My use of the term "army of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty" should be understood to include not only Kushite soldiers but also Egyptians. Troops from Upper Egypt, Middle Egypt (Khmun), much (not all) of Lower Egypt and, perhaps, other nations would have joined the Kushites in fighting Assyria under the Twenty-fifth Dynasty's leadership. The terms "army of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty" and "army of the Double Kingdom" are interchangeable.

In regard to quotations from the book of Second Kings, I will rely on Mordechai Cogan and Hayim Tadmor's Anchor Bible translation,⁷ unless otherwise noted. For other books of the Bible, the New Revised Standard Version will be used, unless indicated.

As for the Assyrian annals, Cogan's translation will be used except where noted.⁸ In the case of Sennacherib's campaign to the Levant, this translation is based on the so-called Rassam Cylinder, earliest of the various royal accounts dealing with the campaign of 701 BCE, having been composed only a year later. Cogan observes that because it is the most contemporary of the annals, the "Rassam Cylinder should be considered the key witness."⁹

⁷ M. Cogan and H. Tadmor, *II Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB, 11; Doubleday, 1988).

⁸ M. Cogan, *The Raging Torrent: Historical Inscriptions from Assyria and Babylonia Relating to Ancient Israel*, 2nd ed. (Jerusalem: Carta, 2015 [2008]).

⁹ M. Cogan, "Cross-examining the Assyrian Witnesses to Sennacherib's Third Campaign: Assessing the Limits of Historical Reconstruction," in I. Kalima and S. Richardson (eds.), *Sennacherib at the Gates of Jerusalem: Story, History and Historiography* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 55.

RESPONSE TO MARTA HØYLAND LAVIK: THE KUSHITE MISSION'S HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Marta Høyland Lavik rightly remarks that the interest that she and I have in Isaiah 18 is fundamentally different: most of her attention goes to Kush as a literary motif in that oracle, while most of mine in *The Rescue of Jerusalem*¹⁰ goes to the text's historical context. My response to her insightful analysis of Isaiah 18 will be true to that observation: I'll deal here only with the historical.

One of Lavik's particularly striking observations is that 18:2 alludes to not one but "two groups of messengers"; one would quite obviously consist of Kushite diplomats coming to Jerusalem; the other, which I had not understood in my treatment in *Rescue of Jerusalem*, would be made up of Judahites visiting Egypt. Lavik's interpretation of this back-and-forth diplomacy would reflect a certain political logic: the Judahite delegation would fit into those larger diplomatic relations to which Isaiah 30 refers when it tells of envoys who "go down to Egypt" to "make an alliance" for the purpose of obtaining "shelter [for Judah] in the shadow of the Pharaoh."¹¹ (To be sure, Judah's diplomatic offensive could have consisted of more than one mission to Egypt, so the group to which Isaiah 18 refers may not necessarily be the same as that which figures in Isaiah 30 and 31.)

Lavik says she agrees with me that the Kushites' visit to Jerusalem may indicate talks that relate to a "common defense strategy"¹² of Judahites and Kushites." In holding this view, we are a minority: those who see the Twenty-fifth Dynasty as involved in the Levant in 701 BCE for defensive rather than offensive reasons are vastly outnumbered in the twenty-first century by scholars who say the Double Kingdom's envoys instigated Hezekiah to rebel against his Assyrian overlord. Some of

¹⁰ H.T. Aubin, *The Rescue of Jerusalem: The Alliance between Hebrews and Kushites in 701 BC* (New York: Soho; Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 2002).

¹¹ Isa 30:1–2. See also Isa 31:1.

Arguing for a different historical context is J.K. Hoffmeier, "Egypt's Role in the Events of 701 BC in Jerusalem," in A.G. Vaughn and A.E. Killebrew (eds.), *Jerusalem in Bible and Archaeology: The First Temple Period* (Atlanta: SBL, 2003). He proposes that the context of Isa 30:1–5 and 31:1–3 is the crisis of the 720s (as described in 2 Kgs 17:4) when Samaria's King Hoshea, having rebelled against the northern kingdom's Assyrian overlord, sent emissaries to Egypt to seek (in vain) Egyptian military assistance (233–34). However, Isaiah makes no mention of Samaria here. Hezekiah is presented in 2 Kgs 18:21, 24 as expecting military help from Egypt; it would be curious if he expected such help without having sought it.

¹² Lavik's reference is to this observation in *Rescue*: "[At] a time when Sennacherib was about to thunder down on [the Levant], the envoys' mission may have been to decide with Hezekiah on a common defense strategy" (229).

these scholars see Isaiah 18 itself as reflecting such a troublemaking scenario;¹³ others also see the Double Kingdom as fomenting rebellion but do not make specific reference to Isaiah 18.¹⁴

If the view that the Double Kingdom had encouraged the Levantine rebellion were correct, that incitement would be leading to Assyria's invasion place the Kushite Twenty-fifth Dynasty in the role of effectively bringing about the ruination of much of Judah rather than, as I argue in *Rescue of Jerusalem*, of helping in the kingdom's survival. Skeptics may question Lavik's and my preference for the defender role for Kush in Isaiah 18 over the provocateur scenario. The following section will consider such skepticism in the context of Isaiah 18.

1. THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF ISAIAH 18

Lavik presents no direct argumentation for the view that the Double Kingdom aimed to defend Judah (as distinct from promoting rebellion); however, she does make a case for it indirectly.

If the Double Kingdom had in fact induced Judah to revolt, it would be normal for biblical texts (many of which date from the decades following Sennacherib's invasion) to show some degree of ill feeling toward Kushites; the foreigners' interference in Judah's affairs would have had the unwitting result of causing mass destruction, many deaths and deportations, and the loss of much of the kingdom's territory. Yet Lavik's survey of the more

¹³ Twenty-first century scholars who see the Twenty-fifth Dynasty's envoys in Isaiah 18 as encouraging Hezekiah to rebel against Sennacherib include: C. Balogh, *The Stele of YHWH in Egypt: The Prophecies of Isaiah 18–20 Concerning Egypt and Kush* (London: Brill, 2011), 197; G.M. Grogan, "Isaiah," in T. Longman III and D.E. Garland (eds.), *Proverbs – Isaiah: The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 585; and J.N. Oswalt, *Isaiah: The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 235. Those who ascribe the same motive to Isaiah 18's envoys but who date the action to Ashdod's revolt c. 712 include L.L. Grabbe, *Ancient Israel: What Do We Know and How Do We Know It?* (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 185; and J.J.M. Roberts in P. Machinist (ed.), *First Isaiah: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015), 248. For argumentation against the Ashdodite context and for an anti-Sennacherib context, see P.M. Cook, *A Sign and a Wonder: The Redactional Formation of Isaiah 18–20* (VTSup, 147; Leiden: Brill, 2011), 54–57.

¹⁴ Twenty-first century writers who see the Twenty-fifth Dynasty as promoting rebellion among Levantine rulers but without referring to Isa 18 include: J.M. Miller and J.H. Hayes, *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah*, 2nd ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006), 415; N. Na'aman, " 'Let Other Kingdoms Struggle with the Great Powers—You, Judah, Pay the Tribute and Hope for the Best': The Foreign Policy of the Kings of Judah in the Ninth-Eighth Centuries BCE," in R. Cohen and R. Westbrook (eds.), *Isaiah's Vision of Peace in Biblical and Modern International Relations: Swords into Plowshares* (New York: Macmillan, 2008), 68; and T. Wilkinson, *The Rise and Fall of Ancient Egypt* (New York: Random House, 2010), 407.

For twentieth century supporters of these views and discussion, see *Rescue*, 46, 226–34, 309 n. 62.

than fifty Kush-related references in the Hebrew Bible confirms that none reflects negativism. Rather, she concludes that the Kush motif “in the Hebrew Bible [is] associated with the following: richness, military reputation, abundance, remoteness and relation to Zion in eschatological times.” (This conclusion is consistent with *Rescue of Jerusalem’s* Argument Five, which holds that Isa 18:7 and the Hebrew Bible as a whole “accords Kush great honor. No other nation receives such special treatment, and no explanation presents itself other than the Kushite Dynasty’s help to Judah against Assyria.”¹⁵)

Isaiah 30 may further weaken the idea that the Twenty-fifth Dynasty was an interloper in the Levant. The text suggests the Double Kingdom was reluctant to get involved so deeply in the region; as mentioned above, Isa 30:1 says that the Judahite envoys desperately seek to “make an alliance”: no pre-existing alliance, then, had existed between Hezekiah and the Pharaoh. The Pharaoh’s indecision or wariness is apparent in the Judahites’ felt need to ingratiate themselves by bringing treasure: “[the Judahites] carry their riches on the backs of donkeys, and their treasures on the humps of camels” (v. 6). Lavik’s interpretation of Isa 18:5’s imagery of “quivering tendrils,” is consistent with this view that Judah is reaching out to the Double Kingdom and not the reverse: “[T]he quivering tendrils are the diplomatic attempts of the fragile Judahites to attach themselves to the firm Kushites.”

The situation in the Philistine city-state of Ekron, Judah’s geographical neighbor and its partner in the regional rebellion, is instructive. In an action that parallels Judah’s, Ekron sought the Twenty-fifth Dynasty’s help. According to Daniel David Luckenbill’s translation of the Oriental Institute Prism’s version of Sennacherib’s account, “The officials, the patricians and the (common) people of Ekron [. . .] had become afraid and had called (for help) upon the kings of Egypt (and) the bowmen, the chariot (-corps) and the cavalry of the king of Ethiopia [Kush], an army beyond counting—and they (actually) had come to their assistance.”¹⁶ Indeed, Ekron and Judah had an especially close rapport within the rebel coalition: Ekron’s rebellious new leaders had sent their deposed king, the pro-Assyrian Padi, to Jerusalem for confinement. (It is thus conceivable that Ekron and Judah would have appealed to the Double Kingdom in tandem.) Here, then, is a second instance of a Levantine kingdom supplicating Egypt for aid during the crisis.

A more recent translation of the Rassam Cylinder by A. Kirk Grayson and Jamie Novotny contains a detail missing from the other renderings: After “the governors, the nobles and the people of Ekron” had rebelled and turned Padi over to Judah,

¹⁵ Aubin, *Rescue*, 187; for exposition, see § 13.

¹⁶ D.D. Luckenbill, “Sennacherib (704–681): The Siege of Jerusalem,” *ANET*, 287. The translation of the Rassam Cylinder by W.R. Gallagher, *Sennacherib’s Campaign to Judah: New Studies* (SHCANE; Leiden: Brill, 1999), also explicitly links the Twenty-fifth Dynasty forces’ arrival to the Ekronites’ appeal (116). For other comments on the appeal, see Aubin, *Rescue*, 231.

“they became frightened on account of the villainous acts they had committed.” It is only then that they “formed a confederation” with the kings of Egypt and the forces of the king of Kush.¹⁷ Note the sequence of events: 1) once the Ekronites apprehend Assyria’s retaliatory intentions, they take fright; 2) they then form an alliance, or “confederation,” with the Double Kingdom. This reinforces the idea that the Double Kingdom became an ally or supporter of this Levantine kingdom only after the crisis was underway.

Significantly, the Assyrian annals contain no hint that the Double Kingdom entered the conflict as a co-conspirator in the original rebellion. Nor do any of the biblical accounts. Lavik’s analysis of Isaiah 18 discerns no blaming of Kushite-ruled Egypt for Judah’s peril. Indeed, if the Twenty-fifth Dynasty had some moral responsibility for getting Judah into the kingdom’s existential crisis, one would think that the envoys of Isaiah 30 and 31 would play that card—that is, invoke the dynasty’s sense of guilt—when seeking the dynasty’s assistance; instead, they use gifts for leverage.

Note, too, that the two decades leading up to 701 present good evidence that the Twenty-fifth Dynasty had a policy of appeasing Assyria,¹⁸ not making trouble. Such a policy would have been adopted following a confrontation with Assyria c. 720, when the Twenty-fifth Dynasty engaged an Assyrian army that had advanced to the Egyptian border city of Raphia, on the eastern side of the Sinai desert. Assyria’s king, Sargon II, claims to have defeated the Kushite-Egyptian contingent and made it flee;¹⁹ however, he did not cross the border into Egypt then or later, so this resistance against Assyrian expansionism appears to have worked.

Also reflecting an appeasement policy is an incident c. 716 when Sargon came near Raphia: a Delta king under the aegis of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty responded to Sargon’s intimidating presence with a gift of high-quality horses. We also find appeasement in the Twenty-fifth Dynasty’s withholding of support for the rebellion by the Philistine city-state of Ashdod against its Assyrian overlord in 712. Finally, appeasement is evident in the Twenty-fifth Dynasty’s reaction after the leader of Ashdod’s failed revolt, Iamani, sought refuge in the Double Kingdom: the Pharaoh consented to Assyria’s request for extradition.²⁰

¹⁷ A.K. Grayson and J. Novotny, *The Royal Inscriptions of Sennacherib, King of Assyria (704–681 BC), Part 1* (The Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period, 3/1; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2012), 64.

¹⁸ Aubin, *Rescue*, 67–75.

¹⁹ Cogan, *The Raging Torrent*, 90, 93.

²⁰ See also a balanced assessment of the evidence in J. Pope, “Beyond the Broken Reed: Kushite Intervention and the Limits of *l’Histoire Événementielle*,” in I. Kalimi and S. Richardson (eds.), *Sennacherib at the Gates of Jerusalem: Story, History and Historiography* (CHANE; Leiden: Brill, 2014): “The Kushite stewardship of Egypt also appears to have driven [the Kushites] evolving response to Assyrian aggression: Levantine fugitives could not be harbored, lest they endanger domestic security, and

The Levantine vassal states' self-interest in revolt is obvious: they hoped to free themselves of tribute, taxes and other obligations to Assyria. The Double Kingdom's self-interest in this rebellion, however, is not clear at all. The policy of placation had been serving the Double Kingdom relatively well: it had brought peace, albeit an uneasy peace, as well as access to valued Levantine markets.²¹ Political instability in the Levant, on the other hand, carried the risk of Assyrian retaliation to the region, and imperial forces on such a mission would be so near Egypt as to represent potential danger. The Twenty-fifth Dynasty would have had no interest in provoking the Near East's only superpower.

Still, history is full of cases in which societies act unwittingly in ways contrary to their self-interest. Would this have been such a case? Is N. Na'aman right in saying the "main power behind the rebellion" was the Twenty-fifth Dynasty, which "conducted a new, more aggressive policy toward Assyria" in the Levant?²² Na'aman and other advocates do not support this view with argumentation. Indeed, as Isaiah 30 and 31 indicate, the evidence points the other way. With their heavy burden of obligations to Assyria, the vassal states were quite capable of planning to free themselves without the Double Kingdom's prodding.

2. CONJECTURE: WHAT SORT OF STRATEGIZING MIGHT THE OFFICIALS OF ISA 18 HAVE DONE?

Lavik writes that the Hebrew Bible's positive depiction of Kushites "adds credibility to Aubin's assertion that the Kushites may have played a relevant role in the political affairs of the ancient Hebrews leading up to the crisis in 701." We both see defense strategy as the plausible subject of the talks in Isaiah 18. Using Isaiah 18 and other biblical texts, an attempt to tease out some of the possible *elements* of that strategy follows.

1. *Region-wide coordination.* Isa 18:2 may offer an important insight when it says the Kushite envoys arrived "by sea and in vessels of paper-reed." What is significant for our purposes is not that they came on boats with papyrus hulls—common on the Nile and serviceable on the Mediterranean—but rather that they came by sea. This was not the usual travel route from Egypt

military action by the Twenty-fifth Dynasty in Western Asia was confined to the defense of the southern Levantine buffer zone, rarely if ever reaching beyond" (159).

²¹ L. Singer-Avitz, "A Group of Phoenician Vessels from Tel Beer-sheba," *TA* 37 (2010), 188–99, sees liberalized trade between the Levant, Philistia, Judah and Egypt under a policy initiative by Sargon II in 716 BCE (196).

²² Na'aman, "Let Other Kingdoms Struggle," 68. Na'aman is not alone among twenty-first century scholars with such a view. Thus Hoffmeier, "Egypt's Role," says the Kushite Pharaoh "wanted to return Egypt to its former glory, controlling the Levant" (232). D. Kahn, "Taharqa, King of Kush and the Assyrians," *JSSSEA* 31 (2004), 109–28, says that after Sargon's death the Twenty-fifth Dynasty "took advantage of the situation and attempted to gain power in the Levant" (109).

to landlocked Judah: the norm for caravaners and other travelers was to pass through the Sinai.²³ A sea voyage, however, makes sense if Jerusalem was not the Kushites' only destination. We know from Sennacherib's annals that the Philistine city-states of Ashkelon and Ekron were also members of the rebel coalition: sea travel would have permitted the Kushite envoys to land at Ashkelon, Philistia's major port and a long-time trading partner of Egypt, and discuss strategy with its ruler, Sidqa. According to this hypothetical scenario, the envoys could have then moved on and met other Philistine rebels, including the leaders of Ekron, on the coastal plain, before heading to Jerusalem (some fifty kilometers from the sea as the crow flies.) When we posit a defense strategy, then, we must not see Judah's strategy in isolation from other rebel states of the southern Levant; rather, we must think in terms of inter-state coordination.

2. *The time element.* Logistics are of high importance in any war, and in this conflict their role is particularly striking. If the Twenty-fifth Dynasty was to intervene in the southern Levant before Sennacherib's invasion was a *fait accompli*, it had to bring many of its troops from a great distance at great speed. Isa 18:2 implies such urgency in bidding farewell to the Judahite emissaries heading for the Double Kingdom: "Go, swift messengers [. . .]"

Frank Yurco is one of several scholars who make the reasonable assumption that the Twenty-fifth Dynasty deployed two different contingents in the conflict, and he offers useful (if unsettled) estimates on the amount of time it might have taken each to reach the war zone.

Contingent One would have been the fast-moving strike-force that battled Sennacherib on the plain of Eltekeh before he could attack either Ekron or Judah. Based in Lower Egypt, it was composed of chariotry and cavalry, according to Sennacherib's annals. Yurco calculates that this fast, horse-borne unit could have made the trip from the Memphis area to Eltekeh in three weeks.²⁴ However, if the unit had been posted nearer to Egypt's frontier—perhaps in the region of Tanis—the duration would have been significantly less.

Contingent Two, arriving later in the theater of war, corresponds to the force that 2 Kgs 19:9 describes as under the command of Tirhakah (Taharqo). It would have been composed mainly of foot soldiers based in several different parts of the Double Kingdom, some perhaps as far away as Kush. If the soldiers included reservists and/or untrained mostly agricultural workers mobilized for the emergency, these may have been scattered over the Double Kingdom, an area spanning more than

²³ Prior to the rebellion, Assyria controlled these overland routes. Early in the rebellion, however, Hezekiah had seized Assyrian-controlled sites along the routes, including Gaza (2 Kgs 18:8). At the time of Isaiah 18, then, there would have been no restrictions on free passage. Regarding routes, see discussion in my response to the essay by K. Lawson Younger, Jr., in this collection.

²⁴ F.J. Yurco, "Sennacherib's Third Campaign and the Coregency of Shabaka and Shebitku," *Serapis* 6 (1980), 226–27.

3,000 kilometers. Yurco calculates the trip from the Kushite capital of Napata (if some troops indeed came from there) to Thebes would have taken six weeks, and from there to Memphis another four.²⁵ Add to that another five or six weeks for the trek on foot to the southern Levant, and we get a total travel-time of about four months, or perhaps three at best. To that total we must tag on the time it would have taken for word of Sennacherib's campaign to reach the Double Kingdom (perhaps via Levantine sources) and thus trigger the mobilization in the first place.

Yurco calculates that meanwhile the Assyrians would have needed as few as sixteen days to march from Assyria to its first targets, the Phoenician city-states on the northern Levant's coast.²⁶ Yurco's estimates are subject to challenge, but any new assessment would surely confirm that the aim of confronting Sennacherib before he controlled the entire Levant posed a severe logistical challenge.

Adding to the challenge is that Sennacherib, according to his annals, faced no battlefield resistance in Phoenicia: rulers of its various cities had surrendered, hoping to avoid destruction. (The only exception appears to have been defiant Tyre; the fortified island city appears to have avoided capture by virtue of being located 600 meters from the mainland.²⁷ This, however, would have done little to delay the campaign's progress.) As Yurco suggests, Sennacherib may have been "well ahead of schedule" when his army reached the southern Levant.²⁸

3. *The strategy's possible content.* If I might use one word to (over)simplify the hypothetical strategy, that word would be *delay*. The key to confronting Sennacherib before it was too late may have been holding up his progress to allow time for the large but slow-moving Contingent Two to arrive.

The Kushites may have informed Hezekiah about the lateness of the second contingent and urged him not to surrender Jerusalem or any other of his cities, towns and strongholds but, rather, to prepare for sieges by strengthening fortifications and stockpiling food. This would force Sennacherib to consume time by mounting assaults on walled sites and devoting additional time to dealing with post-conquest matters (attending to casualties, plundering, punishing some survivors and deporting others). Regardless of whether this strategy came from the Kushite envoys or had some other origin, we can be confident that such a strategy applied to Judah as a whole: Sennacherib's annals declares, "I besieged 46 of [Hezekiah's] fortified walled cities and

²⁵ Ibid., 227, 228 n. 56. Yurco bases the estimate on travel times cited by classical sources in later centuries.

²⁶ Ibid., 226.

²⁷ H.J. Katzenstein, *A History of Tyre: From the Beginning of the Second Millennium BCE until the Fall of the Neo-Babylonian Empire in 538 BCE* (Jerusalem: Schocken Institute for Jewish Research, 1973), observes that, in his annals, Sennacherib "hides his failure to conquer Tyre by not mentioning the city" (248–49). Also finding that Tyre avoided capture is Gallagher, *Sennacherib's Campaign*, 104.

²⁸ Yurco, "Sennacherib's Third Campaign," 224.

surrounding smaller towns, which were without number. Using packed-down ramps and applying battering rams, infantry attacks by mines, breeches and siege machines, I conquered (them).²⁹ Yurco estimates that operations on a single well-defended city might take a minimum of four weeks, as in the case of Lachish²⁹ and Azekah, and given the high number of fortified sites he suggests the total operations against Judah may have taken up to twelve weeks.³⁰ Indeed, the annals say Philistine cities, too, held out and required assaults; such was the case with Ekron, (the town of) Eltekeh and a number of towns belonging to Ashkelon including Beth-Dagon, Joppa, Bene-barak and Azor.

A no-capitulation policy may well have been controversial among many ordinary Judahites and Philistines: given the high likelihood of Assyria's successful assaults, obedience to the policy would have meant forfeiture of the sort of mercy that Phoenician cities received. For intimidation purposes, Assyria publicized its treatment of non-surrendering rebel locales: it could mean execution of leaders (often by flaying, as Sennacherib's bas relief of the Lachish siege would depict), killing of many others and deportation of ordinary folk.³¹

Hezekiah did not, however, abandon these towns and cities to their own devices. Archeologists have found the remains of thousands of clay storage jars scattered around Judah (particularly at Lachish), often in the stratum that corresponds to Sennacherib's destructive campaign; they are thought to have contained such foodstuffs as olive oil and wine. The jars often bear inscriptions reading *lmk*, meaning "to/for the king." This marking system may have begun some years prior to the rebellion c. 704 when Judah was still an Assyrian vassal,³² but Judah may have stepped up the pre-existing storage system in anticipation

²⁹ In the case of heavily-fortified Lachish, Judah's second largest city, one can see why: to storm the city, the Assyrians built a ramp to surmount a steep slope topped by a high wall. P.J. King, "Why Lachish Matters: A Major Site Gets the Publication It Deserves," *BAR* 31:4 (2005), describes it: "The siege ramp was constructed of tons of bonded cobbles and boulders, topped with a platform to accommodate the wooden siege engines, with frames covered with leather. The siege engines were rigged with battering rams that were mounted on wooden wheels. The reliefs [of the siege] at Nineveh depict five siege engines deployed on the siege ramp at Lachish." The time taken to find and transport the tons of boulders must itself have been considerable.

³⁰ Yurco, "Sennacherib's Third Campaign," 228.

³¹ In her study of Assyrian punishment of recalcitrant populations, K. Radner, "High Visibility Punishment and Deterrent: Impalement in Assyrian Warfare and Legal Practice," *ZAR* 21 (2015), notes that Sennacherib's annal describing his campaign against Babylon in 704–702 BCE states, "I put to the sword the population of the city Hirimmu, a dangerous enemy, and did not spare a single one. I hung their corpses on poles and placed (them) around the city" (117).

³² N. Na'aman, "The *lmk* Seal Impressions Reconsidered," *TA* 43 (2016), 111–25, proposes that Hezekiah introduced the *lmk* and winged-emblem markings shortly after his coronation c. 714 BCE (118, 122).

of sieges in 701.³³ Intriguingly, the many jars also bear seal impressions of either a winged sun disk or a winged scarab, Egyptian symbols; these suggest a Twenty-fifth Dynasty influence in Judah in the late eighth century. What is relevant to Isaiah 18 is that the discussions to which it refers could well have included plans to help provision soon-to-be-besieged localities.

The Double Kingdom itself would also have an important role in carrying out this strategy of causing delay. In dispatching Contingent One to engage Sennacherib before he could conquer Ekron, the Twenty-fifth Dynasty may have hoped for victory in battle (which would occur at Eltekeh), but victory may not have been its realistic expectation. Even a loss or standoff would have had redeeming value: it would have slowed Sennacherib's progress.

CONCLUSION

Lavik convincingly goes against conventional opinion in concluding this about Isaiah 18: "A literary reading shows that the way some scholars have played down the role of the Kushites in this text does not accord with the positive treatment they are given here and throughout the Hebrew Bible." Were there any merit to the view that the Kushite Twenty-fifth Dynasty helped instigate the Levant's rebellion against Assyria, thereby provoking disastrous Assyrian reprisals against Judah and its Philistine neighbors, it is hard to imagine that the Bible would spare such a meddler from critical treatment and that it would, as Lavik finds, instead associate Kushites with "[r]ichness, military reputation [. . .] and relation to Zion in eschatological times."

Lavik remarks, "If one reads Isaiah 18 historically, one can argue that it describes an attempt at negotiating an alliance between Judah and Kush." Earlier, she writes that the diplomatic activity in Isaiah 18 may suggest a "common defense strategy" of Judahites and Kushites. These interpretations provide the most plausible background for talks at which officials representing Judah and the Double Kingdom would have worked out a plan to resist Assyrian conquest of the southern Levant. Isaiah 18 maintains a Judah-centric perspective; it makes no mention of Judah's allies among the Philistines, but the strategy may well have included the city-states of Ashkelon and Ekron. The strategy's goal would have been to bind the cities, towns and strongholds of the southern Levant's rebel states into a common policy of never surrendering—thereby stalling the Assyrians' advance and giving time for the Double Kingdom's forces to arrive.

The foregoing is just an educated guess. We may never be certain of the content of the defense strategy that Isaiah 18's

³³ For discussion of settled and unsettled issues involving the jars, see Na'aman, *ibid.*; and O. Lipschits, "Archaeological Facts, Historical Speculations and the Date of the LMLK Storage Jars: A Rejoinder to David Ussishkin," *JHS* 12 (2012), 115. For an overview of the jars, see J.T. Walton, *The Regional Economy of the Southern Levant in the 8th-7th Centuries BCE* (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2015), 118-24.

Kushite and Judahite officials would have devised, but we can be confident of this: for Jerusalem, it worked.

RESPONSE TO SONG-MI SUZIE PARK: SOME THEOLOGICAL ISSUES IN 2 KINGS 18–19

1. AGREEMENT ON THE STURDY REED

Suzie Park's 2015 book on the biblical Hezekiah, based on her Harvard dissertation, includes a richly detailed textual analysis of the Rab-shakeh's speech.³⁴ Her deep familiarity with the speech combined with the fact that her book does not deal with the passage's parallel structure regarding Egypt and YHWH makes her ideally qualified to make both a knowledgeable and open-minded assessment of my argumentation regarding the speech. I am delighted that her approach as a specialist in biblical texts upholds my take as a novice and that we agree, as she puts it, that the Rab-shakeh's "ironic accusations" about Egypt and YHWH "suggest that the survival of Jerusalem in 701 might have been due, in part, to the efforts of both."

Because Park's essay does not reproduce the passage in question, it may be useful to have it before us for easy reference. In 2 Kgs 18:20–22, 25, the Rab-shakeh says to the Jerusalemites:

On whom are you depending, that you rebel against me? Look, now, *you are depending on Egypt*, that splintered reed of a staff, which pierces a man's hand and wounds him if he leans upon it! Such is Pharaoh King of Egypt to all who depend upon him. And if you say to me, "*We are depending on the Lord our God*"—isn't he the one whose high places and altars Hezekiah has removed, saying to Judah and Jerusalem: 'You must worship before this altar in Jerusalem?' [. . .] The Lord himself told me to march against this country and destroy it.³⁵

Numerous scholars see the passage as a straightforward indictment of the reliability of "Egypt"—i.e., Egypt's Twenty-fifth Dynasty—during the crisis of 701 BCE.³⁶ Disagreeing, I argue in

³⁴ S.-M.S. Park, *Hezekiah and the Dialogue of Memory* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2015), 31–78, esp. 31–47.

³⁵ Emphases added. NIV.

³⁶ Examples of twenty-first century scholarship that take the Rab-shakeh's ridicule of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty at face value: P. Dubovský, *Hezekiah and the Assyrian Spies: Reconstruction of the Neo-Assyrian Intelligence Services and Its Significance for 2 Kings 18–19* (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2006), 23–24; V.H. Matthews, *A Brief History of Ancient Israel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 84; and N. Na'aman, "'Let Other Kingdoms Struggle with the Great Powers'", 598.

Earlier examples: W.Y. Adams, *Nubia: Corridor to Africa* (London: Allen Lane, 1977), 246; J.H. Breasted, *A History of Egypt from the Earliest Times to the Persian Conquest* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1906), 553; N. Grimal, *A History of Ancient Egypt*, trans. from the French by I. Shaw (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 346; T.G.H. James, "Egypt: The Twenty-fifth and Twenty-sixth Dynasties," in J. Boardman et al. (eds.), *The Cambridge Ancient History*, 2nd ed., vol. 3, part 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 694; and K.A. Kitchen, "Egypt," in J.J. Bimson (ed.), *Baker Encyclopaedia of Bible Places* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books,

*The Rescue of Jerusalem*³⁷ that the Assyrian emissary's speech creates a parallel between Egypt and YHWH: through the use of common sentence structure, vocabulary ("are depending"/"are depending"),³⁸ and uniform tone of mockery, Sennacherib's propagandizing emissary presents both the human army and the deity as unworthy of Hezekiah's trust in their ability to defend Jerusalem. In the B1 text's climactic end (19:36), Sennacherib's failure to seize Jerusalem endows the Rab-shakeh's speech with an ironic lesson: contrary to his prediction, Hezekiah was right to depend on the deity just as he was right to depend on that other half of the pairing, the army. Thus did YHWH and Egypt alike demonstrate symmetrical trustworthiness. This analysis forms Argument Six of my thesis that the Double Kingdom's army was influential in preventing Assyria's capture of Jerusalem.

