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JERICHO

Tell es-Sultan/ancient Jericho inherited its name, *Yericho/Yerekho*, from the ancient Canaanite (West Semitic) *yerakh* (“moon”), a deity worshipped in pre-Classical Palestine. The term might be also related to the modern Arabic name of the city ar-Riha, translated as “scent” or “fragrance” in connection with the flowers of the oasis and with ointments and perfumes produced here in Hellenistic and Roman times. A scarab with inscribed hieroglyphics dating from the Middle Bronze Age (Egyptian Thirteenth Dynasty) possibly bears the ancient Canaanite name (*Ruha*) of the site (with the same meaning of “moon”), also occurring in Egyptian sources, with the title of its ruler (*adjmer* = administrator of channels).

The ancient site, with three main localizations (Strabo, *Geogr.* 16.2, 41; Flavius Josephus, *J.W.* 4.468–475; and Eusebius, *Onom.* 104.25–31 describe different cities with this name, which sometimes indicated the whole oasis), lies 820.2 ft (250 m) below sea level, around 5.6 miles (9 km) north of the northern shore of the Dead Sea and 4.3 miles (7 km) west of the Jordan (Num 26:3, 63), at the foot of Jebel Quruntul (Mount of Temptation). The main spring (‘Ain es-Sultan, also known as Prophet Elisha’s Spring), providing 1,056.7 to 1,320.9 gallons (4,000–5,000 liters) of fresh water each minute,

and two other springs, one located to the north (‘Ain Dyuk and ‘Ain el-Auja) and one to the south (through the Hellenistic and Roman aqueduct of Wadi Qelt), supplied water to the flourishing oasis. Thus, the site, with its gardens and cultivations, was also known as the “city of palms” (Judg 3:13, 2 Chr 28:15). The identification of Tell es-Sultan with biblical Jericho going back to the earliest pilgrims and travelers in Palestine was definitely established by E. Robinson and E. Smith in 1841 (recalled by C. R. Conder and H. H. Kitchener in their *Survey of Western Palestine*, 1883).

According to the Old Testament, Jericho was one of the main centers of the tribe of Benjamin, marking the border with the tribe of Ephraim. Seven main biblical accounts are centered on Jericho: Jericho was conquered by Joshua at the sound of rams’ horns (Josh 6), with the sudden collapse of its city walls and the curse over the reconstruction of the city itself; Eglon, the king of Moab, conquered the city at the time of Judge Ehud (Judg 3:12–26), who eventually killed him; at the time of David, his envoys, who had had half of their beards shaved off and their garments cut in the middle at the waist by Hanun, king of Ammon, were told to wait at Jericho until their beards grew back (2 Sam 10:5); Hiel, king of Bethel, reconstructed the city at the time of Achab, burying his firstborn son (Abiram) under the city walls and his youngest one (Segub)

under the city gates (1 Kgs 16:34); after Elijah's ascent to the heaven (at the Jordan), Elisha healed the waters of the spring, which had become bitter and caused disease and death, by throwing in it a pot of salt (2 Kgs 2:19–22).

In the New Testament Jericho is renowned for the episode of Zacchaeus, the chief tax collector there, who climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see Jesus and then gave half of his possessions to the poor (Luke 19:1–10). This episode is remembered by a park and a museum (by the Russian Orthodox community). The last episode is that of the blind man healed by Jesus because of his faith (Mark 10:46–52, Matt 20:29–34).

Pre-Classical/Biblical Jericho. The main pre-Classical site (biblical Jericho) is Tell es-Sultan, located approximately 1.6 miles (2.5 km) north of the center of the modern city of ar-Riha. The mound, ca. 1,312 by 590.5 ft (ca. 400 by 180 m), grew aside the Spring of 'Ain es-Sultan, on the fringes of a limestone plateau (where a huge necropolis was also located), bordering the Jordan River.

