

My poor mother conceived me and bore me in secret; she laid me in a little box of reeds and plastered it over with asphalt. She put me on the river and the river carried me to Akki, the water-bearer. Akki, the water-bearer, drew me from the river; Akki, the water-bearer, brought me up as a boy; Akki, the water-bearer, made me a gardener. While I was a gardener I became dear to the goddess Istar, and I became king."

The Agade here mentioned by Sargon as his capital is no other than the city of Archad of Genesis x., 11, then spoken of as being of the kingdom of Nimrod, while Babylon, Erech, and Chalanne were in Shinar. Agade was on the Euphrates, close to a canal which divided it from the town of Sippar. The two cities are spoken of together in the Bible as Sepharvaim.

From this history, which reminds us vividly of the infancy of Moses, it was thought at first that this Sargon was mythical, and that the stories of his conquests in Elam, Arabia, and the West, were pure inventions; but apart from the discovery of his autobiography, the existence of business records connected with his campaigns show clearly that he certainly existed. Tiles are dated, for example, from the year in which Sargon made an expedition against Elam and Zachara, and from other campaigns by him. Naram-Sin succeeded his father Sargon, and founded the temple at Sippar that was excavated by Nabunaid. Naram-Sin was worshipped during his life time by his subjects as the "god of Agade." Probably the earliest records of divine honours being paid to a man are those that refer to Sargon and Naram-Sin. Babylon is first mentioned in the reign of Sargon, probably thus about 3,800 B.C. The story of the foundation of Babylon by Sumerians, as related by the Greek, Ctesias, is purely mythical. Its proper name was Bab-Illo, or "The gate of the god Illo." The Semites of Sargon made their language prevail over the Sumerian, though they adopted the civilisation of the latter. Other Semitic invasions followed that of Sargon, and the Sumerian language and the Sumerian nations lost their nationality; so that the Semitic languages of Sargon and Hammurabi, of whom we shall speak later, are the same.

The Semites established themselves first in the north of Babylonia. By 2,800 B.C., Elam, of the Old Testament, which lay S. E. of the Babylonian plains, from which it had no natural boundary, and with which it had before this been in strife, overran and conquered South Babylonia. In Genesis x., 22, Elam and Assour, that is, the Elamites and Assyrians, are sons of Shem. The Semitic Elamites violated the temples, and their king, Kudur-Nanchundi, in 2,285 B.C., carried off the sacred image of the Chaldean goddess of the Earth, Nana, from the biblical Erech to Susa, their capital, whence it was recovered