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Is the New Testament God's Word?

Contested Conflagration:
Joshua and the Conquest of Hazor

David: Man or Myth?

Contested Conflagration: Joshua and The Conquest of Hazor

By Cambria Jones

Introduction

Over the past centuries, the age-old debate over the date of the Israelite Exodus from Egypt and subsequent Conquest of the Promised Land has only increased in force and significance. On one side, esteemed archaeologists like Yigael Yadin, Amnon Ben-Tor, and James Hoffmeier argue for a late date Exodus during the 13th century BC, or Late Bronze Age (LB) III (Petrovich 2008: 489). On the other hand, respected scholars such as Douglas Petrovich, Bryant Wood, and Charles Aling posit an early date Exodus during the 15th century, or LB I. The late date Exodus position suggests possible errors in the history or numerology of the Conquest and Exodus, while the early date position confirms the accuracy of traditional biblical chronology (Aling 2010). Thus, as Petrovich explains, because the dating of the Exodus is inextricably linked to methods of biblical interpretation, its spiritual significance further polarizes these late date and early date sides of the debate (2008: 489–90). Like the waves of the Red Sea in the biblical story of the Exodus, scholars on both sides part with the force of the supernatural.

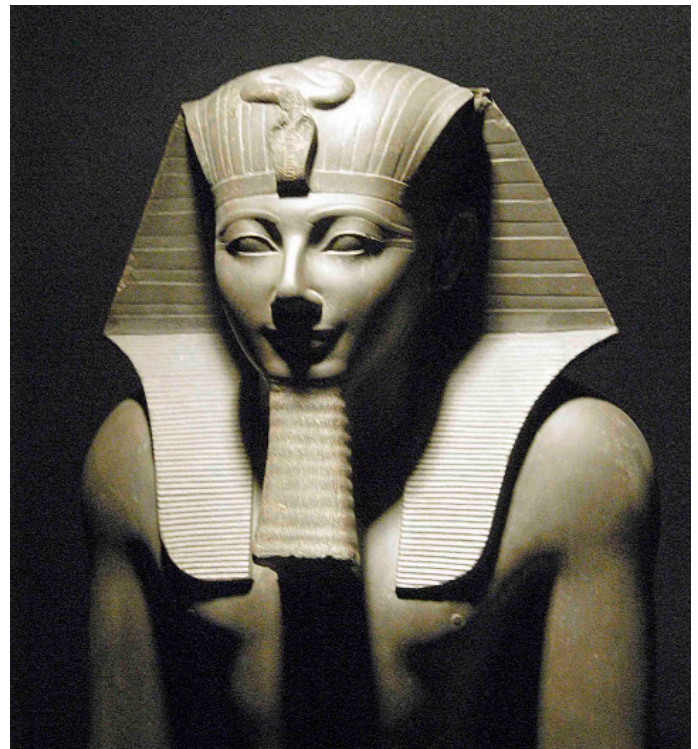
This controversy seems to become more intricate and intense with each new archaeological discovery, but some of the most hotly contested evidences for an Exodus-Conquest date are those which relate to the destruction dates of Canaanite cities conquered by Joshua and the Israelites following their Exodus from Egypt. Excavation of these cities could help confirm a date for the Conquest established from the biblical record. Many prominent archaeologists and scholars throughout the past century have focused their work and attention on the three cities destroyed during the Israelite Conquest—the cities of Ai, Jericho, and Hazor. Although a relatively large amount of evidence has been excavated from these cities, however, analysis and interpretation of these evidences have not thus far reached a consensus on the late-date/early-date Conquest-Exodus chronology debate (Aling 2010).

Both sides of the debate, however, do agree that the city of Hazor presents the strongest evidence for the consideration of those seeking a Conquest-Exodus date. In fact, scholars representing both the late date and early date positions argue that Hazor provides proof of their respective chronologies. For instance, Hoffmeier states that evidence at the city of Hazor supports a late date Exodus because it, “provides the only possible evidence for an Israelite conquest of Canaan in the late 13th century BC” (Petrovich 2008: 490). Aling, on the other hand, believes that the excavations at Hazor provide undeniable support for an early date conquest and Exodus (2010). Both positions have strong arguments and supports; however, when considered as a whole, the evidences at Hazor seem to

overwhelmingly suggest an early date for the Israelite Conquest of Canaan and Exodus from Egypt. The following presentation will explore these early date supports from the archaeological and epigraphical evidences regarding Hazor, including its LB II habitation gap, Mycenaean pottery timeline, and palace ruins.

