[ROSAPAT 04]

BYBLOS AND JERICHO IN THE EARLY BRONZE I

Social dynamics and cultural interactions

Edited by LORENZO NIGRO

with contributions by
GASSIA ARTIN, LORENZO NIGRO, FRANCES PINNOCK, ANDREA POLCARO, MAURA SALA and ASSAAD SEIF

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«LA SAPIENZA» EXPEDITION TO PALESTINE & JORDAN
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Foreword

Lorenzo Nigro

Cultural transformations through pre-classical periods and the rise of early urbanism in the Levant are among the favourite topics of research activities of Rome “La Sapienza” Expedition to Palestine & Transjordan, the Institution which organized the International Workshop “Byblos and Jericho in the Early Bronze I: social dynamics and cultural interactions”, held in Rome on March 6th 2007.

The Workshop was deemed useful for investigating a crucial period in the history of the Levant: that immediately preceding the advent of urbanisation, when a series of stimuli and reactions activated dynamics favouring the gradual development of a proto-urban society, eventually leading to the rise of the early Levantine urban culture. The emblematic cases of Byblos and Jericho, in spite of their different geo-morphological and historical settings, shared many cultural aspects fully appreciable in the archaeological record: from the spatial organization of the villages to domestic and public architecture, pottery, lithics and to the centralization, transformation and exchange of valuable raw materials; all phenomena which describe two extraordinarily flourishing centres of ancient Levant.

The archaeological phases anticipating the dawn of urbanization in the two sites show a number of similarities and several meaningful differences, which were thought to deserve a further investigation in the light of recent research, i.e. the publication of EB I layers at Tell es-Sultan¹, and a renewed study of the so-called “Énéolithique” necropolis at Byblos, as well as the reappraisal, both by the General Directorate of Antiquities of Lebanon and by the Department of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage of the Palestinian National Authority, of field research and site protection, starting from an overall sampling of clay sources all around the Byblos promontory (see A. Seif in this volume), and from the implementation of the Jericho Oasis Archaeological Park².

The Workshop was organized into three sections: the first one, after a general and extremely necessary - and hopefully satisfactory - attempt of stratigraphic correlation between the two sites, takes into consideration the spatial organisation and the major architectural features of the two pre- and proto-urban villages of Byblos and Jericho (by L. Nigro)\(^3\), and points out the central propulsive role played by the spring and the related sacred areas in both sites (by M. Sala).

The second section examines the apparently different funerary customs in Byblos and Jericho, sites which yielded two of the hugest necropolises of the ancient Near East, with new data from recent studies on the jar-burials excavated by M. Dunand at Byblos (by G. Artin), and a reappraisal of the EB I tombs in the *plateau* flanking Tell es-Sultan, in the light of recent publication of John Garstang's excavations (by A. Polcaro). The analysis of pottery assemblages from the jar-burials of Byblos and from clay samples taken all around this site provide enlightening insights into the environment and the resources which allowed the fishermen's village of Jbail to successfully grow and became a town at the end of the Early Bronze I (by A. Seif).

The third section, with the paper by F. Pinnock, gives a glance at the final outcome of the urbanization process, comparing the urban layout of Byblos and Ebla in the 3rd millennium BC, two major sites of Syria-Palestine, which were ideologically and physically centred on large sanctuaries and on the fundamental relationship between the city-temple and the royal palace.

A number of issues were highlighted in the Workshop, from the one side stressing the favourable opportunity offered by the two examined sites, which both can illustrate the whole parabola of pre- and proto-urban cultural developments in the Levant from the Neolithic to the Early Bronze Age; from the other side, outlining the various local specificities of cultural processes and archaeological features at Byblos and Jericho, two major Levantine proto-urban centres arisen aside a spring.

\(^3\) At both Byblos and Jericho, it is possible to distinguish the early pre-urban phase of the beginning of the Early Bronze I (Early Bronze IA) with the establishment of two rural villages, and the following distinctive stratigraphic phase of the Proto-Urban Period (Early Bronze IB), with a general regularization of the layout of the villages marked by the addition of terrace-walls and boundary-walls, and neater demarcations of the domestic compounds, as it will be definitively accomplished in the fortified town of the beginning of the III millennium BC.
Acknowledgments

The Workshop “Byblos and Jericho in the Early Bronze I: social dynamics and cultural interactions” would not have been held without the support of Rome “La Sapienza” University, and, especially, of its Vice-Rector, Prof. Paolo Matthiae, who also made available the conference venue; to Him his addressed my deepest thank.

The Department of Historical, Archaeological and Anthropological Sciences of Antiquities supported the event, by hosting the foreign scholars; our thank is, thus, addressed to the Director, Prof. Gilda Bartoloni, and to all of the personnel involved.

A special thank is due to Dr Frédéric Husseini, General Director of Antiquities of Lebanon, who, in a very difficult situation, assured the Directorate participation in the conference at the highest scientific level.

The Department of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage of the Palestinian National Authority also deserves our thank and admiration for the enduring effort of protecting Tell es-Sultan in these years of terrible threaten to the Palestinian Cultural Heritage.

Illustrations and photos from Garstang’s Archives in London are published thanks to the courtesy of Palestine Exploration Fund; while those from M. Dunand’s excavations in Byblos are from the Fonds Dunand in Geneva.

The Workshop has been a further example of how complex and intense were cultural interconnections and exchanges between the different regions of the Levant, an area which, at the level of cultural phenomena, exhibited in pre-classical antiquity a great deal of unity and an overall coherence of developments (as it is, for instance, exemplified by the early relationships with Egypt of Byblos and Jericho).

In conclusion, it is appropriate to dedicate this book to the Lebanese and Palestinian people, who are still facing difficult challenges, hoping that culture and archaeology will be always a field of common dialogue and growth between the countries of the Mediterranean.

Rome, 8th December 2007

Lorenzo Nigro
ASIDE THE SPRING: BYBLOS AND JERICHO FROM VILLAGE TO TOWN IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 4TH MILLENNIUM BC

Lorenzo Nigro

1. Introduction

Early Bronze Age I is a crucial period in the history of Levant, witnessing the settlement of new human groups and the formation of social entities expression of a new culture\(^1\), which will mark the definitive establishment of sedentary agricultural communities, and will set the bases for the successive rise of the earliest urban societies (fig. 1)\(^2\).

In this period the two sites of Byblos (Jbail) in Lebanon and Jericho (Tell es-Sultan) in Palestine show a somewhat similar growth, during what may be called an incipient urban phase of progressive transformation and cultural flourishing, with several similar cultural elements deserving further investigation. In spite of a sometimes puzzling archaeological periodization\(^3\), and of tricky terminological correlations (tab. 1)\(^4\), a comparison of material and cultural developments of the two sites allows to highlight some relevant comparable phenomena, which may help in focusing shared socio-cultural aspects typical of the whole Southern Levant in the second half of the 4\(^{th}\) millennium BC.

Henceforth, a dialectic parallelism between the two centres in this period will be attempted throughout the examination of threefold archaeological evidence: stratigraphy, architecture and material culture\(^5\).

\(^1\) Rome “La Sapienza” University.


\(^3\) Recent excavations in coastal sites of Syria-Palestine from Tell Sianu in Syria (Bounni - al-Maqdissi 1998, 257-261), to Sidon (Doumet-Serhal 2006, 11-17), Beirut (Badre 1997, 12-22) and Tell Arqa (Thalmann 2006, 17-32, 215-223) in Lebanon, have clearly shown that the rise of urbanism was a widespread phenomenon involving the whole Levant in the 3\(^{rd}\) millennium BC.

\(^4\) That is true, in particular, for the EB I periodization in Palestine, due to the contemporary presence in this region of different pottery horizons – variably associated with socio-cultural groups – of which a reliable correlation is still to be achieved (Nigro 2005, note 2, tab. 1).

\(^5\) Especially in Byblos, where the periodization of the site proposed by its excavator (Dunand 1950) adopted a sequence and a terminology independent of the ones elaborated for the contemporary sites of both Syria and Palestine (see tab. 1).

\(^5\) A first assessment to this matter was offered by A. Ben-Tor (Ben-Tor 1989).
Fig. 1 - Early Bronze I major sites in Southern Levant.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Byblos</th>
<th>Jericho</th>
<th>Palestine</th>
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<td><strong>Phases</strong></td>
<td>Dunand’s Phases⁷</td>
<td>Phases⁸</td>
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<td>(Sultan IIc)</td>
<td>Late Chalcolithic</td>
<td>3800 - 3500/3400 BC</td>
<td>Pre-dynastic Period (Naqada I)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Énéolithique Récent</strong></td>
<td>Installation IIB</td>
<td>Sultan IIIa1</td>
<td>EB IA</td>
<td>3500/3400 - 3200 BC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Proto-Urban Period</strong></td>
<td>Installation III</td>
<td>Sultan IIIa2</td>
<td>EB IB</td>
<td>3200 - 3000 BC</td>
<td>Proto-dynastic Period (Naqada IIIA-B; 0-I dynasties)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EB I-II</strong></td>
<td>Installations IV-V</td>
<td>Sultan IIIb</td>
<td>EB II</td>
<td>3000 - 2700 BC</td>
<td>I-II dynasties (Naqada IIIIC-D)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tab. 1** - Archaeological comparative periodization of Byblos and Jericho during the 4th and the beginning of the 3rd millennium BC⁹.

**Fig. 2** - General view of the site of Byblos (Jbail) from the top of the Crusaders’ castle towards the sea, from north (2006).

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⁷ Dunand 1950.
⁸ According to the updated periodization of the recent Italian-Palestinian Expedition at Tell es-Sultan/ancient Jericho (Marchetti - Nigro eds. 1998, 13-14; Nigro 2006a, tab. 1).
⁹ For a general chronological reassessment of the *Néolithique* and *Énéolithique* Periods at Byblos in the Southern Levantine context see also Garfinkel 2004.
2. Environmental setting: the Neolithic and Chalcolithic premises

The different geo-morphological environments of the two sites, Byblos on a coastal promontory overlooking eastern Mediterranean (fig. 2)\(^\text{10}\), Jericho at the edge of the homonymous oasis in a depression not far from the northern shore of the Dead Sea (fig. 3)\(^\text{11}\), offered important natural and economic resources for the early flourishing of their communities: at level of primary subsistence, Mount Lebanon piedmont in the first case, the Jericho Oasis in the second, allowed both intensive horticultural cultivation and animal husbandry; while the Lebanese Mountain and the Mediterranean Sea in the case of Byblos, as well as the Jordan Valley and the Wilderness of Judah in the case of Jericho, provided fishes and wild animals (ibex, gazelle, wild boar)\(^\text{12}\) to be integrated in the diet of the local populations. Subsistence was, thus, made possible by natural resources well beyond the needs of the Gublian and Jerichoan inhabitants. This presumably protected both centres from dramatic crisis of natural origin, such as dearth, famine and epidemic.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{Fig3.jpg}
\caption{General view of the site of Tell es-Sultan/ancient Jericho in the homonymous oasis, from north-west (2000).}
\end{figure}

\(^\text{10}\) On the topography of Byblos see Dunand 1973a, 1-7; Saghieh 1983, x; Margueron 1994, 13-14.

\(^\text{11}\) Nigro 2005, 4-6.

\(^\text{12}\) The gazelle continued to remain a major component of the diet at Jericho during the entire Bronze Age (Clutton-Brock 1979).
These favourable environmental niches were at the basis of the earliest *floruit* of both sites during the Neolithic period, when Byblos and Jericho were characterised by a prominent occupation, which includes them among the key-sites of the whole ancient Near East\(^{13}\).

As it concerns Byblos, the Neolithic settlement had an extension of at least 15-20 dunams, and it was displaced on the western and then also on the southern slope of the upper mound overlooking the seashore\(^{14}\). Stratigraphy testifies to the progressive growth of the settlement, while architecture and material culture illustrate a highly developed community, with houses finely built-up and plastered (fig. 4)\(^{15}\) and cult installations, among which various symbols (fig. 5)\(^{16}\) find appropriate comparisons with those known from Palestine, for instance at Jericho itself (fig. 6)\(^{17}\).

---

16 Jidejian 1968, 11; Dunand 1973a, 77-79, 123, pls. CX-CXII.
As it regards Jericho, the settlement was, as it is worldwide known, large and strongly fortified\(^\text{18}\), including some extra-familiar structures such as the Tower excavated in Trench I with the related walls (fig. 7)\(^\text{19}\), and hosted houses very well-refined with lime plaster\(^\text{20}\). A further characteristic was the cult of ancestors, testified to by the modelled and plastered skulls, buried under the floor of the houses\(^\text{21}\).

Fishing and hunting were basic activities of the Byblos and Jericho Neolithic economy, sustaining the earliest steps of agriculture to become the main source of subsistence.

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\(^{18}\) Kenyon 1957, 51-76.

\(^{19}\) Kenyon 1981, 18-45, pls.4-13, 15-16, 19-20, 23, 26, 203-212.


\(^{21}\) Garstang - Garstang 1948, pl. IX,b; Kenyon 1957, 60-64; 1981, pls. 163b, 166-167a, 170b-171.
In spite of their somewhat amazing growth during the Neolithic Period, when both settlements expanded and extended their dimensions and prosperity, they were not able to fill the gap towards a further stage of social complexity and economic organization in the following Chalcolithic Period. The post-Neolithic horizon in both centres shows many aspects of interest: a new model of agricultural society begins to develop, less structured but capable of quality improvements, above all in the metalwork and craftsmanship productions.

Nonetheless, the Chalcolithic occupation marks a further step in the historical development of Byblos and Jericho, even though with different intensity, since Byblos shows a prominent cultural horizon (Dunand’s “Énéolithique Ancien”), characterized by the appearance of curvilinear architecture (fig. 8), adults jar-burials, and the introduction of copper items\(^{22}\), while Tell es-Sultan was not at that time the main settlement in the oasis, and thus provided only sparse remains of this phase (Sultan IIc)\(^{23}\).

\(^{22}\) Four copper hooks were found respectively in Tombs T.1380 and T.1669; another one has been retrieved outside tombs (Dunand 1973a, 170, 184, 186, 207-108, fig. 135).

\(^{23}\) A cornet base and a churn were found by K.M. Kenyon in Trench I (Holland 1987, 22), a flint hammer and a fan scraper were retrieved by the Italian-Palestinian Expedition in Area F (Nigro 2005, 120, note 4, 198, note 1). In this
Also the end of Chalcolithic is neatly different in the two sites: at Byblos the shift to an Early Bronze I horizon occurred in a stream of strong continuity (due to this continuity it was called “Énéolithique Récent”)\textsuperscript{24}, while in Jericho, EB I (Sultan IIIa) groups clearly represent newcomers settling the tell anew\textsuperscript{25}.

\textsuperscript{24} Ben-Tor 1989, 50.

\textsuperscript{25} Kenyon 1957, 95-102.

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{superimpositions.png}
\caption{Superimpositions of Néolithique Récent, Énéolithique Ancien and Énéolithique Récent buildings at Byblos (after Dunand 1973a, pl. I).}
\end{figure}

phase the main settlement in the Jericho Oasis was possibly represented by Tell el-Mafjar (Taha \textit{et al.} 2004; Anfinset 2006).
3. Raw material centralization and exchange control at the mid of the 4th millennium BC

As we move to the second half of the 4th millennium BC, what made possible further decisive cultural achievements was the capability of both centres in gathering and controlling specific raw materials, which were going to become fundamental in the proto-urban economic system of exchange. Byblos and Jericho overcame the limits of a simply husbandry and agriculturally based village economy, including the control and exchange of precious stuff into their economic systems.

In the case of Jericho, these materials were mainly salt, sulphur and bitumen, easily available on the nearby shores of the Dead Sea, and, perhaps indirectly, copper (fig. 9), which was presumably already extracted in the Wadi Feynan (‘Arabah)\(^{26}\), and possibly distributed through Jericho itself. Actually, each of these stuff had its own area of distribution, but an analysis of cantonal and interregional diffusion is beyond the goal of this paper. At any rate, Jericho stands as a key point of distribution towards the north, the west and the east, as it was at a pivotal crossroad of the Palestinian exchange network.

![Fig. 9 - EB I copper spear-head from Megiddo/Tell el-Mutesellim (after Loud 1948, pl. 283:1).](image)

As it regards Byblos, one has to surmise the beginning of systematic cutting and shipping of cedar timber, as well as the successive export of olive oil and wine, which in this period began to be produced in the Lebanese inland\(^{27}\). These products are very difficult to be detected in the archaeological record, so that their presence was inferred basically from findings in the Pre- and Proto-Dynastic Necropolis of Egypt\(^{28}\), namely at

\(^{26}\) Levy 2007, 27-46.

\(^{27}\) Dunand 1973b, 20; Wengrow 2006, 137-140.

\(^{28}\) Brunton 1927, 41, 62-63; Prag 1986, 71-72.
Saqqara and Abydos\textsuperscript{29}. The discovery of boat-burials made of cedar timber in the Proto-Dynastic necropolis of Umm el-Qaab in 1991 (fig. 10)\textsuperscript{30} gives a further support to this hypothesis, pointing to strong and developed exchanges between the Levantine centre and Egypt in this period\textsuperscript{31}.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{boat-burials.png}
\caption{Boat-burials made of cedar timber discovered in the Proto-Dynastic necropolis of Umm el-Qaab (Abydos).}
\end{figure}

### 3.1. Seals and seal impressions

The beginning of goods centralization and exchange under an proto-institutional control during the proto-urban stages at Byblos and Jericho is meaningfully illustrated by the stamp seals and seal impressions retrieved by M. Dunand in the Eneolithic stages at Byblos and by K. M. Kenyon at Jericho (fig. 11). Byblos especially yielded a series of seals in clay, stone and bone/ivory, showing geometric and animalistic motives\textsuperscript{32}, hinting at proto-administrative practices, as attested to in several other proto-urban areas of the Ancient Near East in the same period\textsuperscript{33}. Along with stamp seals, also some cylinder seals were found in Byblos\textsuperscript{34} and attributed to the latest stage of the Énéolithique Récent, thus extraordinarily demonstrating

\textsuperscript{29} Emery 1949; 1954; 1958; Petrie 1900; 1901; 1902; 1903; Dreyer \textit{et al.} 1998; 2000; 2003; 2006; O’Connor 1989; Wengrow 2006, 231-258.

\textsuperscript{30} O’Connor 1991; Wengrow 2006, 249-250, fig. 10.13.

\textsuperscript{31} On the beginning of exchanges between Egypt and Byblos see Kantor 1942, 196-199, 201; Ward 1963, 5-7, 18-19; Davies 1981; Prag 1986, 59-60, 65-73.

\textsuperscript{32} Dunand 1945, 23-58, pls. II-VI; 1973a, 326-329, figs. 200-204, pl. CLXVIII. A detailed analysis of these seals and seal impressions is in Mazzoni 1992, 85-86, pls. XXVI-XVIII.


\textsuperscript{34} Dunand 1973a, 328, fig. 203.
Aside the spring: Byblos and Jericho from village to town

the transition in this phase to the urban stage\textsuperscript{35}, when cylinder seals became in Southern Levant a common mean of control and identification of items and products\textsuperscript{36}. As it regards Jericho, a grill-like pattern stamp seal impression similar to the stamp seals of Byblos\textsuperscript{37} has been found at Jericho by K.M. Kenyon on an EB IA jar sherd from Trench III\textsuperscript{38} (fig. 11).

