

Assyrian Language and Writing in Ancient Iraq _ unpublished Building Bricks model

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Introduction:

The Assyrian writing language on bricks which we intend to deal with is known as “ Launching Blocks“ in the castles and temples building , and which have the form of Stamps or inscriptions⁽¹⁾ similar to the writing found on the sockets of the doors related to different kings and rulers of different regions or cities in Mesopotamia. This type of cuneiform writing is documented as memorable symbols to refer to building and to distinguish its type according to its launch or rebuilding ⁽²⁾. In order to observe such works, stones and blocks were used as essential material.

It is worth mentioning that the brick was used in old Iraqi architecture in the early periods of the 10th Millennium BC, as found in the village of "Zawi Jamie"⁽³⁾ on the remains of the circular shape stone foundations ⁽⁴⁾. In the following Ages the use of stone in the foundations of buildings to cover some city walls and facades of the walls of the Assyrian palaces⁽⁵⁾ continued or it might be used for certain purposes as the stone at hand and related to a memorial statue. The discovered stones have varied in different parts of Assyria: the marble, alabaster and limestone.⁽⁶⁾

The reason behind using of stone in the northern part of Mesopotamia more than the plain alluvial is related to its abundance in the northern regions of Mesopotamia since it is characterized by its strength and stiffness and resistance to climate change, because it contains

¹ -Walker C B F , Cuneiform Brick Inscription , the British museum , the Ashmolean museum, Oxford the city of Birmingham museums and art gallery, the city of Bristol museum and art gallery, British museum publications limited, London, 1981, p.9

² -Hallo W.W , Royal Inscription of the Early Old Babylonian , BIOR , vol.18, 1961,p.4ff.

³ - Zawy Jumy:located near Shana Da Ra cave on the Upper Alzab river in Kurdistan Iraq, its area is 215×275 M, rough rests of walls have been found made of rivers' stones and pebbles, they refer to rounded huts its diameter is 4 M, and two built houses and fireplaces and house decorations, see Sabah Abood Aljasim, the transformation from the stage gathering food into producing food, MA degree unpublished, Baghdad University-College of Arts, (1975:61).

⁴ - Adal Abdu Allah Aldulymee, The beginning of agriculture and the first cultivating village in Iraq, MA degree unpublished, Baghdad University-College of Arts, (1985:111).

⁵ - Hussein Daher Hamud, "The carved walls as Assyrian mass media" Adab Alrafidian magazine, No. 31, Baghdad, (1998:291).

⁶ -Yosef Shareef, The History of Ancient Iranian Architecture in Different Period, Baghdad,(1983:172)

minerals and other compounds that cohere with each other to make up the stone itself⁽⁷⁾. In the Sumerian language, the stone was known as "NA₄" which resembles in the Akkadian language the word "abnum".⁽⁸⁾

I- Describing the Remains:

The first model of the remains that we have is a (brick) overall dimensions is 27.2 cm long and 22.3 cm wide and 5.5 cm thickness, cuneiform text is devoted to the king "Shalmanassar first" (1274 - 1245 BC.) The text consists of six lines of the Assyrian Akkadian language As regards to how and where it was found , it is now in the "Museum of Erbil," and put there by someone found it in unknown archaeological site which now represents a cemetery, the people of the region buried their dead for decades, and the hill, which was held by the cemetery is located within the boundaries of a village called (Pastam) which is About 20km to the north of the famous ancient city of Nimrud, on the east bank of the River "Zab the highest" within the limits of the city, "Kalak" (See map -1-), in Erbil governorate.

The second model of the remains which we will show is taken from the modern Assyrian era (the first millennium B.C), and specifically it is due to the reign of King Šarrukin (Sargon) (722 704 BC). The text contains four lines of cuneiform writing on Assyrian square-shaped building brick in the city was known "Dur-Sharokeen"(Khorsabad).⁽⁹⁾

II- The language of the texts:

The Assyrians and their neighbors of the Hittites, and others use the Sumerian language as well as the Akkadian language (Assyrian), which was the language of correspondence, treaties and international relations during the second millennium BC (fourth century BC).⁽¹⁰⁾ The Sumerian and Assyrian languages have been studied side by side in the capital Hittite "Hatusha",⁽¹¹⁾ and the excavations there showed Dictionaries of languages in this regard)⁽¹²⁾.

