

The Bible and Archaeology



*Dr. H. Wayne House
M.A., Th.D., J.D.
Distinguished Research
Professor of Biblical and
Theological Studies*

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**Session 1: Introduction to Biblical
Archaeology**

Session 2: Archaeology and History

Session 3: Archaeology and the Bible

**Session 4: Archaeology and Its Value for
the Christian**



Introduction to Biblical Archaeology

- Definition of Archaeology
- Divisions of Archaeology
- Value of Archaeology
- Development of Archaeology
- Steps in Archaeology
- Important Finds in Archaeology

DEFINITION OF ARCHAEOLOGY

I. Definition of Archaeology

- A. Derivation: *Archaios* and *logos*, study of ancient things, the past, antiquity
- B. P.R.S. Moorey (British archaeologist): “the study of *durable rubbish*”
- C. Keith Schoville (U.Wisconsin): “the systematic recovery, analysis, and interpretation of the surviving evidence of human activity”

DIVISIONS OF ARCHAEOLOGY

Divisions of Archaeology

- Artifacts (“Silent Evidence,” like lamps)
- Inscriptions



Black Obelisk of
Shalmaneser



Place of Trumpeting Inscription

The "Place of Trumpeting" inscription was discovered in 1969 by Benjamin Mazar at the southwest corner of the Temple Mount. It is believed to be from one of the Temple towers designating the area where the trumpets would be sounded to signal the beginning and end of the Sabbath (Josephus, *Jewish War* 4.582-83). Some suggest that the inscription is a message to the Temple builders designating where the stone slab should be placed (2 Chron 5; 13; 15; 20; 23; 29; Ps 81:3; Joel 2:15). It reads: **"...[of]/to the place of trumpeting."**





The Babylonian story of the Flood
Old Babylonian, written in year 12
of Ammisaduqa, king of Babylon,
1635 BC
Probably from Sippar

This tablet is one of three which
contained the Epic of Atrahasis, hero
of the Babylonian flood story.

It recounts how the gods, after
several attempts to destroy mankind,
which had been making too much
noise for their comfort, eventually
arranged for a flood to drown the
world. The god of wisdom, Enki,
exceptionally warned his divine
brother, Atrahasis of what was to happen,
thereby enabling him to prepare a
boat in which he, his household and
his animals were saved.

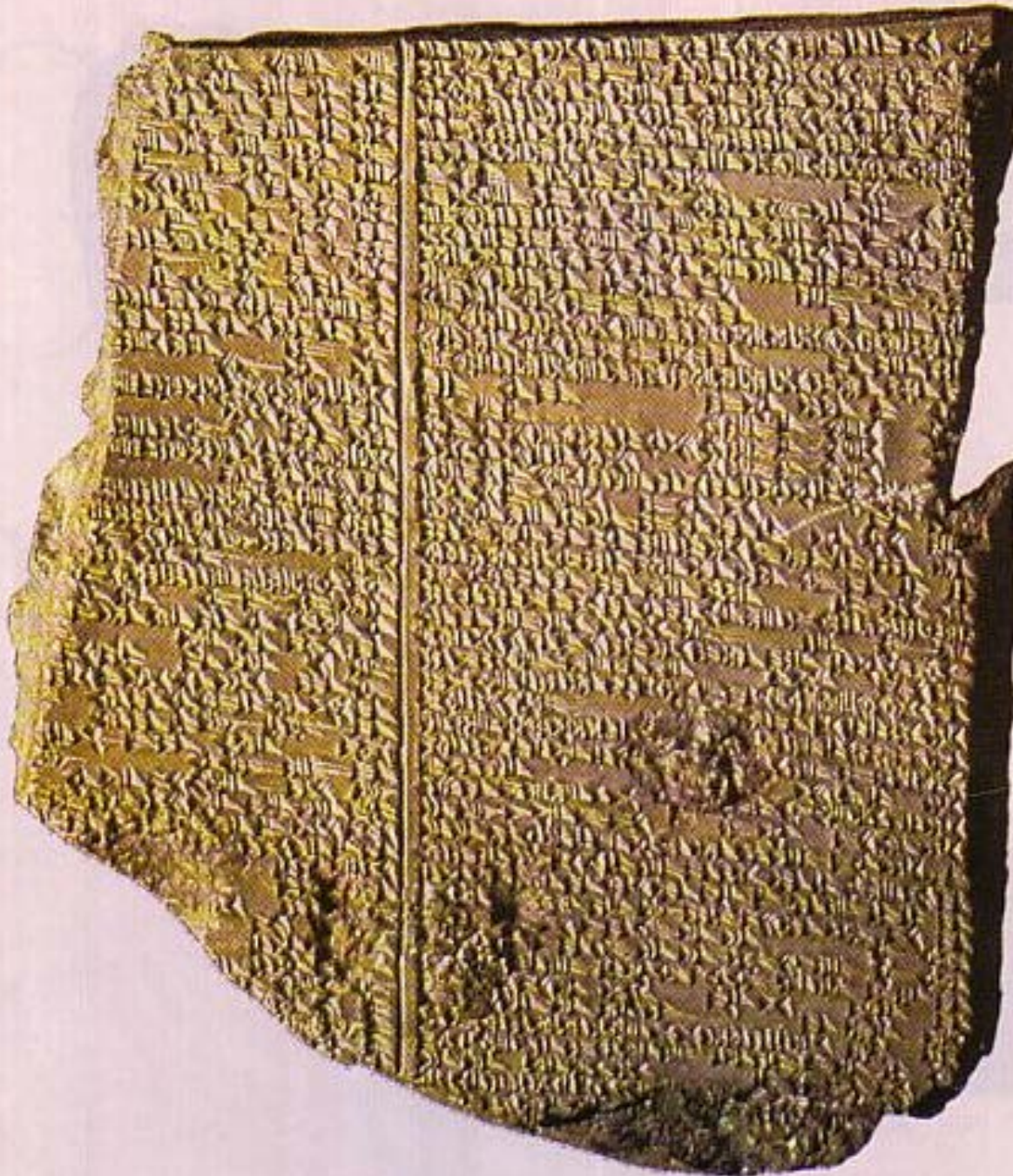
ATRAHASIS EPIC

Babylonian Story of the Flood

1635 B.C.

#1 Gilgamesh Epic Tablet XI

- Nineveh, Iraq
- 650 BC
- Flood story similar to Gen. 6-9



Gath Inscription

Discovered in 2005 at Tel es-Safi (Gath), this 9th century BC ostraca is the earliest deciphered Philistine inscription ever found. It demonstrates that names similar to “Goliath” were used around the time David slew Goliath in 1 Samuel 17.