History of Exploration. The site of Tell es-Sultan and, more extensively, the Jericho oasis have attracted pilgrims and travelers since antiquity as one of the major holy places in Palestine and the seat of a flourishing Christian community of Gentile lineage since the first century C.E. It was mentioned by the Pilgrim of Bordeaux in 333 C.E. as well as by the pilgrims Egeria (381–384 C.E.), Paula (a noble Roman woman, 404 C.E.), the archdeacon Theodosius (530 C.E.), and the Anonymous Pilgrim from Piacenza (570 C.E.), each of them leaving a written account of the places and the numerous churches and monasteries present in the oasis. The memory of the site was preserved also during the Middle Age, when Jericho was mostly deserted as a result of the insecurity of its surroundings. With the Islamic establishment in the area, the Jerusalem to Jericho road became one of the main routes used to make a pilgrimage to Mecca, as echoed in Arab sources. European travelers continued to visit Jericho from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries C.E.

The earliest explorer of Tell es-Sultan was Captain Charles Warren of the British Royal Engineering

Corps, who cut the site in 1868 with a E-W trench 7.9 ft (2.4 m) wide and 19.7 ft (6 m) deep, concluding that it was devoid of any interest. In 1907–1909, Tell es-Sultan was the first site in Palestine to undergo a scientific archaeological expedition. An Austro-German expedition directed by Ernst Sellin and Carl Watzinger extensively excavated the tell, uncovering all around it the foot of the Middle Bronze–III (Middle Bronze–IIC) rampart, consisting of a monumental structure made of limestone blocks (the “Cyclopean Wall”), and tracing on its top the Early Bronze–III double city wall made of sundried mud bricks. The Austro-German expedition produced a detailed report but adopted a wrong chronology: they attributed the Middle-Bronze fortifications to the Israelites and the Early-Bronze city walls to the Canaanite city conquered by Joshua. In light of W. F. Albright's results at Tell Beit Mirsim, Watzinger corrected this chronological setting. The Austro-Germans also fixed an Iron-Age sequence on the eastern slope of the “Spring Hill,” which was then recalibrated by Manfred and Helga Weippert (1976), showing that Jericho was occupied continuously from the tenth to the sixth centuries B.C.E.

The second major expedition to Tell es-Sultan was led by the distinguished British archaeologist John Garstang from 1930 to 1936, with the explicit aim of demonstrating the reliability of the biblical account in the book of Joshua. In spite of this perspective, Garstang's expedition revealed very important aspects of the site: Mesolithic and especially Neolithic layers, the period when Jericho was one of the most relevant sites of the whole Fertile Crescent; the huge necropolis west and north of the site, with a series of familiar tombs from the Early, Middle, and Late Bronze Age (Garstang's contribution was, successively, revised by Kathleen M. Kenyon [1951] and, specifically for the Late Bronze, by Piotr Bienkowski [1986]).

After World War II, Kathleen M. Kenyon organized an international expedition at Tell es-Sultan, which set a new standard in archaeology by testing and launching the stratigraphical digging method developed by Sir Mortimer Wheeler. Sections of 13.1 by 13.1 ft (4 by 4 m) squares were carefully drawn,

reconstructing the history of each single spot of the site. Kenyon's expedition dug the site from 1952 to 1958, with a full reevaluation of the archaeology, letting emerge the prominent Neolithic phases of the site, and summarizing the Bronze-Age city developments. They excavated three main trenches, expanding previous expedition cuts, on the western (trench I), northern (trench II), and southern (trench III) flanks of the tell. Moreover, they systematically excavated the huge necropolis north and west of the tell, uncovering more than 600 tombs, ranging from the Early Bronze I to the Roman period, published in the first two volumes of her final report (Kenyon, 1960, 1965). Kenyon's work was brought to complete publication by Thomas A. Holland, who was coauthor of the last two volumes (Kenyon and Holland, 1982, 1983).

In 1997 the Department of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage of the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities of the Palestinian National Authority started a new project of exploration and reevaluation of Tell es-Sultan in cooperation with Rome "La Sapienza" University (1997–2012), mainly focusing on the Bronze-Age city fortifications and residential quarters. The basic contribution of the Italian-Palestinian expedition was to put forward an overall periodization of the site, reexamining and matching the data produced by all the previous expeditions.

