The Geography of the Nuzi Area

GERFRID G. W. MÜLLER
Wilhelms-Universität Münster

The study of the topography of the kingdom of Arrapḫa has been a focus of scholarly investigation almost since the publication of the first Nuzi texts. This paper outlines the progress made in the location of various towns and settlements mentioned in the texts from Arrapḫa and Nuzi and the roads that connected them.

A map of the kingdom of Arrapḫa can be drawn today on the basis of our knowledge of the toponomy and topography of the area. However, it is far from being a map in the modern sense that leads us from tell to tell over ancient tracks. It is rather a tool of our imagination that provides us with an idea of what we will have to look for once we will be able again to do field work in this area.

The following is a brief outline of how I reconstructed the basic grid of towns connected by roads mentioned in the Nuzi texts. At its core, the reconstruction is, in my opinion, quite reliable. But as long as we do not have more fixed points, all the localizations around the central roads and towns will remain quite speculative. Circles are used on the maps below to indicate tentative locations of towns and settlements.

The starting point and the destination of as many roads as possible had to be determined in order to begin my reconstruction. In 1938, when A. Leo Oppenheim made the first attempt to reconstruct the topography of the Nuzi area,¹ he could use only those roads whose starting points and destinations were mentioned in the texts. However, in many instances, only the destination of a road was given. The starting point had to be determined by an evaluation of the prosopographical data, a tedious task subsequently partly undertaken by Deller, Fadhil,² and Zaccagnini.³ In the course of this study, a number of ghost towns, originating from misreadings, were eliminated. Work on recently

² A. Fadhil, Studien zur Topographie und Prosopographie der Provinzstädte des Königreichs Arrapḫa (Baghdader Forschungen 6), Mainz, 1983.
published texts, especially those from Arrapḫa in the British Museum\(^4\) and from Nuzi in Excavations at Nuzi \(^5\) filled in some important gaps.

When the first reconstruction of the topography of the Nuzi area was attempted, there were only two fixed points—Arrapḫa (Kirkuk) and Nuzi (Yorghan Tepe). But when I began my study, two more had been determined—Kurruḫanni (Tell al-Faḥar) and Natmani (Tell ṬAli), the Atmani of the Middle Assyrian tablets found at this site. Natmani is the most distant city from Nuzi and therefore the best place to begin to trace the routes to Nuzi from town to town on roads mentioned in the texts (see Map 1\(^6\)). We know of two roads going

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\(^6\) Only roads mentioned in this paper will be found on the map. For more details on the reconstruction, see G.G.W. Müller, Studien zur Siedlungsgeographie und Bevölkerung des mittleren Osttigrisgebietes, Heidelberger Studien zum Alten Orient (HSAO 7), Heidelberg, 1994.
from or to Natmani—one to Tenteve, the other to Turša. On the basis of the topographical data, Fadhil came to the conclusion that Turša was located on the bank of the Lower Zab and suggested this important settlement is probably buried under the huge Tell Mahüz. A Spanish expedition planned to investigate this tell but, because of the Gulf war, was, unfortunately, never able to begin work at the site.

From Turša two more roads go respectively to Hurašina rabū and to Unapšewe. The latter is another important town surrounded by many ḍinātū, “hamlets.” One of several roads connecting Unapšewe with other settlements in the area leads us to Apenaš, which is directly linked to Nuzi. The distance between Nuzi and Tell Mahüz is approximately 40 km and between Tell Mahüz and Tell ʿAli about 18 km. Now there is not much doubt about the approximate location of the towns on the way from Natmani to Nuzi.

Hurašina rabū could also be reached from Turša. Hurašina rabū was close to Hurašina şehru, which was located to the east at a river, presumably the Lower Zab. Hurašina rabū was connected by another road with Zizza, which itself was linked by roads to Apenaš and Nuzi. Thus a second route from Natmani to Nuzi can be determined.

The descriptions of field locations, from which we get most of our information about roads, offers us clues to the direction of these roads. They describe fields in relation to roads, from which we can conclude that roads run basically (or at least when they pass fields) in east–west or north–south directions. The directions of roads determined from an analysis of the descriptions of field locations turn out to be quite reliable, especially if we take the north–south axis as parallel to the Zagros range. As a result, I used these locations for the approximate positioning of other settlements that were not situated between firmly established locations.

A study of the general pattern of the watercourses provided additional clues. We know, e.g., that Unapšewe and Zizza were both at or close to a watercourse called Šuḫ. We also know that Artihe was near a geographic feature called jarru, something like a lake, but most likely the swamp found on old (modern) maps of the area. However, the most complicated area to reconstruct was the region of Nuzi itself. This is no place to go into further detail, but the once proposed identification of Tarkulliwe with modern Tarkhalan is no longer tenable—the roads to Ulamme and Tarkulliwe run in a north–south direction. North of Nuzi there is no space at all for these settlements and also they are connected with other towns that have to be located in the south.

