**Chapter 3 - The Late Bronze Age: Strata XIV–XIII**

Shlomit Bechar

Hazor of the Late Bronze Age II saw a fundamental change in the plan and layout of the city in general. This is reflected first and foremost in the construction of Building 7050 on top of the acropolis, together with its Ceremonial Precinct (see Hazor VII). The edifices of the Ceremonial Precinct sealed and annihilated all Middle Bronze Age remains. This same pattern is evident in almost every area excavated on the site, and the remains in Area M are no different. Here, an impressive palace complex was constructed, sealing the earlier road and courtyards which led to the top of the acropolis (see Chapter 2). The complex comprises an Entrance Complex, a courtyard, a “Citadel” and the Administrative Palace itself (see Plan 3.1).

The finds dated to the Late Bronze Age in Area M can be divided into three phases, all dating to LBII. These three phases are all attributed to one stratum, keeping in line with Ben-Tor’s interpretation of the phases of Building 7050 (Ben-Tor 2017). The first phase consists of the foundations for the administrative palace, the second of its main phase of use. The last phase reflects the last days of use of the palace, before its final destruction. It will be shown here that all phases of the administrative palace are in fact one stratum and that it might be time to define this as Stratum XIV/XIII, as we refer to Yadin’s Strata XII–XI as one, XII/XI.

**Phase I – The Foundation Phase**

This phase is not an independent one but consists of leveling and preparing the area for the major changes it will foresee in the following phase. During the initial phase, most of the walls of the palace and its surroundings were built. Excavations uncovered several architectural elements, most built under floors or as support of walls.

The most conspicuous feature of this phase in the area is the numerous draining channels and installations. These were exposed in almost every part of the area. We do not know where the fluids were finally gathered, or how their flow was drained out of the city. Only two sumps were found in the area, located in the southern parts of the “citadel”. Two junctions of drain channels were found in one of the rooms of the palace itself and another one outside the “citadel”.

This is the place to mention Yadin’s exposure of the irrigation and drainage networks uncovered in the lower city (Areas F and P) and outside of the city, below the modern Hazor Museum (Area N). According to him, these were built in the MBA, with the construction of the lower city (Yadin 1969:8; 1972: 65–66). The network of drainage channels found in Area M is clearly dated to the LBA, as some of the channels are built within walls of the palace, cut MBA remains (such as the staircase in the northern section), or are constructed to fit the walls of the palace (especially in the “citadel”, and see below). However, it is certainly possible that this network connected to the earlier drainage system uncovered by Yadin in the lower city. Though most of the various drain channels do not merge into one, their orientation and building techniques allow us to reconstruct such a connection in some cases.

Prior to the construction of the royal edifice, the area underwent considerable preparations. This is reflected in enormous fills that were laid before the construction of the walls, the paved areas, as a foundation for later building activities, etc.

The Administrative Palace and its entrance complex were built sloping up both to the south as well as the west, supported by terrace walls. These terrace walls also functioned as the walls of the palace. The palace was badly disturbed by later Iron Age pits in the north and the east. Although we had evidence for a second story (see below, Phase II, room L.18-301), a staircase leading to it has not been uncovered to date.

The palace complex includes the entrance from the lower city, through the gate, to an open space where a ceremonial podium and a large building (termed here the “Citadel”) were found (Zuckerman 2003: 23-52; Cimadevilla 2012). This complex leads to a large courtyard; the palace lies to the south of the courtyard. Thus far, only three halls of the palace have been exposed as well as an inner courtyard.

Following some general remarks pertaining to the walls and the constructive fill of the palace, the presentation of the foundation phase of the palace will be by the different sections – the Halls, the “Citadel”, the Entrance Complex, the Courtyard and the northern section (Plan 3.1).

General remarks on the architecture of the complex

*The walls*

The mudbrick superstructure of some of the walls was preserved (e.g., walls W.3381, W.3383, W.3385, W.3327, W.16-307, and W.16-302). Although this does not mean that all walls had mudbrick superstructure, yet it seems that most of them did. This would be the case for most of the walls of the Entrance Complex (e.g., walls W.3241, W.3118, W.3109, W.3302) as their top surfaces were found flat. All the walls of the halls of the palace were made of mudbrick, apart from four walls which were only made of stone (W.11-303, W.11-309, W.10-307 and W.16-305).

Some of the walls of the palace’s halls also functioned as terrace walls, such as W.3118, W.3881, and possibly also W.16-305. Wall W.16-302 preserved to a height of almost 3m and is built in an unusual manner. Its western part is made entirely of stones, covered with a layer of light plaster or mudbrick. Its eastern part is made of mudbrick, encompassing the stone core of the wall. It is possible that this wall functioned as a terrace wall, based on its height. However, this is difficult to determine since the rooms to the south of this wall have not been entirely uncovered.

Walls W.3256 and W.3257 were built as a support to wall W.3118. They are built adjacent to it, on a lower level. A drain channel was built between the two walls (see below). Thus, it seems that walls W.3256 and W.3257 did not have a superstructure and were thus not visible.

*Constructive fills*

A reddish-yellowish mudbrick material was found, sealing some of the drain channels (e.g. L.5875 sealing L.5882, see below and in Plan 3.6). At times, below this fill a level of very packed and light yellow material was identified, without any finds (e.g., L.5874, L.5879, L.6614, L. 6625, these do not appear in the plans as they are fills). This fill was also found in some of the foundation trenches of the walls of the “Citadel”, implying this it is not part of the bedrock or virgin soil as might be suggested, but rather a constructive fill laid before the construction of the complex.

A reddish-white fill was found throughout the area and is also interpreted as a constructive fill. This fill was found below some of the walls (e.g., W.3256, W.3257). It was also found as a support for some of the drain channels (e.g. L.5633 and L.5634 as support to drain channel L.5636, see below and in Plan 3.5).

The Halls of the Administrative Palace (Plans 3.2, 3.3)

Several halls of the Administrative Palace were exposed, sealing the MBA grand staircase (see Chapter 2). These total to four halls, to date, termed here the northwestern hall, the northwestern, southeastern and southwestern halls. The following is a brief description of their layout and building techniques.

