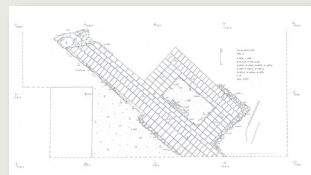


Gaia Ripepi

## TOWER A1: A MIDDLE BRONZE DEFENSIVE BUILDING IN TELL ES-SULTAN

The Tower (Tower A1) excavated by Italian-Palestinian Expedition (Fig. 5) since 1997 in Area A at the south-eastern foot of the *tell*, included a massive building, at least 13 m long, and facing an open space to the west of the Tower. Its chronology and stratigraphy were further investigated in the area west of the Tower<sup>1</sup>, showing a life-time spanning from late MB I (MB IB, Sultan IVa = 1900-1800 BC) to the end of MB II (Sultan IVb = 1800-1650 BC). Tower A1 was erected at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century BC, after razing the area with levelling operations (F.1761). It was rectangular in shape (6.50 × 5.40 m) and built of regular reddish-brown mudbricks (36 × 52 × 15 cm), laid as headers, on a stone foundation (Fig. 1). It is NW-SE oriented and it is composed of west wall W.19 with its stone foundation wall W.1659<sup>2</sup>, north wall W.15 with its stone foundation wall W.1673, east wall W.164 with its



stone foundation wall W.1766, and south wall W.190 with its stone foundation wall W.1765; the walls, preserved up to 2.4 m, were 1.3-1.6 m wide (Fig. 1). The western foundation wall (W.1659) consisted of big orthostates (90 × 80 cm) located at different elevations, following the slope of the *tell* (Fig. 3); a line of pebbles, lying on top of the orthostates protected the foot of the mudbrick superstructure (W.19).

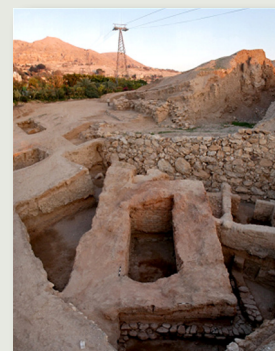


### STRATIGRAPHY AND CHRONOLOGY

West of the tower the earliest MB IB floor (L.1670 in ArIV13 and L.1690 in AqIV12) was recognized; inside the Tower too, the original MB IB floor (L.1650)

1 NIGRO *et al.* 2011, p. 574.

2 The Italian-Palestinian Expedition identified the foundation trench (P.1687) of orthostatic wall W.1659. It was 0.3 m wide and it was filled up with reddish-brown fragmentary bricks (F.1691).



was identified, with the stone basement (W.1661)<sup>3</sup> for a wooden staircase (Fig. 2). At the end of MB I, there was a destruction (F.1658 and F.1689), followed by collapse (F.1652 and F.1693)<sup>4</sup>, which marked the end of the earliest phase of use of the building. After this destruction, Tower A1 was reconstructed (Fig. 2) with reparations and additions, probably because of static problems: foundation walls were reinforced on three sides (west wall W.1671, south wall W.1651 and east wall W.1667) with enfolding walls made of small and medium-size stones, while on the northern side a transversal N-S supporting wall (W.22) was adjoined to the Tower<sup>5</sup> (Fig. 1). West of the Tower related floors are already recognized (L.1680 in ArIV13 and L.1660 in AqIV12)<sup>6</sup> and also the floor inside (L.199), where the original floor and the stone basement were obliterated. During MB II, Tower A1 was also surrounded to the east and to the north by houses, growing up against it. A new destruction (F.1688) and subsequent collapse (F.1685) at the end of MB IIA, marks the end of Tower A1 use<sup>7</sup>.