Archaeological Background

In order to establish a background for the arguments over the Conquest date of Hazor, it is important to briefly establish whether any of its destruction layers can be attributed specifically to the Israelites. According to the biblical record,



Michael Luddeni

Statue of Thutmose III, who reigned in Egypt from 1506 to 1452 BC. Yadin and Ben Tor associate the habitation gap found in the archaeological record at Hazor to the military activities of this famous Egyptian Pharaoh in the middle of the Late Bronze I age. The totality of the extra-biblical evidence strongly indicates that Thutmose III could not have been responsible for destroying Hazor in LB I. The biblical text indicates it was the Israelites who were responsible for this first destruction of Hazor, and that the destruction took place at the very end of LB I (1406 BC), long after the death of Thutmose III.

Hazor’s ruins must evidence two characteristics of destruction in order to confirm such an Israelite conquest. First of all, the destruction must be by fire since Scripture clearly states that when Joshua and the Israelites captured Hazor, they burned the great city. Secondly, archaeological evidence must suggest that an attack on Hazor was perpetrated *specifically* by the Israelites and not another nearby people group (Aling 2010). Over the past century of analyzing and evaluating Hazor’s ruins and biblical descriptions of Joshua’s Conquest, scholars have concluded that *two* of Hazor’s destructions do, in fact, match the biblical requisites for a conquest by the Israelites.

During his excavations of the city of Hazor, archaeologist Yigael Yadin uncovered evidence for the first requirement indicating an Israelite conquest of Hazor—destruction by fire. Joshua 11:10–11 states, “And Joshua turned back at that time, and captured Hazor...and he burned Hazor with fire” (ESV). According to the archaeological record, two such conflagrations occurred at Hazor. The first conflagration was during LB I, as evidenced by a burn layer on Hazor’s northern slope, consisting of a layer of ashes and fallen mud-bricks (Petrovich 2008: 501) as well as the remains of a burned palace (Freiling 2005: 18). The second conflagration, evidenced by charred wood beams, cracked basalt, and layers of ash, has been dated to LB III (Petrovich 2008: 490–91). Thus, both destructions fulfill the biblical mandate for destruction by fire, allowing archaeologists to attribute either the LB I or LB III destruction of Hazor to the Israelite conquest.

As for the second characteristic of destruction, excavations of the LB I and LB III strata also indicate that both destructions were perpetrated *specifically* by the Israelites. One such evidence is the obliteration of religious structures and artifacts, since God had commanded the Israelites to destroy all pagan culture and religion. Strata representing both destructions of Hazor reveal that the temples and religious foci at Hazor were the nucleus of conflagration. In fact, Wood states that the city’s “cultic centers seemed to have been singled out for especially harsh treatment by the conquerors” (Petrovich 2008: 502). Even the manner of destruction corresponds to Israelite presence, since archaeologists have unearthed a number of severely mutilated religious objects and statuary (Petrovich 2008: 491). This aligns with evidence from other sites that demonstrates that the Israelites had a practice of mutilating and destroying anything associated with pagan religion (Ben-Tor 2006).

Furthermore, because of the nature of these mutilated religious statues and the geographical position of Hazor, it is not viable to attribute Hazor’s destruction to any other nearby people group (Ben-Tor and Rubiato 1999: 38). The deliberately vandalized religious artifacts at Hazor actually represent both Canaanite and Egyptian religions. This indicates that the city was not destroyed by either the Canaanites or Egyptians, since both of these pagan ancient peoples adopted the deities and temples of conquered cities rather than destroying them. The other nearby people group, known as the Sea Peoples, did not invade as far inland as Hazor’s location. Thus, as concluded by eminent archaeologist Kenneth Kitchen, “neither the Egyptians, Canaanites, nor Sea Peoples destroyed LB I Hazor—the early Hebrews remain the feasible option” (Kitchen 2002: 313). Coupling this conclusion with the fact that two destructions of Hazor evidence burning, it

becomes clear that either the LB I or LB III conquest of the city can be attributed to Joshua’s conquest.

