

## **Cuneiform Inscription on the Brick from King Shalmanassar1<sup>st</sup>Period<sup>(1)</sup>**

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The text that we are going to study is considered one of the well-known writings which is usually known as "bricks inauguration" in buildings, palaces and temples and they are in the form of stamp or inscription. This type of cuneiform is codified as memorial models to indicate to the kind of construction and discrimination in terms of inauguration or reconstruction and the impact that we are going to study a brick stone its total dimensions 27.2 cm. long, 22.3 cm. wide and 5.5 cm. thickness, written on it the cuneiform text belong to the period of the king, "Shalmaneser I" (1274 - 1245 BC.). The text consists of six lines of writing in Akkadian- Assyrian languages. A person found it on an unknown ancient hill which is now represent a cemetery which people of the region buried their dead for decades. It located within the boundaries of a village known as "Bastam" about 20 km to the north of the famous ancient city of Nimrud, on the east bank of the River "Upper Zab" within the boundaries of the city, "Kalak" in Erbil governorate.

The importance of the text shown on the brick that it revealed to us the location of the important archaeological City for the researchers and those who specialize in archaeology. That is the city of "Kilizi" which was one of the Assyrian cities connected with other Assyrian cities in the northern Mesopotamia and the to discover what they had included contributes to increase information on the Assyrian state during its middle period. So my call is an urgent need to preview this archaeological hill and stand on the discovering archaeological remains and their buildings' foundations.

## **Introduction:**

**T**he following texts used to be known as “Launching Blocks“ in the castles and temples building , and which have the form of Stamps or inscriptions<sup>(2)</sup> 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.<sup>(3)</sup> 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 10<sup>th</sup> Millennium BC, as found in the village of "Zawi Jamie"<sup>(4)</sup> on the remains of the circular shape stone foundations<sup>(5)</sup>. 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<sup>(6)</sup> 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.<sup>(7)</sup>

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<sup>(8)</sup>. In the Sumerian language, the stone was known as "NA<sub>4</sub>" which resembles in the Akkadian language the word "abnum".<sup>(9)</sup>

## **I- Describing the Remains:**

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.

## II- The language of the text:

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).<sup>(10)</sup> The Sumerian and Assyrian languages have been studied side by side in the capital Hittite "Hatusha",<sup>(11)</sup> and the excavations there showed Dictionaries of languages in this regard)<sup>(12)</sup>.

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.<sup>(13)</sup> 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.<sup>(14)</sup> Ashur has been mentioned in the old Assyrian texts from Old, Middle, and NeoAkkadian 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".<sup>(15)</sup> 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"<sup>(16)</sup>. 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".<sup>(17)</sup>

## III- Writing Text 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 "AdadNirari" the second (in 911 BC), the Middle Assyrian era.<sup>(18)</sup> During this period a number of powerful kings who continued, in their reign, the growth of the Assyrian state and its strength increased,<sup>(19)</sup> 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.<sup>(20)</sup>

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.<sup>(21)</sup>

Then successively after "AdadNrara" first, his son, "Shalmanassar I" (1274- 1245 BC),<sup>(22)</sup> 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 " " who is considered to be King sixteenth in the list of the kings of Assyria, and the temple was rebuilt by "Aarichomthe first," King number thirty-third in the list of Assyrian kings. The temple was reconstructed by king "ShamshiAdad" 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".<sup>(23)</sup> Perhaps the present memorial text inauguration is located in a series of achievements Urban carried out by King ShalmanassarI, during his time the text is documented and carries 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.

(see Fig.2, 3) :IV- Reading the Text

- 1- É.GAL<sup>md</sup> šùl-ma-nu-SAG
- 2- MAN KIŠ
- 3- A<sup>u</sup>ÉRIN.DUH MAN KIŠ -ma
- 4- A GID<sub>2</sub>-de-en-DINGIR(ili) MAN Aš-šur
- 5- šá É<sup>u</sup>UTU LUGAL
- 6- šá URU Ki-li-z[i]

A- English Translation:

- 1- (Property) of the palace of ShalmanassarI,
- 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-Syllabic Translation by the lines:

1 –"É.GAL": Single Sumerian consists of two syllables of the two signs which have been used frequently in the Sumerian texts, especially property, and the first syllable " É "corresponding "bit" in the Akkadian language meaning house or temple)<sup>(24)</sup>, (and the second syllable of "GAL" meaning great or large offset rabû in the Akkadian language, and by collecting the two syllables the meaning will be "palace".)<sup>(25)</sup>

