

The Function of the Middle Building in Late Bronze Age Jericho

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Abstract: The Middle Building is one of the few structures dated to the Late Bronze Age at Jericho. It has been recognized as a residence but also hypothesized to have been a fort. On the basis of its location and some features it shares with the Stratum IXb structure at Tell Halif, it is argued that the Middle Building in Jericho was more than a private dwelling. Rather, it is likely to have been a way station that was part of the Egyptian administration.

Jericho is not mentioned in the Amarna Letters or in the Egyptian historical texts from the Late Bronze Age so its status at that time is unknown. The site has been extensively excavated, initially by Sellin and Watzinger 1907-1909, then Garstang 1930 - 1936 and Kenyon 1952-1958, but only a few remains from the LBA have been found (cf Bienkowski 1986: 1-4). More recently an Italian – Palestinian team has reinvestigated Early Bronze Age Jericho and its surrounds (Nigro et al. 2005; Nigro & Taha 2006; Nigro 2007).

Garstang (1936: 74-75) discovered a room with Late Bronze Age pottery beneath Iron Age remains north of the ‘Palace’ area¹, while Kenyon (1957: 261) found the foundation of a room, a floor, a mud oven and dipper juglet, as

well as some artefacts in tombs. Kenyon (1957) attributes the paucity of the remains to LBA structures having been washed away. Neev and Emory (1995: 103), who investigated the geological, climatological and archaeological background to the destruction of Sodom, Gemorrah and Jericho, concur. They state that “a wet sub-phase happened between the Late Bronze and Iron Ages” resulting in the disappearance of most of the LBA layer. While not denying the possibility of erosion, Bartlett (1982: 97) disagrees, pointing out that if there had been Late Bronze Age occupation against the Middle Bronze Age walls,

traces of this erosion would have been found in the wash at the foot of the tell. But while this can be found for the MB period, it cannot be found for the LB period.



Figure 1: A view from the north-west of the Late Bronze Age Middle Building being excavated Jericho 1933. Infrastructure associated with the spring can be seen on the left at the base of the Tell. Courtesy of the Palestine Exploration Fund, Garstang Archive, Album J33, Plate 1.

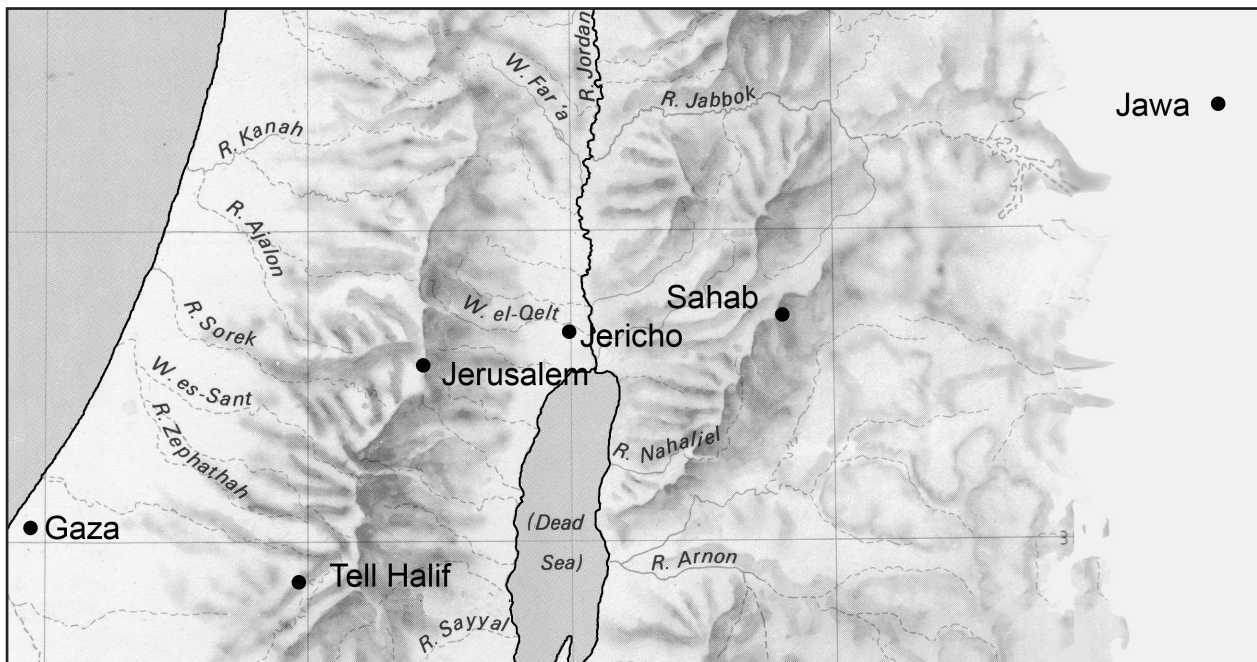


Figure 2: A map of the southern Levant with the place names referred to in this paper.

