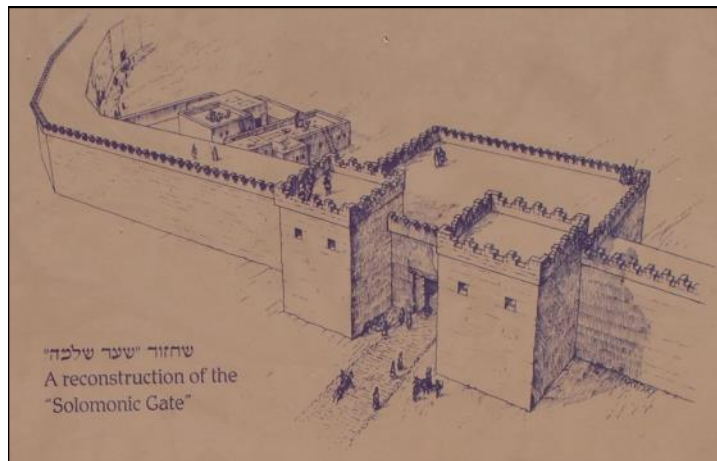


HAZOR

Hazor was located nine miles north of the Sea of Galilee on the west side of the Jordan, below Huleh Lake. It was near important trade routes and controlled the way to the sea. Hazor was the largest Canaanite city, encompassing two hundred acres. The site was divided into an upper city and a lower city. The importance of the city is evident from the fact that Hazor is mentioned in Assyrian, Babylonian, and Egyptian texts (see *ANET*, 242, 477).

Hazor was first occupied in the Bronze Age (3200-2000 B.C.). At the time of Joshua's conquest (c. 1400-1380 B.C.), the city was burned with fire (Josh. 11:11, 13). It was allotted to the tribe of Naphtali (Josh. 19:36), but it is questionable whether or not they lived in it (see Judg. 1:33). During the Judges period, Hazor was once again the head of a Canaanite kingdom (Judg. 4:2-3; see Josh. 11:10). However, during the days of Barak and Deborah, the king of Hazor was subdued by Israel (Judg. 4:23-24); at some point the Israelites began to occupy the city. During the monarchy, Solomon rebuilt Hazor (north), along with Megiddo (central) and Gezer (south) (1 Kings 9:15-17). The city may have been rebuilt again during the reign of Omri or Ahab. Hazor was conquered in the military campaign by the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser III in 732 B.C. (2 Kings 15:29).

Visitors to the ruins of Hazor today will encounter a Solomonic gate complex as well as double (casemate) walls. This gate had six chambers and two towers, being similar to those found from the same period at Megiddo and Gezer. In ancient cities, the gate was the site of city business and court cases (Ruth 4), as well as a place for defense. A casemate wall was constructed from two parallel walls that were periodically connected together and roofed. The intervening space between the walls could be used for storage or for defense. Troops could also walk along the roof of the wall (as the drawing below illustrates).





Solomonic Gate at Hazor (10th Century B.C.)



Tower of the Gate Complex



Room in the Gate Complex



View of Gate from Inside the City

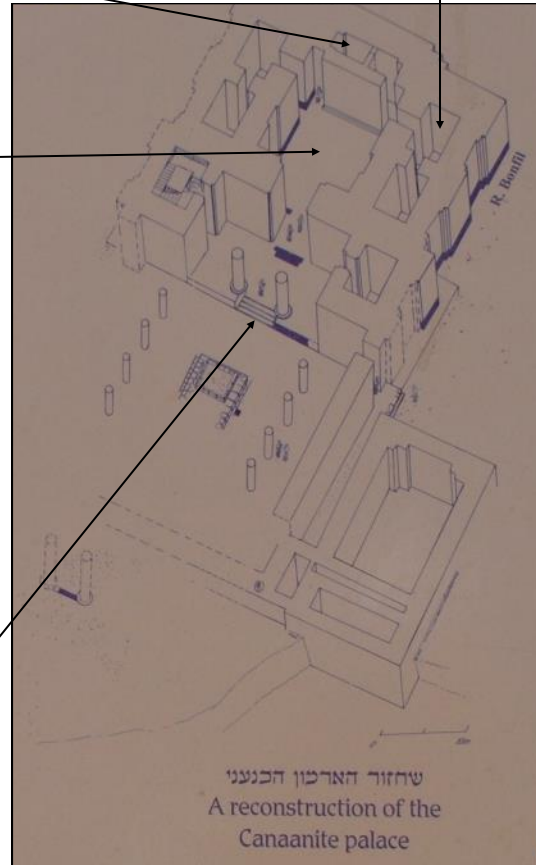
After passing through the Solomonic gate, one finds the ruins of a palace used by the Canaanite kings of Hazor prior to Israelite occupation. This palace was built from a combination of basalt stone, wood, and mud bricks. It had a courtyard and a throne room.



