**Hazor in the fourteenth to thirteenth centuries BCE**

**(Strata XIV-XIII)**

1. **Ben-Tor**

‘Abdi-Tirshi, the king who ruled Hazor in the fourteenth century BCE, initiated a major change in the layout of the site's acropolis: The earlier palace of the Middle-Bronze Age (probably that of Ibni-Adad) was filled in and a new palace (part of the ceremonial precinct) was built on top of it. The southern temple and the adjacent open-air cultic installation were filled in as well. An additional palace, probably an administrative one, was built close to the northern edge of the acropolis, overlooking the lower city. The path leading from the lower city to Hazor's acropolis, which originally led straight up, now turned sharply westwards, encircling the new administrative palace.

These changes characterize Hazor's Stratum XIV under the rule of Abdi-Tirshi. During this king's reign, Hazor was considered by Egypt, which ruled the entire Levant, as “number one” of all cities in Canaan. Even though during Egypt's rule, the king of Hazor had a special and close relationship with the king of Egypt *(*Yadin 1972:7–8; E. Morris, 2006).

Hazor's privileged status apparently continued into the thirteenth century when Ramesses II ruled the region. The number of fragments of Egyptian statues belonging to kings and high officials, all apparently destroyed when Hazor went up in flames towards the end of the century, exceeds that of those found at any other site in the Levant (see Hazor VII: 574–590, and XXXXX below), apart from Byblos, which had always been the most important Egyptian commercial center in the region. Although we do not know when exactly all these statues were sent from Egypt to Hazor, they were all discovered in thirteenth-century contexts, with the exception of a few found re-used as building material in Iron Age contexts.

These statues, and even statue fragments, were clearly regarded as objects of prestige and were probably displayed in the ceremonial and administrative palaces in which they were found.

Further evidence of Hazor's continued close relationship with Egypt in the thirteenth century BCE is demonstrated by jar handles bearing scarab impressions typical of the reign of Ramesses II, a fragment of an alabaster vessel that was likely inscribed with the throne name of the said king (see D. Ben Tor, above XXXXX), and an assemblage of Egyptian pottery dating to the thirteenth century that “should be viewed against the backdrop of diplomatic and commercial ties between Hazor and Egypt in this period” (M. Martin, Hazor VII: 590-603).

The close ties between Hazor and Egypt are also confirmed by a stone fragment inscribed with Egyptian hieroglyphs, possibly part of an offering table, found in a prominent location in Area M, near the point of entry from the lower city to the acropolis. The smashed fragment of this object was discovered in the debris of the final destruction layer in Area M (for a full discussion of this object, see this volume pp. XXXXIShlomit - is there such a discussion in this volume????) The offering table may well have been placed in Hazor by Prahotep, the great vizier of Ramesses II, who probably came to Hazor during one of his visits to the land of Hatti. This event is dated by K. Kitchen “in the 40's of Ramesses II's reign, circa 1240–1230 in round figures” (Kitchen 2003. 20-28). Such an important official could have visited Hazor only while it was still at its peak as the “head of all those kingdoms” (Joshua 11:10).

Like so many other sites in the region, Hazor began to show signs of decline in the thirteenth century BCE (Cline 2014, 171-176; Zuckerman2007, 17-26) This phase, which is reflected in all areas of the excavation of the upper and lower city alike ( Ben-Tor and Zuckerman 2008), must have begun *after* Prahotep's visit to Hazor, that is, after 1240-30 BCE, and may have continued into the twelfth century (send to AJA article if already appeared by Hazor VIII).

The suggestion that it was Hazor XIII on the acropolis and 1b in the lower city that came to a violent end, as suggested above (AJA article) and by Finkelstein (2005), cannot be accepted in view of our reevaluation of both Yadin's findings and those of the renewed excavations (Ben-Tor and Zuckerman 2008).

There is clearly no major break between Hazor Strata XIV and XIII; rather – as shown above (pp. XXXX) – the two were in continuum. The city prospered through the slightly more than a century of its existence with minor modification to its secondary walls, repairs, and the raising of various floors.

However, we suggest here that Stratum XIII should be divided into two parts: the earlier one – during which Hazor was still a flourishing city, worthy of a visit by an important Egyptian official – should be entitled XIIIb (parallel to 1b in the lower city); and the later one, characterized by a decline evident throughout the site – upper and lower city included – should be entitled XIIIa, and made the equivalent of 1a in the lower city..

By that point, Hazor was weak and unfortified (Ben-Tor 1989, 170, 264, 297), and was ripe for the taking. At some time in the late thirteenth or even the early twelfth century BCE, the entire city, acropolis, and lower city alike, were violently destroyed and set on fire.

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