Bienkowski (1986: 122) concurs with Bartlett on this issue. Archaeologists, then, are divided as to whether Jericho was more substantial in the Late Bronze Age than the extant remains suggest. However, they seem to agree that what has been termed the Middle Building does date from the Late Bronze Age. Garstang and Kenyon wavered as to which phase of that age it should be assigned² but Bienkowski's reconciliation of their data led him to state, "There seems to be no alternative but to date the Middle Building to LBIIa/early LBIIb, c. 14th/early 13th centuries B.C." (1986: 117). He bases this judgement on several points:

- The Middle Building sits on top of part of the burnt black destruction layer (called the 'Streak' by Garstang) of the Middle Bronze Age city which had been washed down the hill.
- The pottery associated with the Middle Building was LBIIa/LBIIb
- The Middle Building is "in the same stratigraphic position as an adjacent structure firmly dated to the second half of the Late Bronze Age, which was also associated with LBIIa pottery."

Nigro (1996: 61) though, thinks that LBIIb is more appropriate. He says (1996: 53) that a secure date is not possible, based on the excavation, because Garstang did not follow stratigraphical criteria so that the date of the ceramics does not necessarily give a date for the building itself. The third point made above by Bienkowski is at odds with this criticism. Thus the possibility of a date in LBIIa cannot be excluded.

The Middle Building

First described by Garstang (1934: 105-16 cf. Garstang and Garstang 1948: 123- 24), the Middle Building measures 14.4m x 11.8 m and has seven rooms, one of which Garstang (Garstang and Garstang 1948: 123) asserts was a courtyard, a judgement with which Bienkowski cautiously agrees (1986: 112). The foundations of the building are stone and they supported a mud brick superstructure although only a little of that remains. Nevertheless, Bienkowski (1986:112) draws attention to a notation in a surveyor's notebook indicating the find of wooden beams on the floor of one of the rooms and says they suggest collapsed roof timbers.

It should be noted that there were difficulties associated with the excavation of the Middle Building because of the presence of the later "Hilani" structure on top of it whose foundations intruded into the remains of the Middle Building. The finds inside the latter were not extensive and the "barren floors" led Bienkowski (1986:118) to think that there may have been "an orderly exodus rather than a sudden end". Nevertheless, some LBA pottery was found in the Middle Building, as were a damaged cuneiform tablet and a small terracotta figurine of a naked woman broken off above the knees. The pottery is listed and discussed by Bienkowski (1986: 98-102; 118-120) although he makes it clear that not all the pottery sherds from the excavations were preserved. Much of the pottery was locally made and was similar to the LBA pottery found in tombs. However, whereas some Cypriot ware was found in the Middle Building, none was apparent in the tombs. This may suggest that the occupiers of the Middle Building were of a higher social status and/or wealthier than those interred in

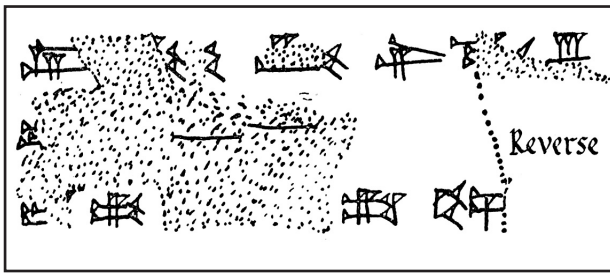


Figure 3: Sidney Smith's drawing of the cuneiform tablet found at Jericho 1933, Rockefeller Museum 1485, from Garstang, 1934: 117.

the area. Bienkowski (1986:113) says the figurine found in the Middle Building, but whose present whereabouts is unknown, is likely to date from the Late Bronze Age. Further, that it provides a parallel to the figurine found in a tomb at Alalakh³, although he notes that similar types of figurines do appear elsewhere in Bronze Age Canaan and Syria. The damaged cuneiform tablet, of which there is a drawing and a report by Sidney Smith in Garstang (1934: 116-117), is now housed in the Rockefeller Museum⁴ (Horowitz and Oshima 2006: 96). A drawing is reproduced in Figure 3.

Smith (in Garstang 1934) says that the signs resemble those used in the Amarna Letters from the Phoenician coastal towns, rather than from Mittani, Assyria or Asia Minor⁵. They look similar also to the signs used in the

Jerusalem Amarna Letters. It should be noted that like tablet 11 from Hazor⁶ and tablet 2 from Shechem⁷, both of which date from the Late Bronze Age, the writing on the Jericho tablet continues onto the obverse side. Smith (cf Garstang, 1934: 117) surmises that the Jericho tablet was a "business note recording some name or names" while Horowitz and Oshima (2006: 96) translate the only legible portion as "s[o]n of Ta[g]utaka". Hazor 11 and Shechem 2 also cite names⁸. However as the context is missing from all three tablets it is not possible to be certain about whether they should be characterized as belonging to the sphere of business, other administrative matters or taxation.

