THE SONG OF DEBORAH: POETRY IN DIALECT

CHAPTER FOUR

DAPARA / TAPARA: A CLUE TO CHRONOLOGY

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TAPARA / DABARA:

A CLUE TO THE CHRONOLOGY

I. The Meaning of דבורה

In *Megillah* 14b Deborah's name is זיבורתא "hornet, bee" and it is called a *hateful* name. According to Feldman (1986: 122), Josephus actually denigrated Deborah by equating her name with μέλισσα "bee." But Brown (1992: 73–74) suggested that Josephus's translation of דבדרה as μέλισσα explains his reference to Deborah's interceding for the people as a priestly function. Brown surmised that the analogy to the bee implies that Deborah was asexual, which may help to explain why Josephus omitted the phrase אשת לפידות "wife of Lappidoth." Many critics since Josephus have associated דבורה with μέλισσα, among them Bachmann (1869: 252) and G. A. Smith (1912: 82), who noted

> . . . it [דבורה] may be a Hebrew parallel to the Greek Melissa, which was not only an epithet applied to poets, but [also] the title of the Delphian prophetess and of other 'humming priestesses' of such prophetic deities as Demeter, her daughter [Persephone] and Cybele.

While these parallels with μέλισσα are of some interest, defining the name Deborah as "hornet" or "bee" appears to be only an early "popular" etymology, reminiscent of the figurative zoomorphic titles given to the rabbinic dialecticians, the עוקרי הרים (Hahn 1897: vii–ix). Moreover, the "bee" etymology fails to provide a common derivation for the names Deborah, Daberath, and Tabor, an association about which Burney conjectured (1918: 81), "Possibly there may have been a connexion between the name of this city [Daberath] and the name of the prophetess."

Even though R. Payne Smith (1897–1901: 815a) had associated the name Deborah with Syriac דבהܐ "leader," Klein (1987: 114), when citing post-Biblical Hebrew דַּבָּר "leader" and דַּבָּרוּת "leadership," made no mention of Deborah, citing instead דָּבָר "to speak, to hum" and as the etymology of דבורה "Deborah" and "bee." But Brown (1992: 70) rightly noted that "the designation of Deborah as 'leader' possibly derives from a wordplay

on the Aramaic root of the name Deborah, *dbr*, which denotes (among other meanings) to 'lead (the flock).'" However, more than an Aramaic cognate is involved in recognizing Deborah as "leader." The stem דבר is Hittite and Hebrew, as well.

Mendenhall (1973: 163) was the first to propose a common etymology based upon the Hittite-Luwian *tapara* "governor, ruler" for the names דביר (Josh 15:15) in the southern Shephelah (also known as קרית ספר) and לו דבר (2 Sam 9:4) in the Trans-Jordan (spelled לא דבר in 2 Sam 17:27 and Amos 6:13; and לדבר in Josh 13:26). He stated,

> On the Transjordanian plateau is located the curious *Lodebar*, "nothing" by popular etymology; but the name is the precise equivalent to later *L/Ron-deberras* preserved in Greek, going back to original *R/Luwandatapara*, "Ruwanda is Lord." . . . *D/Tapara* 'lord, governor,' gives us by popular etymology *Debir*, just as Egyptian transcriptions yield the name Qiryat-*Sofer*. city of the *šapiru* = "governor" . . . . One name is a translation of the other. "City of the book" (*sēfer*) is thus again a late popular etymology.[94]

The appearance of the Hittite-Luwian *t/dapara* " ruler, governor" is more widely attested than Mendenhall, Klein, or Brown have noted. The vocable דבר appears as a noun meaning "leader" and as the verb "to rule, to govern, to manage the affairs (of a province, not just a flock)" in Arabic, Aramaic, Syriac, Ugaritic, and elsewhere in Biblical Hebrew, as well.[95]

דבר "to govern" is attested in Ps 18:48, which can be translated, "He causes (me) to govern (וידבר) the nations subordinate to me," and similarly, Ps 47:4, "He causes (me) to govern (ידבר) nations subordinate to us and nations inferior to us." Ps 58:2a reads, "O gods, do you really govern (תדברון) justly?" Also, in 2 Chron 22:10, one can translate, "Athaliah . . . rose and took control (ותדבר) over all of the royal seed of the house of Judah."[96]

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[94] Mendenhall, 1973: 163. He calls attention to Milgrom's (1970) study supporting his identification of "ethnic" Levites as being originally Luwian.

