

[Note: Text essentially completed in May, 2014; minor changes have been made from time to time. One major change: the five-page appendix, which expanded the data base on views on the Kushite role in 701 BCE by scholars in the 19th and early 20th centuries, has been transferred (in enhanced form) to a monograph, *Jerusalem's Survival, Sennacherib's Departure, and the Kushite Role in 701 BCE: An Examination of Henry Aubin's Rescue of Jerusalem*. It was published online by JHS 19:7 in December 2019; for the data in question, see pp. 238-48. http://www.jhsonline.org/Articles/article_253.pdf. For the book's hard-copy version, published in 2020 by Gorgias Press, see pp. 297-309.]

Has Racism Skewed Scholars' View of Kush? A Response to a Critique of *The Rescue of Jerusalem*

Henry Trocmé Aubin

Montreal (info@henryaubin.com)

Has Western scholarship judged unfairly the importance of an African army that sought to repel an Assyrian invasion of Palestine in 701 BCE (2 Kgs 19:9 and Isa 37:9)? Answering in the affirmative is a book by journalist H.T. Aubin. In an article in the *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures*, P.S. Evans attacks that critique. In the article that follows, Aubin a) rebuts each of Evans' points, and b) further questions the quality of considerable scholarly research into ancient Africa as it applies to biblical history.

Introduction

An article in *JHS* (Vol. 12, "History in the Eye of the Beholder? Social Location and Allegations of Racial/Colonial Biases in Reconstructions of Sennacherib's Invasion of Judah," by Paul S. Evans,¹ contests certain ideas in my *The Rescue of Jerusalem: The Alliance between Hebrews and Africans in 701 BC*.² In the same article, Evans also challenges a later article by Alice Ogden Bellis³ that aligns itself with these ideas.

Evans contends that my "social location," or place in society, has distorted my presentation of how scholars have regarded the response of Egypt's 25th Dynasty to Assyria's invasion of Palestine in 701 BCE; the dynasty's five pharaohs were from Kush⁴ (or Cush, as in many translations of the Bible), also known as Nubia or, in some past Western usage, as Ethiopia. Evans observes that my social location is that of a white person who adopted a black child, and that this was the impetus for my research into

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).

² H.T. Aubin, *The Rescue of Jerusalem: The Alliance between Hebrews and Africans in 701 BC* (New York: Soho/Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 2002).

³ 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: Eisenbrauns, 2010), 247-59.

⁴ Although historians of ancient Israel often spell it "Cush," "Kush" is the spelling most used by Nubiologists and those Egyptologists who study this society.

this dynasty, as I note myself in the book's introduction. Evans says that this social location has "clearly (mis-)guided" my research into how Western scholars have treated the Kushite role in the events of 701 BCE.⁵

Is it true that I have misrepresented historiography to suit my point of view? I will respond here to all of Evans' criticisms as they apply to the accuracy of my work. (I have put off reading the Bellis article until after a first draft of my response, that I might better confine the response to what concerns me.) I will also deal with the broader issue of Western scholars' misconceptions of Kush's role in the history of ancient Israel.

In *Rescue of Jerusalem*, I try to determine why the Assyrian army, led by the emperor Sennacherib, abandoned its invasion of Judah during the reign of Hezekiah, an event treated in 2 Kgs 18-19, Isa 36-37 and 2 Chron 32. Each of these narratives credits the angel of the Lord with forcing the invaders' withdrawal as they were threatening the kingdom's capital; the event's importance⁶ has prompted scholars over the centuries to theorize on a more realistic cause for Jerusalem's deliverance. One of the principal theories is that an epidemic forced the Assyrians to retreat (I refer to this as the "epidemic theory"); a second maintains the invaders departed to attend to troubles elsewhere in their empire (the "troubles-elsewhere theory"). I argue for another theory: that the Assyrians departed sometime after hearing a report or rumor that a Kushite expeditionary force was approaching; 2 Kgs 19:9 and Isa 37:9 allude to this advance and say it was led by Tirhakah, a Kushite royal now more commonly known as Taharqa. This view received scant support from scholars during the 20th century.⁷

⁵ Evans, "History in the Eye of the Beholder?," 24.

⁶ Heinrich Graetz, in his landmark *History of the Jews* (trans. from the German; 6 vols.; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1891-92), says of the Assyrian design to take Judah's capital: "If this plan had succeeded, Jerusalem would have suffered a fate similar to that of Samaria, and the few remaining tribes would have been carried off into captivity and scattered abroad, to be irretrievably lost amongst the various nationalities" (1:273). (Cited in Aubin, 296, note 24.) This would have meant the end of Hebrew society. I am unaware of any serious dissent to this view.

W.H. McNeill, "Infectious Alternatives," in *QJMH* 10 (1998), comments upon this hypothetical disappearance of Hebrew culture: "Think of what that would mean! For without Judaism, both Christianity and Islam become inconceivable. And without these faiths, the world as we know it becomes unrecognizable: profoundly, utterly different." He says of what might have happened had the Assyrian campaign succeeded: "Surely there is no greater might-have-been in all recorded history" (80). (In this article, McNeill -- author of *Plagues and Peoples* and the National Book Award-winning *The Rise of the West* -- expressed support for the epidemic theory; upon reading the manuscript of *Rescue of Jerusalem*, he described himself as "convert" to the view that the Kushites had played an essential role in Jerusalem's survival. {Personal communication, 2000.})

⁷ For a discussion of occasional support in the remainder of the 20th century for the idea that the Kushites would have contributed in some way to the Assyrian retreat, see *Rescue of Jerusalem*, 124-31, where I characterize this support as argued too weakly to be convincing and presented too briefly or discreetly to have attracted attention.

In one of this book's twenty chapters, I explore the history of this theory; it is this account that Evans disputes. The account is based on what I label as "a light sampling of scholarship from medieval times onward, not a systematic review of it."⁸ I maintain:

- That some notable Western scholars over the span of several centuries prior to the late 19th century considered that the 25th Dynasty's army played a significant role in preventing Sennacherib from attacking Jerusalem. The ten individuals whom I cite fall into two categories. One consists of those who support the idea that the 25th Dynasty's forces were the only reason or leading reason for Sennacherib's withdrawal; I call this idea the "Kushite-rescue theory." The six supporters of this theory are: A.H.L Heeren, Henry Constable, William Lowth, Malbim (Meier Loeb ben Jehiel Michael), Radak (Rabbi David Kimhi) and J. Gardner Wilkinson. The other scholars see the Kushite-Egyptian soldiers as a factor in causing the retreat but not the only factor; an epidemic, for example, might have been also involved. Here I will call this the "hybrid Kushite-rescue theory" (though I do not give it a name in the book). Its supporters are John Calvin, Heinrich von Ewald, Simon Patrick and Isaac Mayer Wise.
- That scholarly support for these Kushite-related views wanes markedly starting in the 1880s. This decline coincides with the onset of mass colonialism in black Africa by European powers. The term "scramble for Africa," coined by contemporary British journalists, is commonly used by historians for a phenomenon whose start has been dated to 1882.⁹
- That some of the colonial era's leading Western specialists on ancient Egypt and Nubia hold overtly racist views concerning black Africans and are dismissive of Kushite accomplishment in general.
- That although racism is, generally speaking, by no means discernible in their writings, Western scholars in the latter, post-colonial half of the 20th century tend to reflect the conventional wisdom, as established by

⁸ Aubin, 244.

⁹ Actions by Britain's Gladstone government in Egypt in 1882 are often seen as igniting the scramble; see R. Robinson and J. Gallagher, with A. Denny, *Africa and the Victorians: The Climax of Imperialism in the Dark Continent* (New York: St. Martins, 1961), 466. They conclude: "From start to finish the partition of tropical Africa was driven by the persistent crisis in Egypt. When the British entered Egypt on their own, the Scramble began; and so long as they stayed in Cairo, it continued until there was no more Africa left to divide" (465). The main players were Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Portugal, plus Belgium's King Leopold II. Spain was present to a lesser extent.

Thomas 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, 10 million square miles of new territory and 110 million dazed new subjects..."(xxi).

influential experts and mentors of the colonial era, that the 25th Dynasty had poorly governed Egypt. These scholars of the late 20th century tend to give little credence to the possibility that this dynasty's army had been a significant factor in saving Jerusalem.

I use the term “colonial era” here exclusively in reference to European powers' occupation of Africa beginning in the early 1880s and ending in roughly the middle of the 20th century. For the purposes of the book, the two most relevant occupied countries are Egypt and Sudan. In the case of Egypt, Great Britain took control of the country in 1882, leaving the Ottoman Empire as nominal ruler; in the case of Sudan, a British-Egyptian administration took control in 1898.¹⁰ For simplicity's sake, I will refer to the main armies in the conflict of 701 BCE as those of the Kushites (or of the 25th Dynasty) and the Assyrians; however, the Kushite force would have included a substantial number of Egyptians, just as the Assyrian army (as was its practice) would have contained units of soldiers from some other nations. My use of the word “scholars” will include archaeologists, historians and anthropologists as well as biblical commentators. My page references to Evans' article will be to the JHS electronic version. In footnotes, I will often give page references to my book; this is done not out of narcissism but out of a need to establish in the face of Evans' criticisms what the book actually contains (and what Evans' critique overlooks).

The thrust of Evans' article, as he states in his introduction, is that “the evidence does not support [Aubin's and Bellis's] hypothesis” that “due to anti-African racial bias, scholars have failed to acknowledge that the Cushites rescued Jerusalem from Sennacherib in 701 BCE.”¹¹ (Evans' broad use here of the word “scholars” here could lead some readers to suppose that I conflate today's generation of scholars with their often more racially biased predecessors of the colonial era. Such an accusation would be understandably offensive to many *JHS* readers. It is only well into the latter half of his article that Evans sufficiently notes that “Aubin does not accuse modern scholars of racism *per se*, but asserts that modern scholarship has adopted this view of Cushite incompetence from their ‘colonial-era’ predecessors.”¹² Too, Evans' reference to “modern scholars” and “modern scholarship” could be taken to include the current scene; the manuscript of *Rescue of Jerusalem* was essentially completed

¹⁰ To be sure, neither Egypt nor Sudan was an outright colony of Great Britain: both officially belonged to the Ottoman Empire. The British, however, effectively ruled Egypt from the 1880s until 1922; Egypt's *de facto* ruler for 24 years starting in 1883 was London's chief representative to the country, Lord Cromer. They also ruled Sudan, with Egypt as their lesser partner, for 57 years until the end of 1955. Britain's attitude toward Egypt and Sudan is generally described as colonial.

¹¹ Evans, “History in the Eye of the Beholder?,” 3.

¹² *Ibid.*, 15.

in 1997, as noted,¹³ although it was not published until five years later; such criticism in the book therefore should not be seen as extending to 21st-century scholarship.¹⁴)

Let us now consider Evans' attempts to discredit my account of how certain scholars over the course of several centuries have regarded the role of Kushites in the conflict of 701. I will respond to Evans' points and criticisms in roughly the order that he makes them.

1. Misstating the starting premise

Point: Evans starts by describing my premise (which he will subsequently call unfounded). He says that I maintain that in the decades and centuries prior to the 1880s there was, in his words, "a scholarly consensus that the Cushites were instrumental in the deliverance of Jerusalem."¹⁵ He does not see this consensus as modest but, rather, as "fairly broad."¹⁶ He uses the word "consensus" to describe my view six times.

Response: I never suggest a consensus.¹⁷ I state: "The point, then, should be made emphatically. Prior to 20th 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" (emphasis added).¹⁸ Note that this wording covers supporters of both the Kushite-rescue theory and the hybrid Kushite-rescue theory.

The word "consensus" indicates majority opinion. "Some" does not mean "most."

¹³ Aubin, *xiii*.

¹⁴ My reading of 21-century scholarship is at the moment too spotty to allow for confident generalizations.

¹⁵ Evans, "History in the Eye of the Beholder?," 4.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁷ To determine whether or not there was a true scholarly consensus prior to the late 19th century, one would have to do more than my own unscientific, "light sampling of scholarship" and carry out a comprehensive survey of writings that deal to some degree with Sennacherib's invasion. A thorough survey in the 1990s, before the digitalization of books, would have required searches of studies by authors influential and obscure, written in various languages and located in libraries (and their rare-book departments) in numerous Western cities, something outside the scope of an unsubsidized project. A majority of the ten scholars I identify were indisputably "leading figures" in their fields. The sampling is sufficient to bear the weight of my qualified observations

¹⁸ Aubin, 241. Of the ten scholars named, at least eight were prominent in varying degrees in their respective fields. The exceptions: Constable and, arguably, Lowth.

2. Wrongly disputing the supporting evidence

Criticism: Evans suggests I exaggerate pro-Kushite support in the pre-colonial era. He says that only three of the six individuals whom I name as supporters of the Kushite-rescue theory (as distinct from the hybrid version) deserve to be considered as such: ¹⁹ they are Constable, a 19th-century Anglican prebendary at Cork;²⁰ Radak, a 12th-century rabbi from France, and Malbim, a 19th-century rabbi from eastern Europe.²¹ Evans in effect eliminates three other scholars from my list: Heeren, Wilkinson and Lowth.

Response: No basis exists for any of these eliminations. Let us consider each case.

- The German historian Heeren (1760-1842), knighted by England and named by France to its Legion of Honor, writes one sentence on Taharqa's expedition: he says Taharqa "deterred" Sennacherib "from the invasion of Egypt, merely by the rumour of his advance against him."²² I observe in the book that for Heeren, the 25th Dynasty's expedition was in effect "exclusively responsible for turning back Sennacherib."²³ Evans disagrees emphatically: "Heeren says nothing of the sort."²⁴ Evans explains: "The turning back of Assyria envisioned

¹⁹ Evans, "History in the Eye of the Beholder?," 6.

²⁰ H. Constable, "Tirhakah," in P. Fairbairn (ed.), *The Imperial Bible Dictionary* (2 vols.; London: Blackie, 1867), 2:1042-43. Constable says Taharqa achieved a "midnight overthrow" of Sennacherib.

²¹ Annotation by Rabbi A.J. Rosenberg, *II Kings, a New English Translation: Translation of Text, Rashii and Commentary* (New York: Judaica, 1980), 386 ff. To be sure, the circumstances that the two clerics sketch for Taharqa's success are hardly plausible: Radak says Sennacherib withdrew to defend against an attack by Taharqa on Mesopotamia, and Malbim maintains the emperor retreated out of concern that Taharqa was advancing on Assyria; Evans calls Radak's proposal "obviously indefensible" (p. 5). Fanciful though the idea of Taharqa invading Sennacherib's homeland might seem today, this might not have been the case in Radak's 12th-century France, where the geography of the Middle East would not have been so well known.

The point: proposals for the precise circumstances by which the Kushite-Egyptian forces would have repelled Sennacherib are not so significant. No one knows what those circumstances *really* were, and conjecture is fair game. The circumstances that a scholar might propose for the constructive role of the 25th Dynasty in saving Jerusalem do not de-legitimize that scholar's perception that the Kushites carried out some sort of constructive role, even if those circumstances seem far-fetched. The open-mindedness that such a perception implies is more important than a plausible scenario.

²² A.H.L. Heeren, *Historical Researches into the Politics, Intercourse, and Trade of the Carthaginians, Ethiopians, and Egyptians*, 2nd ed. (trans. from the German; Oxford: D.A. Talboys, 1838), 410-11. Heeren does not amplify.

²³ Aubin, 236.

²⁴ Evans, "History in the Eye of the Beholder?," 5.

by Heeren does not suggest that Cush turned Assyria back from conquering Judah, but rather merely from invading Egypt.”

Evans errs. He ignores the footnote that accompanies Heeren’s observation, In that footnote, the historian indicates that he bases his opinion on 2 Kings 19:9; this is the verse that states that Sennacherib, while in Judah, received the intelligence regarding Taharqa’s advance. Heeren’s footnote thus makes it plain that he sees the expedition as deterring Sennacherib from further action against Judah (as well as from an invasion of Egypt).²⁵

- Regarding Wilkinson (1797-1875), vice-president of the British Archaeological Association, Evans writes, “Aubin and Bellis both point out J.G. Wilkinson’s opinion (1878) that Tirhakah defeated ‘the numerous army of Sennacherib.’”²⁶ Yet, despite acknowledging this, Evans will later leave out Wilkinson from the shortened list of scholars whom he sees as true supporters of the Kushite-rescue theory. He gives no explanation for this omission. Wilkinson’s absence from Evans’ list is all the more curious because of the unequivocal nature of his view: in an another book (published in 1854), he writes that “Tirhaka... checked the advance of the Assyrians and, forcing Sennacherib to retire from Judaea, restored the influence of Egypt to Syria.”²⁷
- Lowth (1660-1732), an Anglican cleric and biblical commentator, backs the idea that the 25th-Dynasty army created a “diversion” for “Sennacherib’s forces, when they were ready to fall upon the Jews.”²⁸ A diversion is a common

²⁵ Note that, for Heeren, Assyria’s ultimate objective was the invasion of the Nile Valley; the conquest of Palestine - a stepping stone for an attack on Egypt - was a precondition for that. It would have been to head off such an invasion that, as argued in Chapter 6 of *Rescue of Jerusalem*, the 25th Dynasty sent forces to Palestine to confront Sennacherib. Heeren’s statement reflects this.

Note also that Heeren’s book is more focused on the African continent than on Palestine, as the book’s title indicates (see note 22). This focus may further explain why Heeren cites Egypt rather than Judah in his brief mention of Sennacherib’s campaign.

²⁶ Evans, “History in the Eye of the Beholder?,” 5-6, citing Sir J. Gardner Wilkinson, rev. and ed. by S. Birch, *The Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians* (3 vols; London: Murray, 1878), 1: 94-5, 97. See Aubin, 240. In the earlier 1847 edition of the same work, Wilkinson also credits Taharqa with defeating Sennacherib (1:143).

²⁷ Wilkinson, *A Popular Account of the Ancient Egyptian*, (rev. and abridged ed. (2 vols; New York: Harper, 1854), 1:308-09. See Aubin, 240, note 17 on 386.

²⁸ William Lowth, B.D., Prebendary of Winchester, *A Commentary upon the larger and lesser Prophets: being a continuation of Bishop Patrick*, 3rd ed. (London: Printed for J & J. Knapton, et al, 1730), 73, 84-5.

Intriguingly, Lowth also indicates that “most Interpreters” (*i.e.*, biblical commentators) agree with the idea of the Kushite-Egyptian expedition’s success.

military tactic, and it is among the plausible explanations for why the Assyrians might have retreated under Kushite pressure. This diversion is the only cause that the Briton gives for the invaders' withdrawal, so he would appear to give the 25th Dynasty's expedition *full credit* for the Assyrian setback. However, Evans says Lowth's idea of a diversion would have only "contributed" to the Assyrian withdrawal,²⁹ which presumably would make him a supporter of the hybrid Kushite-rescue theory (as distinct from the Kushite-rescue theory).

In sum, Evans dismisses unjustifiably three of my sampling's six supporters of the Kushite-rescue theory.

Criticism: Evans further lessens the importance of support for the hybrid Kushite-rescue theory by asserting that its supporters "only held to a *contribution* by the Cushites, and this contribution only assisted after the main reason for [the] Assyrian defeat - the pestilence/plague" (emphasis in original). Evans concludes: "In sum, the evidence that Aubin and Bellis present hardly shows a 'Cushite-Rescue theory' at all, but merely that some commentators/scholars viewed the rumour or actual presence of a Cushite force to have been a factor (but not the key factor) in Sennacherib's withdrawal..."³⁰ This group would include: von Ewald (1803-1875), one of 19th-century Germany's most prominent Christian theologians; Wise (1819-1902), the Prague-educated rabbi who has been called the founder of U.S. Judaism,³¹ and the Church of England's Bishop Patrick (1626-1707), theologian and biblical commentator.³² Evans does not say so, but the distinguished group would presumably also include by extension John Calvin (1509-1564), whose own hybrid variation calls for a degree of combat success by Kushite forces (at Pelusium, following Herodotus's account) in combination with the actual angel of the Lord.

²⁹ Evans, "History in the Eye of the Beholder?," 5.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.

³¹ See M.B. May, *Isaac Mayer Wise: The Founder of American Judaism* (New York and London: Putnam, 1916), 397.

³² I should explain the inclusion of Patrick, the 17th-century bishop of Ely, on the list. He credits the report of Taharqa's advance combined with a pestilence as making Sennacherib "hasten away"; however, he says there are two places called Kush, one located in Arabia and the other being "Ethiopia," and he deems the former to be the more likely. He makes this choice on geographical rather than racial grounds, saying that the African Kush was farther away. Patrick's opinion is cited in a note at 2 Kgs 19:7 in *Mant's Bible*, known more formally as: Rev. George d'Oyly and Rev. Richard Mant (eds.), *The Holy Bible, according to the authorized version, with notes, explanatory and practical, taken principally from the most eminent writers of the United Church of England and Ireland* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1817). I consider the Anglican prelate to be a supporter of the hybrid Kushite-rescue theory because his textual analysis points to the army named in 2 Kgs 19 as contributing to Sennacherib's departure; a mistake in identifying the location of Kush, perhaps a reflection on the lack of general knowledge in the 17th century about that civilization, is less important. See also note 21.

Response: Evans gives importance to the distinction that exists between scholars who see the Kushites as being solely responsible for the retreat and those who see them as contributing to it hybrid-style. I do not.

Evans says supporters of the latter view perceive the Kushites as being “only” and “merely” “a factor (but not the key factor)” in the withdrawal. Through both tone and definition he thus in effect devalues the Kushites’ involvement in the deliverance of Jerusalem: they would not have played a “key” role.

The very notion of a downgrade, however, is peculiar. It is hard to see why carrying out their mission in tandem with disease or some other factor would diminish the value of the Kushites’ role. Both a scenario of the Kushite army singlehandedly causing a retreat (as advanced by Constable and Wilkinson) and a scenario that calls for Sennacherib to retreat in the face of a combination of disease and Kushite activity (as espoused by von Ewald, Wise and Patrick) present the Kushite role as essential -- and therefore “key,” contrary to Evans’ claim. That is because even if, for the sake of argument, the Kushite role was simply the proverbial last straw that broke the camel’s back, the retreat would not have occurred without it. In war as in cinema, if one is a co-star one is also a star.