To return to the Middle Building: Garstang (Garstang and Garstang 1948: 179) says that it was "clearly a residence (for it had both hearth and oven)". Nevertheless, he draws attention (ibid) to what he thinks is some curious features: one room was like a stable and the structure had "its own stout inclosing wall which was laid out noticeably askew from the old lines of the city". According to Garstang (1934: 105), the wall was built in three stages. Bienkowski (1986: 112) comments that it "must be integral to the Middle Building, since it is on the same axis, but cuts the lines of the earlier MB 'storerooms' and is overlain by the later Iron Age 'Hilani'." Bienkowski (1986: 117) considers the question of the function of the Middle Building. He points out the evidence of domestic occupation on the Tell discovered by Kenyon (outlined above) and draws attention to Garstang's find of a room with LBA pottery beneath Iron Age remains north of the Palace area (cf Cook, 1936: 74-75), thus concluding that the Middle Building was not the only occupied dwelling of the time. Because of the thick enclosure wall, he wonders whether

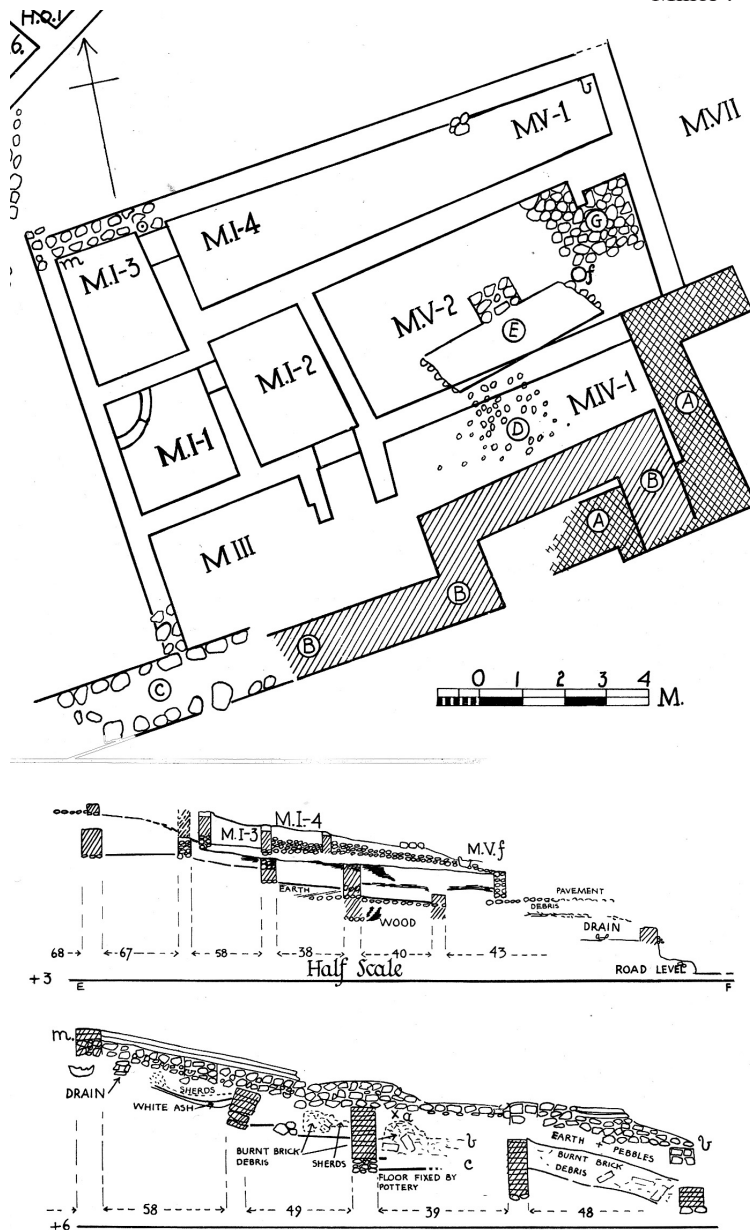


Figure 4: Middle Building plan and sections from Garstang, 1934: pl. XIV

it was a small fort although seems to reject the idea when he says, “there is nothing to suggest that it was used for military purposes” (Bienkowski 1986: 117). However, given the evidence from the slightly later times of Seti I and Ramesses II of Egyptian concern to protect/ regulate the other fords across the Jordan⁹, it is most probable that Jericho was equipped to deal with any potential problem that might arise. This does not mean necessarily that the building was used exclusively as a military installation, nor merely as a dwelling place as Garstang implied.

Are there any further clues to the function of the building? Bienkowski (1986: 117) says,

“The closest known parallel to the Middle Building is the LBIIb ‘residency’ at Tel Halif...”

It is proposed now to investigate the building at Tell Halif in order to see if it can shed any light on the purpose of the Middle Building from Jericho.¹⁰

Tell Halif

Jacobs (1987: 67-86), one of the excavators of Tell Halif in the northeastern Negeb, gives a description of the architectural features of the building likened by Bienkowski to the Middle Building in Jericho. Further, Jacobs (1987) gives an assessment of the function and place of Tell Halif in relation to the Egyptian Empire.