[95] See, respectively, Lane 1872: 844b; Gordon 1965: 383–384, no 641; J. Payne Smith 1903: 82–83; R. Payne Smith 1897–1901: 815a; Jastrow 1903: 279, 731; Klein 1987: 114; ערוך השלם 3: 12b.

[96] The versions read "Athaliah . . . rose and exterminated all of the royal seed" under the influence of ותקם ותאבד in 2 Kgs 11:1.

The place name דברת ("governor") in Josh 21:12, 28 and 1 Chron 6:57 is the same name which appears in Josh 19:20 as הרבית (A-text Ραββωθ "great lady" but B-text Δαιβρων). The name הרבית is a *translation* of דברת, as קרית ספר "city of the governor" in Josh 15:15 is the translation of דביר (as noted on page 74). The A-text Ραββωθ (= רבות for MT רבית) could reflect an honorific plural, like the פרעות in Ju 5:2. Indeed, the singular appearance of רבית leads one to suspect that it was originally רבות or even רבתי, the honorific appellative which appears in Lam 1:1, "the *Mistress* of the people . . . the *Mistress* among the nations" (McDaniel 1968b: 30–31; Cross 1983: 136).

Deriving the name Deborah from the same root as דָּבָר and דברה permits דבורה to be read as the title "Lady-governor, Ladyship," much like שׂרה "Princess" and מלכה "Queen." The *place* names from the דברה root could also be דְּבִיר, דָּבְרַת, and even תָּבוֹר—places renowned for leadership.

Therefore, Mendenhall's conclusion that Debir is related to *tapara* can be extended to the names דבורה, דברת, and תבור. Luwian names with the independent prefixed or affixed *tapara* element, cited by Houwink Ten Cate (1961: 158–159), include the variations Τβερα-, Τβρεη-, Δαπαρα, Δαπαρας, and δβερρας.[97] The variations between δ and τ and π and β parallel the variations occurring in תבור and דביר; and the Hellenized spellings ending in -ας parallel the Semitized forms דבורה and דברת. It would not be surprising to find the name of Deborah in other texts appearing as תפרה, תברה, דפרת, or תברת.[98]

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[97] The unusual transliterations of דבורה in 5:1 and 7, with the doubling of the third consonant, Δεβωρρα (MSS Nb´gkmsz), Δεβορρα (MSS dilnpq), may find their explanation in this spelling. Gemination of the third radical is rare, even in Arabic and Akkadian. However, transliterations with a doubling of the second consonant—e. g., Δεββωρα and Δεββορα — are not problematic since gemination of the second radical is much more common (see Moscati, 1964: 78–79).

[98] On the interchange of the voiceless ת and the voiced ד, see 1 Chron 17:17 (תור אדם) and the parallel account in 2 Sam 7:19 (תורת האדם), where תור or תורת appear instead of the anticipated דור. See also note 101.

In view of the many Hittite motifs appearing in the Megiddo ivories, one can anticipate other evidence of a Hittite presence in Galilee until the collapse of the Hittite empire about 1200 B.C.E.[99] Indeed, Rendsburg (1982: 363; 1989: 116) has argued that the peculiar הוא occurring 120 times in the Torah is a *genuine* Hebrew form, but he noted that "epicene HW' is the result of the Hurrian and Hittite substratum [which used a 3rd common singular pronoun] in the very area where Hebrew first appears as a distinct dialect of the Canaanite language."[100]

Deborah's origins may have been Hittite, allowing her nonetheless still to be counted as an Israelite. She uniquely had the title אם בישראל "the Mother in Israel" and Ezekiel (16:3, 45) noted perhaps with more historical accuracy than has been appreciated, "your mother was a Hittite (ואמך חתית), your father an Amorite." The credibility of Ezekiel's castigation of Jerusalem would have required some established tradition about a Hittite "mother," comparable to the traditions about "sisters" Sodom and Samaria to which he also appealed (16:46).

The title אם בישראל in Ju 5:7, in parallelism with דבורה, reflects the poet's use of synonyms: "Mother" and "Ladyship." The title אם (like the title אב) and the title דבורה "(Lady) Governor" speak of political and/or religious leadership. P. de Boer (1974: 31) cited the epithet "the Lady of the Battle" (given to Inanna in the epilogue of the Hammurabi Code) as an appropriate title for Deborah and correctly noted the absence of any literal "motherly" role for her. The "mother-of-god" title in Hittite texts (*ANET*,

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[99] Loud 1935: 10. The statement of Gordon (1958: 31, note 9) is noteworthy: "The Hittite contribution to Israel will doubtless appear more and more significant during the years ahead. The full meaning of Ezek 16:3 ('thy father is an Amorite, and thy mother is a Hittite') is yet to come." See also Rabin 1963: 113–139 and Kempinski 1979: 21–45.