"<sup>md</sup>šùl-ma-nu-sag": name of the king "Shalmanassarthe first", one of the kings of the Assyrian state in its mediator age , he ruled for 29 years (1274 - 1245 BC). Identifying the text is attributable to his own time, his name was connected with Divinity(dingir), which is usually referred to denote the names of the gods.<sup>(26)</sup> Because the writer was proud of his king, he wrote his name followed thismark. It is likely that the name of the King is a compound of the name of God (Sālmanuš) and "MAŠ" or "SAG".The writer had also documented some markers referring to the names of people before mentioning the name and this is considered the sign which can be read as " dis" .<sup>(27)</sup>

2 –"MAN":is a Sumerianitem with multiple readings including the meanings king, offset by šárru of the Akkadian language.<sup>(28)</sup>

**"KIŠ":** is a Sumerian item offset kiššatu in Akkadian which means the universe,<sup>(29)</sup> and by collecting it with the previous syllable, the meaning becomes "king of the universe," and "char. Kish" means king of Kish, i.e., king of the universe named after the "Monarchy's Kish", and this means that the term is taken from the name of the city, "Kish" (KIŠ) the Sumerian, which has a significant importance according to the Sumerians, since it was known in the history of civilization of Mesopotamia as a center first dynasty ruled after the flood, according to a document proving the Kings Sumerian and entitled "majestic" in the language of Sumerian "Nam.lugal".<sup>(30)</sup> mentioning these two marks has been stated repeatedly delineated in the following line to refer to King "AdadNerrari" the father of the King "Shalmanassar" first.

**3-"A":** Is a Sumerian sign means "son" and offset maru / aplu<sup>(31)</sup> in the Akkadian language. It has been repeated in the fourth line to refer to the lineage of the king "Shemenser" mentioning his father and grandfather. "10-eren<sub>2</sub>-duh", are three signs used to read the name of king "AddNerari first", the father of Shemenser first.

**"MAN.KIŠ-ma":** It has been previously noted the delineation of the first two Sumerian words which mean King of the universe or the world, but the sign which is read "ma" is a tool to connect the words and sentences to each other, and can be translated into "well" and "also,"<sup>(32)</sup> and there were such a formula in the Assyrian Modern Assyrian period on the Building bricks in the palaces, temples and tombs of the buildings in the Assyrian cities, including the palace of King "Assyria Nasser Pal" Second, specifically in one of the walls of a tomb in city "Kalkh" (Nimrod).<sup>(33)</sup>

**4 –"GÍD (Arik)-de-en-DINGIR (ili)":** Four signs are used to read out the name of the king "Ark-Den-Eli" grandfather King "Shalmanassar first".

**aš-šur:** is the name of the famous city of Ashur from which the Assyrians took their name which probably came by using two signs used to be known during the ancient and medieval Assyrian era with other similar formats. In addition to the sign "ki" which refers to the city and which wasn't documented by the writer himself because of line finishing or because of the fame that the city of Ashur gained so there is no need to identify the marker on the city at the end of the name.

**5 –"Šá":** Is relative with Akkadian, meaning "who" and "belonging to".<sup>(34)</sup> UTU is the Sumerian name that is known as God of the sun "šamaš" in the Akkadian language,<sup>(35)</sup> the name of the god was preceded by the marker referring to divinity

and since the nickname was preceded by the Sumerian term "É" which means the temple, the meaning, then, is the temple of the god "Shamash". The Sumerian term LU.GAL resembles the same term in the Akkadian language "šarru" meaning king.<sup>(36)</sup>

6 –"URU": Is a single Sumerian term means city and it resembles "ālu" of the Akkadian language,<sup>(37)</sup> it may precede the names of cities as a marker or the mark "ki" might be attached as a Sumerian term to mean land, city, and limits. Its synonym in the Akkadian language is *iseršetu*.<sup>(38)</sup>

"Ki-li-zi": Is the name of the Assyrian city and certainly nothing of its signs drawing left clearly but the first syllable and some parts of the second one and a simple part of the third one, and the importance of the text of this brick lies in our knowledge about a probable site to one of the most important Assyrian cities. It has been reported in the Assyrian writings in the form "Ki-Li-Zi" or "Kal-zi" and as in the following "URU kal-zi". Its master had received large quantities of food and a dress was represented for the statue of the god Adad.<sup>(39)</sup> However, determining the location was not confirmed since the sources, related with archeological excavations, including the famous archives of Assyria, mentioned that it was an administrative center in the capital of Assyria, and in the past it was known as the "Klazey" but nowadays it is called "shmamuk Palace" (Qasršamamok).<sup>(40)</sup>

