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Assyrian Geography and Neo-Assyrian Letters The Location of Ḫubuškia Again

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In the framework of the historical geography of western Iran in Neo-Assyrian times, the problem of the location of Ḫubuškia has been much debated in the past. Leaving aside older ideas discarded by modern research¹, in recent times two diverging proposals have been advanced. The first is that Ḫubuškia should be looked for in the mountain area north of Assyria, between Lake Van and Lake Urmia, on the Yüksekova / Hakkâri plain²; the second is that it must have been located east-south-east of Assyria, in the valley formed by the Lower Zab headwaters, south-west of Lake Urmia³. A third, intermediate position has been proposed by Russel, who has located Ḫubuškia in the mountain area east of Rowanduz and south of Muṣaṣir⁴.

Both proposals rely exclusively on the reconstructions of the itineraries followed by the military campaigns of the Assyrian kings, which are described in their royal inscriptions. The question has been briefly, but adequately summed up recently by M. Liverani and M. Liebig⁵. A northern location of Ḫubuškia is backed up by the following elements: it is close to Muṣaṣir (in the Baradost), to Kurruri /Ḫabaruri (the Dasht-i Ḫarir plain), and to Gilzanu (western-south-western shores of Lake Urmia); it is separated from Assyria by one of the two Zabs, usually identified as the upper one. The south-south-eastern location, however, is backed up by its proximity to Mannea (east of Assyria), and again by its proximity with Muṣaṣir and Kurruri/Ḫabaruri. As for Russel's proposal, he identifies the Zab (mentioned by Sargon in his "Letter to the God" as separating Ḫubuškia from Muṣaṣir) as the Rowanduz river, a western tributary of the Upper Zab.

The possibility that other texts such as Neo-Assyrian letters may offer some clues to the solution has never been seriously taken into account, probably because of the poor state of the editions and of the fragmentary information they offer. Nevertheless, when they contain geographical data, the letters represent a first-rank source for historical-geographical reconstruction, on the condition that they are adequately understood and that their historical and contextual background is fully appreciated. All this obviously implies the knowledge and the control of a wide series of elements, such as chronology, administrative background, communicational and rhetorical questions, and many other problems, which generally pile up on each other to such an extent that, as has been aptly stated, the final impression is that of a swamp of innumerable unrelated data⁶.

¹The bibliography is aptly assembled in ATA, p. 25 fn. 61.

²ZU, p. 60.

³J.V. Kinnier Wilson, *The Kurba'il Statue of Shalmaneser III*: Iraq 24 (1962), pp. 108-110; P. Hulin, *The Inscription on the Carved Throne-Base of Shalmaneser III*: Iraq 25 (1963), p. 59; J. Reade, *Kassites and Assyrians in Iran*: Iran 16 (1978), p. 141; *Studies in Assyrian Geography II*: RA 72 (1978), pp. 178-179; Hasanlu, *Gilzanu, and Related Considerations*: AMI 12 (1979), pp. 178-179; P. Zimansky, *Urartian Geography and Sargon's Eighth Campaign*: JNES 49 (1990), p. 19; M. Liebig, *Zur Lage einiger im Bericht über den 8. Feldzug Sargons II. von Assyrien genannter Gebiete*: ZA 81 (1991), pp. 33-34; J. Reade, *Campaigning around Muṣaṣir*, in A. Çilingiroğlu - D.H. French (eds.), *Anatolian Iron Age 3. The Proceedings of the Third Anatolian Iron Age Colloquium held at Van, 6-12 August 1990*, Ankara 1994, pp. 185-188.

⁴H.F. Russel, *Shalmaneser's Campaign to Urartu in 856 B.C. and the Historical Geography of Eastern Anatolia According to the Assyrian Sources*: AnSt 34 (1984), pp. 196-198.

⁵Cf. fns. 1 and 3, above.

⁶LAS II, p. xi.

However, most recent research on Neo-Assyrian letters has begun to throw light on such problems, through the refinement of the methodological approaches and through the clarification of many aspects that too often had remained hidden behind a poor understanding of language and style. With these premises, letters—together with administrative and juridical documents—rise to the top of the list of significant sources for historical reconstruction, as they are closely connected to everyday life and fixed administrative practice. In this way, the comparison with data stemming from royal inscriptions, which have for a long time been considered essential sources in historical research, may result in crucial corrections and updating of our knowledge.

The main source for the location of Ғubuškia is a letter written to Sargon by Šulmu-bēli, the deputy of the Palace Herald⁷; it contains a description of the route taken by the king of Ғubuškia to come to Assyria, bringing his tribute in cattle and sheep. The letter, well-known since its publication in Harper's copy and Waterman's transcription (ABL 809), has recently been re-published by S. Parpola and myself in SAA 5, no. 133. In studies on the historical geography of the Assyrian Zagros, the crucial data stemming from this letter have not been fully appreciated, because of its fragmentariness and the apparent uniqueness of some of the toponyms it mentions. The present contribution is aimed at solving such problems, offering a new reading of one of the toponyms, which may fix, I hope definitively, the location of Ғubuškia on the map.

In this letter, the deputy reports to Sargon on the arrival of the king of Ғubuškia in Assyria with his tribute consisting of horses, cattle and sheep, and asks the king whether he has to go to receive the foreign prince. Here follows the text as edited in SAA, with slight modifications in the rendering of some toponyms, which are necessary in order to avoid anticipated judgment based on the SAA edition.