History of Tell es-Sultan. Tell es-Sultan was a prominent site of the Near East in the Mesolithic (10,500–9000 B.C.E., Sultan o), Proto-Neolithic (9000–8500 B.C.E., Sultan Ia, also known in the flint industry as "Sultanian"), and especially Pre-Pottery Neolithic (8500–6000 B.C.E., Sultan Ib–c), when the site contained a town including communal structures, such as the round tower (with a base diameter of 27.9 ft [8.5 m] and a preserved height of 26.2 ft [8 m]) discovered by Kenyon in trench I and a major encircling stone wall, as well as evidence of the domestication of plants which marks the origin of agriculture and of the invention of modular bricks as one of the basic steps of architecture. A typical feature of Pre-Pottery Neolithic B Jericho is a series of plastered human skulls with seashell inlay eyes and painted decorations pointing at ancestor

worship (a feature also known in other Pre-Pottery Neolithic B sites of the Levant: Beisamoun, Tell Ramad, Yiftahel, Kfar Hahoresh, and 'Ain Ghazal). Moreover, Garstang found two groups (190, 195) of full-size, stylized clay statues: group 195 included a man, a woman, and a child. The statues are akin to the famous specimens from 'Ain Ghazal in Jordan, and they again suggest the development of a distinguished cult of the ancestors. The following Pottery Neolithic (6000–4500 B.C.E., Sultan IIa–b) or Yarmoukian is viewed as a culturally recessive period, when the site was slightly reduced in size and hosted a less developed village.

Early Bronze-I village and necropolis (3500–3000 B.C.E., Sultan IIIa). A new human group settled on Tell es-Sultan in the second half of the fourth millennium B.C.E.; it brought a new material culture, which gradually developed, reaching full urban status in the following Early Bronze II–III period. For this reason Kenyon labeled this initial stage of the Early Bronze-Age culture "proto-urban." The burial customs of these seminomadic newcomers consisted of multiple disarticulated depositions in underground caves, accompanied by very simple ceramic assemblages. Skulls were piled in the center, and long bones accumulated on the sides of the tomb (Garstang's tomb A, in its lowest strata; Kenyon's tombs A13, A84, A94, A114, A124, A130 +A61, K1, K2).

The largest portion of the Early Bronze-I village was excavated by Garstang on the northeastern plateau in 1935–1936 and only partly published. The area was then expanded to the south by Kenyon; all data were matched, distinguishing two phases of the Early Bronze-I village (Sultan IIIa1 and 2).

In the earliest stage (Early Bronze IA, 3300–3200 B.C.E., Sultan IIIa1, Garstang's level VII), domestic units including round huts and fenced compounds show a flourishing rural community, also illustrated by gradual changes of burial custom, with the introduction of primary burials and the inclusion of food offerings in open-shape vessels among the funerary equipment. Pierced goat bones (caprine metacarpals), with a schematic incised representation of a

human face, found in tombs were interpreted as flutes. Distinguishing features in the village are an elongated apsidal building, possibly devoted to communal activities, excavated by Kenyon, as well as a broad-room shrine with a raised platform, a niche (shrine 420), and marble and stone cultic furniture, excavated by Garstang.

In the latest stage (Early Bronze IB, 3200–3000 B.C.E., Sultan IIIa2, Garstang's level V), rectangular houses take the place of circular ones, compounds are more clearly delimited, and a street is enucleated. Functional specialization of pottery (including line-painted ware) and the presence of status symbols, such as Egyptian or Egyptianizing items (e.g., stone mace-heads and palettes), envisage the birth of urban society.

Early Bronze-I ceramic productions at Jericho were described by Kenyon and used to identify different cultural groups. A reexamination of the pottery assemblage, including simple, storage, painted and red-burnished wares, allowed the excavators to distinguish plain wares from finer productions and to recognize painted decorations (grain wash and band slip) as well as red-burnished and line-painted ware (finer Early Bronze-I productions) as typical of the very end of the Early Bronze IA and of the whole Early Bronze IB.