Throneroom



Courtyard (Foreground) and Entrance with Pillars



Mud Bricks



Figure with a Large Basin (Israel Museum)

This basalt statue of a figure with a large basin (15th-13th century B.C.) was found in the throne room of the Canaanite palace at Hazor, probably demonstrating that the palace also served a religious function. The statue was shattered into hundreds of fragments in one of the fires that destroyed the city, so it had to be reconstructed. The figure in the statue is wearing a pendant with an eight-rayed star, likely representing a deity.



Cuneiform Tablet from Hazor
(Israel Museum)

A cuneiform tablet dating from the eighteenth or seventeenth century B.C. was discovered at Hazor in 1992. It mentions “Jabin [Ibni], king of Hazor.” This clarifies an issue raised by comparing Joshua 11:11 and Judges 4:2—where in different periods the king of Hazor is called “Jabin,” which means “discerning.” This was apparently a dynastic name or title. Fragments of other cuneiform tablets were also found, which relate to everyday life.



Bronze Statue of a Canaanite Ruler in Broad
Hemmed Cloak from the Palace
(Israel Museum)

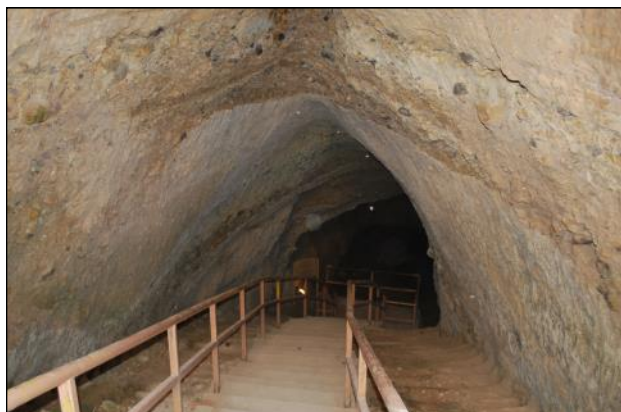


Basalt Statue of Canaanite Ruler from Hazor
15th-13th Century B.C.
(Israel Museum)

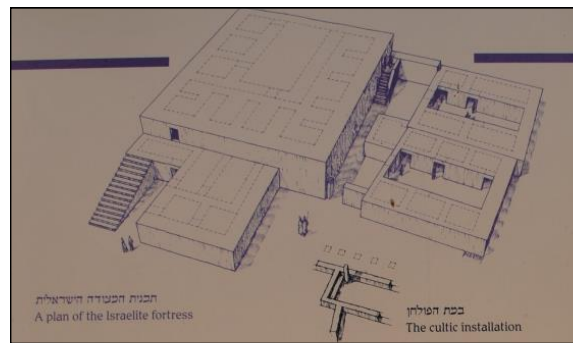
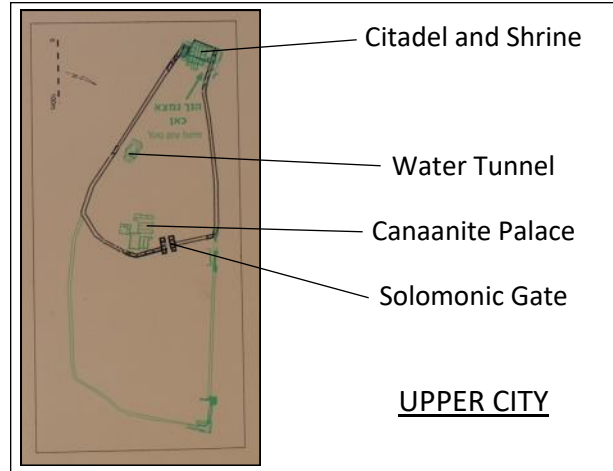


Beyond the Canaanite palace, one encounters a water system that is comprised of a 50 to 60 feet rectangular shaft connected to stepped tunnel that is about 80 feet long. The tunnel ends at an aquifer, which supplied the city with water.

