

**"Cuneiform Text on a Building Brick from Khorsabad"****Dr.Qusay M Al- turky****Faculty of Science and Education – Akre****University of Dohuk****نص مسماري على طابوقة بناء من مدينة خُرسباد الاثرية****أ.م.د. قصي منصور عبد الكريم التركي****فاكيولتي العلوم والتربية/ جامعة دهوك - عقرة****الملخص عربي:**

تتنوع الكتابات المسمارية التي يتم تدوينها كنماذج تذكارية في الأبنية الملكية التابعة للدولة كالقصور والمعابد، ومن بين تلك الكتابات النصوص المنقوشة على طابوق البناء، أو ما يعرف بـ "طابوق التذنين"، وعادة ما توضع نماذج لهذا الطابوق بين صفوف البناء في المبنى الواحد مرات عديدة، والنموذج الذي سنعرضه من فترة العصر الآشوري الحديث (الالف الأول قبل الميلاد)، وتحديدًا يعود لفترة حكم الملك "شروكين" (Šarrukin) (722 - 704 ق.م) ويحوي النص أربعة أسطر من الكتابة المسمارية الآشورية على طابوقة (Brick) بناء مربعة الشكل اكتشفت في ارضية قصر الملك "شروكين"، بمدينة "خُرسباد" ذات أبعاد هي: 33 سم طولاً و33 سم عرضاً و10 سم سمكاً، دون عليها نص مسماري باللغة الاكديّة. الآشورية.

وتكمن اهمية (الطابوقة) في إنها أكدت لنا اهمية آخر عاصمة آشورية بكامل مرافقها تضاهي المدن الآشورية العريقة السابقة لها مثل نينوى وكالخ (كالخ)، والتي انفرد ببنائها أعظم ملوك العصر الآشوري الحديث ومؤسس آخر سلالة آشورية حملة اسمه وهي السلالة السرجونية، والذي من المرجح انه كان اختياراً ذو دوافع اقتصادية وسياسية حول اختيار الملك عاصمة جديدة لمملكته، وقد اكدت الطابوقة بشكل قاطع ان بناء القصر هو للملك شروكين، باني المدينة والرجل المبجل من قبل اعظم الالهة العراقية القديمة وهو الاله اينليل. فمن الضروري البدء باعادة تنقيب المدينة بكافة اقسامها ومن بينها قصر الملك الذي اكتشفت في ارضيته الطابوقة عن طريق الصدفة أيضاً

**Abstract:**

Cuneiform writings vary in which are recorded as souvenir in royal buildings belonging to the property of the state as palaces and temples, and among these writings the texts inscribed in the building brick, or what is known as "brick inauguration", usually models of such bricks are placed among the lines of the same building several times. The model, 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.it was discovered in "Dur- sharrukin" (Khorsabad).

**"Introduction:**

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### **I – The Use of the Stone in Building:**

The stone in the ancient Iraqi architecture which was used in the early periods, nearly belongs to the tenth thousand BC. In "Zawyjame" village <sup>(1)</sup>, rests of circle-shaped foundations made of stone were found <sup>(2)</sup>. Using the stone was also continued in the following eras in the foundations of buildings and in covering some of the Assyrian cities fences and in the façade of palace's walls <sup>(3)</sup>, or special usage as the stones which are among our hands as souvenir. There are different kinds of detected stones in various places of Assyrian country such as, marble, alabaster and lime stones. The reason of using the stone in the northern part of Mesopotamia more than the southern part is the availability of the stone in northern part, which is strong, hard and resistance of whether changing, and because of it contains metals and other components which bond with each other forming the stone itself <sup>(4)</sup>. The stone has been known in Sumerian as "NA4" and in Akkadian as "abnum". <sup>(5)</sup>

### **II– writing on the Assyrian bricks:**

Writings on building bricks are similar to those writings on the doors' handles in various periods of kings and various rules of cities, the cuneiforms texts which were recorded as memorial samples expressing the works and the building achievements of the kings of such kinds are known as inauguration boards <sup>(6)</sup>, for recording such works, regulated square or rectangular bricks were used in different eras particularly the Assyrian one <sup>(7)</sup>.