[100] The Hurrian substratum may account for the spirantization of the Hebrew בגדכפת and the postpositive article in Aramaic. See Rendsburg (1982: 363) and references cited there. Rendsburg's conclusion that the epicene הוא proves that "The Pentateuch as a whole by necessity can be dated earlier than the composition of Joshua, Judges, etc." is premature. The use of the epicene הוא could be a deliberate archaizing device designed to give the Pentateuch an ambiance of antiquity, required for its having Mosaic authority. Until the question over its being archaic or archaistic is resolved, there is little to be gained by abandoning the achievements of literary criticism.

209, 211) for women of religious authority could explain Deborah's title of אם, as well as the designation אשה נביאה in Ju 4:4. Consequently, the Hittite connection of "the Mother in Israel," suggested by Ezekiel, provides a link between Deborah's name and her synonymous title of authority.

The topographical list of Ramesses III (1198 B.C.E.) on the first pylon of the Great Temple of Medinet Habu records the names of one hundred nineteen northern towns and territories (plus six African places) which he had suppressed. The text of the 85th name-ring, which is directly under the arch of Ramesses' right foot (see Plates I and II), appears in Simons' transcription and discussion of the ring-name as *[q]-ś-t-b-r-n* (?).[101] But as is unmistakable from the photograph, the name can also be read *<q>ᴣwśtbrt* by restoring the *q* and reading the deeply incised ▬ sign as a variant of the ⊟ sign (*ta*).[102] As is clear from the 84th and 86th name-rings, the ▬ sign cannot be read as the sign ∿∿ (*n*). The first part of the name is the *qś* (*qwś* or *qyś*) element meaning "troops, marauding band," discussed above (pages 70–71). The second element, *tbrt*, is probably the variant תברת (= דבורה). When taken together, *qᴣwś* plus *tbrt* could be read as "(the territory of) the troops of Deborah."

Simons noted, perhaps with more correctness than he realized, that this *tbrn* / *tbrt* was related to the 21st ring-name in the list of

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[101] See Simons 1937: 78–79, 165–168. For the name *Dᵓ-pw-rᵓ* = Deper = Tabor (occurring in the list of Galilean cities along with Beth-anath and Merom) captured by Ramesses III in the eighth year of his reign, see Breasted 1906: 3: 159. The *tbrt* of the Ramesses II list suggests that in this case, at least, Ramesses III did not borrow from the list of Ramesses II at Karnak. On the interchange of ב and פ and ד and ת, see page 75 above and note 98.

[102] See Albright 1934: 63; and Gardiner 1966: 531. On the matter of errors in the inscriptions, see Nelson (1929: 23–31) who noted:

> Another point not always appreciated in dealing with these Medinet Habu reliefs is the extensive ancient use of plaster to cover up defects in the masonry and to eliminate lines and whole figures . . . the method used for making the corrections was to cut deep rectangular holes along all very deeply cut lines to be eliminated . . . the deep holes served to hold this new plaster covering . . . .

If the disputed ▬ sign of *[q]-ś-t-b-r-t* proves to be the base for such a plaster correction (equal to an erasure), the name-ring could still contain a reference to the masculine Tabor (*t-b-r = Dᵓ-pw-rᵓ*), though not to Deborah / Teborah.

Ramesses II, *qȝyś rybn* "the band of Reuben" (discussed above, page 70, note 90). Although long debated, it is now recognized that the name Asher (*i-ś-r*) is attested in topographical lists from the reigns of Seti I and Ramesses II.[103] For the purpose of this study it is important to note that the tribal names Asher and Reuben attested in lists of Ramesses II do not occur in the lists of Ramesses III. Apparently, the victory of Deborah (= *tbrt*) or the forces at Mount Tabor (=*tbr[?]* = *dȝ-pw-rȝ*), over Sisera's coalition prompted Ramesses III to move northward and re-establish his claims in the Asian province. The appearance of the name of either Deborah or Tabor in the topographical list of Ramesses III provides the chronological reference for dating events under discussion, and may prove to be as significant as the mention of Israel in the Merneptah stela.

II. The Meaning of אשת לפדות

Before looking at other proposed dates for Deborah, a brief discussion about Deborah's titles in 4:4, אשה נביאה and אשת לפידות, is in order.[104] Boling (1975: 95) translated לפידות as

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[103] Burney 1921: 82; Rowley 1938: 259–260; Dussaud 1938: 176–177; Yeivin 1956: 98–99; 1971: 23–24, 31–32.