Both scenarios also have something else important in common: I call it in the book a “respectful view of Kush.”³³ The ten scholars in question assume that the 25th Dynasty had the competence to enable, or to help enable, the survival of Judah and Jerusalem;³⁴ it is an assumption hard to find among Western scholars during the late 19th and the 20th centuries. (See below).

Criticism: Evans says, “Without even attempting an exhaustive treatment of the literature, it will be immediately obvious that pre-1880 there were various opinions regarding the survival of Jerusalem...”³⁵ - that is, opinions that did not hold the Kushites to be solely responsible for that survival. As examples, he cites the views of the Babylonian Talmud and several 18th- and 19th-century Western scholars. He deems that these cases represent “contradictory evidence” to my idea that, as he (incorrectly) presents it, “the ‘Cushite-rescue theory’ was the prominent or consensus view prior to the closing decades of the 19th century...”³⁶

³³ Aubin, 242.

³⁴ Even if, as some historians suggest, Sennacherib would have withdrawn after hearing a *false* rumour about an advance of Kushite troops, his evident fear would suggest the Kushites had a considerable military reputation.

³⁵ Evans, “History in the Eye of the Beholder?,” 6.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 8.

Response: Readers might suppose from Evans' tone that I do not take into account the existence before the late 19th century of explanations for the deliverance that do not feature the Kushite role. In fact, I note the existence of such "alternative theories,"³⁷ and also illustrate the point by citing individuals of some renown³⁸ as pre-colonial supporters of the epidemic theory, the most common of the alternative theories.

Criticism: After arguing for four pages that no consensus ever existed, Evans concludes: "[I]t is obvious that, as far as establishing that the 'Cushite-rescue theory' was a prominent or consensus view prior to the closing decades of the 19th century, Aubin and Bellis have hardly done what one could call a scholarly treatment, and their research does not approach the thoroughness necessary to support such wide-reaching statements."³⁹

Response: Evans thus disparages me for, in effect, failing to substantiate a claim I do not make.

The gratuitous condemnation of my scholarship concludes the opening segment of Evans' article. To recapitulate: in addition to misrepresenting my argument, he attacks my list of ten scholars who see the Kushites as having "played some sort of significant role (whether supporting or leading) in turning back Sennacherib" by wrongly eliminating some cases and marginalizing the importance of others on tendentious grounds, thus leaving only three unchallenged.

The list of ten supporters stands.

3. Misrepresenting the research

Criticism: In the next segment of his article, Evans focuses on Europe's intellectual climate in the late 19th century. He starts by disputing my view that a "mass abandonment" of the Kushite-rescue theory occurred at this time.⁴⁰ He says that because "there was no [prior] Cushite-rescue theory 'consensus'" there could be "no mass abandonment of the theory in the late 19th century."⁴¹

³⁷ See discussion of "alternative theories" in Aubin, 243.

³⁸ The examples are: Josephus, the first-century Jewish historian; Sir Austen Henry Layard (1817-1894), the British archaeologist whose spectacular Mesopotamian discoveries include Sennacherib's palace at Nineveh, and Lord Byron (1788-1824), who hints at disease in his 1815 poem, "The Destruction of Sennacherib." See Aubin, 243.

³⁹ Evans, "History in the Eye of the Beholder?," 8.

⁴⁰ As described in Aubin, 243-248.

⁴¹ Evans, "History in the Eye of the Beholder?," 13.

In support of his view, he names Franz Delitzch as an example of a scholar whom, he says, I incorrectly claim “abandon[s] the Cushite-rescue theory in favour of the plague explanation.”⁴²

Response: Wrong. I make no such suggestion about Delitsch (1813-1890). Rather, I use this Christian intellectual at the University of Leipzig to help exemplify a trend in which many “internationally influential historians, often clerics or strongly religious laypeople, threw their weight behind the epidemic theory.”⁴³ I do not suggest that he or any other individuals actually *switched* opinions; rather, I say that broad generational evolution -- a “societal sea change”⁴⁴ --occurred in how the West viewed Africa generally. (For how this was reflected not only in scholarship but the in the arts, see section 11 below.)

Criticism: As a further example of my supposedly unfair treatment of colonial-era scholars, Evans asserts that I misjudge Alfred Edersheim’s motives in not backing the Kushite-rescue theory. Evans says that “Aubin and Bellis... simply assume [that Edersheim’s support for the epidemic theory] is due to the racist view of Cushite incompetence.”⁴⁵ ⁴⁶

Response: Evans draws an improper inference. I write that “in the late 19th century, alternatives to the Cushite-rescue theory gain an unprecedented degree of acceptance,”⁴⁷ and an accompanying endnote states: “I am not suggesting that all scholars who hold that the Kushites were minor players in the 701 conflict are necessarily scornful of the Kushites generally (although a correlation does exist in a majority of cases).”⁴⁸ Edersheim (1825-1889) is one of several examples I give of scholars supporting alternative theories. (Delitzch is another example.) I do not say Edersheim (1825-1889) has racist views; rather, I simply cite the Oxford lecturer as

⁴² Ibid., 8, 9.

⁴³ Aubin, 244.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 243.

⁴⁵ Evans, “History in the Eye of the Beholder?,” 9.

⁴⁶ Evans pointedly observes not once but twice (on his p. 8 and p. 25, note 133) that Bellis misspells Edersheim’s name (“Edelsheim”). If Evans had not made spelling an issue I would not mention this, but he himself misspells two scholars’ names -- Malbim (“Malbin,” on his p. 6) and Kuenen (“Keunen,” on p. 7).

⁴⁷ Aubin, 243.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 387, note 31.

being among the well-known scholars of that period who “threw their weight behind the epidemic theory.”⁴⁹

Racism is a serious charge, and I make it only when there is unmistakable evidence for it in an individual’s writings. (See section 11.)

4. Misstating the chronology

Criticism: Evans says that “despite claims by Aubin and Bellis, there is no evidence whatsoever for a ‘mass abandonment of the Kushite-rescue theory’ in the 1880s.”⁵⁰ He says that “several sources dated to this period (1880-1900) actually credit the Cushites with contributing to the Assyrian retreat.”⁵¹ His three sources: William Bevan, Eberhard Schrader and Julius Wellhausen.

Response: If Evans is right, it would weaken my contention of a correlation between the onset of the colonial era and a decline in support for the Kushite-rescue theory (as well as a decline in support for its hybrid version and, for that matter, a decline in general respect for Egypt’s Kushite dynasty). However, let us look at each source Evans assigns to the period of 1880-1900:

- Bevan (1821-1908), an Anglican cleric from Wales, does indeed write that Kushite Egypt defeated the Assyrians and saved Judah;⁵² he thus in effect makes the 25th Dynasty solely responsible for rescuing Jerusalem.⁵³ However, Evans gives the wrong time frame: in the text of his article, he presents Bevan’s view as having been published in a biblical dictionary in 1893; that same view, however, appeared word for word in the dictionary’s first edition in

⁴⁹ *ibid.*, 244.

⁵⁰ Evans, “History in the Eye of the Beholder?,” 10, quoting Aubin, 248.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁵² Bevan, “Alliances,” in (W. Smith, ed.), *A Dictionary of the Bible: Comprising Its Antiquities, Biography, Geography, and Natural History* (3 vols.; Boston: Little, Brown, 1860), says “it was only when the independence of Egypt was threatened, that the Assyrians were defeated by the joint forces of Sethos and Tirhakah” (1:49). Sethos, who appears in Herodotus’s account, is often presumed to be Shebitku, the Kushite pharaoh in 701; this would mean these “joint forces” would belong to the 25th Dynasty.

⁵³ Evans thus identifies a scholar of the pre-colonial era (of whom I had been unaware) who can be added to the list of Kushite-rescue supporters of that period, raising the number to seven. This also increases the total number of pre-colonial scholars seeing the Kushites as playing either a supporting or leading role in the rescue to eleven.

1860.⁵⁴ In sum, Bevan's view harks from well before the colonial era; Evans' use of Bevan to refute me does not hold up.⁵⁵

- Another slip in chronology occurs in Evans' classification of Schrader (1836-1908) as a colonial-era supporter of the Kushite-rescue theory. Evans notes that in the 1885 English translation of a study, the German Assyriologist casts doubt on Sennacherib's claim to have routed the Kushite-Egyptian foe in the battle at Eltekeh. This clash, which took place in Palestine, is the only battle between Kushite-Egyptian forces and the Assyrians in 701 for which a record exists; in his annals, Sennacherib describes the clash in triumphant terms.⁵⁶ Evans quotes Schrader as writing that "if it was a victory" for Sennacherib, it would have been "a Pyrrhus-victory."⁵⁷ Schrader also writes that the losses that the Assyrians presumably suffered at Eltekeh had the effect of making Sennacherib "little able to compel Jerusalem to surrender"; those losses combined with a "pestilence that broke out in the army" caused Sennacherib to retreat from Palestine.⁵⁸ Schrader thus supports the hybrid Kushite-rescue theory. However, this 1885 translation reproduces without change the views expressed in the original 1872 German version.⁵⁹ Schrader's

⁵⁴ Bevan's idea relating to the Kushite expedition gets a passing, one-sentence comment in the three-volume work.

⁵⁵ A somewhat comparable error occurs when Evans, making a related point, refers a page later to F. W. Farrar, *The Second Book of Kings*, in W.R. Nicoll (ed.), *The Expositor's Bible* (New York: Armstrong, 1894), 338. Evans says, "[I]n 1894 F.W. Farrar viewed Sennacherib's withdrawal as likely due to plague or simoon, but [he] clearly had a high view of Tirhakah, asserting that the Cushite king was 'the greatest of the Egyptian sovereigns who came from Ethiopia. He reigned gloriously for many years'" (11). However, Farrar formed his view of Taharqa well before the colonial era. In 1860, a third of a century before publication of *The Second Book of Kings*, Farrar (1831-1903), who would become dean of Canterbury Cathedral, writes in "Hezekiah," *Dictionary of the Bible* (*op. cit.*): "This magnificent Ethiopian hero, who had extended his quests to the pillars of Hercules was indeed a formidable antagonist [for Sennacherib]" (1:800). Farrar's positive opinion of Taharqa can thus be seen as crystallizing in the pre-colonial era and as reflecting the relative open-mindedness of that time. (For background on Taharqa's association with the "pillars of Hercules," see Aubin, extensive note on 358-60.)

⁵⁶ J.B. Pritchard (ed.), *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1969), 287-8.

⁵⁷ Evans, "History in the Eye of the Beholder?," 9, note 41, quoting E. Schrader, *The Cuneiform Inscriptions and the Old Testament* (2 vols.; trans. O.C. Whitehouse; London and Edinburgh: Williams & Norgate, 1885), 1:300.

⁵⁸ Schrader, 300. Schrader thus becomes the twelfth pre-colonial supporter of the idea that the Kushite-Egyptian force contributed in a supporting or leading manner to saving Jerusalem. I had not consulted Schrader's work before reading Evans' article.

⁵⁹ Schrader, *Der Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament* (Giessen: J. Ricker'sche Buchhandlung, 1872), 189-190.

view, like Bevan's, thus *precedes* the colonial era and does not support Evans' argument.

- Evans' reference to Wellhausen (1844-1918) is moot. Evans writes that "although first published in 1865, Wellhausen's *Prolegomena* continued to have massive influence in this time period (1880-1900) despite espousing a significant Cushite contribution towards an Assyrian defeat (an opinion which was not emended due to the rise of [any] new consensus of Cushite incompetence)."⁶⁰ It is not so important that Evans errs on the date: the book was first published in German in 1883 (not in 1865, when Wellhausen was 21), although an earlier version was published under a slightly different title in 1878. In theory, this correction of the publication date, which puts it in the colonial era, should strengthen Evans' argument; the problem, however, is that Wellhausen makes no *forthright* assertion in *Prolegomena* of a Kushite contribution. Rather, Wellhausen is pointedly vague: "By a still unexplained catastrophe, the main army of Sennacherib was annihilated...."⁶¹

Evans thus fails to identify instances of *fresh* and *clear-cut* support for either the Kushite-rescue theory or the hybrid Kushite-rescue theory in the period of the 1880s through to the early 1900s. By fresh support, I mean support that would

⁶⁰ Evans, "History in the Eye of the Beholder?," 10.

⁶¹ Evans reads much into Wellhausen's views on the Kushite-Egyptian role in *Prolegomena to the History of Israel* (trans. J.S. Black and A. Menzies from the German; Edinburgh: Black, 1885). Wellhausen ascribes Sennacherib's withdrawal to what Evans calls "multiple factors" ("History in the Eye of the Beholder?," 7). One factor would be what Wellhausen says is an "unexplained catastrophe." Evans describes the second factor this way: "Wellhausen views the battle of Eltekeh... as an Assyrian victory, but suggests it was only a temporary setback for the Egyptians and posits a second battle with Egypt" from which Sennacherib was unable to recover (ibid., 7).

Wellhausen in *Prolegomena* never says a second battle took place. He says, rather, that after Eltekeh "Sennacherib pressed on southwards [i.e., toward the Egyptian frontier], for the Egyptians were collecting their forces against him." He says nothing more about these forces. Later, says Wellhausen, "By a still unexplained catastrophe, the main army of Sennacherib was annihilated on the frontier between Egypt and Palestine, and Jerusalem was thereby freed from all danger"(Wellhausen, 482-3). That is all Wellhausen says in *Prolegomena*. Evans evidently infers that a second encounter between the two armies led to Sennacherib's withdrawal. I do not know whether Evans is right or wrong: Wellhausen's scenario is murky. (Witness, among other things, his use of the passive verb, "was annihilated.") It is also not clear if, as Evans says, Wellhausen indeed posits "multiple factors" as causing the retreat; Wellhausen could have just one cause in mind, the "unexplained catastrophe."

If Evans is right in saying Wellhausen sees a Kushite-Egyptian force as causing Sennacherib's withdrawal, it would raise the question of why the German scholar does not explicitly give credit to that force. Another question: Would Wellhausen's discreetly couched explanation for the deliverance be symptomatic of an intensifying racial bias in Germany at that time? In other words, would Wellhausen not want to say out loud what he really thought?

I would like nothing better than to add this notable scholar's name to the list of those who support the idea of the Kushites playing a helpful role in the deliverance. Such support, however, would need to be plain and inarguable. Wellhausen's statement that Sennacherib's reversal is "unexplained" is the only opinion that is clear.

originate from thinking in that period; two of the views that Evans cites are from one or two decades before. The third case that he cites, that of Wellhausen, fails to pass the test of clarity.

5. Not taking into account the study's full content

Criticism: Evans suggests that my critique of scholarly views on the Kushites starting in the colonial era is too narrow: “Apparently scholars’ opinions are researched only in so far as to determine whether they viewed Cush as rescuing Jerusalem or not.”⁶²

Response: Nonsense. Evans focuses his article mostly on my Chapter 18, which deals with scholars’ views on who or what saved Jerusalem. That chapter’s discussion presupposes readers’ familiarity with earlier parts of the book. Evans’ charge ignores:

- Chapter 17’s nine-page treatment of how numerous 20th-century scholars view the 25th Dynasty’s relations with Palestine outside of the context of whether or not that dynasty helped save Jerusalem.
- Chapter 13’s fifteen-page discussion of how 20th-century biblical scholars perceive the Hebrew Bible’s treatment of the Kushites in contexts other than that of Sennacherib’s campaign.⁶³
- Briefer treatments of scholarly views on other aspects of the Kushites. Chapter 6, for example, highlights 20th-century scholars’ remarkably positive views toward Kushite art, including architecture.⁶⁴ Also, to provide contrast for the views of colonial-era scholars, Chapter 18 itself cites prominent pre-colonial historians’ positive opinions on Kush outside the context of Jerusalem’s crisis.⁶⁵

⁶² Evans, “History in the Eye of the Beholder?,” 10.

⁶³ See especially commentaries on Amos 9:7, Jer 13:23 and Isa 18:1-6. I argue that scholars who see such passages as pejorative may misconstrue them: “It is a mistake to project back to those times, as many biblical experts do, today’s widespread racial attitudes. In ancient times, the racial climate was unlike anything we know today” (Aubin, 168).

⁶⁴ Aubin, 70-71. See section 7 of this text.

⁶⁵ The decipherer of the hieroglyphics, J.F. Champollion (1790-1832), in H. Hartleben (ed.), *Lettres et Journaux de Champollion le Jeune* (2 vols.; Paris: Leroux, 1909), suggests that Egyptian culture had grown out of an upstanding Kushite civilization. (The point is not whether or not he is correct but, rather, that he is not biased; elsewhere he calls the rule of the 25th Dynasty “gentle and humane.” (See Aubin, 242). His contemporary, Heeren, lauds the “piety and justice of the Ethiopians” and notes that “the pen of cautious, clear-sighted historians often places them on the highest rank of knowledge and civilization” (*op. cit.*, 290-1, 471; see also Aubin, 236). For Mariette and his contribution to *Aïda*, see Aubin, 242.

Note also that immediately following Chapter 18 is a chapter devoted to a well-known colonial-era scholar, Archibald H. Sayce, who worked in Egypt and Sudan periodically over a span of four decades starting in 1879. The chapter deals with his views on Jerusalem's survival in only three of its 16 pages: most of the profile presents his attitudes on race, ancient Kush, the colonial establishment and the contemporary colonial war. Evans makes no mention of Sayce.

Evans' criticism raises the question of how well he has read the book.

Criticism: Evans says that I “do not even explore the reasons why scholars did not view Cush as instrumental to Sennacherib's withdrawal.”⁶⁶

Response: Evans' complaint further raises doubts of his familiarity with the book's content. His criticism reflects no awareness of Chapter 14's seven-page exploration of why numerous scholars dismiss the Kushites' performance against Sennacherib. I argue that what greatly explains that dismissal is the speech by Sennacherib's envoy, the Rab-shakeh, to the threatened Jerusalemites (2 Kgs 18:19-25).

The ease with which many twentieth-century scholars' have swallowed this Assyrian propagandist's depiction of Kushite Egypt says something about their critical faculties, so permit me to review the situation.

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 on it! Such is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who depend on 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” (emphases added).⁶⁷

Here is how certain leading scholars see the passage:

- James Henry Breasted, writing in his 1905 *A History of Egypt*, the standard primer on the pharaonic era throughout much of the 20th century, finds the

⁶⁶ Evans, “History in the Eye of the Beholder?,” 10.

⁶⁷ Quotation from NIV.

Rab-shakeh to have “mockingly” spoken “the truth.” He says “Sennacherib disposed of Taharqa’s army without difficulty.”⁶⁸

- William Y. Adams, in *Nubia*, which became the standard history of the ancient Upper Nile after its publication in 1977, also accepts the veracity of the Rab-shakeh’s speech: the Assyrian envoy’s words “aptly suggest the estate to which Egypt’s imperial fortunes had fallen in the eighth century BC.”⁶⁹ He says: “The passage, despite its mocking tone, is dear to the hearts of historians of Nubia, for it recalls the one brief appearance of Kush upon the stage of world history.”
- Other respected historians cited in Chapter 18⁷⁰ who explicitly use the Rab-shakeh’s speech as a source for evaluating the Kushite role include A.J. Arkell,⁷¹ Nicolas Grimal,⁷² T.G.H. James⁷³ and Kenneth Kitchen^{74 75}

I argue that these scholars misconstrue the meaning of the Rab-shakeh’s speech: far from impugning Kushite Egypt’s reliability, the broken-reed passage evokes its reliability. The Rab-shakeh mocks Hezekiah for trusting in two things, Egypt and

⁶⁸ J.H. Breasted, *A History of Egypt: From the Earliest Times to the Persian Conquest* (New York: Scribner, 1905), 552-3. Breasted is by no means the first to deem this passage to show the 25th Dynasty’s weakness. For example, Julius Oppert, *Mémoire sur les rapports de l’Égypte et de l’Assyrie dans l’antiquité* (Paris: Imprimerie Impériale, 1869) says the image of the bruised reed alludes to the defeat of the Kushites at Eltekeh (31-2); his tone, however, is not disrespectful.

⁶⁹ W. Y. Adams, *Nubia: Corridor to Africa* (London: Allen Lane, 1977), 246.

⁷⁰ Not cited in that chapter is a respected scholar whose view I only came across later: John A. Wilson, *The Culture of Ancient Egypt* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 294.

⁷¹ A.J. Arkell, *A History of the Sudan: From Earliest Times to 1821* (London: Athlone, 1955), 126.

⁷² N. Grimal, *A History of Ancient Egypt*, trans. I. Shaw from the French (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 346.

⁷³ James, “Egypt: The Twenty-fifth and Twenty-sixth Dynasties,” in J. Boardman, I. Edwards, E. Sollberger, N. Hammond (eds.), *The Cambridge Ancient History*, 2nd ed. (14 vols.; Cambridge: Cambridge, 1991), vol. 3, pt. 2, 694.

⁷⁴ K. A. Kitchen, “Egypt,” in J. Bimson (ed.), *Baker Encyclopedia of Bible Places* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1995), 116-7.

⁷⁵ I have named only historians. A biblical commentator with a strong opinion is J.N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1-39; The New International Commentary on the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans, 1986). Referring to the Rab-shakeh’s speech in Isa 36 (2 Kgs 18), he comments, “[The Hebrews] trusted in Egypt, which had neither the strength nor Judah’s best interests at heart. Sometimes it is only our enemies [as in the case of the Rab-shakeh] who see the folly of our behaviour” (635). See Aubin, 370.

Yahweh; the structure of his speech presents these two objects of trust (which I have italicized in the above quotation of 2 Kgs 18:19-25) in rhetorical symmetry, not opposition.⁷⁶ The outcome of the narrative, which is Jerusalem's deliverance, demonstrates that just as Hezekiah was right to rely on Yahweh, so was he right to rely on Pharaoh king of Egypt.

