

According to the Book of Joshua (11:10-13), "Hazor was then head of all those kingdoms" of Canaan, which joined together to fight — and to be destroyed by — the newly arrived Israelites. Strategically located in the Northern Galilee, where the ancient Way of the Sea branches off to Mesopotamia, Hazor appears in the Egyptian Execration Texts (18th-19th century BCE), in the Mari documents (18th century BCE) and in the Tel-Amarna letters (1355-85 BCE) as a persistently powerful, prosperous commercial center. The James A. de Rothschild Expedition of 1955-58, led by Prof. Yigal Yadin, excavated both the lower and upper city. His proposed stratigraphy and chronology identifies twenty-one

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levels of occupation, of which Stratum 11 is an unfortified 11th century BCE early Israelite settlement, and Stratum 10 is associated with a major rebuilding effort by King Solomon. His chronology, however, has long been controversial.

To resolve this controversy, Prof. Amnon Ben-Tor of the Hebrew University and his colleagues returned to Hazor in 1990-95 to continue excavation at two sites on the acropolis of Israelite (10th-8th century) Hazor, using modern methods. Their actual excavations spanned a wide range of eras. For example, an extensive Late Bronze Age mud-brick wall was unearthed under the foundations of the large 9th century "Tripartite Building." Most important, however, their detailed analysis of the characteristic pottery styles and ceramic assemblages of each layer and their comparison with those uncovered in similar Israeli sites, tend to support Yadin's "late" dating of Strata 9 and 10, although their division into subphases is significantly more detailed. The investigators' dating of the public structures at Hazor, and their implications for dating similar structures at Megiddo, Gezer, Jerusalem and Beit Shean, generally support the historicity of the Biblical report of a well-developed Israelite state and monarchy in the 10th century BCE, one able to carry out extensive public works.

Prof. M. Artzy of the University of Haifa and his colleagues have been analyzing rich Bronze Age (2-3rd millennia BCE) archaeological finds from Akko, strategically located near the only good bay and natural harbor in ancient Israel. Intermittent excavations by Prof. Moshe Dotan and colleagues during 1973-85 unearthed a wealth of luxurious ceramics and grave goods, including imports from Egypt, the Aegean islands, Cyprus and Syria. Because of other commitments, much of this material has long remained scattered, unanalyzed and unpublished.

The field diaries for Areas AB, H, PH and S and associated, but unindexed, field photographs have now been located; and more than 400 excavated items have now been indexed and drawn. This work should provide a clearer stratigraphy and history for this important site and clarify its relationship to other nearby maritime trade and commercial centers such as Kabri and Nami. Both projects were supported, in part, by the Israel Science Foundation.



Excavations at the "Tripartite Building" on the acropolis of Hazor