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Terqa Final Reports No. 1

L'Archive de Puzurum

by Olivier Rouault



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INTRODUCTION

by Giorgio Buccellati

A. Acknowledgments

With this volume devoted to the archive of Puzurum we inaugurate the series of *Terqa Final Reports*. As we undertake the last step in a very long process which has required the effort of so many individuals and the support of so many institutions, we wish to acknowledge our indebtedness to all who have made it possible, especially the Director General of Antiquities and Museums of the Syrian Arab Republic, Dr. Afif Behnassi, who together with all the officers of the Directorate in Damascus, Aleppo and Der ez-Zor have assisted us in every possible way from the beginning of our excavations.

The Joint Expedition to Terqa is sponsored by the University of California at Los Angeles; the California State University, Los Angeles; IIMAS – The International Institute for Mesopotamian Area Studies; the University of Rome; the Centre National des Recherches Scientifiques, Paris; the University of Arizona; Johns Hopkins University.

Support for the excavations has come through major grants from the Ambassador International Cultural Foundation, Pasadena; the S. H. Kress Foundation, New York; and the Ahmanson Foundation, Los Angeles.

Publication of this volume has been made possible through a special grant from the Ambassador International Cultural Foundation.

The excavations are under the direction of Giorgio Buccellati and Marilyn Kelly-Buccellati, with Mario Liverani as Associate Director and Olivier Rouault as Chief Epigraphist.

The area supervisors who most contributed to the recovery of the archive of Puzurum were, during the 3rd season (1977), Kay C. Simpson and, during the 4th season (1978), Maryse Gaborit, Kathleen F. Galvin, Renata M. Liggett, with the assistance of Jean-Michel Gaborit, Arlene S. Harris, Eiko Matsushima and Chiara Sogno.

Special editorial assistance in the production of this volume was provided by Amanda H. Podany.

B. Terqa Final Reports

It is fitting that this first volume be authored by Olivier Rouault: as chief epigraphist of the Joint Expedition to Terqa he has helped us set the standards for the study of the tablets in the field, where he has actively participated in the excavation and the recording process. The skill with which he has been able to prepare the tablets of Puzurum for publication can best be appreciated by comparing the finished edition of the texts with the floor plan (Fig. 2) which records the location of all the fragments out of which the tablets were reconstructed. It must also be stressed that most of the work on this publication was completed by Rouault in 1982, and that the unfortunate delay in the publication resulted from a variety of circumstances beyond his control.

The sorting criteria for our final reports are stratigraphic first, and then typological. In the case of the current volume, we deal (stratigraphically) with a single room (STCA 1, Fig. 1) and one occupational period. Of the material recovered we present here, as a first typological subdivision, the epigraphic documents. This material was excavated during the third and fourth seasons (1977 and 1978). A few pockets of floor accumulation belonging to the same stratum were excavated in the fifth season (1979): while they yielded fragments of tablets, envelopes and bullae, they were all anepigraphic.

On typological grounds, the bulk of the tablets published in this volume consists of sale contracts where one and the same man, Puzurum son of Namišum (also written Namašum), appears as the buyer (see below, chapter 1). It is on this basis that we call the tablets found in STCA 1 the "archive" of Puzurum and, by extension, the building to which the room belongs the "house" of Puzurum. It must be borne in mind, however, that the "archive" was not in fact preserved as an archive (see presently, under section C1), and that possibly Puzurum was either dead or advanced in age by the time the house was destroyed by a fire (see under section D).

A few other texts similar to those found in STCA 1 were uncovered in subsequent seasons in the courtyard (STCA 4) onto which the room STCA 1 opens. Even though they belong together, both typologically and (to some extent) stratigraphically, it was felt best to proceed at this point with the contents of just the room STCA 1, which does in fact constitute a clearly identifiable stratigraphic whole, and to leave for a later publication the other tablets found in the courtyard.

