

Proceedings  
of the 6<sup>th</sup> International Congress  
on the Archaeology  
of the Ancient Near East  
May, 5<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> 2008, “Sapienza” - Università di Roma

Volume 2  
Excavations, Surveys and Restorations:  
Reports on Recent Field Archaeology in the Near East

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2010  
Harrassowitz Verlag · Wiesbaden

# TELL ES-SULTAN/JERICHO AND THE ORIGINS OF URBANIZATION IN THE LOWER JORDAN VALLEY: RESULTS OF RECENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH

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## ABSTRACT

*Tell es-Sultan/Jericho as a case study of Early Bronze Age urbanization in Southern Levant offers a favourable set of data on this crucial phenomenon in the history of Palestine. New data made available from the unpublished J. Garstang's Archives matched with Rome "La Sapienza" and MOTA - DACH (National Authority of Palestine) joint excavations in 1997-2000 allow to draw out a preliminary picture of the earliest urban stage in the history of the site, characterised by the erection of a massive fortification system, and by an organisation of its urban layout during the Early Bronze II. Jericho in the Lower Jordan Valley thus stands up as an exemplary case of what happened in the first centuries of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC, during an archaeological phase (Early Bronze II) somewhat neglected in the last years, which, conversely, marked the full affirmation of the urban model in this region of the Ancient Near East.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Recent research activities of Rome "La Sapienza" Expedition to Palestine & Jordan in the Jericho Oasis were focused on the major Early Bronze Age site of Tell es-Sultan,<sup>1</sup> one of the most long-lived sites of the ancient Near East, presently under heavy threaten due to the general political situation in Palestine, and to the building expansion of the modern city of Ariha. Arisen as central place of the Lower Jordan Valley, aside a major source of fresh-water, the Biblical "Elisha Spring" ('Ain es-Sultan),<sup>2</sup> in the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC Tell es-Sultan became one of the major cities of the region.

Rome "La Sapienza" University Expedition has carried on the work on Jericho in the last years by gathering and studying unpublished materials from John Garstang's Expedition in the 1930ies kept in the Palestine Exploration Fund (PEF) Archives in London, and has already published two books on the Proto-Urban stages of the site in the series ROSAPAT.<sup>3</sup>

1 Marchetti, Nigro (eds) 1998; 2000.

2 Nigro 2005:1-6.

3 Nigro 2005; Nigro (ed.) 2007.

The next step was to focus on the earliest fully urban stage of Jericho, that is the Early Bronze II (Garstang's Levels V and IV;<sup>4</sup> Period Sultan IIIb in the updated Italian-Palestinian periodization),<sup>5</sup> matching data collected by all of the Expeditions which worked at the site (Tab. 1).

Period	Tell								Necropolis	
	Garstang	Kenyon							Garstang	Kenyon
	NE Trench	EIII-IV	Sq. HII	Sq. M	Trench III	Trench II	Trench I	Site A		
EB IIA (Sultan IIIb1)	level V	L-G	III. iv - III.v	XX.xcv (Town Wall I) - XX.xcvi	X V I . lxiii - X V I . lxxvii	XVI.liv - X V I I . lviii	XXXIV. xxxviii (Wall A+B) - XXXIV. xxxix	Stage B	Tomb A, Tomb 24	Tombs A108, A127, A122, D12
EB IIB (Sultan IIIb2)	level IV	F-D		XXI. xcvii (Town Wall II) - XXI.ci	XVII. lxxviii - XVII. lxxi	XVIII. lix - XVIII. lxxii	XXXV. xl (Wall C) - XXXV. xli (Wall C+D)			

Tab. 1: Stratigraphical correlation between EB II phases identified by the two British Expeditions directed by J. Garstang (1930-36) and K.M. Kenyon (1952-58) at Tell es-Sultan and in the nearby Necropolis.

## 2. THE PROTO-URBAN PREMISES:

### THE VILLAGE OF PERIOD SULTAN IIIA (EARLY BRONZE I, 3300-3000 BC)

The dawn of a city aside the source of 'Ain es-Sultan at the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC was a long-lasting phenomenon started in Period Sultan IIIa2 (3200-3000 BC), i.e. the Early Bronze IB, when the rural village implanted over the ruins of the five-millennia-old pre-existing Neolithic site<sup>6</sup> started to be transformed into a town,<sup>7</sup> by terracing its dwelling quarters, and definitely outlining a main street<sup>8</sup> and a cult area hosting a distinguished shrine.<sup>9</sup> The earliest communal enterprise was the erection of terrace-walls,<sup>10</sup> which in many respects anticipate the building of more articulated fortification works such as city-walls, being a major work carried out at an extra-familiar level of social aggregation. Agricultural production, bovine breeding and ceramic technology also strongly grew during Sultan IIIa2, when the inhabitants

4 Garstang *et al.* 1935: 149-150, Pls XXV,b, XXVI; 1936: 68, 73-74, Pls XXVIII.

5 Nigro 2006b: Tab. 1.

6 Garstang *et al.* 1935: 167-168; 1936: 68-70; Garstang, Garstang 1940: 43-58; Kenyon 1957: 51-76; Nigro 1996-97: 187-188.

7 Nigro 2005: 35-41, 115-116, 122-126, Plan III; 2007b: 18-20, 36-38.

8 Garstang *et al.* 1935: Pl. XXIV,a; Nigro 2005: 36. This street remained in use during the whole EB II-III urban period (Sultan IIIb-IIIc) with roughly the same outline (Sellin, Watzinger 1913: 36-38, Fig. 17, Pl. II; Garstang *et al.* 1935: 152-154, Pl. XXIII; Nigro 2000: 22-23, Figs. 1:2, 1:15; 2006b:5-6).