Most of the cuneiform signs were recorded as it is clear for the reader as Assyrian section, they are nothing, but methodic signs, it is a method used by Assyrian writers particularly the medium Assyrian era, and this method of writing was about a tradition in ancient Mesopotamia, words were not written by Akkadian phonetics, but were short-handed by synonymous signs each of which refers to an Akkadian word consisting of many syllables, one who reads cuneiform words should know how to read those signs and their synonymous, or it is short-handed syllable namely a word consists of several syllables, this is common in the cuneiform writings and it is known among cuneiform writing specialists as (Ideography) writing either on the Sumerian, Babylonian or Assyrian writing. <sup>(8)</sup>

### **III – The text language**

It was known that Assyrian and their neighbor the Hittites and others used the Sumerian language as well as Akkadian language (Assyrian) which was the language of corresponding, conventions and international relationships during the second millennium BC (particularly the fourteenth century BC <sup>(9)</sup> the language of the Assyrian and Sumerian languages alongside were studied in the capital the Hittites "Hatusha",<sup>(10)</sup> Engravings show the existence of concerning dictionaries <sup>(11)</sup> and it has been found through the study of the Assyrian writings that most of the Sumerian one phonetic syllable words and many syllables connected with the cuneiform signs are Sumerian origin in which through using them expressing the syllable and the Assyrian meanings. It seems that using such method – writing on the stones and memorial stands– suits the nature of writing on stones by engraving, on the contrary of the writing on the mud by using the method of pressing typing on the wet clay. In which writer could save time while spending it in writing the long Assyrian words which consist of many phonetics syllables by one Sumerian syllable. This method shorthanded the available spaces of writing on the surface of stone. Hence, the Assyrian word was intentionally changed by a symbol of one cuneiform mark expressing the word by a Sumerian syllable <sup>(12)</sup> henceforth, the reader of cuneiform should be informed by Sumerian language and their cuneiform signs as well as reader should be known of Akkadian language at the same time.

As for the mentioned Assyrian city in the text, it is the first habitant for the Assyrian people during their various eras, and it was the place for worshiping the largest gods "Assure", its name was mentioned in the cuneiform texts written by several forms in Sumerian and Akkadian <sup>(13)</sup>, and it has been mentioned in the text which is conformed the name of the city in the Akkadian writings from the old, medium and modern Assyrian era. In the Akkadian era, the name was written as "aš-šur.ki" once (Assyrian City) the form of the name in lybiela texts (Tel Mardeikh) was "a-šur.ki" once,<sup>(14)</sup> and another form "aš-šur-ki"<sup>(15)</sup>, but the name in the old and medium Assyrian era was written as syllabic " a-šu-ur.ki" or as "a-šur.ki",<sup>(16)</sup> and the modernist used form of Assyrian reign name was the syllabic shape by doubling the first letter "šš" as it is known during the modern Assyrian era as "aš-šur.ki". The name of Assyrian City was common, the resources of Arabic and Aramaic refer to the name of it as "Assyrian Aqoor".<sup>(17)</sup>

#### **VI – The period of the text writing:**

Researchers named the period of writing on the brick 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"<sup>(18)</sup>, 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.<sup>(19)</sup> The city was known after the discovering of the brick in the king's palace under the name "Dur-Sharokeen".<sup>(20)</sup>

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 <sup>(21)</sup> 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).<sup>(22)</sup>

Tracing the cuneiform texts, we find many signs in different resources ensuring the name of "Door Sharrokin" (Dur-Šarru-kin)<sup>(23)</sup> 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, (BAD<sub>2</sub>)<sup>(24)</sup> 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.<sup>(25)</sup> 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)<sup>(26)</sup> 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",<sup>(27)</sup> hence the name was declined into "Khorsobad" which is known nowadays.<sup>(28)</sup>

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." <sup>(29)</sup>

#### **V – The Description of Brick**

The dimensions of the discovered brick on its ground of the king's palace are: 33cm length, 33 cm width and 10 cm the thickness, cuneiform text was written on it four lines in Akkadian – Assyrian language, (see the diagram 2) and the four lines text which we intend

to study it among texts on bricks which were usually put between the walls lines of palaces and temples as mentioned above, this sort of writing is recorded as a memorial samples of building bricks. <sup>(30)</sup>

