

1. Introduction

1.1. Presuppositions, Goals and Methods

To undertake excavations at a site is always a privilege and a responsibility. We are laying hands, in a very concrete sense, on the unfolding of human culture as it became organically embedded in a stratified sequence of material remains, we are disturbing a depositional history which can reveal its sense only as it is so disturbed. Our responsibility is to find that delicate balance whereby the necessary intrusion of archaeology proceeds at so controlled a pace that the results achieved outweigh the trauma of excavation. To try and be worthy of the privilege we must articulate clearly our responsibilities, we must establish a specific frame of reference to which we may relate every step of the excavation as the excavation is taking place. We must also work in such a way that the results may rapidly become part of the public record because only an effective dissemination of the results justifies the effort spent in the recovery. This publication, and the others to which we will refer, are our attempt to meet these responsibilities.

It goes without saying that many of the reasons for the choice of a site are contingent in nature—and so it was with our choice of Ashara, as will appear in part of the next section. First, we wish to explain briefly the main intellectual reasons for such a choice—the broader picture, in other words, within which we feel that our archaeological work acquires its intended meaning.

1.1.1. The Third Millennium:

A Revision of the Notion of 'Mesopotamia'.

The extensive archaeological work carried out in Syria in the last several years has begun to show that our established notions about Mesopotamian culture must be revised drastically. The dramatic highpoint in this revisionistic phase is marked by the discovery at Tell Mardikh of the third millennium palace of Ebla with its incredible archives. The major importance of this discovery lies in the documentation it provides of a culture which is at the same time essentially Mesopotamian and essentially autonomous. This might seem a contradiction only if we think of Northern Syria as being outside Mesopotamia. In fact, and this is the major revision which is beginning to impose itself, Northern Syria includes one half of a cultural tradition which has the lower alluvial plain as its other half; if we choose to call this tradition Mesopotamia, then Northern Syria, at least in the third and early part of the second millennium, may be considered as Western Mesopotamia. Excavations on the Middle Euphrates should be of considerable weight in the historical reassessment which is beginning to take place. The Euphrates was the route through which contacts were possible, as we know among other things from the importance of Mari, and from the role which this region plays in the inscriptions of the Kings of Akkad as they relate their exploits in the West (i.e., Northern Syria). This region was a veritable bridgehead for their expeditions, and the acknowledgements to the god Dagan as a key instrument in the destruction of Ebla is an ideological way of underscoring the importance of having had full control over this bridgehead. Now Dagan is the main god of Terqa. Lying, as it does, half way between Akkad and Ebla (see Fig. 1), Terqa was the last station for the Kings of Akkad in Dagan territory on the Middle Euphrates and thus a border town between the two powers, open to influences

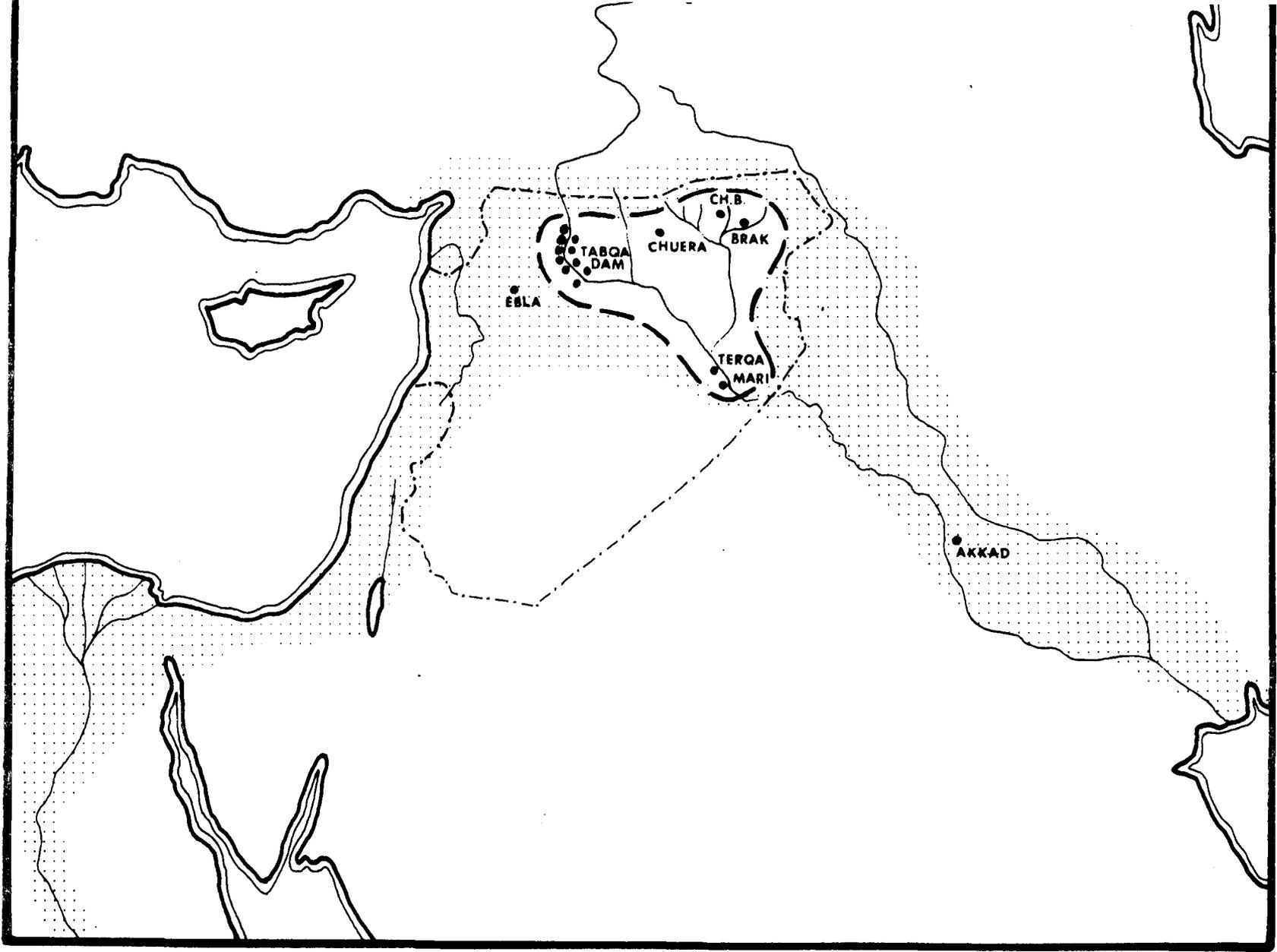


Figure 1.
The Middle Euphrates Region at the heart of the Fertile Crescent.

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from both sides. From a personal communication of Professor Pettinato we know that Terqa is in fact mentioned in the texts from Ebla. And from archaeological evidence we knew already that Terqa was indeed inhabited at that time (Thureau-Dangin and Dhorme 1924, pp. 288, 291). Thus we can expect to derive from this site unique information on the cultural alignment of the late third millennium which saw Ebla and Akkad as the two major standard bearers.

1.1.2. The Early Second Millennium: Regional Structure and Nomadic Acculturation

In the early second millennium, we know from the Mari texts that Terqa was one of the major provinces of the Kingdom of Mari. What we know in this respect has been well put together by Kupper in his comprehensive study on the subject (1947). Other works on Mari also touch on Terqa from a variety of points of view, thus for example the other major work by Kupper (1957) on the nomads. In undertaking excavations at Terqa we hope to find a counterpart to the information gained from the Mari archives—a double counterpart in fact: first, the archaeological correlate of the references contained in the Mari texts, and second, the epigraphic correlate of the texts themselves, i.e., the other half of what has been found so far of the Mari-Terqa correspondence. While these are very specific expectations, which may well never be met given the vagaries of stratigraphic deposition and the unpredictability of archaeological exploration, there are two other dimensions of the correlation between Terqa and Mari which are more general in nature and may more realistically be expected to condition our archaeological work.

In the first place, we hope to gain some insight into the internal structure of a *cultural and administrative region*. With the extended knowledge we have of the hub of this region, Mari, and with the comparable knowledge we hope to gain for one of its key subordinate nodes, Terqa, we may be in a position to verify empirically assumptions about the dynamics and growth of urban conglomerates. The tensional factors which condition the hierarchical interrelationship and the equilibrium of urban settlements in terms of the flow of economic goods, the articulation of power and the like (whether expressed in terms of central place theory or other models) can best be tested empirically by exposing as large a body of evidence as possible relating to different levels in the hierarchical scale of settlements. At Terqa we hope to be able to obtain a large exposure dating to the period of Mari, so as to better understand the configuration of the provincial level within the administrative system of the Kingdom.

The second point which we hope to clarify with our excavations has to do with the question of *nomadic acculturation*, (where the term nomadic is used in a loose sense to refer to village pastoralists, in the sense propounded for instance by Luke 1965). Being a smaller settlement at this time, Terqa was administratively, and perhaps geographically, closer to the Amorite peasant/nomads and their settlements (several of which are listed, in the texts, for the Terqa district). Thus Terqa may more readily and distinctively reflect, in both epigraphic and artifactual finds, the relationship between the central urban government and the steppe communities, as well as the ongoing process of integration of the latter into the former. We may also expect to obtain further information on the origin of Amorite dynasties, if their coming to power is to be understood as the political growth of the peasant sector of the population.

1.1.3. The Middle of the Second Millennium:

New Centralization of Power with the Kingdom of Khana

In terms of substantive new evidence, the material from the period following the kingdom of Mari may be the most important of all. We know of a kingdom of Khana of which Terqa was a major center and perhaps the capital. At any rate, we have from Terqa more than a dozen texts dated to this period, and we knew from previous soundings that archaeologically too the period of Khana is well represented. Our goal in this respect, then, is to obtain a fuller archaeological picture of the middle of the second millennium with the hope, specifically, to bridge what is otherwise, in Near Eastern history, a gap for most of the 16th century. Terqa is one of the few sites where we can hope to obtain an unbroken stratigraphic record stretching from the Old Babylonian to the Middle Babylonian periods. If so, we will recover information pertaining not only to the chronological question of the 16th century (and the attendant problems of short vs. middle chronology), but also to such important questions as the degree of cultural continuity in the Euphrates region, the role of the Kassites (for whom presumably Terqa marked an important intermediary station on their way to Babylonia), the role of the Hurrians (since Terqa seems to have been the southernmost province of the kingdom of Mitanni, in juxtaposition in this respect to Nuzi in the East and Alalakh in the West), and of course the consistency and extent of the kingdom of Khana.

An interesting institutional development has to do with the transition from a lower to a higher degree of autonomy. As Mari fell never to recover again, Terqa appears to have filled in the consequent vacuum. Given what we know of stratigraphy at Terqa, this new centralization of power may be expected to have left a trace in the archaeological record. If so, excavations there might provide some interesting specific evidence for a study of the correlation between institutional and depositional history.

1.1.4. The First Millennium:

A New Pattern of Nomadic Adaptation?

The data known from Terqa for the first millennium present us with an interesting paradox. The single most important, and to date the only monumental find from the site, is a stela carved with representations in an Assyrian-Aramaic style and with an inscription by Tukulti-Ninurta II of which for now only a preliminary edition exists (Tournay and Saouaf 1953). It seems clear that the stela was erected on the occasion of a stopover of Tukulti-Ninurta at the site, when he may have received the tribute of Sirku (as Terqa was then known) and Laqē (the region around it). Mentions of both Sirku and Laqē are not infrequent in the Assyrian Annals. Yet—and this is the paradox—no evidence has been found so far of occupation at the site during the Assyrian period. The paradox may lead to some interesting research into the possibility that by the first millennium a new pattern of nomadic acculturation may have developed, whereby the site had retained its name, but served only as a focal point for surrounding tribes rather than as a regular settlement. Also possible is that the center of the site shifted to an area not yet discovered. Only fuller exploration at the site itself and in its adjacent area will allow us to formulate the question in more precise terms, and possibly work toward a solution.

1.1.5. The Islamic Period: A Specialized Craft Center?

If there is a problem with an apparent lack of occupation in Aramaic times, there is also a problem with the resumption of occupation in Islamic times. Or, in fact, two problems. The first has to do with the contemporary town for which we do not know the date of the beginning—although it may probably readily be found out, if one were to carry out some pertinent archival research. It is certain in any case that part of the modern settlement which is on top of the mound represents the oldest section of Ashara—since it contains the mosque, the market and clearly the older style houses, and since it is known to have occupied the same general area when Thureau-Dangin and Dhorme visited in 1923. From both the nature of the top stratigraphic levels and the nature of surface remains, it does not appear as though the contemporary settlement goes very far back in time.

Surface materials point instead, in a general way for now, to the twelfth century, or the Ayyubid period, as the time when the site was reoccupied in modern times—and even then, for a short period only. The problem in this connection has to do with the *nature* of the early Islamic settlement. From the scraps of evidence we have gathered from the surface and the subsurface, there seems to be a discrepancy between two facts. On the one hand, there is a large amount of luxury items, especially in the form of glazed vessels (and to some extent, colored glass bracelets): the inventory of shapes and colors, even from preliminary tabulations, is considerable. Yet, on the other hand, there seems to be no trace of the structural remains which presumably would have housed the individuals for whom these artifacts would have been destined. If this dichotomy holds up, then one possible explanation is that we are dealing not with a regular settlement inclusive of a residential area, but rather with a craft center whose luxury items were manufactured for shipment to other areas. In any case, the discovery, in 1976, of a glazing kiln as well as the abundance of kiln implements and wasters on the site (see below, 3.3), indicates that glazed ceramics and glass artifacts *were* manufactured *in situ*; the question is whether or not that was the only or even the *primary* function of Ashara at the time. Incidentally, even the inception of the use of the name Ashara cannot be determined without further archival research. We do not know, in other words, whether the name goes back to the twelfth century or is later.

1.1.6. Structural Archaeology: Methods and Techniques

In addition to the substantive problems outlined above, we plan the excavations at Terqa with specific methodological and technical goals in mind. We refer to our approach as “structural archaeology,” meaning that we aim for a holistic exploitation of the evidence, conceived as an organic structure with a complex range of internal relationships among its component parts. While the articulation of the presuppositions which lie behind this approach will be developed elsewhere, some of the central concerns may briefly be mentioned.

Archaeological data are processed in three sequences: stratigraphic, typological and integrative. The first two sequences are primarily documentary, and present the data according to two distinct sorting criteria—one which is derived from the process of cultural deposition in the ground, and the other from the seriation of artifacts into typological categories. Naturally, even these two documentary sequences are based on interpretive presuppositions; yet, it is the

third sequence which is more specifically interpretive, in that it focuses on the interrelationship of all available data with a view toward analyzing the constitutive elements of the pertinent ancient culture.

With regard to the stratigraphic sequence, we wish to increase as much as possible the degree of control without lessening unduly the ratio of returns. One way in which we hope to obtain this goal is to develop a versatile system for automated recording of structural remains and other stratigraphic details by means of photogrammetric devices. Stereophotography and holography will also be used to similar ends. A precise quantification of the data will also allow for a statistical verification of stratigraphic conclusions reached at the moment of excavation. It is in this respect especially that the use of the computer makes it possible to obtain an ideal wedding of a maximum of generalization and a maximum of specificity, provided plans are made for a well integrated pattern of encoding (recording) and decoding (programming).

With regard to the typological sequence, we are in the process of developing a comprehensive categorization system which will lend itself more readily to automated recording and will at the same time provide the most flexible tool for cultural analysis. In so doing, we are basing our definition of attributes on both culture-free and culture-bound criteria for which precise formal parameters may be spelled out. Working both empirically from the Mesopotamian data and deductively from universal systems of principles, we hope to establish a system which is both rigid and flexible—rigid or univocal in the correspondence of attributes to artifacts, and flexible in the range of cultural elements to which it can apply.

The stratigraphic and typological sequences focus on the material coming directly from the excavations, and are thus primarily the responsibility of the Expedition's staff. The integrative sequence, on the other end, is an open-ended process which focuses on institutions and events, and is the responsibility of all concerned scholars in the field. The task of the Expedition in this respect is to provide the initial documentary input, in a manner which will be outlined immediately below (1.2).