9 Nigro 2005: 33-35; Sala 2005b.

10 Nigro 2005: 23-25, 35, 111-112, 120-122, Figs 3.14, 4.2-4.4, 4.12, 4.15-4.16.

of Jericho begun to exploit not only the flouring Oasis, but also the nearby natural resources of the desert and the Dead Sea. Interregional relationships also flourished during Early Bronze I, especially towards Egypt<sup>11</sup> and coastal Lebanon and Syria, as well as the increase of social complexity and they acted as favourable factors enhancing the early urban formation.

### 3. THE RISE OF THE CITY OF PERIOD SULTAN IIIb (EARLY BRONZE II, 3000-2700 BC): JERICHO, A FAVOURABLE ENVIRONMENT FOR AN EARLY URBAN DEVELOPMENT

At the very beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC the town arisen from the rural village reached an economic status and an inner complexity of social organization able to successfully face the challenge of transforming the town into a major fortified city, the centre of a pivotal Palestinian district.<sup>12</sup> This was basically necessary for security reasons (in order to protect the enormous economic surplus gathered into the town) and - not at a less meaningful level - for the self-representation of the newly developed urban power, thus for a pure political issue: the epiphany of power by a ruling class, who assured protection, productivity and employment to the inhabitants of the Oasis and the surrounding desert and Dead Sea northern shores.

#### 3.1. *The Erection of the EB II (Sultan IIIb) City-Wall*

The passage from the flourishing EB IB incipient town to the EB II fortified city, thus, took place as the final outcome of a long-lasting process (§ 2), and it was marked by a major achievement which established the urban status: the erection of the city-wall, as a major fortification line encompassing the whole settlement.<sup>13</sup> The earliest city-wall, made of light yellowish mud-bricks, was identified in several stretches along the perimeter of the site by all of the expedition which excavated at Tell es-Sultan (Fig. 1).<sup>14</sup>

The clearest stratigraphic setting of this impressive structure is visible on the western side of the site, in Kenyon's Trench I (see below) and Square MI (Fig. 2),<sup>15</sup>

11 Nigro 2007b: 37-38. A substantial Egyptian connection is testified to by a conspicuous number of Egyptian or Egyptianizing finds retrieved by all the expeditions who worked at Tell es-Sultan in EB IA-B layers both on the tell and in the nearby necropolis (see below fn. 67).

12 Nigro 1996-97: 191-194.

13 Nigro 2006a: 355-361; 2006b: 4-7.

14 The distinctive colour of these mud-bricks was first noticed by Sellin and Watzinger (the so-called "Massiv" Wall excavated on the north-western side of the site; Sellin, Watzinger 1913: 17, Pl. 3,a, Plan I). J. Garstang identified other stretches of the same fortification wall in the north-eastern corner ("trench K"; Garstang 1931: Pl. I; 1932: 8-9, Fig. 3, Pl. IX; Garstang *et al.* 1935: 151-152, Pl. L,c), to the west in his "trench f" (Garstang 1931: 189-190, Pl. I; 1932: Fig. 1). K.M. Kenyon reached the same city-wall in several spots: in Trench I ("Wall A"), Site M, and on the western side in his "point p" (Garstang 1931: 192, Fig. 5, Pl. I) (Town-Wall I) and Site A. Finally, the Italian-Palestinian Expedition detected this earliest urban fortification system on the northern side of the site, in Area L (Nigro 2006b: 5).

15 Here Kenyon distinguished two structures "Town Wall I" and "Town Wall II", belonging to two

where it is superimposed by two following EB III reconstructions.<sup>16</sup> A distinctive element discovered on this side of the site both by the Austro-German and Kenyon's Expedition were semicircular towers, a typical EB II Palestinian defensive device.<sup>17</sup> In Kenyon's Trench I, the semicircular tower, which has a diameter of around 4 m, abuts from a solid wall ("Wall A" + "Wall B" = Town Wall I) to which it was presumably added in an advanced phase of Early Bronze II (fig. 3).<sup>18</sup> The semicircular tower discovered by the Austro-German Expedition was instead not completely excavated but only traced along the outer faces of the structure (Fig. 4).<sup>19</sup> Further north, again on the western side of the tell, in the small sounding called "Site A", K.M. Kenyon reached another small stretch of "Town Wall I", which showed a distinguished layer of collapse of dune yellowish mud-bricks due to the earthquake which brought to a sudden end the life of the city of Sultan IIIb (§ 6).<sup>20</sup>

Another branch of the earliest EB fortification was excavated at the north-western corner of the site, where a massive structure (labelled "Massiv" and purple inked in the original plan)<sup>21</sup> was identified by the Austro-German Expedition in 1907-1909 (fig. 4), possibly belonging to a major defensive work protecting the northern edge of the site.<sup>22</sup> Such a structure reached a width of 5.6 m and a length of more than 12 m,<sup>23</sup> at its northern edge, where it was identified also by J. Garstang,<sup>24</sup> it was cut by the MB III rampart. At the middle of the northern side of the site, in Trench II, K.M. Kenyon tentatively identified a round tower (possibly protecting a gate) located at the southern limit of the trench itself in Stage XVI,<sup>25</sup> however, in the following stages (XVIII.phase lix - XVIII.phase lxii) the whole trench was occupied by rectangular houses, thus

successive phases; according to Kenyon, Town Wall II was added to Town Wall I on its inner side in order to make it thicker: both however belong to the earliest EB II city-wall (Kenyon 1981: 257-260, Pls 290, 296b).