The documents published here are of considerable interest for a number of reasons. (1) First and foremost, they are the first sizeable body of evidence coming from regular excavations which can be used for the history of the kingdom of Khana, the heir to the political and territorial tradition of Mari. The historical information to be gathered from these texts (for now sketched only briefly below, under section D and in chapter 2) begins to fill in the picture of the middle Euphrates in terms of both the larger political framework and the microcosmos of the individual families. (2) Since they provide the best support for chronological sequencing, the texts allow us to set a vast assemblage of material culture found in stratigraphically related contexts in its proper time frame, thus contributing to an accurate definition of the distinctive Khana material culture. This has already been published, at least in part, in *TPR* 3, 4 and 8 (see also the forthcoming *TPR* 9). (3) The personal names are interesting in their continuity and diversification vis-à-vis Mari. The onomastic data from Terqa are currently being prepared for publication by J. M. Pagan. (4) There is also good evidence for several interesting scribal practices: a tablet with two envelopes, all well preserved (*TFR* 1 5, 5E and 5EE), a memo with the partial text of a contract, the full text of which is preserved on a separate tablet (*TFR* 1 6 and 6M), a loan contract split longitudinally in half with both halves preserved separately in different parts of the room (implying that the loan had been repayed and the loan document "cancelled," *TFR* 1 7). (5) Finally, the tablets contain another very important body of information, the seal impressions, which provide ample documentation for the Khana sphragistic style: they are being prepared for publication by M. Kelly-Buccellati for a forthcoming volume of *TFR* (see for now Kelly-Buccellati 1981).

As an appendix, two additional fragments are published here which were excavated in the fourth season, but in a different stratigraphic context (*TFR* 1 57-58). Thus, with this volume and with the fascicles *TPR* 2 and *TPR* 7, we have published all the epigraphic documentation recovered during the first four seasons of excavation at Terqa. A new *TPR* fascicle is currently in preparation (by O. Rouault and A. H. Podany), with a preliminary catalog of all the texts found subsequently between the fifth and the eighth season.

Parallel to the edition of the texts given in this volume we are publishing a separate volume (*GC* 1) which contains a provisional transliteration of the so-called Khana texts found before our excavations and a complete graphemic categorization of those texts plus all the texts found during our excavations through the fourth season. *GC* 1 inaugurates both the concept of graphemic categorization and a separate series of *Terqa Data Bases*, about which more will be found in the introduction to that volume. Here suffice it to say that *GC* 1 provides a complete sign index and a virtual word index to the texts published in *TFR* 1.