Two more aspects of our field activity may be stressed here. First, we intend to expand our area of interest to the general area around Terqa so as to provide an accurate and comprehensive survey not only of archaeological, but also of geomorphological and ethnographic features which may be of relevance to an understanding of the global context in which the cultural deposition at Terqa has to be viewed. Second, we plan for our operations to serve the needs of field training within the systematic framework of a regular field school. To this end we have begun to develop a well equipped laboratory, inclusive of an extensive library (on microfiche) and of various tools and instruments which will form part of our permanent equipment in the field house.

1.2. Publication Program

As indicated above, it is a specific goal of the Terqa Expedition to provide a rapid and flexible dissemination of the results. There is an obvious risk consequent to this choice, namely that conclusions based on the preliminary analysis of a partial set of data may be faulted by subsequent discoveries and more extensive analysis. Yet the advantages are greater

than the risks, primarily since the body of documentary evidence will retain its validity regardless of whatever revisions may need to be introduced into the interpretive framework and the conclusions proposed. Such revisions will, in fact, be a function of the initial speed of publication, since comments and criticisms can already at an early stage benefit the ongoing integrative process of interpretation.

An important correlative to speed is flexibility. This is brought out especially in two aspects of our publication programs. First, we conceive of dissemination as a multi-tiered process, whereby different degrees of description, analysis and documentation are possible. While avoiding duplication, we wish to provide a variety of ranges, one leading to the other in terms of degrees of specificity: this is reflected in the different outlets planned, from summary preliminary reports to final reports, from traditional publications to microfiche, computer outputs and audio-visual units. The second way in which we intend to provide special flexibility to our publication program is through the notion of modular preliminary reports of which this is the first one, and which will be explained more in detail below. Modularity will create effective outlets for the integration of new data and of interpretive revisions, by eliminating the technical constraints of traditional publishing.

1.2.1. Summary Preliminary Reports

A summary report of each season of excavations will be submitted each year to the journal *Annales Archéologiques Arabes Syriennes*; it will provide an overall exposition of the activities of the season, and of its major finds in both a stratigraphic and a typological respect. Each report will be numbered sequentially under the title *Terqa Archeological Project (TAP)*. While other general articles will be produced as the occasion demands, the summary report submitted to *AAS* will normally constitute our official vehicle for a unified presentation of our results.

1.2.2. Modular Preliminary Reports

Greater details about our ongoing work at the site will be provided in the series *Terqa Preliminary Reports (TPR)* of which this is the first fascicle. Numbered from 1 on within the series, these fascicles will appear regularly within the journal *Syro-Mesopotamian Studies*. The modular nature of the journal permits us to diversify the degree of coverage accorded to different aspects of the excavation, as is apparent from the list of titles appended below. It also, and very importantly, makes it possible to selectively update certain aspects of the record in the measure called for by the data: by way of example, one may conceive a situation in which a revision of ceramic typology is desirable by the third season, whereby a special fascicle would be devoted at that time to integrate the new material with the old. Fascicles will be published as they are ready, without the inevitable constraints brought to bear upon a normal multi-author report by the requirements of collective timing. The fascicles envisaged at present are appended below (articles which are in preparation are not given a sequential number, since they will appear, and accordingly receive a pertinent number, as soon as each is completed):

TPR 1: GIORGIO BUCCELLATI AND MARILYN KELLY-BUCCELLATI
General Introduction and the Stratigraphic Record of the First Two Seasons.

- TPR 2: GIORGIO BUCCELLATI
 A Cuneiform Tablet from the Second Season.
- TPR 3: MARILYN KELLY- BUCCELLATI AND LINDA MOUNT WILLIAMS
 Object Typology of the Second Season (excluding Vessels and Lithics).
- TPR 4: MARILYN KELLY-BUCCELLATI AND WILLIAM R. SHELBY
 Ceramic Vessel Typology of the First and Second Season.
- TPR 5: NICHOLAS M. MAGALOUSIS ET AL.
 Sourcing Techniques applied to Soils and Ceramics from Terqa and Dilbat.
- TPR - : JOAN S. MEIGHAN
 The Faunal Remains of the Second Season.
- TPR - : CLEMENT W. MEIGHAN
 Burials of the Second Season.
- TPR - : AS'AD MAHMUD
 Islamic Ceramic Industry of the Second Season.
- TPR - : OLIVIER ROUAULT
 Cuneiform Texts found at Terqa before the Joint Expedition: A New Edition.

1.2.3. Limited Access Policy to Field Records

Consultation of the Field Records will be possible before publication to scholars who are engaged in a type of research on which the primary data of our excavation have a direct bearing. Consultation will be at the discretion of the Directors of the Expedition, according to modalities which will be specified in reply to personal inquiries. No information derived from the Records may be published in any form or utilized as lecture material without written permission from the Directors of the Expedition.

It will be obvious to anyone using the files that they are the immediate record of an ongoing operation, and that, as a result, they contain inconsistencies, premature conclusions, even notes of a personal character. They are in the nature of a journal which is in fact unmonitored for public consumption. If we make it available for specialized use to colleagues even at this stage, it is in the belief that the information gained from excavations at a public site should be made available to the scholarly public as rapidly and efficiently as possible, with no fear that the final report might in any way be preempted by such an early exposure of the raw data. We also trust that our candor will be met with an open mind toward the positive aspects of this procedure, rather than with an easy criticism for the obvious negative aspects inherent in the unedited record.

1.2.4. Audio-Visual Units

Two different sets of audio-visual units complement the publication of our finds. One unit in each category has already been produced for the second season, and others will follow after each season.

The first set belongs to *Audio-Visual Modules: Documentary Series*. It consists of a slide-tape presentation offering the following multiple features: (I) A selection of the most important color illustrations of the excavations and the artifacts. When used in connection

with the preliminary and final reports, the modules will serve the function of a volume of color plates, for a fraction of the cost; to this end, the modules are packaged and sold in book format, and individual slides are cross-referenced, whenever pertinent, in the written reports. (2) An integrated audio-visual presentation which, by means of a synchronized tape narration, presents in unified lecture form the major results of each season. Since all data presented are primary in nature, the modules serve in this respect a documentary function which makes them of interest to specialized audiences. On the other hand, the presentation is conceived specifically for an oral presentation, so that the modules are in fact quite suitable for general instructional needs. (3) A collection of slides which may be used individually for inclusion in lectures on the archaeology, history and geography of the Near East. It is because of the advantages inherent in this last point that the slide-tape format was chosen, as distinct from other options such as film-strip or color microfiche.

As implied in the name of the series, slide-tape units are conceived in a modular fashion, meaning that the various units (each between 15 and 25 minutes in length) will be interchangeable, so as to allow multiple slide presentations with a diversified internal structure. The first module covers the background of the Expedition and the results of the second season. Future modules will be devoted to specific cultural or methodological topics.

The second set of audio-visual units consists of 16 mm. motion picture documentaries. They will cover various aspects of our work for which it seems especially useful to capture events as they unfold rather than statically as single frames. The coverage extends beyond the archaeology to various aspects of the human and physical landscape which provides the setting against which some aspects of ancient lifeways may best be appreciated. The first such documentary is now available for distribution. Entitled *By the Meadows of the Euphrates*, it provides a general introduction to the archaeology of the second season and it depicts modern life at Ashara.

1.2.5. Final Publications

In the measure in which our work will result in meaningful, self-contained sequences, final publications will be prepared to provide a presentation of the material according to the focal point of major cultural units, such as architectural structures or artifactual assemblages. These publications will emphasize both the documentary and the interpretive dimensions of the data. With regard to the former we plan to produce a comprehensive data base in the form of computer outputs and microfiche.

1.3. Acknowledgements

Archaeological programs are collaborative by nature. From the field to the laboratory to the final publishing, we work almost like intellectual brokers: we try to bring together human and technical resources in such a way that everyone's best interest is furthered by the association with the project. Thus it is that in making explicit here our gratitude to those who have helped and are helping, we recognize the strong commonality of interest we all share.

If it is generally a privilege to undertake an archaeological excavation, it is certainly a very special privilege for us to work in Syria and to benefit there from the exemplary scholarly expertise and the administrative efficiency of the colleagues and the staff of the Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums. Most especially we wish to thank for their help – in Damascus: Dr. Afīf Bahnassī, Director General of Antiquities and Museums; Mr. Adnān Bunnī, Director of the Service of Archaeological Excavations; Mr. Qāsim Tūēr, Assistant Director of the Service of Archaeological Excavations; – in Aleppo: Mr. Maḥmūd Hreitānī, Director of Antiquities of Northern Syria; Mr. Waḥīd Khayyāta, Director of the Aleppo Museum; Mr. Muḥammad Muslīm, Representative of the Directorate with our Expedition; – in Dēr ez-Zōr: Mr. Asʿad Maḥmūd, Director of the Dēr ez-Zōr Museum.

Of the civilian authorities, we came to rely especially upon the kind assistance of the Governor of the Province of Dēr ez-Zōr, Mr. ʿAbd el-Salām Bītār.

In Ashara, we found not only a warm welcome from all the local townspeople, and valuable cooperation from the workmen who assisted us in the field, but also a generous attitude with regard to the antiquities which are ever present in the town. Here we wish to mention especially Mr. Minnāʿ Nijris (see *TPR* 2 1), Mr. Maʿamar Atīya (*TPR* 3 10), Mrs. Ḥalīma al-Frēaḥ (*TPR* 4 61, 64).

It was a distinct pleasure to have U.S. Ambassador Mr. Richard W. Murphy and his wife, Anne, visit us at the site. Both in Ashara and Damascus we enjoyed the warm cooperation and strong interest in our work on the part of the U.S. Deputy Chief of Mission, Robert H. Pelletreau Jr., and his wife, Pamela.

The work of the Expedition was made possible through grants from the Ambassador International Cultural Foundation of Pasadena and the S. H. Kress Foundation of New York. To both foundations, and to their officers who have unfailingly assisted us with enlightened concern for the scholarly progress of our work, goes our personal note of gratitude.

Finally, we wish to underscore the generosity of our colleagues at Johns Hopkins University, especially Professor Delbert R. Hillers, as well as Professor William Sladek of Towson College, who very readily agreed to enlarge the scope of the Ashara expedition so that it might become a broadly based Joint American Expedition. The circumstances under which the agreement was reached were unusual; so was their response—so too, we trust, will continue to be the ensuing results of our joint enterprise.

2. An Outline of Earlier Excavations and Isolated Finds

2.1. Earliest Chance Finds

The first publication of an artifact presumed to come from Terqa dates to 1897. It is a tablet (AO 2673) which registers a land grant by Išar-Lim, king of Khana, pertaining to a parcel “in the new city of Terqa (*i-na* URU.GIBIL.KI *ša* URU *Tir-qa.KI*)” (Thureau-Dangin 1897, 85:1-2 = *TCL* 1 237:1-2). The introduction to the original publication states that “les tablettes publiées dans le présent fascicule proviennent pour la plupart de Telloh”

(Thureau-Dangin 1897, p. 69), but it is clear that our text belongs to the so-called Khana texts, which come from Terqa or at least from its region.

The first publication of an artifact *known* to come from Terqa dates to 1908, and is due to Condamin. It is a foundation tablet of Šamši-Adad (AO 4628) which records the building of Dagan's temple at Terqa. The tablet was obtained from an "indigène," who reported that it had been found "sur les bords de l'Euphrate, en aval de Dēr ez-Zōr (ed Der), dans un endroit nommé Tell 'Ašar (ou 'Išar), situé à 4 heures de distance de Es-Sālḥīje" (p. 247). Condamin adds that the "native" had provided a sketch map of the site, from which it appeared that the tell was to be identified with "Burğ el Ischāra" on Kiepert's map. Potentially, then, this would also have been the first piece of evidence to secure the identification of Ashara with ancient Terqa, except that the name of Terqa was misread in the transliteration of the text.

The first recorded visit of an archaeologist to the site was by E. Herzfeld, who came there by accident in November 1910. On his way from Aleppo to Baghdad, he stopped at the castle of Rahaba where his horses escaped. By the time his attendants caught up with the horses, Herzfeld had walked to Ashara, which at that time was situated one hour to the east of the main caravan route. He spent two entire days there collecting several artifacts which he published a few years later (Herzfeld 1914). The most important is a foundation tablet of Zimri-Lim, not as well preserved as the one of Šamši-Adad, but clearly mentioning, in the remaining portion, the name of Terqa. Herzfeld, with assistance from Thureau-Dangin, was the first scholar to identify correctly the name, to associate it with Ashara, and to draw meaningful historical conclusions from his discovery (Herzfeld 1914, pp. 134-39). Unfortunately, he did not even attempt to give the findspot of the tablet in his report, although it was the only object which he personally found on the surface (p. 134). The other objects which he describes are also of considerable importance: fragments of statuettes and figurines of alabaster, diorite, onyx, lapis, and clay; and a fragment of an agathe cylinder seal.

From Herzfeld's description, the erosion activity of the river seems to have been identical in his time to what it has been until recently. It must have always been easy for any interested party to obtain artifacts from the face of the tell which overlooks the river, and which is generally soft. Several came into the hands of scholars on one occasion or another, and by 1923 a total of 15 tablets presumably from Terqa, in addition to the one found and published by Herzfeld, were known. It was in that year that the first regular excavations took place at Ashara.

2.2. French Soundings of 1923

Indirectly, Thureau-Dangin had been associated with Ashara since its first artifact appeared on the scene. He was also to be credited with the first regular excavations at the site—jointly conducted with P. Dhorme and a group of French legionnaires. His brief season took place from the 7th to the 11th of September, 1923. In just five days, they descended, in one sounding, from the highest point of the mound to the lowest levels and, in another sounding, they cleared a third millennium grave. Their results are reported in an interesting and informative article, published soon after their trip (Thureau-Dangin and Dhorme 1924). It is

written in a vivid style that conveys emotions (in front of the people, the landscape, the archaeology) to a rather unusual degree. In addition to reporting on the excavations, the article provides a comprehensive survey of the epigraphic materials which had come to light in the meantime, and some of which are published there for the first time (no tablets were found in the course of their excavations). As for the excavations, an accurate and thoughtful coverage is given the various recovered artifacts in terms of a descriptive and a comparative analysis. Also careful are the stratigraphic notations pertinent to the relative superimposition of cultural phases: the authors clearly point out the break between Islamic and second millennium levels, and the presence, below the latter, of third millennium levels.

Only in one respect do we miss some essential information, namely the *location* of the two operations. There is no explicit description, much less a sketch plan of the site: the lack of precision on this particular point, already noted in the case of Herzfeld's publication of Zimri-Lim's foundation tablet, is all the more remarkable if one considers the high degree of accuracy with which the measurements of the artifacts, and even stratigraphic elevations, are reported (the measurements of Zimri-Lim's tablet, in particular, are much more detailed than has ever been customary in Assyriology). Given the importance that the original location of the artifacts has for an understanding of the general stratigraphic configuration of the mound, we have ventured a guess on the basis of inferential evidence. The main points of our argumentation are summarized below. For the sake of clarity, we have designated the stratigraphic sounding as SG01 and the third millennium grave as SG02; they are so indicated on the accompanying sketch plan of the site (Fig. 2), where they appear in their presumed location. All references below are to Thureau-Dangin and Dhorme 1924.

The following features are given by the authors to describe SG01. The excavations were in the form of a well ("un puits," pp. 284, 285). This was dug vertically (p. 285), and it was on or near the vertical face of the tell which overlooks the river ("le bord de la falaise," p. 285; also on p. 285, SG02 is described as being "sur un *autre* point de la paroi verticale du tell," which implies that the same description would apply to SG01). It was generally on the higher portion of the mound ("dans la partie la plus élevée du tell," p. 285), but not quite at the highest point, since at SG01 the escarpment is about 13.50 ms. above plain level (p. 285), and from there the ground slopes upward to a maximum elevation of 18.50 ms. (p. 285). Since SG02 is to the south of, and lower in elevation than, SG01 (p. 285) which in turn is lower than the highest point of the tell, it follows that SG01 must be to the south of the highest point. This highest point was dominated then, as it is today, by an octagonal minaret (p. 282). Hence, SG01 must have been: circular in shape, to the south of the minaret and on the edge of the escarpment, at a point where the elevation was about 13.50 ms. above plain level. This description fits rather well a semi-circular shaft (III. 2; *AVM DS-1* 32-33) which is located between our soundings SG4 and SG5. Since the stratigraphic sequence described by Thureau-Dangin and Dhorme is very similar to our own stratigraphic sequence in SG4, the proximity of the two is an element in favor of this identification. An apparent obstacle to the identification may be seen in the statement that excavations in SG01 reached virgin soil (p. 282), while the shaft of our proposed SG01 does not. It must be noted, however, that on p. 287 it is expressly said that the bottom five meters yielded nothing: this may imply that the lower levels corresponded to the solid brick structure we uncovered in SG5. It is also possible that, in fact, little excavation took place in those lower levels (the grave in SG02 was being dug at the same time) which might in turn be the reason why traces of excavation are not extant in the lower portions of our presumed SG01.

