

**FROM THE HISTORY OF THE MILITARY SYSTEM OF THE NEW ASSYRIAN STATE**

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**Annotation:** This article presents information about the military campaigns carried out during the most powerful New Era of the Assyrian state in the history of the Ancient World, the military reforms of the rulers, the armament of the army and its unique military tactics. The military work of ancient Assyria was fundamentally different from the military art of other contemporary Eastern countries in its perfection.

**Keywords:** Assyrian Empire, Tiglath-Pileser III, Sargon II, Ashshurpanapal, Belibni, Sidonian, regular army, taran, war chariots, Nineveh, Phoenicia.

**INTRODUCTION**

In the history of the ancient world, there were powerful states that occupied very large territories. There were several factors that contributed to their rise. It is known from history that for each state to be strong and continue its activities, three things are important: population, treasury and army. Without them, a state cannot be imagined. Of course, the army is one of the most important factors. Examples of states in the history of the ancient world that had such a strong army include the kingdoms of Ancient Egypt, Sumer, Akkad, Babylon, and Hittite. Among these states, the importance of the Assyrian kingdom, which had a separate military system, is also noteworthy. This state was one of the most powerful states of its time and conducted military campaigns against neighboring tribes for 1300 years. The history of this state can be divided into 3 stages:

1. 20th-16th centuries BC,
2. 16th-11th centuries BC, and
3. 10th-7th centuries BC.

**MAIN PART**

During these periods, especially in the last period, the Assyrian kingdom became very strong. That is why it was called New Assyria or Great Assyria. At the end of the 10th century BC, the name “Assyrian Renaissance” was given in history. King Asshur II restored the development of the country and restored his power in the Mesopotamian region. During this period, the Assyrian army took the first place in Ancient Asia in terms of its number, organization, level of armament, ability and combat power[Urakov D., and others., p. 61].

During the Old and Middle Kingdoms, the Assyrian army was similar to that of other Mesopotamian states. The army consisted of cavalry and infantry. Military campaigns were led by a ruler or a military commander. Later, during the reign of Tiglath-Pileser III (745-727), a new, energetic commander, who was raised by the military, created a large, well-armed and strong regular army, and the entire apparatus of state power was used for military needs. The large army of Assyria was replenished with conquered lands and the free population of the country. Each provincial governor collected soldiers from the lands under his control. These soldiers were commanded by the provincial governor himself.

During this period, a special “regular army” was formed in Assyria. This army was called the

“royal division”. This army served to suppress rebellions. There was also a personal guard of the king in Assyria, which was supposed to protect the “sacred person” of the king. Written sources contain information about the existence of small military units (kisru) consisting of 50 people. The Assyrian military units included infantry, cavalry, and charioteers. In the structure of the Assyrian army, 200 infantrymen were divided into 10 cavalrymen and one charioteer. It is worth noting that the Assyrian army also included camel-riding warriors [Kabirov A., p. 143].

According to the information, the Assyrian army was one of the first to use camels. This was thought out in every way, as camels could go without water for a long time and could carry a lot of cargo. The Assyrian army was the main weapon of the state's aggressive policy. The army was divided into several parts depending on the weapons. The infantry was the most numerous in terms of numbers, and it was divided into light and heavy armed units. From the 9th century BC, cavalry units appeared. They were also composed of heavy and light armed units. The striking part of the army was the chariots. Chariots were a privileged part of the army, over time they were replaced by cavalry units. When besieging cities and fortresses, the Assyrians used various siege weapons. [Rajabov R., p. 119].

The Assyrian army demolished fortresses and walls using battering rams, which were protected by shields. Then the Assyrians began to use wall-breaking devices for the first time in the world. (The Hecians called this weapon a ballista or catapult). Since there were no explosives at that time, cannons and burning tar-filled tar were used. The tar was fired from levers through hardened, fast-burning belts. The formation of the Assyrian army was very carefully thought out and amazed the people [Kurushkol Y., p. 216].

