



# Biblical Destructions of Hazor

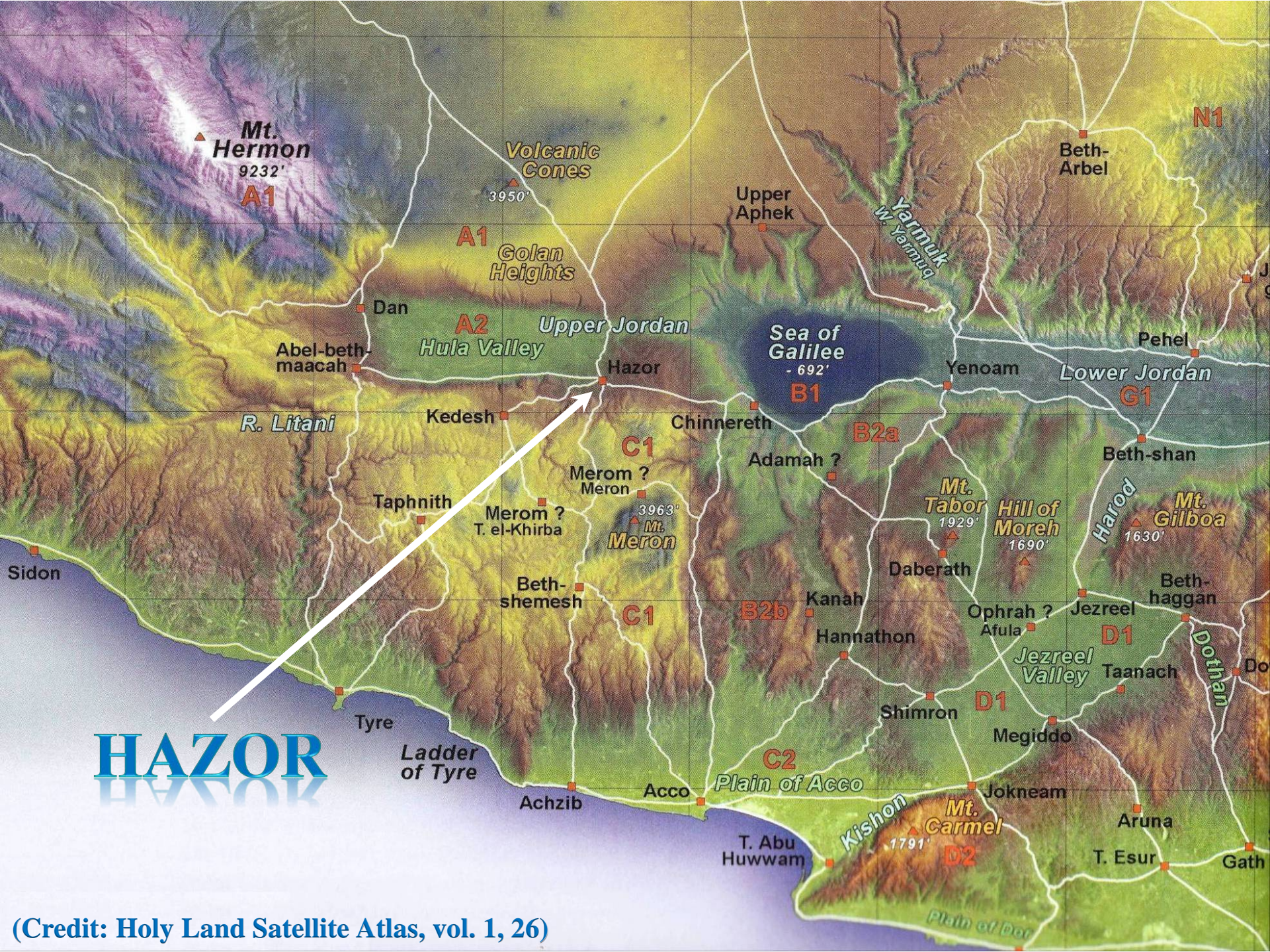
Prof. Douglas Petrovich

West Houston Bible Church

# Hazor (Tel el-Qedah)

Topic: Map with  
Hazor's Location

**(Introduction)**



# HAZOR

(Credit: Holy Land Satellite Atlas, vol. 1, 26)

# Hazor (Tel el-Qedah)

Topic:  
Background

**(Introduction)**

# Background on Hazor

Ancient Hazor consists of a rectangular **lower city** (170 acres) and a bottle-shaped **upper city** (30 acres), essentially an elongated mound called a tel, which rises about 40 m above the surrounding plain. At the time of the city's height during the Late Bronze Age, the population is estimated to have been 40,000 residents. This means that **Hazor was 4x larger than Lachish, the 2nd largest site in Canaan, and 20x larger than Jerusalem.**