- 16 Kenyon 1981: Pls 236, 295-296b. This superimposition was already noticed by Garstang (1930: 129-130, Pl. I; 1931: Pl. I).
- 17 Semi-circular towers are a typical defensive device of EB II Palestinian and Transjordanian fortified towns, as attested to by the examples of Arad (Amiran *et al.* 1978: 11-13, Pls 149-150, 177-178, 180, 182, 187), Khirbet el-'Alya (Braun 1989: Fig. 1), et-Tell (two semi-circular towers next to the "Postern Gate" in Area L, respectively: Tower C West [Marquet-Krause 1949: 3, Pl. C; Callaway 1980: 72-73, Figs 49-51] and Tower C East [Marquet-Krause 1949: Pl. C, wall 200; Callaway 1980: 73-81, Fig. 49]; Tower C in Area A, defending the "Citadel Gate" [Callaway 1980: 65-68, Figs 8, 38, 42] and the tower next to the "Corner Gate" in Area K [Callaway 1976: 25]).
- 18 According to Kenyon's opinion, the tower was added to an original structure ("Wall A", 1.1 m width), together with a second adjoined structure ("Wall B"); in Kenyon's reconstruction "Wall A" + "Wall B" = "Town Wall I": Kenyon 1957: 138, Pl. 35a; 1981: 97, Pls 79-80a, 229b, 240.
- 19 Sellin, Watzinger 1913: 30, Pl. 19.
- 20 Kenyon 1981: 373, Pls 200-201, 343a.
- 21 Sellin, Watzinger 1913: Pl. I.
- 22 This earliest defensive walls seems to be recognisable also under the foundation of the later EB III North-Western Tower and city-wall (Sellin, Watzinger 1913: Fig. 7; Garstang 1930: 129-130).
- 23 It was built with big dune yellowish mud-bricks 70 cm long (Sellin, Watzinger 1913: 17).
- 24 Garstang 1930: 129, Pls I, VI, IX; 1931: 189-190, Pl. I (labelled "F"); 1932: Fig. 1.
- 25 Kenyon 1981: 149-150, Pls 100b, 101a-b, 250a, 251a-b.

indicating that the city extended further to the north.<sup>26</sup>

Another stretch of the EB II city-wall, showing a width of around 2.5 m, was brought to light at the north-eastern edge of the later fortification both in Sellin and Watzinger's<sup>27</sup> and in Garstang's excavations;<sup>28</sup> these remains, however, do not allow to definitely clarify the exact shape of the city in that point, where possibly there was a corner of the fortification line and a structure terracing the slope towards the spring and the oasis as in the Early Bronze IB.<sup>29</sup>

To the south, an earliest city-wall could be tentatively identified with walls NCS+NDE, or with walls NCV+NCT,<sup>30</sup> outlined by K.M. Kenyon in Trench III in Stages XV and XVI,<sup>31</sup> but out of use already in the course of Stage XVI,<sup>32</sup> and more probably to be considered terrace-walls,<sup>33</sup> similar to the ones identified by Garstang in the North-Eastern Trench<sup>34</sup> and by Kenyon on the western side of the site in Trench I (Wall EO).<sup>35</sup>

Except from the north-western defensive outwork, the rest of the EB II city-wall wherever brought to light along the city-perimeter exhibited a regular width and it was made of dune yellowish mud-bricks, thus testifying to the simultaneous building enterprise which encircled Jericho for the first time within a continuous powerful defensive line. The overall length of the city-wall was around 1 km, and building material included a number of mud-bricks which may be calculated around 1,2 million. While water and mud were largely available in the Jericho Oasis, wood and labour had to be imported, and this means that the earliest ruling institution at Jericho was able to accomplish such a difficult task. This may introduce a reflection about the specificity of the peculiar "urban phenomenon" illustrated by Tell es-Sultan in the Early Bronze II.

26 Kenyon 1981: 153-161, Pls 251c-253a.

27 Sellin, Watzinger 1913: 29, Figs 10-11.

28 Garstang 1930: 130, Pl. I; 1931: Pl. I; Nigro 2000: 357, Fig. 8. In another section of this wall brought to light by Garstang on the north-eastern side, it is possible to distinguish the yellowish mud-bricks distinctive of Sultan IIIb fortifications (Garstang 1932: 8-9, Fig. 3, Pl. IX; Garstang *et al.* 1935: 151-152, Pl. L,c).

29 Nigro 2005: 23-25, 35, 120-122, Figs 3.14, 4.12-4.16.

30 The room delimited by walls NCV+NCT was interpreted as a sanctuary by Kenyon. No data, however, support such an interpretation and it seems more simply an EB I domestic unit (Kenyon 1981: 199-201, Pls 266-267a; Nigro 2005: 116-119).

31 Kenyon 1981: 199-204, Pls 266, 267a, 267c, 273-274; Nigro 2006: 360-361.

32 Kenyon 1981: Pls 267d, 268a-b.

33 This interpretation seems to be supported by the presence of silos and domestic structures further to the south outside the abovementioned walls: Kenyon 1981: Pls 267c-d.

34 Nigro 2005: 23-25, 35, Fig. 3.14. The southern prosecution of this wall was excavated by K.M. Kenyon in Square EIV (Wall ZZE-ZZT, then ZA; Kenyon 1981: 315-322, Pls 313-314; Nigro 2005: 120-122, Figs 4.12, 4.15-4.16).

35 Kenyon 1981: 96, Pls 77-78, 229a; Nigro 2005: 111-112, 120-122, Figs 4.2-4.4.

### 3.2. *Extra-Regional Factors Leading to Palestinian - Jerichoan EBA "Urbanism"*

Starting in the last centuries of the 4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC and with a gradual increase during the 30<sup>th</sup> century BC, some extra-regional factors may be individuated accompanying the rise of local forms of "urbanism" in the Southern Levant; one may recall these factors basing upon archaeological data from Southern Palestine, and, especially, from Tell es-Sultan/Jericho. Socio-economic elements which stimulated the growth of the local community may be individuated in the following foreign influxes descending both from the North (the Lebanese Coast and Syria) and from the South (Egypt):

- adoption of registration practices witnessed by cylinder seal impressions on jars (from the Lebanese Coast and the North);<sup>36</sup> these practices point to a complex system of production and exchange of primary goods (§ 5.2);
- metal trade and manufacturing (mainly copper from Southern 'Arabah, and silver from the north);
- diffusion of status symbols and luxury good imported from Proto-Dynastic and early Pharaonic Egypt (§ 5.4).