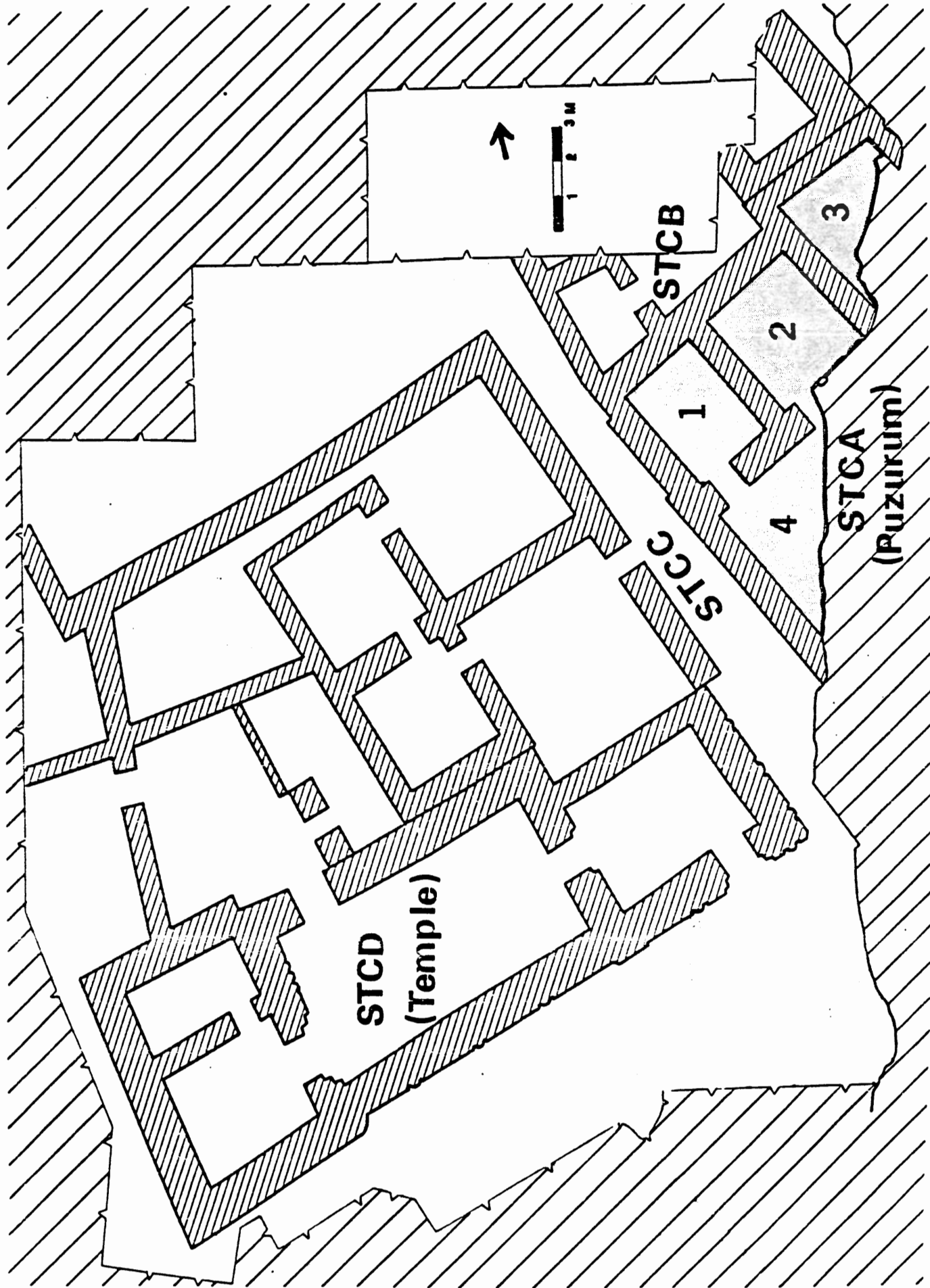


Fig. 1. Schematic plan of Area C, Kaštilišiu phase. The "archive" of Puzurum was found in STCA 1.