Park exercises initial caution about this argument: "It is difficult to discern whether a statement about Egypt's unreliability is ironic by affirming that the country acted contrary to that accusation." I agree on this difficulty: it was only after the first five arguments in support of the influences of the Kushite Twenty-fifth Dynasty had been worked out that I could see this one. Park must have encountered even more difficulty because, as she notes, she has deliberately analyzed the Rab-shakeh's speech "in isolation" from my "additional arguments, which examine other sources and evidence outside of the biblical text." This approach allows her to judge the argumentation entirely on its own merits—without outside influence from the other arguments—and adds weight to her conclusion regarding Egypt's helpful role.

None of the six arguments is convincing in isolation. It is when they are taken together, with each re-enforcing the others, that they provide strong, coherent evidence for the thesis.

2. DEBATE ON HOW B2 RELATES TO OTHER BIBLICAL TEXTS

The theology-steeped B2 segment, probably written at least a century after 701, offers no help in my attempt to fathom the historical outcome of the 701 conflict, yet I devote one of my book's longer chapters to it.³⁹ My interest in B2 is largely limited to exploring the motive of its writer(s) in obscuring the Twenty-fifth Dynasty's role in 701 and to determining whether or not that motive might reflect ill feelings of some sort against that dynasty; I am satisfied that it does not do so.⁴⁰ This attitude is in sharp contrast to the hostility that many Judahites would later feel toward the Kushites' successors, the Saites of the Twenty-sixth Dynasty, Judah's overlord in the late seventh century BCE;

1995), 116–17.

³⁷ Aubin, *Rescue*, 180–87.

³⁸ Editor's note: the Hebrew verb **אָמַן** meaning "trust" or "rely on" is used three times as a Qal perfect and once as a Qal participle so the parallelism is quite strong in Hebrew.

³⁹ Ibid.: "Chapter 16: The Ancient Revisionists' Motive," 209–24.

⁴⁰ Indeed, as Marta Høyland Lavik's essay in this collection confirms, the Hebrew Bible's numerous references to Kushites are remarkably positive.

these negative feelings are manifest in treatments of Egypt in biblical texts of the late seventh and sixth centuries, including Exodus and Deuteronomy.

Park and I concur that the B2 writers would have seen the B1 version's awarding of joint credit to the Double Kingdom and YHWH as "theologically problematic as it would have taken away from the portrayal of YHWH as the sole savior of Zion," as Park puts it. We disagree, however, on two points: (1) the relevance of the covenantal promise of Deuteronomy, and (2) the nature of the "signs and wonders" in the Exodus narrative to which B2 may allude.

1. Regarding Deuteronomy's covenantal promise, Park says, "I posit that the ending in Source B2 in which the angel of the Lord strikes down the Assyrian army (2 Kgs 19:35) draws attention to Egypt and its possible role in 701, not to covenantal promises, *per se*." I, on the other hand, see the covenantal promises of Deuteronomy 7 as a point of reference for the B2 account. In Deuteronomy 7, Moses declares to his followers as they are about to enter the promised land that YHWH "maintains covenant loyalty with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations" (v. 9). The B2 account contains echoes of this in YHWH's intervention in the face of Assyria's threat to the promised land:⁴¹

- Just as the Lord says that he will protect his faithful as he had in the past when overcoming "Pharaoh and all of Egypt" during his people's escape from bondage (Deut 7:18–19), so the Lord's angel in B2 overcomes Sennacherib and his army (2 Kgs 19:35).
- Just as Moses says the Lord "does not delay but repays in their own person those who reject him" (Deut 7:10), so Sennacherib, who earlier had mocked YHWH (2 Kgs 19:10), is killed at home in Assyria while worshipping pagan gods (2 Kgs 19:37).⁴²

Park's dismissal of these resemblances lacks argumentation. What makes it hard to see the two above-mentioned similarities as merely coincidental is that they fit into a larger pattern of similarities between Deuteronomy 7's covenantal conditions and the overall portrayal of Hezekiah's career in 2 Kings *outside* of the confines of the B2 account (19:9b–35). Thus:

- Just as Moses says the chosen people must, as they enter the promised land, obey divine will by destroying structures and items of pagan worship (Deut 7:5), so Hezekiah does away with the high places, the pillars, and Nehushtan (2 Kgs 18:4).

⁴¹ Aubin, *Rescue*, 215.

⁴² The time element is shrunk to make the king's death appear to have occurred with little delay after his return home (when in fact his assassination occurred twenty years later).

- Just as Moses says that YHWH “maintains covenant loyalty with those who love him and keep his commandments” (Deut 7:9), so Hezekiah “held fast to the Lord [. . .] [and] kept the commandments that the Lord commanded Moses” (2 Kgs 18:6). Note the explicit reference to Moses.
- Just as the Lord will “turn away [. . .] every illness” from his obedient people (Deut 7:15), so does he promptly heal the disease-stricken Hezekiah after the king calls attention in a prayer to his “faithfulness” (2 Kgs 20:1–7).

The covenantal promises in Deuteronomy 7, then, appear to use Hezekiah’s life as exemplifying the veracity of Moses’s teaching.⁴³ The survival of YHWH-loving Hezekiah and the defeat and eventual death of the YHWH-scoring Sennacherib, as recounted, offer hard evidence that YHWH keeps the covenantal promise: those who love the deity and obey his commandments will be saved from “all the peoples of whom you are afraid” (Deut 7:9,18–19).⁴⁴

2. As for B2’s allusions to Exodus’s “signs and wonders,” Park and I agree that the B2 refers implicitly to Deut 7:18–19, in which Moses instructs his followers not to fear hostile nations but to keep in mind the exodus from Egypt:

[R]emember what the Lord your God did to the Pharaoh and to all Egypt, the great trials that your eyes saw, the signs and wonders, the mighty hand and the outstretched arm by which the Lord your God brought you out. The Lord your God will do the same to all peoples of whom you are afraid.

The signs and wonders that Moses evokes are, of course, those disasters that YHWH inflicts on Egypt in Exodus. Park and I differ on *which* of these disasters corresponds most closely to the disaster befalling the Assyrians in B2.

Park sees B2’s outcome, the death of the 185,000 Assyrians soldiers, as alluding to the last of the ten calamities (or so-called plagues)—i.e., the mass death of firstborn humans and livestock. She gives these reasons: (1) the victims in each narrative are described as being “struck down” (Exod 12:29, 2 Kgs 19:35), (2) both of these mass deaths occur at night, and (3) “the lack of respect exhibited by foreign leaders induces and therefore justifies God’s bloodbath.” I make the case in *Rescue of Jerusalem* that while the signs and wonders would include the ten calamities, the tenth does not receive such special attention. Rather, I argue that the most “pertinent” reference of 2 Kgs 19:35, 37 would be to an event occurring well after the deaths of the firstborn: the

⁴³ Note that these similarities also fall outside of the B1 account (2 Kgs 18:17–19:36). Deuteronomy’s echoes thus occur outside the confines of what is generally considered the deliverance narrative and stretch out over other accounts of Hezekiah’s reign.

⁴⁴ Aubin, *Rescue*, 217–19.

drownings of the Pharaoh and his men while pursuing the Hebrews.⁴⁵ It is the climactic and most spectacular of all the disasters befalling Egyptians.

To be sure, subjectivity is involved in judging which of these two events corresponds most closely to Moses's signs and wonders, but objective evidence is also in play. The following similarities between the portrayals of the mass deaths of the Assyrians in 2 Kgs 19 and of the Egyptians of Exod 14 are more striking than those between the Assyrian deaths and the deaths of the firstborn:

- In each of the two cases, the victims are enemies of the chosen people intent on doing them great harm. The victims of the tenth calamity (as well as the nine others) are primarily⁴⁶ innocent people or animals.
- In each case, the victims are also specifically soldiers. The human victims of all ten calamities are primarily civilians.
- In each case, a villainous, YHWH-scoring monarch suffers mortal punishment. One villain, the nameless Pharaoh, drowns as he pursues the Hebrews while the other, the Assyrian king, dies violently as he worships a pagan god. The tenth calamity imposes suffering on no villain; the victims are innocent humans and animals.
- In each case, divine intercession saves the Hebrews from a dire threat: capture by enemies. The ten calamities, by contrast, are not a divine response to any such threat; they are, rather, part of a bargaining process aimed at obtaining freedom from bondage.
- In each case, the angel of the Lord plays a hand in imposing the punishment. The angel leads the Hebrews toward the sea and keeps the Pharaoh's forces from catching up (Exod 14:19–20); in B2, the angel actually kills the Assyrian soldiers. In none of the ten calamities, does the angel of the Lord or any other angel play any visible role (although Park infers an angelic presence in Exod 12:23).
- In each case, the disaster ends with remarkably similar imagery: Exod 14:30 tells of bodies of the “dead on the seashore” while 2 Kgs 19:35 reports that “when morning dawned, they were all dead bodies.”

In sum, Moses's promise in Deut 7:19 that YHWH will save the chosen people from “all peoples of whom you are afraid” evokes as persuasive precedents the numerous “signs and wonders” that have helped the Hebrews achieve freedom from Egypt. Which

⁴⁵ Ibid., 217–18.

⁴⁶ I say “primarily” because it may be assumed that the calamities of boils and lethal hail, for example, included some soldiers; they would have represented a modest part of the affected populations.

of the signs and wonders *in particular* is most pertinent? Firstborn humans (including children), lambs, and cattle have nothing to do with B2's subject, the historical invasion of Judah that occurred several generations before the probable composition of both Deuteronomy and Exodus. A better precedent (retroactively created) for the mass deaths of the Assyrians threatening to destroy the Hebrew capital in B2 would be the mass deaths of the Egyptians threatening to fall upon the Hebrew fugitives. To be sure, the ten calamities are also pertinent in that they show the extent of YHWH's extraordinary power and love for his people—"signs and wonders" are, after all, plural words. But the ten calamities are not *as* pertinent as a cruel and mighty army's setback.

Here, to underscore Deuteronomy 7's greater pertinence, is another link between Moses's signs-and-wonders speech and the Hebrews' flight. Deut 7:19 gives a special role to YHWH's arm: "Just remember [. . .] the mighty hand and the outstretched arm by which the Lord your God brought you out." It is in the story of the Red Sea disaster that the limb also comes into play: YHWH empowers Moses to stretch out his arm to part the water in order to let the Hebrews pass and then to stretch it again to make the water return, submerging the pursuers. No arm is involved in the death of the firstborn.

3. DID THE B2 WRITERS SEEK TO NEGATE TAHARQO'S ROLE?

Park makes another point needing comment. She writes:

[T]he writers of B2 seem to hint at Egypt's role with the reference to the final calamity, the death of the firstborn, in the Exodus account precisely *because* they wanted to address the debate about Judah's reliance on Egypt. By alluding to Egypt at the end of Source B2, the writers engage this debate by negating any suggestions that Egypt is to be credited for Judah's rescue in 701.⁴⁷

I question the suggestion that the point of the B2 writer(s) in evoking a hostile Egypt at the time of the exodus was to nullify any credit going to Egypt of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty for rescuing Judah. If that had indeed been the intention, the referencing of Egypt in the description of Sennacherib's defeat is too subtle to achieve that end. The writers would have had a far more direct and effective way to conceal Egypt's constructive role in the 701 conflict: they could have simply deleted 2 Kgs 19:9a. The presence of Tirhakah/Taharqo and his army would thus have vanished from the biblical record.

In obscuring (not the same thing as negating or totally concealing⁴⁸) the Twenty-fifth Dynasty's role, the B2 writers by no

⁴⁷ p. 50 above [emphasis in original].

⁴⁸ A careful reading will suggest Taharqo's influence. That is how a number of scholars working before the last half of the nineteenth century were able to detect such influence prior to the advent of such clues-containing breakthroughs as Bernhard Stade's discernment of the

means engaged in a sinister cover-up. The revisionists had a theological reason for having their reliable, omnipotent deity's action overshadow the human role. (In addition, as Park notes, the humans in question, the Kushites, had by the time of the B2 writers been defeated by the Assyrians; having retreated permanently to their distant homeland, they would hardly have been seen as credible rescuers.) By glorifying YHWH and by showing through the Exodus and Kings stories that loyalty to him could bring deliverance, the writers sought to show that YHWH offered credible hope to their discouraged fellow exiles.⁴⁹

CONCLUSION

What differences of opinion I have with Park are of little importance in regard to understanding the history of the 701 crisis. What matters is her thoughtful opinion on the Rab-shakeh's speech, and we agree on its interpretation: although the speech when taken in isolation from other evidence does not conclusively indicate that the Twenty-fifth Dynasty's forces were influential in saving Jerusalem, it is consistent with such influence.

three distinct segments within the Bible's invasion narrative and the translation of Sennacherib's annals. For these scholars, see Aubin, *Rescue*, 235–48, Jeremy Pope's essay and table in this collection, and my response. *Rescue*'s conclusion: "[T]he B2 writers did *not* erase the credit that the B1 writers would have given to Kushite Egypt's forces. Their theologically motivated insertion of the angel may have impeded a reader's view of these forces, but it did not entirely block it" (248).

⁴⁹ Aubin, *Rescue*, 283.

**RESPONSE TO CHRISTOPHER HAYS: HAYS POSES A
TIMELY QUESTION ON SCHOLARSHIP**

**1. THE SURPRISING NATURE OF THE KUSHITES'
RELIGIOUS INFLUENCE ON JUDAH**

Christopher B. Hays's essay, as well as his earlier work,⁵⁰ adds substantially to our knowledge of relations between Judah and the Kushite-governed Double Kingdom of Egypt and Kush in the lead-up to the conflict of 701 BCE. His excitingly original research sheds light on cultural (particularly religious) rapport between Judahites and Kushites that would have intensified under the threat of Sennacherib's campaign to retaliate against Levantine rebels. The essay proposes that Judahites not only sought military protection against Assyria from the Double Kingdom, they also attempted to obtain protection by joining the Kushites in the worship of the protective deity Mut. Surprising as it is, Hays's decoding of the wordplay concerning Mut in Isa 28 seems plausible: the common worship of the goddess by Judahites and Kushites (albeit not to the exclusion of other deities) accords with the overall positive relationship between Judahites and Kushites during Hezekiah's rule.

In *The Rescue of Jerusalem*, I posit the existence of a Double Kingdom "sphere of influence," using the term in a loose sense: the Double Kingdom would not have had political control of Judah and other parts of the Levant that were also Assyrian vassal states, but it would have enjoyed commercial access before the 701 conflict; this would have continued for two decades afterward.⁵¹ Hays's core thesis—that certain of the Double Kingdom's religious ideas also gained popularity during the lead-up to the 701 invasion—substantially broadens our view of the varied nature of this sphere of influence.

**2. WOULD A COVENANT MEAN A FORMAL DEFENSE
PACT?**

Hays argues that the "covenant with Death" to which Isaiah ben Amoz refers is wordplay for a covenant with Mut, a Kushite goddess with a "strong protective aspect"; Hays makes a strong argument for this in an earlier book⁵² and, pending the test of debate, I have no reason to doubt it. His essay, however, also extends the influence of Mut from the dimension of religion into the dimension of international relations, specifically military affairs. Hays suggests that when the prophet speaks of a "covenant with Mut" in Isa 28 he is referring to an actual "pact" or "treaty" with the Double Kingdom. Hays asserts that "the need for military aid from the Kushites was surely the primary motivating factor in the Judahites' pursuit of a 'covenant with Mut.'" Furthermore: "The Twenty-fifth Dynasty came to the Judahites' aid, and

⁵⁰ In particular, C.B. Hays, *A Covenant with Death: Death in the Iron Age II and Its Rhetorical Uses in Proto-Isaiah* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015).

⁵¹ Aubin, *Rescue*, 157–58.

⁵² Hays, *Covenant with Death*, 288–315.

it is highly likely they did so under the auspices of a pact sealed by religious rituals”—that is, Mut-related rituals.

Hays’s hypothesis depends on an interpretation of what Isaiah meant by the word “covenant.” Hays interprets the word literally and sees it as referring to an agreement between Judah and the Double Kingdom to become allies against Assyria in 701. In the context of biblical history, a covenant is a solemn, binding agreement between parties, as is a pact or treaty in the context of international relations. (Since Hays uses the three terms interchangeably, I do as well.) If the Double Kingdom was indeed a party to such a formal agreement, it would have assumed a sense of obligation toward Judah’s defense.

Hays’s hypothesis of a Mut-related pact between Judah and the Double Kingdom raises several issues:

1. That these states did indeed become allies in this period is quite evident (otherwise the one would not have come to help the other),⁵³ but was an actual defense pact *necessary* to establish such a war-time alliance?

2. If the Double Kingdom endeavored to assist Judah “under the auspices of a pact” related to Mut, and if the Double Kingdom’s assistance proved to have been influential in saving Judah, what might have been the contemporary theological implications in Judah? More to the point: Although the biblical accounts (written later) credit YHWH, acting directly through his angel, with saving Jerusalem (2 Kgs 19:35/Isa 37:36), would many Jerusalemites in the aftermath of the 701 crisis have seen Mut as deserving of some or much credit for Judah’s rescue, or deserving of sharing the credit with YHWH? Note that, according to Hays, the worship of the Kushite deity in Judah had become sufficiently respected in the lead-up to the Double Kingdom’s intervention that “Jerusalem’s leaders would have prayed to Mut”—with Hezekiah presumably being among them. Note, too, that international treaties require the assent of the head of state; this would suggest that Hezekiah would have approved the Mut-related pact. This deity’s standing in official circles, then, would have been far from peripheral.

3. Do the questions posed above rely on a false premise? Contrary to Hays’s hypothesis, is the term “covenant” in Isa 28’s “covenant with Mut” not to be taken literally? Would Isaiah be using the term as a mere figure of speech for the sake of rhetorical vigor? Might Isaiah have been denouncing Judahites for making a covenant with Death/Mut as today one might criticize people for making a pact with the Devil or for worshipping at the altar of Mammon? If this is so, we would need to rule out the proposition that a formal, Mut-linked defense treaty existed between Judah and the Double Kingdom in 701 in the first place.

These questions will be addressed in what follows.

In trying to puzzle out the kind of relationship that might have existed between Judah and the Double Kingdom in 701, it

⁵³ It is a relationship emphasized in *Rescue*’s subtitle, *The Alliance between Hebrews and Africans in 701 BC*.

is essential consider Sennacherib's campaign from perspectives that are absent in Hays's treatment.

The Double Kingdom's perspective

Judah sought the protection against Assyria offered by not only Mut but, more concretely, by her fighting arm, the army of the Double Kingdom. From the Pharaoh's viewpoint, however, the gain from a pact committing him in advance to protecting Judah would not be so evident. The Twenty-fifth Dynasty's overriding concern would have been similar to that of all governments: the security of its own territory and population. To that end, the Pharaoh would have wanted the full blessing of Mut (as well as of Amun) for any military undertaking, but a treaty with a Levantine kingdom would have been unnecessary in order to resist Sennacherib on Levantine soil. It would also have been encumbering: as the Assyrians approached, the Pharaoh would have wanted complete latitude to respond according to evolving circumstances; an existing pact obligating him to protect a foreign and rather distant kingdom would run counter to such freedom.

Indeed, it is possible that in the early stages of Sennacherib's campaign the Twenty-fifth Dynasty did not have a fixed strategy in place for responding. If he feared Sennacherib might proceed to attempt to invade Egypt after subduing the Levantine rebels, the Pharaoh may have weighed at least two options: (1) keeping the Double Kingdom's forces in Egypt and, in the event of an invasion, waiting for the Assyrian troops to tire themselves crossing the Sinai desert before fighting them with home-turf advantage, or (2) attempting a pre-emptive strike in the Levant. In weighing these options, the Pharaoh may have waited for intelligence on Sennacherib's campaign (for example, on the size and composition of his army) before deciding on an opportunistic intervention on foreign soil. For the Double Kingdom, then, it is quite likely that a pact obligating it to help a beleaguered Judah would not have been in its interest.

The prophet's perspective in Isaiah 30 and 31

Isa 31:1 describes envoys from Jerusalem "who go down to Egypt for help." The time of the journey is not explicit, but the tone suggests urgency if not desperation: Sennacherib may well already be en route. The envoys are seeking to get the Double Kingdom to send its cavalry and chariotry to confront Assyria (Isa 31:1). One might think that if a treaty for military assistance already existed (having been agreed to earlier by the two parties), Isaiah 30 or 31 would mention it, but they do not. Given the prophet's disdain for a covenant with Mut in Isa 28, and his denunciations of numerous other aspects of Judah's relationship with the Double Kingdom in Isa 30 and 31, his silence on the matter is telling.

One might suppose, too, that if such a treaty existed at the time of the mission, the envoys would invoke it—as leverage, if need be—as part of their appeal to the Double Kingdom for aid. The envoys do in fact to apply leverage—a sign that the Double

Kingdom may be hesitant about involvement in the Levant—but it has nothing to do with a pact. Instead, their leverage comes in the form of material ingratiating: the envoys “carry their riches on the backs of donkeys, and their treasures of the humps of camels” (Isa 30:6) in the hope that these will help make their hosts more receptive to their plea.

In sum, a covenant of the sort that Hays envisages would logically have been pertinent to the Judahites’ mission to Egypt, and the prophet offers no hint of such an agreement.

A political-science perspective

In both ancient and modern history, military alliances between nations do not necessarily entail treaties. An alliance is simply a helpful relationship based on common interest, and no negotiations or ceremonies need be involved. To be sure, such alliances *may* be formalized by treaties; this is particularly the case when the perceived threat to the parties is not immediate and there is time for diplomatic negotiations and governmental ratifications. (An instance of this from the modern era would be the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, founded on the principle that an attack on one signatory country must be seen as an attack on all.) It is common, however, for alliances to spring up without treaties or the like: in wartime in particular, emergency conditions may indeed favor such a model. (The United States thus entered both World War I and II, for example, without a pact with Great Britain, France or any other ally.)

Such an informal relationship would fit well with what we know of the conditions prior to the Double Kingdom’s entry into the 701 conflict. Again, Isaiah is insightful in his depiction of Judah’s scramble to survive. In Isa 30:1 he says the envoys intend to “carry out a plan”⁵⁴ or “take counsel”⁵⁵—that is, to exchange ideas with their hosts. The point of the mission would be to prepare with the Double Kingdom’s representatives a joint plan for countering Sennacherib. My assumption is that the “plan” to which Isaiah refers would be a preliminary strategy; as the situation evolved, further meetings or dealings could have occurred, including the one in Isa 18:1–2a involving Kushite emissaries’ visit to Jerusalem or the one in Isa 18:2b in which Judah’s “swift messengers” speed off to communicate with the Kushites. (For speculation on the content of such a joint strategy, see my response to Marta Høyland Lavik’s essay.)

Finally, we should not lose sight of contemporaneous developments in Ekron, Judah’s nearest Philistine neighbor. Ekron was Judah’s particularly close partner⁵⁶ in the anti-Assyrian rebellion, and it may be seen to provide an instructive parallel to

⁵⁴ NRSV, CEB.

⁵⁵ *Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1985).

⁵⁶ Sennacherib’s annals say Ekron’s rebel leaders sent their deposed king, Padi, to Judah for confinement. Gallagher, *Sennacherib’s Campaign*, suggests that because of this collaboration Hezekiah “made himself Sennacherib’s main enemy and main target” (111).

Judah in the context of Hays's essay. We do not know if Mut would have had a following in Ekron, but on the basis of Sennacherib's annals we do know that the Ekronites reacted to the prospect of Assyrian retaliation in much the same manner as Judahites: Sennacherib's annals say the former "took fright," and the Twenty-fifth Dynasty responded to their appeal⁵⁷ by sending a contingent of Kushites and Egyptians to battle the Assyrians near Ekron, at Eltekeh. Interestingly, the annals do not say that this appeal involved a pact between Ekron and the Double Kingdom; the annals' muteness on this matter resembles that of Isaiah 30 and 31 with regard to a pact involving Judah. Ekron's SOS, as well as the last-minute nature of the Double Kingdom's intervention in the Levant, suggest that Ekron, like Judah, had no formal advance agreement with the Double Kingdom for military support.

Summing up: Hays sheds light on one aspect of the friendly relationship existing between a significant number of Judahites and Kushites in the lead-up to the conflict of 701 BCE, that aspect being a common devotion to a Kushite deity offering protection. Hays concludes that the Twenty-fifth Dynasty intervened to help Judah "under the auspices of a pact sealed by religious rituals." I do not challenge Hays's proposal that the envoys of Isaiah 30 and 31 may have participated in such Mut-related rituals in Egypt (such as his interpretation of Isa 30:1–2 in which he says a pouring-of-drinks ritual is "regularly obscured in translation"); however, I would replace "auspices of a pact" with "auspices of a plan" (Isa 30:1) or "strategy."

This rejection of such words as "pact" and "treaty" may seem trivial, but these terms are presented as synonyms of the prophet's use of the word "covenant" in Isaiah 28, the keystone of Hays's hypothesis. All three words would denote a binding agreement in which the Double Kingdom would vow to aid Judah against Assyria; for the Double Kingdom this would be foolhardy. Since the goddess Mut would to a considerable extent provide divine support for the resulting military enterprise, the success of the Double Kingdom's action would redound to her credit. Would she, not YHWH, have been seen by many Judahites as the divine hero of Jerusalem's deliverance? Fortunately, it is a question that need not detain us: Hays takes the word "covenant" literally, but the passage makes better sense if the prophet uses the word figuratively.

If such were the case, it would clarify the Twenty-fifth Dynasty's decision-making process prior to intervening in the Levant. The Kushite Pharaoh did not send troops under the auspices of a treaty with Judah sanctioned not by YHWH but by a Kushite deity revered by many Judahites; rather, he sent troops because it made military sense. Theologically speaking, then, Judah would not have owed its survival to a foreign goddess.

⁵⁷ Ekron's appeal for help is not explicit in the annals but may be assumed.

3. RECENT SCHOLARSHIP'S TREATMENT OF THE KUSHITE ROLE IN 701 BCE

Hays shares my puzzlement about the cursoriness with which those scholars who support the idea of Kushite success in 701 tend to express that support. In *Rescue*, published in 2002, I show that of the seven scholars (of whom I was aware) who in the last half of the twentieth century wrote that the Twenty-fifth Dynasty's army may have influenced (even if only a bit) the Assyrian decision to depart, none deals with this view in more than two sentences.⁵⁸ Hays comments: "[U]pon reflection, Aubin has a point that these notes are all quite brief. It is fair to ask why there has not been greater rhetorical enthusiasm on the part of historians." The word "enthusiasm" suggests emotion; "recognition" would be more objective. But, putting aside that quibble, the question is timely.

I will not attempt to answer it. Doing so would require personal familiarity with the scholarly milieu, and I have virtually none. As a reader of what is published, however, I know that even those scholars who find the Twenty-fifth Dynasty influential to some degree in causing Assyria's withdrawal do so in a manner not commensurate with its importance in history. Thus Donald Redford—to take one of the more prominent of the cited seven authors as an example—sees the Double Kingdom as successful against Sennacherib yet devotes but two sentences to the event in his 1992 book, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times*;⁵⁹ what is more, he gives not even a passing mention to that event's consequences on history.⁶⁰ The immediate consequence

⁵⁸ See Aubin, *Rescue*, 126–31. The seven are: W.H. Barnes, *Studies in the Divided Monarchy of Israel* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991), 123–24; D.B. Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 353; C. Herzog and M. Gichon, *Battles of the Bible* (New York: Random House, 1978), 142–43; A. B. Lloyd, *Herodotus, Histories, Book II: Commentary 99-182* (Leiden: Brill, 1988), 103; D.J. Wiseman, "The Assyrians," in Gen. Sir J. Hackett (ed.), *Warfare in the Ancient World* (London: Sidgwick & Johnson, 1989), 52; and Yurco, "Sennacherib's Third Campaign," 225–28. Because of the small importance that Lloyd gives to the Double Kingdom's army relative to other factors, I then classified him as a supporter of the epidemic theory (*Rescue*, 338); in his essay in this collection, he leans toward the surrender theory.

⁵⁹ Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel*, states without argumentation that the Double Kingdom's forces defeated Sennacherib at Eltekeh and caused his retreat (351–53). This explanation for Jerusalem's survival is followed by Lester L. Grabbe and Ernst Axel Knauf; it is critiqued in my response to Grabbe's essay in this collection.

⁶⁰ Hays also alludes without elaboration to Redford's article, "Kush," in ABD 4:109–11. For two reasons, this 2,000-word article on Kushite history is one of the best examples of what I call the *sotto voce* syndrome. One reason is its unenlightening content. Redford tells of the Kushite success in a single sentence: "Kush intervened forcefully and unexpectedly at Eltekeh (701 B.C.), battling Sennacherib to a standstill." The sentence (1) does not say that the Kushites' foe was the Assyrian empire, (2) does not indicate who this fellow Sennacherib was, (3) does not say in what country this place called Eltekeh was located,

is well-described by nineteenth-century scholar Heinrich Graetz; he observes in his landmark *History of the Jews* that if Sennacherib had succeeded in conquering all of Judah, “Then Jerusalem would suffer a similar fate to Samaria, and the few remaining tribes would be carried off into captivity and scattered abroad, and be lost amongst the various nationalities.”⁶¹ That view is not controversial. Mordechai Cogan writes, “Had Jerusalem fallen, Judah would have gone the way of the northern kingdom of Israel and especially its capital, Samaria—to exile and extinction.”⁶² Sara Japhet, former president of the World Union of Jewish Studies, sees not one but three consequences: (1) “The historical and political meaning of [the deliverance] cannot be overestimated: [. . .] the conquest of Jerusalem would have meant the end of Judah, and with it the end of the national entity called Israel”; (2) “[. . .] the deliverance of Jerusalem also had far-reaching and long-lasting theological ramifications” for Sennacherib’s withdrawal indicated “Jerusalem had a unique position in the earthly world. It was indestructible, for the Lord’s presence and special grace protected it from evil,” and (3) “The deliverance of Jerusalem may be seen as the seed which would grow and flourish in later generations into a new theology of election”⁶³—that is, the theology of the chosen people. William H. McNeill, who has been called “possibly the most renowned world historian of our times,”⁶⁴ ponders what Sennacherib’s conquest of Jerusalem might have meant: “[W]ithout Judaism, both Christianity and Islam become inconceivable. And without these faiths, the world as we know it becomes unrecognizable: profoundly, utterly different.”⁶⁵ The author of *The Rise of the West* concludes: “Surely, there is no greater might-have-been in all recorded history.”⁶⁶

and (4) does not hint at the intervention’s significance; nor does the sentence’s context enlighten in any way. The second reason for the article’s noteworthiness is that, as Hays points out, it appears in an “accessible venue”—the *Anchor Bible Dictionary*. Indeed, the six-volume *Dictionary* is a standard item in numerous public libraries, and its readership includes members of the public who would be unfamiliar with the period of history in question. The article thus squanders an opportunity to make the Kushite dynasty’s achievement better known to the public.