Interaction among these factors played a decisive role in enhancing an "urban" phenomenon in the Lower Jordan Valley at the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC.

### 3.3. *Intra-Regional Factors*

A basic feature of Tell es-Sultan was its pivotal location at a major crossroad of the region: the site exercised a direct territorial control both in regards of the road-network (which also means easy access to local raw materials and their centralization) and in respect of the oasis, where fruitful cultivable-land was concentrated as a basic internal socio-economic factor.

Especially fresh water management at Jericho was a definitive power in the hands of the ruling institution (social class), as it was, of course, directly linked to cultivable land use and property, and allowed the accumulation at the site of great amount of agricultural surplus (testified to by the increase in number of attestations of storage facilities and jars within the settlement: see below). Also bovine taming was made possible by the large availability of water.

Nevertheless, territorial control over the Dead Sea basically meant salt, sulphur, curative mud and bitumen; stuff which may be stored and conveyed to other markets after refining.

### 3.4. *The EB II Dwelling Quarters*

Matching data gathered by the four expedition which worked at Tell es-Sultan, it is possible to state that the earliest city of Jericho had a rectangular layout with a central quarter on the Spring Hill overlooking the Oasis and Jebel Quruntul, where the main buildings (possibly a palace and a temple) stood.

36 Ben Tor 1978: 101-109; 1995: 66, 72-76; Mazzoni 1992:178-205.

At least three dwelling quarters may be distinguished along the main central street: the one on the northern *plateau*, the lower southern one, and the eastern one, on the sloping flank of the site facing the Spring.

#### 3.4.1. The Northern Quarter

The northern quarter was extensively investigated by Garstang but only partially published<sup>37</sup>. On both sides of the main street,<sup>38</sup> houses were crowded one to the other, each hosting a variety of installations for food processing and storage (Fig. 5), illustrating the flourishing agricultural production of the oasis (barley, beans, lentils, nuts, figs, etc.). One may convincingly identify in this intense agricultural activity one of the economic factors pushing ahead the early urban experience at Jericho.

Mortars and pestles, working tables, grinding stones, as well as silos made of elongated bricks vertically set into the underlying layers (Fig. 6), according to a well known Palestinian EB habit, testify to these food producing and storage activities, which in some cases seem to achieve an extra-familiar dimension.

The Italian-Palestinian Expedition reached EB II layers in Area F, where a portion of the northern street (here L.437) and some houses opening in it were uncovered,<sup>39</sup> continuing the excavations started by Garstang and checking and confirming in the general sequence the stratigraphy established by British archaeologists.

#### 3.4.2. The Southern Quarter

The southern quarter was partially brought to light in a long trench excavated by the Austro-German Expedition<sup>40</sup> through the southern part of the tell. Another group of dwellings and silos was discovered by K.M. Kenyon in Trench III, Stage XVI.Phase lxiii - Stage XVII.Phase lxxi,<sup>41</sup> albeit it is not clear whether they were inside or outside the city-wall (possibly identified with walls NCS+NDE, or with walls NCV+NCT; see above).

#### 3.4.3. The Spring Hill and the Eastern Quarter

Apart from the city-wall, a main public structure was uncovered by the first expedition on the western side of the Spring Hill, where the palace and temple of Jericho stood also in the Early Bronze III and Middle Bronze I-II, even though they have been only very partially excavated and published.<sup>42</sup> This structure was not adequately explored, however its dimensions and location suggest that it was a public building, with a main

37 Garstang *et al.* 1935: 147-148, 151-152, Pls XXIII,b, XLVII,b-c (where is evident that EB II houses lie under the foundation level of the later EB III northern city-wall); 1936: 73-74, Pls XXVIII.

38 See above fn. 8.

39 Nigro 2006b: 5-6, Figs 3-5.

40 Sellin, Watzinger 1913: Figs 21-24; Nigro 2006a: 360-361.

41 Kenyon 1981: Pls 120-121, 268-269a.

42 Sellin, Watzinger 1913: 39-44, Figs 18-20; Marchetti 2003: 300-303, Fig. 4.

rectangular room with two pillars as central element.<sup>43</sup>

On the opposite flank of the Spring Hill, the eastern slope overlooking 'Ain es-Sultan was only partially investigated by Garstang all around and underneath the so-called Eastern Tower, possibly a MB I defence work.<sup>44</sup> Here (in Square K 6), EB II layers were reached<sup>45</sup> and a small set of EB II ceramic vessels (Fig. 7)<sup>46</sup> was found in situ in some dwellings located just in front of the Spring (Fig. 8).<sup>47</sup> Also in this spot the Italian-Palestinian Expedition resumed investigations, which confirmed the stratigraphic sequence down to Early Bronze II.<sup>48</sup>

#### 4. TOMBS OF PERIOD SULTAN III B

Six tombs, excavated by Garstang (Tomb A and Tomb 24)<sup>49</sup> and Kenyon (Tombs A108, A127, A122, D12),<sup>50</sup> so far known in the necropolis from this period (some other were unfortunately looted; Fig. 9), illustrate the definitive affirmation of primary deposition of dead in familiar burials of an emerging ruling class, as the rich funerary equipment exemplary show. These tombs, with their finds (§ 4.1), give an insightful illustration of what was the funerary custom of an early fully sedentarian "urban-like" society.