Archaeologists usually date this water system to the time of Ahab (9th century B.C.), thinking that it was built inside the city as a defense against the Assyrians. Since similar water tunnels can be found at Gezer and Megiddo, perhaps they all were actually a part of Solomon's building program. As previously noted, Solomon rebuilt Hazor, Gezer, and Megiddo during his reign (1 Kings 9:15-17).

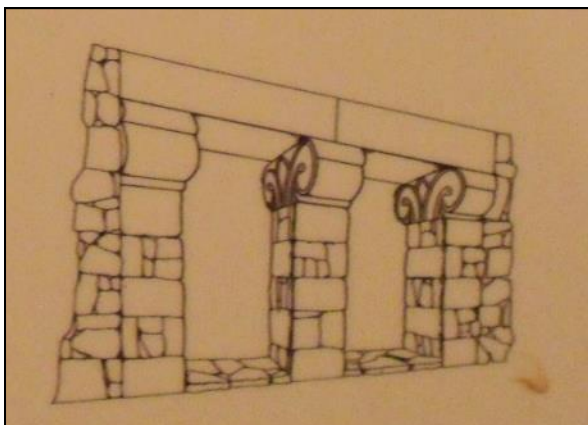


Beyond the water tunnel are the remnants of a shrine—a “high place” dated to the Judges period (14th-11th century B.C.). It was located at the highest elevation in Hazor at that time. Incense burners, a standing stone (*massebah*), and other cultic items were discovered in the area. In addition to the shrine, there are ruins from a citadel dating to the later period of the kingdom of Israel.

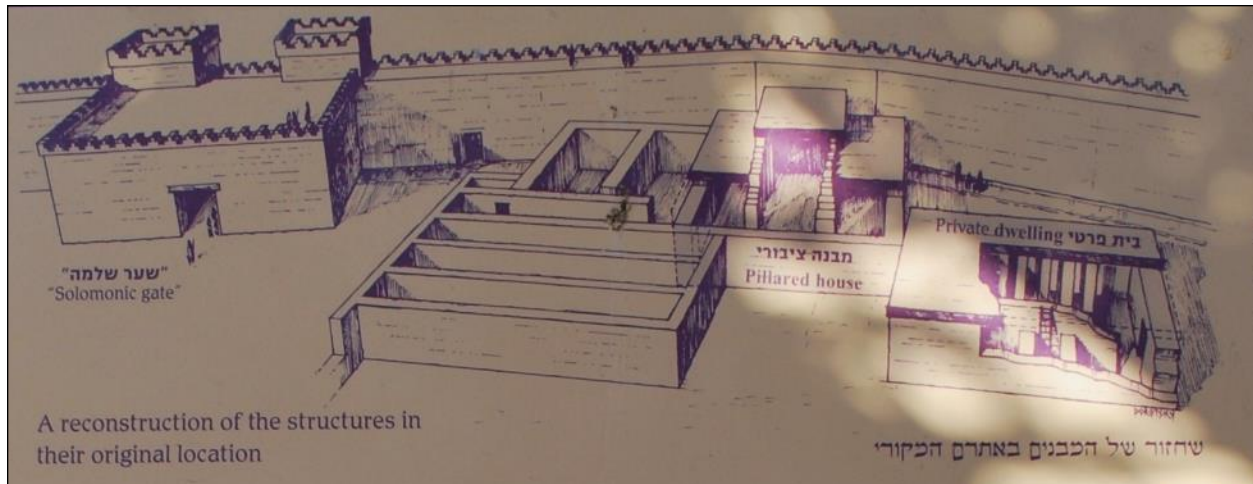


Citadel and Shrine Area





This structure is the right half of a double gate which stood at the entrance of the fortress at Hazor. It is comprised of hewn stones, two carved capitals, and a massive lintel. The gate has been dated by archaeologists to the time of King Ahab (9th century B.C.). (Israel Museum)



Although originally found just inside the Solomonic gate, a few structures have been moved to a nearby location at Hazor. One is the pillared house. Two rows of pillars divided this long building into three aisles. The central part of the roof was raised (see the drawing above), which allowed for light and ventilation. This type of buildings was used for storing grain and other items.



