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Indice

Editorial

Any scientific journal reaching two decades of regular activity has taken on, in the course of time, some special characteristic in the eyes of readers. *Ocnus* focuses, and will continue so, on historical archaeology with a solidly built critical approach, one of the main pluses of the Specialization School of Archaeological Heritage at the University of Bologna. At the same time, the epistemological challenges of the postmodern world need to be addressed through a variety of approaches which will be hosted by our journal: multidisciplinarity, interdisciplinarity and hybridization become part of an anthropological perspective in which archaeology is seen as fully integrated within the broader frame of social sciences. Different disciplines do not contribute to historical and behavioral explanations simply by an accumulation of knowledge, but also contaminating each other through shared objectives and views. If data represent a construct of researchers depending on their questions, we aim at producing new qualities of data by raising debates, assessing analyses of different kinds of evidence and providing responses that are scientific so far as they allow the possibility of being verified at each step.

The social significance of archaeology has become more stringent than ever. Striving for what we may call Inclusive Archaeology means sharing an approach based on openness: towards local and regional communities (science does not live in isolation but has an impact on and needs feedback from civil society), towards the scientific community (dissemination of newly produced data is the core mission of scientists), towards the global community (digital technologies must be used to build new forms of integrated datasets which may be used freely through the web). In addition, we feel that there should be no preconception in discussing and proposing new Laws for the protection of the cultural heritage: whereas in recent years the global, illegal market of antiquities has proved itself in many cases stronger than what States could oppose to it, it may be time to consider how some degree of global control on market, rather than a simple contrast, may enhance our care for a heritage that is being destroyed at a pace sometimes faster than the methods and views we can develop for understanding it.

Nicolò Marchetti

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A Late Bronze Age I Fortress at Taşlı Geçit Höyük and the Defensive Architecture of Anatolia and Northern Levant during the 2nd Millennium BC

Giacomo Benati, Federico Zaina[1]

The 2009 and 2010 excavation campaigns by the joint Turco-Italian Expedition at Taşlı Geçit Höyük (Gaziantep, Turkey) aimed at shedding light on the urban layout of the site during the Bronze and Iron Ages. In the northernmost part of the acropolis (area A), a monumental fortress building dating from Late Bronze I was uncovered. The purpose of this paper is to analyse the stratigraphy and architecture of that building, as well as the associated materials. Fortress A is also discussed in the light of the defensive architectural tradition in Anatolia and Syria-Palestine during the Middle and Late Bronze Ages.

1. Introduction

The salvage excavations at Taşlı Geçit Höyük (Gaziantep, Turkey) were conducted, between 2009 and 2010, by a joint Turco-Italian expedition[2]. An integrated approach consisting of excavation, restoration, environmental and landscape research, site management and presentation activities was carried out there. The aims of the two seasons were to understand the urban layout of the site through the Bronze and Iron Ages, as well as restoring and protecting the uncovered heritage and the site now located within an artificial lake (Marchetti 2011a: 298).

The extensive excavation (fig. 1) brought to light a sequence of archaeological phases spanning from Middle Bronze Age IB (hereafter MB IB) to the Hellenistic period (Marchetti 2012: 535)[3]. Excavations in Area A, located in the northernmost part the acropolis, revealed a massive defensive fortress[4] dating from Late Bronze Age I (hereafter LB I; Marchetti 2011a: 299; 2012: 532). This kind of building belongs to a well-known typology, first attested during MB I-II and to some extent during LB I, in Syria and the Levant (Burke 2008: 65-66).

The purpose of this paper is to analyse and discuss the stratigraphy and architecture of Fortress "A" at Taşlı Geçit Höyük in the light of the defensive architectural tradition of Syria, Levant and Anatolia. To do so, the first two paragraphs are devoted to present stratigraphical and architectural data from the excavation of Fortress "A". Then a brief discussion of some characteristic

[1] , G. Benati (University of Turin) wrote paragraphs nos. 3, 4.3, F. Zaina (Sapienza University of Rome) wrote paragraphs nos. 2, 4.1; paragraphs nos. 1, 4.2 and 5 were written together.

[2] The Taşlı Geçit Höyük excavation and restoration project was directed by Prof. Nicolò Marchetti of the Alma Mater Studiorum-University of Bologna, to whom we express all our gratitude for his guidance and support. Thanks are due to all our colleagues and friends of the Expedition for their help and suggestions. We are also grateful to Profs. F. Pinnock (Sapienza University of Rome), L. Peyronel (IULM Milan) and A. Burke (UCLA) for their useful comments and to Profs. D. Beyer (Strasbourg University), V. Sevin (Istanbul University), and Dr. M. Akar (Koç University) for providing us with their offprints and unpublished materials.

[3] Note that pottery evidence from the Early Bronze Age has been found scattered at the base of the höyük.

[4] Burke (2008: nr. 18) distinguished the terms "fortress" and "bastion", the first one being referred to fortified settlements, while the second to the town defences. However, in this article such a distinction has been deemed not necessary and therefore both definitions have been employed with the same meaning.

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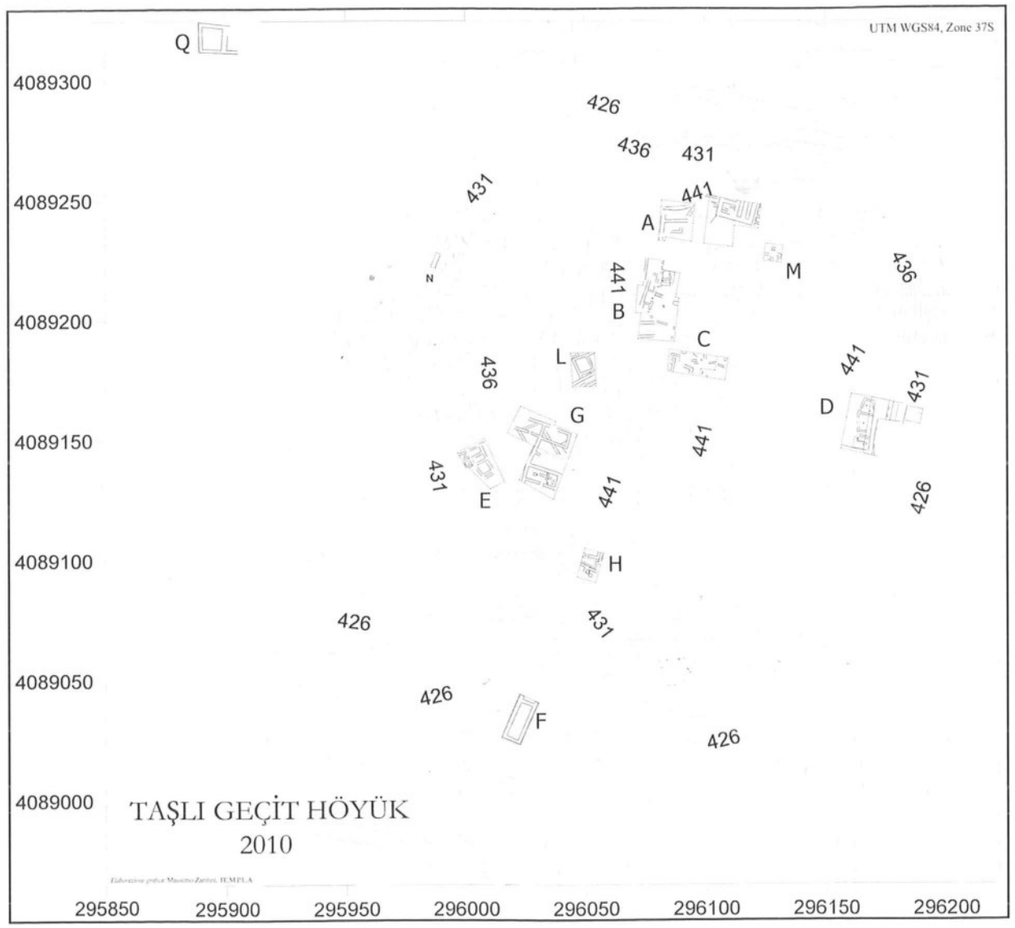

Fig. 1. Contour map of Taşlı Geçit Höyük (copyleft of the Turco-Italian Expedition at Tilmen Höyük and Taşlı Geçit Höyük, courtesy of N. Marchetti)

MBA military buildings from Tilmen Höyük, Tell Mardikh/Ebla and Tell el-Jezairi/Gezer is offered. Finally, the results of this analysis are discussed taking also into consideration some LBA defensive systems in southern Anatolia and northern Syria.