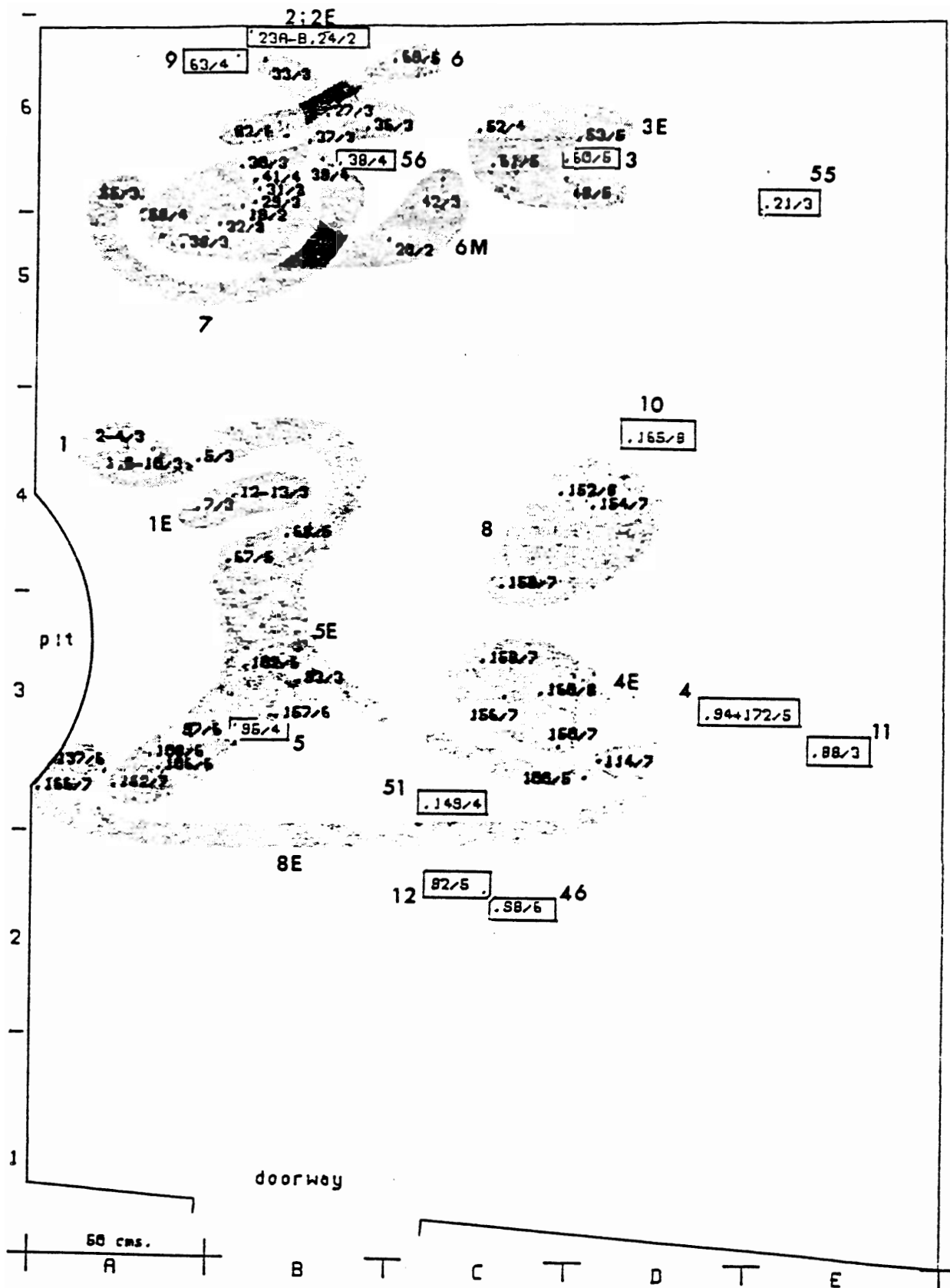


Fig. 2. STCA 1. Distribution map of tablets by findspot.

Small numbers refer to entries in the TQ4 epigraphic register, followed by the level (after the slash). Large numbers refer to publication numbers in *TFR* 1. Numbers within the same shaded area correspond to fragments joined together to reconstruct tablets or envelopes. Numbers within unshaded rectangular frames correspond to single documents.

C. Stratigraphic Considerations

C1. The "Archive" of Puzurum

The setting of the "archive" of Puzurum was in fact not archival at all: the tablets were not stored properly, but rather tossed about among a variety of other artifacts. The documents were at best in dead storage, and seem to have lost all current value by the time they were placed, or apparently thrown, in this room. They were well preserved because the entire house was engulfed in a violent fire, which caused the collapse of the roof. No one searched through the debris after the fire to recover any of the documents, even though a subsequent reuse of the room is well documented. The tablets then belong to a clearly defined, single occupational stratum in the sense that they were intentionally placed in the storeroom (i.e., they were not forgotten or lost). We cannot say if they were collected all at once or over a period of time (which would in any case have been rather short, judging from their content). But we can say that by the time they were stored they had lost their current value: they had been "expended" from a juridical point of view, because most of the envelopes had been opened; also, they were stored broken, since the fragments were found in different parts of the room in such a way as to indicate that the tablets had not been broken as a result of impact from the collapse of the roof, but rather prior to that. Thus, if the term "archive" can be used, it is primarily because the documents are in fact related to each other typologically, and only secondarily because they were found stored together, even if scattered about, in the same room.

I do not have any substantial additions to make at this point to the preliminary interpretation of the stratigraphic situation and the depositional history of the archive of Puzurum as given in *TPR* 10, pp. 35-40, and also in *AVM-DS* 2, 9-24 and 3, 52-119—to which I must refer for more information on this topic. A fuller analysis of the pertinent data is reserved for a later volume of *TFR*, in which the entire stratigraphic documentation will be presented, including on the one hand all the movable items recovered (artifacts, pottery, bricks, stones, bone, wood and shell) and on the other the sequencing of floors, lenses and types of soil. M. W. Chavalas is currently working on such a volume, which will include not only the room STCA 1, but the entire house of Puzurum as well.

