

The Esarhaddon Prism

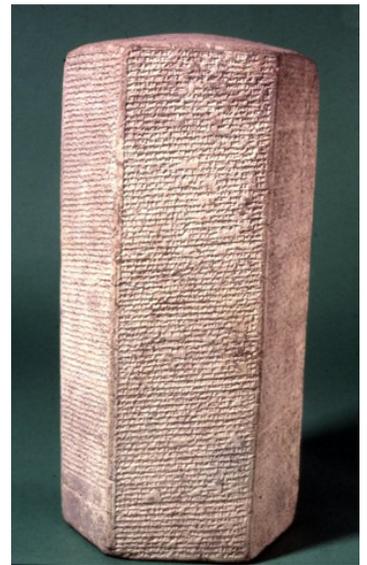
While excavating Nineveh on behalf of the British Museum (1927-28), Assyriologist Reginald Thompson discovered a small hollow hexagonal clay prism with Akkadian cuneiform. The Esarhaddon Prism was so named, because it memorialized the reign of Sennacherib's son Esarhaddon and dated to 673-672 B.C.

As the favorite son, Esarhaddon would succeed Sennacherib after his father was assassinated by two older brothers which was mentioned in the Bible (2 Ki 19:37). Successful as a military and political leader, Esarhaddon would restore Babylonian which was destroyed earlier by his father.

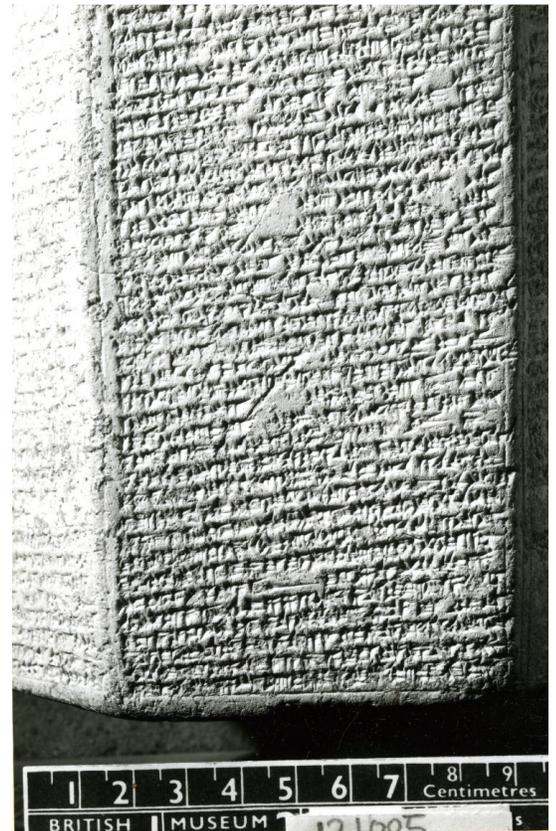
The Esarhaddon Prism is a narration of military conquests and lists the vassal kings paying tribute. Among these vassal kings mentioned is Manasseh the son of Hezekiah. Although he was the longest reigning king of either kingdoms of Israel, Manasseh, the king of Judah, was an evil king (2 Ki 21:1-18; 2 Chron 33:1-20), and in the Bible's record, the unnamed Assyrian king that defeated Manasseh was Esarhaddon (2 Chron 33:11). Manasseh would be Judah's most evil king (2 Ki 21:9) and reestablished pagan worship practices that his father previously destroyed.

Deported to Babylon, Manasseh would repent and return to Jerusalem as a vassal king (2 Chron 33:11-13). On one side of the six-sided Esarhaddon Prism (column 5), Manasseh is listed on line 55 as "Menasi, king of Judah."

1) (their) gall eructating. I had no rival, my weapons were unopposed, 2) and among the princes, my predecessors, not one was (my) equal. 3) Those who scoffed at the kings, my fathers, and answered with hostility, 4) by the command of Ashur, my lord, were delivered into my hands: 5) those (places) whereof the wall was difficult, I broke their stones as though they were a potter's vessel: 6) the corpses of their warriors unburied I gave to the wolf to eat: 7) the treasury of their goods I carried off to Assyria, 8) the gods, their helpers, I counted as a spoil. 9) Like sheep I drove their fat people. 10) He who to save his life had fled into the midst of the sea 11) did not escape my net, and saved not his life: 12) the fleet of foot who took to the fastnesses (?) of the distant mountains, 13) like a bird I hunted him from the mountain and bound his pinions: 14) their blood like a broken (dam) I let flow on the slopes of the mountains. 15) The Sute, dwellers in tents, whose dwelling is remote, 16) like the fierce shock of a hurricane I tore up their roots. 17) Of those who made the sea their fortress, the mountain their stronghold, 18) not one did I let escape from my net; 19) not a fugitive fled away. 20) Those of the sea in the mountains, those of the mountains by the sea I ordained as their



