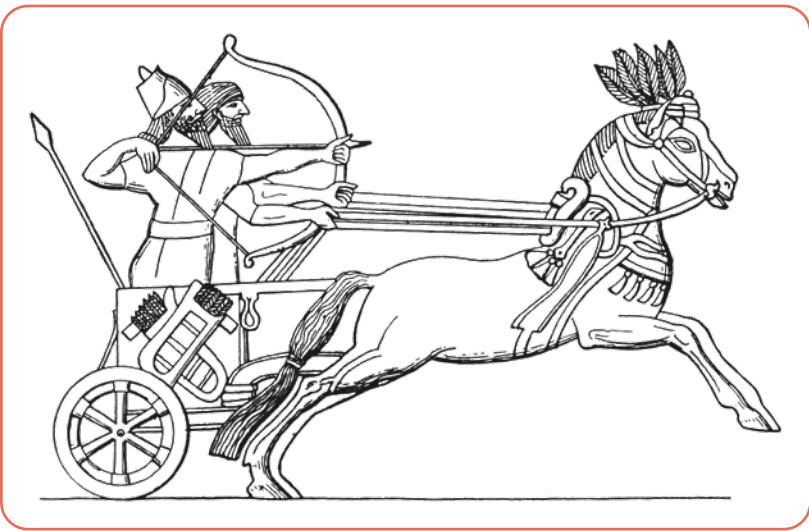


NEO-ASSYRIAN EMPIRE, 911–609 BCE



In the 12th to 10th centuries BCE, the once mighty Assyria faced a decline: the state was shaken by civil wars among pretenders to the royal throne, and provincial governors along with Syrian vassals pursued independent policies. However, in the 9th century, a gradual reclaiming of lost territories began, until under the reign of Tiglath-Pileser III, Assyria embarked on an expansion into new lands.

Reforms implemented by several generations of kings bolstered central authority, enabling successful military campaigns across the Near East. The Neo-Assyrian Empire emerged as the greatest power of its time, leaving behind a rich cultural legacy.



Assyrian War Chariot

Anatolia

Anatolia, on the periphery of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, experienced periodic invasions by Cimmerians and Scythians, who inhabited lands north of Assyrian provinces. Dominated by local states like Phrygia and Lydia, the region saw complex interactions. For example, although Assyrian kings referred to Lydia as their vassal, it pursued an independent policy and at times supported uprisings within Assyrian territories.