Here I wish only to provide the locational record of the epigraphic materials published in this volume. First, I will update the information provided already in *TPR* 10: while the documentation given there was presented with some detail, it could not naturally take into account the results of Rouault's work presented in the current volume: hence the typological identification of the epigraphic materials needs occasionally to be improved, and the individual labels can now be given, for ease of reference, in terms of the *TFR* number sequence adopted in the current volume. Second, while the data presented in *TPR* 10 included a selection of both the major epigraphic materials and the major artifacts, the data given here will exclude the artifacts, but will include all the tablets, envelopes and fragments published in the current volume.

I have chosen to present the data in both graphic and tabular form, providing thereby all the essential locational information.

The graphic presentation of the data (Fig. 2) consists of the horizontal plotting of much of the epigraphic materials (including fragments) on a single floor plan, with the addition of the level next to the identifying label. The floor plan is computer generated using the graphic program published in *TPR* 12. Some items are omitted from the plan either because they were found in screening (and occasionally among the sherds) or because they are very small fragments, and their inclusion would only clutter the present map. A reference to their locus is found however in Chart 1.

The tabular presentation (Chart 1) lists all the epigraphic materials in sequence by field number, with the correlation to the publication number in *TFR* 1, and the indication of the appropriate locus. Loci and levels are used instead of coordinates and elevations, because for the present context they seem to provide an easier point of reference while maintaining at the same time an adequate degree of precision: loci are 50 cms. on the side, and levels are given in increments of 10 cms. The full volumetric documentation will be found in a forthcoming *TFR* volume by M. W. Chavalas on the stratigraphy of the house of Puzurum. The levels are computed in centimeters as positive elevations from a zero point at the base of the tell which corresponds approximately to 183 ms. above sea level. They are the same as in *TPR* 10, Fig. 6, as follows:

Level 1 = 1159-1149	Level 5 = 1119-1109
Level 2 = 1149-1139	Level 6 = 1109-1099
Level 3 = 1139-1129	Level 7 = 1099-1089
Level 4 = 1129-1119	Level 8 = 1089-1079

The stratigraphic record we established during the excavations was such as to account for the minute details of the emplacement of the artifacts. This turns out to be of major interest for an understanding of the depositional history of the room and the general use of the documents. The graphic presentation of the data in Figs. 2 and 3 illustrates this. Most of the envelopes (*TFR* 1, 1E, 3E, 4E, 5E, 8E) were broken in many fragments, sometimes scattered at some distance from each other (see especially 5E and 8E). The tablets, on the other hand, are often complete (3, 4, 5), or broken in a few large fragments (1, 6). This, plus the observation that the evidence of burning (resulting from the fire which destroyed the house) is very uneven for adjoining fragments, indicates that the envelopes had been stored broken: had they been broken in the fire, the fragments would have clustered more closely together, and a similar pattern would have obtained for both tablets and envelopes. It was also observed from the beginning, and it has been noted in several of our publications, that *TFR* 1 7 was split longitudinally, in such a way that it could not have happened accidentally: the two portions of the tablet were not found together, but some 50 cms apart. Since this was a loan, it seems most likely that it had been split upon repayment of the debt, and returned to the debtor (Puzurum in this case).

The reconstruction on Fig. 3 shows an example of one tablet (6M) pieced together out of a sizeable number of fragments. A comparison between the distribution of the fragments on the floor plan, and their distribution on the reconstruction of the tablet shows that adjoining parts of the tablet when whole were not adjacent in the ground (e.g., fragments 42 and 59).

It is also worth noting that the documents in the back of the room were generally higher than those in the middle. This may have been due to an expected heavier accumulation at the opposite end of the doorway.

This type of analysis is suggested here as a way to make the best use of detailed stratigraphic information such as the one we have been recording in our field work. As already mentioned, the same analysis will be expanded in the final stratigraphic report to cover not only the rest of the epigraphic material, but also all the artifacts and structural features of the house of Puzurum.

C2. Texts from Other Areas

As already mentioned, we are publishing here, by way of an appendix, two documents which were recovered in the fourth season of excavation outside the house of Puzurum. As it happens, they both come from a street context, one in Area F and the other in the same area as the house of Puzurum, Area C.

