

Assyrian Language in Mesopotamia “The Writing on Building Bricks Models”

Abstract: The paper, in its pictured investigation and in some of the photos of cuneiform patterns, tries to prove the crystal clear on patterns of ancient Assyrian language, and in a deeply historical investigation connected with the field study in different parts of Mesopotamia, and investigates the cuneiform system language which have lately been found written on bricks in different parts and locations in Mesopotamia. Finally, the results show that the highest percent regarding the cuneiform writing are evidences of vanishing ancient language, Assyrian.

The Assyrian writing language on bricks which we intend to deal with is known as “Launching bricks”, in the castles and temples building, and which have the form of stamps or inscriptions.

The first model:-From the Assyrian Middle Ages back to the King "Shalmanaser I" (1274 1245 BC).Total dimensions 27.2 cm long, 22.3 cm wide and 5.5 cm thick, reserved in Erbil Museum now, discovered in a village called Bastam now near the city of Erbil and the old city of Kilizi.

The second model:- From the Assyrian Modern Period, the king "Sharukin" (722 -704 BC) returns to the city of DUR-SHARUKIN. Site of the discovery of the second brick in the city of Dur – Sharukin, now Khorsabad. The dimensions of the brick are 33 cm long, 33 cm wide and 10 cm thick, with a four-line cuneiform text and are preserved in Mosul Museum now.

Keywords: Cuneiform ; Mesopotamia ; Building Bricks ; Kilizi City ; Ashur City ; Khursabad City

المختصر

اللغة الآشورية القديمة في بلاد الرافدين

‘نماذج لكتابات مسمارية على طابوق البناء’

اللغة الآشورية فرع من فروع اللغة الآكادية التي تعود بالاصل الى عائلة اللغات الجزرية القديمة (اللغة السامية) وُعرف عن الاشوريين انهم كتبوا بالخط المسماوي وبلهجتهم الاشورية في كافة مناطق نفوذهم شمال بلاد الرافدين وعاصمتهم آشور وخارجها وذلك منذ الالف الثاني قبل الميلاد ، الان أن تواجدهم في بلاد الرافدين يسبق هذا التاريخ إذ تشير المصادر الى ان الاشوريين من الاقوام التي هاجرت من جزيرة العرب الى شواطئ نهر دجلة شمال بلاد الرافدين منذ فترة الالف الثالث قبل الميلاد وربما قبل هذا العهد على شكل موجات بشرية متغيرة في الزمن والعدد . وموضوع البحث يتطرق الى اللغة الآشورية من خلال الكتابة المسماوية على ما يعرف بـ‘طابوق البناء’ أو ما تعرف بـ‘نواحات أو طابوق التدشين’ في الأبنية الملكية التابعة للدولة كالقصور والمعابد ، وهذا النوع من الكتابات المسماوية يتم تدوينه كنماذج تذكارية على طابوق البناء ، كان يوضع بين صفوف البناء في المبني الواحد مرات عديدة ، والنماذجتان اللذان سنعرضها من فترة العصر الآشوري الوسيط والحديث (الالف الثاني والالف قبل الميلاد) .

النموذج الأول: من العصر الآشوري الوسيط يعود للملك ‘شلمنصر الاول’ (1274 - 1245 ق.م). وابعاد الطابوقة الكلية 27,2 سم طولا و22,3 سم عرضا و5,5 سم سماكا، عثر عليها في قرية تقع فوق انقاضها اليوم قبور قديمة لازهالي قرية ‘باستام’ ، والتي تبعد حوالي 20 كم غرب مركز مدينة اربيل شمال بلاد الرافدين، محفوظة الان في متحف اربيل .

النموذج الثاني: من العصر الآشوري الحديث، يعود للملك ‘شروعكين’ (704 - 722 ق.م).

طابوقة البناء الثانية مختومة باسم الملك شروعكين، ابعادها الكلية 33 سم طولا و33 سم عرضا و10 سم سماكا، دون عليها نص مسماري من أربعة اسطر، عثر عليها في ارضية قصر الملك ‘شروعكين’ في مدينة دور- شروعكين (خرسپاد) الاشورية ، والتي تقع على بعد 15 كم شرق مدينة الموصل (نينوى) وهي محفوظة الان في متحف الموصل.