This topographical reconstruction provides us with an opportunity to raise further questions. One interesting point is the ethnic distribution in the region around Arrapha and Nuzi (Map 2). We find in the texts quite a few individuals

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7 Fadhill, Studien zur Topographie, 194ff.
8 The text, Jank. 30, is restored, but not beyond any doubt.
9 The four points of the Babylonian compass follow the main directions of the winds.
from Hanigalbat, mainly charioteers, who were stationed in the vassal kingdom of Arrapha. There were also many slaves from Lullubu (Nulluāju), who came as prisoners of war or were imported by merchants from the Zagros northeast of Nuzi. But what is of more interest to us here is the distribution of the settled population, the Hurrian Arrapheans, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, and the Kassites.

Basically the inhabitants of the land of Arrapha were Hurrians, as reflected in their personal names and toponyms. If we look at the map of settlements that can be tentatively located, we find only a few towns with non-Hurrian names. The most western is Bûr-Adadwe, definitely an Akkadian name (“calf of Adad”) with a Hurrian genitive suffix (“town of B.”). Ibašši-il-we may be located in the same area; but this cannot be determined with certainty.

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11 Since designations of settlements by personal names (of the founder or the like) are very common, a derivation from buru, “well,” is most unlikely.
In the north we see Ḫurasina şehru and rabû, derived from Akkadian ḫurâšu, "gold." The dimtu of Belânu was adjacent to the area of Ḫurasina şehru. Further south, close to Unapšewa, there was, though not on the map, the dimtu ša isparâti, "hamlet of the weavers," in the area of Apsaḫulušše by the "big road" to Karâna. The location of Karâna, derived from Akkadian karânû, "wine," is a crux to the reconstruction. Unfortunately, the location of Karâna has not been determined, but we assume it was situated somewhere close to the Lower Zab, probably on its right bank, i.e., north of the river.

In the region of Apsaḫulušše we find also the dimtu ša Nulluenašwe, the "hamlet of the Lullubans." Apart from this case, the Lullubans never appear as a group but only as slaves and usually without personal names. In the same area we have to look for (dimtu or URU) Adad-šemiwe.

Another settlement called Irêm-Adad-we ("Adad showed mercy"), adjoined the dimtu Kizzuk, the latter named after the ancestor of the well-known Kassite family. There are some hints that the dimtu Kizzuk was close to Šuriniwe, between Unapšewa and the Lower Zab, although the reconstruction of this area is problematic. Even more uncertain is the location of Maškani(we), possibly west of Unapšewa, towards the Lower Zab. In the same region we have to look for Bél-ahê-su-še.

The closer one comes to Aššur or the Lower Zab, the more Assyrian influence becomes evident. On the other hand, we find dimtu, like Bélu-qarrād and Bél-abi, in the vicinity of Nuzi, in the very heartland of Arrapḫa.

In the south there are two more places with names that may be Akkadian—Tupšarriniwe and Dûr-ulba. The latter is already attested in the Old Akkadian period, while the former may be derived from a Hurrian form tupšarr̥ from Akkadian tupšarr̥u, "scribe."

If we examine the names of people who are known to have been from the better-documented towns, we find only a few Akkadian names. In the center of the country, in Arrapḫa, Zizza, and Nuzi, the number of individuals with Akkadian names owning fields or houses is very small. The same holds true for the debtors we know from Tašenniwe, which must be sought not far from Arrapḫa. Only Arwa seems to have had a higher percentage of people with Akkadian names (between 10–20%); but the sample is rather small. Towards the south in Ulamme, Artîhe, and Temtenaš, their share is under 10%.

In the west, Tupšarriniwe and Kurruḫanni, and even Šuriniwe in the north near the Lower Zab, each shows less than 10% Akkadian names. The important Unapšewa and Ḫurasina şehru on the Lower Zab have 10–20% among the owners of fields and houses and witnesses. In contrast, the individuals mentioned in the Puhîšenni S. Mûšapu archive, which Fadhil ascribed to Unapšewa, reveal a very low frequency of Akkadian names, suggesting that not all these texts belong there. Finally, the case of Turša on the Lower Zab is not very clear. The landowners in the time of Telhipillâ bearing Akkadian names make up 20% of the total; whereas, in later times, their share is less than 10%. On the other

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12 Possibly an indication for gold that was washed out there from the river.
hand, we have clear evidence for some foreign migration into the region south of the Lower Zab. There exist a number of contracts in which Assyrian refugees (łapiru) voluntarily make themselves slaves of Teliphtilla. The reduction of the percentage of Akkadian names may be a result of assimilation.