![Fig. 11 - EB I stamp seals and seal impressions from Byblos (after Dunand 1973a, figs. 200-202, 204, pl. CLXVIII), and Jericho (Kenyon - Holland 1983, fig. 78:16).](image)

4. Aside the spring: the basic value of fresh water

Along with the availability of important raw materials, which in both sites stimulated territorial control and goods exchange on long-distance routes, there is another basic – and apparently obvious – resource similar in Byblos and Jericho. It is fresh water, i.e. the spring, which in both sites represents physically and symbolically the propulsive centre of the village gradually turning into a town. Byblos and Jericho developed respectively around and aside a main water-source, which either in a rocky promontory facing the sea\textsuperscript{39} or in a desert depression played a never overestimated role.

\textsuperscript{35} Mazzoni 1992, 83.
\textsuperscript{37} Dunand 1973a, 326-327, figs. 200 (n. 20004), 201 (n. 21352).
\textsuperscript{38} Kenyon - Holland 1983, 193, fig. 78:16.
\textsuperscript{39} Dunand 1973a, 3-4.
The transformation of both springs into regulated and built-up structures (respectively a well⁴⁰ – fig. 12 – and a kind of fountain – fig. 13) begins in the Early Bronze Age, when the two rural villages start to be transformed into towns. This also suggests a regulation of irrigation of the oasis at Jericho (and the establishment of stably cultivable land), and the creation of water reservoirs to be exploited by seamen for ships restocking at Byblos. In the Early Bronze Age I, fresh water started, thus, to be exploited also for extra-familiar socio-economic enterprises, suggesting the existence of a central ruling institution.

⁴⁰ Margueron 1994, 18-19.
5. The two necropolises: two different funerary customs

Both Byblos and Jericho have provided a large amount of data on the funerary customs of their inhabitants through their necropolises. The two huge necropolises are, in fact, the second macroscopic common element between Byblos and Jericho. They exhibit distinguished burial customs, which neatly define the two EB IA communities.

From the point of view of spatial organization, there is a noticeable difference between the two sites, illustrated by the location of each own necropolis: inside the dwell area – though not preferably underneath the houses – at Byblos (fig. 14), and in the limestone plateau north and west of Tell es-Sultan, well outside the site, at Jericho (fig. 15). This may reflect a tradition which in Byblos descends from the Neolithic and Chalcolithic Periods, while in Jericho is the result of the rather rapid establishment of the necropolis, where multiple burials are adopted in shaft tombs instead of predominantly individual jar-burials of Byblos, pointing at a funerary ideology determined by the strong familiar links of an agricultural community. In this respect, the differences in funerary customs (individual versus multiple burials) may be also explained looking at the different socio-economic foundations of the two communities: one sea-oriented, the other concentrated in the oasis cultivation; both, however, firmly rooted into the ideology of an early agriculture-based society, opened to the new enterprise represented by long-distance trade through the sea and the desert respectively.

Fig. 14 - Jar-burials in the Énéolithique settlement at Byblos (after Dunand 1973a, pl. J,a).

41 Artin 2005; and also in this volume.
In any case, the two necropolises, as well as the two settlements themselves, allow to follow the progressive cultural developments of the two local communities during the second half of the 4th millennium BC.

6. Tell es-Sultan/Jericho in the Early Bronze I

The proto-urban settlement of Jericho (fig. 16) was explored by the two British expeditions respectively directed by John Garstang (1930-1936) and Dame Kathleen M. Kenyon (1950-1958); a general reassessment of available data, including previously unpublished data from Garstang’s last season (1936), was put forward by the present author\(^{42}\), with an overall reconstruction of stratigraphy and plans of the village.

6.1. The village of Tell es-Sultan in the Early Bronze IA (Sultan IIIa1) and the speedy growth of a rural community

The earliest EB I village at Tell es-Sultan (Sultan IIIa1, 3300-3200 BC) is one of the - rare - perspicuous illustration of what is usually called “sedentarization”. A group of new settlers\(^{43}\) erected over the impressive

\(^{42}\) Nigro 2005.

\(^{43}\) The arrival of new groups of settlers has been surmised also on the basis of the analyses of the tombs (Kenyon 1957, 95-102; 1979, 66-83; Nigro 2005, 199).
remains of the Neolithic settlement their dwellings, consisting of a series of juxtaposed circular huts (fig. 17) built-up in mud-bricks laid upon foundations of undressed stones and slabs⁴⁴, with sunken floor and a possible straw or adobe dome (fig. 18)⁴⁵, usually surrounded by installations (such as circular silos and stone platforms) and frequently - if not always - grouped in couples (fig. 19). Each house had its own compound with storage facilities and food production devices, which hint at a copious agricultural production.

Fig. 16 - J. Garstang’s excavations in the EB I village on the northern plateau at Tell es-Sultan/ancient Jericho (PEF).

The main topographic feature of the village was a terrace-wall regulating the distribution of houses on different terraces on the eastern slope of the tell⁴⁶, overlooking the spring of ‘Ain es-Sultan, while a distinctive intervention was, towards the end of the phase, the outlining of a religious compound, were a bent-axis shrine was erected⁴⁷.

⁴⁴ Garstang et al. 1935, 153, pl. Ll,a; Garstang - Garstang 1948, 81; Nigro 2005, 23-32, figs. 3.15-3.17, plan II.
⁴⁵ As still in use nowadays in northern Syria (fig. 18).
⁴⁶ Nigro 2005, 18, 23-25, fig. 3.14.
⁴⁷ Nigro 2005, 33-34; Sala 2005b; 2007, 71-79, pl. 5.
Fig. 17 - Plan of Sultan IIIa1 (EB IA) rural village on the northern plateau at Tell es-Sultan.

Fig. 18 - Houses with adobe dome in northern Syria, nowadays.

Fig. 19 - The western sector of Sultan IIIa1 (EB IA) village excavated by J. Garstang at Tell es-Sultan, with the circular Houses 173 and 177, and the apsidal House 175 (PEF).
The ceramic inventory of this initial EB phase at Jericho is characterized by hemispherical bowls and bowls with straight sides, juglets and small jars with lug handles, and storage jars with everted rim (fig. 20). In the earliest layers the commonest decoration is incised, notched or punctuated (the latter is also a distinguished feature of the Southern Transjordanian tradition, visible, for example, in the Bab edh-Dhra’ pottery inventory), while in a more advanced phase, it is noteworthy the first appearance of Line-Painted Ware, a specialized production which in the following proto-urban phase will become a distinctive indicator (fig. 21). Large containers such as storage jars and vats are conversely characterized by a white or creamy wash and a wavy band slip. Finally, the attestation of Egyptianizing shapes, such as the so-called “lotus vase” in the nearby necropolis (fig. 39), also testifies to the early contacts with Egypt.

Fig. 20 - Ceramic inventory of Sultan IIIa1 (EB IA) village.

48 For an illustration of EB I pottery at Tell es-Sultan/Jericho see Sala 2005a.
51 Kenyon 1960, fig. 17:23 (Tomb A114); 1965, fig. 12:6 (Tomb K1); Sala 2005a, 177-178.
6.2. From rural village to incipient urban community: Jericho in the Early Bronze IB (Sultan IIIa2)

A major stratigraphic and structural change marks at Jericho the passage to Sultan IIIa2 Period, the Early Bronze IB (3200-3000 BC): the original rural village with circular huts displaced on various terraces without a clear order undergoes a noticeable regularization, characterized by the appearance of rectangular houses, sometimes with rounded corners, and of apsidal buildings, probably devoted to a some kind of community or at least extra-familiar function. Also the inner organization of the village shows the starting of a process of urbanization: a neater partition into domestic compounds of rectangular or trapezoidal shape and the establishment of a street running south-west/north-east, which will remain in use during the whole Early Bronze Age (fig. 22). The sacred compound is also reconstructed with the addition of an ancillary building (or shrine), which gives the religious complex the shape of a twin temple, as it happens in other EB Palestinian sites.

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52 Nigro 2005, 35-41, 115-119, plan III.
54 Nigro 2005, 36.
55 Nigro 2005, 35, fig. 3.30, plan III.
56 Such as the sacred precinct of Tell el-Mutesellim, stratum XIX/level J-3 (Loud 1948, 61, fig. 390; Finkelstein - Ussishkin 2000, 38-52, fig. 3.11; Sala 2007, 56-71).
The increasing social complexity at EB IB Jericho is also testified to by the retrieval of status-symbols, such as limestone and calcite mace-heads (fig. 23), both on the site and in the necropolis\textsuperscript{57}, and by the typological diversification of pottery assemblages, again both on the tell and in the contemporary tombs of the necropolis (fig. 24)\textsuperscript{58}. Such important finds also hint at a gradual but substantial transformation of the site economic capability, which attests to its political status as a centre at a pivotal crossroad of the Early Bronze IB exchange routes, on the shore of the Dead Sea in the Southern Jordan Valley.

\textsuperscript{57} Sellin - Watzinger 1913, figs. 109-110; Garstang 1932, pl. VII:5 (Tomb A); Holland 1983, 808-810, fig. 365:1-2, 6; Nigro 2005, 200, fig. 3.51.

\textsuperscript{58} Namely, in the increasing diffusion of some specialized productions, such as Line-Painted and Red Slip Wares (Kenyon 1960, 4-8, 50-51, fig. 22; Kenyon 1965, 4-6, 21-27, figs. 7-10; Sala 2005a, 171-175).
Fig. 23 - A. Mace-head from Tomb A, layer 3 (after Garstang 1932, pl. VII:5); B-C. Mace-heads from the tell (after Sellin - Watzinger 1913, figs. 109-110); D. Mace-head from Sultan IIIa1 village (after Garstang et al. 1936, pl. XXXVI:25); E. Mace-head from Site M (after Kenyon - Holland 1983, fig. 365:2).

Fig. 24 - Red-Burnished and Line-Painted Wares vessels and spouted jar from Sultan IIIa2 (EB IB) village.

If one looks now at the earliest Early Bronze Age phases at Byblos, they are perhaps appreciable in a less clear stratigraphic displacement. After the "Installation Néolithique" (Installation I), M. Dunand singled out the so-called "Énéolithique", which – using Syro-Palestinian terminology – represents a local Chalcolithic horizon ("Énéolithique Ancien"), while the following phase, named "Énéolithique Récent", nearly corresponds to Palestinian Early Bronze IA (3400-3200 BC). A further stage, which truly marks the passage to a proto-urban phase, is that of Installation III, called "Proto-Urbain" (a term presumably due to the deep influx of the definition coined by K.M. Kenyon at Jericho itself), roughly corresponding to Palestinian Early Bronze IB (see tab. 1).

In spite of its intrinsic complexity, Dunand's periodization points out what seems a main feature of Byblos development between the Neolithic and the Early Bronze Age: it does exhibit a high degree of cultural continuity, since the Early Bronze I seems to develop directly from the previous Chalcolithic cultural stage; a continuity which characterizes the whole Levantine coast also in the following periods, and that may be related to environmental local specificities. This makes a neat difference with Palestine, where Chalcolithic and Early Bronze I horizons show a greater degree of discontinuity. Nevertheless, Dunand stressed the difference existing between the Énéolithique and the following Proto-Urbain Installation, characterized by a regular displacement of rectangular houses, and, especially, by the end of the custom of jar-burials inside the village.

7.1. Byblos in the Early Bronze IA: the Installation "Énéolithique Récent"

As stated above, Early Bronze IA in Byblos may be confidently identified with the Installation called "Énéolithique Récent" by M. Dunand. It is very difficult to distinguish the remains belonging to this early rural village among the many overlapping structures excavated by Dunand; it is, however, possible to delimit the dwell area during this stage, and to single out some relevant houses. EB IA installations were scattered over the northern upper mound, around the central depression and towards the

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60 Dunand 1950, 590-593; 1973a, fig. 146; 1973b; 18-20, 55.
south-west down to the seashore (fig. 25)\textsuperscript{61}, which at the time was used for landing the boats of the fishers and of some sailor.

\textbf{Fig. 25 - Énéolithique Récent (EB IA) Installation on the south-western slope of the upper mound at Byblos overlooking the seashore, from south-east (2006).}

Architecture and spatial organization of the village
At any extent, it seems remarkable the presence of circular huts of around 4-6 m of diameter (fig. 26), partly sunk into the preceding layers (and this perhaps has sometimes contributed to stratigraphic confusion)\textsuperscript{62} and sometimes grouped in couples, for many respects similar to those of the Sultan IIIa1 rural village\textsuperscript{63}. Oval-shaped houses are also present\textsuperscript{64}, stressing the preference in this stage for curvilinear architecture (fig. 27)\textsuperscript{65}. As noticed in Jericho, circular dwellings and curvilinear architecture are usually typical of new settled areas, as they need no pre-existing constrains. In this case, the slope south of the spring was regularized by means of one or two terrace-walls before re-occupying it. Underneath the floors of free spaces

\textsuperscript{61} Dunand 1950, 16; 1973a, 213-215, 219-220.
\textsuperscript{63} Nigro 2005, 23-32; see above § 6.1., figs. 16-19.
\textsuperscript{64} Oval-shaped houses are exemplarily attested to in the contemporary Lebanese village of Dakerman, south of Sidon (Saidah 1979, 31-38, figs. 2-13).
\textsuperscript{65} For a general overview on the curvilinear architecture in the EB I Southern Levant see Braun 1989; Ben-Tor 1992, 60-62; Enea 1996; up to the recent discovery of the EB IA village of Sharaya in the Leja region in Southern Syria: Nicolle - al-Maqdissi 2006.
between these circular and oval dwellings, jar-burials were commonly interred (fig. 14)\(^{66}\), according to a funerary custom which is spread all over the Lebanese coast in the 4\(^{th}\) millennium BC, as it is shown also by Dakerman, the EB IA village south of Sidon, where burying dead in jars (\textit{pithoi}) scattered among the houses of the living people is also attested to\(^{67}\), though in a smaller figure in respect of Byblos.

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\(^{67}\) Saidah 1979, 42, figs. 14-15.
EB IA material culture: pottery and stone tools
The ceramic horizon of this stage (Dunand’s “Énéolithique Récent”) is very well illustrated by numerous finds, mainly retrieved in the tombs\textsuperscript{68}. Pottery shapes inventory can be quite easily compared with the classic EB I Palestinian tradition, with bowls, sometimes with one handle, and high-looped cups, two-handled jars and small globular jars, bottles and jugs with tall neck, twin-vessels and jars with everted rim (figs. 28-29).

\textsuperscript{68} Dunand 1937-1939, pls. CLXXXIX-CC; 1950, 588-589; 1973a, 268-301, figs. 149-177, pls. CXLVIII-CLI; 1973b, 17-18.
Pedestal vessels\(^69\), instead, remain a classical coastal type in the Bronze Age, and are seldom present in Palestine. Jugs and jars are usually decorated by punctuated or stroke bands on the neck and on the shoulders, as a typical local feature, which, however, occurs as stated above in several regional ceramic groups, such as those of Jericho itself\(^70\), Bab edh-Dhra' and of other southern Transjordanian sites\(^71\).

Specially relevant seems the high frequency of large \textit{pithoi}, which points, as at Jericho\(^72\), to a sharply increasing agricultural production and storage\(^73\). Actually, a large number of these \textit{pithoi} were expressly made for

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\(^69\) Dunand 1937-1939, pls. CXVII-CXCI; 1973a, 300, figs. 158-159, 161.


\(^72\) Nigro 2005, 37, fig. 3.33, pls. 6-7.

\(^73\) Dunand 1973b, 18.
funerary utilization, thus letting Dunand put forward the interpretation which linked an agriculturally based ideology of rebirth with seeds conservation and storage. Lithics are largely developed in this period, and include: denticulate blades and Canaanean blades; awls, scrapers and chisels; arrow-heads and daggers. As it regards the stone tools, mortars of various typologies and counterweights are attested to, as well as some spindle whorls, belonged to domestic looms. Worked bones were also part of the domestic inventory of EB I Byblos, usually used as kohl sticks, palettes, but also for personal ornaments. In some cases pierced bones may be interpreted as ritual objects, perhaps music instruments like the so-called “flutes” of Jericho.

The transformation of the village towards the end of “Énéolithique Récent” In an advanced phase of the same Installation, the erection of the Enceinte Sacrée with its temenos and the flanking stone-paved street is a major transformation, accompanied by a sensible growth of the village, which probably causes that rectangular houses, usually with rounded corners, take the place of round huts, and, exactly as already observed at Jericho, a few apsidal buildings also appear, suggesting a more specific function for such structures (figs. 30-31).

Architecture is now characterized by a more accurate use of unworked stones of medium and small size, also with the employ of a large number of river-smoothed pebbles, also in floors (fig. 32). Limestone mortars embedded into floors (fig. 33), raised platforms, silos, slab-paved surfaces (figs. 34-35) are common devices in this phase, when a flourishing agriculture household production is the solid basis of Byblos subsistence economy. Almost identical devices are attested to in contemporary Tell es-Sultan houses. In both sites, the following step will be the gradual

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74 This interpretation - which became classic in pre-historical reconstructions - is illustrated by Dunand (Dunand 1973a, 264-265) and by other scholars basing upon his work (Cauvin 1998, 45).
75 Dunand 1973a, 301-304, figs. 178-180.
76 Dunand 1973a, 266, pls. CXXXIV.
77 Dunand 1973a, 313-315, pl. CLXI.
78 Dunand 1973a, 308-311, fig. 184, pls. CLVII-CLIX.
79 Dunand 1973a, pl. CLIX (ns. 20782, 26756); Kenyon 1960, 48; 1965, 13, fig. 5:1-7.
82 Dunand 1973a, 213-214, fig. 139; 1973b, 17.
83 Dunand 1973a, 266-267, pls. CXXXII-CXXXIV.
centralization of such production activities in expressly devoted spaces and, even, buildings, as well as the creation of extra-familiar storage devices.

Fig. 30 - Rectangular houses with rounded corners, apsidal buildings and boundary-walls of the EB IA settlement at Byblos in the final stage of the Énéolithique Récent (after Dunand 1973a, fig. 139).
Fig. 31 - Western sector of the Énéolithique Récent installation at Byblos (after Dunand 1973a, pl. J,a).
Fig. 32 - Structures of the final stage of the Énéolithique Récent settlement at Byblos (after Dunand 1973a, pl. CXIII:1).

Fig. 33 - Limestone mortar embedded into the floor (after Dunand 1973a, pl. CXXXI:7).

Fig. 34 - Slab-paved silos (after Dunand 1973a, pl. CXXXI:1).
Fig. 35 - Rectangular house with rounded corners, raised platforms, silos and slab-paved surfaces, in the Énéolithique Récent settlement at Byblos (after Dunand 1973a, fig. 141).

