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# From Mari to Yakaltum: a route westwards according to the royal archives of Mari

Dominique Charpin

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BERLINER BEITRÄGE ZUM VORDEREN ORIENT

BAND 30

# Berliner Beiträge zum Vorderen Orient

Herausgegeben von

Dominik Bonatz  
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und  
Jörg Klinger

*Entre les fleuves – III*

On the Way in Upper Mesopotamia.  
Travels, Routes and Environment as a Basis for the Reconstruction of  
Historical Geography

edited by  
Adelheid Otto and Nele Ziegler



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# From Mari to Yakaltum: a route westwards according to the royal archives of Mari \*

IN MEMORY OF PIERRE VILLARD

*without whom this study would not have existed*

DOMINIQUE CHARPIN\*\*

An ancient historian often studies the itineraries from narrative sources: we can cite Xenophon's *Anabasis*, where the author describes the expedition of Cyrus the Younger against his brother Artaxerxes II and the retreat of the Ten Thousand in 401 BC. The assyriologist is then led, with the help of cuneiform sources, to comment on the description of the routes followed, which sometimes provoke his astonishment (JOANNÈS 1995). The case that will be examined in this contribution is in a very different methodological situation: indeed, no text describes the route followed by Zimri-Lim and his troops when they went from Mari to the kingdom of Aleppo in the autumn of 1765 BC: this military campaign is only documented by archival texts. The historian must first patiently put in order the pieces of a puzzle of which he does not possess all the elements, before providing a geographical commentary on the data gathered. In what follows we will consider the available sources and the methods to be applied to them, then we will examine the fixed points of the stages of a trip that the textual data makes possible to determine, and finally we will attempt to reconstruct the route that was followed.

## 1. Reconstruction of itineraries: sources and methods

For an assyriologist, the reconstruction of routes in the Ancient Near East requires methods adapted to the different types of sources at his disposal,<sup>1</sup> the focus here will be

on the archives of the Old Babylonian period, in particular those discovered in the palace of Mari.<sup>2</sup>

### 1.1 Background

The documents of the Old Babylonian period have some general characteristics that need to be briefly recalled.

the 18th century BC"), funded by the ANR for 48 months (2022-2026). I thank N. Ziegler, E. Cancik-Kirschbaum and A. Otto for initially inviting me to participate in their HIGEOMES programme, and in particular to the meetings in Dijon (16-17 March 2012) and Mainz (23-24 November 2012), where the themes of the present contribution were initially presented. In taking it up for publication in the "ELF III" volume, I have of course taken into account the many texts and studies that have been published in the meantime.

While I was putting the finishing touches to this study, the news arrived that Pierre Villard had left us. It seemed appropriate to dedicate this contribution to his memory, not without emotion; I will have the opportunity to pay him a longer tribute in the next issue of the *AfO* journal.

\*\* Collège de France-PSL & UMR 7192.

1 A colloquium was organised by M. Fales in Udine on the topic of itineraries in 2004: see FALES 2006, with contributions by M. Porter, M. P. Streck, M. Forlanini and D. Sevaliè.

2 The main study on routes and itineraries documented by Mari texts is JOANNÈS 1996, but it does not include methodological considerations; it should also be noted that it is now more than a quarter of a century old and that the progress of our knowledge since then has been significant. For more recent indications, see ZIEGLER & LANGLOIS 2016 (cited below as MTT 1/1) and ZIEGLER 2022 (below MTT 2/1); note that the "HIGEOMES" tab of the ARCHIBAB database allows for a continuous update of the data (currently limited to Upper Mesopotamia and to the region east of the Tigris).

\* This contribution was completed within the framework of the PCE-HM project ("Power and written culture in Upper Mesopotamia in

These archival texts are of a varied nature: letters, legal acts and accounting documents. Their number is very important, since more than 35,000 texts have been published in full since 1882.<sup>3</sup> It should also be pointed out that the flow of publications continues to be very abundant: for the last decade, an average of 320 new texts have been published each year.<sup>4</sup> Within this group, the archives found in the palace of Mari form a considerable group:<sup>5</sup> 9,541 texts have been published in full.<sup>6</sup> For the present investigation, we have to use two very different types of documents, but which provide complementary information: bookkeeping documents and letters. The former have the disadvantage of being very terse; on the other hand, they have the considerable advantage of being dated, or, when the date has disappeared, datable. The letters, on the other hand, did not include a date, with few exceptions; however, they have the advantage of being much more explicit. As the methodological problems vary greatly according to the type of text, we will examine them in turn.

#### 1.1.1 Reconstruction of itineraries from accounting documents

For the Old Babylonian period, the most privileged case where non-epistolary documents provide an itinerary is the well-known “Urbana-Yale” itinerary:<sup>7</sup> Three tablets give the stages of a journey from Larsa to Emar (or Imar) and back. The Mari archives do not contain any texts of this nature, but nevertheless accounting documents make it possible to reconstruct routes. There are two possible scenarios. For some trips, only primary documents are available: small notes where the scribe recorded an expenditure or the receipt of goods, noting the day and the place where the transaction was made. In other cases, the study relies on summary documents that allow the reconstruction of an itinerary, sometimes by combining their

data with that of the primary documents that have survived alongside.

##### 1.1.1.1 Itineraries reconstructed from primary documents

By arranging accounting documents in chronological sequence, it is possible in some cases to reconstruct itineraries: their temporal succession reflects the spatial progression. For such an operation to be possible, a prerequisite is that the sequence of months and years is known. This may seem obvious today, but the chronology of Zimri-Lim’s reign (1775–1761 BC) was not established so long ago—and there are still a number of points to be clarified.<sup>8</sup> Perhaps the most methodologically interesting example is the reconstruction of a military campaign of the Mari king Yahdun-Lim, whose reign preceded that of Zimri-Lim by around 25 years. It is based on a series of twenty-two small notes recording day-to-day oil and textiles expenditure as well as some gifts of textiles; the scribe specified that the operation was carried out “at the gate of GN”. The chronological arrangement of these documents shows a journey through the Habur triangle, which has been interpreted as a military campaign (CHARPIN 1994).

##### 1.1.1.2 Summary documents

Other journeys can be reconstructed from summary documents. The most obvious case is that of Zimri-Lim’s route to a city called Hušla or Hušlan, located at the eastern end of the “Habur triangle”, well beyond the borders of his kingdom.<sup>9</sup> The accounts of the “king’s chest” (<sup>si</sup>PISAN LUGAL) are available for this trip:<sup>10</sup>

– a summary dated 30/vi/Zimri-Lim 8, i.e. ARM 7 117 + M.10544;<sup>11</sup>

– a summary dated 20/[vii]/Zimri-Lim [8], i.e. ARM 7 219 (partially reproduced in ARM 31 133).

These two summaries can be supplemented by a series of small expenditure texts, whose data are sometimes included in one of the two summaries.<sup>12</sup>

From this documentation, we can fix the stages of the king’s move from Mari: 13/v at Mari; 14/v at Šuprum; 15/v at Terqa; 24/v at Saggaratum (M.12018 [= ARM 32 p. 342]). From this date onwards, no further location is assured, but the sequence of stages is known: 4/vi at Rašum (ARM 7

3 Exactly 35,192 according to the ARCHIBAB database as of 28/3/2023 (i.e. an average of 250 texts per year); this figure does not include the many texts that have only been partially quoted or included in catalogues.