The building was found in Stratum IXB and dates from LBIIb (Jacobs 1987: 69)¹¹, thus predating the Jericho structure by at least a century. Like the Middle Building, the LBIIb residency at Tell Halif was not built according to an Egyptian architectural design even though, like the one at Jericho, it was constructed during the period of Egyptian overlordship¹². The building at Tell Halif measured approximately 17m x 14m, so was slightly larger than the Middle Building at Jericho (14.4m x 11.8m) (measurements given in Bienkowski 1986: 117), although it should be noted that both were rectangular. Like the Middle Building, its foundations were made of stone (cf Seger 1993: 556) and its superstructure of mudbrick. Bienkowski (1986: 117) thinks a further feature they may have had in common relates to the use of wooden roof beams¹³. The building at Tell Halif had a well defined central courtyard (6m x 6.5m) (Seger 1993: 556) with 7 rooms arranged around its four sides although there is no indication that any of the rooms had doors (Jacobs 1987: 72). Jacobs goes on to say that entry to the structure was gained through an exterior door to one of the rooms¹⁴ and points out that this was a fairly common feature of the courtyard house. If there was a courtyard in the Middle Building at Jericho, it was not nearly as well defined as the one at Tell Halif although, as seen above, Bienkowski cautiously agrees with Garstang’s conclusion that one of its seven rooms fulfilled this function. However, it was not square or central. As Nigro (1996: 7, 52-53) points out, its largest room was on one of the edges of the structure.

Northern elements abound in the building at Tell Halif. Although the earliest examples of the architectural design of the courtyard structure have been found in Mesopotamia, the largest number has been discovered at Ugarit (Jacobs 1987: 69)¹⁵. The inclusion of upright wooden beams set into the wall of one room (Room G) in the house at Tell Halif reflects a technique that was normal practice further north in Syria, Anatolia, Crete and Mycenae (Jacobs 1987: 73), but not in Canaan¹⁶. Indeed, Jacobs (1987: 73; note 11) says that the size of the beams used means they would have had to have been imported from Lebanon or Syria. That the central room was roofed was deduced from the find of a large stone in the middle of the room, which would have functioned as a base for a pillar, and piles of charred wood which appear to have been the remnants of beams which stretched from the pillar to the walls, thus providing the framework for the roof (Jacobs 1987: 73). It is even possible that there was a second storey for the remains of a staircase were apparent in Room G (Jacobs 1987: 74). The find of a lamp well above the level of the floor of Room G but mixed with fallen bricks and charred wood also suggests another storey (Jacobs 1987: 83, fig 12)¹⁷. The partial (or possibly the full) roofing of the central room again reflects the practice

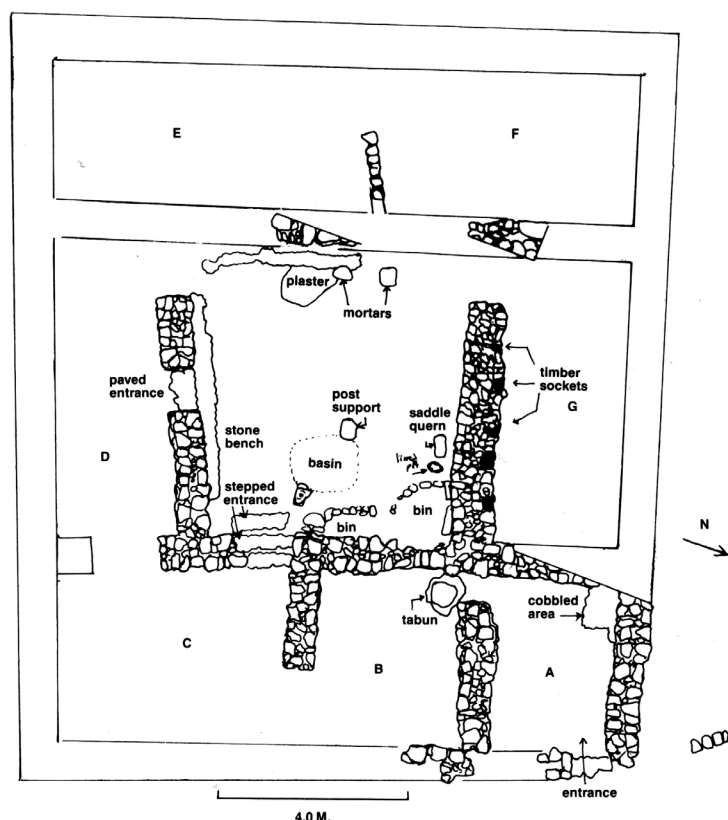


Figure 5: Plan of the Late Bronze Age building at Tell Halif, from Jacobs, 1987: 70

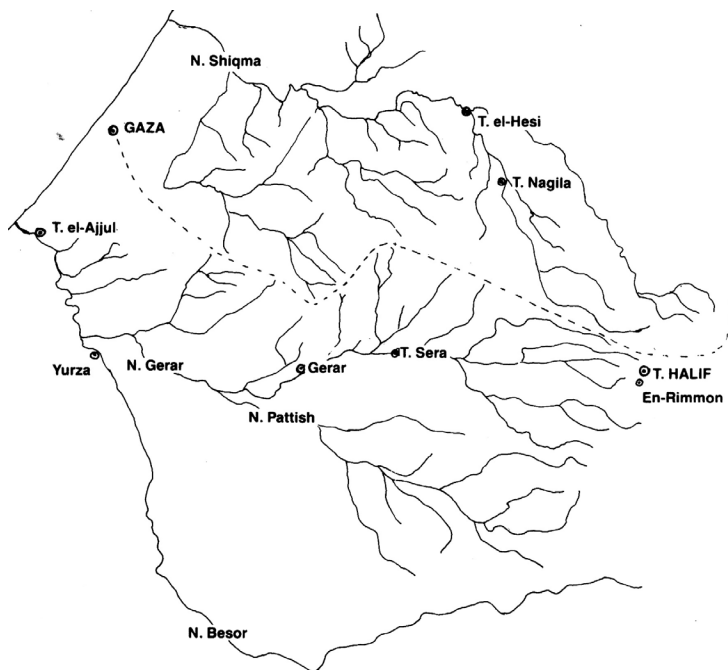


Figure 6: A map with wadi systems and possible route between Gaza and Tell Halif from Jacob 1987: 68