Pillared House (Storage Building)



Private Dwelling (Four-Room House)

This four-room house, common in the Israelite period, has a central courtyard with rooms on three sides. Living quarters were actually located in an upper storey, whereas domestic activities were performed on the ground floor—such as cooking, baking, and crafts. This particular house has an olive oil press in the courtyard.



Olive Oil Press (8th Century B.C.). Olives were first crushed in a basalt basin. Then they were put in woven baskets made of reeds, which were in turn placed upon the stone press. Pressure was applied to the olives by the beam, which was weighted with large stones. Oil dripped from the baskets into the channel of the stone press below. From there, it ran into either a jar (as in the drawing) or a vat sunk into the floor of the courtyard.

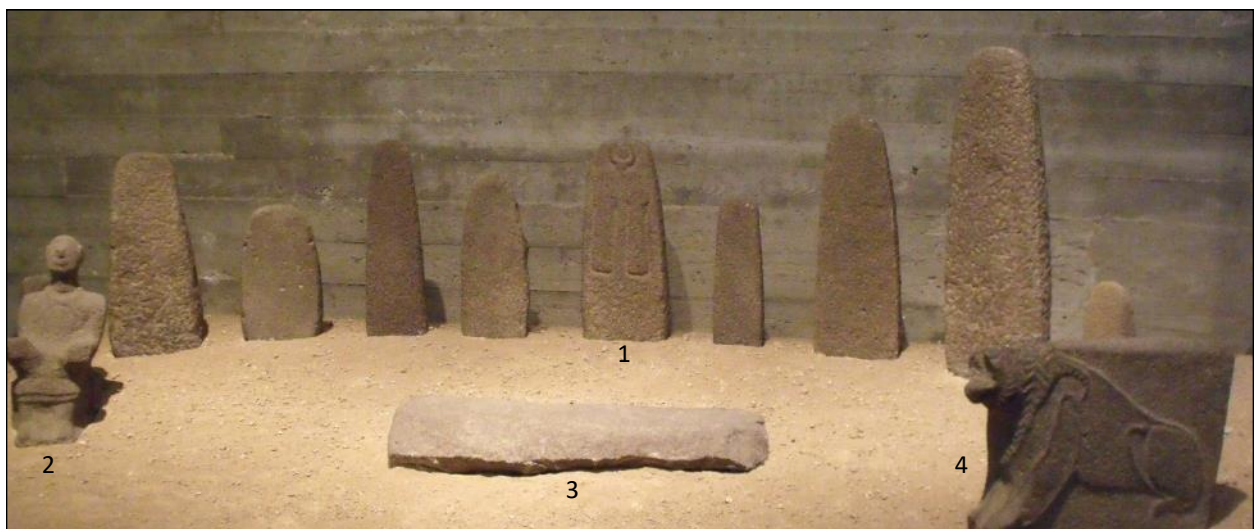
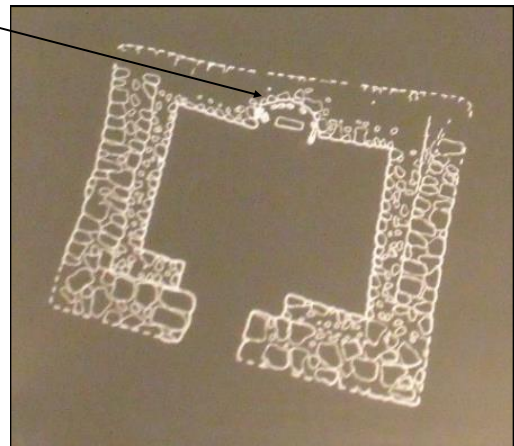