1. [a]-na LUGAL EN-ia
2. ARAD-ka ¹DI-mu—EN
3. lu-u DI-mu a-na LUGAL EN-ia
4. TA* URU.BĀD—LUGAL—GI
5. DU-ak LÚ*.A—KIN-ia
6. TA* ŠÀ-bi URU.a-ni-su
7. ina URU.EN-an ina [GA]BA¹-ia
8. i-tal-ka ma-[a]
9. ¹ia¹-an-zu-^rú^r [0]
10. KUR.ḫu¹-buš¹-a-a [0]
11. ma-a UD-24-KĀM [0]
12. i-na URU.^rx^r-^rx^r-[x] (SAA 5: ^rú^r-a¹-[si])
13. e-ta-^rrab¹
- r.1. i-na URU.ḫar-ra-[ni-a]
2. i-la-a[k¹]⁸
3. ma-a šúm-ma i-na ŠÀ-bi
4. URU.ḫar-ra-ni-a la e-l[i¹]
5. UD-26-KĀM ina URU.PÚ-te
6. ú-la-a ina URU.ḫar-ra-ni-a
7. e-te-li UD-27-KĀM
8. ina URU.PÚ-te ANŠE.KUR.MEŠ
9. GUD.NITÁ.MEŠ-šú¹ ^rUDU¹.MEŠ-šú

⁷His dignity is mentioned in SAA 5 150: r. 8'-9' and SAA 1 30: 3'.

⁸Correct in this way the transcription *i-tu-š[i¹]* erroneously given in SAA 5 (see collations *ibid.*, p. 269).

10. 1-^ren¹⁷ UD-mu i—pa-na-tú-šú
 11. [i-na] pu-ut¹ URU.a-ni-su
 12. [i]-tal-ku-ni
 13. [x A]NŠE.KUR.MEŠ
 14. [x GU]D¹.MEŠ
 15. [x x UDU.NIT]A[?].MEŠ
 16. [x x (x)]-šú-nu
 17. [x x i]-^rsi¹⁷-šú
 18. [x x x] ^rx x⁷ [x x]
 s.1. [šúm-m]a LUGAL be-lí i-qa-bi la-lí-[ki]
 2. [i-s]i-šú¹ la-da-bu-ub

"(1) [T]o the king, [my lord]: your servant Šulmu-bēli. Good health to the king, my lord! (4) I was coming back from Dūr-Šarruken; my messenger, coming from Anisu, met me in Adian and said: (9) "Ianzû of Ĥubuškia has entered ...[...] on the 24th, and has to go to Ĥarra[nia]. If he does not go up to Ĥarrania, he will be in ...te on the 26th; else if he does go up to Ĥarrania, he will be in ...te on the 27th. " (r.9) The horses and his oxen and sheep came in one day ahead of him opposite Anisu. [He has wi]th him [x] horses, [x ox]en and [x shee]p [plus] their [.....]. (s.1) [I]f the king, my lord, so orders, I sha[ll go] and speak [wi]th him".

As for its contents, the letter—like some others—deals with the bureaucratic control of the flow of tribute towards Assyria. The Assyrian officials had to receive the foreign kings or rulers (or their representatives) accompanying their tribute; and they had in all probability to check the amount of tribute, assuming full responsibility for its arrival at the Assyrian collection centers without losses or changes in composition⁹. Since the bureaucratic responsibilities of Assyrian officials did not extend to events occurring in formally "foreign" territory¹⁰, we may safely assume that tribute was checked upon entering Assyrian territory; thus, if a letter describes an itinerary to be followed by the tribute (animals and merchandise), it is highly probable that this itinerary lies within Assyrian territory, and not outside it¹¹. Consequently, our letter in all probabilities mentions an itinerary from Ĥubuškia to Assyria which was entirely or partly inside Assyrian territory.

The location of the Ĥubuškian king's itinerary may be pinpointed on the map in two ways. The first, very obviously, consists in trying to establish relations with other well-known fixed points of Assyrian geography. The second way is to consider the geographical location and extension of the administrative area subjected to Šulmu-bēli. In a sense, all this has been partly attempted in the past; but no firm results have been attained.

As far as the first method is concerned, on one hand, the readings of the names of the first and last towns quoted in the letter have never been absolutely certain, and this has prevented a comparative approach with other texts; on the other hand, the reference to Anisu, which is mentioned in some relation to Ĥabĥu in a letter of Tāb-šar-Aššur (with which we shall deal below), was sufficient

⁹The tribute did not pertain to the provincial economic administration controlled by governors, but was considered strictly belonging to the central royal administration (TCAE, p. 123). The provincial governors' duty was only to have it correctly delivered to the center.

¹⁰The tributary kingdom is always treated as formally independent, even though it may be mistreated in political relations at the kings' level. An Assyrian governor, once the border is trespassed, formally loses his otherwise politically attested primacy. See e.g. SAA 5 35 where the Assyrian governor of Tušĥan protests against the Šubrian king's refusal to extradite Assyrian deserters who had fled to his country, or SAA 5 33, where Šubrian people capture Assyrian eunuchs and soldiers, and their king rather insolently pretends to investigate the matter personally, forcing the Assyrian governor to write to his king asking permission to react.

¹¹Deller, ZU, p. 121, has applied this line of reasoning to another letter of Šulmu-bēli which shall be commented below.

indication in favour of the location of Ḫubuškia north of Assyria, since Ḫabḫu was clearly north of it¹². The picture has not been changed by the proposals put forward in the last edition. The restoration of the name of Waisi (the well-known Uraṭian city south-west of lake Urmia, which in all probability may be identified as the modern Ushnuvīyeh)¹³ as the first town in the itinerary has generally been suggested by the vague connection between Anisu and Ḫabḫu; by circular reasoning, this confirmed the northern location of Ḫubuškia, with particular emphasis on the area of Yūksekoa/Hakkāri, which lies immediately north of Ḫabḫu.