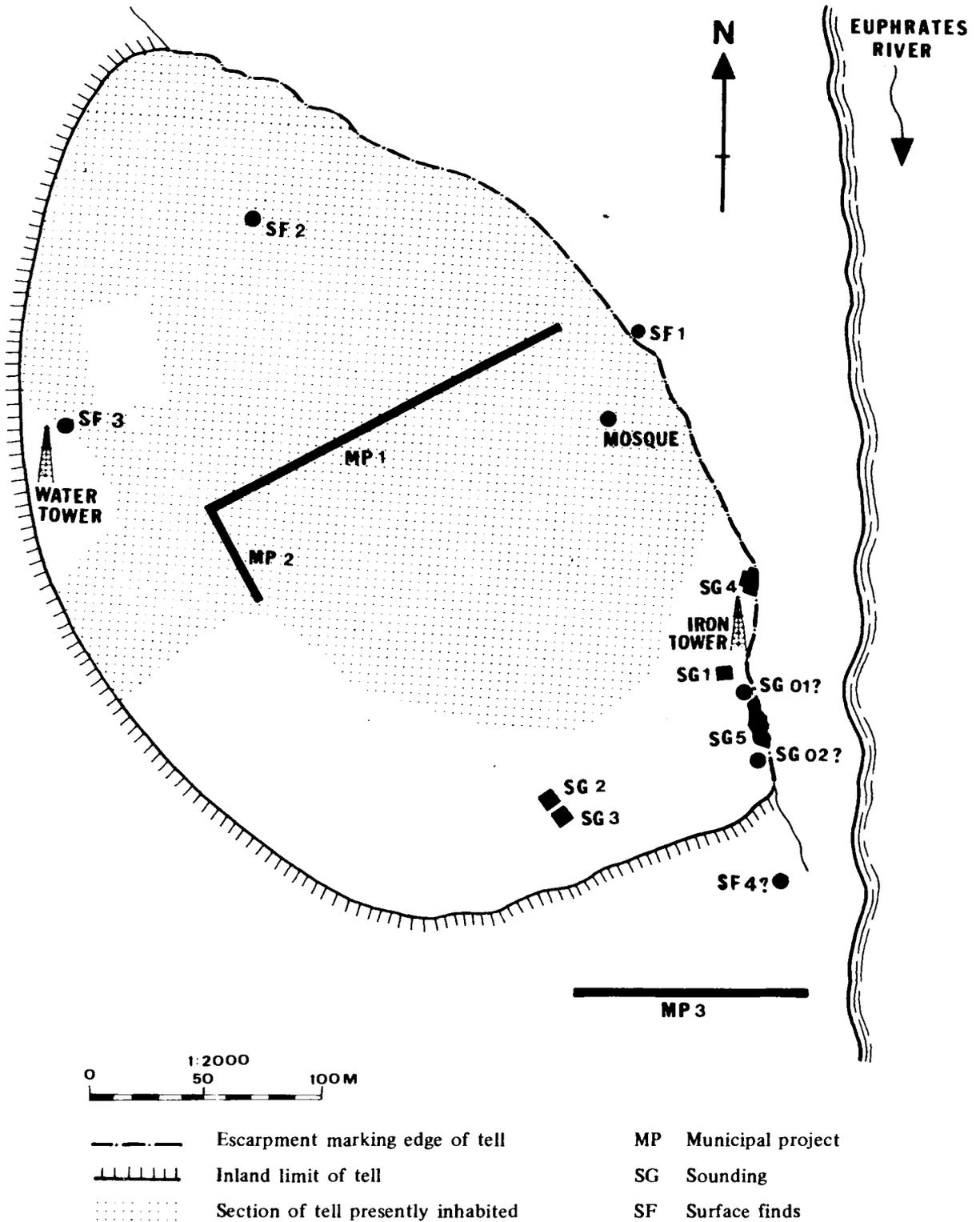


Figure 2. Sketch Plan of Terqa.

In SG02, the French scholars found traces of a "funerary chamber" (p. 291): only a corner, formed by two brick walls, was left. It resembled a niche, which was about 2.30 ms. wide, opened toward the river (?), and may have been vaulted (p. 285). Its floor was at about 2.50 ms. above plain level (p. 288). As already noted above, it was to the south of, and lower than, SG01 (p. 285). The identification proposed on the sketch plan is corroborated by the observation (by C. W. Meighan) that as a part of local folklore it often happens that a mother might bring her sick infant to the spot designated by us as SG02 and known locally as the "sheikh's tomb" (Ill. 1; *AVM DS-I* 34-36). Reportedly, there are contemporary burials of the family of Sheikh Jabber at this location, although no traces are visible. Even in this case, it seems possible that the tradition whereby this location is endowed with special meaning might go back to the discovery by Thureau-Dangin and Dhorme of an important grave at precisely this spot. It is interesting to note that the visit of the two Frenchmen is still remembered by some local individuals, although we could obtain no useful information from their reports as to the location of their activities.

Whatever the validity of the specific locations proposed here for SG01 and SG02, the general area of their activities seems pretty much narrowed down, by the considerations adduced above, to this particular area of the mound. The close typological correlation between SG4 and SG01 on the one hand and, on the other, between SG5 and SG02 is interesting not only by way of corroboration of our hypothesis, but also because it provides a tentative, at least, stratigraphic setting for discoveries which would otherwise remain in a vacuum.

2.3. The Mari Correspondence

In spite of the relative success of the brief soundings at Ashara, no decision was made to begin excavations there. The next most important contribution to the history of the site was to come not from the site itself, but from Mari. The discovery of archives in the palace of Zimri-Lim brought to light not only a considerable amount of indirect references to Terqa, but also a sizeable body of letters which had originated there and had been sent to the king by the governor of Terqa, Kibri-Dagan, and others. This is by far the largest group of texts from Terqa to date, and it has already been analyzed in various respects by several scholars (see especially Kupper 1947; Dossin 1948; Kupper 1950; Kupper 1964; Dossin 1967; Marzal 1971; Römer 1971; Sasson 1973; Anbar 1973; Batto 1974).

2.4. Further Chance Finds

Only three more tablets, presumably from Ashara, have been published since 1924 (a new edition of all tablets found prior to our excavations is planned by O. Rouault as a future fascicle of *TPR*). A group of 135 tablets, bought by the Aleppo museum in 1948 and inventoried as Nos. 2876-3010, are reported to have come from Ashara, but from a cursory examination of a few numbers, this attribution seems doubtful. (We are grateful to Mr. Waḥīd Khayyāta, Director of the Museum of Aleppo, for bringing these texts to our attention. We plan a more careful examination and, if warranted, a separate edition of these texts in the near future.)

The most important chance find at Ashara came in 1948, when a peasant found by accident an Assyrian stela with a cuneiform inscription. The monument was published in Tournay and Saouaf 1953, but because of intrinsic linguistic difficulties, the edition of the text can at best be considered provisional. (Note that Grayson 1976 refrains from providing a translation, underscoring thereby the need for a new edition). Archaeologically, it is once again most unfortunate that the exact findspot was not recorded.

2.5. The First American Season (Spring 1975)

It was not until more than 50 years after the first French soundings that regular excavations were to start at the site. After concluding her work at Tell Fray, Theresa H. Carter obtained a permit to excavate at Ashara on behalf of Johns Hopkins University. In 1973, William Sladek, a member of her team at Tell Fray, had visited Terqa and collected initial information about the site. In 1974, Theresa H. Carter and Corethia Qualls carried out a brief reconnaissance which resulted in a preliminary mapping of the site (Carter and Qualls 1975). Actual excavations were carried out from May 24th to May 31st, 1975 under the direction of Delbert R. Hillers of Johns Hopkins University, with the assistance of William Sladek. They opened two squares which they called TAI and TAI. For the sake of uniformity in terminology, we have redesignated these two operations as SG1 and SG2 respectively, and they are so shown in the sketch plan on Fig. 2. Both squares were excavated to a depth of about 2 ms., and, in both, second millennium materials were found immediately below Islamic levels. In the year following the excavations, SG1 all but disappeared because it was in the path of a city road (*AVM DS-1 40*). SG2 was preserved in fairly good condition, and work there was resumed during the 1976 season. With much generosity, Hillers and Sladek have placed at our disposal their field notes and photographs, which we have utilized in the preparation of the report given below on the stratigraphic record from the first two seasons.

2.6. The Second American Season (Fall 1976)

With an active spirit of cooperation, it was agreed in September 1976 to enlarge the scope of the expedition so as to include the Institute of Archaeology at UCLA next to Johns Hopkins University; the present writers took charge of the new Joint American Expedition to Terqa as its directors. The rest of the staff in 1976 included Prof. Clement W. Meighan as surveyor and archaeologist, Mr. William R. Shelby as Assistant Director and archaeologist, Ms. Linda Mount Williams as draftsman and archaeologist, Ms. Joan S. Meighan as photographer (still and motion) and osteologist, Mr. Nicholas M. Magalousis as pedologist and archaeologist—all of UCLA. Mr. Samir Tūr of Damascus, worked as draftsman. Mr. Muḥammad Muḥlīm of Aleppo, and Mr. Asʿad Maḥmūd of Dēr ez-Zōr, served as Representatives of the Directorate of Antiquities, with Mr. Maḥmūd also doubling as archaeologist. The season lasted from October 2 until November 18. We employed an average of ten workmen, and enjoyed excellent weather throughout the season, with hardly a drop of rain until the day we left.

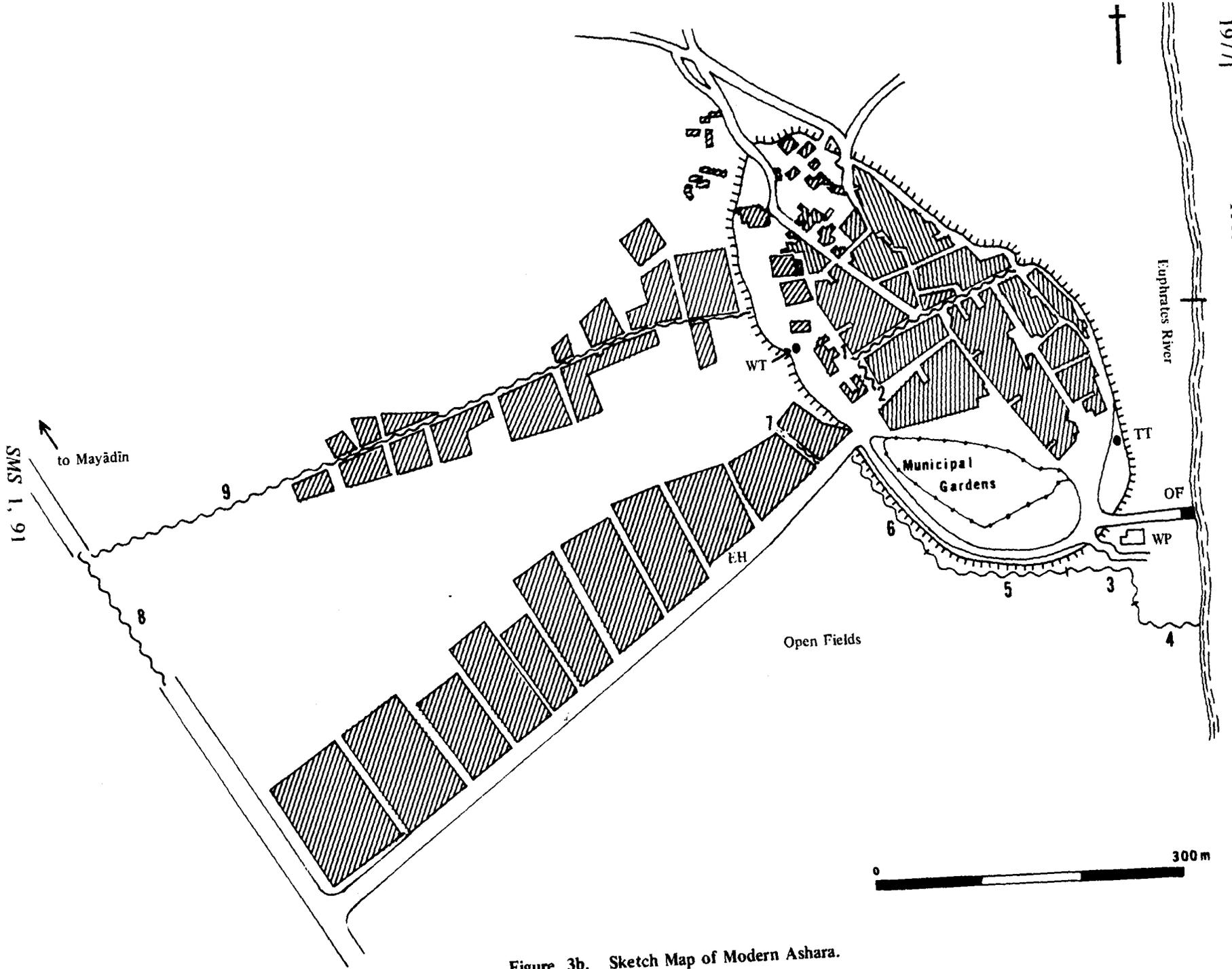


Figure 3b. Sketch Map of Modern Ashara.

3. The Stratigraphic Record of the First Two Seasons

3.1. Location and Configuration of the Site

The (approximate) coordinates for the site are 34° 55' N. and 40° 30' E. It is only a few hundred yards east of the main road from Dēr ez-Zōr to Abu Kemal, at a distance of about 12 kms. south of Mayādīn, and it directly overlooks the Euphrates.

Ashara is a town (*nahia*) within the county (*manṭaqa*) of Mayādīn and the province (*muḥafadha*) of Dēr ez-Zōr. The modern town covers about two-thirds of the ancient mound, although most of the present settlement spreads to the west of the tell and toward the road (Fig. 3).

The perimeter of the mound proper includes an area of about 22 acres, but it appears as though the ancient settlement extended in parts at least beyond this perimeter. There is a large uninhabited area in the southern section of the mound, and it is there that our excavations took place.

Since even the second season was preliminary in nature, no exact survey was made of the mound, and all maps cited here are to be understood as provisional sketches. This is true in particular of the contour map (Fig. 4), the main function of which is simply to suggest what the general configuration of the mound is today. The sharp escarpment on the east (Ills. 1, 3; *AVM DS-1* 5,10-11) is obviously the result of a long period of erosion by the river: perhaps more than one-half of the ancient settlement has been lost, if the mound is conceived to have been approximately circular and if the line of the escarpment is conceived as its diameter (also, structural remains are reported to still be standing in the middle of the river, Carter and Qualls 1975, p. 2). The resulting skyline of the mound is rather impressive (*AVM DS-1* 12-13).

3.2. Contemporary Depositional History

There are two major aspects of contemporary activities which affect the archaeological structure of Terqa: excavations and leveling on the one hand and, on the other, dumping. Public municipal projects are accountable for the former, of which most noticeable in recent times have been (1) the leveling of a large area to the Southwest of the tell for the purposes of establishing a municipal garden, and (2) the construction of an extensive sewer system.

These projects have had a considerable impact on the site. Dumping, on the other hand, is the result of private household activities and tends to protect rather than to disturb the ancient depositional levels. Since in our work at the site we have been faced with various implications deriving from such a close interaction of ancient and modern, a few considerations may well be in place here.