Whether I am right or wrong is the irrelevant here. The point is that there is no basis to Evans' claim that I do not deal with the grounds for which so many scholars have seen the Kushites as irrelevant to the Assyrian retreat.

6. Inventing shortcomings

Criticism: Evans, referring to me, says: "The charge that those who do not hold to a 'Cushite-rescue theory' viewed the Cushites as incompetent cannot be sustained by the evidence."⁷⁷

Response: I make no such charge. Indeed, I cite Egyptologist Gaston Maspero (1846-1916), of France, and historian John Kenrick (1788-1877), of Britain, as examples of epidemic-theory supporters who are also eminently fair in their treatment of Kushite culture.⁷⁸ As well, in my concluding chapter, I salute French philosopher and historian Ernest Renan (1823-1892), a supporter of the epidemic theory, as a rare example of a scholar from *any* period who discerns that, in contexts other than Sennacherib's invasion, "the Hebrew Bible in fact praises the Kushites." Renan writes: "It is remarkable that the Ethiopians are always represented by the prophets as having a propensity for the worship of Yahweh, and that they for this reason were treated more favorably than the other *goyim* [nations]."⁷⁹

Criticism: Evans presents the case of the 19th-century scholar Leopold von Ranke to rebut my supposed "charge" that "those who do not hold a 'Cushite-rescue theory' viewed the Cushites as incompetent." Evans writes that "Aubin claims that von Ranke's 'troubles-elsewhere' explanation for Sennacherib's withdrawal is due to his

⁷⁶ Aubin, 183-7.

⁷⁷ Evans, "History in the Eye of the Beholder?," 11.

⁷⁸ G. Maspero, in A.H. Sayce (ed.) *History of Egypt, Chaldea, Syria, Palestine and Assyria* (12 vols., trans. M.L. McClure from the French; London: Grolier, 1903), is unusually generous, saying that Taharqa's pharaonic rule "recalled the glories of the great reigns of former days, if not by his victories, at least by the excellence of his administration and his activity" (8:141). Also: J. Kenrick, *Ancient Egypt under the Pharaohs* (2 vols.; New York: Alden, 1883, first published 1850) 2:306-16). See Aubin, 387, note 31.

⁷⁹ E. Renan, *History of the People of Israel* (5 vols.): *From the Time of Hezekiah till the Return from Babylon* (Boston: Roberts, 1891), note on 80. See Aubin, 283-4.

acceptance of Cushite incompetence.”⁸⁰ Evans intimates that I see the troubles-elsewhere theory itself as emerging from “scholars’ racism.”⁸¹

Response: My book devotes a single sentence to von Ranke (1795-1886), and I would invite the reader to try to detect in it any hint of such bias against the Kushites on von Ranke’s part:

One of the most famous of all the historians of the day was Leopold von Ranke, a religiously motivated German who is sometimes called the father of modern history writing; in the 1885 English edition of one of his books, this devout Lutheran, who sought to juggle objectivity with a desire to show the ‘truth’ of God’s hand in history, endorsed the theory that troubles elsewhere in the empire had drawn Sennacherib away.⁸²

I present von Ranke as part of the trend mentioned in section 3: “[I]n the late 19th century, alternatives to the Kushite-rescue theory gain an unprecedented degree of acceptance.”⁸³

Also, contrary to what might be imagined from Evans’ article, I at no time suggest that this troubles-elsewhere theory originated in any racism of scholars of this period.

Finally, Evans complains that “Aubin fails to acknowledge or address” arguments that von Ranke makes for the troubles-elsewhere theory.⁸⁴ There is nothing distinctive, however, about von Ranke’s arguments for that theory; they resemble those of its other supporters. I critique those arguments earlier in the book (Chapter 9); rehashing them later in the book would be pointless.

Criticism: Evans states that von Ranke “argued that Assyria did not completely conquer the West due to ‘the counteracting influence of Egypt’ which ‘rendered this impossible.’ He clearly credits Cushite Egypt with Assyrian failure to conquer the

⁸⁰ Evans, “History in the Eye of the Beholder?,” 11.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁸² Aubin, 244, citing von Ranke in G.W. Prothero (ed.) *Universal History: The Oldest Historical Group of Nations and the Greeks* (New York: Scribner, 1884), 79. The original German edition was published in 1881.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 243.

⁸⁴ Evans, “History in the Eye of the Beholder?,” 9.

West, so how can he be promoting Cushite incompetence with racial bias?”⁸⁵ I am presumably guilty of misunderstanding von Ranke.

Response: Evans does not indicate the time period in which Kushite Egypt would have kept Assyria at bay. Since Evans’ article deals with the reign of Sennacherib, however, readers might take it for granted (as I did at first) that Evans means that such a feat would have occurred during that reign. A check, however, shows that this is not what von Ranke actually suggests. When he writes that Egypt’s influence prevented Assyria from completely conquering what he calls “Western Asia” (*i.e.*, Palestine and part of Arabia), the context leading up to that sentence suggests he is in fact referring to Assyria under the rule of Sennacherib’s predecessor, Sargon II.⁸⁶

Von Ranke acknowledges his uncertainty of the power situation within Egypt during this period: ⁸⁷ he then goes on to say. “We learn that the rulers of Ethiopia added Egypt to their dominions, but abandoned that country again....”⁸⁸ Von Ranke does not indicate in which part of this period (during Kushite rule or during a time when the Kushites were not ruling) he thinks that Egypt helped limit the Assyrian empire’s expansion. In sum, no basis exists for Evans’ confident assertion that von Ranke “clearly” gives credit to Kushite Egypt.

When it comes to dealing with Kushite Egypt’s opposition to Sennacherib himself, von Ranke is genuinely clear and, contrary to what a reader might assume from Evans’ article, he in fact sees Kushite Egypt as unable to prevent Assyria from conquering Western Asia. Von Ranke accepts Sennacherib’s claim of victory at Eltekeh and concludes: “We may regard this as the battle which *established the ascendancy* of the Assyrians in Western Asia” (emphasis added).⁸⁹ (Note: Although von Ranke sees the Kushites as losing this battle, he does not depict them as incompetent: ineffectuality against the Assyrian juggernaut and incompetence are not the same thing.)

⁸⁵ Von Ranke, 77, as cited by Evans, *ibid.*, 11.

⁸⁶ Von Ranke, 77.

⁸⁷ Von Ranke says, “We possess but the scantiest information about the condition of Egypt at this epoch” (*ibid.*, 74). Von Ranke’s uncertainty is understandable. After conquering Lower Egypt and thereby effectively signalling to Assyria that he would defend the entire Nile Valley against invasion, the Kushite king Piye returned to Kush for the remainder of his reign, leaving much of the pre-existing Egyptian power structure in place as vassals. It was only some years later (the chronology is debated) that Piye’s successor, presumably concerned about Assyrian intentions and Egypt’s ability to defend itself, reasserted Kushite authority over all of Egypt. See Aubin, 62-9.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 74-5. By abandonment, von Ranke presumably means Piye’s return to Kush (see previous note).

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 77. (Von Ranke is, in my opinion, wrong on this: I argue in *Rescue of Jerusalem*, that Judah and some other parts of Palestine entered into Egypt’s sphere of influence for two decades after 701 {152-9}. Many 20th-century scholars, however, share von Ranke’s view.)

Conclusion: Evans errs in saying von Ranke attributes “Assyria’s failure to conquer the West” (i.e., Western Asia) to Kushite Egypt’s resistance. In fact, von Ranke says quite the contrary -- Kushite Egypt’s defeat at Eltekeh actually enabled Assyria to establish its hegemony there.

7. Ignoring the evidence

Criticism: Evans says: “Aubin and Bellis see evidence for a scholarly bias against Cush (that of Cushite incompetence)... in suggestions that Cush fomented rebellion in Judah. In their opinion, such suggestions ‘vilify’ the Cushites. In other words, the Cushites can be blamed for Judah’s rebellion that brought on the Assyrian invasion.”⁹⁰ Evans goes on to say: “[I]t is unclear why suggestions that Cushite Egypt encouraged the rebellion vilify the Cushites. Such suggestions are attempts at reconstructing the events and do not appear to be motivated by a desire to cast Cush in a negative light.”

Response: Evans’ criticism requires several responses.

A. It is common for scholars over the course of the 20th century to blame the Kushite Dynasty for encouraging the rebellion of Judah and nearby Palestinian states, an event that provoked Sennacherib’s devastating response.⁹¹ Evans’ criticism does not reflect familiarity with my discussion of this trend in *Rescue of Jerusalem*. We can divide the scholars in question into two categories. One consists of those who assign blame to the Kushites for stirring up revolt *without* actually vilifying them. They include F. Gonçalves (1986), A. Kuhrt (1995), J.M. Miller & J.H. Hayes (1986), R.

⁹⁰ Evans, “History in the Eye of the Beholder?,” 11. Evans is commenting on an observation in my Chapter 18: “By 1908 it had become so *de rigueur* to diminish the Kushite role at Jerusalem that in a biblical commentary, one William Emery Barnes went so far as to vilify Taharqa in saying, ‘The Egyptian was a contemptible foe’” (my p. 244, citing the Anglican cleric in *The Two Books of Kings* {Cambridge: University Press, 1908}, 286, note 7.) Evans disagrees with my view that Barnes (1859-1939) himself is being pejorative; he says in a footnote that Barnes attributes the characterization to Isa 30:3-7 and comments that Barnes is “clearly relying on Isaiah’s opinion.”

That Barnes is doing so is not clear at all. I see Isaiah as presenting Egypt (i.e., Egypt under the 25th Dynasty) not as Judah’s foe but, rather, as its prospective ally; the prophet considers Egypt not as contemptible but, rather, as lacking the military ability to repel the Assyrians from Judah; that is why he is so harsh against those who seek the pharaoh’s protection, a protection that he foresees as being futile. Evans does not rebut, or acknowledge, this interpretation of Isa 30 in Aubin, 173 and 366, note 46.

⁹¹ Sennacherib’s annal tells of conquering in Judah alone 46 cities and forts as well as “countless small villages” in *Ancient Near Eastern Texts, op. cit.*, 288. Lachish, Judah’s second largest city after Jerusalem, was destroyed.

Clements (1980) and A.L. Sachar (1930).⁹² The other category, which includes such opinion-leaders as Breasted, Adams and Kitchen, *does* adopt a tone consistent with Webster's definition of "vilify" -- that is, "make less valuable and important: lower in estimation."⁹³ The following quotations, drawn from parts of *Rescue of Jerusalem* that precede Chapter 18, are presented in chronological order:

- Breasted (1905) writes in his *A History of Egypt* that c. 711 the 25th Dynasty's pharaoh, Shabaka, ruler of a "decrepit nation" that had fallen into a "state of decadent impotence," sent "agents among the Syro-Palestinian states to excite them to revolt" against Sargon's Assyria. A decade later, after "Sennacherib disposed of Taharqa's army without difficulty" at Eltekeh and a pestilence had driven the Assyrians home, "The Syro-Palestinian princes... were so thoroughly cowed that the inglorious Ethiopians were thenceforth unable to seduce them to rebellion."⁹⁴
- Adams (1977) says in his landmark book *Nubia* that the Kushite dynasty's "imperial ambitions" led to "machinations" in Palestine. Its "imprudent efforts only provoked the scornful Assyrian response." "Shabaka [the pharaoh who succeeded Piye, founder of the 25th Dynasty, and preceded Shebitku] sought by

⁹² Both F. Gonçalves, *L'expédition de Sennachérib en Palestine dans la littérature hébraïque ancienne* (Paris: Lecoffre, Gabalda, 1986) 141,108, and A. Kuhrt, *The Ancient Near East, c. 3000-330 BC* (2 vols.; London and New York, Routledge, 1995), 1:499, assert that the 25th Dynasty "fomented" revolt in Palestine and leave it at that. J.M. Miller & J.H. Hayes, in *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), say, "Egypt was a strong supporter, if not an instigator of the revolt" (358). In this context, words like "foment" and "instigate" are hardly complimentary, but they do not vilify. R. Clements, *Isaiah 1-39; New Century Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans/London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1980), writes in neutral terms: [The envoys] had been sent to Jerusalem to enlist [Hezekiah's] support in the planned revolt of Egypt-Ethiopia against Assyria" (164). Sachar, who would become founding president of Brandeis University, is disapproving of the 25th Dynasty's actions but, arguably, does not cross the line in *A History of the Jews* (New York: Knopf, 1930). He says that during the reign of Sargon, the envoys "who came from Egypt [to Jerusalem] were the most importunate. They urged the creation of a strong alliance to break the humiliating hold of Assyria on the world... The arguments were plausible and were presented with the glibness and smoothness of practised diplomats." After Sennacherib came to power, "Egypt was again on the alert, planning, plotting, exhorting" (56-7). For discussion of these scholars, see Aubin, 228 ff.

⁹³ Suggestions of racism have no place in this part of my discussion. It is quite possible to disparage a people without racial bias entering the picture. (During the Cold War, for example, many North Americans disparaged Russians; the bias was political, not racial or ethnic.) Of the scholars listed here for vilifying statements, I have no grounds for seeing any of them as racist; the exception is Breasted, whose views will be treated in section 11.

⁹⁴ Breasted, 551-60.

intrigue and subsidy to provoke rebellion in the Levantine states....” They had as their “immediate upshot ... the devastation of Judah...”⁹⁵ ⁹⁶

- J. Motyer (1993), Isaianic scholar and principal of England’s Trinity College, describes Egypt as “vociferous in promising backing to a rebellion” and behaving as “nothing less than an evil genius.”⁹⁷
- Kitchen (1995), known as a usually meticulous chronicler of pharaonic Egypt, sees, the Kushite Dynasty as “meddling” in 701; its “incompetent interference in Palestinian affairs was disastrous for Egypt and Palestine alike.”⁹⁸ Shebitku, the pharaoh in 701, had “nakedly imperialistic pretensions.”⁹⁹

To be sure, not all 20th-century scholarship sees the 25th Dynasty as having provoked trouble in Palestine: M. Noth¹⁰⁰ and J. Leclant¹⁰¹ are prominent scholars who

⁹⁵ Adams, 263-4.

Adams does not see Taharqa (who in 701 would not become pharaoh for about a decade) as himself provoking Sennacherib’s invasion by instigating rebellion, but the American anthropologist’s evaluation of him is nonetheless worth noting. He says: “[Taharqa] appears to have been a man of considerable ability, even if he one of the most unsuccessful military commanders in history. It was his misfortune to reap the harvest of his predecessors’ foolhardy ambitions in Asia [the Levant]” (Adams, 264).

There is, arguably, no vilification here: the tone is not disdainful. Yet even if one were to suppose (as does Adams, a supporter of the epidemic theory) that Prince Taharqa led a futile expedition against Sennacherib, Adams’ assessment is hyperbolically severe. It is hard to reconcile that evaluation with the victory (undisputed by historians) of Kushite Egypt, under the command of Taharqa as pharaoh, over an Assyrian army inside Egypt’s border in 674 BCE (one of Assyria’s rare defeats). It is true that Assyrians subsequently defeated Taharqa twice inside Egypt (in 671 and 667) and drove him back to Kush as they took over Egypt, but surely there is no disgrace in losing to the only superpower of the day. It is also hard to reconcile Adams’ put-down with the evaluation of Taharqa by Strabo in the first century BCE: the Greek geographer includes Taharqa on his list of seven military leaders of previous centuries who led under-publicized “expeditions... to lands far remote.”⁹⁶ This places Taharqa in notable company: also on Strabo’s list are Cyrus the Great and Xerxes.

⁹⁷ J. Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah* (Leicester, UK: Inter-Varsity, 1993), 20, 170.

⁹⁸ Kitchen, “Egypt,” 117.

⁹⁹ K.A. Kitchen, *The Third Intermediate Period in Egypt (1100-650 B.C.)*, 2nd ed. with supplement (Warminster, U.K.: Aris & Phillips, 1986), 557.

¹⁰⁰ M.Noth, *The History of Israel*, 2nd ed. (London: Black, 1959), 264.

¹⁰¹ J. Leclant, *In the Steps of the Pharaohs* (New York: Hastings House, 1958), 26. In *Rescue of Jerusalem*, I say of Leclant: “Remarkably even-handed toward the Kushite Dynasty in many areas, he is also fair to it on this point” (382, note 1).

say Palestinian states went to Egypt for help.¹⁰² But this goes against the majority opinion. The judgment of the scholars in both the vilifying and non-vilifying categories is that Kushite Egypt - far from helping to save Judah - inadvertently helped provoke the invasion in the first place.¹⁰³

In sum, in casting doubt on my view that some scholars vilify the 25th Dynasty when they claim it encouraged rebellion, Evans does not refute the supporting evidence that I present. Nor does he demonstrate awareness of it.

B. The second part of Evans' criticism in this section merits separate consideration. He says: "[I]t is unclear why suggestions that Cushite Egypt encouraged the rebellion vilify the Cushites. *Such suggestions are attempts at reconstructing the events* and do not appear to be motivated by a desire to cast Cush in a negative light" (emphasis added). Evans' perception of scholarly studiousness ties in with an earlier comment: "They [Aubin and Bellis] hold that this view of the incompetence of Cush is so 'deeply entrenched' in modern scholarship that it is simply not questioned anymore. Aubin and Bellis evidently do not seem to appreciate the subjectivity of this assumption, and so draw generalized conclusions too quickly."¹⁰⁴

I will explore here the matter of whether or not the "attempts at reconstructing the events" by the scholars are in fact attempts that reflect methodological rigor. More specifically, I will explore the evidence on which scholars base this view that the 25th Dynasty fomented Palestinian revolt in the last dozen years or so of the 8th century BCE.

To begin, let us consider more fully the situation concerning the Kushite pharaoh mentioned above in the period c. 713-11, Shabaka, or Shabako. Assyria was the overlord of not only Judah but also Ashdod and several other small Palestinian kingdoms close to the Egyptian frontier. Breasted writes about the Kushite pharaoh:

¹⁰² To be sure, another prominent scholar, Kitchen, in *The Third Intermediate Period in Egypt (1100-650 B.C.)*, 1st ed. (Warminster, U.K.: Aris & Phillips, 1973), says that in the lead-up to the conflict of 701 "Hezekiah of Judah and others opened negotiations with the new pharaoh Shebitku to obtain his support against Assyria" (385). However, in his article "Egypt," published two decades later, Kitchen appears to revise that view; he disapprovingly describes the same pharaoh as "meddling" in Palestine. To "meddle" says Webster's, is to "busy oneself intrusively or officiously." That differs from Kitchen's earlier view that Palestine had sought Kushite Egypt's involvement.

¹⁰³ James, "Egypt: The Twenty-fifth and Twenty-sixth Dynasties," judges the 25th Dynasty harshly for its behavior in Palestine without actually blaming it for encouraging revolt. He writes: "[The Kushite pharaohs'] adventures in foreign affairs, almost invariably disastrous, were, it seems, not prompted by any consistent policy, but by misguided interest in the machinations of Palestinian and Syrian states, compounded with a misjudgment of the competence of their armies..." (703). (See Aubin, 182-3; in my earlier Chapter 6, I also rebut James' charge that the Kushites lacked a "consistent policy" in foreign affairs.)

¹⁰⁴ Evans, "History in the Eye of the Beholder?," 10.

Appreciating the serious danger of the presence of so formidable a state as Assyria on his very borders, Shabaka immediately sent his agents among the Syro-Palestinian states to excite them to revolt. In Philistia, Judah, Moab and Edom, he promised the vassals of Assyria support in rebellion against their Ninevite sovereign [Sargon]. Remembering the ancient supremacy of Egypt, failing to understand the state of decadent impotence into which it had fallen, and anxious to shake off the oppressive Assyrian yoke, they lent a ready ear to the emissaries of Shabaka.¹⁰⁵

Breasted's version is influential.¹⁰⁶ Adams quotes approvingly the last sentence of the above quotation in its entirety, and he goes on to assert that such "machinations," as he calls them, eventually led to Sennacherib's invasion of the region in 701.¹⁰⁷ The other scholars cited in sub-section A do not explicitly credit Breasted (or anyone else) as a source, but one can surmise that, given Breasted's stature, his account of the pharaoh's revolt-inciting emissaries could well have helped to shape, or at least to re-enforce, their view that the Kushites fomented revolt in the western corner of the Assyrian empire.

But what is Breasted's *own* source? His footnote refers to a 1889 book by Hugo Winckler,¹⁰⁸ who had earlier translated Sargon's annals into German. Winckler describes "Pir'u of Egypt" as sending agents to the Palestinian kingdoms with messages to oppose Assyria. Breasted takes "Pir'u" to be the Kushite pharaoh Shabako.

The problem is that Winckler's translation errs. Part of the Assyrian text is lost and the name of the sender of the agents is missing. Winckler assumes that the sender is Pir'u, but the body of expert opinion is against him. As early as 1869, George Smith, another translator of the annals, describes the passage as indicating that "Yavan intrigued with the neighbouring princes and revolted from Assyria."¹⁰⁹ Yavan, better known as Iamani, was Ashdod's ruler and is mentioned later in the inscription. D.D. Luckenbill, who worked with the same incomplete text when he translated the annals

¹⁰⁵ Breasted, 550-1

¹⁰⁶ To be sure, Breasted was not the first historian to hold this view. A decade before, for example, Rev. William G. Blaikie, *A Manual of Bible History* (London: Nelson, 1895), suggested that it was under Egypt's "instigation that Hezekiah was led to revolt from the king of Assyria" (312). He gives no source.

¹⁰⁷ Adams, 264.

¹⁰⁸ Breasted's footnote cites Winckler, *Untersuchungen zur altorientalischen Geschichte* (Leipzig: Pfeiffer, 1889), 94.

