



Egypt,<sup>[1]</sup> defeating the [Cimmerians](#) and [Scythians](#) and exacting tribute from [Phrygia](#), [Magan](#) and [Punt](#) among others.<sup>[1]</sup> After its fall, (between 612 BC and 605 BC), Assyria remained a province and [Geo-political](#) entity under the Babylonian, [Median](#), [Achaemenid](#), [Seleucid](#), [Parthian](#), [Roman](#) and [Sassanid](#) empires until the [Arab Islamic](#) invasion and conquest of Mesopotamia in the mid-7th century, when it was finally dissolved.<sup>[5]</sup>

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## Early history

In prehistoric times the region was home to a [Neanderthal](#) culture such as has been found at the [Shanidar Cave](#). The earliest [Neolithic](#) sites in Assyria were the [Jarmo](#) culture c. 7100 BC and [Tell Hassuna](#), the centre of the *Hassuna culture*, c. 6000 BC. During the 3rd millennium BC, there developed a very intimate cultural symbiosis between the [Sumerians](#) and the [Semitic Akkadians](#) throughout [Mesopotamia](#), which included widespread [bilingualism](#).<sup>[6]</sup> The influence of [Sumerian](#) (which was a [language isolate](#) and thus not related to any other language) on [Akkadian](#) (and vice versa) is evident in all areas, from lexical borrowing on a massive

scale, to syntactic, morphological, and phonological convergence.<sup>[6]</sup> This has prompted scholars to refer to Sumerian and Akkadian in the 3rd millennium BC as a [sprachbund](#).<sup>[6]</sup>



Letter sent by the high-priest Lu'enna to the king of [Lagash](#) (maybe [Urukagina](#)), informing him of his son's death in combat, c. 2400 BC, found in [Girsu](#).

[Akkadian](#) gradually replaced [Sumerian](#) as the spoken language of Mesopotamia somewhere after the turn of the 3rd and the 2nd millennium BC (the exact dating being a matter of debate),<sup>[7]</sup> but Sumerian continued to be used as a sacred, ceremonial, literary and scientific language in Mesopotamia until the 1st century AD.

The city of [Assur](#) ([Aseur](#)) existed since at least before the middle of the 3rd millennium BC (c. 2600 - 2500 BC), although it appears to have been a [Sumerian](#) ruled administrative centre at this time rather than an independent state. Assyrian kings are attested as far back as the late 25th to early 24th Century BC, beginning with [Tudiya](#). During the [Akkadian Empire](#) (2334-2154 BC) the Assyrians, like all the Akkadian peoples, were subject to the dynasty of Akkad. The [Akkadian Empire](#) of [Sargon the Great](#), which united all the Akkadian speaking [Semites](#), including the Assyrians, claimed to encompass the surrounding "four quarters"; the regions north of the seat of the empire in central Mesopotamia had been known as [Subartu](#). The name [Azuhinum](#) in Akkadian records also seems to refer to Assyria proper. During the Akkadian Empire, the city of [Ashur](#) was a regional administrative center of the Empire, implicated by [Nuzi tablets](#),<sup>[8]</sup> subject to their fellow Akkadian Sargon and his successors. However, towards the end of the reign of [Sargon the Great](#), the Assyrian faction rebelled against him; "the tribes of Assyria of the upper country—in their turn attacked, but they submitted to his arms, and Sargon settled their habitations, and he smote them grievously".

The Akkadian Empire was destroyed by economic decline, internal strife and [barbarian Gutian people](#) in 2154 BC. The rulers of Assyria during the period between 2154 BC and 2112 BC may have once again been fully independent as the Gutians are only known to have administered southern Mesopotamia, however there is no information from Assyria bar the king list for this period. Assyria became part of the Empire of the [Sumerian 3rd dynasty of Ur](#) founded in 2112 BC, and appears to have remained largely under Sumerian domination until the mid-21st century BC.

According to some [Judeo-Christian](#) theological traditions, the city of [Ashur](#) (also spelled [Assur](#) or Aššur) was founded by [Ashur](#) the son of [Shem](#), who was deified by later generations as the city's patron god. However, there is absolutely no historical basis whatsoever for this tradition in the far older [Mesopotamian](#) annals; Assyrian tradition itself lists an early Assyrian king named [Ushpia](#) as having dedicated the first temple to the god [Ashur](#) in the city in the 21st century BC. It is highly likely that the city was named in honour of the Assyrian god of the same name.

## Classical Dating

[George Syncellus](#) in his *Chronographia* quotes a fragment from [Julius Africanus](#) which dates the founding of Assyria to 2284 BC.<sup>[9]</sup> The Roman historian [Velleius Paterculus](#) citing Aemilius Sura states that Assyria was founded 1995 years before [Philip V](#) was defeated in 197 BC (at the [Battle of Cynoscephalae](#)) by the Romans.<sup>[10]</sup> The sum therefore  $197 + 1995 = 2192$  BC for the foundation of Assyria. [Diodorus Siculus](#) recorded another tradition from [Ctesias](#), that dates Assyria 1306 years before 883 BC (the starting date of the reign of [Ashurnasirpal II](#)) and so the sum  $883 + 1306 = 2189$  BC.<sup>[11]</sup> The *Chronicle* of Eusebius yet provides another date for the founding of Assyria, with the accession of [Ninus](#), dating to 2057 BC, but the Armenian translation of the *Chronicle* puts back this figure slightly back to 2116 BC. Another classical dating tradition found in the *Excerpta Latina Barbari* dates the foundation of Assyria, under [Belus](#), to 2206 BC.

## Old Assyrian period

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Of the early history of the kingdom of Assyria, little is positively known. In the [Assyrian King List](#), the earliest king recorded was [Tudiya](#). He was a contemporary of [Ibrium](#) of [Ebla](#) who appears to have lived in the late 25th or early 24th century BC, according to the king list. Tudiya concluded a treaty with Ibrium for the use of a trading post in [The Levant](#) officially controlled by Ebla. Apart from this reference to trading activity, nothing further has yet been discovered about Tudiya. He was succeeded by [Adamu](#) and then a further thirteen rulers

([Yangi](#), [Suhlamu](#), [Harharu](#), [Mandaru](#), [Imshu](#), [Harshu](#), [Didanu](#), [Hanu](#), [Zuabu](#), [Nuabu](#), [Abazu](#), [Belu](#) and [Azarah](#)) about all of whom nothing is yet known.

The earliest kings such as Tudiya, who are recorded as *kings who lived in tents* were likely to have been independent [Akkadian](#) semi nomadic pastoralist rulers. However, these Assyrian kings became subject to the Akkadian Empire from the late 24th century BC.<sup>[1]</sup> These kings who dominated the region, at some point during this period became fully urbanised and founded the *city state* of [Ashur](#).<sup>[12]</sup>

The first written inscriptions by 'urbanised' Assyrian kings appear in the mid-21st century BC. Assyria then consisted of a number of city states and small [Semitic Akkadian](#) kingdoms. The foundation of the first true urbanised Assyrian monarchy was traditionally ascribed to [Ushpia](#) a contemporary of [Ishbi-Erra](#) of [Isin](#) and [Naplanum](#) of [Larsa](#).<sup>[13]</sup> c. 2030 BC. He was succeeded by kings named [Apiashal](#), [Sullili](#), [Kikkiya](#) and [Akiya](#) of whom nothing is yet known.

In approximately 1975 BC, [Puzur-Ashur I](#) (a contemporary of [Shu-ilishu](#) of [Larsa](#) and [Samium](#) of [Isin](#)) founded a new dynasty, and his successors such as [Shalim-ahum](#) (died 1946 BC), [Ilushuma](#) (1945- 1906 BC), [Erishum I](#) (1905- 1867 BC), [Ikunum](#) (1867- 1860 BC), [Sargon I](#), [Naram-Sin](#) and [Puzur-Ashur II](#) left inscriptions regarding the building of temples to gods such as [Ashur](#), [Adad](#) and [Ishtar](#) in Assyria.

[Ilushuma](#) in particular appears to have been a powerful king, and the dominant ruler in the region, who made many raids into southern Mesopotamia between 1945 BC and 1906 BC, attacking the independent Sumero-Akkadian city states of the region such as [Isin](#), and founding colonies at the expense of the [Hattians](#) and [Hurrians](#) in [Asia Minor](#). The conflict between Assyria and the states of the south was to become a pattern throughout the history of ancient Mesopotamia, with the future rivalry between Assyria and [Babylonia](#). However, Babylonia did not exist at this time, but was founded in 1894 BC by an [Amorite](#) prince named [Sumuabum](#) during the reign of [Erishum I](#).

The [Amorites](#), a [Semitic](#) people hailing from the north eastern [Levant](#) had overrun southern Mesopotamia from the mid-20th century BC, deposing native [Sumero-Akkadian](#) dynasties and setting up their own kingdoms. However, they were successfully repelled by the Assyrian kings of the 20th and 19th centuries BC.