Through the study of the Assyrian writing texts it has been observed that most Sumerian words are of one syllable and many syllables that are associated cuneiform signs are originally Sumerian referring to Assyrian written expression and meaning, and apparently, the use of such a method for writing on stones and memorial status fit with the nature of the writing on the stone using a drilling method, as opposed to writing on clay using method of printing by

⁷ - Hameed Mohammad Hussein, The Influence of the Building Iraqi House Over Eras, Baynal Nahreen Magazine, No 49-50, Baghdad (1985:72).

⁸ - Labat R Manuel D Épigrafié Akkadienne (= MAD) ,2002, Paris,no.229,p.125.

⁹ - Rawlinson H.C. The Cuneiform Inscription of Western Asia, II ,Pl.50, col.I, II,26.

¹⁰ - Doblovour E, signs and miracles studies in methods and curriculums used in reading and writing and ancient languages, translated and presented by Amar Hatim, (Libya-Tunis,1983:224).

¹¹ - Anton Mortkrat, the history of Far East, translated by Tawfeeq Sulyman- Ali Abu Assaf, Damascus 1967.

¹² - Ahmed Zydan Khalf Salah Alhadydy, the Assyrian relations with the modern Hittites kingdoms in north of Syria (911-612 BC), un published PhD Thesis, University of Mosul, College of Arts, History Dept. (2005:86)

pressing on the soft clay, which enables the writer to save time used in writing the long Assyrian word consisting of several syllables substituting one Sumerian syllable. This method may also abbreviate this space available to write on the surface of the stone, so deliberately used to replace the Assyrian symbol word with one cuneiform mark to express one word of one syllable in the Sumerian language.⁽¹³⁾ Therefore, the reader of the cuneiform writing must master Sumerian cuneiform marks and be knowledgeable of the Akkadian language.

According to the city of Ashur mentioned in the text, it is the first home of the Assyrians and the headquarters of a large worship of their gods Ashur, the name came in cuneiform texts written in several Sumerian and Akkadian formats ⁽¹⁴⁾ .

Ashur has been mentioned in the old Assyrian texts from Old, Middle ,and Neo Akkadian Ages and found identical name of the city in literature ,e.g. , in the Akkadian Age the name was written as “aš-šur.ki” (City of Aššur) and the form of the name appeared in “ Ibla” (Mardeekh hill) once as “ a-šur.ki” and another as “aš-šur-ki”.⁽¹⁵⁾ In the Old and Middle Assyrian age , on the other hand , the name was written syllabically as “ a-šu-ur.ki” or “ a-šur.ki” ⁽¹⁶⁾. Generally speaking , in the Modern Assyrian age , writing names was syllabic form by doubling the first consonant sound “šš” to have it as “aš-šur.ki” which is available in the text we are dealing with and the name of the city called “ Aššur “used to be familiar since the Arabic and Aramic references mentioned the name as “ Aqour - Aššur “ .⁽¹⁷⁾

III- Texts Writing Period:

Researchers designated the period between the middle of the second millennium BC, which marks the ascension "Bozzor Assyria" the third about 1521 BC. the Assyrian throne and until the beginning of the rule of "Adad Nirari" the second (in 911 BC)., the Middle Assyrian era.⁽¹⁸⁾ During this period a number of powerful kings who continued, in their reign ,

¹³ - Jorny A.R. Hittites, (London,1952), translated by Mohammad Abdula Kader, revised by Faysal Al-Waaly (1963:175-177).

¹⁴ - Ryad Ibrahim Mohammad Ahmed Al-Jibory, unpublished texts cuneiforms from the modern Assyrian reign- Assyrian city, unpublished MA thesis, University of Mosul, College of Arts, (2004:16-17). To know the readings mentioned on the tense of Ashur , you can see the following sources:

Nashef,K, Die Orts – und Gewässernamen der altassyrischen zeit, Germany (1991),p.14-20.(RGTS,4) ; Nashef Die orts – und Gewässernamen der mittelbabylonischen und mittelassyrischen zeit , Germany(1982), (=RGTC,5) ; Groneberg ,B., Die orts- und Gewässernamen der altbabylonischen zeit , Germany (1980), p.41-45.(=RGTC,3); Edzar,D.O., and others Die orts- und Gewässernamen der prä-sargonischen und sargonischen zeit,Germany(1977) ,p.20 (=RGTC) ; Eedzard,D.O.farber,G., Die Orts-und Gewässernamen der zeit der 3. Dynastie von Ur, Germany (1974), p.19 (= RGTC,2).