The Northwestern hall (Plan 3.2) is defined by walls W.16-307 and W.3381 in the north, W.13-308 in the east, W.16-302 in the south and W.16-305 in the west. The northern walls are made of mudbrick, preserved to a height of over 2m, both have a pilaster facing inwards, to the south. The southern face of wall W.16-307 was covered by a layer of light plaster as were the lower courses of wall W.16-305 and W.16-302 (see above, general remarks).

In the eastern part of this room, two confluences of drain channels were exposed. The south-western (square K/10) was a confluence of three drain channels, covered with basalt slabs. The north-eastern (square L/10–11) was a confluence of two drain channels, covered with limestone slabs. The drain channel in the north-eastern confluence could have continued to the drain channels within the citadel.

An entrance was exposed between the northwester and the northwestern hall (Plan 3.3). This hall is defined by walls W.3381 in the north, W.11-306 in the south and W.13-308 in the west. The eastern limit of this hall is beyond the excavated area.

The large pavement of the MBA (L.12-326) was still used during the LBA phase, in the southeastern hall (Plan 3.3). However, due to the fact the two steps of the earlier staircase were also uncovered here, it is possible to suggest that both the pavement and the steps were covered by a layer of packed earth, though one was not uncovered.

So far only the western part of this hall is known. The pavement is surrounded by walls W.11-306 in the north, W.11-303 in the south and W.10-307 in the west. A gap between the pavement and wall W.10-307 in the south-western corner may suggest that orthostats (which were later robbed) were used to adorn the lower part of the wall, or that some kind of perishable furniture was placed here. It seems that during the initial LBA phase, the opening connecting the southeastern and the northeastern halls was located further to the east and therefore still unknown.

Based on the pavement found here, it is possible to suggest that this hall may have functioned as an inner courtyard, commonly found in other Syrian-type palaces (e.g. Matthiae 2002: 193; Iamoni 2015). The southern wall of this hall or courtyard, W.11-303 is the eastern continuation of wall W.11-309, of the western hall. These two walls mark the southern limit of the palace. No LBA finds were uncovered to the south of these two walls, which also cut the MBA remains (see Chapter 2).

Walls W.11-309 and W.10-307 are the southern and eastern walls (respectively) of the southwestern hall (Plan 3.3). They are both built in a stepped technique. The upper part of the inner face of these walls is stepped, or slightly removed. This may suggest that this peculiar construction technique might have been used to support the roofing of the room, indicating these walls were preserved to their full height. Three such steps were observed in the northern face of wall W.11-309, which was also plastered, and two such steps were identified in the western face of wall W.10-307. This wall was badly robbed in its last days, its entire northern part consisting only of the bottom course, whereas the southern part was preserved to a height of over 2m (see in Plan 3.3, indicated by broken lines and changes in the elevations). It is reasonable to assume that during the initial phase the wall stood to its full height.

The “Citadel” (Plans 3.3, 3.4)

To the north of the halls identified as part of the administrative palace lies a large square building. Though the function of this building is not clear, due to its strategic location, it was suggested that it was used as a citadel. Whatever its function was (and see below for additional suggestions), it is clear that it is an integral part of the palace, based both on a shared wall (W.3381) and its location. This building is defined by walls W.3302 in the east, W.3381 in the south, W.3383 and W.3385 in the west and W.3235 and W.3109 in the north. Mudbrick superstructures were found on all outer walls except for wall W.3302.

The entrance to this building was through an opening between walls W.3383 and W.3385. A drain channel (L.6618 and L.6602, see below) passed between these walls, below the threshold of the opening (see below, during the main phase of use). The outer face of the northern wall (W.3235 and W.3109) had a niche, fitted for the podium (L.5625) that was built here.

Wall W.3302 was not straight. Its southern part is parallel to wall W.3383 in the west, but its northern part is skewed to the east. This slanted construction perhaps implies the existence of a blocked entrance in the northern part of the wall. In such a case, this wall had two phases and an entrance to this building existed here in addition to the entrance between walls W.3385 and W.3383 in the west, possibly in the earlier phase. A drain channel (W.3304, see below) passes below this wall. The building itself is divided into three units in this initial phase (a late wall, W.3384, will divide it into four units in the next phase,).

The northern unit is defined by walls W.3235 and W.3109 in the north, W.3302 in the east, W.3380 in the south, and W.3385 in the west. The main entrance to the building was to this room, from which one could enter both the south-eastern corridor and south-western cell. In the southern part of the northern unit, near wall W.3380, a pit was found (Plan 3.4). This pit, L.6621, is defined by a stone surface L.6631, the two features are built together. The pit was bell-shaped, filled with small stones. At the bottom of the pit, a whitish-yellowish material was found, similar to the material identified as “virgin soil” (though see above for other interpretations of this fill).

Drain channel L.6588 lies in the eastern part of this unit. It is roofed by stone slabs and leads into pit L.6589. This pit has two openings, one in its southern part, where channel L.6588 drains into it, and one in its eastern part, where another channel probably continued from it under wall W.3302. It is possible to suggest that it continues into drain channel W.3304, which was built below wall W.3302. The channel in W.3304 was made up of two rows of stones and was roofed by stones slabs.

A plaster layer, L.6579, was found, abutting drain channel L.6588 and pit L.6589 (Plan 3.4). This plaster layer was most probably a foundation for the later pavement to be constructed in this room.

The south-western cell is defined by walls W.3394 in the north, W.3386 in the east, W.3381 in the south and W.3383 in the west. A stone-lined pit, L.6611, was found in this room (Plans 3.3 and 3.4). A large flat stone was found in the south-western corner of the room, which might have originally functioned as a cover for this pit. The pit extended almost over the entire space of the cell, its stones abutting the stone foundation of the western wall W.3383. A small opening was discerned in the northern wall of the pit, leading to drain channel L.6618. This opening is located in the upper part of the pit, negating the possibility this pit functioned as a cesspit. Channel L.6618 is built together with wall W.3394, the foundation of the threshold to this room (see Plan 3.x). Stones of wall W.3394 were partly used to cover channel L.6618, its continuation was not roofed. The channel was not paved with stones at its foundation, in contrast to most other channels found in the area. Channel L.6618 probably continues to merge with channel L.6669 in the early phase (Plan 3.7) and channel L.6602 in the late phase (Plan 3.4).