⁶¹ H. Graetz, *History of the Jews from the Earliest Times to the Present Day*, vol. 1, rev. ed. (London: Myers & Co., 1904 [1891]), 281.

⁶² M. Cogan, “Into Exile: From the Assyrian Conquest of Israel to the Fall of Babylon,” in M.D. Coogan (ed.), *The Oxford History of the Biblical World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 335.

⁶³ S. Japhet, “From the King’s Sanctuary to the Chosen City,” *Judaism* 46:2 (1997), 135.

⁶⁴ R. Duchesne, *The Uniqueness of Western Civilization* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 23.

⁶⁵ W.H. McNeill, “Infectious Alternatives: The Plague that Saved Jerusalem,” *MHQ: The Quarterly Journal of Military History* 10:3 (1998), 80.

⁶⁶ In the article in question, McNeill suggests disease caused the Assyrian departure. Two years later, when I was having trouble finding a publisher for *Rescue*, I took account of McNeill’s familiarity with the 701 conflict and, after an exchange of letters, sent him the manuscript

Given the catastrophic fate suffered by the Northern Kingdom at the hands of the Assyrians some twenty years before (2 Kgs 17), one would think that scholars who deal with this period of history ought to be aware of at least the first of the three consequences that Japhet sketches. Yet, so far as I am aware, no scholar in the last 100 years has coupled a) the Twenty-fifth Dynasty's influence in the deliverance of Jerusalem with b) its effect on history.⁶⁷

The brevity of late twentieth-century scholarly treatments of the Double Kingdom's success in 701 has been noted above. What about the new century? I am aware of six scholars in the twenty-first century who give full or partial credit to the Kushites for repelling Sennacherib.⁶⁸ Here are four; they are listed in chronological order with pertinent excerpts:

Mario Liverani, *Israel's History and the History of Israel*, trans. C. Peri and P.R. Davies (London: Equinox, 2005) writes that Jerusalem's "narrow escape [. . .] was helped by the onset of an epidemic among the besiegers and the imminent return of an Egyptian army [. . .]" (148).

G. Mumford, "Egyptian-Levantine Relations during the Iron Age to Early Persian Periods (Dynasties 20 to 26)," in T. Schneider and K. Szpakowska (eds.), *Egyptian Stories: A British Egyptological Tribute to Alan B. Lloyd on the Occasion of His Retirement* (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2007), presents argumentation, albeit minimal: "[B]iblical accounts allude to a second Egyptian attack. This represents either a regrouping

in the hope he might endorse its publication. Although I had not been known to him, he wrote a letter that I reproduce here because it shows what a scholar with sweepingly broad horizons sees in the conflict's historical significance.

To whom it may concern:

Having read Henry Aubin's MS about what probably happened in 701 BCE, when King Sennacherib's Assyrian army showed up under the walls of Jerusalem, but after threatening to attack suddenly withdrew, I am glad to say that I found his argument about how an Egyptian army commanded by Pharaohs from Nubia compelled Sennacherib's retreat to be very convincing. So much so indeed that I feel compelled to retract my own previous belief that a lethal epidemic [. . .] was what made the Assyrians withdraw.

I know that Aubin is not a professional scholar, but his explanation of why the Egyptian military role has been overlooked and rejected by recent scholarship struck me as very plausible indeed. And it is a fact that when professionally learned men arrive at a consensus it often takes an outsider to challenge established views.

This is what Aubin has done and he certainly deserves a hearing. Whoever publishes this book will therefore be doing a service to learning and one of far from trivial importance inasmuch as the subsequent history of Judaism, Christianity and Islam all hinged on the interpretation Biblical writers made of how God—not the Egyptians—demonstrated his universal power by saving Jerusalem from the mightiest army of the age. (Letter dated Nov. 19, 2000.)

⁶⁷ For two scholars who *do* make this connection in the early years of twentieth century, Archibald H. Sayce and Nathan M. Work, see Jeremy Pope's essay in this collection and my response to it.

⁶⁸ They do so without reference to *Rescue*.

of the initial Egyptian force [at Eltekeh], or the appearance of another Egyptian army led by Taharqa, who may have played a role in Sennacherib's failure to secure Judah" (230).

Csaba Balogh, *The Stele of YHWH in Egypt* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), says in a footnote, "Isa 37:7 probably refers to the news of the approaching Egypto-Kushite army that would chase Sennacherib away" (191 n. 224).

Benjamin D. Thomas, *Hezekiah and the Compositional History of the Book of Kings* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014) provides argumentation for Kushite success, but this occupies but a fleeting mention in a footnote: "[I]n [2 Kgs] 19:9a, the king of Assyria hears that Taharqa, king of Kush, had marched out to fight him; in 19:36, Sennacherib returned and stayed in Nineveh" (390 n. 207).⁶⁹

We see several things here: (1) none of these discernments of Twenty-fifth Dynasty success is longer than two sentences (2) two of the four authors identify the intervening army as Egyptian without alluding explicitly to Kush, and (3) the two other authors bury this event in footnotes. The syndrome of minimization of the past century thus continues into the new one.⁷⁰

It should be noted that there are exceptions to the norm of minimizing Kushite accomplishment. Two exceptions are Lester L. Grabbe and Ernst Axel Knauf: each published articles in the same book in 2003 (without knowing *Rescue of Jerusalem*) that supported the idea of Kushite success in 701 and that use several pages to explain how they reached their judgments.⁷¹ (For discussion of these articles, see my response to Grabbe's essay elsewhere in this collection.) Such insights, coming as they do from reputable scholars, might well be of interest to much of the general public. That, however is not to be. By its particular stylistic treatment of the subject, the book is aimed at a niche audience of specialists, and if that is not enough to deter general readers, the price may. The publisher's list price for the collection of essays in which the two essays appear is US \$216, and Amazon.com is selling it for \$357.70 at this writing (2017). Though it is of course not of Grabbe's or Knauf's doing, the price barrier alone ensures that their insights are effectively *sotto voce*.

⁶⁹ This is a nutshell version of Argument One in *Rescue* for the Twenty-fifth Dynasty army's effectiveness in 701; see *Rescue*'s § 10.

⁷⁰ For more discussion of minimization, see my response to Alan Lloyd's essay in this collection.

⁷¹ L.L. Grabbe, "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* (JSOTSup, 363; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003), esp. 137–39; and E.A. Knauf, "Sennacherib at the Berezina," in *"Like a Bird in a Cage,"* 141–49.

**4. IS SCHOLARS' RECENT REASSESSMENT OF KUSHITE
MILITARY PROWESS A "WAVE" OR A RIPPLE?**

Aside from the issue of brevity, Hays is generous—overly so, in my view—in assessing academia's treatments of Kushite forces. He says that "other prominent recent scholars [besides Redford] before Aubin [. . .] had already credited the Kushites with a powerful role in 701." The first scholar he cites in support of that assertion is David O'Connor who, in a 1993 book, affirms that "Egypt's Napatán rulers vigorously resisted Assyrian efforts to invade the southern Levant [. . .]" This one-sentence treatment of 701 does not indicate this resistance's outcome; to merely resist is not to be powerful. (The Lachishites who defended their city vigorously against Sennacherib's siege were brave but not powerful.) Hays is on stronger ground with his second example, Robert Morkot. In his two sentences on the conflict's actual outcome, the Egyptologist states in a 2000 book that the "military action [. . .] ended in a stalemate"; I agree that this is indeed a plausible outcome. However, Morkot interprets this result in a rather dim, downbeat manner: the stalemate was "not [. . .] an outright success" because it did not enable the Double Kingdom to reign imperialistically in the Levant (an assessment that assumes expansionist ambitions for which no evidence exists). Hays's third and final example is his weakest: he writes, "Even John Bright's classic *History of Israel* (3rd ed., 1981) took the role of the Kushites seriously." In fact, Bright states that the Twenty-fifth Dynasty's defeated forces were characterized by "notorious military unreliability."⁷² In sum, Hays's criterion for scholarship that credits "the Kushites with a powerful role in 701" is rather generous. For better examples of scholars who make the grade, see the discussion in *Rescue of Jerusalem's* § 18 of scholars from the twelfth century C.E. to the 1880s who see the Twenty-fifth Dynasty as influential in causing Sennacherib's departure; for additional data, see also Jeremy Pope's essay in this collection and my supportive response.

Moving on to the twenty-first century, Hays's generally positive evaluation of scholarship (aside from the matter of brevity) continues: "[I]t's safe to say that [*The Rescue of Jerusalem*] was part of a larger wave of reassessment. There seems to have been more work in this vein already brewing at the time that Aubin wrote, since still others came out with substantial analyses not long after [the book's publication in 2002]." In support of this opinion, a footnote (64 n. 13) cites the work of these three scholars:

- Kenneth A. Kitchen writes the Kushite-Egyptian army opposed Sennacherib at Eltekeh "without success." It then "regrouped," but upon learning

⁷² J. Bright, *A History of Israel*, 3rd ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1981; originally published 1972), 304. See also 186, 298–309. Although Bright mentions that Taharqo was from Nubia, he repeatedly refers to the Twenty-fifth Dynasty army as "Egyptian," never as partly Nubian or Kushite. A reader might suppose that while a Nubian (Taharqo) may have led the army, the army as a whole was composed of Egyptians.

that Sennacherib had “brought his forces together” to fight it, the army became fearful and “quietly melted back south [. . .] to the safety of distant Egypt.”⁷³ Kitchen does not exclude “food poisoning” as a possible cause. (In an earlier work, he suggests “some sudden epidemic” may have been the cause.⁷⁴) The Twenty-fifth Dynasty’s intervention thus does not appear to have been very influential.

- J.J.M. Roberts’s article does not address the Twenty-fifth Dynasty’s actions in the Levant in 701 at all other than to say repeatedly that it was “meddling.”⁷⁵ Hardly a “substantial” analysis.
- James K. Hoffmeier ascribes “imperialistic designs” to the Twenty-fifth Dynasty’s actions in the Levant in 701 without discussing any aspect of its performance against Assyria.⁷⁶

If we add these three instances to the cases discussed earlier involving brevity, we see that there is not much twenty-first century scholarship that is worth citing for “substantial analyses” of the Double Kingdom’s “powerful role” in 701. The closest thing to substantial analysis of which I am aware would be the work of Grabbe and Knauf. (That I happen to differ with their explanation of how the Double Kingdom’s army achieved success is irrelevant to this discussion; what matters here is that each scholar provides serious argumentation for his opinion.)

In a footnote (p. 61 n. 1), Hays makes this important point: the story of the Kushites’ success in 701 has “the potential to be widely relevant in a world where racism is still too strong a force.” Until now, academics have done little to help develop that potential. My hope is that most of the specialists’ essays in this collection will help with that.

CONCLUSION

Hays’s core insights on the presence of Nilotic religious influence on Judah and elsewhere at the time of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty are intriguing and, assuming they hold up to the test of debate, brilliant; they would significantly increase our understanding of a cultural rapport between Kushites and Judahites in the period leading up to the conflict of 701 BCE, a rapport that

⁷³ K.A. Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 41.

⁷⁴ K.A. Kitchen, “Egypt, the Levant and Assyria in 701 BC,” in M. Görg (ed.), *Fontes atque pontes: Eine Festgabe für Hellmut Brunner* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1983), 251.

⁷⁵ J.J.M. Roberts, “Egypt, Assyria, Isaiah, and the Ashdod Affair: An Alternative Proposal,” in A.G. Vaughn and A.E. Killebrew (eds.), *Jerusalem in Bible and Archaeology: The First Temple Period* (Atlanta: SBL, 2003), 270, 282.

⁷⁶ J.K. Hoffmeier, “Egypt’s Role,” 219-34.

included the common worship of the Kushites' protective deity, Mut.

The essay does not show convincingly, however, how a "covenant with Mut" would have gone so far as to include a military treaty with the Twenty-fifth Dynasty, a treaty so solemn that it would have caused, or helped cause, the dynasty to send soldiers to Judah's aid. Nor does the essay suggest why it would have been in the Twenty-fifth Dynasty's interests to have ever agreed to such an advance commitment. That the Kushites' Twenty-fifth Dynasty and Hezekiah's Judah were allies is evident, but alliances do not require pacts/treaties (though they may sometimes have them).

Hays is right to say that Western scholarship is becoming more receptive to recognizing the Kushites' *general* influence in the Levant.⁷⁷ His own groundbreaking work on the cult of Mut in Jerusalem is itself evidence of that. However, as regards the more specific matter of support among academics for the view that the Twenty-fifth Dynasty may have been influential in the premature end of Sennacherib's invasion, the textual record for such support has been discouraging until now (that is, until the present collection of contributors' essays). What support there has been up to now has been expressed in terms too meager and/or in publications too abstruse to alter the widespread view that ancient black Africa has been irrelevant to the development of Western civilization. The point is, of course, not that scholars should be publicists or propagandists of Africa's influence; it is simply that they give that influence the attention that it objectively deserves.

My review in *Rescue* of twentieth-century scholars' support for the Twenty-fifth Dynasty's influence in causing the Assyrian retreat concludes with this generalization:

These occasional accounts [. . .], then, have several things in common. They tend to be extremely brief [. . .] They present a Kushite role in forcing Sennacherib's departure not as an upfront, coherent theory but rather, *sotto voce*, almost as a parenthetical aside. Indeed, in a puzzling omission, not one of the accounts that credits the Kushites with some role ever alludes even vaguely to the historical importance of the Assyrian departure. A reader would assume the conflict to have been but a trivial anecdote of history. Little wonder that these accounts have had no impact whatever on the public's understanding of Africa's role in Western history.⁷⁸

Has anything changed up to now in the twenty-first century among academics? Yes, Grabbe and Knauf—to cite cases I am

⁷⁷ Scholars in the relatively young field of Nubiology have in recent decades also been calling attention to the record of Kushites *in the Nile valley as a whole* (in contrast to the Levant). However, Nubiologists so far have given little attention to the Kushite presence *in the Levant*. One of the few Nubiologists who has written on the Levantine conflict of 701 BCE is Kahn, "Taharqa," who sees Sennacherib's campaign as successful (111).

⁷⁸ Aubin, *Rescue*, 131.

aware of—do more than give passing mention to the exploit; the format in which their views are presented, however, dictate their obscurity, so that these authors' relative expansiveness hardly represents meaningful change. The *sotto voce* syndrome has shown itself up to now to be alive and well.

This brings the discussion back to Hays's pertinent question regarding scholarship's treatment of the Double Kingdom's actions in 701: "It is fair to ask why there has not been greater rhetorical enthusiasm on the part of historians." The ball is in scholars' court.

Postscript. "I completed the above response prior to the publication of an article that develops the argument that "Jerusalem was saved by Taharqo," commander of a second (post-Eltekeh) contingent: see N. Franklin, "The Kushite Connection: The Destruction of Lachish and the Salvation of Jerusalem," in I. Shai et al. (eds.), *Tell it to Gath: Studies in the History and Archaeology of Israel; Essays in Honor of Aren M. Maeir on the Occasion of His Sixtieth Birthday* (Münster: Zaphon, 2018), 680–95, esp. 690. I had earlier called *The Rescue of Jerusalem* to the author's attention. I hope this receptivity to the influence of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty is a sign of things to come

RESPONSE TO JEREMY POPE: THE EMPTINESS OF THE THEORY OF HEZEKIAH'S SURRENDER

Jeremy Pope is a leading expert on the foreign policy of the Double Kingdom of Kush and Egypt, so his judgment that its army contributed to Sennacherib's departure from the Levant in 701 BCE carries weight. That he approached *The Rescue of Jerusalem's* presentation of that thesis as a skeptic makes his view all the more significant.

This response will address two distinct themes: (1) the idea, discussed by Pope, that Judah survived Sennacherib's invasion because of Hezekiah's surrender, and (2) Pope's useful synthesis of data on centuries of scholarship supporting the idea that the Kushite Twenty-fifth Dynasty was influential in Judah's survival.

THE SURRENDER THEORY'S WEAKNESS

In reading Pope's essay, I must admit to a twinge of disappointment—not with his essay, which I admire—but with myself. Pope concludes his presentation, in which he weighs arguments and lets the reader see his own well-considered reasoning, by finding that the hybrid Kushite rescue theory holds *only* a “slight advantage” in plausibility over the surrender theory. Such a judgment would suggest that the three-page critique of the latter in *The Rescue of Jerusalem*⁷⁹ is not as convincing as hoped. Indeed, looking back, my critique's inadequacy is quite plain.

Pope observes that the surrender theory is currently the “strongest of the current mainstream theories” that compete against the hybrid Kushite rescue theory; recent scholarly support for it is indeed impressive.⁸⁰ At the same time, however, the

⁷⁹ Aubin, *Rescue*, 122–24.

⁸⁰ Supporters of the surrender theory in the twenty-first century include: J. Blenkinsopp, “Hezekiah and the Babylonian Delegation: A Critical Reading of Isaiah 39:1–8,” in Y. Amit, et al. (eds.), *Essays on Ancient Israel in the Near Eastern Context: A Tribute to Nadav Na'aman* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 114; Cogan, *The Raging Torrent*, 132; and also “Cross-examining the Assyrian Witnesses to Sennacherib's Third Campaign”; P. Dubovský, “Assyrians under the Walls of Jerusalem and the Confinement of Padi,” *JNES* 75:1 (2016), 126; F.M. Fales, “The Road to Judah: 701 BCE in the Context of Sennacherib's Military Strategy,” in I. Kalimi and S. Richardson (eds.), *Sennacherib at the Gates of Jerusalem: Story, History and Historiography* (CHANE; Leiden: Brill, 2014), 247; O. Keel and B. Strawn, *Jerusalem and the One God: A Religious History* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 2017), 104; D.R. Miller, “The Shadow of the Overlord: Revisiting the Question of Neo-Assyrian imposition on the Judean Cult during the Eighth-Seventh Centuries BCE,” in J.R. Wood, J.E. Harvey and M. Leuchter (eds.), *From Babel to Babylon: Essays on Biblical History and Literature in Honour of Brian Peckham* (New York: T&T Clark, 2006), 150 n. 21; Miller and Hayes, *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah*, 419; N. Na'aman, “Let Other Kingdoms Struggle with the Great Powers,” 70; K.L. Noll, “The Evolution of Genre in the Book of Kings: The Story of Sennacherib and Hezekiah as Example,” in P.G. Kirkpatrick and T.D. Goltz (eds.), *The Function of Ancient Historiography in Biblical and Cognate Studies* (New York: T&T Clark, 2008), 39; F. Stavrakopoulou, *King Manasseh and Child Sacrifice*:

surrender theory has received little critical analysis. In doing that now, the aim is to encourage scholars to consider the role of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty.

Before giving cautious approval of the latter, Pope evaluates the surrender theory and finds several arguments for it attractive. Discussion of these follows.

1. Pope notes that Sennacherib's annals claim that (a) "fear of my lordly brilliance overwhelmed [Hezekiah]" and that (b) Hezekiah gave Assyria a considerable indemnity or payment that included treasure, soldiers,⁸¹ weaponry and raw materials.

The indemnity issue can be disposed of quickly. Indemnity or tribute is not necessarily a sign of surrender. It is more likely the cost of Judah's resuming a subordinate relationship with Assyria as determined in peace negotiations headed by the Double Kingdom and Assyria and held after the end of military hostilities.⁸² The payment may partly reflect a totaling up of the annual

Biblical Distortions of Historical Realities (BZAW, 338; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2004), 95; D. Ussishkin, "Sennacherib's Campaign to Philistia and Judah: Ekron, Lachish, and Jerusalem," in Y. Amit et al. (eds.), *Essays on Ancient Israel in its Near Eastern Context* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 354.

In his essay in this collection, Alan B. Lloyd also indicates support for the surrender theory. In earlier work, Lloyd had leaned toward the theory that an epidemic was the most probable reason for the Assyrian withdrawal. (For discussion of Lloyd's earlier view, see Aubin, *Rescue*, 121–22.)

For a list of eleven supporters over the course of the twentieth century, see *Rescue of Jerusalem*, 339–40 n. 22.

⁸¹ One of a vassal's common obligations to Assyria was to supply troops.

⁸² Gallagher, *Sennacherib's Campaign*, presents his own translation of the Rassam Cylinder edition of Sennacherib's annals and concludes from it, "This means the Philistine kings' tribute was raised, but not Hezekiah's" (129, n. 5). If Gallagher is correct, this would be consistent with my view that Hezekiah, not having surrendered or been conquered, got off relatively easily everything considered (starting with the survival of his kingdom, his own person and his kingship). Gallagher's view on the matter of payment, however, is not essential to positing lenient treatment.

To those who might demur that Hezekiah and Judah were on the contrary harshly treated in light of Judah's loss of much territory after the conflict, I would respond that the apportioning of former Judahite territory among neighboring Philistine states—which had the effect of making the sizes of the southern Levantine kingdoms less uneven—would have served the Twenty-fifth Dynasty's ultimate objective of maintaining the southern Levant as a semi-neutral buffer region, a core part of my post-701 scenario. Miller and Hayes, *History of Ancient Israel and Judah*, observe that the overhaul of the region's political map would have had this effect: "The redistribution of territory and the possible assignment of portions of Hezekiah's territory to various Philistine rulers restored political equilibrium in the area, so that no ruler had a balance of power in his favor" (421). Such a balance of power is desirable for stability in a semi-neutral buffer region that includes multiple states. H. Tadmor, "Philistia under Assyrian Rule," *BA* 19 (1966), says of post-701 Philistina: "Thus, the balance of power between the four cities

tribute unpaid since the start of the rebellion several years before; it may also reflect an effective bribe to Sennacherib not to return. The annals say Hezekiah sent the payment to Assyria at some time after the conflict, rather than at the time of Sennacherib's departure; this is consistent with the hypothesis that the indemnity's content would have been negotiated as part of the later peace accord.⁸³ Robert D. Bates suggests reasonably that the annals' unusual emphasis on Hezekiah's tribute may be a way of deflecting attention away from—and compensating for—the failure to subdue the rebel.⁸⁴

As for the language the annals use to describe Hezekiah's fearful response to Sennacherib, that also does not imply Jerusalem's surrender. To see why, let us compare the Assyrian annals' treatment of the eight Phoenician cities that manifestly did surrender with the same annals' treatment of Jerusalem. The leaders of the Phoenician cities not only “bowed in submission at my feet,” they also had this response to the Assyrian army: “The awesome terror of the weapons of the god Aššur, my lord, overwhelmed [them].”⁸⁵ That stands in revealing contrast to what we have just seen was the reaction of Jerusalem's leader, Hezekiah: “Fear of my lordly brilliance overwhelmed him.” The difference is substantive: Sennacherib's dazzling splendor overwhelms the Judahite king but the army itself strikes terror among the Phoenician leaders. The language suggests the Phoenicians bowed in submission after the Assyrians showed they were ready to assault their cities and wreak havoc. The Judahite monarch, on the other hand, was simply overwhelmed by a sense of the emperor's loftiness. One cannot equate “lordly brilliance” with “awesome terror.”⁸⁶

of Philistia was preserved and Philistia was consolidated as a semi-neutral buffer area between Assyria and Egypt” (97). For the more on the buffer region, see *Rescue*, 76, 153, 155, 354 n. 10.

⁸³ Pope notes the discrepancy with the biblical account: the 2 Kings narrative's account of the payment, 18:14–16, *precedes* its description of the invaders' blockade of Jerusalem. There is a perfectly reasonable explanation for this. As is generally agreed, the biblical narrative consists of three distinctive segments written at different times: the indemnity is part of the A segment, 2 Kgs 18:13–16. This segment, which was written the earliest, is a terse recapitulation of the invasion by a writer who may reflect the viewpoint of the temple and state; their wealth would have been depleted by the need to pay the indemnity. For storytelling purposes, 18:14–16 should have been placed at the end of the narrative to reflect the settlement reached by negotiators after the end of the military hostilities; however, perhaps because it was written first, it was placed first. Of the three interpretations that Pope offers for the discrepancy between the Assyrian and biblical accounts, this explanation fits the third—i.e., that “Hezekiah's payment was a result of the negotiated settlement [. . .].”

⁸⁴ R.D. Bates, “Assyria and Rebellion in the Annals of Sennacherib: An Analysis of Sennacherib's Treatment of Hezekiah,” *NEASB* 44 (1995), 50.

⁸⁵ Cogan, *Raging Torrent*, renders, “The terrifying nature of the weapon of (the god) Ashur my lord overwhelmed [them]” (124).

⁸⁶ To rephrase the sentence using Cogan's translation: One cannot

It must be acknowledged, however, that the word “overwhelmed” is ambiguous. Would it indicate surrender in this context? Or something less?

For an answer, consider another comparison, this one between the Rassam Cylinder’s description of Hezekiah and Luli, or Eloulaios, king of the most powerful of the Phoenician city-states, Tyre (and also king of Sidon). In this case, what is noteworthy is the *sameness* of the two rebel kings’ responses to the imperial army. The annals’ description of Luli’s reaction to Sennacherib is word-for-word *identical* to Hezekiah’s response: “Fear of my lordly brilliance overwhelmed [him] [. . .].”⁸⁷ What makes this sameness significant is that *Luli did not surrender*; he is the only Phoenician leader on record not to have yielded. Thus, we see that in Luli’s case being “overwhelmed” in no way means submission. Rather, it means being severely frightened: such was Luli’s fear of Sennacherib’s approach that, as the annals recount, he fled Tyre by boat. (He found safety in Cyprus.)

In his *History of Tyre*, H. Jacob Katzenstein observes: “Eloulaios’ flight to Cyprus must be regarded not as a surrender to the Assyrian armies but as a kind of transfer of the capital.”⁸⁸ William Gallagher also concludes: “Sennacherib could not do anything effective against Tyre. It remained independent but isolated.”⁸⁹

In sum, the Rassam Cylinder’s treatment of Hezekiah as being overwhelmed by Sennacherib’s brilliance is no more evidence of a surrender than is the payment of an indemnity. The similarity of the annals’ treatments of Luli and Hezekiah suggests that Judah’s king, too, eluded Sennacherib’s grasp.

2. A common argument against the surrender theory is that Sennacherib’s leniency toward Hezekiah would depart from the Assyrian empire’s policy of dealing harshly with rebellious vassals. According to the argument, Sennacherib would have never allowed a submissive Hezekiah to keep both his life and throne since restive vassals might think that they, too, might avoid dire consequences if their own future rebellions failed.

Pope responds by pointing to Tikulti-Ninurta II, an Assyrian king two centuries earlier whose actions might represent precedents for leniency. Pope notes that the king “repeatedly arrived at rebel outposts [. . .] and accepted the towns’ surrender without bloodshed [. . .].” The context, however, is not comparable to that of 701 BCE. Tikulti-Ninurta, reflecting standard Assyrian policy,⁹⁰ appears to have been conquering *new* territory

equate “awesome splendor of my lordship” with “terrifying nature of the weapon of Ashur.”

⁸⁷ Cogan, *Raging Torrent*, renders, “The awesome splendor of my lordship overwhelmed [him]” (124).

⁸⁸ Katzenstein, *The History of Tyre*, 248–49.

⁸⁹ Gallagher, *Sennacherib’s Campaign*, 104.

⁹⁰ Referring to Assyria’s vassal states, B.J. Parker, “The Assyrians Abroad,” in D.T. Potts (ed.), *A Companion to the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East*, vol. 2 (Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), notes: “The basic premise was that if the polity in question submitted peacefully to Assyrian demands, the ruling elite were allowed to remain

by showing off to local leaders his intimidating (but restrained) military strength and then treating the leaders relatively kindly when they voluntarily submitted. With Hezekiah, however, Sennacherib was dealing with a *vassal* who had broken the solemn oath of loyalty and rebelled. As J. Maxwell Miller and John H. Hayes note, “Rebellious vassals [. . .] could be crushed mercilessly, and rebel territory [. . .] incorporated into the Assyrian provincial system and placed under control of an Assyrian military governor and a hierarchy of officials.”⁹¹ The case of Tikulti-Ninurta, then, is not a true precedent.

Pope’s second example involves envoys of Assyria’s Tiglath-pileser III who go to Babylon to seek its submission. Its pertinence to the surrender theory is not clear to me: Babylon’s king was not a vassal who had rebelled against Assyria; nor do the envoys in question broach the matter of leniency in exchange for surrender.⁹²

Pope notes that in *Rescue of Jerusalem* I issue a challenge to backers of the surrender theory: “Proponents would strengthen their case if they could point to several cases, or even one case, of an Assyrian emperor of this general period showing similar leniency [to that supposedly extended to Hezekiah].” The challenge stands.⁹³

3. Pope finds F.M. Fales’s proposed surrender-theory scenario “intriguing.” A building block in Fales’s logic is Hezekiah’s message to Sennacherib containing what Fales calls “words of outright capitulation: ‘I have done wrong; withdraw from me; and I shall bear whatever you impose on me’ ” (Kgs 18:14).⁹⁴ Does this really signify capitulation?

in power and retain control over their subjects and territory and therefore maintain a relatively autonomous status” (872).

⁹¹ Miller and Hayes, *History of Ancient Israel and Judah*, 368.

⁹² For discussion of this encounter at Babylon, see my response to L.L. Grabbe’s essay in this collection.