The main rivals to early Assyrian kings during the 22nd, 21st and 20th centuries BC would have been the [Hattians](#) and [Hurrians](#) to the north in [Asia Minor](#), the [Gutians](#) to the east in the [Zagros Mountains](#) of north west [Iran](#), the [Elamites](#) to the south east in what is now south central [Iran](#), the [Amorites](#) to the west in what is today [Syria](#) and their fellow [Sumero-Akkadian](#) City-States of southern Mesopotamia such as [Isin](#), [Kish](#), [Ur](#) and [Larsa](#).<sup>[1]</sup>

Assyria had extensive contact with [Hittian](#), [Hittite](#) and [Hurrian](#) cities on the [Anatolian](#) plateau in [Asia Minor](#). The Assyrians established colonies in [Cappadocia](#), (e.g., at [Kanesh](#) (modern [Kültepe](#)) from 1945 BC to 1740 BC. These colonies, called *karum*, the Akkadian word for 'port', were attached to [Hittian](#) and [Hurrian](#) cities in [Anatolia](#), but physically separate, and had special tax status. They must have arisen from a long tradition of trade between Assyria and the Anatolian cities, but no archaeological or written records show this. The trade consisted of metal (perhaps lead or tin; the terminology here is not entirely clear) and textiles from Assyria, that were traded for precious metals in Anatolia.

Like many city-states in Mesopotamian history, Ashur was, to a great extent, an [oligarchy](#) rather than a monarchy. Authority was considered to lie with "the City", and the polity had three main centres of power — an assembly of elders, a hereditary ruler, and an [eponym](#). The ruler presided over the assembly and carried out its decisions. He was not referred to with the usual [Akkadian](#) term for "king", *šarrum*; that was instead reserved for the city's patron deity [Assur](#), of whom the ruler was the high priest. The ruler himself was only designated as "the steward of Assur" (*iššiak Assur*), where the term for steward is a borrowing from [Sumerian](#) *ensi(k)*. The third centre of power was the eponym (*limmum*), who gave the year his name, similarly to the [archons](#) and [consuls](#) of [Classical Antiquity](#). He was annually elected by [lot](#) and was responsible for the economic administration of the city, which included the power to detain people and confiscate property. The institution of the eponym as well as the formula *iššiak Assur* lingered on as ceremonial vestiges of this early system throughout the history of the Assyrian monarchy.<sup>[14]</sup>

## Assyrian Empire of Shamshi-Adad I

In 1813 BC the native Akkadian king of Assyria [Erishum II](#) (1819- 1813 BC) was deposed, and the throne of Assyria was usurped by [Shamshi-Adad I](#) (1813 BC – 1791 BC) in the expansion of [Semitic Amorite](#) tribes from the [Khabur River](#) delta. Although regarded as an Amorite by later Assyrian tradition, Shamshi-Adad is also credited with descent from the native ruler [Ushpia](#) in the [Assyrian King List](#). He put his son [Ishme-Dagan](#) on the throne of a nearby Assyrian city, [Ekallatum](#), and maintained Assyria's [Anatolian](#) colonies. Shamshi-Adad I then went on to conquer the kingdom of [Mari](#) (in modern [Syria](#)) on the [Euphrates](#) putting another of his sons, [Yasmah-Adad](#) on the throne there. Shamshi-Adad's Assyria now encompassed the whole of northern Mesopotamia and included territory in [Asia Minor](#) and northern [Syria](#). He himself resided in a new capital city founded in the Khabur valley, called [Shubat-Enlil](#).

[Ishme-Dagan](#) inherited Assyria, but Yasmah-Adad was overthrown by a new king called [Zimrilim](#) in Mari. The new king of Mari allied himself with the [Amorite](#) king [Hammurabi](#) of [Babylon](#), who had made the recently created, and originally minor state of [Babylon](#) a major power. Assyria now faced the rising power of Babylon in the south. Ishme-Dagan responded by making an alliance with the enemies of Babylon, and the power struggle continued without resolution for decades. Ishme-Dagan, like his father was a great warrior, and in addition to repelling Babylonian attacks, campaigned successfully against the [Turukku](#) and [Lullubi](#) who had attacked the Assyrian city of [Ekallatum](#), and against [Dadusha](#), king of [Eshnunna](#) and [Iamhad](#) (modern [Aleppo](#))

## Assyria under Babylonian domination

Hammurabi, after first conquering [Mari](#), [Larsa](#), and [Eshnunna](#), eventually prevailed over Ishme-Dagan's successors, and conquered Assyria for Babylon in 1756 BC. With Hammurabi, the various *karum* colonies in Anatolia ceased trade activity — probably because the goods of Assyria were now being traded with the Babylonians. The Assyrian monarchy survived, however the three Amorite kings succeeding Ishme-Dagan; [Mut-Ashkur](#) (who was the son of Ishme-Dagan and married to a [Hurrian](#) queen), [Rimush](#) and [Asinum](#) were vassals, dependent on the Babylonians during the reign of Hammurabi.

## Assyrian dynasty restored

The short lived Babylonian Empire quickly began to unravel upon the death of Hammurabi, and Babylonia lost control over Assyria during the reign of Hammurabi's successor [Samsu-iluna](#). A period of civil war ensued after the deposition of the Amorite vassal king of Assyria [Asinum](#), who was a grandson of Shamshi-Adad I, by a powerful native Akkadian vice regent named [Puzur-Sin](#). A native king named [Ashur-dugul](#) then seized the throne with the help of Puzur-Sin, and a period of internal instability ensued with five further kings ([Ashur-apla-idi](#), [Nasir-Sin](#), [Sin-namir](#), [Ibqi-Ishtar](#) and [Adad-salulu](#)) all reigning in quick succession. Babylonia seems to have been too powerless to intervene or take advantage of this situation. Finally, a king named [Adasi](#) came to the fore c. 1720 BC and completely freed Assyria from any pretence of Babylonian dominance. Adasi drove the [Babylonians](#) and [Amorites](#) from Assyria during the late 18th century BC and Babylonian power began to quickly wane in Mesopotamia as a whole, although the Amorites would retain control over Babylonia and southern Mesopotamia until 1595 BC when they were overthrown by the [Kassites](#), a people from the [Zagros](#) Mountains who spoke a [language isolate](#) and were neither Semites nor Indo-Europeans.



Assyrian, 1400 BC

Adasi was succeeded by [Bel-bani](#) (1700-1691 BC). Little is known of many of the kings that followed such as; [Libaya](#) (1690-1674 BC), [Sharma-Adad I](#) (1673-1662 BC), [Iptar-Sin](#) (1661-1650 BC), [Bazaya](#) (1649-1622 BC), [Lullaya](#) (1621-1618 BC), [Shu-Ninua](#) (1615-1602 BC), [Sharma-Adad II](#) (1601-1599 BC), [Erishum III](#) (1598-1586 BC), and [Shamshi-Adad II](#) (1585-1580 BC). However Assyria seems to have been a relatively strong and stable nation, existing undisturbed by its neighbours such as the [Hatti](#), [Hittites](#), [Hurrians](#), [Amorites](#), [Babylonians](#) or [Mitanni](#) for well over 200 years. When Babylon fell to the [Kassites](#) in 1595 BC, they were unable to make any inroads into Assyria, and there seems to have been

no trouble between the first Kassite ruler of Babylon, [Agum II](#) and [Erishum III](#) of Assyria, and a treaty was signed between the two rulers. Similarly, [Ashur-nirari I](#) (1547-1522 BC) seems not to have been troubled by the newly founded [Mitanni](#) Empire in [Asia Minor](#), the [Hittite](#) empire or Babylon during his 25 year reign. [Puzur-Ashur III](#) (1521-1498 BC) proved to be a strong and energetic ruler. He undertook much rebuilding work in [Assur](#), the city was refortified and the southern quarters incorporated into the main city defences. Temples to the moon god [Sin \(Nanna\)](#) and the sun god [Shamash](#) were erected during his reign. He signed a treaty with [Burna-Buriash I](#) the Kassite king of Babylon, defining the borders of the two nations in the late 16th century BC. He was succeeded by [Enlil-nasir I](#) (1497-1483 BC) who appears to have had an uneventful reign.

## Assyria under Mitanni domination

The emergence of the [Mitanni](#) Empire in the 16th century BC did eventually lead to a period of [Mitanni-Hurrian](#) domination in the 15th century. The [Mitanni](#) were an [Indo-European](#) people who conquered and formed the ruling class over the indigenous [Hurrians](#) of [Asia Minor/Anatolia](#). The Hurrians were a Caucasoid people who spoke a [language isolate](#) and were neither Semites nor Indo-Europeans. Some time after the death of the capable [Puzur-Ashur III](#) in 1498 BC, [Saushtatar](#), king of [Hanilgalbat](#) ([Hurrians](#) of [Mitanni](#)), sacked [Ashur](#) and Assyria became a sometime vassal state. This event is most likely to have happened during the rule of [Nur-ili](#) (1483 - 1471 BC). The Assyrian monarchy survived, and the Mitanni influence appears to have been only sporadic, and they appear not to have been always willing or able to interfere in Assyrian internal affairs. For example the son of Nur-ili, [Ashur-shaduni](#) (1470 BC) was deposed by his uncle [Ashur-rabi I](#) in his first year of rule, and similarly, [Ashur-nadin-ahhe I](#) (who had made an alliance with [Egypt](#), which sent him a consignment of gold) was deposed by his own brother [Enlil-nasir II](#) in 1420 BC. Assyrian kings seemed to have been free of Mitanni influence regarding international affairs at times also, as evidenced by the border treaty between [Ashur-bel-nisheshu](#) (1417–1409 BC) and [Karaindash](#) of Babylon in the late 15th century. [Ashur-rim-nisheshu](#) (1408–1401 BC) and [Ashur-nadin-ahhe II](#) (1400–1391 BC) were the final two kings subject to the Mitanni empire. [Eriba-Adad I](#), a son of Ashur-bel-nisheshu, ascended the throne in 1390 BC and the ties to Mitanni began to unravel.