Early Bronze II-III city (3000–2250 B.C.E., Sultan IIIb-c). At the beginning of the third millennium (Early Bronze II, Sultan IIIb), with the erection of a massive city wall and the enucleating of a public area on the central mound facing the spring and overlooking the whole oasis, Jericho became a real city. Structural and architectural transformations testify to the achievement of urban status, as do material culture remains. The urban layout was planned in order to include the spring within the city.

The Early Bronze-II (3000–2800 B.C.E., Sultan IIIb) city wall, made of dune yellowish bricks with a thick ashy mortar in between, was identified by Garstang and Kenyon on the northern and western sides of the tell. In trench I Kenyon uncovered also a semicircular tower, a typical defensive feature of this period (a second semicircular tower was

excavated some 98.4 ft [30 m] to the north by Sellin and Watzinger). The Early Bronze-II city wall delimited an area larger than that of the following Early Bronze-III city; it collapsed in an earthquake. To the northwest, Sellin and Watzinger brought to light a huge structure (called the "Massive Wall"), possibly related to this earliest fortification line. Early Bronze-II houses on the northern plateau had storage devices for cereals and other agricultural products, thus indicating the wealthy agriculture of the oasis.

The Early Bronze III (2800–2250 B.C.E., Sultan IIIc) marks the peak of the third-millennium city: the citywalls were doubled, and the 13.1 ft (4 m) wide space in between the inner and outer walls, built of mud bricks on stone foundations, was kept free for pathways or storerooms or filled up with crushed limestone in order to strengthen the fortifications. Wooden beams and reeds served as chains and draining devices within the mud-brick structures. Such an impressive work remained for millennia a distinctive emerging feature of Tell es-Sultan, possibly inspiring the biblical author of the Joshua account.

Other major elements of the city were Palace G, on the eastern flank of Spring Hill, excavated by the Italian-Palestinian expedition, and the temple, on the western one, excavated by Sellin and Watzinger; other public buildings were excavated on the southern side (Building B1, possibly devoted to communal food processing) and at the northwest corner of the city wall (where a rectangular tower, excavated by Sellin and Watzinger, stood). Material culture, as demonstrated also by tomb assemblages and finds, was characterized by a specialized pottery inventory, by finely worked pieces of craftsmanship (namely, stone and ivory bull's heads), and by cylinder seals, possibly within a kind of palatial system of distribution of goods, including an exchange system for metals (copper, silver, and gold) and other precious stuff (salt, ointments, perfumes, sulfur, bitumen, etc.), as balance weights attest. Jericho was at a pivotal crossroad in the early trade network of urban Palestine, as indicated by finds: seashells, remains of exotic animals (e.g., hippopotamus),

several items illustrating a connection with Egypt (lotus vases, mace-heads, slate palettes, and the so-called Abydos ware in Early Bronze II), and Khirbet Kerak ware (either imported or a locally produced imitation), pointing to a later northern influence.

Twelve familiar tombs are known in the necropolis, in use during the Early Bronze II–III. Their assemblages included pottery (open shapes for food offerings, jugs and juglets for ointments), personal ornaments, cylinder seals, and other precious items. Among the valuable finds a crescent copper axe head (from tomb A114[B]) and a dagger (tomb F5) are notable, as is a bull's head made of fine limestone with shell inlays (tomb D12). The city was destroyed by a fierce fire at the end of the Early Bronze IIIB, around 2250 B.C.E.

