

p.44 and has shown that it contains a wide-spread fairy-story element and can also be interpreted as a "monument novel" or "picture saying" for a picturization of a god with a ^{mouse} mouth. The basis of this observation ~~XXX~~ it is possible to consider the mouse story as actually a purely imaginary idea. The question is only whether one has to consider it in that way. As we have seen fantastic numbers and references to time in the OT are not sufficient ~~XXXXXX~~ to consider a whole account as wholly unhistorical. As a matter the Assyrian royal inscriptions also are very free with their numbers and the propaganda of the reports in modern wars manipulate numbers likewise in whatever ways they choose. _____ Therefore reports with greatly "rounded out" numbers or even with numbers that were deliberately falsified can still be historic in its main features. The same is true of accounts which ~~XX~~ make use of wide-spread fairy-story ideas. It is altogether possible that in them aside from certain names nothing is historical. It is however, also possible that the fairy-tale idea is only the delcaration of stories of accounts which to some part go back to historical reports. It must be decided in each case along with investigation of all available sources just how much weight should be given to fairy-tale ideas or etiological interpretations in an account.

We do this in the case of Herodotus mouse-story. It cannot be denied that it seems far less absurd if considered in connection with the account of the plague ~~XXXX~~ to the Assyrian army in the OT than when taken by itself. It is well known that mice and rats can carry pestilence. It is also their habit when deprived of their usual nourishment of chewing up leather and similar materials. Since both accounts are tied up with the name of Sennacherib, but on account of their details can hardly be considered to have been derived one from the other, it is very difficult to consider them entirely in the realm of fairy-story. In addition they are supported by the fact that a pestilence is the most probable cause of the unexpectedly rapid departure of Sennacherib from Palestine since