Chronology Question

Placing the Israelite conquest of Hazor during LB III, however, leaves a substantial chronological problem unresolved. While prominent scholars like Yadin, Ben-Tor, and Hoffmeier represent their position with extensive first-hand excavation, research, and analysis, their LB III conquest theory cannot explain the biblical record of *two* Israelite destructions of Hazor. According to the Bible, Joshua’s Conquest of Hazor in Joshua 11 was followed by a second conquest by Deborah and Barak as recorded in Judges 4. This second conquest resulted in the destruction of Hazor as recorded verses 23–24: “So on that day God subdued Jabin the king of Canaan before the people of Israel. And the hand of the people of Israel pressed harder and harder against Jabin the king of Canaan, until they destroyed Jabin king of Canaan” (ESV). As stated by Yadin himself, “If Hazor was destroyed and Jabin killed in the times of Joshua, decades before the period of the Judges, how is it possible that the city and its king again figured so prominently in these later battles?” (1975: 13). Thus, attributing the LB III conquest of Hazor to Joshua seems archaeologically plausible; even Yadin, Ben-Tor and Hoffmeier must admit that their theory leaves the biblical history of a chronologically second conquest unexplained.

For the time, at least, two answers to this two-Conquest dilemma remain widely propagated, neither of which is compatible with the doctrine of biblical inerrancy. The first requires scholars to altogether reject any historicity of Deborah and Barak’s conquest of Hazor, which reduces the second Conquest to a mere legend or an exaggeration of a minor battle (Yadin 1975: 250–52). The second answer, as stated by Yadin, argues that “the narrative in the Book of Joshua is... the true historical nucleus, while...Judges 4 must have been a later editorial interpolation” (Petrovich 2008: 494). This denies the exactness of the Bible’s historical content regarding the Conquest, as well as undermining its authorship and factuality. Thus, traditional biblical scholarship rejects the validity of both of these solutions because they result in denial of the literal interpretation of Scripture and the accuracy of biblical conquest chronology. It is clear that ultimately, the theory promoted by Hoffmeier and Yadin cannot be accepted without creating major problems for biblical interpretation.

A solution does exist, however, which perfectly fulfills the

Chronology Chart

(based on Petrovich 2008)

Late Bronze I	ca. 1483–1400 BC
Late Bronze II	ca. 1400–1290 BC
Late Bronze III	ca. 1290–1177 BC
Thutmosis III	ca. 1506–1452 BC
Amenhotep II	ca. 1455–1418 BC
Thutmosis IV	ca. 1418–1408 BC

biblical record of two Israelite conquests of Hazor. According to Petrovich, Wood, and Aling, Hazor's first destruction in LB I should be attributed to the Conquest of Joshua and the Israelites as described in Joshua 11. According to this theory, the second destruction of Hazor in LB III thus represents the second conquest by Deborah and Barak as recorded in Judges 4. Petrovich, Wood, and Aling also consider their chronology of Hazor's destructions to provide the answer to the Conquest-Exodus date debate, since they place Joshua during LB I, which corresponds with an early date for the Exodus (circa 1446 BC).

Chronology of Hazor

According to Petrovich, a habitation gap at the beginning of LB II at Hazor provides the strongest support for this theory that Joshua bears responsibility for the LB I conquest of Hazor. To understand the significance of this habitation gap, the chronology of Hazor must be examined. Excavations of Hazor's upper and lower cities have revealed signs of habitation within three specific time periods pertinent to the two Israelite conquests. One fully operative and influential stage of Hazor's habitation occurred during LB I, the period encompassing an early date Exodus during the reign of the Egyptian pharaoh Amenhotep



Douglas Petrovich, www.exegesisinternational.org

A view of the excavations in Area M at Hazor. The upper levels are from the Iron Age, which translates to the time of the Israelite monarchy, while the lower levels extend to LB II and LB I. The black basalt floor and podium visible in the upper center of the picture are from LB II. The black arrows point to the occupational gap between the stoned pavement of LB II and the LB I level below the gap. The camera points virtually due northward and looks downhill toward the lower city.