Middle Bronze–I village and necropolis (2250–1950 B.C.E., Sultan IIIc). A new community of seminomads settled on the ruins of the ancient city in the Middle Bronze I, inaugurating a completely new burial custom in the necropolis. Rock-cut tombs entered through vertical shafts hosted individual primary burials with simple funerary furnishings, basically small pottery jars and copper daggers in case of male burials, beads and other simple personal ornaments in female burials. More than 350 tombs of this kind were excavated by Kenyon, who distinguished groups on the basis of tomb types (dagger, pottery, bead, square-shaft, composite, outsized, and multiple burials) and considered this new group a vanguard of the Amorites, the new population entering the Levant from the south at the end of the third millennium B.C.E. Actually, the evidence from the tombs suggests a tribal organization in the early stage (2250–2200 B.C.E., Sultan IIIc1) and integration into a large rural community, also incorporating northern influences, in the mature stage of the period (2200–1950 B.C.E., Sultan IIIc2).

The same cultural horizon was also excavated on the tell, distinguishing an early stage, when a rural village occupied the central hill of the tell, and a later stage, when the slopes of the tell were occupied by houses and domestic installations. During the later stage Jericho actually was a huge settlement, hosting a flourishing community with a

distinguished ceramic production (in fabrics, surface treatments and shapes), characterized by the use of fine combing for decorating jar shoulders in order to hide the signs of the junction between the handmade body and the wheel-made neck of vessels. Copper and bronze daggers and other items (a hoard of copper axes, including a broad fenestrated specimen, was found in the northwestern corner of the site by Sellin and Watzinger) point to the development of bronze technology during the last stage of the Middle Bronze I, possibly transmitted by itinerant specialists in metallurgy.

Canaanite city of Middle Bronze II (1950–1550 B.C.E., Sultan IVa–c). At the beginning of the second millennium B.C.E. a new city arose on the mound, with its center on Spring Hill, where a palace (excavated by Garstang and by the Italian–Palestinian expedition) and a temple were erected; and a defensive line was built, running along the enlarged southern and eastern sides of the lower city, including a portion of the oasis around the spring itself. The earliest (Middle Bronze IB, Sultan IVa) defensive structure consisted of a solid mud-brick wall on stone foundations, which was replaced in the Middle Bronze II (Sultan IVb) by a series of supporting walls, built-up terraces, and ramparts regularizing the huge ruins of the monumental Early Bronze–III double fortifications on the southern, western, and northern edges of the tell itself, the upper city.

The Italian–Palestinian excavations revealed a huge building in the southern lower city (area A), consisting of a rectangular tower with mud-brick walls upon an orthostate foundation. The latter was the earliest building erected in the lower city, directly upon Pre-Pottery Neolithic B layers, at the beginning of the nineteenth century B.C.E. (Middle Bronze IB, Sultan IVa), probably contemporary with the huge eastern tower excavated by Garstang at the foot of Spring Hill.

After a fierce destruction, possibly attributable to Pharaoh Amenemhat III's (r. ca. 1878–1842 B.C.E.) campaign in Palestine toward the end of the nineteenth century B.C.E., the city was heavily fortified with the erection of ramparts supported by stone walls, like the curvilinear stone structure, at the

southwestern foot of the tell (area E). Earthen ramparts were strengthened by crushed limestone tongues and plastered with clayish *huwwar* (soft, chalky, white limestone). The top of these ramparts was crowned by a mud-brick wall, as excavations in area C (north of Kenyon's trench I) demonstrated.

The palace occupied the central and eastern part of Spring Hill. It was excavated by Garstang ("Hyksos Palace"). Just below palace floors a series of built-up tombs were uncovered by Kenyon and by the Italian-Palestinian expedition. One of them (D.641) included the burial of a young woman bearing a scarab with the hieroglyphic inscription "Adjmer Rwha," which is the Egyptian title "administrator" and the Canaanite word "Ruha," possibly the ancient name of Jericho. Not far away from the palace, on the northwestern hilltop of the southern mound at the center of the tell, there was the Middle-Bronze temple, looking east.