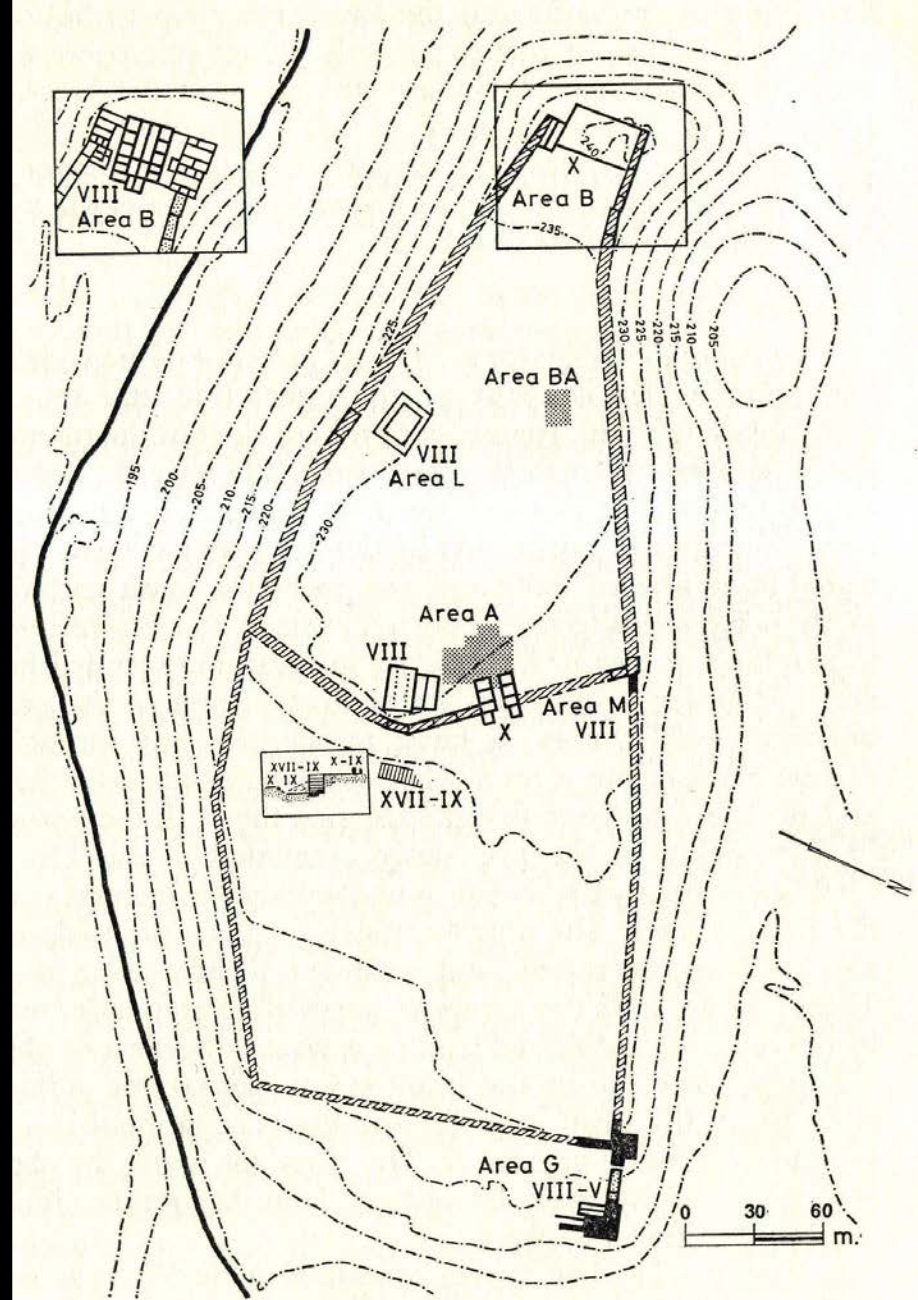
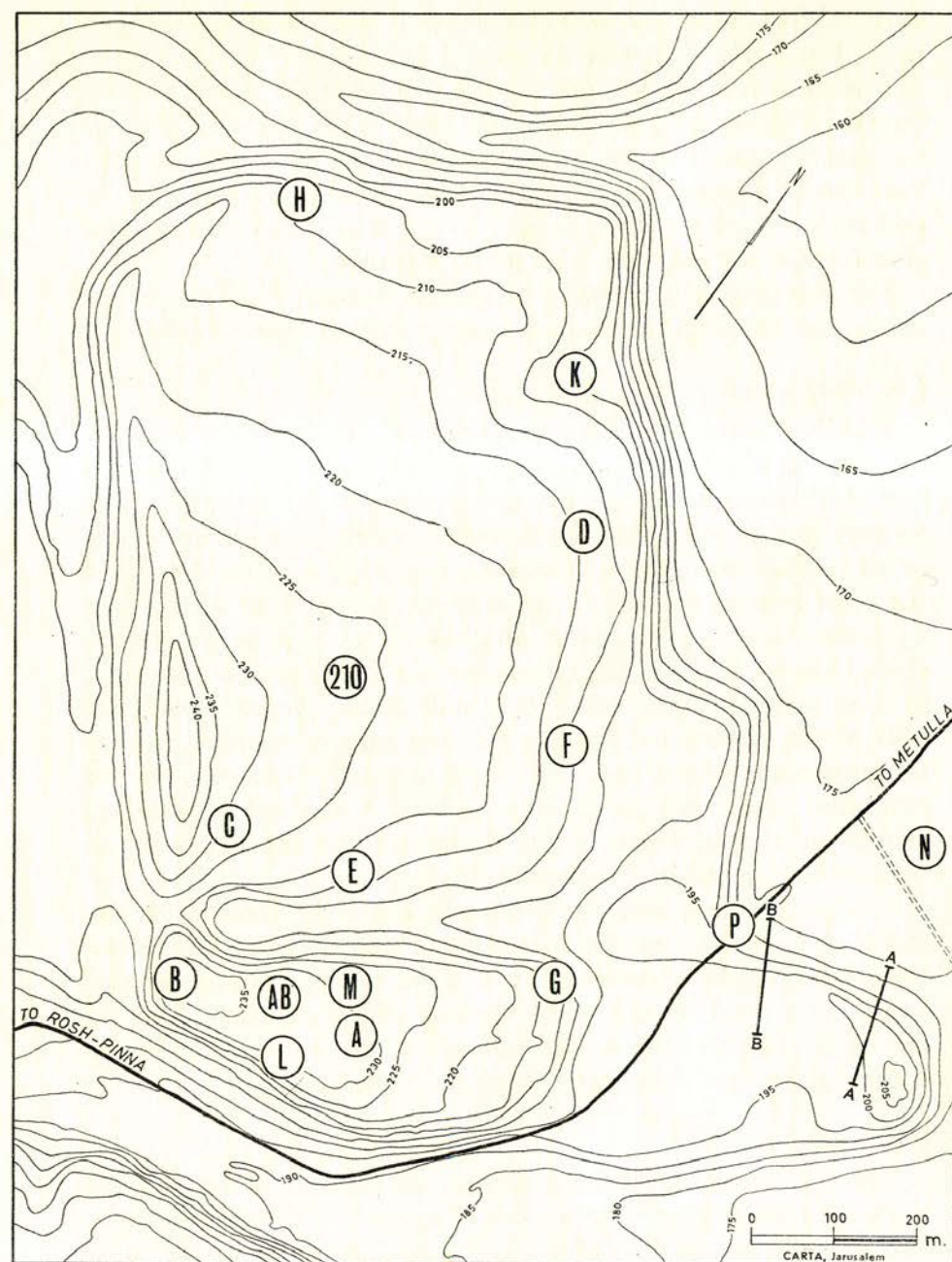
John Garstang took initial soundings at the tel in 1926. Yigael Yadin, an Israeli soldier who turned archaeologist, excavated at Hazor from 1955–1958 and 1968–1969, which produced some of the most outstanding finds in the entire Holy Land. Amnon Ben-Tor, who dug under Yadin, resumed excavations there in 1990, which continue to this today.

A major thrust of the current excavations, notably in Area M, is the hunt for a **cuneiform archive**. Recent digging took the newest squares down to the final stratum of the Late Bronze Age (*ca.* 1230 BC). Archives could exist for MBA II (by 1550 BC), LBA I (by 1400 BC), and/or LBA II. Information relevant to biblical studies certainly might be found.