##### 4.1. Funerary Equipment

Tomb furnishings, together with pottery (see below), included symbolic items such as flutes made of pierced bones, bone pendants and beads,<sup>51</sup> clay figurines, and an Egyptian-like stone palette<sup>52</sup>, a typical personal attribute of high rank female burials.<sup>53</sup>

43 This kind of broad-room with one or two central supporting pillars is also the basic architectural unit in Palestine during the Early Bronze II (Ben-Tor 1992: 62-64). See for instance the dwelling quarters excavated at the EB II town of Tell el-Far'ah North (de Vaux 1961: 576-588, Pls XXXIII-XXXIV, XL,a, XLIII-XLV; de Miroschedji 1993b: 436-437), and Arad (Amiran *et al.* 1978: 14-16, 19-35).

44 Garstang 1932: 15-17, Pl. 9; 1934: Pls 13, 15; Garstang, Garstang 1940: 79-81, Fig. 4; Nigro 2006a: 365-366; 2006b: 26, Fig. 38; 2009: 362, Figs 6, 8-9.

45 Garstang, Garstang 1940: Fig. 3.

46 Garstang 1932: 9-10, Pl. XII:13-18. Two other scattered EB II vessels (Garstang 1932: 9, Pl. I:23-24) were found by Garstang on the opposite side of the tell in Square I 4, in a probe under the foundation of the EB III western city-wall.

47 Garstang 1932: 9, 11, 17, Fig. 5, Pl. XXc; Garstang, Garstang 1940:77-78.

48 The deepest EB I-II layers were reached in this spot of the tell also by K.M. Kenyon in Square HII (Kenyon 1981: 341-343, Pls 325-326a; Nigro 2006a: 364-367).

49 For Tomb A see Garstang 1932: 18-22, 41-43 and for Tomb 24 see Garstang 1932: 38-41, Fig. 8 (the latter was perhaps contemporary to Kenyon's Tomb A127). Actually, Tomb A was in use for a longer period, covering almost completely the whole Early Bronze Age, from the beginning of the Early Bronze I (Polcaro 2005) to the end of the Early Bronze III.

50 From the earliest to the latest one: Tomb A108 (Kenyon 1960: 82-85, Fig. 23, Pls V:2-VI), Tomb A127 (Kenyon 1960: 85-93, Figs 24-29, pl. VII:1), Tomb A122 (Kenyon 1960: 93-94, Figs 30-31), Tomb D12 (Kenyon 1960: 94-126, Figs 32-41; Tomb D12 was used also in the following Early Bronze III).

51 Kenyon 1960: Figs 27:2-3, 4-6, 28, 29 (Tomb A127); Fig. 41 (Tomb D12).

52 From Tomb D12 (Kenyon 1960: Fig. 40:3).

53 These items (well attested to, for instance, in the Bab edh-Dhra' necropolis), in fact, were probably

Ceramic assemblages show an intensification and diversification of productions; they comprise bowls, *amphoriskoi*, jugs and jars with lug-handles (Fig. 10), sometimes red slipped and burnished or painted for food and beverage offerings associated to primary burials.

## 5. THE EB II MATERIAL CULTURE

EB II material culture at Jericho does represent a well distinguished horizon, with diagnostic types in flint industry<sup>54</sup> and pottery, and some specific indicators of the urban status, such as pierced sea-shells, and cylinder seals and seal impressions (§ 5.2), which possibly demonstrate the existence of a central control of goods distribution and exchange. Sea-shells were sometimes considered tokens, while the practice of sealing points to the identification of products and their owners.

### 5.1. The Pottery Inventory

As it regards pottery (Figs 7, 10), the EB II Jericho inventory marks a visible change in material culture: platters appear for the first time, as well as red-burnished bowls; *amphoriskoi* continue in the EB I tradition, though with vestigial lug-handles, while jugs and juglets show a new ovoid shape with loop handles.

Storage jars are a distinguished realm, since their number and variety testify to the sharp increase of agricultural production under the new “urban” exploitation of the Oasis.

Specialized ceramic productions, often used as status symbols in funerary equipments, are the so-called “Abydos Ware”,<sup>55</sup> and the Red highly burnished and Polished Wares, both decorating jugs supposed to be wine/grape juice or perfume containers.

### 5.2. Seals and Sealing

A few finds testify to the introduction of systematic sealing activities at Jericho in this period. A bone cylinder seal with net incised decoration found in Tomb A127<sup>56</sup> and a second one in stone with linear incisions from Squares EIII-IV (Stages G-F),<sup>57</sup> and one impression on a jar shoulder with an animalistic frieze found by Sellin and

used for grinding face paint (Rast, Schaub 1989:455-456).

54 Garstang 1932: Pl. XVIII:1:b,c,e, 2:a-c, h-l.

55 An “Abydos Ware” juglet was found in Tomb A127 (Kenyon 1960: Fig.25:34), while a fragmentary jar was retrieved in House L.443 of the Italian-Palestinian Expedition in Area F (§ 5.4; Fig. 11).

56 Reg. N. 56 (Kenyon 1960: 91, Fig. 27:4; Ben-Tor 1978: 4, Fig. 1:2). This cylinder seal finds a remarkable comparison in a cylinder seal (19306) found at Byblos in level XXV in the area between the Temple of the Obelisks and Building II (Dunand 1950-58: 1081, Pl. CXCIV).