⁹³ Another scholar who has sought a precedent for Assyrian leniency toward Hezekiah is Nadav Na’aman, a supporter of the surrender theory, in L.L. Grabbe, “Reflections on the Discussion,” in idem, *Like a Bird in a Cage*, 323. Na’aman cites Tiglath-pileser’s treatment of Hanunu, king of Gaza: when the Assyrian king’s army approached the city, the rebel Hanunu fled to Egypt; upon his return, Tiglath-pileser not only spared him but reinstated him as king. There would be two problems with seeing this as a precedent to Sennacherib’s treatment of Hezekiah. First, there is no sign that Hanunu closed Gaza’s gates before fleeing; there is thus no indication of resistance. Second, as the experienced ruler of a city-state that was strategically located on both Arabian and Egyptian trade routes, and that was also a seaport, Hanunu could serve as a skilled hand to manage Assyria’s commercial ambitions. Neither of these situations would apply to Jerusalem, which kept its gates defiantly closed and was less strategically located. Na’aman also mentions cases of leniency involving Necho I of Egypt and Ba’al of Tyre, but here, too, the situations are not comparable to the case of Hezekiah. For Hanunu, see S.W. Holloway, *Assur Is King! Assur Is King! Religion in the Exercise of Power in the Neo-Assyrian Empire* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 192.

⁹⁴ Fales, “The Road to Judah,” 247 n. 86.

The words, “I have done wrong,” contain no hint that Hezekiah is yielding his city. The king is simply taking responsibility for having broken his loyalty oath as a vassal.

The king’s next words—“withdraw from me; and I shall bear whatever you impose on me”—also benefit from close reading. Commenting on the words, “Withdraw from me,” Gallagher notes that their “significance [. . .] has seldom been appreciated.” He astutely observes: “Formulated as an imperative sentence, the words show that Hezekiah’s surrender was conditional. He admitted that he was at fault, but he also demanded that the king of Assyria withdraw from him, that is to say, his territory.”⁹⁵

Gallagher further comments: “The implicit understanding is that if Sennacherib did not withdraw, Hezekiah would not submit to Sennacherib’s terms of vassaldom.”⁹⁶ What circumstances might elicit such a message? Hezekiah could have sent it in reply to directions from negotiators in peace talks between the Double Kingdom and Assyria (and which probably took place at Lachish.⁹⁷) The negotiators would have needed Judah’s rebel king to admit guilt to Sennacherib and to pledge a payment; the Twenty-fifth Dynasty’s all-important demand would have been that this payment be contingent upon Sennacherib’s permanent withdrawal.

In sum, each of these three arguments cited as favoring the surrender contains serious weaknesses.

POPE’S EXPANSION OF THE HISTORIOGRAPHICAL ASPECT

Pope’s essay adds to our understanding of the evolution of historians’ and biblical scholars’ support for the idea that the Twenty-fifth Dynasty contributed in some way to Sennacherib’s decision to depart. Let me start by summarizing *Rescue of Jerusalem’s* presentation of that evolution. On the basis of a sampling of writers’ views, I argued that:

1. “Prior to the twentieth century, those who stated that the Kushite Dynasty had played some sort of major role (whether supporting or leading) in turning back Sennacherib included some of the West’s leading figures in Christian and Jewish thought.”⁹⁸ (Nine such writers were identified: RaDaK, Calvin, Patrick, Lowth, Heeren, von Ewald, Wilkinson, Malbim and Wise. A tenth supporter of the theory, less prominent, was Constable. See below for amplification.)
2. This support for the Kushite Dynasty’s role declined in the late nineteenth century, taking a sharp drop in the

⁹⁵ Gallagher, *Sennacherib’s Campaign*, 256. Gallagher supports a blend of the epidemic theory (245, 261) and the surrender theory (257–62).

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 256.

⁹⁷ 2 Kgs 18:14.

⁹⁸ Aubin, *Rescue*, 241. Unless otherwise indicated, much of the material in this section is from § 18 in *Rescue*.

1880s.⁹⁹ This trend coincided with an intensification in anti-African racism. Among other factors, Charles Darwin's *On the Origins of Species* (1859) may have helped lay the intellectual groundwork for the trend: the supposition was that if natural selection means that one species will dominate a less competent species, then the same ought to be true among races. The 1880s drop-off in scholarly support for the Kushite role correlates with the 1880s' start of what many historians call the Scramble,¹⁰⁰ the rush of seven European powers to colonize or otherwise subjugate Africa.¹⁰¹

3. Scholarly support for the Kushite role gradually re-emerged in the second half of the twentieth century, after the mid-century end of colonialism in Africa.¹⁰² However, this support was—and continues to be up to now—generally expressed in subdued and fleeting fashion. (For discussion that includes twenty-first century support, see my response to Christopher Hays in this collection.)“

Thanks to the digitalization of scholarship, all but nonexistent when I was researching the pre-colonial writings in the 1990s, it has been easier to find another seven pre-1880s writings supportive of Kushite influence in Sennacherib's departure;¹⁰³ Pope has added another five.

⁹⁹ P.S. Evans, “History in the Eye of the Beholder?”, attacks *The Rescue of Jerusalem* for its presentation of matters relating to this change in historiography. In the book, I list the views of ten generally prominent scholars (also cited in the present text) who in the decades and centuries before the 1880s saw the Kushites as having influenced Jerusalem's deliverance; Evans's leading point is to charge me with claiming this was the *consensus* (i.e., majority) opinion among scholars prior to the 1880s. Had it been made, such a claim would indeed have been egregious given that during those centuries many hundreds of historians and biblical commentators in numerous countries have offered diverse explanations for the deliverance (i.e., ten views could never comprise a consensus). As well, Evans contests the factual basis for including several of the ten scholars on the list; Pope, in an independent review, upholds their inclusion. Without considering the presented evidence, Evans also contends there was no drop in support for Kushite influence starting in the 1880s. See p. 200-201 n. 6 in “Henry T. Aubin's Responses” in this volume.

¹⁰⁰ T. Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa* (New York: Random House, 1991), sums up the phenomenon this way: “Suddenly, in half a generation, the Scramble gave Europe virtually the whole continent: including thirty new colonies and protectorates, ten million square miles of new territory and 110 million dazed new subjects [. . .]” (xxz).

¹⁰¹ The main players, as one may recall, were Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Portugal, plus Belgium's King Leopold II. Spain was present to a lesser extent. Great Britain unofficially ruled Egypt and Sudan without colonizing them; the official ruler was the Ottoman Empire. Yet Britain's view of the two countries is widely seen as “colonial.”

¹⁰² See Aubin, *Rescue*, 124–31.

¹⁰³ Some of the historiographical discussion that follows is adapted from the appendix to my unpublished riposte to P.S. Evans's article

How does this more than doubling of the data—identified pre-1880s supporters now total twenty-two—affect my earlier hypothesis of a colonial-era drop of support for the Kushites? Among the twelve supporters newly identified are seven who qualify as leaders in their various fields, having a certain intellectual stature and potential influence in their diverse milieus: Aponte, Hoskins, Michaelis, Pineda, Saunders, Schrader and Sumner. (Bevan, Cooper, Preiss, Smith, and Strachey are all published authors, but they appear not to have had real prominence.)¹⁰⁴

Below is another version of Pope's list of those writers who see the Kushites as having influenced Sennacherib's departure; I have added simplified descriptions of each individual. The twenty-two names represent an unscientific sampling of opinion; it is to be hoped that other researchers will be able to add to it. The conclusions that will be drawn from them below are necessarily tentative, based as they are on a limited survey; as the names of more supporters of Kushite influences turn up, the conclusions may well require revision. The names in **bold** type are individuals with enough prominence in a particular milieu (and in some cases the broader society) to give their views more weight than they might have otherwise. (Footnoted source-references are included for those individuals who have not already been treated in Pope's essay or in *Rescue of Jerusalem*.)

RaDaK (1160?–1235): French rabbi and biblical commentator.

Jean Calvin (1509–1564): French Protestant theologian (“Calvinism”) and organizer of the city-state of Geneva as a theocracy.

Juan de Pineda (1558–1637): Jesuit advisor to the Spanish Inquisition and biblical exegete.

Simon Patrick (1626–1707): Anglican bishop of Ely (England) and religious writer.

William Lowth (1660–1732): Anglican cleric in England and biblical commentator.

Christian Friedrich Preiss (1751–1812): German philologist.

Johann David Michaelis (1717–1791): Prussian biblical scholar and orientalist.

(see 201 n. 6, above). To avoid redundancy, the riposte's appendix has been removed.

¹⁰⁴ What qualifies as “prominence” is subjective and, given the distance in time, often uncertain; the designation is certainly subject to debate. I have tried to err on the side of generosity: thus, I have included someone like G.A. Hoskins (see below), who—although a non-academic and without many credentials—authored an early book on Kush and Egypt that would have enjoyed some popularity and influenced opinion.

Arnold Hermann Ludwig Heeren (1760–1842): German historian of classical antiquity.

José Antonio Aponte (d. 1812): African-Cuban accused of organizing a rebellion (the “Aponte Conspiracy”) against slavery in Cuba and against Spanish colonialism.

Prince Saunders (1775–1839): African-American educator in New England and Haiti, and a member of the abolitionist movement.

George Alexander Hoskins (1802–1863): Briton who traveled to Egypt and Sudan and wrote one of the earliest accounts of Kush together with fine drawings and watercolors of ruins.¹⁰⁵

Georg Heinrich von Ewald (1803–1875): German Protestant theologian and historian of Israel.

John Gardner Wilkinson (1797–1875): Vice-president of the British Archaeological Association; sometimes called the “father of British Egyptology.”

Isaac Mayer Wise (1819–1900): Eastern European rabbi who became a leader of U.S. reform Judaism and first president of the Hebrew Union College, oldest rabbinical seminary in the U.S.

William Bevan (1821–1908): Anglican cleric from Wales.

Henry Constable (1816–1891): Canon of the Anglican cathedral at Cork, Ireland.

Philip Smith (1817–1885): British historian of the ancient Near East.

Eberhard Schrader (1836–1908): German professor of theology, biblicist and pioneer of Assyriology in the German-speaking world.

William Graham Sumner (1840–1910): American Episcopal minister who went on to become a noted social scientist, teaching the first course on sociology in the United States (at Yale) and heading the American Sociology Association.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ G.A. Hoskins, *Travels in Ethiopia above the Second Cataract* (London: Longmans, 1835), says Taharqo “took part” in the “discomfiture” (an outmoded word for “defeat in battle”) of Sennacherib (303–04). The book is also noteworthy for its praise of Napata, Kush’s capital. Of its ruins, he writes: “Few temples in Egypt have been more extensive or finer than this must have once been” (142). Napata is a “city where the arts evidently were once so zealously cultivated, where science and learning appear to have reigned” (159).

¹⁰⁶ Sumner’s remarks are in annotations to a biblical commentary: Karl Chr. W.F. Bähr, *The Books of the Kings: Book II*, trans., enlarged and ed. by W.G. Sumner (New York: Scribner, Armstrong, 1872). Sumner wrote that Taharqo “raised a new army” after the “disaster at Eltekeh,”

William Ricketts Cooper (1843–1878): British writer on the ancient Near East.¹⁰⁷

Malbim (1809–1879): Eastern European rabbi and biblical commentator.

Edward Strachey (1812–1901): British baronet and writer on Hebrew history.

What conclusions may be drawn from this list?

First, the addition of twelve pre-colonial authors strengthens the hypothesis in *Rescue of Jerusalem* that a significant number of prominent Westerners saw the Twenty-fifth Dynasty as having had an influential role in Jerusalem's deliverance.

Second, the expanded data base shows an increase in the diversity of these individuals' backgrounds. Accordingly, to accommodate all members of the group, the wording of my original premise needs elasticity. Instead of saying, "Prior to the twentieth century, those who stated that the Kushite Dynasty had played some sort of major role (whether supporting or leading) in turning back Sennacherib included some of the West's leading figures in Christian and Jewish thought," the last dozen words should be changed to "included a number of Westerners who were leaders in their various fields." This wording covers supporters who are active in not only the religious domain but also the secular.

Third, of the twenty-two supporters in the pre-colonial (pre-1880s) period, eighteen are from Europe. The figure, however, can arguably be raised to twenty; two thinkers can be said to have received much of their intellectual formation in Europe. After graduating from Yale College, Sumner, a New Jersey native, did graduate work in Hebrew, the Bible, and theology at the universities of Geneva, Göttingen, and Oxford. Although Wise made his mark in the United States, his education and early career were in Bohemia. (By contrast, Saunders's and Aponte's formative years were in the New World—New England and Cuba respectively.)

and the "news that Tirhakah was coming with a new force" made "Sennacherib more impatient than ever to finish the conquest of Jerusalem" and he demanded Hezekiah's surrender; soon after this unsuccessful demand, an unidentified "great calamity fell upon the Assyrians which forced them to retreat without coming to blows with Tirhakah" (209, 221). It must be acknowledged that Sumner's support for the hybrid Kushite rescue theory is borderline. However, one may take from his brief account that Taharqo's pressure was a light but not insignificant factor in Sennacherib's retreat; Taharqo's resilient army would have still been inside or near the war zone (and thus a threat) at the time of the Assyrian withdrawal.

¹⁰⁷ W.R. Cooper, *An Archaic Dictionary: Biographical, Historical, and Mythological; from the Egyptian, Assyrian and Etruscan Monuments and Papyri* (London: Bagster, 1876): [A]t the request of Hezekiah [. . .], [Taharqo] invaded Palestine to repulse Sennacherib [. . .]. The news of his arrival caused that monarch to withdraw from Judea" (547).

Next, we come to the African colonial period itself, which spans eight decades—from the 1880s to the mid-twentieth century. A keen-eyed reader may detect one difference between the following list of supporters of Kushite influence and Pope's list: my list does not include Archibald H. Sayce. Although the prominent Oxford Assyriologist, who did archaeological work in Egypt and Sudan, is on record as a supporter at one brief point in his career, his topsy-turvy views on the Kushites, recounted in *Rescue of Jerusalem's* § 19, defy simplified categorization.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸ Sayce's changing views on race correlate to his changing views on the role of the Kushite Dynasty in the 701 conflict. In *The Races of the Old Testament* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1891), he writes, "The Negro, in fact, stands about as much below the European as he stands above the orang-outang" (16–17). He goes on to say, "The [ancient] Egyptian is a member of the white race" (83). The pharaohs of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty, including Taharqo, and their courts also "belonged to the white race. They were of Egyptian descent" (144). However, in a book published four years later, *The Egypt of the Hebrews and Herodotus* (New York: Macmillan, 1895), Sayce takes stock of an Assyrian depiction of a Kushite royal on the Zinjirli stela and reverses his view: "[. . .] we now know [the Kushites] were Negroes in reality" (113). In each of these books, written while Britain was fighting a particularly difficult war in Sudan, Sayce contends that Sennacherib defeated Taharqo's forces.

In 1911, well after Britain's victory, Sayce writes, "It was the Ethiopian [i.e., Kushite] king, with his black levies [. . .], who prevented Sennacherib from destroying Jerusalem, and thereby the religion of Judah. [. . .] The Negroes of Africa had saved the city and temple of Jerusalem." (A.H. Sayce, "Introductory Note," in Y. Artin, *England in the Sudan*, trans. from the French by G. Robb [London: Macmillan, 1911], 3–4.) This remarkable observation appears in a book that may not have circulated much in scholarly circles; it is a vanity book for a friend, a high Ottoman official, His Excellency Yacoub Artin Pasha, and consists of letters the pasha wrote to his wife while journeying through Sudan with Sayce. Note that in this book Sayce describes Taharqo as "Ethiopian"; it is his troops who are Negro. In another book published the same year Sayce confirms that Taharqo is not Negro: "Ethiopians had no Negro blood in their veins." (A.H. Sayce, "Introductory: The Ethiopian Capital," in J. Garstang, A.H. Sayce and F.L. Griffith, *Meroë, the City of the Ethiopians: Being an Account of the First Season's Excavations of the Site, 1909–1910* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911], 4.)

The logic thus appears to be this: when Sayce deems Taharqo to be a Negro, the Twenty-fifth Dynasty's intervention in the 701 conflict fails; when Taharqo is Ethiopian (and thus white), he heroically saves Jerusalem.

But this might not have been Sayce's final opinion. In a 1926 revised edition of a book intended for a general British audience published in 1885, Sayce had the opportunity to affirm the Kushite role in 701, but he passes it up: he says nothing about the circumstances of Sennacherib's departure. (A.H. Sayce, *Assyria: Its Princes, Priests, and People* [London: Religious Tract Society, 1926].)

Where Sayce's convictions lay is debatable. My own hypothesis is that Sayce as an ordained deacon was very much a man of the Church of England. He would wear his churchman's long-tailed black coat and high collar even on archaeological digs. The Religious Tract Society (nondenominational) published several of his books, and he served for

When writing *The Rescue of Jerusalem*, I could find only one supporter other than Sayce from the colonial period: D.D. Luckenbill. Four more have since emerged. Here, in chronological order, are descriptions of all five:

Lewis Bayles Paton (1864–1932), an Old Testament professor at Hartford Theological Seminary, in Connecticut. In a 1901 book, he conjectures that the “reason why Sennacherib fled was that his army was so weakened by disease that he did not care to encounter Tirhaqa.”¹⁰⁹ The threat posed by Taharqo’s reported advance would thus have helped Sennacherib decide to depart.

John Edgar McFayden (1870–1933), Old Testament professor at the University of Toronto, says in a 1908 book that “at the rumour of the approach of the Ethiopian king, [Sennacherib] departed from Libnah [. . .] and returned to Nineveh.”¹¹⁰

Amos Kidder Fiske (1842–1921), a non-academic and New York Times editorial writer, suggests in a 1911 book that after Eltekeh the Assyrian army was “badly cut up near the borders of Egypt” by Taharqa’s force.¹¹¹

Nathan Monroe Work (1866–1945), an African-American sociologist at the Tuskegee Institute, a historically black university in Alabama, gives the Kushites (“Ethiopians”) credit in a 1916 article appearing in the *Journal of Negro History*; what is more, he also places their achievement in the framework of world history, something that—so far as I know—has eluded every other subsequent academic up to now. (Sayce’s similar observation was published five years earlier.¹¹²) Pope has scored a coup in unearthing the long-ignored passage, worth quoting in full: “Sennacherib’s attempt to capture Jerusalem and carry the Jews into captivity, was frustrated by the army of the Ethiopian king, Taharka. The nation and religion of Judah were thus preserved from being absorbed in heathen lands like the lost Ten Tribes.

many years as president of the Society of Biblical Archaeology, publisher of a prestigious journal. Given the racial climate during this colonial period, it could have been difficult for him to assert loudly and clearly that the exploit of the “Negro levies” —subhumans according to the view expressed in his 1891 book—had enabled the survival of Jerusalem and Judah’s religion, and thus had in effect also enabled the eventual emergence of Christianity.

¹⁰⁹ L.B. Paton, *The Early History of Syria and Palestine* (New York: Scribner’s, 1901), 260.

¹¹⁰ J.E. McFayden, *The Messengers of the Prophetic and Priestly Historians* (New York: Scribner’s, 1908), 227.

¹¹¹ A.K. Fiske, *The Great Epic of Israel: The Web of Myth, Legend, History, Law, Oracle, Wisdom and Poetry of the Ancient Hebrews* (New York: Sturgis & Walton, 1911), 148.

¹¹² See n. 108 above.

The Negro soldiers of the Sudan saved the Jewish religion."¹¹³

Daniel David Luckenbill (1891–1927), a native of Pennsylvania and a professor of Assyriology at the University of Chicago, wrote in 1924 of the clash at Eltekeh: “[I]t is altogether possible that this battle, in which [Sennacherib] may have been fought to a standstill, came at the close of the campaign and was the reason for his abandonment of the siege [of Jerusalem].”¹¹⁴

What does the addition of these colonial-era scholars do to that part of my hypothesis that sees a sharp decline in scholarly support for the Kushite role as taking place in the colonial era? They add complexity and require that the hypothesis be nuanced along the following lines.

1. Paton, McFayden, Fiske, Work, and Luckenbill are from North America. While mindful of the danger of giving too much importance to geography’s influence on attitude, it is fair to note that, unlike much of Europe, North America was not directly involved in the colonization of Africa. To be sure, not all North American historians specializing in the ancient Near East were bias-free: among these five writers’ contemporaries were the celebrated Egyptologists James H. Breasted¹¹⁵ (1865–1935) and George A. Reisner¹¹⁶ (1867–1942), natives of Illinois and Indiana respectively, whose overtly expressed anti-African racism is treated in *Rescue of Jerusalem*.¹¹⁷ It is to be noted, however, that both Breasted and Reisner did post-graduate studies at the University of Berlin under Adolf Erman (1854–1937), an overtly racist leader of the influential “Berlin school” of Egyptology. (Erman’s obituary in the *Journal of the American Oriental Society* asserts: “It would be hard to overestimate the importance of Erman’s work. The whole course of Egyptological scholarship since 1880 could be described in terms of his clear, bold, and eminently well-rounded mind [. . .].”¹¹⁸ His racism is straightforward. In a book published in English in 1907, and in German in

¹¹³ N.M. Work, “The Passing Tradition and the African Civilization,” *JNH* 1:1 (1916), 37–38.

¹¹⁴ D.D. Luckenbill, *The Annals of Sennacherib* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1924), 13. See discussion in Aubin, *Rescue*, 127–29.

¹¹⁵ Breasted, *A History of Egypt*, asserts that the “feeble and inglorious” line of Kushite Pharaohs began to suffer at the hands of Assyria as “the southern strain with which their blood was tintured began to appear” (554, 560). For an assessment of Breasted’s view on the role of what he called the “Great White Race” in human history, see L.J. Ambridge, “Imperial and Racial Geography,” in J.H. Breasted’s, *Ancient Times, a History of the Ancient World*, *JEH* 5 (2012), 12–33.

¹¹⁶ G.A. Reisner, *The Archaeological Survey of Nubia for 1907–1908*, vol. 1 (Cairo: National Printing Department, 1910), says of Kush: “Its very race appears to be the product of its poverty and its isolation—a negroid Egyptian mixture fused together on a desert river bank too far away and too poor to attract a stronger and better race” (348).

¹¹⁷ Aubin, *Rescue*, 180–81, 243, 244.

¹¹⁸ L. Bull and W.F. Edgerton, “Adolf Erman, 1854–1937,” *JAOS* 58 (1938), 414.

1904, he states that Egyptian religion was appreciatively received when introduced to the “races of lowest culture and meanest endowments, the land of Nubians and negroes.” Piankhy was a “barbarian” and his army consisted of “wild hordes” when it took control of Egypt. After the Twenty-fifth Dynasty was driven from Egypt, Kush “sank into still deeper barbarism.”¹¹⁹) Perhaps also helping to explain Breasted and Reisner’s attitudes on race is their many years of archeological work in Egypt and Sudan during the heyday of Britain’s *de facto* colonial rule; this was not the case with the five aforementioned North Americans. In the case of Luckenbill, the only one of the five who might be called a member of the academic establishment as regards the study of the ancient Near East, it is worth noting that his support for the Kushite role came *after* that heyday and as the colonial mentality in Egypt was winding down: in 1922, two years before the publication of his opinion, Egypt had declared its independence from the British protectorate.

2. My hypothesis was (and is) that what the pre-colonial supporters of the Kushites lacked in numbers they often possessed in prominence—that is, many of these supporters were leading thinkers in their fields. Their ideas on numerous subjects, even those outside their immediate areas of expertise, might not be so easily ignored by their contemporaries. Of the twenty-two pre-colonial supporters, sixteen were such leaders. Paton, McFayden, Fiske and Work, achievers though they were, do not appear to have been recognized leaders in their fields. (As Pope observes, Work’s Jim Crow-era article in the *Journal of Negro History* “seems to have passed unnoticed by contemporaries” in mainstream academia.) The exception is Luckenbill, who had a bright Assyriological career underway prior to his death at age forty-six; his several sentences on the Twenty-fifth Dynasty’s feat appear to have attracted little attention, being rarely cited.

CONCLUDING REMARKS ON HISTORIOGRAPHY

This expanded round of sampling upholds the idea that support among Western scholars as a whole was far more common before the colonial period (twenty-two scholars) than during that period (five scholars). It also re-enforces the suggestion that such pre-colonial support, unlike colonial-era support, included a significant number of leading intellectuals. The new data therefore suggest (with all the limitations implicit in an unscientific sampling) that a nuance can be made in the broad term “Western”: in the pre-colonial period, it is European scholars who dominate the support for the Kushites. In the colonial period, however, it is North Americans who appear apt to back the Kushites. Instead of saying there was a severe decline in support for a Kushite role among Western scholars in the colonial period, the word “European” ought to replace “Western.”

In viewing different European points of view according to era, it is instructive to make a quantitative comparison between

¹¹⁹ A. Erman, *A Handbook of Egyptian Religion*, trans. A.S. Griffith (London: Archibald Constable & Co., 1907), 196, 198.

the pre-colonial period and the colonial period. To make a fair, apples-to-apples comparison from the above sampling, let us *contrast the two periods using an equal number of years*. During the eight decades preceding the colonial era (that is, from 1800 to the end of the 1870s), one counts twelve European supporters of Kushite influence: Bevan, Constable, Cooper, von Ewald, Heeren, Hoskins, Malbim, Schrader, Smith, Strachey, Wilkinson and, counting him as European because of his background in Bohemia, Wise. During the eight decades of the colonial era, one finds no European scholars who support the Kushites' role (excepting the questionable Sayce).

What makes this contrast all the more striking is that scholars during the colonial period had more pertinent research material at their disposal than did many of their earlier counterparts. For one thing, all colonial-era scholars would have been able to access Sennacherib's annals, which were first translated from cuneiform into a modern language in the mid-nineteenth century. This means there would have been no way for Hoskins, von Ewald, and Wilkinson to know of that informative text. Furthermore, all colonial-era scholars would have access to the first translation of Piankhy's stela in 1873; this detailed account of the Kushite king's conquest of Middle and Lower Egypt shows that the Kushites had the military muscle and sense of strategic planning to be credible adversaries for Assyria. Finally, colonial-era scholars would have been in a position to be aware of Bernhard Stade's ground-breaking study, published in 1886 and the subject of much discussion; Stade concluded that the account of Sennacherib's invasion in the books of 2 Kings and Isaiah is actually composed of three separate texts from different periods.¹²⁰ (Reading the biblical narrative without the third and latest of the Stade-identified texts provided my first inkling of "Tirhakah's" influence on Sennacherib; it became Argument One for Kushite success in *Rescue of Jerusalem*.¹²¹)

My revised, more nuanced view of the historiography, then, is this. First, that prior to Europe's conquest and colonization of Africa, those who stated that the Twenty-fifth Dynasty played some sort of significant role (whether supporting or leading) in Sennacherib's departure included some of Europe's more prominent thinkers. Second, that a severe drop in such opinion took place among Europeans at a time that coincided with the start of the colonial period. Third, that support in the post-colonial period (from mid-twentieth century to present) for a Kushite influence has never recovered the intellectual respectability that it had enjoyed in pre-colonial times. To be sure, among supporters prior to the publication of this collection of essays are some brilliant scholars, but none has the intellectual stature of a Calvin or a Wise.¹²² Nor has any of them expressed such support in such a

¹²⁰ B. Stade, "Anmerkungen zu 2 Kö. 15–21," *ZAW* 6 (1866), 122–92.

¹²¹ See § 10 of Aubin, *Rescue*. For an evaluation of this argument, see Song-Mi Suzie Park's essay in this collection.

¹²² Wise is called the "founder of American Judaism" by his biographer, M.B. May, in *Isaac Mayer Wise: The Founder of American Judaism*

way as to attract the public's attention. (For examples of twenty-first century scholars' *sotto voce* syndrome, see my response to Christopher Hays's essay in this collection.)

A final observation: Work's article, published in 1916, not only supported the Twenty-fifth Dynasty's influence in 701 BCE but also noted that action's historical importance. So far as I am aware, that is something that no other academic has been able to do in the course of the ensuing 100 years.

**RESPONSE TO DODSON: ASSESSING THE STRENGTH
OF THE TWENTY-FIFTH DYNASTY'S ARMY IN 701
BCE**

Aidan Dodson judges *The Rescue of Jerusalem*'s proposal that the Twenty-fifth Dynasty's intervention helped cause Sennacherib's retreat in 701 BCE to be "a perfectly reasonable working hypothesis." After examining the book's argumentation that the Twenty-fifth Dynasty had the military capability to help cause Sennacherib to withdraw,¹²³ he concludes: "[T]here is no reason to doubt that [the army] could have been well-resourced, experienced and, if well-led, effective on the battlefield—even against the Assyrians." Dodson's 2012 book that deals with the Kushite Twenty-fifth Dynasty expresses no opinion on the cause(s) of the retreat, and I appreciate his essay's conclusion all the more because of this background of thoughtful reserve.¹²⁴

Dodson criticizes *The Rescue of Jerusalem* on two counts. Let's look at each.

**1. THE RELATIVE STRENGTH OF THE TWENTY-FIFTH
DYNASTY'S ARMY**

Dodson approves of my assertion that in 701 BCE the Twenty-fifth Dynasty would have possessed "one of the strongest—probably *the* strongest—army in Egypt in many centuries"¹²⁵ (that is, since the weakening of the New Kingdom in the twelfth century BCE). However, he objects to an accompanying one-sentence endnote that adds, "Possibly, it was even the strongest army in the history of Egypt."¹²⁶ Since the aside was tangential, I did not back it up. Dodson writes that "it seems excessive to suggest that [the Twenty-fifth Dynasty's army] could have exceeded the strength of the Egyptian armies of the [New Kingdom's] Eighteenth Dynasty"; he goes on to call the endnote remark "unjustifiable hyperbole." His out-of-hand rejection of the mere possibility of such strength reflects an attitude among some scholars that the Twenty-fifth Dynasty belongs to a period of diminishing military potency: Ian Shaw's *Egyptian Warfare and Weapons* consigns the Twenty-fifth Dynasty to a chapter entitled "Military Decline,"¹²⁷ for example, and Toby Wilkinson's *The Rise and Fall of Ancient Egypt* lumps that dynasty into a section of the book called "Change and Decay (1069–30 B.C.E.)."¹²⁸ William Y. Adams, in his widely respected book on Nubia accepts the veracity of the Rab-shakeh's likening of the Kushite army to a "broken reed" in 2 Kgs 18:21 and says the Assyrian emissary's

¹²³ This is Argument Four (§ 12) in Aubin, *Rescue*, 154–63.

¹²⁴ A. Dodson, *Afterglow of Empire: Egypt from the Fall of the New Kingdom to the Saite Renaissance* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2012).

¹²⁵ Aubin, *Rescue*, 74 (emphasis in original).

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 323 n. 85.

¹²⁷ I. Shaw, *Egyptian Warfare and Weapons* (Buckinghamshire: Shire, 1991), 65.