### GARSTANG'S EAST TOWER

A similar Tower, the so-called "Eastern Tower", was recovered by Garstang<sup>8</sup> in squares I-K6 on the eastern flank of the *tell*. The Tower (Fig. 4) had the same building technique of Tower A1, with four courses of stone foundations 1 m high, and a superstructure, preserved up to 3.26 m, made of grayish regular mudbricks (35-36 × 30-32 × 13 cm). The color of bricks used is more significant than has often been acknowledged because they represent the source of available materials. Reddish or brown bricks often reveal the



3 NIGRO *et al.* 2011, p. 577.

4 NIGRO *et al.* 2011, p. 575.

5 MARCHETTI 2000, p. 194; NIGRO *et al.* 2011, p. 577.

6 NIGRO *et al.* 2011, p. 577.

7 NIGRO *et al.* 2011, p. 574.

8 GARSTANG 1931, pl. VI; ID. 1932, pp. 13, 15-17, pl. XI: *City B*; GARSTANG - GARSTANG 1948, pp. 79-80, fig. 4.

use of clean soil and thus suggest that the materials used in this bricks were taken from outside of the settlement<sup>9</sup>. Such bricks, however, were of an inferior quality since they contained less temper than bricks made from occupational debris, which were usually gray or black in color because of the ash. Differently from Tower A1, the Eastern Tower had three rooms, without any access, and it measured 18 × 9 m. The Italian-Palestinian excavations allowed to clarify the topographical position of the Eastern Tower and its relations with the city fortifications. First, the Tower foundation is definitely dated to MB I<sup>10</sup>; second, it was related to MB IB eastern fortification line, represented by Italian-Palestinian Wall W.7<sup>11</sup> excavated in Area D, that is Kenyon's walls HCJ and HCP<sup>12</sup> and Garstang's wall running from Tower to the north and south<sup>13</sup>.

The topographical location of Tower A1 and its relation with the MB I-II fortification system has yet to be clarified, because its relations with the MB II fortification line was completely obliterated by the construction, after razing operations, of MB III rampart, sustained by a massive stone retaining wall (W.4), which foundation trench cuts tower W.19 (Fig. 3). In the earliest phase (Sultan IVa2) Tower A1 was contemporary to the first MB rampart<sup>14</sup>, while in the further phase (Sultan IVb) to the MB II defenses, brought to light by the Italian-Palestinian Expedition in Area E<sup>15</sup>, just 8 m north-west of the Tower. This defensive structure, named Curvilinear Stone Structure, was interpreted as part of the second rampart.



#### INTERPRETATION OF TOWER A1

Some characteristic of Tower A1, like size, building-technique and circulation scheme, with the room accessible only from above, is paralleled with contemporary

military buildings<sup>16</sup> such as the towers associated to the MB IIC town-wall at Tell el-Jezer/Gezer<sup>17</sup>; Tell el-Mutesellim/Megiddo<sup>18</sup> tower in Area BB of MB IIA-B (stratum XII). The towers in Gezer are very similar in shape with Tower A1, also if they are bigger (12-15 × 8 m), consisting of one room accessible from above, but not in building-technique, being made of hammer-dressed stones. Their position in the defensive line is very clear<sup>19</sup> and it is noticeable that some are parallel to the city wall, while others are perpendicular to it. The Megiddo tower of stratum XII in Area BB<sup>20</sup> abuts from the city-wall; it measures 10 × 6 m and shows the same building-technique of Tower A1, with heavy stone foundations and a massive mudbricks superstructure.

Tower A1 is perhaps part of a larger defensive building, which extended westwards, a kind of outpost in the MB IB mudbrick city-wall. Its position indicates that the MBA town had an extension larger than previously thought.

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<sup>9</sup> BURKE 2008, p. 73.

<sup>10</sup> MARCHETTI 2003, pp. 306-312, figs. 8, 10.

<sup>11</sup> NIGRO 2000, pp. 165-169, figs. 3:1, 2.

<sup>12</sup> KENYON 1981, pp. 356-357, pls. 339-340.

<sup>13</sup> GARSTANG 1932, p. 16, note 1.

<sup>14</sup> There was no trace in Trench III of the wall of the first main stage of MB defences, found in Site H and probably in Site A (Kenyon 1981, p. 215).

<sup>15</sup> MARCHETTI - YASIN 2000, pp. 181-185.