There are dozens of Mesopotamian [cuneiform](#) texts from this period, with precise observations of solar and lunar eclipses, that have been used as 'anchors' in the various attempts to define the [chronology of Babylonia and Assyria](#) for the early 2nd millennium BC (i.e., the "high", "middle", and "low" chronologies.)

[\[edit\]](#) Middle Assyrian Empire — Assyrian resurgence

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Middle Assyrian Period	
1365 BC–934 BC	 →



Map of the [Ancient Near East](#) during the [Amarna Period](#) (14th century BC), showing the great powers of the day: Egypt (green), [Hatti](#) (yellow), the [Kassite](#) kingdom of Babylon (purple), Assyria (grey), and Mitanni (red). Lighter areas show direct control, darker areas represent spheres of influence. The extent of the [Achaean/Mycenaean](#) civilization is shown in orange.

<b>Capital</b>	<a href="#">Assur</a>
<b>Languages</b>	<a href="#">Akkadian</a>
<b>Religion</b>	<a href="#">Mesopotamian religion</a>
<b>Government</b>	<a href="#">Monarchy</a>
<b>King</b>	
- 1365 - 1330 BC	<a href="#">Ashur-uballit I</a> (first)
- 967 - 934 BC	<a href="#">Tiglath-Pileser II</a> (last)
<b>Historical era</b>	<a href="#">Mesopotamia</a>
- Independence from <a href="#">Mitanni</a>	1365 BC
- Reign of <a href="#">Ashur-dan II</a>	934 BC

Scholars variously date the beginning of the "Middle Assyrian period" to either the fall of the Old Assyrian kingdom of [Shamshi-Adad I](#), or to the ascension of [Ashur-uballit I](#) to the throne of Assyria.

## Assyrian expansion and empire 1390 - 1076 BC

See also: [Military history of the Neo-Assyrian Empire](#)

By the reign of [Eriba-Adad I](#) (1390 BC - 1366 BC) Mitanni influence over Assyria was on the wane. Eriba-Adad I became involved in a dynastic battle between [Tushratta](#) and his brother [Artatama II](#) and after this his son [Shuttarna II](#), who called himself king of the [Hurri](#) while seeking support from the Assyrians. A pro-Hurri/Assyria faction appeared at the royal Mitanni court. Eriba-Adad I had thus loosened Mitanni influence over Assyria, and in turn had now made Assyria an influence over Mitanni affairs.

During the reign of [Ashur-uballit I](#) (1365 BC – 1330 BC). Assyrian pressure from the east and [Hittite](#) pressure from the north-west, enabled [Ashur-uballit I](#) to gain the upper hand over the Mitanni, and again make Assyria an imperial power at the expense of not only the [Mitanni](#) themselves, but also [Kassite Babylonia](#), the [Hurrians](#) and the [Hittites](#); and a time came when the Kassite king in Babylon was glad to marry [Muballitat-Šērūa](#), the daughter of Ashur-uballit, whose letters to [Akhenaten](#) of [Egypt](#) form part of the [Amarna letters](#). This marriage led to disastrous results, as the Kassite faction at court murdered the Babylonian king and placed a pretender on the throne. Ashur-uballit promptly invaded Babylonia to avenge his son-in-law, entering Babylon, deposing the king and installing [Kurigalzu II](#) of the royal line king there.

Ashur-uballit I then attacked and defeated [Mattiwaza](#) the [Mitanni](#) king despite attempts by the [Hittite](#) king [Suppiluliumas](#), now fearful of growing Assyrian power, attempting to preserve his throne with military support. The lands of the Mitanni and Hurrians were duly appropriated by Assyria, making it a large and powerful empire.

[Enlil-nirari](#) (1329- 1308 BC) succeeded Ashur-uballit I. He described himself as a "Great-King" (*Sharru rabū*) in letters to the Hittite kings. He was immediately attacked by Kurigalzu II of Babylon who had been installed by his father, but succeeded in defeating him, repelling Babylonian attempts to invade Assyria, counterattacking and appropriating Babylonian territory in the process, thus further expanding Assyria.

The successor of Enlil-nirari, [Arik-den-ili](#) (c. 1307-1296 BC), consolidated Assyrian power, and successfully campaigned in the [Zagros](#) Mountains to the east, subjugating the [Lullubi](#) and [Gutians](#). In the [Levant](#), he defeated [Semitic](#) tribes of the so-called [Ahlamu](#) group.

He was followed by [Adad-nirari I](#) (1295- 1275 BC) who made [Kalhu](#) (Biblical [Calah/Nimrud](#)) his capital, and continued expansion to the northwest, mainly at the expense of the [Hittites](#) and [Hurrians](#), conquering Hittite territories such as [Carchemish](#) and beyond. Adad-nirari I made further gains to the south, annexing Babylonian territory and forcing the [Kassite](#) rulers of [Babylon](#) into accepting a new frontier agreement in Assyria's favour. Adad-nirari's inscriptions are more detailed than any of his predecessors. He declares that the gods called him to war, a statement used by most subsequent Assyrian kings. He referred to himself again as *Sharru Rabi* ( meaning "The Great King" in the [Akkadian](#) language) and conducted extensive building projects in Ashur and the provinces.

In 1274 BC [Shalmaneser I](#) ascended the throne. He proved to be a great warrior king. During his reign he conquered the powerful kingdom of [Urartu](#) that had encompassed most of [Eastern Anatolia](#) and the [Caucasus Mountains](#), and the fierce [Gutians](#) of the [Zagros Mountains](#) in modern [Iran](#). He then attacked the [Mitanni-Hurrians](#), defeating both King [Shattuara](#) and his [Hittite](#) and [Aramean](#) allies, finally completely destroying the Hurrian kingdom in the process.

During the campaign against the Hittites, Shattuara cut off the Assyrian army from their supply of food and water, but the Assyrians broke free in a desperate battle, counterattacked, and conquered and annexed what remained of the Mitanni kingdom. Shalmaneser I installed an Assyrian prince, [Ilu-ippada](#) as ruler of Mitanni, with Assyrian governors such as [Meli-sah](#), installed to rule individual cities.

The Hittites tried unsuccessfully to save Mitanni. In alliance with [Babylon](#), they fought an economic war against Assyria for many years. Assyria was now a large and powerful empire, and a major threat to [Egyptian](#) and [Hittite](#) interests in the region, and was perhaps the reason that these two powers, fearful of Assyrian might, made peace with one another.<sup>[15]</sup> Like his father, Shalmaneser was a great builder and he further expanded the city of [Kalhu](#) (the biblical [Calah/Nimrud](#)) at the juncture of the [Tigris](#) and [Zab](#) Rivers.

Shalmaneser's son and successor, [Tukulti-Ninurta I](#) (1244 BC -1208 BC), won a major victory against the [Hittites](#) and their king [Tudhaliya IV](#) at the [Battle of Nihriya](#) and took thousands of prisoners. He then conquered [Babylonia](#), taking [Kashtiliash IV](#) as a captive and ruled there himself as king for seven years, taking on the old title "King of Sumer and Akkad" first used by [Sargon of Akkad](#). Tukulti-Ninurta I thus became the first native [Akkadian](#) speaking [Mesopotamian](#) to rule the state of Babylonia, its founders having been [Amorites](#), succeeded by [Kassites](#). Tukulti-Ninurta petitioned the god [Shamash](#) before beginning his counter offensive.<sup>[16]</sup> [Kashtiliash IV](#) was captured, single-handedly by Tukulti-Ninurta according to *his* account, who "trod with my feet upon his lordly neck as though it were a footstool"<sup>[17]</sup> and deported him ignominiously in chains to Assyria. The victorious Assyrian demolished the walls of Babylon, massacred many of the inhabitants, pillaged and plundered his way across the city to the [Esagila](#) temple, where he made off with the statue of [Marduk](#).<sup>[18]</sup> He then proclaimed himself "king of Karduniash, king of [Sumer](#) and Akkad, king of [Sippar](#) and Babylon, king of [Tilmun](#) and [Meluhha](#)."<sup>[19]</sup> Middle Assyrian texts recovered at ancient [Dūr-Katlimmu](#), include a letter from Tukulti-Ninurta to his *sukkal rabi'u*, or grand vizier, [Ashur-iddin](#) advising him of the approach of his general [Shulman-mushabshu](#) escorting the captive Kashtiliash, his wife, and his retinue which incorporated a large number of women,<sup>[19]</sup> on his way to exile after his defeat. In the process he defeated the [Elamites](#), who had themselves coveted Babylon. He also wrote an epic poem documenting his wars against Babylon and Elam. After a Babylonian revolt, he raided and plundered the temples in Babylon, regarded as an act of sacrilege. As relations with the priesthood in [Ashur](#) began deteriorating, Tukulti-Ninurta built a new capital city; [Kar-Tukulti-Ninurta](#).<sup>[20]</sup>

However, Tukulti-Ninurta's sons rebelled and besieged the ageing king in his capital. He was murdered and then succeeded by [Ashur-nadin-apli](#). Another unstable period for Assyria followed, it was riven by periods of internal strife and the new king only made token and unsuccessful attempts to recapture Babylon, whose Kassite kings had taken advantage of the upheavals in Assyria and freed themselves from Assyrian rule. However, Assyria itself was not threatened by foreign powers during the reigns of [Ashur-nirari III](#), [Enlil-kudurri-usur](#) and [Ninurta-apal-Ekur](#) (1192-1180 BC), although Ninurta-apal-Ekur usurped the throne from Enlil-kudurri-usur.

