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978-1-108-01710-7 - The History of Esarhaddon, King of Assyria, B.C.
681-688

Ernest A. Budge

Excerpt

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THE GENEALOGY AND ACCESSION OF
ESARHADDON, AND PRINCIPAL
EVENTS OF HIS REIGN.



ESARHADDON was the son of Sennacherib, king of Assyria, B.C. 705-681. The Sin-akhi-irib of the cuneiform inscriptions is the—

סִנְחַרִּיב of the Bible;

LXX. *Σενναχηρίμ*, or *Σενναχηρείμ*;

Josephus, *Σενναχήριβος*;

Herodotus, *Σαναχάριβος*.

The sons of Sennacherib were—

1 Sharesar, Biblical שָׂרְאֲצַר (Nergal-sarra-yutsur);

2 Adrammelech, „ אֲדַרְמֶלֶךְ;

3 Esarhaddon, „ אֲסַרְחַדְדֹן;

written *Ἀσορδάν* and *Σαχερδωνός*, Berossus and LXX.;

„ *Ἀσαρίδανος*, Ptolemy;

„ *Ἀσαράδαν*, Ezra;

„ *Σαχερδών*, Codex Alex.

„ *Ἀχειρδωνός*, Compl.

The account of the death of Sennacherib is told us by the Bible, and very briefly, for we read (2 Kings xix. 37): “And it came to pass as he (Sennacherib) was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Shareser his

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sons smote him with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Armenia. And Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead.”¹

Josephus says (*Ant.*, x. 1, sec. 5) that Sennacherib was buried “in his own temple called Araske” (ἐν τῷ ἰδίῳ ναῶν Ἀράσκη λεγομένῳ).

It has been generally thought that Esarhaddon was Sennacherib’s eldest son, and this seems to have been the idea of Polyhistor, who made Sennacherib place a son, *Asordanes*, on the throne of Babylon during his own lifetime (Ap. Euseb., *Chron.*, Can. i. 5).² The testimony of a small tablet (*W.A.I.*, iii., 16) supports this view.

It has been aptly called the “Will of Sennacherib.”³ It reads—

“I, Sennacherib, king of multitudes, king of Assyria,
have given chains of gold, etc., to
Esarhaddon, my son, who was afterwards named
Assur-ebil-mucin-pal,

according to my wish.

The name of Esarhaddon is written in the following ways—

D.P. Assur - akha - IDIN - na.—i. 49, 1.

D.P. Assur-akha-idinna.—i. 48, 2, 1.

D.P. Assur-akha-idinna.—i. 48, 5, 1.

It means “Assur gave a brother.”

¹ These events are mentioned, with additions, by Berosus (Berosus and Abydenus ap. Eusebius, *Chron. Armen.*, ed. Aucher, vol. i. pp. 42, 43); Gesenius, *Theasaurus*, p. 962.

² Smith’s *Dict. of Bible*, large edition.

³ *Records of the Past*, vol. i. p. 136.

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The syllabaries explain the ideograph employed in the name thus :—

| | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| | = | | i-luv. Heb. לִיב, ii. 31, 27. |
| | = | | Assuru. Heb. אַשּׁוּר, Sayce, <i>Syl.</i> , 414. |
| | = | | a-khu. Heb. אַחַי, ii. 2, 276. |
| | = | | na-da-nu. Heb. נַדָּנָה, iii. 70, 77. |
| | = | | a-khu. Sayce, <i>Syl.</i> , 13. |
| | = | | na-da-nu. Sayce, <i>Syl.</i> 1. |

The character is a variant form for , Assur. It is found on an altar slab of Assur-natsir-pal (*Trans. Soc. Bib. Arch.*, vol. vii.).

Esarhaddon began to reign B.C. 681, and he reigned until B.C. 668. His brothers Adrammelech and Shareser attempted to obtain the throne, but Esarhaddon drew up his army, and, marching against them, gained a complete victory at Khanirabbat, a district on the Upper Euphrates. According to some, Adrammelech was killed in battle; according to others, he escaped with his brother and took refuge in Armenia. According to local tradition, the king of Armenia received the vanquished with great kindness, and gave them land to dwell in.¹

A tablet, containing "addresses" to Esarhaddon, was probably drawn up at the time when Esarhaddon was preparing to fight against his brothers. Column II. speaks thus (*W.A.I.* iv. 68):—

- 14 Fear not, Oh Esarhaddon,
 15 I (am) Bel, thy strength.
 16 & 17 I will ease the supports of thy heart.
 18 Respect, as for thy mother,
 19 Thou hast caused to be shown to me.
 20 (Each) of the sixty great gods, my strong ones,
 21 Will guide thee with his life—
 25 Upon mankind trust not, (but)

¹ Maspero, *Histoire Ancienne*, p. 422. Moses of Khorene, *History of Armenia*, I., i. p. 22.