The modern dump is scattered at various points along the cliff facing the river (Ill. 1, 3-4, 19; *AVM DS-1* 14-15). We encountered it in larger quantities in our own excavations, especially in SG5, where it reached at times a depth of more than one meter (Ill. 5; *AVM DS-1* 52-56). The decision to discard the dump without any attempt at archaeological recording will hardly need a justification: our concern and interest as archaeologists is with the broken

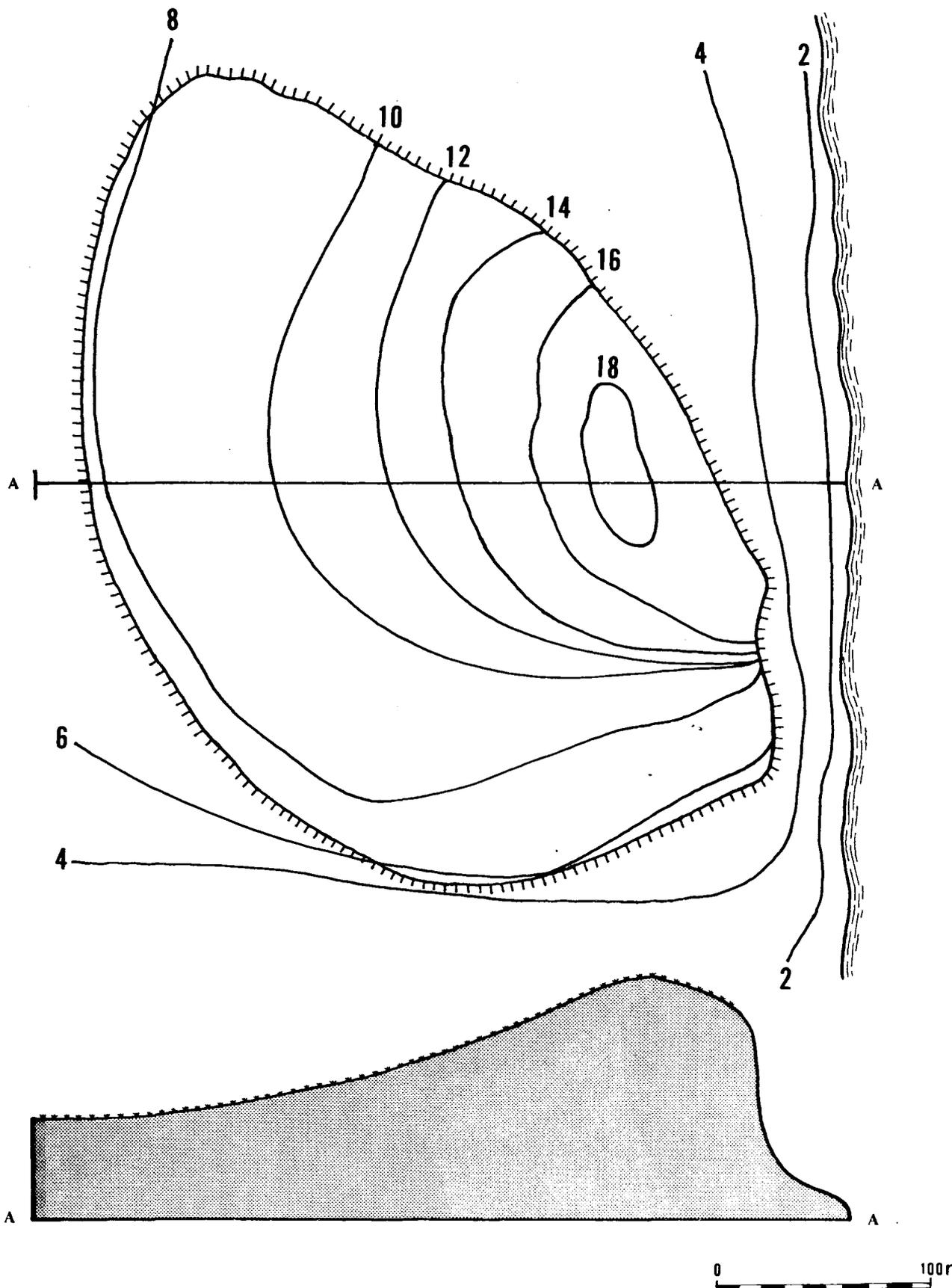


Figure 4. Sketch Contour Map of Terqa.

traditions of the past, and the dump at Ashara is instead the refuse of a well known living tradition. Recording and analysis (both stratigraphic and typological) of the refuse is thus not needed for the purposes of substantive archaeological research.

Leveling is frequent due to a variety of activities in the many open areas of the tell, especially to the south. There is a dirt road which runs along the edge of the escarpment; its southern loop, where the road leaves the escarpment to join the edge of the municipal garden (Fig. 3) seems to be leveled on a periodical basis. For instance SG1, a square opened in 1975 by the Johns Hopkins team (*AVM DS-1 39*), was all but obliterated by the fall of 1976 when we returned to the site. The area of the municipal garden was obviously leveled before planting—a *larger* area, in fact, than that of the garden itself, as it appears when one considers the esplanade where SG2-3 are located (Fig. 3; *AVM DS-1 18*). This conclusion, drawn from a visual observation of the upper levels, was confirmed by oral reports obtained from our workmen, although this remains rather vague since no special effort was made on our part to secure any type of pertinent documentation.

A rather destructive series of excavations was undertaken at the very beginning of our stay in Ashara, in connection with the construction of a sewer network (Figs. 2 and 3). The trenches, dug by a bulldozer, were generally about 2 meters deep and uniformly one meter wide, except for trunk junctions, which were generally 2 meters square (*AVM DS-1 43a*). Since we were faced with a *fait accompli*, and could not therefore approach the trenches with any degree of stratigraphic control, we had to limit ourselves to collecting as large a sample as possible of artifactual remains from the debris piled on the two sides of the trench. We did this in sections of 4 meters, so as to gain some insight into horizontal distributional patterns. Given the fast pace at which the bulldozing was proceeding, there was no possibility of studying any of the sections; and with the large quantity of materials recovered, we were not able to study them except in a very preliminary fashion. Even from this, it was possible to determine three important facts. (1) The Western perimeter of the tell seems to correspond to the perimeter of the ancient occupational levels, since all trenches to the west of the tell are sterile. (2) The trenches to the south of the tell, and outside its main perimeter, revealed instead Islamic occupation (see the next section). (3) The trenches on top of the tell revealed a considerable amount of second millennium pottery, thus showing that generally the top Islamic levels are no deeper than 2 meters.

3.3. The Islamic Levels

The only structural remains of note come from a trench (MP3) cut by the Sewer Project to the south of the tell proper. Designated at FT1 (within MP3), it is an interesting kiln which had apparently been used for glazing (Ill. 6; *AVM DS-1 44-45*). By the time we were aware of it, it had been sliced in half (through its short axis) by the bulldozer; inside, it contained an almost compact mass of pottery sherds, glaze wasters, fire-dogs, and small tripods used to support vessels while being glazed. Some of these, on the floor of the kiln, seemed to have remained *in situ* as they might have been used when initially placed in the kiln, with glaze drippings occasionally showing (partly showing in Ill. 6, but see especially *AVM DS-1 46*). The same materials which were found inside the kiln were also found (with the addition of glass bracelets) in large quantities just outside the kiln and at various places along MP3, generally clustering in a few points of major concentration. Also a few

complete vessels were found, of which two in particular deserve mention (ASH2-12 and ASH2-13). They are identical in shape, have an elegant profile (a medium-size jar, with high neck and two broad handles) but are made of a coarse ware: it would appear that they were waiting to be placed inside the kiln for glazing, as if for assembly line production.

In the sewer trench dug in the center of the tell (MP1) we noticed no structural remains, except burials, normally in large jars. Since the maximum depth of these trenches was 2 meters, and since we found Islamic material mixed throughout with second millennium material, it would appear that nowhere, along the 160 meters of the MP1 transect, does Islamic occupation reach farther than 2 meters below the surface. The limited depth of Islamic levels throughout the tell seems further suggested by the following indications. (1) In the lower sewer trench (MP2) the vast majority of artifactual remains were from the second millennium, which seems to imply that Islamic levels were thinner than in MP1. (2) Several important pre-Islamic chance finds were made in the course of household excavations, i.e., in the immediate subsurface of the mound—namely, two second millennium vessels in SF3, and two third millennium vessels in SF2 (Fig. 2). (3) Finally in each and every controlled excavation unit, the top levels (from modern subsurface through Islamic) were generally thin. The precise measurements are as follows (see also sections in Figs. 10, 12, 13):

SG1, Levels 1-24, top 150 cms.

SG2, Levels 1-18, top 100 cms.

SG3, Levels 1-8, top 100 cms.

SG4, Levels 1-7, top 210 cms.

As indicated earlier, no major structural remains were found in any of these excavation units. A simple mention may be made here of a bread oven in SG2 (*AVM DS-1 80*) and a portion of an unexplained small brick feature in SG4 (FT 7, level 7).

In contrast to the relatively shallow extent of Islamic layers, artifactual remains of this period are plentiful: from the surface we have collected a vast inventory of glazed sherds, greatly varied in color and decorative patterns; lesser in quantity, but proportionately quite varied in appearance, are the fragments of glass bracelets; finally, the small tripods and fire-dogs used in glazing are ubiquitous. Whether or not this may be explained by the assumption that in Islamic times the site served only for a short period as a specialized craft center, it is too soon to tell, but indications make this an increasingly interesting hypothesis to be tested.

3.4. Second Millennium Levels

3.4.1. Burial Complexes in SG1 and SG2-3

A considerable number of burials were found during the first two seasons in SG1 and SG2-3. There was no overall structural connection among them; in fact, there was no stationary structure or grave associated with any of them. Rather, the burials were all contained in large and extra-large jars, topped by some other vessel which was sometimes broken (Burial 15, Ill. 7; *AVM DS-1 84*) or by large sherds (Burial 18, Ill. 8; *AVM DS-1 85*).

(The motion picture documentary of the second season, *By the Meadows of the Euphrates*, contains an effective sequence of when Burial 15 in SG3 was first opened.)

The stratigraphic context of these burials is not fully clear, as will be apparent from the following considerations. The burials were not all lying on floor level, nor were they sunk into the ground from an even floor to a uniform depth. Their elevation varies considerably within a very small area, and in some cases one burial overlies another. We have not been able to trace convincingly the outline of any of the pits which presumably were dug from the surface in antiquity to deposit the burial jars and the pertinent offerings within the ground; this is partly due to the fact that later occupation cut deeply into earlier deposition as is clearly shown by the jar which was sliced in its upper third by a floor level (Burial 10, Ills. 10-11; *AVM DS-1* 82-83). We do not know, for instance, whether the burials were sunk deeply into the ground and completely covered, or if they were partly emerging above the ground level, covered perhaps with dirt to form something like a tumulus. Since the burial jars are normally accompanied by smaller vessels, we may assume that the latter were in fact associated with the former and contained some perishable material, possibly used as offerings. There is a varied inventory of burial types and offering vessels, but a discussion of this aspect belongs outside the stratigraphic sequence with which we are concerned at present and will be given in a separate *TPR* fascicle. By way of information, it may simply be added here that all second millennium burials in SG2-3 are adults, with but one exception (N. 13): interestingly, this infant burial was placed immediately below, and was partly damaged by Burial 10 (which in turn had been sliced by a later floor).

The compact clustering of burials, especially in SG2-3, implies that we are dealing with a burial area, and not with occasional, isolated burials. (It bears mentioning that the area continued to be used for burials in Islamic times, (see above 3.3). The inventory of second millennium burials in SG2-3 is as follows:

Square	Burial	Level	(Field No.)			
			ASH 2-	<i>TPR</i> 4	Ill.	<i>AVM DS-1</i>
SG2	1	36	207	14	—	81, 90
SG2	2	30	156	?	—	81
SG3	10	9	37	19	10, 11	82-83
SG3	11	9	20	28	—	—
SG3	12	9	—	—	—	—
SG3	13	9	34	15	—	89
SG3	14	10	71	30	—	—
SG3	15	11	—	—	—	—
SG3	16	11	75	20	7	84
SG3	18	11	137	21	8	85-86
SG3	x	11	(not yet completely excavated, but from all appearances a burial)			

Their relative stratigraphic position is shown in Fig. 5. Since the burials are well sealed by the floor of Level 8 in SG3 (Ill. 10, *AVM DS-1* 82), and since, typologically, the vessels belong together near the period of Nuzi, it is safe to assume that the burials are generally contemporary. The question remains as to whether the area served any other function, either before or at the same time that it was used as a burial ground. The clues which may be used for an answer are, at the moment, insufficiently explicit. Some may be mentioned here, as a preliminary to what may hopefully become a clearer picture during the coming seasons. (1) Along the Northwestern side of SG2 there is a portion of a brick structure which seems to extend down to the same level as the burials from a considerable elevation (see section in Fig. 14). (2) In level 9 of SG3 there was an unusual concentration of pottery, lithics and animal bones (especially in the Southern corner and along the central Southwestern baulk); in the Western corner, there were ashes contained by bricks, lacking any discernible configuration, but possibly meant to serve as a fire pit, if not a regular oven. (3) A large amount of lithic materials, including tools, were found in Level 10 of SG3. (4) In levels 31 and 32 of SG2 (corresponding to Level 10 of SG3) there were clear traces of a drain running across a shallow circular pit about one meter in diameter; nearby were possible traces of three postholes (Ill. 9). If there is any cumulative value to this type of evidence, it may be that the area had been used for outside activities, such as food preparation; subsequently to that, it may have become specialized as an interment area, but without any particular preparation or cleaning.

3.4.2. Burials in SG4

The burials found in SG4 differ from those in SG2-3 in the following respects. (1) They are limited to second millennium levels, and are not found in Islamic levels. (2) They are all infant burials, with but one exception (FT10). (3) The stratigraphic context is clear. The inventory is as follows:

Stratigraphy	Burial	Level	(Field No.)			
			ASH 2-	TPR 4	Ill.	<i>AVM DS-1</i>
ST1 FT10	-	10	---	---	---	---
ST2 FT11	1	11	174	---	---	---
ST2 FT11	2	11	---	---	---	---
ST2 FT11	3	11	---	---	---	---
ST2 FT11	4	11	177	29	---	---
ST2 FT11	5	11	115, 116	1, 13	12	---
ST4	6	15	206	15	18	---
ST2 FT11	(No burial inside)	11	38	23	---	88

The adult burial (FT10) was placed in a slanted position in such a way that the base was resting in Level 10, and probably belonged to it, while the top was in Level 9 (or even in the bottom of Level 8). It was found in the Northeastern portion of SG4, in a corner formed by two walls: one wall, running in a NW-SE direction (and marked A in Fig. 6), belongs to the same level (10) as the burial; the other wall, running in the opposite direction (NE-SW), is of an earlier date and belongs to the residential unit of Levels 14-15. The function of the wall of Level 10 is unclear, partly because only a small portion of it was cleared.

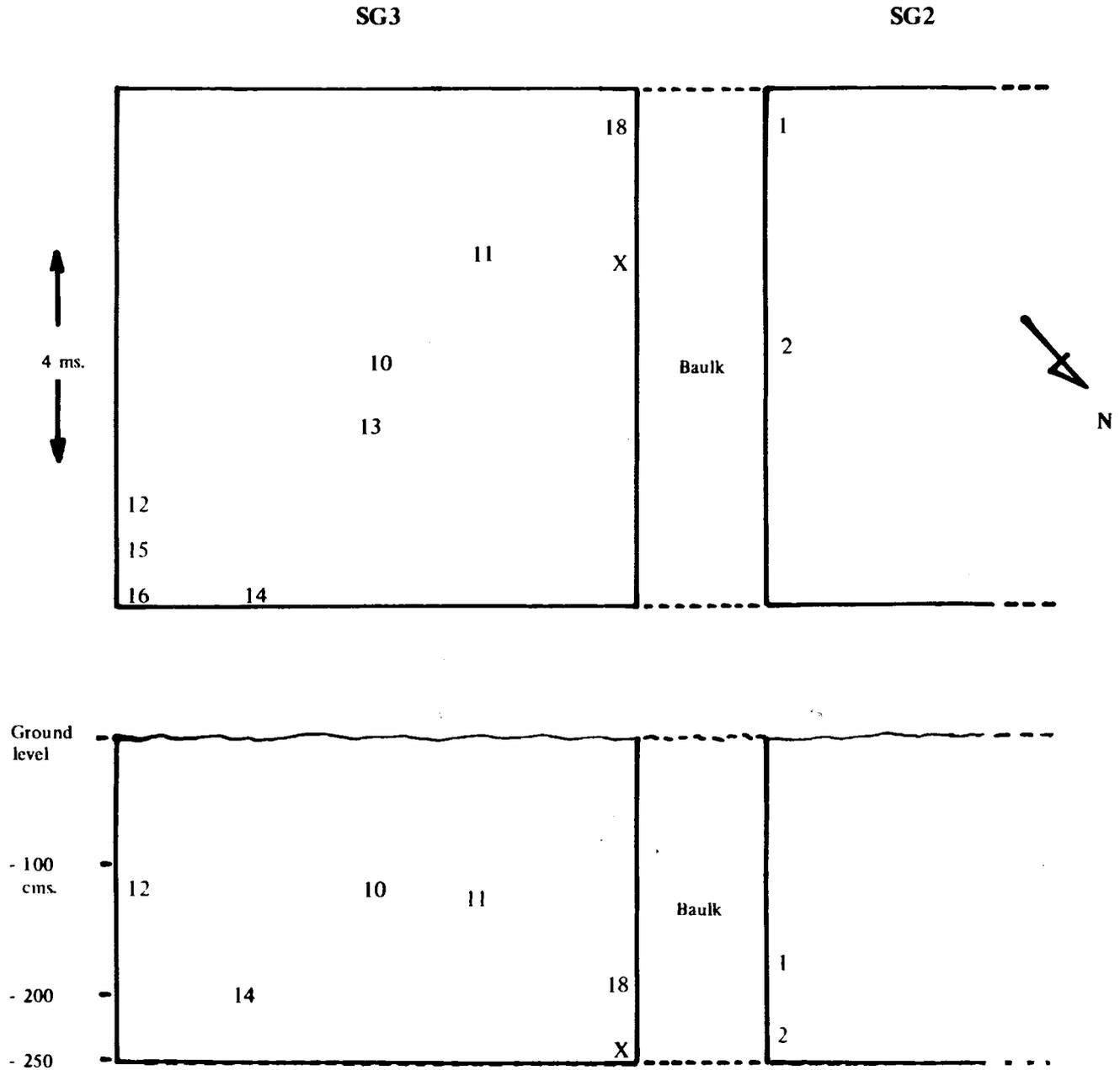


Figure 5. Location and elevation of second millennium burials in SG2-3.