The south-eastern corridor is defined by walls W.3302 in the east, W.3381 in the south, W.3386 in the west and W.3380 in the north. Here, several pits and channels were found (Plans 3.3 and 3.4). In the west, an oval stone-lined pit was found. This pit, L.6562, was built three courses deep and was found filled with soft fill. Its opening led to the east and continued into a roofed drain channel, L.6578, which led further east into another pit, L.6569. This latter pit was also stone-lined, but had two openings, one in the west, to receive fluids from drain channel L.6578, and the other in the north, where it probably continued into drain channel L.6588. Several pottery vessels were found inside this pit, including bowls and a jug. Next to this pit, in the last phase of the LBA, an orthostat with a large drilled hole was found, possibly used to cover this pit.

Though it is not clear what was the function of all these pits and their connected channels, it is tempting to suggest that they could be part of a latrine system, making this building the lavatories. Another possibility is that this was one of the royal workshops, where liquids were needed. An additional option is that this building was used for purification before entering the palace and its courtyards. In short, the function of this building is still unclear. However, as was initially noted, this building was interpreted as a citadel based on its strategic location. This term continues to be used here, though it is stressed that this is used by means of convenience and by no means a fixed term.

To the east of the “Citadel”, drain channel L.6565 was uncovered (Plan 3.4, square N/11). This drain channel is roofed by flat slabs and paved by small stones. The walls of this channel were preserved three courses high. This drain channel possibly continues further to the north, in L.5636 (see below and Plan 3.5). Plastered surface, L.6533, abutted channel L.6565 in the east and wall W.3302 in the west. Similarly, a patch of a pebbled paved surface, L.6587, abutting wall W.3302, was also a foundation for floor L.6550.

The Entrance Complex (Plans 3.5, 3.6, 3.7)

The Entrance Complex comprised two chambers and a courtyard paved by basalt orthostats. The western chamber (Plans 3.5 and 3.7) is defined by walls W.3320 in the north, W.3312 in the west, W.3259 in the south and wall W.3244 in the west. Wall W.3335 abuts the lower course of the eastern face of wall W.3320 and is made of a single course (Plan 3.5). It may have functioned as a foundation and support of the orthostat, which adorned the eastern face of wall W.3320. Wall W.3335 was sealed by a paved surface L.5818 (Plan 3.6), indicating it did not have a superstructure. A narrow wall, W.3333, made of one row of stones, was built along wall W.3259, in the southern part of this chamber, abutting the remaining walls. No floor was found abutting this wall and narrow wall W.3333 is sealed by the floor of the room (see below, L.5808). This wall could have also functioned as a bench or as constructive support to wall W.3259.

The eastern chamber is not well defined. It is comprised of wall W.3241 in the north. wall W.3237 in the east and wall W.3258 in the south.

During this phase, the podium area was being prepared for the construction of the podium itself and the paved basalt courtyard. A patch of thick plaster with a pebble foundation was found in the north-eastern corner of the Entrance Complex (L.5612), abutting wall W.3258 in the south. The connection of this surface with wall W.3239 is cut by a later pit. In the north, the plaster ends about 30-50 cm from wall W.3241, suggesting orthostats may have been previously placed here and were later removed. This plaster layer was the foundation for the orthostats paving. It was laid on top of a fill made of mudbrick material (L.5649, not illustrated). This type of fill is found throughout the area and was discussed above which characterizes this part of the complex (see above in Constructive Fills). A very thick plaster layer (L.5571) was also found under the basalt slabs and to the east of them, abutting wall W.3239. However, it is also possible that the plaster found in L.5612 and L.5571 is, in fact, the floor of phase II (see below).

In the western part of the Entrance Complex, a narrow strip of small stones was found in L.5818 (Plan 3.6, square L/14). It is assumed that this strip is part of a larger pebbled pavement which continued further to the east and south and was used as the foundation for the orthostats which paved the entrance to the complex. A stone patch (L.5643) similar to that of L.5818 was found to the north of the basalt steps of the Entrance Complex, in the gap between the basalt steps and wall W.3244 (Plan 3.7, square L/13). This latter stone patch, L.5643, probably sealed drain channel L.6664.

The podium itself was constructed on a foundation of small stones and is built of two courses (the lower course is shown on Plan 3.5). Its lower course is almost entirely made of orthostats in secondary use, the north-eastern one is a large basalt slab crudely worked to fit the upper course. Small flat stones were used to fill the gap between the orthostats and wall W.3235 in the south. The upper course of the podium is made of a single basalt slab. Four depressions were drilled in the southern part of the slab, in a square outline, approximately 50 cm from each other (see Plan 3.x).

To the east of the Entrance Complex, another room was found (Plan 3.5). This room is defined by walls W.3118 in the north (as aforementioned, this wall was supported by walls W.3256 and W.3257), and W.3237 in the west. The latter wall had an opening, leading to this room from the west, from the area of the basalt courtyard. The eastern limit of this room is unknown, possibly sealed under the later wall W.3119 (shown in Plan 3.x). The southern limit of this room is also unknown but it could be suggested that it is the northern wall of the “citadel”, W.3109. Inside this room, sealing the earlier staircase, several layers of stone pavements were found (e.g. L.5622, L.5378). These were used as a foundation for the later pavement of this room (L.5358, Plan 3.x).