2. Fortress "A" at Taşlı Geçit Höyük: Stratigraphy and materials

The excavations in Area A, carried out during the 2009 and 2010 seasons, yielded a stratigraphical sequence stretching from the MB IB to the Hellenistic period (table 1). Among the archaeological evidence, Phase 2 – dating to the beginning of the LB I – revealed a massive fortress (labelled "A") with an adjoining building to the east.

Fortress A is only partially preserved since the northernmost limit of the mound is almost completely eroded away. The north-western part of the fortress building is preserved at foundation level, while the south-eastern part also preserves a few mud-brick rows. Despite this limited evidence, a complete reconstruction of the building plan can be proposed (figs. 2-3). The stratigraphical analysis revealed that the foundation walls of the fortress cut the structures of Phase 1, dating

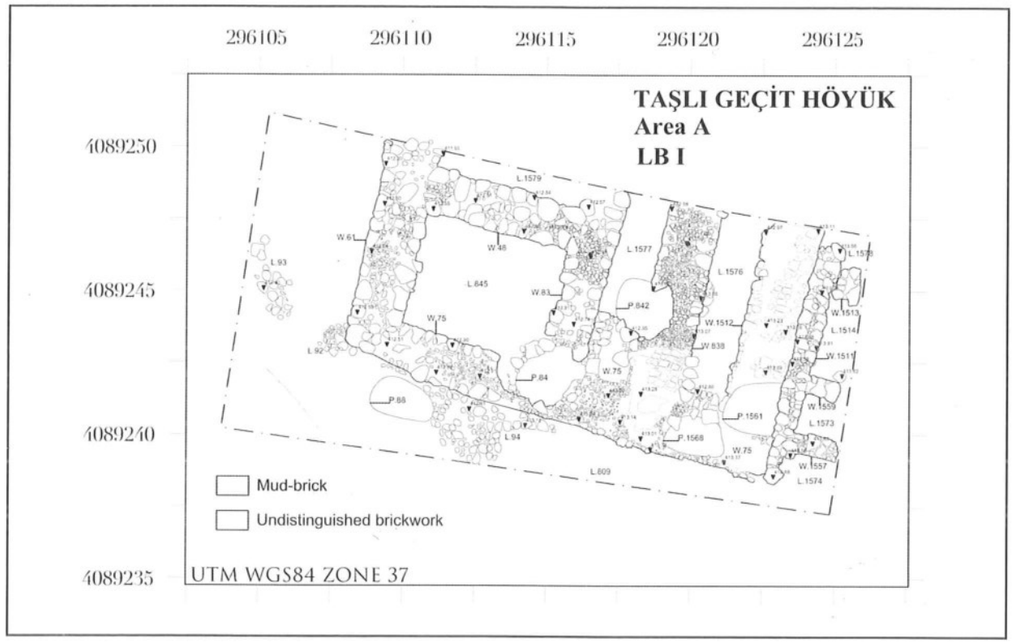

Fig. 2. Detailed plan of Fortress A (phase 2) at Taşlı Geçit Höyük (copyleft of the Turco-Italian Expedition at Tilmen Höyük and Taşlı Geçit Höyük, courtesy of N. Marchetti)

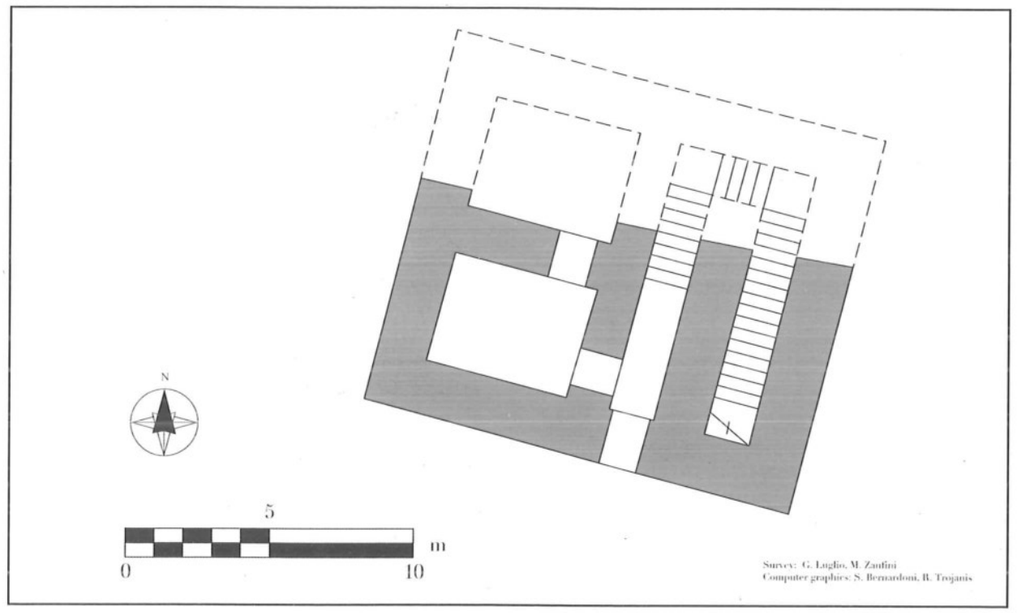

Fig. 3. Hypothetical reconstruction of the inner circulation of Fortress A based on the plan of Fortress P2 at Tilmen Höyük

DATE	PHASE	LOCI
Hellenistic	5b	Building (L.1523, L.1524, L.1526, L.1543)
	5a	Building (L. 825, W.4, W.43+W.72) and building (W.60+W.846)
IA III	4b	Houses (L.79, L.80, L.81, L.827, L.1504)
	4a1-2	Building (L.10, L.36, L.41 and L.833) and floors L.46 and L.37
LB I	3	L.831, pits and installations
	2	Fortress (L.845, L.1579, L.1577 and L.1576); adjoining building (L.1578, L.1514, L.1573, L.1574); streets (L.92 and L.809)
MB IB	1	Houses (L.98, L.804, L.807, L.1572)

Table 1. Synopsis of the stratigraphical sequence of Area A

to MB IB[5]. Scattered traces of MB IB walls and pavement suggest that perhaps some earlier structure (i.e. W.86, W.91, W.1571 and W.1575) had been reused for strengthening the foundation. The fortress consists of four rooms, two squared (L.845 and L.1579) approximately 5.00 x 4.00 m, and two rectangular, north-south oriented (L.1577 and L.1576) about 10.00 x 1.50 m. In addition, some remains of outer streets connected with the building, have been uncovered to the west (L. 92[6] covering W.61) and to the south (L.809). Since both the fortress and the annex are mainly preserved at foundation level, no floors were found[7].

Against the easternmost wall of the fortress (W.1512) was built the western wall (W.1511) of a smaller building (an annex), the plan of which cannot be completely reconstructed because it extends into the unexcavated area. This annex is composed of four small rooms (L.1578, L.1514, L.1573 and L.1574) only partially cleared.

The preservation of the remains of both buildings has been affected by erosion occurred along the northern slope, as well as by the successive occupational phases (Levels 3 and 4a1-2/b) which reused and damaged the structures. In the eastern part of the fortress, rooms L.1577 and L.1576 and those of the annex are covered by a levelling layer (F.837) laid down to set up the structures of Phase 3[8]. Here F.837 is thicker, sloping gently westwards, and the walls of the fortress are better preserved with at least one row of clay and lime mud-bricks preserved above the stone foundations (W.75, W.838 and W.1512). The chronological attribution of Phase 3 to late LB I can be inferred on the basis of the pottery assemblage and a Mitannian "Common Style" frit cylinder seal (Marchetti 2011b: 120-121; 2012: 532, fig. 4) found in the layer (F.816) covering floor L.831. To the West, some walls of room L.845 (W.61, W.75), laying very close to the surface, were reused by both LBI (Phase 3)[9] and IA III (Phase 4a2-b)[10] domestic and public structures. The annex building has been investigated only partially. Its walls, standing almost one meter above those of the fortress, are only preserved at foundation level. Thus, it can be suggested that the floors of the annex might have been higher than those of the fortress (fig. 4). As for the eastern part of the fortress, the majority of the annex is covered by F.837.

The repertoire of materials associated with the fortress is quite limited[11]. These finds came from

5 W.86, W.90, W.91, W.806, W.1571, W.1575. The assemblage is characterized by MB IB types such as Syro-Cylician painted jars and jugs (see also Marchetti 2011a).

6 During the excavations two patches of a pebbled floor were found to the south of the fortress. Both patches were covered by a thick layer of clay and some broken mudricks (F.76). The portion leaning against the fortress wall was named L.92, while L.93 was allocated to another portion found close to the southern excavation limit. Given that both floor remains were at the same elevation and were both covered by F.76, they have been merged and both named L.92.