4 Average calculated from a total of 3,194 new texts published from 2011 to 2020.

5 For an overview, see CHARPIN 2008.

6 According to the ARCHIBAB database as of 28/3/2023.

7 See respectively GOETZE 1953 (Urbana) and HALLO 1964 (Yale), to be completed by GOETZE 1964. Much progress has been made since 1964, starting with the confirmation that Tuttul was located at Tell Bi’a, at the mouth of the Balih, which Hallo had refused to admit. See since then for the western part of the route OTTO 2009 and ZIEGLER 2009; and for the eastern part of the route ZIEGLER 2002. See now in this volume the studies of ZIEGLER, OTTO & FINK 2023 on the Urbana-Yale route and of ZIEGLER & OTTO 2023 on the location of Ekallatum (see also *infra* note 73).

8 See CHARPIN & ZIEGLER 2003 (cited below as FM 5).

9 See MTT 1/1, p. 155; the data of the published texts are accessible via the ARCHIBAB site, tab ‘HIGEOMES’, then ‘Info sites’ and then ‘Hušla’ in the drop-down menu.

10 Since VILLARD 1992, see FM 5, p. 211; the study announced on p. 211 n. 380 has not yet been completed.

11 The join is still unpublished.

12 For example, ARM 7 119 (from 2/vii/Zimri-Lim 8) is repeated in ARM 7 219: 6-8.

115 and 116 [= ARM 32 p. 343]); 7-17/vi at Tadam; 18-19/vi at Ilan-šura (M.10532 [= ARM 32 p. 343-344]); 22/vi at Razama-of-Yussan (M.10543 [= ARM 32 p. 344]). And finally, from 24/vi to 3/vii in Hušla (M.10530 [= ARM 32 p. 345], on 1/vii).

The highlight of the journey seems to have been an offering by Zimri-Lim to the Kumme storm god on 2/vii (ARM 7,119 [= ARM 31,132]). However, the king of Mari did not go to Kumme in person: he had his gift carried from Hušla. The stages of the return journey are also known: on 5/vii at Ilan-šura, on 22/vii at Saggaratum (M.12450 [= ARM 32 p. 345-6]) and on 16/viii at Terqa (ARM 7 11).

This journey is described in later documents, which refer to it by the furthest place on the route: “When my lord resided in Hušlân”<sup>13</sup> or “When my lord returned from Hušlan”<sup>14</sup>. The nature of the trip has yet to be defined; it has been referred to as a “pilgrimage to Hušla” (DURAND 1988 : 493) but it is quite possible that the main motivation was of a diplomatic-military nature.

### 1.1.1.3 Conclusion

The main advantage of this type of source is that it provides historians not only with a sequence of place names, but also with time indications. However, these are not always easy to interpret: some stages last for a long time, without us knowing why, or what took place on that occasion.

### 1.1.2 Itineraries in the correspondence

The advantage of letters is that they give details. However, a distinction must be made between projects or instructions on the one hand, and descriptions of routes that were actually followed on the other.<sup>15</sup> In both cases, the word *gerrum* seems to have been used to describe a “route” in

13 ARM 27 131 : (6) *i-nu-ma be-li i-na hu-úš-la-an<sup>ki</sup> úš-[b]u*.

14 ARM 27 131 : (13) *i-nu-ma be-li iš-tu hu-úš-la-an<sup>ki</sup>* (14) *i-tu-ra-am*.

15 I owe the distinction between “prescriptive route” and “descriptive route” to a paper by E. Cancik-Kirschbaum and N. Ziegler in our work on historical geography. I note that it more or less overlaps with the distinction made by modern travel assistance software between “route” and “track”: cf. <https://support.garmin.com/fr-FR/?faq=v0rJAHy2hq3prHjRlxdRw5>, which states: “Un itinéraire est une suite de trajets calculés entre une série de points entrés dans le GPS dans l’ordre que vous avez défini” and “Un tracé est une suite de points enregistrée lors de votre déplacement, vous permettant de suivre un trajet précédemment accompli” (“A route is a series of paths calculated between a series of points entered into the GPS in the order you have defined” and “A track is a series of points recorded during your journey, allowing you to follow a previously completed route”).

Akkadian, regardless of its nature,<sup>16</sup> the word *harrānum* concretely describing the “path” or “road” taken.<sup>17</sup>

#### 1.1.2.1 Itineraries to be followed

The first category can be described as prescriptive itineraries. Two examples are provided by the letters of Samsi-Addu published in the first ARM volume. In one we find the description of a route between Šubat-Enlil and Mari (ARM 1 26):

“Say to Yasmah-Addu: Thus says Samsi-Addu, your father. I will leave for Mari, the day after the 20th of the month of Mamitum (v\*), (thus) the day after the day I sent you my present tablet, I will leave Šubat-Enlil for Mari. My stages (*nubattum*): from Šubat-Enlil to Tilla; from Tilla to Ašihum; from Ašihum to Iyatu; from Iyatu to Lakušir; from Lakušir to Saggaratum.”

The starting point and the end point are known (DURAND 2004 : 135 n. 148), on the contrary to the stages<sup>18</sup> that are rarely mentioned elsewhere, notably Iyatu and Lakušir.<sup>19</sup> The context must be taken into account: the letter clearly indicates the desire to reach Mari as quickly as

16 This is the word used in A.1053 (prescriptive itinerary): it is found in the opening and closing of the enumeration of the stages 1. 5 (*ge-er-ru*), 20 (*ge-er-ra-am*) and 22 (*ge-er-ru-um*). It is found in M.5431 (descriptive route): [18] and 31 in the form KASKAL.A. The parallelism between the phonetic and ideographic spellings confirms the conclusion of M. Stol who proposed the equation KASKAL.A = *gerrum* in Stol 1978: 218a. The word *gerrum* also refers to “expedition”, whether commercial, diplomatic or military in nature.

17 The clearest example of the difference between *gerrum* and *harrānum* could be given by the unpublished letter A.430 (24) *ša-bu-um LÚ ELAM.MA.MEŠ* (25) *iš-tu ku-za-ba-at<sup>ki</sup> a-di ka-ak-ku-la-tim<sup>ki</sup> i-na ge-er-ri-im* (26) *ša LÚ.KÚR il-li-ku i-na i-mi-ti KASKAL ù šu-mé-lim* (27) *1 li-im ša-la-am-tum ša mi-tu i-ba-aš-ši-i* “The Elamite army went from Kuzubat to Kakkulatam. On the route (*gerrum*) that the enemy followed, on the right and on the left of the road (KASKAL = *harrānum*), there were a thousand people who had died” (quote in GUICHARD 1999: 46 n. 126). The word *gerrum* (l. 25) refers to the route from Kuzubat to Kakkulatam, while KASKAL (l. 26) actually denotes the road, to the left and to the right of which lay the corpses of the dead enemies: it is clear that the scribe did not use the ideogram KASKAL to write down the word *gerrum*, which he had already written phonetically before: KASKAL must therefore surely be read here as *harrānum*. This seems to confirm the proposal of M. Stol quoted above, for whom KASKAL.A = *gerrum* and KASKAL = *harrānum*, but see below note 20 about ARM 1 85+.

To these two Akkadian terms must be added a third, *daraggum*, attested in A.510:3’ (CHARPIN 2021a: 566).