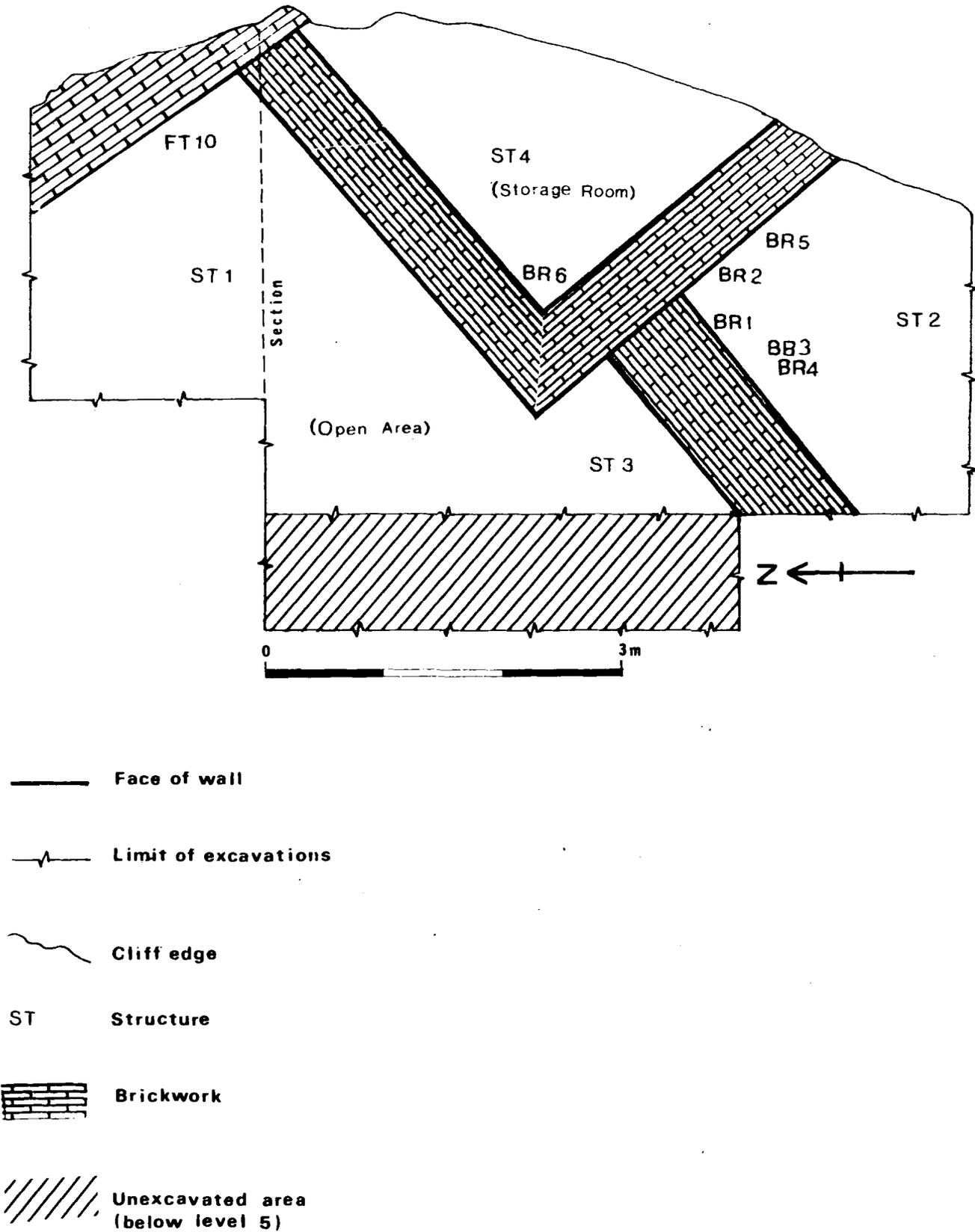


Figure 6.
Sketch Plan of SG4

No definite floor was found associated with this wall. On the other hand, the burial jar seems to have been laid on the surface rather than sunk into the ground: the dirt around it consists of fallen brick and rubble, consolidated into a clay layer which is very hard and immediately adjacent to the burial jar such as one would expect if it was formed after the burial had been set in its place.

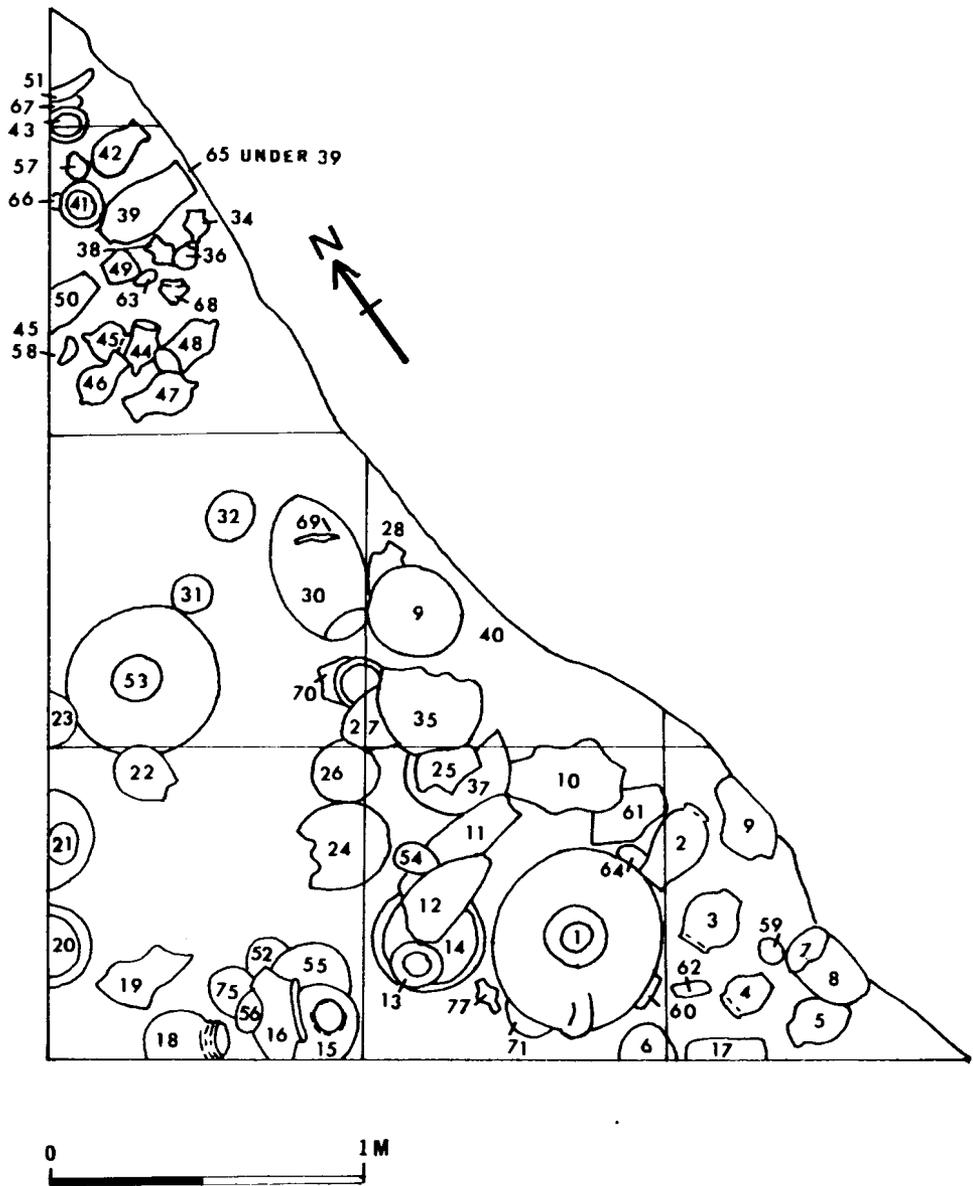
Five of the infant burials (plus one infant burial jar without a burial in it) were found within a single room (ST2), in Level 11, at an elevation of about a meter above the living floor of the room. The burials were contained in deep bowls covered by a platter (Ill. 12; *TPR* 4 1, 13) or in jars covered by a small bowl (*TPR* 4 29, 10; *AVM DS-1* 88). Several goblets were found near the burials, and so were several small objects. The most important of these objects, a Hittite stamp seal (*TPR* 3 1), though found in the general area of the infant burials, was at a somewhat lower elevation (in Level 12) and not in the immediate vicinity of any burial, so it may or may not have been part of a set of offerings (Ill. 13; *AVM DS-1* 91). The definition of a burial complex is problematic, since no structural remains are associated with any of them and since no trace of a shaft was found such as would have been left if burials and offerings had been sunk into the ground. Nor was there a clear walking floor found either above or immediately below the burials. Here too, then, as with the adult burial, it would appear as though the burials had been laid on the ground, with some associated vessels and offerings, after the roof had collapsed and the house had been abandoned.

Burial 6 (Ill. 18) was found in the corner of ST4, immediately below the walking floor of the room (Level 15)—i.e. underneath the collection of vessels which will be described in the next section. The bones of the infant are in remarkably good condition, and virtually all present and intact. It appears clearly then that the burial was dug into the floor while the house was still inhabited.

3.4.3. A Residential Unit in SG4

Below Levels 10 and 11 there was, throughout SG4, a deep layer of heavily burnt material, some 60 to 80 cms. at its highest point, which covered the living floor of the house and contained a wealth of utilitarian material, most of it left, *in situ* as it was when the house burnt. Several pieces of clay roofing materials were found on the floor, with clear traces of beam impressions (Ill. 17). While a discussion of the total assemblage cannot be given here, because of the amount of data involved, a few major points may be singled out.

(1) In ST4, Level 15, there was the largest single assemblage of artifacts (FT13), consisting mostly of ceramic vessels but also several stone tools. A total of 76 artifacts was recorded in a small area of a little more than 3 square meters (Fig. 7, Ill. 14; *AVM DS-1* 99): many were still clearly in place, whether they were large jars sitting on a stand (Ill. 15; *AVM DS-1* 104) or resting directly on the floor, propped up by other small items (Ills. 14, 16), a set of goblets nestled together around a cylinder shaped vessel (Ill. 14) or a large bowl used as a container for other implements (Ills. 14, 16). Some of the vessels were found empty—a feature which occurs frequently at the site, and which is the result of the protection afforded the vessels by the hard, cement-like consistency of the soil which is typical of many segments of the stratigraphic deposition at Terqa. One vessel in particular (ASH2-89) contained a variety of vegetal remains (seeds and possibly spices) which await further analysis.



Numbers in drawing are field numbers. The most important items are identified as follows:

Field No.	ASH2-	TPR 4	Designation
1	133	18	Large spheroid jar
2	101	(cf. 32)	Small jar
3	94	(cf. 26)	Small jar
4	89	(cf. 26)	Small jar
13	97	33	Small jar
14	99	42	Large goblet
29	100	(cf. 25)	Medium jar
39	92	32	Small jar
41	175	54	Vessel stand

Figure 7.
Sketch Plan of Floor Assemblage in SG4 (FT13).

We refer generically to this area as a storage room, simply because of the density of the artifacts and the resulting difficulty of circulation. Specificity as to the type of storage involved (e.g., as to what the content, if any, of the vessels might have been), may hopefully be gained from our ongoing study of the assemblage.

(2) A considerable amount of ground stone tools were located in the open area ST1.

(3) Two interesting bronze/copper pieces came from the levels between the house floor and the burial levels: a knife blade in Level 13 of the open area ST1 (*TPR* 3 13) and possibly an armor scale in Level 12 of ST2 (*TPR* 3 12). It is possible that the elevation of these metal pieces is too high with respect to the house floor to belong with the house, and that they may be due to activities subsequent to its abandonment.

As for the layout of the various units one may introduce the following considerations.

(1) It is clear that ST2 and ST4 were roofed because of the presence of several pieces of roofing clay material (Ill. 17). Also, ST4 is relatively narrow (about 3½ meters), i.e., of a size suitable for roofing; note that only a very small portion of the Northeastern wall is preserved, but it is sufficient for the purposes of establishing the width of the room.

(2) ST1 and ST3, on the other hand, were not roofed: there were no traces of roofing materials and the unevenness of the Southwestern wall would not lend itself readily to roofing. The layers above the floor are much harder in the open area than those indoors. What has been uncovered so far is insufficient to allow any conclusions as to whether the open area is a courtyard or is exterior to the house; but it is worthy of notice that a considerable number of artifacts were found here, possibly implying that it served the function of an activity area. (3) Nothing can be said with regard to circulation between the various areas, since no doorways were found in what has been exposed. The Southwestern wall of ST2 is not bonded with, and is slightly wider than, the Northeastern wall of the same room; also, it is not aligned with the corresponding Southwestern wall of ST1. Whether this implies that ST1 and ST2 belong to two different buildings or building periods, it is too soon to tell.

Prospects for future research are promising, since both the roofed and the open areas seem to extend into the three baulks (on the Northeast, where the river erosion has cut into the tell, and created a sharp escarpment, nothing is left). The walls are standing to a considerable height (about 2 meters), probably almost to roof height, and are well preserved. Hopefully the same conditions will continue as we proceed with our excavations.

3.4.4. General Configuration of Second Millennium Occupation

From a comprehensive look at the various second millennium finds, it appears that site occupation in this period was generally at a high elevation. Altogether, we have at present the following pertinent evidence:

MP1: see above, 3.2-3

MP2: see above, 3.2-3

SF1: see *TPR* 2

SF3: ASH2-171 = *TPR* 4 31, and ASH2-170 = *TPR* 4 39

SG01: see above, 2.2

- SG1: see above, 3.3
 SG2: see above, 3.3; 3.4.1
 SG3: see above, 3.3; 3.4.1
 SG4: see above, 3.3; 3.4.2-3

By plotting schematically these data on a map and a section of the mound we obtain a preliminary, but indicative, profile of second millennium stratigraphy as shown in Fig. 8.

3.5. Third Millennium Levels

3.5.1. A Monumental Building in SG5

SG5 was begun as a cleaning operation. At the location shown on the map (Fig. 2), we noticed a considerable depression in the vertical profile of the mound, flanked on the south by a hump known as the "sheikh's tomb" and, on the north, by the steep and higher face of the central portion of the tell (Ill. 1; *AVM DS-1* 31, 49). The top of this depression was only about 3 meters above plain level, was relatively flat and was covered by what appeared to be a thin layer of contemporary refuse (Ill. 19; *AVM DS-1* 52-53). From the river banks, the face of the cliff at this particular point revealed some interesting features. Instead of a flat vertical face with horizontal bands showing in the section, as one can see elsewhere on the high face of the tell (Ill. 3), in SG5 we could see sharp vertical projections which seemed to correspond to structural brickwork (Ill. 20; *AVM DS-1* 49). At the bottom of some of these projections, there was an undercut up to a meter deep, apparently the result of water erosion (Ill. 20; *AVM DS-1* 50); this too seems to imply that the projections above consisted of solid brickwork, otherwise the sheer weight of the debris would have caused the upper part to collapse soon after it had been deprived of its support at the base.