[104] The identification of Barak with Lappidoth goes back to David Kimḥi and Levi ben Gershom. Gilad Gevaryahu provided me the following text and translation of the midrashic work of the thirteenth-century, *Yalkut Shimꜥoni* which, following the *Tanḥumaʾ*, reads in Judges 4, § 1:

> . . . according to Eliyahu: they said the husband of Deborah was a simple man (עם הארץ). She [Deborah] said to him, "Come, I will make wicks for you, and you go with them to the temple in Shiloh. Then your share for the hereafter will be with the learned/righteous ones (כשרים). Then you will have a place in the hereafter." And she was actually making the wicks, and he was taking them to the temple. He [her husband] had three names: Barak, Michael, and Lappidoth: Barak because his face was shiny like lightning; Michael (מיכאל) because he softens himself (ממיך), or because he was named after an angel (מלאך); Lappidoth because his wife was making wicks—thick ones so the light would be augmented. And God, who can see through hearts and kidneys, said to her, "Deborah, your intention was to augment my light, so *I will augment your light in Judah and Jerusalem against the twelve tribes of Israel* [italics mine]. . . .

"Flasher," and considered it a nickname of Barak, "Lightning," whom he recognized, following Hilliger, Wellhausen, Budde, and Cooke (cited by Burney [1903: 85]), as Deborah's husband. Bal (1988a: 57–58), responded quite negatively to this widely accepted identification, stating:

> The assimilation of Lappidoth to Barak, who thereby becomes co-judge, constitutes a typical case of the biased use of the [anthropological] code, assisted by the philological code, which ultimately *permits* all three hypotheses [that Deborah was spouse, prophetess, and judge].

Bal claimed that Moore (1892) [*sic*] had suspected that לפידות was not a name. Following him, she preferred reading לפידות as a modifier of אשת, observing: "Woman of flames, of light? The epithet would be highly appropriate." But Moore (1900b: 114) noted, "the only natural interpretation is that which takes ל׳ as the name of Deborah's husband," and he caricatured Cassel's rendering "ein Weib von Feuregeist" as "pure *midrash*." Bal's reading, nevertheless, has merit, and is reminiscent of earlier proposals cited by Bachmann (1869: 254) for rendering לפידות אשת as "helle Frau" and "Flammenweib."

Ju 4:4a is a noun clause in which the compound predicate includes (a) the appositional אשה נביאה and (2) the bound nouns אשת לפידות. Because there is no conjunction in the predicate, אשת לפידות could be the appositional modifier of either אשה or נביאה. Traditional interpretations made אשת לפידדת the modifier of אשה, and לפידדות—following common usage as cited in Mandelkern (1967: 57)—became the name of a husband. But when אשת לפידות is read as the modifier of נביאה, a title emerges: "the prophetess, the woman of torches." Moreover, if the feminine plural indicates an abstract noun of intensity (GKC 124[a,e]), אשת לפידות could mean "the woman of flames/fire."

This does not simply imply a "a burning enthusiasm for Yahweh" (James 1951: 59), a hot head, a fiery temperament, or even, as Bal suggested (1988b: 209), "an inflamed and an inflaming woman." Here, לפיד, lacking the modifier אֵשׁ "fire," may have to do more with *light* than *heat*. The evidence for this is in the metaphorical use of the Arabic قبس, a synonym of לפיד. The noun قبس signified a live coal or firebrand, a "piece of fire which

one puts on the end of a stick" (Lane 1885: 2481a) to be used like a לפיד, i.e., as a torch or "pot in which light is carried." The participle قابس means not only "taking fire, a taker of fire," but also "acquiring or learning knowledge, an inquirer or seeker of knowledge." The plural قوابس connotes "those who teach what is good." Hebrew לפיד may also have been used metaphorically like the Arabic قبس . Therefore, אשת לפידות may well have meant "the lady of learning," i.e., a woman in what would now be called a "learned profession," such as משפט "law," נבואה "prophecy," or מדיניות "politics."[105] The epithet speaks of erudition exercised for the good of the community. When understood in this way, אשת לפידות parallels the epithets אשת חן "woman of grace" (who in Prov 11:16 "attains honor") and the אשת חיל "worthy woman" in Prov 12:4, 31:10 and Ru 3:11, which have bound nouns in the singular.[106]

Through לפידות (=قبس) Deborah can be linked with the אשה חכמה "the wise woman" of Tekoa and of Abel (2 Sam 14:2 and 20:16) and the female sages of Israel (who have been studied by Camp [1981: 26; 1990: 188, 203]). As earlier noted by J. Gray (1967: 268), these female sages included Huldah, who was the sagacious woman consulted by the king and the high priest (2 Kgs 22:14), and Deborah.