# Hazor (Tel el-Qedah)

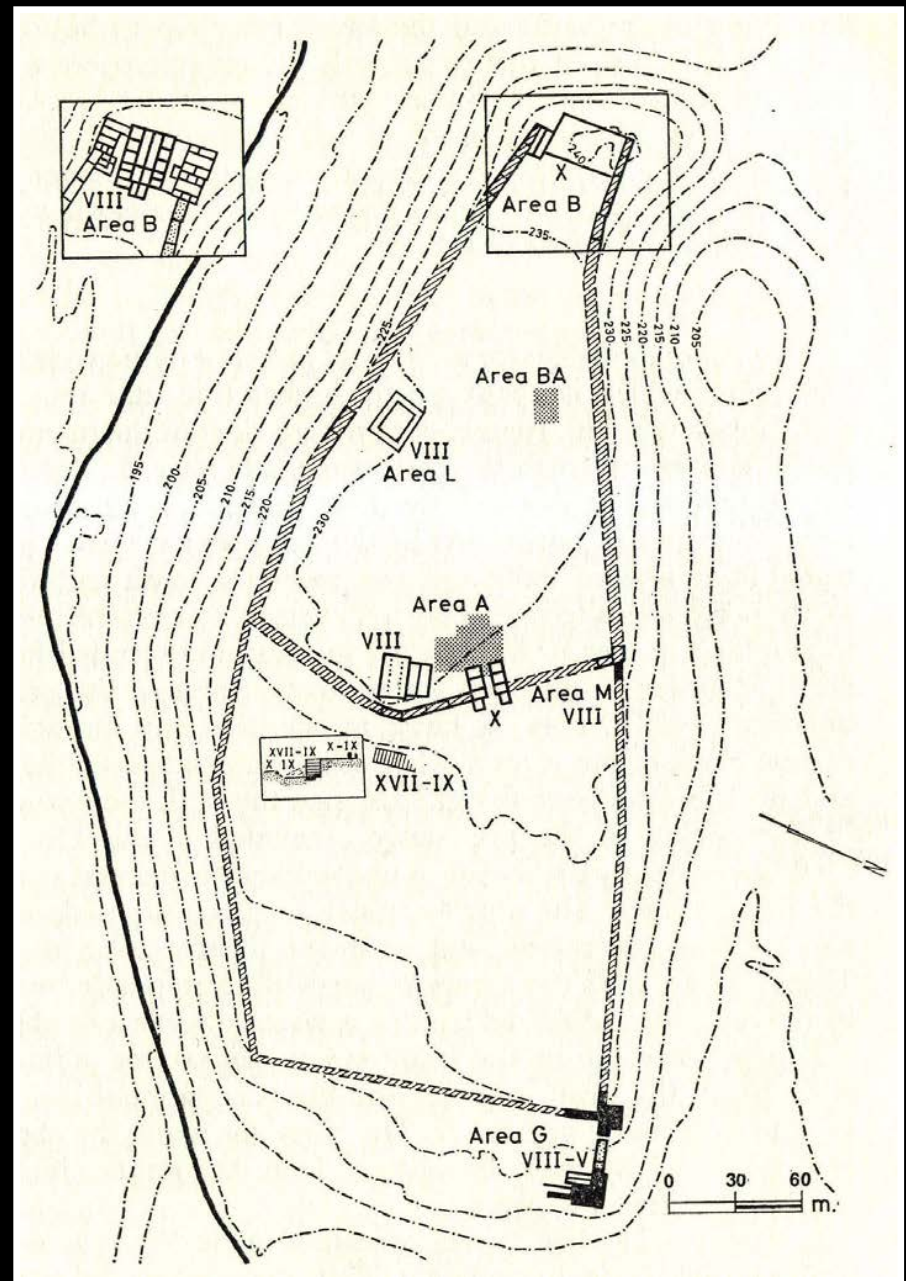
Topic: Views  
of the Mound

**(Introduction)**



Topographical Map of Hazor

Plan of Hazor's Upper City



Plan of Hazor's Upper City





Aerial View of  
Hazor from the  
East



Aerial View of Hazor from the North-Northeast



Aerial View of Hazor from the Northwest

Aerial View of  
Hazor from the  
Northeast





Aerial View of Hazor from the Southeast

# HAZOR



Upper City (Area B at far right)

# HAZOR PERIOD:

Middle Bronze Age IIB (1800–1560 BC)

Upper-City Stratum: “Pre-XVII”

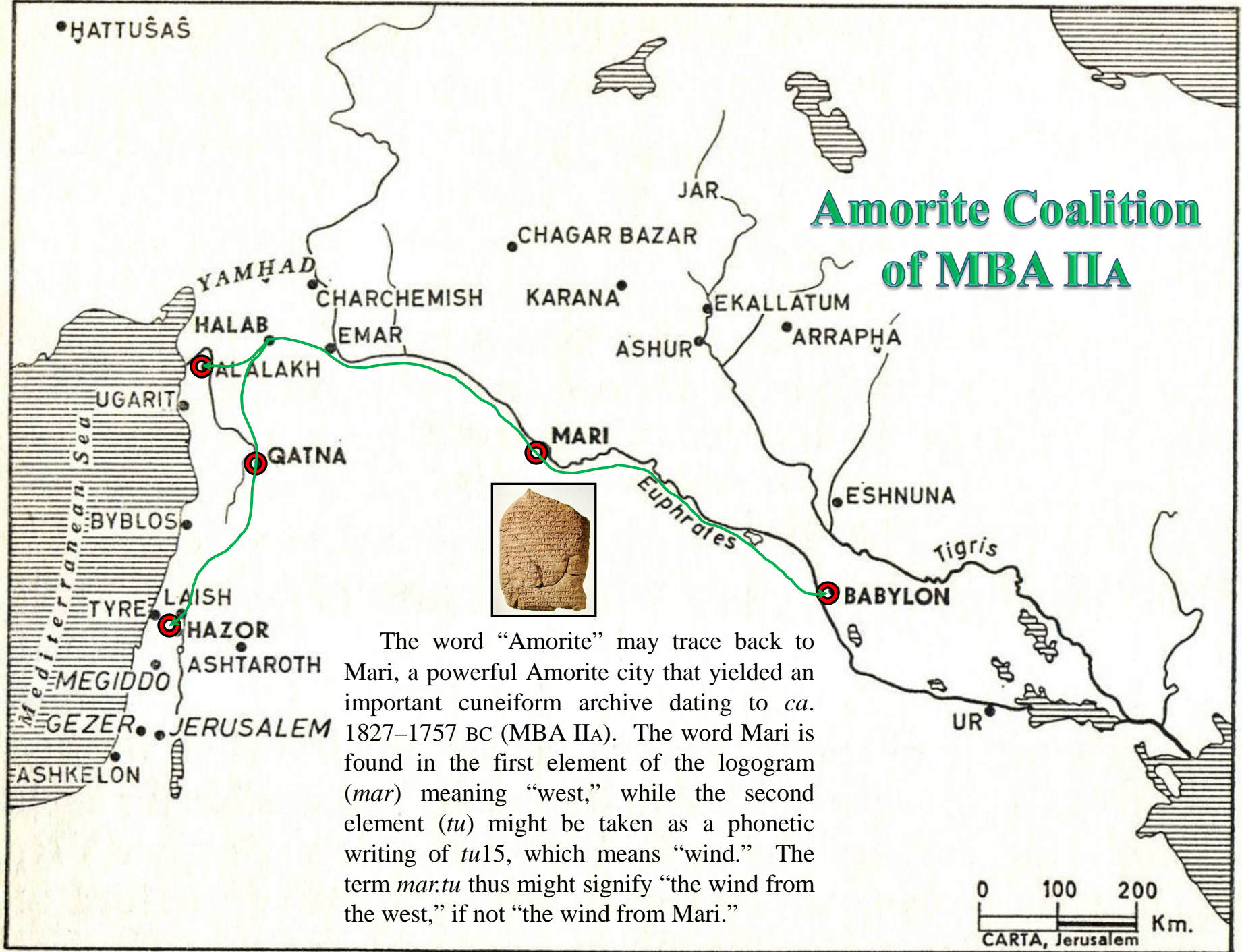
Lower-City Stratum: 4

# Stratum 4 (MBA IIA–B)

The earliest written record of Hazor is found in the Egyptian execration texts, dating to around 1800 BC. Hazor also is mentioned in the archives at Mari, which date from 1827–1757 BC, probably equating the earliest settlement at the site to the final decades of MBA IIA (Yadin, *NEAEHL*: 594).

Some structures and burials exist from MBA IIA, but conventional thought dates the initial occupational level to MBA IIB, which begins in about 1750 BC. The first fortifications and ramparts of the Lower City were built at this time, and the buildings in Area C show that the city's enclosure began there.

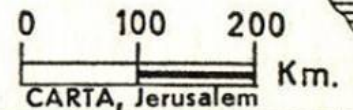




## Amorite Coalition of MBA IIA



The word “Amorite” may trace back to Mari, a powerful Amorite city that yielded an important cuneiform archive dating to *ca.* 1827–1757 BC (MBA IIA). The word Mari is found in the first element of the logogram (*mar*) meaning “west,” while the second element (*tu*) might be taken as a phonetic writing of *tu15*, which means “wind.” The term *mar.tu* thus might signify “the wind from the west,” if not “the wind from Mari.”



# **Stratum 4 (MBA IIA–B)**

**The discoveries in the Lower City indicate that a large city was established and thrived at Hazor during the MBA IIB (*ca.* 1750–1668 BC). Moreover, the Upper City must have been inhabited side-by-side with the Lower City.**

**Excavations in various areas (A, B, G, L, and AB) show that the tel was densely populated and highly fortified during the MBA II period. The results from excavations under Amnon Ben-Tor in the 1990s suggest that the city's population during this time was about 20,000, making Hazor the largest and most important city in the entire southern Levant already.**

# **Stratum 4 (MBA IIA–B)**

**Excavations in Area F yielded rock-cut tombs with an elaborate network of connecting tunnels. As a rule, they consisted of large, rectangular shafts with caves hewn in varying shapes that branched from their bases (Yadin, *NEAEHL*: 596).**

**The rampart (defensive wall) was erected during this time, which is known from how the construction of the earliest temple (Stratum 3) was after the leveling of Area H and the filling-up of the ground-level up to the edge of the rampart (Yadin, *NEAEHL*: 597).**