Because of its low elevation (up to 3 meters above plain level) we thought that we might have here a brick structure of early date, perhaps from the earliest levels at Terqa. And because of the cover of contemporary refuse, we thought we might reach some plausible conclusions without extensive excavations. In fact, we planned at first to simply remove the contemporary refuse without undertaking any excavations of the ancient cultural deposits--which was the reason why we did not circumscribe this particular "sounding" within a right angle perimeter, as one normally does in a "square" excavation unit. As it turned out, we did in fact remove some ancient depositional levels; at that point we had outlined the inner face of a room (ST1), so that provisionally we used this perimeter as our frame of reference.

By the end of the season we had uncovered a massive unitary structure, which covered an area some 22 meters long and 9 meters wide (Fig. 9; Ill. 21; *AVM DS-1* 61, 63). It included three discernible structural features: a well (FT1), a vertical drain (FT2), an inside area of which we have exposed so far a room (ST1) and a passageway (or second room, ST2). Cut into the wall, just by the edge of the Western corner of the room, was a burial with two vessels directly associated (BR1) and a few other vessels at a distance of about 50 centimeters to the Northwest (FT9); the latter vessels may be associated with Burial 1 or perhaps with another burial still to be excavated.

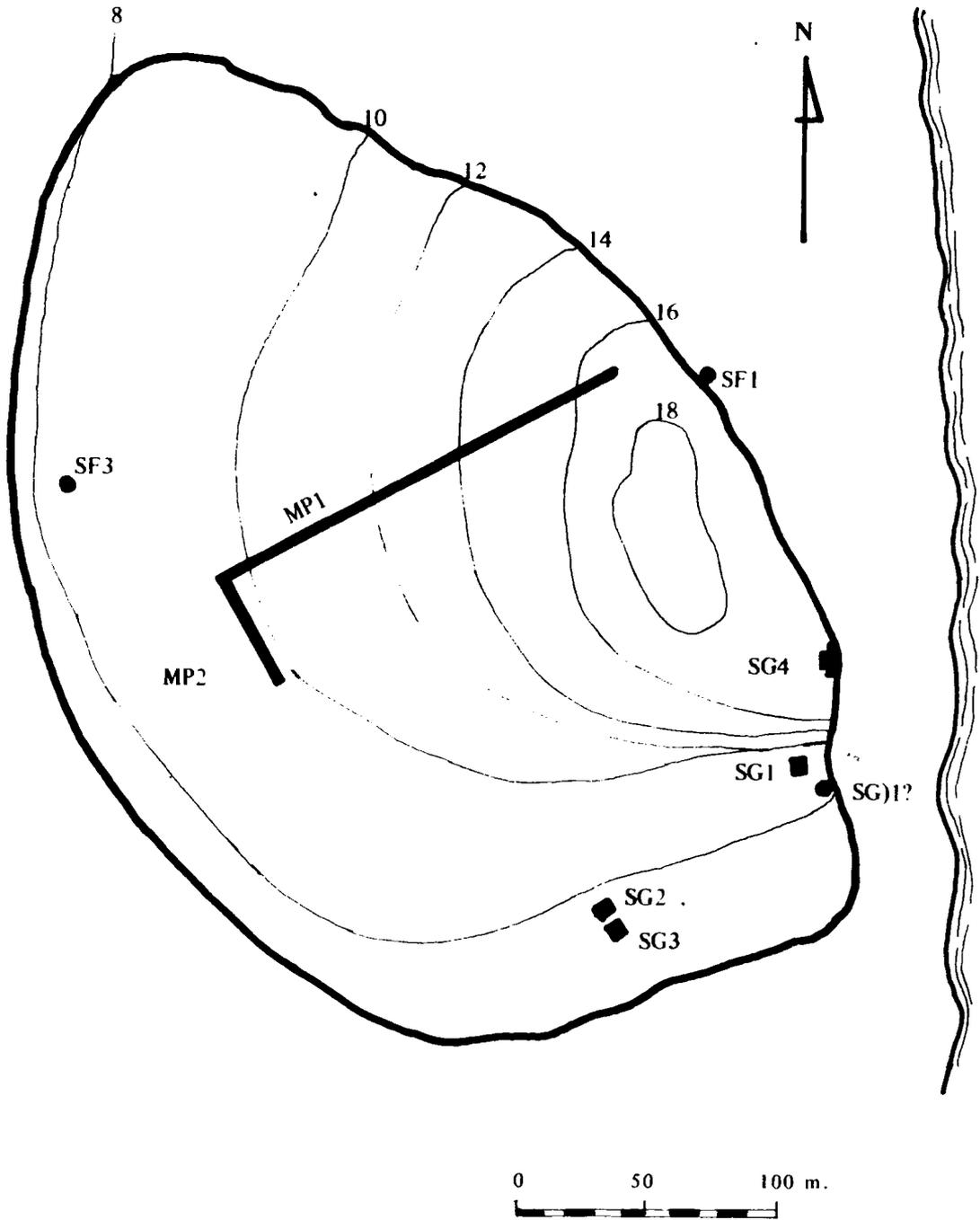


Figure 8.
General configuration of second millennium occupation.

In spite of the large area exposed we could gain no clear insight into either the structural articulation of the building or its function. The surface of the bricks is generally badly eroded, probably as the result of both water overflow from the river and contemporary activities of refuse dumping. Yet the consistency and articulation of the bricks (about 20 x 40 x 10 cms. in size) is mostly clear throughout (Ill. 23; *AVM DS-1 62*). The face of the brickwork which overlooks the river does not correspond, as far as we have been able to determine, to the original face of the structure. This would imply that the original width of the wall was greater than it is today—perhaps considerably so, especially if the clean fill (about which see presently) may be conceived as representing the central section of a very large wall. The structure seems to consist of solid brick, with two exceptions. On two places along the outer face there are some large rocks, which may have been used as part of an inner fill within the brickwork. One group of rocks is to the northeast of the well, in line with what appears to be, below the top surface of the bricks, a section of clean fill. This latter was exposed only through a limited probe, and its consistency and extent, or, for that matter, its possible relationship to the rocks on the Northeast, remain to be determined.

The well is made of bricks and it shows two rows of steps recessed in its walls, one opposite the other. While it appears as though its side walls are bonded with the surrounding brick structure, so that the well would be contemporary with the structure, this too cannot be determined exactly without some excavation. We were able to clear the inside of the well to a depth of 3 meters: it contained only clean fill which still continued below.

The drain consists of pottery sections and it too seemed to be contemporary with the brick structure. It was cleaned to a depth of a meter; just like the well it contained only clean fill which also continued below.

The small room (ST1, Ill. 22; *AVM DS-1 63*), about 2 by 4 meters in size, has a single, narrow and irregular passageway (ST2, Ill. 24) about half a meter wide. We carried excavations down to a good floor (Level 5), which could easily be traced throughout the exposed area of ST1 and ST2. The surface varied from light grey ashy to grey-green compact and hard. It sloped down by about 20 cms. from East to West in both ST1 and ST2. It seems that the walls of the rooms, cleared at this point to a maximum height of about half a meter, continue below this floor, which implies that the floor is later than the surrounding brickwork.

On either side of the passageway there is a rock cairn (FT3 and FT7). From these, some rocks have tumbled down along the floor following the slope, thus coming to cluster toward the lower, Northwestern portion of the room (Ills. 25-26). The rock cairns seem to rest on the floor of Level 5, and follow neatly the outline of the corners of the room, which implies that they are possibly contemporary with the floor and later than the surrounding wall. None of the stones were removed by us, so that we do not know about the internal structure (or content?) nor about the function of the rock cairns. The Northwestern cairn (FT7) is the best preserved of the two. Level with its base, and opening to just below its lower course, is a small trough-like drain (Ill. 29). It is defined simply by the harder consistency of the soil, and it leads under the center of the narrow side of the cairn, to within 10 cms. inside perimeter of the cairn. The drain was cut into the wall, and was immediately below a burial (see presently). Since the burial was also cut into the wall, it would appear that the

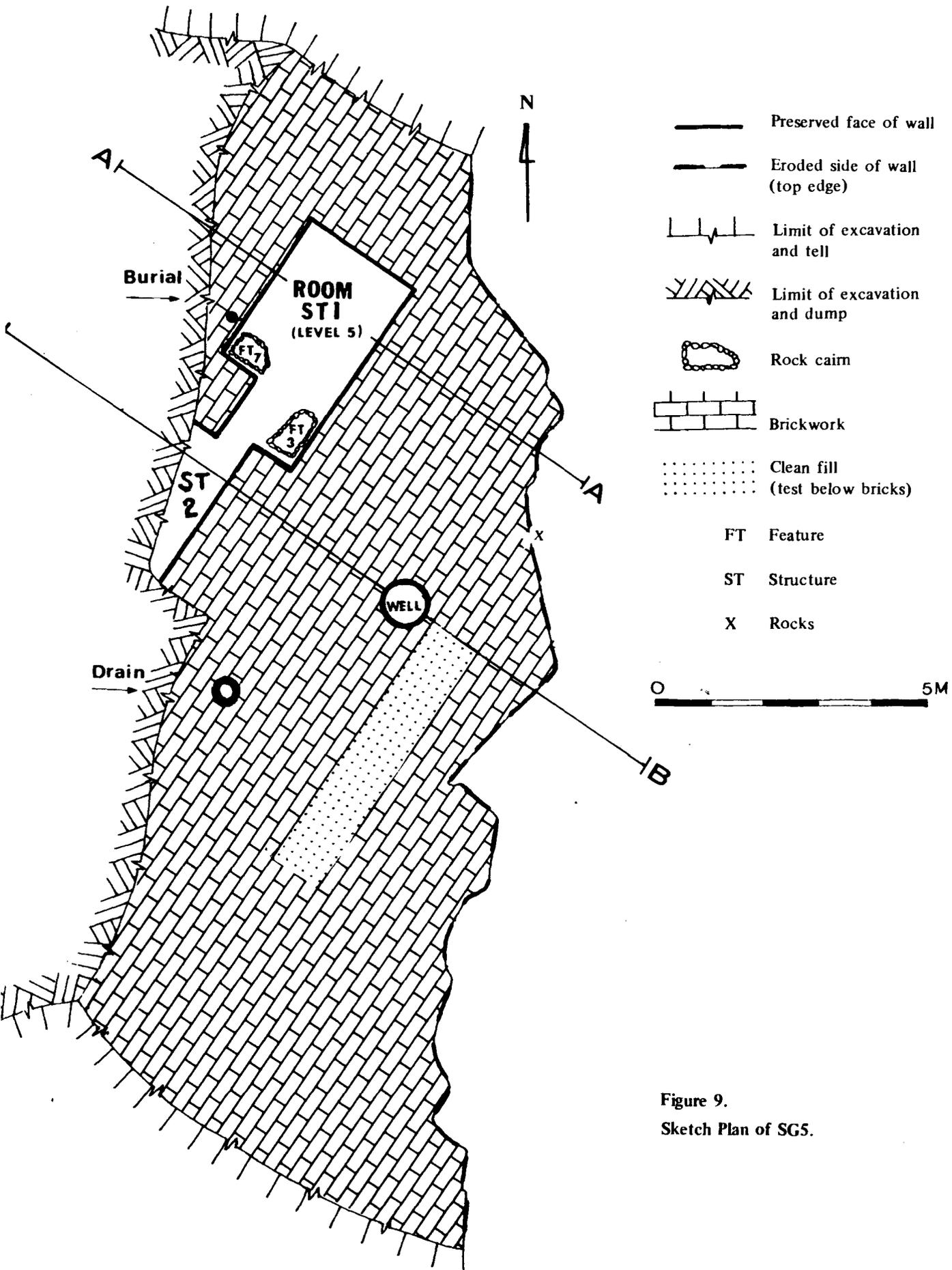


Figure 9.
Sketch Plan of SG5.

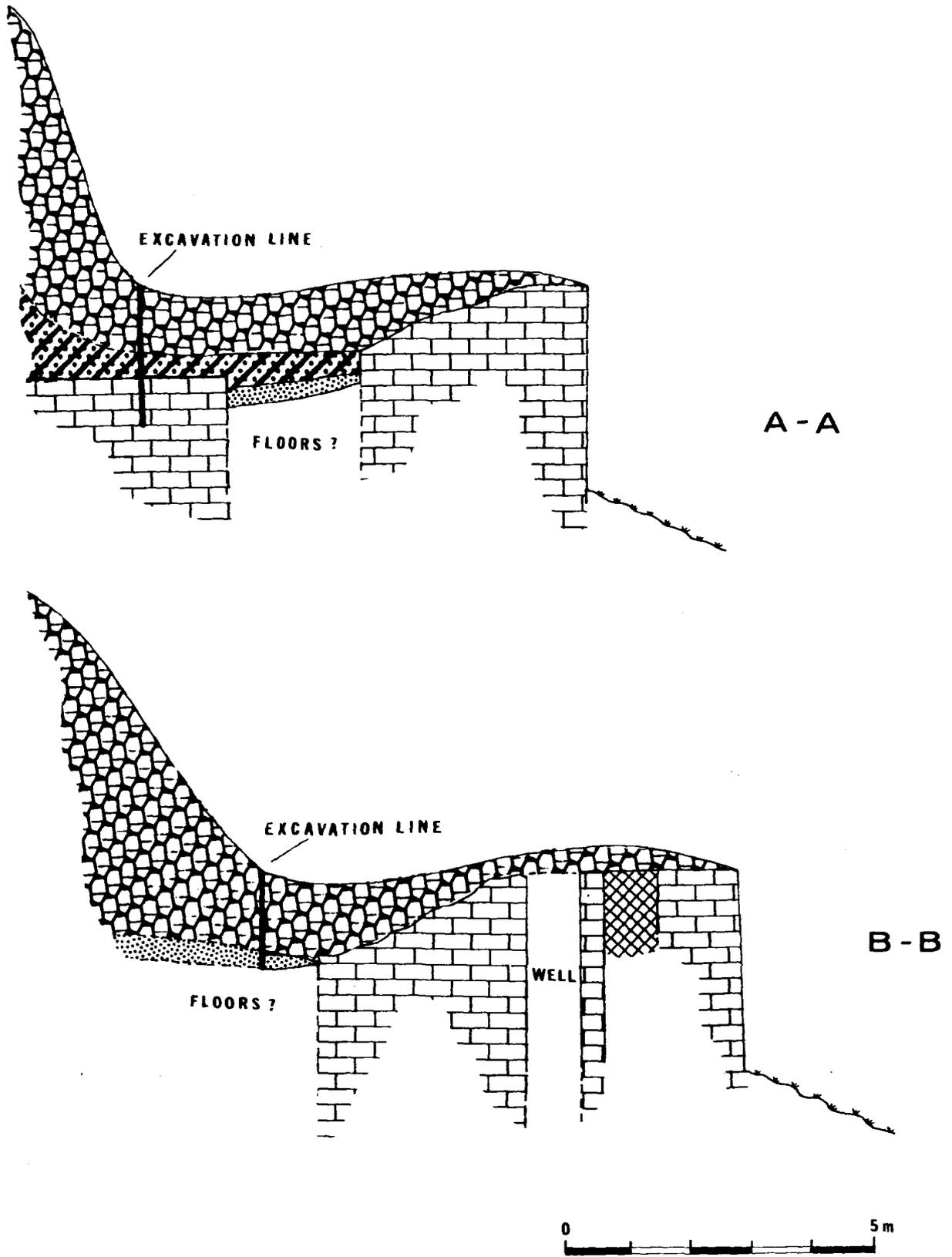


Figure 10.
Sketch Section of SG5.

drain is associated with the burial; and since the burial leads under the cairn, it would appear that both burial and drain are in turn associated with the cairn.