¹⁰⁹ G. Smith, "Assyrian History,": in *Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Alterthumskunde* 7 (1869), 107.

into English in 1924, does not shed more light on the sender's identity; however, what is more important for the purposes of this discussion, his translation eliminates Pir'u (and therefore Shabako) as a possibility.¹¹⁰ N. Na'aman's 1974 translation in effect does the same. Indeed, Luckenbill's and Na'aman's renditions indicate that Pir'u cannot possibly be an instigator of rebellion.¹¹¹ That is because Sargon in both translations complains that the sender also sent "presents" (which Luckenbill interprets to be bribes) to Pir'u to gain his military assistance. The pharaoh would not have sent gifts to himself. Also, the annal itself says that the pharaoh did not respond to the appeal for help. Some meddler.¹¹²

Some other scholars in journal articles over the course of the 20th century have also in effect taken Shabako off the hook without coming straight out and saying so. H. Tadmor in 1966 said lamani "contacted his [Palestinian] neighbors... in an attempt to stir up a rebellion, and he requested Egypt's aid."¹¹³ D. B. Redford said in 1985 that lamani "contacted" other nearby rulers "in an effort to organize an anti-Assyrian coalition, and sent to 'Pharaoh (Pir'u) king of Egypt' for aid."¹¹⁴ Yet somehow the myth that the Kushites were intrusive troublemakers in Palestine has endured in many

¹¹⁰ Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia*: (2 vols.; Chicago: University of Chicago, 1927): "To the kings of the lands of Philistia, Judah, Edom, Moab, who dwell by the sea, payers of tribute and tax to Assur, my lord, they sent numberless inflammatory and disdainful messages to set them at enmity with me, to Pir'u, king of Egypt, a prince who could not save them, they sent their presents (bribes) and attempted to gain him as an ally" (2:105).

¹¹¹ N. Na'aman, "Sennacherib's 'Letter to God' on His Campaign to Israel," *BASOR* 214 (1974). His translation: "Together with the kings of Philistia, Judah, Edom and Moab, who dwell by the sea, payers of tribute and gifts to Ashur my lord, they sent evil words and unseemly speeches (with) their presents to Pharaoh king of Egypt, a prince who could not save them, to set (him) at enmity with me, and asked him for (military) aid" (32).

¹¹² Na'aman, "Sennacherib's 'Letter to God,'" even comments: "I doubt whether the alliance... ever crystallized, in the light of the Egyptian hesitancy to take an active part in the conspiracy against Assyria" (32).

¹¹³ H. Tadmor, "Philistia under Assyrian Rule" in *BA* 12 (1966), 94,

¹¹⁴ D.B. Redford, "Sais and the Kushite Invasions of the Eighth Century B.C.," *JARCE* 22 (1985), 6. Redford identifies Pir'u not as Shabako but rather as Bocchoris (also known as Bakenranef), Shabako's Delta adversary, who also used the title of pharaoh (note 16). This view, in any case, removes the Kushite Dynasty from the picture. In the same article, however, Redford nonetheless sees Shebako and Shebitku as having expansionist ambitions: "Both Pharaohs undoubtedly had aspirations to extend their hegemony over Asia" (15).

well-respected books that deal with this period and that reach a wider audience than do journals.¹¹⁵

Why the myth's longevity? Breasted aside, there are no palpable signs of racism among the later scholars who present the Kushites as incautious interlopers. What jumps out, however, is methodological slackness. Kitchen, Kuhrt, Sachar and Miller & Hayes¹¹⁶ do not cite a primary or secondary source for their depictions of the Kushites as rebellion boosters. Thus has Winckler's mistaken translation in the late 19th century, amplified by Breasted to a wide readership,¹¹⁷ taken on a life of its own despite more accurate later translations. So much for historians' seemingly sedulous

¹¹⁵ Attacking the myth in a recent study is 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* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2014). Pope examines scholars' various interpretations of Kushite relations with the Levant prior to the 701 conflict, including the fomenting-rebellion interpretation, and concludes: "Aubin has persuasively demonstrated that the anti-Assyrian coalitions mentioned in the surviving record are unanimously described as Levantine appeals sent to Egypt; even the Neo-Assyrian royal corpus - no apologist for the Kushite royal house - never charges the 25th Dynasty with initiating the correspondence. Consequently, the explanation of Kushite foreign policy circulated to popular audiences is the one most undermined by the documentary evidence" (137).

¹¹⁶ Although Miller & Hayes cite Isa 31:1-3 for Judah's quest for military aid from the 25th Dynasty (358), they give no source for their view that the 25th Dynasty was a "strong supporter, if not instigator of the revolt."

¹¹⁷ Breasted is not the only one of his era to follow Winckler's interpretation. In his dissertation, the Assyriologist A.T. Olmstead, *Western Asia in the Days of Sargon of Assyria* (Cornell University, 1906), also cites Winckler and sees "Pir'u" as having "instigated" the Ashdodite revolt (69). Like Breasted, Olmstead suggests Pir'u was the pharaoh of Egypt, rejecting Winckler's hypothesis that Pir'u is the ruler of a kingdom in the Negeb. Olmstead in a later work, *History of Assyria* (New York, London: Scribner's, 1923), indicates in a footnote his own reliance on Breasted's account of the period and says that during Sargon's reign "Egypt continued to intrigue with the enemies of Assyria in Palestine" (218). (Olmstead supports the epidemic theory {309}.)

“attempts at reconstructing the events” for which Evans intimates I should show more respect.¹¹⁸

C. Among the scholars belonging to the two categories are three who *do* give a source for their opinion.

Gonçalves, Clements and Motyer, all of whom are biblical scholars, point to Isa 18:1-6 as their evidence for Kushite meddling.¹¹⁹ The passage describes the arrival (presumably in Jerusalem) of black African emissaries (presumably Kushites). This evidence, however, is unconvincing. The problem is the opacity of Isa 18:1-6. For one thing, the timing of this diplomatic visit is uncertain: it could have been during either Sennacherib’s reign or that of Sargon. For another thing, it is not at all evident that, as the three biblicists say, the emissaries seek to persuade Judah to rebel. It is useful to take Isa 18 in the context of Isa 20:5-6, 30:1-6 and 31:1, which deal with political relations between Judah and Kushite Egypt at a time of a threat of Assyrian invasion.

¹¹⁸ Are things in the 2000s getting better? There are some positive signs. Identifying lamani as the instigator of the revolt are Silvie Zamazalová, “Before the Assyrian Conquest in 671 B.C.E.: Relations between Egypt, Kush and Assyria,” in J. Mynářová (ed.), *Egypt and the Near East - the Crossroads: Proceedings of an International Conference on the Relations of Egypt and the Near East in the Bronze Age* (Prague: Sept. 1-3, 2010), 320-1, and Aidan Dodson, *Afterglow of Empire: Egypt from the Fall of the New Kingdom to the Saite Renaissance* (Cairo, New York: American University in Cairo, 2012), 156. Also exonerating the Kushites from making trouble are: K. Lawson Younger, Jr., “Assyrian Involvement in the Southern Levant at the End of the Eighth Century B.C.E.,” in (A.G. Vaughn and A.E. Killebrew, eds.) *Jerusalem in Bible and Archaeology: The First Temple Period* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 241-2; Paul M. Cook, *A Sign and a Wonder: The Redactional Formation of Isaiah 18-20* (VTSup 147; Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2011), and Christopher B. Hays, *Death in the Iron Age II and in First Isaiah* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 60.

On the downside is an author who will be more widely read: Toby Wilkinson, *The Rise and Fall of Ancient Egypt* (New York: Random House, 2010). He deals gently with Kushite policy when Sargon was in power, saying the extradition of lamani reflected an “entente” and “cautious diplomacy.” Wilkinson claims, however, that this prudence waned after Sennacherib’s arrival: “Egypt decided that covert encouragement of local insurgencies would serve its interests better, and began to stir discontent among the fractious rulers of the Near Eastern city-states. The policy backfired disastrously” (407). Wilkinson cites no evidence. Also reaching a broad audience is John Taylor, “The Third Intermediate Period (1069-664 BC),” in (Ian Shaw, ed.) *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000), who speaks vaguely but pejoratively of Kushite “interference” in Palestine (358). J.J.M. Roberts, “Egypt, Assyria, Isaiah, and the Ashdod Affair: An Alternate Proposal,” in *Jerusalem in Bible and Archaeology: The First Temple Period*; see earlier in this note) presents “Nubia and its Egyptian vassals... meddling in Palestinian affairs” at the time of the Ashdod revolt; there may have been “some joint Nubian-Egyptian activity on the frontier sufficient to encourage revolt but insufficient to merit mention in the Assyrian annals” (279-282). The Belgian biblicist Edward Lipiński, *On the Skirts of Canaan in the Iron Age: Historical and Topographical Researches* (Leuven: Peeters and Faculty of Oriental Studies Bondgenotenlaan, 2006), says lamani’s “revolt at Ashdod... was most likely supported” by the 25th Dynasty (142).

Conclusion: the myth lives on.

¹¹⁹ Although Sachar does not give a source for his depiction of diplomats plotting with “glibness and smoothness,” the description appears to echo Isa 18. The RSV translation portrays the diplomats as representing a nation or people “tall and smooth.” The context is physical characteristics (rather than manner of speech), “Smooth” here may simply mean smooth-skinned; the Kushites’ way was to be beardless. (See Aubin, 172, 229.)

The context of all four passages could be either the lead-up to the conflict of 701 or a tense period during Sargon's reign a decade before when Ashdod was in rebellion and sought Judah's support (in vain).¹²⁰ Isaiah 20:5-6, 30:1-6 and 31:1 depict Judah as appealing desperately to Kushite Egypt for military help; none of these passages provides support for the view that it was Kushite Egypt that was fomenting rebellion.¹²¹ Significantly, the accounts of both Sennacherib and Sargon themselves corroborate this sense that it was Palestinian kingdoms that sought Kushite Egypt's involvement against Assyria,¹²² rather than the other way around.

So, then, what is one to make of Isa 18:1-6 in regard to Kushite-Judahite relations? The passage defies confident interpretation. However, one possibility (and it is only that) is that the envoys are visiting Judah to work out a common defense strategy as Assyria prepares its 701 invasion.¹²³

In sum, there is no reason to put stock in these biblicists' "attempts at reconstructing the events."

D. What is one to make of these views that Egypt under Kushite rule was decrepit, imperialistically minded and decadent? It is not to idealize the Kushite regime to point out how these characterizations - which are weakly argued if they are argued at all - are vulnerable to challenge.

Decrepit nation? Surely not politically. Prior to its conquest by King Piye of Kush in the 720s, Lower Egypt had been fragmented into 11 independent political units, some of which might well have been sympathetic to an Assyrian invasion and been in a position to profit from it; the Kushites unified Egypt for the first time in three

¹²⁰ See Aubin, 365, notes 32 and 33.

¹²¹ Note that the Kushite pharaohs' reluctance to involve themselves actively in Palestinian-Assyrian affairs is deeply rooted: 2 Kgs 17:4 tells of Israel's unsuccessful appeal to Egypt for military help against Assyria in the mid-720s. According to most chronologies, Egypt was under Kushite rule at that time. (See Aubin, 65-66.) As well, after the failed rebel Iamani fled Ashdod and sought refuge in Egypt, the Kushite Dynasty extradited him to Assyria. See *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 285.

¹²² In addition to Sennacherib's allusion to Palestinians having "implored" Kushite Egypt to send troops in 701, Sargon's annals state that the kings of Judah, Philistia and two other Palestinian states, Edom and Moab, "sent evil words and unseemly speeches [with] their presents to Pharaoh king of Egypt, a prince who could not save them, to set him at enmity with me, and asked him for [military] aid." Sargon's account is from Na'aman, "Sennacherib's 'Letter to God', 32.

¹²³ In that case, the envoys could be saying in effect, "Do not yield -- stall for time until our forces arrive."

centuries.¹²⁴ Nor was Egypt decrepit militarily: Piye's army was strong enough to have routed coalition forces consisting of soldiers from many of those political units; some native Egyptians would later bolster the army that Shebitku mounted against Sennacherib.¹²⁵ Under Kushite rule, then, Egypt was more unified and militarily strong¹²⁶ than it had been in centuries.

Imperialistic? The conquest of Lower Egypt by the Kushite king, Piye, was hardly intended to seize territory and exploit it; I argue that his post-conquest actions suggest his aim was to strengthen Egypt defensively and to protect it and Kush from the threat of Assyrian invasion;¹²⁷ I also argue that the motivation behind his successors' interventions in Khor was not control or exploitation but rather self-defense and a need to keep the international trade routes open.¹²⁸ On the other hand, as we have seen, Kitchen sees one of Piye's successors as pharaoh, Shebitku, as having "nakedly imperialistic pretensions." What is Kitchen's source? The Egyptologist observes that Shebitku, who took power in the lead-up to the emergency of 701, gave himself the Horus name¹²⁹ of "Strong Bull"; Kitchen says that this unusual choice of name harks back to a pharaoh of Egypt's New Kingdom,¹³⁰ a genuinely imperialistic period several centuries earlier, and that the title shows an imperialistic bent.¹³¹ The new pharaoh's choice of title, however, could have simply reflected recognition of the extraordinary military muscle he would need to defend the Nile Valley. Indeed, the actions of the expedition that he sent to Palestine in 701 indicate a pre-emptive strike, not a campaign of imperial conquest. Nor is empire-building evident in the remainder of Shebitku's reign: Kitchen himself, in another context, recognizes that

¹²⁴ See Aubin, 61-64, 69-74.

¹²⁵ Sennacherib's annals refer to the presence of Egyptian charioteers in the army he fought at Eltekeh.

¹²⁶ A few decades later, Na 3:9 would refer in a military context to the "boundless strength" of Kush and Egypt (NIV).

¹²⁷ See Aubin, 62-69. Explaining Piye's return to Kush after subduing Lower Egypt, I.E.S. Edwards, "Egypt: From the Twenty-second to the Twenty-fourth Dynasty," in *Cambridge Ancient History, op. cit.*, takes a minority view in suggesting (correctly, I think) that the new pharaoh was content to "establish a protectorate over the country while leaving its administration largely in the hands of those who were already in authority" (vol. 3, Pt. 1: 570), as cited in Aubin, 64-5.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 68-77.

In his 2014 article, Pope says his own review of the evidence validates "Aubin's emphasis upon border defense and commercial interest as the dominant motivations for Kushite involvement in the Near East" (141).

¹²⁹ A Horus name is the mission-statement appellation that all pharaohs chose for themselves.

¹³⁰ Kitchen, first edition (1973) of *Third Intermediate Period*, 383.

¹³¹ Kitchen says this in the second edition (1986) of *Third Intermediate Period*, 2nd ed., 383-5, 557. His characterization of Shebitku's ambitions reflects the same increase in disapproving language to describe the 25th Dynasty that was observed above in note 101.

there is no evidence of “foreign adventures” in his 11-year rule after 701.¹³² Neither Kitchen nor Adams (with his claim of the dynasty’s “imperial ambitions”) note the story, set in the time of Cambyses’ threat to Kush (6th century BCE), in which Herodotus says that “the gods... up to now... have not put it in the minds of the children of the Aithiopians to acquire other land than their own.”¹³³

Decadent? The notion of cultural decadence is easily refuted. The Kushites’ construction of monuments and other buildings in Egypt’s holy city, Thebes, were the most ambitious in four centuries.¹³⁴ Nor do the arts (particularly sculpture) reflect decadence. For example, W.S. Smith, former curator of Egyptian art at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, notes, “The revival of Egyptian art which began under Dynasty XXV was... part of the resurgence of the Egyptian spirit which, without any real modification from abroad, was stimulated by vigorous Kushite rulers...”¹³⁵ Leclant says Egyptian art, on which he is an authority, “underwent a veritable renaissance” during the Kushite tenure.¹³⁶ Evaluations by three additional scholars -- T. Kendall, J.H. Taylor and D. Wildung -- are likewise laudatory.¹³⁷ Generally speaking, specialists in Egyptian and Kushite art, along with Nubiologists, are unusual among 20th-century scholars for their positive view of the 25th Dynasty.

To conclude: These numerous scholars’ reconstructions of the Kushites’ performance in the lead-up to the Assyrian invasion show a flair for superficial research. As well, in casting doubt on my view that some scholars vilify the 25th Dynasty when they claim it encouraged rebellion, Evans does not refute the supporting evidence that I present, let alone demonstrate awareness of it.

EXCURSUS: None of this is to suggest that the 25th Dynasty would have been uninterested in Palestinian affairs.

Given the dire threat that Assyria posed to the security of Egypt and Kush, it would be astonishing if the 25th Dynasty did not have representatives (diplomats and intelligence people) in so strategic a region. It is a leap, however, to affirm without

¹³² Kitchen, *Third Intermediate Period*, 2nd ed., 386.

¹³³ Herodotus, “The Aithiopian logos,” in T. Eide, *et al.*, (eds.), *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 (Bergen: University of Bergen, 1994), 326. Adams shows familiarity with the story in a different context (*op. cit.*, 270).

¹³⁴ Adams, 267.

¹³⁵ W.S. Smith, *The Art and Architecture of Ancient Egypt* (N.p.: Penguin, 1958), 244-5.

¹³⁶ J. Leclant, “Introduction.” *L’Égypte du crépuscule: De Tanis à Méroé, 1070 av. J.C.–IVe siècle après J-C*, by C. Alfred, *et al.* (France: Gallimard, 1980), 5.

¹³⁷ See Aubin, 70-1 and 321-2, note 73.

evidence that the 25th Dynasty was actively instigating revolt among Assyria's Palestinian vassals. Granted, it is theoretically possible that such a hypothesis is true;¹³⁸ if that were so, however, such activity - highly provocative from Assyria's standpoint - would run counter to Kushite Egypt's earlier record of appeasing the Assyrians on matters outside its own border.¹³⁹

Scholars who blame the 25th Dynasty for fomenting revolt show no awareness that their scenario a) contradicts Sennacherib's own statement that Egypt had sent a force to Eltekeh only after Palestinians had "implored" it for military help, which hardly suggests the 25th Dynasty's eagerness to involve itself,¹⁴⁰ b) would represent a turn-around in that dynasty's foreign policy and c) assumes that Judah and its Palestinian allies, lacking much ability to think for themselves, would let a foreign power manipulate them into a risky revolt.

8. Making an analogy that reflects incomprehension

Criticism: In arguing that scholars who blame Kushite Egypt for fomenting trouble "do not appear to be motivated by a desire to cast Cush in a negative light," Evans points out that several 20th-century scholars conjecture that Hezekiah, rather than the pharaoh, was the actual ringleader of the Palestinian revolt, and he asks: "Using the logic of Aubin and Bellis, should we understand these [scholars'] studies to be anti-Semitic in vilifying Hezekiah for instigating rebellion against Assyria?"¹⁴¹

Response: Well, yes, such studies might well be seen that way if, without real evidence, they were to present Hezekiah as an "evil genius" who, as head of the "decadent," "decrepit" and "inglorious" Hebrew nation, showed "incompetent interference" in other Palestinian states' affairs by using "glibness and smoothness" in his "machinations" to "excite" them into a revolt that would prove disastrous.

On the matter of motivation that Evans raises, I will not deal with that: I do not know what is inside people's heads unless they reveal their biases publicly, as in the case of Breasted and certain other colonial-era scholars to be discussed in section 11.

¹³⁸ As I note in *Rescue of Jerusalem*, "My argument is *not* that such a hypothesis is necessarily false. I can't prove that this did not happen. To make a case for Egypt's instigation of outright revolt, however, one would have to show why Egypt might see a departure from its customary don't-rock-the-boat policy to be in its interest" (384, note 29). So far as I am aware, no historian in the 20th century has attempted this.

¹³⁹ See Aubin, 67, 75, 229-32.

¹⁴⁰ See the translation of Sennacherib's annal by D. Ussishkin, *The Conquest of Lachish by Sennacherib* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv U., 1982), 16. To be sure, it is conceivable that a relatively strong country would successfully urge its weaker neighbours to rebel against an overlord without committing itself to help militarily if necessary, but it is unlikely.

¹⁴¹ Evans, "History in the Eye of the Beholder?," 12.

What is apparent among the post-colonial scholars who vilify the dynasty for its actions in Palestine is not their “desire to cast Cush in a negative light,” since their desire is unknowable, but rather that their negative assessments lack adequate argumentation.

9. Making erratic charges

Criticism: Evans complains: “Aubin-Bellis also see recent scholarship as continuing to have a negative view of the Cushites. However, the evidence does not support this assertion.”¹⁴²

Response: Evans shows no awareness of this statement in Chapter 19: “It would be wrong to leave the impression that all modern scholarship has been unfair.” I then present a kind of honor roll of scholars who in the latter part of the 20th century “have been exceptionally balanced in their presentation of Kushite culture.”¹⁴³

Criticism: Immediately after asserting that I see recent scholarship as negative toward the Kushites, Evans comments that “several recent studies have underscored the contribution of Cushite forces [in 701 BCE].”¹⁴⁴ He names five such books or articles. I evidently should have been aware of them.

Response: One of the studies in question is Redford’s *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1992); Evans singles out a page in that book (p. 353) that deserves attention. He shows no awareness that I discuss the content of that page in my Chapter 9, pp. 127-9.

As for the four remaining studies (one of which is Evans’ own book,¹⁴⁵ he also shows no awareness that *Rescue of Jerusalem’s* publication date, 2002, actually predates the publication of each of those four studies.

Criticism: After having “shown,” as he puts it, that “there was no Cushite-rescue theory ‘consensus’ and, therefore, [there] could be no mass abandonment of the theory in the late 19th century, Evans moves on: he challenges my view that a

¹⁴² Ibid., 13.

¹⁴³ Aubin, 264.

¹⁴⁴ Evans, 13.

¹⁴⁵ Evans, *The Invasion of Sennacherib in the Book of Kings: A Source-Critical and Rhetorical Study of 2 Kings 18-19* (VTSup 126; Leiden: Brill, 2009). Although the tone of Evans’ article, “History in the Eye of the Beholder?,” might lead a reader to assume the author’s skepticism in regard to the idea of a significant Kushite role in saving Jerusalem, his book finds that “The success of the Egyptian expedition against Sennacherib’s army appears plausible...” (185).

qualitative change in European attitudes on race took place in the second half of the 19th century, gaining particular vigor in the 1880s, which is when colonialism in black Africa by European powers began on a massive scale.