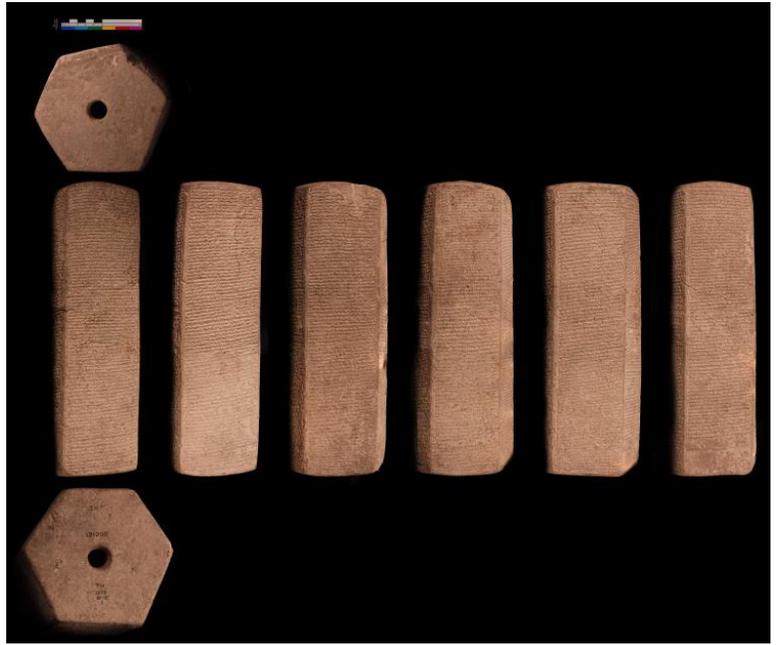
13 in (33.33 cm) high x 6.5 in (16.51 cm) at its widest base



Each side measures about 3 inches (7.6 cm)

The Esarhaddon Prism (page 2)

dwelling. **21**) By the command of Ashur, my lord, who is it who could be my rival **22**) in royalty? Or among the kings, my fathers, **23**) (who was there) whose rule was so great as mine? **24**) From out of the sea my foes thus spake: **25**) "Whither can the fox go in the sunlight?" **26**) The Elamites (and) Kutu, proud princes, **27**) who had answered the kings, my fathers, with enmity; **28**) of the power of Ashur, my lord, which I had exercised over all my enemies, **29**) they heard, and fear and terror were showered on them. **30**) So that there should be no encroachment on their boundaries **31**) their messengers for favour and peace **32**) to Nineveh to my presence they sent and **33**) in the name of the great gods took an oath. After Ashur, Shamash, Bel, and Nabu, **34**) Ishtar of Nineveh, Ishtar of Arbela, over my foes **35**) had made me stand in triumph and I had attained all my heart's desire, **36**) in the conquest of my numerous



enemies **37**) whom by the help of the great gods, my lords, my hands had conquered, **38**) the temples of the cities of Assyria and Akkad I caused to build and **39**) sheathed them with silver (and) gold and made them shine like the day. **40**) In those days the Front Palace of Nineveh **41**) which the kings going before my fathers had built, **42**) for the ordinance of the camp, the maintenance of the stallions, **43**) mules, chariots, weapons, equipment for war, **44**) and the spoil of the foe, of every kind, **45**) which Ashur, king of the gods, as the due of my royalty gave, **46**) for the care of the horses (and) practice of the chariots; **47**) that place was too small for me, and the people of the countries, **48**) the spoil of my bow—I made them bring the hoe (and) brick-mould, and **49**) they made (unburnt) bricks. That little palace **50**) throughout I destroyed and much land **51**) as an addition from the fields I cut off and **52**) added thereto with limestone, the solid stone from the mountains, **53**) I laid its foundation and filled a terrace: **54**) I assembled the kings of the Hittites and across the river. **55**) Ba'lu, king of Tyre, **Menasi, king of Judah**, **56**) Kausgabri, king of Edom, Musuri, king of Moab, **57**) Sil-bel, king of Gaza, Metinti, king of Ascalon, **58**) Ikausu, king of Ekron, **59**) Milkiasapa, king of Gebal, **60**) Matanba'al, king of Arvad, **61**) Abiba'al, king of Samsimurruna, **62**) Puduil, king of Beth-Ammon, Ahi-milki, king of Ashdod, **63**) Twelve kings of the shore of the sea: Ekistura, **64**) king of Idalion, Pilagura, king of Chytrus, **65**) Kisu, king of Soli, **66**) Ituandar, king of Paphos, **67**) Erisu, king of Silli, Damasus, king of Curium **68**) Atmesu, king of Tamesi, **69**) Darmisi, king of Karti-hadasti, **70**) Unasagusu, king of Ledra, **71**) Bususu of Nuria, ten kings of Iatnana **72**) of the middle of the sea, total twenty-two kings of Hatti, the sea shore, **73**) and the middle of the sea, all of them I sent and **74**) great beams, solid columns, dressed (?) planks, **75**) of cedar (and) cypress, the product of Sirara and Lebanon, **76**) whereof the stature from of old had increased and become luxuriant, **77**) winged bulls (and) colossi of ashnati-stone, **78**) female colossi (and) cow-colossi, slabs, burnt brick, **79**) of marble, ashnan-stone, turmina-stone, **80**) breccia, alallu-stone, GI.RIN. ŠAR.GUB.BA-stone, **81**) from the mountains, the place of their creation, **82**) for the need of my palace, with difficulty and trouble.

References:

1. Youngblood RF, ed., *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, (2014).