- Two names inscribed on the shard were written with Semitic characters.
- They are Philistine names etymologically equivalent to “Goliath” and suggests the reliability of the Philistine name “Goliath.”

Proto-Canaanite Goliath Inscription

VALUE OF ARCHAEOLOGY

The Value of Archaeology

- It frequently illustrates and illuminates the Bible.
 - It may assist in determining fixed *dates* for biblical events (e.g. Patriarchs, Exodus).
 - It may clear up the interpretation of *obscure texts* (e. g. horns of the altar).



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 - It may clear up the interpretation of *obscure texts* (e. g. horns of the altar).
 - It can contribute information concerning *customs* and cultures of Bible times (e.g. city gates, the Canaanites).
 - It can help us to correct *misinterpretations*.

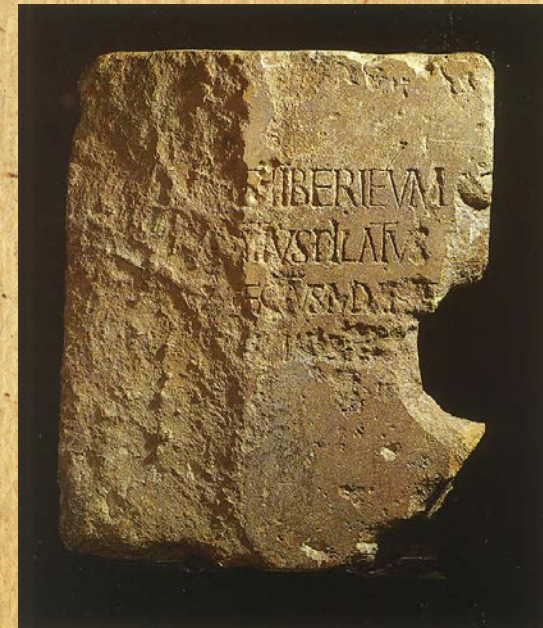
The Value of Archaeology

- ② It often supplements the information given in the Bible.
 - It sometimes supplies *details missing* in the biblical account (e.g. Sargon II, King Mesha of Moab).
 - It often provides *information not found* in the Bible at all (e.g. Battle of Qarqar, Battle of Carchemish, intertestamental period).



The Value of Archaeology

- ③ It sometimes authenticates the Bible.
 - It has destroyed *false theories* concerning the Bible (e.g. the documentary theory of biblical formation)
 - It has demonstrated the *accuracy* of the Bible (e.g. Solomonic gates (Gezer, Megiddo, Hazor), Hittites, Pilate inscription, Sodom).



VALUE OF ARCHAEOLOGY

“It may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a biblical reference. Scores of archaeological findings have been made which confirm in clear outline or exact detail historical statements in the Bible.”

American Rabbi and archaeologist, Nelson Glueck
Rivers in the Desert: A History of the Negev, 31.

DEVELOPMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY

Development of Archaeology

- A. Early Interests (limited to historic sites and later relics)
- B. Pious Pilgrims (late first millennium, and crusades, and for centuries since then)
- C. Treasure Hunters (1798-1890)
- D. Early Scientific Efforts (1890-1940)
- E. Modern Archaeology (1948-present)

STEPS OF ARCHAEOLOGY

Steps of Archaeology

- Find location

Tels, Tells, and Tall

- Definition: An artificial mound resulting from human occupation
- Joshua 11:13 – “Yet Israel did not burn any of the cities on their mounds (Hebrew *tells*) except Hazor, which Joshua burned.”

Tell Beth Shean (Scythopolis)



Tell Megiddo



Tell Dothan



Tell Jericho





Tell Jericho (recent history)