As for the second method, the location of the itinerary in the province of the Assyrian Palace Herald accorded well with the connection with Ḫabḫu emerging from Ṭāb-šar-Aššur's letter, since the Palace Herald's province ought to have extended north-east of Central Assyria. Thus, by similarly circular reasoning, the northern location of Ḫubuškia was roughly confirmed.

However, the location of the itinerary in the province of the Palace Herald should be more carefully considered. At least for a certain time, the province of the Palace Herald included administratively the mountain state of Mušāšir¹⁴: this is clearly stated in Sargon's Annals¹⁵, and is confirmed by a letter which shows the king of Mušāšir's political dependence on this Assyrian official¹⁶. More interestingly, in another letter of his, Šulmu-bēli reports about the journey of Urzanā to Assyria with his tribute¹⁷, and gives a detailed description (which is partly broken in the text) of the itinerary followed by the Mušāširian king. As we have seen, Šulmu-bēli had to take care of foreign tribute passing through his own territory: thus, we may assume, as working hypotheses, (1) that the itinerary followed by Urzanā should to some extent reflect the itinerary followed by the Ḫubuškian king; and (2) that both itineraries may have had one point in common in their final part, where they should have converged in order to reach a further common collection point in central Assyria. Here follows the text as given in SAA 5, no. 136:

4. ¹ur-za¹-na UD-10-KÁM
5. ina URU.a-¹la¹-mu iz-za-az
6. ¹UD¹[11²-KÁM] ina URU.ḫi-ip-tú¹-ni
7. [UD-12²-KÁM] ina URU.mu-ši
8. [UD-13²-KÁM ina U]RU 1-te
9. [UD-14²-KÁM ina URU.arb]a¹-il¹

"Urzana is staying in Alamu on the 10th; on the [11th?] he will be in Ḫiptuna; [on the 12th?] in Muši, [on the 13th?] in Issēte, [on the 14th?] in Arb]ail".

Alamu and Muši are *hapax legomena*. Ḫiptuna has been identified with Heftōn / Tall Haftūn, a town in Dasht i-Ḫarīr (along the Upper Zab, north-east of Erbil), which, according to Nestorian and Arabic sources, lies at two days' march from Erbil in the direction of Azerbaijan¹⁸. As stated by K. Deller¹⁹,

¹²ATA, pp. 25-27, with bibliography on fns. 69 and 70.

¹³See lastly Zimansky: JNES 49 (1990), pp. 16-18.

¹⁴For its location in the Baradost, around the modern town of Sidekan, see most recently the bibliography in Liverani, ATA, fn. 57 on p. 24. It must be stressed that Mušāšir is one of the few fixed points in the historical geography of the Assyrian Zagros.

¹⁵In his Annals, Sargon claims to have incorporated Mušāšir in the Palace Herald's province: Lie, *Sargon Annals*, p. 28: 163-164.

¹⁶SAA 5 147.

¹⁷SAA 5 136; for a previous edition and comment, see Deller, ZU, pp. 120-121. The mentions of horses and sheep, and of the audience-gift (*namurtu*), point clearly to the delivery of tribute.

¹⁸R. Zadok, *West Semitic Toponyms in Assyrian and Babylonian Sources*, in Y. Avishur - J. Blau (eds.), *Studies in the Bible and the Ancient Near East Presented to S.E. Loewenstamm*, Jerusalem 1978, p. 181.

¹⁹Deller, ZU, p. 121.

it was an important town, possibly the administrative center of the province of the Palace Herald; according to the penalty provided in a delivery contract for corn, it was probably very close to a river, which should obviously be identified as the Upper Zab or one of its tributaries, such as the Rowanduz river²⁰. Issēte is the reading of the town name which is usually written ideographically 1-*te* (and previously read Anate / Anatu²¹), as was ingeniously suggested by K. Deller²², who stated that it was not far from Arbail and Kurbail²³. The last name is that of Arbail; the name is fragmentary on the tablet, but it has been restored by double collation²⁴. An administrative document shows that some dependent kinglets, one of whom clearly reigned in the Zagros area, brought their tribute to Arbail²⁵: this town was very probably a collection center for tributes coming from the East²⁶, to which Urzanâ too had to converge with his own contribution.

Urzanâ's itinerary should have followed the well-known road which comes down from Rowanduz to the Dasht i-Ḥarīr, and then reaches Erbil, either crossing the Khati Dagh and Sefin Dagh hills through the modern town of Shaqlawa, or passing west of the Pirman Dagh (see Fig. 1)²⁷. *Prima facie*, the itineraries of the king of Ḥubuškia and of Urzanâ of Muṣaṣir do not have any point in common. Nevertheless, we should notice that in both itineraries one of the stages—the last in the Ḥubuškian king's, the penultimate in Urzanâ's—is represented by a town whose name is written by way of a logogram followed by the phonetic complement *-te*: Issēte / URU.1-*te* in Urzanâ's, URU.PÚ-*te* in the Ḥubuškian king's. Following the instructions of our manuals on epigraphy, the second name has been reconstructed in SAA 5 as Burte, on the basis of the equation of the logogram PÚ with *burtu*, *būru*, "cistern"²⁸.

But Šulmu-bēli was a high dignitary, as was his superior; and certainly had very clever and expert scribes at his disposal. The author of this letter was certainly one of these: and he did not limit his craft to the short lists of equivalences given in our manuals—as we sometimes do. He had certainly at his disposal the vocabularies: and the A, Ea and Proto-Ea Vocabularies state that the sign PÚ might correspond to the word *issu*, "pit, clay pit"²⁹. It is clear that, to render a sound like *lissētel*, our scribe did not make use of the writing which used the logogram 1 (= *issēn*, "one"), adopted by other scribes, but preferred a more sophisticated rendering. It seems, in fact, that our scribe uses peculiar writings or rare linguistic forms: he writes *ḥu-buṣ-a-a* instead of the normal *ḥu-buṣ-ka-a-a* (such a writing is not due to an error, since it appears in another letter, which is attributable to the Palace Herald or rather his deputy given its content³⁰); and he uses *ina GABA* (*ina iri*) instead of the common *ina UGU* (*ina*

²⁰FNALD 29: A 15; the penalty included the reimbursement of expenses for transport by river (by means of *kelek*) of the corn which had been acquired.