7 No floors have been found connected to the mudbrick walls of W.75, W.838 and W.1511, in L.1576 and L.1577.

8 Among such structures, there are also some storage pits cutting through the walls and fillings of the fortress: P.841, P.842, P.1561 and P.1568.

9 Silos S.69 of phase 3, dating from LB I.

10 Wall W.49 of phase 4b, dating to IA III, was built upon W.61. W.87 of phase 4a2 dating to IA III cuts the southwest corner of room L.845.

11 The following abbreviations have been used to describe the main characteristics of each vessel: Class, SW (Simple Ware), PW (Preservation Ware), KW (Kitchen Ware); Technique, W (Wheel), H (Hand), WH (Wheel-Hand); Color, I (Inner), O (Outer), C (Core); Firing, H (High), Mh (Medium high), M (Medium), Ml (Medium low), L (Low); Inclusions type, M (Mineral), V (Vegetal), Y (Mineral and vegetal); Inclusions dimension, A (Small), B (Medium), C (Large); Inclusions frequency, 1 (Low), 2 (Medium low), 3 (Medium), 4 (Medium high), 5 (High); Surface treatment, B (Burnish), S (Slip), SB (Slip&Burnish), W (Wash), SM (Smooth), w (Whitish), b (Brownish), r (Reddish), bl (Blackish), 1 (Outer surface), 2 (Inner surface), 3 (Outer&Inner surfaces). In case of single color, the code (i.e. I, O and C) is not given.

12 132 sherds were found in F.76 covering L.92 and L.93, while 28 come from F.806 that covers L.809.

Fig. 4. General view of Fortress A from south-east (copyleft of the Turco-Italian Expedition at Tilmen Höyük and Taşlı Geçit Höyük, courtesy of N. Marchetti)

the layers covering the streets (L.92 and L.809) and consist of pottery sherds. The assemblage from fill F.76, covering the street to the west (L.92), show a substantial LB I horizon, with a few intrusive earlier and later specimens. This is probably due to the levelling works, as well as to some pits sunk from the following occupational phases. In the southern part of the fortress, layer F.806 (covering the street L.809) yielded a more homogeneous LB I assemblage. The pottery assemblage is characterized by few specimens mainly encompassing Simple Ware (SW)[12]. A few Kitchen Ware (KW) and a handful of Preservation Ware (PW) shapes are attested as well. This small horizon might be paralleled with the north-central Syrian, southern Anatolian, as well as the Middle Euphrates areas. Among the open shapes, platters and bowls are well represented. The former have a straight wall and thickened rim (SW, fig. 8.1) or a rounded wall (KW, fig. 8.11). The latter are characterized by specimens with in-turned rims and rounded wall (SW, fig. 8.12), witnessing a well-known trend of continuity from MB II to LB I, as attested at Tell Afis (Mazzoni 1998: 36), Tell Hadidi (Dornemann 1981: 42, fig. 13.24) and Tell Rifa'at (Matthers 1978: fig. 220.1). Other examples, with a less in-turned thickened rim and almost straight wall (SW, Fig. 8.2), are largely attested during the whole LBA. Large deep red burnished bowls with an out-turned rim and rounded wall (SW, fig. 8.4) have close LB I parallels with southern Anatolia (Hansen and Postgate 2007: 338, fig. 390.666).

Among the closed shapes, medium to large size kraters and jars, have been found alongside with pots. Red smoothed medium size kraters may have straight rim and out-turned neck (KW, fig. 8.13), or out-turned thickened rim and straight neck (SW, fig. 8.15). Both these types belong to a LB I tradition attested along the Middle Euphrates (Dornemann 1981: 42, fig. 16.1; McClellan 2007: 55, pl. II.6). A later LBA dating is suggested for a large krater with out-turned thickened rim and neck (SW, fig. 8.6). The assemblage of jars mainly consists of shapes with an out-turned thickened rim (KW and PW, figs. 8.9-10, 8.16). Similar examples are also attested in northern Syria (Mazzoni 2002, pl. LXII.50) and along the

Fig. 5. Stairwell L.845, L.1576 and L.1577 from south (copyleft of the Turco-Italian Expedition at Tilmen Höyük and Taşlı Geçit Höyük, courtesy of N. Marchetti)

Fig. 6. View of W.838 and the fortress walls masonry (copyleft of the Turco-Italian Expedition at Tilmen Höyük and Taşlı Geçit Höyük, courtesy of N. Marchetti)

Cylician coast (Gates 2006: fig. 8.11). A jar with out-turned rim (SW, fig. 9.5) belongs to the LB I tradition of the Middle Euphrates area (Mazzoni 2002: 132-133). Contacts with LB I Northern Syria (Mazzoni 2002: pl. LIX.25) are represented by the pots with out-turned rim and neck, and thickened inner wall (KW, figs. 8.7, 8.14).

3. Architecture

Fortress A is a massive rectangular bastion measuring ca. 15.00 x 13.00 m. The walls are mostly preserved at foundation level for a width of ca 1.80 m (fig. 5). The building technique consists of two outer lines of large stones roughly squared on the external face, and an internal filling of small stones and pebbles (fig. 6). As demonstrated by the discovery of mud-bricks in situ on the eastern part of the fortress, the stone foundation formed the basis on which the mud-brick elevation was set. The brick superstructure was laid on a layer of small pebbles set upon the stone foundations.

The excavations allowed the clearance of three of the four rooms forming the original building plan. The northernmost square room (L.1579) and part of the two broad rooms (L.1576, L.1577) collapsed due to erosion of the northern slope of the mound. At the eastern limit of the operation, an annex consisting of four stone walls (W.1511, W.1513, W.1559, W.1557), was partially exposed. The walls, ca 1 m thick, built with the same masonry technique of the fortress, were set against the eastern wall of the fortress; as a consequence the annex must be considered contemporary. However the aims and nature of the salvage excavation campaigns carried out at Taşlı Geçit Höyük did not permit the extension of the area limit, in order to clarify the nature of such structure.

According to both architectural features and topographic position of the fortress, one might suppose that the access to the building was situated either along the south or the west side, facing the inner part of the acropolis. Access was probably provided through one of the square rooms that, in turn, might have led to both the other square room and the two-flight stairway, occupying the two broad parallel rooms to the east (fig. 3). This interpretation of Fortress A's architectural features is based on a comparison with similar buildings labelled "fortresses" (H, Q, P) brought to light at the nearby site of Tilmen Höyük. Tilmen fortresses were in turn defined by comparison with Syro-Palestinian military facilities, such as the Ebla fortresses (M, V, AA, EE), or the Gezer Tower 5017,

Fig. 7. Late Bronze Age glacis (W.308) in area D at Taşlı Geçit Höyük (copyleft of the Turco-Italian Expedition at Tilmen Höyük and Taşlı Geçit Höyük, courtesy of N. Marchetti)

built atop of earthen ramparts[13]. These structures – characterized by modular standard features, massive stone foundations and mud-brick elevations – were interpreted by the excavators primarily as defensive devices[14].

From the structural point of view, a parallel might be drawn between Taşlı Fortress A and Tilmen Fortress H, both in use during LB I, and Fortress M at Ebla. The position of Fortress A, located along the northern border of the upper terrace of the mound, lets us conclude that this building's purpose was probably to control the outer foot of the acropolis, by analogy with the abovementioned fortresses of Tilmen and Ebla[15].

[13] Ebla fortresses were placed at intervals of 250-300 m on top of the earthen rampart aimed at controlling the outer foot of the city defense (Peyronel 2000: 1353).

[14] Note that Burke stressed the functional difference between simple towers and bastions/fortresses, suitable also for other general purposes (Burke 2008, 65). Furthermore, during the MBA fortified buildings were used to store goods officially sealed with cretulae (see below, par. 4.2, nr. 20).

[15] The comparison with Tilmen Fortresses Q and P appears not sustainable, according to both functional and topographic criteria. In fact, Fortress P is situated in the lower town and is connected with the casemate system, while Fortress Q, in spite of the bad state of preservation,

Archaeological dating	Tell Mardikh	Hama	Tell Atchana	Tell Afis	Tell Hadidi
MB IA	IIIA1	H5	XVII-XIV	V	
MB IB	IIIA2	H4-3	XIII-X		
MB IIA	IIIB1	H2-1	IX-VIII		
MB IIB	IIIB2		VII		
LB IA	IVA	G 3-1	VI-V	VI	"Tablet building"
LB IB			IV		H XIII

Table 2. Synopsis of the main MB I-LB I sequences in Northern Syria (*after* Mazzoni 2002: 130-133; Nigro 2002: 99)

Furthermore, given that Fortress H preservation allows to reconstruct a remarkable overall height (ca. 11.00 m, see below par. 4.2), one might conclude that also Fortress A at Taşlı Geçit had originally a tower-like shape and was at least two storey high.