As for the Kassites, the matter is more complicated. First of all, who is a Kassite? There are a number of personal names identified as Kassite since the publication of Nuzi Personal Names and K. Balkan’s Kassitenstudien. A few of them are hybrid names, Kassite and Hurrian (e.g., Bula-nikir), but most are rarely attested or very short. The name Hášuar, for instance, seems to be a variant of Kassite ḫašmar, “falcon.” Unfortunately, this name is quite common in contrast to most other alleged Kassite names—thereby introducing some Kassite presence into many households. Even a prince is called Hášuar; maybe his mother was a Kassite. But in most cases, Hášuar is the only Kassite name in the family.

Another example that illustrates the difficulties in recognizing Kassite names is the suffix -uk. Balkan lists the names Sambil-ḫaru (a horse name, besides Sambil-ḫari), Ula-gisuk, Kissuk (from Nuzi, besides Kisi-ḫarbe and Kissi), and Galduk (also from Nuzi). Now we can add the name Nizzuk from recently published Nuzi texts in the British Museum where an individual bearing this name is explicitly called kaššu (without the determinative LÚ). But does this mean that all the names with -uk are Kassite? In the “Ḫapiru Prism” of King Tunip-Teššup of Tikunani, published by M. Salvini in 1996, we find among perfectly good Hurrian names such names as A-ḫu-ul-tu-uk (VI 34, VIII 26), A-īa-ri-tu-uk (VI 41), Ep-šu-un-ku-uk (an overseer, VI 43), E-zi-uk (I 34), Ḥer-ra-uk (VII 35; cf. Ḥerri), and finally, under an overseer named Gi-ḫa-li (cf. Kizzy), Ki-i-ri-uk (VIII 32) and Ḥa-li-uk (VIII 36) (together with others with perfectly good Hurrian names like Kuš-ḫatal and Ari-n). Furthermore, Pu-la-ḫa-li (IV 54, VII 51) and Sa-ka-ar-ak-ti (V 9) appear in this prism—both claimed to be Kassite and both were present at Nuzi. The latter is known also as an element in Šagarakti-šuriaš, Šagarakti-Šâb, and Šagarakti-Enil, but the former is claimed only as being Kassite on the basis of the element Hala, the Kassite equivalent for Gula. Which name is really Kassite and which person is Kassite?

13 E.g., JEN 456, 611, 613.
14 I.J. Gelb, P.M. Purses, A.A. McRae, Nuzi Personal Names (OIP 57), Chicago, 1949.
16 K. Balkan, Kassitenstudien, 223, Par. 74 b.
18 Although Salvini recognized only one Kassite name (Šagarakti), Th. Richter recently pointed out that there might be more (“Anmerkungen zu den hurritatnischen Personenennamen des Ḫapiru-Prismas aus Tigunanu,” SCCNH 9 [1998] 125–34).
19 To avoid further confusion: the mentioned names with tuk are definitely Hurrian (cf. tukke at Nuzi as well as the verbal elements in front of -tuk). I tend also to interpret at least Ḥerruk and Ḥeluk as Hurrian (cf. the honorific -k that also appears in several names of deities; cf. I. Wegner, “Grammatikalische und lexikalische Untersuchungen hurratitischer
The seals and seal impressions do not help either. The Kassite style seals—maybe we should better say seals with designs of Kassite inspiration—were used by individuals with Akkadian and Hurrian names as well as by persons with Kassite background (e.g., Arih'jamanna S. Turi-kintar) and appear to have been popular among scribes. On the other hand, the seals of the Kizzuk family mostly show Mittani designs.

If we accept the results of Balkan, Gelb, and Purves, as well as the rather optimistic ones of Deller and Dosch in their study on the Kizzuk family, we come to the conclusion that Kassites lived everywhere in the land of Arrapa and even held high offices, such as held by the mayor of Nuzi, Kusši-Jurbe. Two of the three towns that are connected with the estates of the Kizzuk family are on our map: Temtenāš in the south and Šuriniwe in the north somewhere between Unapšewe and the Lower Zab. These two towns obviously were not situated side by side, as suggested by Deller and Dosch. The concentration of people of Kassite origin in the area around Šuriniwe is emphasized by the names of two nearby dimittu, Kizzuk and Ukin-Zab.

Let us now turn to the economic geography. The domains of the royal household were concentrated, as far as we know, around Nuzi and down to Atakkal and Šinina. Other fields of the palace were in Tiltapa, probably situated somewhere in the vicinity of Atakkal and Šinina, as well as in Hulumeniwe (possibly near Zizza). Finally, there were fields in Turşa. All these areas had a good water supply. Fields of queens were also situated in Nuzi, Atakkal, and Ulamme, as well as to the west of Unapšewe. The estates of Prince Silwataššup were probably somewhere in the triangle Palaš - Arrapa - Nuzi resp. Arwa. Tašenniwe was probably near Arapa but cannot be located with certainty. Other estates were also at Šillījawe near Nuzi and at Zizza.