II (Ben-Tor 1997: 108–109). This habitation corresponds with the statement in Joshua 11:10 that Hazor at the time of Israelite conquest was “the head of all those kingdoms” (ESV). Strata at Hazor also reveal a second habitation period spanning approximately the next hundred years, during the period known as LB II. The third habitation period, which encompasses a late-date Exodus under the reign of Pharaoh Ramses II, occurred during LB III Hazor (Aling 2010).

The significance of Hazor's chronology to Petrovich's Conquest theory lies in the gaps between these habitations, the periods where the city remained in a state of devastation and

inoccupation. Because of the extent of the fiery devastations that ended Hazor's LB I and LB III habitations, both of these periods correspond with subsequent gaps in the city's habitation. According to interpretations of the archaeological evidence, the first razing of Hazor that occurred in the middle of LB I was followed by a considerable habitation gap stretching through the beginning of LB II. The second conflagration of Hazor during LB III corresponds with an even longer habitation gap until the Israelites rebuilt the city during the time of Solomon (Petrovich 2008: 494).¹

Evidence from the Habitation Gaps

As argued by Petrovich, both of these habitation gaps at Hazor contribute strong archaeological arguments for dating Joshua's conquest to an early date during LB I. In the first place, because of the lengthy second habitation gap following the LB III destruction of Hazor, attributing this later conquest to Joshua leaves no chronological place for the Judges 4 conquest of Hazor by Deborah and Barak. Even more significantly, according to Aling, the first habitation gap following Hazor's LB I destruction further disproves a later date Conquest because it reveals that the earlier destruction of Hazor can only be attributed to Joshua and the Israelites (2010).

Despite the existence of these habitation gaps, more liberal archaeological scholars like Yadin and Ben-Tor, still do *not* acknowledge difficulty with dating Joshua's Conquest to LB III. Their dismissal of the historicity of a second conquest by Deborah and Barak allows them to disregard the problem of Hazor's second habitation gap. Since they do attribute this later destruction to Joshua, Yadin and Ben-Tor explain the habitation gap following Hazor's LB I destruction by attributing it to the Egyptian pharaoh Thutmosis III. In order for this theory to be valid, the destruction and habitation gap at Hazor should fall within the reign of Thutmosis III. Archaeological and epigraphical evidence, however, contradicts this dating theory, placing Hazor's early LB II habitation gap (1400–1375 BC) about 50 years later than the reign of Thutmosis III (1506–1452 BC). This contradiction renders it impossible to associate Thutmosis III with the first razing of Hazor and thus contradicting the theory posited by Yadin and Ben-Tor (Aling 2010).

In his article “The Dating of Hazor's Destruction in Joshua 11,” Petrovich presents evidence of the chronological impossibility of ascribing the LB I conquest and subsequent habitation gap at Hazor to a campaign by Thutmosis III. First, Petrovich points to epigraphical evidence recorded in ancient Egypt—more specifically, a conquest list from Amenhotep II's Year 3 campaign. This military record describes a victorious attack against Hazor by Pharaoh Amenhotep II, the son and successor of Thutmosis III. Hazor would not have existed as a conquest-worthy city less than a decade after Thutmosis III's death, however, if that pharaoh had destroyed the LB I city and initiated its early LB II habitation gap. Thus the existence of this gap renders it impossible to date the LB I conquest to the reign of Thutmosis III, considering that Hazor was an operative city a few years after his death. In the words of Petrovich, the LB I habitation gap “renders a conflagration under Thutmosis III and a subsequent invasion/conquest under Amenhotep II mutually exclusive, an impossible chain of events” (2008: 504–505).