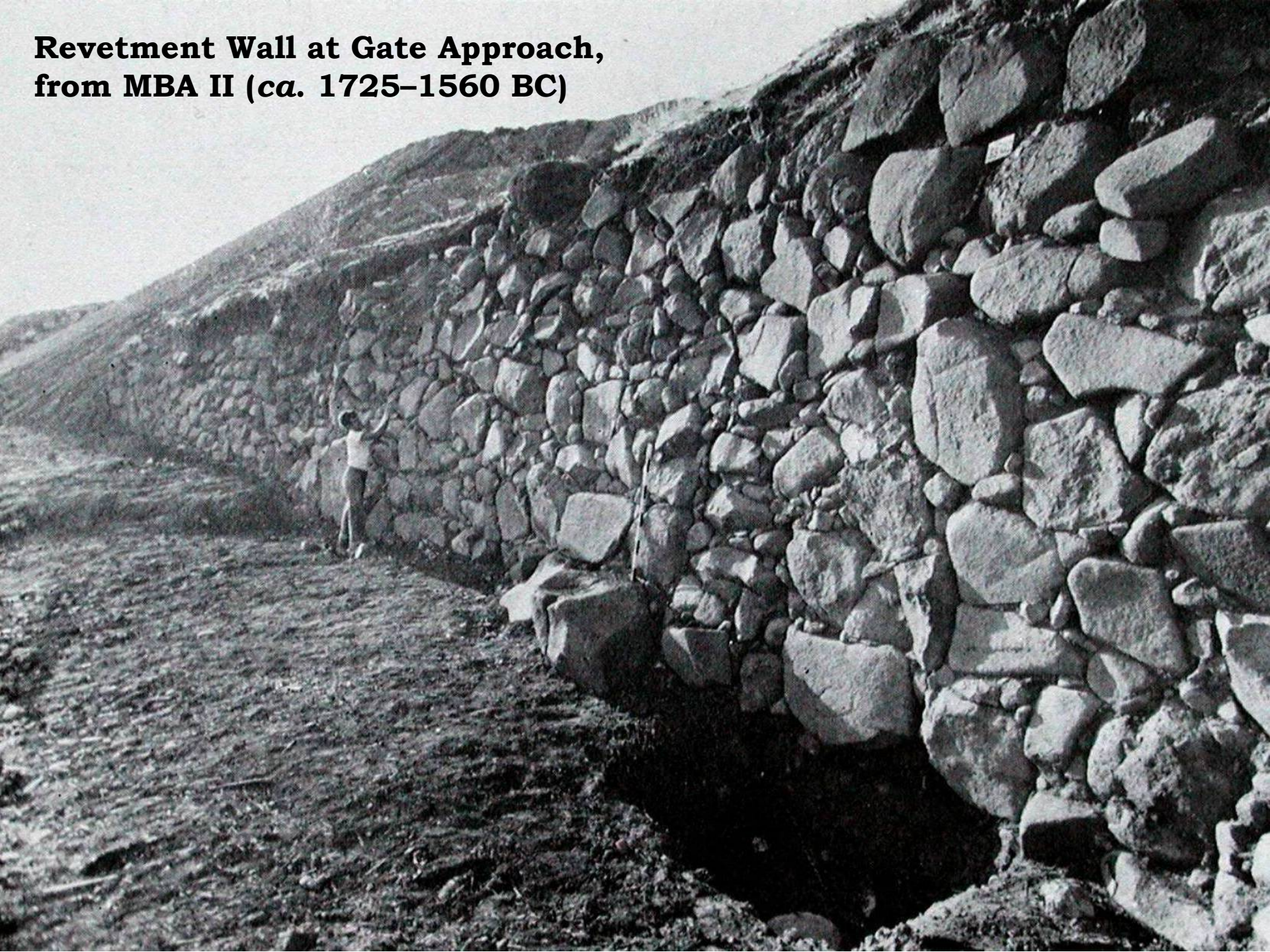
**Stratum 4's gate was situated slightly to the rear of the natural slope and was approached by means of a**

## **Stratum 4 (MBA IIA–B)**

**gradual ascent constructed of beaten earth laid in alternate layers of basaltic flakes and clays, crushed yellowish chalk rock, and brown brick clay (Yadin, *NEAEHL*: 599).**

**This gate, which is similar to the southern gate at Gezer, apparently had a number of pilasters in the passageway. Very little was found of the gate (Area K), but on both sides of the gate, the wall joined the rampart and the glacis at the point where it reached the natural, higher level of the Lower City. The city wall near the gate stood on lower ground and consisted of 2 parallel walls (Yadin, *NEAEHL*: 599).**

**Revetment Wall at Gate Approach,  
from MBA II (ca. 1725–1560 BC)**



**Stone Glacis and  
Moat, from MBA  
II (ca. 1725–  
1560 BC)**



# HAZOR PERIOD:

Middle Bronze Age IIC (1668–1560 BC)

Upper-City Stratum: “Post-XVI”

Lower-City Stratum: 3

# Stratum 3 (MBA IIC)

In Area C of Stratum 3, which dates to MBA IIC, many infant burials in jars were found beneath the floors of the houses. In Area F, a large building with thick walls was constructed on a rectangular plan (Yadin, *NEAEHL*: 595–596). Yadin interpreted this as a double temple that was consecrated to 2 deities.

The temple of Stratum 3 in Area H consisted of a broad hall with a small, rectangular niche—a sort of holy of holies—on the northern side. Two towers flanked the entrance to the hall, and the entire area around the temple was paved with small cobblestones (Yadin, *NEAEHL*: 597).