As already highlighted, the two-year salvage excavation carried out at Taşlı Geçit did not permit further exploration, either of the presence of other military facilities on the acropolis, or of the eventual connection of the fortress with a city wall. However, it is worth noting that an imposing stone glacis (fig. 7), preserved to a height of ca. 6.00 m, has been exposed along the north-eastern side of the tell (Area D; Marchetti 2011b: 46). A preliminary analysis of the pottery assemblage retrieved lead us to assume that Fortress A and the glacis were contemporary. Thus, it is possible to conclude that the north-eastern foot of the mound was protected by a stone glacis[16], while a military tower-like device, Fortress A, was set atop of the tell along the northern side.

shows a more articulated plan (and according to the finds retrieved) might have had also administrative functions. For a brief discussion of Tilmen Höyük military devices see below par. 4.2.

16 Note that the stone glacis might have also protected the mound slope from eventual Kara Su river floods. During the LBA, glacis appear well attested in the Levant, northern Syria and Anatolia. A mudbrick glacis was exposed at Tell Afis, Areas N1 (cfr. Affanni, Di Michele 2010), and a chipped limestone glacis protected Area Y at El-Qitar (McClellan 1986: 424, 429, fig. 10). Glacis were also brought to light at Tell Mumbaqa and Emar in connection with fortification walls (cfr. Affanni, Di Michele 2010: 43, nrr. 25-26). With regard to Anatolia, an imposing stone glacis was erected as part of the so-called Yerkapı complex at Hattuša (cfr. Neve 1983). A stone glacis recently exposed at Beirut can be dated according to the excavators between the end of the LB II and the beginning of the IA I (Badre 1997: 63-64, fig. 31, a; cfr. fig. 20). The Beirut glacis provides a good structural parallel for that excavated at Taşlı Geçit Höyük Area D (cfr. fig. 7 with fig. 20).

4. Late Bronze Age Fortresses and the MBA Tradition

4.1. The periodization of the MBA and the LBA

The periodization of the 2nd mill. BC followed in this paper is that of the Syrian area (table 2). For the MBA this is mainly based on the stratigraphical sequence of Tell Mardikh IIIA-B (Nigro 2002) as well as the reassessment of Hama H1-5/G (*ibidem*) and Tell Atchana XVII-VII (Heinz 1992; Gates 1987; McClellan 1989). An exhaustive early LBA sequence is difficult to determine in Western Syria and Northen Levant (Mazzoni 2002: 130)[17]. Nonetheless the pottery analysis offered by Mazzoni (2002) on the assemblages from Tell Afis, Hama, Tell Atchana and Tell Hadidi, recognizing an LB IA and LB IB division, can be accepted here.

On the basis of this sequence, Fortress A at Taşlı Geçit Höyük can be ascribed to a restricted tradition of defensive buildings attested in the Levant from the MB IIA. The earlier examples of such military architecture have been found in northern Levant at Tilmen Höyük and Tell Mardikh/Ebla[18]. These were followed shortly after, between MB IIB and LB IA, by the bastion of Gezer (Dever 1970). Though some of those buildings were still in use during the LB I, Fortress A is the only one so far attested as newly built in this period.

4.2. Middle Bronze Age fortresses tradition

Fortress A at Taşlı Geçit Höyük belongs to a defensive buildings tradition dating back to the early Middle Bronze Age and widely attested in Anatolia and Syro-Palestine. The most important MB fortresses of this area have been excavated at Tilmen Höyük, Tell Mardikh and Gezer.

17 This is mostly due to the similarity of the MBA and LBA ceramic horizons (Akkermans and Schwartz 2003: 331).

18 On Tilmen Höyük, cfr. Marchetti 2005; 2006b; 2008a; 2008b; 2008c; 2009; 2010; on Ebla, cfr. Matthiae 1989; 1998; Peyronel 2000; 2007; Pinnock 2001.

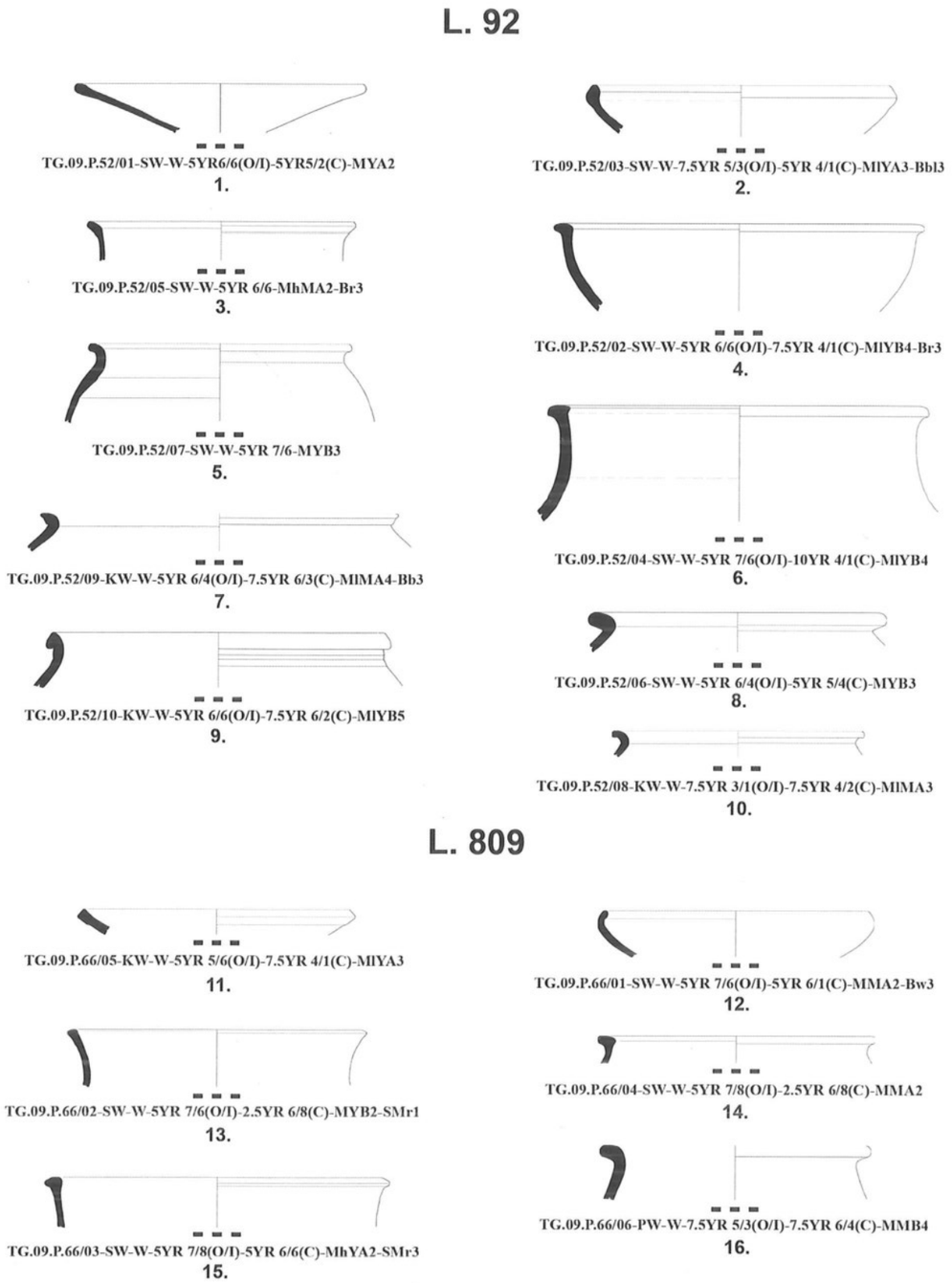

Fig. 8. Late Bronze Age I pottery assemblage from the outer pavements (L.92-93 and L.809) of the fortress