Through this study we tried to investigate the name and history of this city in the published cuneiform sources, and that enabled us to expect that the site of the Assyrian city during the Middle and Modern Assyrian eras is now, a great high hill in a village called "Bastam" next to the eastern bank of the "Higher Zab River" among the administrative boundaries to "Kalak" (Khabat) of the province of Erbil, where the brick belonging to the palace of the Assyrian king Shalmanassar the first mentioned in the village was found. The Sumerian cuneiform sources indicated that there is a city called the same name, which was similar to the text written on the brick, on which the name was written syllabically in the Middle Assyrian period using the following phonological sounds: (URU ki-li-zi),<sup>(41)</sup> and the same syllable were used to write the same name of the city during the Modern Assyrian period, in addition to writing the name in the familiar and normal way, i.e., (URU/DU<sub>3</sub>-zi). It is obvious that many ways of writing were used to write the name of this city, but the last correct writing which "Postgate J.N" has arrived at was (ki-li-zi).<sup>(42)</sup> This is the name of the city which was found on the brick we are dealing with in the present study. It is of importance to mention that the information we received, about the site of the city during the eighties of the previous century, by English archeologist

“Saggs H” who said that the city of “ ki-li-zi” was so important that it was known as a rural city and many educated people and many writers known by their school texts as “ki-li-ziwriters”, but its location wasn’t exactly identified but they were satisfied to identify its direction which is in the east of Assyria and southeast of the city of Erbil.<sup>(43)</sup>

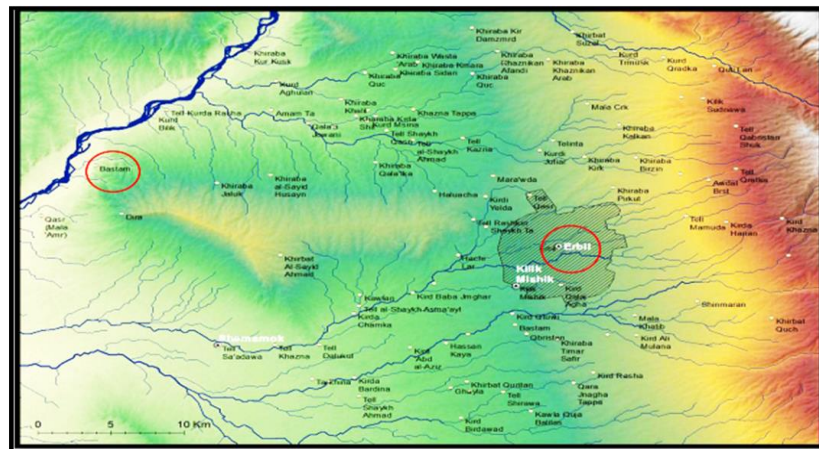
**VI-recommendations:**

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 a,b) 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 (s

**VII- Map, Figures:**

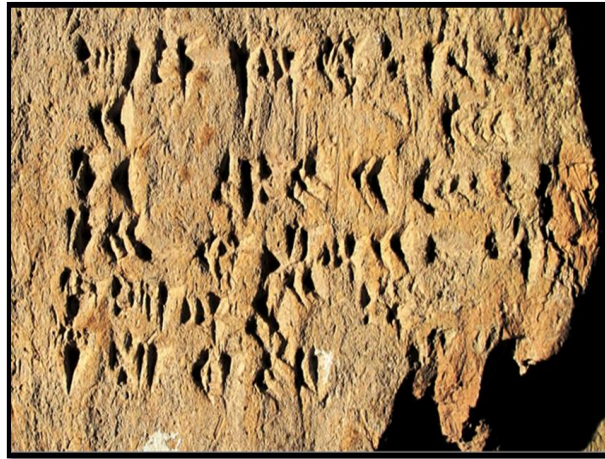
(1)Map of the expected site the Bastam' Village.

The researcher has taken this map personally from Professor Jason A.Ur from Harford University who makes contouring survey for cities and ancient sites in Iraq on November





**(2) An inscribed brick of Shalmanassar the 1st  
in Erbil Museum.**



**(3) A copy of the initiation Text**



**(4a) Slid picture for the hill sides where the brick was discovered of the Bastam's Village.**

**(4b) Slid picture for graveyard at the hill of the Bastam's Village.**



**(5) Numbers of the scattered pottery fragments on the hill's roof.**



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