¹⁵ - Michalowski, P., Third Millennium Contacts: Observation on the Relationships between Mari and Ebla, JAOS, 1985, 105, part.2, p.297.

¹⁶ - Talib Munaam habeeb, the career and the achievements of Sanhareeb (705-681 BC) unpublished MA thesis, university of Baghdad, College of Arts, (1986:6).

¹⁷ - Alhamawy Yaqoot, Muajam Albuldan -The Dictionary of Cities- Tehran Printing, (1965:119).

¹⁸ -Taha Baqer, An Introduction Ancient Civilization History, part .1,Baghdad,(1973:484)

the growth of the Assyrian state and its strength increased ,⁽¹⁹⁾ one of those kings was "Eric – Den -Eli " (1319- 1308 BC)., who sent several campaigns to the southern border which increased the prestige of the Assyrian state.⁽²⁰⁾

Following him, then, was King "Adad – Nirari the first "(1307 -1275 BC.), who walked in the footsteps of his predecessors, and was able to confront his opponents outside the boundaries of his kingdom, and repel many of the attacks on the kingdom.⁽²¹⁾

Then successively after "Adad Nrara" first, his son,"Shalmanassar I" (1274- 1245 BC) ⁽²²⁾, ruled the Assyrian state .During his age many movements were carried out by some external kingdoms to effect and control the Assyrian state and to reduce its power and dominance, but he has sought, just like his predecessor to impose his strength and to maintain the glory of the Assyrian Empire, and ward off the external threats, he also contributed to the creation of many buildings and Urban achievements. He was well known for his interest in the symbolic idea of the history, e.g., he mentioned, in one of his writings on the history of building a temple in the city of Assyria, saying, "This temple was built by the King, "Oshiba" who is considered to be King sixteenth in the list of the kings of Assyria, and the temple was rebuilt by "Aarichom the first," King number thirty-third in the list of Assyrian kings. The temple was reconstructed by king "Shamshi Adad" the first (1831-1781 BC), and finally it was restored by King Shalmanassar, after 580 years from the date of construction for the first time."⁽²³⁾ Perhaps the present memorial text inauguration is located in a series of achievements Urban carried out by King Shalmanassar I, during his time the text is documented and carried his name and the name of his father and grandfather , where his trio name was documented to prove lineage sequence by mentioning his father and grandfather, and this reminds us of the administrative tripartite which required mentioning names of the employee or the chief administrative officer as if simulating what we have nowadays.

Next, for The period of the second model writing, Researchers named that as the modern Assyrian era or it is known as the reign of the second Sargon Dynasty (721-612 BC), and specifically during the period of the rule of the Assyrian king "Sharokeen", who did not think to build a new capital for the Assyrian in his first crowing days, resources refer to that he settled in the Assyrian city during the first years of his rule, then he transferred into "Nineveh"

¹⁹ - Ibid.

²⁰ - Waleed Muhammed Saleh Farhan, The Political Relationship of Assyria State, M.A, degree thesis, College of Art, University of Baghdad,(1967:51).

²¹ - Grayson, A K, Assyrian Royal Inscriptions, Part 2, Wiesbaden, 1972/76, p.60.

²² - Munn - Rankin. J. M, Assyrian Military Power, 1300 - 1200 B.C, CAH, Vol, 11, Part.2, 1975, p.279.

²³ - Farooq Naser Al- Rawi, The Science and Knowledge, Iraqi Civilization Encyclopedia, part.2, Baghdad,(1985:274).

the important Assyrian capital, then he chose "Kalikh" (Namrud) as one of the four most important Assyrian cities and capitals, finally, he decided to build a new capital which was fit his name, position, and his new Sargonian dynasty, after spending five years of ruling, he decided to put the foundation stone in a new position in 717 BC, after taking the throne in winter 722 B.C.⁽²⁴⁾ The city was known after the discovering of the brick in the king's palace under the name "Dur-Sharokeen".⁽²⁵⁾ (see map.6)