The most important data for the reconstruction of the topography of the Nuzi area comes from the well-known Tehiptilla archive. The fields of Tehiptilla and his family, acquired by adoption, were mainly situated in or around Turša, Unapšewe, Zizza, Apenāš, Nuzi, Ulamme, Šinina, Hūšri, and Artihe. The wide range of the estates (Map 3) now provides us with an idea of the mobility of the upper strata of Arrapaean society. According to the witness lists, Tehiptilla used to travel together with some confidants.

J. Fincke systematically collected all references to goods in connection with place names in her volume of the Repertoire géographique. Whereas barley can be found virtually everywhere, wheat shows a specific distribution. Wheat came from Turša on the Lower Zab and from the best-watered area down from

Beschwörungsformeln aus Boğazköy,” in V. Haas [Hrsg.], Hurritisch und Hurrítisch [Xenia 21], Konstanz, 1988, 149–50).


21 RGTC 10, 428ff.
Palaja via Arrapha, Anzukalli, Nuzi, Tarkulli, Šinina, and Našmur, insofar as we can approximately fix the places of origin (Map 4). We find wheat also at Unapšewe close to the river Šuah.

The percentage of irrigated fields cannot be determined with certainty because of the uneven distribution of the sources. In the better-documented towns of Turša, Unapšewe, Zizza, Nuzi, and Artiže, the percentage of fields that are explicitly said to be irrigated lies roughly between 10 and 20% with the lowest rate at Unapšewe with 12% according to Zaccagnini’s calculation. But in Apenaš, where the sources do not mention any canal, eight out of ten mentioned fields are irrigated. At the beginning of our century there was no agriculture at all in this area. However, the area of the fields in this region is much smaller than in the aforementioned cases. If we limit our sample to the luppi nurrīt texts, the percentage of irrigated field area looks somewhat different: Apenaš 88%, Zizza 64%, Turša 38%, Artiže 24%, Nuzi 22%, and

Unapšewe 21%. Among other cities and unlocated fields, Zaccagnini counted only an 11% irrigated area. This is in contrast to the amount of irrigated fields in Unapšewe and again points to the importance of the river Šuah in this area.

The yields, as far as we can calculate, reveal the most favorable conditions to be around Ulamme, Šinina, and Artihe, possibly also Apenas with a ratio of roughly 1:8, followed by Nuzi, Zizza, Unapšewe, and Hurasina šehru at around 1:6. Turša and Tentewe, as well as Arrapha, possibly had lower yields, but the documentation is rather scarce in these cases.²³

A good impression of the hydrological situation is provided by the distribution of settlements with gardens (Map 5). The fact that we find gardens also in Šuriniwe and Tentewe raises some doubt as to the exact location of these settlements. Interesting to note is the provenience of sesame seed from Ulamme, which was issued to people from Apenas, Temtenas, and Lubdi,²⁴ all places that

²⁴ HSS 14, 72.
were presumably rich in water, especially those at the foot of the mountains. *Uḫinnu*, “fresh, green dates,” were delivered to Anzukalli and Lubdi. The land of Arrapha is quite far north for the cultivation of dates since winter frost might make the palm trees burst. Thus the dates might not have originated from the Nuzi area.

Several spices, such as *kammu* (cumin) and *kusibarratu/kussibirru* (coriander), and vegetables, such as *šimeru* (fennel), are mentioned as coming from *Zīzza*, *Zīwa*, and Durzanzi, but they grow everywhere.

Several items were imported—horses from the Lullubu in the northwest mountains, from Ḥanigalbat, and from the countries of Murkunāš/Murkušanni and Kuššuḫḫe, the land of the Kassites (perhaps beyond the Hamrin ridge). Also tin, as well as copper, came from Lullubu and was also imported from Akkad.

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25 HSS 14, 215.
Textiles were not only produced in the country, but also were imported from the surrounding countries of Akkad, Murkunaš/Murkušanni, Inzalzi, and Hanigalbat. Lower-quality textiles came from Nullu, the country of the Lullubians.

We can look forward with great expectations to a future survey of the Arrapha area to improve and refine our reconstruction and to perhaps provide us with a picture of the actual settlement pattern. In addition, such a survey might give us more insight into the agricultural structure and climatic variations in the area. The finds from Nuzi and Kurruḫanni allow us the opportunity to obtain a clearer and more accurate image of the inner workings of the social and political structure of this little kingdom on the periphery of the cuneiform world.