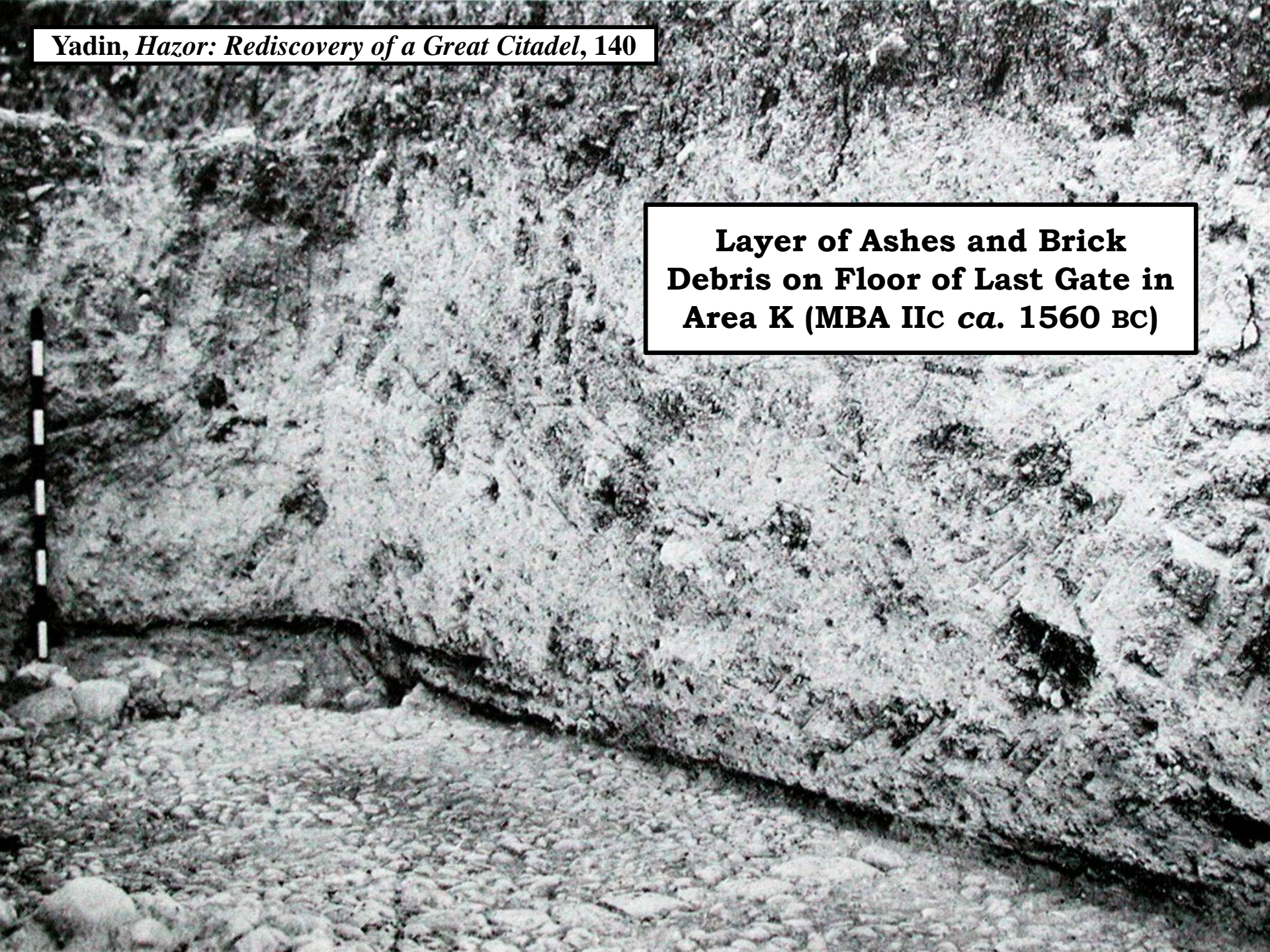


# Stratum 3 (MBA IIC)

The gate of Stratum 3, built at the end of the MBA, is completely different than the gate of Stratum 4, both in plan and in position. The entrance to the gate was flanked by 2 large towers, and the southern tower is divided into 2 interconnected chambers. To this gate belonged an adjoining casemate wall, one of the earliest of its type found in Canaan. The wall evidently continued for only a short distance before joining the rampart of the Lower City (Yadin, *NEAEHL*: 599).

Stratum 3 was destroyed in a conflagration, which dates to the end of MBA IIC (Yadin, *NEAEHL*: 595).

**Layer of Ashes and Brick  
Debris on Floor of Last Gate in  
Area K (MBA IIC ca. 1560 BC)**



# HAZOR PERIOD:

Late Bronze Age I (1560–1400 BC)

Upper-City Stratum: XV

Lower-City Stratum: 2

# Joshua 11:1–15

The Destruction of Hazor under  
Joshua and **the Commander of  
the Armies of He-who-is**

(*ca.* 1400 BC)

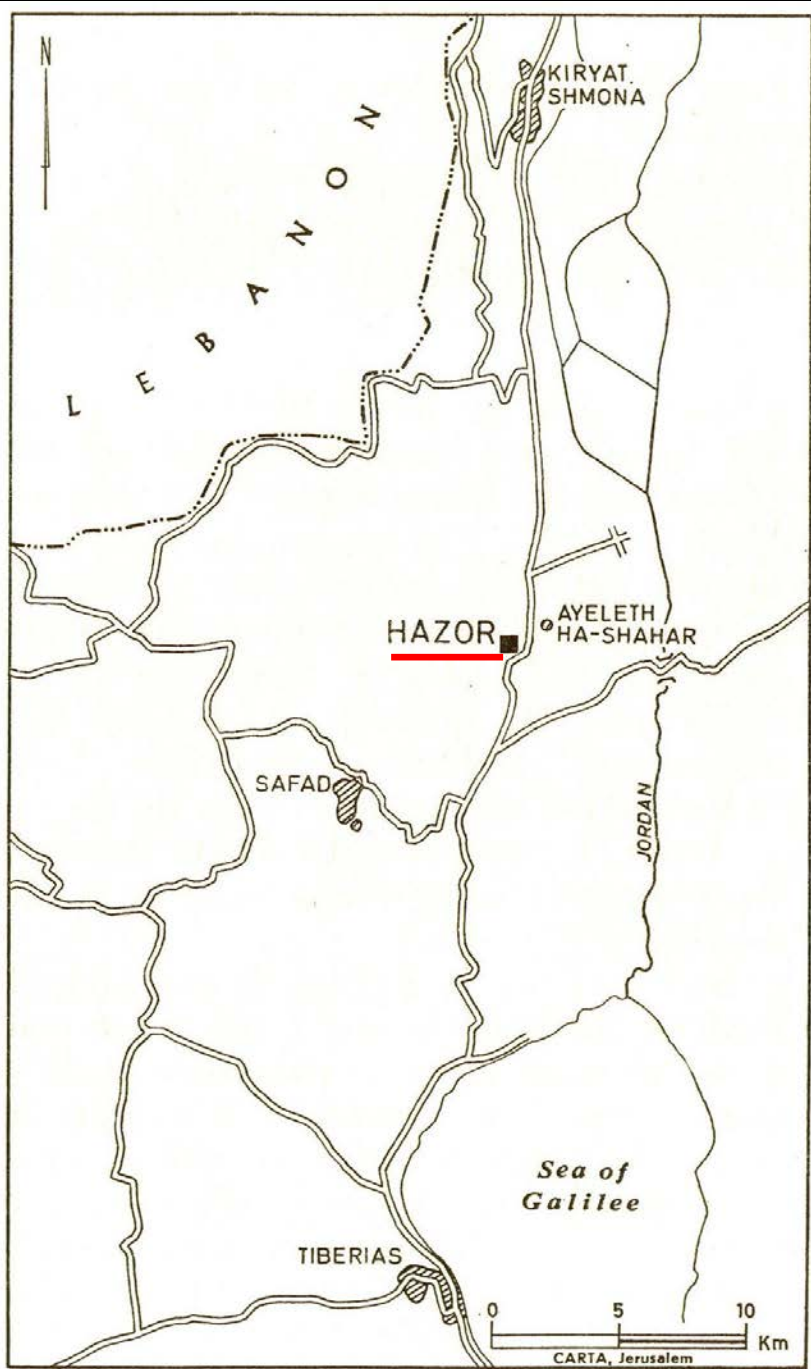
# Joshua 5:13–15

5:13 Now it came about when Joshua was near Jericho that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and take note, a man was standing opposite him with his sword drawn in his hand. So Joshua went to him, and he said to him, “Are you for us or for our enemies?” 5:14 Then he said, “No, I instead I have come as **the Commander of the Armies of He-who-is.**” Thus, Joshua fell on his face to the ground, and he bowed down. Then he said to him, “What has my lord to say to his servant?” 5:15 **The Commander of the Armies of He-who-is** said to Joshua, “Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy.” Then Joshua did so.

# Biblical Description of Hazor of the Late Bronze Age I:

“Then Joshua turned back at that time and captured Hazor and struck its king with the sword; for Hazor formerly was the **head of all these kingdoms.**”

—Joshua 10:11



# Stratum 2 (LBA I)

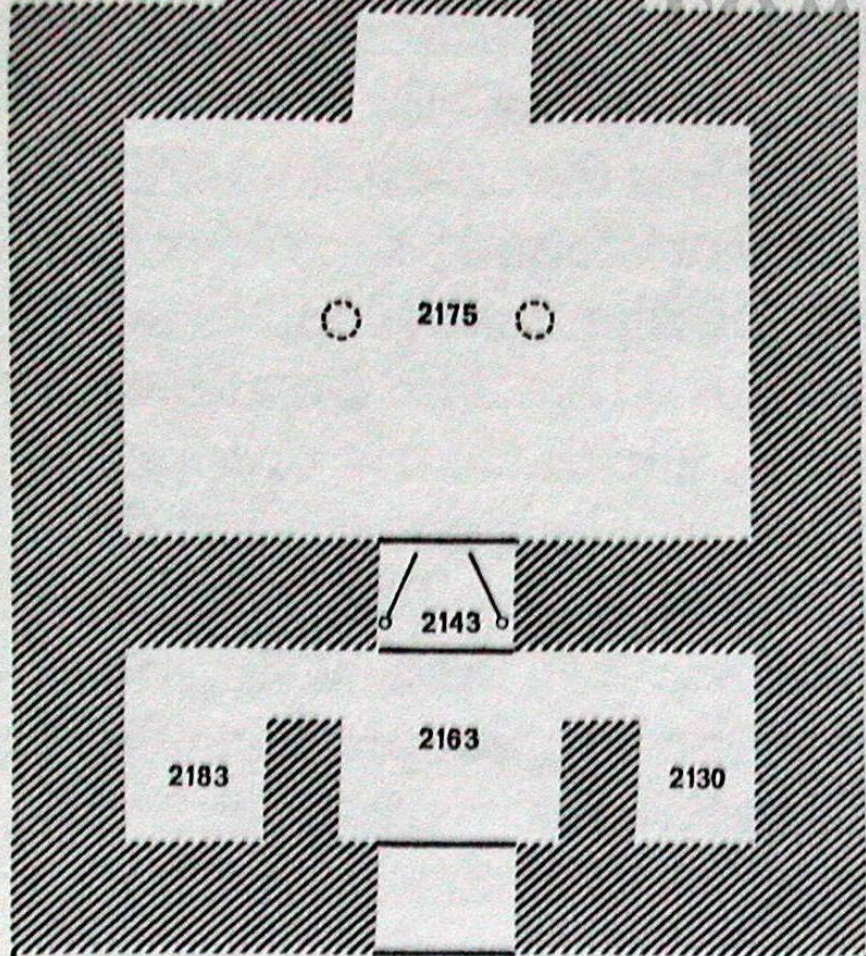
Stratum 2 in the Lower City represents the city that was inhabited during LBA I, which sat above a thick layer of ash. In Area F, part of the temple from Stratum 3 was reconstructed, while other architectural features remained in disuse. Nearby burials contained bichrome ware (Yadin, *NEAEHL*: 595).