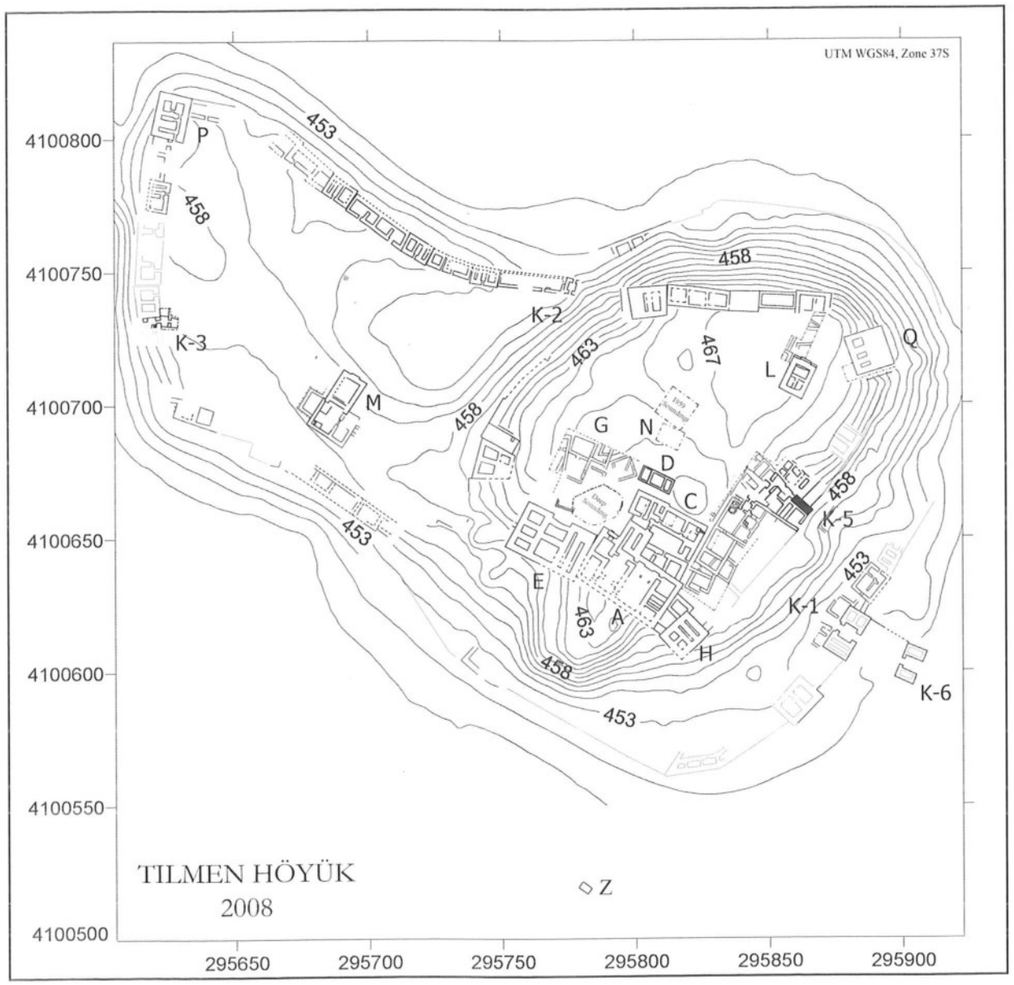

Fig. 9. Countour map of Tilmen Höyük (copyleft of the Turco-Italian Expedition at Tilmen Höyük and Taşlı Geçit Höyük, courtesy of N. Marchetti)

The MB IB-II city of Tilmen Höyük consists of a lower town and an acropolis, both protected by an independent defensive system (fig. 9). The upper fortifications are characterized by at least four fortresses located at the acropolis corners, two of which have been thoroughly investigated (Fortresses H and Q). The lower town is encompassed by a casemate system that connected the main city gate (K1-K6), some posterns (K-2, K-3), and two fortresses at the north-western corner (P-P2). Fortress H (fig. 10) is a rectangular building composed of two small square rooms to the south, and two narrow parallel rooms to the north (Marchetti 2008a: 354). On the basis of the pottery assemblage retrieved in Fortress H, the excavators assumed that the building was constructed during the MB II, probably at the time of the construction of Palace A, and was still in use during the LB I (*ibidem*: 355)[19]. Although it is not clear whether this structure retained its military function also during LB I or it was reused for other purposes. In the north-east corner of the acropolis, Fortress Q consists of a massive structure composed of a two-room suite and two broad parallel rooms (Marchetti 2009: 388)[20]. Analysis of the ceramic repertoire, together with the assemblage of clay sealings[21], suggests a MB IB date for the construction of Fortress Q, probably destroyed by fire during the MB II. The glyptic assemblage from Fortress Q makes clear that administrative practices requiring an official control were performed here[22].

[19] It must also be stated that Tilmen Fortresses H and Q, by contrast with Ebla specimens built upon artificial ramparts, were partially sunk in the slope of the mound. The tower-like structure in this case consisted of a basement, in part inserted into the mound slope and accessible only from above, and at least two upper storey, one of which flush with the acropolis level, where the access was probably located. As a consequence it would not be surprising to reconstruct a minimum height of 11.00 m for Fortress H (which was probably higher still).

[20] Due to the erosion process occurred on this part of the slope, only the three rooms abutting the internal part of the acropolis were still preserved.

[21] In L.2072, 18 clay sealings and tags were found. Ten of them are characterized by Old Babylonian, Old Syrian and schematic style seal impressions (Marchetti 2011b: cat. nrr. 18-22). Most notably among them, a large conical door sealing bearing the impression of an official of Sumula'el, king of Babylon, was retrieved (see Marchetti 2009: figs. 7-8; 2011b: cat. nr. 21).

[22] The use of buildings connected with the defensive system as storage for sealed goods is attested also at Ebla and Tell Ahmar. At Ebla this is the case of Fortress V, in which cylinder seals and clay bullae were found, but probably also in Fortresses AA and M (Pinnock 2001: 31-33; Burke 2008: 65). While at Tell Ahmar two fortified store rooms connected by a casemate-like structure were excavated in Area M, at the summit of the mound (Bunnens 2010: 111-115, figs. 1-2). Large quantities of charred grains, pottery sherds, seal impressions and a cylinder seal were retrieved in one of the blocks (3), leading the excavators to interpret these structures as official store rooms (*ibidem*: 115).

[23] Cfr. the MBA casemate systems of Ališar Hüyuk (Gregori 1986: 216, fig. 39), and Tell Atchana (Yener et al. 2010: 25, figs. 2.5, 2.16).

[24] This assumption appears to be further supported by the examination of a number of other public buildings exposed at Tilmen, such as Palace A, Building E and Temple M. On the one hand Palace A might be paralleled with later MBA Syrian royal residencies, such as Tell Atchana VII palace and the Northern Palace (Q) at Ebla (Marchetti 2006a: 277), and Temple M might be ascribed to the classic tradition of the Syrian in-antis temples (Marchetti 2007: 153-154). On the other hand Building E has been interpreted as a cultic building on the basis of Anatolian comparisons, such as the tripartite buildings considered temples, uncovered at Kaneš (Level 7; Marchetti 2006a).

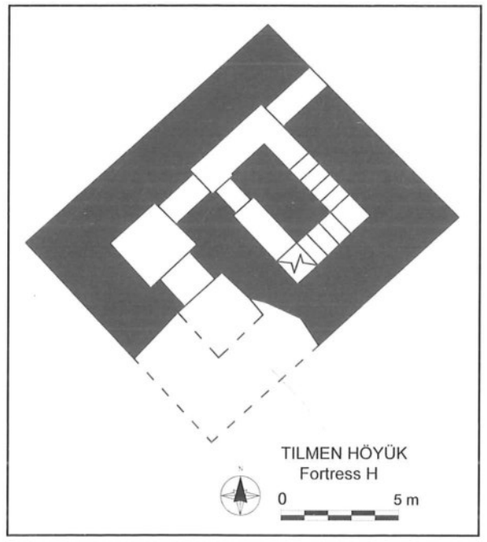

Fig. 10. Hypothetical reconstruction of the inner circulation of Fortress H (MB II-LB I) at Tilmen Höyük based on Fortress P plan (copyleft of the Turco-Italian Expedition at Tilmen Höyük and Taşlı Geçit Höyük, courtesy of N. Marchetti)

Investigations undertaken in Area P, at the northern corner of the Lower Town, allowed the exposure of a fortress (P) built at the joint of the northern and western casemate system of the lower town. The layout of Fortress P appears similar to H and Q, although with a more articulated internal circulation. According to the excavators, the lower town buildings were probably abandoned at the end of the MB II period (Marchetti 2008d: 392). In this view, it must be highlighted that a fortification system consisting of both casemates and angular bastions represents a unique feature in the MBA scenario[23]. In fact, casemate walls appear to be documented in Anatolia at least from the beginning of the MBA (Gregori 1986: 214-218), while bastions are thus far not attested. In this view we might consider Tilmen Höyük defensive system as the merging of the local Anatolian tradition of the casemate circuits, and the Syro-Palestinian tradition involving rectangular bastions built upon the fortification system[24].