18 The term used in Akkadian, *nubattum*, indicates the place where one spends the night: the stages here are therefore implicitly spaced by one day. It therefore took five days to travel from Šubat-Enlil to Saggaratum, where the Euphrates valley was joined; the continuation of the route downstream from Saggaratum did not need to be specified.

19 J.-M. Durand has proposed that Iyatu could be located at Tall Umm Aqrubba (DURAND 2009: 54).

possible: it is therefore probably a question of stations on a road parallel to the Habur but which cuts across the steppe.

The letter ARM 1 7 is also well known, in which Samsi-Addu indicates the route to be followed by a convoy loaded with cedars to be brought from Saggatum to Šubat-Enlil. To the same category belongs the letter of Samsi-Addu to Yasmah-Addu in which he describes the three possible routes from the Middle Euphrates to Qaṭna: the “high” (*elitum*), “middle” (*qablītum*) or “low” (*šaplītum*) route.<sup>20</sup> This type of text obviously poses a problem: we do not necessarily know what was really feasible or what has been done. In ARM I 85<sup>+</sup> the availability of water resources between the Euphrates valley and Qaṭna was a precondition for the trip given the number of soldiers who had to make the journey. A more recently published example is provided by the letter of Yarim-Addu to Yasmah-Addu A.1053: the sender, a nomadic chief, indicates to the king of Mari the route he should follow along the Habur upstream of Qaṭṭunan, listing eight stages ending in Zalluhan (CHARPIN 2009). We do not know whether Yasmah-Addu followed the route described by Yarim-Addu.

The prescriptive itinerary that appears in another letter of Samsi-Addu discovered in Shemshara (JOANNÈS & ZIEGLER 1995) can be reminded. The great king describes a route in eastern Tigris region, which starts in Šušarra, passes by Zaslum, then Šegibbu, Zikum, Ura’u, Lutpiš, until the country of Haburatum (ShA 1 1 [SH 809]).

In some cases, the travel plans are described with a precise calendar. Habdu-Malik, *šukkallum*-vizier of Zimri-Lim, summarised to the king his visit to the main capitals of the Jebel Sindjar region:<sup>21</sup>

“On the 27th I sent this tablet from Kurda. On the 28th, I will stay in Andarig. On the 29th, if I have been able to meet (Atamrum), I will leave for Karana. On the 30th I shall return from Karana and enter Andarig. On the 1st of the month of Malkānum, I will leave Andarig. On the 2nd, or the 3rd, I will set out from Kurda to my lord.”

Texts like this inform us about the minimum time it took to go from one place to another: we see here that in one day one could travel between two of the three cities

mentioned (Kurda, Andarig and Karana). This allows us to make proposals for the location of these three capitals, which have still not been situated with any certainty.<sup>22</sup> Another example is the letter from Sumu-hadu in the Euphrates valley setting out the stages of the convoy to take Zimri-Lim’s new wife to the capital:<sup>23</sup>

“She will stay one day in Dur-Yahdun-Lim; the next day in Zibnatum; the third day in Terqa; the fourth day she will arrive at Šuprum. She will spend the night in Šuprum, then get up in order to enter Mari before the fifth day.”

#### 1.1.2.2 Itineraries effectively followed

Descriptive itineraries on the other hand are less numerous and, above all, generally much more fragmentary. A good example is given by a letter from Zakira-Hammu, governor of Qaṭṭunan, to the king of Mari:<sup>24</sup>

“Yassi-Dagan came out safely from Šubat-Enlil, and then arrived in Ṭabatūm. Starting from Ṭabatūm, he arrived at the wide wadi (*rapšum*), which (is) upstream of Tehran. Then he left the broad wadi (*rapšum*), and, hiding himself, went by the steppe to Andarig.”

Such a sequence makes it possible to understand that the topographical feature *rapšum* was located in the Habur valley at the starting point of a track allowing to pass south of the Jebel Sinjar to Andarig.<sup>25</sup>

Of course, the routes differed depending on whether it was a messenger travelling, merchants in a caravan, nomads with their flocks, an army heavily equipped or not, etc. There is a very interesting case concerning the journey of messengers from Ešnunna to Allahad, south of Jebel Sinjar:<sup>26</sup>

“[The route of the messen]gers [of the Ya]minites [between Ešnunna] and Karana, [he made it known to me] [thus: (from Ešnunna) to Dur]-Sin; [from Dur]-Sin to Arrapha; [from Ar]rapha [to Ka]wa[lhum]; [from K]awalh[um] to Razama of the Yamutbal; from Razama of the Yamutbal to Karana; from Karana to Allahad. To the river bank: this is their route.”

20 This is ARM 1 85+. See DURAND 1987: 159-167 “Les trois routes de l’Euphrate à Qaṭna à travers le désert” and since CHARPIN 2010. I have quoted in this article (p. 241) an unpublished document which is the draft of Yasmah-Addu’s reply to his father (correct the reference to M.11301 [= reference to ARM 33 209] to M.11031); this unpublished document is to be published by N. Ziegler. Note in ARM 1 85+ the use of KASKAL (l. 32, 33, 34, 40, 44, 45, 48) for ‘road’ in the sense of ‘itinerary’, which tempers what has been written above note 17.

21 ARM 26/2 392 : 61-68.

22 See review in MTT 1/1, pp. 25-26 (Andarig), pp. 180-181 (Karana) and pp. 196-197 (Kurda).

23 ARM 33 145 : 23-31.

24 ARM 27 65: 5-11.

25 For the interpretation of *rapšum* as “the wide wadi”, cf. DURAND 2004: 132-133. See since ZIEGLER 2011: 10 for an identification of this *rapšum* with the wadi Abu Fighe (and see map p. 16).

26 M.5431: 18-31 (JOANNÈS 1992: 185-187). Note that the scribe uses l. 31 the ideogram KASKAL.A to describe the route.

### 1.1.2.3 Traffic problems

Some particularly problematic routes required the accompaniment of someone who knew the terrain well. Thus, in a letter from Samsi-Addu to Yasmah-Addu, we find this indication: “There are roads (*gerrum*) from Mari to Yahpila: La’um (knows them).”<sup>27</sup> This meant going from the capital city on the Middle Euphrates to the Tigris region: several routes were possible and the king of Mari had to rely on La’um, who had already followed them.

Moreover, certain routes were only feasible in the appropriate seasons. Thus, Sammetar advised Zimri-Lim not to make the new queen of Mari and the women of her entourage travel from Aleppo in summer: the diviner Asqudum, who was leading the expedition, had to wait until autumn before setting off.<sup>28</sup> Similarly, Sumu-hadu told the king that the troop that was to go to Qaṭna, given the season, could only travel by night.<sup>29</sup> The roads leading from the Middle Euphrates to the region of present-day Homs crossed the “Syrian desert”.

### 1.1.3 Texts that are not really itineraries

A final category of documents should be mentioned here: texts describing the terroirs, whether they are administrative documents or pieces of correspondence. One can thus find in a letter the enumeration of localities along a watercourse: this is the case of ARM 33 120, which names “all the localities that feed into the Išim-Yahdun-Lim canal, (i.e.) Samanum, Terqa, Raqayum, Kiritum and Kulhitum”.<sup>30</sup> In cases like this, the only question that remains to determine a possible route is on which bank (right or left) each locality was situated.<sup>31</sup> Such a text is important for the location of the place names it lists, but it is not a true route.