[Ashur-Dan I](#) (1179-1133 BC) stabilised Assyria during his unusually long reign. He maintained friendly relations with Babylonia and other neighbours of Assyria, and seems to have quelled internal instability. However, another brief period of internal upheaval followed the death of Ashur-Dan I when his son and successor [Ninurta-tukulti-Ashur](#) (1133 BC) was deposed in his first year of rule by his own brother [Mutakkil-Nusku](#) and forced to flee to [Babylonia](#).

[Mutakkil-Nusku](#) himself died in the same year (1133 BC) leaving a third brother [Ashur-resh-ishi I](#) (1133 -1116 BC) the throne. This was to lead to a renewed period of Assyrian expansion and empire. As the [Hittite](#) empire collapsed from the onslaught of the [Indo-European Phrygians](#) (called [Mushki](#) in Assyrian annals), Babylon and Assyria began to vie for [Aramean](#) regions (in modern [Syria](#)), formerly under firm [Hittite](#) control. When their forces encountered one another in this region, the Assyrian king [Ashur-resh-ishi I](#) met and defeated [Nebuchadnezzar I](#) of [Babylon](#) on a number of occasions. Assyria then invaded and annexed [Hittite](#) controlled lands in [Asia Minor](#) and [Aram](#) (Syria), marking an upsurge in imperian expansion.

[Tiglath-Pileser I](#) (1115- 1077 BC), vies with [Shamshi-Adad I](#) and [Ashur-uballit I](#) among historians as being regarded as the founder of the first Assyrian empire. The son of [Ashur-resh-ishi I](#), he ascended to the throne upon his father's death, and became one of the greatest of Assyrian conquerors during his 38 year reign.<sup>[21]</sup>

His first campaign in 1112 BC was against the [Phrygians](#) who had attempted to occupy certain Assyrian districts in the Upper [Euphrates](#); after driving out the Phrygians he then overran the [Luwian](#) kingdoms of [Commagene](#), [Cilicia](#) and [Cappadocia](#) in western [Asia Minor](#), and drove the [Hittites](#) from the Assyrian province of [Subartu](#), northeast of [Malatia](#).

In a subsequent campaign, the Assyrian forces penetrated [Urartu](#), into the mountains south of [Lake Van](#) and then turned westward to receive the submission of [Malatia](#). In his fifth year, Tiglath-Pileser again attacked [Commagene](#), [Cilicia](#) and [Cappadocia](#), and placed a record of his victories engraved on copper plates in a fortress he built to secure his [Cilician](#) conquests.

The [Aramaeans](#) of northern Syria were the next targets of the Assyrian king, who made his way as far as the sources of the [Tigris](#).<sup>[21]</sup> The control of the high road to the [Mediterranean](#) was secured by the possession of the Hittite town of [Pitru](#)<sup>[22]</sup> at the junction between the [Euphrates](#) and [Sajur](#); thence he proceeded to conquer the [Canaanite/Phoenician](#) cities of ([Byblos](#)), [Sidon](#), and finally [Arvad](#) where he embarked onto a ship to sail the [Mediterranean](#), on which he killed a *nahiru* or "sea-horse" (which [A. Leo Oppenheim](#) translates as a [narwhal](#)) in the sea.<sup>[21]</sup> He was passionately fond of hunting and was also a great builder. The general view is that the restoration of the temple of the gods [Ashur](#) and [Hadad](#) at the Assyrian capital of [Assur\(Ashur\)](#) was one of his initiatives.<sup>[21]</sup> He also invaded and defeated [Babylon](#) twice, assuming the old title "King of [Sumer](#) and [Akkad](#)", forcing tribute from Babylon, although he did not actually depose the actual king in Babylonia, where the old *Kassite Dynasty* had now succumbed to an [Elamite](#) one.

## Assyria in the Ancient Dark Ages, 1075-912 BC

The period from 1200 BC to 900 BC was a [dark age](#) for the entire [Near East](#), [North Africa](#), [Caucasus](#), [Mediterranean](#) and [Balkan](#) regions, with great upheavals and mass movements of people.

Assyria and its empire were not unduly affected by these tumultuous events for some 125 years, perhaps the only ancient power that was not. However, after [Tiglath-Pileser I](#) died in 1076 BC, Assyria was in *comparative* decline for the next 150 years. The empire shrank significantly, and Assyria appears to have controlled only areas close to Assyria itself, essential to keeping trade routes open in eastern [Syria](#), south eastern [Asia Minor](#) central Mesopotamia and north western [Iran](#).

[Semitic](#) peoples such as the [Arameans](#), [Chaldeans](#) and [Suteans](#) moved into areas to the west and south of Assyria, including overrunning much of [Babylonia](#) to the south, [Indo-European/Iranic](#) peoples such as the [Medes](#) and [Persians](#) moved into the lands to the east of Assyria, displacing the native [Gutians](#) and pressuring [Elam](#) and [Mannae](#) (which were both ancient non Indo-European civilisations of Iran), and to the north the Indo-European [Phrygians](#) overran their fellow Indo European [Hittites](#), [Urartians](#) ([Armenians](#)) rose in the [Caucasus](#), and [Cimmerians](#), [Colchians](#) and [Scythians](#) around [The Black Sea](#). [Egypt](#) was divided and in disarray, and [Semitic Israelites](#) were battling with other fellow Semitic [Canaanite](#) peoples and the [Peleset\(Philistines\)](#) for the control of southern [Canaan](#).



Assyrian horsemen pursue defeated Arabs.

Despite the apparent weakness of Assyria in comparison to its former might, at heart it in fact remained a solid, well defended nation whose warriors were the best in the world. Assyria, with its stable monarchy and secure borders was in a stronger position during this time than potential rivals such as [Egypt](#), [Babylonia](#), [Elam](#), [Phrygia](#), [Urartu](#), [Persia](#) and [Media](#)<sup>[23]</sup> Kings such as [Ashur-bel-kala](#), [Eriba-Adad II](#), [Ashur-rabi II](#), [Ashurnasirpal I](#), [Tiglath-Pileser II](#) and [Ashur-Dan II](#) successfully defended Assyria's borders and upheld stability during this tumultuous time.

Assyrian kings during this period appear to have adopted a policy of maintaining and defending a compact, secure nation and satellite colonies immediately surrounding it, and interspersed this with sporadic punitive raids and invasions of neighbouring territories when the need arose; For example, during the reign of [Ashur-rabi II](#) (1013–972 BC) [Aramean](#) tribes took the cities of [Pitru](#) and [Mutkinu](#) (which had been taken and colonized by [Tiglath Pileser I](#).) This event showed how far Assyria could assert itself militarily when the need arose. The Assyrian king attacked the Arameans, forced his way to the far off [Mediterranean](#) and constructed a [stele](#) in the area of [Mount Atalur](#).<sup>[24]</sup> Similarly, [Ashur-Dan II](#) (935–912 BC) is recorded as having made punitive raids outside the borders of Assyria to clear [Aramean](#) and other tribal peoples from the regions surrounding Assyria. [Ashur-dan II](#) concentrated on rebuilding Assyria within its natural borders, from [Tur Abdin](#) to the foothills beyond [Arbela](#), he built government offices in all provinces, and as an economic boost, provided ploughs throughout the land, which yielded record grain production.

## Society in the Middle Assyrian period

Assyria had difficulties with keeping the trade routes open. Unlike the situation in the Old Assyrian period, the Anatolian metal trade was effectively dominated by the [Hittites](#) and the [Hurrians](#). These people now controlled the Mediterranean ports, while the [Kassites](#) controlled the river route south to the [Persian Gulf](#).

The Middle Assyrian kingdom was well organized, and in the firm control of the king, who also functioned as the High Priest of [Ashur](#), the state god. He had certain obligations to fulfill in the cult, and had to provide resources for the temples. The priesthood became a major power in Assyrian society. Conflicts with the priesthood are thought to have been behind the murder of king [Tukulti-Ninurta I](#).

The main Assyrian cities of the middle period were [Ashur](#), [Kalhu \(Nimrud\)](#) and [Nineveh](#), all situated in the [Tigris](#) River valley. At the end of the Bronze Age, Nineveh was much smaller than Babylon, but still one of the world's major cities (population c. 33,000). By the end of the Neo-Assyrian period, it had grown to a population of some 120,000, and was possibly the largest city in the world at that time.<sup>[25]</sup> All free male citizens were obliged to serve in the army for a time, a system which was called the *illku*-service. A legal code was produced during the 14th-13th century which, among other things, clearly shows that the social position of women in Assyria was lower than that of neighbouring societies. Men were permitted to divorce their wives with no compensation paid to the latter. If a woman committed adultery, she could be beaten or put to death. It's not certain if these laws were seriously enforced, but they appear to be a backlash against some older documents which granted things like equal compensation to both partners in divorce. The women of the king's harem and their servants were also subject to harsh punishments such as beatings, mutilation, and death. Assyria in general had much harsher laws than most of the region. Executions were not uncommon, nor were whippings followed by forced labour. Some offenses allowed the accused a trial under torture/duress. One tablet that covers property rights has brutal penalties for violators. A creditor could force debtors to work for him, but not sell them.



Assyrian troops return after victory.

The Middle Assyrian Period is marked by the long wars fought during this period that helped build Assyria into a warrior society. The king depended both on the citizen class and priests in his capital, and the landed nobility who supplied the horses needed by Assyria's military. Documents and letters illustrate the importance of the latter to Assyrian society. Assyria needed less artificial irrigation than Babylon, and horse-breeding was extensive. Portions of elaborate texts about the care and training of them have been found. Trade was carried out in all directions. The mountain country to the north and west of Assyria was a major source of metal ore, as well as lumber. Economic factors were a common *casus belli*.