Fig. 36 - Boundary-wall on the south-western slope of the upper mound in the Énéolithique Récent settlement at Byblos (2006).
At Byblos, as in Jericho, one major indicator of a growing social complexity is the inner spatial organization of the settlement, subdivided both by boundary-walls (fig. 36) and terrace-walls. What, of course, deserves a special mention is the outlining of the sacred compound just aside the spring at the end of this period, delimited by a solid temenos. Again as in Jericho, the establishment of a main sanctuary in the village took place when an overall spatial organization of the settled area was accomplished, towards the end of the Early Bronze IA (around 3300 BC).

The first appearance of copper in Byblos
The introduction of copper was a distinguished innovation of the productive and exchange system during the 4th millennium in the Levant, which would have deeply influenced the successive development of the proto-urban economy. Installation IIB at Byblos is the earliest in which copper items appear, mainly in jar-burials, but also in the houses. They are usually daggers and hooks (fig. 37), pointing both at symbolic and practical purposes. The provenance of the metal is unknown, even though Cyprus may be indicated as a possible source, and, at any rate, the first appearance of such metal testify to a further growth of Byblos socio-economic capabilities, indicating the establishment of regular exchange of local goods for copper. The question of which were these local goods is still open.

Fig. 37 - Copper hooks and daggers from the Énéolithique Récent settlement at Byblos (after Dunand 1973a, pl. CLX).

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86 See above note 80.
87 Shalev 1994; Nigro 2003.
88 Dunand 1973b, 17.
89 Dunand 1937-1939, pl. CLXXXIX; 1973a, 311-313, fig. 186, pl. CLX.
Together with cedar timber, which, as stated above, is attested to in Egypt, one may surmise the production of olive oil and also transformed fish, even though the latter industries are not clearly discernible in the archaeological record. Well-fired ("Metallic") storage jars and *pithoi* clearly used for olive oil are, in fact, attested to only from the following period (Early Bronze IIA, 3000-2800 BC)\(^90\).

**Egyptianizing status-symbols: mace-heads and palettes**

Byblos has provided a distinguished series of limestone and calcite mace-heads (fig. 38)\(^91\), fully comparable with those found in Palestine, well epitomized by the already mentioned Jericho examples\(^92\). The piriform and the globular mace-heads appear, thus, as Egyptianizing symbolic items related to rank throughout the Levant still in Early Bronze IA. At Byblos, they are attested to both in jar-burials (two specimens from Tomb 84 and one from Tomb 1402)\(^93\) as well as in the settlement\(^94\), like in Jericho\(^95\). Also stone palettes are present in the Byblos inventory, both of the elongated type (known at Jericho from a specimen retrieved by Sellin & Watzinger which possibly bears a *serekh*)\(^96\), and of the square type, known in Palestine at Jericho itself\(^97\), and in the necropolises of the Ghôr (see the specimens from Bab edh-Dhra’). The latter seems to be a perspicuous Egyptianizing funerary equipment, apparently characterizing female burials\(^99\).

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\(^90\) At Byblos (Periods KI-II; Saghieh 1983, 88-89, 108, pl. XXXIX; Engberg - Shipton 1934, 64, note 19) as well as in Palestine, where they appear in a characteristic pattern-combed Metallic Ware production, precisely from the beginning of the Early Bronze II (Greenberg - Porat 1996, 5-6, figs. 2:3-6, 3:2-5, 5-13).

\(^91\) Dunand 1973a, 304-306, figs. 181-182, pl. CLV (ns. 19332, 27360, 33669).

\(^92\) Garstang *et al.* 1936, pl. XXXVI:24-25; Garstang - Garstang 1948, 79; Kenyon 1965, fig. 5:8 (Tomb K2); Nigro 2005, 34, fig. 3.28.

\(^93\) Dunand 1973a, fig. 181 (ns. 6763, 23480).

\(^94\) Dunand 1973a, fig. 181 (ns. 24558, 28504).

\(^95\) See above p. 19, note 57.

\(^96\) Sellin - Watzinger 1913, fig. 107; Nigro 2005, 12, fig. 2.8.

\(^97\) Garstang *et al.* 1936, pl. XXXVI:26; Nigro 2005, 34, fig. 3.28.

\(^98\) Rast - Schaub 1989, 452-456, fig. 261. The type is successively known also in other sites of the Jordan Valley, such as Khirbet Kerak (Greenberg - Eisenberg 2002, 214, fig. 13.2).

\(^99\) These items, in fact, were probably used for grinding face paint (Rast - Schaub 1989, 455-456).
Egyptianizing “lotus vases” in the EB I Gublite pottery inventory
Along with these status-symbols, an Egyptianizing influx may be also detected in the ceramic production of this phase and it is well illustrated by the bowl with outflaring walls (fig. 39), traditionally called “lotus vase”\(^\text{100}\), two specimens of which have detected also in the Jericho necropolis and dated to the Early Bronze IA\(^\text{101}\).

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\(^{100}\) Dunand 1973a, fig. 151 (ns. 28235, 28143). The majority of these vessels was retrieved in the EB IB sites of Southern Palestine, such as Tell el-Khuweilfeh (Kansa - Levy 2002, 190-193, fig. 12.10:c), Tel Ma’ahaz (Amiran - van den Brink 2001, 32-35, fig. 3.2:1-6), ‘Ain Besor (Gophna 1990, 145-147, fig. 1:4), Tell el-‘Areini (Brandl 1989, fig. 12:12), and et-Tell (Marquet-Krause 1949, pl. 68:59). Moreover, in Northern Palestine “lotus vases” were recently found at Tell el-Mutesellim (Joffe 2000, 170-175; Goren 2000, 496-501; Goren - Ilan 2003), in the cachet within the monumental temple of level J-4/stratum XVIII (Finkelstein - Ussishkin - Peersmann 2006, 50-52).

\(^{101}\) See above note 51.
7.2. *Byblos in the Early Bronze IB: the Installation “Proto-Urbain”*

The progressive transformation of Byblos into a town is demonstrated by the addition of new rectangular houses in between and sometimes upon the earliest rounded structures (figs. 40-41), which characterizes the final stage of the *Énéolithique Récent* village and the following *Proto-Urbain Installation*. The latter stage shows the crystallisation of processes started in the *Énéolithique Récent*, with the gradual achievement of an urban status.

![Fig. 40 - Rectangular houses of the *Proto-Urbain* installation at Byblos, south of the spring.](image)

During the proto-urban stage, in fact, the reconfiguration of the village is completed, and it definitely turned into a town\(^\text{102}\); this event, still difficult to be recognized on the ground as well as in the excavation record, anyway,

involved some major elements such as the limits of the settlement, which included also the southern lower mound, the terraced slope of the southern side of the site, down to the sea-shore, and the harbours, which were going to be given a built-up structure\textsuperscript{103}, apt to their new commercial role\textsuperscript{104}. Domestic units of the proto-urban phase are rectangular, usually with an inner partition at two thirds of their length, and are regularly juxtaposed around central courtyards shared by different houses hosting various devices. This indicates a more accurate subdivision of building areas, as well as the individuation of the rectangular domestic unit with two pillars which will become a standard of the earliest urban installation at the beginning of the 3\textsuperscript{rd} millennium BC\textsuperscript{105}.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{fig41.png}
\caption{Apsidal building of the final stage of the Énéolithique Récent settlement at Byblos and superimposed rectangular house of the Proto-Urban Period (after Dunand 1973a, fig. 146).}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{103} Frost 2001; Stefaniuk et al. 2005.
\textsuperscript{104} Wengrow 2006, 148-150.
\textsuperscript{105} Dunand 1983, 93; Ben-Tor 1992, 62-66.
8. Conclusions: a locally experimented way to early urbanization

This necessarily synthetic comparative examination of the parallel developments of the proto-urban settlements of Byblos and Jericho during the Early Bronze I allows the following concluding observations. Similarities as well as differences between the two sites are useful for raising new questions as a mean of interpretation of the Proto-Urban (let say Early Bronze I) cultures in Southern Levant, and especially to evaluate the specificities of each formative urban phenomenon during the Early Bronze Age. I would let apart the well ascertained strong regionalism of material culture, by drawing out the common trends of development of both sites, which prepared the way to the early stage of urbanization. The original fishermen’ and peasants’ villages of Byblos and Jericho gradually developed into “incipient towns” by fixing their overall layouts, with the contemporary establishment of a centre (the spring) and some natural and built-up boundaries, and by delimitating private (familiar) and public (extra-familiar) spaces by means of terrace-walls regularizing pre-existing house-yards, and streets.

In Byblos, in the centre aside the spring, the sacred area (Enceinte Sacrée) was located, on the one hand, suggesting that was the religious institution which controlled the access to fresh-water, on the other hand, testifying to the deep religious significance and utilization of this water in the earliest Levantine cultures. A main burial field extended all around this area, including also the dead community into the spaces of the living people. Both ideologically and spatially, thus, the spring became the focus of the expanding town.

The presence of terrace-walls and boundary-walls which define the village layout, well documented both at Jericho\(^\text{106}\) and at Byblos\(^\text{107}\), moreover, attests to the coordination of public works by an emerging ruling institution.

Also the comparison of some material culture indicators suggests interesting considerations: especially pottery, architecture, and individual items promoted to status-symbols.

Architecture is striking similar in house shapes, from curvilinear to rectangular plan, especially if one considers the different building materials adopted in the two sites, mainly mud-bricks in Jericho and mainly field-stones in Byblos.

\(^{106}\) See above § 6.2.
\(^{107}\) See above pp. 26-31.
Pottery exhibits its strong regional, even cantonal, character, though in a widely shared series of broad functional types, such as hemispherical bowls and bowls with straight walls, high-looped cups and bottles, *amphoriskoi* and two-handled jars (with a particular type with upward loop handles)*\textsuperscript{108}*. Big storage jars and *pithoi*, twin-vessels and vessels with “basket” handles (figs. 20, 24, 28-29, 42)*\textsuperscript{109}*. 

![Fig. 42 - EB IA two-handed jars with upward loop handles and EB IB and small jars with round pierced lugs from Byblos and Jericho.](image)

Status-symbols, such as mace-heads and palettes*\textsuperscript{110}*, clearly indicate that at the end of the 4\textsuperscript{th} millennium BC, Byblos and Jericho were both under a strong Egyptian influence; a datum now corroborated also by the clear identification in both sites of the “lotus vase” typology*\textsuperscript{111}*. If this is not at all a surprise for Byblos, an Egyptian influence in Jericho at such an early period is quite interesting, and may possibly descend from the early Egyptian activities both in Southern Palestine, and in the Ghôr, 

\*\textsuperscript{108} For Byblos see Dunand 1973a, pl. CLI (n. 21882); for Jericho see Nigro 2006b, 20, 24, fig. 11. 
\*\textsuperscript{109} For comparisons see also Ben-Tor 1989, 46-50, figs. 2-4. 
\*\textsuperscript{110} See above p. 19, fig. 23, p. 32, fig. 38. 
\*\textsuperscript{111} See above p. 17, note 51, p. 33, note 100, fig. 39.
during the Early Bronze I\footnote{On the contacts between Egypt and Southern Palestine in the late 4th millennium BC see Harrison 1993; de Miroshedji et al. 2001; Amiran - van den Brink 2002. Egyptian presence in Southern Levant during the EB I has been recently further illustrated by the discovery of a monumental *dromos* tomb at Tell el-Khuweilfeh, apparently inspired to the Egyptian tombs of the necropolis of Helwan (Levy *et al.* 1997, 14-16, 34-35; 2002, 424-428).}. This new data may, thus, strengthen the historical view which considers the Egyptian impact one of the decisive factors in launching the proto-urban Levantine societies towards the achievement of a full urbanization. The most evident effect of the Egyptian contact seems to be the stimulation of exchange of special goods and the increase of social complexity\footnote{Esse 1989, 90-93; Harrison 1993; Levy 1995, 242-243.}. With a synthetic expression, one may state that such contact transformed the fishermen of Byblos\footnote{Jidejian 1968, 11.} into sailors, and at least some of the peasants of Jericho into merchants, within a new formula of stratified society. However, one has not to forget the role of Syria, which at Byblos as well as at Jericho, has still to be thoroughly investigated.

A precise diachronic assessment of these comparative data is not easy to achieve; however, it seems to me not decisive. We have been giving a glance to a process of cultural growth which was not necessarily chronologically simultaneous, neither symmetrical or even parallel; what appears meaningful is that this process shows comparable stages in its development and ends with the same outcome: the transformation of the village into a town.

This rapid review of data seems to indicate that the human communities at Byblos and Jericho in the second half of the 4th millennium BC eventually gave a similar response to the same endogenous and exogenous stimuli.

In this case, the contact with Proto-Dynastic Egypt should engender a comparable reaction: a rapid social stratification, with the emergence of social groups and of group-leaders; and the opening of both communities to international trades and to the issue of land and sea routes control, thus producing, in a *long-durée* perspective, the birth of two major Early Bronze Age cities of the Levant: Byblos and Jericho.
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EARLY SHRINES AT BYBLOS AND TELL ES-SULTAN/ ANCIENT JERICHO
IN THE EARLY BRONZE I (3300-3000 BC)

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1. Introduction

In an advanced phase of the Early Bronze IA, around the 3300 BC, two early shrines were erected at both Byblos and Tell es-Sultan/ancient Jericho, within the two proto-urban settlements which flourished around and aside the respective springs in the second half of the 4th millennium BC.

Both of them are among the earliest sacred buildings so far identified in the Early Bronze Age Southern Levant: at Byblos, the Enceinte Sacrée, erected at the end of the so-called Énéolithique Récent 1, represents the earliest cult compound, which would have been successively reconstructed and used across the whole Early Bronze and Middle Bronze Ages2, within a gradual reconfiguration of the late énéolithique village subdivided by boundary-walls and terrace-walls3. At Jericho, the construction of Shrine 420 in a later phase of Sultan IIIa1 Period (EB IA)4 takes place within a general regularization of the village on the northern plateau of the mound, marked, from the one hand, by the addition of a second demarcation-wall on the northern slope, from the other hand, by the insertion of secondary units and neater demarcation fences of each domestic compound5.

The two shrines were, thus, clearly erected within the framework of a first spatial reorganization of both the EB I settlements of Byblos and Jericho, and in a phase of progressive flourishing and transformation of the two communities, which set the bases for their successive development into urban centres.

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1 Dunand 1973b, 18. For an archaeological comparative periodization of Byblos and Jericho during the 4th millennium BC see Nigro in this volume, tab. 1.
3 Dunand 1973a, 215-216, 239, fig. 139, pls. J,b-c; see Nigro in this volume, pp. 26-31, 36, figs. 30-36.
4 According to the periodization proposed by the recent Italian-Palestinian Expedition to Tell es-Sultan (Marchetti - Nigro eds. 1998, 13-14; Nigro 2006a, tab. 1).
5 Nigro 2005, 33-34, plan II; Sala 2005a, 42; 2007, 35, 73-75.
2. The *Enceinte Sacrée* at Byblos: the first cult compound arisen aside the spring at the end of the 4th millennium BC

As it was recently pointed out by Maria Eugenia Aubet in the International Congress on the “Phönizisches und Punisches Städtewesen” held in Rome between 21st - 23rd February 2007, pre-classical Byblos has been primarily known for its numerous and important temples and cult places, which flourished all around the sacred well at the centre of the ancient settlement (fig. 1) from the very beginning of the Early Bronze Age, at the end of the 4th millennium BC (tab. 1).

<table>
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<th>Phase</th>
<th>Sacred Buildings</th>
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<td><strong>EB III</strong> (Installation VI)</td>
<td><em>Enceinte Sacrée</em> Baalat Gebal Temple (Chapelle Orientale) (Temple en L)</td>
<td>Sultan III c1</td>
<td>(temple on the Spring Hill?)</td>
<td>EB III A 2700 - 2500 BC</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>EB III</strong> (Installation VI)</td>
<td><em>Enceinte Sacrée</em> Baalat Gebal Temple Chapelle Orientale Temple en L</td>
<td>Sultan III c2</td>
<td>(temple on the Spring Hill?)</td>
<td>EB III B 2500 - 2300 BC</td>
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Tab. 1 - Chronological correlation between Byblos and Jericho sacred buildings in the 4th - 3rd millennia BC.

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6 Marzoli - Helas eds. in press.
8 Nigro in press, § 4, note 46.
Most of these Gublite religious compounds, arranged around the spring which was gradually regularized and built-up as a well⁹ and became the core of the religious life of Byblos, are quite well known both for their noticeable findings and for their architectural features (even if often in a tentative stratigraphic sequence); namely: the Baalat Gebal Temple (fig. 2), erected around the 29th century BC¹⁰; the so-called “L-shaped” Temple¹¹ (later on, the Obelisk Temple; figs. 3-4)¹², from the mid of the 3rd millennium BC; the Chapelle Orientale (fig. 4), also from the mid of the 3rd millennium BC, or even earlier¹³; and the Champ des Offrandes¹⁴. All these cult places date back to the 3rd millennium BC, to the time of the first urban settlement at Byblos.

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¹⁰ Dunand 1937-1939, 290-308; 1982, 195; Jidejian 1968, 17-20; Saghieh 1983, 40-51, 55-58, fig. 13, pls. X-XVII.
Fig. 2 - Remains of the Baalat Gebal Temple, from east (2006).

Fig. 3 - The three *cellae in antis* inside the restored *Temple en L* complex, from east (2006).
Nonetheless, an earlier shrine, dating back up to the end of the 4th millennium BC, was excavated by Maurice Dunand just to the south-west of the sacred well: it is the so-called *Enceinte Sacrée* (fig. 5). This shrine represents the earliest Early Bronze Age sanctuary so far identified at Byblos, and it was erected in an advanced phase of the *Énéolithique Récen*t village within a general reassessment of the layout and spatial organization of the settlement at the beginning of the incipient urban phase of Byblos. The area of the *Enceinte Sacrée*, which provided many deposits and offerings from the end of the 3rd millennium BC and the first half of the 2nd millennium BC, was occupied by an early compound built towards the end of the *Énéolithique Récen*t (around 3300 BC), when the sacred precinct was erected aside the spring, on the southern slope of the western hill. A sector of the previous *énéolithique* settlement was expressly enucleated to

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15 Dunand 1982, 197.
18 Dunand 1973b, 18. On the general topography of Byblos see Dunand 1973a, 1-7; Margueron 1994, 13-14; and also Artin in this volume, fig. 1.
host the shrine, and a stone-paved street\textsuperscript{19} was realized across the settlement flanking the \textit{temenos}, while domestic compounds, apsidal buildings and rounded-corners dwellings continued to be in use to the west and to the south of it (fig. 6)\textsuperscript{20}, and started to cluster mainly in the area to the south-east of the spring, where the village would expand in the following Proto-Urban Period\textsuperscript{21}.