Douglas Petrovich, www.exegesisinternational.org

The red rectangle depicts the occupational gap between LB II (above) and LB I (below). This gap attests to a long period of non-inhabitation after the conquest of Hazor under Joshua. Hazor was not inhabited by the Israelites next, after this destruction, but by another Canaanite population.

In addition to this chronological conundrum, Petrovich provides further epigraphical evidence against the theory that Thutmosis III razed LB I Hazor. Hermitage Papyrus 1116A, a record from year eighteen of Amenhotep II's reign (ca. 1457 BC), records the transportation of grain and beer rations to an Egyptian garrison at Hazor. The presence of such a military garrison provides further proof that during the time of Amenhotep II, Hazor existed as a vibrant and functional city. In other words, in the decades immediately following the reign of Thutmosis III there was no habitation gap at Hazor; rather, the city existed in a fully occupied state. Once again, the archaeological necessity of a habitation gap after the LB I conquest of Hazor does not correspond with the theory that LB I Hazor was destroyed by Thutmosis III (Petrovich 2008: 507–508).

Petrovich mentions still more evidence that demonstrates the impossibility of attributing Hazor's early LB II habitation gap to a conquest by Thutmosis III. He points out that Hazor actually appears in ancient Egyptian topographical city lists dating through the reign of Thutmosis III. In fact, the city of Hazor does not disappear from these Egyptian city lists until *after* the reign of Thutmosis III's successor, Amenhotep II. In order to appear on a list of Egypt's enemies, the city of Hazor must have been occupied at these times during the reign of both pharaohs. Thus, if Thutmosis III had been responsible for Hazor's LB I conflagration, the city would not be included in these later city lists because of the long habitation gap which followed its destruction (Aling 2010).

Yet another archaeological evidence appears in Petrovich's article; namely, the excavation of a scarab from the tombs of Hazor which bears the inscription of Thutmosis IV (1418–1408 BC), the second pharaoh to follow Thutmosis III. Since Thutmosis IV did not receive much accolade as a pharaoh, his scarabs were not treasured or passed down as heirlooms to be entombed decades after their distribution. To the contrary, scarabs of Thutmosis IV only appear in burials dating to his reign. Thus, the presence of a Thutmosis IV scarab at Hazor, according to Petrovich, "confirms the existence of Hazor as an occupied and

functioning city...immediately after the reign of Amenhotep II" and during the reign of Thutmosis IV (2008: 506). Considering this scarab thus as further evidence of the vigor and vitality of Hazor less than fifty years after Thutmosis III's reign, neither that pharaoh nor even his successors could have destroyed LB I Hazor because of the habitation gap following that destruction (Petrovich 2008: 505–507). Archaeology again provides proof of the impossibility of crediting Hazor's first destruction to Thutmosis III.

As a final note, one further argument can be made against the theory that Thutmosis III bears responsibility for Hazor's first conflagration. This argument suggests that the very nature of the LB I destruction provides evidence against attributing that conquest to the Egyptian pharaoh. The fact that Hazor was destroyed by fire does not correspond with Thutmosis III's pattern of campaigning and destruction, since he did not burn other subjugated cities such as Kadesh, Tunip, or Aleppo. If neither Thutmosis III nor his successor Amenhotep II burned even Kadesh, the vanquished city of their greatest enemy, it remains highly implausible that Thutmosis III would have razed Hazor to the ground. Based even upon the sole consideration of the pharaoh's need of supplies on his campaign route through Palestine, an Egyptian razing of Hazor seems highly improbable (Petrovich 2008: 503–504).

Mycenaean Pottery

Furthermore, Mycenaean pottery provides more archaeological evidence supporting Petrovich's conclusion that Thutmosis III did not destroy LB I Hazor. This Mycenaean pottery presents such an exact timeline for the chronology of the ancient Near East that archaeologists use it to date excavation layers. The pottery excavated from caves surrounding Hazor can be divided into three periods on the Mycenaean pottery timeline:

1. Early Mycenaean III A:1 pottery dates from 1425–1400 BC (end of LB I).
2. Early Mycenaean III A:2 pottery dates from 1400–1375 BC (beginning of LB II).
3. Late Mycenaean III A:2 pottery dates from 1375–1300 BC.

