

## **Tomb of Jonah - Jonah's Tomb** destroyed in Mosul on July 24, 2014

(parts from <https://www.timesofisrael.com/islamic-state-looting-uncovers-ancient-palace-beneath-jonahs-tomb/>)

Archaeologists in Iraq say they have made an unexpected discovery under a site destroyed by Islamic State traditionally thought to hold the tomb of the biblical prophet Jonah.

Under a mound covering the ancient city of Nineveh, beneath a shrine destroyed by IS, they found a previously undiscovered palace built in the seventh century BCE for the Biblical Assyrian King Sennacherib and renovated by his son Esarhaddon.

"The objects don't match descriptions of what we thought was down there," according to a Telegraph report. "There's a huge amount of history down there, not just ornamental stones. It is an opportunity to finally map the treasure-house of the world's first great empire, from the period of its greatest success."

Deep inside looters' tunnels dug beneath the Tomb of Jonah in the ancient Iraq city of Nineveh, archaeologists have uncovered 2,700-year-old inscriptions that describe the rule of an **Assyrian king** named **Esarhaddon**.

The seven inscriptions were discovered in four tunnels beneath the biblical prophet's tomb, which is a shrine that's sacred to both Christians and Muslims. The shrine was blown up by the Islamic State group (also called ISIS or Daesh) during its occupation of Nineveh from June 2014 until January 2017.

ISIS or ISIS-backed looters apparently dug the tunnels to look for archaeological treasures from the Assyrian kings in what is today Iraq, Ali Y. Al-Juboori, director of the Assyrian Studies Centre at the University of Mosul, wrote in a recent issue of the journal Iraq. [In Photos: Ancient City Discovered in Iraq]

One inscription, in translation, reads:

**"The palace of Esarhaddon, strong king, king of the world, king of Assyria, governor of Babylon, king of Sumer and Akkad, king of the kings of lower Egypt, upper Egypt and Kush [an ancient kingdom located south of Egypt in Nubia]."**

This inscription was found during excavations at Nineveh on the back of a fallen "lamassu," a deity with a human's head and the body of a lion or bull. It reads (in translation):

**"The palace of Ashurbanipal, great king, mighty king, king of the world, king of Assyria, son of Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, descendant of Sennacherib, king of Assyria."**



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Kush leaders at one point ruled Egypt, according to ancient inscriptions found at other archaeological sites. Those inscriptions also say that Esarhaddon defeated the Kush rulers and chose new rulers to govern Egypt.

Another inscription found under the Tomb of Jonah says that Esarhaddon **"reconstructed the temple of the god Aššur [the chief god of the Assyrians]," rebuilt the ancient cities of Babylon and Esagil, and "renewed the statues of the great gods."**

The inscriptions also tell of Esarhaddon's family history, saying that he is the son of Sennacherib [reign 704–681 B.C.] and a descendent of Sargon II (reign 721–705 B.C.), who was also "king of the world, king of Assyria."

Al-Juboori also translated four other inscriptions found at Nineveh, near the Nergal Gate (Nergal was the Assyrian god of war), between 1987 and 1992 by an archaeological team from Iraq's Inspectorate of Antiquities. Conflicts in the area made it difficult for the team to publish their discoveries at the time.

The inscriptions date to the reign of King Sennacherib, and they all say this king: **"had the inner wall and outer wall of Nineveh built anew and raised as high as mountains."**

Archaeologists found several inscriptions near the Tomb of Jonah during the 1987-1992 excavations. One of them was written on a prism-shaped clay object and discusses Esarhaddon's many military conquests, including Cilicia (located on the southern coast of what is now Turkey). The transcribed inscription calls Esarhaddon "the one who treads on the necks of the people of Cilicia."