\subsection*{2.1. Plan and architecture of the earliest temple}

The temple\textsuperscript{22} rose inside a sacred precinct encircled by a curvilinear stone enclosure (figs. 5-6), around 33.50 m wide on its NW-SE side, and probably including the spring (which was the centre of the cult) in its north-eastern part\textsuperscript{23}.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{fig5.png}
\caption{Plan of the \textit{Enceinte Sacrée} (after Dunand 1973a, fig. 143).}
\end{figure}

\begin{thebibliography}{1}
\bibitem{19} Dunand 1973a, 233-235, pl. J.c.
\bibitem{20} Dunand 1973a, pls. CXXVI:3, J.c.
\bibitem{21} That is Early Bronze IB (3200-3000 BC); Dunand 1973a, 214, 240.
\bibitem{22} Dunand 1973a, 235-241, fig. 143, pl. J,c.
\bibitem{23} Dunand 1950, 590; 1973a, 240.
\end{thebibliography}
The temple itself was very badly preserved: just the southern part of it, 6.60 m wide, was brought to light, with a fragment of a floor made of gravel and white mortar (fig. 5). In any case, the chamber might be feasibly reconstructed as a rectangular building of Breitraum type with a central access opened to the east, towards the sacred well (as it will be in
its following 3rd millennium BC reconstructions)\textsuperscript{24}, even though its original length can not be determined. The temple was apparently preceded by a stone-paved courtyard, partially preserved in front of the south-eastern part of the building. A strict parallel for this feature is offered by the EB I sacred precinct of Megiddo/Tell el-Mutesellim (stratum XIX/level J-2), where a stone-paved court with cult graffiti (\textit{loci} 4008, 4064, 4118) represented the earliest religious device of the area\textsuperscript{25}.

The remains of a curvilinear stone installation in the northern sector of the \textit{temenos} were reconstructed by Dunand as a possible rounded platform, since circular open-air stone platforms are a distinctive cult device of the Early Bronze Age Palestinian sanctuaries, as attested to by the later EB III platforms in the sacred areas of Megiddo\textsuperscript{26} and Khirbet ez-Zeraqon\textsuperscript{27}.

The \textit{temenos} wall of the \textit{Enceinte Sacrée} (1.60-2.00 m wide) was characterized by squared or rectangular inner buttresses (fig. 7), projecting 0.80-1.20 m, and placed at quite regular intervals (from 1.40 to 2.10 m), which represent a somewhat remarkable feature of the cult compound\textsuperscript{28}. Similar buttresses lined the inner face of Byblos city-wall in the 3rd millennium BC (fig. 8)\textsuperscript{29}. The same architectural feature is attested to also in the enclosure wall of the EB IIIB palace at Khirbet Yarmouk\textsuperscript{30}, suggesting the existence of a somewhat shared architectural tradition in the Southern Levant, where squared inner buttresses seem to have been use to dress the open spaces of public buildings.

\textsuperscript{24} Dunand 1973a, 238.
\textsuperscript{25} Loud 1948, 61, figs. 144-146, pls. 271-282; Kempinski 1989, 19-21, 170-173; Sala 2007, 48-51, figs. 12-13.
\textsuperscript{26} Loud 1948, 70, 73-76, figs. 164-165.
\textsuperscript{27} Ibrahim - Douglas 2004, 371-373, fig. 4.
\textsuperscript{28} Dunand 1973a, 235, 238, pl. CXXVII:1.
\textsuperscript{29} It is thus also possible that the buttressed \textit{temenos} was actually the enclosure of a following Early Bronze Age reconstruction of the \textit{Enceinte Sacrée}.
\textsuperscript{30} De Miroschedji 1999, 9-12; 2003, 159*, figs. 3-5, 8:2.
A sort of bench or buttress (0.65-1.00 m wide, and around 0.40 m high) lined the outer face of the *temenos* wall; an architectural element that is attested to also in the Late Chalcolithic buildings in the sacred precinct of En-Gedi.\(^{31}\) The *temenos* was quite well preserved in its south-western stretch, where a possible access (2.80 m wide)\(^ {32}\) was detected (fig. 9), but almost completely eroded on the other sides. The main entrance to the shrine should opened across the *temenos* to the south-east (fig. 5), where the settlement stretched out during this period (fig. 6).\(^ {33}\)

The stones employed in the walls of the temple, and in its enclosure (as well as in the contemporary houses), were mostly fieldstones of medium and small size, but also pebbles from riverside beds were used (fig. 10).\(^ {34}\)

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\(^{31}\) Ussishkin 1980, 8-9, fig. 3; Sala 2005b, 276-277; Sala 2007, 10-12, pl. 1.


\(^{33}\) Dunand 1973a, 240.

\(^{34}\) Dunand 1950, 588; 1973a, 235, 238, pl. CXXVII:2.
The shrine remained in use in the following Proto-Urban Period (3200-3000 BC), when some major changes took place in the layout of the village. Some reconstructions were carried out also in the sacred compound; the temenos was rebuilt using small sandstone slabs dug out from the nearby ground, even though the general layout of the sacred precinct was maintained.

Unluckily, neither furnishings nor pottery of possible cult destination were retrieved in the earliest sanctuary of the end of 4th millennium BC.

**2.2. Conclusions**

The religious destination of the area of the Enceinte Sacrée continued throughout the 3rd and 2nd millennia BC, with a series of successive and superimposed reconstructions (fig. 11). The original roughly oval-shaped layout of the sacred precinct was apparently maintained within the earliest urban installation at the beginning of the 3rd millennium BC. Only at the end of 3rd millennium BC the religious compound was completely refurbished and the elliptical shape gave place to a roughly rectangular temenos, which housed a rectangular shrine with a vestibule and a cella.

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37 Dunand 1973a, 241; 1983, fig. 2.
39 Dunand 1983.
Fig. 11 - The southeastern stretch of the temenos of the Enceinte Sacrée with visible two superimposed reconstructions of the enclosure carried out during the 3rd millennium BC (after Dunand 1973a, pl. CXXVIII:3).

Possible comparisons for the earliest shrine of the Enceinte Sacrée are represented by the Late Chalcolithic sacred precincts of En-Gedi\textsuperscript{41} and Tuleilat el-Ghassul\textsuperscript{42} in Southern Palestine. Both of these religious compounds were surrounded by a temenos wall and included a temple of Breitraum type with a central entrance across one of the long sides. These two sacred complexes exhibit the earliest codification of a temple-type, that is the Breitraum temple with direct entrance, which will become typical and distinctive of the Early Bronze Age religious architecture of Palestine, and perhaps more in general of Southern Levant, at least from the Early Bronze IB onwards (that is from the Proto-Urban Period)\textsuperscript{43}, as testified to by the sacred precincts of Megiddo\textsuperscript{44} (stratum XIX/levels J-2 and J-3)\textsuperscript{45}, and by the temple in the public complex at er-Rujm\textsuperscript{46}.

The EB I (Énéolithique Récent) Enceinte Sacrée at Byblos is thus especially significant, if one takes into consideration that Byblos in particular, and the Levantine coast in general, show a high degree of cultural continuity between the Chalcolithic and the Early Bronze I: Early Bronze I at Byblos, in fact, seems to arise straight from the preceding Chalcolithic cultural

\textsuperscript{41} Ussishkin 1980; Sala 2005b, 274-282; Sala 2007, 8-19, pl. 1.
\textsuperscript{42} Seaton 2000; Sala 2005b, 283-290; Sala 2007, 19-30, pl. 2.
\textsuperscript{43} Kempinski 1992; de Miroschedji 1993; Sala 2005b, 269-272, 290-292; Sala 2007, 3-4, 37.
\textsuperscript{44} Finkelstein - Ussishkin 2000, 38-55, figs. 3.10-3.11; Sala 2007, 37-71.
\textsuperscript{45} According to the updated stratigraphic sequence proposed by I. Finkelstein and D. Ussishkin (Finkelstein - Ussishkin - Peersmann 2006: tab. 3.1).
\textsuperscript{46} Mazar - de Miroschedji 1996, 4-13; Sala 2007, 79-88, pl. 6.
stage\textsuperscript{47}, in this respect pretty differing from the contemporary shift in Palestine\textsuperscript{48}. More remarkable changes take place at Byblos in the proto-urban development at the end of the 4\textsuperscript{th} millennium BC (that is in the Early Bronze IB)\textsuperscript{49}, when also the religious compound of the \textit{Enceinte Sacrée} was partly reconstructed, though maintaining the general layout of its forerunner.

3. Shrine 420 at Tell es-Sultan/ancient Jericho

Despite the many and successive expeditions who worked at the Tell es-Sultan, from the Austro-German Expedition directed by E. Sellin and C. Watzinger in 1907-1909\textsuperscript{50} to the recent Italian-Palestinian Expedition in 1997-2000\textsuperscript{51}, no temple building has been yet identified in the Bronze Age city of ancient Jericho\textsuperscript{52}. Nonetheless, in 1936 during the excavation of the North-Eastern Trench by John Garstang\textsuperscript{53}, where the earliest occupational strata were reached for the first time within a large exposure at Tell es-Sultan and a consistent sequence of the Neolithic and Early Bronze Periods was investigated (fig. 12)\textsuperscript{54}, among the structures of the EB I village one noteworthy building, with a quite different plan from those of the surrounding ordinary dwellings and installations, was brought to light. This structure belonged to “level VII” of Garstang’s stratigraphic sequence\textsuperscript{55}, that is the earliest stage of the EB I village at Tell es-Sultan\textsuperscript{56}.

\textsuperscript{47} Ben-Tor 1989, 50.
\textsuperscript{48} Many studies focused on the problem of the transition from the Chalcolithic to the Early Bronze Age in Palestine; for instance, Amiran 1977; 1985; Braun 1989; Eisenberg 1989.
\textsuperscript{49} Dunand 1973b, 18-20; see Nigro in this volume, pp. 34-35.
\textsuperscript{50} Sellin - Watzinger 1913.
\textsuperscript{51} Marchetti - Nigro eds. 1998; 2000.
\textsuperscript{52} For a hypothesis of identification of the Early Bronze Age temple on the northern plateau of the tell see Nigro in press, § 4, note 46.
\textsuperscript{53} The North-Eastern Trench was excavated by J. Garstang in the two last seasons of working at Tell es-Sultan, in 1935-1936 (Garstang \textit{et al.} 1935; 1936).
\textsuperscript{54} Garstang \textit{et al.} 1935, 142-154, 163-168; 1936, 67-76; Sala 2006.
\textsuperscript{55} Garstang \textit{et al.} 1936, 68, 73-74. Garstang used the term “level” to name the major occupational and stratigraphic phases distinguished in the deep accumulation excavated in the North-Eastern Trench (Garstang \textit{et al.} 1936, pl. XXVIII). Garstang’s levels can be now equalized, respectively, level VII to Phases DD-R of the sequence elaborated by J.B. Hennessy for Squares EIII-IV (Hennessy 1967, 6-7, 15-18) excavated by K.M. Kenyon immediately south-west of Garstang’s
It was excavated close to the northern limit of the trench, nearby the north-eastern corner of the EB III city-wall (fig. 12). The building was interpreted by the British archaeologist as a small shrine, and it represents, in fact, the only cult building so far excavated at Tell es-Sultan: that is Shrine 420.

The shrine was erected in a later phase of Sultan IIIa1 Period (late Early Bronze IA), within the dwelling quarters of the EB IA rural village (fig. 13), but in an area deliberately separated from the contemporary houses on the nearby southern terrace by the erection of a north-west/south-east demarcation-wall, in the framework of a first spatial reorganization of the EB I settlement57.

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57 Nigro 2005, 33-34, plan II; Sala 2005a, 42; 2007, 35, 73-75.
3.1. Plan and architecture

Shrine 420\textsuperscript{58} consisted of a roughly rectangular chamber\textsuperscript{59} with a bent-axis entrance on its long northern side, which suggested to Garstang the denomination of “Babylonian Shrine” (figs. 14-15). It was delimited by plastered mud-bricks walls; in particular, the thick back-wall directly constituted by the north-west/south-east demarcation-wall of the shrine terrace. A large plastered dais 1.60 m wide with some circular depressions (“cup-marks”) was built at the north-western end of the chamber opposite to the entrance, while a continuous plastered bench lined against the other walls.

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\textsuperscript{58} Garstang \textit{et al.} 1936, 73-74, pl. XLI,a; Garstang - Garstang 1948, 78-79, fig. 8; Sala 2005a; Sala 2007, 71-79, pl. 5.

\textsuperscript{59} Outer dimensions of the shrine: 7-7.5 × 4.3 m ca.; inner dimensions: 5.8-6.2 × 2.1-2.6 m ca., with a ratio of 2.6.
of the room. Dais, walls, benches, floor and entrance were all carefully plastered. A niche, not noticed by Garstang, was placed just in front of the dais in the western wall of the shrine (fig. 15).

The prolongation of the lateral walls into the northern section of the trench leaves open the possibility that the shrine was preceded by a fenced courtyard; but this sector was not investigated.

Some cult furnishings (fig. 16), found in the same level and associated by Garstang to the shrine, probably belonged to the building; namely, a smoothed stone object of oval section from locus 451 (a), tentatively interpreted as a massebah60, a small libation altar from locus 421 (b), two limestone bases from the same locus 421 (c, d), and the fragmentary stems of two other possible betyls (e, f) respectively from loci 451 e 39361. It is possible that these furnishings were originally placed on the benches and into the niche of the shrine.

**Fig. 14 - Plan of Shrine 420 (redrawn from Garstang - Garstang 1948, fig. 8).**

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60 This is a smoothed stone 0.68 m high and 0.14 m wide. The presence and diffusion of massebôt is well documented in the cult and religion of Palestine in the pre-classical periods (and even later; Graesser 1972). As it concerns the end of the 4th millennium BC, in the Early Bronze I the use of massebôt is attested to at Tell el-Jazari in the area of the so-called “Crematorium”, where a monolith of 2 × 1.7 m stood in front of the entrance of the cave (Macalister 1912, 74-76); and in the public complex at er-Rujm, where an alignment of standing stones set in the back wall of hall 152 would have been included in the temple building from a previous open-air sacred area (Mazar - de Miroschedj 1996, 11-13; Sala 2007, 83-88).

61 Garstang et al. 1936, 73-74, pl. XLI,b.
The passage to the following distinctive stratigraphic stage, called Sultan IIIa2 (that is Early Bronze IB; Garstang’s level VI), marked by a reconstruction of the north-south terrace-wall and the east-west boundary-wall delimitating the shrine terrace, and by the addition of rectangular houses and neater partitions into domestic compounds of rectangular or trapezoidal shape⁶², was characterized also by a refurbishing and an enlargement of the religious compound. In Sultan IIIa2 phase, the shrine was reconstructed and doubled with the addition of a second room to the east (447)⁶³, which, in spite of its lower location, makes the plan of the compound roughly similar to other Palestinian so-called “double” temples of the same period, such as that of Megiddo, stratum XIX [level J-3]⁶⁴.

### 3.2. Conclusions

Shrine 420 represents a cult structure for both its plan and architectural features (such as the fine plaster inner revetment, and the presence of a

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⁶² Nigro 2005, 35-41, 200, plan III; Nigro in this volume, pp. 18-19, fig. 22.
⁶³ Nigro 2005, 35, fig. 3.30, plan III.
⁶⁴ Loud 1948, 61, fig. 390; Finkelstein - Ussishkin 2000, 38-52, fig. 3.11; Sala 2007, 56-71.
dais opposite to the entrance), and the kind of the related finds. The partial knowledge of the urban layout does not allow us to discern if the building was set in an area structurally completely separated from the neighbouring village; only the thick back-wall, in fact, can be interpreted as a sort of boundary of the cult compound. In any case, it seems that Shrine 420 was a cult building inserted within the dwellings units, rather than an actual temple. Also the small dimensions, as well as the plan of the shrine, which differs to some extent from the official tradition of the Early Bronze Age Palestinian sacred architecture (namely that of the Breitraum temple with direct entrance) allow to identify the building as a shrine or a chapel of a living quarter, instead of a major temple.

Perhaps also for this reason (that is its non-official destination), the shrine was not reconstructed at the beginning of the 3rd millennium BC (Sultan IIb Period, Early Bronze II), in the emerging urban centre of Tell es-Sultan, after the city-wall was erected and the layout of the settlement was reorganized.

![Fig. 16 - Cult furnishings associated by J. Garstang to Shrine 420 (redrawn from Garstang et al. 1936, pl. XLI,b).](image)

### 4. Conclusions

Within the spatial reorganization of settlements and socio-economic transformations of the incipient urban phase which affected the Southern Levant at the end of the 4th millennium BC, two early shrines were erected at both Byblos, probably the major centre of the Levantine coast at the

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65 See above p. 57, note 43.
time, and Tell es-Sultan, at one of the main east-west and north-south crossroads of the Ancient Near East. Namely for its location and its tight connection with the spring, maintained also in the following reconstructions, the Enceinte Sacrée represented the earliest public shrine erected at Byblos next to the sacred well, all around which, during the 3rd millennium BC, the main sanctuaries of the city were erected, and it stood, from the beginning, at the core of the official cult and religious life of the city, which had in the spring its centre and its main point of attraction. 

Differently, the earliest shrine identified at Tell es-Sultan, for its location within a dwelling quarter, its small dimensions and its unique layout, which pretty differs from the Palestinian Early Bronze Age temples, did not represent an official temple, but it was rather a sort of shrine of a dwelling quarter of the EB I rural village. 

In both the EB I settlements, in any case, the destination of a clearly definite space to cult compounds was an evident outcome of the process of spatial reorganization started in the last quarter of the 4th millennium BC, which would have brought to the emergence of the first urban society in Southern Levant at the beginning of the Early Bronze II.

66 The strategic location of Tell es-Sultan in the framework of the ancient road network, both from north to south and from east to west across the Jordan Valley up to the Egypt, is testified to namely from the earliest EB I strata by the finding of some Egyptian or Egyptianizing items in the EB IA layers on the tell (two ceremonial mace-heads and a possible stone palette in Garstang's North-Eastern trench, level VII; Garstang's et al. 1936, pl. XXXVI:24-26; Garstang - Garstang 1948, 79), as well as in the nearby necropolis (two so-called “lotus vases” from EB IA layers of Kenyon's Tombs A 114 and K 1; Sala 2005, 177-178), which point to the particular relationship between Tell es-Sultan and the emerging Pharaonic reign (Nigro in this volume, pp. 17, 37-38); on the other hand, the recovering of two imitations of Grey Burnished Ware from EB I tombs in the necropolis (Tomb K2; Kenyon 1965, fig. 7:8) and elsewhere (Nigro 2006b), as well as the presence of a cylinder seal from Tomb A127 (Kenyon 1960, 91, fig. 27:4) and of a seal impression from the tell (Sellin - Watzinger 1913, fig. 66) in the following Early Bronze II (3000-2700 BC), testify to the connections with the northern inner and coastal regions (Nigro 2005, 6, note 4).
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1. Introduction

Byblos is located 40 km north of Beirut on the Lebanese coast, and occupies a rocky promontory 30 metres above sea level. The excavations of this site were mainly directed by the archaeologist Maurice Dunand between 1925 and 1973. In the course of his work, he excavated an extensive necropolis and settlement from the period that he described as the Énéolithique, which he divided on the basis of ceramics and architecture into the Énéolithique Ancien and the Énéolithique Récent. The necropolis and settlement are very important, being one of the few excavated examples from this period in central and northern Levant. The Énéolithique layers of Byblos are characterised by inhumations in jars, and an exceptionally rich and varied corpus of grave goods. Despite the remarkable quality of the Énéolithique material, the necropolis remains relatively unknown. Only 24% of the tombs have been described in publications. Furthermore, the analysis of the site proposed by Dunand and by other individual studies is partial, as only certain elements of the Énéolithique Period have been studied. Statistical, qualitative and spatial analyses of the data are absent; thus, past interpretations and syntheses are too general and incomplete to be of value to the scientific community.