²¹Attestations in NAT, pp. 18-19.

²²Deller, ZU, p. 121, based on the reading *lissēn*l of the logogram 1, "one".

²³*Ibid.* For the proximity with Kurbail, see below.

²⁴SAA 5, p. 105; collations by I.I. Finkel and S. Parpola. The name was not restored by Deller, ZU (collation by M. Salvini).

²⁵ADD 1110+ = SAA 7 58: III 6'; rev. II 18' (uncertain); III 18. In this last case, a small group of kinglets is mentioned, whose provenances are in part fragmentary; the only name preserved is that of the ruler of Arzizu, a town which can be located roughly in the areas around Lake Zeribor, in the Zamua regions (for the location see most recently Liverani, ATA, p. 54).

²⁶TCAE, pp. 121-123.

²⁷For a description of the itineraries, see L. Levine, *Geographical Studies in the Neo-Assyrian Zagros*: Iran 11 (1973), p. 7.

²⁸Other reading: Tulte (Parpola, NAT, p. 359, s.v.).

²⁹Voc. A: I/2, 148ff.: pu-u TÚL = *bur-tum*, *šit-pu*, *is-[su-u]*; I/2, 160f.: tu-ul TÚL = *bur-tum*, *is-su-ú*, *mi-iḥ-šu*, cf. Voc. Ea I 52; Voc. Proto-Ea: MSL 2 128 II 16: tu-ul TÚL = *is-su-ú* (cf. CAD I, p. 204, s.v. *issu*).

³⁰CTN II 243 = SAA 5 144 (cf. Deller, ZU, p. 104). The letter deals with the much debated problem of the Cimmerians in relation to the king of Urartu; the author, whose name is lost, announces he has written to Urzanâ to send news: collecting news on the Cimmerian problem and transmitting them to Šulmu-bēli was a duty of Urzanâ, attested in SAA 1 30: 3'-5'.

muḥhi)³¹. Thus, it is clear that a town named *Burte* did not exist, and that only one town, Issēte, lies behind the writings 1-*te* and PŪ-*te*.

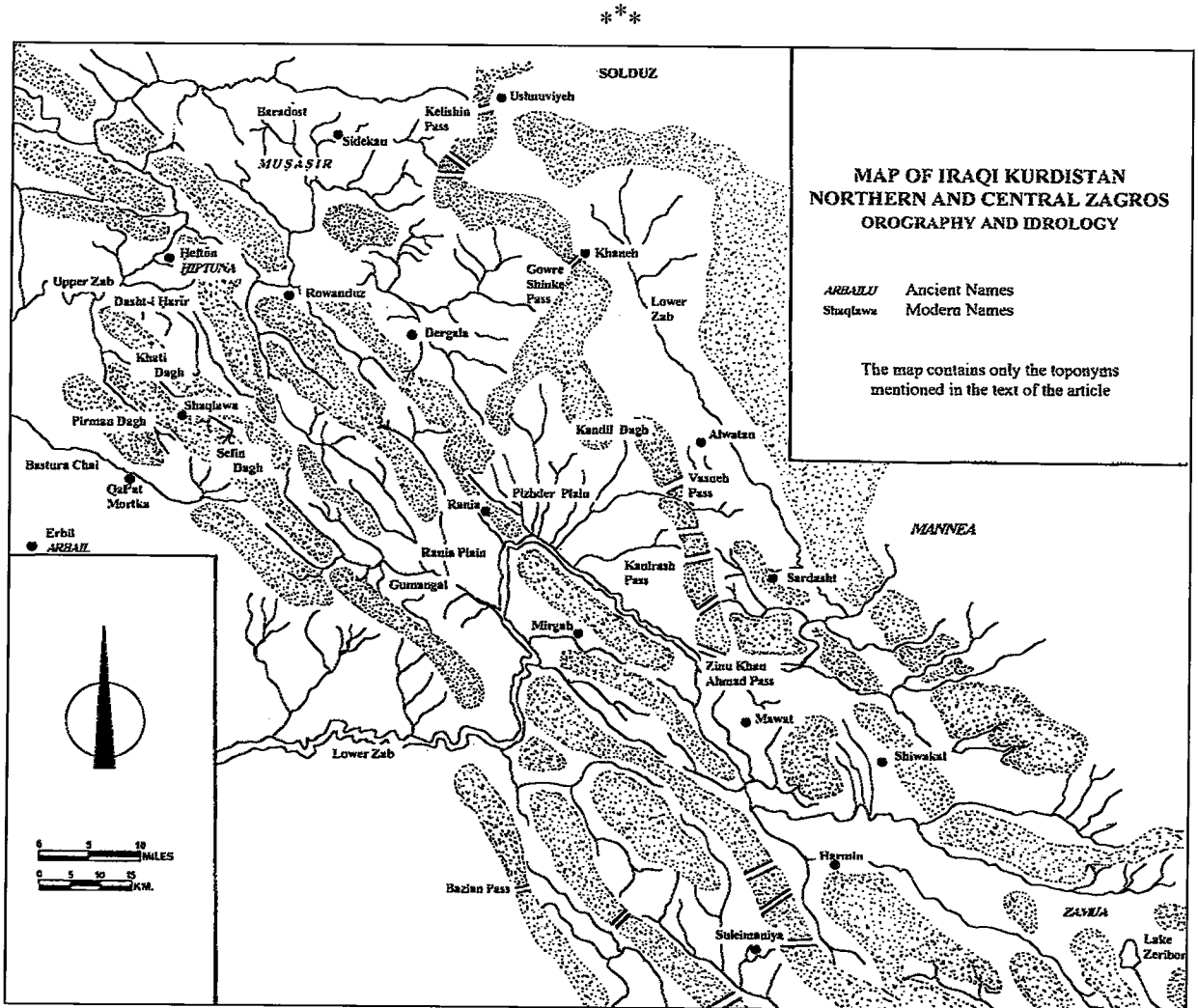


Fig. 1. - Map of Iraqi Kurdistan Northern and Central Zagros. (Personal elaboration of the Maps in Levine, Zagros, p. 6 and p. 11).