At Tell Mardikh the Italian Expedition brought to light four fortresses (fig. 11) built atop of the earthen ramparts in areas M, V, AA and EE (see Peyronel 2000, 1353). These have been dated to the renovation of the defensive system undertaken between the MB IIA (Mardikh IIIA) and MB IIB (Mardikh IIIB; Burke 2008: 202).

Fortress M (fig. 12) – excavated on the eastern rampart to the North of the Desert Gate – is a free-standing rectangular structure divided into

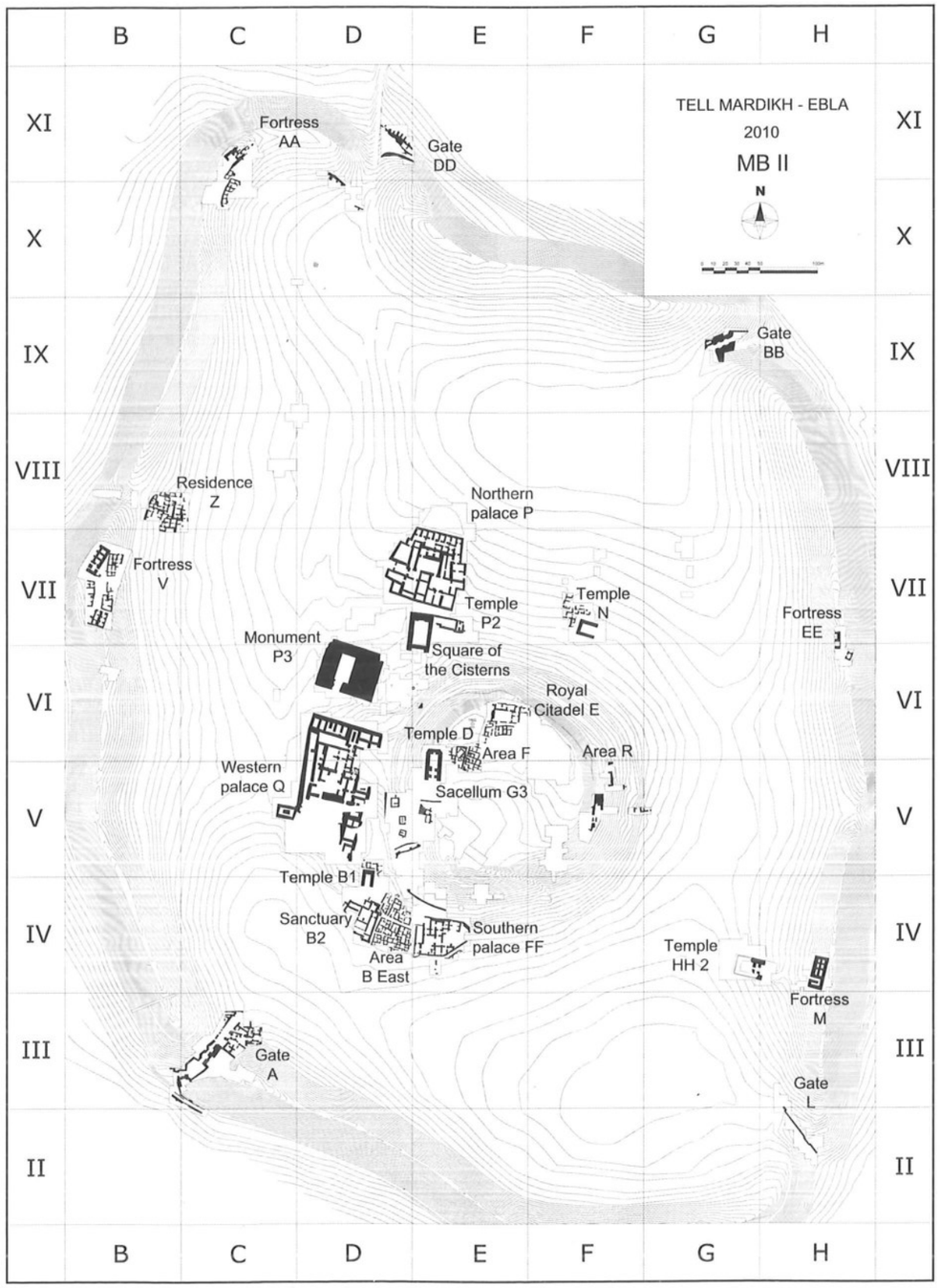

Fig. 11. Contour map of Middle Bronze Age remains at Tell Mardikh (after Matthiae, Marchetti 2013: fig. 1: 2)

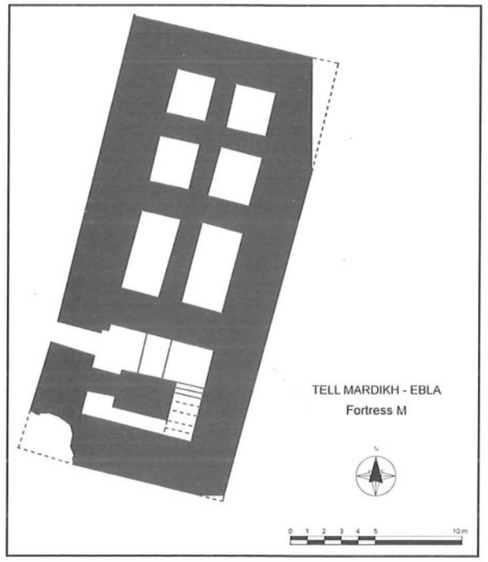

Fig. 12. Schematic plan of Fortress M at Tell Mardikh (redrawn after Matthiae 2001: 42, fig. 6)

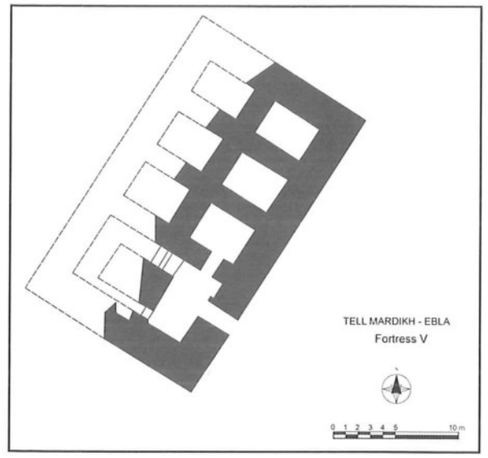

Fig. 13. Schematic plan of Fortress V at Tell Mardikh (redrawn after Matthiae 2001: 45, fig. 8)

two sections (Matthiae 1989: 47). The northern one is composed of two parallel rows with three rooms to one side, while the southern sector has a small vestibule and a staircase leading to the second floor (*ibidem*: 127)[25]. The isolated location of Fortress M might be paralleled with the examples at Taşlı Geçit Höyük and Gezer. In Area V on the western rampart, the excavations yielded the remains of a bastion (fig. 13) in a bad state of preservation[26]. The fortress probably consisted of eight rectangular rooms located on two parallel rows arranged in two sectors: the entrance and the stairs leading to the second floor and the other rooms[27]. The investigations in Area AA (fig. 14), on top of the northern town wall, east of the Aleppo Gate, revealed a defensive complex (Pinnock 2001: 21) similar to that of Area V. At the north-western limit of the area the archaeologists discovered a huge fortress building. Although

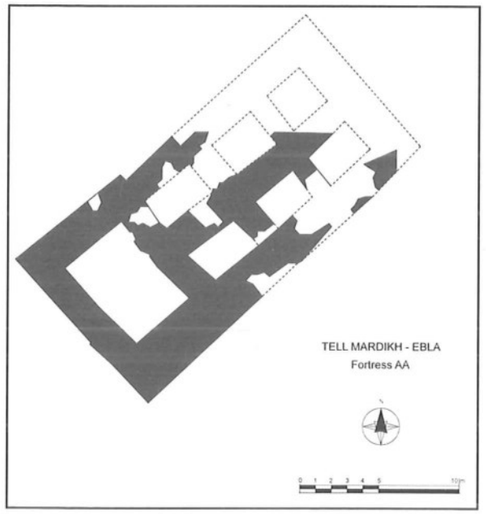

Fig. 14. Schematic plan of Fortress AA at Tell Mardikh (redrawn after Matthiae 2001: 47, fig. 9)

badly eroded, the plan might be paralleled with those of fortresses M and V (Matthiae 2000: nr. 54). Fortress EE, was first identified in 1999 on the eastern rampart (*ibidem*: 587-593; Peyronel *in press*). Matthiae (2000: nrr. 55, 57) has suggested that its plan could have been quite close to those of Fortresses M, V and AA.

