**Hazor in the forteenth-thirteenth centuries B.C**

**(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 up 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 other 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. Ramesses II still ruled the region, and close relations between Egypt and Hazor apparently continued. The number of fragments of Egyptian statues belonging to kings and high officials, (all apparently smashed 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), except Byblos, which had always been the most important Egyptian commercial center in the Levant. Although we do not know when exactly all these statues were sent from Egypt to Hazor, all of them (with the exception of a few found re-used as building material in Iron Age contexts) were discovered in thirteenth-century contexts.

These statues (or even statues fragments) were clearly regarded as objects of prestige and were probably displayed in the ceremonial and administrative palaces in which all of them were found.

Further evidence of Hazor's continued close relationships with Egypt in the thirteenth century B.C.lies in jar handles bearing scarab impressions typical of the reign of Ramesses II, a fragment of an alabaster vessel bearing part of the throne name most likely that 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 confirmed by a stone fragment with Egyptian hieroglyphs, possibly part of an offering table, found in a most strategic location in Area M, that is, close to the point of entry from the lower city to the site's 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 a "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 13th 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 12th century BCE (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 re-evaluation of Yadin's findings, as well as 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 throughthe slightly more than a century of its existence with minor modification to its secondary walls, repairs, and the raising of 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 the visit of 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..

Hazor by this point was weak and unfortified (Ben-Tor 1989, 170, 264, 297), and was ripe for the taking. At some time in the late 13th century or even the early 12th century BCE, the entire city, acropolis and lower city alike, were violently destroyed and set on fire.

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