Of these three types, both the Early Mycenaean III A:1 and Late Mycenaean III A:2 exist in the ruins of Hazor, **while Early Mycenaean III A:2 is conspicuously absent** (Petrovich 2008: 505–506). This absence of Early Mycenaean III A:2 pottery reveals a gap in Hazor's greatness, a lack of trading prowess that would coincide to a destruction at the very end of LB I and extending into the earliest stage of LB II. If the destruction of Hazor truly occurred at the time indicated by the Mycenaean pottery, the city could not have been razed by Pharaoh Thutmosis III, who actually reigned decades earlier. Thus the chronology of Hazor's destruction suggested by the Mycenaean pottery corresponds with the previously mentioned evidence provided by Egyptian documents and Hazor's artifacts. In the end, Egyptian records, archaeological evidence, and Mycenaean pottery all reveal that Hazor remained an inhabited and thriving city not only during and after the reign of Thutmosis III, but during that of his successors, Amenhotep II and Thutmosis IV (Aling 2010).

The Palace at Hazor

Archaeological excavation of Hazor itself even supports the conclusions based on this Mycenaean pottery timeline and the aforementioned written and archaeological evidence against crediting Thutmosis III with the LB I destruction of Hazor. In her article “When Did Joshua Destroy Hazor?”, Krista Freiling describes the excavation within the city of a Late Bronze Age palace destroyed by fire. While many now believe this “palace” is actually a temple, Freiling’s arguments still retain their validity. Whether the burned structure at Hazor is a temple or a “palace,” if it dates to LB I, it provides archaeological support for attributing that earlier conflagration to Joshua (Freiling 2005: 18).

Although it remains difficult to pinpoint an exact date for the burning of the palace at Hazor during the Late Bronze Age, Freiling presents an excellent argument for dating this conflagration to LB I. According to Yadin’s excavation reports, the strata at Hazor that represent LB III reveal an abundance of imported Cypriote and Mycenaean pottery; within the burned palace, however, there is a marked absence of such imported pottery. Freiling finds this absence a strong indicator that the palace does not date to LB III, as purported by Ben-Tor, but rather to the LB I. If so, the destruction of the palace would uphold the theory attributing the early date conquest of Hazor to Joshua and the Israelites (Freiling 2005: 18–19).

Beyond the evidence provided by this absence of imported pottery, Freiling supports her conclusion by presenting evidence of Israelite responsibility for the palace’s destruction. During excavations at Hazor in the 1990s, archaeologists unearthed the head of a desecrated religious statue, a number of intentionally decapitated religious statues, and similarly mutilated Egyptian statues (Ben-Tor and Rubiato 1999: 35–36). As Freiling states, “The deliberate destruction of the statuary at Hazor makes it apparent that it was the Israelites that brought about the end of Canaanite Hazor and the palace complex” (2005: 19). Thus, as evidenced by the absence of imported pottery and the presence of desecrated religious objects, the burning of the palace corresponds to a LB I destruction of Hazor by Joshua.

Accordance with Jericho

The archaeological discoveries at the city of Hazor itself, however, do not stand alone—excavations at Jericho also strongly indicate an early date destruction for this other Conquest city. Wood posits the impossibility of a late date Conquest at Jericho because “no evidence has been found for occupation in the late 13th century, let alone for a destruction at that time” (Wood 2005: 477). Contrary to the conclusions of archaeologist Kathleen Kenyon, Wood argues that the pottery, ruins, and artifacts of Jericho actually all align with an early date Conquest during LB I.

At Jericho, for example, excavations have revealed fallen walls that date to the late 15th century BC. In the 1930s, British archaeologist John Garstang discovered a double city wall, later dated by Kenyon to the Early Bronze Age, which had collapsed, falling outward rather than inward (Wood 1990: 54–56). This aligns perfectly with the biblical conquest story, since the walls

of Jericho were not toppled inward by siege, but fell at God’s command. These walls adjoin a residential area of Jericho dating to LB I that contains evidence of destruction by fire, which likewise supports the biblical mandate that the Israelites burned Jericho (Wood 1990: 46).