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26 Bend thine eyes

27 Upon me—trust to me! (for)

28 I am Istar of Arbela.

After the battle (B.C. 680), Esarhaddon marched into Nineveh. But about this time Nabu-zir-napisti-eser, son of Merodach-Baladan, an old enemy of Assyria, raised an army and went to attack the city of Ur, whose eponym's name was Nin-gal-iddina (?). He was successful in his siege, and captured the city. Esarhaddon sent out his officers, and Nabu-zir-napisti-esir, knowing this, fled to Elam, asking protection from Umman-aldas, king of that country. But this was refused; and in col. 2, lines 33 and 34, we read that "he had trusted to the king of Elam, who had not caused his life to be spared." Nahid-Marduk, another son of Merodach-Baladan, hearing of the death of his brother, came to Nineveh and sought alliance with Esarhaddon, who received him graciously, and gave him the sea-coast to rule over.

Another revolt in Syria now claimed the attention of the Assyrian king. Abdi-milcutti, king of the city of Zidon, had made alliance with 'Sānduarri, king of Cundi and 'Sizū. Esarhaddon marched against Zidon, besieged and captured it. He cut off the heads of Abdi-milcutti and 'Sānduarri, and, hanging them upon the necks of their great men, exhibited them in the wide spaces (Rehoboth) in Nineveh.

All Palestine and the neighbouring regions now submitted to Esarhaddon—viz., twelve districts in Palestine, and ten in Cyprus. Each king sent presents.

At this time, also, he captured the city of Arzani, perhaps a city of Egypt.

Esarhaddon's next expedition was against the Gimirrai, or Kimmerians, whose king was called Teuspa. He conquered them, and, at the same time, the inhabitants of Cilicia and Dūha submitted.

Soon after this, Esarhaddon attacked the Mannai, but in this attempt he appears not to have been quite as successful. However, five Median chiefs came to Nineveh and submitted to Esarhaddon.

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Esarhaddon now attempted the conquest of Arabia. Many of the Assyrian kings before Esarhaddon had made some conquests in the land of Edom. But he went farther, and reached two cities, called Bāzu and Khazu (the Biblical Huz and Buz), and conquered eight kings and queens. The journey, however, was very difficult, and little more is said about it.

A king, called Lailie, asked that the gods which Esarhaddon had captured from him might be restored. His request was granted, and Esarhaddon says—"I spoke to him of brotherhood, and entrusted to him the sovereignty of the districts of Bāzu."

Esarhaddon being master of Arabia, Syria, Media, and the other countries which had rebelled against him, was now troubled by Egypt. Before the reign of Esarhaddon, an Ethiopian, called Sabaka, had conquered Egypt. He died, and Sabatok, his successor, made good his cause, and was recognised as king.¹ But now Tirhakah fought Sabatok, who was vanquished, taken prisoner, and put to death.²

Tirhakah had been a stubborn and rebellious enemy against Sennacherib, the father of Esarhaddon. It was his army that had opposed Sennacherib at the time of the overthrow of the Assyrian army. Tirhakah, having reigned about twenty years, considered himself well established on the Egyptian throne, so he made an alliance with Bāhlu, king of Tyre, and as it is said—

"The yoke of Assur, my lord, they despised; they were insolent and rebellious."

"Esarhaddon had entered into a convention with Bahal, by which, in return for services rendered by the Tyrians, the Assyrian monarch ceded to the king of Tyre a considerable portion of the coast of Palestine, including Accho, Dor, and all the northern coast of the Philistines, with the cities and Gebal, and Lebanon, and the cities in the mountains behind Tyre."³

This very serious rebellion aroused Esarhaddon and brought him and his army against the rebels. He started from the

¹ Oppert, *Mémoire sur les Rapports de l'Égypte et de l'Assyrie*, p. 14.

² *Manetho*, edited Unger, p. 251.

³ Smith's *Assyria*, p. 34.

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city Aphek, and marched as far as Rapikhi (?), a journey of 30 *casbu*, or 210 miles.

The Assyrian army was short of water, and was obliged to drink whatever water could be found, for he says—

“Marsh waters from buckets I caused my army to drink.”

He then marched into Egypt, and Tirhakah was beaten.

Esarhaddon next divided Egypt into twenty provinces; all, except two, being governed by Egyptian generals.

The exceptions are :—

Sar-ludari, king of the city of Tsiahnu (Zoan, or Tanis), and Bucur-Ninip, king of the city of Pākhnuti.

Esarhaddon caused to be carved upon the rocks of the Nahr-el-Kelb a long inscription, in which he called himself “King of Egypt, Thebes, and Ethiopia.”¹ B.C. 672.

Esarhaddon now began his buildings. He first built “ten fortresses” in Assyria and Accad. He then repaired and enlarged the palace at Nineveh, which had been made for the “custody of the camp-baggage.” The twenty-two kings of Syria (for their names see text) brought him materials for his works. He began a palace at Calah, but it was never finished; and he built one for his son, Assur-bani-pal, at Tarbitsi (modern Sheref Khan).