To undertake an exhaustive study of the 4th millennium layers of Byblos, it was vital to examine the archives from the original excavations, including

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1 This article is based on a research undertaken as part of my PhD at the University of Lyon in France (Artin 2005a), which focused on reinvestigating the archaeological material from the Énéolithique necropolis at Byblos (see also Artin 2005b).

2 Today, the term Chalcolithic is more frequently used than Énéolithique to describe the period which dates to approximately 6100 - 5000 14C BP or 5000 - 3800 cal. BC. Unfortunately, dating Byblos and its different chronological phases has been controversial, due to the absence of radio-carbon analysis, and to the lack of related studies. For these reasons, I have retained the term Énéolithique for the purpose of this study (see Nigro in this volume, tab. 1, for a general periodization reassessment).

all the unpublished data. In this way, the mass of information from the past was not to be lost or left unevaluated. This documentation was critically re-evaluated where necessary, and, at the same time, the different terminologies were standardised. The re-evaluation of the archives permitted the confirmation or reconsideration of past hypotheses, and, where appropriate, the creation of new ones.

2. Documentation and methodology
The unpublished documentation includes the *Fonds Dunand* archives, the personal records of Jean Lauffray (the architect who worked with Dunand), and the archaeological finds which have been dispersed into different university, museum and institute collections. The *Fonds Dunand* were saved from destruction during the Lebanese war, and are now housed in the *Faculté des Lettres* at the University of Geneva. These archives are the most complete and important source of information that we have on the Byblos excavations (1926-1975). These documents include excavation notes, arranged into boxes and drawers without having been classified. Thus, the utilisation of these archives becomes complicated. Furthermore, the *Fonds Dunand* in Geneva is not exhaustive, as certain documents belonged to other excavation members are missing. For example, the notes of the énéolithique necropolis and the topographic accounts have not been found. Many documents may in fact have been lost for a thorough inventory was never taken.

The Byblos archaeological finds are housed in the *Musée National de Beyrouth*, *Dépôt de la citadelle de Byblos*, the *Institut de Paléontologie Humaine* in Paris, the *Département d'Anthropologie de l'Université* in Geneva, and the *Institut de Préhistoire Orientale* in Jalès (France). However, the archaeological materials in the *Musée National de Beyrouth* were often inaccessible, either due to looting during the war, or to limited access to the collections. The Director of Antiquities’ fear of losing artefacts by theft hindered access to the material during the first few years of my thesis.

The choices regarding my methodology and the quality of the results that could be obtained were constrained by the limitations of the available documentation.

My primary concern was the controversial methods used during the original excavations. This methodology used a grid system of 10 metres to divide

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4 An authorisation was eventually given in 2000-2001, which allowed me to examine a certain number of archaeological items.
the entire area. The site was excavated in uniform 20 cm spits without consideration for the archaeological stratigraphy or natural topography. Unfortunately, these methodological problems could not be resolved through further excavation due to the condition of the site. The very dispersed, incomplete and inconsistent nature of the documentation as a whole were additional constraints to this study.

The methodology of this research consisted of the formation of two bodies of data from the available documentary sources and archaeological material. The first corpus included all archaeological-palaeoanthropological information, and the second all the geo-spatial data. The archaeo-anthropological corpus incorporated all the information regarding the tombs and their associated grave goods and human remains, while the geo-spatial corpus integrated the spatial parameters relative to the tombs and the habitation structures.

The available documentation was computer analysed using FileMaker™ for the text, and MapInfo™ for the geo-spatial disposition of the necropolis. The use of these two programmes made it possible to investigate the varying characteristics of the three elements which compose the funerary material (the funerary contexts, the human remains and the associated grave goods) and to do an archaeological-anthropological study. In addition, the spatial analysis of the distribution of tombs, their contents as well as the relation between tombs and habitation structures made it possible to establish the chrono-spatial development of the necropolis. However, to understand more clearly the organisation and development of the occupation of Byblos in the Énéolithique Period, the site had to be divided into sectors or zones, which take account of the morphology of the terrain.

At the centre of the area is a small valley, which in later periods contained a well and a “sacred pool”. There may have been a well or a spring here in the Énéolithique Period, but no evidence has ever been reported. For the purpose of my study, I drew three concentric circles around this central feature and I subdivided the area contained within these circles into zones (fig. 1). Thus, zones A and B are divisions of the inner circle which has a diameter of about 80 m. Zones C, D, E, G are divisions of the middle circle which has a diameter of about 200 m. Zones I and M are divisions of the outer circle which has a diameter of about 350 m. The final two sectors are two hills which are contained within the area of the circles. Zone F is the higher hill (colline haute) to the north of the well, and zone H is the lower hill (colline basse) to the south.
3. Funerary goods analysis and results

A rich variety of funerary goods was found in the Byblos énéolithique necropolis. The site has 2097 tombs, 2059 of which are burials in jars\(^5\). The information gathered allowed us to quantitatively analyse the characteristics of the three main groups of materials: funerary contexts, human remains, and grave goods.

4. Funerary contexts

The énéolithique necropolis is characterised by 98% of inhumations in jars. The remaining 2% of the corpus consists of inhumations in other types of vessels, and plain burials, both on the site and in nearby caves (fig. 2).

The form, dimensions, position and orientation of the different types of inhumations were not systematically recorded in the publications and

\(^5\) In general, the exact number of tombs is never given in publications and excavation reports. This is not surprising as the authors of these documents do not indicate their source, and they never had access to the Fonds Dunand to complete and verify their findings.
archives, and to date no typological archaeometric study of the jars has been undertaken.
From the available data, a variety of forms can be observed, amongst which are the ovoid, globular and elongated jar forms. Their lengths vary between 0.20 m and 1.95 m. The majority (67 %) were positioned horizontally, but the orientation varied considerably.

5. Human remains
An anthropological study of the human remains was impossible as the majority has been lost. To complicate matters even further, the documentation for Byblos is incomplete in the areas of funerary anthropology and palaeontology. Taphonomic studies of human remains were rarely done on the Chalcolithic sites of the Near East\(^6\), so the present study is based on the analysis of documentary sources indicated in the corpus.
63 % of the jars contained human remains. Individual tombs represent the standard burial type with multiple graves comprising only 6 % of the total

\(^6\) Le Mort - Rabinovich 1994; 2002.
number found\textsuperscript{7}. However, the lack of information and the unavailability of the osteological material for future study means that any relationship between individuals within multiple burials cannot be established. 35% of the skeletons within the jars were oriented with the skull near the opening. The skeletons were also positioned facing both right and left, and 21% were in a contracted position (fig. 3).

\textsuperscript{7} 37 children and 54 adults were buried in tombs classified as multiple. Only 20 graves contained both adults and children. An identical number of adults was buried with other adults. Unfortunately, the sex of the individuals buried in the multiple graves is not known.
45% of the identified adults (buried in 581 jars) and 39% of the children (buried in 499 jars) suggest that there was no selection based on age within this necropolis. Therefore, we can suppose that all members of the population were buried in the same *intra moenia* sparse cemetery. The presence of both adult and child tombs within the same locations reveals that there was no geographical separation by age into different burial zones. However, the methods used to determine age mentioned in the documentary sources were based on a crude empirical system, and differ greatly from today’s methods. The notes concerning Byblos give only a rough estimation of age based on the size of the bones found. It is therefore impossible to classify the remains according to normal age groups. For this study, three categories were chosen: adults, *immatures* (children), and human remains which are too poorly preserved to be categorised. The remains considered to be *immature* are those described as being a “young child,” a “very young,” a “newborn”, an “infant,” an “8 year-old child,” a “child a few months old,” a “very small child,” a “child a few years old.” The imprecise nature of dating this information made further division of human remains into more specific groups impossible. Hypotheses or conclusions concerning the individual’s sex have been avoided, as the categories “male” and “female” were arbitrarily assigned and represent only 3% of the total number of human remains found.

6. Grave goods

In general, grave goods were abundant within the tombs with an average of 3 objects per tomb. According to the available documentation, a total of 3652 objects were found. The grave goods are extremely diverse, and included ceramics, metal and stone artefacts. The lithic industry included stone implements and weapons (either flaked or polished); the bone industry included tools made of bone and/or ivory; and the art objects and ornaments (non-functional items) included human or animal figurines, as well as amulets, necklaces, bracelets, beads, and pendants made of different materials (fig. 4). Only a small percentage of animal and plant remains are mentioned in the *Fonds Dunand* archives.

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8 The sex of 62 individuals was identified from a total of 644 adults (Özbek 1976).
6.1. Ceramics
Ceramics are the most abundant type of artefacts, and are present in almost 56 % of the jars. These ceramic grave goods, as defined by Dunand, include several series of pots, goblets, bowls, and cups\(^9\). The fact that the jars were protected enabled the ceramic ware to be well preserved. Ceramics were found in inhumations in all zones of the site.

6.2. Metallic artefacts
This category includes all metal objects (88 % made of copper, 11 % made of silver) with the exception of ornaments, and represents 1 % of the material found in jars. This type of artefacts varies from the first metal hooks made of copper, to daggers, which were found in large quantities. A total of 44 metal objects was discovered (fig. 5), and very few of them were from non-funerary contexts for this period in Byblos. It is interesting to note that the metallic artefacts were absent from zones C, H and K.

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\(^9\) Dunand 1937-1939, pls. CLXXXIX-CC; 1973, 268-301, figs. 149-177, pls. CXLVIII-CLI; Artin 2005b, 233-234, fig. 2; Balfet 1962; Epstein 2001.
6.3. **Stone artefacts**

Stone artefacts, which include the heavier items, are rare and constitute only 1% of the total grave goods found. 26 stone objects, which were made from either limestone or basalt, were discovered, and these were for the most part in the south-western zones and more rarely in the central and northern zones. The most frequently found stone artefacts were clubs, mace-heads, goblets, bowls and polished pebbles. Many different types of stone were used, but the majority were made of limestone.

6.4. **Lithic industry**

Amongst the 209 lithic objects found in the tombs the majority was made of flint and 8% of obsidian. Although these grave goods were found across the site, they were somewhat rarer in the northern and eastern sectors.

The lithic industry comprises 6% of the grave goods discovered. In spite of the abundance of polished axes and adzes in domestic contexts, flint weapons were rarely discovered in the tombs. Flint flakes were frequently found, but only a small number of tools were discovered in jars.

6.5. **Bone and ivory artefacts**

The bone and ivory artefacts were completely absent from the central and the northern zones, and represent only 1% of the grave goods discovered. Amongst the bone artefacts which had been re-worked were awls (found in abundance), blades, pins and goblets (somewhat rarer). The bone artefacts represent 91% of the objects belonging to this category, while only 9% were made of ivory.
6.6. Art objects and ornaments

1271 art objects and ornaments made from silver, limestone, cornelian, bone, ivory, shell and obsidian were recovered from 255 tombs. This category of objects was frequently encountered throughout the entire site, and form 35 % of the total number of grave goods found. It is interesting to note that different elements of ornamentation are frequently encountered, and in particular discoidal, biconical and spherical shaped beads, rings and pendants (fig. 6). The majority are made of silver. Artefacts made of gold are very rare. The art objects are represented by some small sculptures, notably figurines made of stone or ivory. Glyptics include several clay cylinders, and stone or ivory seals.

Fig. 6 - Ornaments: tomb n. 92 (cliché after Fonds Dunand, Geneva).

7. Apparent associations within the funerary group

From the funerary contexts, human remains and the grave goods just mentioned, certain associations within the funerary group become evident. By compiling the available evidence from the analysis of the funerary ensemble, the following preliminary observations can be made:

1. the inhumations in non-typical jars contained exclusively infant burials; unfortunately the sex of the child could not be determined;
2. the vast majority of infant burials was found in small jars (between 0.20 m and 0.70 m long) and the jars were placed in a vertical position. This differs from the majority of adults who were buried horizontally for the most part in larger jars. These receptacles were rarely found in a vertical or inclined position. We can deduce from these findings that jars of different sizes were used according to the age of the deceased, and that the position of the container depended on their size and weight. The vertical position was reserved for the smallest individuals;

3. ceramic grave goods were frequently associated with metal and stone goods, and were discovered for the most part in multiple burials;

4. art objects and other personal ornaments were often found with the infant inhumations.

If we consider the differences in the nature and quantity of grave goods found in the tombs, it may seem that certain individuals had a higher status than others in Byblos énéolithique society. However, one has to be cautious with this hypothesis as the site was occupied for a millennium. During this period new materials and techniques were introduced, while others were abandoned. Certain objects were also made especially for inhumation with their owner. Thus, the establishment of a hierarchical order based on grave goods is very problematic.10

8. Spatial analysis results of the funerary ensemble

The analysis of the chrono-spatial data has provided information on two research areas: the spatial evolution of the necropolis, and the relations existing between the tombs and the habitation structures.

In the absence of stratigraphical and chronological data, and with the impossibility of making any qualitative analysis, the reconstruction of the site evolution is based on the quantitative study of the grave goods, and the pattern of the construction of the habitation structures around the site.11 The quantitative study of the grave goods, based on the observation of rarity of certain materials, enables us to understand the development of the necropolis.

10 Chehab 1950. We can quote, for instance, the appearance of Egyptianizing status-symbols, such as mace-heads and stone palettes (Dunand 1973, 304-306, figs. 181-182, pl. CLV [ns. 19332, 27360, 33669]; see Nigro in this volume, p. 32, fig. 38; Polcaro in this volume, p. 104).

11 On the layout and inner organization of the Énéolithique Récent settlement see Nigro in this volume, pp. 21-31.
The stone goods were present in abundance in zone L (to the south-west), which corresponds to the oldest occupied area of the site. The presence of this type of artefact diminishes progressively to the east and south, and disappears completely in zone C (in the hills and to the north). In addition to this, no goods made of bone were found in zones A, B and C (the central zones). These facts reveal that the placing of bone and stone artefacts in funerary contexts was abandoned prior to the spread of the necropolis to the centre and to the north. This phenomenon coincides with the development and inclusion of a new material: metal. It appears that the evolution of the necropolis occurred gradually from the south-west to the north-east, going around the central zones A, B and C.

The occupation of the space by tombs and habitation structures has the same chronological progression across the site. Spatial occupation and the use of the site appears to have started in the west and progressed to the east, with a tendency to occupy the flat areas. The site occupation terminated in the north.

After having studied the plans closely, analysing (a) the distribution of habitation structures, (b) the tombs for which we have geographic coordinates, and (c) the tombs below the floors of the habitations, we come to further interesting conclusions.

First of all, only 5.5% of the tombs were situated under the house-floors (sous les logis is the term utilised by Dunand to designate houses). An equal number of adults and children were buried in these graves. This observation contradicts the hypothesis that the under-floor tombs were reserved for children only. Secondly, only 4% of the other tombs were found within 2.5 metres of habitations. This distance is double the average length of the jars from Byblos. We can therefore say that only 10% of the tombs were under the habitations or in their immediate vicinity, and that the inhabitants of Byblos normally buried their dead at least some distance from their houses. It is highly probable that certain areas of the settlement were forgotten or abandoned after having been occupied by tombs or by habitations. The growth of the site was at times limited, or even diminished. These facts reveal the complexity of the énéolithique necropolis of Byblos.

9. Conclusion

Byblos differs from other known sites in the Levant, but similar localities probably exist, and their discovery could modify our hypotheses. Its peculiarities, however, deserve general interest and highlight our knowledge of pre- and proto-urban stages in this region of the ancient Near East.
Even though we lack information which would increase our understanding, Byblos stands as one of the most important discoveries of human occupation in the region during the 4th millennium. Hopefully in the future, a comprehensive qualitative study of material from Byblos will be made, which will give us a much better understanding of this formative period in the eastern Mediterranean.

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PETROGRAPHIC ANALYSES OF SELECTIVE CERAMIC MATERIAL DISCOVERED IN THE ENEOlITHIC TOMBS OF BYBLOS

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1. Introduction

The site of Byblos revealed many important discoveries since the first excavations of Pierre Montet in 19211, followed by Maurice Dunand2 in 1926. In his first two publications Fouilles de Byblos I and Fouilles de Byblos II Dunand described about 18000 objects inclusive of only 10% of the ceramic assemblages discovered in Byblos. Despite the photos of pots and sherds in the plates of these volumes, Dunand only published in the text volume of Fouilles de Byblos V three pots from the “Néolithique Ancien”3, five pots from the “Néolothique Moyen”4, and only one pot from the “Néolithique Récent”5. For the later periods, he included 23 pots from the “Énéolithique Ancien”6 and 230 pots from the “Énéolithique Récent”7. Remarkably, Dunand related in his introduction of Fouilles de Byblos I8 to the preparation of a special volume for the pottery (Fouilles de Byblos IV), but later on a volume of lithic study by Jacques Cauvin9 replaced the projected volume of pottery.

In the course of a doctoral research program, we examined more than 1200 whole pots discovered during 50 years of excavations on the tell and stored in the site warehouse. Most of these pots were discovered within the tombs layers. In addition, sherd sampling was done on the site for stratigraphic connections. Interestingly, larger pots of the assemblage had been used as tombs during the Eneolithic Period. Technological as well as

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1 Montet 1928-1929.
3 Dunand 1973, 48, 50.
5 Dunand 1973, 149.
8 Dunand 1937-1939, avant propos vii.
9 Cauvin 1968.
petrographic characterizations were performed on these assemblages. At present, we will only address the petrography of these assemblages. Petrography of the 1200 whole pots, as well as samples collected from the site, revealed rich bioclast inclusions within clay fabrics of the ceramics. In this work, petrography of the most important studied fabrics, P32, P33, P55 and P56, reveal the following:

- these wares are made of clay with calcareous and other mineral inclusions. Non-plastic calcium carbonate inclusions include characteristic bioclasts of foraminifera, lamellibranch fragments, ostracods and echinoderm debris\textsuperscript{10};
- foraminifera are single-celled organisms called protists covered by a test or shell made of one or multiple chambers with simple or very complex structure. They are found in all marine environments either floating in seawater, referred to as planktonic foraminifera, or living in a less oxygenated environment, i.e. the sea bottom, and they are referred to as benthonic foraminifera\textsuperscript{11}. They are usually less than one millimeter in size, with rare exceptions of over 10 cm in size. Their fossil assemblages are important biostratigraphic markers that allow relative age dating for rocks and clay deposits;
- ostracods, also called seed shrimps, are small crustaceans, varying between 0.2 to 30 mm, usually protected by bivalve shells, living on or inside the upper layer of the sea floor\textsuperscript{12}. Like the forams, fossil ostracods are used for the biozonation of old marine strata;
- echinoderms, also known as urchins and starfishes, exclusively live in marine environments on the sea floor. Their ossified skeletons and spines are major contributors to many limestone formations. Fossil echinoderm remains can provide valuable clues as to the paleoenvironment of recipient sedimentary rock\textsuperscript{13}.