57 Reg. 810 (Kenyon, Holland 1983: Fig. 368:3).

Watzinger in 1907-1909 excavations<sup>58</sup> belong to two classes of EB II glyptic,<sup>59</sup> also attested to at Byblos, Megiddo and Hazor.<sup>60</sup> Especially, the figured frieze finds a striking counterpart in some specimens from Byblos.<sup>61</sup>

### 5.3. *Specialized Craftsmanship: Economic and Social Growth of Sultan IIIb*

Some items found in the tombs of the period, moreover, point to the development of locally manufactured pieces of art, testifying to the existence of specialized craftsmanship, as a typical trait of an “urban” centralized society. A bull-head is especially noteworthy belonging to a well known Palestinian artistic class attested to at Jericho and Palestine in the Early Bronze II-III.<sup>62</sup> The bull-head found in Tomb D12<sup>63</sup> is made of fine limestone with a triangular inlay of bone in the forehead; it shows the same iconography of the other specimens (thought to be of Syro-Mesopotamian origin),<sup>64</sup> but is made of stone instead of ivory (such as the EB III specimen found by J. Garstang in Room W in Square K6, in the dwelling quarter at the eastern bottom of the Spring Hill),<sup>65</sup> probably due to its early dating; remarkable comparisons can be found in contemporary examples from Arad, et-Tell (Area L), and Khirbet Yarmouk (Area B).<sup>66</sup>

### 5.4. *Egyptian Contacts*

In the incipient urban phase of Sultan IIIa (Early Bronze I), the presence of Egyptian

58 Sellin, Watzinger 1913: 97-98, 106, Fig. 66; Ben-Tor 1978: 8, 89, Fig. 6:34-37.

59 Hennessy 1967:64, Pls LII-LIII; Ben-Tor 1978: 89; Mazzoni 1992: 196-205.

60 Ben-Tor 1978: 8-9; 1995: 72.

61 The most striking comparison is with specimen 14184 (Dunand 1950-58: 671, Pl. CXCVI), but further comparisons can be found in other cylinder seal impressions with animalistic friezes (Ben-Tor 1978: 71-75), such as specimens 10340, 11298, 11149, 11572 and 12613 (Dunand 1950-58: Pl. CXCVI; Saghieh 1983: 76-79) and specimens 5072, 5073 and 5684 (Dunand 1937-39: 340-341, 383, Pl. CXXXIII; Saghieh 1983: 42), dated by M. Saghieh to Periods KII-IV (that is EB II-III; Saghieh 1983: 90-91).

62 Up to now eight bull's heads in ivory or stone have been retrieved in Palestine: two from Jericho (see below), one from Khirbet Kerak (Bar-Adon 1962), one from Khirbet Yarmouk (de Miro-schedji *et al.* 1988: 86-87, Pl. 48:1, XXIV:1; de Miroschedji 1993a: 29\*-30\*, Fig. 1), two from et Tell, respectively from Sanctuary A (Marquet-Krause 1949: 20-21, Pl. XCIV; Ben-Tor 1972: 24-27, Figs 1-2) and from Area L (Callaway 1974: 57-59, Fig. 1; 1980: 123-125, Fig. 83), one from Arad (Amiran *et al.* 1978: 57, Pl. 120:9) and one from Bab edh-Dhra' (Rast, Schaub 1989: 456-459, Fig. 262:2). The specimens from Khirbet Kerak, the Sanctuary A at et-Tell, Bab edh-Dhra' and the dwelling quarter at the eastern bottom of the Spring Hill at Tell es-Sultan date to Early Bronze III, while the ones from Arad, Khirbet Yarmouk, et-Tell (Area L) and Tomb D12 at Jericho can be ascribed to Early Bronze II (de Miroschedji 1993a: Tab. 1).

63 Reg. N. 267 (Kenyon 1960:125, Fig. 40:2, Pl. VII:2).

64 Ben-Tor 1972: 27-29; de Miroschedji 1993a: 37\*-39\*, note 10; Rast, Schaub 1989: 458.

65 Garstang 1932: 17-18, Pl. XX:a; Garstang, Garstang 1940: 77-78, Pl. XIV,b; de Miroschedji 1993a: 34\*, Fig. 4.

66 See above fn. 62.

or Egyptianizing items both in funerary and religious contexts at Tell es-Sultan<sup>67</sup> pointed out the role played by the Egyptian connection as factor favouring the early urban formation in Palestine.<sup>68</sup>

EB II material from the site and the necropolies apparently testify to a certain decrease of such indicators, however the sharp increase of Palestinian objects (mainly ceramic vessels) in Egyptian necropolis of this period (I-II Dynasties), should advice about the establishment of a continuous exchange. Especially, the so-called Light-Faced Painted Ware (more commonly known as “Abydos Ware”), and the Red-Polished jugs and bottles witness wine and perfumes exports towards Egypt from Palestine, as well as pattern-combed jars testify to the export of oil.<sup>69</sup> A jar belonging to the Light-Faced Painted Ware production was found in Area F in House L.443 by the Italian-Palestinian Expedition (Fig. 11), while a jug of such a production had been retrieved by K.M. Kenyon in Tomb A127 (Fig. 10).<sup>70</sup>

Trench III also gave back a so-called compressed pear-shaped alabaster mace-head,<sup>71</sup> and a second stone mace-head was retrieved in Squares EIII-IV (Stages K-J);<sup>72</sup> this was a kind of status symbol (icon of the leader) which maintained its popularity also in this period, and in the following Early Bronze III.

A stone palette perforated by a hole at one end from Tomb D12 (southern group, layer 6)<sup>73</sup> can be tentatively ascribed to the EB II utilization of the tomb; this latter seems to be a perspicuous Egyptianizing funerary equipment, apparently characterizing female burials.