In Area H, the temple plan of Stratum 2 is identical with that of its predecessor. However, the floor was raised and paved with large cobblestones, which were plastered with a white, limey clay that is typical of the LBA I. A Large *bamah* (high place) was found in the nearby court (Yadin, *NEAEHL*: 597).

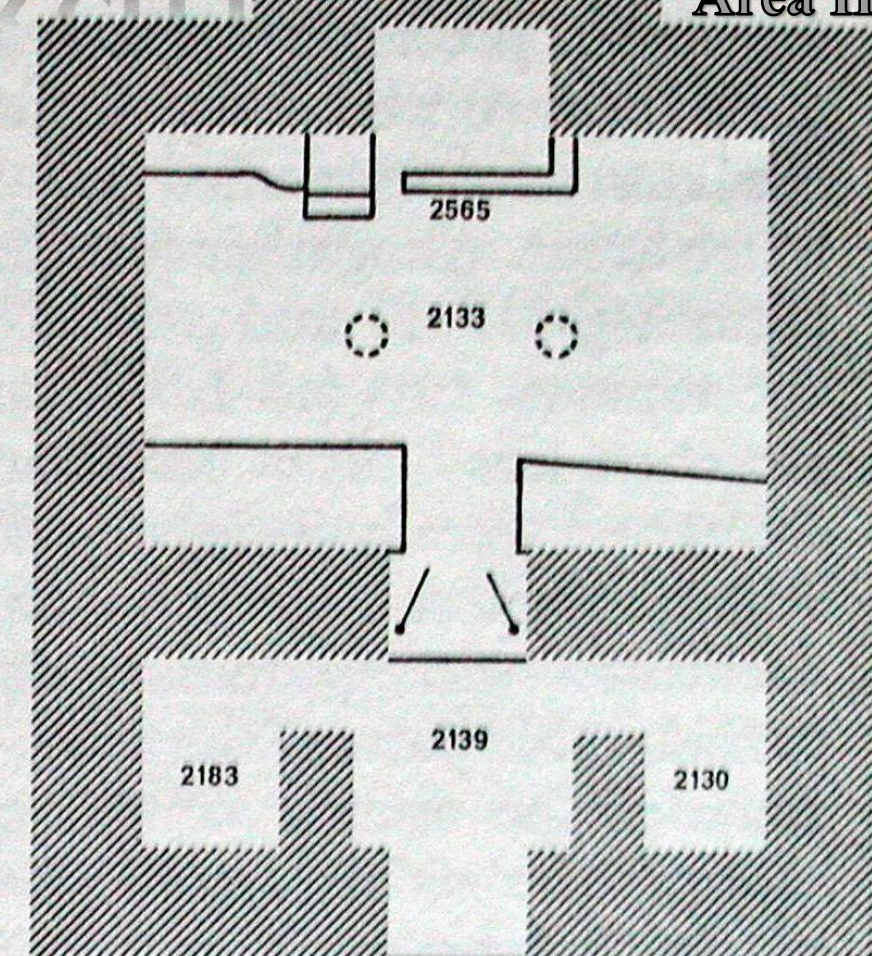
Area H

# LOWER CITY

Area H



**Stratum 3 Temple (MBA IIC)**



**Stratum 2 Temple (LBA I)**



2165



2146

2534

2138

2188

2565

2133

2143

2163

2183

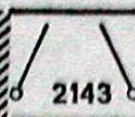
2130

2148

2183

2139

2130







**LBA-I Temple (Area H) w/*bamah* (“high place”) in Center**

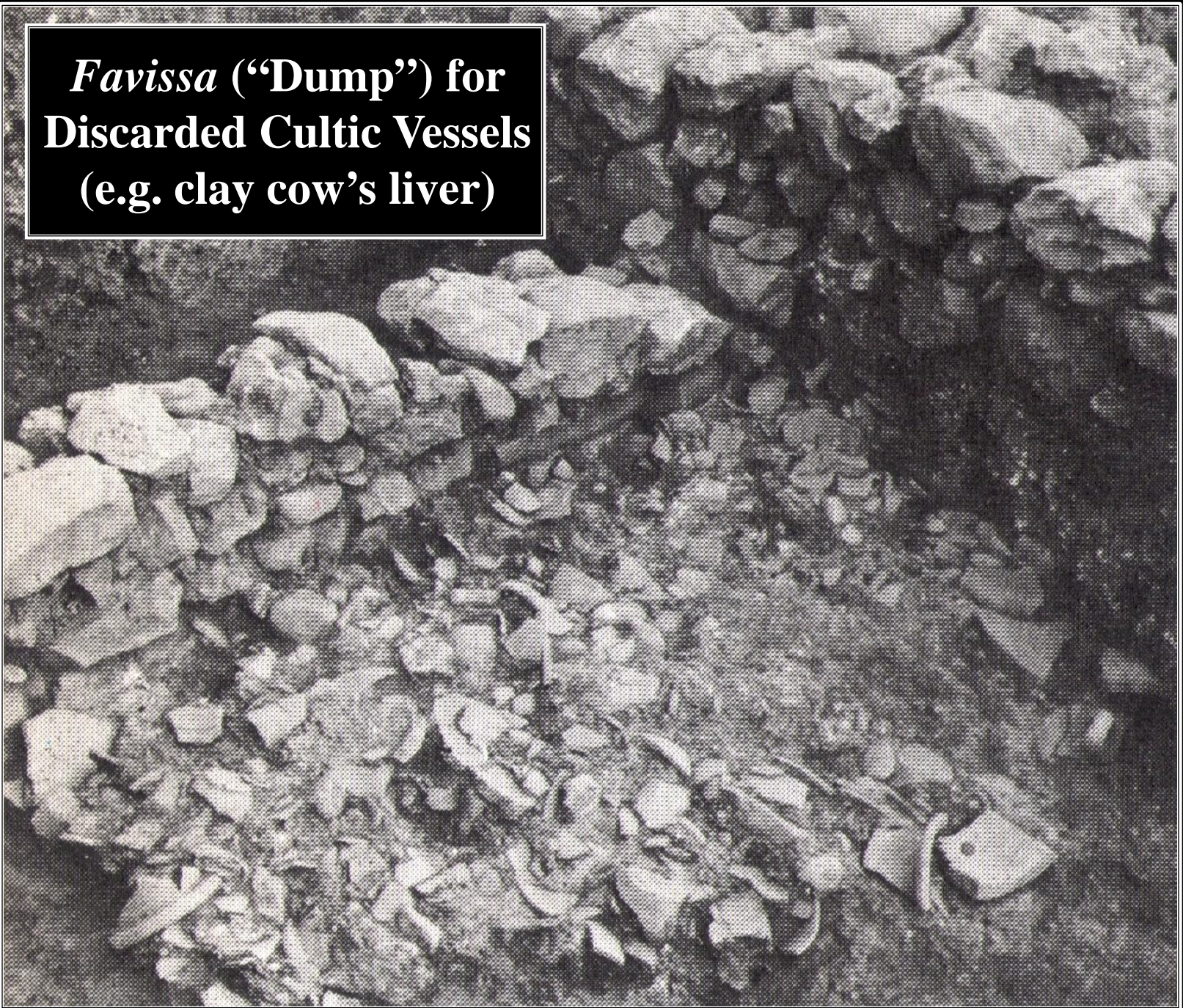
**Yadin: “[T]he temple of stratum 2 was destroyed by an enemy and the people abandoned it abruptly.”**