In this case study, these fossil bioclasts helped to identify the type and the source of clay used by the Byblos potters for the production of the abovementioned ceramic wares.

\textsuperscript{10} The identification of the inclusions was made on fresh brakes of sherds and on some of the pots under a binocular with 10x and 30x magnification.
\textsuperscript{11} Loeblich - Tappan 1964.
\textsuperscript{12} Clarkson 1993.
\textsuperscript{13} Clarkson 1993.
2. Sample fabric description

Fabric P32, sample n. BYB98 XXIV.3X.02

Fabric P32 is sampled from funerary jar 1720 (fig. 1). Its tomb, numbered 2111, was discovered in square 11/6 at levée L1V (17.20-17.40 meters above sea level).

This fabric is rich in lime, calcite and dolomite crystals and dark brown iron oxide, and it includes significant bioclasts. For example, in fig. 2, a benthonic foraminifer (in the centre of the picture) is a *Trocholina sp.*; another bioclast, left at the base of the foraminifer, is *Pithonella sphaerica* (*Incertae sedis*), which is a round calcite sphere surrounding a dark core. Another *Pithonella sphaerica* is identified in the same fresh break (fig. 3, in the centre), surrounded by calcite debris. In fig. 4 (lower left centre), a planktonic foraminifer cf. *Hedbergellinae* is noted. Such fossil occurs frequently within the “Marnes de Ghazir” Cenoman-M.2norian rock formation of Central Lebanon. The foraminifer is also surrounded by calcite and shell debris.
Fabric P33, sample n. BYB98.XXIV.3X.03
Fabric P33 belongs to stratigraphic sherd samples from a controlled section of the Chalcolithic area at the tell (fig. 5).
This fabric has a moderate mineral inclusions distribution varying between lime, calcite crystals, quartz grains and dark brown iron oxide. Bioclasts include: a benthonic foram cf. *Miliolidae sp.* (fig. 6, lower right centre) and an Ostracod (fig. 7, centre left).

**Fabric P55, sample n. BYB98.XXIV.Cote SE.01**

Fabric P55 belongs to a V shape bowl (fig. 8), museum n. 401616, unearthed from square 13/7 *levée* XLVII. It is a hand-shaped vessel with traces of red slip present on the surface.

In addition to the moderately distributed calcareous debris, and red and black iron oxide inclusions, whole bioclasts and fragments include echinoderm spines, such as in fig. 9, where we note a spine section at the top left.

Fig. 10 shows a quartz sand grain in the lower left corner, iron oxide coated grain in the lower left, a benthonic foraminifer cf. *Miliolidae* in the centre and, finally, a moldic calcite rhomb close to centre of the picture.
Fabric P56, sample n. BYB98 XXIV. CoteSE.02
Fabric P56 belongs to a funerary urn (fig. 11), museum n. 401619, unearthed from square 12/9 levée LI. It is a hand-shaped vessel with traces of burnished red slip present on the surface.

Fabric P56 bears a moderate distribution of mineral inclusions mostly calcite, quartz, red and black iron oxides. In fig. 12, at the top right of the centre, a conical fragment cut towards its free standing end, with blue greyish hue, is a small fragment of a phosphatic fish tooth grain. In fig. 13, an echinoderm spine is visible at the top and a transversal section of a benthonic foraminifer cf. *Miliolidae. sp.* is visible in the centre.
3. Analyses results
The fossil assemblages of foraminifera, echinoderms, ostracods and other calcareous fossil debris within the clay matrices of the ceramic wares indicate a marine origin of the clay deposits. Locally and around Byblos harbour, 5-10 m sections of argillaceous limey thin intervals that alternate with thin limestone beds crop out along the shore. They form a geologic formation called “Marnes de Ghazir”\(^{14}\), that straddles the Cenomanian Turonian stages of the Middle Cretaceous. Fabrics within clay intervals and thin limestone strata include fossil and mineral assemblages similar to those noted within the wares of the ceramics discussed herein. This strongly suggests a provenance of our studied clay from the “Marnes de Ghazir” argillaceous intervals.

4. Geological context of Byblos
The geological context of Byblos gives interesting information concerning the argillaceous intervals of the “Marnes de Ghazir”.

The general direction NNE-SSW of the Lebanese coasts deviates westward, where the alignment of the coast between Maamaltein (Central Lebanon) and Batroun (North Lebanon) takes a north-south direction. From the Nahr Ibrahim to Jbail (Byblos), the north-western coast is steepened by the differential erosion of the middle cretaceous formations that dive toward the west and the south-west under the sea (fig. 14)\(^{15}\).

Geological observations and descriptions of the geology of Jbail by L. Dubertret 1960 (Feuille de Jbail au 1/50.000), note the beginning of an anticline ripple at the level of Jbail. It displays a Cenomanian formation of hard limestone on the flank of Mount Lebanon overlain by a Lower Turonian formation “Marnes de Ghazir”, made of thin argillaceous/chalky beds. An Upper Turonian formation made of limestone with Hippurites\(^{16}\), massive and hard, close to the coastline, partially covers this structure that surrounds the Jbail plateau.

The gentle slopes of these three formations at the foot of the mountain become steeper close to the coast. Downstream the Nahr Ibrahim, the layers of the “Marnes de Ghazir” are compressed into chevron folds\(^{17}\).

\(^{14}\) Noujaim 1977, 78.
\(^{15}\) Dubertret 1945.
\(^{16}\) A fossil bivalve mollusk of the genus Hippurites, of many species, having a conical, cup-shaped lower valve, with a flattish upper valve or lid. Hippurites are found only in the Cretaceous rocks.
\(^{17}\) Dubertret 1945, pl. IV.
whilst at Saqiet Zaidane (north of Byblos), they dip more gently westward. At Ras Qartaboun, south of Jbail, the massive Turonian blocks strongly tilt westward at the coast line (fig. 15).

The Quaternary plateau of Jbail covered with poudingues and sandstones is a former sheltered bay against the up-thrown block of the formation of “Marnes de Ghazir” at Saqiet Zaidane, north of the port of Jbail. The space created by this normal faulting occurred since Tertiary time. The differential erosion that followed coupled with sustained uplift, uncovered a substratum of “Marnes de Ghazir” north of Jbail by Saqiet Zaidan, whilst the down-dropped block with the newly created space provided room for a Quaternary bay and beach deposition flanked by massive Turonian strata southwards along the shore from Ras Qartaboun to Halate (fig. 15).

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18 Frost 2001, fig. 2.
19 Dubertret 1945.
2007 Petrography analyses from the Eneolithic tombs of Byblos

Quaternary porous calcareous sand dunes, known as “Ramleh”, are deposited against the emerged “Marnes de Ghazir” (cliff of Saqiet Zaidane). Outcrops of this Quaternary formation are noticeable around the northern harbour of Jbail and at Jaziret el-Yasmine (fig. 15). A Quaternary to recent sedimentary package of calcareous sands/poudingues covers the substratum of “Marnes de Ghazir” at the foot of the tell of Byblos and under the beach of Skhiny bay (fig. 15).

Fig. 15 - Sketch-map of Byblos region showing the coast line directions (after Sanlaville 1977).

5. Clay sampling from site

The abovementioned geological observations show that the “Marnes de Ghazir” layers are present underneath and close to the ancient tell of Byblos. Hence our samples have been collected from 12 random locations (fig. 16). Only eight samples had the required plasticity to form coherent briquettes of plastic clay, which did not crumble when fired (fig. 17). With our potter, we examined these samples, before and after firing.
According to our potter, S9, sampled from wadi Qassouba downstream (fig. 15), has the needed criteria, mostly adequate plasticity, to be used for pottery making. Moreover, it has a clay fabric similar to our pots’ samples described above. However, our potter indicated that S9 type of clay, with its heavy lime inclusions, can not stand high temperatures unless it is slaked properly and its inclusions removed. This was, in fact, the information we needed, because the pottery of the Eneolithic Period was not highly purified by the potters of Byblos, since they used the clay with its natural inclusions almost barely sieved. Large lime and other mineral inclusions could be easily identified with the naked eye within the fresh breaks of the studied pots.

Close petrographic examinations of S9 showed the same mineral inclusions as our fabric samples. Bioclasts and mineral inclusions have almost the same frequency and distribution as our sample fabrics (fig. 18). Consequently, the petrology of S9 indicated a type of clay weathered from the “Marnes de Ghazir” layers and consequently similar to the clay used to shape the pots with the fabrics P32, P33, P55 and P56.
6. Conclusion

Clay sources do not always have to be very far from the production center. If present, they could be outsourced from nearby locations. In our case, the parent rock i.e. the alternate argillaceous intervals and thin limestone strata of the “Marnes de Ghazir” formation is present near and underneath the tell of Byblos. Consequently, the clay used for the pottery production is almost residual clay, slightly weathered by the stream of the Wadi Qassoubba and deposited on either sides of its banks downstream. Ancient potters, among others the Byblos potters, adapted to the types and conditions of clay they had in hand. The potters of Byblos used the weathered “Marnes de Ghazir” clay in the state it had been extracted, even with many inclusions, shaped it and fired it in conditions that insured its coherence. Their requirements to produce usable pottery were much less rigorous than one would expect and their pottery assemblages were produced in simple conditions. Finally, the bioclastic fraction can be decisive in the tracing of the clay location. Here, the input of a specialized geologist is of primary importance to select and properly identify the
discriminating elements of the fabric that are relevant to the clay origin identification.

**Acknowledgments**

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FUNERARY ARCHITECTURE, FINDINGS AND MORTUARY PRACTICES IN THE EB I JERICHO NECROPOLIS

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1. General view and tombs distribution

The Jericho necropolis is one of the largest of the whole Levant. It provided a precious corpus of data, especially due to J. Garstang’s and K.M. Kenyon’s excavations1. The main interest of the necropolis depends on the chronological extension and continuity of tomb sequences, starting from the early stage of the urbanization in Palestine down to the Late Bronze Age.

The Early Bronze Age phases of the necropolis are extremely important in order to understand the economical and social issues and the ideological framework, linked with the phenomenon of sedentarization in EB I Palestine2. Up to date, the EB I identified cemeteries are two: Area A, located at the northern edge of the necropolis, where K.M. Kenyon discovered ten tombs of the Early Bronze I-II, and Area K, located at its southern limit, where Kenyon discovered two tombs of the Early Bronze I, very close to the area where previously J. Garstang discovered the two tombs of Early Bronze I-II, called respectively Tomb n. 24 and Tomb A (fig. 1)3.

2. EB I tombs

EB IA tombs show a series of typical funerary features: burial chambers are located inside natural caves on the side of the wadi around the tell; the caves were naturally excavated by the water flow and then adapted and enlarged by men to have an oval or rounded plan. The architectural features of these tombs are, thus, very simple, without any additional structure inside the chamber; the only precaution was generally a pillar left at the centre of the chamber to support the roof; the limestone of the

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1 Garstang 1932; 1934; Garstang et al. 1935; 1936; Kenyon 1960; 1965.
2 The Early Bronze IA (phase Sultan IIIa1) represents the first step of sedentarization on the tell and the establishment of the first village, that in the next period (Early Bronze IB, phase Sultan IIIa2) shows the passage in the domestic architecture from the circular to the rectangular plan of the houses (Nigro 2005, 35-42).
caves was, in fact, very friable because of the winter rains and the case of collapse was very frequent also in antiquity.

Fig. 1 - Jericho necropolis: cemeteries from the Early Bronze Age to the Roman Period (after Kenyon 1960, fig. 1).

The earliest tombs of the necropolis in two different funerary areas are Tomb A94 and Tomb K1. These two tombs are the most suitable examples
for a general view of EB IA burial costumes. Tomb K1 is actually a typical example of EB I tombs (fig. 2), with the same architecture of Tomb A94, but with a central pillar used for supporting the roof (probably also due to an extensive use of the burial chamber).

![Fig. 2 - Plan and sections of Tomb K1 (after Kenyon 1965, fig. 12).](image)

Here, the typical burial costume of the Early Bronze IA, i.e. the inhumation, is adopted, and the dead are buried always in secondary position. Long

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4 The tombs discovered by K.M. Kenyon with secondary depositions in EB I strata are: Tomb A13 (Kenyon 1960, 47-51), Tomb A84 (Kenyon 1960, 47), Tomb A94 (Kenyon 1960, 16-40), Tomb A114 (Kenyon 1960, 41-47), Tomb A124 (Kenyon 1965, 31-32), Tomb A130 (Kenyon 1965, 32), Tomb K1 (Kenyon 1965, 27-31), Tomb K2 (Kenyon 1965, 8-27).
bones are piled in the centre and skulls are aligned around the walls of the chamber. The characteristics of the tombs point to families’ burials, showing a special care for the dead, and to a funerary ritual indicating an ideology of death centred on the ancestors of the whole community. Secondary deposition and rearrangement of long bones and skulls after decomposition are attested to in all of the EB IA tombs, and have generated many hypothesis about the techniques adopted for “cleaning” of human bones before burials. Three possibilities have been suggested: 1) natural decomposition on air with the corpses left on natural slopes near the tell (this was the first hypothesis by Kenyon), or under the ground, in a first primary deposition; 2) decomposition favoured by animals, in particular crows and vultures; this hypothesis is frequently supported by the parallelism with a more ancient Neolithic Anatolian wall-painting of Çatal Hüyük (fig. 3), where bodies without heads are left on the top of some kind of towers to be devoured by the vultures: an unusual anthropological costumes though still present today between the Indian Parsis; 3) artificial decomposition, obtained trough more complex practices

5 The ancestors’ role as founders of the ancestry lines, that are at the base of sedentarization, is the last step of a long process that has its origin in the Neolithic Period, with the first attentions and rituals given by Neolithic people to skulls as symbol of the transformation of the dead. When, in the Early Bronze IB, with the process of sedentarization, the ideology of ancestors is definitively unified with the concept of territorial possession by a population viewing in the dead deposed in the same place the base of the commune ancestry lines, the root for the future development of the ideology of death as instrument of power is established. In fact, the ideology of ancestors not only gave social stability to the sedentarization in the Early Bronze IB, but it was also the main base of the ideological justification of the elites that managed the economical production. These elites, promoters of the EB II-III urban development, transformed the ideology of ancestors from an extensive one, characteristic of the whole society in Early Bronze I and founder of the ancestry lines of the clans, in an exclusive one (Polcaro 2006, 283-307).
6 The best example is the necropolis of Bab edh-Dhra’, where in many EB IA tombs the funerary costume of secondary deposition is attested (Rast - Schaub 1989, 35-203).
8 Mellaart 1967, 166-168.
9 The Avestan (i.e. the “tower of silence”) is the funerary tower of the Parsi community, a small ethnical minority migrated from Persia to India in the 7th century and still practicing the Zoroastrian religion. These towers are erected on a hill for the disposal of the dead according to the Zoroastrian rite. Such towers are about 8 m high, built of bricks or stones, and contain gratings on which the
as the boiling of corpses or some other kind of ritual way to take the flesh off.

The only certain data is that Jerichoan corpses were decomposed before their placement inside the burial chamber, since no example of articulation or small bones typical of primary deposition were found inside the tombs. Between the previously reported hypotheses, we prefer the first one, and, in particular, considering the parallelism with the contemporary transhumant peoples of Transjordan\textsuperscript{10}, we believe that bodies were first buried at the ground, in an earthen pit, then re-exhumed, after natural corpses are exposed. After vultures have picked the clean bones, they fall into a pit below. See, e.g., Dixon 1988.

\textsuperscript{10} Analyses on the human bones in the necropolis of Bab edh-Dhra’ proved that bodies were first buried at low deep in the ground. Human bones had slug shells attached, similar to those found in some megalithic burials in the area (Rast - Schaub eds. 1981, 50); these shell were discovered, for example, on the human remains in Tomb A78, burial chamber of south-east (Rast - Schaub eds. 1981, 47-50, 119-120).
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decomposition obtained in a seasonal cycle, and finally re-buried in the familiar tombs near the tell. However, in Tomb A94, contemporary to K1, the pile of long bones, without the skulls, was burned\(^{11}\). I suggest that a different burial custom was adopted by the family titular of that tomb. This could be related to the necessity of purifying the bones from residual flesh due to the short time left to decomposition under the ground\(^{12}\).

Pottery inside the burial chambers is typical of EB IA Palestine and it does not show important differences with the usual domestic assemblages of the same period; storage jars are completely absent; while the most common shapes are bowls and small cups with loop handle (fig. 4)\(^{13}\). EB IA funerary assemblages also exhibit some personal ornaments as cornelian beads, but also symbolic objects, as the pierced bones interpreted by Kenyon as “flutes”. These are small bones with two holes, and sometimes incised lines above, which look like a “face” (fig. 5)\(^{14}\).

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\(^{11}\) Kenyon 1960, 16-40.
\(^{12}\) Polcaro 2006, 78.
\(^{13}\) Kenyon 1960, 11-16; 1965, 6-8.
\(^{14}\) These lines have generated different interpretations of these objects; see Polcaro 2005b, 138-139; 2006, 80.
Other objects found inside EB IA tombs are mace-heads often made of limestone, but sometime also of semi-precious stones (as calcite, pink granite, marble), indicative of the social organization of this period and of the exchanges between the Jordan Valley and Egypt\(^\text{15}\). Unfortunately, all furnishings of these tombs were mixed together against the walls of the burial chambers and it was not possible to recognize the different assemblages related to each dead. This could be explained with the egalitarian ideology of EB IA transhumance people, before the emergence of the figure of a chief of the community\(^\text{16}\).

The tombs of Jericho present two important changes in the Early Bronze IB: the passage from secondary to primary deposition of the dead and the appearance of the typical brick or stone platforms, where the dead and sometime the funerary assemblage were located, as it is shown by Tomb K2\(^\text{17}\). The passage to primary deposition is a possible indication of the complete sedentarization on the tell, while the introduction of the burial platform for the bodies indicates the attention that some individuals received after death. The ideology of ancestors of the previous period changed. Burial platforms inside the tombs spread in all EB IB Palestinian necropolises indicating the passage to an ideology of death celebrating a single dead as special.

\(^{15}\) On the presence of Egyptian or Egyptianizing mace-heads at Jericho, and the relationships with the pre- and proto-dynastic Egypt in the Early Bronze I see Nigro in this volume, pp. 19, 37-38.

\(^{16}\) Polcaro 2006, 139-146.