Assyrian architecture, like that of Babylonia, was influenced by [Sumero-Akkadian](#) styles (and to some degree Mitanni), but early on developed its own distinctive style. Palaces sported colourful wall decorations, and seal-cutting (an art learned from Mittani) developed apace. Schools for scribes taught both the Babylonian and Assyrian dialects of [Akkadian](#), and [Sumerian](#) and [Akkadian](#) literary works were often copied with an Assyrian flavour. The Assyrian dialect of Akkadian was used in legal, official, religious, and practical texts such as medicine or instructions on manufacturing items. During the 13th-10th centuries, picture tales appeared as a new art form: a continuous series of images carved on square stone steles. Somewhat reminiscent of a comic book, these show events such as warfare or hunting, placed in order from the upper left to the lower right corner of the stele with captions written underneath them. These and the excellent cut seals show that Assyrian art was beginning to surpass that of Babylon. Architecture saw the introduction of a new style of [ziggurat](#), with two towers and colorful enameled tiles.

## Neo-Assyrian Empire



Map of the Neo-Assyrian Empire and its expansions.

Main articles: [Neo-Assyrian Empire](#) and [Military history of the Neo-Assyrian Empire](#)

The Neo-Assyrian Empire is usually considered to have begun with the accession of [Adad-nirari II](#), in [911 BC](#), lasting until the fall of Nineveh at the hands of the [Babylonians](#), [Medes](#), [Scythians](#) and [Cimmerians](#) in 612 BC.<sup>[26]</sup>

## Expansion, 911-627 BC

Beginning with the campaigns of [Adad-nirari II](#) (911-892 BC), Assyria once more became a great power, growing to be the greatest empire the world had yet seen. He firmly subjugated the areas previously under only nominal Assyrian vassalage, conquering and deporting troublesome [Aramean](#), [Neo-Hittite](#) and [Hurrian](#) populations in the north to far-off places. Adad-nirari II then twice attacked and defeated [Shamash-mudammiq](#) of [Babylonia](#), annexing a large area of land north of the [Diyala River](#) and the towns of [Hit](#) and [Zanqu](#) in mid Mesopotamia. He made further gains over [Babylonia](#) under [Nabu-shuma-ukin I](#) later in his reign.

His successor, [Tukulti-Ninurta II](#) (891-884 BC) consolidated Assyria's gains and expanded into the [Zagros Mountains](#) in modern [Iran](#), subjugating the newly arrived [Persians](#) and [Medes](#) as well as pushing into central [Asia Minor](#).



Assyrian attack on a town with archers and a wheeled battering ram, 865–860 BC

[Ashurnasirpal II](#) (883–859 BC) was a fierce and ruthless ruler who advanced without opposition through [Aram](#) and [Canaan](#) (modern [Syria](#)) and [Asia Minor](#) as far as the [Mediterranean](#) and conquered and exacted tribute from [Aramea](#), [Phrygia](#) and [Phoenicia](#) among others. Ashurnasirpal II also repressed revolts among the [Medes](#) and [Persians](#) in the Zagros Mountains, and moved his capital to the city of [Kalhu](#) ([Calah/Nimrud](#)). The palaces, temples and other buildings raised by him bear witness to a considerable development of wealth, science, architecture and art. He also built a number of new heavily fortified towns, such as [Imgur-Enlil](#) ([Balawat](#)), [Tushhan](#), [Kar-Ashurnasirpal](#) and [Nibarti-Ashur](#). Ashurnasirpal II also had a keen interest in [Botany](#) and [Zoology](#); collecting all manner of plants, seeds and animals to be displayed in Assyria.

[Shalmaneser III](#) (858–823 BC) attacked and reduced [Babylonia](#) to vassalage, and defeated [Aramea](#), [Israel](#), [Urartu](#), [Phoenicia](#), the neo [Hittite](#) states and the [Arabs](#), forcing all of these to pay tribute to Assyria. Shalmaneser III fought the [Battle of Qarqar](#) against an alliance of 12 nations (including [Egypt](#), [Israel](#), [Hamath](#), [Phoenicia](#), the [Arabs](#), [Arameans](#), and neo [Hittites](#) among others). His armies penetrated to [The Caucasus](#), [Lake Van](#) and the [Taurus Mountains](#); the Hittites of Carchemish were compelled to pay tribute, and the kingdoms of [Hamath](#) and [Aram Damascus](#) were subdued. In 831 BC he received the submission of the [Georgian](#) kingdom of [Tabal](#). He consolidated Assyrian control over the regions conquered by his predecessors, and by the end of his 27 year reign Assyria was master of Mesopotamia, The Levant, western Iran, Israel, Jordan and much of Asia Minor. Due to old age, in the last 6 years of his reign he passed command of his armies to the "Turtanu" (General) [Dayyan-Assur](#).



[Jehu](#), king of [Israel](#), bows before Shalmaneser III of Assyria, 825 BC

However, his successor [Shamshi-Adad V](#) (822-811 BC) inherited an empire beset by civil war in Assyria. The first years of his reign saw a serious struggle for the succession of the aged Shalmaneser. The revolt was led by Shamshi-Adad's brother [Assur-danin-pal](#), and had broken by 826 BC. The rebellious brother, according to Shamshi-Adad's own inscriptions, succeeded in bringing to his side 27 important cities, including [Nineveh](#). The rebellion lasted until 820 BC, preventing Assyria expanding its empire further until it was quelled. Later in his reign, Shamshi-Adad V successfully campaigned against both [Babylonia](#) and [Elam](#), and forced a treaty in Assyria's favour on the Babylonian king [Marduk-zakir-shumi I](#). In [814 BCE](#) he won the battle of [Dur-Papsukkal](#) against the Babylonian king [Murduk-balassu-iqbi](#), and went on to subjugate the [Aramean](#), [Sutean](#) and [Chaldean](#) tribes newly settled in parts of [Babylonia](#).

He was succeeded by [Adad-nirari III](#) (810- 782 BC) who was merely a boy. The Empire was thus ruled by his mother, the famed queen [Semiramis](#) ([Shammuramat](#)) until 806 BC. [Semiramis](#) held the empire together, and appears to have campaigned successfully in subjugating the [Persians](#) and [Medes](#) during her regency, leading to the later [Iranic](#) myths and legends surrounding her.<sup>[27]</sup>

In 806 BC, [Adad-nirari III](#) took the reins of power from [Semiramis](#). He invaded the [Levant](#) and subjugated the [Arameans](#), [Phoenicians](#), [Philistines](#), [Israelites](#), neo [Hittites](#), [Moabites](#) and [Edomites](#). He entered [Damascus](#) and forced tribute upon its [Aramean](#) king [Ben-Hadad III](#). He next turned eastward to [Iran](#), and subjugated the [Persians](#), [Medes](#) and the pre Iranian [Manneans](#), penetrating as far north east as the [Caspian Sea](#). He then turned south, forcing [Babylonia](#) to pay tribute. His next targets were the [Chaldean](#) and [Sutu](#) tribes who had settled in the far south eastern corner of Mesopotamia, whom he conquered and reduced to vassalage, then the [Arabs](#) in the deserts of the [Arabian Peninsula](#) to the south of Mesopotamia were invaded, vanquished and forced to pay tribute also.



A [lamassu](#) from the palace of Sargon II at [Dur-Sharrukin](#).

Adad-nirari III died prematurely in 782 BC and this led to a temporary period of stagnation within the empire. [Shalmaneser IV](#) (782 - 773 BC) seems to have wielded little personal authority, and a victory over [Argishti I](#), king of [Urartu](#) at [Til Barsip](#) is accredited to an Assyrian General ('Turtanu') named [Shamshi-ilu](#) who does not even bother to mention his king. Shamshi-ilu also scored victories over the [Arameans](#) and neo [Hittites](#), and again, takes personal credit at the expense of his king. [Ashur-dan III](#) ascended the throne in 772 BC. He proved to be a largely ineffectual ruler who was beset by internal rebellions in the cities [Ashur](#), [Arrapkha](#) and [Guzana](#). He failed to make any further gains in Babylonia and [Aram](#) (modern [Syria](#)). His reign was also marred by [Plague](#) and an ominous [Solar Eclipse](#). [Ashur-nirari V](#) became king in 754 BC, his reign seems to have been one of permanent internal revolution, and he appears to have barely left his palace in [Nineveh](#), although he did lead a successful campaign in [Asia Minor](#) in 750 BC. He was deposed by [Tiglath-pileser III](#) in 745 BC bringing a resurgence to Assyrian expansion.

[Tiglath-Pileser III](#) (745-727 BC) initiated a renewed period of Assyrian expansion; [Urartu](#), [Persia](#), [Media](#), [Mannea](#), [Babylonia](#), [Arabia](#), [Phoenicia](#), [Israel](#), [Judah](#), [Samaria](#), [Palestine](#), [Nabatea](#), [Chaldea](#), [Cyprus](#), [Moab](#), [Edom](#) and the [Neo-Hittites](#) were subjugated, Tiglath-Pileser III was declared king in [Babylon](#) and the Assyrian empire was now stretched from the [Caucasus Mountains](#) to [Arabia](#) and from the [Caspian Sea](#) to [Cyprus](#). Tiglath-Pileser III had reorganised the Assyrian army into a professional fighting force, and greatly improved the civil administration of his empire, setting the template for all future ancient empires<sup>[28]</sup> Tiglath-Pileser III introduced eastern [Aramaic](#) as the *Lingua Franca* of Assyria and its vast empire.<sup>[29]</sup>

[Shalmaneser V](#) (726-723 BC) consolidated Assyrian power during his short reign, and repressed [Egyptian](#) attempts to gain a foothold in the near east.