On the basis of this interpretation, it becomes clear that the two itineraries, crossing the territory subject to the Assyrian Palace Herald converged at the end towards one common point, the town of Issēte, which—as Urzanā's itinerary clearly shows—was only one stage of march away from Arbail. The exact location of this town on the map has hitherto been not possible, owing to the scarcity of attestations and to the failure in determining the name of the last stage of Urzanā's itinerary (i.e., Arbail): but at this point a less indefinite location may be looked for.

We may start considering the location of Hīptuna/Hēftōn as reconstructed by Medieval sources. As stated above, it was situated on the Upper Zab or on one of its eastern tributaries³², in the Ḥarīr plain; and was at a distance of two days' march from Erbil³³. Now, Urzanā needed *three* days as a minimum

³¹SAA 5 133: Obv. 7.

³²If a tributary of the Zab, the river mentioned by Yāqūt must be east of it, because for a traveller who moves from Arbail towards Azerbaijan it would be illogical to cross over to the western bank of the Zab.

³³Zadok, *Studies Loewenstamm*, p. 170.

to reach Arbail departing from Ḫiptuna (two stages, Muši and Issēte, lie between the two towns). This obviously means that he was moving slower than a traveller on horse or on mule, very probably because he was accompanying the animals which he was bringing as tribute to Assyria. But this means also that Issēte, the last stage before Arbail, was very close to the latter. The distance by land between the western end of the mountains which border the Ḫarīr plain to the north-east and Erbil must be around 100 kilometers³⁴; we may thus calculate three average stages (Ḫiptuna - Muši; Muši - Issēte; Issēte - Arbail) of about 35 km each, which gives 35 km ca. as the distance between Arbail and Issēte.

Such a distance brings us to the area of the hill chain formed by the Pirman Dagħ and the Sefin Dagħ: it extends east of Erbil and bars the way to the Ḫarīr plain although there are passes which are very easily crossed³⁵. But this is not yet sufficient to establish a more precise location. As stated above, two roads can be taken to reach the Ḫarīr plain from Erbil: either through the passes on the hills, or avoiding the hill area by a detour west of the Pirman Dagħ.

However, an inscription of Sennacherib celebrating his construction of a canal supplying Arbail with water may help to solve this problem definitively. It was found at Qal'at Mortka, at the head of an ancient canal—probably Sennacherib's own canal—which ran partly underground from the Bastura Chai, an eastern tributary of the Upper Zab originating in the Sefin Dagħ. The inscription lies ca. 5 km away from the point where the Bastura Chai is crossed by the road from Erbil to Shaqlawa³⁶. In the inscription, Sennacherib states—with a rather difficult syntax—that he had dug waters from pits which flanked three rivers flowing from Mt. Ḫani, in order to add their waters to the rivers themselves³⁷. The inscription refers very probably not to the canal built or restored by Sennacherib, but to the headwaters of the Bastura Chai, which, as may be seen on the map, originates from the confluence of some small streams.

Now, if the headwaters of the Bastura Chai are in the area where one must search the "pits of water, springs"³⁸ which, according to Sennacherib's inscription, flanked the river, their distance from Arbail would coincide quite well with the distance between Issēte and Arbail which we have reconstructed. And the name of the town Issēte, which very probably meant "the pits, the clay pits"³⁹, would fit in perfectly with the landscape described in Sennacherib's text. Thus, Issēte may be roughly located on the western slopes of the hills of the Sefin Dagħ, a few kilometers south-west of—if not coinciding with—modern Shaqlawa, around the headwaters of the Bastura Chai.

There is only one major problem with such a location of Issēte, which is raised by a Neo-Assyrian contract of sale of land where a road leading from Kurbail to Issēte is mentioned⁴⁰. When a road is mentioned in such a context, it should not be considered as a road connecting very distant places: the geographical horizon of juridical texts seems generally rather limited, except for the penalty clauses which sometime mention very distant places. Thus, Issēte and Kurbail should not be believed to lie too far from one another. The location of Kurbail has always been uncertain: it has been searched for

³⁴My own calculation, based on *Tactical Pilotage Chart*, TPC G4-B, Ed. 3, Saint Louis, Missouri, 1975.

³⁵Levine: Iran 11 (1973), p. 5; a brief description in H.W.F. Saggs, *The Land of Kirruri: Iraq 42* (1980), p. 82.

³⁶Saggs, *ibid.*

³⁷Ḫ.MEŠ ša ul-tu KUR.ḫa-a-ni KUR-e / ša SAG URU.arba-il A.MEŠ ku-up-pi / ša ZAG u GÜB ša i-ta-at Ḫ.MEŠ ša-ti-na / aḫ-ri-ma UGU-ši-na uš-rad-di "three rivers, which (flow) from Mount Ḫani in front of Arbail: I dug waters from pits which were at the right and at the left of those rivers, and let (those waters) be added to them (i.e., the rivers)". The inscription was published by F. Safar, *Sennacherib's Project for Supplying Erbil with Water: Sumer 3* (1947), pp. 23-25 (Arabic version pp. 71-86); re-edition with philological commentary by J. Laessøe, *The Irrigation System at Ulḫu, 8th Century B.C.*: JCS 5 (1951), pp. 29-30. I adhere to Laessøe's reconstruction and explanation of the text (anacoluthon construction at ll. 2-3).