Consequently, it appears that Judges 4 and 5, in very different ways, recognized Deborah's power and erudition. "Mother in

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[105] Note the study of Couturier (1989) which deals with Deborah's three functions as *chantre*, *prophétesse*, and *chef*. Brown (1992: 43, 48–49) highlighted Pseudo-Philo's declaration that "a woman [Deborah] will rule over them and enlighten them forty years" (in *Biblical Antiquities* 30.2–5). She discussed Pseudo-Philo's having Deborah sent forth on the seventh day, suggesting a representation of Deborah as a Wisdom figure, as well as his making her the female prophetic counterpart of Moses.

[106] This interpretation of לפד sheds light on the meaning of Prov 25: 21–22, where the synonym גחל "burning coal" appears: "If your enemy be hungry, give him food . . . for thus you will heap hot embers *upon* his head (גחלים אתה חתה על ראשו)." This is quoted in Rom 12:20 as an act whereby evil is overcome by good. Far from being an act of torture, "heaping coals על ראש *above* the head," was a matter of *light* and *illumination*, much like "kindling one's interest, to kindle the mind, or have a burning/brilliant or bright idea" in English usage. However, note Segert's (1987: 159–164) survey of other opinions.

Israel" and "the woman of light(s)" were very appropriate titles for Deborah and complemented her name *Taparrat/*Dabarat, "Governor, Leader" with its Hittite affinity. In light of her רַבְּנוּת "authority, office" she would no doubt have been a רַבָּתִי, though not a רִבִּי or a רַבָּן.

III. Alternative dates for Deborah

Even if Deborah's name spelled *tbrt* (or *tbr* for Tabor) were unattested in the topographical lists of Ramesses III, a strong case could be made for placing her defeat of Sisera during the reign of Ramesses III. The evidence and argumentation can be presented most succinctly in a critique of opposing views which date Deborah and Sisera significantly after the reign of Ramesses III. The proposal of Mayes (1969: 353–356; 1974: 91–99), that this victory by Israelite tribes over a Canaanite-Philistine coalition led by Sisera should be seen in close connection with Israel's defeat by the Philistines at Aphek sometime in the course of the second half of the eleventh century B.C.E., has already been rejected as untenable (see above, page 64) since Mayes acknowledged that "arguments which have been adduced in support of this date of the battle against Sisera are not very reliable."

A more attractive chronology has been offered by Yeivin (1956: 103; 1971: 84–85, 104–106, 124) who accepted the historicity of the tradition that Sisera had served in Jabin's army (Ju 4:2, 7). He dated the defeat of Jabin (which was the catalyst for Merneptah's Asiatic campaign) to 1221, the victory of Shamgar to 1188 (shortly after the appearance of the Philistines), and the defeat of Sisera to 1175. Yeivin's dating demands an interval of forty-six years between the date of Sisera's escape from Hazor and his death at the hands of Yael. This would mean that Sisera was either a boy-soldier under King Jabin or an aged charioteer when chased by Barak. Yeivin's first date is quite acceptable, but an earlier date for Shamgar's activity and Sisera's defeat is required if Sisera is viewed as the same officer who served in Jabin's army. Yeivin's discussion on the chronology of this era is helpful in critiquing the views of Maisler, Aharoni, Albright, Lapp, and Globe. The proposals of these scholars demand a more detailed critique, and Yeivin's contribution will be noted in the course of this extended discussion.

A. Views of Maisler and Aharoni

The tradition in Josh 11:1–16, which associated Joshua with the destruction of Hazor, was transformed by Josephus into Joshua's battle against unnamed elements of a massive Canaanite coalition assembled at Beroth in Upper Galilee. The defeat of Jabin, according to Josephus, came after Yael's assassination of Sisera: "Barak also fought with Jabin at Hazor, and when he met him he slew him, and when the general had fallen Barak overthrew the city to the foundations, and was commander of the Israelites for forty years" (*Antiquities* 5: 1: 17 and 5: 5: 4; Naber 1888: 1: 279, 305).