Garstang excavated 23 Middle-Bronze tombs in the necropolis (tombs 1-5, 8-9, 12-15, 19-23, 30-32, 35, 40-42) and discovered several Egyptian items (such as scarabs, *alabastra* [bottles made of calcite], and faience objects). Kenyon also excavated 51 Middle-Bronze tombs in the necropolis (some reused from the Middle Bronze-I period), subdividing them according to their pottery assemblages into five groups, ranging from Middle Bronze II to III (i.e., 1850-1550 B.C.E.). Large caves were used as familiar multiple burials; they are characterized by an extraordinary preservation of finds, such as wooden trays, combs, tables, chests, and bowls; ostrich eggs; leather and textiles; as well as bone inlays of wooden boxes with geometric (hatched) and bird decorations. Among the valuable finds were an Old Babylonian cylinder seal, a bronze belt of a distinguished type with circular studs, and two equids from Kenyon's warrior tomb J3. A few Egyptian scarabs bear royal names and titles, including Pharaohs Hotepibra and Sobekhotep V (r. 1725-1721 B.C.E.) or VI (r. 1690-1688 B.C.E.), suggesting a strong relationship of Jericho with Egypt during the Thirteenth Dynasty.

The Middle-Bronze city was destroyed at least three times, and there was a drastic reconfiguration during the seventeenth century B.C.E., when a new

restricted area was encircled by a rubble rampart, supported by the huge Cyclopean Wall at its foot and a series of terrace walls on the slope. The Cyclopean Wall was traced by the German expedition and extensively excavated by the Italian-Palestinian expedition to the south.

Late Bronze Age (1550-1200 B.C.E., Sultan V [1450-1250 B.C.E.]). After the destruction at the end of Middle Bronze II, the city of Ruha further reduced its extension, concentrating on the eastern flank of Spring Hill, where the palace was replaced by a relatively small residence (called the "Middle Building" and excavated by Garstang). Actually, the absence of bichrome ware and Cypriot imports suggests that the site was deserted between 1550 and 1450 B.C.E.; the scarcity of finds, however, is not positive evidence of absence since the Middle Building seems to have replaced the previous palace directly. One of the most interesting finds from the Middle Building (just east of it on the slope) is a cuneiform tablet, attributable to the fourteenth century B.C.E.

Pottery vessels found by Garstang in reused tombs 4, 5, and 13 can be attributed to the same time. Actually, tomb 5 shows vessels as early as the second half of the fifteenth and the beginning of the fourteenth centuries B.C.E.; tombs 4 and 13, conversely, yielded vessels datable to 1375-1275 B.C.E. Tomb 5 also included a scarab of Thutmose III (r. ca. 1504-1450 B.C.E.) and one of Hatshepsut (r. ca. 1473-1458 B.C.E.) (a second scarab of Thutmose III was found in pit tomb 11 dating from the Iron I), while tomb 4 yielded two scarabs with the cartouche of Amenhotep III (r. 1417-1379 B.C.E.).

No evidence of a fortification system for this period existed, and Garstang's wall of "City D" was a wrong attribution to the Late Bronze of the Early Bronze-III double city wall. This is, of course, fairly normal since the majority of sites in Palestine are devoid of a new fortification system in this period, after having been submitted to Egyptian Eighteenth-Dynasty control.

Iron Age (1200-586 B.C.E., Sultan VI). In the final stage of the Late Bronze the site was unoccupied, and only a few remains datable to the early Iron Age

were identified. Garstang's "cremation pit" (tomb 11) can be dated to Iron I, a period also illustrated by pottery fragments retrieved by the German expedition and studied by Helga and Manfred Weippert (1976). They were found in the foundation of a monumental building erected on the eastern slope of Spring Hill, the so-called Hilani, dated to Iron II by the same scholars (the period when the two biblical episodes of David's envoys [2 Sam 10:5] and Hiel, king of Bethel [1 Kgs 16:34], would be situated). The possible occupation of the site in the ninth century B.C.E. is also suggested by Kenyon's tomb A85.

A continuous eighth to sixth century B.C.E. occupation both on the summit of the tell and on its northern and southern slopes was documented by all of the expeditions but extensively excavated only by Sellin and Watzinger in the central and northern areas of the tell, where private houses and slab-paved staircases climbing the tell (similar to those of Tell es-Sa'idiyeh) were brought to light, while a tripartite building was uncovered by Kenyon at the foot of trench I to the west. A double-winged royal stamp on a jar handle may indicate that Jericho was included in the administration of the Kingdom of Judah in the seventh to sixth centuries B.C.E.