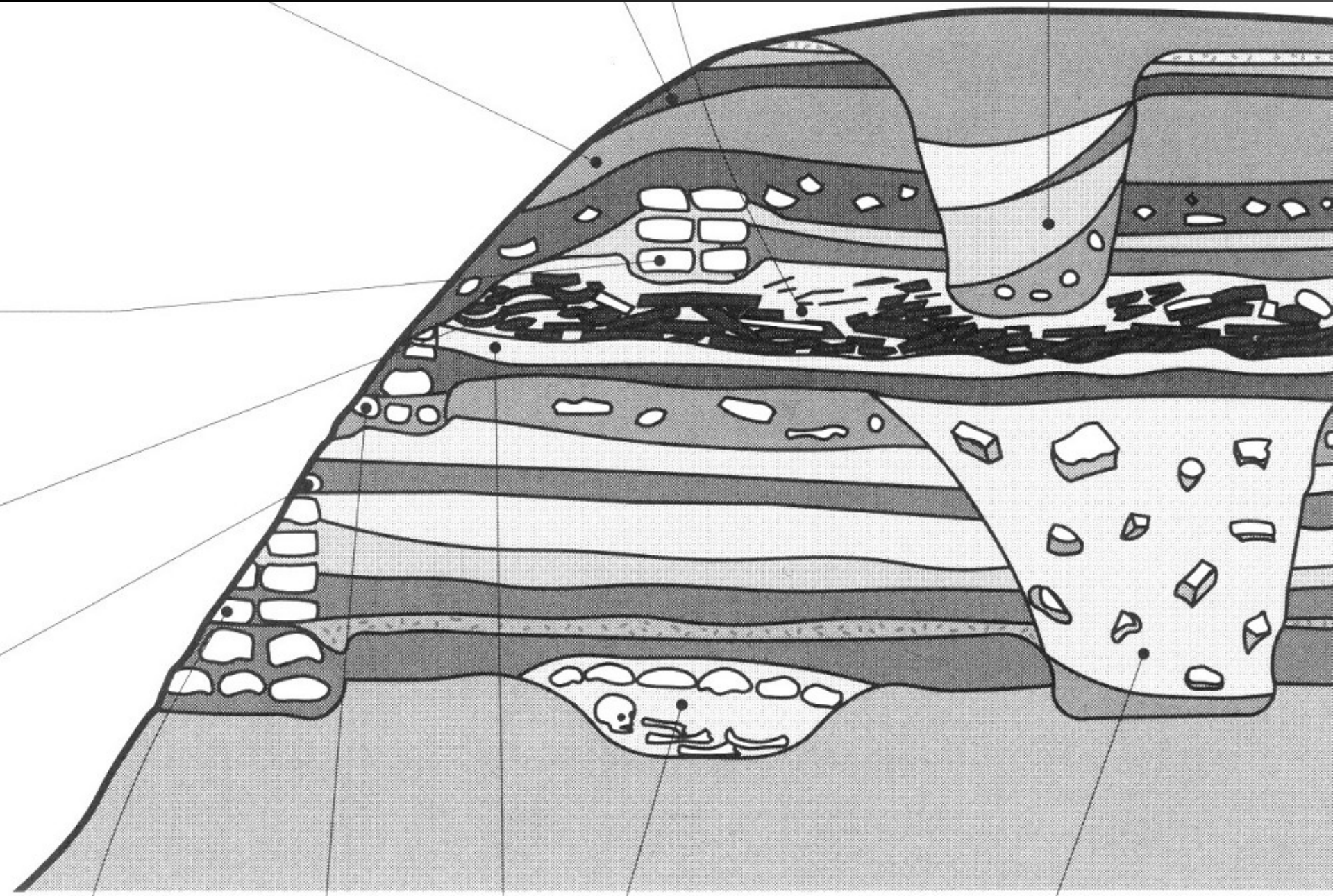
Tell Lachish



Tall el-Hammam



Cross-Section of a Tell



Why Live in the Same Place?

- Water
- Defensible location
- Arable land
- Commercial links
- Previous city (→ building supplies)
- “Other” (existential, aesthetic, religious, etc.)

Why Leave?

- Famine or plague
- Earthquake
- War
- Migration
- Changes in climate
- Decline in local economy

Steps of Archaeology

- Find location
- Dig!

Excavations Squares (at Sepphoris)



Digging at Tall el –Hammam (Sodom)

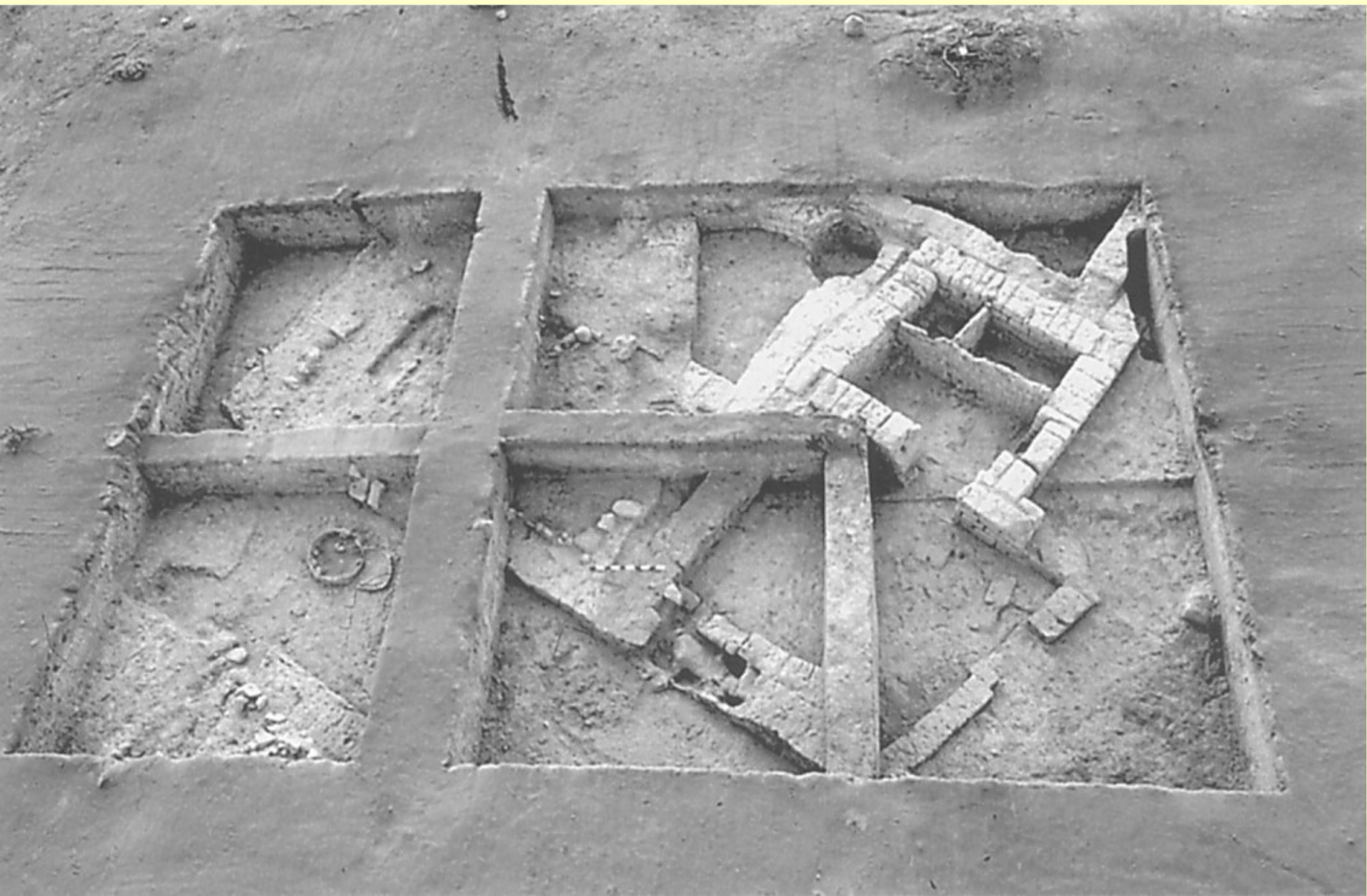


Where is all the treasure they said was here?