To the west of pavement L.5622, a drain channel was uncovered. This channel (L.5613) seals the MBA staircase (see Plans 2.4 and 2.7), whose pavement was used as the paving of this channel (Plan 3.5). Channel L.5613 was later sealed by pavement L.5358 (Plan 3.x). Channel L.5613 continued to the north, within wall W.3118, where it has a gable outline and where it probably merged with channel L.5863. Channel L.5863 was built between walls W.3256 in the west and W.3257 in the east and is paved with basalt slabs in its southern part. Channel L.5613 was found filled with stones in its northern part (the northern face of wall W.3118), suggesting that sometime during the life-span of the palace, channel L.5863 was used without its southern extension, L.5613.

To the east of this room, a long and narrow drain channel was exposed, L.5636, which preserved to a height of ca. 60 cm (Plan 3.5). The southern part of the channel was paved with large pebbles; the northern part was disturbed and the pavement did not preserve. The northern part is defined by two well-built walls. The channel was found filled with large amounts of pottery sherds and bones.

One of the largest drain channels in the area was found below the orthostat pavement (Plan 3.6). This channel, L.5882, is located between walls W.3220 in the west and W.3241 in the east. It is made of two walls built of large stones, it is roofed by partially worked limestone slabs, and was paved by small stones. This channel continues further to the north in L.5872, where it partially cuts and partially seals the MBA staircase going up to the south (see Chapter 2 – northern section). A wall of a single row of stones (W.3332), was found to the west of this channel. It curves towards this drain channel, with a pavement abutting it (L.5886). This wall also seals the earlier MBA staircase and was thus attributed to this phase. It seems this wall is part of a drain channel which also leads to L.5872, though the function of this wall is still unclear.

The connection between drain channels L.5872 and L.5882 was cut by later Iron Age building activities. A sharp incline was identified between these two channels, the northern one being approximately 1m lower in elevation than the southern. This may suggest that the entrance to the acropolis (accessible by a staircase in the MBA) was via a ramp. Such a ramp was indeed noted in square M-N/17, built of layers of red and white fill, each one covered by either a stone surface or a layer of plaster. The ramp slopes up to the south, following the natural terrain of the tell. Its southern part was badly damaged by later Iron and Persian period building activities. At the base of the ramp, clean LBA assemblages were identified, suggesting a date for its construction. A fill similar to the ramp was also identified sealing drain channel L.5633, walls W.3118, W.3256, W.3257 and see below.

The Courtyard (Plans 3.4, 3.7)

The basalt stairs of the Podium Complex (to be discussed in the next phase) lead to a wide paved courtyard. The northern limit of the courtyard and the entire palace complex, in general, is defined by walls W.3259 and W.17-301, which have a built entrance between them. Wall W.3259 is supported by small two stepped pillars (walls W.3323 and W.3328). This type of construction was also identified in wall W.3320, stepped wall W.3331 being built to the north of it (see Plan 3.6). No living surfaces or floors were found abutting these walls. The walls abutting wall W.3259 (W.3321 and W.3328) were later integrated into a pavement (see below, Main Phase). Thus, it seems that the northern walls of the complex were supported by smaller terraced walls in the west and large terrace walls in the east (W.3256 and W.3257, see Plan 3.5), which did not have a superstructure and did not exist on their own. This construction method is probably due to the natural terrain of the area.

In the eastern part of the courtyard, a large drain channel was exposed (L.6669, Plan 3.7), unique in its construction compared to the other drain channels in the area. This channel was defined by two stone walls built 2-3 courses high, lightly inclining inwards, almost creating a gable. The channel was paved by small pebbles throughout its entire length and was roofed by basalt orthostats, their worked sides facing down. This channel is preserved over 12m in length and about 60 cm in height.

The channel went out of use before the destruction of the palace complex: it was sealed by stones in the point of intersection and was used as a tomb of a child (Fig. X). This is the only known LBA burial in this area.

Drain channel L.6669 was replaced by L.6602 (Plan 3.4), which is narrow and shallow, defined by two walls. It is covered by flat stones and was cut by two later Iron Age pits.

In the northern part of the courtyard, drain channel L.6664 was built of two walls made up of four courses and paved by very small stones (Plans 3.4 and 3.7). It was roofed by very large limestones. In its center a rectangular cist was exposed, allowing for occasionally required repairs. The channel turns perfectly at the corner of wall W.3244 towards the north, and probably continued under the orthostat paving (see above) and connected with channel L.5882. It was sealed by pavement L.5643 (see above).

**Phase II – Main Use** (Plan 3.8)

This is the phase when the palace and its adjacent complexes were in use. The northern section of the area was most probably covered by the ramp discussed above. Iron Age remains were found above the drain channel and earlier MBA remains in the southern section of the area. Consequently, this phase was only identified in the Entrance Complex, the Administrative Palace and the Courtyard.

The Entrance Complex (Plan 3.9)

During this phase, the entrance to the entire complex was through a gate, defined by walls W.3320in the west and W.3241 in the east.

The western and eastern chambers were found immediately to the south of the gate. In the western chamber, a patch of pavement was found (L.5808) in the center of the room. Broken pottery vessels, especially scoops, and basalt vessels (a grinding bowl and a door socket), were found on this floor. This floor seals the narrow wall found in the southern part of the chamber in the previous phase (W.3333, see Plan 3.5).

In the eastern chamber, no floor was identified above the plaster found in L.5612 and L.5571, suggesting these might have been the floor level of the eastern chamber, and not just the foundation for the basalt pavement. The entire area to the south of these two chambers was paved by basalt orthostats in secondary use. This pavement (L.5569) extended to the northern wall of the ‘citadel’ in the south, W.3109, whose northern face was plastered. In the east, it abuts mudbrick wall W.3237 and in the west, the pavement abuts wall W.3244 and staircase L.5593 (see below). The orthostats which make up the pavement are not uniform in their shape and size or in the orientation of their placement. Some are broken pieces of orthostats and at times broken basalt stones were also incorporated in the pavement. It seems that these were foraged from around the site, most probably from earlier MBA buildings where these were placed originally. Near the southern part of the pavement, a horse-shoe shaped basalt orthostat was found. This installation, together with the several ‘scoops’ found in this area, have led Zuckerman to suggest that this was a liminal area, where cultic and ritual activities took place (Zuckerman 2007a:324–325; 2007b: 21).