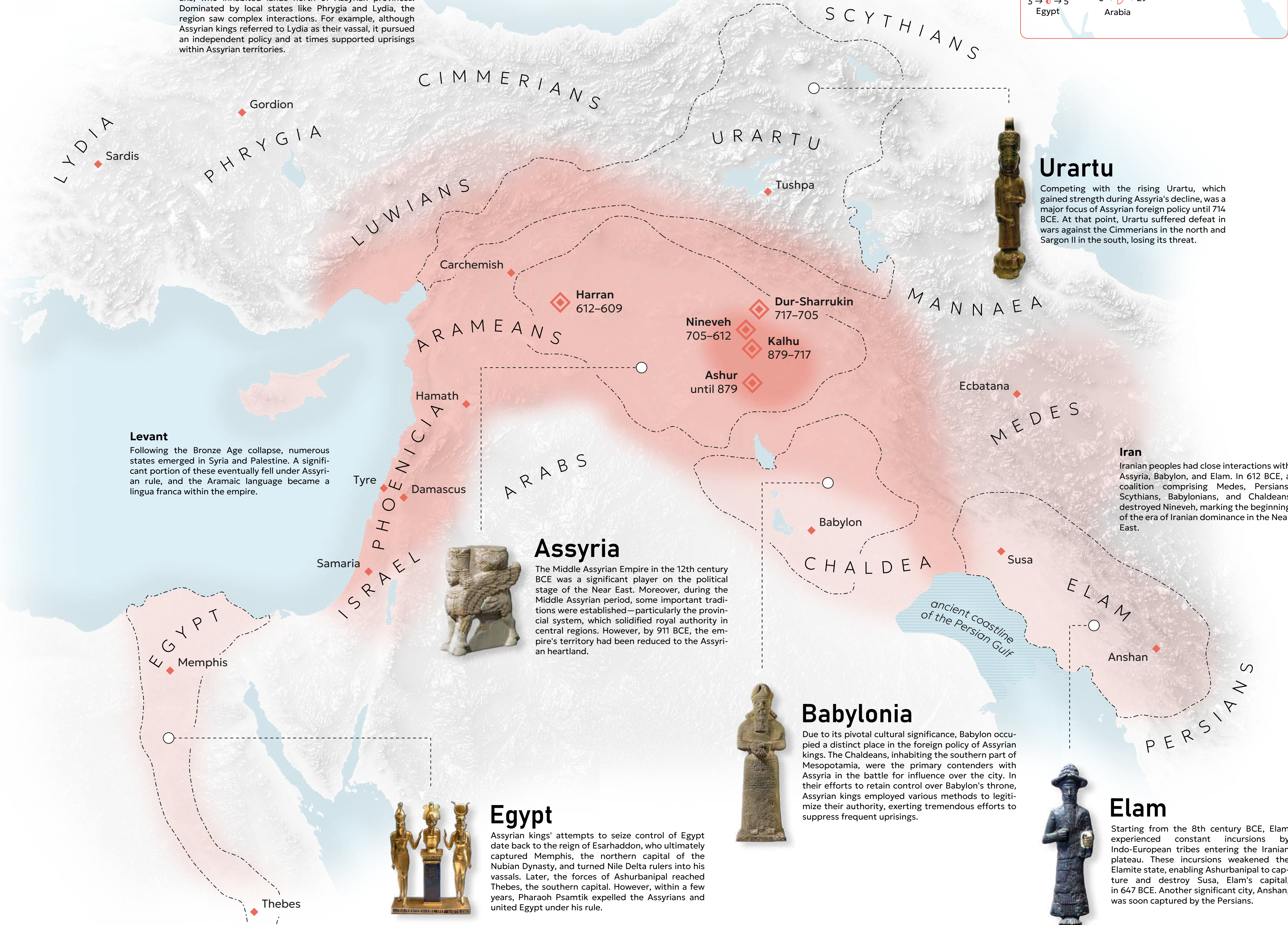
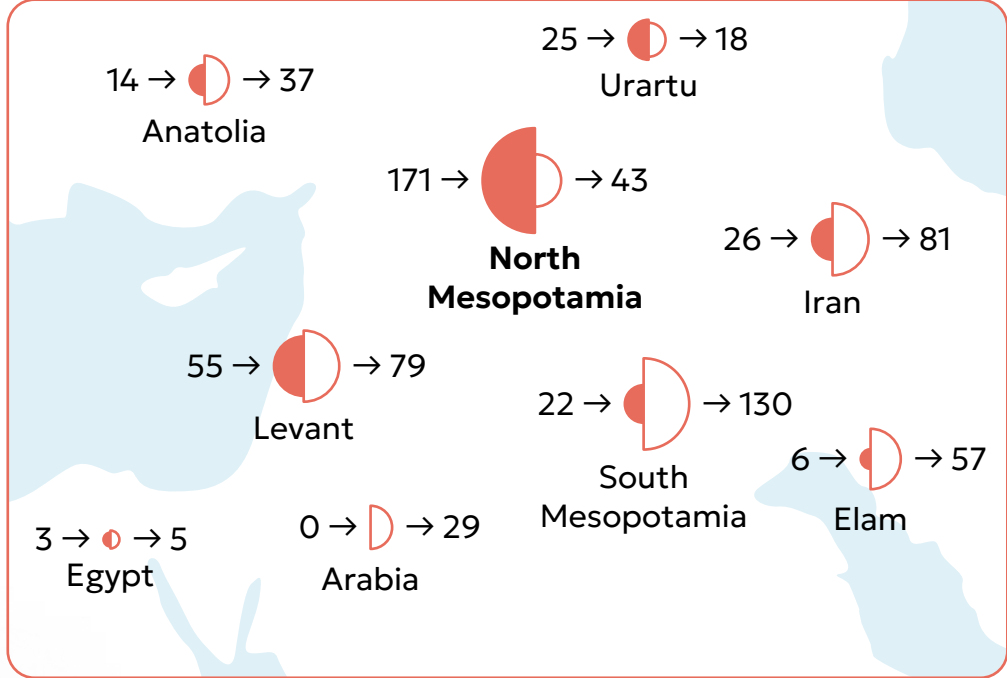
Resettlement Policy

The resettlement policy was known in earlier times, but in the Neo-Assyrian period it flourished. The number of displaced individuals during the three centuries of the Neo-Assyrian Empire is estimated at 3 to 6 million. Tens of thousands of people were deported at a time, including both Assyrians and subjugated population.