The way and the place of the brick was discovered by coincidence by the agrological researcher "Shatha Almashadany" while visiting the ruins of "Khorsabad" (look at the map No.1), the brick was found in the place of building the palace with other three bricks, it has been delivered to the directorate of Nineveh. <sup>(31)</sup>

### **VII – Reading, Translating and Analyzing the Text on the Brick:**

#### **I. Reading the lines of the second brick**

- 1- E<sub>2</sub>. GAL <sup>DIŠ</sup>MAN. GIN ,  
GAR <sup>d</sup>BAD NU. EŠ<sub>3</sub> aš \_ šur ,  
MAN dan- nu MAN šu<sub>2</sub> ,  
MAN KUR aš \_ šur .

#### **II. Translating the Lines in English:**

- 1- Sharrokin palace,
- 2- The ruler (appointed by) the god Enlil, the owner of high position<sup>(32)</sup> for Assyrian,
- 3- strong king, the king of world (universe),
- 4- The king of Assyrian country.

#### **The general translation:**

"The place of the king Sharrokin, the appointed ruler by the god Enlil, the notability, dignified in Assyrian, the strong king, the king of Assyrian country."

### **III. Analysis and translate the lines on the brick according to the lines:**

- 1- É.GAL is a Sumerian word consists of two syllabic signs used a lot in the Sumerian texts particularly the royal one, the first syllable É in Acadien means bit in Akkadian language which means house or temple <sup>(33)</sup> and the second syllable GAL means great or great which is rabû in Akkadian language, but gathering the two syllables means "palace" <sup>(34)</sup>

<sup>DIŠ</sup>MAN a Sumerian word means king in Akkadian language means "šarru",<sup>(35)</sup> the second word GIN which means loyal or faithful, in Akkadian means kinu, this word usually comes names of fames <sup>(36)</sup>, thus the first line means the palace of the faithful king or the loyal king intending here "Sharrokin".

- 2- GAR a Sumerian word means the ruler and in Akkadian means "šaknu".<sup>(37)</sup>

<sup>d</sup>BAD a word refers to the god Enlil, the modern reading of the sign "IDIM", accurately the word is used as a title of the god Enlil (god of air), the god of "Bel", the god of "Ea".<sup>(38)</sup>

NU.EŠ<sub>2</sub> is a Sumerian expression which means notability, dignified, in Akkadian it means "nešakku"<sup>(39)</sup>, it may literary and meaningly mean hermit.

aš-šur is the famous Assyrian city and the Assyrian people likely took their name from it, the form of the city name has come with two signs which it has been known during the old, and medium Assyrian era with other forms which are little bit similar to them, as well as the sign ki which refers to the city and which the writer did not record it because of the end of the line or because of the fame of Assyrian name city which is needless to record the referring sign to the city at the end of the name.