\(^{17}\) Kenyon 1965, 8-27.
individual\textsuperscript{18}. In the Early Bronze IB new characteristic pottery appear\textsuperscript{19}, possibly related to new costumes deriving from sedentarization. The other funerary goods do not change, but it is now possible for the first time to identify the single objects referred to each dead, possibly indicating his social status. For example, carved bone more elaborated than the EB IA “flutes” were found, as the cylinder worked with line-pattern outside, possibly a seal, recovered in Tomb A127\textsuperscript{20}, an EB IB tomb with stone platforms (fig. 6).

\begin{center}
\textbf{Fig. 6 - Plan of Tomb A127 (after Kenyon 1960, fig. 24).}
\end{center}

3. EB I funerary rituals: similarities and differences between the Jericho and Byblos necropolises

Previous contributions\textsuperscript{21} have already shown the many similarities existing between the EB I tradition at Jericho and Late Eneolithic of Byblos in domestic architecture and settlement organization\textsuperscript{22}; however, the burial

\begin{center}
\textsuperscript{18} Such a conception in some ways anticipate what in historical period was royal funerary ideology (Polcaro 2006, 147-150).
\textsuperscript{19} Sala 2005, 169-170, 174-175.
\textsuperscript{20} Kenyon 1960, 85-93.
\textsuperscript{21} Ben-Tor 1989.
\textsuperscript{22} See Nigro in this volume, §§ 6.1., 7.1.
customs attested to in the Byblos necropolis seem very different from those of Jericho. In Byblos, dead are mostly buried inside big jars, similar to the ossuaries of the Chalcolithic Period in Southern Levant, simply interred in the ground. Further analyses of data perhaps shows some similarities between the funerary ritual of Byblos and Jericho in Early Bronze I. Actually, at Byblos there is no chronological indication available about the dead in primary deposition and those in secondary burial\(^23\): dead lay inside the jars mostly in primary position, with the bones in articulation\(^24\). However, sometime a second burial is inserted into the jar removing the bones of the first one and keeping in the jar the skull\(^25\). This process is thus very similar to the one attested to in the Jericho necropolis and suggests that the skulls were preserved in the memory of ancestors like in EB IA tombs of Tell es-Sultan. Moreover, in a tomb of Byblos, where many people are buried inside the funerary jar, the remains of the oldest burials consisted in a line of skulls aligned along a wall of the burial chamber\(^26\), in the same way of the EB IA secondary burials of the Palestinian necropolis. The selection of the skulls and of the long bones for the conservation of the ancient dead is thus a trait d'union between the ideology of death of the Jericho and Byblos populations, that perhaps identified the skull as seat of the soul and the material sign of the perpetuation of dead. Similarities are also present in the position of bodies in the earliest inhumations: if we compare primary burials of Byblos with those of Early Bronze IB in Jericho, we see that in both cases dead mostly lay on one side, generally the left, with the legs crouched and the hands on the chest\(^27\). A further similarity of the burial costumes in the two necropolises is

\(^{23}\) As at Jericho and in all the EB I Palestine cemeteries, where the burial costume changes from the secondary burial in the Early Bronze IA to the primary burial in the Early Bronze IB, with the sedentarization on the tells.

\(^{24}\) Dunand 1973, 246-265.

\(^{25}\) See, for example, Tomb 1686, 11/4, XLVI, where two adults are deposed in a big funerary jar and two older inhumations were discovered outside the jar with the bones scattered (Dunand 1973, 257), and Tomb 1521, 13/10, XLIII, where only one inhumation was recovered in primary deposition with all the skeleton in crouched position, while one adult and 8 children were found in secondary deposition with only the skulls and the long bones present (Dunand 1973, 258).

\(^{26}\) Tomb 1590, 14/8, XLV (Dunand 1973, 257-258).

\(^{27}\) See, for example, Tomb 645, 3/5, XL (Dunand 1973, 252-253). In the Early Bronze Age Palestinian necropolises, the dead in primary position, mostly crouched, had sometimes the hands in front of the chest, or, in some cases, in front of the face (Polcaro 2006, 174-176).
the attestation of cremation as a system for a faster decomposition of the body.28

Another possible similarity may be seen in some cases in the composition of the funerary assemblages. Funerary gifts in Byblos burials are mostly pots, beads and bone tools: these bone tools with one hole recovered in Eneolithic burials of Byblos resemble some well known items in the Jericho necropolis, in particular the so-called Kenyon’s “flutes”, though these ones have two holes instead of a single one (fig. 5).29 The materials of the bead used for necklaces are the same of the Jericho ones, and, in particular, the most used semi-precious stone was red cornaline in both the cemeteries.30 Vessels shapes in funerary equipments of Byblos and Jericho are different, but the general distribution of functional types is once again very similar: in many cases, the pottery associated with a dead includes a bowl and a small cup, with sometimes small jars. Special items made of symbolic materials, such as copper and silver, are also attested to in both necropolises. Mace-heads are common both in Jericho and Byblos, while the choice of a particular material for them, like alabaster or other imported stones, indicates the importance of these items as distinctive signs of rank: this is clearly represented in the Byblos necropolis too.33

In conclusion, the ritual of the inhumation of the dead and also the ideological background seem thus to be similar in EB I Jericho and Byblos, though with several differences due to the different cultural interactions and external factors of these two coeval Levantine communities.

28 See, for example, Tombs 1785, 2/4, XLVIII and 1563, 11/6, XLV, where one of the three burials inside the same jar had the bones clearly burned (Dunand 1973, 257).
29 Dunand 1973, 246-265.
31 Dunand 1973, 246-265.
32 This kind of metal was discovered in children’s funerary assemblages (see, for example, the silver ring of Tomb 1424, 16/9, XLII; Dunand 1973, 249), as well as in the funerary assemblages of adults (see, for example, the rich Tomb 1674, 11/6, XLVI, where a silver necklace and some silver beads of different shape were discovered; Dunand 1973, 253-254).
33 See the oval-shaped mace-head of Tomb 1674, 11/6, XLVI (Dunand 1973, 253), in bone, with a silver ring around the hole.
34 Dunand 1973, 260-265.
4. Jericho Tomb A excavated by J. Garstang

One of the most important Jericho tombs for the Early Bronze I is Tomb A, a large cave tomb recovered at 150 m from the tell and excavated by J. Garstang in 1931. The number of dead and the dimension of the burial chamber clearly indicate the importance of the tomb, which Garstang dated too late, at the end of the Early Bronze Age. The recent analysis of EB I strata of Tell es-Sultan, allow to re-date the first occupation of Tomb A (layer 4) to the end of the Early Bronze IA, while the last period of use was the Early Bronze III (layer 0). It is interesting, in particular, the reproduction of stratum 3/2b, where the transition from the Early Bronze IB to the Early Bronze II is shown (fig. 7). Stratum 2b is visible on the western corner, where all corpses of the precedent period, mainly skulls, are located near the walls of the burial chamber in order to make it free for new primary burials. On the other side of the chamber, the intact corpses are visible and also the original position of pottery and other items of the funerary inventory were kept. In this stratum, dated to the Early Bronze IB, a dead, called n. 24, lies in a noticeable position: the corpse is on his back, with the arms raised. His legs were crossed each other and, between them, a mace-head, the only one present in the whole tomb, was recovered. The other primary depositions in the tomb show all the side crouched position, according to a very common custom in Palestinian EB IB cemeteries. This last position is typical of the Early Bronze Age in the Palestine cemeteries, starting from the establishment of the primary deposition in the Early Bronze IB.

The raised arm of dead n. 24, remind us the Stele of Arad, discovered by R. Amiran. The Stele, that probably represents some ritual act, shows two figures with raised arms: one lies on a rectangular structure, probably a coffin or a platform, and the other stands in front of him, with emphasized opened hands. This scene, interpreted as the death and the resurrection of a god, identified by Amiran with the Sumerian God Dumuzi, can however represent a funerary ritual, with a priest or a mourner praying for an important death person.

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35 Garstang 1932, 18-23.
37 Polcaro 2005a, 57-65.
38 Polcaro 2005a, 59.
39 Polcaro 2005a, 60, fig. 3.50, 63, fig. 3.53.
40 Polcaro 2005a, 65-68.
41 Amiran 1972, 86.
A man praying with raised arms also is depicted in several cylinder seals of the Early Bronze Age Southern Levant, such as some examples from Bab edh-Dhra’ in Transjordan. Another interesting parallel is with one of the incised figures of Tell el-Mutesellim (court 4008, stratum XIX, slab 5), where a man with raised arms stands up in front of the moon crescent with a musical instrument, possible a lyre, and a sign or a spear\(^{42}\). In general, the gesture of raising arms is considered in the whole Mesopotamian literature as a prayer of invocation to the gods, for example in the invocations of the sun god Utu, but it also remains in the successive classical and Biblical tradition and later: for example, in the typical representation of the “orant” in the Early Christian catacombs (II-IV sec.

\(^{42}\) Loud 1948, 61, fig. 390, pl. 273; Polcaro 2005a, 67, fig. 3.56.
AC). We thus suggest that the explicit choice of the burial position of the corpse in the tomb we are discussing clearly refers to the sacred gesture for the invocation of gods, which probably identifies the dead n. 24 of the Tomb A of Jericho as a priest\textsuperscript{43}. The particular position of the dead n. 24 of the Tomb A, thus, shows that, while in a pre-urban culture, the architecture and the funerary gifts are not useful to recognize any difference in the role played by the dead in the society, the position of the dead may indicate his social status\textsuperscript{44}. It is interesting, moreover, to analyze the funerary gifts found near dead n. 24: apart from the usual vessels, bowls and juglets, between the legs of the dead there was a calcite mace-head, the only found in the whole tomb\textsuperscript{45}. The association of the mace-head with this particular dead, possible a priest or eventually a chief with a sacred role of the family group buried in Tomb A, identifies this object as distinctive of his status. Some objects as mace-heads, common in the Early Bronze IA, but not related to a particular person in that period, can thus in the Early Bronze IB become a distinctive funerary gift for identifying the community leader.

The EB I necropolis of Tell es-Sultan is, thus, of sound interests for the understanding of the historical and social evolutions of the society from the Proto-Urban Period to the mature urban society of EB II. Because of this reason, Rome “La Sapienza” Expedition to Palestine & Jordan, with the patronage of UNESCO, started two years ago a project for the conservation and valorisation of the funerary areas in Jericho, now heavily threatened by the modern urban development of the city of Ariha.

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\textsuperscript{43} Polcaro 2005a, 69-70.

\textsuperscript{44} In the Early Bronze IA, it is still difficult to recognize different social ranks and roles of the dead by the funerary rituals. In the Early Bronze IB, with the establishment of the primary burial in Southern Levant, the funerary gifts are for the first time linked to a single dead. However, prestigious elements used as social distinction are not yet identified. Only in the Early Bronze II-III, in particular with the appearance of weapons in the burials, some status elements, distinctive of the rank of the dead, become visible. This is also the period in which changes of tombs architecture possibly descend from a special role of some families in the society (Polcaro 2006, 283-308).

\textsuperscript{45} Polcaro 2005a, 61, fig. 3.51.
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1. Introduction

Recent discoveries in Syria allow to analyse, more and more in detailed and organic way, not only individual monuments, or aspects of the artistic and material cultures as such, but, by means of an actually wide and articulated comparison with contemporary evidence, even more general ideological patterns, and the organisation of matter and space, looking for eventual common models, at least at the regional, sometimes at the macro-regional level.

In this occasion, we would like to ask some question to two basic sites of the Levant in the Early Bronze Age: Ebla in the inner plateau, not completely excavated, and yet rich of quite relevant evidence, and Byblos, on the coast, completely excavated, albeit with far from satisfactory techniques. What we wish to investigate regards the shape of the town, the eventual ideology which brought to the elaboration of that specific shape, and the possible existence of models that ideology might have employed in order to create the urban pattern.

One first element in common between the two centres is certainly that both are the expression of the important phenomenon we usually call “secondary” urbanization, and that they were closely related to the great trade route connecting the shores of the Arab-Persian Gulf with the Mediterranean, having as its farthest, yet very important terminals the Indus Valley and the Nile Valley. Both sites were, therefore, the result of on purpose planning, not much influenced from eventual previous settlements, and of the capacity of exploiting different natural resources, and the important income of long distance trade. Yet, as far as we actually know, Byblos had been settled before the urban development proper, and shows remnants of important Late Neolithic and Proto-Urban occupations, while Ebla is apparently a new foundation, in a site apparently not very rich

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1 The phenomenon of secondary urbanization in Syria is quite well developed and of the greatest interest for its symbolic elements, which, though derived from Mesopotamia, show since the beginning strong, and elaborated elements of originality (Matthiae 1993, 527-528).
in natural resources, yet of relevant strategic importance precisely for the domination over trade routes.

2. Ebla

Ebla is located in north inner Syria, in excellent position to control the last segment of the caravan route, which left the Euphrates near Mari, and crossed a region with several well equipped and strongly structured settlements – like al-Rawda or Sha'yrat – probably functional precisely for the management of trade; in fact, their decline at the end of the Early Syrian period, when quite likely trade routes changed in upper Syria, with the joint influence of a possible climatic crisis, led to the progressive de-urbanization of that region of inland Syria. 

Subsistence at Ebla was based on the extensive exploitation of a wide territory, which allowed, on a large scale, the integration of the agriculture of cereals, legumes, olive trees and vines, with cattle and sheep breeding, and the cultivation of fruit trees on the nearby mountains, as is quite evident from the bio-archaeological remains on the site. These characteristics, with the absence of important water resources, make of Ebla a typical example of secondary urban settlement, whose development is made possible only by means of the joint exploitation of different resources, as we have already mentioned, agriculture of cereals, vegetables and fruit, cattle and sheep breeding, and trade.

From the combination of written and archaeological evidence we can propose the following reconstruction of the urban pattern of mature Early Syrian Ebla, around 2300 BC. In Early Bronze IVA, the site quite likely had the same extension of 56 hectares (fig. 1), which it kept in the following phases of Early Bronze IVB and Middle Bronze I-II, and was surrounded by a massive mud-brick wall. We may have an idea of this wall from a sector preserved inside the Old Syrian rampart, certainly dating from Early Bronze IVB (fig. 2), but probably originally built in Early Bronze IVA: the fortification was completed by sight and defence towers, which might have had a square, or rectangular section, as often happens in contemporary sites; yet we cannot rule the possibility out that they had a round section, as can be observed in nearby Tell Tuqan, where the round towers usually dated from Early Bronze IVB, were recently attributed in an accurate study to Middle Bronze by F. Baffi (fig. 3).

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3 Castel 2004, 5-6.
4 Baffi 2006, 22.
Fig. 1 - Ebla. General plan of the site, with excavated areas in white, and schematic plans of the main EB IVA buildings.

The general plan, actually with an ellipsoidal shape, may have been originally a round one, later on changed in an ellipsoid, as recently proposed by P. Matthiae⁵, yet the possibility that it was elliptical also in the

⁵ Matthiae in press.
original shape cannot be ruled out. The town was divided into four main quarters, a pattern again preserved into the Old Syrian period, corresponding to the four gates still visible in the fortification perimeter. Remains of a road running at the foot of the Acropolis were located south of the ruins of the Royal Palace G, between this building and a probable cult edifice, running under the Southern Palace of Middle Bronze I-II\textsuperscript{6}.

\textbf{Fig. 2 - Ebla. Western rampart: remains of the EB IVA-B town wall; inside, the MB I rampart.}

\textbf{Fig. 3 - Tell Tuqan: one of the MB round towers included in the town wall.}

\textsuperscript{6} Taking into consideration the fact that the town apparently kept the main elements of its pattern from Early Bronze through Middle Bronze Age, it is quite likely that, as happened in Middle Bronze, radial streets ran through the lower town, connecting the street running all around the foot of the Acropolis, with the four main gates.
The Acropolis, almost in central place, and certainly lower than today, was nearly totally occupied by the quarters of the royal Palace – Palace G – which stretched into the lower town west, in correspondence with the Court of Audience (fig. 4), adopting a model which can be paralleled with Palace A at Kish in general plan (fig. 5)\(^7\), but which reveals important differences as concerns royal ceremonial and the relation between king and subjects.

![Fig. 4 - Ebla. Schematic plan on the Royal Palace G.](image)

In fact, at Kish the court between the two main blocks of the palace was functional to circulation between them, while at Ebla it was the main place for royal reception; at Kish, though with some uncertainty, the throne room may be identified in a remote part of one block (Building II, rooms 43-45)\(^8\), while at Ebla it is close to the entrance to the Administrative Quarter.

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\(^7\) Heinrich 1984, 17-21. The problems of functional interpretation of this building, which represents the first example of public architecture not devoted to cult in Mesopotamia, are largely highlighted by Margueron (Margueron 1982, 62-64, 68-69), perhaps with an excess of scepticism.

\(^8\) The main problem in identifying the functions of Early Dynastic palaces in Mesopotamia, is the possible co-existence of strong elements of cult, descending...
The palatial complex, called SA.ZA in the Archives texts, was closely related with a sanctuary dedicated to the main deity of the town, namely God Kura. In a sounding made in the *cella* of Ishtar’s temple in Area D, on the top of the Acropolis, previous monumental remains were singled out, dated on the base of pottery evidence to Early Bronze IVB (fig. 6). It seems from the Uruk tradition. So, for instance, precisely in Palace A, the group of rooms 43-45, which may possibly be the reception suite of the palace, when examined in isolation, closely resembles the typical temple structure of the Uruk period (Margueron 1982, fig. 26, *secteur*). Yet, we would like to stress that the absence of the tripartition, and the slightly different articulation of the outer walls might point to a shift in function, from a merely cult, to a cult-laic destination. A duality also reflected in the titles used for the sovereigns in Mesopotamian city-states of the Early Dynastic period.
therefore possible to propose that also in the mature Early Syrian period this region was the location of a temple, possibly precisely the sanctuary dedicated to Kura. This hypothesis may be perhaps supported by another observation: during the same Early Bronze IVB the royal palace was located elsewhere, in the lower town north – the so-called Archaic Palace (fig. 7) – and, therefore, the presence of an important cult building on the top of the Acropolis seems to be the consequence of the relation with a relevant older temple, rather than of the connection with a palace, while the close connection temple-palace was immediately restored at the beginning of Middle Bronze, when the royal residence (Palace E) stood to the side of Ishtar’s Temple (Temple D). Another possible element of evidence is the presence, in the north-west wing of the Royal Palace G, of a probable cult sector, adjacent to the proposed location of Kura’s temple, pointing to a sacral function of that area of the Acropolis.

Fig. 6 - Ebla. Sounding below Temple D on the Acropolis.

9 The sector included two rooms, definitely larger than the surrounding ones, whose floors had been decorated with wood inlays, marking the thresholds (Matthiae 1990, 391-405).
In the Lower Town the sure elements of the urban pattern thus far known are three: Building P4 to the north, the presumed sanctuary immediately south of the Royal Palace G, and the most important one, the Temple of the Rock to the south-east, close to the town wall. We would like to underline that the location of this sanctuary confirms the position of the Early Syrian fortification also in this part of the town.

Building P4 was a multi-functional structure, used for food and luxury handicraft production (fig. 8). Grinding stones, preservation jars, and other fixed fittings point to large scale transformation of cereals and olives, while handicraft production was specialised prevalently in the creation of shell elements of inlays. Similar elements of inlaid panels found inside the Royal Palace G are usually of bigger size and made of stone; moreover, the building is located near the north foot of the Acropolis, at some distance from the Palace, thus, it seems more likely, as in fact Marchetti and Nigro have convincingly maintained, that the building was not meant to supply directly the court. The hypothesis is that the point of reference was a cult

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10 The great majority of the inlays from Building P4 seem to belong to inlaid panels with human figures, wearing kaunakes-dresses, and sheep, with only a few specimens of other items, which are, on the contrary, the majority in the Royal Palace G, like fragments of lapis lazuli beards or hair-dresses, or miniature hair-dresses in the round.

area, corresponding to the Old Syrian Temple P2, where traces of EB IVB occupation were also found. Even the head of the cult statue found in the ruins of the Old Syrian temple might date back from the same period\textsuperscript{12}. Moreover, as we have pointed out at for Temple D on the Acropolis, this would not be the only evidence for a continuity of occupation and function in the areas of the most important buildings at Ebla, as similar events were also observed in the area of Temple N, and of the Western Palace.