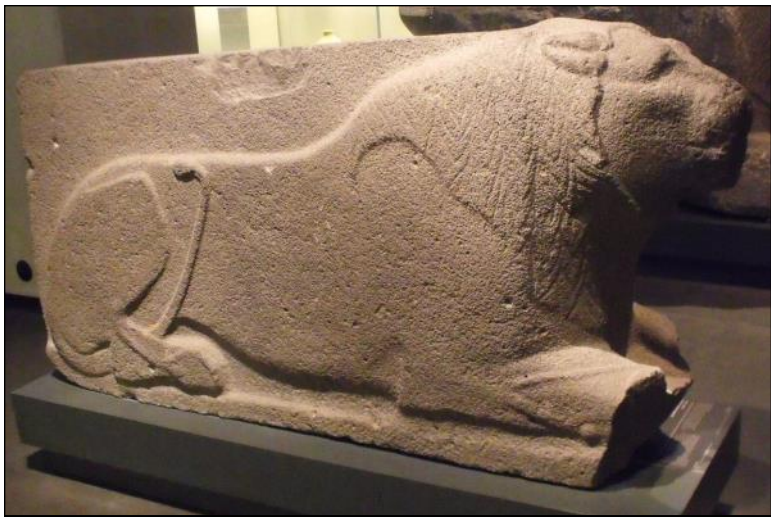
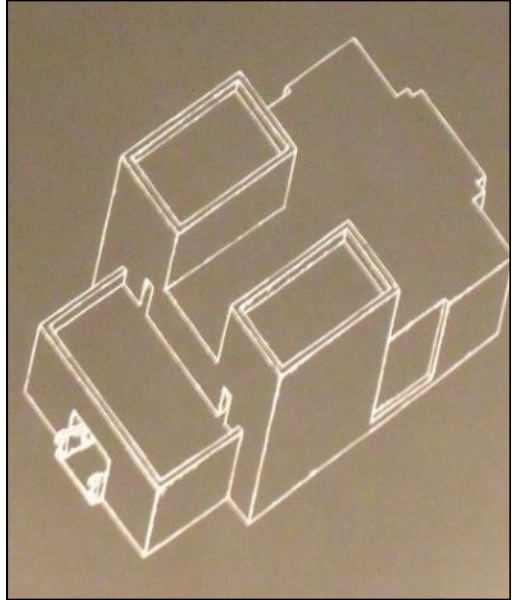
Standing Stones (*Masseboth*) in Shrine Area

Several shrine areas, such as the one above, existed at Hazor in various time periods. Another was excavated in the lower city of Hazor, dating to the 15th-13th century B.C. It was small, having only one room. The wall opposite of the entrance had a niche which contained a row of basalt standing stones (*masseboth*).

The scene from this shrine is on display at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem (see photo below). The standing stones appear in an arc. (1) The center stone has uplifted hands worshipping moon symbols. (2) To the far left is a figure with a symbol of the moon god Sin. (3) In the foreground is an offering table. (4) To the far right is a lion relief, which may belong to an earlier period.



The lower city of Hazor also had a large temple dating to the 15th-13th century B.C. It consisted of three rooms in a row—the porch, the holy place, and the holy of holies. The holy of holies housed the statue of the deity (a storm god). The holy place was flanked by two towers. The entrance of the porch was apparently guarded by two lions.



Basalt Lions from Hazor
(Israel Museum)





Basin for Liquid Offerings

Most likely, these artifacts were all originally in the holy of holies at the temple in the lower city. They are on display at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem.



Offering Table



Statue of the Storm God Standing on a Bull Grasping a Dagger with His Left Hand (and a Mace-like Scepter with His Right)



Altar for Burning Incense or Standing Stone (Israel Museum)

This basalt incense altar or standing stone was also found in the temple of the lower city of Hazor. The top and bottom are square, and the sides are rectangular. The circle with the cross in the center serves as a symbol for the Canaanite storm god.