<sup>16</sup> On layout and architecture of MB towers see: KEMPINSKI - REICH 1992, p. 321; BURKE 2008, p. 65.

<sup>17</sup> Stratum XIX: MACALISTER 1912, I, pp. 249-251; *ibid.*, III, pl. III.

<sup>18</sup> LOUD 1948, 87; figs. 198, 398.

<sup>19</sup> MACALISTER 1912, III pl. III.

<sup>20</sup> LOUD 1948, fig. 398.

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## RIASSUNTO

La scoperta della Torre A1 da parte della Missione Italo-Palestinese a Tell es-Sultan/Gerico ha offerto un nuovo elemento per la comprensione della struttura urbana di Gerico durante il Bronzo Medio. La posizione al margine meridionale del *tell*, nell'area A, ha testimoniato che l'estensione dell'abitato superava i limiti individuati dalle precedenti missioni archeologiche. L'interpretazione della funzione della Torre A1 era resa complessa a causa delle operazioni di livellamento per la costruzione del successivo *rampart* del Bronzo Medio III che aveva tagliato le relazioni tra le diverse strutture difensive individuate nell'Area A. Tuttavia, è probabile che la torre facesse parte di un edificio difensivo localizzato nella città bassa sul limite meridionale della città.

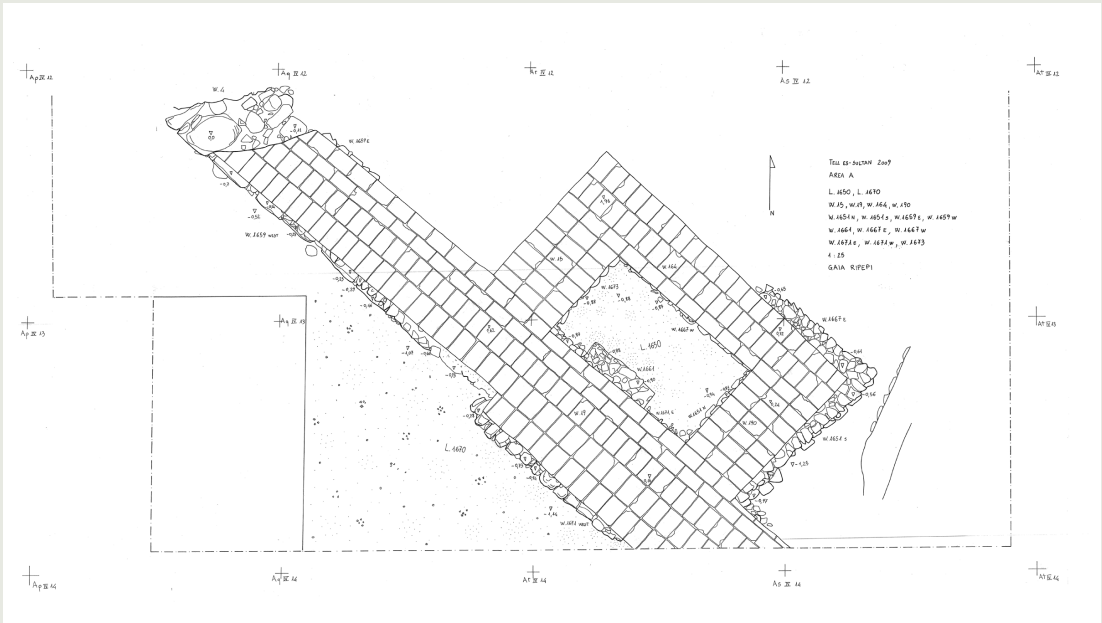


Fig. 1 – Plan of Tower A1.





Fig. 2 – MB II phase of Tower A1.



Fig. 3 – Detail of the north end of Tower A1 (W.19), cuts by foundation trench of W.4.



Fig. 4 – The Eastern Tower excavated by Garstang on the eastern flank of the Spring Hill (after NIGRO 2009, fig. 8).





Fig. 5 – Tower A1 from north-east.