The only parallel to this pavement is a paved orthostat courtyard found in a MBII context in Tilmen Höyük. However, the orthostats used in Tilmen Höyük are not in secondary use. In fact, the entire site of Tilmen Höyük is built of basalt, and basalt orthostats are extremely prevalent there (Marchetti 2008, 468 and fig. 6).

A basalt-made podium was exposed in the southern part of the courtyard. This podium had four round depression in its southern part, indicating it probably supported a chair (see picture x). Since the entire compound is located at the connection between the lower city and the acropolis, it is highly likely that either the king himself or his representative sat on this chair, welcoming those entering the acropolis. A large concentration of burnt ivory inlays was found near the podium, suggesting these adorned this supposed chair.

To the east of the basaltpaved courtyard, another paved room was found. The pavement (L.5358) in this room abuts wall W.3118 in the north and wall W.3109 in the south. The southern-most steps of the Middle Bronze Age staircase are incorporated in the pavement (see Chapter 2).

A staircase (L.5593) was uncovered to the west of the basalt pavement, leading to the courtyard in the west. The orthostats paving stones of the podium areaabut the lower stair. It seems that during this phase, the staircase only comprised of four stairs. The stairs are made of small and narrow basalt slabs. These were not originally orthostats but were cut intentionally to be used as stairs, as can be seen by the section of the staircase (and see below). These stairs become narrower as they ascend.

The entrance to the courtyard through this staircase was adorned by a basalt orthostat which was built against wall W.3235. The northern wall, W.3244, was not well preserved, consequently no orthostat was found there, though, it is possible to assume that another orthostat lined the northern part of the entrance to the courtyard.

The Area to the North of the Courtyard (Plan 3.10)

Another paved area was found (Plan 3.10) to the north of the opening between walls W.17-301 and W.3259 This part of the area pavement, L.5845 most probably functioned as an industrial area. The pavement ends in straight lines on all other sides, the reason for which we were unable to determine. A possible suggestion is that wooden benches were placed on all other three sides of that pavement. A mudbrick bench found in the southern part of this area, abuts wall W.3259. A thick layer of ash covers pavement L.5845 on top of which a thick layer of yellowish-white plaster was deposited. Broken pieces of ceramic cylinder vessels (perhaps used as pipes) were found on this floor. The ash layer and light plaster material extended westwardsand abuts wall W.3336 in the west. A paved installation was found in L.5888. This installation is defined by three walls W.3336 in the east, W.3337 in the west and W.3338 in the north. The installation was most probably roofed, as few roofing stones were found in situ. Three large ovens were built against the walls of this installation. Two of the three ovens, L.5891, and L.5892, were built against the eastern wall of the installation, W.3336; the third oven, L.5933, was built against the northern wall, W.3338. Another possible oven was built against this latter one.

Though it is possible that the three ovens and the installation were part of a smelting workshop, it is not clear why this is located at the entrance to the palace complex. A few suggestions may be offered. First, this was possibly built in a later stage, though there is no evidence to support such a suggestion. Second, this might be one of the workshops attached to the palace. The location of this workshop near the palace suggests that metalworking might have been one of the most important industries to be under close control of the rulers of the city (Costin 1991). Third, remains of metalworking debris were also found on the floor of the ‘throne room’ in Building 7050. Based on the remains of large concentrations of industrial debris in the building and its surroundings, it was suggested that metalworking was indeed practiced within the building itself (Yahalom-Mack et al. 2014).

The Courtyard (Plans 3.10, 3.11)

During this phase, the courtyard was paved by small pebbles, abutting all the walls defining it: W.17-301 and W.3259 in the north, W.3385, and W.3383 in the east, W.3381, and W.16-307 in the south.

Two openings were identified leading into the courtyard, one from the east through staircase L.5593, discussed above (Plans 3.9 and 3.10), and another from the north, through an opening between walls W.17-301 and W.3259 (Plan 3.10), also discussed above. The northern entrance was paved (L.5880) and a door socket was found in the south-eastern corner of the entrance, next to wall W.17-301

The courtyard is paved by small to medium-sized pebbles. Several pits were identified within the courtyard. These are not the usual later pits dug in the Iron Age but are rather pits that might have been caused by irrigation or winter run-off water in this area of the acropolis. In fact, the lack of pavement in the north-eastern part of the courtyard is located precisely where drain channel L.6664 is located (compare Plan 3.7 and 3.10). In the north-eastern part of the courtyard, a deep depression was identified in the pavement (L.18-328), which should most likely also be associated with the drainage system of the city. In the eastern part of the courtyard, a basalt orthostat with a curved upper edge was found (see picture X), its function is not clear.

The stones of the pavement abut the northern face of mudbrick wall W.3381, while in the west, this connection was not visible due to later building activities in this area, though it is assumed (see below and Plan 3.19).[[1]](#footnote-1)

A grand staircase was found in the western part of the courtyard. The stairs are approximately 4.2m wide and to date, seven stairs have been found. The staircase continues further west, beyond the current excavation limits.

The stones of the steps are made of wide and large basalt slabs, and are mostly *not* re-used basalt orthostats but were intentionally cut in a specific shape meant to be used as stairs (see picture x). Only one of the slab, which is part of the lowest stair, is made of a re-used orthostat, as indicated by the two circular depressions on its narrow face (see picture x).

The courtyard leads to two halls of the palace: the one termed “the citadel” (L.6534) and the other, the Entrance Hall (L.18-301), accessed via two basalt made steps (Plan 3.11). Like all other stairs in the area, these two steps are also made of basalt slabs, and these too are not basalt orthostats in secondary use but were intentionally cut to be used as stairs. However, the steps are not as wide as those of the grand staircase, and are approximately half as wide measuring only 2.3m wide. Seashells were found on these steps, suggesting perhaps some sort of a hanging decoration above or near the entrance.