الكلمات المفتاحية :

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 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 (see.fig.1&2), 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, dimensions is 33c.m long and 33c.m wide and 10 c.m thickness (see. fig.3&4) 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 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 , 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, "Oshiba1" 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" 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.2)

It is worth mentioning that the era of the Assyrian king "Shaerooken" 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 Alhamawy" in the seventh hundreds of Hijra under the name "khorstoobad"⁽³²⁾ hence the name was declined into "Khorsabad" which is known nowadays.⁽³³⁾

The place of discovering the brick was the mentioned city, particularly the ground of king's palace "Sharrokin", 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⁾

IV- Reading the first model Text :(see Fig.1,2)

- 1- É.GAL ^{md} šùl-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]

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.

V- Reading the Second model Text: (see fig.3&4) :

1- Reading the lines of the second brick

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

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.

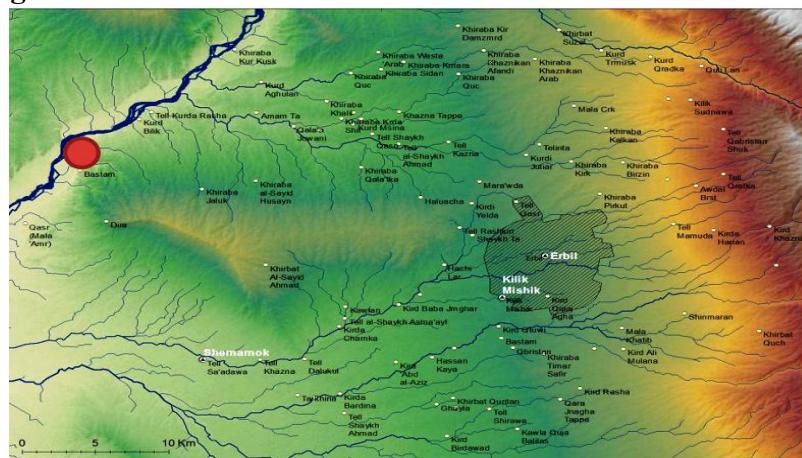
VI - recommendations:

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, 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.

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 "Kalah" 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.

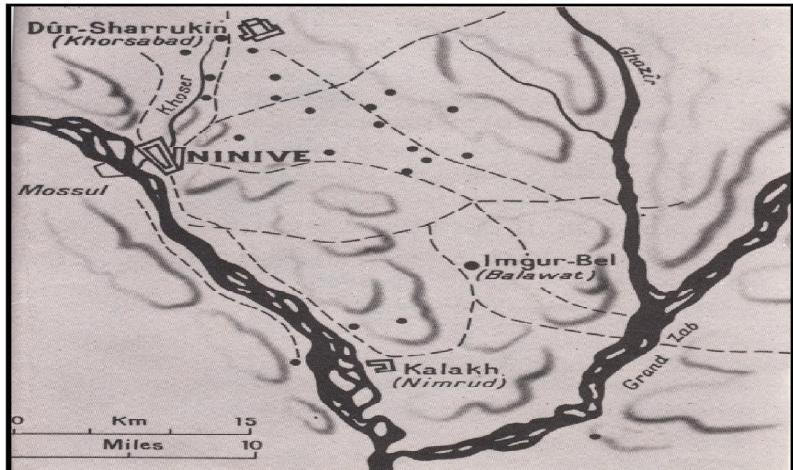
VII- Map, Figures and Pictures:



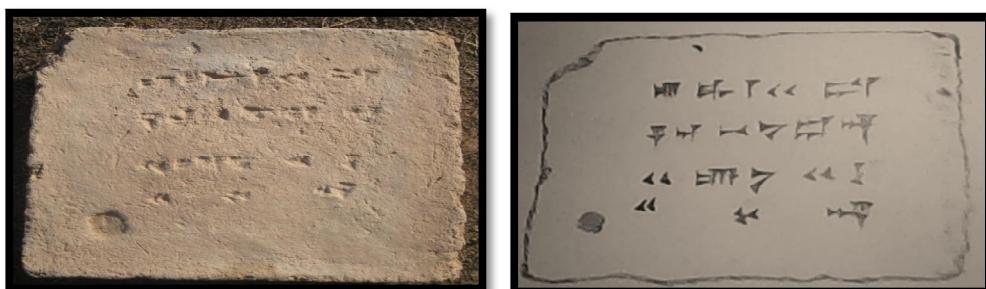
(Map.1) the expected site of the town Kilizi in the Bastam's Village.



(fig.1&2) An inscribed brick of Shalmanassar the 1st in Erbil Museum and A copy of the initiation Text



(Map.2) the location of the second model to Dor- Sharrokin (Khorsabad)



(Fig.3&4) Writing on the brick of the second model and its copy with cuneiform signs.

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