Neo-Babylonian and Persian period (586–332 B.C.E., Sultan VIIa). After the Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem in 587 B.C.E. and its destruction, Jericho fell into Neo-Babylonian and, successively, Persian administration. The site, though in a reduced scale, continued to be occupied (a barbed arrowhead found in trench I is a tangible relic of Persian warriors active in this area), even though this period envisaged a decline of settlement and cultivation in the whole oasis (only one site, a ritual bath in Wadi en-Nueima, was attributed to Persian occupation). An ostrakon with an Aramaic inscription and some stamp seal impressions can also be attributed to this period.

Hellenistic period (332–53 B.C.E., Sultan VIIb). In the Hellenistic period, the Jericho oasis witnessed an extraordinary flourishing, with the systematic exploitation of the springs of 'Ain Dyuk and 'Ain el-Auja and the aqueduct of Wadi Qelt, which was

related to the erection of numerous villas and to an enhancement of productive capacities (palm date trees, wine, and opobalsamum [resin of the balsam tree] for the perfume industry). The banks of Wadi Qelt, at the southern border of the oasis, were chosen as the site of a palatial complex by the Hasmonean rulers. Before the erection of the palace complex, some defensive structures controlled access to the oasis (Tell el-'Aqaba/Cypros, Nuseib 'Uweishira, and Jebel Quruntul). The palatial complex at Tell Abu el-'Alayiq North extended over an area of ca. 7.4 acres (ca. 3 ha or 30 dunams). It included the first Hasmonean palace, the so-called Buried Palace and Pool Complex, with its ritual baths, built by John Hyrcanus (r. 135–104 B.C.E.) and successively enlarged by Alexander Jannaeus (r. 103–76 B.C.E.), including the Fortified Palace and the Twin Palaces, as well as an industrial area with ritual baths and a synagogue or *triclinium* (dining room with a couch surrounding three sides of the table). The palace complex became the summer residence of the Hasmonean rulers, and it was progressively enriched until the Roman period, when it was rebuilt by King Herod the Great (r. 37–4 B.C.E.) after the destruction by earthquake in 31 B.C.E. (Herod's second palace).

Beyond the palace site, other contemporary settlements were rural villages spread around the oasis, such as Tell Abu Hindi, Khirbet en-Nitla/Tell Jaljul, Tell es-Samarat (where some tombs were also excavated), and Tell es-Sultan, as well as other marginal settlements (Qasr el-Yehud to the east and Suwwanet eth-Thaniya and Wadi en-Nueima to the north). During the Hellenistic period, Tell es-Sultan hosted only temporary occupation. An inscribed handle of a Rhodian amphora dates to 220–150 B.C.E.

Roman period (53 B.C.E.–337 C.E., Sultan VIII). Sparse architectural remains from the Roman period belong to rural installations and include a winepress with associated *signinum* plastered bins (i.e., bins made of material consisting of tiles broken into small pieces and mixed with mortar). A Roman Corinthian capital was found on the tell, as well as other architectural fragments. Also, the necropolis was used in Roman times. Seven tombs and 14

graves were excavated by Kenyon. A carved capstone of a monumental tomb was recovered by the Italian–Palestinian expedition. During the Roman period the main site in the oasis was Tell Abu Hindi—of course, together with Tulul Abu el-‘Alayiq, where Herod’s palaces stood.