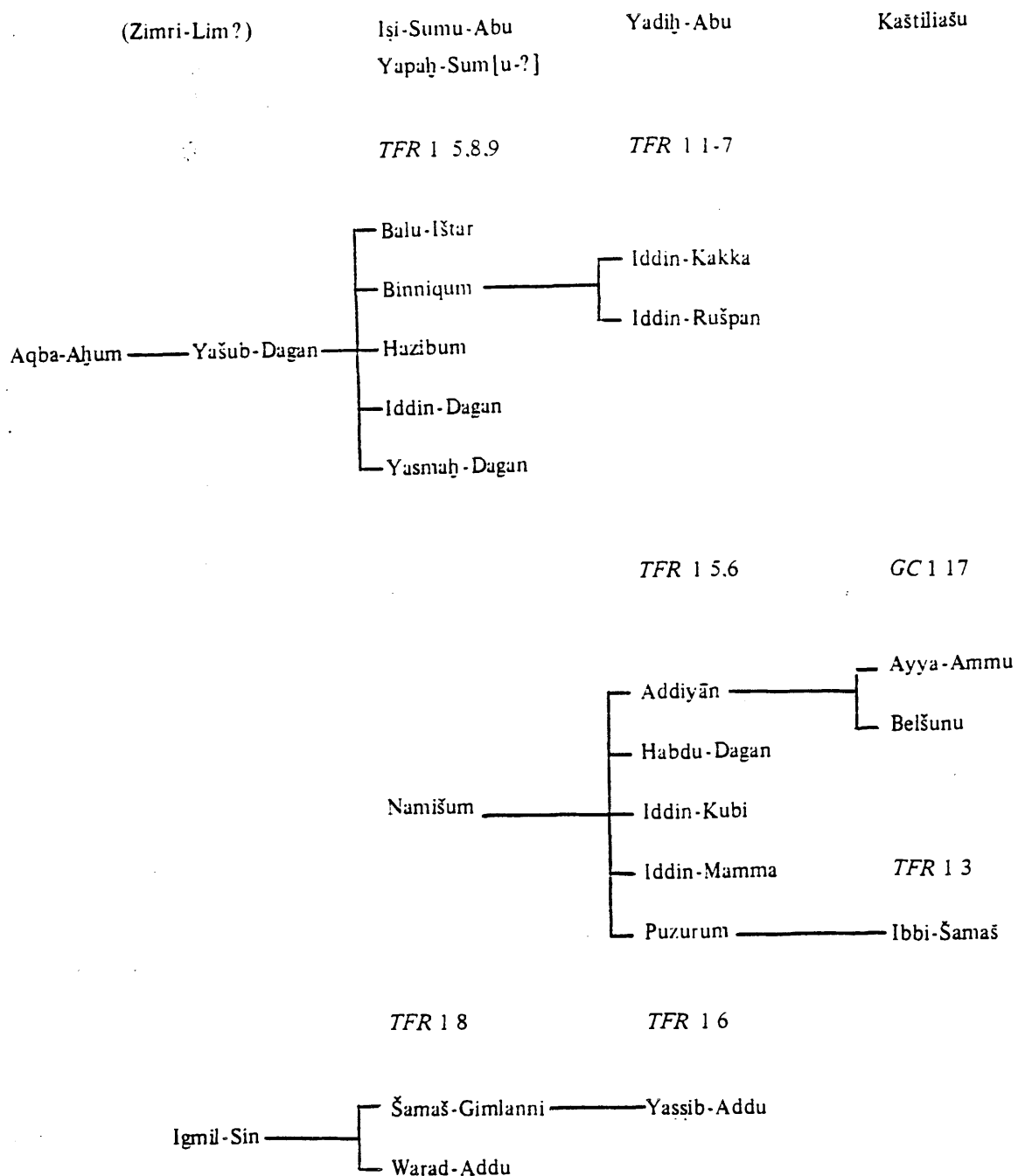


Chart 2. Family trees of some Terqa families correlated to respective reigns

TFR 1 57, a fragment of a mathematical tablet, was found in a street in Area F. A single sounding (SG 25) was opened there during the fourth season of excavation (1978). Subsequent excavations in the same area have uncovered the remains of a large building complex, probably administrative in nature, with important epigraphic materials, including several school tablets and a large fragment of a cultic text: within the building flanked by the street where *TFR* 1 57 was found there was a well defined scribal installation. For a preliminary description of this area see *TPR* 10, p. 41 and Buccellati and Kelly-Buccellati 1984. Stratigraphically, *TFR* 1 57 dates most likely to the period of Kibri-Dagan.