[Sargon II](#) (722-705 BC) maintained the empire, driving the [Cimmerians](#) and [Scythians](#) from [Iran](#), where they had invaded and attacked the [Persians](#), who were vassals of Assyria. [Mannea](#), [Cilicia](#) [Cappadocia](#) and [Commagene](#) were conquered, [Urartu](#) was ravaged, and [Babylon](#), [Aram](#), [Phoenicia](#), [Israel](#), [Arabia](#), [Cyprus](#), and the famed [Midas](#), (king of [Phrygia](#)) were forced to pay tribute. His *stèle* has been found as far west as [Larnaca](#) in [Cyprus](#). Sargon II conquered [Gurgum](#), [Milid](#), the [Georgian](#) state of [Tabal](#), and all of the [Hittite](#) kingdoms of the [Taurus Mountains](#). He was killed in 705 BC while on a punitive raid against the Cimmerians, and was succeeded by [Sennacherib](#).



Relief showing a [lion hunt](#), from the north palace of [Nineveh](#), 645-635 BC

[Sennacherib](#) (705-681 BC), a ruthless ruler, defeated the [Greeks](#) who were attempting to gain a foothold in [Cilicia](#), and defeated and drove the [Nubian](#) ruled [Egyptians](#) from the [Near East](#) where the Nubian Pharaoh [Taharqa](#) had fomented revolt against Assyria. [Babylon](#) revolted, and Sennacherib laid waste to the city, defeating its [Elamite](#) and [Chaldean](#) allies in the process. He sacked [Israel](#) and laid siege to [Judah](#). He installed his own son [Ashur-nadin-shumi](#) as king in Babylonia. He maintained Assyrian domination over the

Medes, Manneans and Persians to the east, Asia Minor to the north and north west, and the Levant, Phoenicia and Aram in the west. Sennacherib was murdered by his own sons (according to the Bible the sons were named [Adrammelech](#), [Abimelech](#) and [Sharezer](#)) in a palace revolt, apparently in revenge for the destruction of Babylon.

[Esarhaddon](#) (680-669 BC) expanded Assyria still further, campaigning deep into the [Caucasus Mountains](#) in the north, breaking [Urartu](#) completely in the process. Tiring of [Egyptian](#) interference in the Assyrian Empire, Esarhaddon crossed the [Sinai Desert](#), and invaded and conquered [Egypt](#), driving its foreign [Nubian/Kushite](#) and [Ethiopian](#) rulers out and destroying the [Kushite Empire](#) in the process. He expanded the empire as far south as [Arabia](#) and [Dilmun](#) (modern [Bahrain](#) or [Qatar](#)). Esarhaddon also completely rebuilt [Babylon](#) during his reign, bringing peace to Mesopotamia as a whole.

The [Babylonians](#), [Egyptians](#), [Elamites](#), [Cimmerians](#), [Scythians](#), [Persians](#), [Medes](#), [Manneans](#), [Arameans](#), [Chaldeans](#), [Israelites](#), [Phoenicians](#) and [Urartu](#) were vanquished and regarded as vassals and Assyria's empire was kept secure. Esarhaddon died whilst preparing to leave for Egypt to once more eject the [Nubians](#), who were attempting to encroach on the southern part of the country. This task was successfully completed by his successor, [Ashurbanipal](#).

Under [Ashurbanipal](#) (669-627 BC) Assyrian domination spanned from the [Caucasus Mountains](#) in the north to [Nubia](#), [Egypt](#) and [Arabia](#) in the south, and from [Cyprus](#) and [Antioch](#) in the west to [Persia](#) in the east.



Ashurbanipal's brutal campaign against [Susa](#) in 647 BCE is recorded in this relief.

Ashurbanipal destroyed [Elam](#) and smashed a rebellion led by his own brother [Shamash-shum-ukin](#) who was the Assyrian king of [Babylon](#), exacting savage revenge on the coalition of [Chaldeans](#), [Nabateans](#), [Arameans](#), [Sutu](#), [Arabs](#) and [Elamites](#) who had supported him. An Assyrian governor named [Kandalanu](#) was installed to rule Babylonia on Ashurbanipal's behalf.

Ashurbanipal easily crushed the [Nubian/Cushite](#) king [Tantamani](#), who had attempted to invade Assyrian controlled Egypt, [Tantamani](#) fled back to [Nubia](#) and was never again to pose a threat. [Persia](#) and [Media](#) were regarded as vassals of Ashurbanipal.

He built vast libraries and initiated a surge in the building of temples and palaces. After the crushing of the Babylonian revolt Ashurbanipal appeared master of all he surveyed. To the east, [Elam](#) was devastated and prostrate before Assyria, the [Manneans](#) and the [Iranic Persians](#) and Medes were vassals. To the south, [Babylonia](#) was occupied, the [Chaldeans](#), [Arabs](#), [Sutu](#) and [Nabateans](#) subjugated, the [Nubian](#) empire

destroyed, and [Egypt](#) paid tribute. To the north, the [Scythians](#) and [Cimmerians](#) had been vanquished and driven from Assyrian territory, [Urtu](#) ([Armenia](#)), [Phrygia](#), [Corduene](#) and the neo[Hittites](#) were in vassalage, and [Lydia](#) pleading for Assyrian protection. To the west, [Aramea](#) ([Syria](#)), the [Phoenicians](#), [Israel](#), [Judah](#), [Samarra](#) and [Cyprus](#) were subjugated, and the [Hellenised](#) inhabitants of [Caria](#), [Cilicia](#), [Cappadocia](#) and [Commagene](#) paid tribute to Assyria. Assyria now appeared stronger than ever. However, the long struggle with Babylonia and Elam and their allies, and the constant campaigning to control and expand its vast empire in all directions, left Assyria exhausted. It had been drained of wealth and manpower; the devastated provinces could yield nothing to supply the needs of the imperial exchequer, and it was difficult to find sufficient troops to garrison the huge empire.

At its height Assyria conquered the [25th dynasty Egypt](#) (and expelled its [Nubian/Kushite](#) dynasty) as well as [Babylonia](#), [Chaldea](#), [Elam](#), [Media](#), [Persia](#), [Ararat](#) ([Armenia](#)), [Phoenicia](#), [Aramea/Syria](#), [Phrygia](#), the [Neo-Hittites](#), [Hurrians](#), northern [Arabia](#), [Gutium](#), [Israel](#), [Judah](#), [Moab](#), [Edom](#), [Corduene](#), [Cilicia](#), [Mannaea](#) and parts of [Ancient Greece](#) (such as [Cyprus](#)), and defeated and/or exacted tribute from [Scythia](#), [Cimmeria](#), [Lydia](#), [Nubia](#), [Ethiopia](#) and others.

The Assyrian Empire at its height encompassed the whole of the modern nations of [Iraq](#), [Syria](#), [Egypt](#), [Lebanon](#), [Israel](#), [Jordan](#), [Kuwait](#), [Bahrain](#), [Palestine](#) and [Cyprus](#), together with swathes of [Iran](#), [Saudi Arabia](#), [Turkey](#), [Sudan](#), [Libya](#), [Armenia](#), [Georgia](#) and [Azerbaijan](#).

## Downfall, 626-605 BC

The Assyrian Empire was severely crippled following the death of Ashurbanipal in 627 BC — the nation descending into a prolonged and brutal series of civil wars involving three rival kings, [Ashur-etil-ilani](#), [Sin-shumu-lishir](#) and [Sin-shar-ishkun](#).

[Ashur-etil-ilani](#) came to the throne in 626 BC, and was immediately beset by a series of internal civil wars. He was deposed in 623 BC, after four years of bitter fighting by [Sin-shumu-lishir](#), an Assyrian *Turtanu* (General) who also occupied and claimed the throne of [Babylon](#) in that year. In turn, Sin-shumu-lishir was deposed as ruler of Assyria and Babylonia after a year of warfare by [Sin-shar-ishkun](#) (622 - 612 BC) — who was then himself faced with constant violent rebellion in the Assyrian homeland. This situation led to wholesale revolution in [Babylonia](#), and during his reign many Assyrian colonies to the west, east and north similarly took advantage and ceased to pay tribute to Assyria, most significantly the [Medes](#), [Persians](#) and [Scythians](#).

By 620 BC, [Nabopolassar](#), a member of the [Chaldean](#) people from the far southeast of [Mesopotamia](#), had claimed the city of Babylon and much of Babylonia in the confusion. Sin-shar-ishkun amassed a large army to eject Nabopolassar from Babylon, however yet another revolt broke out in Assyria proper, forcing the bulk of his army to turn back, where they promptly joined the rebels in [Nineveh](#); similarly, Nabopolassar was unable to make any inroads into Assyria despite its weakened state, being repelled at every attempt, and the next four years saw bitter fighting in the heart of Babylonia itself, as the Assyrians tried to wrest back control.<sup>[1]</sup>

However, Nabopolassar entered into an alliance with the Median king [Cyaxares the Great](#), who had taken advantage of the upheavals in Assyria to free the Iranian peoples from Assyrian vassalage and unite the [Iranic Medes](#), [Persians](#) and [Parthians](#), together with the remnants of the pre-Iranic [Elamites](#) and [Mannaeans](#), into a powerful Median-dominated force. The Babylonians and Medes, together with the [Scythians](#) and [Cimmerians](#) to the north, attacked Assyria in 616 BC, sacking the city of [Kalhu](#). After four years of bitter fighting, [Nineveh](#) itself was finally sacked in 612 BC, after a prolonged siege followed by house to house fighting. [Sin-shar-ishkun](#) was killed defending his capital.