The ”Citadel” (Plan 3.12)

Unlike the previous phase, when the building had only two halls (see Plan 3.4). it is now divided into four spaces, with a new wall, W.3384, built in the center of the building. The wall is free standing and is adorned with cube shaped orthostats on both its eastern and western ends (two at each end). Since the entire palace complex, is located on the northern slope of the site, facing the Lower City the citadel too is built on terraces, the northern rooms are lower in elevation than the southern rooms.

The northern space of the building defined by walls W.3235 in the north, W.3302 in the east, W.3384 in the south and W.3385 in the west, is paved. This pavement (L.6524) is made of small and medium-sized pebbles, abutting all walls. The pavement is partially covered by plaster, especially in its eastern part. The pavement also seals drain channel L.6588 and pit L.6589 from the foundation phase (see above and Plan 3.4). Two entrances, both from the south, lead into this room

The central room is defined by walls W.3384 in the north, W.3302 in the east, W.3380 in the south and the entrance between walls W.3385 and W.3383 in the west. The room has a paved floor covered by a layer of gray plaster (L.6534,) abutting wall W3380 in the south and wall W.3384 in the north.

The south-eastern room is defined by walls W.3380 in the north, W.3302 in the east, W.3381 in the south and W.3386 in the west. A hard-packed earth floor (L.6556) was found in this room, abutting walls W.3302 and W.3381 and sealing the drain channel found in this room (see above, foundation phase and Plan 3.4).

In the south-western cell a hard-packed earth floor (L.6585) was found, abutting the walls of the room, W.3394 in the north, W.3386 in the east, W.3381 in the south and W.3383 in the west. It also abuts a large flat stone in the south-western corner of the room.

The Halls of the Administrative Palace (Plans 3.11 and 3.13)

In almost all four halls, only one floor level was identified, all were hard-packed earth floors. It is impossible to distinguish the assemblages of finds between the currently discussed phase and the last phase (the destruction phase). Therefore, most assemblages will be discussed in the framework of this phase.

The North-western Hall (L.18-301, Plan 3.11): The entrance to this room from the courtyard was by two basalt stairs (see above). Immediately to the south of these stairs, a plastered surface was found with a large burnt wooden beam directly to the south of it. The plastered surface could have functioned as the threshold of the hall. The burnt wooden beam could have also been part of the threshold or the lintel of the entrance. The entrance to this room is quite wide and is defined by two pilasters protruding southwards from mudbrick walls W.16-307 in the west and W.3381 in the east. In the south-eastern corner of this entrance, a large, perfectly squared and very well smoothed flat stone was found. It is pink and most probably not local, and its function is unclear.

In the eastern part of this hall, a very thick plaster floor was found, L.13-318. Since this floor is very damaged, it does not run-up against any of the surrounding walls, it does however, abut the opening of a drain channel (see Plan 3.2 and discussion of the drain channels in this hall in Phase I). A basalt slab was found nearby, leaning against wall W.3381, probably served as a cover to the opening of this drain channel.

The WesternHall (L.17-304, Plans 3.11, 3.13, 3.14): This hall is defined by walls W.16-302 in the north, W.10-307 in the east, W.11-309 in the south and W.16-305 in the west. Two steps made of worked limestone, lead from the Entrance Hall into the Western Hall. These steps are located at the eastern end of mudbrick wall W.16-302.

Excavations in the western part of the hall have not reached the floor level yet due to safety issues. A large stone, measuring more than 1 m high, was found in the north-western corner of this hall (L.16-322, Plan 3.11), its function unclear. A similar stone was found in the north-eastern part of this hall, in line with the steps connecting this hall and the Entrance Hall.

At the beginning of this phase, this hall was a large space (Plan 3.13). However, at some point during this phase, a large mudbrick wall, W.11-302, was built in the eastern part of the hall, dividing the hall into two sections (Plan 3.14). The eastern section has a hard packed earth floor L.12-313. Thirteen pithoi were found partially sunk into the floor (see photo X). These were leaning against wall W.11-302 and the corner of walls W.10-307 and W.11-309. Some of the pithoi were filled with charred grains (see Chapter X). A bowl and a jug were found inside two of the pithoi.

In the western section, a hard-packed earth floor was found, L.17-304 as well as plaster floor (L.13-306), the latter abutting wall W.13-303 (Plan 3.14). A small segment of a square shaped pavement (L.13-312) was found abutting the mudbrick wall W.11-302 and continuing further to the west. Three storage jars were found to the south of this pavement, all three belong to the so-called ‘commercial’ type. One of the jars, was filled with an unidentified yellow material. Dozens of ‘scoops’ were found in this part of the room, together with a pithos, pithoid-flask, kraters, jugs, bowls, juglets, two large basalt grinding bowls, a grinding stone and hundreds of seashells (see discussion in Chapters X, XX, and XXX).

The Northern Hall (L.13-324, Plan 3.13): In this hall, patches of plaster and pavement were found (L.13-319, L.13-321, L.13-326). Plaster floor L.13-319 abutted the northern wall, W.3381, but was cut in the south. In the east, a hard-packed earth floor, L.13-324, was found. A krater and a bowl were found on this floor. A round installation (L.13-323) filled with ash was found in the western part of this hall.

This hall continued further to the east beyond the excavation limits.

The Southern Hall (L.12-326, Plan 3.13): As was noted above, (see above, Phase I, Halls of the Administrative Palace) it is most likely that the large pavement of the MBA (L.12-326) and the staircase of this period were covered with a hard-packed earth floor at this phase, though one was not identified.

**The Destruction Phase** (Plan 3.15)

The architecture of this phase is practically identical to that of the previous phase, Phase II, the main use. Minor changes of raising floors, building of new installations or meager walls were noted and will be described below. The entire area was destroyed in a violent conflagration, the debris consisting of ashes, burnt wooden beams, fallen and burnt mudbricks, broken pottery vessels (some described already in the previous phase due to the lack of ability to differentiate the two phases).

Therefore, this phase is termed ‘the destruction phase’ as it reflects the phase which was destroyed.

The Entrance Complex (Plan 3.16)

No changes were noted in the floors of the two entrance chambers. Burnt wooden beams and burnt mudbricks were found on the floor of thewestern chamber (L.5808).