In my book, I find support for this view in I. Hannaford's study of race.¹⁴⁶ (At the time of my writing it was one of two works tracing in depth the history of Western views on race.¹⁴⁷) Evans suggests I cite Hannaford out of context. That is because I write, "Drawing considerably on Hannah Arendt's ideas, Hannaford concludes 'that there was no fundamental historical movement of racial and anti-Semitic ideas until after 1880.'" ¹⁴⁸ Evans takes issue with how I use that statement, for I write that "Hannaford sees a watershed intensification of European hostility toward the Other at precisely the same time that the Kushite-rescue theory falls from grace."¹⁴⁹ Evans comments: "However, when Hannaford's book is consulted it is clear that he is referring chiefly to the rise of anti-Semitism in this time period, and not to anti-African sentiments at all."¹⁵⁰

Response: While Hannaford does indeed deal "chiefly" with anti-Semitism in this chapter of his book, he does not deal *only* with it: Hannaford also addresses broader racism. Earlier in the chapter, he writes that among the English in the second half of the 19th century there "arose a romantic consciousness of the spiritual force of race and a scientific hereditarism that both explained and justified the advance of Anglo-Saxon civilization in all corners of the world."¹⁵¹ That is a clear allusion to an imperial presence in non-white lands, including Africa.

Indeed, my book quotes this observation by Hannaford in the same paragraph as the quotation of Hannaford that Evans cites; Evans, however, makes no mention of it. Taking it into account would make it harder to contend that Hannaford is "referring... not to anti-African sentiments at all."

¹⁴⁶ Hannaford, *Race: The History of an Idea in the West* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center/Baltimore, London: Johns Hopkins UP, 1996).

¹⁴⁷ The other book is I. Geiss, *Geschichte der Rassismus* (Frankfurt, 1988). For review of studies on race, see G.M. Frederickson, *Racism: A Short History* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2002), 168.

¹⁴⁸ Hannaford, 316, as quoted in Aubin, 247.

¹⁴⁹ Aubin, 247.

¹⁵⁰ Evans, "History in the Eye of the Beholder?," 14.

¹⁵¹ Hannaford, 306. In the same chapter, see also 277-281, especially 278, which deals with Dr. James Hunt, the British author of a 1863 paper that "argued that there was a far greater difference in intelligence between a Negro and a European than there was between a gorilla and chimpanzee and that the Negro was a distinct and inferior species."

Evans' claim that I quote Hannaford out of context overlooks the larger context of Hannaford's book.¹⁵²

Criticism: Evans also makes much of my attribution (wrongly, in his opinion) to Hannaford of the idea that, in my words, a “watershed intensification” (see above) of anti-African racism got under way in the 1880s. He says “racist ideas against dark skinned people predate this ‘watershed’ period of 1880-1900.”¹⁵³ He cites studies that show, for example, how England “reinvented” race in the mid-19th century, how anti-African racism legitimized black slavery in the southern U.S. and in 18th-century Germany and how arrogance toward black people within England augmented in the 1860s. He concludes: “In sum, *the date of 1880 does not appear to be a watershed for racism in general (and not particularly for anti-African racism, which already existed well before), though it does mark the publication of some specifically anti-Semitic works in Germany*”(emphasis added).¹⁵⁴ Evans' short lecture on pre-1880s racism in Europe concludes a section in his article that sows doubt on my argument 1)

¹⁵² In writing the book, I never imagined that this idea of an intensification of racism in Europe in the late 19th century could be questioned; I therefore did not think it necessary to quote further expert opinion. Here are three such opinions:

1. Arendt, in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 2nd enlarged ed. (Cleveland and New York: World, 1962; first published 1951), writes: “Not until the end of the [19th] century were dignity and importance accorded race-thinking as though it had been one of the major spiritual contributions of the Western world. Until the fateful days of the ‘scramble for Africa,’ race-thinking had been one of the many free opinions which, within the general framework of liberalism, argued and fought each other to win the consent of public opinion”(158-9.) (“Race-thinking” is thinking based on racial classifications; it is not the same thing as racism, but it enables racism.)

2. Audrey Smedley, *Race in North America: Origin and Evolution of a Worldview* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993): “The cultural construction of the ideology of race culminated in its institutionalization as a worldview in the nineteenth century. (...) By the mid-nineteenth century race had emerged in European consciousness as a worldview that affirmed the division of Europeans into ‘racial’ groups and the inherent superiority of certain of these ‘races’ over others. (...) “Simultaneously, [the ideology of race] provided rationalization and justification for further conquests abroad, satisfying the elevated imperial ambitions of politicians, military adventurers and those with commercial interests” (255-6). “At bottom, race was a social mechanism for concretizing and rigidifying a universal ranking system that gave Europeans what they thought was to be perpetual domination over indigenous peoples of the New World, Africa, and Asia” (303-4).

3. Trigger, in “Paradigms in Sudan Archaeology,” in J. Hay (ed.), *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 27 (1994), describes the intensification of racism leading up to the mass colonialism in Africa this way: “As early as the 1860s, the basic premises of enlightenment philosophy began to be challenged by the intelligentsia of a Western European middle class that was increasingly anxious to protect its newly won privileges. The idea of the essentially equal intelligence of all human groups gave way to racist beliefs in their differing and unequal talents and potentialities for cultural development. (...) The development of the planet... depended on the less evolved races making way for the expansion of Europeans, who alone were capable of effectively exploiting the various continents. This theory provided justification for the colonialism that was becoming increasingly common in the latter part of the nineteenth century” (326). (Aubin, 389, note 47, refers to this article without quoting from this passage.)

¹⁵³ Evans, “History in the Eye of the Beholder?,” 14.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 15.

that racism intensified during the colonial era and 2) that this development helps explain the drop in support for the view that the Kushites helped rescue Jerusalem.

Response: Of course European racism predates the scramble. Evans' didactic tone in stressing the existence of anti-African racism in Europe and the Americas well before the 1880s might lead a reader to assume incorrectly that I fail to acknowledge such history. In addition to taking this history into account,¹⁵⁵ I note, which Evans' unnuanced presentation does not, that slavery largely occurred "out of sight of Europe itself," where "the practice was largely frowned upon and the racist premise of European superiority [was] more muted."¹⁵⁶ Prevailing views on blacks in 1860 would have been vastly different in London than, say, in Richmond, Va. The book points out that in 1833 the British Parliament abolished slavery in British colonies and that thirteen years later France did the same in its colonies.

In seizing on my reference to "watershed intensification," Evans ignores the word that should dominate the thought, the noun, and concentrates on the adjective: he repeats "watershed" five times, using it as a noun, and does not use the word "intensification" at all. By "watershed intensification" I had sought suggest a significant step-up in the evolution of pre-existing racism; taking "watershed" in isolation, however, can convey the idea that earlier racism was scant or perhaps even virtually absent, which was far from the case.¹⁵⁷ In retrospect, I should have used a different adjective: "major intensification" would have conveyed the thought without the chance of misinterpretation.

Point: Evans' comment that "the date of 1880 does not appear to be a watershed for racism"¹⁵⁸ would indicate that this change took place in that particular year. Later, Evans says I advance "a hard date of 1880 for the change in scholarly opinion."¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁵ I describe European racism as emerging during overseas colonialism of the 16th and, more particularly, 17th centuries in Aubin, 245 and 388-9, note 40. I also note that, decades before the scramble, the theory of evolution in Darwin's *The Origin of the Species*, published in 1859, helped lay an intellectual foundation and give some respectability in Europe to the perceived hierarchy of race (Aubin, 246). For additional factors, including the link in Europe between labor relations and race-thinking, see Aubin, 389, note 47.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 245, and extensive endnote 40 on 388-9.

¹⁵⁷ Heinrich Brugsch, a German and the director of the School of Egyptology in Cairo, illustrates an increasing sense of racial superiority in the years preceding the 1880s' scramble. In his *A History of Egypt under the Pharaohs* (2 vols; trans. from the German by H.D. Seymour and P. Smith; London: Murray, 1879), of which the original appeared in German in 1877, Brugsch says that ancient Egyptian civilization ascended the Nile to Kush and "brought the blessings of a civilized state among the rude dark-colored population" (1:4). (See Aubin, 387.)

¹⁵⁸ Evans, "History in the Eye of the Beholder?," 15.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 16, note 89.

Response: There are no references in my book to “1880” in regard to a change in scholarly opinion; I count five uses, however, of the term the “1880s.” Although Evans’ misrepresentation is minor, it suggests I have a simplistic idea of how societal attitudes evolve.

It would have been silly to pinpoint Europe’s shift in its racial attitude to a single year. Important intensifications of social attitudes within a single country are seldom so sharp and sudden; they generally take place over a span of years. In the case of the mass colonization of Africa, the participating countries did not all venture into that continent the same year, making a looser time-frame all the more warranted.

Historically, too, it would also make no sense to use 1880 as a “hard date.” I use 1882 as the starting date of the scramble.¹⁶⁰

10. Misrepresenting cited sources

Criticism: Evans twice cites a study by G. Fredrickson to note that racism was involved in American slavery and in “some writings” in 18th-century Germany.¹⁶¹ Evans uses this to help cast doubt on my argument that an unprecedented degree of anti-black racism occurred in Europe in the late 19th century.

Response: In invoking Fredrickson as an authority, Evans does his counter-argument no good. Fredrickson’s book, which I did not see (it was published the same year as my own), happens to say what I say (only better).

Fredrickson writes that it was in the 20th century that racism reached its “hideous fruition,”¹⁶² with the most extreme cases of this being U.S. and South African segregation and Germany’s racist regime leading to the Holocaust. But colonialism reflects it, too. He explains:

The Western imperialism that began in the late fifteenth century *climaxed in the late nineteenth with ‘the scramble for Africa’* and the seizure of new possessions or territorial concessions in East Asia and the Pacific. The ideology justifying the acquisition of new colonial territories by France, Britain, Germany, and ultimately, the United States was *transparently racist*. Rudyard Kipling summed up this ideology in the [1899] poem: “The White Man’s Burden.” (...) The duty of the superior

¹⁶⁰ Aubin, 254.

¹⁶¹ Evans, “History in the Eye of the Beholder?,” 14-15, citing Fredrickson, *op. cit.*

¹⁶² Fredrickson, 99.

race, according to Kipling, was to take responsibility for “new-caught, sullen people, half-devil and half-child” (emphases added).¹⁶³

A study that Evans invokes to undermine my argument about an intensification in racism in the late 19th century thus has the ironic effect of refuting his own argument that the late 19th century saw no upswing in racial bias.

Criticism: Evans treats as controversial the link that I make between Europe’s mass colonialism in black Africa in the late 19th century and an increase in anti-black bias among Europeans in the same period. After noting that “Some studies have suggested that race was ‘reinvented’ in England in the mid-19th century,” he writes, “However, some [scholars] have argued that British imperialism and doctrines of race were not causally linked at all.”¹⁶⁴ It is in the next sentence that he reaches the important conclusion cited above: “In sum, the date of 1880 does not appear to be a watershed for racism in general (and not for particularly anti-African racism....).”

Response: If some scholars indeed deny a causal relationship between imperialism and racial doctrines, it would challenge my thinking as well as that of most historians of the period. Evans says “some” scholars; one might suppose that means two or more such scholars hold this contrarian view. His footnote, however, cites only one: G. Watson, author of *The English Ideology*.¹⁶⁵

Does Watson indeed claim that, in Evans’ words, “British imperialism and doctrines of race were not causally linked at all”?

The page reference in Evans’ footnote leads to this sentence in Watson’s *The English Ideology*: “There is no clear evidence that British imperialism and *Victorian* doctrines of race are linked in any causal way” (emphasis added). Evans’ paraphrase omits an important word: “Victorian.”¹⁶⁶ To understand Watson’s meaning, one must bear in mind that British imperialism began some three centuries before the Victorian era (1837-1901). Watson is saying that this early, *pre-Victorian* British imperialism was *not* inspired by the same sort of racial attitudes that flourished during the Victorian era (and especially the late Victorian era).

¹⁶³ Ibid., 107. Fredrickson sees the scramble for Africa as representing the “climax” of four centuries of Western imperialism around the world: “The climax of imperialism was driven as much, if not more, by the status rivalry between Western nations as by a desire for specific territories and the natural or human resources that they contained. But the belief in the superiority of ‘civilized’ whites over ‘barbarous’ or ‘savage’ peoples was an *essential rationale*” (emphasis added, 109).

¹⁶⁴ Evans, “History in the Eye of the Beholder?,” 15.

¹⁶⁵ G. Watson, *The English Ideology: Studies in the Language of Victorian Politics* (London: A. Lane, 1973).

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 215.

Indeed, contrary to what Evans' paraphrase might lead a reader to assume, Watson's reference to "British imperialism" has nothing to do with late 19th-century imperialism in Africa; rather, it has to do with the establishment of a British presence in North America and the Indian subcontinent in earlier centuries.¹⁶⁷

Evans' citation of Watson is thus quite astonishing.

The following sentence from Watson's book better reflects that author's thought: "The Victorian interest in race is vastly in excess of that of any previous generation of Englishmen...."¹⁶⁸

As he does in the case Fredrickson, Evans invokes for support an authority who actually contradicts him. My argument that an important intensification of anti-black racism occurred in imperial Europe in the late 19th century stands.

11. Overlooking compelling evidence

Criticism: At the outset of his article, Evans contends that the evidence does not support my hypothesis that, in his words, "due to anti-African racial bias, scholars have failed to acknowledge that the Cushites rescued Jerusalem from Sennacherib."¹⁶⁹ In his exposition, he appears to acknowledge obliquely that such bias did exist among the colonial-era scholars,¹⁷⁰ yet he suggests that it might not have been greater than in the previous several generations and that it was, in any case, irrelevant to these scholars' perception of the Kushite performance in 701. In his conclusion, he reaches this judgment: "[T]he fact that most scholars have not viewed

¹⁶⁷ Readers may judge for themselves. Here is Watson's statement in context: "There is no clear evidence that British imperialism and Victorian doctrines of race are linked in any causal way. The continuous history of the British empire begins with settlements in North America in the *early seventeenth century*; in the *seventeenth and eighteenth centuries* the Indian subcontinent was slowly permeated by traders, soldiers and officials. Neither event was clearly based on any assumption, favourable or unfavourable, about the native races of either continent. It is a fantasy to suppose that the British conquered one quarter of the land surface of the world out of a doctrine of racial superiority; the abundant assertions of English superiority in the period (and they are very doubtfully racial assertions) refer to such rivals as the French, the Spanish and the Dutch rather than to the coloured races" (215; emphases added). The African territories, Watson notes, "are almost afterthoughts of imperial history, acquired in the 1880s and after" (218). They reflect a different mentality.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 200.

¹⁶⁹ Evans, "History in the Eye of the Beholder?," 3.

¹⁷⁰ Evans writes: "The historical reconstruction of Sennacherib's invasion will not be solved by *realizing* the racial bias of 19th-century scholars and their continuing effect on today's scholars (racist or not)" (emphasis added). *Ibid.*, 23. I infer from the use of the word "realizing" - instead of, say, "debating" - that he agrees that some degree of bias existed, even if it was not particularly more intense than in the decades prior to the colonial era.

the Cushites as responsible for rescuing Jerusalem cannot be explained by *ad hominem* arguments that claim scholars have been racist in their neglect.”¹⁷¹

Response: Was racial bias really irrelevant to the colonial-era’s perceptions of the Kushites? Someone who is unfamiliar with that period and some of its principal scholars might have no reason to reject the notion purely on the basis of Evans’ article. That is because of an immense gap in Evans’ argumentation: he does not mention the central evidence I present for the racial bias of some of the most eminent experts on ancient Egypt and Kush during the decades of British presence in Egypt and Sudan. Here are the three major colonial-era scholars whose views Evans’ article ignores:

- George A. Reisner (1867-1942), of Harvard and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, the leader of numerous excavations of Egyptian and Kushite sites and the “father of Nubiology,”¹⁷² wrote of Nubia: “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 way and too poor to attract a stronger and better race.”¹⁷³
- Sayce (1845-1933), excavator of Kushite and Egyptian ruins, Oxford professor of Assyriology, long-time president of the Society of Biblical Archaeology and insider par excellence with administrative and military leaders during Britain’s occupation of Egypt, wrote: “The brains of the higher races are distinguished by more complex convolutions than those of inferior races.”¹⁷⁴ “The black coloring matter of the Negro extends to... even his brain, the convolutions of which are comparatively simple.”¹⁷⁵

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 23. Evans’ footnote 132 further reflects distaste for linking racial bias to colonial-era scholarship.

¹⁷² As Adams calls him in dedicating *Nubia: Corridor to Africa, op. cit.*, to his memory.

¹⁷³ G. A. Reisner, *The Archaeological Survey of Nubia, Report for 1907-1908* (Cairo: National Printing Dept., 1910), 1: 348. See Aubin, 244.

¹⁷⁴ A.H. Sayce, *The Races of the Old Testament* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1891), 16. See all of *Rescue of Jerusalem’s* Chapter 19 for treatment of Sayce.

¹⁷⁵ Sayce, *Races of the Old Testament*, 146.

“The Negro in fact, stands about as much below the European as he stands above the orang-outang...”¹⁷⁶ The Kushites “were Negroes in reality.”¹⁷⁷

- Breasted, of the University of Chicago, excavator of Egyptian and Kushite monuments, the “father of American Egyptology” (as he is often called), writes in his widely praised¹⁷⁸ *A History of Egypt* that Kushite rulers sprang from a “feeble and inglorious line.”¹⁷⁹ Of the 25th 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.” He uses the word “inglorious” to describe the Kushites four times in eight pages. (As for the conflict of 701, “Sennacherib disposed of Taharka’s army without difficulty.”)

It would have been hard for Evans to argue that racial bias did not infect Breasted’s evaluation of the Kushites’ performance. Consider, for example, the tintured-blood passage in its entirety. Of Pharaoh Shebitku (also known as Shabataka) in the years immediately after 701, Breasted writes:

[I]t is evident from the conditions which survived him that he was entirely unable to exterminate the local [Lower Egyptian] dynasts and consolidate the power of Egypt for the supreme struggle which was before her. It was indeed now patent that the Ethiopians were quite unfitted for the imperial task before them. The southern strain with which their blood was tintured began to appear as the reign of Shabataka drew to a close...”¹⁸⁰

Note, too, that Reisner, Sayce and Breasted were in positions to propagate their views and influence the next generation of scholars, and not just through their

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 16-17.

¹⁷⁷ The Rev. A.H. Sayce, *The Egypt of the Hebrews and Herodotus* (New York: Macmillan, 1895), 113. Sayce’s racial classification of the Kushites varies; at one point he sees them as “white.” See Aubin, 253-5, 261-263.

¹⁷⁸ For example, W.R. Dawson and E.R. Uphill, *Who Was Who in Egyptology*, 2nd rev. ed., (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1972 call *A History of Egypt* “a masterpiece and probably the best general history of Pharaonic Egypt ever published” (38-9). See Aubin, 181.

¹⁷⁹ This quotation and those that follow are from Breasted, 552-60. For discussion, see Aubin, Chapter 14.

¹⁸⁰ Breasted, 554.

published writings. When they were not doing fieldwork in the Nile Valley, each was teaching at an important Western institution of learning. Indeed, Breasted founded in 1919 the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute, a leading research organization in the study of ancient Egypt, Kush and the Near East.¹⁸¹ How could such figures *not* be influential?

My entire chapter on Sayce (Chapter 19) attempts to show how a widely respected scholar could become so immersed in the colonial intellectual and political climate that he “lost all critical distance between himself... and empire.”¹⁸² Evans steers clear of this particularly detailed case. It would be hard to show that Sayce's general racial attitude did not grow from his society's fertile soil.¹⁸³

If Evans' unclear allusion to “*ad hominem* arguments” is meant to apply to my treatment of these scholars, there is no basis for so dismissive a remark. These are

¹⁸¹ For example, Breasted's disdain for the 25th Dynasty is echoed in John A. Wilson, *The Culture of Ancient Egypt* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951). Wilson (1899-1976) studied under Breasted at the Oriental Institute and succeeded him as its director. Wilson, whose footnotes indicate Breasted's influence, shares with Breasted the views 1) that Kush “tried to intrigue in Asia against the Assyrian conquerors” and 2) that the broken-reed passage provides evidence of Kushite unreliability (294). High-handedness colors Wilson's assessment of Piye: he calls him a “backwater puritan” (293) and comments, “His culture was a provincial imitation of earlier Egypt, fanatical in its retention of religious form” (292).

(The characterization of Piye as fanatical lives on in Adams' 1977 book, *Nubia*. Adams quotes Wilson's sentence approvingly, saying it “aptly” reflects the king's faith {252}.)

Also finding in Piye a “fanatical piety” is British Egyptologist Sir Alan Gardiner (1879-1963) in his *Egypt of the Pharaohs: An Introduction* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1961), 340.

The high-handedness continues in Redford's 1992 book, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel*. He presents Piye as a “humourless traditionalist” and a member of a Kushite royal line whose “[a]dherence to such a ‘straight-laced’ fundamentalism, always stronger in a convert, was to enhance the Kushites' loathing of their contemporaries, the Libyan rulers of Egypt who - horrors of horrors! - had loose morals, showed no reverence for ancient dietary laws, and always acted perfidiously” (315, 344). Chiding Redford for “pass[ing] over without notice considerable parts of the evidence” is L. Török, *The Kingdom of Kush: Handbook of the Napatan-Meroitic Civilization* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 163, note 253.

For more sober and analytical views of the royal religiosity see Török, 263-84, and J. Assmann, *The Mind of Egypt: History and Meaning in the Time of the Pharaohs* (trans. by A. Jenkins; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1996), 326-64.