Deportations were carried out for various purposes, such as:

- Creating loyal enclaves in hostile territories
- Strengthening military presence at the borders
- Weakening centers of resistance
- Recruiting craftsmen and unskilled workers

Number of known deportations: to area → ● → from area



Urartu

Competing with the rising Urartu, which gained strength during Assyria's decline, was a major focus of Assyrian foreign policy until 714 BCE. At that point, Urartu suffered defeat in wars against the Cimmerians in the north and Sargon II in the south, losing its threat.

Assyria

The Middle Assyrian Empire in the 12th century BCE was a significant player on the political stage of the Near East. Moreover, during the Middle Assyrian period, some important traditions were established—particularly the provincial system, which solidified royal authority in central regions. However, by 911 BCE, the empire's territory had been reduced to the Assyrian heartland.

Babylonia

Due to its pivotal cultural significance, Babylon occupied a distinct place in the foreign policy of Assyrian kings. The Chaldeans, inhabiting the southern part of Mesopotamia, were the primary contenders with Assyria in the battle for influence over the city. In their efforts to retain control over Babylon's throne, Assyrian kings employed various methods to legitimize their authority, exerting tremendous efforts to suppress frequent uprisings.

Elam

Starting from the 8th century BCE, Elam experienced constant incursions by Indo-European tribes entering the Iranian plateau. These incursions weakened the Elamite state, enabling Ashurbanipal to capture and destroy Susa, Elam's capital, in 647 BCE. Another significant city, Anshan, was soon captured by the Persians.

Assyrian Kings

Traditionally, King Lists were maintained in the ancient Near East, allowing for fairly accurate reconstruction of their reigns. Some rulers deserve special attention, and the struggle of Babylon for independence also presents an intriguing chapter in history.

Rulers of Babylon:

- independent Babylonian
- ◇ Assyrian puppet king
- Chaldean
- ◆ Assyrian king himself

...	
○	911–891 Adad-nirari II 👑
○	890–884 Tukulti-Ninurta II
○	883–859 Ashurnasirpal II
○	858–824 Shalmaneser III
CO	823–811 Shamshi-Adad V
?	810–805 Shammuramat 👑
?	804–783 Adad-nirari III
?	782–773 Shalmaneser IV
●	772–755 Ashur-dan III
●	754–745 Ashur-nirari V
CO	744–727 Tiglath-Pileser III 👑
◆	726–722 Shalmaneser V
◆	721–705 Sargon II 👑
CO	704–681 Sennacherib
◆	680–669 Esarhaddon
CO	668–627 Ashurbanipal 👑
◆	626–623 Ashur-etil-ilani
○	622–612 Sin-Shar-ishkun
○	611–609 Ashur-uballit II
X	

Adad-nirari II, 911–891

Under the rule of Adad-nirari II, Assyria experienced a new **resurgence** after a long period of decline. Adad-nirari II solidified his authority and led a series of successful military campaigns, greatly expanding Assyrian territory. Subsequent kings continued this trend, though over time, they gradually lost most of their political power to commanders, state officials, and other so-called “magnates”.

Shammuramat, 810–805

Shammuramat allegedly served as a regent during the reign of the young king Adad-nirari III. This might be the sole known instance of an Assyrian queen retaining power after her husband's death. Additionally, the legendary figure of the warrior queen Semiramis and the creation of one of the Seven Wonders of the World, the **Hanging Gardens of Babylon**, are associated with her.

Tiglath-Pileser III, 744–727

By the time of Tiglath-Pileser III's ascension to power, Assyria had regained territories which it had during the height of the Middle Assyrian Empire. Tiglath-Pileser III reduced the size of provinces, significantly curbing the power of provincial governors. He also established a **standing army** that operated independently of crop seasons and was consistently combat-ready.

Sargon II, 721–705

Like Sargon the Great some 1600 years earlier, Sargon II most likely was an usurper. He founded a new dynasty, ending the rule of Adasids. His major **military achievements** included the destruction of the Kingdom of Samaria, weakening Urartu, and restoring Assyrian control over Babylon. Sargon II also undertook extensive construction works in his capital city, Dur-Sharrukin.

Ashurbanipal, 668–627

During Ashurbanipal's reign, the Neo-Assyrian Empire reached the **zenith of its power**, extending from the Nile in the West to the Zagros in the East. Kings' main goal shifted from expansion to maintaining stability. Although Assyria remained strong during Ashurbanipal's rule, it was ultimately destroyed just some twenty years later, giving way to the Neo-Babylonian Empire and then to the Achaemenid Empire.

Assyria

- heartland
- provinces
- vassals and tributaries
- capitals
- notable cities
- great powers