\textbf{Fig. 8 - Ebla. Isometric view of Building P4, Early Bronze IVA.}

The Temple of the Rock has a massive structure (fig. 9), with \textit{in antis} façade, and \textit{Breitraum cella}; curiously its entrance is turned to the east, which is the direction of sunrise, yet, in this case, gave to the building a very limited breath, as it was very close to the town wall. On the base of what is written in the Eblaic rituals of kingship it was convincingly proposed that this may have been the second temple dedicated to Kura in the town, where the queen, after spending one night outside the town walls, went at sunrise, in order to wear the clothes and paraphernalia of her rank, before going towards Kura’s palatine temple in SA.ZA.

\textsuperscript{12} Matthiae - Pinnock - Scandone 1995, 392, fig. 237.
Thus, the location of the sanctuary, very close to the wall and the gate quite likely opening into it, in correspondence with the Old Syrian Steppe Gate, and called Kura’s gate in the Early Syrian period, was perfectly functional to this ritual. On the other hand, the choice of this place is also strictly related, and possibly determined by the rock underneath, which made up a large part of the floor of the cella, surfaced again in front of the entrance, where it also opened in a cavity\textsuperscript{13}.

\textsuperscript{13} The excavations of the 2007 campaign revealed that, below a well arranged protection of fifteen courses of bricks, placed in the cella after the destruction of the town, at the end of the mature Early Syrian period, around 2300 BC, in fact the cella itself was occupied for its largest part by another cavity, approximately round in shape, served by three pits, where several clay vases of refined craftsmanship had been ritually thrown. This finding, on the one hand, supports the name of Temple of the Rock given to the structure, as it confirms the fact that the rock...
Therefore, the Temple of the Rock played a relevant role in the ritual of kingship because it stood over a place which had a strong meaning for that same kingship, as it had possibly been the theatre of a historical or mythic-historical event, probably closely related with the foundation of the town (fig. 10).

In sum, Early Syrian Ebla had a round or elliptical shape, closed by a built mud-brick wall; it was divided in four quarters, limited by radial roads joining a ring-like street running at the feet of the Acropolis, and had an important ideological reference point in a natural element located in the lower town, marked by a sanctuary related with kingship. The urban pattern ended up, as happened later on in the Old Syrian period, in the royal palace and in the temple of the deity protecting the town, located side by side on the Acropolis, most likely visible from outside, over the top of the town wall.

Fig. 10 - Ebla. 3D rendering of the Temple of the Rock.

Itself played an important part in the rites which took place in the cult place, and, on the other hand, throws some light on the personality of Kura, as head of the Early Syrian Eblaic pantheon, probably related with the underground sweet water, and with foundation myths of the Eblaic kingship.
3. Byblos

The analysis of the Eblaic evidence is made a little difficult by the not yet complete archaeological exploration, and by the possibility that anyhow the oldest levels were largely obliterated by the most recent ones. On the other hand, the study of Byblos is made quite complicated for every period of its life, for the system of excavation and registration employed, which puts very serious obstacles to the understanding of evidence\(^\text{14}\), starting with the basic point: is the site identified with Byblos the whole town, or is it a part of it, mainly corresponding to the centre of power?\(^\text{15}\)

In the reconstruction we are going to propose here we will rely on Muntaha Saghiæ’s scrupulous reconstruction and recovery of the excavation data. Caution is of course compulsory, and we are certainly risking some circular reasoning.

The Gublite territory is certainly more limited than that of Ebla (fig. 11), for the closeness of the hills over which the site stretches in part: the large land extensions are missing, which in inland Syria allow extensive cereals agriculture and cattle breeding.\(^\text{16}\) The site was probably organised in a primary phase precisely on the hills, and was gradually shifted closer to the sea, until it occupied a promontory, whose actual shape is quite likely the result of strong erosion of the coast line\(^\text{17}\). It had a strong and quite sudden flourishing during Early Bronze II, around 2900 BC.\(^\text{18}\). As a result it was proposed that it was a new foundation, inspired by Egyptian presence\(^\text{19}\). In the light of similar phenomena observed elsewhere, like at

\(^\text{14}\) An example of the problems met with in analysing the Gublite evidence, but also of the possibilities to exploit the extant data is offered by Finkbeiner 1981 for the Obelisk Temple.
\(^\text{15}\) Margueron underlines the problem of size (Margueron 1994, 26): Byblos is 5 hectares in surface vs 56 hectares of Ebla, while the Old Syrian palace of Mari reaches 2.5 hectares. One obvious possibility is that the tell thus far excavated were only the Acropolis of the town, while the lower town might stretch inland, though not for a large extension. In fact, the possibility must not be ruled out, that, due to geographic conditions, the sites on the Mediterranean coast were smaller than those inland, and included more than one site in strategic position, as happens, for instance, with the complex of Ugarit, Minet el-Beida, Ras Ibn Hani, all belonging to one and the same town system.
\(^\text{16}\) See at this regard Margueron 1994, 13-14.
\(^\text{18}\) Jidejian 1968, 15.
\(^\text{19}\) Margueron 1994, 26. As a matter of fact, the hypothesis is advanced only on the base of the round shape of the town, which however, as Margueron points out at,
Ebla, we rather believe that the town was shifted closer to the sea, and flourished in function of the definition of the long distance trade routes we have already mentioned, taking, like Ebla and the sites growing up to the east, in the steppe region, great advantage of the possibilities offered by the developments we link with the phenomenon of secondary urbanization. Within this frame, as we will try to demonstrate, relations with foreign powers may have given birth to individual monumental shapes or types, but the basic model for the urban pattern is definitely a local one.

Fig. 11 - The territory of Byblos (after Margueron 1994, fig. 2).

Stretching over two hills, an upper and a lower hill, Byblos has its centre in a depression, where a well was excavated, in order to reach the water table below, as seems more likely, or, according another interpretation, to exploit a natural source (fig. 12). The town wall, identified in part, includes a stone structure, probably a glacis, strengthened in a second moment by buttresses. The preserved fragments follow an arch, and were apparently the last feature added to the town, as they covered older

is not a typical Egyptian feature, though the Egyptian hieroglyphic sign for town is circular.

20 Margueron 1994, 14, 18-19.
houses. Thus, during the Early Bronze Age period, the urban pattern was reduced, or rather, the centre of power was defined by means of a second defence wall. After this event, anyhow, private burials were no more allowed on the tell, with the only exception of royal tombs.

Fig. 12 - Byblos. General plan of periods K III/IV (after Saghieh 1983, plan I).

The town, or part of town preserved, is divided into seven quarters by main streets (fig. 13), which, in the middle of the tell limit a sector including the well, the sanctuary later called Obelisk Temple, and the Chapelle Orientale, with an open space, pivoting on a feature which Dunand called sacred pool, a regular oval hollow, which may have contained water\textsuperscript{22}. The concentration of cult buildings in the region of the well and of the open space leads to believe that they did not have a uniquely utilitarian function in the urban pattern, but rather that they had some accessory, or exclusive function in religious rites.

On one side of this complex, but at a higher level, stood the main temple of the town, whose titular deity was nearly certainly the Baalat Gebal\textsuperscript{23}. The building was related on one side with the well, and on the other with the open space.

\textbf{Fig. 13 - Byblos. General plan with the indication of main streets, and of the division in quarters (after Saghieh 1983, 2, ill. 1).}

\textsuperscript{22} Saghieh 1983, 1-3, ill. 1.

\textsuperscript{23} Saghieh 1983, 40-58.
The identification of the palace area of Byblos is one of the most complicated matters, among many problems set by the reconstruction of the urban pattern of the town, and will probably remain unsolved. The evidence at hand is very scanty: Dunand maintained he had identified remains of an extended residence on one rock spur dominating the sea\textsuperscript{24}. In his description the residence included a large central room, with two pairs of rooms on each side, on whose floors several fragments of alabaster vases were found, bearing hieroglyphic inscriptions of one Pepys, and therefore belonging to one or both pharaohs of the VI Dynasty with this name. The plan of these remains, however, was not published, while M. Saghieh identified, at a short distance from the Baalat Temple, two relevant structures, large rectangular halls, whose walls are decorated with flat buttresses and niches inside and outside. In these buildings pharaonic inscriptions bearing the name of Pepys were found, together with a large collection of Egyptian objects with inscriptions spanning from the IV to the VI Dynasty; moreover, their building technique is quite similar to that of a better preserved pavilion, located on the other side of the Baalat complex, between the temple and the “pool”.

We may observe what follows: the two halls are not free-standing, but seem to be further related with remains of other relevant structures, and their plan is used also in important private residences. It seems, therefore, quite likely that they did not have a cult function, or did not have only a cult function. They are placed at a high level, at the same height as the Baalat Temple, in a place from which they dominate the sea. It is moreover possible that in the later Middle Bronze Age the Royal Palace were not too far away, slightly shifted to the north, in correspondence with the region of the Royal Tombs, where impressive remains of stone foundations, whose date is unknown, but whose technique closely resembles the typical Middle Bronze masonry, might mark the original placement of the palace (fig. 14). We therefore propose that the two buildings including the halls, or at least the easternmost of them, were part of a larger palace complex, probably made juxtaposing separate units, which replicated the basic plan of a

\textsuperscript{24} Montet 1925, 31. In his description some large stone block, possibly belonging to an imposing building, was located in relation with the entrance to the wells leading to Tombs III and IV. Further on, the hill had been made more regular by stones, in order to host a building dominating the sea. The author maintained he had found part on the stone masonry and a large staircase with three steps, actually included in the Crusaders’ wall. Apparently, the building was also somehow connected with the Baalat Temple.
luxury residential typology. The importance of the buildings is marked, anyhow, by the relevance of the pharaonic objects they contained.

Thus, in this reconstruction, Byblos had, in summary, a general pattern difficult to reconstruct, as preservation is incomplete, for which a round shape was proposed. It was limited by a built wall, of which a short sector is preserved with two gates. The centre had an important ideological reference point in a natural feature located in the lower town, well, or source (fig. 15)25, marked by the presence of sanctuaries; one of them, the

25 In the light of the recent discoveries at Ebla, in Area HH, Temple of the Rock, there seems to be some similarity, at least from the ideological point of view between the Gublite well, and the Eblaic cavity inside the cella of the Temple of the Rock: in both instances, in fact, natural features, related with the underground, were artificially re-arranged, and became the pivot of cult activities of great importance for the town. In fact, even admitting that the cavity of Byblos were a well, thus a source of drinking water, the importance of the masonry surrounding it, and the placement of important sanctuaries around it go definitely beyond its mere practical importance for the survival of the inhabitants.
Obelisk Temple, was, in our opinion, at least in Middle Bronze I, but possibly also previously (the so-called “Temple en L”)\(^{26}\), probably strongly related with kingship, and with rituals of kingship, culminating with the offering of royal images and paraphernalia, which had to be preserved underground\(^{27}\). Lastly, the urban landscape had its visual focus, as quite likely happened in the Middle Bronze Age, in the temple of the deity protecting the town, and in the royal palace, side by side in eminent position, dominating the coastline below.

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\(^{26}\) Sala in this volume, p. 49, note 11.

\(^{27}\) Pinnock, in press. The Obelisk Temple, according one hypothesis, which seems quite sound, was dedicated to the god Rashap, lord of war, death, and plague, who had, at Ebla, an important sanctuary closely related with the Western Palace, the Crown Prince’s residence, built over the Royal necropolis, and with the Sanctuary of the deified royal ancestors. We therefore proposed that, as many votive deposits in the Gublite temple are related with kingship, also the Obelisk Temple might have had a similar function, and was employed for royal rites also by foreign sovereigns, in particular the Eblaic ones, who could find, also in the arrangement of the urban pattern of the coastal town, a traditional setting for this kind of ceremonies.
located in the lower town, and the temple stood, most probably alone, on top of the Acropolis. At Byblos, the halls do not have traces of occupation during the same Early Bronze IVB, and an imposing palatial building was erected in the lower town, near the so-called megaron in M. Saghieh’s Area II (fig. 16)\textsuperscript{28}.

\textsuperscript{28} Saghieh 1983, 27.
4. Models in comparison

In our opinion, therefore, Ebla and Byblos seem to define, with some difference related with the two sites catchments, and origin, a Syro-Palestinian typology of royal town, namely of an autonomous centre, ruled by a king, with independent policies, and playing a role in international long distance trade.

This proposed model was not the only possible one, and certainly we must refer to the most relevant one, also attested in north Syria, namely the closed centre, with a round shape not only in the general pattern, but also in the organisation of the settlement texture, with concentric streets, cut more or less in perpendicular by other streets leading towards the centre of the site\(^{29}\), where the focus is a cult building, rather than a palace or residence\(^{30}\). The latter is frequently located in the lower town, in a peripheral region\(^{31}\), as happened only for a short period at Ebla, during Early Bronze IVB. In upper Syria this typology is the typical urban pattern for great centres with extended territorial control, like Tell Khuera for instance (fig. 17)\(^ {32}\). In north inner Syria, on the other hand, it was possibly used for lower rank settlements, where the acknowledgement of cultural, and political belonging was marked by the adoption of common architectural typologies, as happens, for instance, in the temple of al-Rawda (fig. 18)\(^ {33}\), whose size and shape closely resemble the Temple of the Rock at Ebla. Another characteristic of this settlement typology is the separation between Acropolis and lower town, by means of a system of concentric fortification walls; this model was adopted in Old Syrian Ebla, but it was certainly not present in Early Syrian Ebla, where, as we have recalled, the Royal Palace G was in close touch with the lower town through the open space we called Court of Audience. If the tell of Byblos is the actual town of the Early Bronze Age, it would follow the Eblaic typology, while, were the walls thus far singled out the inner fortification of the Acropolis, the model adopted here would rather be that of the north Syrian-north Mesopotamian *Kranzhügel*. In this instance, however, the articulation of the “Acropolis” would present all the characteristics of a complete town pattern.

\(^{29}\) Meyer 2006, 185, fig. 3.
\(^{30}\) Meyer 2006, 183, fig. 2.
\(^{31}\) Meyer 2006, 187, fig. 7.
\(^{32}\) Meyer 2006 offers an up to date review of all the problems related with the development of the *Kranzhügel* type.
Fig. 17 - Tell Khuera. General plan with functional division of the site (after Meyer 2006, fig. 7).

Fig. 18 - Al-Rawda. Geomagnetic prospecting (after Gondet - Castel 2004, fig. 5).
In summary, we believe we can single out a model for the royal towns of the Early Bronze and Middle Bronze Ages in north inner Syria and the Levantine coast: though with differences and autonomous elaborations of individual architectural types, probably inspired even by trans-regional influences, the urban centre is characterised by the presence, in a high place, of the royal palace and the temple of the patron deity of the town side by side; at a lower level, in the lower town, or in a secondary sector of the Acropolis, there was one second cult place, related with a natural element. At Ebla, in the Early Syrian period, the two temples, on the Acropolis and in the lower town, were dedicated to the same deity, Kura, while in the Old Syrian period the situation was more articulated: the temple on the Acropolis was duplicated by a temple in the lower town north, not related with the natural feature, but dedicated to the same deity, Ishtar, while the temple rebuilt over the remains of the ancient Temple of the Rock, where ceremonies ending up in the ritual deposition of objects in pits are well attested, was dedicated to a male deity, perhaps of the same type of Hadad, yet its relation with kingship is probably stressed by its tripartite plan34.

At Byblos the main temple on the Acropolis was dedicated to the Baalat, a form of Ishtar, as convincingly demonstrated by G. Scandone35, while the titular deity of the L-shaped temple in the lower town is not identified for certain. As is well known a dedicatory inscription to the Egyptian god Herishef led to propose a philological identification with the god Reshef, which was convincingly dismissed by P. Xella36. Yet the analysis of votive deposits found in the area of the temple led me to propose that the god adored in that temple was a male deity precisely of the type of Reshef, with a close relation with rituals of kingship, in particular with the cult for deified ancestors. Thus, at the very beginning of the Old Syrian period, the kings of Ebla thought they could find at Byblos a situation very similar to that of Ebla in the urban pattern, namely in the location and function of the main public, religious and administrative buildings, and also in the ideology of kingship, and of its relation with deities. It is possible that in a context of secondary urbanization, the strong connection of the settlement with a natural feature was basic in rooting a community to the territory, while the

34 According P. Matthiae’s hypothesis, in fact, in the architectural tradition of Syrian cult buildings, the basic model of the classical temple with cella, and antae in façade, became tripartite, with vestibule, ante-cella, and cella, when the building was in close relation with a palace or royal residence (Matthiae 1975; 1986).
35 Scandone Matthiae 1994, 47.
36 Xella 1994, 197.
execution of ceremonies culminating in the deposition of gifts in pits or caves paralleled the other basic underground passage, through which the king, after death, shifted from human to divine nature, and, as member of the *rápi’uma* protected his community from the divine sphere. As recently maintained by P. Matthiae this kind of urban pattern shows a bi-partition, or rather a duplication, of the main ideological focuses of the town, where king and patron deity act on the Acropolis, and in the lower town. In this system kingship is central, yet we detect a further bipolarity in this role, quite evident in our opinion in Ebla, both in the Early and in the Old Syrian period, between king and queen, or king and a high rank lady with an important role in cult.

The other model, of the closed centre with radial pattern of streets, adopted in upper Syria and upper Mesopotamia for the most important regional centres, eventually shows a more traditional bipartition between temple and palace, where apparently the place of honour is left to the temple, and the palace occupies a less eminent position in town. In the Syrian model analysed here, the king is not subject to gods because he is going to become one of them after death; in the upper Syrian/upper Mesopotamian model, as is traditional in Mesopotamia, legitimacy to rule comes from the gods, and the town belongs to them. In alternative, the adoption of this model in inner Syria, might have been one way to mark the hierarchy of settlements within one region, where in the royal towns the king had its residence at the side of the main deity’s seat, and in the non-royal towns, the ruler’s residence was in the lower town, while the most relevant position in the urban panorama was left to the god’s residence. It would be quite interesting, though it is out of the scope of this presentation, to analyse how this models shifted from one into the other in time in the following urban development of Syria, in order to try and understand the political ideology of these centres, and the relations they had with one another and with nearby powers.

37 Another main element of difference between Syrian and Mesopotamian town pattern, or rather, between primary and secondary urban pattern, is probably descending from the presence of water canals, and from the distribution of cultivated fields along them, which is a typical feature of Mesopotamian/primary urbanization patterns: Van de Mieroop 1997, 63-97, but these observations were mainly done on 2nd millennium sites. On the other hand, in Mesopotamia, the only evidence thus far concerning a patently expressed ideological meaning of town building dates from the Late Assyrian period, with Sargon II for Khorsabad, and even more Sennacherib for Nineveh (Matthiae 1994, 127-162).
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