Statue of a Seated Deity
from the 15th-13th Century B.C.
(Israel Museum)



Bronze Storm God
Ready to Strike
(Israel Museum)



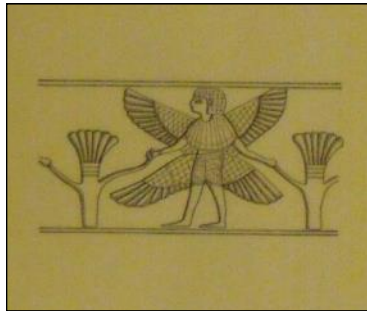
Goddess Figurines Made of Gold, Bronze, and Electrum
15th-13th Century B.C.
(Israel Museum)



A Bull and Its Shrine from the Temple



Ritual Scepter Head Portraying Two Snakes
Wrapped Around a Figure



Carved Ivory Handle from Hazor
(8th Century B.C.)



Liver Model with Divination Formula from Hazor
(17th-15th Century B.C.)

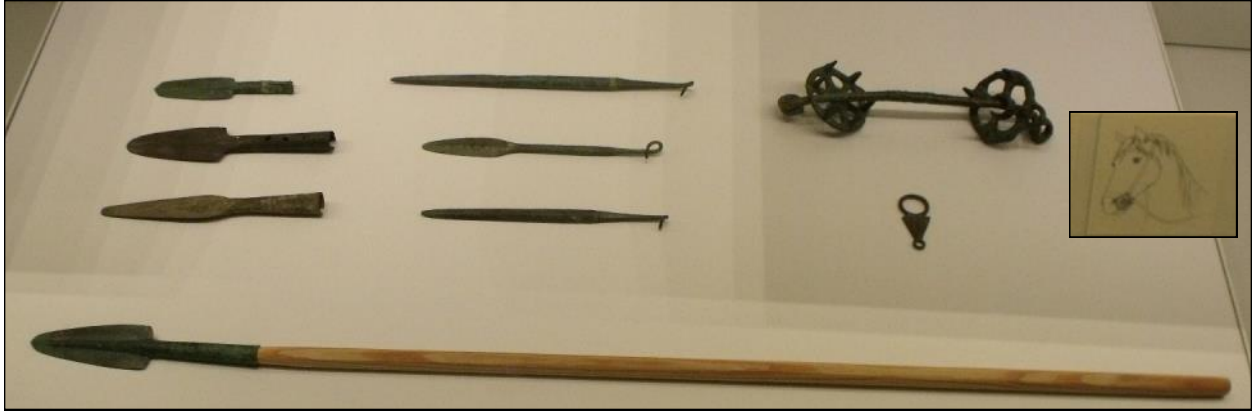


Reconstructed Jewelry Box (15th-13th Century B.C.)



Game Board, Dice, and Tokens
from Hazor and Other Sites

These items are all on display at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem. Other artifacts can be seen at the Hazor Museum, which is located at Kibbutz Ayelet Hashahar not far from Tel Hazor.



Spear Heads, Javelin Butts, Bit, and Bridle Ring



Daggers

Weaponry
from Various Sites
in Israel
(Israel Museum)



Armor Scales (Hazor)



Sickle Swords (Scimitars)

This stela portrays the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser III, also known as Pul (745-727 B.C.). He is holding a mace, a symbol of royal authority, in his left hand. Above his head, there are representations of the major Assyrian deities. The inscription commemorates the victories of his military campaigns. It also mentions Menahem, king of Israel, paying tribute to him. This event is also related in the Bible (2 Kings 15:19-20).

Later, in 735-732 B.C. during the reign of Pekah, Tiglath-Pileser III came back to Israel and defeated most of the northern kingdom (especially Galilee and Gilead), taking the Israelites as captives. The cities that were defeated by Assyria included Hazor (2 Kings 15:29). This was the beginning of the end for the northern tribes, who were ultimately defeated and exiled in 722 B.C. The siege of the capital city Samaria was begun by the Assyrian king Shalmaneser V (2 Kings 17:3-6). According to Assyrian records, it was completed by his brother, Sargon II, who succeeded him as king (*ANET*, 284-85).



Reconstructed Stela of Tiglath-Pileser III
(Israel Museum)