It is worth mentioning that the era of the Assyrian king "Shaerokeen" represents the beginning of ruling new dynasty kingdom founded to set the latest Iraqi political epoch in the north of Mesopotamia, the successors kings did not have the same capability of strength and greatness⁽²⁶⁾ the last king was "Sin- Šar-Aškin" in his last ruling Nineveh collapsed and the Assyrian cities and emperor crumpled with the end of his era in (612 B.C).⁽²⁷⁾

Tracing the cuneiform texts, we find many signs in different resources ensuring the name of "Door Sharrokin" (Dur-Šarru- kin)⁽²⁸⁾ with three syllables of three cuneiform signs, the second and the third syllables are the right linguistics Assyrian name of the king "Sharrokin" which is pronounced wrongly as "Sargon" whereas the right pronunciation is "Sharrokin" (Šarrukin), while the first syllable refers to the city as "fort" or fence which is pronounced in Akkadian language "dūru" interpreted in Samarian, (BAD₂)⁽²⁹⁾ but if we go back to the same name which included the name of Assyrian king "Sharrokin" we find that the last syllable of the name (kenu/kinu) which means the stable, the fair or the assure.⁽³⁰⁾ But the well-known name of the city is "Khorsabad", the resources mention that it is declined and taken from another spelling which named the city, it is "Khsro Aabad" which was called by Sasanyian, (Parisian people ruled Iraq and Farris periods of time (226-637 C)⁽³¹⁾ it is those who changed the name from "Dor Sharrokin" or "Sargon" city into "Khsro Aabad", it was mention by "Yagot

²⁴ - Iva Kanjek – Care Shabowm, the ancient history of Assyrian, translated by Farooq Ismail, Dar Alzaman, 1st printing, Damascus, (2008:69).

²⁵ - Rawlinson H.C. The Cuneiform Inscription of Western Asia, II ,Pl.50, col.I, II,26.

²⁶ - Three kings came after Shrookeen (Seen – Aakhy – Aryba (704-681) and the Assyrian king Akhy – Adin (680-669) and the Assyrian king Bany – Aably (627-668) for more information, see: Muaath Habish Khider Alaabady, the royal annalists in the modern Assyrian period, unpublished MA degree, College of Arts, University of Mosul, (2006:51).

²⁷ - Taha Bager, An introduction in the history of old civilizations. 1st part, Dar Albany, 1973:515ff.

²⁸ - Ebling and Meissne, Realexikon der Assyriology, Vol.I, p.249.

²⁹ - Labat R, op.cit, No.152

³⁰ - Ibid, No.85.

³¹ - Farege Bassmajy, Iraqi museum treasures, General directorate of agrology, Baghdad, (1972:69).

Alhamawy" in the seventh hundreds of Hijra under the name "khorstoobad",⁽³²⁾ hence the name was declined into "Khorsobad" which is known nowadays.⁽³³⁾

The place of discovering the brick was the mentioned city, particularly the ground of king's palace "Sharrokin", (see fig.7) in his "Dur-Sharrokin" city, the resources mentioned that he wanted to build a unique palace; it was described as "unequal palace" to prove that a text was left on brick which was found among the ruins of the palace saying:

"Sharrokin the second, the king of the world, he built the city, "Dur Sharrokin" and he gave its name and its palace (unequal), who built it inside it." ⁽³⁴⁾

V- Reading the first model Text :(see Fig.2, 3)

- 1- É.GAL^{md} šul-ma-nu-SAG
- 2- MAN KIŠ
- 3- A^dU-ÉRIN.DUH MAN KIŠ -ma
- 4- A GID₂-de-en-DINGIR(ili) MAN Aš-šur
- 5- šá É^dUTU LUGAL
- 6- šá URU Ki-li-z[i]

English Translation:

- 1- (Property) of the palace of Shalmanassar I,
- 2- king of the universe,
- 3- son of Adad-nērārī king of the universe also,
- 4- son of Arek-den-ili king of Assyria,
- 5- (Brick) of the temple of Šamaš, king,
- 6- of the city Kilizi.

VI- Reading the Second model Text:

1- Reading the lines of the second brick (see fig.8) :

E₂. GAL^{DIŠ}MAN. GIN ,
GAR^dBAD NU. EŠ₃ aš - šur ,
MAN dan- nu MAN šu₂ ,
MAN KUR aš - šur .

³² - Shihab Aldeen Yagoot Alhamowy, ibid, 358.