Byzantine period (337–636 C.E., Sultan IX). In the Byzantine period Jericho is illustrated on the Madaba map mosaic, with the name and a basilica represented. Already in the fourth century C.E., at the dawn of the Byzantine era, Jericho was a pilgrimage and prayer place, thanks to its religious significance, with churches and monasteries flourishing in the oasis, in the ‘Ain Hajla area, and on the surrounding hills (Tell Abu Hindi, Khirbet en-Nitla/Tell Jaljul, Qasr el-Yehud, Jebel Quruntul, and Rujm el-Mughefir North). The main site of the oasis was Tell el-Hassan. The Jericho oasis thus became a rich and variegated Byzantine enclave, where several Christian communities of monks lived (Orthodox, Catholic, Coptic, etc.), with monasteries and churches epitomizing Byzantine art in mosaics, frescoes, and stucco decorations. On Tell es-Sultan (on the northeastern peak of Spring Hill) a rural village arose, also producing dust pits deeply cutting into the Iron- and Bronze-Age strata. In the nearby area of the Spring of ‘Ain es-Sultan a basilica was erected, of which only a capital and some sparse remains are preserved. Two synagogues also arose in the oasis: the Synagogue of Shahwan, in the Tell el-Jurn area, and the Synagogue of Khirbet Na‘aran.

Islamic period (636–1516 C.E., Sultan X) and Ottoman period (1516–1918 C.E., Sultan XI). Remains of Islamic occupation of Tell es-Sultan are represented by ceramic fragments dating from the Umayyad period (Abbasid and Mamluk pottery was also found). At the northern edge of the oasis, on the northern banks of Wadi en-Nueima, the magnificent residence of Caliph Hisham (r. 723–743 C.E.) was built in the first half of the eighth century C.E., including baths paved with extraordinary mosaics and wooden and stucco figured decoration, in the twenty-first century in the Rockefeller Museum (formerly the Palestine Archaeological Museum) in Jerusalem.

During the crusader period one of the main installations near Tell es-Sultan was the sugar mills of Tawaheen es-Sukar. During the middle and late Islamic period the site was gradually abandoned, while the spring was constantly preserved until the Ottoman period, when a monumental pool (229.7 by 49.2 ft [70 by 15 m]) was erected.

[See also Herodian Jericho.]

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Lorenzo Nigro

JERUSALEM, BRONZE AND IRON AGE

Like other sites in the southern Levant, Jerusalem's history was profoundly shaped by its location in the "land between" the African and Eurasian landmasses. The convergence of these two continental plates (the Jordan Valley is the northern extension of the Great Rift Valley) shaped the fractured topography of the Judean hill country with its high

ridges, sharp slopes, and deep valleys. The steep terrain is replete with defensible positions for settlements, and the restrictive natural routes along the ridges that crisscross the area allow transportation and communication to be controlled with ease. The downside of this fractured topography is that water is not as easily accessible and that extensive terracing was required to stem soil erosion once the hillsides were stripped of their native forests in order to increase agricultural productivity. Another consequence of the southern Levant's geographic location, particularly of its location relative to the Mediterranean Sea and the Arabian and Saharan Deserts, is its slightly dry Mediterranean climate. Around Jerusalem precipitation is limited to about 21.7 inches (550 mm) annually, which makes dryland farming possible; but proximity to a water source was still crucial to an urban center. Finally, with the rise of urban societies in Egypt and Mesopotamia the geopolitical consequences of being in a "land between" came into play as well, and the southern Levant (and Jerusalem with it) was frequently caught up in the rivalries and aspirations of its more powerful neighbors. This geopolitical context was a primary factor in the development of Bronze- and Iron-Age Jerusalem and would lead to the city's destruction in 586 B.C.E.

From a geographical perspective, Jerusalem was not prime real estate. The southeast hill offered limited visibility of the surrounding area, and the closest thoroughfares are several kilometers distant. These nearest routes were the central ridge that runs north to south from the Benjamin Plateau into the southern hill country and the latitudinal route connecting the Jordan Valley in the east to the Shephelah and Coastal Plain in the west, again via the Benjamin Plateau. Although it inhibited its ability to directly control these routes, Jerusalem's slight removal from the highways was probably an advantage in troubled times, the absence of natural routes making it harder to surprise the site's inhabitants and posing logistical problems for sizeable armies. Furthermore, in the right circumstances, Jerusalem's indirect access to routes running in the four cardinal directions was an important asset and, as

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