¹²⁸ Wilkinson, *The Rise and Fall*, 361–486.

words “aptly suggest the estate to which Egypt’s imperial fortunes had fallen in the eighth century BC.”¹²⁹ Perhaps the single most influential writer in English over the course of the twentieth century on the subject of ancient Egypt, James Henry Breasted, affirms that Egypt under the Twenty-fifth Dynasty was in a state of “decadent impotence.”¹³⁰

Dodson’s skepticism offers a stimulating opportunity to assess the attributes of the Double Kingdom’s land forces¹³¹ and to compare them with those of the top armies of the New Kingdom. Perhaps the following very rough evaluation of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty army’s prowess may be able to nudge forward our understanding of the *rapport de force* between the Double Kingdom and Assyria.

A note on methodology. To make a proper comparison of the military strength of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty and that of Egypt’s preceding high point in strength, we need to identify that high point. There seems little doubt that this apogee could have occurred sometime during the New Kingdom, the period that historians give to the mid-sixteenth through late twelfth centuries BCE and that included the Eighteenth through Twentieth Dynasties. Dodson in effect offers the Eighteenth Dynasty (1540–1278)¹³² as the gold standard of Egyptian might. Although he could be right, I am unaware of supporting data. Indeed, in his study of the Egyptian military, R.O. Faulkner observes that “it is not possible to say precisely at what date the Egyptian army attained its maximum development.”¹³³ Some readers might argue that the military power of the Nineteenth Dynasty (c. 1278–1176), or perhaps even that of the early Twentieth, could have been stronger, and they too could be right.¹³⁴ The iconic “Ramesses the Great” of the Nineteenth Dynasty is the subject of Kenneth Kitchen’s, *Pharaoh Triumphant: The Life and Times of Ramesses II, King of Egypt*, but the Egyptologist is ambivalent about where to locate the peak of New Kingdom power: on the one hand, he writes that “Under Thutmose III and Amenophis III [of the Eighteenth Dynasty] [. . .], Egypt had first reached a peak of political world-rank power [. . .]”; on the other hand, he notes

¹²⁹ Adams, *Nubia*, 246.

¹³⁰ Breasted, *A History of Egypt*, 551. Accordingly, in 701 “Sennacherib disposed of Taharka’s army without difficulty” (552).

¹³¹ Since naval forces are not relevant to the conflict of 701 BCE, I will deal only with land forces. Note, however, that Piankhy’s stela presents the Kushites as successful when fighting on water early in his campaign to conquer and unify Egypt against Assyria.

¹³² The dates in this response are drawn from Dodson, *Afterglow of Empire*, 190–93.

¹³³ R.O. Faulkner, “Egyptian Military Organization,” *JEA* 39 (1953), 42.

¹³⁴ R.B. Partridge, *Fighting Pharaohs: Weapons and Warfare in Ancient Egypt* (Manchester, UK: Peartree, 2002), advises against certitude when dealing with pharaonic Egypt’s military history: “A great deal of information does [. . .] have to be treated with caution, for the recorded history we have is selective and biased. We are told what the Egyptians themselves wanted to believe, or what those in authority wanted the population to believe” (3).

two paragraphs later that the Ramesside kings of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Dynasties “sought [. . .] to restore and even surpass the greatest glories of the Eighteenth Dynasty in both war and peace.”¹³⁵ An army that is more glorious, however, is not necessarily stronger. Anthony J. Spalinger, in *War in Ancient Egypt: The New Kingdom*, also refrains from conjectural comparisons, but he affirms that the general period of Ramesses II corresponds to the “time when the Egyptian state had to exert itself to the fullest in order to resist the Hittite threat and subsequently to deal with serious problems in Palestine and Libya.”¹³⁶ Note, too, that Breasted considers that the Hittite foe with which Ramesses II had to cope was “more formidable than any [army] which Egypt had hitherto been called upon to meet.”¹³⁷ Finally, and significantly, most estimates of the size of the Eighteenth Dynasty’s armies tend to be smaller than those of the Nineteenth (see below). To give full context to my proposition that the Twenty-fifth Dynasty’s army in 701 was possibly the strongest army in Egypt’s history up to that time, I will broaden Dodson’s frame of reference and include more New Kingdom armies than simply those of the Eighteenth Dynasty.

Here are seven criteria, presented in no special order, for assessing an army’s strength.

Size. One measure of a field army’s potency is its manpower. The military historian John Keegan suggests that Ramesses II’s army had 5,000 troops in the most famous of Egypt’s clashes in the Levant, the Battle of Kadesh, which took place in the late thirteenth century BCE.¹³⁸ Spalinger’s closer analysis, however, estimates that Egypt had at least 20,000 troops at Kadesh against the Hittites, a view shared by several other scholars,¹³⁹ and that it later sent 30,000 against the Libyans; by contrast, he estimates that Thutmose III of the Eighteenth Dynasty would have had only 5,000–6,000 soldiers in the important battle of Megiddo in the fifteenth century BCE.¹⁴⁰ Donald Redford notes that while “Egyptian troop sizes in the Late Bronze Age must have varied considerably depending on the purpose of the expedition,” the “common size for armies of the period” was 10,000 men.¹⁴¹ He sets this ceiling: “Forces in excess of

¹³⁵ K.A. Kitchen, *Pharaoh Triumphant: The Life and Times of Ramesses II, King of Egypt* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1982), 224.

¹³⁶ A.J. Spalinger, *War in Ancient Egypt: The New Kingdom* (Malden, MA.; Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), 272–73.

¹³⁷ Breasted, *History of Egypt*, 424.

¹³⁸ J. Keegan, *A History of Warfare* (New York: Random House, 1993), 176.

¹³⁹ Including Breasted, *History of Egypt*, 425; Faulkner, “Egyptian Military Organization,” 42; Shaw, *Egyptian Warfare and Weapons*, 28; B.T. Carey, *Warfare in the Ancient World* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military, 2005), 18.

¹⁴⁰ Spalinger, *War in Ancient Egypt*, 275 (Libyan conflict), 99 n. 22 (Megiddo).

¹⁴¹ D.B. Redford, *Wars in Syria and Palestine of Thutmose III* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 195, 196.

30,000 men are rare and the passages that mention them highly suspect.”

Unfortunately, the textual and pictorial descriptions of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty’s army are minuscule next to those of New Kingdom armies: no records of its own pertaining to its performance in the 701 conflict have been found, nor has it left records that hint at the size of its forces. Still, as Dodson points out, the unification of Kush and Egypt roughly a decade¹⁴² before the 701 mobilization meant that the army of the newly formed Double Kingdom could tap an extra-large “martial pool of manpower” for enlistees and conscripts.¹⁴³ Dodson also makes this useful observation: “[T]he union of Egypt and Kush restored the economic basis of the military power of the glory days of the New Kingdom.”

In *Rescue*, I follow Kitchen’s hypothesis that the Twenty-fifth Dynasty’s forces against Assyria in 701 may have consisted of two contingents,¹⁴⁴ with one force consisting mostly of chariotry and cavalry and a larger, later-arriving force that included numerous infantry as well as chariotry and cavalry. Although no estimates exist on the size of either contingent, Sennacherib’s annal describes the earlier and smaller of the contingents (which he battled at Elekeh) as containing a “countless” number of soldiers. Maybe it indeed was a very large force, or maybe Sennacherib asserted that only to make his self-described victory seem all the greater. Whatever the size of the Double Kingdom’s contingent, however, it must have put up a decent fight: the annals say nothing about pursuing the enemy after the battle, as was the standard practice of triumphant ancient armies; nor do they say that the Assyrians captured any of the “kings of Egypt” (presumably the minor kings of Lower Egypt) present at the battle.

Conclusion: Too few data exist to make a comparison between the Twenty-fifth Dynasty’s army in 701 and any New Kingdom army on the basis of size.

Weaponry. At first glance, the Twenty-fifth Dynasty’s army might appear to hold an important advantage over the forces of the New Kingdom: its rule coincides with the Iron Age, the time when tools and weapons of iron were first produced in significant numbers. In the case of the Eastern Mediterranean, in which the Twenty-fifth Dynasty was a major military presence, this period would have started early in the twelfth century (and lasted until the sixth century BCE). Such a chronology would exclude the armies of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasties; they belonged to the Bronze Age.¹⁴⁵ The Iron Age had huge military implications

¹⁴² Dodson’s essay dates the unification under Shabatako to c. 710.

¹⁴³ To be sure, Kush had been a source of mercenaries for Egypt during the New Kingdom (and before), but these would have been less numerous than the number of Kushite males eligible for military service under the Double Kingdom.

¹⁴⁴ Kitchen, “Egypt, the Levant and Assyria,” 251.

¹⁴⁵ The last of the three New Kingdom dynasties, the Twentieth, existed during the twelfth century but it nonetheless fits the Bronze

for the Eastern Mediterranean: Richard Gabriel and Karen Metz point out that by the early half of the first millennium in the ancient Middle East iron had replaced bronze in weaponry to become the “mainstay of all major armies of the period.”¹⁴⁶ Paul Kriwaczek lists the advantages of iron swords, daggers, battleaxes, spears, etc.: “Bronze weapons offered no real contest [to iron]: this new material, which was cheaper, harder, less brittle, could be ground sharper and kept a keener edge far longer.”¹⁴⁷ Yet, paradoxically, this does not mean the Twenty-fifth Dynasty’s troops had a significant advantage over those of the New Kingdom.

Egypt, advanced society that it was in most areas, lagged behind its Eastern Mediterranean neighbors in adopting iron for weapons and tools; Kush also. Bruce Trigger observes that in Egypt and Kush “iron appears to have remained uncommon for almost five hundred years longer than it did east of the Sinai Peninsula”¹⁴⁸—i.e., the Levant, Anatolia and Mesopotamia. Indeed, at the time of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty, Trigger writes, “iron appears to have been rare in Egypt and was used mostly for magical and ornamental purposes”; he notes that the same holds for Kush.¹⁴⁹ Randi Haaland, an archaeologist specializing in iron work, says of Kush: “Iron was very rare before the sixth century. An iron spearhead found in the tomb of Taharqo is wrapped in gold foil, indicating the special nature of iron.”¹⁵⁰

It was only well into the seventh century, during the Twenty-sixth Dynasty of the Saites, that iron weaponry would become common in Egypt.¹⁵¹ In Kush, as much as 10,000 tons of iron slag have been found near the ancient city of Meroe, a sign of major smelting operations, but the oldest level of this metallurgical debris is dated to more than a century after the 701 conflict.¹⁵²

Age model. J.C. Waldbaum, *From Bronze to Iron: The Transition from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age in the Eastern Mediterranean* (Göteborg: Aström Förlag, 1978), says that the earliest Egyptian site in which a significant number of iron objects have been found is a late eleventh-century tomb belonging Pharaoh Psusennes I of the Twenty-first Dynasty (15).

¹⁴⁶ R.A. Gabriel and K.S. Metz, *From Sumer to Rome: The Military Capabilities of Ancient Armies* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1991), 49. Of a similar view is Waldbaum, *From Bronze to Iron*, who notes that iron weapons and tools in the Eastern Mediterranean “may be said to be in common, though not exclusive, use nearly everywhere by the tenth [century]” (670).

¹⁴⁷ P. Kriwaczek, *Babylon: Mesopotamia and the Birth of Civilization* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, St. Martin’s Press, 2010), 236.

¹⁴⁸ B.G. Trigger, “The Myth of Meroe and the African Iron Age,” *African Historical Studies* 2:1 (1969), 52.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 42.

¹⁵⁰ R. Haaland, “Ritual and Political Aspects of Iron-working: Iron in War and Conflict,” in *Archaeology of Early Northeastern Africa* (SAA, 9; Poznan: Poznan Archaeological Museum, 2006), 144.

¹⁵¹ Trigger, “Myth of Meroe,” 35.

¹⁵² J. Humphris and T. Rehren, “Iron Production and the Kingdom of Kush: An Introduction to UCL Qatar’s Research in Sudan,” in A. Lohwasser and P. Wolf (eds.), *Ein Forscherleben zwischen den Welten: zum*

Conclusion: In weaponry, neither the Twenty-fifth Dynasty's army nor the New Kingdom's forces has a clear edge over the other. The Double Kingdom's apparent lack of interest in iron meant that it missed an excellent opportunity to distance itself from New Kingdom armies in a key domain.

Chariotry. Dodson says that “nothing is known about the [. . .] composition of the Egyptian-Kushite army” in 701, but we do know a bit. Sennacherib's annal says that in the Battle of Eltekeh he confronted “Egyptian charioteers” and “bowmen, chariot corps, and cavalry of the king of Kush.” Also, the Bible presents Hezekiah as having high regard for the Twenty-fifth Dynasty's chariot corps: in 2 Kgs 18:24, the Rab-shakeh says the king has “trust in Egypt for chariots and horsemen” as defenders against Assyria.¹⁵³ Barebones though these Assyrian and biblical references are, the information they contain is useful. At a time when Judah's survival hung in the balance, its king refused to surrender. By deciding to hold out, Hezekiah accepted the risk of seeing his subjects deported, his city destroyed, and himself painfully put to death—the standard Assyrian practice of punishing unyielding rebel vassals. Holding out thus indicated a high degree of confidence in the Twenty-fifth Dynasty's ability.¹⁵⁴

Chariots have been called the “striking arm” of ancient field armies.¹⁵⁵ They could charge into enemy ranks, sow mayhem and scatter the foe; as well, they could provide mobile platforms that could circulate on the periphery of a battlefield and from which archers could pepper the enemy with arrows.

But would the Twenty-fifth Dynasty's chariotry have been any more effective than the New Kingdom's? Yes. Generally speaking, the bigger the chariot the more powerful it was on the battlefield. During the New Kingdom, the chariot crews consisted of two soldiers: the driver and a warrior armed with a bow and javelins or spears.¹⁵⁶ We know from their reliefs that by 701 the Assyrians had enlarged their war chariots to hold a third occupant. The larger chariot could also inflict more damage when plowing into enemy formations. To compensate for the weight

80. *Geburtstag von Steffen Wenig* (Berlin: Sudanarchäologische Gesellschaft, 2014), 81.

¹⁵³ The Rab-shakeh's remark mocks Hezekiah for (alleged) misplaced trust in Egypt, “a splintered reed staff” (v 21). See Aubin, *Rescue*, § 14, for the view that the biblical writer implicitly means just the opposite—that the trust is well-placed. See also Song-Mi Suzie Park's essay in this volume.

¹⁵⁴ For a defense of the historicity of the core of the Rab-shakeh's speech, see my response to L.L. Grabbe in this collection.

¹⁵⁵ R.A. Gabriel and D.W. Boose, *The Great Battles of Antiquity: A Strategic and Tactical Guide to Great Battles that Shaped the Development of War* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1994), 102.

¹⁵⁶ A.J. Spalinger, “Military Institutions and Warfare: Pharaonic,” in A.B. Lloyd (ed.), *A Companion to Ancient Egypt* (Malden, MA/Chichester, West Sussex: Blackwell, 2010), 438.

of the extra occupant and the larger, heavier vehicle, the Assyrians added a third horse.

If the Twenty-fifth Dynasty, too, had upgraded to the three-man model it would represent a noteworthy increase in chariot capability since the New Kingdom. But did the Dynasty in fact adopt three-man crews by 701? In the absence of smoking-gun evidence, it is worth considering four points.

First, a relief in the Temple of Amun in the Kushite capital of Napata depicts a military procession that, despite severe erosion, appears to show a chariot pulled by three horses,¹⁵⁷ not the New Kingdom's two. Spalinger dates the relief to early in Piankhy's reign, which would place it several decades before the 701 conflict.

Second, an Assyrian text that Spalinger dates to "shortly after 671" explicitly tells of Kushites and Egyptians using three-man chariots.¹⁵⁸

Third, a heavier chariot requires not only greater horsepower but also stronger wheels. That means more spokes. Starting at about the time of the Eighteenth Dynasty's Thutmose III, Egyptian chariot wheels went from four spokes to six, and there the number stayed for the duration of the New Kingdom.¹⁵⁹ Depictions at temples at Sanam and Kawa built by Pharaoh Taharqo show non-royal chariots whose wheels have eight spokes, equal to the number of spokes of Assyria's heavy war chariots.¹⁶⁰

Spalinger acknowledges that the "first clear-cut evidence for a heavy chariot (eight spokes to a wheel)" dates from Taharqo's rule (690–664), but he makes this judgment: "In all, it is perhaps best to conclude that a heavier chariot began to be used extensively in the late eighth century BC, leaving the precise date for this innovation open."¹⁶¹ Spalinger's dating would thus allow for the Twenty-fifth Dynasty's army to have entered the 701 conflict with these large weaponized vehicles.

A fourth bit of information would further strengthen the conclusion that the Twenty-fifth Dynasty's chariots in 701 would have held three occupants and used eight-spoke wheels. Well before Assyrian expansionism posed a direct threat to the Nile Valley, the Kushites had established themselves as the breeders of one of the ancient world's most prized varieties of chariot

¹⁵⁷ Spalinger, "Notes on the Military in Egypt during the XXVth Dynasty," *JSEA* 11 (1981), 50–51. The eroded relief does not permit an interpretation of the horses' size.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 56–57.

¹⁵⁹ Spalinger, *War in Ancient Egypt*, 13. The Pharaoh's chariot, however, might have had eight-spoke wheels. See Spalinger, "Military Institutions," 438, and "Notes on the Military in Egypt," 53.

¹⁶⁰ Spalinger, "Notes on the Military in Egypt," 52–53.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 57. Spalinger also observes that the pictorial evidence indicates that Kushite soldiers were far less armored than their Assyrian counterparts (56) and that their chariots were less imposing (52), but this essay compares the armies of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty with the New Kingdom's, not Assyria's.

horses.¹⁶² The “Kushite” horse, as the breed was known, was larger than most other breeds, including those that New Kingdom armies had used, and was in demand by many armies of the Near East.¹⁶³ As Robin Archer notes, the “large Nubian horses [. . .] allowed [. . .] heavy chariots as an effective battlefield unit.”¹⁶⁴ (Indeed, Assyria itself began importing some of these horses several decades before Sennacherib’s rule, a time when Kush was pursuing a non-conflictual policy toward the empire.¹⁶⁵) It is logical to assume that the Kushites would not simply have traded away all their extra-strong horses but would, rather, have been part of the international trend and employed them to power their own big chariots.

Conclusion: It is quite likely that the “chariot corps [. . .] of the king of Kush,” to which Sennacherib’s annal refers in its account of the battle of Eltekeh, included these heavy vehicles. This would have represented a marked improvement in the battlefield effectiveness of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty’s chariotry over that of its New Kingdom counterparts. Spalinger’s investigation of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty’s army in the late eighth century also finds greater efficiency: “It can be maintained that the footing of war in the Nile Valley, represented by either the Kushites or by the Egyptians themselves, had *developed somewhat from the New Kingdom*. [. . .] Better shields, a growing use of a heavier chariot, three men to a chariot, the beginning use of iron for weapons, and more large horses—all point to a *more efficient war machine in Egypt*.”¹⁶⁶ (Emphases added.) But, as will see, the attributes of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty’s army did not end there.

Cavalry. Cavalries were unknown to the world’s armies in the second millennium BCE. Only in the first millennium BCE did soldiers on horseback enter combat in the Near

¹⁶² See discussion in Aubin, *Rescue*, 78.

¹⁶³ Referring to latter part of the eighth century BCE, L. Török, *The Kingdom of Kush: Handbook of the Napatan-Meroitic Civilization* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), writes, “[T]he finest horses used in contemporary Egypt and Assyria were bred in, and exported from Nubia. It may also be supposed that the development of the large, long-legged, high-quality horse may have already have begun in Kush before the Twenty-fifth Dynasty period” (158). L.A. Heidorn, “The Horses of Kush,” *JNES* 56:2 (1997), notes that there may have been about 1,000 Kushite-breed horses in Assyria at the time of Sennacherib’s successor, Esarhaddon (108–09).

¹⁶⁴ R. Archer, “Chariotry to Cavalry: Developments in the Early First Millennium,” in G.G. Fagan and M. Trundle (eds.), *New Perspectives on Ancient Warfare* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 77.

¹⁶⁵ S. Dalley, “Foreign Chariotry and Cavalry in the Armies of Tiglath-pileser III and Sargon II,” *Iraq* 47, 1985, 44. See also Wiseman, “The Assyrians,” 44.

For the Twenty-fifth Dynasty’s appeasement policy toward Assyria, see my response to Marta Høyland Lavik in this collection.

¹⁶⁶ Spalinger, “Notes on the Military in Egypt,” 58. He does not demonstrate that Kush or Egypt would have had iron weapons in the late eighth century BCE.

East. The Assyrian army, as the “most sophisticated” military organization of its day, brought cavalry into its army as early as the first half of the ninth century BCE.¹⁶⁷ The Kushites eventually followed suit: Sennacherib, as noted above, attests in his annals that at Eltekeh he fought the “cavalry of the king of Kush.”

Conclusion: Sennacherib’s statement confirms that the Twenty-fifth Dynasty’s army in 701 possessed a major asset that all New Kingdom armies lacked. Mounted troops had a large advantage over charioteers. They were cheaper to equip, more maneuverable in combat, more capable of riding over rough terrain, and excellent for surprise attacks.

Military training and tradition. Soldiering appears not to have held much appeal for Egyptians. Writes Lionel Casson: “The Egyptians, though their art is full of scenes of gory battle and their annals of bloody triumphs, were not particularly good soldiers.”¹⁶⁸ The authors of the wide-scope *Ancient and Medieval Warfare* also conclude, “[t]he Egyptian seems never to have been warlike by nature.”¹⁶⁹ This may help explain why separate Kushite campaigns under Piankhy and Shabatako (according to Dodson’s identification) handily defeated Egyptian forces in the decades preceding 701.

Kushite culture, on the other hand, appears to have been quite receptive to the military life. Kushites had served as mercenaries in pharaonic armies since the third millennium BCE;¹⁷⁰ in the decades prior to the 701 conflict they had also fought in Levantine armies.¹⁷¹

A stela from Taharqo’s reign offers a glimpse of the unusually tough physical conditioning in the Double Kingdom’s army. The inscription tells of how the army required conscripts to run every day, and how on one occasion the Pharaoh presided over a nocturnal race. The competition started at Memphis, went as far as the Fayum oasis, a distance that Wolfgang Decker estimates at fifty km; after reaching the oasis at dawn, the runners rested for two hours, then ran the fifty km back to Memphis.¹⁷² Decker remarks that “one has to marvel” at these participants

¹⁶⁷ Gabriel and Boose, *Great Battles of Antiquity*, 98, 106.

¹⁶⁸ L. Casson, *Everyday Life in Ancient Egypt*, rev. and exp. ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001 [1975]), 56.

¹⁶⁹ O.L. Spaulding and H. Nickerson, *Ancient and Medieval Warfare* (London: Constable, 1994), 17.

¹⁷⁰ A.M. Gnirs, “Military,” in D.B. Redford (ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), says of Kushites and Libyans: “Skilled in the bow and spear, these foreign soldiers built up the elite combat troops fundamental to the striking power of the Old Kingdom army.” See also Breasted, *History of Egypt*, 424; Shaw, *Egyptian Warfare and Weapons*, 30.

¹⁷¹ Aubin, *Rescue*, 324–25 n. 97.

¹⁷² As calculated by W. Decker, *Sports and Games of Ancient Egypt*, trans. A. Guttmann (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992 [1987]), 64.

“who were, after all, trained for military rather than sport performances.”¹⁷³ All the more impressive, the stela identifies the runners as recruits—not as members of elite units.¹⁷⁴ My difference of opinion with Dodson on the caliber of the Double Kingdom’s army centers on its status in 701, and this inscriptional evidence dates from c. 685.¹⁷⁵ Nonetheless, the army institution of 701 is the same as that of sixteen years later, and large institutions are often characterized by ingrained values and traditions; the stela, then, may offer a glimpse of an institutionalized culture of tough training.

Conclusion: Kushite and other foreign mercenaries were often elite soldiers, and their presence in New Kingdom armies would at least have made up in part for some of the shortcomings of Egyptian troops. In the Twenty-fifth Dynasty’s army, however, the officer corps—from the generals on down—would have transmitted the Kushites’ strong military ethos throughout the units of either Egyptian or Kushite troops. It seems probable that training and tradition would have been stronger in the Twenty-fifth Dynasty’s army than in New Kingdom forces.

Combat experience. This is one of the intangibles that help determine military competence.

The business of imperialism kept the New Kingdom armies remarkably busy. This was particularly true during the fifty-four-year career of Thutmosis III, when as many as seventeen campaigns took place¹⁷⁶—to the Levant, Nubia and Libya.

Yet when the Twenty-fifth Dynasty’s troops set off for the Levant in 701, they, too, were not ingenues in the art of war. Despite their homeland’s remoteness, the Kushites’ millennia-old tradition of employment in armies of the Eastern Mediterranean had steeped them in that region’s technologies and strategies—ideas and approaches passed on in training and soldierly culture. What would have been immediately relevant for the Kushite and Upper Egyptian (Theban) troops taking part in 701 conflict, however, was the experience gained in the aforementioned conquests of Middle and Lower Egypt by Piankhy around 723¹⁷⁷—a campaign notable for its multiple intense battles—and

¹⁷³ Ibid. One purpose of such endurance training may have been to enable infantry to reach conflict areas quickly.

¹⁷⁴ Interestingly, at one point the Pharaoh himself, who had been observing on horseback, dismounted to run with them: L. Török, “Stela of Taharqo on the Race of his Soldiers, From the Dahshur Road,” in T. Eide et al., *Fontes Historiae Nubiorum: Textual Sources for the History of the Middle Nile Region between the Eighth Century BC and the Sixth Century AD*. Vol. 1 of *From the Eighth to the Mid-fifth Century BC* (Bergen: University of Bergen, 1994), notes that the fact Taharqo had been mounted rather than in a chariot may reflect “the apparently greater importance of cavalry in the Kushite army as opposed to Egyptian practice” (163).

¹⁷⁵ The dating is by Török, *ibid.*, 158.

¹⁷⁶ B. McDermott, *Warfare in Ancient Egypt* (Gloucestershire: Sutton, 2004), 95.

¹⁷⁷ Dodson’s essay does not give a date, but I am using that given

by Shabatako of Lower Egypt in c. 710. Also pertinent was the experience of fighting the potent Assyrians themselves c. 720; this would have been when Kushite and Egyptian soldiers met Sargon II's troops at the Egyptian border-city of Raphia, south of Gaza, in an effort to keep Assyria at bay.¹⁷⁸ Despite Sargon's claim of victory, the defenders must have acquitted themselves well: Sargon never crossed the Sinai during his remaining fifteen years of rule.

We may assume, then, that (1) many older Kushite and Upper Egyptian soldiers taking part in the 701 action would have obtained battle experience in the Kushite kings' two separate conquests of the northern Egypt; (2) they would also have acquired experience against Assyrians in the Gaza clash; (3) younger members of the 701 army would have been trained by combat-wise veterans of those conflicts, and (4), not least, many older Middle and Lower Egyptians who had fought against Piankhy's or Shabakto's forces would have gained experience (even if in a losing cause) that could be useful when serving alongside Kushites in 701.

Conclusion: The members of Thutmose III's army may have known more frequent campaigns, but the Double Kingdom's army in 701 would have had a background in fighting imposing, well-organized adversaries. (See below.) The combat experience of the two armies may have been roughly at par.

The Competition. Generally speaking, nations seek to produce armies that are as strong as is necessary to compete against and, so they hope, defeat the enemy; thus, if Nation A escalates with a new and threateningly imposing military asset—say, an increase in the numbers of charioteers or infantrymen—Nation B will escalate its own resources to cope with that challenge. In trying to compare the strength of New Kingdom armies with that of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty army of 701, then, it is useful to ask: Which period of history, the New Kingdom or the time of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty, would have offered the strongest opponents?

The answer is plain. The New Kingdom's foes—the Mitanni, Canaanites, Libyans, Hittites, etc.—were far inferior in strength to the Double Kingdom's enemy, the Neo-Assyrian Empire. Richard A. Gabriel and Donald W. Boose estimate the total size of the latter's forces in the eighth century BCE at 150,000–200,000 men; they assert that Assyria was “the most powerful and successful military empire the world had seen to that time.”¹⁷⁹ In his recent, two-volume analysis of the Assyrian army in the first millennium, Tamás Dezső extends this exceptional status forward in time: “The Assyrian army in its complexity, its

by Frédéric Payraudeau, “Retour sur la succession Shabaqo-Shabatako,” *NéHé* 1 (2014), 115–27, since his chronology has much in common with Dodson's on other items. Other scholars dating of Piankhy's conquest range from 734 to 719.

¹⁷⁸ Cogan, *The Raging Torrent*, 90. For the presence of Kushites in this clash, see p. 93.

¹⁷⁹ Gabriel and Boose, *Great Battles of Antiquity*, 97, 90.

size, its tendency to become more professional, increasingly well-equipped, armored, and drilled, and the high level of its strategic and tactical command, reached standards which were previously unknown and which—for hundreds of years—would not be achieved by any other army of the ancient world.¹⁸⁰ One estimate puts the size of a typical combat field army (as distinct from the total army) at between 30,000 to 50,000 troops,¹⁸¹ another settles on 50,000,¹⁸² and a third does not exclude a much higher figure.¹⁸³ Focusing specifically on Sennacherib's army of 701, Dezsö puts its size at 30,000 to 40,000.¹⁸⁴ (By contrast, recall that Spalinger proposes that Egypt's foe at Kadesh, the Hittites, may have had as few as 20,000.¹⁸⁵) We must bear in mind, however, that when Sennacherib encountered the Twenty-fifth Dynasty's forces at Eltekeh or elsewhere, his field army may not have been at full size: Assyrian forces may have been scattered into several units in order to deal with adversaries at different locations. Earlier casualties may also have reduced the forces' number.

In preparing to meet the renewed threat of Assyrian invasion in decades *after* 701, the Twenty-fifth Dynasty would have had time to ramp up its army's strength. It would have had at least one indisputable success: in 674, as Dodson notes, Taharqo as pharaoh defeated an Assyrian army led by King Esarhaddon inside Egypt's border.¹⁸⁶

For another measure of the Double Kingdom's military capability, consider where Tyre's loyalty lay following Esarhaddon's setback: rather than remain a vassal of Assyria, the leading Phoenician city-state of that period allied itself with the Double Kingdom. Three years after his setback at the hands of Taharqo, Esarhaddon returned to the Levant en route to what would be a successful invasion of Egypt. His annal reports: "In the course of my campaign, I surrounded with armed posts Baal, king of Tyre, who put his trust in his friend Taharqo, king of Kush, and threw off the yoke of Assur, my lord, (and) answered me with

¹⁸⁰ T. Dezsö, *Recruitment and Logistics*. Vol. 2 of *The Assyrian Army* (Budapest: Eötvös University Press, 2016), 164.

