Sargon of Akkad Encyclopedia Article

Sargon of Akkad

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c. 2334-2279 B.C.

Mesopotamian ruler who created the first empire in history. Sargon came from the lower classes, and like Moses a thousand years later was said to have been rescued from a boat of reeds and pitch. He eventually seized power, becoming apparently the first Semitic ruler in his region. After taking most of the lands between what is now southern Turkey and the Persian Gulf, he symbolically washed his sword in the waters, a gesture that would be replicated by conquerors throughout ancient times. Sargon may have also established trading contacts with lands as far away as Oman, the Indus Valley, and Crete, but by 2150 B.C. the nomadic Gutians from the north had destroyed the Akkadian empire.