of the north (Jacobs 1987: 73). One type of pottery found in the central room also exhibits a northern origin. This is a 'krater with a strainer spout and a "basket" handle' (Jacobs 1987: 74; fig.8)¹⁸ which closely resembles a find labelled "Hittite" at Alaca Hüyük (cf Zübeyrkoşay 1951: pl. lxiv) in north-eastern Anatolia. As well as highlighting the northern aspects of the architecture, Jacobs draws our attention to its costliness in terms of the materials used. The importation of wood has already been mentioned, but to this should be added the "fine metaled surface" of the floor of Room G (Jacobs 1987: 72). Here it should be noted that both the large wooden beams and the metallised floor belong to Room G, marking it as distinctive from the other rooms.

Jacobs (1987: 79-81) demonstrates that Tell Halif was the only town in the northern Negeb in the Late Bronze Age and that habitation was almost totally limited to the Tell itself. He thinks this was due to the fragile eco-system where dry farming would have had to be practiced. So, why was there a town in the region at all? Jacobs (1987: 79-81) shows that occupation appears to have alternated between Tell Halif and Tell Beit Mirsim over the span of the Early to Late Bronze Ages. The move from Beit Mirsim to Halif was, in Jacob's opinion, the result of the former being destroyed at the end of the MBA. The poor settlement (Stratum X-MB IIC/LB IA - cf Jacobs 1987: 69) at Halif which followed was begun, posits Jacobs (1987: 81), by "the displaced citizens of Beit Mirsim". This settlement was superseded in a generation. Jacobs says,

What had begun in Stratum X as a village of thin-walled houses was replaced in Stratum IXB with a large and handsome building (69)¹⁹

In Jacob's view,

The only cause sufficient to account for the dramatic, nearly overnight, changes in the prosperity of the town must have been that of a revived economy of the entire region under the urging and for the benefit of Egypt. It is likely that Halif's location on one of the major routes inland to the Judean hills- especially from a town belonging to Egyptian royalty (Gaza's epithet was "That -Which-the-Ruler-Seized) – guaranteed its successful and rapid growth. (76)

Tell Halif's position on the trade route is surely the key here. However, it may be possible to extend this observation a little further. There were no settlements close to Tell Halif. Jacobs underlines the isolation of Halif when he says,

Not a single farmhouse, industrial site or even grave belonging to the Late Bronze Age has been found away from the tell by the team which has systematically conducted a survey of the region around Tel Halif (79)

yet he does not draw the obvious conclusion that

Halif was not primarily an agricultural centre, rather its function was to support the trade route. Seger (1993: 557) says it is likely that during this period it was a "special-use site", "probably a trading station maintaining connections between the coastal highway and areas in the Judean hills." He may be correct that it was a trading centre, but it is likely to have been a way station as well²⁰.

Way Stations in the Ancient Near East

What is known from the literary record about way stations in the Ancient Near East? Dorsey (1991: 43- 47) gathered together some data about them. On page 43 he quotes a statement made by Shulgi, King of Ur, in the Neo-Sumerian period,

*I...built there [along the highways] "big houses"
Planted gardens alongside of them, established
resting places,
Settled there friendly folk,
[So that] who comes from below, who comes from
above,
Might refresh themselves in its cool [shade],
The wayfarer who travels the highway at night,
Might find refuge there like in a well-built city.
(translated by Kramer in Pritchard 1969: 585).*

The evocative imagery in these words of Shulgi conveys to us several notions: that in way stations people could rest; were welcome whoever they were; could cool down and sleep in safety. Casson (1974: 36) comments that "who comes from above" in Shulgi's statement is indicative of high administrative officials whereas "who comes from below" probably indicates traders. It should be noted that

Shulgi's way stations were government controlled and that the people who ran them did so with his approval²¹. Further evidence of a general nature has come down to us about way stations from Ancient Near Eastern sources of a later period. From the extant Neo-Assyrian literature, Dorsey (1991: 45) adduces that way stations were government operated, had the responsibility of accommodating travellers, passed on official correspondence and had to be loyal to the king. With the exception of passing on correspondence (of which Shulgi said nothing), all the aspects of way stations in Neo-Assyrian times were present over a thousand years earlier in the time of Shulgi and presumably they continued to be present throughout the intervening period. Another later source is the Hebrew Bible²². From its evidence, Dorsey (1991: 46) tentatively concludes that way stations were located in wilderness areas where there were no towns or villages where one could be accommodated. He is surely correct for this very situation is reflected in Shulgi's statement which says that way stations provide, "refuge ... like in a well-built city". This implies that they acted as substitutes for cities and, as such, were likely to have been built to withstand attack and to be found in sparsely populated areas. Nevertheless, they need not have been the only structure in a given location. A way station would have required workers such as cleaners, cooks, stable hands and others who would have needed to house themselves and their families. Not all way stations were in isolated locations though some, at a time later than Shulgi, appear to have been built in close proximity to a city and this is the case with the one at Knossos (cf Evans 1928: 103-39)²³.