Excavation Grid



Tell Rehov



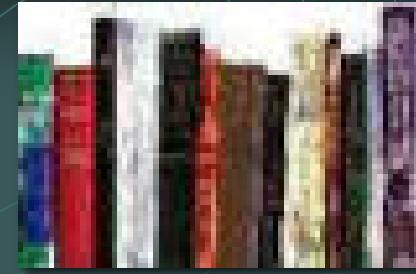
Steps of Archaeology

Find location

Dig!

Describe

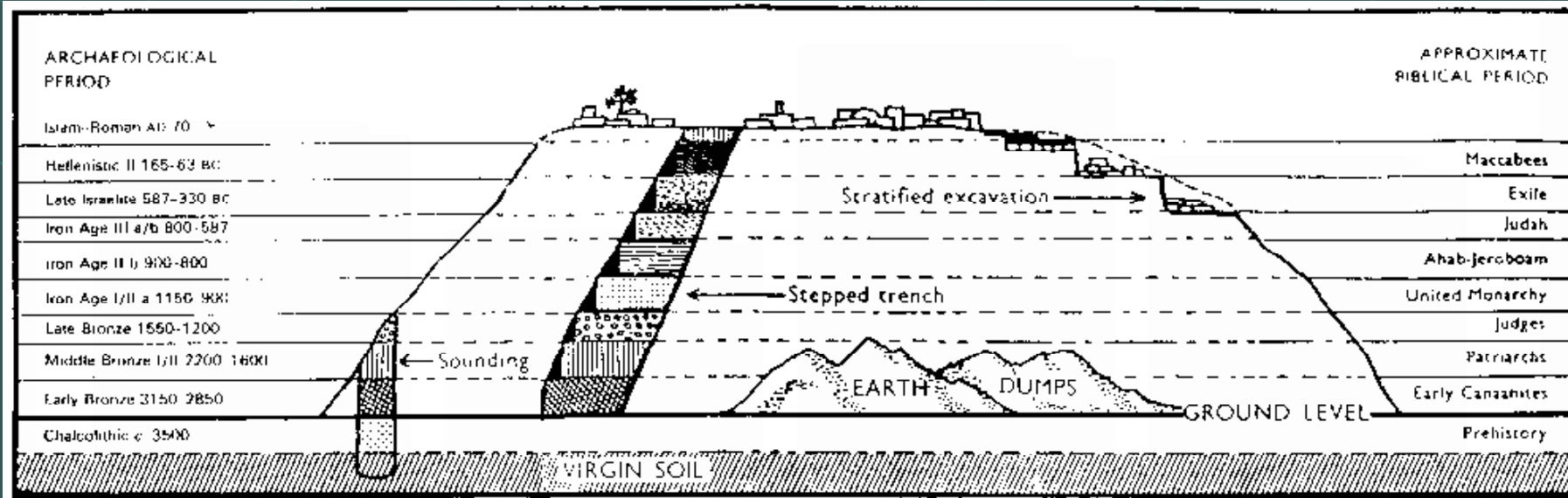
Archaeological Terms



Excavation Terminology

Tell

Stratum



Schematic drawing of an ancient tell showing methods of excavation and levels (strata) of occupation

Locus Sheets

EARTH LOCUS SHEET

1. IDENTIFICATION

A. LOCUS 4
 B. SITE Malabia C. SEASON S98 D. FIELD C E. SQUARE 2E04 F. DATES 21 Sep to _____ G. SHEET 1
 H. SUPERVISOR T. Bolan I. BALK _____ J. INSTALLATION SUPPLEMENT K. INCLUSION _____
 L. DESIGNATION Soil inside installation S M. COMPLETE (Fld Sup) _____

2. RATIONALE (for assigning locus)

A. REASON Fill inside square-shaped installation S
 B. SEPARABILITY: TOP: VERY CLEAR CLEAR AVERAGE UNCLEAR VERY UNCLEAR ARBITRARY
 BOTTOM: VERY CLEAR CLEAR AVERAGE UNCLEAR VERY UNCLEAR ARBITRARY

3. DESCRIPTION

A. COLOR: 1. Munsell Number _____
 2. Verbal _____

B. TEXTURE: C. PARTICLE SHAPE
 1. Clay (<1/256mm) _____% 1. A _____%
 2. Silt (1/256-1/16mm) _____% 2. AS _____%
 3. Sand (1/16-2mm) _____% 3. SR _____%
 4. R _____%

D. CONSISTENCE: very loose very hard
 1. Hardness (circle one): 0 1 2 3 4 5
 2. Compactness (S, M, or V): 3. Wetness (S, M, or V):
 ___ a. Loose ___ d. Firm a. Dry
 b. Crumbly ___ e. Gravelly ___ b. Moist
 ___ c. Friable ___ f. Rabbly ___ c. Wet
 4. Structure (check one):
 Water: a. Puddling b. Channeling c. Sheet Wash
 d. Wind e. Talus f. Random

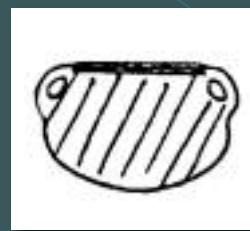
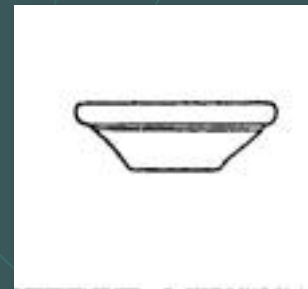
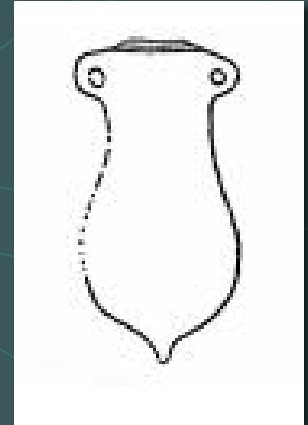
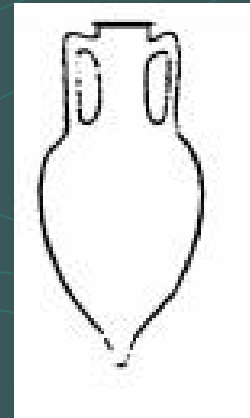
E. MEASUREMENTS:

E. INCLUSIONS:

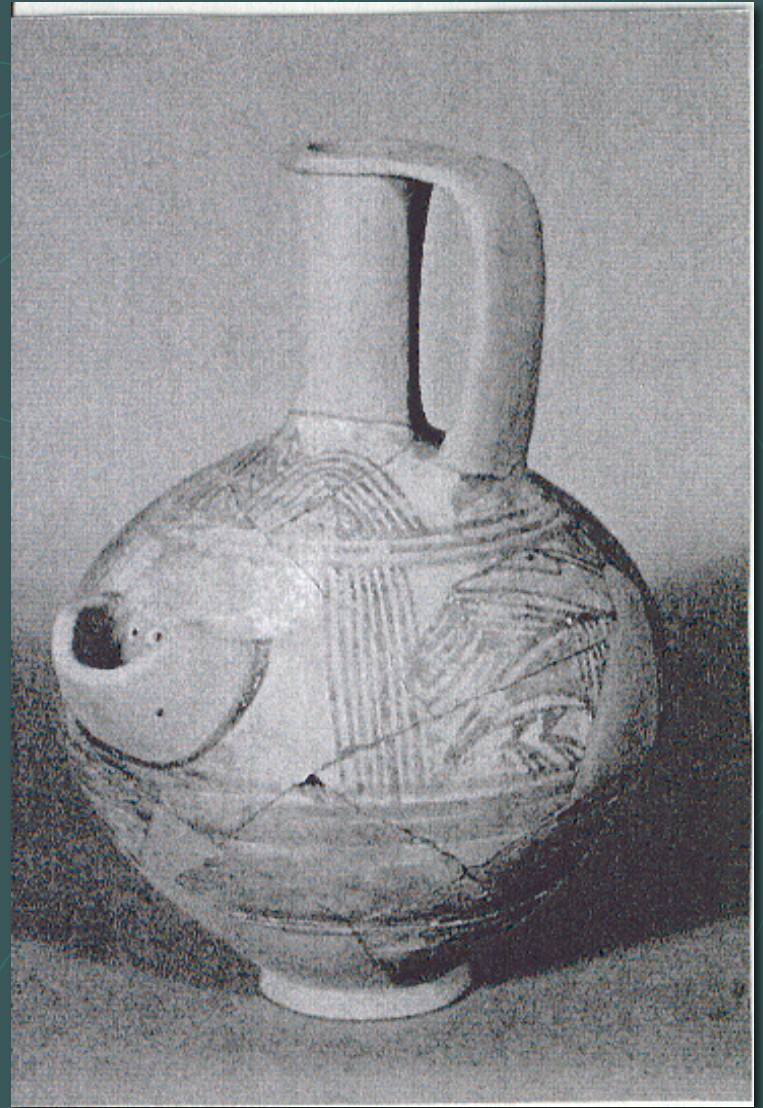
1. Earth(E): Freq: Size (Diam: avg or range)
 a. Nut Pockets _____
 b. Brick Material _____
 c. Pebble Pockets _____
 d. Ash Pockets _____
 e. _____
 f. Dist: Random Patterned (ex) Layered (ex)
 2. Stone:
 ___ a. Pebbles (2mm-6cm)/bask ___ c. Boulders (25cm+)/bask
 ___ b. Cobbles (6-25cm)/bask d. Dist: Random
 Patterned (ex)
 Layered (ex)
 3. Artifact (Give totals for c-k):
 a. Pottery: Freq Rare f. Brick Frags _____
 b. Flint: Freq Rare g. Roof Tiles _____
 c. Glass _____ h. Worked Stones _____
 d. Tesserae _____ i. Burned Stones _____
 e. Tabun Fragr _____ j. _____
 k. Arch. Frags _____ Describe: _____
 l. Dist: Random Patterned (ex) Layered (ex)

Pottery Analysis

| | Large vessels | Jugs and pitchers | Jars and pots | Flasks | Juglets | Cups | Bowls and plates | Lamps |
|----------------------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------|--------|---------|------|------------------|-------|
| Neolithic and Chalcolithic | | | | | | | | |
| Early Bronze Age | | | | | | | | |
| Middle Bronze Age | | | | | | | | |
| Late Bronze Age | | | | | | | | |
| Iron Age | | | | | | | | |
| Persian period | | | | | | | | |
| Hellenistic period | | | | | | | | |
| Roman period | | | | | | | | |



Philistine Pottery



Pottery Tag

POTTERY TAG

() Dip

Site _____ Season _____ Superv _____

Fld _____ Sq _____ Loc _____ / _____

Pail _____ Date (crcl. mo.) _____ Jun/Jul/Aug 19 _____

COUNT:

Diagnostics _____

Total _____

ORIGIN:

From Locus

From Sift

Other _____

CONDITION:

Mendable

Fragile

Poss Contam

READING:

REMARKS:

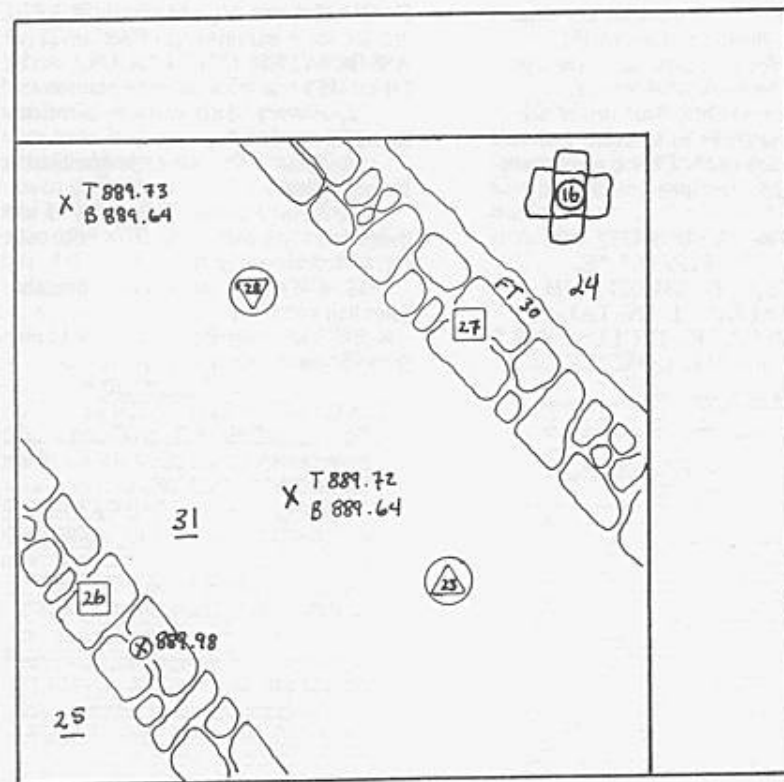
Top Plan

Site U Season B6 Sq 5M40 L 31

Date 7 Jun Balk _____

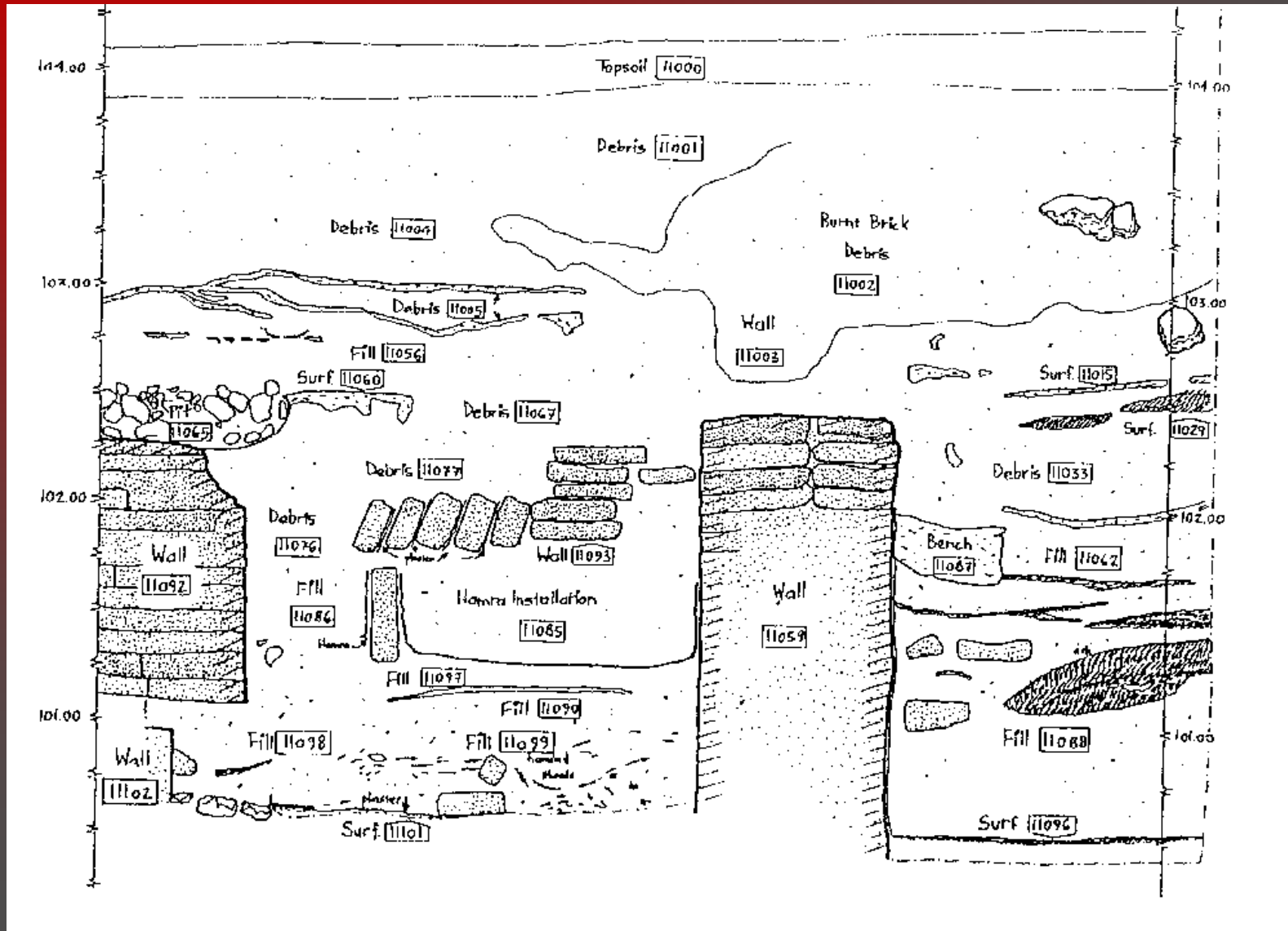
Supervisor LGH North 4

Scale 1:50

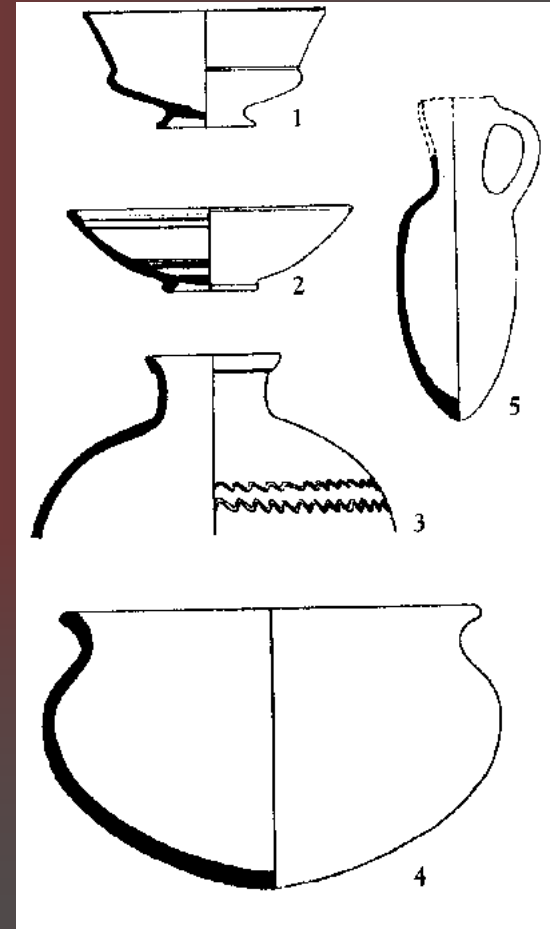


Pit 28 was not cut from this level,
but higher.