While Esarhaddon was yet king, he set his son Assur-bani-pal upon the throne to reign with him. This is evident from *W.A.I.*, iii. 1, 7, 9, where it is said :—

9 Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, the father, my begetter.

10 The will of Assur and Beltis the gods, his ministers, he exalted.

11 Which (gods) commanded him to establish my kingship.

The inscription then goes on to say that, on the 12th day of May, Esarhaddon gathered together the principal men of the kingdom, and it was decreed that Assur-bani-pal should be made king. This event must have taken place between B.C. 671 and B.C. 668.

¹ Oppert, *Mémoires sur les Rapports de l'Égypte et de l'Assyrie*, pp. 38, 43, 80, et seq.

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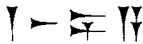
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When Esarhaddon returned to Assyria, Tirhakah raised a large army and went to besiege Memphis. The city fell into his hands after a "murderous siege."¹ The account of his defeat is given by the annals of Assur-bani-pal. Esarhaddon died in the year B.C. 668.

He left one son, Assur-bani-pal, king of Assyria, and another called generally Saulmugina, king of Babylon. Their names are thus written:—

Assur-bani-pal, 





Saulmugina, 

Esarhaddon was truly "the great king," and he adopted the policy of holding court at Nineveh and Babylon. Babylon was the scene of many great battles, and during its existence was fought for oftener than, perhaps, any other city in the Babylonian and Assyrian empires. It was said to have been built in very early times, became capital under Khammuragas, and held this position for 1200 years (*Babylonia*, p. 75). Khammuragas (about B.C. 1700) calls himself "king of Babylon." He built there a temple to Merodach.

It was conquered by Tuculti-Ninip B.C. 1271; by Tiglath-Pileser I. B.C. 1110; by Tiglath-Pileser II. B.C. 731; by Merodach-Baladan B.C. 722; by Sargon B.C. 721; it was sacked and burnt by Sennacherib B.C. 692, but restored by Esarhaddon B.C. 675; captured by Assur-bani-pal B.C. 648, also by Nabu-pal-yutsur B.C. 626, and finally taken by the Medes and Persians B.C. 539.²

In his capacity of ruler he was comparatively merciful and kind, for the phrase "riemu arsi-su" (I showed mercy to him) occurs frequently in the inscriptions; also his restoration

¹ Oppert, *Les Sargonides*, p. 57.

² For the measurement of its walls, etc.—See Diodorus Siculus, vol. i. pp. 118, 120. Amstelodami, 1746.

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to his enemies of the gods which he had captured is probably without equal among the deeds of the mighty kings of Assyria "who went before." Another proof of his generosity to his enemies is shown by the fact of his releasing Manasseh, king of Judah, and restoring to him his kingdom after he had been carried captive to Babylon (2 Chron. xxxiii. 11). He extended the Assyrian empire by the conquests of Arabia and Egypt, and does not appear to have taken delight in warlike expeditions for their own sake, but only undertook them when necessity required for the submission of his enemies.

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[More information](#)LIST OF TEXTS USED OR CONSULTED
FOR THIS BOOK.The brick legends lithographed in *W.A.I.*, i. 48.No. 10 $\frac{48}{2}$ — 31 „ „ *W.A.I.*, i. 45, 47.Broken Cylinder, No. 11 $\frac{48}{315}$ — 4, lithographed in *W.A.I.*, iii. 15, 16.Black Stone „ *W.A.I.*, i. 49.

Broken Cylinder (unnumbered).

K 3082, K 3086 } Containing the account of the expedition
S 2027 } to Egypt.K 1679. Containing the equivalent parts of lines for *W.A.I.*,
i., xlv. 41, 48.

K 2671. War against Elam.

K 3053. Titles and genealogy of Esarhaddon.

K 4473. War against Sidon.

K 4444. War against Bālu, king of Tyre.

K 2663. Bears the name of Esarhaddon, dated 27th day of
Iyyar.RM. 3. Belongs to a Cylinder of Assur-bani-pal, and contains
a list of names of tributary kings and cities,
by which the spelling of many names in *W.A.I.*,
iii. 13, has been corrected.*W.A.I.*, iii., xvi. No. 3. The Will of Sennacherib.

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The system of transliteration adopted in the following pages is the same as that used in Professor Sayce's *Assyrian Grammar*, and is as follows :—

| | |
|-----------|-----|
| a - â ha | = א |
| b | = ב |
| g' | = ג |
| d | = ד |
| h | = ה |
| u, v | = ו |
| z | = ז |
| kh | = ח |
| dh | = ט |
| i | = י |
| c | = כ |
| l | = ל |
| m, also v | = מ |
| n | = נ |
| s | = ס |
| e | = ע |
| p | = פ |
| ts | = צ |
| k | = ק |
| r | = ר |
| s | = ש |
| t | = ת |