Esarhaddon claims in the inscription that:

**"I surrounded, conquered, plundered, demolished, destroyed and burned with fire twenty-one of their cities together with small cities in their environs. ..."**

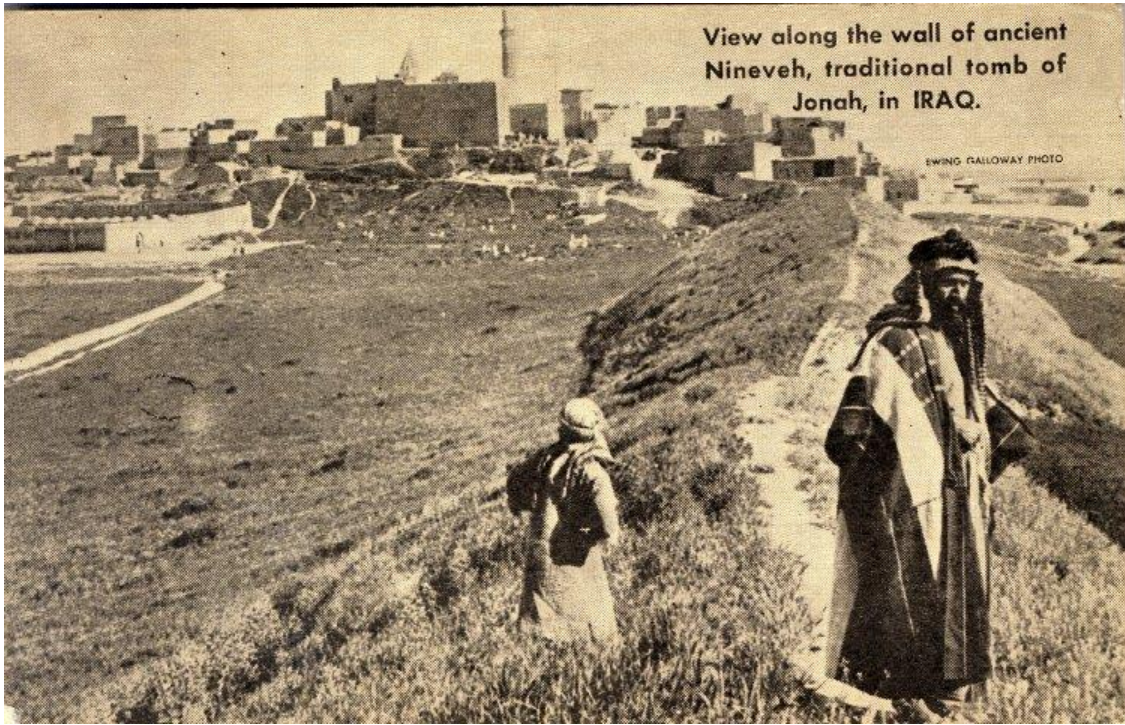
The inscription also discusses his conquest of Sidon (located in modern-day Lebanon), claiming that Esarhaddon's army tore down the city's walls and threw them into the Mediterranean Sea.

The remains of ancient inscriptions from other sites that ISIS tried to loot and destroy have also been found. After the ancient Assyrian city of Nimrud was recaptured in November 2017, the surviving inscriptions include one describing a monkey colony that once flourished at Nimrud.



**1890 - Tomb of Jonah, near the mosque, on the artificial mound of Nabbi Yunis, Nineveh, Assyria**





The tomb of Jonah inside the shrine at Nebi Yunus.



The destroyed shrine in Mosul that held the tomb of Jonah



Screen shot from video from ISIS Blowing up the Tomb of Jonah in Mosul located inside a Sunni mosque

From <https://gatesofnineveh.wordpress.com/2014/07/11/what-is-the-tomb-of-the-prophet-jonah/> :

“While the existence of a historical religious figure from Gath-Hepher named Joseph son of Amittai seems to be supported by 2 Kings 14:25, details about his life and final resting place are completely unknown. This has not stopped a half-dozen places from claiming to be the site of his tomb.

- In the fourth century Jerome wrote in his Commentary on Jonah that Jonah’s tomb was displayed in a small village near **Sepphoris**, and
- indeed the ancient site of **Gath-Hepher** sits outside the Israel Arab town of **Mashhad**, which to this day claims to have Jonah’s tomb.
- **North of Hebron** in the West Bank sits Mount Nebi Yunus, the highest point in the West Bank and home to another tomb of Jonah.
- There is yet another tomb of Jonah at **Jieh on the coast of Lebanon**, and
- another near **Apamea in Syria**.
- Yet another story holds that Jonah was buried on the hill named **Giv’at Yonah on the north side of Ashdod** in Israel, a spot currently occupied by a lighthouse.

It goes without saying that even though it is almost certain that none of these places are the actual tomb of Jonah, they are still valued by the local populace and destroying any one of them would be an offense against their cultural heritage and local history.