To summarise, the Old Syrian defensive system at Tell Mardikh was certainly the result of a

[25] L.1905, L.1912, L.1917, L.1918, L.1923 and L.1933; L.1908, L.1910.

[26] Cfr. Matthiae 1998; Peyronel 2000: 1353; Matthiae 2010: 409-414.

[27] A functional interpretation of the inner space based on the spatial distribution of the artefacts has been recently attempted by Peyronel (2000: 1363-1364). In vestibule L.6522 and L.6515 he recognized primary craftsmanship activities, food consumption and administration, while the smaller squared rooms could have been storage areas.

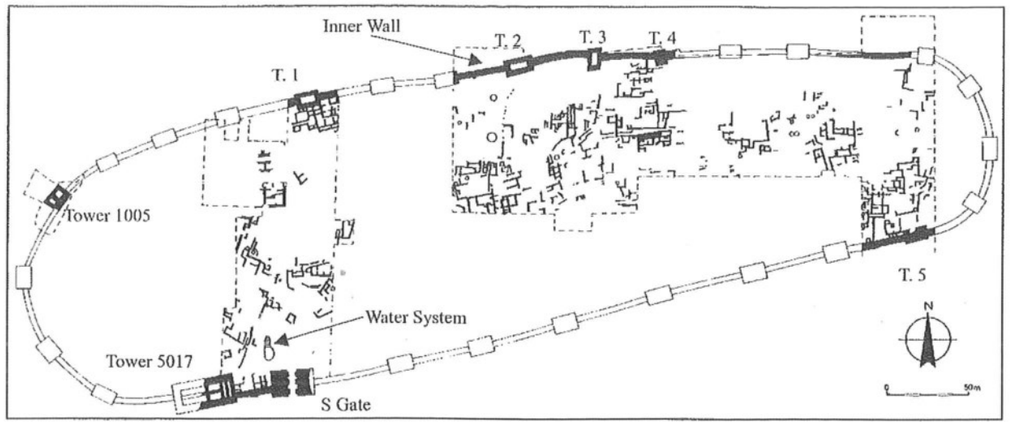

Fig. 15. Map of Tell el-Jezairi/Gezer (after Herzog 1997: fig. 4.20)

well-planned project that took place from the MB I (Pinnock 2001: 33). With regard to the fortresses, Pinnock (*ibidem*: 22) recently highlighted how their projection over the line of defence, probably conceived as a regular oval shape, was made for a precise reason and aim[28]. In the past, this location would have been specifically suited for both towers and bastion/fortresses to increase what Burke (2008: 65) defined the "field of fire".

The defensive system of Tell el-Jezairi/Gezer consists of two long oval shaped walls with towers, fortresses and gates built up in subsequent period (fig. 15). According to the HUC expedition, the so-called "Inner Wall" (Stratum XIX) might be entirely assigned to the late MB IIB (cfr. Table 1; cfr. Burke 2008: 260). Tower 5017 (fig. 16), located close to the South Gate and associated by the archaeologists to the "Inner Wall", might be safely paralleled with northern Syrian fortresses (Dever et al. 1970: 18-19)[29]. On the basis of the reconstructed plan it can be argued that the building had at least six rooms, divided in two sections: an eastern one, including the entrance and the staircase, and a western one, consisting of four rooms positioned on two parallel rows east-west oriented (Herzog 1997: 156, fig. 4.20). The masonry technique used is almost identical to Taşlı Geçit Höyük consisting primarily of stone foundations built with large stones enclosing a filling of smaller

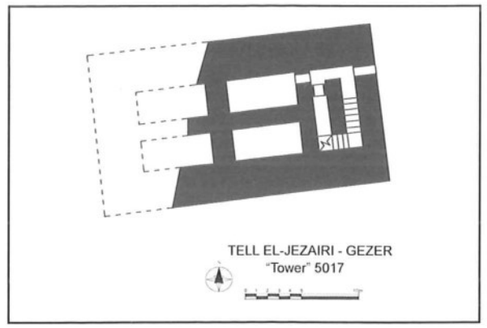

Fig. 16. Schematic plan of Fortress 5017 at Gezer, reconstruction based on the plan of Fortress P at Tilmen (redrawn after Dever et al. 1970: pl. 8)

stones (Burke 2008: 262)[30]. Dever (1970: 42) assigns the construction of the fortress to the late MB IIB on the basis of the stratigraphy and the pottery found in the foundation trench[31].

[28] On this topic see also Matthiae 2010: 402-403.

[29] However, recent studies (Herzog 1990) also suggested that Tower 1005, although only partially excavated, might have had similar lay-out and functions.

[30] Cfr. Dever et al. 1970: 19; Kempinski 1972: 184. Despite the lack of evidence for a mud-brick superstructure, the HUC excavators (Dever et a. 1970: nr. 3) quoting the early 1900's Macalister excavations claim that "*Since Macalister shows a photograph of the Inner Wall with bricks still in place on top of the stone foundation, we may be confident that tower 5017 likewise had a superstructure of bricks*".

[31] This datum contradicts Kempinski's (1972: 183-185) attempt to re-date the tower to the MB IIA (see also Dever 1973) and Herzog's (1997: 156) proposal to assign it to the MB IIB.

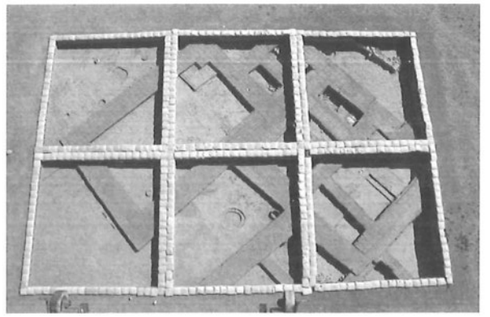

Fig. 17. Late Bronze Age southern fortress at Tell Atchana (after Yener 2008: fig. 9)

4.3. Defensive architecture during the Late Bronze Age

The MBA defensive tradition of building fortress-like structures appears to die-off abruptly at the beginning of LBA. Only Taşlı Geçit Höyük fortress, built during LB I, escapes this pattern. Nonetheless, this single case must be contextualized in the wider scenario of the early LBA military architecture. Following Burke (2008: 84), northern Levantine defensive technologies probably impacted the Anatolian architectural traditions during this period. During this time in central Anatolia the imposing defensive systems of Hattuša, Alaça Höyük and Kušakli were built adopting MBA Levantine prototypes such as mud-brick walls with towers, stone glacis, four-pier gates, corbel-vaulted postern gates, alongside with an extensive use of casemate walls of local tradition[32]. With regard to LBA southern Anatolian, sites such as Tell Atchana/Alalakh (fig. 17; see Akar 2013), Mersin (Garstang 1953; Jean 2006), Porsuk/Zeyve Höyük (fig. 18; see Beyer, Charlier 2007; 2008) and Imikušağı (fig. 19; see Sevin 1987; Konyar 1997), produced extensive evidence of elaborated defensive systems consisting of combination of features like casemates or town wall with towers or glacis[33]. However, a part for Tell Atchana, where two large fortress-like complexes have been exposed, these sites were mostly defended by casemates systems

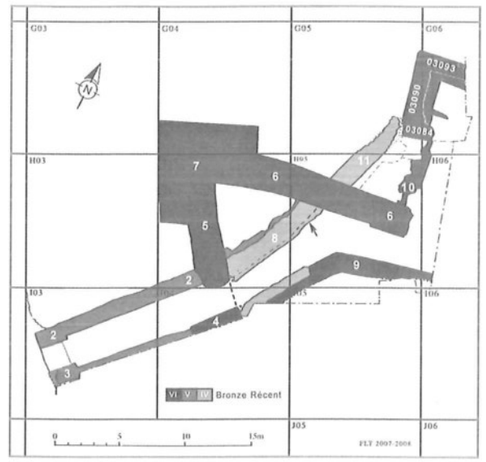

Fig. 18. Late Bronze Age defensive system at Porsuk (after Beyer 2008: 334, fig. 38)

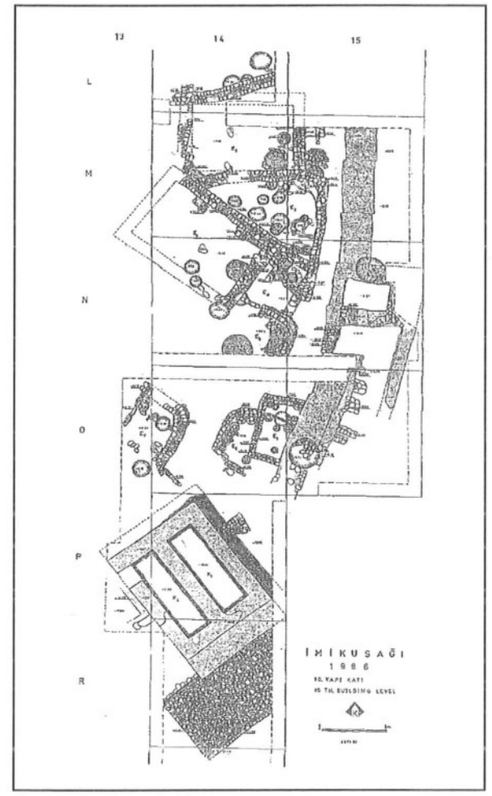

Fig. 19. Late Bronze Age defensive system at Imikušağı (after Sevin 1987: 320, fig. 3)

[32] On the casemate tradition in Anatolia see extensively Gregori 1986.