A more subtle example is provided by FM 16 53, where fields are measured “from the temple of Amu of Hubšalum to Dunnum”, listing successively Šuprum, Nagiyum, Šubatun, [Iddisum], [Tizrah], [Mari], Šakka and Urah.<sup>32</sup> The analogous text FM 16 57 gives the sequence Ara’itum, Nu’abum, Hutnum, [Šuprum], Nagum, Šubatun, Iddi-

sum, Tizrah, Mari, Šakka, Urah. In such cases, one cannot speak of routes *stricto sensu*, but the writing of such texts implies that the surveyors successively measured the fields of these localities located on the left bank of the Euphrates upstream from Mari, and then downstream from it. The minimal deduction is that the scribe collected the available data in a geographical order: in this case one could speak of a mental itinerary.

## 2. Zimri-Lim’s journey to Yamhad

These general considerations on sources and methods allow us to address a particular case, which dates from the end of the ninth year of the king of Mari Zimri-Lim: he left his capital for a journey that was to last five months and take him to the Mediterranean coast, to Ugarit. The route he followed has been known for several decades: it was reconstructed by P. Villard, first in his contribution to ARM 23 in 1984,<sup>33</sup> and then in an article in *Ugarit Forschungen* in 1986.<sup>34</sup>

### 2.1 Documentation

At the time, the documentation consisted mainly of accounting texts.<sup>35</sup> They can be grouped into three categories:<sup>36</sup>

– Type 1: these are small accounts, drawn up in close chronological proximity to the recorded transaction; they are inventories, expenditures of silver or tin, and exchanges of gifts with the kings of the regions crossed. An example is ARM 25 135 (= ARM 32, p. 359 [M.11215]): on this small tablet is recorded the expenditure of a silver weapon partially plated with gold, a gift for Yawi-El, king of Talhayum, made in Zilhan, on the 19th of month xii in year 9 of Zimri-Lim.

– Type 2: these are summaries drawn up by the service of Dariš-libur. He was most probably the chief barber of Zimri-Lim,<sup>37</sup> responsible for the king’s wardrobe; these

27 ARM 1 35: (15) *ge-er-ru iš-tu ma-ri<sup>ki</sup>* (16) *a-na ia-ab-pi-la<sup>ki</sup> i-ba-aš-šu-ú* (17)<sup>1</sup> *la-ú-um i-de*. For the location of Yahpila = Yahappi-Ila, cf. ZIEGLER 2002: 245.

28 ARM 33 143.

29 ARM 33 150.

30 The passage, already quoted by J.-M. Durand (DURAND 1990: 124), was taken into account by H. Reculeau in FM 16 (RECULEAU 2018: 179 n. 1386).

31 For a problem of this kind, see the case of the cities downstream of Mari, in the province of Suhum (CHARPIN 1997 and CHARPIN & MILLET ALBÀ 2009).

32 The restorations are based on the parallel with FM 16 57: 14-16.

33 See VILLARD 1984: 457-475 (analysis) and 507-522 (texts n<sup>os</sup> 535-549).

34 See VILLARD 1986. This article integrated a text published by Ph. Talon in ARM 24 in 1985 and especially the very important data published by H. Limet in ARM 25 in 1986.

35 P. Villard was also aware of the partial nature of his documentation: “Il est vraisemblable qu’un certain nombre de lettres se rapportent au dossier étudié ici” (VILLARD 1986: 387 n. 7).

36 I follow here VILLARD 1986: 388, but change the order of presentation of the categories so as to follow the chronological order of their writing.

37 See CHARPIN 2015: 8. The inventories of *bit gallābi* published by I. Arkhipov in ARM 32 should be the subject of a special study by him.

texts seem to have been written in Ugarit, the final point of the journey to the West, and therefore cover the period from month xii/ZL 9 to month iii/ZL 10. In all these summaries, the date and place of the transaction (usually a gift made or received) are specified in each case, independently of the date of writing of the text itself. An example is the beginning of ARM 25 38+ARM 25 46 = ARM 32 p. 366-367 ([M.5291+M.11367]): a gold ring, weighing 1 mina 18 1/2 shekels, a gift from Aplahanda, king of Karkemiš; 18th of month i; to Yakaltum. The text itself dates from the 9th of month iii and was written in Ugarit.

– Type 3: we are dealing with summaries covering longer periods of time, which include some of the expenses of the trip to Yamhad, but also other operations (VILLARD 1984: 388).

In some cases, we have a Type 1 document and a record in a summary (Type 2 or 3) for the same gift, or several records of the same gift in different summaries.<sup>38</sup>

It can therefore be seen that this file does not provide a description of an itinerary: it is reconstructed by chronologically ordering the places mentioned for each of the transactions. The working hypothesis is that the gifts made by the king or offered to him during his travels were recorded as they were made or received. The accuracy of P. Villard's analysis of 1984 must be emphasised here, while at the same time H. Limet understood nothing of the context to which the texts he published belonged (LIMET 1985).

Since 1986, the documentation has increased, in particular due to the addition of letters relating to this case. They have made it possible to better understand the nature of this trip: whereas P. Villard had emphasised the diplomatic and commercial nature of the journey,<sup>39</sup> it was in fact a military campaign by the king of Mari Zimri-Lim, intended to help the king of Aleppo Yarim-Lim to punish the king of Ugarit (CHARPIN 2021a). Moreover, our knowledge of historical geography has progressed, so that it is not useless to take stock again, limiting ourselves to the section of the route that goes from Terqa to Yakaltum and then Hakkulan.

## 2.2 Fixed points on the route

From the documents presented above, the following steps can be reconstructed:<sup>40</sup>

38 This phenomenon has been studied more extensively by GUICHARD 2005: 67-89.

39 He was followed by J. Sasson (SASSON 1984 and 2008).

40 This table is based on that of VILLARD 1986: 389, with additions and updates; we have stopped at the stage of the temple of Dagan

ARM = ARCHIBAB T-ref.	Date <sup>41</sup>	Nature of the recorded transaction	Location
XXV 201 = www.archibab.fr/T11856	2-xii	Gold jewellery entrusted to a civil servant	Terqa
XXIV 197 = www.archibab.fr/T5077	8-xii	Reception of clothes “when the king went to Yamhad”	(Mari)
XXV 531 = www.archibab.fr/T11364	8-xii	Inventory of crockery, including table knives, accompanying the king on his journey to Aleppo	Saggartum <sup>42</sup>
XXV 450 = www.archibab.fr/T11857	8-xii	Account of tin and silver in <i>tukkannum</i> -bags given to different people, “when the king went to the Yamhad”.	Saggartum
XXV 135 = www.archibab.fr/T11858	19-xii	Spending of a gold-plated silver weapon for Yawi-Ila, king of Talhayum	Zilhan
XXV 121 = www.archibab.fr/T11859	20-xii	Ring received by the king and ring for Mennazi; expenses under the responsibility of Darsi-libur	Zilhan
XXV 48+ = XXXI 161 = www.archibab.fr/T5691	22-xii	Jewels and GAL-vases, sent by Yawi-Ila, king of Talhayum, and Haya-Sumu (l. 1-8)	Zilhan
XXIII 535 = www.archibab.fr/T5080	29-xii	Ring received by the king (i 1-7)	Zilhan
XXV 118 = www.archibab.fr/T11884	29-xii	Ring received by the king (l. 1-5)	Zilhan

of Hakkulan. P. Villard's references are followed by the T-number of ARCHIBAB, as most of the texts have been republished since 1986 (note that P. Villard had access to the transcriptions of the texts of ARM 25 collated by J.-M. Durand and completed by numerous joins, which were subsequently republished in ARM 31 and 32). ARM 23 543, republished as FM 4 56 (www.archibab.fr/T18802), which has nothing to do with the journey to Yamhad, has been excluded from the table; N. Ziegler has shown that this text in fact dates from 3/i/Zimri-Lim 10 (Ziegler 1999: 231), and this solves the problem raised by P. Villard (Villard 1992: 203 n. 64).