An ash layer with large amounts of burnt mudbricks was found on the basalt-made pavement L.5569. Many of the ‘scoops’ were found on the pavement, especially near the podium.

A fifth step was added to the basalt made staircase L.5593. This step slightly deviates from the course of the original staircase, resulting in a very narrow stepping space on the step below it. A similar addition of steps during this phase was also noted in the center of the acropolis, in Area A, where this difference resulted in an empty space between the older steps and the new ones (Ben-Tor et al. 2017: 108).

A flimsy row of stones was built on top of the basalt made pavement, blocking the direct access to the podium. The eastern end of this row of stones sealed the horse-shoe shaped installation set within the basalt pavement (see above).

In the hall to the east of the basalt made pavement, a new wall, W.3119, was built, adorned by basalt made orthostats on its eastern face and limestone slabs on its western face. No floor was identified to its east, where large amounts of broken orthostats and fallen mudbricks were found. This wall is built in a different orientation than the other features of the palace complex. This wall seals the pavement of the previous phase (L.5383, see Plan 3.9). The destruction layer (L.5359A) in this room consists of a thick layer of mudbricks, ash and broken pieces of orthostats.

The “Citadel” (Plan 3.17)

In the northern room (L.6515B), a new pavement was laid, covered by a plaster surface, on which burnt wooden beams were found. A rounded installation (L.6530) built in the corner of walls W.3235 and W.3385. The installation is built of a single row of stones, preserved two courses high and seals the earlier floor (L.6524, see Plan 3.12).

The eastern entrance between the northern room and the central room (in wall W.3384) was blocked during this phase, allowing entrance only from the western part, near the main entrance to the building. The western entrance was somewhat narrowed in this phase, as a result of a cube shaped basalt stone placed next to the western end of wall W.3384.

A plaster floor (L.6511) was found in the central room. A stone pavement (L.6507) was found in the eastern part of this room. A complete cooking pot was placed in the western part of the room (L.6507), stones place around it suggest they were used to stabilize it.

The south-eastern room (L.6556) continued from the previous phase without any changes (see Plan 3.12). Remains of the roof of this room, including a roof roller, and a door socket, were found on the floor. An orthostat with a large round hole drilled in its center was also found on this floor. The function of this orthostat is still unknown.

A plaster floor was found in the south-western room, L.6535, with a tabun built on the flat stone in the south-western corner of the room. Wall W.3394 (in Plan 3.12) went out of use as a small patch of pavement was found on this wall.

The Courtyard (Plans 3.17 and 3.18)

The major change in the courtyard is the new rounded installations built abutting the northern walls of the palace halls. All these are built on top of the pebbles of the courtyard and thus represent a later addition.

In the western part of the courtyard, three installations abutting wall W.16-307 were found (L.18-322, L.17-319 and L.17-320) In the western-most installation, L.18-322, a complete Mycenaean pyxies was found (send to Illustration, Photo, page). An intact burnt deer antler was found on a paved surface of installation L.17-319,. This paved surface was most likely part of a channel that continued to the eastern installation L.17-320.

The three eastern installations (L.17-321, L.17-325 and L.6596,) abut wall W.3383. All three had a paved surface. The function of these six installations is not clear. Some suggestions that come to mind are that they were used as garbage bins, that they were part of a ceremony conducted before entering the palace, etc.

The Halls of the Administrative Palace (Plans 3.18 and 3.19)

The major difference between the current phase and the previous one inside the palace are changes which were made to the walls of the building. In the entrance hall a new wall was built (W.13-317), which re-uses a complete basalt orthostat as the northern end of the wall.

This wall does not abut any of the other walls of the building and cuts through the earlier plaster floors. It seems that this wall was haphazardly built, to divide the hall into two separate units.

In the east, a packed earth floor, L.13-313 seals the earlier plaster floor (L.13-318) This earth floor abuts wall W.13-317 in the west and a small rounded installation in the north-eastern corner of the room. This installation (L.12-367) was made of two courses of small stones, abutting walls W.3381 in the north and the small pilaster extending from it in the east. The installation was found filled with ash and bones. Inside the installation, but more so directly next to it, a large assemblage of cooking vessels was found including extremely large cooking bowls and miniature cooking pots. Several bowls, jugs, and a krater were also found here~~.~~ (Send to Figs./Phot.) This installation is similar to the above-mentioned installation, L.6530.

In the south-eastern corner of the eastern unit of this hall, within the destruction level of the building, leaning against the corner of walls W.13-308 and W.11-306. a broken statue of two feet of an Egyptian sphynx was found (Ben-Tor D. 2017: 584–590).

To the west of wall W.13-317, a packed earth floor was found (L.13-304) with large amounts of burnt wooden beams, a concentration of fresco fragments, basalt vessels, and a storage jar. This floor continues further to the west (L.18-302 and L.18-301), where large amounts of burnt wooden beams were found. Some were laid in a north-south orientation and others in an east-west orientation. Apparently these wooden beams were part of the roof of this room and the floor of the upper level of the building. Within the large number of pottery vessels found broken on this floor, dozens of smashed pithoi were found. The bases of most of these pithoi were found turned, facing upwards, indicating they probably crashed down from the upper level when the building was burnt down.

The entrance between hall L.18-301 and hall L.17-304 became narrower by the addition of a new wall, W.13-301. This wall is made of a single row of mudbricks and abuts wall W.11-302 in the east. In the west, wall W.13-301 ends at the large limestone which is built in line with the steps leading into this room (see above).

In the western part of this hall, the southern face of wall W.16-302 was widened. A new row of mudbricks was built on its southern face, beyond the stone foundation of the original wall. Further to the west, a new wall was built, W.16-306, built together with the widening of the southern face of wall W.16-302. The stone foundation of this wall is built in a very haphazardly manner, similarly to wall W.13-317. It seems that the stones were thrown on top of each other and not meticulously constructed. A mudbrick superstructure was identified here as well. This wall was used to divide the southern hall into two units. It is most likely that the entrance to the western unit lies further to the south, outside of the excavation limits.