¹⁸¹ Kriwaczek, "Babylon," puts the army at "between 30,000 and 50,000 men, equivalent to five modern divisions, a huge contingent by the standards of the day" (236).

¹⁸² Gabriel and Boose, *Great Battles of Antiquity*, 98; and *Encyclopedia of Military History*, 9

¹⁸³ C.B. Hays and P. Machinist, "Assyria and the Assyrians," in B.T. Arnold and B.A. Strawn (eds.), *The World around the Old Testament: The People and Places of the Ancient Near East* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016), (31–106) state, "Shalmeneser III (r. 858–824) claimed to have crossed the Euphrates with 120,000 soldiers, and that was not at the peak of the empire" (56).

¹⁸⁴ Personal communication. I am unaware of other estimates of the 701 army's size.

¹⁸⁵ Breasted, *History of Egypt*, 424. Gabriel and Metz, *From Sumer to Rome*, suggest the Hittites had even fewer soldiers, 17,000 (21).

¹⁸⁶ See A.K. Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles* (Locust Valley, NY: Augustin, 1975), 84.

insolence.”¹⁸⁷ Tyre may not have been alone in seeing the Double Kingdom as a credible counterweight to Assyria: Mordechai Cogan surmises that “[o]ther [Levantine] cities may have joined the rebels.”¹⁸⁸ Ashkelon, Philistia’s leading seaport, may have been among them.¹⁸⁹ The point: in the eyes of some Levantine rulers, the Double Kingdom’s defeat of Assyria in 674 appears to have been no lucky fluke.¹⁹⁰

A further sign of the Kushite Pharaoh’s military credibility: despite Esarhaddon’s capture of Taharqo’s capital of Memphis, in Lower Egypt, numerous Egyptian leaders who had sworn allegiance to Assyria, rallied to Taharqo’s side when he returned to challenge the Assyrians.¹⁹¹ Eventually the Assyrians would drive the Kushites permanently from all of Egypt; however, the shock that is evident in the prophet Nahum’s response to this defeat may be seen as a further indicator of widespread faith in Kushite military muscle. Commenting on Assyria’s capture of Upper Egypt’s capital, Thebes, in 663, the prophet says of that storied city, “Kush and Egypt were her boundless strength” (NRSV), or “Kush and Egypt constituted her strength, without limit” (CEB).¹⁹²

Of course, the credibility that the Double Kingdom’s army’s strength possessed in the 670s and 660s does not testify to its strength in 701, but it does reflect on that military organization’s obviously entrenched commitment to competing against an enemy far more powerful than any foe the New Kingdom would have encountered.

Conclusion: The Twenty-fifth Dynasty’s army demonstrated the capacity to engage successfully¹⁹³ with a mightier adversary that any New Kingdom army would have confronted.

Overall conclusion: In three of the seven criteria—number of soldiers, weaponry and combat experience—it is hard to determine whether an army of the New Kingdom or the Twenty-fifth Dynasty would have been superior. On a fourth criterion, military training and tradition, the Twenty-fifth Dynasty gets the nod although there is not enough data for this choice to be compelling. The remaining three criteria all favor the Twenty-fifth Dynasty: (1) its chariots were more effective in battle; (2) it possessed a cavalry, unlike the New Kingdom, and (3) its forces were designed to take on far stronger adversaries.

In light of these considerations, I upgrade from possible to likely the observation that the Twenty-fifth Dynasty army in 701 was the strongest in Egyptian history up to that time.

¹⁸⁷ Cogan, *Raging Torrent*, 167.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 169.

¹⁸⁹ Tadmor, “Philistia,” 99.

¹⁹⁰ Aubin, *Rescue*, 159.

¹⁹¹ See Cogan, *Raging Torrent*, 177.

¹⁹² Nah 3:9.

¹⁹³ Given the unknown nature of the outcome of the Double Kingdom army’s challenge to Sennacherib, this vague wording covers everything from a standoff advantageous to the Double Kingdom to an outright battlefield victory for it.

2. THE QUESTION OF A POST-CONFLICT TREATY

Dodson differs on my proposition that the Twenty-fifth Dynasty and the Assyrians negotiated a peace in the aftermath of the hostilities of 701. The evidence that the Double Kingdom enjoyed positive conditions in the Levant following that conflict is strong; these conditions, described below, are consistent with having had the upper hand at the conclusion of that conflict (Argument Three in *The Rescue of Jerusalem*, § 12). A peace treaty would help account for these conditions.

This idea of a treaty relates to a royal seal unearthed at Nineveh that Dodson discusses, but this idea in no way depends on the artifact.¹⁹⁴ (Indeed, when I hypothesized the treaty while researching *The Rescue of Jerusalem* in the 1990s I had not yet learned about the seal's existence.) Because of the seal's extraneous nature, I will stay clear of the debate on the artifact's significance (a debate that relates in part to granular physical issues) and instead deal with the context, a possible peace treaty.

Dodson does not reject the idea of a treaty, but he is skeptical of it, calling it "problematic." He says (1) that no "objective evidence" exists for it, and (2) that "*Rescue's* suggestion that it might have been a multilateral agreement lacks any supporting parallels." I will respond to each objection.

1. There is no proof of any such treaty, but the circumstantial evidence for it is abundant. After 701, the Double Kingdom enjoyed commercial access to the Levant. This is evident in the widespread use of Egypt's system of commercial weights in the southern Levant and in Egypt's ability to import Levantine goods.¹⁹⁵ There would have been no such benefits had Assyria maintained a tight rein on this vassal region. Such conditions—peace and international trade—are consistent with the southern Levant serving as, in Hayim Tadmor's words, a "semi-neutral buffer zone."¹⁹⁶ Buffer zones don't just happen; they are the creatures of treaties.

In light of the Double Kingdom's status in the region, it is significant that Sennacherib, who would have been the Assyrian signatory to a treaty, did not return to the Levant during the remaining twenty years of his reign. The southern Levant, staging area of any Assyrian invasion of Egypt, appears to have been free of any significant military presence on the part of either Assyria or the Double Kingdom and to have been politically stable. To appreciate the exceptional nature of the Levant's generation of peace one must bear in mind that the army of Assyria had entered the region aggressively at least six times in the thirty-three years up to and including 701 (in 734, 733–2, 720, 716 and 712), and on two occasions (720 and 716) had advanced threateningly

¹⁹⁴ I deal with the seal in *Rescue*, 149–50.

¹⁹⁵ For discussion of weights and trade, see *Rescue*, 155–57 and Jeremy Pope's essay in this collection.

¹⁹⁶ Tadmor, "Philistia," 91.

to Egypt's doorstep but not beyond; furthermore, after Sennacherib's death in 681, the army attempted to invade Egypt in 674, and in 671 it did so successfully.

Durable treaties as a rule bring gains to the parties that sign them (which is why they endure), and—given the tumultuous times—a hypothetical pact that lasts twenty years must be considered durable. It was not just Egypt that received gains; Assyria's are also striking. It was spared overt defeat. It was able to save face and *present* the campaign as successful in Sennacherib's misleadingly positive account of the campaign's Jerusalem episode and in the palace-relief of the conquest of Lachish. As well, Assyria was able to maintain light (possibly token) oversight over Judah and other small vassal states whose rebellion had provoked Sennacherib's 701 invasion.

2. Dodson also criticizes the peace-treaty hypothesis by saying no parallels exist for my "suggestion" of what he terms a "multilateral agreement." In fact, I do not see the treaty as multilateral so much as bilateral: the two principal negotiators would have been the Double Kingdom and Assyria.¹⁹⁷ Generally speaking, principal parties in international treaty negotiations are *sovereign* states. The rebel kingdoms had been vassals of Assyria before their revolt, and after the conflict they all returned to that status (albeit with a lightened yoke).

If there had been no accord between Assyria and the Double Kingdom in the wake of the 701 conflict, what other explanation could there be for the peace in the Levant that endured throughout the reign of Sennacherib and for the economic advantages that the Double Kingdom enjoyed in the Levant during that same period?

DODSON'S CONTRIBUTION TO UNDERSTANDING TAHARQO'S ROLE IN 701

Dodson's essay helps clarify the rather blurry picture that has prevailed until recently of Shabako and Shabatako. In arguing for a reversal of the conventional order of the duo's reigns, Dodson builds on proposals made several years ago by Frédéric Payraudeau¹⁹⁸ and others. If the switch survives scholarly debate, it would mean Shabako would deserve credit as the monarch who, responding to Ekron's and Judah's appeals, dispatched troops to try to stop Sennacherib. Dodson also indicates his proposal would torpedo the idea of Shabako and Shabatako as co-regents. I supported the co-regency in *The Rescue of Jerusalem*, but that notion is a thoroughly dispensable part of my background sketch of the period.

¹⁹⁷ In *Rescue*, I wrote the small kingdoms of the rebel coalition, including Judah, would have been "involved" in negotiations (150), a deliberately loose term: it is easy to imagine the two major powers' diplomats consulting the small states' representatives, but the latter could hardly have been full partners in the talks.

¹⁹⁸ Payraudeau, "Retour sur la succession," 115–27.

The reign-reversal's most substantive effect on our understanding of the events of 701 is that, as Dodson points out, it would push the age of Taharqo in 701 upwards to about thirty. This would undergird the Bible's often doubted statement that Taharqo ("Tirhakah") headed the force advancing toward Sennacherib (2 Kgs 19:9) and shatter many scholars' claims that the Kushite royal would have been but a child at the time, too young for even nominal leadership of the expeditionary force.¹⁹⁹

In *The Rescue of Jerusalem*, I offer eight reasons for favoring Taharqo's leadership of this contingent,²⁰⁰ but none is as compelling as Dodson's insightful proposal.

Postscript. Since writing this response in 2017, I have become aware of recent radiocarbon tests that indicate Kushite soldiers would have possessed iron weapons throughout much of the eighth century BCE. J. Humphris and T. Schreibner, "New Radiocarbon Chronology for Iron Production in the Meroe Region," *African Archaeological Review* 34:3 (2017), 377–413, report that tests on metallurgical waste deposits in Kush show that iron production dates from at least as early as 786–765 BCE (399, fig. 4). This finding heightens the probability that the Twenty-fifth Dynasty's forces in 701 were Egypt's strongest army to that time.

¹⁹⁹ For discussion of the debate over Taharqo's age, see Aubin, *Rescue*, 111–15.

²⁰⁰ Aubin, *Rescue*, 112–15.

RESPONSE TO LESTER GRABBE: WAS THE BATTLE OF ELTEKEH DECISIVE?

I deeply appreciate Lester L. Grabbe's participation in this project. I was unaware of his work when writing *The Rescue of Jerusalem*, but since then I have devoured many of his books and articles, admiring his breadth of knowledge, caution before making judgments, and sense of non-ideological fairness. He is also the only contributor to this collection who previously published an opinion²⁰¹ that squarely favors the Twenty-fifth Dynasty as having played a significant role in causing Sennacherib's retreat.²⁰² Furthermore, Grabbe is among the rare academics—Ernst Axel Knauf is another—whose support for Kushite-Egyptian influence in Jerusalem's survival extends beyond several off-hand sentences, thereby allowing the reader to see more than a fragment of the author's evidence and reasoning.

In his essay, Grabbe reaffirms that earlier opinion about the Twenty-fifth Dynasty's success. Of course, I agree with that conclusion, but his essay also makes five other points inviting response. I'll deal with them in ascending order of importance.

1. Grabbe writes, "The one area where I would completely disagree with Aubin is his view that Jerusalem was besieged by Assyrian troops [. . .]." We agree on one matter: nothing in the book conflicts with his view that "[t]here were no siege ramps, battering rams, or sappers at Jerusalem." Grabbe accepts the view, which has gained recent currency, that the Assyrians only blocked access to and egress from the city ("communication routes") and that this does not constitute a siege. However, biblical texts say that (1) a "large force" of Assyrian soldiers accompanied the Rab-shakeh to Jerusalem (2 Kgs 18:17), (2) Jerusalem's "valleys were full of chariots, and cavalry took their stand at the gates"

²⁰¹ See "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* (JSOTSup, 363; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003), esp. 137–39.

²⁰² I should explain why I rule out A.B. Lloyd, also a contributor, of being likewise a supporter of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty's significant influence in 701 BCE. It is true that in *Rescue* I noted that Lloyd indicates that the Twenty-fifth Dynasty had a role in the Assyrians' decision to depart (A. B. Lloyd, *Herodotus, Histories, Book II: Commentary, 99–182*, [Leiden: Brill, 1988], 103). However, that role occupies the background and is inferior to two other influences, disease and Sennacherib's need to attend to troubles elsewhere (103); because of the importance Lloyd gives disease in Herodotus (see Aubin, *Rescue*, 126), when writing *Rescue* I placed him in the category of epidemic-theory supporters (338 n. 8). Lloyd's later writing justifies this categorization: in "Book II," his article in D. Asheri, A. Lloyd, and A. Corcella (eds.), *A Commentary on Herodotus, Books I–IV* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), Lloyd states that the "disaster" causing the Assyrian departure "probably took the form of an epidemic of typhoid or cholera"; he does not mention Twenty-fifth Dynasty forces (343). In his essay in this collection, Lloyd also gives those forces no substantive credit.

(Isa 22:7), and (3) the Rab-shakeh told the inhabitants that the alternative to surrender was death (2 Kgs 18:32). One can argue about whether or not this, plus the blockage of communication routes, constitutes the *early* stage of a siege, but—terminology aside—what is evident is that Jerusalem was in peril.

2. Grabbe remarks, “Perhaps my most important difference [with Aubin] is that I do not *require* Taharqo in [the conflict of] 701 BCE, only an Egyptian army.” (Emphasis in original.) Here, too, we agree (though I may not have made this point strongly enough in the book). I think the case is sturdy for Taharqo’s leadership role in the conflict, but I do not require his presence: knowing the identity of the field commander of a given army is unessential for understanding the basic nature of a conflict; what *is* essential is knowing the identity of the country/countries that sent the army into the conflict (and in this case there is no question).
3. However, I do differ with Grabbe when, in the next sentence, he asserts, “I believe the balance of evidence supports Taharqo as the leader of the Egyptian forces at Eltekeh”—that is, *if* Taharqo was involved at all in the intervention, Grabbe specifies that it would have been as the successful commander at Eltekeh. He is not alone in holding this view: a specialist on the Twenty-fifth Dynasty, Dan’el Kahn,²⁰³ is also partial to it.

Although he invokes the “balance of evidence” in reaching his opinion, Grabbe offers neither evidence nor argumentation. Nor does Kahn. One way to challenge the view of Taharqo’s leadership at Eltekeh is to situate his place in the royal hierarchy of the Double Kingdom of Egypt and Kush:

- Much scholarly attention has gone to the idea that the writer(s) of 2 Kings’ B1 segment erred when referring to Taharqo as “king of Kush” (19:9) because he did not become Pharaoh until eleven years later; this perceived anachronism (as well as doubts about Taharqo’s age in 701) has helped fuel doubts about Taharqo’s involvement in the Twenty-fifth Dynasty’s intervention. But look again at that title: 2 Kings does not refer to Tihakah/Taharqo as pharaoh, or as king of Egypt, or as king of the Double Kingdom of Kush and Egypt. Rather, as Kenneth Kitchen astutely points out, when the Bible calls him the “king of Kush” that may be precisely what he is—that is, king of one of the two components of the Double Kingdom.²⁰⁴ Hierarchically, Taharqo would have been

²⁰³ Kahn, “Taharqa,” 109.

²⁰⁴ K.A. Kitchen, “External Textual Sources – Egypt,” in A. Le-maire and B. Halpern (eds.), *The Books of Kings: Sources, Compositions, and*

the subordinate of the pharaoh—that is, says Kitchen, “the real ‘pharaoh’ of [the Rab-shakeh’s speech in] 2 Kgs 18:25.” Kitchen adds, “Thus, the biblical text applies the correct geographic title to Taharqa in 701.”

- Now, keeping Kitchen’s interpretation in mind, consider the annals’ description of the Assyrians’ adversary at Eltekeh. According to Cogan’s translation of the Rassam Cylinder, “The kings of Egypt, (and) the bowmen, chariot corps and cavalry of the king of Kush assembled a countless force and came to their (i.e., the Ekronites’) aid”²⁰⁵ (emphasis added). Other renderings of the event make the same subtle distinction.²⁰⁶ The annals thus indicate that the kings²⁰⁷ of Egypt were physically present at the battle, but the wording does not indicate that the king of Kush himself was also present. Had the king of Kush been at the battle, the annal’s writer might have said something more straightforward such as, “The kings of Egypt as well as the king of Kush and his bowmen, chariot corps, and cavalry assembled a countless force [. . .]”²⁰⁸

Conclusion: The king of Kush did not have to be present in order for the Assyrians to recognize certain troops as belonging to him: Kushite soldiers would have been identifiable by their bodily appearance as well as by uniforms and insignia. If Taharqa was indeed the king of Kush, as Kitchen plausibly proposes, and if the annals expressly omit any mention of the king of Kush’s personal presence at Eltekeh, why should one overrule the annals and place Taharqa with this strike force? As I note in *The Rescue of Jerusalem*, a plausible alternate role exists for him: “Tirhakah,

Historiography and Reception (VTSup, 129; Leiden: Brill, 2010), 379.

²⁰⁵ Cogan, *The Raging Torrent*, 124.

²⁰⁶ In their translation of the Rassam Cylinder, Grayson and Novotny, *The Royal Inscriptions of Sennacherib*, use a different sentence structure but make the same distinction: “[The Ekronites] formed a confederation with the kings of Egypt (and) the archers, chariots, (and) horses of the king of the land of Meluhha [Kush], forces without number, and they came to their aid” (emphasis added). Note, too, that the translation by Luckenbill, *The Annals of Sennacherib*, also shows this differentiation in his translation of the Oriental Institute Prism’s version of the campaign, written some years after the Rassam version (31).

²⁰⁷ The plural “kings” reflects the fact that Egypt had more than one king. Egypt at that time was fragmented into various minor kingdoms and chiefdoms, which in 701 would have been the Kushite pharaoh’s vassals. N. Na’aman, “Sennacherib’s Campaign to Judah and the Date of the LMLK Stamps,” *VT* 29:1 (1979), 61–86, proposes that the passage “implies that the rulers of the Delta (‘the kings of Egypt’) headed this expedition [to Eltekeh], joined by an Ethiopian [Kushite] army dispatched by a Nubian monarch” (65).

²⁰⁸ Cogan, *Raging Torrent*, 124.

king of Kush,” to whom 2 Kgs 19:9 refers, may have been commanding a second, possibly larger contingent of Twenty-fifth Dynasty forces that would have advanced on Sennacherib sometime after the battle at Eltekeh.²⁰⁹

Kitchen’s identification of Taharqo as the king of Kush is important for another reason. As Frank Yurco has posited, this second contingent would probably have been “mobilized from Kush” and have contained many Kushite foot soldiers.²¹⁰ As Kush’s monarch, Taharqo may have been living in Kush and presiding over its affairs prior to the start of the 701 crisis; it would therefore have been logical for him to head this second contingent on its long march to the war zone rather than to command the earlier contingent that had been posted in Lower Egypt and that fought at Eltekeh. (Part of Taharqo’s chariotry and cavalry—among the elite of the Double Kingdom’s forces—may well have been among those stationed in Lower Egypt in readiness against threats from the east.)

4. Grabbe says much of the 2 Kings’ B1 account is of “doubtful historical value,” and he singles out the Rabshakeh’s speech as particularly suspect, calling it “novelistic.” He goes so far as to question that the Rabshakeh went to Jerusalem at all.

The speech by Sennacherib’s spokesperson, the Rabshakeh (2 Kgs 18:19-35) is a pillar that helps support the B1 narrative. The speech affirms the seriousness of the Assyrian intent to conquer Jerusalem, tells of Hezekiah’s stubborn refusal to surrender (vv. 29–32), warns of the dire fate that awaits the Jerusalemites if their king refuses to surrender (v. 32), identifies Egypt’s Twenty-fifth Dynasty as Judah’s ally (v. 21), and indicates (in part through mockery) that Hezekiah so trusts that ally that he will risk his kingdom’s survival on its aid (vv. 21, 24, 31–34). (In contrast to those aspects, the speech also contains theological embellishments that may well have no correspondence to what the Rabshakeh would have actually said and that would reflect later Deuteronomic/Deuteronomistic influence.²¹¹)

Is Grabbe right to suggest that the entire speech is a piece of fiction? Referring to the language in which the Rabshakeh gives his speech, he asks, “Is it likely that such a person knew Hebrew?” No, perhaps not. But would the Rabshakeh not have had an interpreter? The Bible presents other occasions when people from different linguistic backgrounds meet and speak to each other easily; the presence of an interpreter is not mentioned but the reader takes it for granted. Such is the case, for example, when the biblical writer directly quotes the queen of Sheba’s

²⁰⁹ Aubin, *Rescue*, 112-15, 199-201.

²¹⁰ Yurco, “Sennacherib’s Third Campaign,” 225.

²¹¹ For example, N. Na’aman, “The Debated Historicity of Hezekiah’s Reform in the Light of Historical and Archaeological Research,” *ZAW* 107 (1995), 179–95, sees 2 Kgs 18:22 as a late addition (183). E.B. Zvi, “Who Wrote the Speech of the Rabshakeh and When?” *JBL* 109 (1990), 79–92, also identifies v. 22 as well as the Rabshakeh’s allusions to cultic reform as late theological additions (85, 91).

speech to Solomon (1 Kgs 10:6–9); it is plain that she would not have been speaking Hebrew and that Solomon does not know her language. An intermediary is simply assumed.

The scene at the wall contains a number of details that connote a real event:

- a. The text takes the trouble of giving the identities of the members of the Assyrian delegation to the wall: “The king of Assyria dispatched the Tartan, the Rab-saris, and the Rab-shakeh from Lachish to King Hezekiah [. . .]” (2 Kgs 18:17). Since the first two do not reappear in the story, they are unnecessary for novelistic purposes. Sennacherib’s presence at Lachish is another unnecessary detail.
- b. The trio “took up position by the conduit of the Upper Road on the Fuller’s Field Road” (v. 17). Why such specificity if this action is imaginary?
- c. The names of the three Judahite officials who listen to the Assyrian delegation are also given: “Eliakim, son of Hilkiah, the royal steward, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah son of Asaph the recorder” (18). Why would the writer have made up the presence of these individuals? (Note that the first two are manifestly historical.²¹²)
- d. The verbal interplay between the Rab-shakeh and the Judahite officials displays cleverness on the part of the former. When the Judahite officials ask him to communicate in Aramaic rather than Hebrew so that the eavesdropping citizens will not understand, the Rab-shakeh exploits the request by addressing the citizens directly in an attempt to set them against their unyielding king (vv. 29–35). The ploy has the ring of verisimilitude. If, as I doubt, the biblical writer had invented the exchange from whole cloth, he would have been uncommonly creative.
- e. Hezekiah’s absence also rings true. (The absence is underscored in v. 37 by the Judahite officials reporting to him on what the Assyrians had said.) It is quite possible that, for reasons of protocol, the king would have refused to leave his palace to meet personally with the Assyrians, his hierarchical inferiors. (Note that in the text below from Tiglath-pileser’s reign, the king of Babylon also remains physically aloof, letting others meet the Assyrian emissaries at the city gate.)
- f. The three Judahite officials’ silence toward the Assyrians (“They [. . .] did not answer a word, for it was the king’s order, ‘Do not answer him!’”) also sounds real-

²¹² Isa 22:15–25 mentions Shebna and Eliakim. That there is no other record of Joah does not negate his presence at the meeting with the Rab-shakeh.

istic (v. 36): Hezekiah may not have wanted his subordinates drawn into anything resembling negotiations, a royal prerogative.

Another way to assess Grabbe's view that the Rab-shakeh's appearance at Jerusalem is a product of a writer's creative imagination is to cite a documented precedent: an Assyrian government report dating from Tiglath-pileser III's reign (745–727) tells of a situation at Babylon when it was under Assyrian threat. In that account, Babylon's situation parallels Jerusalem's in several ways: in both cases, (1) Tiglath-pileser, like Sennacherib, is absent but sends emissaries to represent him; (2) Babylon's king, like Hezekiah, does not personally meet the enemy spokesman but sends officials to do so; (3) Tiglath-pileser's emissaries, like Sennacherib's Rab-shakeh, are not admitted into the city but are obliged to speak just outside the wall; (4) the Babylonian officials, say the Assyrians, "would not argue with us," a stance that resembles that of the laconic Jerusalem officials; (5) the Assyrians at Babylon do not simply deliver an ultimatum but try to bargain (as they put it, "we used many arguments with them"), and (6) strikingly, the Assyrian emissaries employ the same divide-and-conquer tactic as the Rab-shakeh in trying to undermine their interlocutors' confidence in Babylon's king and his aides, saying they have "misled you."²¹³

Conclusion: The detail-rich story of the Assyrians at Jerusalem, minus its theological touches, appears authentic enough. If the aim had been to inject the story with sheer novelistic drama, a face-to-face encounter between the Yahweh-trusting monarch and the Yahweh-mocking emperor would have been more effective than a meeting between go-betweens.

5. Grabbe favors the hypothesis that the battle on the plain of Eltekeh was "either a standoff or possibly even a defeat" for the Assyrians and that it determined the outcome of the crisis. He sees no need for what I suggest—*i.e.*, a second confrontation between the Kushite-Egyptian army and the Assyrians. He cites a 1992 book²¹⁴ by Donald Redford for supporting this interpretation and goes on to credit Ernst Axel Knauf with having "strengthened" this hypothesis in a 2003 article which appears in a book that Grabbe edited. Knauf goes into a more detailed explication of the hypothesis than does Grabbe, and because of Grabbe's faith in Knauf's analysis, I will address the critical details of their shared hypothesis.

Knauf says that "Eltekeh was far from a glorious victory for the Assyrians [as Sennacherib's annal claims] and much more of a

²¹³ H.W.F. Saggs, "The Nimrud Letters, 1952 – Part I," *Iraq* 17 (1955), 23–26.

²¹⁴ My response to Christopher Hays's essay deals with Redford's two-sentence, argumentation-free treatment of Assyria's defeat.

close run thing,”²¹⁵ perhaps a “stalemate”;²¹⁶ he goes on to conclude that after the battle Sennacherib negotiated an agreement with the Kushite-Egyptian contingent. “[T]he data favor” such an outcome, says Grabbe.

Do they? The data are entirely in Sennacherib’s annal. Immediately after describing the battle on the plain of Eltekeh (as distinct from the town of Eltekeh), Cogan’s translation of the Rassam Cylinder version tells us:

I besieged and conquered [the towns of] Eltekeh and Timnah and carried off their spoil. I advanced to Ekron and slew its officials and nobles who had stirred up rebellion and hung their bodies on watchtowers all about the city. The citizens who committed sinful acts, I counted as spoil, and I ordered the release of the rest of them.²¹⁷

Sennacherib’s narrative intimates that this conquest of Ekron came *after* the battle on the plain of Eltekeh,²¹⁸ and that the conquest of Ekron came *before* the invasion of Judah, which included the capture of forty-six Judahite towns and strongholds and the threat to Jerusalem. It is true that the annals may sometimes present the sequence of events out of chronological order, but in this case there is also geographical logic to this sequence: the Assyrian campaign would have started in Phoenicia, then come south down the coast into Philistia and then, once Philistia was essentially subdued, swung eastward into the Judahite hills. This sequence is widely accepted by scholars.²¹⁹

Knauf uses a sharply different sequence as a basis for thinking the battle of Eltekeh was a campaign-ending setback for Assyria. He sees the Assyrians avoiding capture of the Philistine city of Ekron during their southward march; instead, they would have swung eastward and entered Judah and conquered Lachish

²¹⁵ E.A. Knauf, “Sennacherib at the Berezina,” in L.L. Grabbe (ed.) *“Like a Bird in a Cage”: The Invasion of Sennacherib in 701 BCE* (JSOTSup, 363; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003), 147.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 149.

²¹⁷ Cogan, *Raging Torrent*, 124. An earlier translation of the Rassam Cylinder by Gallagher, *Sennacherib’s Campaign*, also depicts Sennacherib’s troops as hanging bodies on Ekron’s towers, indicating seizure of the city (116).

²¹⁸ Also interpreting the annals to mean that Sennacherib would have attacked Ekron *after* the Eltekeh battle are: Fales, “The Road to Judah,” 239–40; Kitchen, *Reliability of the Old Testament*, 41; N. Na’aman, “Ashkelon under the Assyrian Empire,” in J.D. Schloen (ed.), *Exploring the Longue Durée: Essays in Honor of Lawrence E. Stager* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 354; and Tadmor, “Philistia,” 97. See also Mordechai Cogan’s detailed reconstruction of the invasion in “Cross-examining the Assyrian Witnesses to Sennacherib’s Third Campaign: Assessing the Limits of Historical Reconstruction,” in Kalimi and Richardson (eds.), *Sennacherib at the Gates of Jerusalem*, 64.

²¹⁹ See, for example, Kitchen, *Reliability*, 41; and Na’aman, “Sennacherib’s Campaign,” 69 n. 19; and Gallagher, *Sennacherib’s Campaign*, 123–25. See also the maps that trace Sennacherib’s invasion route in J.B. Pritchard (ed.), *The Harper Atlas of the Bible* (New York: Harper & Row, 1987), 122–23; and in Cogan, *Raging Torrent*, 123.

and other strongholds; only then, learning of the advance of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty's horse-borne forces, would they have returned to Philistia to do battle at Eltekeh. Held to a stalemate or some other setback at Eltekeh, Knauf suggests, the Assyrians would have lacked the strength to attack Ekron. Instead, they would have sued for peace and, after a peace conference with the Twenty-fifth Dynasty near Ekron, would have limped home.²²⁰

Knauf's hypothesis contains these assumptions:

First, by positing that the setback at Eltekeh would have occurred before Sennacherib could send more than a very few cavalry troops to picket Jerusalem²²¹ (located well to the east of that area of Judah the Assyrians would have already ravaged), the hypothesis assumes that the king grossly exaggerates when he claims to have threatened Jerusalem and to have "locked up [Hezekiah] within Jerusalem, his royal city, like a bird in a cage." The hypothesis also implicitly assumes that the B1 account exaggerates in saying a "large army" (CEB, NIV) or "great army" (NRSV) of Assyrians went to Jerusalem (2 Kgs 18:17). Several of Grabbe's ideas that have been discussed (and challenged) above can be seen to make perfect sense in the context of this same assumption. A quick Assyrian exit from the Levant after a setback at Eltekeh would explain why Grabbe's essay sees few Assyrian troops as having reached Jerusalem and the Rabshakeh's visit as having never happened. As well, the success of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty's contingent at Eltekeh would obviate the need for a later, second contingent to have any relevance to the conflict; it would follow that if Taharqo had in fact led a contingent that "set out to fight" Sennacherib (2 Kgs 19:9), that contingent could have only been the Eltekeh contingent. It was the only unit of the Double Kingdom's army involved in the conflict's outcome.