What did way stations look like? Shulgi said that he built "big houses", so they resembled residences. However, the remains of his structures have not been uncovered. Casson's survey (1974: 88-90; 200-211) of way stations/hostels/inns throughout the ancient world from Minoan to Byzantine times indicates that the size of the structure varied from place to place according to the amount of traffic along a particular route. One feature that appears to have been consistent though was the presence of a courtyard, either square or rectangular, when a structure was located outside a city.

Was the Stratum IXB Building at Tell Halif a Way Station?

- Tell Halif was certainly in a sparsely populated area, thus fulfilling one of the two possible general locations for a way station. Further, skirting the wadis, it was on a route leading from the Via Maris to the Judaeian hills and so travellers are likely to have passed through it.
- The building itself would have been defensible as there was probably only one entrance – originally through room A leading to the other rooms that gave access to the central courtyard. Where the later entry was located is not clear to the excavator or the present writer²⁴.

- The large number of pottery vessels, as well as evidence of grain, wine and lentils, but not of cooking, discovered in the central room, (Jacobs 1987: 74-75), may suggest that the building at Tell Halif was a way station²⁵.
- The cobbled area of the floor of Room A may suggest the presence of pack animals²⁶, prior to its final phase²⁷.
- It is probable that the central courtyard at Tell Halif contained "a pool". Jacobs (1987: 74) describes the "pool" - which he calls a "basin" - as follows:

One of the features of the room worth noting is a sloping sunken area (c.1.9m. x 1.5 m. across) of the floor near the eastern entrance. The "basin" had been carefully maintained through all three phases of the house, and in the final phase its edge had been rimmed by small vessels, particularly bowls and jugs. It can only be surmised (since nothing was detected in the "basin" except a water jug that had apparently rolled into it) that the basin was used in some chore that required the containment of a liquid.

However, it is noteworthy that a pool of a similar size was found at the way station at Knossos excavated by Evans (1928:116).

- Additional support for Tell Halif having been a way station comes from the international finds there. The "Hittite" pottery has already been mentioned, but Egyptian amulets were found also, as was a bulla sealed with a Mittanian style cylinder seal (Jacobs 1987: 82). All this leads to the conclusion that people from a variety of geographical locations passed through Tell Halif.
- This is not surprising for it would have been on the most direct route from central Transjordan to Gaza and/ or the Via Maris and thence to Egypt.

It is highly unlikely then that the building at Tell Halif was simply some rich man's dwelling house. More probably, it was his business premises; a business run with the blessing of the Egyptians for the facilitation of travel, whether of administrative officials or merchants. One could hazard a guess that the lavishly appointed Room G was the owner/manager's office and that it reflected his northern origin (or close contact with the north) as well as his wealth, which he derived from those passing through his portals²⁸. He may even have been connected with a merchant company himself and have moved south to facilitate business²⁹. Nigro (1996: 5) asserts that Halif was an outpost of Lachish and, if so, it will have been overseen by the ruler of the latter.

The Middle Building at Jericho Revisited

To return to a discussion of Jericho: the conclusion about the function of the Stratum IX building at Tell Halif may well be applicable to Jericho also.

- Jericho, like Tell Halif, was in a sparsely populated area and its importance increases with the realisation that it had a fresh water spring. Further, it was almost equidistant between Sahab³⁰ in Jordan, and Jerusalem. As such, it would have been an ideal place for a way station.
- The buildings at Jericho and Tell Halif, while not having a central courtyard in common, had some similar features: both were rectangular; had foundations of stone and a superstructure of mudbrick; had wooden roof beams although due to the lack of remains of the mudbrick superstructure of the Middle Building, it is unknown whether there were any wooden beams set into the wall as at Tell Halif. A pool, presumably for bathing, was evident at Tell Halif and, although none was found in the Middle Building at Jericho, it is possible that the presence of a spring at Jericho, close to the Middle Building, may have obviated the need for a purpose built pool. Like the Building at Tell Halif, the Middle Building at Jericho contained artefacts from much further north, suggestive of travellers passing through the area.
- A cuneiform tablet was found at Jericho and, even though most of it was illegible, it is an indication that the Middle Building was not merely a domestic dwelling. As the building was apparently abandoned in an orderly fashion, the logical conclusion is that the tablet had been compiled by, or sent to whoever was in charge rather than being in transit to somewhere else. This suggests that the person in charge was educated and/or a scribe was present, linking with what has been found out from Neo-Assyrian texts about the role way stations played as far as official correspondence was concerned.
- The Middle Building at Jericho was protected by very thick walls. These may have served a dual purpose – defence against erosion as well as defence against marauders who had often been prevalent in the area

Can it be concluded that the Middle Building at Jericho was part of the Egyptian network? Yes. The time of its construction, most probably during the fourteenth but possibly the thirteenth century BCE, its location at a crossroads and its proximity to a fordable area of the River Jordan strongly indicate this. Further pointers in this direction are the function of the building as a way station, adduced from its similarity to Tell Halif, and the probability that its overseer was the recipient or generator of a cuneiform tablet. Further, it is only 36kms/22.5 miles from Jerusalem which, according to the Amarna Letters (EA 285- EA 290), was part of the Egyptian Empire. Indeed, Nigro (1996: 5) thinks that Jericho may have been an outpost of the Jerusalem city state and the similarity in the style of the signs between the Jerusalem Amarna Letters and those used on the Jericho tablet would support such a suggestion.

