

Chinese names with the actual pronunciation of these names will show how difficult this is. Yet the Assyrian names in the Old Testament have proved to correspond with the actual original far more accurately than the similar references in ancient Greek sources.

The Assyrian rulers were always seeking for means of maintaining their hold on their conquests. It was one thing to send a great army to overcome a distant region. It was quite another to keep the region under Assyrian control, once the army had departed. Two expedients were hit upon, in order to do this. One was the Assyrian emphasis on "frightfulness." The Assyrian kings tried to terrify their enemies by gloating over the brutality that they showed toward nations that had revolted against them. In no other ancient records do we find ~~quite~~ such an emphasis on cruelty toward conquered foes as in the Assyrian records. This was intentional on the part of the Assyrian kings, in order to terrify their enemies and make them less likely to revolt once they had been conquered. Even a careless reading of the book of Nahum, that great poem against Nineveh, the Assyrian capital, with its vivid description of the downfall of the Assyrian empire, will show how prominent this feature was in the minds of the Israelites. References to no other ancient people in the Bible are in quite the same tone.

The other Assyrian expedient was that of movement of whole populations from one area to another. This is abundantly illustrated in the Assyrian record, and finds many echoes in the Old Testament. Thus we find the Assyrian kings taking the people of Israel and carrying them off to another part of their empire (2 Kings 17.6), and bringing in people from other sections whom they settled in Samaria (2 Kings 17.24). The Samaritans originated from this mixture of population.