41 The texts dated to month xii are from the end of Zimri-Lim year 9 and those of month i from the beginning of year 10.

42 Read l. 9 *i\*-na\*sa\*-ga\*-[ra-tim<sup>kj</sup>]*; cf. CHARPIN 2021a: 539 n. 21.

ARM = ARCHIBAB T-ref.	Date	Nature of the recorded transaction	Location
XXIII 535 = www.archibab.fr/T5080	10-i	Two rings and a cloth for Haya-Sumu, king of Ilan-šura (l. 8-17)	Qardahat
XXV 153 = www.archibab.fr/T11885	10-i	Ring(s) for Haya-Sumu, king of Ilan-šura (l. 2'-5')	Qarhadat
XXV 118 = www.archibab.fr/T11884	10-i	Rings for Haya-Sumu, king of Ilan-šura (l. 7-14)	Qarhadat
XXV 48+ = XXXI 161 = www.archibab.fr/T5691	13-i	GAL-vase sent by Šennam, king of Ursum (l. 9-12)	Qardahat
XXV 38+ = www.archibab.fr/T11873	18-i	Vase sent by Aplahanda, king of Karkemiš (l. 1-6)	Yakaltum
XXV 48+ = XXXI 161 = www.archibab.fr/T5691	(i)	Vase sent by General Samsi-Addu to Tuttul, and taken out (ZI.GA) for Hammu-rabi's wife, in Yabuhum (l. 13-15)	
XXV 48+ = XXXI 161 = www.archibab.fr/T5691	21-i	Vase sent by the Elders of Tuttul (l. 16-17)	
XXIII 537 = www.archibab.fr/T11900	24-i	Jewels for Yarim-Lim, king of Yamhad "at the meeting" (l. 1-7)	Dagan Temple of Hakkulan
M.11308 = www.archibab.fr/T11899	24-i	Jewels for Yarim-Lim, king of Yamhad (l. 1'-7')	Dagan Temple of Hakkulan
XXV 153 = www.archibab.fr/T11885	24-i	Jewels for Yarim-Lim, king of Yamhad (l. 6'-10')	
XXIII 535 = www.archibab.fr/T5080	26-i	Jewellery, cloth and bow for Yarim-Lim, king of Yamhad (i 18 to ii 6); jewellery for Gašera (ii 7-15)	Dagan Temple of Hakkulan
XXV 118 = www.archibab.fr/T11884	26-i	Jewellery, cloth and bow for Yarim-Lim (l. 7-24) and Gašera (l. 25-31)	Dagan Temple of Hakkulan

The stages of the journey documented by texts are thus: Terqa, Saggartum, Zilhan, Qardahat (= Qirdahat) and Yakaltum; the Euphrates was crossed at Yakaltum and the next stage was the temple of Dagan of Hakkulan, where the "meeting" (*nanmurtum*) between the kings of Mari and Aleppo took place.

### 2.2.1 From Mari to Qirdahat (2/xii to 13/i)

Much progress has been made on the location of ancient toponyms along the Habur, in the framework of the "Procope" cooperation, which led to the publication of BBVO 20,

otherwise known as *Entre les fleuves – I*, on the one hand, and to the publication in RA 105 of the work of the Franco-Japanese cooperation known as "SAKURA", organised by Nele Ziegler and Shigeo Yamada around the discoveries of the Tell Taban excavations. The situation is as follows:<sup>43</sup>

– **Terqa** = Tell Ashara.

– **Saggartum**: for a long time, this city was located at Tell Abu Ha'it, but J.-M. Durand has very convincingly proposed a location of Saggartum on the Euphrates, at the confluence with the Habur, perhaps at or near Buseira, the Roman Circesium (DURAND 2009: 50).

– **Zilhan**: the point has been made by N. Ziegler (ZIEGLER 2011: 9):<sup>44</sup>

"I would tend to locate Zilhan really close to Ṭābatum (Tell Taban), but on the right bank [of the Habur]; however, there is no tell identified for the Middle Bronze Age in this area, except possibly Tell Fleti, which seems to me too far downstream. Since Zilhan is no longer attested after this period, it is possible that the site had only a short-lived occupation and that this explains why its location was not identified during the surveys."

– **Qirdahat**: it is one of the gains of the programme that preceded HIGEOMES to have proposed a new location for Qirdahat/Qardahat. While for a long time this city was located on the tell of Chagar Bazar or nearby, the itinerary of the letter A.1053 showed that it was located on the very course of the Habur (CHARPIN 2009); a location at Hassaka or in the immediate vicinity of this city is therefore very likely. Indeed, to bring together people from different points of the Habur triangle to reach the Euphrates bend, the site of Hassaka is the best possible choice: the city is still today a road junction in northeast Syria.

There are thus three stages on the Habur: Saggartum near Buseira, Zilhan near Tell Taban and Qirdahat near Hassaka. A later letter alludes to the "ascent" from Zimri-Lim to Zilhan, followed by a stopover at Qirdahat:<sup>45</sup>

"When my lord had gone up to Zilhan, then his son Šidqan had witnessed what was said in the presence of my lord: Tamarzi, having heard of your coming to Qardahat, had sent a message to the Elders of Urkiš saying, 'Just as

<sup>43</sup> In any case, the very useful volume MTT 1/1 (ZIEGLER & LANGLOIS 2016), to which I will only occasionally refer, can be consulted.

<sup>44</sup> "J'aurais tendance à localiser Zilhân vraiment très près de Ṭābatum (Tell Taban), mais sur la rive droite [du Habur] ; cependant, il n'y a pas de tell identifié pour l'époque du Bronze Moyen dans cette région, sauf éventuellement Tell Fleti, qui me semble trop en aval. Puisque Zilhân n'est plus attestée après cette époque, il est possible que le site n'ait connu qu'une occupation éphémère et que cela explique qu'on n'ait pas identifié son emplacement lors des prospections."

<sup>45</sup> A.2567 (= LAPO 16 440 = www.archibab.fr/T426), edited in CHARPIN 1993a: 178-181.

Samsi-Addu had served you as a guide, let Zimri-Lim be a guide to you.”<sup>46</sup>

In fact, Zimri-Lim was to lead the armies of his vassals gathered at Qirdahat to the Mediterranean.