As far as the relationship between trading centres and way stations is concerned, it is probable that there was a link between them and that the presence of one brought about the appearance of the other. However, neither is likely to have been primary. As Al-Maqdissi (2008: 42) points out, the presence of oases along the way will have given rise to the route from Mari to Qatna across the Syrian Steppe in the first place and way stations will have developed subsequently. Tell Halif was close to a wadi and in a spot that anyone travelling from the southern end of the Via Maris to the Judaeen hills or beyond would have had to pass. A fresh water spring was located at Jericho and so anyone travelling from Transjordan to Jerusalem or south to Egypt would have passed that way. Consequently, way stations appeared at both Tell Halif and Jericho³¹. However, way stations were primarily “government installations” designed, according to the much earlier Shulgi, to support personnel travelling on government business and secondarily to provide secure accommodation to traders who were passing through. It may be that their function was even broader by the Late Bronze Age, but to investigate that would require a further paper.

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Endnotes

- 1 Bienkowski (1986: 112) says it is possible the 'Palace' dates to the LBA but there is no certainty. In his opinion there is too little information upon which to base a judgment.
- 2 Bienkowski (1986:113-118) provides a summary of the varying dates assigned to the Middle Building by Garstang and Kenyon, showing how their views shifted over time.
- 3 Bienkowski (1986: 113) cites L. Badre, *Les Figurines Anthropomorphes en Terre Cuite a l'Age du Bronze en Syrie*, Paris, 1980: pl. XX:51
- 4 Its registration number is IAA 35.2878; Rockefeller Museum 1485 (Horowitz and Oshima, 2006: 96). Photographs of each side of the tablet appear in Horowitz and Oshima (2006: 231)
- 5 Smith (cf Garstang, 1934: 117) surmises that the tablet was a "business note recording some name or names".
- 6 Horowitz and Oshima (2006: 82) give the registration number of the tablet as IAA 1997-3308 and its present location as the Institute of Archaeology, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem
- 7 Horowitz and Oshima (2006: 123-25) give the registration number of the tablet as IAA 32.2891 and its present location as the Rockefeller Museum.
- 8 Hazor 11 has a place name and a personal name on three lines cf. Horowitz and Oshima (2006: 82) while Shechem 2 appears to be the lower half of a tablet upon which is written a list of witnesses cf. Horowitz and Oshima (2006: 124)
- 9 Cf. *The First Beth-Shean Stela* (Pritchard, 1969: 253-254) which demonstrates that Seti I sent troops to deal with the attack on Beth-Shean by Hammath and Pella: the First Division of Amun to Hammath; the First Division of Re to Beth-Shean and the First Division of Sutekh to Yenoam. An Egyptian residency and a second large public building in Egyptian style were found in Stratum XII at Tell es-Sa'idiyeh (probably Biblical Zarethan) (Tubb in Tubb and Chapman, 1990: 94-110), 1.8 km east of the Jordan and, like Beth-Shean, Hammath and Yenoam, situated close to a ford of the River.
- 10 It has to be acknowledged that Bienkowski may have over stated the case for the similarity of the two buildings for there is a major difference in their internal layout. Nigro (1996: 7) classifies the Middle Building at Jericho as a "residence with the largest room on the side (of the structure)" but Tell Halif as "a residence with a central square room". Nevertheless, each building appears to have had a tripartite division cf. figure 4 above and figure 5 below.
- 11 Seger (1993: 556) says the level in which the Building was uncovered was Stratum X, although dates it to the same time as Jacobs.
- 12 Jacobs (1987: 70,72) points out that the building at Tell Halif predates the Amarna period, thus refuting the claims of several scholars that the architectural design emerged from Egypt in the Amarna period.
- 13 Bienkowski (1986: 112) comments, "The upright wooden 'roof supports' at Tell Halif recall the possible ceiling timbers at Jericho"
- 14 Jacobs (1987: 72) supposes a different entry point must have been in use later, as the room which constituted the original entry functioned as a rubbish dump and had had an oven built over the internal entry point.
- 15 See note 12.
- 16 Jacobs (1987: 73) cites Kuntilat 'Arjud (cf. Meshel 1979: 29) in the Negeb as the only other place in Canaan where the technique is evident. However, the building there is from a later period – the end of the ninth or the beginning of the eighth century BCE during the reign of Joash, King of Israel, according to the excavator, Meshel (1997: 312)
- 17 Jacobs (1987: 74, 83) also admits the possibility that the staircase led to the roof, rather than to a second storey. However, a second storey is the more likely option as none of the rooms off the courtyard had doors and the courtyard itself was clearly a storage and "working" room. Bins, a lined pit, querns, ceramic vessels suited to a variety of functions as well as storage jars were found in this room (Jacobs, 1987: 74).
- 18 The figure is cited as figure 5 by Jacobs on p. 74, but the appropriate drawing on p. 75 is labelled as figure 8.
- 19 What Jacobs calls Stratum X is listed as Stratum XI in Seger (1993: 556)
- 20 Warburton (2001:236, note 6) says that the LB1b residence at Tell Halif should have been listed with the Governor's Residencies in Oren (1984: 37-56) and Weippert (1988:272) although Warburton questions whether such buildings had anything to do with governors at all!
- 21 Nevertheless we are not told of the business relationship between Shulgi and those who ran his way stations – were they direct employees who received a "wage" or were they "franchisees" who had "bought" a business or "concession holders" who were allowed to run the way station as a business for a certain length of time? Did Shulgi employ workmen to build his way stations or did he merely give permission to those who would run them to have them built and thus choose their own architectural design? Our lack of knowledge in these areas continues also into later periods for we do not know the exact terms of the business relationship between other ruling powers and those who ran the way stations. We are thus constrained in our judgement
- 22 The evidence is limited (Gen 4:27; 43:21; Exod 4:24; Josh 43:3,8; 2 Kgs 19:23; Isa 10:29; Jer 9:1) and was written at a later time.
- 23 Presumably, when way stations were located close to a city their purpose would have been to afford officials the opportunity to refresh themselves after a long journey prior to entering the city itself and/or because the city was locked up at night and the traveler arriving late would have been unable to gain access. Some way stations may also have been part of a city's outer defence system, for they were located on roads leading to the city as Al-Maqdissi (2008: 42) suggests when he draws attention to way stations on the roads leading to Qatna from four directions.
- 24 Originally entered through room A, access to room B and beyond was blocked with the construction of a tabun (oven) and room A became a rubbish dump. Jacobs (1987: 72) says that clearly another entrance must have been made in the final phase of the building but offers no explanation as to why the change took place.
- 25 A fifteenth century way station found at Knossos on Crete had the remains of storage jars and bins for grain in rooms on its lowest floor (Evans 1928: 105). The finds in the central room at Tell Halif reflect, of course, the final phase of occupation and it cannot be taken for granted that all the storage jars were in the same place for the whole period.
- 26 Evans (1928:105) draws attention to cobbles on the floors of some of the lower rooms at what he asserts was a hostel at Knossos. He says, "A remarkable feature about these