³⁸For this meaning of *kuppu*, see CAD K, pp. 550-551.

³⁹See above, fn. 27.

⁴⁰ADD 385 = ARU 194 = NALK 202 (p. 239): rev. 14'-15': KASKAL ša TA* URU.kur-b[a-i] / ša a-na URU.1-iú il-lak-[u-ni] "the road which leads from Kurb[ail] to Issētu". T. Kwasman (NALK, p. 240, ad 14'-15') adopted the old reading *ana-tú* for Issētu/e, though admitting that it was dubious and quoting Deller's opinions in ZU.

in the hills north of Nineveh, immediately south of Dohuk (and identified with modern Gir-e Pan)⁴¹, and north-east of Nineveh, in the Navkur plain west of the Upper Zab⁴²; no firm proof may be adduced for either location.

On the basis of the location of Issēte the western location of Kurbail seems excluded. With a western Kurbail and a consequently western Issēte, we would expect more numerous, better known town-names of Central Assyria to be mentioned between Ḫiptuna and Issēte than the single Muši. On this basis, the location proposed by J. Reade in the Navkur plain seems preferable; and this location explains the ties between Kurbail, Kalḫu and Arbail which emerge from the penalty clauses of some contracts apparently coming from Kurbail, which imply the dedication of young people (or the payment of a fine) to the gods and goddesses of those three towns⁴³. On this basis, Issēte would be one of the apexes of a triangle of roads whose other apexes were Kurbail and Arbail. It must be stressed at this point that the collations (and the printed copy of Harper in ABL too) show clearly that the last town name in Urzanâ's itinerary is Arbail, and not Kurbail: this is necessary to remove the doubt that the road taken by Urzanâ ended up to Kurbail, and that his last stage was along the road which is mentioned in the contract quoted above.

Once having ascertained the location of Issēte, it is necessary to establish whether the itinerary from Ḫubuškia to Issēte lies north or south of the itinerary of Urzanâ. For this purpose, the location of Anisu is the central point of the question.

As anticipated above, Anisu is usually associated with Ḫabḫu⁴⁴ on the basis of a letter of Ṭāb-šar-Aššur. In this letter, Sargon's Treasurer informs his king of having received a messenger, in the town of Anisu, who had related to him the situation in the town (or province) of Birāte and in the land of Ḫabḫu; then he goes on to inform the king that he will be in the town of Ieri the following day⁴⁵. The province administered by the Treasurer was immediately south of Ḫabḫu, in the northern sector of the plain and the hilly area north of the Assyrian capitals⁴⁶. Anisu has generally been located in the north because it has been thought—although without any specific study of the matter—that the Treasurer, when writing his letter, was in his own province, and was informing the king about the situation in the territories bordering on (or included in) his own province as stemming from his own personal, *routine* observation.

But Ṭāb-šar-Aššur was one of the highest officials in the Assyrian empire; as such, provincial governorship was not his only duty: he was often sent by the king on various missions around the empire. His letters show him transporting cultic implements to Aššur⁴⁷, or transporting stone-thresholds close to a river⁴⁸, or going to Nineveh with basalt slabs⁴⁹, or inspecting timber piled on the bank of the river Zab⁵⁰. Thus, not all the letters of Ṭāb-šar-Aššur were necessarily written from his provincial capital, or from other towns in his dominion. On the other hand, in his letter Ṭāb-šar-Aššur

⁴¹See the folding map in SAA 1.

⁴²Reade: RA 72 (1978), p. 178. Perhaps some hints about the geographical proximity of Kurbail with Arbail is offered by ABL 413, where (rev. 11) some female weavers of Arbail are sent to Kurbail: but it must be admitted that this source is rather inconclusive.

⁴³E.g., CTN II 17: 19-20, 30-32 (1 mina of gold to Ninurta dwelling in Kalḫu, 7 male and 7 female votaries to Adad dwelling in Kurbail, 7 male and 7 female hierodules[?] to Ištār dwelling in Arbail).

⁴⁴See lastly SAA 1, p. 236.

⁴⁵ABL 173 = SAA 1 45: 4-rev. 2: "A cohort commander of the Chief Eunuch delivered me the king's sealed message in the city of Anisu on the 27th. The messenger of the commander of the fort came to me in Anisu; I asked him about the news, and he told me this: 'The city of Birāte and the whole land of Ḫabḫu are well; everybody is doing his work'. All is well; the king, my lord, can be glad. On the 28th I shall be in the city of Ieri".

⁴⁶UTN, pp. 168-172.

⁴⁷SAA 1 54 and 55.

⁴⁸SAA 1 56.

⁴⁹SAA 1 58.

⁵⁰SAA 1 62.

says that the messenger bringing him the news about Birāte and Ḫabḫu *had arrived* in Anisu: this means that Tāb-šar-Aššur was *far* from Birāte and Ḫabḫu; and consequently that Anisu may have nothing to do with those countries.

The location of Anisu must be fixed by comparison with other texts. We have seen that the Treasurer is to go from Anisu to Ieri, a town which lies at one day's march away. In another letter written to Sargon, the same town of Ieri is described as the starting point for a journey of the imperial magnates towards Fort Adad-remanni⁵¹. Now, Fort Adad-remanni, as has been clearly shown by Levine, is one of the last stages on the road which leads from Arzuḫina to the province of Zamua; and is to be located almost certainly near lake Zeribor⁵².