### 2.2.2 From Qirdahat to Yakaltum (from 13/i to 18/i)

On 18/i, a gift from King Aplahanda of Karkemiš was recorded at Yakaltum. Initially, P. Villard had wanted to locate Yakaltum on the Balih (VILLARD 1986: 397). But since 1986, two new elements have to be taken into account: first, Walter Mayer showed in 1990 that the ancient name of Munbaqa was Ekalte (MAYER 1990). This site is located on the left bank of the Euphrates, 25 km upstream from Maskana/Imar. Subsequently, Wu Yuhong linked Ekalte to the toponym Yakaltum attested by the Mari sources.<sup>47</sup> Thus, the Yakaltum stage is to be moved from the Balih to the Euphrates.<sup>48</sup> The letter ARM 4 6 explicitly indicates that this site was a crossing point of the Euphrates. Samsi-Addu wrote there to Yasnah-Addu:<sup>49</sup>

“So write to Yasub El and ask him to provide boats at Yakaltum or at another place on the banks of the Euphrates, so that as soon as they arrive, they may serve as a ferry. Let him (= Yašub-El) not refuse them!”

A letter from Himdi-Addu confirms that Yakaltum was an important crossing point of the Euphrates.<sup>50</sup> It is therefore very likely that Zimri-Lim and the troops accompanying him crossed the river. This formed the border of the kingdom of Yamhad: in fact, a meeting between the kings of Mari and Aleppo took place very soon after the Yakaltum stage, in the temple of Dagan of Hakkulan,

whose precise location remains unknown, but was obviously situated west of the Euphrates.<sup>51</sup>

## 3. Which route was followed?

The first point to note is that Zimri-Lim did not follow the usual route from Mari to Aleppo. There are examples of such a journey, such as that of Asqudum who carried a musical instrument to the capital of Yamhad. He travelled by boat from Tilla-Zibim to Lasqum, at the narrowing of the Euphrates valley called Hanuqa in Arabic, 60 km upstream from Deir ez-Zor (near Halabiya); then, using porters, he reached Tuttul (near present-day Raqqa), then Imar (Maskana) and finally Aleppo.<sup>52</sup> Another example is the mission of Warad-ilišu to transport women to Aleppo:<sup>53</sup> the route followed was along the Euphrates River on the right bank, passing through Terqa, Dur-Yahdun-Lim, then Abattum and Imar. In no case did the road from Mari to Aleppo make a detour to the north like the route of Zimri-Lim at the end of his ninth year of reign.<sup>54</sup> This route was imposed on the king of Mari for political reasons: Zimri-Lim had to fetch the troops of his vassals from the Habur triangle and lead them to the kingdom of Yamhad. The first part of the itinerary, which no longer poses a problem, should be distinguished from the second, which is more difficult to determine.

### 3.1 From Mari to Qirdahat

After leaving Mari, Zimri-Lim was in Terqa on 2/xii. Six days later, we find him in Saggaratum on 8/xii. It was then that the count (*piqittum*) of the Mari army was carried out, as shown by the unpublished tablet M.5696.<sup>55</sup>

Zimri-Lim went up the Habur and stayed at Zilhan for ten days, from the 19th to the 29th. The question that can be asked today is whether Zimri-Lim was followed by the

46 I do not share J.-M. Durand's judgement: “Un 1<sup>er</sup> point est que le voyage de Zimri-Lim à Zilhân n'est pas une allusion au séjour que le roi y fit du 19 au 29/xii/ZL 8' (au début du voyage qui devait le mener jusqu'à Ugarit), allant quelques jours après Zilhân, à Qa/irdahat, du 10 au 13/i/ZL 9' (P. V., UF 18, p. 389). 10 ans après la chute du royaume de Haute-Mésopotamie, on ne comprendrait pas cette allusion à sa fidélité envers Samsi-Addu” (DURAND 1997: 637).

47 Wu YUHONG 1992. This note is to be completed by CHARPIN 1993b and VILLARD 1993.

48 It is very surprising that in his 2016 study, B. Lafont located Yakaltum on Map 1 on the Balih, where the site had been placed by P. Villard in 1986, ignoring all the later bibliography (LAFONT 2016). See henceforth the references and bibliography in MTT 1/1, p. 95-96 “Ekallatum (2)”.

49 ARM 4 6 (= LAPO 17 706 = www.archibab.fr/T8830): (20) *i-na-an-[na] a-[n]a ia-šū-ub-DINGIR* (20) [š]u-pu-u[r]-ma (21) <sup>513</sup>MÁ.HI.A [i-na] ia-k[a-a]-tim<sup>ki</sup> (22) ù-[lu] a'-[šar-ša-mi] (23) ša a-ab <sup>51</sup>UD.KIB. NUN.NA<sup>ki</sup> (24) li-iš-ku<sup>o</sup>-ma (25) ki-ma ma-ab-ru-u[m]-ma (26) ša i-il-la-[ka-nim] (27) i-ib-ba-ra-n[im] (28) la i-ka-[al-ši-na-ti].

50 ZIEGLER 2009: 191-192 and notes 49 and 52, with a quotation of the unpublished letter M.6147+M.7464.

51 MTT 1/1, pp. 109-110, should be modified on this point according to CHARPIN 2021a: 548. A. OTTO (2006: 265) proposed to localise the Dagan temple of Hakkulan at the shore of the Jabbul Lake, where the famous basalt head of a male god had been found already in the 1920ies.

52 DURAND 1988: 119-138, especially 124-127 “C. À propos de l'itinéraire de Mari à Imar”.

53 DURAND 2002: 29-33 and ZIEGLER 2007: 172-174.

54 We must forget here what P. Villard wrote. Commenting on ARM 14 87, he erroneously identified Tilla-Zibim and Tilla and concluded that this “confirmerait que l'une des routes habituelles du Yamhad à Mari passait par l'Ida-maraš” (VILLARD 1986: 409 n. 51).

55 For this text, see CHARPIN 2021a: 545.

Mari army along the Habur: it seems more likely to me that his soldiers—at least a significant part of them—were sent quickly to Azara;<sup>56</sup> it would be this army that Yanšibum would have led and it is because of the announcement of his arrival that the king of Azara would have surrendered to the king of Aleppo Yarim-Lim, against whom he had rebelled.<sup>57</sup>

Zimri-Lim left Zilhan and stopped at Qirdahat from the 10th to the 13th. It is obviously in Qirdahat that Zimri-Lim met Haya-Sumu, to whom the king of Mari offered several jewels. We can therefore think that Zimri-Lim then took the lead of the army that his vassals of Ida-Maraš had gathered.<sup>58</sup> In fact, Zimri-Lim's pace seems to have accelerated noticeably afterwards.

### 3.2 From Qirdahat to Yakaltum

Zimri-Lim left Qirdahat on 13/i and stayed in Yakaltum from 19/i. The road from Hassaka to Munbaqa is 240 km as the crow flies: if the distance is covered in seven days (from 13/i to 19/i), that makes stages of 34 km per day, which is a lot but not impossible (DI FILIPPO 2016: 461-467). We must try to understand why no text names an intermediate station during this seven-day period.<sup>59</sup>

#### 3.2.1 Intermediate steps ?

Now that Qirdahat is located in Hassaka or in the immediate vicinity, it seems very likely that the road to Yakaltum bypassed the Jebel Abd-El Aziz from the north.