Second, Knauf's hypothesis assumes that the annals' account of Sennacherib's *own performance* at Eltekeh suggests that the Assyrians failed to win at Eltekeh: Daniel David Luckenbill, whose translation Knauf relies upon, renders, "In the melee of battle, I personally captured live the Egyptian charioteers with their princes and also the charioteers of the king of Kush." Taking this at face value, Knauf concludes, "An army has to be in dire straits indeed if the commander-in-chief sees himself forced to join the melee."²²² It strains credulity, however, to think that even the most heroic combatant could "personally" capture so many of the enemy. As well, Sennacherib's self-depiction of involve-

²²⁰ Knauf, "Sennacherib at the Berezina," 146–49.

²²¹ Very few indeed. Knauf says that "Sennacherib's verbiage implies no more than that he had picketed the, or some, gates of Jerusalem with one or more cavalry troops [. . .]" (145).

²²² Knauf, "Sennacherib at the Berezina," 147.

ment in battle can hardly be taken as evidence of desperation: his annals as well as his building inscriptions are exercises in manly personal glorification.²²³

Third and most important, Knauf's hypothesis assumes that another indication of the Assyrians' poor performance at Eltekeh is that they subsequently lacked the strength to conquer the nearby city of Ekron. He uses Luckenbill's translation of the Oriental Institute Prism, which reads: "I drew near to Ekron—the governor who had rebelled I slew with my sword. The citizens who had rebelled I counted as spoil. The rest of them, who had not rebelled, I pardoned."²²⁴ Knauf interprets the passage this way: "Note that Sennacherib does not state that he besieged and/or conquered Ekron, or set foot in the city. All he says is, 'I drew near to Ekron.' This reads as if the peace was negotiated between Egypt and Assyria in the Assyrian camp."²²⁵ The problem is that Knauf overlooks the two sentences that immediately follow the cited passage: "The citizens who had rebelled I counted as spoil. The rest of them, who had not rebelled, I pardoned." These actions denote control of Ekron: one cannot either count as spoil part of a population or grant pardon to another part unless one controls that population; this is particularly so if, as William Gallagher suggests, counting as spoil is equivalent to deporting.²²⁶ Knauf's hypothesis that the battle of Eltekeh spelled the end of the Assyrian campaign may rest, then, on not taking into account key sentences regarding Ekron's fate.

What we see here then may be a pattern of interpreting—or, rather, misinterpreting—circumstances in order to have them fit a conclusion.

CONCLUSION

Grabbe sees Knauf's essay as having "strengthened" their shared idea of an Assyrian setback at Eltekeh. It does not. Sennacherib does more than simply say, "I drew near to Ekron": his full statement suggests he actually conquered Ekron, and the annal places this event *after* the battle of Eltekeh. Once he had captured Ekron, the Assyrian king would have gone on to devastate much of Judah and to send "a large army" and the Rab-shakeh's delegation to Jerusalem (2 Kgs 18:17).

The annals' account of post-Eltekeh activity refutes the idea that the Twenty-fifth Dynasty may have achieved what Grabbe

²²³ D.D. Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia*. Vol. 2 of *Historical Records of Assyria from Sargon to the End* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1927), 115–98.

²²⁴ Note that this version says nothing about Assyrians displaying rebels' corpses on Ekron's towers, as depicted in Cogan's rendering in *Raging Torrent* of the earlier Rassam Cylinder. Knauf, of course, did not have access to Cogan's translation, it having been published after Knauf's article.

²²⁵ Knauf, "Sennacherib at the Berezina," 148 n. 19.

²²⁶ Gallagher, *Sennacherib's Campaign*, 126.

calls a “standoff or possibly even a defeat” at Eltekeh. That account also makes it all the more plausible that some additional action by Twenty-fifth Dynasty forces would have been needed to prompt Sennacherib’s departure. To make the 2 Kings version consistent with this view that Eltekeh spelled the end of Sennacherib’s threat to Judah, Grabbe minimizes the extent of Assyria’s preparatory military actions against Jerusalem, dismisses the Rab-shakeh’s diplomatic visit as fiction, assigns Taharqo’s sole participation in the 701 conflict to the battle at Eltekeh, and rejects holus-bolus the Assyrian annals’ accounts of the outcome of the Eltekeh battle. Thus are key parts of the only two contemporary pieces of textual evidence ignored to fit the hypothesis. The hybrid Kushite rescue theory, on the other hand, incorporates the contemporary evidence into its interpretation of events.²²⁷

Grabbe concludes: “My view is very similar to Aubin’s differing only in some details, I think.” Our difference of opinion regarding the historicity of the Rab-shakeh’s visit, however, is more than a detail. The Rab-shakeh visit and its repercussions take up the vast majority—more than ninety-five per cent—of the B1 segment in the 2 Kings’ narrative of the invasion story. If, following Grabbe, one delegitimizes the Rab-shakeh’s visit, one is not left with much to take seriously in the entire biblical account aside from the short A segment.²²⁸ If the historicity of the Assyrian emissary’s role is not trustworthy, why should one trust *anything* in the B1 segment, including the approach of Taharqo’s contingent?

Nonetheless, when in my response to Christopher Hays’s article in this collection I pay regard to both Grabbe and Knauf for spelling out their views on the 701 conflict’s outcome in articles published in 2003, I am not being ironic. By presenting their opinions on the denouement over the course of some pages, rather than in several vague but confident sentences as is the trend,²²⁹ they empower readers to understand and judge the reasoning.

²²⁷ I do not count the B2 segment in the 2 Kings account as contemporary (since it was composed some generations after 701 BCE).

²²⁸ The B2 account must be seen as ahistorical.

²²⁹ For recent examples, see my response to Christopher Hays’s essay in this collection.

RESPONSE TO ALAN B. LLOYD: WHY MINIMIZE THE KUSHITE ROLE IN 701 BCE?

Alan B. Lloyd is the only contributor to this collection who squarely rejects the theory presented in *The Rescue of Jerusalem* that the Twenty-fifth Dynasty's forces were influential in causing Sennacherib's departure from the Levant in 701 BCE. This dismissal is consistent with his view in a 2007 article.²³⁰

PRELIMINARY REMARKS

The Rescue of Jerusalem presents six detailed arguments in favor of the theory or thesis,²³¹ but Lloyd's essay does not seriously address any of them. It subjects the theory to no critical analysis.

Lloyd rejects the theory on grounds that it is "Not proven," yet a theory by definition lacks proof.²³² The proper test for a theory is plausibility.

Lloyd says the most likely explanation for the end of Assyria's hostilities against Judah in 701 BCE is that "Hezekiah simply bought Sennacherib off," another way of saying that Hezekiah surrendered. He does not address the arguments against the surrender theory in *The Rescue of Jerusalem*.²³³

THE RACISM ISSUE IN HISTORIOGRAPHY

Commenting on *The Rescue of Jerusalem*'s discussion of the role of racism in scholarly writings on Kush, Lloyd says that "it is impossible to identify the influence of [racism] in modern treatments" of that role. He does not define what he means by "modern," but if we take it as the period since the mid-twentieth century, I would agree.

I cannot let pass, however, Lloyd's assertion that racist renderings of Kushite history are confined to "some nineteenth-century scholars." Although the trend started in the nineteenth century, intensifying with the onset of European colonialism in Africa in the 1880s, it continued into the twentieth century; see in *The Rescue of Jerusalem* a sampling of quotations from works by

²³⁰ A.B. Lloyd, "Book II," in O. Murray and A. Moreno (eds.), *A Commentary on Herodotus: Books I-IV* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 343.

²³¹ Aubin, *Rescue*, § 10–14.

²³² *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* (1966) defines a "theory" as an "unproven assumption." More expansively, it sees it as "a working hypothesis given probability by experimental evidence or by factual or conceptual analysis but not conclusively established [. . .]."

²³³ Aubin, *Rescue*, 122–24.

James Breasted²³⁴ and George Reisner.²³⁵ It is true that such unabashed expressions of Kushite racial inferiority date from the early years of the century, but scholarship of a similar attitude lasted until the mid-twentieth century, according to separate assessments by two anthropologists who worked in Sudan during the latter half of that century, Bruce Trigger²³⁶ and William Adams.²³⁷

“Racism” is an exceptionally sensitive term. I reserve it for instances in which individuals hang themselves with words or actions that could have no other interpretation. Using that tight criterion, I have found no clearly identifiable racism in any of the hundreds of books and articles dealing with Kushites (in or outside of the context of the 701 conflict) that I have come across and that were published since the 1950s.

THE “KUSHITE-MINIMIZATION SYNDROME”

For me, the problem with scholarship’s current treatment of the Kushite role in 701 BCE is what might be called minimization or attenuation. This can take more than one form. Among those relatively few scholars who see the Kushite Pharaohs of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty as having been a significant factor in saving Jerusalem, the norm is to express that view in a sentence or two, then to drop the matter as if it were trivial; there is no allusion to its effect on history. My response to Christopher Hays’s

²³⁴ Aubin, *Rescue*, 180–81. J.H. Breasted, often called the “father of American Egyptology,” writes in *A History of Egypt*, that Kushite pharaohs sprang from a “feeble and inglorious line.” He uses the word “inglorious” to describe the Kushites four times in eight pages (553–60). Of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty, he says “there was never a line of kings so ill-suited to their high destiny.” With the Kushite rulers encountering problems in consolidating power in Lower Egypt, “The southern strain with which their blood was tintured began to appear.”

²³⁵ Aubin, *Rescue*, 244; G.A. Reisner, sometimes known as the “father of Nubiology,” refers to Nubia during this period in *The Archaeological Survey* in these terms: “Its very race appears to be a product of its poverty and its isolation—a negroid European mixture fused together on a desert river bank too far away and too poor to attract a stronger and better race” (I:348).

²³⁶ B.G. Trigger, “Paradigms in Sudan Archaeology,” *IJAHS* 27:2 (1994), 323–45, observes that archaeology in Sudan started in earnest only after the defeat in 1898 of the Sudanese by Anglo-Egyptian forces. For the next sixty years or so, he writes, “the interpretation of Sudanese history by European archaeologists was dominated by a paradigm that both reflected and justified a colonial policy.” (334). (“Possibly the least racist,” he adds, “were the Austrian and German archaeologists, whose countries had no specific colonial interests in the Sudan” [335]).

²³⁷ Adams, *Nubia*, says of the opening decades of the twentieth century: “It must be acknowledged [. . .] that the racist point of view which was shared by nearly all the early students of Nubian history condemns the age more than the men. [. . .] It was [. . .] not until a generation later that notions of racial superiority and inferiority came seriously to be questioned” (92).

essay elsewhere in this collection gives examples of this practice from the twenty-first century.²³⁸

Another form of attenuation takes place when scholars cast doubt on the role that Kushites might have played in significant historical events or when they otherwise doubt the Kushites' abilities.²³⁹ Lloyd's essay provides two instances in which he questions the extent of the Kushites' role in the 701 conflict.

A. "[W]e know nothing about the decision-making process which got the mixed Egyptian and Kushite army into the [701] campaign. We cannot even establish whether Kushites were the critical agents in promoting the operation."

Actually, we can hypothesize quite a bit about that decision-making process. Lloyd is right to suggest that the Kushites were not alone in making decisions: Egyptian elements would also have been involved. A pattern of collaboration between Kushites and various Egyptian groups for the purpose of resisting Assyria goes back to the time of Piankhy and provides a context for the decision-making in 701. We can see this in two important instances in which Kushites, acting within a collaborative framework, have been the leaders or driving force (which is what I assume Lloyd means by "critical agents").

The first example is the Kushite king Piankhy's conquest of Middle and Lower Egypt. Kush's decision to intervene in Egypt was not taken unilaterally but rather in collaboration with native Egyptians, in this case the Theban rulers of Upper Egypt who may have appealed to him for aid against a Saite-led threat. As László Török suggests, Thebes sought "an alliance with the ruler of Kush which meant [. . .] the chance of an effective military protection against possible northern invasions."²⁴⁰ Napata and Thebes would have had a common fear of eventual Assyrian expansionism²⁴¹ and may have perceived the Saites as acting as a fifth column for Assyria. Piankhy's stela that describes the ensuing campaign, however, shows in detail how Kush provided most of the manpower and strategy for the campaign.²⁴² It was Kush, not Thebes, that carried out the conquest of northern

²³⁸ For examples from the late twentieth century, see *Rescue*, 126–31.

²³⁹ An example in this collection of essays is Aidan Dodson's out-of-hand dismissal of any possibility that the strength of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty's army in 701 BCE might have exceeded that of New Kingdom armies. (To avoid misunderstanding, this is not to suggest that Dodson's works reflect even a hint of racism; the body of his work shows respect for Kushites.)

²⁴⁰ Török, *The Kingdom of Kush*, 150.

²⁴¹ The Assyrian ambition to conquer Kush, long assumed by many scholars, is perhaps documented in the reign of Sennacherib's successor, Esarhaddon. Citing a fragmentary Assyrian text, Heidorn, "The Horses of Kush," writes that "Esarhaddon apparently meant not only to conquer Egypt but to extend his control to the southernmost limits of the known world" (110).

²⁴² It is true that Piankhy's stela that describes the campaign was what we would today call an "authorized" account. So far as I am aware, however, Kush's leadership of the campaign has never been challenged by scholars.

Egypt. If Egyptian elements had acted as critical agents in the conquest it would be hard to explain how Piankhy, and not an Egyptian, became Pharaoh.

The other example concerns the Kushites' decades-long rule of Egypt between Piankhy's conquest and the 701 crisis. That rule was loose and collaborative: one cannot unify a fractious country for the first time in more than two centuries and—despotism aside—expect the population's docility in the face of a foreign master. I.E.S. Edwards observes that the Kushites were content to “establish a protectorate over the country while leaving its administration largely in the hands of those who were already in authority”;²⁴³ Jeremy Pope speaks of the Kushites' “stewardship.”²⁴⁴ While many matters were left in the hands of local rulers (the Pharaoh's vassals), it is evident that national-security issues of the newborn Double Kingdom were a high-priority Kushite responsibility. When the Saïtes after some years stirred up resistance to the Kushites, how else to explain a new conquest of northern Egypt by Piankhy's successor?

With this background, let us now turn to the Twenty-fifth Dynasty's intervention in the Levant in 701: referring to it, Lloyd says “For all we know the Kushite kings may have been pushed into these [anti-Assyrian] operations by their Egyptian advisors [. . .]” (The “For all we know” introduction suggests a wild guess; no argumentation is presented.) It is hardly likely the Kushites would have unified Egypt as a bulwark against Assyrian expansionism only to turn the leadership over to others when an Assyrian crisis actually arose. If Egyptian advisors (including Thebans) were in fact influential in mapping strategy in 701,²⁴⁵ the Kushite pharaoh would still have been the decision-maker and commander-in-chief; it is with that person, not with those who give counsel, that responsibility for a military campaign lies. In any military coalition, it is also generally the party with most demonstrable military prowess that has the most influence in collaborative decision-making, and surely no Nilotic group would have brought more prowess to the 701 coalition than the Kushites.²⁴⁶

B. *“The Twenty-fifth Dynasty army [in 701] was clearly a mixed force of Egyptians and Kushites, but we have no means of knowing how many Kushite troops were involved or how critical they were.”*

²⁴³ I.E.S. Edwards, “Egypt from the Twenty-second to the Twenty-fourth Dynasty,” in J. Boardman et al. (eds.), *The Cambridge Ancient History*. Vol. 3, Part 1 of *The Prehistory of the Balkans, the Middle East and the Aegean World, Tenth to Eighth Centuries BC*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 570.

²⁴⁴ Pope, “Beyond the Broken Reed,” 159.

²⁴⁵ There seems no reason to question that there were Egyptian advisors. One does not organize a contented coalition army composed of units from various domains, as the Kushite Pharaoh would have done with vassal jurisdictions, without listening to their leaders.

²⁴⁶ See my response to Aidan Dodson's essay in this collection. In it, I make the case for the Twenty-fifth Dynasty as having the strongest army in Egyptian history to that time; this would have been largely because of the army's Kushite component.

Such questioning of the “critical” role of Kushite troops in the Twenty-fifth Dynasty’s army also appears groundless. (The point about the army’s *mixed* composition, however, gets no disagreement here.²⁴⁷)

Actively helping the Twenty-fifth Dynasty in its intervention in the Levant were certain Lower and Middle Egyptian²⁴⁸ mini-states that had originally fought Piankhy but had since become vassals of the pharaoh.²⁴⁹

Given the silence of ancient records, we no more know the proportion of Kushite troops in the combined Kushite-Egyptian army of 701 than we know the army’s total size. However, we do know from its two conquests of Egypt that Kush’s army had shown itself to be stronger than its adversaries’ in northern Egypt. We also know from the Assyrian annals’ accounts that the Twenty-fifth Dynasty’s mobile, horse-reliant contingent that fought at Eltekeh contained both Kushite and Egyptian soldiers. Indeed, if one takes at face value the annals’ description of that battle of Eltekeh (and do not assume a scribe’s slip), it would appear that the Kushite combatants were more diversified than the Egyptian: the Rassam Cylinder tells of Egyptian charioteers (along with kings and princes), but affirms there were Kushite “bowmen, charioteers and cavalry.” As for the hypothesized second contingent, the one that Taharqo would have led (2 Kgs 19:9), one can question Frank J. Yurco’s unsourced and unexplained opinion that it “consisted entirely of Kushite troops.”²⁵⁰ Taharqo’s force would surely have included Egyptians: Thebes, Kush’s long-time ally, would presumably have contributed troops, and Herodotus notes that a Lower Egyptian militia (made up of “shopkeepers, artisans, and market people”²⁵¹) was

²⁴⁷ See Aubin, *Rescue*. “Just as the Assyrian army was an amalgam of people of different national backgrounds, so probably was the force the pharaohs had cobbled together to fight it.” The book speculates that in addition to Kushite and Egyptian troops, “it is quite possible” that the contingent led by Taharqo could have incorporated “other sub-Saharan peoples, including tribal groups, who were allies or vassals of the kingdom of Kush” (200).

When writing *Rescue*, the rule was to avoid saying “Kushite army” and to say, rather, “Kushite-Egyptian army” and, for variety, “Twenty-fifth Dynasty army” or (trusting the Bible’s mention of Taharqo’s command of a contingent) “Kushite-led” contingent.

²⁴⁸ The informal term “Middle Egypt” refers mainly to the large nome of Khmun, also known as Hermopolis. Politically, it belonged to Upper Egypt, geographically it was in central Egypt. The king of Khmun, Nimlot, rebelled against his lord, Piankhy, prompting the latter’s takeover of Middle and Lower Egypt. After defeating him, Piankhy forgave Nimlot and the latter once more became Piankhy’s vassal (as Piankhy’s campaign stela recounts). It may be assumed that this important jurisdiction contributed troops to the Levantine campaign.

²⁴⁹ Sennacherib’s annals tell of “kings of Egypt” (i.e., Kushites’ northern Egyptian vassals) fighting alongside the troops of the Kushite king in the battle of Eltekeh.

²⁵⁰ Yurco, “Sennacherib’s Third Campaign,” 225.

²⁵¹ Herodotus, *Histories* II, 141, J. Romm (ed.), trans. P. Mensch, (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2014), 258. These militia infantrymen would

also in the army that set out to fight Sennacherib.²⁵² As well, there seems no reason to doubt that the Pharaoh would have made use of regular soldiers from Lower and Middle Egypt in this common-cause resistance against a potential invader.²⁵³

Conclusion: Simply put, protection of the Nile Valley was the *raison d'être* of the Kushite presence in Egypt, and Kushites would not have relinquished supreme authority over this protection. It is hard to take Lloyd's skepticism about a leading role in 701 for the Kushites seriously, all the more so because there is so little attempt to make a case for it.

FOUR PROBLEMS WITH THE TAHARQO-RETURNED-TO-EGYPT SCENARIO

The most common explanations up to now for Sennacherib's failure to conquer Jerusalem are: the *epidemic theory*, which holds that disease forced the Assyrian army's withdrawal; the *troubles elsewhere theory*, which assumes that an unidentified crisis elsewhere in the Assyrian empire obliged Sennacherib's army to leave Judah to attend to it; and the *surrender theory*, which sees King Hezekiah of Judah as yielding to Sennacherib and paying him to depart. Although Lloyd gives special weight to the surrender theory, he sees the other two as possible contributing factors.²⁵⁴

Regarding the Twenty-fifth Dynasty's forces, Lloyd supports the idea that there were two Twenty-fifth Dynasty contingents, one at Eltekeh and the second led by Taharqo, so we agree on that. He suggests that Taharqo's force was "part of the strategic equation"; he does not explain the term, but he may be referring to Sennacherib's awareness of that contingent's existence, even if it were not nearby.²⁵⁵ In any case, neither Lloyd nor

not have been part of the first contingent that fought at Eltekeh; needing speed, that strike force relied exclusively on horse transport.

²⁵² Unlike Lloyd, but like L.L. Grabbe in his essay in this collection, I see wisps of actual history in Herodotus's story of Sennacherib's failed campaign, and one wisp concerns these shopkeepers, etc., among the anti-Assyrian forces. At such a time of crisis, it would have made sense for the Double Kingdom to muster every available able-bodied man into the militia.

²⁵³ It is improbable that Kushite and Egyptian troops would have been combined in the same organizational units; differences in languages and training practices would favor compartmentalization. Note the case with the Assyrian army: K. Radner, *Ancient Assyria: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), observes: "The Assyrian army [. . .] was really many armies [. . .]. The different contingents [often from different nations] were allowed to preserve and develop their own customs and idiosyncrasies. Rather than being forged into a unified army, its individual contingents found themselves in intense competition with each other for royal recognition and favor" (97).

²⁵⁴ This shows modification of Lloyd's view in "Book II," published in 2007: "[A] disaster befell an Assyrian force besieging Jerusalem and probably took the form of an epidemic of typhoid or cholera" (343).

²⁵⁵ Such is the peripheral role that Lloyd gives the second contingent in Herodotus, *Hist.* II, 103.

I suggest that Taharqo's troops ever actually battled Sennacherib's main body of troops. After that we part company: Lloyd says that after hearing that Hezekiah had "bought Sennacherib off," Taharqo "simply turned around and went home." Lloyd's scenario for Taharqo's movements enjoys some respectability: Kenneth Kitchen also proposes that Taharqo retreated to Egypt without confronting Assyria,²⁵⁶ his mission a pointless exercise. I am unaware that this manner of minimizing Taharqo's role has been refuted, so let me attempt that now by discussing four problems with the proposal of his premature departure from the war zone. (These problems are distinct from those concerning the surrender theory, whose weaknesses are discussed in my response to Jeremy Pope's essay.)

The first problem concerns the *narrative style of 2 Kings*. If Taharqo's army had in fact left for Egypt and become inconsequential, it would raise the question of why the writer of the biblical narrative's B1 account made the point about the army's advance in the first place. Lloyd himself acknowledges this problem ("A further issue here is the question as to why Jewish tradition would have invented the Egyptian advance if it had not taken place"); his explanation is that the biblical tradition wanted to acknowledge that Taharqo was part of the "strategic equation" before he made the U-turn and vanished from the theater of war. Such a disappearance, however, would not account for the way the biblical writer stresses in 2 Kgs 19:19a that Tirhakah (Taharqo) "has set out to do battle with [Sennacherib]." That would seem to set the stage for a confrontation, not for an anticlimactic about-face by Taharqo. The narrative logic doesn't work for that scenario: it is hard to imagine why the biblical writer "would have invented the Egyptian advance" if it had proved completely irrelevant to the outcome of Assyria's invasion.

Another problem is the *depiction of Hezekiah in 2 Kings*. In the Rab-shakeh's speech, Judah's king is presented as trusting in the arrival of an army from Egypt to save Jerusalem;²⁵⁷ it is this reliance (along with reliance on YHWH) that keeps Hezekiah from surrendering (2 Kgs 18:20–21, 24). Why would Hezekiah have changed his mind and ceased to rely on Egypt? There is nothing in the Bible to indicate this. According to Lloyd's scenario, the change cannot have been because of Taharqo's return to Egypt: the scenario calls for Taharqo to depart *after* learning of Hezekiah's surrender.

The biblical account's *theological aspect* also poses a problem. In 2 Kgs 19:7, YHWH speaks through the prophet Isaiah and says that he, YHWH, "will put a spirit in [Sennacherib], so that he will hear a report and return to his own country [. . .]." Just two verses later (19:9a), the report turns out to be that Taharqo has set out to fight Sennacherib. Why would the biblical writer(s)

²⁵⁶ Kitchen, "Egypt, the Levant and Assyria," 243–52.

²⁵⁷ For a defense of the historicity of the core elements of the Rab-shakeh's speech, see my response to L.L. Grabbe's essay in this collection.

present the all-knowing deity as predicting a situation—*i.e.*, the threat that Taharqo's army posed to the invader—that would never be fulfilled? Lloyd's view—that Taharqo became discouraged by Hezekiah's capitulation and therefore departed—does not align itself with the story's theological orientation. The view that Taharqo departed the scene prematurely would imply that YHWH erred, which would be a unique occurrence in the Bible.

The final problem concerns the *credibility of Herodotus's account* of the conflict between Sennacherib and the Twenty-fifth Dynasty. Lloyd says the “account can hardly be taken seriously.” In his essay in this collection, Lester Grabbe defends the story's core historicity, noting that the account “tells us of an Egyptian defeat of Sennacherib.” Many scholars fixate on the matter of the mice and conclude that the story is ridiculous. I see the mice as a distraction; other elements are more pertinent. One is Herodotus's depiction of the Kushite king not as departing the theater of war but, rather, as primed to fight: the king “lay [. . .] facing the enemy” as he slept on the very eve of the decisive battle. As it turns out, the battle never occurs—thanks to the rodents who destroy much of the Assyrians' gear, a situation that Grabbe sees as a stand-in for “some unusual happening.” Then comes the story's key passage, one that is often overlooked: “[O]n the following day, having no arms to fight with, [the Assyrians] abandoned their position and *suffered severe losses during their retreat*” (emphasis added). This would suggest the Twenty-fifth Dynasty's troops were very much on the scene.²⁵⁸

Taken together, these four problems severely weaken Lloyd's hypothesis of the Double Kingdom's minimal influence on the 701 conflict's outcome.

CONCLUSION

Lloyd says, “ [I]t is important that we should not overestimate the specifically Kushite dimension” in the decision-making leading up to the Twenty-fifth Dynasty's intervention in 701 conflict and in the composition of the army that intervened. Granted. It is also important, however, not to cast doubts on the extent of Kushite involvement, as if to minimize it, without explaining one's reasoning.

²⁵⁸ This retreat under duress is reconcilable with my view that there was not necessarily a climactic battle between the Twenty-fifth Dynasty's army and Sennacherib's main force but, rather, some other form of setback to Assyria—possibly a standoff that would have been advantageous to the Twenty-fifth Dynasty. My scenario calls for the Assyrian units at this time to have been scattered around Judah on mopping-up operations. Those retreating Assyrians whom Herodotus says were pursued could, then, have been one or more of these dispersed units, not necessarily the main body.

**RESPONSE TO K. LAWSON YOUNGER, JR.: THE
PUZZLE OF TAHARQO'S ROUTE TO JUDAH**

K. Lawson Younger, Jr., examines three separate issues as a means of testing the plausibility of *The Rescue of Jerusalem's*²⁵⁹ theory that a Twenty-fifth Dynasty army helped thwart an Assyrian conquest of Judah's royal city. Younger's treatment of the first two issues contains some useful insights, and the third issue is particularly thought-provoking and is worth responding to in full.

The first issue concerns a hypothesis by Assyriologist Stephanie Dalley that the Assyrian and Judahite royal families may have been linked through marriage. When writing *The Rescue of Jerusalem* I was unaware of her hypothesis concerning such ties between the Assyrian and Judahite royal families in the late eighth century BCE; her suggestion that this relationship may have meant that Hezekiah was Sennacherib's "reliable ally" in 701 BCE would, if correct, have pulled the rug out from under the theory that the Twenty-fifth Dynasty was influential in Sennacherib's decision to depart, since Sennacherib would have had no reason to conquer Jerusalem in the first place. Younger's persuasive conclusion that there is no basis for Dalley's hypothesis thus removes a potential challenge to the theory.

The second issue deals with two sorts of archaeological evidence that have been interpreted as indicating a strong Upper Egyptian/Kushite presence at Lachish in 701. When researching *The Rescue of Jerusalem*, these same published interpretations initially intrigued me since they would have supported my contention (based on other evidence) that close relations existed between Kush/Egypt and Judah. After inspection, however, I explained strong misgivings about them in an eleven-paragraph endnote.²⁶⁰ Younger's own evaluation is more in-depth than mine and his rejection of the would-be evidence is more emphatic. Since Lachish-related evidence was never used in support of the theory of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty's influence, Younger's rejection has no effect on the theory.

The third issue deals with the route that a contingent of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty's army might have taken to reach Judah. The contingent in question is that which 2 Kgs 19:9 says was headed by Taharqo (Tirhakah); according to the previous verse, Sennacherib would have been fighting at the Judahite town of Libnah, in northern Judah, when he received a report of Taharqo's approach. According to the theory in question, this force would have induced, or helped induce, Sennacherib to depart from the Levant before he could seize Jerusalem. Younger says the itinerary that I propose for this contingent is "problematic." Because the theory in *The Rescue of Jerusalem* for the cause of Sennacherib's departure from the Levant gives a significant role to the presence of Taharqo's force, he concludes: "[T]he greatest challenge to Aubin's theory may be in the proposed

²⁵⁹ Aubin, *Rescue*.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 331–32 n. 29.

route taken by Taharqo's army to rescue Jerusalem [. . .].” This is an issue, he says, that needs to be tackled.