The connection between these letters shows clearly that Anisu was the point of departure of an itinerary (Anisu - Ieri - Fort Adad-remanni) which led decisively south-east, towards the area of Suleimaniya in central Zagros. Thus, it is clear that the road from Issēte to Anisu is definitely oriented towards the south-east, and that the whole itinerary of the Ḫubuškian king is to be located south of the itinerary of Urzanâ. If we were to insist on a northern location of Ḫubuškia, and consequently to fix Anisu and Ieri (which is only one day's march away from Anisu) in the north, we would have to prospect a very long tour for the magnates in order to reach territories which were deep in the south-east. Starting not far from an hypothetically northern Anisu, they would have had first to cross in some way the rugged mountains north of Assyria, then either to pass through Mušašir, or to trespass into the Urtian territory south-west of Lake Urmia, or even to descend to the Assyrian plain, and lastly to climb the mountains south-east of Arbail again to reach Zamua.

A confirmation of the location of Anisu south-east of Arbail comes from a query to the god Šamaš which was written during the reign of Esarhaddon. With this query, the *barû* asks the god whether "the troops of the Iškuzāiu (the "Scythians") which are in the district of Mannea will move out and go through the passes of Ḫubuškia to the city Ḫarrania and the city Anisu", to take booty from the Assyrian territory⁵³. As can easily be seen, Anisu and Ḫarrania are clearly described here as two Assyrian towns which lie in the last section of an itinerary from Mannea to Assyria via Ḫubuškia. Consequently, Anisu and Ḫarrania must be sought south-east of Arbail, since Mannea lies in the mountains east - south-east of this city. On the other hand, Ḫubuškia was very close to Mannea: the *turtānu* of Shalmaneser III passed from Ḫubuškia to Mannea only crossing the territory of the town Madaḫisa⁵⁴. Setting Anisu—and Ḫubuškia—in the north would again result in an absolutely illogical tour taken by the Scythians (Mannea - Solduz - Hakkâri/Yüksekova - Assyria), partly similar to the impossible tour of the magnates towards Zamua. Finally, this text definitely confirms the assumption that Anisu and Ḫarrania lie in Assyrian territory put forward above.

At this point, the location of Ḫubuškia in a roughly south-east direction in respect to Arbail is, in my opinion, fully ascertained. The southern orientation of the itinerary Anisu - Ieri - Fort Adad-remanni, which coincides partially with a section of the itinerary of the Ḫubuškian king towards Arbail, is strictly cogent to this direction. But we may go further in determining a less general

⁵¹ABL 441 = SAA 5 162: 4-8: "The magnates departed from Ieri on the 20th of [Tam]muz and went to Fort Adad-remanni".

⁵²L.D. Levine, *K 4675+. The Zamua Itinerary*: SAAB 3 (1989), p. 87. For this location of Zamua, see E.A. Speiser, *Southern Kurdistan in the Annals of Ashurnasirpal and Today*: AASOR 8 (1928), pp. 1-14; Levine: *Iran* 11 (1973), pp. 16-22; ATA, pp. 45-46.

⁵³SAA 4 23: Obv. 5-7: LÚ.ERIM.MEŠ i[š]-ku-[za-a-a šá i-na na-gi-i šá KUR.man-na-a-a áš-bu-ma] (...) / (...) T[A] né-'ri-bi' [šá URU.ḫu-bu-uš-ki-a] / [0] a-na URU.ḫar-ra-ni-a a-na URU.a-ni-i-su uš-[su-né-e]; cf. Rev. 9-11: LÚ.ERIM.MEŠ i[š]-ku]-za-a-a šá i-na na-gi-i šá KUR.ma[n-na-a-a áš-bu] / TA né-ri-[bi šá UR]U.ḫu-bu-uš-ki-a a-na URU.ḫa[r-ra-ni-a] / a-na URU.a-[ni-i-s]u uš-[su-né-e] etc. My reading of l. 7 differs from that given by Starr in SAA 4, who restores the town name as Anisus[]; as it may be easily seen in rev. 11, uš- is not a part of the town name, but is the beginning of the verb uš-su-ne-é, which is here repeated twice: "they will go out towards Anisus; once they have gone out, will they go ...".

⁵⁴E. Michel, *Die Assur-Texte Salmanassars III. (858-824)*: WO 2 (1956), p. 228: 161-165 (campaign of the 30th *palû*, led by the *turtānu*).

location, attempting on one hand to establish the location of the towns of Anisu and Ḫarrania more precisely, and on the other hand to identify the "pass of Ḫubuškia" to be crossed by the Scythians coming from Mannea.

Anisu must have been almost immediately west of the "pass of Ḫubuškia", since it is the first town met when coming from Ḫubuškia, as attested by the letter of Šulmu-bēli; it is also the point where the roads coming respectively from Ḫubuškia and Ieri converge. Thus, we must search for its location in an area east-south-east of Arbail, in the direction of Mannea, which may be used as a starting point towards Zamua. The road from this area to Ieri and further to Fort Adad-remanni may pass only through Mawat, and then proceed south through Harmin or south-east through Shiwakal, to finally reach lake Zeribor. Other roads to Zamua starting east of Arbail do not exist, except obviously the road from Arzuḫina through the Bazian Pass and Suleimaniya described in the well-known itinerary to Zamua; but this however does not include neither Anisu nor Ieri.