This harmonistic reconstruction of events in Josh 11:1–16 and Ju 4:23–24 has been given new life in the proposals of Maisler (1952–53: 83–84) and Aharoni (1967: 203–208). They suggested that the order of events in the biblical tradition should be reversed, so that Deborah's battle against Sisera's Canaanite coalition was followed by the battle of Merom which ended in Barak's destruction of Jabin and Hazor. It was conjectured that, subsequent to Sisera's defeat, Jabin made a renewed effort to occupy the hill country, an action which precipitated his conflict with the Israelites.

Maisler and Aharoni dissociated Joshua from the fall of Hazor, reckoning his name to be a secondary intrusion into the tradition.[107] Moreover, Aharoni was forced to extricate Shamgar from his position in the tradition, where he is viewed as having pre-dated Deborah. He dated the "war of Deborah" to the end of Hazor XIV (Lower City 1b), which contributed to the decline evidenced in Hazor XIII. The "battle of Merom" resulting in Barak's defeating Jabin and the destruction of Hazor was dated to the end of Hazor XIII (Lower City 1a). Shamgar was made responsible for the destruction of Beth Shan VII, just before the reign of Ramesses III (1198–1166 B.C.E.). This reconstruction of events, especially as articulated by Aharoni, is vulnerable to the following criticism of J. Miller (1977: 91):

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[107] Note Yadin's (1979: 57–68) critique of the theories of Aharoni, Alt, Callaway, Fritz, Mazar, Noth, and Weippert, as well as the critique of Mayes' interpretation by Globe (1975b: 181).

In order to establish the credibility of Ju 4:1–2, 23–24, Aharoni had to rework radically the chronology of Joshua 11 and Ju 3:31. The archaeological data had to be restructured so that Hazor XIV survived to the time of Deborah, while Hazor XIII encompassed only the time between Merneptah's death and the rise of Ramesses III. Moreover, if the translation of Ju 5:18 offered in this study proves to be correct ("Naphtali moved violently against Merom"), a second diversionary movement toward Merom was part of the campaign against Sisera, and hence was not subsequent to Sisera's defeat.

A more likely solution to the chronological difficulties, which takes less liberty with the texts and the archeological data, is available. The mention of Jabin in the *introduction of the prose narrative* (4:2) and in the *prose prologue to the poem* (as I have so identified 4:23–24) need not be assigned a late date during the Philistine era or dismissed as an interpolation, as suggested by Yadin (1967: 259; 1975: 255). Although they have been recast by a Deuteronomic editor, they still provide the best chronological reference for dating the conflict with Sisera to the reign of Ramesses III.

The destruction of Late Bronze III Hazor (Upper City XIII and Lower City 1a) has been identified by Yadin (1959: 87) with Joshua's destruction of Hazor in the last decades of the thirteenth century B.C.E. Yeivin (1971: 84–85), as noted already (page 81), proposed the approximate date of 1221, suggesting, "Though there is no proof of the fact, it is likely that it was the rumour of this disturbance [i.e., the collapse of Hazor] that decided Merneptah to undertake his campaign in Hither Asia in the 3rd year of his reign."

The identification of Sisera in Ju 4:2 and 4:7 as an officer from Jabin's army has been dismissed too readily by Eissfeldt (1925: 25, 32) as a redactor's gloss or the result of a conflation of the J and L, or J and E, traditions. As noted, the suppression of the *q∍śṭiśr* "the troops of Sisera" by Ramesses II provided sufficient reason for Sisera's aligning with Jabin of Hazor. Judges 4 need not be interpreted to mean that Jabin was alive at the time of the defeat of Sisera. If the emendation of Ju 4:1–2 offered above is correct, the text speaks of Jabin's death and the subsequent rise of Sisera as an independent figure. Consequently,

Yeivin's (1956: 103; 1971: 84) reconstruction of events appears highly probable:

> With the collapse of Hazor, it is likely that Sisera, Jabin's C.-in-C. (or at least, the commander of his chariotry), tried to salvage Canaanite supremacy by escaping with, at least part of, his chariotry, and establishing his head-quarters somewhere in western Galilee . . . .

Since the fall of Hazor can be dated to the last decades of the thirteenth century, it is possible to date the defeat of Sisera to the first decade or decades of the twelfth century, allowing time for his consolidation of power and his twenty-year oppression of the Israelites (Ju 4:3). Consequently, the events spoken of in Judges 4–5 generally coincided with the destructions of (a) Tell Abu Hawam V C, (b) Megiddo VII B, (c) the initial phase of Taanach Iron I, and (d) Beth Shan VII, all of which have been dated around 1180 B.C.E.[108] This coincidence of destructions in the region under review would suggest that the defeat of Sisera occurred during the period of Egyptian weakness in Syria-Palestine around 1190 B.C.E., when Ramesses III was pre-occupied at home warding off the Sea Peoples.