In his article “Did the Israelites Conquer Jericho?” Wood further explains that pottery discovered at Jericho also indicates an early date destruction during the 15th century BC. During the early excavations of the conquest strata in Jericho’s residential area, Garstang uncovered a significant quantity of LB I pottery (Wood 1990: 49). Similar LB I pottery appeared during Kenyon’s later excavation of the city, including “simple, round-sided bowls...only used for a short time in the latter half of the 15th century BC” (Wood 1990: 52). Although Kenyon argued that the absence of imported Cypriote pottery rendered a LB I destruction date impossible, Wood deems this an argument from silence. He considers it “methodologically unsound and, indeed, unacceptable,” especially since the local pottery excavated by both Garstang and Kenyon herself does indeed date to LB I (1990: 50).

Furthermore, Egyptian evidences excavated at Jericho support the early conquest date indicated by the city walls and pottery finds. In one cemetery, archaeologists discovered a number of scarabs bearing the hieroglyphs of the Egyptian pharaohs Hatshepsut, Thutmosis III, and Amenhotep II (Wood 1990: 53). Since Hatshepsut’s reign as pharaoh was greatly maligned and disrespected following her death, her scarabs were not collected or passed down to later generations. Thus, their presence in the cemetery at Jericho remains a strong evidence that Jericho’s destruction should be dated to the end of LB I. According to Aling, the discovery of a rare seal of Thutmosis III further verifies this conclusion, providing excellent chronological indication of an early date Conquest.



Douglas Petrovich, www.exegesisinternational.org

This closeup shot of the LB I to LB II transition reveals some charred remains that were exposed during the 2001 excavations in Area M, and were still visible when this picture was taken in 2007.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the historical and archaeological evidence at Hazor, when considered as a whole, supports the argument attributing the city's LB I conquest and conflagration to Joshua. Contrary to the theory held by Yadin, this earlier conquest cannot be credited to Thutmosis III. The archaeological record reveals a long habitation gap following Hazor's LB I conflagration, which renders a conquest by Thutmosis III impossible because of conclusive evidence of a fully functioning occupation of Hazor just decades after that pharaoh's reign. The impossibility of attributing Hazor's earlier destruction to Thutmosis III receives further substantiation from the timeline of Mycenaean pottery present in Hazor's ruins.

Besides these evidences against a LB I conquest of Hazor by Thutmosis III, the archaeological record also indicates that the conflagration should be attributed to Joshua and the Israelites. The LB I strata at Hazor contain proofs for both biblical requisites of Israelite conquest—destruction by fire and a specifically Israelite presence. Furthermore, a burned palace excavated at Hazor contains a scarcity of imported pottery that indicates the structure has a LB I destruction date. Since this palace also contains a number of desecrated Canaanite religious statuary, its destruction during LB I should be attributed to the Israelites. This is further indicated by the presence of mutilated Egyptian statuary, since it is highly improbable that the Egyptians burned the palace and destroyed their own religious statues.

As a final note, even archaeological evidence from the Conquest city of Jericho indicates an early date destruction during the LB I. This date can be established because of the date and position of the fallen walls at Jericho, the type of pottery found in the city's ruins, and the presence of chronologically significant Egyptian artifacts. Thus, the evidence for an early-date Conquest at Hazor only receives further substantiation from the excavation of other Conquest cities.

And thus, archaeology as a whole strongly discredits arguments for a late date destruction of Hazor, and actually promotes the theory that Joshua and the Israelites bear responsibility for the city's LB I conflagration. Although the arguments may never be totally conclusive, the extreme probability of this earlier date for the Israelite Conquest should be carefully considered in the Exodus date debate. As posited by scholars like Wood and Petrovich, this LB I Conquest necessitates an earlier date Exodus circa 1446 BC, reflecting and upholding the historical accuracy and authority of the Bible.

Notes

¹ See also The Hazor Excavations Project, "History," (Jerusalem: Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2004), <http://hazor.huji.ac.il/history.htm> (accessed April 18, 2010).

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