In the eastern, excavated, part of this hall (L.13-312), many burnt wooden beams were also found. However, in contrast to the wooden beams found in hall L.18-301, the ones found here were very thin, sometimes plastered. These could have been used as shelves or were used as the flooring of the upper level. Within the destruction level of this room, remains of the ceiling of the room were found, together with basalt vessels and a large number of pottery vessels including pithoi (one was found with its base facing upward), jugs, kraters, and bowls.

In the northern hall a stone wall was built (W.11-315) adjacent to the southern face of wall W.3381. It is possible to suggest that this was done to avoid the maintenance of the mudbrick wall, which was not preserved in the east. A pavement made of large stones (L.13-305) was found abutting wall W.11-315 in the north and wall W.13-308 in the west. Burnt wooden beams were found on pavement L.13-305. An opening was cut in wall W.13-308 leading from the entrance hall to the northern hall.

Unlike the building of new walls and the widening of existing walls, evident in other parts of the palace, in the eastern hall (L.12-326) walls were taken apart. The corner of walls W.10-307 (the northern end of this wall) and wall W.11-306 (the western end of this wall) was dismantled to allow an entrance from the eat into hall L.12-313 (compare wall lines in Plan 3.15 to Plan 3.8). The thirteen pithoi found in this part of the hall (L.12-313) were probably placed here during the previous phase. It is possible to suggest that walls were taken down during the discussed phase to allow easier access to the pithoi.

In the eastern hall, small walls were built on the earlier MBA pavement. In the north, wall W.12-306 seals the earlier MBA steps. In the south, wall W.11-313 was built with a small installation to its west. A floor was found on either side of this wall (L.12-315 in the west and L.12-314 in the east), on top of which large amounts of chipped limestone, and weathered bones, were found, indicating this area was most likely an open space. The function of the installation found to the west of wall W.11-313 and the open space is not clear. This entire area was filled with a massive moist fill made up of brown mudbricks and large amounts of pottery, bones, and pebbles. It is possible that this fill was the superstructure of the walls of the palace.

The southern wall of this hall, W.11-303, was thickened at this phase by adding a new stone wall, W.12-310. This new wall is also built of large and massive boulders with smaller stones between the two walls. It is not clear why wall W.11-303 needed this support, as the entire area to the south of these walls had no LBA remains and therefore was probably not settled during this time.

**Discussion**

The Entrance to the Acropolis

One of the most striking features in the LBA administrative palace of Hazor is the fact that it altered the access route into the acropolis. As of yet, the evidence shows that in the Middle Bronze Age the access to the acropolis was direct; the route was straight, turning to the west only once reaching the top of the acropolis. In the Late Bronze II, access to the acropolis changed and included several turns, junctions, and barriers, such as steps, conducting ceremonies at the Podium, etc.. At present it is not clear how this route of access to the site's acropolis continued to the west or the south However it is clear that once it arrived at the center of the acropolis the route used during the of the MBA continued to be in use in the LBA.

‘Crisis Architecture’

In a very comprehensive and convincing article Zuckerman has dealt with the ‘Anatomy of Destruction’ of the Entrance complex (Zuckerman 2007b). It was suggested there that before destroying the building, its attackers knew the significance of the building and its different ritual and symbolic functions and they obliterated these functions. According to her, only a few of the royal features of the Entrance Complex remained before its final destruction. She also suggested that the building was cleared before it was destroyed (ibid: 19–21).

It seems however, that the changes made in the entire area were not intended to obliterate the symbolic features of the area but were rather taken in order to have more control over the movement of people and objects within the different parts of the building. At times, the movement was more restricted by building new walls and making entrances narrower; while at other times, walls were taken down to allow easier access. Thus, while elements of ‘crisis architecture’ can certainly be identified in the area, the interpretation of these elements is contested here.

Strata XIV–XIII or Stratum XIV/XIII

In his reports, Yadin attributes two strata to the LBII, Stratum XIV and Stratum XIII.[[2]](#footnote-2) Yadin does not explain what this division is based upon, though it seems that it was meant to fit the stratigraphic scheme of the excavations in the lower city (Yadin 1972:118).The different opinions in regards to this issue held by the various excavators which were members of Yadin's expedition, are noted in Hazor III-IV (Ben-Tor ed. 1989: 1, 22). It should be noted, however, that most of the buildings continue to be in use with some changes. Some of these changes could be regarded as part of the crisis architecture that was also noted in Area M. It should be noted, however, that Yadin’s excavations in Area A, where the division between Strata XIV and XIII was established, was not a large scale excavation. This is due to the fact that most of the excavated area lies beneath the Stratum X six-chambers gate, which was not removed to facilitate the excavations of the Bronze Age remains here.

The renewed excavations have shown that the remains attributed to Stratum XIII do not merit defining it as a stratum which stands on its own. In Area A, this stratum is defined by signs of decline (Ben-Tor et al. 2017: 110–141). Small architectural differences between Stratum XIV and Stratum XIII were noticed, but these are better described as different phases than different strata (Ben-Tor 2017).

In Area M, Stratum XIII could be defined by the making of the entrances narrower, the thickening of walls and the building of small installations within the monumental structure. However, these are not significant architectural changes that permit us to define them as a new stratum. In addition, there are several instances where no clear distinction could be made between the floors of the different so-called strata (e.g. the pavement of the courtyard, floor L.6556 in the ‘Citadel’, the floors of the halls of the palace, etc.).

Thus, we would like to suggest that similarly to Stratum XII/XI (see discussion in Ben-Tor and Ben-Ami 2012), the LBII remains at Hazor should be termed Stratum XIV/XIII. This stratum could be divided into two phases, and earlier and a later one.

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1. Plan 3.11 depicts the pavement as aligning mudbrick wall W.16-307. However, a line to the north of this wall indicates the assumed continuation of this pavement. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Note that Yadin attributes Stratum XIV to the LBII and Stratum XIII to the LBIII and dates them to the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries BCE respectively (Yadin 1972: 118), which are now both considered part of the LBII. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)