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The Erbil Governorate lies between 43,45/22' longitudinal parallels, eastwards and 35,37/15' latitudinal parallels, northwards. Thus, it is situated south of the Kurdistan Homelands, north of Federal Iraq and in the middle of Kurdistan Region. Geographically, the city of Erbil extends over a vast plain, with 1300 ft. above sea level. Erbil is a dividing line between Great Zab and Little Zab. The capital of Kurdistan, Erbil is 350 km off the Federal Iraqi metropolis, Baghdad. It is bounded by the city of Sulaimaniya in the east; Great Zab, cities of Mosul and Dohuk from the west; Kirkuk from the south and to the north there are Turkey-Iran borders. Since the ancient eras, Erbil has been an administrative, military and commercial centre, maintaining its value and fame. Hence it is an old

city, having names dating back to 4000 BC. In the Sumerian King's (Shulgi) writings it was known as (Urbillum); in the Babylonian and Assyrian inscriptions, referred to as (Arbaello)-i.e. the four gods. Under the Babylonians, Ishtar Temple was centred there. In cuneiform manuscripts it was known as (Ay Kshan Klama) which means (Region Lady's Home). It was the temple housing Assyrian gods; therefore one can see sculpted pictures of King (Banipal 627-688 BC); many Assyrian kings' pictures who had lived in the region; besides a bronze-made statue of Ishtar goddess. Owing to the city's significance, the Assyrian King (Sennacherib 681-750 BC) stored its underground water in 22 km marble-built tunnel extending from Murtk village to Erbil. On the water spring gate Sennacherib



wrote the following: (I am Sennacherib, the king of Assyria; I built three water tunnels from (Khani) Mountains to the Beauteous Lady's Home...) Erbil was the Assyrian Empire's Capital under Sargon of Akkad (705-721 BC). At that time Erbil had been at the peak of civilisational and constructional progress. Following the fall of Nineveh in 612 BC, it became a part of the Medes's State; however, after the World War I, it became part of Iraq's lands. Erbil witnessed many events and wars. The most well-known battle was (Arbella) in (331 BC) between Alexander of Macedonia and Dara III, the last Persian Emperor. Erbil is also designated as the city of Holako's Downfall, because all Holako's attempts to penetrate this city ended to a big failure and finally he pulled out his army (1235 A.D.)



Pre-Islamic Periods Witnessed by Erbil

1. Sumerian Period
2. Assyrian Period
3. Persian Period
4. Sasanid Period
5. Safavid Period
6. Parthian Period

Post-Islam Principalities Ruling in Erbil

1. Hazbanian Principality
2. Baktakmina Principality
3. Kurdish Mazinjan Principality

Arbila Battle (Kokmila):

In 334 BC, Alexander had led his famous campaign against the East. Alexander met Darios III near Issus River (north of Syria) and defeated him. Consequently, he occupied Syria and Egypt. Later he headed for Iraq, crossed both rivers "Euphrates and Tigris" near Der Al-Zoor, and went towards Mosul, passing by Sinjar. He crossed the Tigris to Nineveh Plains, and encountered Darios in a battle called Kokmila, which was thought to have occurred at Khazar River.

Vector Plass, the archiologist says: The place where the famous Arbila Battle (330 BC) took place is located near Bartilla Plain. He believes that this place is correspondent with what the historians had mentioned. He also related that Bartilla is located in the same place of the ancient Kokmila. Having been defeated, Darios fled and crossed the bridge (at that time existent on Khazar River). Then Alexander crossed the Zab and reached Erbil. He camped at Girdmamik Village, where the remains of the old bridge are found. Batlemos named that place Kur Khora due to the existence of rocks and a huge building as well as many remnants near the Right Zab. To Assyrians, Erbil was a very famous city; it was mentioned in their ornaments written in cuneiform writing. There Darios had collected his treasures and ammunition. When Darios left the city, he left his treasures there.