Even if our documentation is not absolutely complete, the rest of the dossier shows that all the stages of the last

part of the route, between the Euphrates and Ugarit, are documented. The very fact that no stopover is mentioned between Qirdahat and Yakaltum should therefore not be due to chance and should have a meaning: if no toponym is mentioned, it is because there was no king on the way to whom to give a present or from whom to receive one. What are the foreseeable stops on this route? At least one name stands out, at the point where the road from Qirdahat to Yakaltum crossed the Balih. If Ahuna is located at Tall as-Seman,<sup>60</sup> it seems clear that Zimri-Lim's route must have passed through this town: it is the chance of receiving or sending gifts that explains why no text was written there. The city of Ahuna is sometimes explicitly mentioned as a meeting point at the place where the Balih is crossed, as in the letter from Habduma-Dagan to Zimri-Lim ARM 33 80.<sup>61</sup> Moreover, J.-M. Durand proposes to see in the toponym Ahuna a derivative of the root HN', which etymologically means "the place where one rests, the halt";<sup>62</sup> he even sees in it the Yaminite equivalent of the term Mahanum used by the Sim'alites.<sup>63</sup> It should be noted that the general Yanšibum was stationed in Ahuna since the victory over Azara.<sup>64</sup>

#### 3.2.2 A stopover in Tuttul?

The reconstruction of the route is complicated by the mention of Tuttul in ARM 25 48+ (= ARM 31 161 [T5691]):

(13-15) "1 silver *lahtanum*-vase, weighing 1/2 mina, brought by Samsi-Addu, the general, to Tuttul; expense for Hammu-rabi's wife in Yabuhum";

(16-17) "1 silver ox-horn vase, weighing 1/2 mina, [brought from the El]ders of Tuttul, on the 21st, in a *pirsum*-chest".

The problem is to reconcile a possible presence of Zimri-Lim on 18/i in Yakaltum, then on 21/i in Tuttul, knowing that his route continued towards Aleppo. This question has given rise to several hypotheses. According

56 P. Villard had noted: "On remarquera enfin que d'après la formulation d'ARMT XXV 450 : 5-6 (ši-lá *ia-an-ti-in*-<sup>3</sup>IM / ša *i-na* giš-má-tur-há), l'étain et l'argent confiés à Yantin-Addu durent prendre directement la voie de l'Euphrate pour rejoindre la région de Tuttul, alors que la plus grande partie de l'expédition fit le détour par l'Ida-Maraš." (VILLARD 1986: 203 n. 64).

57 For more details on military operations, see CHARPIN 2021a.

58 As shown in Itur-Asdu's letter A.2491+, cited in CHARPIN 2021a: 546 n. 59.

59 A similar situation concerns Atamrum's journey from Babylonia back to his capital, Andarig. His stops along the Euphrates are known, but no toponym is known for the road that connected Harradum (Khirbet ed-Diniye) on the Euphrates to Andarig at the southern foothills of Jebel Sinjar, cutting across the steppe for a distance of about 200 km. See CHARPIN 1997: 352-355 and JOANNES 1996: 328. An escort had accompanied Atamrum: its return is reported by Buqaqum in ARM 26/2 496 (with the new reading proposed in CHARPIN 2021b; add to this note the reference to the version of the same case given by Meptum in A.162: 14-21, where we find l. 14 the expected spelling *ta-aq-ri-ba-tum*).

60 Following CORDOBA 1990; see MTT 1/1, pp. 12-13.

61 See also ARM 33 117, where Sumu-hadu indicates that Amnanean and Yarihean Yaminites joined him from Ahuna.

62 DURAND 2004: 115 n. 20. J.-M. Durand having encountered a spelling with a reduplication of the *h* (*a-ab-hu-na-a*<sup>ki</sup> in A.1209: 10, to be published in ARM 35) normalizes the toponym into 'Ahhunà' and considers that it contains a prefix an- like an-DaRiG: we thus have an-HuNa' > Ahhunà.

63 For Mahanum, see DURAND 2011.

64 See CHARPIN 2021a: 556 (A.2925).



to Wu Yuhong, there are two possibilities.<sup>65</sup> Zimri-Lim did not go to Yakaltum, but only Dariš-libur went there to receive the gifts of Aplahanda from Karkemiš; he then joined Zimri-Lim in Tuttul.<sup>66</sup> The second solution would be that Zimri-Lim could have gone first to Yakaltum to meet Aplahanda, then to return to Tuttul to see the general Samsi-Addu and finally go to Aleppo. But the text does not mention any meeting with Aplahanda: Yakaltum is only the place where a gift sent by the king of Karkemiš was received. It should also be noted that this general Samsi-Addu was an officer of the Aleppo army:<sup>67</sup> the question is therefore to know what he would have done to Tuttul. But again, Tuttul is only the place where a present sent by Samsi-Addu was recorded. Neither of these two solutions, therefore, leads to a clear endorsement.

One should mention the different interpretation proposed by M. Guichard:<sup>68</sup>

“In fact, one must take into account certain particularities of the drafting of **no. 161**. We can see that some adjustments were made when writing the summary: for example, in l. 15 the scribe anticipates an operation which did not take place until the beginning of month ii. The date simply indicates that the gift from the Elders of Tuttul was not introduced into the chest until the 21st. But it is possible that the receipt of the gift was earlier. This would have the advantage of explaining the absence of a place indication (one would expect *ina Tuttul<sup>ki</sup>*) normally expected.” (GUICHARD 2005: 460 n. 185)

Nevertheless, a problem remains: Zimri-Lim having left Qirdahat only on 13/i, this leaves little time for a stay

in Tuttul before 21/i.<sup>69</sup> A historical reminder from a letter of Yaqqim-Addu must finally be taken into account:<sup>70</sup>

“Lanasum said this to Bunuma-Addu: ‘When my lord went up to the Yamhad, the elders of the city deliberated (lit. stood) about (his) entering the city for a sacrifice and said: ‘If a troop of (only) 50 men is to enter with you, you will enter; if not, you will not enter!’”

Note, however, that the text does not say what finally happened: perhaps Zimri-Lim did not make the detour to Tuttul, since he was refused entry to the city with the soldiers who accompanied him! So I wonder if the simplest explanation is not the following. There would have been a hesitation about the route that Zimri-Lim should have taken from Ahuna. The Aleppine general Samsi-Addu thought that he would go via Tuttul and sent him a gift in that city. But in the end Zimri-Lim chose to go straight west to join the Euphrates at Yakaltum: the present waiting for him in Tuttul would have been given to him later with the vase sent to him by the Elders of Tuttul. In any case, if Zimri-Lim had gone to Tuttul, he would have taken the road from Qirdahat to Ahuna anyway, before going down the Balih to Tuttul.

### 3.2.3 Another attestation for this route

It is not impossible to find another example of the partial use of the same route, in the opposite direction, in a file of letters from Dariš-libur. Having completed his mission in Aleppo, Dariš-libur was about to reach Mari by the Euphrates road: he had already reached Imar when he received the king’s order to go to Magrisa.<sup>71</sup> N. Ziegler has endorsed the location of Magrisa on the Habur at Tell Tneinir, about halfway between Zilhan and Qirdahat (ZIEGLER 2011: 6-7). Dariš-libur seems to indicate that he will pass through Ahuna, but without indicating how he will reach this locality from Imar. In any case, the Ahuna-Magrisa road had to cross the steppe by bypassing Jebel Abd-el Aziz from the north: only at the end did it separate

65 “However, it was a round way for Zimri-Lim to go from Tell Munbaqa to Tuttul and then to Halab, since Tell Munbaqa is more near to Halab than Tuttul (Tell Bi’a). One explanation is that Zimri-Lim did not go to Yakaltum, but Dariš-libur, his treasure-keeper, went to there to receive the gifts sent from Carchemish, just on the upper river of Tell Munbaqa, on 18/I and then went to Tuttul to join his lord on 21/I. Another possibility is that Zimri-Lim went to Yakaltum/Tell Munbaqa to meet Aplahanda of Carchemish and went to Tuttul to meet Samsi-Addu, the general, and others so that he could not choose a straight way to Halab.” (WU YUHONG 1992).