The defeat of Sisera's coalition may have been the catalyst for the renewed activity of Ramesses III in Syria-Palestine after 1190, reflected in the name-ring *<q>ꜣwśtbrt*, as well as in the war scenes of Ramesses III engraved in the precinct of the temple of Mut at Karnak and in the inscriptions and his battle scenes throughout Syria, Khatti, and Amurru recorded at his mortuary temple in Medinet Habu.[109] The strengthened Egyptian presence in Galilee under Ramesses III (attested by his rebuilding the port facilities at Tell Abu Hawam) may have precluded the Israelite rout of Sisera's coalition from being turned into a war of occu-pation, for there is no archaeological evidence of an immediate Israelite occupation of the major sites.

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[108] See Maisler 1951: 21–25; Van Beek 1962: 339; Lapp 1964: 8; 1967: 3, 26; Fitzgerald 1967: 191–193; Schofield 1967: 316–321; Aharoni and Yadin 1976: 846–847; Anati 1976: 9–12; and Kempinski 1975: 213–214.

[109] See Yeivin 1956: 95–104; Faulkner 1975: 241–244.

B. Views of Albright and Lapp

The dating of the Song of Deborah by Albright (1936: 29; 1937: 25; 1968: 11) to 1125, as well as his later back-dating to 1150 (following a revised date for the destruction of Megiddo VII A), requires at least a seventy-five year gap between Jabin and Sisera, thereby dismissing the Judges 4 tradition that Sisera had been an officer in Jabin's army. Accepting the integrity of Ju 3:31 and its reference to the Philistines, Albright placed the battle against Sisera after the Philistine invasion (c. 1188), but before their northern expansion. Albright was convinced that the phrase בתענך על מי מגדו "at Taanach along the waters of Megiddo" in Ju 5:19 meant that the fight with Sisera was waged at Taanach and that Megiddo must have been in ruins at the time of the battle. He noted (1949: 117)

> This total omission of any reference to Megiddo itself, while Taanach be-comes the capital of the district, makes it practically certain that Megiddo was then in ruins . . . after the destruction of Megiddo VII about the third quarter of the twelfth century, the site lay in ruins until it was occupied by the people of Stratum VI.

Albright's conclusions about the dating of the Song of Deborah have been generally accepted by Van Beek (1962: 339), Schofield (1967: 321), Craigie (1969a: 255), Bright (1972: 172), and Freedman (1979: 13).[110]

Lapp (1964: 8, 23; 1967: 3, 21, 26) also interpreted בתענך על מי מגדו in Ju 5:19 as the place of battle against Sisera. He as-signed the battle to the final destruction of Iron I Taanach, around 1125 (since Taanach was probably abandoned after this destruc-tion until the tenth century), concurring with Aharoni (1957: 145) that "a town that fell into Israelite hands did not as a rule revive—even when the Israelites did not settle at once in the area."

Yeivin (1971: 62) rightly rejected Lapp's proposed equation of events in Judges 5 with the last destruction of Iron I Taanach, though he did not state his reasons. I concur with Yeivin's dis-agreement with Lapp and Albright, and their followers, for these

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[110] Albright's date of 1125 has been challenged by Engberg (1940: 4–9), Alt (1944: 75–79), Noth (1958: 151), Yeivin (1971: 60–62), and Davies (1986: 45–48).

reasons. The usual translation of בתענך by "at Taanach" has been misleading. The ב of בתענך in this instance means "from," rather than "at" or "by," requiring the translation "from Taanach."[111] Consequently, Ju 5:19 does not indicate the place of battle, or even its point of origin, but the direction of Sisera's route *from* Taanach and *from* Megiddo *into* Jezreel. The Israelite rout of Sisera, therefore, need not coincide with Megiddo's impotence or Taanach's dominance.

Since פלשתים need not mean "Philistine" (as argued in the previous chapter), there is no need to insist on a date in the Philistine era. While the text does not speak of Sisera's defeat *at* Taanach, it does not preclude an Israelite sacking of the cities participating in Sisera's coalition, including Taanach Iron I, Phase 1, Megiddo VII B, and possibly Beth Shan VII, which were all destroyed in the first decade(s) of the twelfth century.