TFR 1 58, a fragment of a stone pendant, comes from a street (STCC) separating the house of Puzurum (STCA) and an adjacent house (STCB) from the temple of Ninkarrak (STCD, see Fig. 1). Since no doorways have been excavated as yet that would have opened onto the street, and since excavation of the street itself has not progressed to the same depth as the adjoining buildings, we do not have at this point a conclusive stratigraphic interpretation of the street STCC. Generally, however, it appears to be synchronous or even to postdate in its higher strata the middle phase of the temple of Ninkarrak. This would place *TFR* 1 58 to somewhere after Kaštiliašu or toward the end of his reign, i.e. around 1700 B.C. or later (see the next section).

D. Historical Considerations

We can draw on three main sources in order to reconstruct the historical setting and the chronological sequencing of our texts: year names, prosopography and stratigraphy. With regard to prosopography, it may be noted that the Terqa contracts contain large numbers of witnesses, a fact which gives us an insight into a rather extensive network of family relationships. A prosopographic study of our texts is adumbrated by Rouault (below, chapter 2), and is also discussed by M. Kelly-Buccellati in connection with the Terqa seals (*TFR*, forthcoming). Here I will borrow from both authors to reconstruct a preliminary set of family trees, showing the major relations of synchrony. They are summarized in Chart 2. The suggestion of a synchronic relationship of the earliest stages of these families (as we know them) with Zimri-Lim of Mari (and/or perhaps with the Babylonian occupation) is not explicitly documented, and is proposed here in function of the expected chronological sequence.

It is interesting to note that the prosopographic evidence of the so-called Khana tablets dated to Kaštiliašu which were found before our excavations generally matches the evidence of our texts dated to the same king (I owe this observation to A. H. Podany). This verifies the generally held supposition that the non-excavated texts come from Terqa. In fact, since we are dealing mostly with contracts, it would seem that these Khana texts come not from scattered areas over the surface of the tell, but very specifically from the same area where our excavations have uncovered Khana strata, namely Area C. This could be expected, since the area overlooks directly the river and was badly eroded by flooding until recent times.

The sequence of kings proposed below (chapter 2) by Rouault on the basis of year names and of prosopographic considerations is verified by stratigraphic observations. As we have just mentioned, we have not yet fully articulated the stratigraphic connections between the house of Puzurum and the temple of Ninkarrak; however, it appears that the third phase of the temple (from the top) is generally synchronous, stratigraphically, with the house of Puzurum. From tablets found on its floor, the third phase of the temple is dated to king Kaštiliašu. Only one of the tablets from Puzurum's archive is dated to king Kaštiliašu (*TFR* 1 10), while the majority is dated to king Yadih-Abu (*TFR* 1-7). Accordingly, we assume the following sequence.

King	Date	House of Puzurum:		Temple of Ninkarrak:	
		Stratigraphy	Epigraphy	Stratigraphy	Epigraphy
(late Khana)	1600?	burials traces of late walls (eroded) no documents		building and occupation of phase 1 no documents	
Šunuhru-Ammu	1650	house occupied (?) no documents		building and occupation of phase 2 one dated document on floor	
Kaštiliašu	1700	house reused (?) house occupied and burnt archive thrown in dead storage one dated document in archive		building and occupation of phase 3 several dated documents on floor	
Yadiḫ-Abu	1725	house perhaps built archive current		traces of phase 4 (unexcavated)	
Iši-Sumu-Abu Yapaḫ-Sum[u-?]	?	earliest documents in archive traces of earlier walls (unexcav.)		(no stratigraphic evidence)	

**Chart 3. Correlation of epigraphic and stratigraphic data
for the house of Puzurum and the temple of Ninkarrak.**