Despite the loss of almost all of its major cities, and in the face of overwhelming odds, Assyrian resistance continued. [Ashur-uballit II](#) (612- 605? BC) took the throne and refused a request to bow in vassalage to Nabopolassar, Cyaxares and their allies. He managed to break out of Nineveh and successfully fight his way to [Harran](#) which he took and founded a new capital. However Harran too was eventually over run in 608 BC. [Egypt](#), itself a former Assyrian colony whose current dynasty had been installed as puppet rulers by the Assyrians, then came to Assyria's aid, possibly in fear that without Assyria they would be next to succumb.<sup>[1]</sup>

[Ashur-uballit II](#) and [Necho](#) of Egypt made a failed attempt to recapture Harran in 608 BC. The next three years saw the remnants of the Assyrian army and their Egyptian allies vainly attempting to eject the invaders from Assyria. In 605 BC, the Babylonians and Medes defeated the Egyptians and Assyrians at [Carchemish](#), bringing an end to Assyria as an independent political entity, although it was to launch a major rebellion against the [Achaemenid Empire](#) in 520 BC, and remained a [geo-political](#) region and colonised province until the late 7th century AD.

The fate of Ashur-uballit II remains unknown, his [Limmu Lists](#) end after the fall of Harran, and it is possible he was either killed at this time, at the battle of Carshemish in 605 BC, or simply disappeared into obscurity.

## Assyria after the empire

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See also: [Assyrian continuity](#)

### Athura, Assuristan, Assyria province

Assyria was ruled by [Babylon](#) from 605 BC until 539 BC, and in a twist of fate, [Nabonidus](#) the last king of Babylon was himself an Assyrian from [Harran](#); however apart from plans to dedicate religious temples in that city, Nabonidus showed little interest in rebuilding Assyria. [Nineveh](#) and [Kalhu](#) remained in ruins, conversely a number of towns and cities such as [Arrapkha](#), [Guzana](#) and [Harran](#) remained intact, and [Assur](#) and [Arbela](#) were not completely destroyed, as is attested by their later revival. However, Assyria spent much of this period in a degree of devastation following its fall.

After this, it was ruled by the [Persian Achaemenid Empire](#) (as [Athura](#)) from 539 BC to 330 BC (see [Achaemenid Assyria](#)). Assyria seems to have recovered dramatically, and flourished during this period. It became a major agricultural and administrative centre of the Achaemenid Empire, and its soldiers were a mainstay of the Persian Army.<sup>[30]</sup> In fact Assyria even became powerful enough to raise a full scale revolt against the empire in 520 BC. The Persians had spent centuries under Assyrian domination, and Assyrian influence can be seen in Achaemenid art, infrastructure and administration. Early Persian rulers saw themselves as successors to [Ashurbanipal](#), and [Mesopotamian Aramaic](#) was retained as the *lingua franca* of the empire for over two hundred years.<sup>[31]</sup> [Nineveh](#) was never rebuilt however, and 200 years after it was sacked [Xenophon](#) reported only small numbers of people living amongst its ruins.

In 330 BC, Assyria fell to [Alexander the Great](#), the [Macedonian](#) Emperor from [Greece](#); it thereafter became part of the [Seleucid Empire](#) and was renamed [Syria](#), a [Hurrian](#), [Luwian](#) and [Greek](#) corruption of **Assyria**.<sup>[32]</sup> It is from this period that the later *Syria* Vs *Assyria* naming controversy arises, the Seleucids applied the name not only to Assyria itself, but also to the lands to the west ([Aram](#) modern [Syria](#)) which had been part of the Assyrian empire. When they lost control of Assyria itself, the name *Syria* survived and was applied only to the land of [Aramea](#) to the west, that had once been part of the Assyrian empire. This was to lead to both the Assyrians from Mesopotamia and Arameans from the Levant being dubbed **Syrians** in Greco-Roman culture.

By 150 BC, Assyria was under the control of the [Parthian Empire](#) as [Athura](#) (the [Parthian](#) word for Assyria) where the Assyrian city of [Assur](#) seems to have gained a degree of autonomy, and temples to the native

gods of Assyria were resurrected. A number of neo-Assyrian states arose, namely [Adiabene](#), [Osroene](#) and [Hatra](#).

In 116 AD, under [Trajan](#), it was taken over by Rome as the [Roman Province of Assyria](#). The Assyrians began to convert to [Christianity](#) from [Ashurism](#) during the period between the early 1st and 3rd centuries AD. [Romans](#) and [Parthians](#) fought over Assyria and the rest of Mesopotamia until 226 AD, when it was taken over by the [Sassanid](#) (Persian) Empire.

It was known as [Asuristan](#) during this period, and became a main centre of the [Church of the East](#) (now the [Assyrian Church of the East](#)), with a flourishing [Syriac \(Assyrian\)](#) Christian culture which exists there to this day. The city of [Ashur](#) again flourished, and appears to have gained a great deal of autonomy during this period. The noted Assyriologist [Simo Parpola](#) has speculated that it may even have once again been independent for a while prior to being sacked by [Shapur I](#) in 256 AD. Temples were still being dedicated to the national god [Ashur](#) in his home city and in [Harran](#) during the 4th century, indicating an Assyrian identity was still strong.

After the [Arab Islamic](#) conquest in the 7th century Assyria was dissolved as an entity. Under Arab rule Mesopotamia as a whole underwent a process of *Arabisation* and *Islamification*, and the region saw a large influx of non indigenous [Arabs](#), [Kurds](#), and later [Turkic](#) peoples. However, a percentage of the indigenous [Assyrian](#) population (known as [Ashuriyun](#) by the Arabs) resisted this process, Assyrian [Aramaic language](#) and [Church of the East Christianity](#) were still dominant in the north, as late as the 11th and 12th centuries.<sup>[33]</sup> The city of [Assur](#) was still occupied by Assyrians during the Islamic period until the 14th century when [Tamurlane](#) conducted a massacre of indigenous [Assyrian Christians](#). After that there are no traces of a settlement in the archaeological and numismatic record.<sup>[34]</sup> The massacres by [Tamurlane](#) massively reduced the Assyrian population throughout Mesopotamia. The [Hamidian Massacre](#) of the 19th Century further greatly reduced numbers. An [Assyrian war of independence](#) was fought during [World War I](#) following the [Assyrian Genocide](#) suffered at the hands of the [Ottomans](#) and their [Kurdish](#) allies. The Assyrians fought successfully against overwhelming numbers for a time, until their [Russian](#) allies left the war and the Armenian line broke. The [Assyrian Levies](#) were founded by the [British](#) in 1928, with ancient Assyrian military rankings such as [Rab-shakeh](#), [Rab-talia](#) and [Tartan](#), being revived for the first time in millennia for this force. The Assyrians were prized by the British rulers for their fighting qualities, loyalty, bravery and discipline, and were used to help the British put down insurrections among the Arabs and Kurds.<sup>[35]</sup> During [World War II](#), Eleven Assyrian companies saw action in [Palestine](#) and another four served in [Cyprus](#). The Parachute Company was attached to the Royal Marine Commando and were involved in fighting in [Albania](#), [Italy](#) and [Greece](#). Many persecutions have befallen the Assyrians since, such as the [Simele Massacre](#), [Anfal](#) campaign and [Baathist](#), [Kurdish](#) and [Islamist](#) persecutions.

## Germany and West Africa theories

Thus far the only people who have been attested with a high level of genetic, historical, linguistic and cultural research to be the descendants of the ancient Mesopotamians are the [Assyrian Christians](#) of [Iraq](#) and its surrounding areas in north west [Iran](#), north east [Syria](#) and south eastern [Turkey](#). Assyria continued to exist as a geopolitical entity until the Arab-Islamic conquest in the mid-7th century, and Assyrian identity, personal names and both spoken and written evolutions of [Mesopotamian Aramaic](#) (which still contain many [Akkadian](#) loan words) have survived among the Assyrian people from ancient times to this day. (see [Assyrian people](#)).

However, there have been many wild claims of ancient mid eastern ancestry (including Assyrian) throughout Europe, Africa and even the Americas, none of which have been supported by mainstream opinion or strong evidence, let alone proof.

The most long standing and popularised theory has been the attempts to link Assyrian ancestry to the ancient Germans. The idea has also some backing in German legend, for example the [Gesta Treverorum](#) (a 12th century German medieval chronicle) makes [Trebeta](#) son of [Ninus](#) the founder of [Trier](#).<sup>[36]</sup> This legend of Trebeta as having founded Trier is also found in [Godfrey of Viterbo's Pantheon](#) (1185) and several other German chronicles of the 12th or 13th century, including the works of [Sigebert of Gembloux](#).<sup>[37]</sup> The legend is also found cited in compendiums of historical sources from later periods, for example [Gottfried Leibniz's Scriptures rerum Brunsvicensium](#) (1710) and the *Anthologia veterum latinorum epigrammatum et poematum* (1835).<sup>[38]</sup>

As with the West Africa theory, this idea does not have the backing of serious historians, nor contemporary written records of the time in the [Near East](#). There have been no studies or records which show such a link, and it must be pointed out that [Ninus](#) and [Trebeta](#) were fictional figures, and not historically attested. In addition, there are no traces of Akkadian or Mesopotamian Aramaic in any Germanic Language.