This is a side-issue; it is by no means integral to the core thesis itself. Indeed, the route that I hypothesized for Taharqo was in a special chapter explicitly cordoned off intellectually from the rest of *The Rescue of Jerusalem*: the concept for this § 15, which I characterized as a “somewhat playful” digression, was to depart from the book's overall sober tone and use imagination and “musings” to fill in some of the numerous gaps in the historical record for the period beginning with the time of Hezekiah's learning of Assyria's campaign to the time of Assyria's eventual retreat.²⁶¹ This caveat appears near the start of the chapter: “[I]f the following scenario should be devastatingly critiqued, the premise upon which it is built—that the Kushites played a pivotal role in causing Assyria's withdrawal—should not necessarily suffer. The premise is as independent of the scenario as a tree is of a treehouse”²⁶²—that is, if the treehouse is fragile and falls, the tree stands unaffected. Younger, however, ignores the caveat, calling this proposed route the “greatest challenge to Aubin's theory.”

Still, Younger's challenge is welcome. It raises an issue I've wondered about ever since *The Rescue of Jerusalem* went to press, and I'm glad to leap at this opportunity to muse again.

THE PROBLEM

According to my proposed scenario, Taharqo's force was the second of two army contingents sent by the Twenty-fifth Dynasty to resist Sennacherib's invasion of the southern Levant. (The hypothesis of two separate contingents is not original to me.²⁶³) Taharqo's body of troops, which I'll call Contingent Two, would have entered the theater of war sometime after Contingent One, a horse-reliant strike-force²⁶⁴ that had fought at Eltekeh. Because speed was Contingent One's priority—it sought to defend the Philistine city-state of Ekron before Sennacherib could get to it²⁶⁵—this strike-force would have presumably taken the most direct of the three main caravan routes from Egypt to the southern Levant's coastal plain.²⁶⁶

²⁶¹ Ibid., 190, 188.

²⁶² Ibid., 188.

²⁶³ Among the historians favoring this view are Kitchen, “Egypt, the Levant and Assyria,” 250; Lloyd, *Herodotus, Book II*, 101–03; N. Na'aman, “Forced Participation in Alliances in the Course of the Assyrian Campaigns in the West,” in *Ancient Israel and Its Neighbors: Interaction and Counteraction; Collected Essays*, vol. 1 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003 [1991]), 33; and Yurco, “Sennacherib's Third Campaign,” 221–40.

²⁶⁴ Sennacherib's annals refer to the Kushite-Egyptian force's chariotry and cavalry.

²⁶⁵ We know this because Sennacherib's annals state that cavalry and chariotry from the Double Kingdom responded to Ekron's appeal for military aid. See Luckenbill, *The Annals of Sennacherib*, 69.

²⁶⁶ Na'aman, “Forced Participation,” suggests that “Egyptian troops were stationed [in Gaza]” prior to the mission to aid Ekron (32–

As Younger notes, these trans-Sinai trade routes are:

- The *Way of Horus* (also known as the *Via Maris*), which hugged the Mediterranean coast as it passed through the Sinai. Upon reaching Gaza, it continued north up the coast through Philistia and led to Phoenicia. The first contingent would, logically, have taken this route.
- The *Way of Shur*, which proceeded inland across the north-central Sinai on its way to Beersheba. (Before travelers reached Beersheba, however, a turn-off to Gaza was available.)
- The *Way of the Wilderness*, which bisected the Sinai Peninsula and headed southeast to the city of Elath (Eilat, Elat), located at the endpoint of the Gulf of Aqaba, an arm of the Red Sea. From Elath, another road went north toward Syria, but with a turn-off road to Beersheba.

Younger stresses how crossing the Sinai desert posed a severe challenge for any army because of scarcity of water, absence of food and fodder, heat, sandstorms and quicksand. He concludes: “[A]ll three routes could prove devastating to any army.”

To be sure, crossing this desert required exceptional measures, but for well-prepared armies it represented no acute challenge.²⁶⁷ Along the Way of Horus archaeologists have unearthed a network of forts and way stations with water provisions built by Egyptians centuries earlier,²⁶⁸ and such facilities may have also existed on the other, less-traveled routes that have drawn less excavation. Note that Egypt’s New Kingdom armies crossed the Sinai frequently. For example, according to Anthony Spalinger, in the fifteenth century BCE, the Pharaoh Thutmose III (Eighteenth Dynasty) and his army crossed the 200 kilometers from the desert’s western edge at Sile (Pelusium) to Gaza in ten days.²⁶⁹ Other New Kingdom armies would have often made the crossing as they maintained Egypt’s imperialistic grip on the Levant. Alexander the Great’s army did the trip in seven days

33). That seems quite possible for at least part of the cavalry and chariotry that would fight at Eltekeh. To reach a base of operations in Gaza in the first place, these soldiers would presumably have used the convenient Way of Horus even if they were not so rushed.

²⁶⁷ To be sure, travel for armies across deserts in the general area of Egypt could be dangerous. Thus in the sixth century BCE a Persian army, consisting of tens of thousands of troops, perished when en route from Thebes to the Oasis of Amun (Siwa), near the present-day Libyan border, perhaps because of a sandstorm. But the desert in question (the Western Desert) is distant from the Sinai, and far more vast. For cases of tragic military marches across various deserts, see J.L. Cloudsley-Thompson “Desert Warfare and Disease,” *Journal of Arid Environments* 25:2 (1993), 187–97.

²⁶⁸ M.S. El-Din, “Introduction: The Splendor of Sinai,” in M.S. El-Din et al. (eds.), *Sinai: The Site and the History* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 25–46 (37). Spalinger, *War in Ancient Egypt*, refers to these facilities as “supply posts” (36).

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 36.

and the Roman emperor Vespasian in five.²⁷⁰ By 701, the Double Kingdom's army would have already gained familiarity with the Way of Horus: as recently as *c.* 720 the Pharaoh dispatched a force across the Sinai to confront Sargon's forces at Raphia.²⁷¹ As mentioned, prior to Contingent Two's arrival in the southern Levant, Contingent One itself would have probably used the Way of Horus on its way to Eltekeh. As well, of course, merchants' caravans frequently traversed the desert. In short, for Contingent One, the Sinai would not have been an intimidating obstacle.

Younger is right that the coastal Way of Horus would have been the least difficult of the three options (as well as the fastest), but Taharqo's Contingent Two could have managed any of them. Kushite soldiers were no strangers to desert travel: for example, the overland shortcut from Kush to Upper Egypt, used by troops and caravans to avoid the Nile's great bend and several of its cataracts, traversed the Nubian Desert east of the Nile and was considerably longer than any of three main routes across the Sinai.²⁷²

The Rescue of Jerusalem's scenario posited that Contingent Two's aim might well have been to catch Sennacherib by surprise. In responding to Aidan Dodson's essay, I try to show that the strength and sophistication of the Double Kingdom's army was greater than modern scholarship commonly recognizes, so let us assume that Assyria was not alone in having a decent intelligence service and that the Double Kingdom and its Levantine allies could have shared intelligence. With that in mind, let us try to imagine how the Pharaoh's military strategists might have responded to Sennacherib's threat.

The strategists would have known from previous Assyrian campaigns²⁷³ how geography would dictate the general north-to-south direction of Sennacherib's itinerary along the Mediterranean east coast. After invading Phoenicia, Sennacherib would work his way to Philistia; only once the control of those populous, prosperous areas was well underway or completed, would the Assyrian units move into the hills east of the coast, enter Judah and eventually reach Jerusalem, far inland.

The Pharaoh received appeals for military aid from at least two kingdoms of the southern Levant: Ekron²⁷⁴ and Judah.²⁷⁵ A positive response to their appeals would have suited the Double

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 33.

²⁷¹ For Sargon's account and for commentary, see Cogan, *The Raging Torrent*, 90, 93.

²⁷² See the map in T. Kendall, "Discoveries at Sudan's Sacred Mountain of Jebel Barkal Reveal Secrets of the Kingdom of Kush," *National Geographic* 178 (Nov. 1990), 96–125.

²⁷³ See the map showing the routes of Sargon's three campaigns in the Levant in Pritchard (ed.), *The Harper Atlas of the Bible*, 123. For the invasion routes of Tiglath-pileser III, see the map in Y. Aharoni, *The Land of the Bible: A Historical Geography*, trans. A.F. Rainey (Philadelphia; Westminster, 1967), 330.

²⁷⁴ See Luckenbill, *Annals of Sennacherib*, 31.

²⁷⁵ Isaiah 30 and 31.

Kingdom's self-interest: the Pharaoh would have sought the maintenance of the southern Levant as a neutral buffer region so as to discourage a future Assyrian invasion of Egypt. The result could have been a two-pronged strategy: Contingent One, using horses and moving fast, would try to protect Ekron and the other Philistine city-states lying between it and Egypt; even if this force were to fail to defeat Sennacherib, the battle would slow his invasion, thereby leaving more time for Contingent Two—representing the anti-Assyrian forces' last hope—to arrive in the Levant. What would be its destination? Because much of this larger contingent would have consisted of foot soldiers,²⁷⁶ it would have moved slowly, and it would be reasonable to expect that by the time it reached the Levant the Assyrians would already have much of Philistia under their control (assuming Contingent One's inability to turn the Assyrians back). Contingent Two's goal, then, should have been to save the principal remaining rebel kingdom, Judah.

How would this affect what interests Younger—that is, the strategists' choice of an itinerary for Contingent Two?

The strategists' object could have been to choose a route that bypassed Philistia, much of it potentially alive with Assyrian scouts and war parties. Accordingly, I speculated in *The Rescue of Jerusalem* that Taharqo's force might have taken a more roundabout way—a “back door”—to reach the Jerusalem region. This, I suggested, could have meant using the Way of Shur to avoid Philistia and reaching Beersheba directly, and from there, following a well-known road, the so-called National Highway, shooting northward to the Jerusalem region.²⁷⁷ This highway passes through relatively sparsely populated country and would have offered the prospect of less conspicuous travel.

Younger treats the three possible routes as follows:

1. Of the *Way of Shur*, he says, “The problem is not in the segment of the route from Beersheba to Jerusalem; it is in the route of the Egyptian army to get to Beersheba.” The Way of Shur, he explains, presented “great potential for disaster”: in addition to tough physical conditions, it was susceptible to raids (“razzias”) by tribal bandits and could be watched by Assyrian intelligence. If the intelligence network detected the troops early enough, they could be “intercepted, cut off and wiped out”.
2. The Way of Horus would have meant passing by Gaza, and the “real challenge,” he says, would have been getting from Gaza to Beersheba: “[It] is highly likely that

²⁷⁶ Herodotus, *Hist.* II, 141, says of the army that the Pharaoh mustered to fight Sennacherib, “His was an army of shopkeepers, artisans, and market people” (258). These militia members would be foot soldiers. The militia should not be seen as composing the Twenty-fifth Dynasty's entire infantry of Contingent One but rather one part of it. See discussion of Herodotus's account in Aubin, *Rescue*, 95–96, 100–02.

²⁷⁷ Aubin, *Rescue*, 204.

such a movement [. . .] would not have gone undetected. This is particularly true on account of Sennacherib's apparently loyal vassal Sil-Bel, the king of Gaza, who surely would have been a source of intelligence on the Egyptian army." Younger goes on to speculate that Sil-Bel "may well" have even been "the source for the report to Sennacherib recorded in 2 Kgs 19:9 that Taharqo was marching out to fight against him." In sum, the Way of Horus, like the Way of Shur, could have been so well monitored by Assyrian intelligence that the chances of Contingent Two eluding detection would have been bleak

3. As for the *Way of the Wilderness*, the longest route, Younger finds its plausibility as an itinerary so unlikely as to be not even worth discussing.

It is, then, the Assyriologist's high regard for Assyrian intelligence that leads him to see as "problematic" the theory advanced in *The Rescue of Jerusalem* about the Twenty-fifth Dynasty's role in influencing Sennacherib's retreat. He concludes: "Thus, it would seem that the Assyrian military intelligence gave Sennacherib enough advance warning to prepare a response".

ADDRESSING YOUNGER'S SKEPTICISM

Let's consider Younger's arguments.

1. Just as Younger may be overestimating the physical rigors of crossing the Sinai desert and the risk that desert raiders might pose to an organized body of thousands of well-armed troops, so may he be overestimating the ability of Assyria's intelligence apparatus in the southern Levant. The essay makes it seem that there is almost no way a Twenty-fifth Dynasty expeditionary force could enter the Levant from the south without the Assyrian intelligence network detecting and alerting Sennacherib to prepare for it. As Younger puts it, "[I]t would seem that the Assyrian military intelligence gave Sennacherib enough advance warning to prepare for a response" [to Taharqo's contingent].

Much of Younger's faith in the network's efficacy centers on Assyria's Gazan ally, King Sil-Bel. In fact, however, neither Sil-Bel nor any other friend to Assyria was then in power at that time in Gaza: 2 Kgs 18:8 asserts that in the run-up to Sennacherib's invasion, Hezekiah "rebelled against the king of Assyria and was his vassal no longer. He defeated the Philistines as far as Gaza [. . .]" If Sil-Bel had been Gaza's king before Hezekiah's strike,²⁷⁸ the Judahite king would have presumably confined him (as he did with Ekron's deposed pro-Assyrian king, Padi, during this same anti-Assyrian revolt.²⁷⁹)

²⁷⁸ Although we can be confident that Judahite forces deposed Gaza's king, the Bible does not identify this ruler. What we do know is that Sennacherib's annals say Sil-Bel became king after the 701 conflict. His appointment was probably a concession to Assyria as part of the post-conflict peace treaty.

²⁷⁹ See Sennacherib's annals.

Younger's larger point is that the *overall* Assyrian intelligence system—over and above Sil-Bel—would have been capable of detecting Contingent Two early enough to all but ensure its ineffectiveness. He says that the empire would have relied not only on loyal Gazan officials but on “other intelligence sources [. . .] in the region.” Indeed, the Assyriologist Peter Dubovský suggests that in the eighth and seventh centuries BCE Assyria had several outposts, or watchtowers, in southern Levant that would, among other things, control the busy trade routes, supervise the vassal kings of Judah and Philistia and gather “military and political intelligence regarding Egypt.”²⁸⁰ But let's consider again 2 Kgs 18:8: the *complete* verse includes a pertinent detail: “[Hezekiah] defeated the Philistines as far as Gaza and its *border areas*, from *watchtower to fortified city*” (emphases added). Would control of Gaza's “border areas” include control of the entry of the Way of Shur into the Levant? One would assume that Hezekiah would take control of whatever areas were necessary to provide cover for his ally. By seizing these watchtowers, or outposts,²⁸¹ Hezekiah's actions would thus have destroyed much of Assyria's intelligence system in the southernmost Levant with the effect of facilitating Taharqo's advance.²⁸²

True, Hezekiah's forces might not have suppressed *all* enemy intelligence: spies who blend into the local population are by definition hard to identify and catch. Dubovský makes a reasonable point when he says that the report to Sennacherib of Taharqo's approach, as noted in 2 Kgs 19:9, “presupposes that the biblical redactor understood that the Assyrians were receiving reports from scouts and intelligence agents [. . .].”²⁸³

The question is: Would such information have been transmitted to Sennacherib with enough time to permit the king to gather his troops and give Taharqo an honest fight? In his annals, Sennacherib states that his army conquered forty-six walled cities and, in addition, countless smaller towns. He or his generals would have split the army into a number of units and sent them to different parts of Judah; they may also have assigned some units to areas of Philistia that had also not yet been subdued and plundered. This means that once Sennacherib had received the report of Taharqo's advance and dispatched messengers to summon far-flung units, the messengers might not know where to find all of them: some units may have improvised their movements as they sought new locales to seize.

2. Another problem with Younger's skepticism is an omission of any consideration of the Double Kingdom's own intelli-

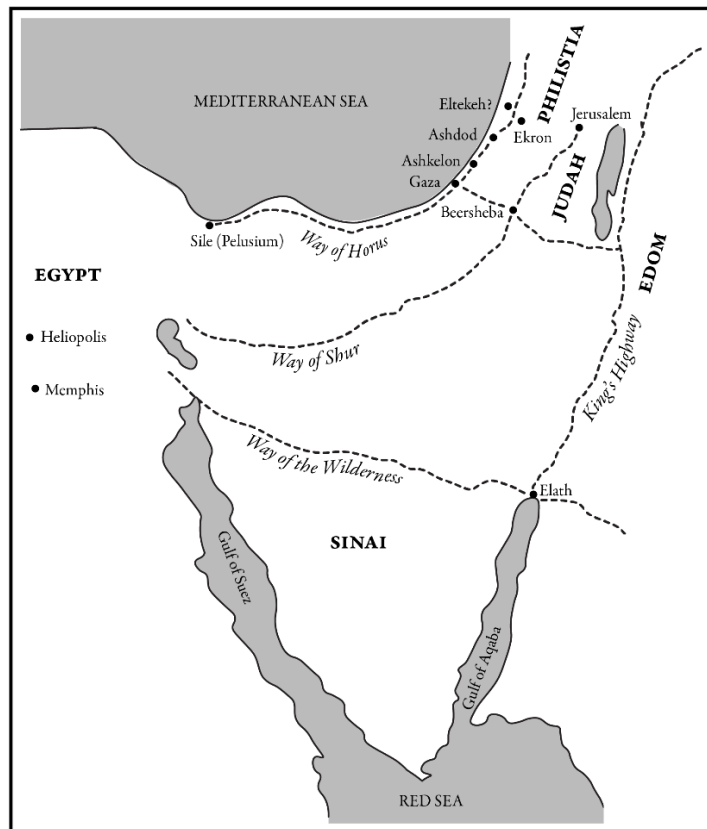
²⁸⁰ Dubovský, *Hezekiah and the Assyrian Spies*, 214.

²⁸¹ Na'aman, “Sennacherib's Campaign,” suggests that Hezekiah would have also seized Gath, northeast of Gaza and (like Gaza) one of Philistia's five main cities.

²⁸² In my response to Lavik's essay, I suggest that Judah's strike on Assyrian-allied cities and facilities in the southernmost Levant could have been planned jointly with the Twenty-fifth Dynasty in order to facilitate anticipated troop movements.

²⁸³ Dubovský, *Hezekiah and the Assyrian Spies*, 28–29.

gence capabilities and its ability to mislead the enemy. The Double Kingdom's military leaders were not ingenués intruding ignorantly into Near Eastern affairs: Kushites had fought in the Mediterranean world, often as mercenaries, for many centuries, and Egyptians—the Kushites' partners on the mission—were also not strangers to intelligence. The possibility should not be dismissed that the Double Kingdom's army might, for example, have faked using one route to the Levant as a cover for the real route. (Skeptics who think it would be unrealistic to suppose that a sizable army of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty army could catch Sennacherib unprepared should bear in mind that far larger armies have successfully hidden their movements, and this even at a time of instant communications and more sophisticated intelligence systems. For example, in the D-Day assault on Normandy beaches in 1944, the Allies—with a far larger force than any army in 701—made the German army think that they would land at another time and at another place.)



A THIRD OPTION?

Although it is plausible that Taharqo could have used the Way of Shur or even the Way of Horus to reach Beersheba, another option is possible. This idea may strike some as far-fetched: it involves the Way of the Wilderness, the roundabout route that Younger dismisses out of hand.

Scholars have called this road the “incense route” because of the caravans using it to bring that product as well as spices from farther east; since caravans made heavy use of this road, and since Ramesses III’s army had used it four centuries before, there is no apparent reason a Twenty-fifth Dynasty contingent could not also travel on it. Once at Elath, the contingent could have left the Way of the Wilderness and headed north on a major trade route, the King’s Highway, that ran through Edom; proceeding east of the Dead Sea, it went to Syria. Taharqo’s contingent could have had two options in using the highway. The first: the troops could have left the highway south of the Dead Sea, using another well-attested road that led west to the southern Judahite town of Beersheba, which has been described as a “road-station for the Arabian international trade caravans” on their way to Philistia’s seaports;²⁸⁴ from Beersheba, the contingent could have used the National Highway to proceed north on the west side of the Dead Sea toward Jerusalem. The second possibility: instead of going to Beersheba, Taharqo’s troops, seeking greater inconspicuousness, might conceivably have remained on the King’s Highway as it continued north; once past the Dead Sea, the contingent could have left the Damascus-bound highway and swung west toward Jerusalem or Libnah on another existing road.²⁸⁵

The Way of the Wilderness could have had several points in its favor. One is that Sennacherib might not have taken the route seriously and thus had his guard down. A second advantage: the route starts in Egypt well south of the Delta (see map); it would thus be actually quite handy for troops arriving from the south—i.e., from Kush, Upper Egypt and Middle Egypt, the places where, one imagines, many of the soldiers were from.²⁸⁶ They could leave the Nile valley upstream from the Delta at either Memphis or Heliopolis (or, if need be, from Wadi Tumilat in the eastern Delta) and join the Way of the Wilderness.²⁸⁷ A third point in favor of this route: in the event there

²⁸⁴ L. Singer-Avitz and Y. Eshet, “Beersheba – A Gateway Community in Southern Arabian Long-distance Trade in the Eighth Century BCE,” *TA* 26:1 (1999), 3–75 (8).

²⁸⁵ For a detailed account of the numerous roads that veined Judah, see D.A. Dorsey, *The Roads and Highways of Ancient Israel* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991).

²⁸⁶ Yurco, “Sennacherib’s Third Campaign,” asserts that, unlike the group that fought at Eltekeh, “Taharqa’s group was mobilized from Kush and consisted entirely of Kushite troops” (225). However, he offers no evidence or argumentation.

²⁸⁷ For a description of the route, see C. Somaglino and P. Tallet, “A Road to the Arabian Peninsula in the Reign of Ramesses III,” in F. Förster and H. Riemer (eds.), *Desert Road Archaeology in Ancient Egypt and*

were some troop units from locations relatively near the Red Sea, it may have been harder for them to join up with Contingent Two at locations in the Nile Valley than to do so at a rendezvous spot such as Elath. Elath would have been accessible to troops sailing on vessels from southerly points on the Red Sea or coming on land routes on either side of the Red Sea.²⁸⁸

It is worth noting that the Assyrians had not left undefended the route that goes by way of the Gulf of Aqaba: the Assyrians had positioned two, possibly three, Assyrian forts, on this route, one of them at Elath itself.²⁸⁹ One assumes that these forts were designed to cope with brigands and other relatively small forces and to collect fees from caravans. Could Hezekiah's preemptive actions against Assyrian facilities have targeted not only those along the Gaza route but also these? If not, these forts should not have posed an insuperable challenge to an attack by Taharqo's large contingent. What would be the main argument against Taharqo's use of this route? A glance at a map indicates the Heliopolis-Elath-Beersheba route would have been several days longer than the two other routes.

CONCLUSION

Younger insists on a curiously high evidentiary bar in testing the view of positive military performance. That 2 Kgs 19:9 says a Taharqo-led body of troops was reportedly advancing toward Sennacherib is not enough: despite the absence of records, he wants to know its precise route—a tall order. Given the lack of evidence for *any* route, discussion of an itinerary for Taharqo's contingent must necessarily be speculative. The premise of discussing the routes here and in *The Rescue of Jerusalem* is that Taharqo intended to surprise Sennacherib, but even that is a guess. Who knows, perhaps (though one may doubt it) Taharqo's contingent was so large, well-trained and fearsome that Taharqo did not much care when Sennacherib would know he was coming.

We will probably never know the itineraries and tactics of the Double Kingdom's forces, and so far as the thesis of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty's success in 701 is concerned, such precision is not essential. What matters is the underlying point: multiple ways existed for the Double Kingdom's forces to deal with logistical challenges.

Beyond (AP, 27; Cologne: Heinrich Barth Institut, 2013), 511–18.

²⁸⁸ When we think of the forces under the Twenty-fifth Dynasty's leadership, we immediately think of Kushite and Egyptian soldiers. But there could have been others: many peoples, after all, feared Assyria and resented its interference with trade. We should not rule out possible contributions of troops from Kush's allies and trading partners to the south or on either side of the Red Sea. See Aubin, *Rescue*, 200.

²⁸⁹ I. Finkelstein, "Kadesh Barnea: A Reevaluation of Its Archaeology and History," *TA* 37 (2010), 111–25, notes that the Assyrians controlled this major trade route in the late eighth century BCE (121–22). See also N. Na'aman, "An Assyrian Presence at Ramat Rahel?" *Ancient Israel and Its Neighbors*, 287.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
ABC	<i>Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles</i> , by A.K. Grayson
ABD	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i>
ACS	<i>African Christian Studies</i>
AHS	<i>African Historical Studies</i>
AbW	<i>Akkadisches Handwörterbuch</i> . Wolfram von Soden. 3 vols. Wiesbaden: 1965--1981
AJE	<i>American Journal of Egyptology</i>
AJPA	<i>American Journal of Physical Anthropology</i>
ANE	Ancient Near East
ANET	<i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament</i> . Edited by James B. Pritchard. 3 rd ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969
AnOr	<i>Analecta Orientalia</i>
AOAT	<i>Alter Orient und Altes Testament</i>
AP	Africa Praehistorica
ARM	Archives royales de Mari
ArOr	Archiv Orientální
AS	<i>Assyriological Studies</i>
ATD	Das Alte Testament Deutsch
ATDan	Acta theologica Danica
ATJ	<i>African Theological Journal</i>
BaghM	<i>Baghdader Mitteilungen</i>
BAR	<i>Biblical Archaeology Review</i>
BAT	<i>Botschaft des Alten Testaments</i>
BBB	<i>Bonner biblische Beiträge</i>
BDB	Brown, Francis, S.R. Driver, and Charles Briggs, <i>A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i>
BES	<i>Bulletin of the Egyptological Seminar</i>
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
Bib	<i>Biblica</i>
BIFAO	<i>Bulletin de l'institut français d'archéologie orientale</i>
BK	Biblischer Kommentar
BN	<i>Biblische Notizen</i>
BSac	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
BSAS	<i>Biblical Studies in African Scholarship</i>
BZ	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CAD	<i>The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago. Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1956--2006</i>
CAJ	<i>Cambridge Archaeological Journal</i>
CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology

<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CBQMS	Catholic Bible Quarterly Monograph Series
<i>CdE</i>	<i>Chroniques d'Égypte</i>
CEB	Common English Bible
CHANE	Culture and History of the Ancient Near East
ConBOT	Coniectanea Biblica: Old Testament
DDD	<i>Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible</i>
EHAT	Exegetisches Handbuch zum Alten Testament
ErIsr	<i>Eretz-Israel: Archaeological, Historical and Geographical Studies</i>
ESHM	European Seminar in Historical Methodology
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FOTL	Forms of Old Testament Literature
GM	<i>Göttinger Miscellen: Beiträge zur ägyptologischen Diskussion</i>
HALOT	<i>The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament.</i> Ludwig Koehler, Walter Baumgartner, and Johann J. Stamm. Translated and edited under the supervision of Mervyn E.J. Richardson. 4 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1994--1999
HdO	Handbuch der Orientalistik
HKAT	Handkommentar zum Alten Testament
<i>HS</i>	<i>Hebrew Studies</i>
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HUCA	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
IBC	Interpretation: a Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>IEJ</i>	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
<i>IJAHS</i>	<i>International Journal of African Historical Studies</i>
IM	Iraq Museum, Baghdad: tablets from there
IRM	<i>International Review of Mission</i> (sponsored by World Council of Churches)
<i>ITC</i>	<i>International Theological Commentary</i>
<i>JAIE</i>	<i>Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections</i>
<i>JAOS</i>	<i>Journal of the Ancient Oriental Society</i>
<i>JARCE</i>	<i>Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt</i>
<i>JARP</i>	<i>Journal of African Religion and Philosophy</i>
<i>JARS</i>	<i>Journal of Arabic and Religious Studies</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JCR</i>	<i>Journal of Coastal Research</i>
<i>JEA</i>	<i>Journal of Egyptian Archaeology</i>
<i>JEH</i>	<i>Journal of Egyptian History</i>
<i>JHS</i>	<i>Journal of Hebrew Scriptures</i>
<i>JITC</i>	<i>Journal of the Interdenominational Theological Center</i>
<i>JMA</i>	<i>Journal of Mediterranean Anthropology</i>
<i>JMH</i>	<i>Journal of Military History</i>
<i>JNES</i>	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>

JNH	<i>Journal of Negro History</i>
JPS	Jewish Publication Society
JRA	<i>Journal of Religion in Africa</i>
JRT	<i>Journal of Religious Thought</i>
JSA	<i>Journal of Social Archaeology</i>
JSOT	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSQ	<i>Jewish Studies Quarterly</i>
JSSEA	<i>Journal of the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities</i>
JTS.NS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies: New Series</i>
KAT	Kommentar zum Alten Testament
KHC	Kurzer Hand-Commentar zum Alten Testament
LHBOTS	Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Series
MHQ	<i>Military History Quarterly</i>
MHQ:QJMH	<i>Military History Quarterly: The Quarterly Journal of Military History</i>
NAC	New American Commentary
NCBC	New Century Bible Commentary
ND	Nimrud (Kalhu): field numbers of tablets excavated there
NEASB	<i>Near East Archaeological Society Bulletin</i>
NeHeT	<i>NeHeT: Revue numérique d'Égyptologie</i>
NIC	New International Commentary
NIV	New International Version
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NTOA	Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
OLA	Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta
Orita	<i>Orita: Ibaden Journal of Religious Studies</i>
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTM	Old Testament Message
PEQ	<i>Palestine Exploration Quarterly</i>
PNA	Prosopography of the Neo-Assyrian Empire
PT	Pyramid Texts
RAAO	<i>Revue d'assyriologie et d'archéologie orientale</i>
RINAP	Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period
RSV	Revised Standard Version
SAA	State Archives of Assyria
SAA	<i>Studies in African Archaeology</i>
SAAB	<i>State Archives of Assyria Bulletin</i>
SAACT	State Archives of Assyrian Cuneiform Texts
SAAS	<i>State Archives of Assyria Studies</i>
SAK	<i>Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur</i>
SAOC	<i>Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization</i>
SBBS	Soncino Books of the Bible
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLASOR	Society of Biblical Literature/American Schools of Oriental Research

SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertations Series
SBLSP	Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers
SBONT	Sacred Books of the Old and New Testament: SCR Studies
SBOT	Sacred Books of the Old Testament
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
SEA	<i>Svensk exegetisk årsbok</i>
SHANE	Studies in the History of the Ancient Near East
SRA	<i>Studies of Religion in Africa</i>
TA	<i>Tel Aviv: Journal of the Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University</i>
THAT	<i>Theologisches Handwörterbuch zum Alten Testament</i>
TbWAT	<i>Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament</i>
TWOT	<i>Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament.</i> Edited by R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke. 2 vols. Chicago: Moody Press, 1980
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	Vetus Testamentum Supplements
WAW	Writings from the Ancient World
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
WVDOG	Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft
ZA	<i>Zeitschrift für Assyriologie</i>
ZAR	<i>Zeitschrift für altorientalische und biblische Rechtsgeschichte</i>
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZDPV	<i>Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins</i>