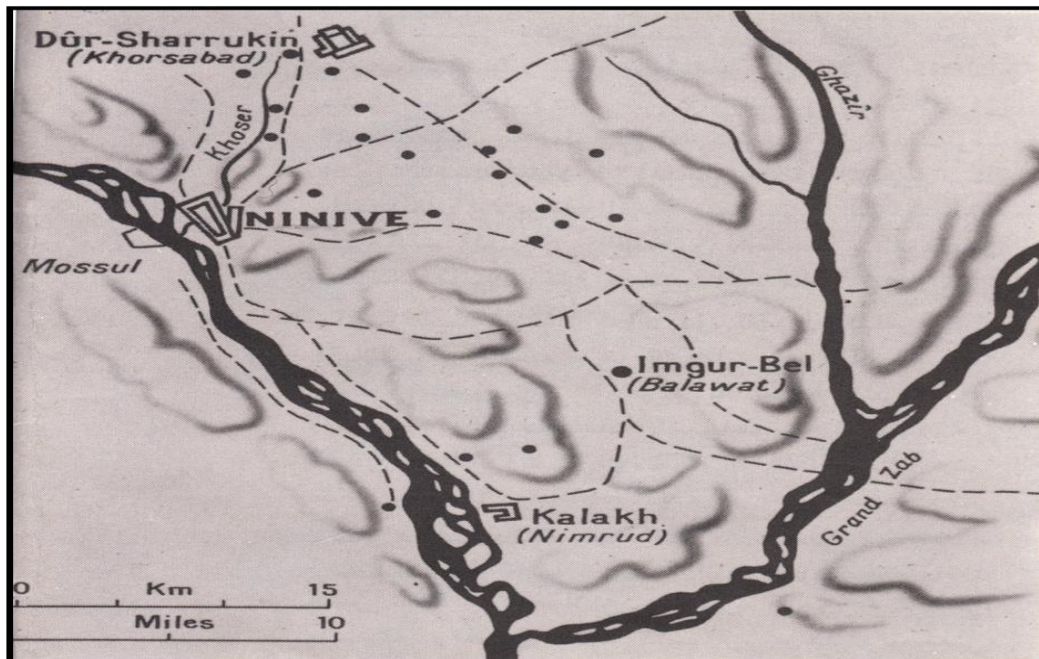
3- dan - nu an Akkadian word mentioned a lot in the royal texts and writings in describing the kings and the rules, which means strong and it means GA- KAL in Sumerian.<sup>(40)</sup>

ŠU<sub>2</sub> a Sumerian word means kiššatu in Akkadian which means the universe or sovereignty.<sup>(41)</sup>

4- KUR a Sumerian word means "mat" and in Akkadian it means (mātu), and it means country.<sup>(42)</sup>

#### Recommendation:

The importance 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 agrolological process again in all parts of the city including the king's palace which was discovered on its ground the brick coincidently.

- **The pendant of maps and shapes:**

Map (1) Location of Sharrokin Dor (Khorsabad) in the river Alkhoser, where was the second brick found, quoted from: Andera Parow, Assyrian country, translated by Issa Salman and Saleem Taha Altekerity, Dar Alrasheed, Baghdad (1980:18).