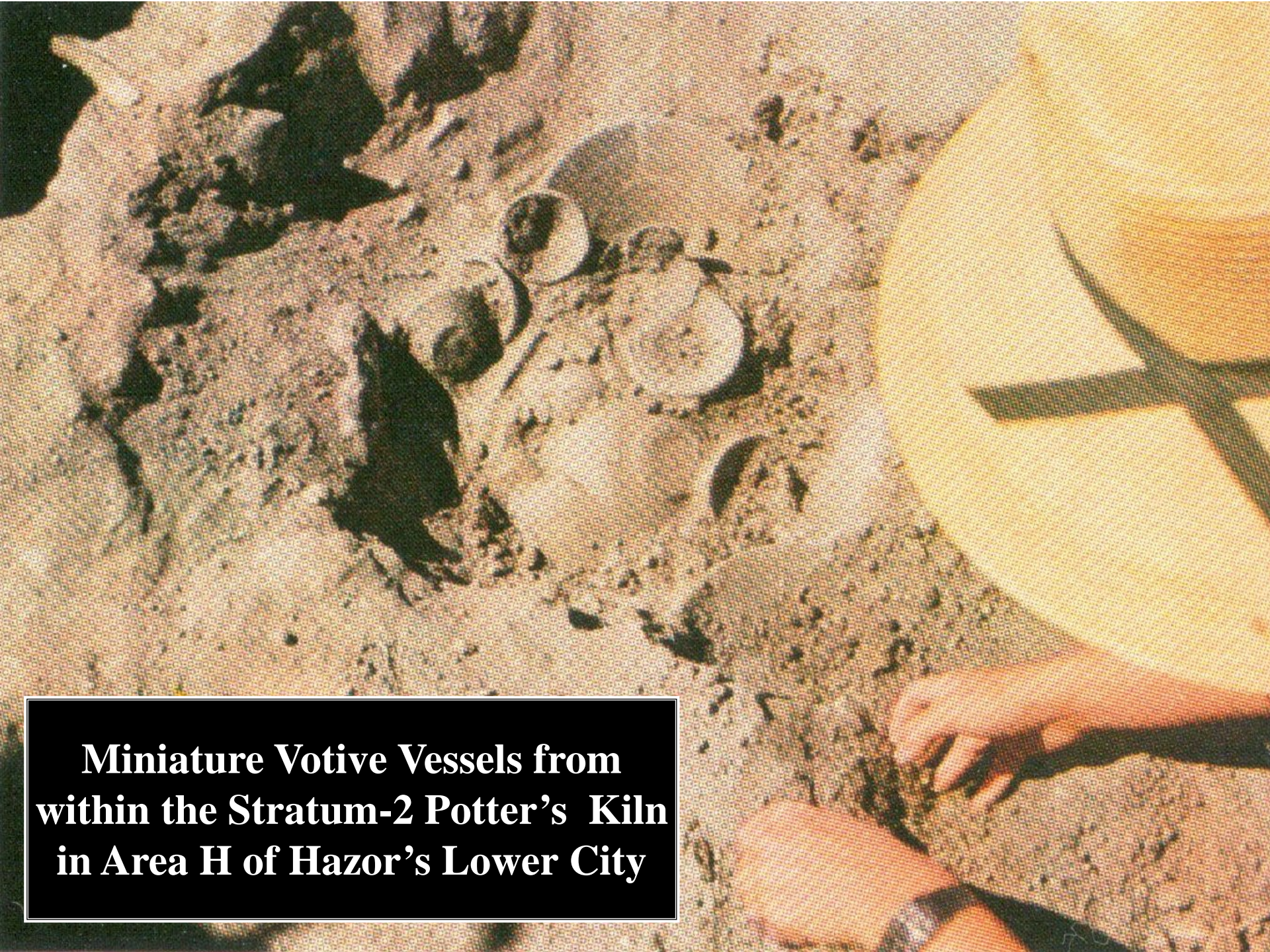
## Stratum 2 (LBA I)

Near the *bamah*, where the sacrificial animals were slaughtered, a single drainage channel was discovered that in part consisted of discarded incense stands. On the other side of the court was a pottery kiln that still contained a large number of votive bowls (Yadin, *NEAEHL*: 597).

To the east of the main *bamah* was a heap of broken ritualistic vessels, including fragments of clay models of animals' livers that were used for priestly divination. One of the fragments bore an Akkadian inscription that mentions "various evil omens," according to Yadin (*NEAEHL*: 597).

*Favissa* (“Dump”) for  
Discarded Cultic Vessels  
(e.g. clay cow’s liver)





**Miniature Votive Vessels from  
within the Stratum-2 Potter's Kiln  
in Area H of Hazor's Lower City**

Votive Vessels of

Temple's Potter



Stratum 2

in Area H

**Area H**

# **Clay Cow's Liver, Used for Divination**



**Cuneiform Akkadian Inscription  
Mentioning a Foreign Attack**

# Cuneiform Text on Clay Liver (Stratum 2 in Area H)

## FIRST FRAGMENT:

“One king is bending down another.  
An enemy is attacking my country.

.....

Forgiveness (will be granted) to the men by the god.  
A servant will rebel against his lord.”