- basements was that, in place of the beaten earth or flagging usual in some places, there were everywhere traces of cobble-paving, which, as our Cretan workmen observed, was ‘good to keep beasts’ hoofs hard’ and suggested to them the idea of stabling”
- 27 However, as this room became a rubbish tip and entry from it to the courtyard was blocked off, the presence of animals in it must have been prior to the latest phase. That Room A was no longer used, implies either that the number of people living in/using the building was lower than it had been earlier or that the building had been extended (another storey added?) and that Room A was no longer suitable for its former purpose.
- 28 Accommodation, food etc would have required payment. The texts from the trading colony from Assur found in Kanesh (Kultepe) in Anatolia tell us that in the nineteenth to eighteenth centuries BCE, traders had to pay for food and “datum” along the route. Veenhof (1972: 219-302) thinks that “datum” was a toll paid in successive stages throughout the journey. Although this is about four centuries earlier than the period under discussion, there is no reason to think that such a lucrative strategy ceased with the end of the colony in Kanesh. It is possible that Tell Halif was a stage on a trading route and that the owner/manager collected the necessary payment, much of which, presumably, he would have had to pass on to the Egyptians. However, he probably would have been able to augment his own income from it to some extent.
- 29 The texts from Kanesh, referred to in footnote 28, mention other karum (merchant centres – literally ports) in Anatolia (listed as 10 by Lewy, 1956: 66, note 280), as well as wabaratum which were lesser settlements (estimated at 30 by Veenhof, 1995: 864). The function of the latter seems to have varied over time. Larsen (1976: 279) thinks they may have been “caravanseraï” which expanded to become trading centres and/or military installations designed to protect the trade routes.
- 30 It is noteworthy that Sahab, adduced to be a trading centre in this period (cf Van der Steen, 2004:283) evidences northern connections, like Tell Halif. Indeed, Ibrahim (1987: 77), one of the excavators of Sahab, comments, “The evidence from Sahab itself throws more light on connections with Bilad esh-Sham (Syria), Egypt and the Aegean world during the Middle and Late Bronze Ages. The buildings, pottery and other artifacts from Sahab are in many ways similar to those found in other parts of Bilad esh-Sham and should be thought of as an extension of the same culture...”
- 31 Jericho in the Late Bronze Age was considerably smaller than it had been in the Early Bronze Age (for a recent interpretation of the data from the EBA cf. Nigro et al., 2005). It is interesting that Jawa was also a city in the EBA but much smaller in the MBA. The “citadel” there, dating from the latter period, has defied identification as to its purpose (Helms 1989: 141-168). It may be that, although the population of Jawa was much reduced in the MBA, as was Jericho in the LBA, a presence in each of those locations continued as they were along routes that were in use.