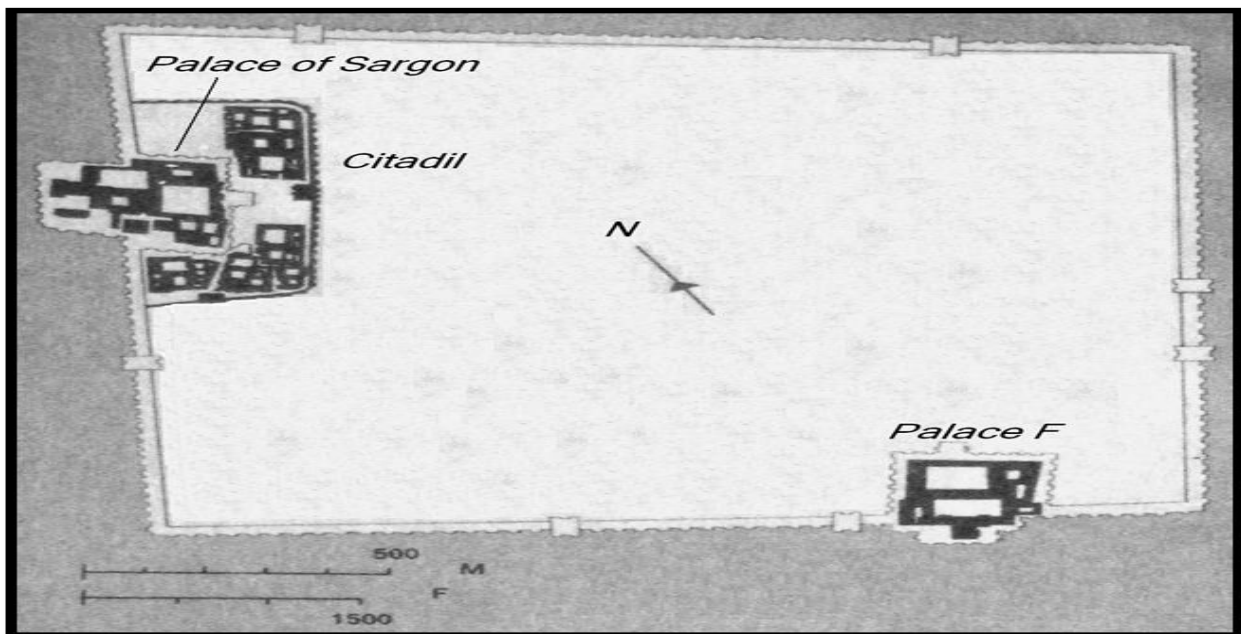


Diagram (1) A plan of the king's Sharrokin palace, for the other parts of the city, the second brick was discovered in the ground of the palace, changed by: Anton Mortecart the Art of ancient Iraq, translated and commented by Issa Salman and Sleem Taha Altecreity, Al-baghdadyia Aladeeb press (1975:403).





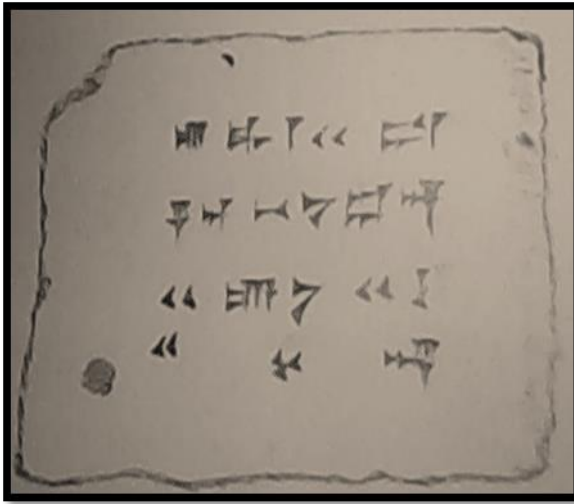


Diagram (2) Writing on the brick and its copy with cuneiform signs.

### References :

- <sup>1</sup>-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).
- <sup>2</sup>-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).
- <sup>3</sup>-Hussein Daher Hamud, "The carved walls as Assyrian mass media" Adab Alrafidian magazine, No. 31, Baghdad, (1998:291).
- <sup>4</sup>-Hameed Mohammad Hussein, The influence of the building Iraqi house over eras, Baynal Nahreen magazine, No 49–50, Baghdad (1985:72)
- <sup>5</sup>-Labat R Manuel D Épigraphe Akkadienne (= MAD) ,2002, Paris,no.229,p.125
- <sup>6</sup>-Hallo W.W , Royal Inscription of the Early Old Babylonian , BIOR , vol.18,1961,P.4 ff.
- <sup>7</sup>-Walker C.B.F, Cuneiform brick inscription, British museum,(1981:11)
- <sup>8</sup>-For more information about the nature and rules of writing on bricks, see: Othman Ganim Mohammad, The Cuneiform writing for fees from the first thousand BC, unpublished MA degree, College of Arts, Dept. of Archeology, University of Mosul,2003.
- <sup>9</sup>-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)
- <sup>10</sup>-Hattusha: The capital of Hittites empire, which was uncovered under the ruins of Bogazkoy in the middle and north of Anatolia, the city was discovered in the middle of nineteenth century, at the end of the same century, first Sumerian figures were discovered of Hittites language. Digging was started at the beginning of the twentieth



century by the Eastward German Association, the job continued in interrupted periods on the extension of the referred century. See: Anton Mortcrat, the history of Far East, translated by Tawfeeq Sulyman– Ali Abo Assaf, Damascus 1967.

