

**A STRATIGRAPHIC ANALYSIS OF THE MIDDLE
BRONZE AGE FROM THE TELL TAANACH
EXCAVATIONS IN 1963, '66 AND '68**

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One of the most troubling issues for Near Eastern Archaeology is the lack of published excavation reports. Part of the problem is that archaeologists love to dig, but dislike writing publication reports. As a result, final reports are lacking for a substantial number of archaeological excavations. Without a final report, the results of an archaeologist's season and new information is lost forever. Dr. Paul Lapp of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary lead excavations at Tell Ta'anach in the West Bank, Palestine in 1963, '66 and '68. At the end of each season, he wrote and published preliminary reports. Preliminary reports provide an overall summary of a season, but a full report is necessary. Due to his untimely death, the final reports for Lapp's excavations were never completed. On the basis of data culled from the personal diaries, field notes, manuals, drawings and unpublished manuscripts, a relative chronology for the Middle Bronze stratigraphy at Tell Ta'anach was determined. Gathering the data was gathered involved photocopying every page from the field books of every square; some field books are kept at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary and some are stored at Bir Zeit University in the West Bank, Palestine. Reviewing and coordinating the Middle Bronze loci in each square enabled a reconstruction of the Middle Bronze Age stratigraphy in each square, which facilitated the forming of an outline of the entire site. From the evidence accumulated from Tell Ta'anach indicates two well defined Middle Bronze IIC strata. There is also evidence of a modest early MB IIB campsite/occupation and a third MB IIC strata in some squares. The method and consistency of buildings and construction and the ceramic assemblage all indicate a socially stable community in the MB IIC phase. It concludes that the occupation story in the Middle Bronze Age at Ta'anach included no permanent habitation in the MB AI, some campsite dwelling in the MB IIB and a thriving community in the MB IIC Phase which transitioned peacefully into the Late Bronze Age. The ceramic evidence indicates a smooth transition from Middle Bronze to Late Bronze pottery in the middle of the sixteenth century BCE.