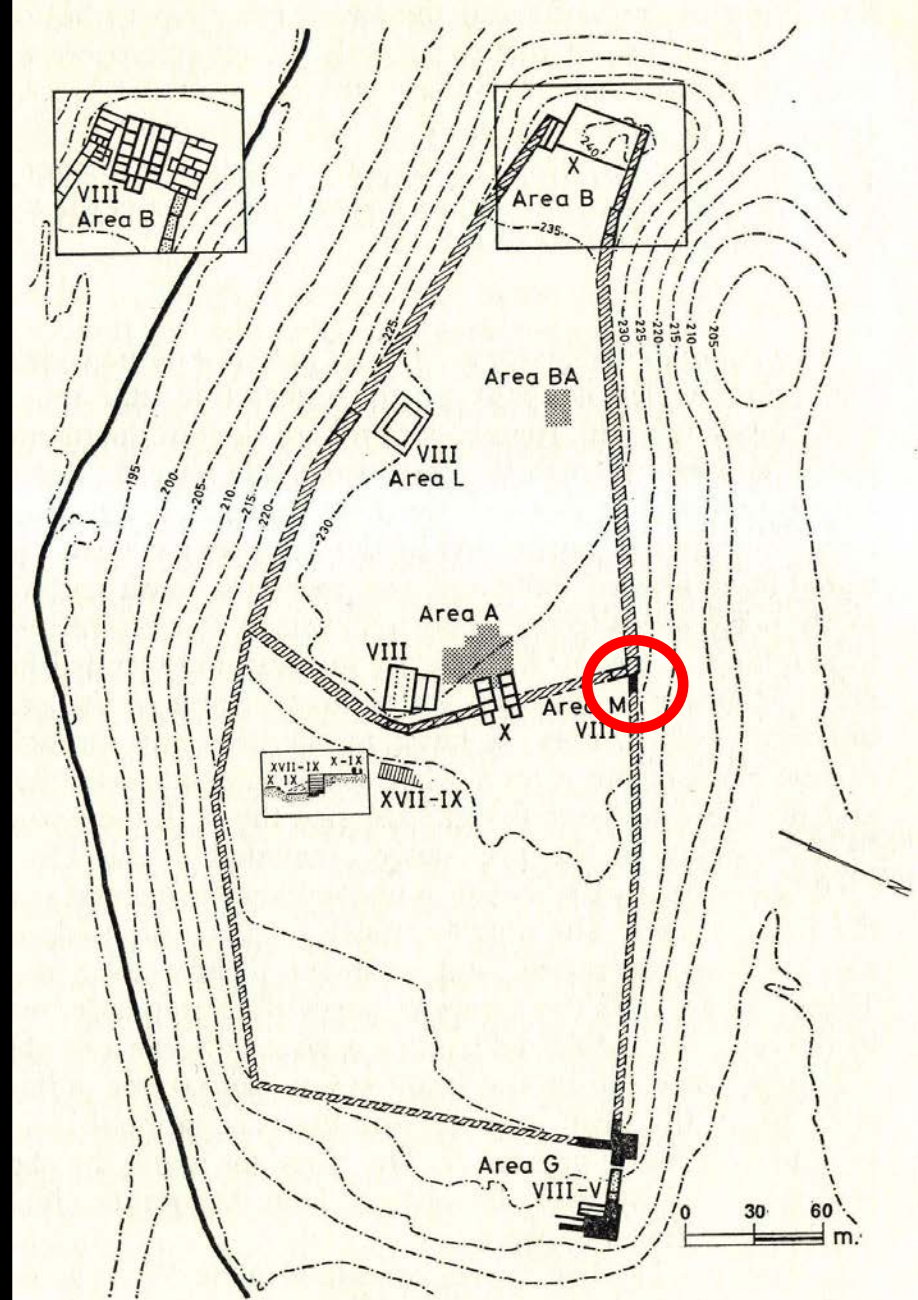
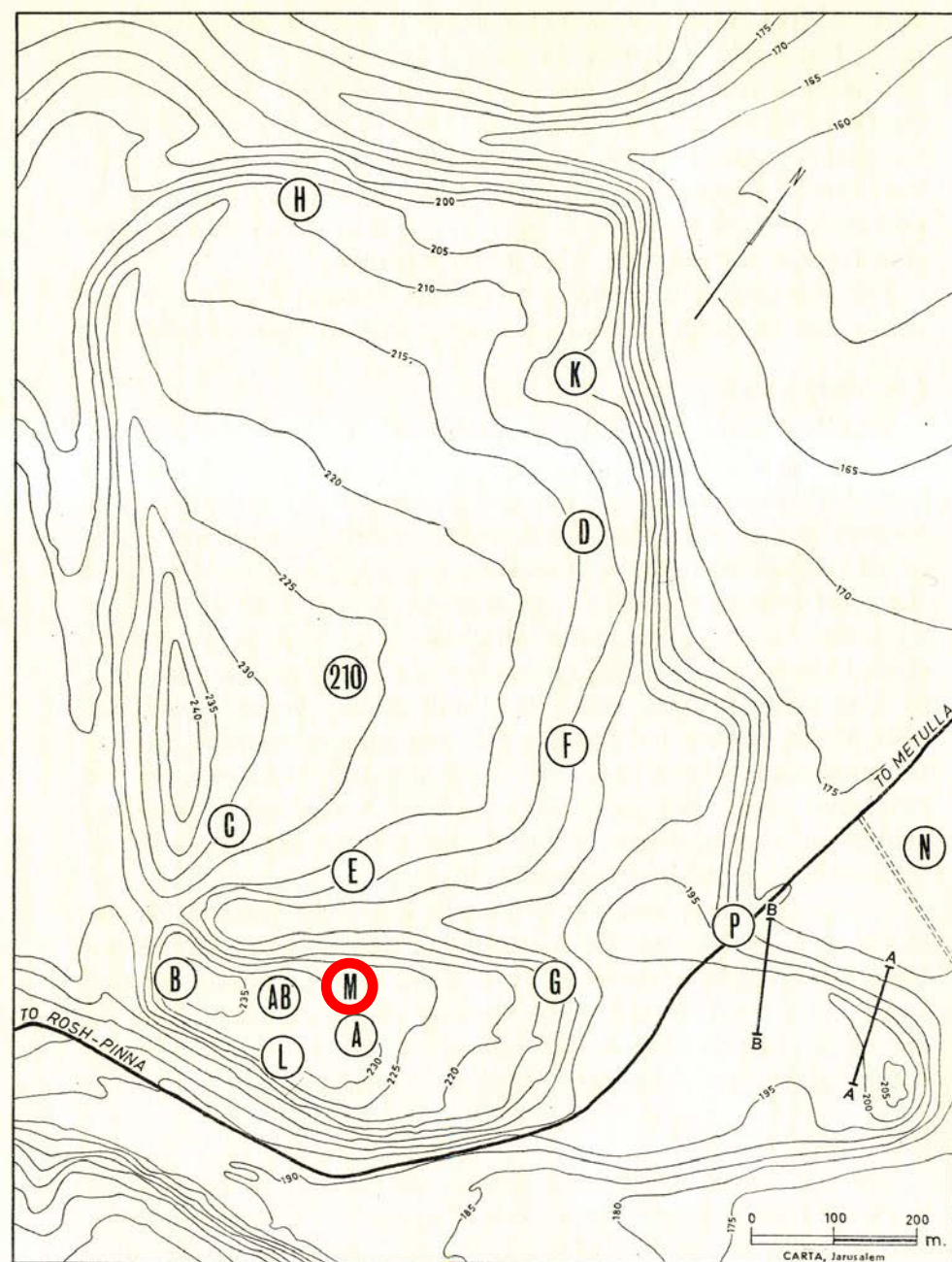
## SECOND FRAGMENT:

“Ishtar (goddess of war) will consume the land.  
Nergal (solar deity) will . . .  
The gods of the city will return.”

# LBA I Settlement:

The end of this phase is highlighted by **the destruction of the city under Joshua** (Josh 11:10–11). The excavations of 1955–1958 showed that both the Upper and Lower Cities were settled in the LBA I. This is attested mainly by the floors and fragmentary walls in Area A, and by the considerable quantity of LB I pottery, including Bichrome and Mycenaean II ware. The full significance of the highly developed culture of LB-I Hazor was realized only in 1968, when Yadin's team ascertained that the last phase of the Long Temple (Upper City) actually belonged to the LBA I. This temple was located adjacent to the king's palace, and **all of its remains were found covered by a thick layer of brick debris**, indicating that the temple never was reconstructed.





Topographical Map of Hazor

Plan of Hazor's Upper City

Lion Orthostat originally of LBA I, but buried in LBA IIA



Area H

(Stone: Basalt)



**Area M (Looking East); Note LBA II Basaltic Structures**



# Basaltic Formations near the Sea of Galilee

■ Basalt, Chalk, Clay, Marl, Limestone, Sandstone

## Hazor's Excavation Report of 2000 (Area M):

“Two fragmentary walls built on top of the paved [Late-Bronze-IIb] street, which were found covered by the destruction layer marking the end of the entire architectural assemblage, indicate that the last phase of occupation here [during the LBA IIb] was of a rather poor nature. . . . The pit cut into an **earlier accumulation of fallen mud-bricks and ashes**: this is the only clear indication found so far for an earlier destruction, still in the Late Bronze Age, pre-dating the final destruction of the [last Canaanite] city. That **earlier phase** [i.e. of LBA I], extending beyond the excavated area, was apparently of a substantial nature, as indicated by an orthostat associated with it.”

## Hazor's Excavation Report of 2001 (Area M):

“**This earlier phase ended in a conflagration, similar to the one that brought an end to the later phase** [of LBA IIb]. The ceramic assemblage associated with this earlier phase, albeit meager, seems to place the date of this earlier destruction somewhere in the Late Bronze Age I (15th century B.C.).”



**LBA-I Burnline  
(Destruction under  
Joshua)**

**LBA-II Pavement  
(Deborah and Barak)**



**LBA-I Burnline  
(Destruction under  
Joshua)**



# OCCUPATIONAL GAP

**Late Bronze II  
above, and Late  
Bronze I below**

**Reflects the gap in  
occupation from  
*ca.* 1400–1370 BC**