¹⁸² Aubin, 260. Among other revealing actions, Sayce advised authorities in a remote part of central Egypt to quickly execute 130 suspected brigands (not Nubians but nonetheless non-white), before they could be brought to trial, lest some of them be acquitted for lack of witnesses. In writing in his autobiography about this event 35 years afterwards, he expresses no regret. See A.H. Sayce, *Reminiscences* (London: Macmillan, 1923), 235-6.

¹⁸³ Rochunda Lashae Belton, “A Non-traditional Traditionalist: Rev. A.H. Sayce and his Intellectual Approach to Biblical Authenticity and Biblical History in Late-Victorian Britain” (dissertation, Louisiana State University, 2007): “In his interpretation of race, Sayce was a product of his time, influenced by popular racial beliefs. Such beliefs depicted those who were white, which Sayce labeled as Aryan, as culturally and intellectually superior while Africans (Negroes) were viewed as the most inferior group” (153).

not isolated odd-balls but, especially in the case of Breasted,¹⁸⁴ high-profile members of the scholarly elite of their day. The unabashed openness with which they express their racial views sheds light on the social acceptability of looking down on black Africans at that time;¹⁸⁵ I cannot find views nearly so stark in the writings of earlier generations of scholars. This trend of negativism toward Kushites extends beyond archaeologists and other historians; it also includes biblical scholars, a subject of

¹⁸⁴ Upon Breasted's death, William F. Albright, pioneer in archaeology of ancient Israel, said of him in "James Henry Breasted: In Memoriam," *BASOR* 61 (1935): "[He was] the greatest organizer of archaeological research whom the world has yet known... [H]e was... the foremost humanist of our day among all the specialists in the study of antiquity" (2). In a retrospective four decades later, Egyptologist William J. Murnane writes in C.N. Wilson, ed., *Dictionary of Literary Biography 47: American Historians, 1866-1912*: "If one were asked to name a scholar who, above all others, stimulated the development of ancient historical studies in the United States during the earlier part of the 20th century, that honor would have to fall to the colossal figure of James Henry Breasted."

¹⁸⁵ Identification of this trend among archaeologists is not original with me. In his analysis of the history of archaeology in Sudan, Trigger notes that archaeology there started in earnest only after the defeat in 1898 of the Sudanese by Anglo-Egyptian forces (see below). For the next 60 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 says, "were the Austrian and German archaeologists, whose countries had no specific colonial interests in the Sudan" {335}).

Trigger does not deal with Breasted or Sayce, but he does treat Reisner and other colonial-era scholars in Sudan whose views reflect a similar attitude. He notes that the anatomist Sir Grafton Elliot Smith writes in 1909 that "the smallest infusion of Negro-blood immediately manifests itself in a dulling of initiative and a 'drag' on the further development of the arts of civilization" (331). Trigger also remarks that D.R. MacIver and C.L. Woolley, co-authors, observe the same year that "the unflinching dynamics of race reasserted their force" when the 25th Dynasty's fell from power" (332).

Trigger concludes his 1994 article by noting that Western archaeologists are making substantial progress, "having exorcised the most baleful influences of racism and colonialism from their profession and presenting a more accurate and dynamic view of African history to the world" (345). I know from attending the International Conference for Nubian Studies in 2004 in Paris and 2006 in Warsaw that this progress continues with vigor among many Nubiologists.

discussion in my Chapter 13 (which Evans also overlooks).¹⁸⁶ Adams, referring to the attitude typified by Reisner, writes, “It must be acknowledged too 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.”¹⁸⁷

Two other gaps in Evans’ argumentation are worth noting.

Evans ignores evidence I present outside the sphere of scholarship for the previously described change in Western opinion on race. I note a difference in how European artists present Africans before and after the onset of mass colonialism in Africa: paintings and sculpture by some prominent European artists present black Africans positively, with a sense of equity,¹⁸⁸ in the decades immediately before the scramble -- and this despite subtle growth of the idea of a hierarchy of races, with whites on top, a notion to which Darwin helped give credence. In the performing arts, I give special attention to *Aida*, featuring as it does inter-racial love between an Egyptian officer and a Kushite; a prominent French Egyptologist, Auguste Mariette (1821-1881), helped write the scenario for Verdi’s popular opera, which opened in 1871. I write:

¹⁸⁶ Compare this wave of negativism to the quotations given elsewhere of such pre-colonial scholars as Champollion, Heeren, Maspero and Renan. These positive depictions of Kushites (based on more evidence than the negative depictions) are all in *Rescue of Jerusalem* and are ignored by Evans.

Two Britons’ depictions, of which I was unaware when writing the book, can be added to the list.

George Alexander Hoskins (1802-1863) wrote *Travels in Ethiopia above the Second Cataract of the Nile* (London: Longmans, 1835) after visiting Egypt and Sudan in 1832-33). In it, he vaunts the “power, wealth and civilization of Meroe” (which replaced Napata as Kush’s capital, 345). Of Napata’s ruins, he writes: “Few temples in Egypt have been more extensive or finer than this must have once been” (142). He calls Napata “A city where the arts evidently were once so zealously cultivated, where science and learning appear to have reigned” (159).

George Smith, *The Gentile Nations: Or, the History and Religion of the Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Medes, Persians, Greeks, and Romans* (New York: Carlton & Phillips, 1854), says of the “Ethiopian” conquest of Egypt, “[I]t must not be regarded as the irruption of a barbarous people on a highly civilised country. On the contrary, Ethiopia at this period was as far advanced in cultivation as Egypt herself” (89).

An article published in 2013 provides other examples of pre-colonial writers who, like Champollion, deem ancient Egyptian culture to have been essentially black African in origin. Martin Bernal, “The Impact of Blackness on the Formation of Classics,” in S. Chrisomalis and A. Costopoulos (eds.), *Human Expeditions: Inspired by Bruce Trigger* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), cites: James Bruce (1730-94), British explorer; Constantin Francis Chassebeuf de Volnay (1757-1820), French traveller and ancient historian; Henri Baptiste (Abbé) Grégoire (1750-1831), French revolutionary leader, abolitionist and Roman Catholic priest, and John Stuart Mill (1806-1873), British political economist and philosopher (16-24).

¹⁸⁷ Adams, 92. Referring to Grafton Elliot Smith’s opinion about the “dulling” effect of “Negro-blood” (see note 186), Adams comments: “[T]he same belief can be found expressed in one way or another in the writings of most of his contemporaries. It was, after all, not until a generation later that notions of racial superiority and inferiority came seriously to be questioned” (92).

¹⁸⁸ Aubin, 242-3.

[W]ithin a decade or two of *Aida*'s triumphant debut this sense of equity wilts. Respect for Africa makes way for disdain. This is not to suggest that before this time all European intellectuals regarded black Africans with a sense of fair play, nor that afterwards they all ceased to do so, but generally speaking societal change took place in both the arts and in scholarship. Among the generation of Egyptologists that succeeded Mariette (1821-1881), it is hard to imagine anyone capable of devising an *Aida*-like plot.¹⁸⁹

As well, Evans also skips over the Anglo-Sudan War (also known as the Mahdist War),¹⁹⁰ one of the most vicious of the colonial wars. It lasted most of the 19th century's final two decades, and its effect on British public opinion is treated in Chapter 19. While the views of archaeologists would have circulated mostly among other academics or other people with an interest in ancient civilizations, the war became a nationalist and political matter and it was of grave concern to Britons as a whole. Sudanese forces in 1883 annihilated a 10,000-member Egyptian force led by the British; two years later, one of the British Empire's most celebrated military heroes, Gen. Charles Gordon, died when the Sudanese captured their capital, Khartoum; the event contributed to the electoral defeat of the British government of the day. Queen Victoria expressed anger over "retreating before savages." Religion as well as race colored many people's opinions: Robert Salisbury, the prime minister during some of the war years, called Islam, the faith of the foe, "a false religion" that was "capable of the most atrocious perversion and corruption on the face of the earth." William Gladstone, also a war-time prime minister, characterized the conflict

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 243.

In an article published after my book, Paul John Frandsen, "Aida and Edward Said: Attitude and Images of Ancient Egypt and Egyptology," in (J.G. Dercksen, ed.) *Assyria and Beyond: Studies Presented to Mogens Trolle Larsen* (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 2004), develops this theme in greater depth. He writes that Mariette, "regarded as the first real excavator in Egypt," was the "mastermind behind the opera" -- "one of the most - if not *the* most - well-known of all operas" (208, 205). "The opera shows sympathy for Ethiopian nationalism... In the much later conflict between Italy and Ethiopia (Abyssinia) - in the 1880s and 1890s - where the Italians fared pretty badly, Verdi had no sympathy for the Italian 'cause'" (225). He goes on to quote J.M. MacKenzie, "Occidentalism: Counterpoint and Counter-polemic," in *Journal of Historical Geography* 19 (1993) as saying: "*Aida* is just about as an anti-imperialist an opera as you can get" and that "He [Verdi] was appalled when the Italian nationalism which he had so fervently supported turned to imperialism in the 1880s and 1890s, and he regarded Italy's defeat at Adowa as salutary" (225 and n71 on 226 in Frandsen). Frandsen also observes: "[R]espect - at least for Ethiopians of royal lineage - is also shown by Mariette in his designs for costumes, which are a far cry from costuming of later times of Amonasro (*Aida*'s father, the Ethiopian king) as a barefoot savage..." (227).

It would have been interesting to see Evans try to square *Aida* with his own view of 19th-century attitudes.

¹⁹⁰ Ottoman Egypt was at the fore against the Sudanese early in the conflict, but Adams points out that toward the end the military campaign was "planned and financed in Great Britain, and was commanded in the field by British officers, but it was undertaken in the name of Egypt" (639).

as a “Christian war.” Much of the war took place on territory that had once been the kingdom of Kush, and the enemy would have been at least partly composed of descendants of peoples who had lived under the Kushite monarchy.¹⁹¹ Such was their view of the Sudanese that British soldiers for the first time in Britain’s military history killed the enemy wounded.¹⁹² By the time the British finally subdued the rebels in 1898, some 300,000 African combatants lay dead, according to the young Winston Churchill,¹⁹³ a soldier-journalist in Sudan. An estimated six million civilians out of a Sudanese population of eight million also died, many of them from starvation or other non-combative causes.¹⁹⁴

By omitting any mention of this conflict, Evans need not address the well-known way in which, during wars, many people tend to dehumanize the adversary’s society.¹⁹⁵ More specifically, he need not deal with this question: how could such a conflict *not* have influenced contemporary scholars’ views of Sudanese history?

12. Proposing an alternative hypothesis that is baseless

Criticism: Evans says, “[Aubin] asks why pre-colonial scholarship determined that Cush rescued Jerusalem using only the Bible and Herodotus [as resources]. That is *because they* [sic] *only had the Bible and Herodotus!*” (emphasis and punctuation in original).¹⁹⁶ Evans finds it significant that the publication of the translated annals into

¹⁹¹ Aubin, 391, note 33.

¹⁹² Brian Robson, *Fuzzy-Wuzzy: The Campaign in the Eastern Sudan, 1884-85* (Tunbridge Wells, UK: Spellmount, 1993), xv; see also 71, and Aubin, 257.

¹⁹³ W.S. Churchill, *The River War: An Account of the Reconquest of the Sudan* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1951; originally published in 1899), 160.

¹⁹⁴ The figure comes from Sir Reginald Wingate, who became governor general of Sudan after the war, as cited in David Steele, “Lord Salisbury, the ‘False Religion’ of Islam, and the Reconquest of the Sudan,” in E.M. Spiers (ed.), *Sudan: The Reconquest Reappraised* (London and Portland, Ore: Frank Cass, 1998), p. 21. For more on the death toll, see Aubin, 391, note 28.

¹⁹⁵ I do not know if Evans is dodging the Anglo-Sudan War (and, for that matter, colonialism), since the word “dodging” would suggest intention, or if his failure to address it is simply a lapse; in any case, by not acknowledging the conflict he does not have to respond to this point in *Rescue of Jerusalem*: “In wars, each side tends to deny the moral worth of the other. It makes killing easier. If a hostile people is inherently without value, then so must be its history. Britain at that time was a profoundly churchgoing society, and its people knew biblical history thoroughly. An appreciation that the Sudanese were heroes, having saved Jerusalem and thus enabling the Judeo-Christian tradition to emerge, would hardly have abetted the war effort” (260-1). Note that British academia was steeped in Christianity: Oxford, for example, required until the mid-19th century all faculty members who taught undergraduates to be Anglican clergymen, and undergraduates themselves had to be Anglican. Sayce himself was an Anglican deacon.

¹⁹⁶ Evans, “History in the Eye of the Beholder?,” 16.

English took place in 1878, only several years before the scramble; this, he says, followed the annals' translation into German in 1852. He suggests that scholars' access to this 1878 translation, rather than any rise in societal racism, would help explain any supposed decline in support for the Kushite-rescue theory in the late 19th century and scant support for it in the 20th century.

Evans ties the annals' pertinence to the fact they "explicitly describe [Assyria's] victory over Egyptian forces and Cushite cavalry" at Eltekeh. He explains: "This is the most *unambiguous evidence* available upon which to base the supposition of a Cushite defeat" (emphasis added) - that is, a defeat of the 25th Dynasty's overall forces,¹⁹⁷ a circumstance that would foreclose the possibility of the Kushites contributing to the Assyrian retreat. Evans scolds: "Since Aubin detected a change in scholars' opinions in the 1880s, one would think he would have perceived a causal connection between the coinciding of the availability of Sennacherib's annals in translation and the supposed 'change' in scholarly opinion that he perceived." More: "That Aubin and Bellis failed to note the relevance of the knowledge of the Assyrian annals for the supposed differences of opinion between pre-1880 scholarship and the post-1880s scholarship is both surprising and unfortunate."¹⁹⁸

Response: Evans bases his reprimands on two assumptions.

1. The first is that if pre-colonial scholars had been aware of Sennacherib's annals and their account of the Assyrian victory at Eltekeh over the 25th Dynasty's forces, these scholars would have dismissed any notion that the Kushites could have helped repel the Assyrians.

In preparing a response to Evans' article, I have come across three pre-colonial scholars who do not conform to that assumption. Each expresses awareness of the Kushite army's defeat at Eltekeh yet says that the army nonetheless contributed to the Assyrian retreat. Two of these scholars are British and the third is American; they would presumably have learned of Eltekeh from the German translation. In chronological order:

- Sir Edward Strachey (1812-1901), in a book published in 1874, says:
 "[Sennacherib] was by his own account, victorious.... But his army now met

¹⁹⁷ Ibid, 17. At the outset of this complaint, Evans does not make it clear if by a supposed "defeat" he simply means a defeat of the Kushite-Egyptian contingent at Eltekeh (which would leave open the possibility of a later comeback) or if he means a comprehensive defeat of all Kushite-Egyptian forces (which would foreclose the possibility of any comeback). However, on the next page he appears to favor the second view: he says the annals are one reason that "It seems clear that a Cushite contribution has not been viewed as determinative to Sennacherib's withdrawal..."

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 16-17.

with a reverse to which he indeed - as might be expected - makes no allusion....” Strachey finds “the most probable supposition to be that the Assyrian king retreated from the Ethiopian, either after sustaining, or without waiting for, a [second] battle....”¹⁹⁹

- Philip Smith (1817-1885) says in an 1871 book that after Eltekeh “Tirhakah may have rallied his forces for another struggle with Sennacherib” and it may have been these forces that Herodotus depicts as ready to fight Sennacherib’s army.²⁰⁰
- William Graham Sumner (1840-1910) was an Episcopalian minister in his native New Jersey when he wrote in annotations to a biblical commentary published in 1872 that Taharqa “raised a new army“ after the “disaster at Eltekeh,” and the “news that Tirhakah was coming” obliged Sennacherib to demand Hezekiah’s quick 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.”²⁰¹ The same year the commentary was published, Sumner began teaching at Yale, where he became a high-profile professor of political and social sciences.

These cases shows that, contrary to Evans’ premise, pre-colonial scholarship *did* have access to Sennacherib’s account of Eltekeh. They also show that knowledge of that account did not preclude the idea that the Kushites had contributed in some degree to the troubles leading up to Sennacherib’s retreat. These cases thus expose a weakness in Evans’ far-reaching claim that Sennacherib’s annals represent the “most

¹⁹⁹ *Jewish History and Politics in the Time of Sargon and Sennacherib*; 2nd edition, revised with additions (London: Isbister, 1874), 317.

²⁰⁰ P. Smith, *The Ancient History of the East from the Earliest Times to the Conquest of Alexander the Great* (New York: Harper, 1871), 155.

²⁰¹ Sumner’s annotation is in 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), 209, 221. I interpret from this that Taharqa’s pressure was a factor in Sennacherib’s retreat, albeit a light factor.

Sumner also became president of the American Sociological Society and a prominent laissez-faire economist and social Darwinist. Interestingly, he was a member of the American Anti-Imperialist League, founded in 1898 after the U.S. occupied the Philippines. The league’s platform states: “We regret that it has become necessary in the land of Washington and Lincoln to reaffirm that all men, of whatever race or color, are entitled to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.”

I was not aware of Strachey’s, P. Smith’s and Sumner’s ideas before now. They extend to fifteen the number of pre-colonial scholars who see the Kushites as playing a leading or a contributing role in turning back Assyria.

unambiguous evidence available on which to base the supposition of a Cushite defeat.”

2. Evans’ second assumption is that colonial-era scholars (as distinct from pre-colonial scholars), having seen the benefit of the wide dissemination after 1878 of the annals’ English translation, would have regarded the account of Eltekeh as spelling the end of the Kushite viability in the conflict against Assyria. Although it is quite possible that some scholars did do as he assumes, Evans cites no such scholars.

I am not about to undertake an expansive survey of scholarly opinion of this time period; that would have been a task for Evans, as the one who advances the argument. Out of curiosity, however, I have done some narrow research - checking the views of three historians who, as translators of the annal in question, would have been particularly aware of the account. Their views on Eltekeh expose a further flaw in Evans’ notion of what constitutes “unambiguous evidence.”

- Schrader translated the annals into German in 1872. In his accompanying commentary, he doubts Sennacherib’s claim to have routed the Kushite-Egyptian foe at Eltekeh. Schrader says the losses that Sennacherib’s army presumably suffered at Eltekeh had the effect of making the Assyrian king “little able to compel Jerusalem to surrender.”²⁰² A “pestilence that broke out in the army as a result of the war” was “probably” what caused his retreat.²⁰³

Schrader thus sees the Kushites as weakening the Assyrians sufficiently at Eltekeh to prevent their conquest of Jerusalem and to contribute to their withdrawal after disease further weakens them. Despite a defeat at Eltekeh, the Kushites’ performance in battle would have helped them achieve their campaign’s strategic objective, which was to keep Assyria out of Palestine.

²⁰² The quotations here are from the English translation, *The Cuneiform Inscriptions and the Old Testament*, *op. cit.*, 300.

²⁰³ Evans is well aware of Schrader’s view on Eltekeh. He writes earlier in his article, on p. 9, that “E. Schrader suggested that the Assyrians did not actually win the battle of Eltekeh - at least not in the manner claimed by Sennacherib. In fact, Schrader comes closest to espousing an actual Cushite-rescue theory when he suggests that in connection with the battle of Eltekeh ‘thus Jerusalem was delivered.’” In his accompanying footnote, he also quotes Schrader as saying that the battle’s outcome was a “Pyrrhus victory” for Sennacherib.

What is curious is that Evans does not reconcile Schrader’s view with his own later claim on p. 17 that scholars’ access to Sennacherib’s account of that battle would have convinced them that the Cushites could not have subsequently contributed to Sennacherib’s withdrawal. Evans thus provides evidence on his p. 9 that runs counter to his assumption eight pages later.

- Sayce collaborated with George Smith in translating Sennacherib’s annal in a book published in 1878.²⁰⁴ In a separate book published in 1889, Sayce says “it may be questioned whether [Sennacherib’s] success was as complete [at Eltekeh] as he represents it to have been.”²⁰⁵ He says Sennacherib divided his own forces: he himself “seems to have remained in the south on guard against a possible return of Tirhakah.” The other contingent besieged Jerusalem, where the angel of the Lord “annihilated” it. In other words, a resilient Kushite force would have weakened the Assyrian army by causing it to divide into two parts. In a text published in 1911, Sayce goes much further:

*It was the Ethiopian king, with his black levies from the land of the sadd [or “sudd,” southern Sudan], who prevented Sennacherib from destroying Jerusalem, and therewith the religion of Judah.... (...) Though Tirhakah was compelled to retreat to Egypt from the battle of Eltekeh, the Assyrian army was too shattered to follow him or to return to the siege of Jerusalem with any prospect of success. The season had grown late, and disease broke out in the ranks of the invaders. Sennacherib found himself obliged to lead the survivors of his army back to Nineveh [his capital], with his rebellious vassal unsubdued. *The Negroes of Africa had saved the city and temple of Jerusalem.*²⁰⁶ [Emphases added.]*

As I write in *Rescue of Jerusalem* about this surprising opinion, “This is the most forthright statement I have encountered by any scholar of the 20th century that recognizes both a) the decisive role of Taharqa’s forces in turning back Assyria *and* b) the impact of that event on history” (emphasis in original).

²⁰⁴ George Smith, in A.H. Sayce (ed.), *History of Sennacherib, Translated from the Cuneiform Inscriptions* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1878). Smith undertook the book project, but after Smith’s premature death Sayce completed the translation’s last eleven pages and acted as overall editor.

²⁰⁵ A.H. Sayce, *The Life and Times of Isaiah* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1889), 31-2.

²⁰⁶ A.H. Sayce, “Introductory Note” to Yacoub Pasha Artin, *England in the Sudan* (trans. G. Robb from the French; London: Macmillan, 1911, ix.

²⁰⁷ It also points to Sayce's zigzagging views on certain race-related matters.²⁰⁸ The point here is that a scholar who knew Sennacherib's annals as well as anyone does not see Eltekeh as precluding the hybrid Kushite-rescue theory. Note that, by crediting both the Kushites and disease for Sennacherib's retreat, Sayce in effect deems a hybrid-role for the Kushites to be fully compatible with their heroic status as Jerusalem's deliverer; this is contrary to Evans' devaluation of the Kushite role if it is not solely responsible for the retreat (see section 2).