The burial (BR1, Ills. 26-28; *AVM DS-1* 65-67) was that of a woman, lying on her side, with her legs flexed, her feet along the edge of the wall and her torso against the side of the cairn and over the trough-like drain just mentioned. The body had been placed in a depression cut into the wall, together with two vessels (*TPR* 4 56 and 58) one of which was still touched by her hand. On her humerus there were two toggle pins (*TPR* 3 7 and 8), next to which were, on the right, a white shell ring (*TPR* 3 22) and, on the left (next to a vessel spout) a black stone bead (*TPR* 3 17). Presumably, these four items belonged together and were used to fasten a garment around the shoulder. Slightly beyond the burial, on the NW, were some other vessels (FT9), which may be associated with this burial or with another one still to be exposed. All vessels in both groups were standing right-side up, and two of them were found completely empty.

The relatively good state of preservation of the floor, the burial and especially the vessels was due to a very hard clay layer (Level 2) which had formed like a protective coating, very effective against the numerous contemporary activities (from walking to dumping) which had regularly been taking place only some 50 cms. above. A sketch section of SG5 (Fig. 10) shows the relative position of the refuse dumps (Level 1) and this hard layer (Level 2), resting above the levels which go with the later floors of the rooms (Levels 3-5).

3.5.2. General Configuration of Third Millennium Occupation

While fewer than the second millennium finds, those of the third millennium are remarkable because of their extent and relative elevation. Altogether we have the following pertinent evidence (besides more surface finds, of unknown location, published by Herzfeld):

SF2:	<i>TPR</i> 4 64 and 68	SG01:	see above 2.2
SF4:	<i>TPR</i> 3 11	SG02:	see above 2.2
SG5:	see above, 3.5.1		

Again, by plotting schematically these data on a map and a section of the mound we obtain a preliminary profile of third millennium stratigraphy as shown in Fig. 11.

4. Remarks on Chronology

Inferences as to the chronological position of the levels excavated so far are based on typological comparisons of ceramics and objects from Terqa with those from other excavated sites. The one tablet which is published in this season's reports (*TPR* 2) did not come from our excavations, so that its relevance to stratigraphy is minimal and does not have a bearing on any excavation unit. Similarly, architectural remains are not sufficiently complete to contribute toward the establishment of a chronological framework. In what follows, we summarize the comparative evidence brought forth in *TPR* 3 for the objects and *TPR* 4 for the ceramic vessels; the reader is referred to those fascicles for the pertinent bibliographical details.

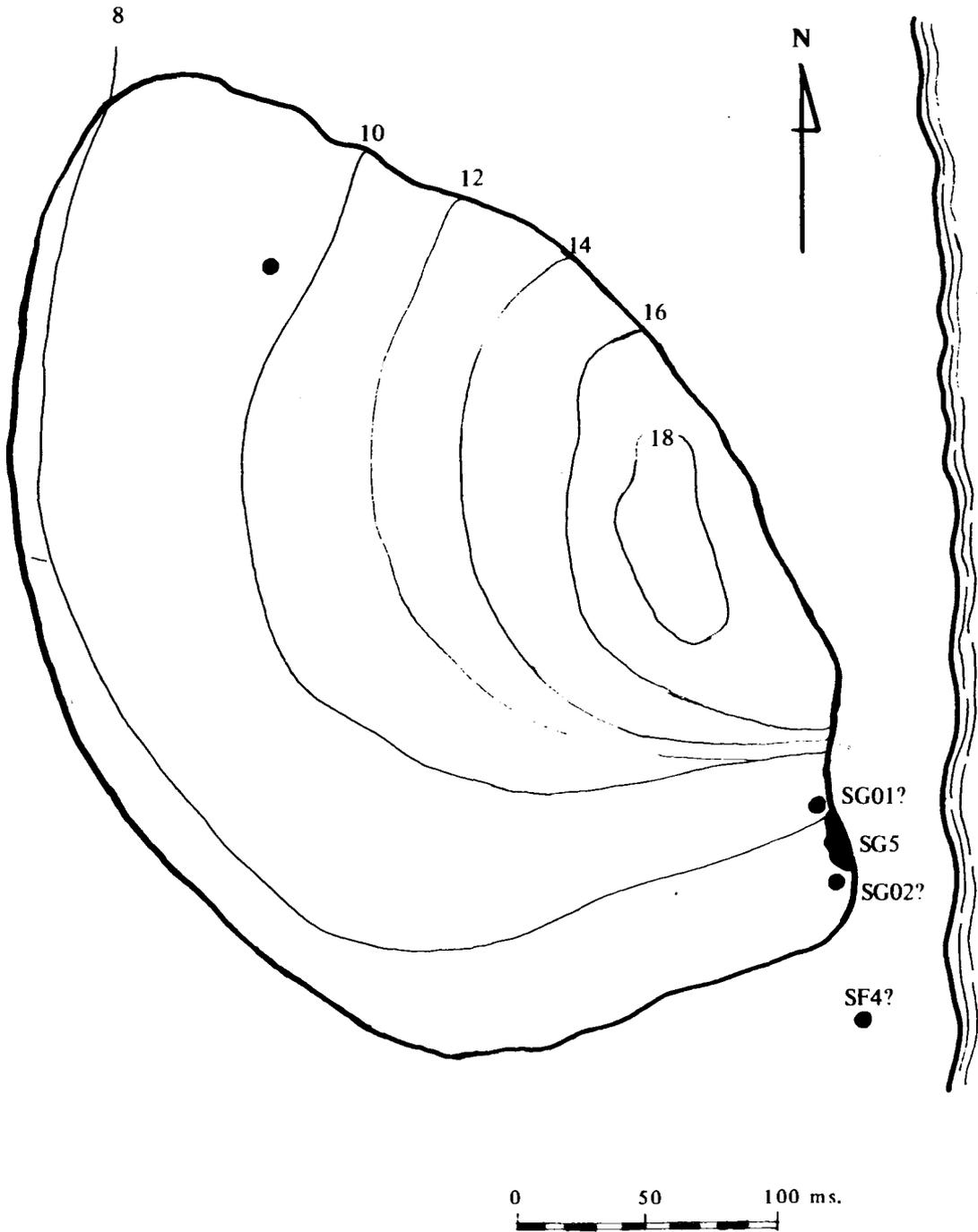


Figure 11.
General configuration of third millennium occupation

The earliest occupation we uncovered came from the monumental structure in SG5. While the floors inside the room and passageway (ST1 and ST2) were relatively poor in artifactual remains, all artifacts of Burial 1, which cut into the structure, are very distinctive in their typological attributes and consequent chronological attribution. Especially important in this respect are various examples of metallic ware vessels, namely bottles, jars and a bowl (for a recent discussion of third millennium North Syrian ceramics, including metallic ware, see Kühne 1976). These date the burial to slightly later than the mid third millennium, that is in the later part of the Early Dynastic period and the beginning of the Akkadian period or about 2400 B.C. Also distinctive of this period are the two metallic ware vessels found in the immediate subsurface in SF2.

The monumental structure, cut into by the burial, is obviously earlier (on purely stratigraphic grounds) than the latter, but probably not by very much. A clear understanding of the chronology of the structure, however, will have to await further excavations.

After this period, occupation on the mound is documented for most of the early part of the second millennium, judging from the various surface finds (especially epigraphic), the French soundings, and our own excavations. The number of stratified levels which can be seen in the escarpment between the third millennium material in SG5 and the second millennium house in SG4 suggests that several different periods within the early second millennium are more than likely to be found.

In the earliest part of the second millennium (around 1900 B.C.) one can place the tablet published in the reports of our own season (SF1 = *TPR* 2 1).

Occupation of the residential quarter in SG4 may in all likelihood be dated to the second quarter of the second millennium, about 1700-1650 B.C. This would be the period of Khana, after the destruction of Mari and before the main occupation at Nuzi. This is also the period of the so-called Khana texts. The most distinctive pottery types in terms of chronology are to be found in the storage room (ST4), where one will note especially the large spheroid jar with double strand handle (*TPR* 4 18). This unusual shape has also (and apparently only) been found at Mari and Baghouz. On the floor of this room were three wide cylindrical jars (*TPR* 4 32): an exact parallel was found at Jidle (dated by Mallowan to about 1600); a painted example came from Brak in a level containing both Habur ware and Nuzi ware.

The infant burials placed within the walls of the abandoned house were probably deposited shortly after the fire destroyed the house, since the walls were still standing high, and there seems to be no evidence of a stratigraphic break between the floor levels (12-15) and the burial levels (10-11). One object found in the burial levels, the stamp seal (*TPR* 3 1), can be dated, on the basis of Hittite comparisons, in the period of the *kārum*'s in Anatolia: thus it appears to be earlier than the level in which it was found. It is noteworthy that this is the only object found so far at Terqa which can be associated with the Hittites.

The burials in SG2-3 were placed in distinctive pottery vessels characterized by large button bases with a round hole in the center, see especially the large jar of SG3, BR18 (*TPR* 4 14): this type is known from Nuzi. In general the type of rope and finger impressed decoration on large jars found in SG2-3 can be also paralleled at Nuzi. The typological connection with Nuzi appears to date these burials to a slightly later date than the house in SG4, around the mid second millennium, or about 1600 to 1550 B.C.

The placement of SG4 and SG2-3 between the periods of the destruction of the Zimri-Lim palace at Mari and the later levels at Nuzi is also indicated by the pottery painted with a bitumen base paint, often in distinctive designs. A few examples of this type of pottery were found at Mari and some also came from Nuzi; but the time of the greatest popularity of this type of pottery decoration appears to be during this period in Terqa judging from the large quantities of sherds and whole vessels we have with this type of decoration. (The presence of this type of decorated pottery at Baghouz as well as the number of similar vessel shapes found both at Terqa and Baghouz indicate that the levels at Terqa from the second quarter of the second millennium are contemporary with the second millennium graves at Baghouz.) A further indication that SG4 and SG2-3 were close in time to each other can be seen in the large number of examples of type *TPR* 4 26 found in both.

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Abbreviations and Definitions

A. Documentary

ASH2-	Prefix of field registration number of artifacts of the second season at Terqa (Ashara).
AO	Prefix of inventory number for the Louvre Museum (Antiquités Orientales).
<i>AVM DS</i>	<i>Audio-Visual Modules: Documentary Series.</i>
DeZ	Prefix of field registration number of artifacts of the first season at Terqa (Ashara).
<i>TPR</i>	<i>Terqa Preliminary Reports.</i>

B. Stratigraphic

BR	Burial:	Non-structural feature including inhumation and associated artifacts.
FT	Feature:	Stationary cultural unit of excavation, not suitable for human circulation, or not sufficiently preserved to determine circulation.
—	Level:	Minimal unit relating spatial elements in terms of temporal sequence; either culture-free or culture-bound.
—	Locus:	Minimal spatial unit, defined in volumetric or culture-free terms, rather than as a cultural unit (not indicated on sketch plans, but given where pertinent in artifact catalogs for the sake of documentation).
MP	Municipal Project:	Archaeologically uncontrolled excavation, conducted for specific public purposes.
—	Quadrant:	Maximal archaeologically controlled excavation unit, related to grid system.
SF	Surface Find:	Movable cultural item, or cluster of such items, found on the surface or in the immediate subsurface, outside of archaeologically controlled excavations.
SG	Sounding:	Maximal archaeologically controlled excavation unit, not related to grid system.
ST	Structure:	Stationary cultural unit of excavation, suitable for human circulation internal to it.

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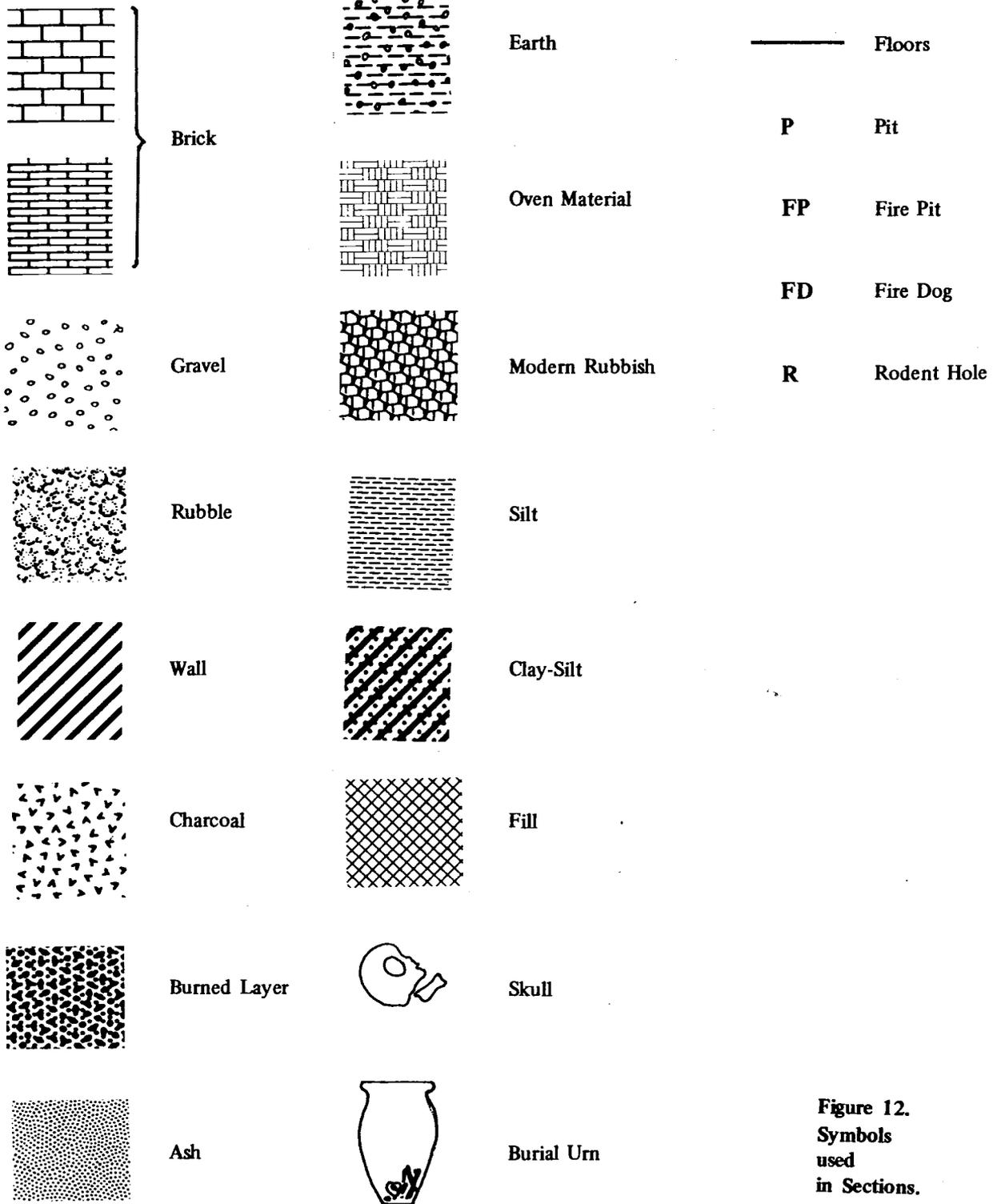


Figure 12. Symbols used in Sections.