Balk Drawing



Drawing Pottery

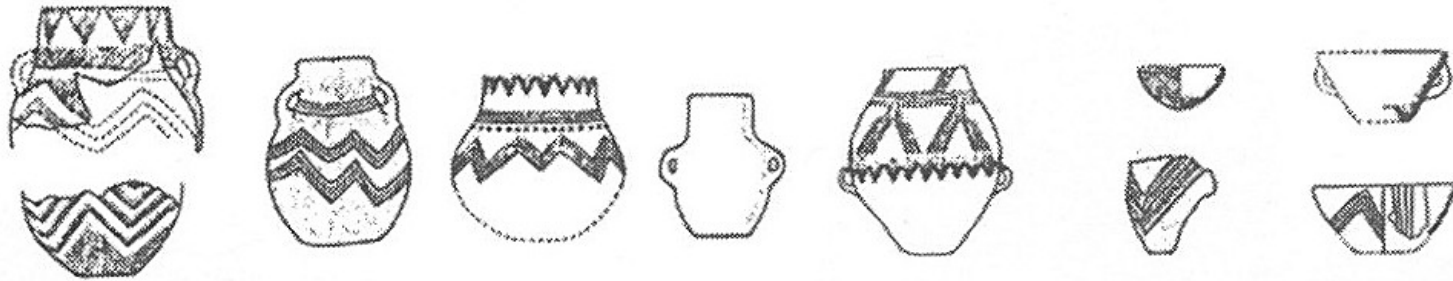


Steps of Archaeology

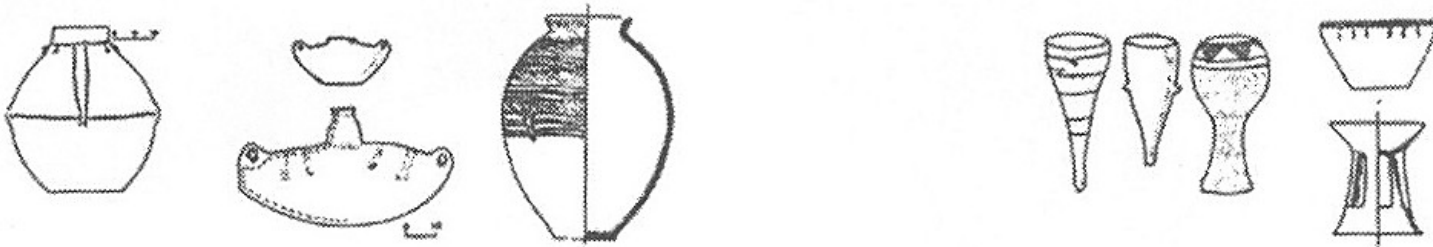
- Find location
- Dig!
- Describe
- Date