- D.D. Luckenbill (1881-1927), who translated Sennacherib's annals in the mid-colonial period (1924), says of 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."²⁰⁹ The American thus sees the Kushites as possibly being solely responsible for the rescue.²¹⁰

²⁰⁷ Aubin, 262.

²⁰⁸ In a 1891 book, *Races of the Old Testament (op. cit.)*, Sayce describes both the Kushite and Egyptian pharaohs as white. In a 1895 book, *The Egypt of the Hebrews and Herodotus (op.cit.)*, Sayce says the Kushite pharaohs were Negro and that their dynasty's army failed against Sennacherib; the war in Sudan was then at a pitch. In a book published more than a decade after that conflict, this racial classification changes: The Rev. A.H. Sayce, "Introductory: The Ethiopian Capital," in *Meroë, the City of the Ethiopians: Being an Account of the First Season's Excavations at the Site, 1909-1910*, by J. Garstang, A.H. Sayce and F. Ll. Griffith (Oxford: Clarendon, 1911), deems the Kushite royals not to be Negro (3-4). It is noteworthy that the passage just quoted in the main text is from a book also published in 1911; in it, Sayce does not say that Taharqa was Negro but only that his troops were. I am not suggesting that the Anglo-Sudan war necessarily directly determined Sayce's varying public opinions on race (other factors may have been involved), but the correlation is remarkable.

I note this in *Rescue of Jerusalem*: "A revealing correlation, then, emerges from Sayce's zigzags. When he declares Taharqa to be Negro he sees the Kushite commander's expedition to [Palestine] as a fiasco. It has no bearing on the Assyrians' withdrawal. But when Sayce deems Taharqa [as distinct from his troops] to be *not* Negro (and presumably white), then his expedition has the effect of leaving Assyria's forces 'too shattered' to capture Jerusalem: Taharqa is responsible for the survival of both the city and Judah's religion" (262).

²⁰⁹ D.D. Luckenbill, *The Annals of Sennacherib* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1924), 13. For discussion, see Aubin, 127-9.

²¹⁰ Evans makes incorrect use of Luckenbill in support of his own argument that Sennacherib's claim of routing the 25th Dynasty's force would, for colonial-era scholars, foreclose the possibility the Kushites contributed to the later Assyrian retreat. Evans says, "Luckenbill suggests that the silence of the Babylonian Chronicle ('which was not slow to record Assyrian reverses') regarding an Assyrian defeat by Cushites in 701 BCE supports the veracity of Sennacherib's claims to victory at Eltekeh" ("History in the Eye of the Beholder?," 18). However, Luckenbill makes no such suggestion: as I state above, he proposes that Sennacherib "may have been fought to a standstill" (Luckenbill, 13). Luckenbill writes that the silence of the Babylonian Chronicle reflects not on the outcome of the battle of Eltekeh (as Evans says) but, rather, on the outcome of Sennacherib's entire campaign, and that this outcome was that "Sennacherib had not met with outright defeat."

How influential were these views among other colonial-era scholars? Schrader's view might have been seen by many. Sayce, however, buried his remarkable opinion in the introduction to a book by a high Ottoman official; the book consists of letters His Excellency Yacoub Artin Pasha wrote to his wife during a post-war trip through Sudan with his friend Sayce, and it seems aimed at the Turkish pasha's social set and colleagues rather than at Western scholars. Indeed, Sayce's later writings reflect his earlier point of view.²¹¹

Luckenbill's book, on the other hand, did receive substantial exposure among scholars, yet he devotes only passing mention to his conjecture about Kushite success. In the more than seventy books and articles published in the rest of the 20th century that I have consulted and that deal with, or touch upon, Sennacherib's invasion, I have not seen either Sayce's or Luckenbill's views cited once.²¹²

The point is that, regardless of the influence their published views might or might not have had, Schrader, Sayce and Luckenbill by no means see Sennacherib's annals as providing "unambiguous evidence" of Kushite failure.

Evans scolds me for not perceiving a "causal connection" between the translations of the annals and any lack of support for the Kushite-rescue theory, yet he fails to show that a causal connection existed in the first place. Indeed, the fact that Strachey, Smith, Sumner, Schrader, Sayce and Luckenbill see the outcome of the battle of Eltekeh as compatible with a helpful Kushite role in saving Jerusalem shows the fallacy of Evans' premise.

13. Overlooking the archaeological evidence

Criticism: Evans says that the unprecedented access to ancient texts and other archaeological findings by colonial-era and 20th-century scholars would have been a factor in discounting the Kushite role in forcing Assyria's retreat. As he puts it, "Neither Aubin nor Bellis seem to appreciate that the archaeological and epigraphic evidence available today is far greater than that available in the mid-19th century."²¹³

Response: There have indeed been significant discoveries since mid-19th century; they go well beyond the Assyrian annals. I deal with three such pieces of evidences; Evans

²¹¹ Does Sayce's generous treatment here of Taharqa, the "Ethiopian," and of the "Negroes of Africa" reflect a new open-mindedness on race? Sayce's true opinions are uncertain. As discussed in *Rescue of Jerusalem* (263-4), his later writings, which are intended for a Western audience, do not credit Taharqa with being influential in the deliverance and do not retract early statements about Negro inferiority. His apparent shyness about communicating to Westerners his view on the Kushite role in 701 may say something about the racial climate of the day.

²¹² The books and articles are listed in endnotes in Aubin, 335-40, with several additional mentions on pp. 124-30 of the main text.

²¹³ Evans, "History in the Eye of the Beholder?," 16.

overlooks all of them. They shed light on certain military, political and commercial conditions in the late 8th and early 7th centuries BCE:

- The first breakthrough was the translation into English of Piye’s “Victory Stela” in 1873,²¹⁴ eleven years after its discovery. In this text, the Kushite king Piye describes how his army conquered Lower Egypt by winning battle after battle against a coalition of adversaries.²¹⁵ The detailed narrative provides evidence that these African forces were unusually capable and would have been no pushover for the Assyrians.²¹⁶

Addressing the supreme god Amon in an inscription on the wall of a Theban temple, Taharqa alludes to “your tribute of Khor.”²¹⁷ Khor is an Egyptian term for the Palestinian region. The year is 675, and Taharqa is pharaoh. The message would appear to indicate that the deity has been regularly receiving some sort of tribute from Palestine. The prevailing scholarly assumption is that after the conflict of 701 the region remained in Assyria’s grip; the inscription, however, suggests the 25th Dynasty came to play a special role in Palestine during this post-war period (which does not exclude an Assyrian role). It is hard to imagine how the region would pay tribute to the 25th Dynasty if Sennacherib had turned back all its forces. Tribute would be consistent with Egypt having gained a strong negotiating position from the conflict of 701; through a treaty with Sennacherib, it would have achieved its aim of making the region into a buffer; the tribute could have been for protection. Assyria, as the militarily stronger and bellicose of the two buffered rivals, also received tribute, perhaps

²¹⁴ F.C. Cook, *The Inscriptions of Pianchi Mer-amon, King of Egypt in the Eighth Century B.C.* (London: Murray, 1873).

²¹⁵ Breasted’s assessment: “With the possible exception of the Annals of Thutmose III and the documents of Ramses II on the battle of Kadesh, this remarkable literary document is the clearest and most rational account of a military expedition which has survived from ancient Egypt” (*op. cit.*, 545). Adams calls it “one of the masterpieces of ancient literature” (*op. cit.*, 248). L. Török, *The Image of the Ordered World in Ancient Nubian Art*, Leiden: Brill, 2002) calls it is the longest royal text composed in hieroglyphic Egyptian that has been found (368).

²¹⁶ See Aubin, 63; also 158-63.

²¹⁷ P. Vernus, “Inscriptions de la troisième période intermédiaire,” in *Bulletin de l’Institut français d’architecture orientale* 75 (1975), 31. See Aubin, 153-4.

in exchange for keeping its army out of the buffer region.²¹⁸ Making payments, substantive or largely symbolic, to both buffered rivals would not be inconsistent with being a small state within a buffer zone.

- In 1882, ancient weights -- the kind used to measure commercial goods -- were discovered in what had been Judah, and over the 20th century hundreds were found scattered across the kingdom's territory. Starting in the 1960s, archaeologists deemed the limestone items to conform to Egypt's unique weight system "in order to facilitate international trade," says R. Kletter in a monograph on the subject.²¹⁹ In 1982, the earliest weights were dated to Hezekiah's reign;²²⁰ Kletter assigns the widespread use of Judah's new weight system to the seventh century BCE.²²¹ He expresses puzzlement as to why Egyptian weights should be so present at this time in Judah, which he sees as a vassal to the "ruling empire," Assyria;²²² this view reflects a common assumption among historians that Assyria was still in sole control of Judah in the years following 701. However, the weights are perfectly consistent with the thesis that in the post-701 decades Judah and some of its neighbors became, as a result of an Assyrian-Egyptian treaty, a buffer region; this arrangement would have served Egypt's self-defence and its commercial interests. It is consistent with a denouement of the 701 crisis that was helpful to the 25th Dynasty.

²¹⁸ That Kushite Egypt would have sought an imperial "lord-vassal" relationship with Palestine's kingdoms is unlikely. The occupation of much of Palestine by Egypt's New Kingdom pharaohs several centuries before demonstrated there was no real economic advantage to being the region's overlord; unlike Phoenicia, which had lumber, Palestine offered few commodities or natural resources that the fertile Nile Valley did not already possess, as concluded by S. Ahituv, "Economic Factors in Egyptian Conquest of Canaan," in *IEJ* 28, 1978. Maintaining a military presence in the region to protect against an Assyrian return would also have been extremely costly for Kushite Egypt. As well, Assyria's army was much bigger than the forces available to the 25th Dynasty, so the latter could have been greatly outmanned in resisting a concerted, well-planned invasion of the region by Assyria. (See Aubin, 148-50 and 352, note 1.) As argued in my Chapter 12, a treaty with Sennacherib making the region a buffer zone was more advantageous. That would give the 25th Dynasty what it most needed economically from the region: unimpeded trade routes.

Regarding Judah's tribute to Assyria, see two of Sennacherib's texts written several years after 701 in Luckenbill, *The Annals of Sennacherib*, 77 and 86. These refer vaguely to Hezekiah's submission (despite his continuation as king).

²¹⁹ R. Kletter, *Economic Keystones: The Weight System of the Kingdom of Judah* (Sheffield, UK: JSOTSup, 276; Sheffield Academic, 1998), 27, 36. For discussion of the weights, see Aubin, 155-7.

²²⁰ Yohanan Aharoni in Miriam Aharoni (ed.), *The Archaeology of the Land of Israel: From the Prehistoric Beginnings to the End of the First Temple Period* (trans. from the Hebrew by A.F. Rainey; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1982), 260.

²²¹ Kletter, 47-8.

²²² *Ibid.*, 148.

These discoveries have the opposite effect of what Evans assumes: rather than necessarily weakening the case for Kushite success against the Assyrian invasion, I believe they strengthen it (although the conventional wisdom of 20th-century scholars has not so interpreted them). The findings suggest that the 25th Dynasty not only had the capacity to be a tough foe against Assyria but that it gained a status in Palestine during the early seventh century BCE that is consistent with having achieved some success in 701.

14. Making more flawed claims

Criticism: Evans says: “Aubin is aware of Sennacherib’s claims to have won the battle of Eltekeh and tries to work around them by positing a subsequent battle (one that is not recorded in any text) wherein the Cushites were victorious over Sennacherib’s forces.” Evans says, “[W]e do not have any text that refers to a second battle so the theory is extremely speculative.”²²³

Response: I posit no second battle. In fact, I flatly dismiss the idea.

Evans, focussed as he is on Chapter 18, overlooks this assertion in Chapter 15: “I subscribe to the near-unanimous view that sometime well after Eltekeh, the Assyrians brought their campaign to a halt before any such *major* confrontation involving Sennacherib’s main body of troops necessarily took place. There is simply no evidence of such a battle” (emphasis in original).²²⁴

As for the Evans’ notion that I see the Kushites as “victorious” over the Assyrians in 701, he ignores contrary assertions in separate chapters. I write:

- Chapter 12: “No evidence exists that [the 25th Dynasty] obtained a military ‘victory’ in the conventional sense of the word.” I propose that the Kushites obtained a stalemate leading to an advantageous negotiated settlement: “For the pharaoh, a stalemate meant a *de facto* victory.”²²⁵
- Chapter 15: “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*)

²²³ Evans, “History in the Eye of the Beholder?,” 19.

²²⁴ Aubin, 189.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 152.

“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.”²²⁶ `

The scenario I propose for the outcome of the conflict occupies a total of more than ten pages. ²²⁷ Evans shows no awareness of it.

Criticism: Evans notes that W. Mayer suggests on the basis of Sennacherib’s annals that the Philistine city of Ekron appealed to Kushite Egypt for military aid to help it resist Judahite (not Assyrian) aggression, and that, in Evans’ words, “the Egyptians/ Cushites came out to rescue Ekron - not Jerusalem” -- when they fought the Assyrians at Eltekeh, which was near Ekron.²²⁸ Evans says: “[I]t is clear that Aubin’s thesis of a trusted alliance between Jerusalem and Cushite Egypt where the latter bravely march in to rescue the former ignores Sennacherib’s annals at this point.”²²⁹

Response: Three points:

- The sense of Evans’ criticism is not clear. If he means I should have dealt specifically with Mayer’s proposal, my response is that *The Rescue of Jerusalem’s* publication predates Mayer’s article. If, on the other hand, Evans means I should have dealt with Sennacherib’s annal independently of Mayer’s proposal, in fact I do: I speculate that “Sennacherib’s awkward, run-on sentence structure... allows the inference that the Assyrian is lumping Hezekiah in with Ekron in the plea for help.”²³⁰
- More importantly, in indicating that I should have addressed the question of whether or not the 25th Dynasty sought to rescue Jerusalem, Evans ignores my discussion of Isa 30:1-6, in which Judahite envoys travel with a gift-laden caravan to Egypt to make an “alliance” and to solicit the pharaoh’s military

²²⁶ Ibid., 189 (Chapter 15).

²²⁷ See *ibid.*, 139-44, 150-3, 199-203.

²²⁸ Evans, “History in the Eye of the Beholder?,” 18, citing W. Mayer, “Sennacherib’s Campaign of 701 BCE: The Assyrian View,” in L.L. Grabbe (ed.), *Like a Bird in a Cage: The Invasion of Sennacherib in 701 BCE* (JSOTSup, 363; London and New York: T&T Clark, 2003), 177.

²²⁹ Evans, *ibid.*, 19; see also, 12.

²³⁰ See the extensive note 26 in Aubin, 313. Pritchard’s and Luckenbill’s translations reflect this murkiness.

aid.²³¹ He also overlooks my treatment of 2 Kgs 18:21-24, in which Sennacherib's representative, the Rab-shakeh, declares twice in his speech to Jerusalemites that Hezekiah is relying on Egypt's military help to save him.²³² Note that the biblical narrative does not question the Rab-shakeh's assertions; it may be assumed that the 25th Dynasty, responding to the Judahite envoys, is sending a military force to help Hezekiah, and that Hezekiah is holding out accordingly.

- I have no problem with Mayer's suggestion that the 25th Dynasty aimed to save Ekron; such an aim, however, would not have been at the exclusion of wanting to save Judah. I argue that the 25th Dynasty's strategic objective in sending an expedition to Palestine in 701 would have been to prevent Assyrian conquest of not only Judah but Philistia and to make that entire region a buffer between the Assyrian empire and Egypt.²³³ Attempts to rescue the neighbouring kingdoms of Ekron and Judah, then, would not have been mutually exclusive.

To conclude: The issue here is not whether I am right or wrong on this matter of Ekron. Rather, the issue is whether, as Evans contends, my thesis "ignores" Sennacherib's annals on this point. It does not. As was also shown to be the case in section 3, a criticism reflects no awareness of an endnote. In this case, the endnote is substantial, consisting of four paragraphs.²³⁴

15. Calling evidence "hard" when it is not

Criticism: Evans suggests that Sennacherib's account of his campaign is not the only reason scholars would have rejected the idea that the 25th Dynasty's forces repelled

²³¹ Ibid., 230; see also Isa 31.1, and Aubin, 57, 230

²³² Ibid., 182-186.

²³³ Ibid., 75-77.

²³⁴ Ibid., 313, note 26.

the Assyrians; an additional reason,²³⁵ he says, would have been the realization that the 2 Kings reference to the advancing force led by “Tirhakah, king of Kush” was anachronistic: Taharqa was only a prince at the time and would not become pharaoh until 690 BCE.²³⁶ Evans concludes:

“In sum, the anachronistic nature of the Tirhakah reference, combined with the evidence of Sennacherib’s annals (which claim to have defeated the Egyptian-Ethiopian armies), has served as *compelling evidence* for most that the Cushites did not rescue Jerusalem in 701 BCE. *Clearly Aubin’s claims that historians who reject the Cushite-rescue theory “offer no hard evidence on which to base their judgments” is [sic] grossly inaccurate.*²³⁷ [Emphases added.]

Response: The general term “historians” here appear to refer to both those of the classical era and subsequent generations (who have often been influenced by them). Evans makes no serious sampling of opinion before making the flat assertion that “most” historians see the anachronistic reference to Taharqa as part of the “compelling evidence” that the Kushites could not have contributed significantly to Sennacherib’s withdrawal: he cites just one example of such a scholar.²³⁸ It is worth noting, however, that a more thorough review of scholarly opinion by L.L. Grabbe reaches a different conclusion on where majority opinion lies: “Although still debated, the *weight of opinion* seems to be that Taharqa was capable of leading a military expedition against the Assyrians in 701 BCE. Whether he did or not is naturally still a matter of debate....”²³⁹ (emphasis added). Evans makes no reference to Grabbe’s

²³⁵ Evans also gives one further reason: he says that scholars “who have not viewed Herodotus [and his story of the mice attacking the Assyrians] as relevant [to the conflict of 701] have had some good reasons to disregard it” (“History in the Eye of the Beholder?,” 21). There is no need to respond to his remarks here because they do not appear to have much to do with me. (In *The Rescue of Jerusalem*, I call the story the “most problematic” of the three ancient accounts of Sennacherib’s invasion; however, my views on the Kushite role in countering that invasion “are reconcilable with the Greek historian’s account but are not dependent upon it.” See Aubin, 96 and 328-9, note 24). The scholars who depend most on the story are supporters of the epidemic theory, associating as they do rodents with plague.

²³⁶ Evans, “History in the Eye of the Beholder?,” 21. (This time frame is not controversial; there is general agreement that Taharqa’s rule began in 690 or 691.)

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 23

²³⁸ Evans, *ibid.*, 22, says V. Fritz, author of *1 & 2 Kings: A Continental Commentary* (trans. by A. Hagedorn; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), is “representative” of those “many scholars [who] reject any Cushite-rescue theory” because of the anachronism. On the next page, Evans upgrades “many” scholars to “most” scholars.

²³⁹ L.L. Grabbe, “Introduction,” L.L. Grabbe (ed.), *‘Like a Bird in a Cage’*, *op. cit.*, 36.

conflicting view on scholarly opinion on the age issue, although Evans is seemingly familiar with Grabbe's article since he cites it in another context.²⁴⁰

The argument against the Taharqa-was-too-young hypothesis is stronger than an ordinary reader of Evans' article might suppose. In the original 1973 edition of his much-cited reference work on the period, Kitchen treats the idea with withering scorn:

[I]t is totally needless to talk of 'anachronism' here. Taharqa was not king in 701 B.C., but he certainly was during 690-664 B.C., for a quarter of a century. In considering the Hebrew text, it should be carefully noted that the phrase 'Tirhakah king of Kush' is *not* reported speech of 701 B.C., but belongs to the words of later narrators.... There is no difficulty whatever in assuming that the existing narrations were drawn up at a date after 690 B.C., when it was one of the current facts of life that Taharqa was king of Egypt and Nubia (...) If in current speech one says that Queen Elizabeth was born in 1926, this is precisely like saying that king Taharqa was in Palestine in 701 B.C.; only a fool and a pedant would seek to 'correct' the first statement...²⁴¹

A. Rainey, in a 1976 article, Adams, in his 1977 book, and F. Yurco, in a 1980 article,²⁴² also see Taharqa as old enough to have participated in the campaign.²⁴³

This problem with the Taharqa-was-too-young hypothesis was pointed out long before the 1970s. Spot checks show that *colonial-era* scholars who explicitly consider

²⁴⁰ Evans, "History in the Eye of the Beholder?," indicates on p. 22, note 121, that Grabbe says the biblical account mentions Taharqa because of his subsequent reputation as a great monarch who stood up to Assyria. The note gives no precise page reference, but Grabbe's observation comes on the same page (Grabbe, 36) -- and, indeed, the same paragraph -- as his conclusion that the "weight of [scholars'] opinion" favours Taharqa being old enough to be on the expedition.

²⁴¹ Kitchen, *Third Intermediate Period*, 1st ed., 159-60, as cited in Aubin, 111-12. As if for good measure, Kitchen later says of the matter of Taharqa's involvement: "There is *no* anachronism or contradiction in the Hebrew text (or any other sources, here), despite the almost pathological mania of some Old Testament scholars for reading such unto these data" (emphasis in original). (Ibid., 386, note 823).

Evans mentions Kitchen's dissent but does not give his important reasoning.

²⁴² A. F. Rainey, "Taharqa and Syntax," in *TA* 3, (1976), 40; Adams, 264, and F. Yurco, "Sennacherib's Third Campaign and the Coregency of Shabaka and Shebitku," In *Serapis: The American Journal of Egyptology* 6 (1980). Yurco shrugs off the anachronism as "probably simply a case of prolepsis" (223).