Only two areas have such characteristics: the Rania plain and the Pizhder plain. The former may be connected to Mawat via Mirgah; the latter via the course of the Lower Zab and the Zinu Khan Ahmad pass. If Anisu is the crossroads between the road to Zamua and the road which goes to Ḫubuškia and Mannea, and if it must be immediately west of the pass leading to Ḫubuškia and Mannea, it must necessarily be searched for in the Pizhder plain. From there, at least four passes lead further east, and the Zinu Khan Ahmad pass leads decisively south towards Mawat. Anisu cannot be located in the Rania plain, since the passage from the Rania plain east to the Pizhder plain is very easy and has not the aspect of a pass⁵⁵. If Anisu is in the Pizhder plain, Ḫarrania must be searched for further west, in the direction of Arbail: keeping in mind the location of Issēte at the headwaters of the Bastura Chai, its best location is modern Rania (which would also give a continuity in the onomastics, a fact that in any case should not be overlooked). From Rania to the Bastura Chai there are easy roads, which run along both sides of the Gumangai river, west of the Sefin Dagħ chain, which is anyway very easy to cross in its southern part⁵⁶.

Having located Ḫarrania at Rania, and Anisu in the Pizhder plain, all that remains is to identify the "pass of Ḫubuškia" which connected Mannea to Anisu (and Ḫarrania). If the pass were to be crossed coming from Mannea, the Kelishin and Gowre Shinke passes must be excluded, because they appear to be too far north in respect to the axis of the movement of the Scythians. If the Scythians had crossed these passes coming from Mannea, they would have proceeded north to Khaneh (or even Ushnuvīyeh), then made a detour south to reach Anisu in the Pizhder plain—another completely illogical detour through rugged mountains and difficult passes. Thus, only the passes crossing the Kandil chain, taking from the Lower Zab headwaters to the Pizhder plain, can be taken into consideration. Levine has described four passes in this area, and two of them as rather easy: the Vasneh pass, in a north-eastern direction from the Pizhder plain to the town of Alwatan, a few miles north of Sardasht; and the Kanirash pass, in a south-eastern direction towards Sardasht. Esarhaddon's query does not give any indication for the choice, nor does the itinerary described by Šulmu-bēli, because neither give any hints for calculating the distance from Anisu to Ḫubuškia. Nevertheless, the only candidate for the location of Ḫubuškia remains the upper valley of the Lower Zab, that long and narrow strip of land which extends north-south from its springs, around Khaneh, to Sardasht⁵⁷.

⁵⁵Levine: Iran 11 (1973), p. 9.

⁵⁶Levine: Iran 11 (1973), p. 5.

⁵⁷Obviously, such a location of Ḫubuškia forces us to discard the restoration *ú^h-r^h-a^h-[si] (= Waisi, the famous Uraṭian fortress taken by Sargon at the end of his eighth campaign) advanced in SAA 5 for the first town name in the itinerary from Ḫubuškia to Issēte. Waisi has been variously located at Ushnuvīyeh (see lastly P. Zimansky, *Uraṭian Geography and Sargon's Eighth Campaign*: JNES 49 [1990], pp. 16-18, with bibliography), or in the mountain basin between Lake Van and Lake Urmia (at Qaleh Ismail Aga: Salvini, ZU, pp. 46-51; O.W. Muscarella, *The Location of Ulhu and Uīše in Sargon II's Eighth Campaign, 714 B.C.*: Journal of Field Archaeology 13 [1986], pp. 465-475; at Baskale: C.F. Lehmann-Haupt, *Musasir un der achte Feldzug Sargons II. (714 v. Chr.)*: MVAG 21 [1916], pp. 143-144; *Armenien Einst und Jetzt*, Berlin-Leipzig 1926, pp. 310, 317-319, 322). Such a restoration would imply that the Ḫubuškian king was proceeding north, from

A stricter definition of the extension of Ḫubuškia in the upper valley of Lower Zab is for the moment impossible. Both the area of Khaneh and Sardasht may well have been included in it, even though the distance between them is very great and the terrain which separates them is extremely rugged and difficult⁵⁸. Nevertheless, no clear indications emerge from Neo-Assyrian sources. The descriptions in the royal inscriptions of the Assyrian kings who visited Ḫubuškia suggest that this kingdom was a rather small entity. The number of 100 villages included in its territory given by Shalmaneser III⁵⁹ may give the impression of a fairly extended country; but it must be noticed that the number is round, and thus may possibly have been rhetorically adjusted or even emphasized; and, on the other hand, that it corresponds to the number of villages included in sub-units of political entities which were later assimilated in size to an Assyrian province, such as e.g. the polity of Dagara, which was a part of Zamua⁶⁰.

Other data stemming from royal inscriptions are of no decisive help in determining the location of Ḫubuškia more precisely. Proceeding further in evaluating the various hypotheses which may be developed comparing the various itineraries of the Assyrian kings who passed through Ḫubuškia would bear few new results. The geographical scheme presented by J. Reade some years ago, in which Ḫubuškia is located in the valley of the Lower Zab, still offers the best explanation of the itineraries of the Assyrian kings in relation to the location of Ḫubuškia. From the point of view of the methodological approach to historical-geographical problems through different categories of sources, it may be appreciated that the examination of data stemming from letters has led to one of the results deduced from the analysis of royal inscriptions. Nevertheless, the plurality of locations previously suggested reminds us clearly that any historical-geographical reconstruction developed exclusively on the analysis of royal inscriptions should always be considered provisional until more refined data are obtained from different sources.

Khaneh or Sardasht, in order to reach the Pizhder plain (where Anisu must be located). This would have been an unreasonably long and difficult detour, not to be covered in three days: it would have implied crossing either the Kelishin Pass in order to reach Muṣaṣir and the Assyrian territories west of it, or one of the other northern passes connecting the mountain area between Lake Van and Lake Urmia with Assyria. The name of the first town in the journey of the Ḫubuškian king must be, for the moment, shrouded in the darkness.

⁵⁸I owe this information to L.D. Levine, who visited that area, in a pleasant conversation during the meeting in Rome.

⁵⁹3R 7: I 20 (Schrader, KB I, p. 154).

⁶⁰ATA, p. 126.