C. Globe's use of Ju 5:17
as a clue to chronology

Globe (1975b: 169–184) rejected the conclusion of Mayes which associated the defeat of Sisera with the battle against the Philistines at Aphek. However, he did not address the more widely accepted views of Albright and Lapp for a date around 1150/ 1125 B.C.E. Without explicitly concurring with Aharoni and Maisler that the battle against Sisera preceded the battle against Jabin, Globe acknowledged Aharoni's argument as a "cogent reconstruction," stating, "Beside this impressive reconstruction, most other recent theories are unconvincing" (181).

Globe supplemented Aharoni's conclusions by an independent argument that in two major battles around 1200 (±25 years) the Israelites were victorious first over Jabin and then over Sisera. He found the clue for resolving the chronological difficulties in Ju 5:17 ("and Dan, why did he abide with the ships [ודן למה יגור אניות]? Asher sat still at the coast of the sea [אשר ישב לחוף ימים]"), which he interpreted to mean, "Asher and Dan were unwilling to jeopardize their lucrative employment in Phoenician ships by fighting against their overlords' allies" (1975b: 183).

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[111] Note Brekelmans 1969: 13–14 and above note 42.

Globe needed to determine when the Danites "remained by ships" (i.e., "were in maritime service") and absented themselves from the war. He ruled out the years between 1190–1150 since the Philistines were then actively consolidating their power along the coast, and hence normal maritime service in the area, requiring the use of non-Philistine employees, was unlikely.

The period after 1150 was ruled out since excavations at Tel Dan (Tell el-Qadi) suggested a mid-twelfth century date for the northern migration of Dan and the destruction of Dan-Laish. The Danites were not likely to have commuted from their northern home to the coastal ports or to the Sea of Galilee for employment in fishing or maritime services. The numerous references to shipping activity in the Amarna letters led Globe to conclude that Dan's maritime service makes "perfect sense" in the cosmopolitan fourteenth and thirteenth century. In light of the destruction of Hazor circa 1200 [*sic*], he narrowed the time span to 1200 (±25 years).

Although Globe's date for Dan's sea-duty—and consequently the time of the battle against Sisera—between 1225 and 1175 coincides well with the dates proposed in my study (1220 for the defeat of Jabin and 1190 for the fall of Sisera), Globe's arguments cannot be used to corroborate these suggestions or to reinforce Aharoni's thesis. Contrary to exegetical tradition, which Globe followed, the יגור אניות in Ju 5:17 does not permit, let alone require, reading this as proof of Dan's doing "sea-duty." It will be argued in the commentary in Chapter Six that the words of 5:17 are far better translated, "Then Dan boldly attacked the ships, Asher assailed along the water's edge and against its harbors." Consequently, as Globe rejected Yadin's suggestion that the Danites were the Danuna or the Denyen of the Sea Peoples (whom some identify with the Δαναοί), one must also reject the opinion that the Danites were at one time sailors in Phoenician or Philistine maritime services and the idea that the date of their sea-duty provides a clue for establishing the date of the battles with Jabin and Sisera.

IV. Conclusions

Rejecting the conclusions of Albright, Lapp, and Globe does not indicate agreement with Noth's (1958: 151) statement, "We have no evidence at all on which to assign a date to the victory

over Sisera, even very roughly . . . . As this victory does not appear to have had any direct and tangible effects on Canaanite cities, it is impossible to date it archaeologically." Nor can one concur with Ahlström's argument (1993: 379–380):

> The possibility cannot be dismissed, however, that the poem in Judges 5 has mixed two events and that the mention of Zebulon and Naphtali may be secondary in the poem. . . . but because Shamgar, who fought the Philistines, is mentioned as a man of the past, the date of the battle may be sometime around 1100 BCE.

To the contrary, a strong case has been made for the date of 1220 for the fall of Hazor and 1190 for the defeat of Sisera's coalition. The arguments included recognition of

(1)   the Hittite-Luwian *tapara* loanword as the title behind Deborah's name and the appearance of her name spelled תברת (or the name of Tabor [תבר]) in a list of peoples whom Ramesses III suppressed (see below, 3);

(2)   archaeological evidence that Hazor was destroyed in the last quarter of the thirteenth century, and it subsequently remained abandoned;

(3)   the violent destruction at relevant sites from Tell Abu Hawam to Beth Shan during the first decade(s) of the twelfth century, which suggests—with all due caution—that the Israelites were contributory to these destructions through military action designed more to neutralize an oppressor than to occupy territory. These actions resulted in the return of Ramesses III to Galilee to suppress the *<q>ꜣwśtbrt*, "the troops of Deborah, or the *<q>ꜣwśtbr[?]* "the troops of Tabor."