## 6. THE DESTRUCTION OF THE EB II SETTLEMENT

This flourishing early city of Jericho came to a sudden end while it was at its apogee around 2700 BC, due to a tremendous earthquake, which made the city spectacularly fall down (Fig. 12).<sup>74</sup>

Such a destruction is also attested to in many other centres of Palestine and Transjordan, such as e-Tell/ ‘Ai and Megiddo, and especially along the Jordan Valley

67 It be must quoted the attestation of Egyptianizing shapes such as the so-called “lotus vase” in the necropolis (Kenyon 1960: Fig. 17:23 [Tomb A114]; 1965: Fig. 12:6 [Tomb K1]; Sala 2005b: 177-178), and the presence of Egyptian or Egyptianizing stone palettes and mace-heads both on the tell (Sellin, Watzinger 1913: Figs 107, 109-110; Garstang *et al.* 1936: Pl. XXXVI:24-26; Nigro 2005: 12-13, 34, Fig. 2.8-2.9, 3.28) and in the nearby necropolis (Garstang 1932: Pl. VII:5 [Tomb A, layer 3]; Kenyon 1965: Fig. 5:8 [Tomb K2]).

68 Esse 1989: 90-93; Nigro 2007b: 37-38.

69 Hennessy 1967: 49-60.

70 Reg. N. 353 (Kenyon 1960: Fig. 25:34).

71 Reg. 1827 (Holland 1983: 804, 810, Fig. 365:1).

72 Reg. 1449 (Wheeler 1982: 630, Fig. 256:2; Holland 1983: 806, 811).

73 Kenyon 1960: 125, Fig. 40:3.

74 Kenyon 1957: 175-176, Pl. 37a; 1981: 207 (Pl. 123a), 373 (Pls 200-201, 343a); Nigro 2006a: 359-361, 372-373.

at Pella, Tell Abu-Kharaz, and Tell es-Sa'idiyeh,<sup>75</sup> and Khirbet al-Batrawy,<sup>76</sup> and it may represent a reference line for chronological correlation among these sites.

I just would like to stress that at Megiddo long cracks<sup>77</sup> appear on the foundation walls of the huge monumental temple attributed to Early Bronze IB by the excavators,<sup>78</sup> which might find a more convenient chronological assessment in the Early Bronze II, as the comparison with the 'Ai temple also suggests.<sup>79</sup>

This terrible destruction, however, did not cause the end of the city, since it was immediately reconstructed, with an enlarged layout and reinforced double city-walls, but this story is beyond the limits of the present paper.

#### CONCLUSION

While Jericho remained one major site of Palestine during the whole Early and Middle Bronze Age, nowadays the site is heavily threatened by urban development and general political events. The archaeological valorisation of Tell es-Sultan is thus a basic and most urgent issue of the agenda, and it is pursued, notwithstanding terrible difficulties, through the enduring efforts of the Palestinian Department of Antiquities. Two Workshops, held in Ariha in February 2005 and March 2008 in cooperation with our University, launched the Pilot Project for the Jericho Oasis Archaeological Park, a challenge with which Roma "La Sapienza" University is fully involved. The reappraisal of restorations and excavations at the site will surely protect it enhancing its cultural value.

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75 A large number of Early Bronze Age Palestinian and Transjordanian sites underwent a violent destruction at the end of the Early Bronze II, some of them being definitively abandoned (as Tell el-Far'ah Nord, Tell Abu Kharaz, Tell es-Sa'idiyeh and Arad). It seems that the major part of such conflagrations was caused by an earthquake, as attested to at Megiddo (Finkelstein, Ussishkin 2003: Fig. 6; Finkelstein, Ussishkin, Peersmann 2006: 49-50), Pella/Tell el-Husn, Tell Abu Kharaz and Tell es-Sa'idiyeh (Bourke 2000: 233-235), 'Ai (Callaway 1980: 147; 1993: 42) and Khirbet al-Batrawy (see below note 76).

76 Nigro 2007a: 349, 352, 357-358 ; Nigro (ed.) 2008: 87 [Fig. 3.37], 250, 255, 279.

77 Finkelstein, Ussishkin 2003: Fig. 6.

78 Finkelstein, Ussishkin 2003: 29-34; Finkelstein, Ussishkin, Peersmann 2006: 36-41, Figs 3.14-3.19; Sala 2008: 99-110, Pl. 7.

79 Sala 2008: 110-113.

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Fig. 1: Stretch of the EB II city-wall identified by J. Garstang in the north-eastern corner of the tell.  
Source: Garstang *et al.* 1935: Pl. L,c.

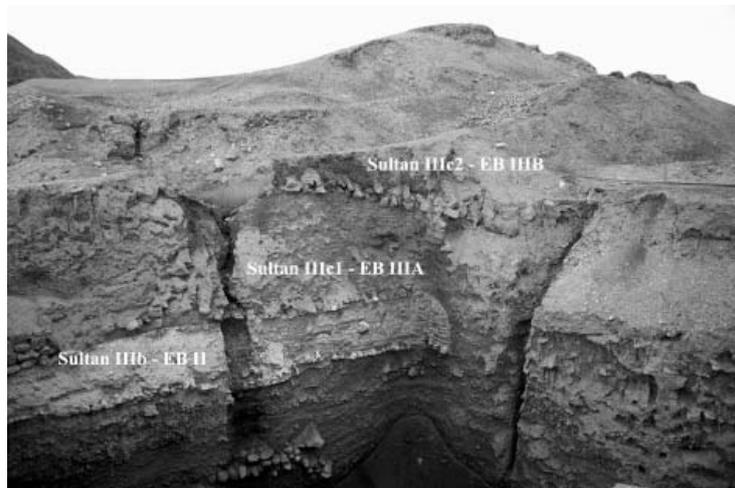


Fig. 2: Superimposition of the three successive Early Bronze II-III (3000-2300 BC) city-walls in the western section of K.M. Kenyon's Site M, on the western side of the tell.



Fig. 3: The semicircular tower excavated by K.M. Kenyon against Town Wall A in Trench I.  
Source: Kenyon 1981: Pl. 79b.