³³ - Kahtan Rasheed Salah, the Agrological Scout in Iraq, General Establishment of Agrological and Heritage (1987:31).

³⁴- Mohammad Ajaj Aljumayly, Sample of Planning and Building the forth Assyrian Capitals- Study in the History and Planning of the Ancient Cities, unpublished PhD Thesis Submitted to the Arabic History and Heritage Higher Studies Institute, Baghdad (2008:407).

2-Translating the Lines in English:

- Sharrokin palace,
- The ruler (appointed by) the god Enlil, the owner of high position⁽³²⁾ for Assyrian,
- strong king, the king of world (universe),
- The king of Assyrian country.

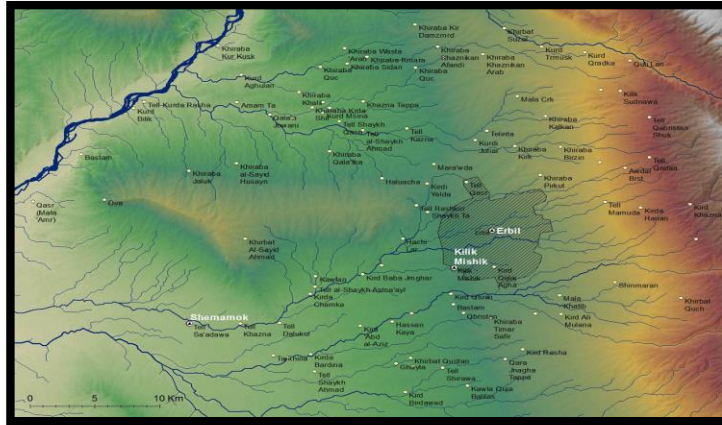
The general translation: "The place of the king Sharrokin, the appointed ruler by the god

VII - recommendations:

The first model given the importance of codification of such a building brick from the era of King Shalmanassar I and his building of an important temple in "Kilizi" city above which are the ruins of the graves of ancient people of the village "Bastam" in particular, and the city, "Kalak" in general, it is likely that this site has a great importance in the eyes of researchers and specialists who wish to be accurately introduced to the site of the city of "Kilizi" which consists of precious and valuable information contributing to the detection and further information concerning the Assyrian cities in northern Mesopotamia, and the relationship of the city in the Assyrian with other cities. So my call is an urgent need to preview this archaeological hill and try to detect its archaeological remnants and foundations of its buildings (see pic.4), or at least stopping burying newly dead people until discovering and diagnosing the site, the roof of the hill specially contains a lot of ancient pottery pieces belong to various pieces (see pic.5).

The second model of the (brick) lies in assuring the significance of the last Assyrian capital with its completed-utility which emulates the veteran Assyrian cities preceded it such as Nineveh and Kalih which evokes interesting, and which withdrew with its building the greatest kings of the modern Assyrian era and the foundation of the last Assyrian dynasty which carried his name, it is the Sargonian dynasty, it was probably the selection for economic and political reasons concerning choosing Sharrokin's king a new capital for his kingdom, definitely, the brick assured that the building of the palace was for the king Sharrokin, the one who built the city and the nobility man by the oldest greatest Iraqi gods, it was the god Enlil. It is necessary to start agrological process again in all parts of the city including the king's palace which was discovered on its ground the brick coincidentally.

VIII- Map, Figures and Pictures:



(1) First model map of the expected site of the town Kilzi in the Bastam's Village.



(2,3) An inscribed brick of Shalmanassar the 1st in Erbil Museum and A copy of the initiation Text



(6) Map of the location of the second model to Dor- Sharrokin (Khorsabad)

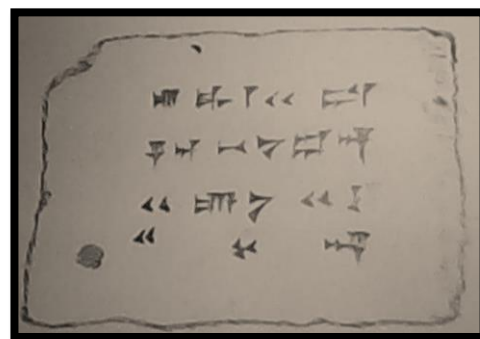


Fig (8) Writing on the brick of the second model and its copy with cuneiform signs.