[33] In addition, it might be worth citing the defensive systems attested during the LBA in northern Syrian sites such as El Qitar (McClellan 1986) and Tell Afis (Affanni, Di Michele 2007; 2010), where town walls, glacis, towers and casemate systems have been exposed. In particular, Tell Afis evidence let us see that MBA fortifications were to some extent reused, and different defensive strategies were adopted throughout the LBA.

Fig. 20. The LB II-IA I stone glacis at Beirut (after Badre 1997: fig. 31)

with projecting towers (Gates 2011: 405). At Tell Atchana two military buildings defined "fortresses" were excavated between 2004 and 2008. The first one, the so-called "Northern Fortress" (Area 1) is dated to LB II and according to the excavators was an imposing mud-brick defensive building erected on a large platform (Akar 2013: 41-46). The "Southern fortress" (Area 4) was a multi chamber mud-brick structure, possibly connected with a circuit wall, and is considered roughly coeval to the Northern Fortress (*ibidem*: 47-48). According to the excavators these buildings should be connected with the Hittite reoccupation of the site during LB IIA that witnessed a large scale fortification program consisting of city walls and fortresses at regular intervals (*ibidem*: 48). Although the latter might be paralleled with the fortifications of Büyükkale and Mersin, the excavators noted similarities with LBA military devices established in the Levant during the Egyptian occupation (*ibidem*: 48-53). According to both plan and building techniques, the Tell Atchana fortresses cannot be compared to Taşlı Geçit Fortress A.

5. Conclusions

The excavation of Fortress A at Taşlı Geçit Höyük provided new data useful to improve our knowledge of the defensive architecture of LBA in the northern Levant. This massive building can be ascribed to an earlier tradition beginning in MB I-IIA (fig. 21) in inner Syria (Tell Mardikh), and then, towards the end of MB II, encompassing the northern Levant (Tilmen Höyük) and Palestine (Gezer). Though some of these buildings (such as Fortress H at Tilmen Höyük) continued to be used (perhaps still with a defensive function) even in the following period, Fortress A at Taşlı Gecit Höyük represents the first example of a newly built LB I bastion of that kind.

On a regional perspective, the excavations carried out in the Islahiye valley offer some new insights into the military architecture developed between the MBA and the LBA. It is in fact evident that the Tilmen Höyük fortification system, composed of casemate walls of Anatolian tradition and Levantine rectangular bastions, built between MB IB and MB II, is unparalleled elsewhere (Tell Ahmar seems to be a different case). In addition, it must be noted that the construction of the Tilmen Höyük bastions slightly predates the pattern noted by Burke (2008: 84, table 12) with regard to the introduction of such defensive devices in the Syro-Palestinian military traditions[34].

On the other hand, the adoption of Syro-Palestinian military traditions in Anatolia during the LBA matches with Burke's analysis (fig. 22). From this viewpoint we might stress that the rectangular fortress of MBA tradition from Taşlı Geçit Höyük appears to be a unique feature in this scenario[35].

Concerning the function of the above mentioned fortresses/bastions, previous analyses allow the identification of two main typologies, according to P. Matthiae's interpretation (Matthiae 2000: nr. 54; *ibidem*: 419). The first type consists of a defensive complex composed of a rectangular bastion and some adjoining buildings with other military, domestic and productive purposes. This topology is exemplified by Fortresses AA and V at Tell Mardikh. Here the fortress buildings have

[34] According to Burke, rectangular bastions and casemate walls compare in the Levant during the MB IIB-LB IA phases.

[35] Materials from Area D are still under study, therefore a LB I date for the exposed glacis may be considered preliminary.

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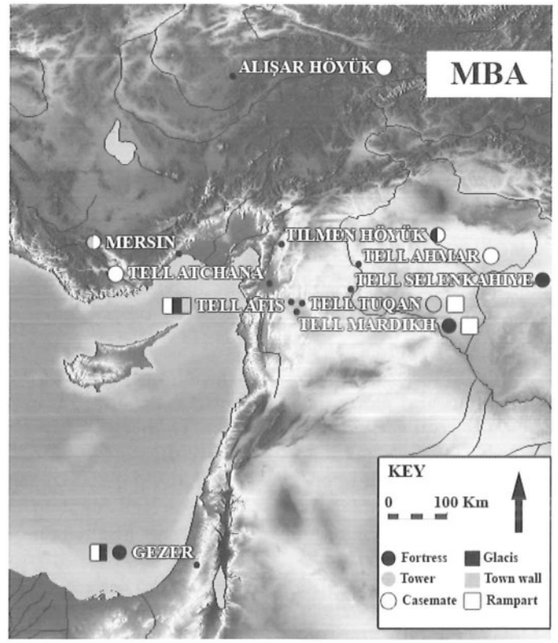

Fig. 21. Distribution of the main defensive buildings in Anatolia, Syria and the Levant during the Middle Bronze Age

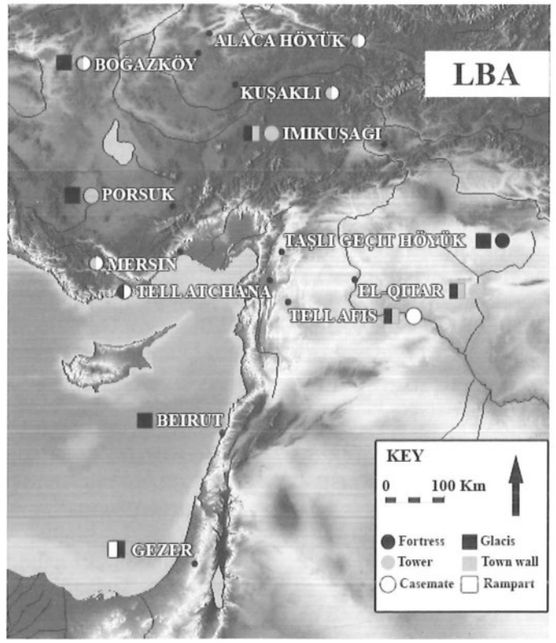

Fig. 22. Distribution of the main defensive buildings in Anatolia, Syria and the Levant during the Late Bronze Age

Dating	Taşlı Geçit Höyük	Tilmen Höyük			Tell Mardikh	Gezer
MB IB		Q	?	?	?	
MB IIA		↓	P	H	M, V, AA, EE	
MB IIB		?	↓	↓	↓	Tower 5017
LB I	A			↓		

Table 3. Synopsis of the chronological development of fortresses and defensive complexes in the Levant from MB I to LB I

been set upon the rampart, while the rest of the units are located all around them and along the inner slope of the earthen walls arranged on terraces. The second type consists of free-standing bastions. These specimens have been found connected to the defensive city walls, such as at Gezer or Tilmen Höyük, or set upon an earthen rampart, like Fortresses M and EE at Tell Mardikh. The main purpose of these devices was to defend city gates and protect sections of the city walls[36]. Fortress A at Taşlı Geçit Höyük might be ascribed to the latter typology, consisting of free-standing bastions built atop of the mound. Indeed, if the Tell Mardikh examples were built upon artificial ramparts, at Taşlı Geçit Höyük the high mound formed by the stratification of older settlements was exploited as a "natural" defence. This morphological characteristic could explain the apparent absence of casemates or wall systems at Taşlı Geçit Höyük[37]. In addition, the assemblages retrieved in some of these buildings, chiefly at Ebla, Tilmen Höyük and Tell Ahmar, tell us that military buildings were sometimes used as official storage areas or productive facilities. Unfortunately, the paucity of finds from the Taşlı Geçit Fortress A does not allow us to draw satisfactory conclusions on the activities carried out in this building.

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[36] Cfr. also Burke 2008: 66.

[37] Note that due to the nature of the excavations, the eventual connection with other military facilities has not been fully investigated.

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