Heavy infantry was armed with spears, swords, and had armor, helmets, and large shields as protective equipment. Light infantry consisted of archers and slingers. Two soldiers: an archer and a shield-bearer who protected his companion with a shield, formed one combat unit. The Assyrian infantry moved in dense formations, the infantry entering the battle under the protection of heavy infantry with large shields. The shield wall moved, and the infantry rained arrows, stones, and short spears on the enemy.

Such movement of the infantry required correct alignment, their precise movement. Two or four horses were attached to the chariots, and in the body of the chariot there was a saddle filled with arrows. The crew consisted of an archer and a spear, a driver armed with a shield, and two soldiers. Sometimes the crew was reinforced with a shield-bearer who protected the archer and driver [Rajabov R., p. 153]. Of course, the Assyrian rulers paid special attention to such strengthening of the army.

A large number of weapons were found in the palace of Sargon II. Kings Sennacherib and Esarhaddon (7th century BC) “To arm the black heads, they built a palace in the city of Nineveh where they would store everything: horses, donkeys, mules, chariots, wagons, ordinary carts, scabbards, rainbows, and even saddles for equipment”.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

Battle tactics. Assyrian generals knew how to fight head-on and flank, and they knew how to use both methods when fighting a broad front. The Assyrians often used “military tricks”, such as attacking the enemy at night. They used the tactic of destroying the enemy and drying up their resources. For this purpose, in order to cut off all communications, deprive the enemy of water and food, and prevent them from receiving military aid, military units occupied mountain passes, waterways, wells, and river crossings.

The Assyrians gathered the enemy in one place and attacked them boldly and fiercely until they came to them, striking at lightning speed. During the time of Ashshubanapal, which consisted of mountains, the roads were very difficult, and they conquered Iran in a month. If the Assyrians fought with a region, if they retreated, they quickly chased them from behind and destroyed them [Avdiyev R., p. 509].

Navy. Assyria had a small navy of its own. They used the Phoenician fleets in the conquered territories, especially in the navies of the Phoenicians. Sargon II also used the Phoenician fleet when he invaded Cyprus. Therefore, it is not surprising that the naval expedition was a great

success for the Assyrians. Therefore, the sending of troops to the Persian Gulf during the reign of Sennacherib is described in detail in Assyrian inscriptions. For this purpose, Phoenician craftsmen came to Nineveh to build ships, and sailors from Tyre, Sidon and Ionia were transferred to the ships that were built. They were sent to the region of Opis along the lower reaches of the Tigris River. During the reign of Ashurbanipal, efforts were made to build a fleet in the Persian Gulf. This time, the work of Phoenician sailors was not finished. The Assyrian commander-in-chief of the coastal Chaldea, Belib, in a letter to Ashurbanipal, asked him to send 20 Sidonians.

The main goal of the Assyrians was primarily to seize trade routes, obtain large amounts of booty and prisoners. Those captured were turned into slaves. There is information about this in the Assyrian chronicles. For example, Sennacherib drove 208 thousand prisoners, 720 horses and mules, 11,073 donkeys, 5,230 camels, 80,100 bulls and cows, and 800,600 sheep and goats from Babylon[website [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)].

### **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, it can be said that for this period, the Assyrian army achieved such successes, their weapons, siege methods, discipline, and the tactics of the commanders in conducting the battle were very well developed. The fact that the army was 120 thousand in number also indicates that the Assyrian army was numerically superior. The Assyrian state was generally the most powerful and warlike state that existed in the history of the ancient world. The military work of ancient Assyria was fundamentally different from the military art of other contemporary Eastern countries. Until the time of King Tiglath-Pileser III, his army consisted of warriors who received land in exchange for their service. After his military reform, the warriors were armed. The following can be said about the army:

- Prisoners of war also served in the ranks of the Assyrian army,
  - The Assyrian infantry was divided into lightly and heavily armed: infantry,
  - The heavily armed infantry had a shield, helmet, and armor as protective equipment and was armed with a sword and spear,
  - The light infantry included archers and slingers, who did not have any protective equipment,
- The military achievement of the Assyrians was that they invented and used with great skill "engineering" groups and cavalry, which were an absolute novelty for their time.

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