According to a single unsupported piece of recent research, refugees from the collapsed Assyrian Empire claim to have reached the region of Lake Chad and founded the kingdoms of [Kanem](#) and [Kebbi](#). These alleged refugees claimed the ancestry of [Sargon of Akkad](#) (whose dynasty died out some 15 centuries before the fall of Assyria), they also contradictionally claimed ancestry from [Nabopolassar](#), a Babylonian king of [Chaldean](#) extraction who played a major part in the destruction of the [Assyrian Empire](#). From the Medieval Arabic king lists of both African states, allegedly copied from earlier lists in ancient Near Eastern languages it appears that the state founders claimed to be deportees of the Assyrian empire who had fled from [Syria](#) and [Samaria](#) after the defeat of the Egyptian-Assyrian army at [Carchemish](#) in 605 BCE.<sup>[39]</sup>

A counterpoint to this argument would be that neither [Samaria](#) nor [Syria](#) where these refugees were claimed to have originated from were actually ever part of Assyria, but were colonies inhabited largely by [Hebrews](#), [Nabateans](#) and [Arameans](#) respectively. In addition, there is no evidence whatsoever in Assyrian, [Babylonian](#), [Median](#), [Persian](#), [Greek](#) or [Egyptian](#) records of the time mentioning deportations of Assyrians from their homelands<sup>[5][40]</sup>

Additionally, the claimants to this ancestry also claim descendancy from Sargon of Akkad (whose dynasty died out over 1500 years before the Assyrian dynasty fell), and from [Nabopolassar](#), who was a [Chaldean](#), politically and militarily opposed to Assyria, and not in fact an [Assyrian](#).<sup>[41]</sup>

## Assyrian Religion

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The Assyrians, like the rest of the Mesopotamian peoples, followed the [Sumero-Akkadian Mesopotamian Religion](#), with the national god [Ashur](#) having pride of place at the head of the pantheon.

Other major gods within the pantheon were; [Anu](#), [Baal](#), [Ea](#), [Enlil](#), [Ishtar \(Astarte\)](#), [Shamash](#), [Tammuz](#), [Adad/Hadad](#), [Sin \(Nanna\)](#), [Dagan](#), [Ninurta](#), [Nisroch](#), [Nergal](#), [Tiamat](#), [Ninlil](#), [Mullissu](#), [Zababa](#) and [El](#).

Native religion survived at least until the 4th century, although Assyrians had begun to adopt [Eastern Rite Christianity](#) which had its birthplace in Assyria between the 1st and 3rd centuries AD, which they still adhere to this day.

## Language

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During the 3rd millennium BC, there developed a very intimate cultural symbiosis between the [Sumerians](#) and the [Akkadians](#), which included widespread [bilingualism](#).<sup>[6]</sup> The influence of [Sumerian](#) on [Akkadian](#) (and vice versa) is evident in all areas, from lexical borrowing on a massive scale,

to syntactic, morphological, and phonological convergence.<sup>[6]</sup> This has prompted scholars to refer to Sumerian and Akkadian in the 3rd millennium BC as a [sprachbund](#).<sup>[6]</sup>

[Akkadian](#) gradually replaced Sumerian as the spoken language of Mesopotamia somewhere around the turn of the 3rd and the 2nd millennium BC (the exact dating being a matter of debate),<sup>[7]</sup> but Sumerian continued to be used as a sacred, ceremonial, literary and scientific language in Mesopotamia until the 1st century AD.

In ancient times Assyrians spoke a dialect of the [Akkadian language](#), an eastern branch of the [Semitic languages](#). The first inscriptions, called Old Assyrian (OA), were made in the Old Assyrian period.<sup>[42]</sup> In the Neo-Assyrian period the [Aramaic language](#) became increasingly common,<sup>[43]</sup> more so than [Akkadian](#) — this was thought to be largely due to the mass deportations undertaken by Assyrian kings,<sup>[44]</sup> in which large Aramaic-speaking populations, conquered by the Assyrians, were relocated to Assyria and interbred with the Assyrians. The ancient Assyrians also used the [Sumerian language](#) in their literature and liturgy,<sup>[44]</sup> although to a more limited extent in the Middle- and Neo-Assyrian periods, when Akkadian became the main literary language.<sup>[44]</sup>

The destruction of the Assyrian capitals of Nineveh and Assur by the Babylonians, Medes and their allies ensured that much of the bilingual elite (but not all) were wiped out. By the 7th century BC, much of the Assyrian population used Akkadian influenced Eastern Aramaic and not Akkadian itself. The last Akkadian inscriptions in Mesopotamia date from the 1st century AD. However, Eastern Aramaic dialects, as well as Akkadian and Mesopotamian Aramaic personal and family names, still survive to this day among [Assyrians](#) in the regions of northern [Iraq](#), southeast [Turkey](#), northwest [Iran](#) and northeast [Syria](#) that constituted old Assyria.<sup>[44]</sup>

After 90 years of effort, the [University of Chicago](#) has published an Assyrian Dictionary, whose form is more [encyclopedia](#) in style than [dictionary](#).<sup>[45]</sup>

## Arts and sciences

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*Main articles: [Art of Mesopotamia](#) and [Architecture of Mesopotamia](#)*



Relief from Assyrian capital of [Dur Sharrukin](#), showing transport of Lebanese cedar (8th century BC)

Assyrian art preserved to the present day predominantly dates to the Neo-Assyrian period. Art depicting battle scenes, and occasionally the impaling of whole villages in gory detail, was intended to show the power of the emperor, and was generally made for propaganda purposes. These stone reliefs lined the walls in the royal palaces where foreigners were received by the king. Other stone reliefs depict the king with different deities and conducting religious ceremonies. Many stone reliefs were discovered in the royal palaces at [Nimrud](#) (Kalhu) and [Khorsabad](#) (Dur-Sharrukin). A rare discovery of metal plates belonging to wooden doors was made at [Balawat](#) ([Imgur-Enlil](#)).

Assyrian sculpture reached a high level of refinement in the Neo-Assyrian period. One prominent example is the winged bull *Lamassu*, or [shedu](#) that guard the entrances to the king's court. These were apotropaic meaning they were intended to ward off evil. C. W. Ceram states in *The March of Archaeology* that *lamassi* were typically sculpted with five legs so that four legs were always visible, whether the image were viewed frontally or in profile.

Although works of precious gems and metals usually do not survive the ravages of time, some fine pieces of Assyrian jewelry were found in royal tombs at Nimrud.

There is ongoing discussion among academics over the nature of the [Nimrud lens](#), a piece of [quartz](#) unearthed by [Austen Henry Layard](#) in 1850, in the Nimrud palace complex in northern [Iraq](#). A small minority believe that it is evidence for the existence of ancient Assyrian telescopes, which could explain the great accuracy of [Assyrian astronomy](#). Other suggestions include its use as a magnifying glass for jewellers, or as a decorative furniture inlay. The Nimrud Lens is held in the British Museum.<sup>[46]</sup>

The Assyrians were also innovative in military technology with the use of heavy cavalry, sappers, siege engines etc.

## Legacy and rediscovery

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*Main articles:* [Achaemenid Assyria](#), [Assyriology](#), and [Assyrianism](#)



[Austen Henry Layard](#) in Nineveh, 1852

Achaemenid Assyria (539 BC – 330 BC) retained a separate identity ([Athura](#)), official correspondence being in [Imperial Aramaic](#), and there was even a determined revolt of the two Assyrian provinces of Mada and Athura in 520 BC. Under [Seleucid](#) rule (330 BC – approximately 150 BC), however, [Aramaic](#) gave way to [Greek](#) as the official administrative language. Aramaic was marginalised as an official language, but remained spoken in both Assyria and Babylonia by the general populace. It also remained the spoken tongue of the indigenous Assyrian/Babylonian citizens of all Mesopotamia under Persian, Greek and Roman rule, and indeed well into the [Arab](#) period it was still the language of the majority, particularly in the north of Mesopotamia, surviving to this day among the [Assyrian](#) Christians.

Between 150 BC and 226 AD Assyria changed hands between the Parthians and Romans ([Roman Province of Assyria](#)) until coming under the rule of Sassanid Persia in 226 AD – 651 AD, where it was known as [Asuristan](#).

A number of at least partly neo-Assyrian kingdoms existed in the area between in the late classical and early Christian period also; [Adiabene](#), [Hatra](#) and [Osroene](#).

[Classical historiographers](#) had only retained a very dim picture of Assyria. It was remembered that there had been an Assyrian empire predating the Persian one, but all particulars were lost. Thus

Jerome's [\*Chronicon\*](#) lists 36 kings of the Assyrians, beginning with [Ninus](#), son of [Belus](#), down to [Sardanapalus](#), the last king of the Assyrians before the empire fell to [Arbaces](#) the Median. Almost none of these have been substantiated as historical, with the exception of the Neo-Assyrian and Babylonian rulers listed in [Ptolemy's Canon](#), beginning with [Nabonassar](#).

The [modern discovery of Babylonia and Assyria](#) begins with excavations in [Nineveh](#) in 1845, which revealed the [Library of Ashurbanipal](#). Decipherment of [cuneiform](#) was a formidable task that took more than a decade, but by 1857, the [Royal Asiatic Society](#) was convinced that reliable reading of cuneiform texts was possible. [Assyriology](#) has since pieced together the formerly largely forgotten history of Mesopotamia. In the wake of the archaeological and philological [rediscovery of ancient Assyria](#), [Assyrian nationalism](#) became increasingly popular among the surviving remnants of the [Assyrian people](#), and has come to strongly identify with ancient Assyria.