- <sup>11</sup>–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)
- <sup>12</sup>–Jorny A.R. Hittites, (London,1952), translated by Mohammad Abdula Kader, revised by Faysal Al–Waaly (1963:175–177).
- <sup>13</sup>–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).
- <sup>4</sup> – Fawzy Rasheed, Assyrian the horizon of the sky, Baghdad (1985:8–10).
- <sup>5</sup>–Michalowski P , Third Millennium Contacts : Observation on the Relationships Between Mari and Ebla, JAOS,1985,105,part.2,p.297.
- <sup>6</sup>–Talib Munaam habeeb, the career and the achievements of Sanhareeb (705–681 BC) unpublished MA thesis, university of Baghdad, College of Arts, (1986:6).
- <sup>7</sup>–Alhamawy, Muajam Albuldan –The Dictionary of Cities– Tehran Printing, (1965:119)
- <sup>8</sup>–"Shrokeen" is known as the king's name which was famous of the name "Sargon" was not assyrian name, moreover, the name was not mentioned in the annuals of the Assyrian kings, a lot of specializations see that the name has a relationship with the priority example appeared on the political events stages in the history of Iraq, it is the king who was the first founder emperor in the history and the first capital builder which carried his name and his title, it was "Akkad" and its founder "the Akkadian Sargon" (2371–2316 BC), Sharokeen wanted to immortalized his name through the architectural achievement as building a city as a capital carrying his name, just as "Akkad" city, the capital that the Akkadian Sharokeen built it, to spell his greatness as the same fame, reverence of Akkad city had over passing eras. See: Fawzy Rasheed, the Akkadian Sargon the first emperor in the world, 1<sup>st</sup> printing, the Golden Encyclopedia (1), the Ministry of Culture and Mass Media, Baghdad 1990.
- <sup>9</sup>–Iva Kanjek – Care Shabowm, the ancient history of Assyrian, translated by Farooq Ismail, Dar Alzaman, 1<sup>st</sup> printing, Damascus, (2008:69).
- <sup>20</sup>–Rawlinson H.C. The Cuneiform Inscription of Western Asia, II ,Pl.50, col.I, II,26.
- <sup>21</sup>–Three kings came after Shrookeen (Seen – Aakhy – Aryba (704–681) and the Assyrian king Aakhy – Aadin (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).
- <sup>22</sup>–Taha Bager, An introduction in the history of old civilizations. 1<sup>st</sup> part, Dar Albyan, 1973:515 and after that.
- <sup>23</sup>–Ebling and Meissne, Realexikon der Assyriology, Vol.I, p.249.
- <sup>24</sup>–Labat R, op.cit, No.152.
- <sup>25</sup>–Ibid, No.85.
- <sup>26</sup>–Farege Bassmajy, Iraqi museum treasures, General directorate of agrology, Baghdad, (1972:69).
- <sup>27</sup>–Shihab Aldeen Yagoot Alhamowy, ibid, 358.
- <sup>28</sup>–Kahtan Rasheed Salah, the Agrological Scout in Iraq, General Gstablishment of Agrological and Heritage (1987:31).
- <sup>29</sup>–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).
- <sup>30</sup>–Hallo W.W, Royal Inscription of the Early Old Babylonian , BIOR , vol.18,1961,p.4 ff.
- <sup>31</sup>–Shatha Deyaa Mohammad Sulyman Almashhadany, Khorsabad city an agrological history study, unpublished MA degree– the Arabic History and Heritage Higher studies Institute, Baghdad (2012:103) and after that.
- <sup>32</sup>–It is worth mentioning that the two signs " NU. EŠ<sub>3</sub>" which mean the word "nêšakku" its translation has been varied, Renee Labat sees it as "priest", see: op.cit,no.75,p.73 (MAD)Labat R, while others see it means as priest but it should preceded by the sign "LÚ", mostly it comes alone as royal title particularly concerning mentioning the second king Sharrokin, as an evidence of the dignified, appreciation, and notability, see under the word " "nešakku" Jeremy B and Others,op.cit,p.251; CAD, N,II,pp.190– 191.
- <sup>33</sup>–MAD, op.cit, no.324 , p.129
- <sup>34</sup>–MAD, Ibid , no.343,p.157.
- <sup>35</sup>–CAD, S/Z, P. 76:b.
- <sup>36</sup>–CAD, K,p.391:b
- <sup>37</sup>–Ibid,S/1, p.180:a
- <sup>38</sup>–MAD, op.cit, p.67, no.69.
- <sup>39</sup>–CAD, N/2, p.190:b
- <sup>40</sup>–MAD, op.cit, no. 319,p.145.
- <sup>41</sup>–Ibid, no.545,p.227.
- <sup>42</sup>–MAD, op.cit, no.366, p.167.