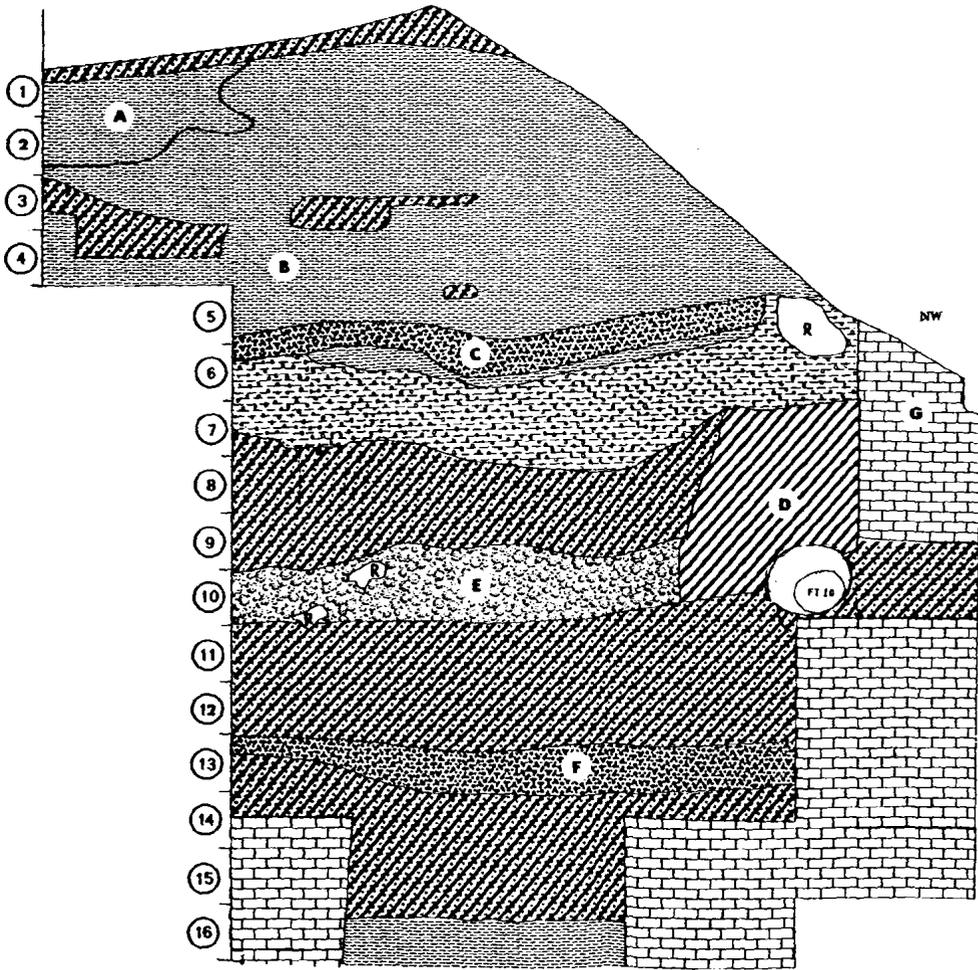


Figure 13. Section of Northern Bulk in SG4.

- A Silt with ash, charcoal, sherds
- B Banded red silt with Islamic sherds
- C Burned layer with silt, ash, charcoal
- D Fallen brick wall covering burial urn
- E Rubble from fallen brick wall
- F Burned layer with silt, ash, charcoal
- G Wall A in sketch plan



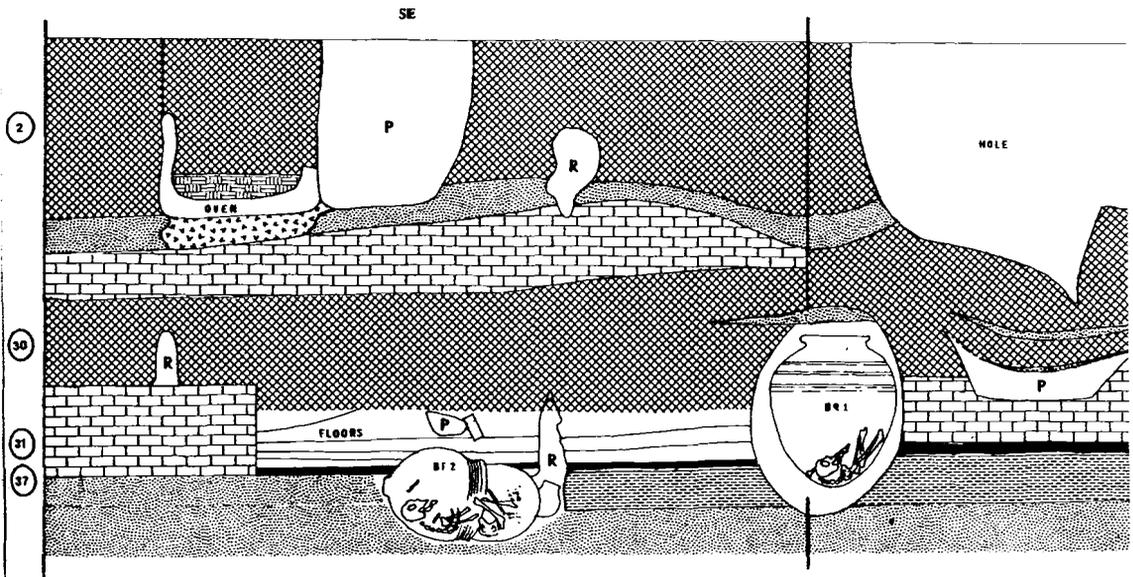
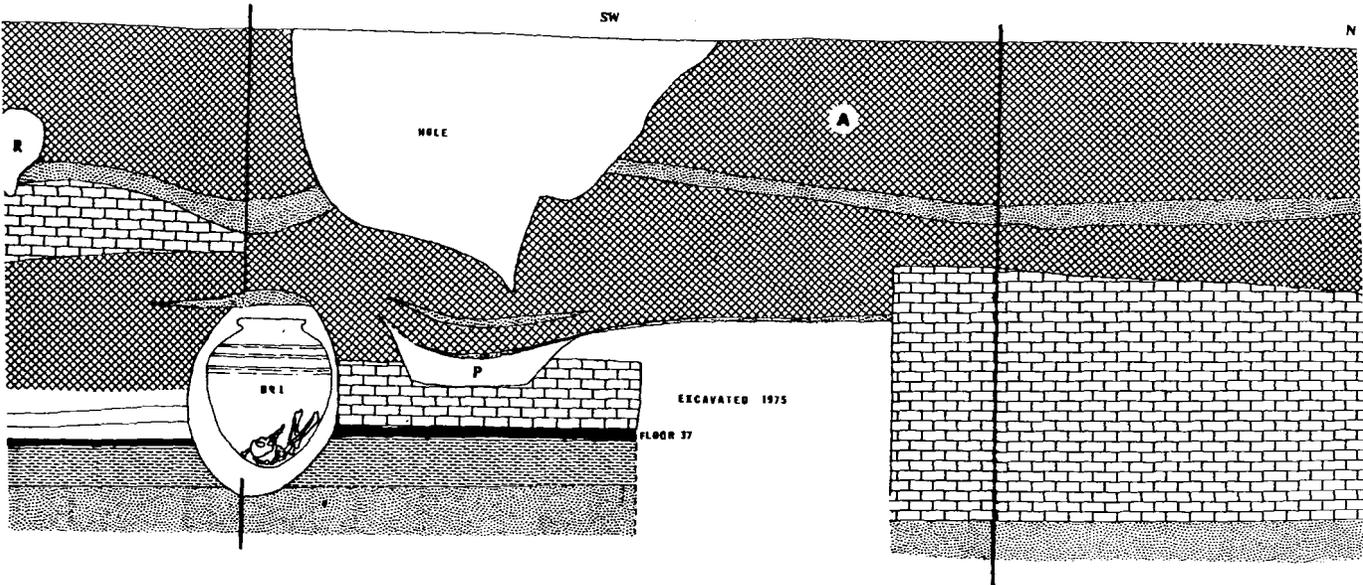
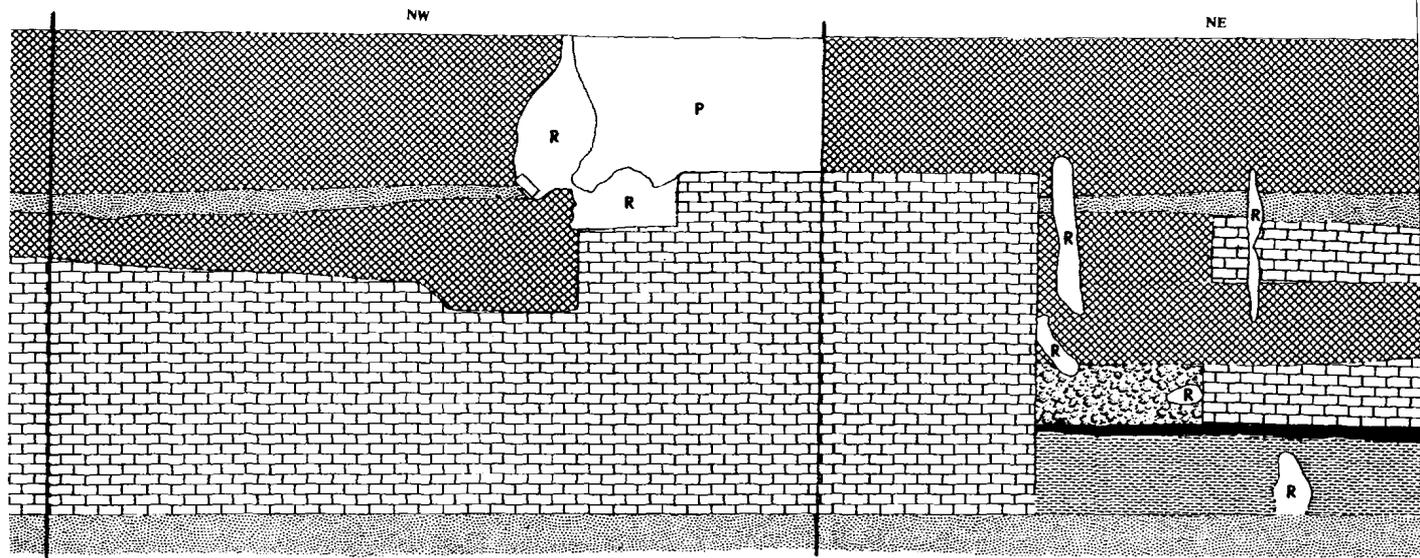


Figure 14. Section of Four Baulks in SG2.



also in SG2.



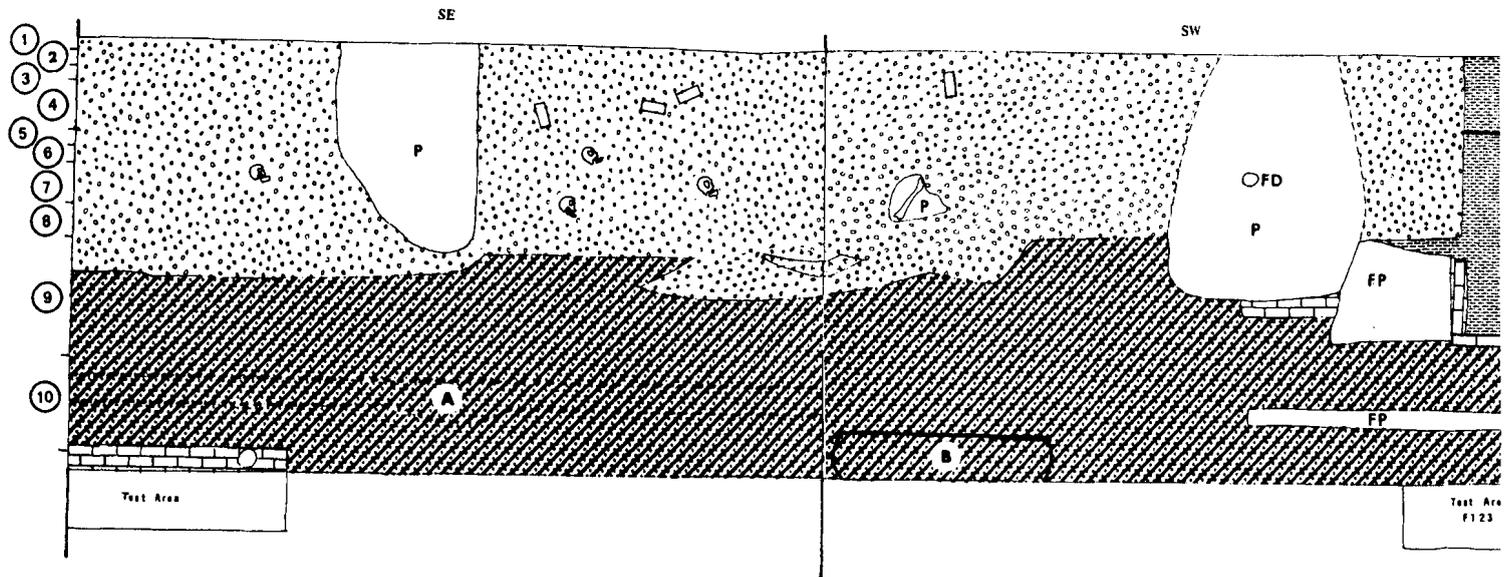
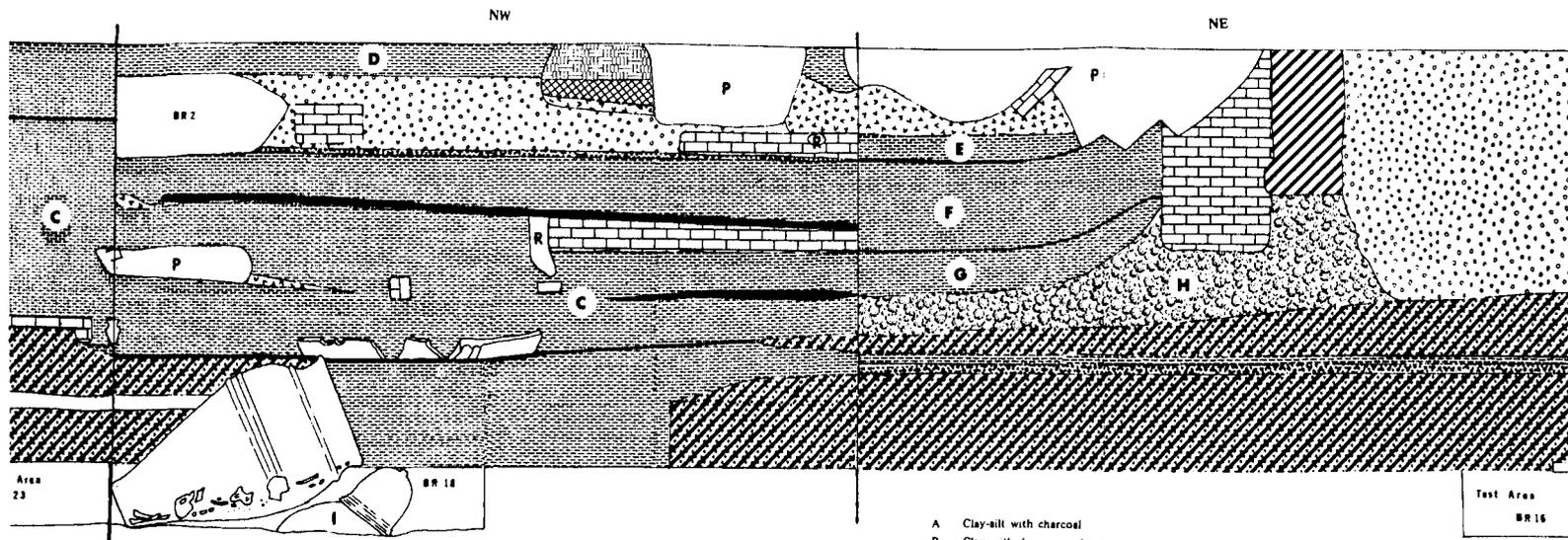


Figure 15. Section of Four Baulks in SG3.

SMS 1, 133



- A Clay-silt with charcoal
- B Clay with decomposed gypsum
- C Compact silt
- D Granular silt
- E Silt with charcoal
- F Red tinted silt
- G Silt with charcoal
- H Red tinted rubble
- i Unexcavated, possibly a burial

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General Introduction

and the Stratigraphic Record of the First Two Seasons

by

G. Buccellati and M. Kelly-Buccellati



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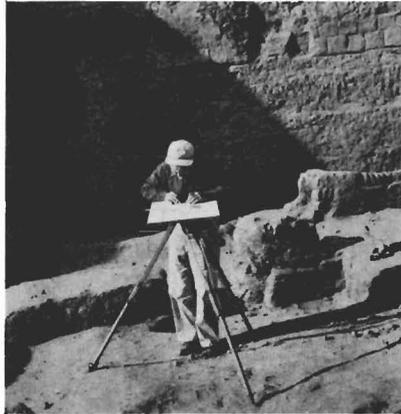
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(December 12, 1904 - February 15, 1977)

a master of field archaeology
whom it was a privilege to have
as our teacher
in the field and in the classroom

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and
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New excavations at ancient Terqa (modern ‘Ashāra, in Syria) were carried out by American teams in 1975 and 1976, and are planned to continue for several years. Beginning a new type of modular preliminary reports, this fascicle concentrates on the substantive and methodological premises of the excavations and on the stratigraphic record of the two seasons of 1975 and 1976. With regard to our program of research, various hypotheses are formulated which will condition our work at the site in its early stages. With regard to stratigraphic analysis, special coverage is given to a third millennium monumental structure and to second millennium materials—a residential quarter and several burials.

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