Various Pottery Drawings

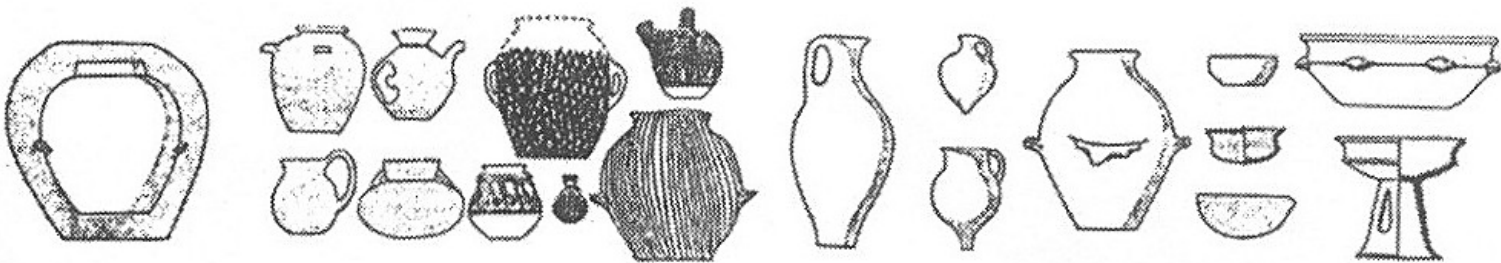
Neolithic



Chalcolithic



Early Bronze

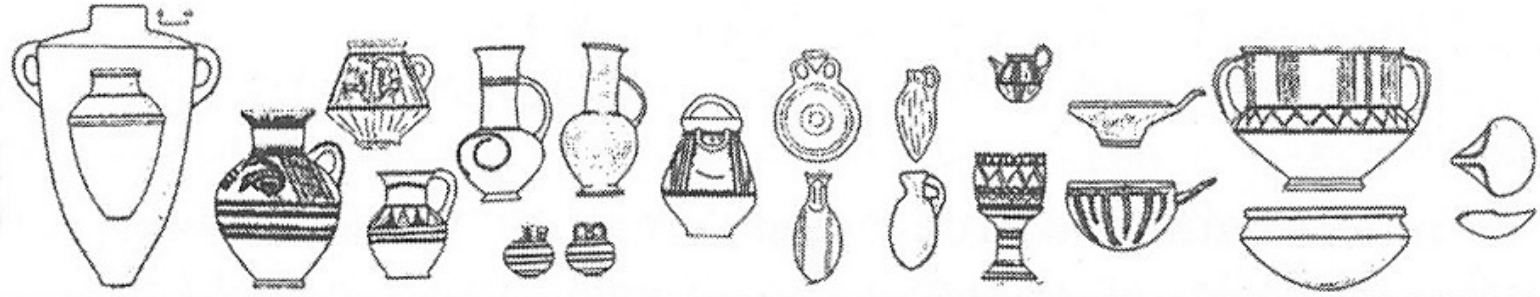


Various Pottery Drawings

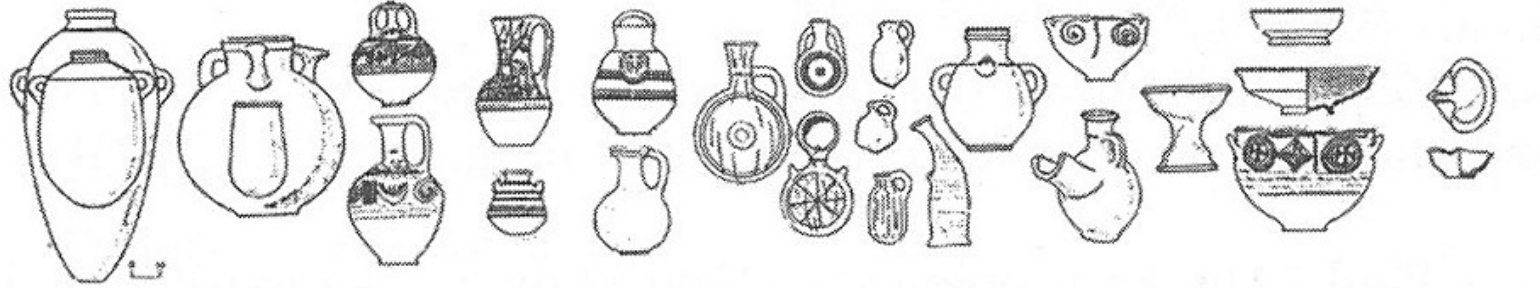
Middle Bronze



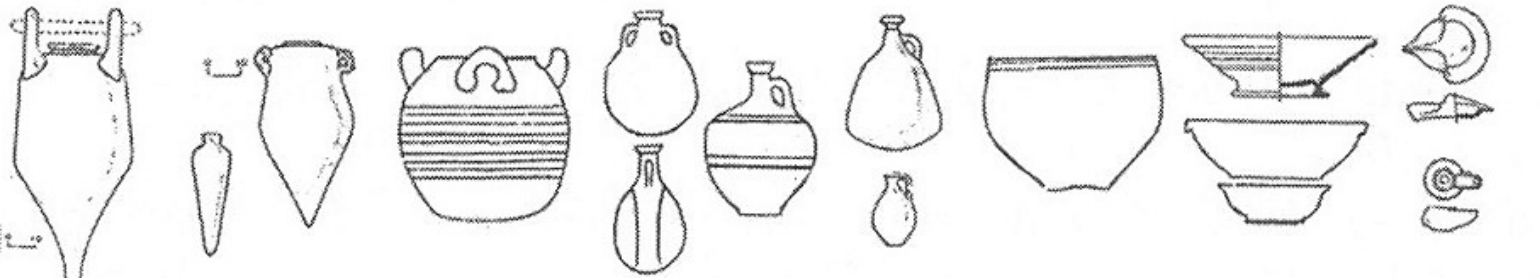
Late Bronze



Iron I-II



Iron III



Styles Change



The Value of Pottery

- Found everywhere
- Indestructible
- Fragile, frequently replaced
- Used for everything
- Reveals much about maker and user

Isaiah 45:9

“Woe to him who quarrels with his Maker, to him who is but a potsherd among the potsherds on the ground. Does the clay say to the potter, ‘What are you making?’ ”

Job 2:8

“Then Job took a piece of broken pottery and scraped himself with it as he sat among the ashes.”

Psalm 2:9

“You will rule them with an iron scepter; you will dash them to pieces like pottery.”

Psalm 31:12

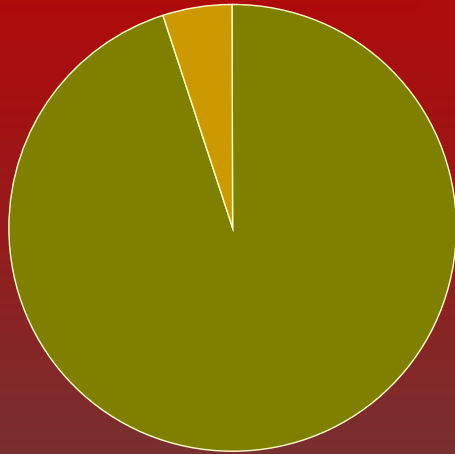
“I am forgotten by them as though I were dead; I have become like broken pottery.”

Limits of Archaeological Dating

- Relatively young study
- Poor excavation and/or recording
- Circular reasoning/assumptions
- Limited ancient written sources

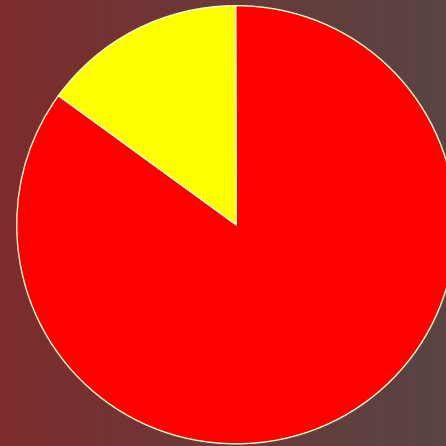
Fragmentary Nature of Archaeological Evidence

1



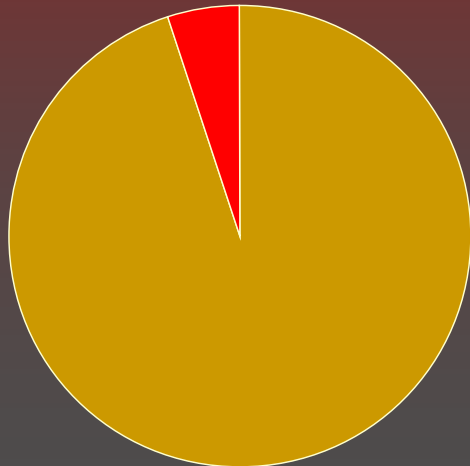
■ Destroyed in antiquity
■ Preserved in tells

3



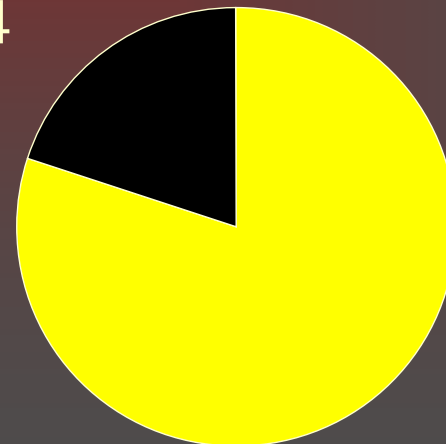
■ Recovered
■ Scientifically Excavated

2



■ Preserved in tells
■ Recovered by archaeologists

4



■ Properly Excavated
■ Properly Published

Steps of Archaeology

Find location

Dig!

Describe

Date

Steps of Archaeology

Find location

Dig!

Describe

Date

Publish