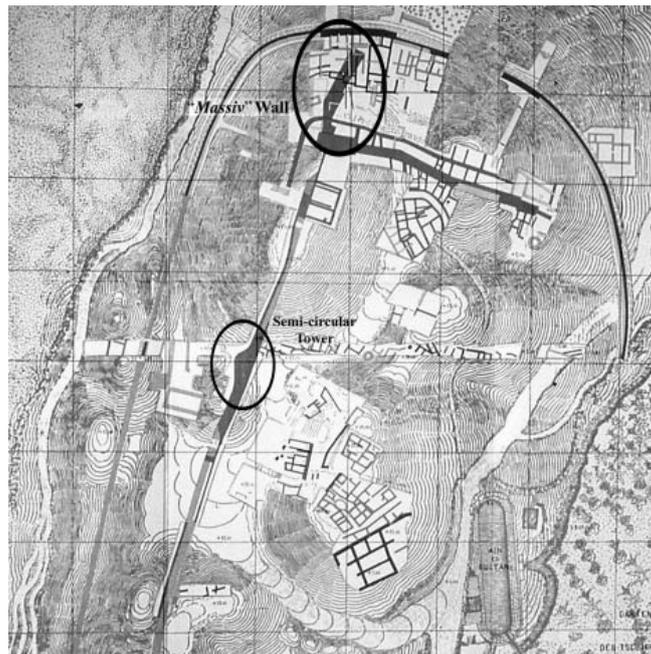


Fig. 4: The “Massiv” Wall identified by the Austro-German Expedition in the northern-western corner of the site and the semicircular tower on the western side.  
Source: Sellin, Watzinger 1913: Pl. I.



Fig. 5: EB II dwellings with domestic installations for storage and food preparation excavated by J. Garstang in 1935-1936 on the north-eastern *plateau* of the tell (Garstang's level V)

Source: Courtesy of Palestine Exploration Fund.



Fig. 6: Silos made of vertical elongated bricks excavated by K.M. Kenyon in Square EIII.

Source: Kenyon 1981: Pl. 181a.

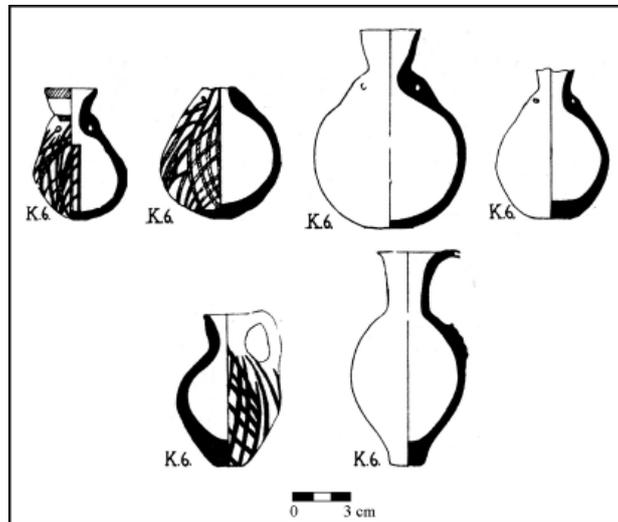


Fig. 7: EB II vessels retrieved by J. Garstang in the lowest layers of the dwelling quarter excavated at the eastern bottom of the Spring Hill.  
Source: Garstang 1932: Pl. XII:13-18.



Fig. 8: General view of the EB II-III houses excavated by J. Garstang at the eastern bottom of the Spring Hill, form north.  
Source: Courtesy of Palestine Exploration Fund.

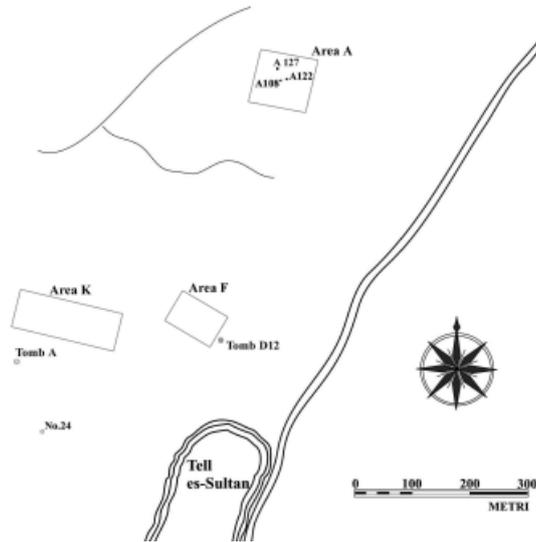


Fig. 9: Schematic plan of the Jericho necropolis with the localisation of EB II tombs excavated by J. Garstang and K.M. Kenyon.

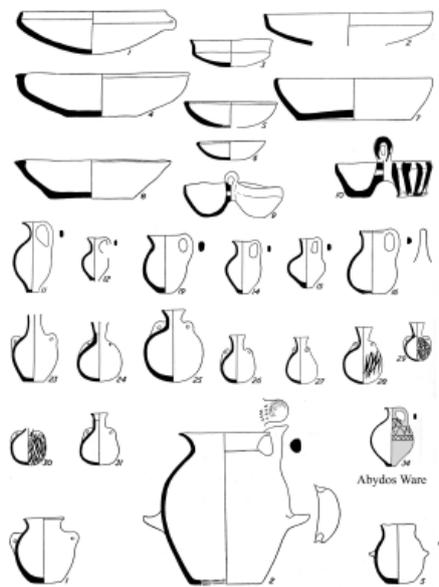


Fig. 10: EB II pottery from Tomb A127.  
Source: Kenyon 1960: Figs 25-26.



Fig. 11: EB II pottery from House L.443 excavated by the Italian-Palestinian Expedition in Area F, on the northern *plateau* of the mound; to the right, fragments of a Light-Faced Painted Ware jar.



Fig. 12: Mud-bricks from the tumble down EB II Town Wall I in Kenyon's Site A.  
Source: Kenyon 1981: Pl. 200b.