ENEMESSAR [PERSON] [Gk Enemessar(os)]. The name of an Assyrian king in the book of Tobit during whose reign Tobit was taken into captivity (1:2). His successor is said to have been his son Sennacherim (Sennacherib; Tob 1:15), who in turn was followed on the throne by Sarcherdonos (Esarhaddon; 1:21). The Vulgate reads Salmanassar throughout (1:2, 15, 16).

No king named Enemessar is otherwise attested. Since according to Assyrian sources Shalmaneser (V) was followed by Sargon (II), who was succeeded by his son Sennacherib, scholars have tried to see in Enemessar either a corruption of Shalmaneser or some reference to Sargon. To the latter belong the suggestions (1) that the name is an inversion of Assyrian Sarru-ukkin said to mean “legitimate king,” adopted by Sargon who was a usurper, and (2) that it is an otherwise unrecorded private name of Sargon for Anum asir “Anu is gracious.” In support of the former it has been suggested (1) that Enemessar derives from Sennacherib, with a loss of l and transposition of m and n, and (2) that shal was dropped and m and n were transposed. Corruption of the name would seem to be the better explanation, though it is not possible to trace all its stages. Transposition of m and n becomes the more plausible when one notes a similar metathesis in sarcherdonos. Elsewhere in the LXX, Heb ḫɔ-ḥɔn is transliterated by some such form as asordan (2 Kgs 19:37; Isa 37:38; Ezra 4:2). It should come as no surprise that a romance written some centuries after its fictive date might make a mistake on the succession of Assyrian kings.

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