66 For ramifications on a general move, see VILLARD 1992: 203 n. 64.

67 DURAND 2002: 95. This Samsi-Addu is mentioned as a recipient of tin in ARM 23 556 [T18907]: 10, in Aleppo.

68 “En fait, on doit tenir compte de certaines particularités de la rédaction du n°161. On s’aperçoit que quelques aménagements ont été réalisés lors de la rédaction du récapitulatif : ainsi par exemple l. 15 le scribe anticipe une opération qui n’eut lieu qu’au début du mois ii. La date indique simplement que le présent des Anciens de Tuttul ne fut introduit dans le coffre que le 21. Mais il se peut que la réception du présent ait été antérieure. Ceci aurait l’avantage d’expliquer l’absence d’indication de lieu (on attendrait *ina Tuttul<sup>ki</sup>*) normalement attendue.”

69 Another solution has been proposed by J.-M. Durand (DURAND 2004: 172 n. 339), but I will not discuss it in detail, because it is based on a correction of the date of the stay in Yakaltum (28 instead of 18, very clear on the tablet).

70 ARM 14 55 (= LAPO 18 1055): (17) ... *la-na-su-wu-um* (18) *a-na bu-nu-ma-d<sup>i</sup>ŠKUR ki-a-am iq-bi* (19) *um-ma-a-mi i-nu-ma be-li a-na ia-am-ba-a<sup>d</sup>ki* (20) *i-lu-ú aš-šum SISKUR<sub>2</sub>.RE a-na li-ib-bi* (21) *a-lim<sup>ki</sup> a-na e-re-bi-im iz-z<sup>i</sup>-zu-ma* (22) [*u*] *m-ma LÚ.ŠU.GI.MEŠ a-lim<sup>ki</sup> {ma šum-ma}* 50 *ša-bu-um* (23) *it-ti-ka i-ru-bu [te-er-ru-ub]* (24) *ú-la-šu-ma ú-ul [te-er-ru-ub]*.

71 FM 7 9. Unfortunately, l. 8-13 are very mutilated, but it seems certain to me that the name of Tuttul should not be restored l. 8 and 12 as proposed by J.-M. Durand. It is a stage between Aleppo (where Dariš-libur left “my lord”, i.e. king Yarim-Lim) and Imar.

from the track leading to Qirdahat. This is another example of the existence of a direct route between the Yamhad and the southern tip of the Habur triangle.

## Conclusion

The case studied here shows to what extent the combination of information extracted from documents of different nature is necessary to reconstruct an itinerary, even if this operation involves certain risks. It is important to avoid any mechanical conclusion, by asking the question of the reason for the existence of a particular toponym, before considering it as a stage: this is what the case of Tuttul has shown us. The silence of the sources must be taken into account, but can sometimes be explained. It is true that the name Ahuna does not appear in the record of Zimri-Lim's westward movement; nevertheless, this city must have been a stage on the road that led the king of Mari from Qirdahat to Yakaltum. When I presented some results of the present study in Mainz in November 2012, the coincidence with the calculations of displacement according to the "least cost" formula seemed striking and promising.<sup>72</sup> Let us hope that further experiments of the same kind can be carried out to take us a step further in reconstructing the network that enabled messengers, merchants and soldiers to move around the Near East in the second millennium BCE.<sup>73</sup>

72 K.-C. Bruhn, T. Kohr, B. Einwag, A. Otto & C. Fink: "Modellierung der Landschaft in der Westjazira und mögliche Wege von Jamhad über den Euphrat bis zum Balih".

73 Since this wish was expressed (in 2012), the "least cost" technique (LCP = *Least Cost Path*) has been applied by F. Di Filippo to the section of the Urbana/Yale route between Šubat-Enlil (Tell Leilan) and Harran (Di FILIPPO 2016). This is a route more or less parallel to the one studied here, but located further north and corresponding in distance: 221.5 km as the crow flies (Di FILIPPO 2016: 456). Unfortunately, this study is based on erroneous premises. It is wrong to believe that this itinerary dates from the time of Samsi-Addu because it mentions Šubat-Enlil and not Šehna (Di FILIPPO 2016: 452): it should be recalled that mentions of Šubat-Enlil persist under Zimri-Lim and beyond, alongside mentions of Šehna (see already CHARPIN 1987, not cited by the author, and since MTT/1/1 p. 344, s.n. Šubat-Enlil, with numerous references to PIHANS 117). It would be completely incomprehensible how a military expedition from Larsa to Imar could have taken place at the time of Samsi-Addu. A paper by N. Ziegler in Dijon in March 2012, which has remained unpublished, gave two crucial insights for the interpretation of the Urbana-Yale route. Firstly, it seems that the expedition dates from the beginning of Samsu-iluna's reign: this would explain why they wanted to bypass the Middle Euphrates region, which was not firmly held by the Babylonian king (CHARPIN 2011). Moreover, the movement would be commercial in nature: it is reassuring that Di Filippo's considerations on the speed of move-

## Main abbreviations

- ARM 1 DOSSIN 1950.  
 ARM 4 DOSSIN 1951.  
 ARM 7 BOTTÉRO 1957.  
 ARM 14 BIROT 1974.  
 ARM 23 BARDET, JOANNÈS, LAFONT, SOUBEYRAN & VILLARD 1984.  
 ARM 24 TALON 1985.  
 ARM 25 LIMET 1986.  
 ARM 26/2 CHARPIN, JOANNÈS, LACKENBACHER & LAFONT 1988.  
 ARM 27 BIROT 1993.  
 ARM 31 GUICHARD 2005.  
 ARM 32 ARKHIPOV 2012.  
 ARM 33 DURAND 2019.  
 FM 4 ZIEGLER 1999.  
 FM 5 CHARPIN & ZIEGLER 2003.  
 FM 7 DURAND 2002.  
 FM 16 RECULEAU 2018.  
 LAPO 16 DURAND 1997.  
 LAPO 17 DURAND 1998.  
 LAPO 18 DURAND 2000.  
 MTT 1/1 ZIEGLER & LANGLOIS 2016.  
 PIHANS 117 EIDEM 2011.  
 For the rest, see [www.archibab.fr](http://www.archibab.fr), "Bibliography" tab.

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ment of an army of 10,000 men (with donkeys to carry luggage) have shown that it is hardly compatible with the data of the route. From the point of view of historical geography, the identification of Harran with Šubat-Šamaš (Di FILIPPO 2016: 473-475) is to be forgotten: see ARKHIPOV 2014 who proposed the equation Šubat-Šamaš = Hanzat and for the location of the latter at Tell Bandar Khan cf. ZIEGLER 2009: 205-207. For more on the "Road to Emar", see now in this book the long contribution of ZIEGLER, OTTO & FINK 2023.

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Forschungen zur „Road to Emar“

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Research on the “Road to Emar”