²⁴³ In *Rescue of Jerusalem*, I offer eight arguments (in addition to Kitchen's) in support of the plausibility of Prince Taharqa's presence in the 701 expedition in some capacity, possibly as titular leader, with his generals exercising a major role (112-115 in Chapter 8). The arguments would represent a challenge to Evans' claim that the Bible's anachronism is "hard evidence" that Taharqa was too young; Evans makes no mention of the arguments.

and reject the argument include Farrar (1894),²⁴⁴ John Skinner (1896),²⁴⁵ Lewis Bayles Paton (1901),²⁴⁶ Breasted (1905),²⁴⁷ W.M. Flinders Petrie (1905),²⁴⁸ Michael George Glazebrook (1910),²⁴⁹ L.L. Honor (1926)²⁵⁰ and Jack Finegan (1946).²⁵¹ (As well, numerous other colonial-era scholars -- including such prominent ones as Sayce,²⁵² H.R. Hall²⁵³ and Luckenbill²⁵⁴ -- accept Taharqa's presence on the expedition albeit without explicitly responding to the anachronism argument.) Among *pre-colonial* scholars who see Taharqa as having been a prince in 701 yet accept his presence on

²⁴⁴ Farrar: “[I]t is perhaps only by anticipation that Tirhakah is called ‘King’ of Ethiopia” (*op. cit.*, 338).

²⁴⁵ Rev. J. Skinner, *The Book of the Prophet Isaiah, Chapters I-XXXIX*, rev. ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1915; 1st ed. was 1896): “...it is a very harmless and natural anachronism to designate [Tirhakah] here by his later title” (285).

²⁴⁶ L.B. Paton, *The Early History of Syria and Palestine* (New York: Scribner's, 1901): “It is true that he [Taharqa] did not officially assume the crown before 691, but we do not know that he was not already practically the ruler of Egypt as early as 701” (258).

²⁴⁷ Breasted says of Taharqa that “some thirteen or fourteen years afterward [he] became king of Ethiopia, a fact which led the Hebrew annalist to give him that title already at the time of this campaign” (552).

²⁴⁸ W.M.F. Petrie, *A History of Egypt from the XIXth to the XXXth Dynasties* (London: Methuen, 1905). The Egyptologist sees Taharqa as “viceroy” and says he was “probably at least 21” (296).

²⁴⁹ M.G. Glazebrook, *Studies in the Book of Isaiah* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1910): “Possibly Tirhakah was associated with his father from about 703, and was therefore practically king” (63, note 1).

²⁵⁰ Honor, *Sennacherib's Invasion of Palestine: A Critical Source Study* (New York: AMS Press, 1966, originally published in 1926): “The fact that Tirhakah is referred to as King of Ethiopia, although he did not receive the title until about thirteen years later, is not strange. It would have been very natural for a writer living during or after the period when Tirhakah was King of Ethiopia to ascribe the title to him, even when referring to an event that had taken place before the accession to the throne” (51).

²⁵¹ J. Finegan, *Light from the Ancient Past: The Archeological Background of the Hebrew-Christian Religion* (Princeton Univ. Press, 1946): “The mention of Taharqa as ‘king’ at this time is, then, a mistake, which is not too surprising since he did come to the throne a comparatively few years later” (178).

²⁵² See discussion of Sayce in Aubin, 262.

²⁵³ H.R. Hall, *The Ancient History of the Near East: From the Earliest Times to the Battle of Salamis* (London: Methuen, 1913), 491, note 3.

²⁵⁴ Luckenbill, 13-4.

the expedition are J.G. Wilkinson (1847),²⁵⁵ Julius Oppert (1869),²⁵⁶ P. Smith (1871),²⁵⁷ François Lenormant & E. Chevalier(1871)²⁵⁸ and Sumner (1872).²⁵⁹ A goodly number of scholars thus do not conform to Evans' contention.

What is more, let us say for the sake of discussion that the anachronism argument turns out to be utterly solid - that Taharqa would indeed have been a young child in 701. Would that, as Evans suggests, constitute evidence that Kushites did not rescue Jerusalem? No. It would only mean that someone other than Taharqa was leading this contingent and that this person would almost certainly be representing the 25th Dynasty. Insofar as the validity of the idea the Kushites contributed to Jerusalem's survival is concerned, the question of whether Taharqa was at the head of the force to which 2 Kings 19:9 refers or whether he was at home in a nursery is irrelevant.

In contending that the Taharqa anachronism and Sennacherib's claim of victory at Eltekeh have combined to serve as "compelling evidence for most that the Cushites did not rescue Jerusalem," Evans is in effect arguing that empiricism rather than an incapacity to judge the Kushites fairly explains scholars' reluctance to credit the 25th Dynasty with a role in the rescue. Yet he fails to provide sufficient sampling of opinion to support his claim that "most" scholars, of either the colonial era or post-colonial era adhere to the Taharqa-was-too-young hypothesis, much less that "most" would see this as part of the "compelling evidence" that the 25th Dynasty's expedition did not contribute to Sennacherib's retreat. As for Evans' criticism that "Clearly Aubin's claims that historians who reject the Cushite-rescue theory 'offer no hard evidence on which to base their judgments' is grossly inaccurate," a statistic is pertinent: I have quoted Evans on eight occasions as introducing a point by saying either "it is clear that" or "clearly"; in each case, the point is dubious or, as here, without basis. Simply put, these are bluff words.

16. Ignoring fair play

²⁵⁵ J. G. Wilkinson, *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians*, 3rd. ed. (5 vols; London: Murray, 1847), 143.

²⁵⁶ Oppert, 29.

²⁵⁷ P. Smith, 154.

²⁵⁸ F. Lenormant and E. Chevalier, *The Student's Manual of Oriental History: A Manual of the Ancient History of the East to the Commencement of the Median Wars* (2 vols; Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1871), 1:278. The original French version was published in 1868. Lenormant (1837-1883) was a French Assyriologist.

²⁵⁹ Sumner's annotation in Bähr, *The Books of the Kings: Book II*, 221.

Criticism: Evans writes: “Aware of the problem of lack of [physical] evidence [for a Kushite role in repelling Sennacherib], 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...” (emphasis in original).²⁶⁰

Response: This jab at my credibility is particularly galling. It misrepresents my thinking.

The first misrepresentation: I do not declare, as Evans intimates with his italicized “was,” that there was once such evidence. Rather, I raise the *possibility* of such evidence. It was a longstanding pharaonic custom to celebrate military successes with murals or stelae, a custom that Piye followed with his “Victory Stela”. I therefore pose a *question* from the viewpoint of a reader who might expect the 25th Dynasty to have made some record of its expedition to Palestine: “Wouldn’t it stand to reason, then, that such pictorial or textual evidence would exist for a successful campaign in Judah?”²⁶¹ I answer the question by citing “three developments [that] could account for the absence” of such evidence. Note the conditional tense.

The next misrepresentation: Evans makes known to readers only one of the three developments that I cite. That development is the defacement of many Kushite inscriptions and/or destruction of edifices (such as temples and palaces) and their records.²⁶²

Left unstated is the second development: nature. Napata, along with Memphis, is where record-keeping might have been expected, but it is located in what is now the Sahara; the surviving Napatan structures are made of a notoriously soft variety of

²⁶⁰ Evans, “History in the Eye of the Beholder?,” 19-20.

²⁶¹ Aubin, 145.

²⁶² Evans, “History in the Eye of the Beholder?,” writes in his note 107: “[Aubin] suggests either the Assyrians who later conquered Egypt destroyed the Egyptian chronicles that recorded Tirhakah’s victory over Sennacherib, or the 26th Dynasty destroyed the records....”

This is not inaccurate as far as it goes, but Evans’ readers would be unable to grasp the unusual extent of this destruction as described in Aubin, 145-6 and note 26 on 350. The logical places for the 25th Dynasty to keep records (including inscriptions in the walls of buildings) in Egypt would have been in Memphis and Thebes, the dynasty’s capitals in Lower and Upper Egypt respectively. After his conquest of Memphis in 671 BCE, Sennacherib’s successor, Esarhaddon, describes what he did to the city: “I destroyed it, tore down its walls, burnt it down” (*Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 293). The Kushites’ building program in the area of Thebes was the most intensive in some four hundred years, as mentioned above, yet precious little of this construction has survived. How little? J. Leclant, *Recherches sur les monuments thébains de la XXVe dynastie dite Éthiopienne*, text (Cairo: L’Institut français d’archéologie orientale (1965), writes that these monuments “have very often been reduced to a state of simple ruin, dilapidation and subjection to the affronts of time: human destruction, wind erosion and the attack of nitre. One understands all too well that [modern scholars] who have described Thebes’ vestiges have generally scorned these monuments.” (My translation.)

sandstone, and wind storms have had a sand-blasting effect, ruining many inscriptions and bas reliefs.²⁶³

The last development that Evans omits mentioning is the watery fate of the remains of numerous Kushite population centres along the Nile Valley in southern Egypt and northern Sudan: the 300-mile-long Lake Nasser created by the Aswan Dam and the Aswan High Dam submerged them. A desperate UNESCO-sponsored program, the optimistically named Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia, rallied archaeologists from many countries to save vestiges before the waters rose. Thirty years after this too-little-too-late campaign, participant T. Säve-Söderbergh, notes that UNESCO gave less attention to vestiges on the Sudanese side of the border than on the Egyptian side.²⁶⁴

Attacking a writer's credibility is easy if one passes over without notice large and essential parts of his argument.

It is obviously futile to speculate on whether a record of the events of 701 from the 25th Dynasty's perspective ever existed, yet it is fair to note 1) that the Kushites were proficient in writing in hieroglyphic and cursive Egyptian as well as hieroglyphic and cursive Meroitic (their language), 2) that Kushite royalty (like Egyptian and Assyrian royalty) was hardly reticent about recording military events²⁶⁵ and 3) that

²⁶³ For wind erosion's drastic effect on Napatan reliefs, see Breasted's photos in A.J. Spalinger, "Notes on the Military in Egypt during the XXVth Dynasty," in *JSSEA* 11 (1981), figs. 2 and 6. See also drawings by others in figs. 3, 4, 5. These illustrations are of rare reliefs of that depict military scenes; the sandstone is so worn that much is not discernible. (Intriguingly, one incomplete scene shows Kushite infantrymen chasing what appear to be Assyrian cavalymen; the context is uncertain.)

²⁶⁴ T. Säve-Söderbergh, "The Nubian Campaign: An Appeal after 30 Years," in *Actes de la VIIIe Conférence Internationale des Études Nubiennes, I - Communications principales, Lille, 11-17 septembre, 1994* (Université Charles-de-Gaulle - Lille III). (See Aubin, 147 and 350, note 30.)

²⁶⁵ Piye's so-called "Victory Stela," the account of his conquest of Lower Egypt, exhibits an uncommon flair for this. In *Rescue of Jerusalem*, I call it a "detailed, exciting and chivalric narrative that is a little-known masterpiece of ancient literature" (63

precious few physical records of events by this dynasty have been found.²⁶⁶ To call attention to this dearth of records is hardly silly.²⁶⁷

Indeed, acute scarcity characterizes not only the writings of the 25th Dynasty but, notes Kitchen, also of the entire period of c. 1070-560 BCE -- a span that also includes the 21st, 22nd, 23rd, 24th dynasties and 26th dynasties.²⁶⁸ The Egyptologist observes that under each of these dynasties, including the 25th, “the centre of power in Egypt was up in the north: at the largely permanent capital Memphis with subordinate dynastic centres in the Delta.” This meant that “formal historical inscriptions about campaigns abroad” as well as “treaties with Near-Eastern states would have been set up on stelae or engraved on temple walls in Memphis or Tanis.” The problem: “In the north, the main construction material for temples and many stelae was limestone.... Unfortunately, the wholesale destruction of temples large and small at Memphis, to reuse the stone for building late antique and medieval Cairo has (in most cases) removed everything except the baseline of buildings.” A further problem: In the dampness of the north, “almost nothing survives of the former mass of contemporary papyrus records.”

The best retort to Evans’ charge is an observation by Kitchen: “The present dearth of major monumental texts and papyrus archives from the Egypt of the early first millennium BCE does not mean that considerable records never existed. Quite

²⁶⁶ Piye’s “Victory Stela” illustrates the depredations commonly inflicted on Kushite remains by enemies: five pieces of the smashed granite stela were found in Napata in 1862, reassembled and joined to a sixth piece found in Dongola province. See G.A. Reisner (listed as A. Reisner), “Historical Inscriptions from Gebel Barkal,” in *Sudan Notes and Records* 4 (1921), 59. To be fair to Evans, I should note that this particular example of destruction is not *in Rescue of Jerusalem*.

There is also this about the paucity of surviving Kushite records. We know from a Babylonian record that Kushite-Egyptian forces defeated an Assyrian army, headed by King Esarhaddon) inside Egypt in 674 BCE. (See A.K. Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles* {Locust Valley, N.Y.: Augustin, 1975}, 84). Historians do not dispute that this victory occurred. It seems reasonable to assume that the 25th Dynasty would have been proud of this, yet no Kushite or Egyptian written record of any aspect of this conflict has been found.

²⁶⁷ In his 2014 article, Pope, too, is struck by the “contrast between the often detailed Kushite descriptions of domestic affairs and the consistently laconic Kushite references to foreign affairs” (112). The reasons he entertains for the dearth of records pertaining to Assyria are not so different from mine: “The Kushite and Egyptian record’s considerable obliquity on international affairs of the eighth and seventh centuries B.C.E. may be variously explained as an accident of survival, systemic destruction, or authorial elision” (130).

²⁶⁸ K.A. Kitchen, “External Textual Sources - Egypt,” in (A. Lemaire and B. Halpern, eds.) *The Books of Kings: Sources, Composition, Historiography and Reception* (VTSup 129; Leiden: Brill, 2010), 369-70. See also Kitchen, “Egyptian Interventions in the Levant in Iron Age II,” in (W.G. Dever and S. Gitin, eds.), *Symbiosis, Symbolism and the Power of the Past: Canaan, Ancient Israel, and Their Neighbors from the Late Bronze Age through Roman Palestina* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 115.

the contrary, surviving economic papyri, donation-stelae, etc., serve to hint at what we have lost....”²⁶⁹

17. Missing the point

Criticism: Regarding 20th-century scholars’ general treatment of Kushite resistance to Sennacherib, Evans says, “... Aubin and Bellis write dramatically as if some sort of conspiracy or cover-up is going on.”²⁷⁰

Response: Evans disregards this statement in Chapter 19: “Insofar as it connotes deliberate or conspiratorial cunning, the term ‘cover up’ does not really fit.”²⁷¹

Evans indicates his incomprehension of the zeitgeist that the book describes in the following passage:

There was no need for a conscious effort by Western historians, archaeologists and biblical commentators a century ago to deny this chapter of Africa’s past. Rather, the denial sprang from a common mindset. Sharing their society’s support for overseas expansion, the scholars set aside ideas that clashed with the imperial premise of Africans’ inherent unworthiness. If, like Archibald Sayce, one believed the “Negroes of Africa” to be midway between Europeans and apes, it was hard to swallow the idea that members of such a sorry genetic background could have accomplished so heroic a feat as to save Jerusalem.²⁷²

In short, to keep a clear conscience when subjugating a people, it helps to feel that these subjects have little worth.²⁷³

Criticism: Evans concludes by criticizing me for saying that my thesis that the 25th Dynasty contributed to turning back Sennacherib is “unshakable.” He adds: “[Aubin’s and Bellis’s] work evinces an ignorance regarding the basic mode of postmodern approach - *suspicion* - especially ‘critical self-suspicion’ ” (emphasis in original).

²⁶⁹ Kitchen, “External Textual Sources - Egypt,” 372.

²⁷⁰ Evans, “History in the Eye of the Beholder?,” 13.

²⁷¹ Aubin, 265.

²⁷² Ibid., 265. Or, as in the case of Sayce, to admit it out loud to a Western audience.

²⁷³ For how Western archaeologists’ negativism towards Kush eased over the course of the 20th century, see note 186.

Response: The need for “critical self-suspicion” is excellent advice. Evans should consider taking it.

Conclusion

Evans’ article, “History in the Eye of the Beholder?”, attempts to show that my social location has led to a deeply flawed presentation of how scholars over the centuries have perceived Kushite Egypt’s performance in resisting Assyrian imperialism in Palestine. His allegations strike at my competence: he says that I have “hardly done what one could call a scholarly treatment,” that my discussion “fails to acknowledge or address” certain arguments, that I commit a lapse that is “both surprising and unfortunate,” that I ignore archaeological evidence, that I make a claim that is “grossly inaccurate,” that I make an argument that will “undermine [my] credibility” and that I show “ignorance” of common-sense research methodology. My foregoing texts responds to these charges and all the other ones.

Evans attempts to discredit my central premise regarding the extent of pre-colonial scholarly support for the Kushite-rescue theory; he does so by distorting the premise into an unrecognizable strawman. In the course of his twenty-four pages, he misrepresents what I say on eight other occasions.²⁷⁴ On seven additional occasions he either claims erroneously that the book fails to treat certain matters or otherwise demonstrates unawareness of much of the book’s actual content.²⁷⁵ On five occasions he also quotes other scholars out of context or otherwise significantly misrepresents their views.²⁷⁶ He twice gives the wrong date for studies when it makes a substantive difference.²⁷⁷ Other problems, less readily categorized, are identified in the titles of this response’s seventeen sections.

Evans’ article is also striking for its omissions. It contains no acknowledgement that a significant increase in Western racism accompanied colonialism (something on

²⁷⁴ Evans errs in saying that I inflate the extent of pro-Kushite support in pre-colonial scholarship, that I misstate in separate instances the ideas of Delitzch, Edersheim and von Ranke, that I charge all skeptics of the Kushite-rescue theory with deeming the Kushites to be incompetent, that I misstate Hannaford’s view on anti-African racism, that I posit the victory of the 25th Dynasty over Sennacherib in a second battle when I explicitly doubt such a battle and that I see a scholarly cover-up of Kushite accomplishment when I explicitly rule that out.

²⁷⁵ Evans wrongly suggests I have failed to research scholarly views of Kush outside the context of 701, to explore the reasoning of scholars who doubt Kushite success in 701, to support my charge that certain scholars vilify the 25th Dynasty’s foreign policy, to take note of fair treatment of Kush by some recent scholars, to address Redford’s view on 701, to deal with post-1850 archaeological evidence reflecting on Kush/Assyria matters and to address the possibility the 25th Dynasty’s army entered Palestine in 701 to defend Ekron as distinct from Judah.

²⁷⁶ Heeren, von Ranke, Fredrickson, Watson and Hannaford.

²⁷⁷ In the cases of Bevan and Schrader.

which all historians on the period agree). The article ignores the explicitly racist writings of three colonial-era Egyptologists at the summit of their field. It does not take into account that Britain was involved during much of the period in question in a protracted and particularly bitter war in the very homeland of the ancient Kushites, Sudan, and that wars tend to dehumanize the enemy and deny the value of the enemy's culture, including its history.

Evans fails to weaken to the slightest degree any of *The Rescue of Jerusalem's* ideas on historiography. They are: 1) Scholarly support for the hypothesis that a Kushite-led force helped save Jerusalem declined in the late 19th century; 2) a correlation exists between that decline and the rise of Europe's colonialism in Africa that started in the 1880s; 3) the racial bias that characterized this colonialism is also to be found in the writings on the Kushites of certain leading Western scholars of that period, and 4) that most (not all) scholars in the latter, post-colonial half of the 20th century tend to echo (albeit in a more toned-down manner) their predecessors' dismissive views of the Kushites' general place in history, including the Twenty-fifth Dynasty's performance in governing Egypt and in resisting Assyria in 701 BCE.

In light of Evans' critique, does anything in the book warrant a change? Yes, to avoid misinterpretation, I would rewrite "watershed intensification" as "major intensification" (*Rescue*, 247) in describing the evolution in European anti-African racism in the 1880s. Aside from that minor alteration, nothing needs changing.

I do not suggest that any of Evans' flaws are deliberate. We have never met and I know nothing of his motivation.

When I started to write this response to his article, my aim was simply to defend my reputation - my most precious asset - against an attack whose inaccuracies might not be apparent to someone without a close understanding of what is actually in the book; I intend to write a second book about other aspects of the Kushites, and I of course want scholars to consider my research without negative preconceptions. In preparing the response, however, I came to see that Evans' article harms far more than simply my credibility and that of Prof. Alice Bellis; addressing this greater harm has meant expanding this response.

What greater harm? Evans obscures a problem that has helped mangle scholars' understanding of Kush. That problem is racism, a word that is now used so often that it has lost its power, but which manifestly describes the colonial era of the late nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century. Colonial-era scholarship established the template of Kushites as bumbling misfits over their heads in the (white) world of the eastern Mediterranean, but Evans' does not acknowledge that inconvenient reality. As I have tried to demonstrate in this response (and more extensively in the book), the image has endured in subdued form and influenced relatively open-minded post-colonial generations of scholars who, I assume, are unconscious of the image's origins. In her article, Bellis describes the template's longevity:

[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. We are so accustomed to looking at the biblical world with the eyes bequeathed to us by our teachers and the existing paradigms they taught us that, in spite our desire to make brilliant new discoveries, we often are limited by our training.²⁷⁸

Has my non-guild, journalistic background been a handicap in research? Yes and no. Yes, I've missed out, for example, on learning ancient languages. But, no, I haven't been steeped in the peculiar training to which Bellis alludes. Fresh eyes sometimes help.

A problem cannot be addressed if its existence goes unrecognized. A reader of Evans' article - approved as it is by peer review²⁷⁹ -- might well assume no problem exists. His exculpatory argumentation -- a whitewash, in plain English -- could lead the reader to suppose that Western scholarship's generally dismissive view of the Kushites is rooted in healthy empiricism and that no correlation exists between Europe's subjugation of Africa and the intensification of anti-African bias. My hope is that, by recognizing the true conditions existing at the time of this attitude's origins, scholars might see the Kushites through a clearer lens.

#

²⁷⁸ Bellis, 257.

²⁷⁹ One might not expect peer reviewers to wade through a 400-page book and to check Evans' many footnoted references. However, would it have been asking too much of them to read attentively the 14-page chapter (Chap. 18) on which Evans bases his critique?