

THE BATTLE OF MEGIDDO

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The Battle of Megiddo by Harold Hayden Nelson

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HAROLD HAYDEN NELSON

**THE BATTLE
OF MEGIDDO**

The University of Chicago

THE BATTLE OF MEGIDDO

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY
OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND LITERATURE
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
DEPARTMENT OF ORIENTAL LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES

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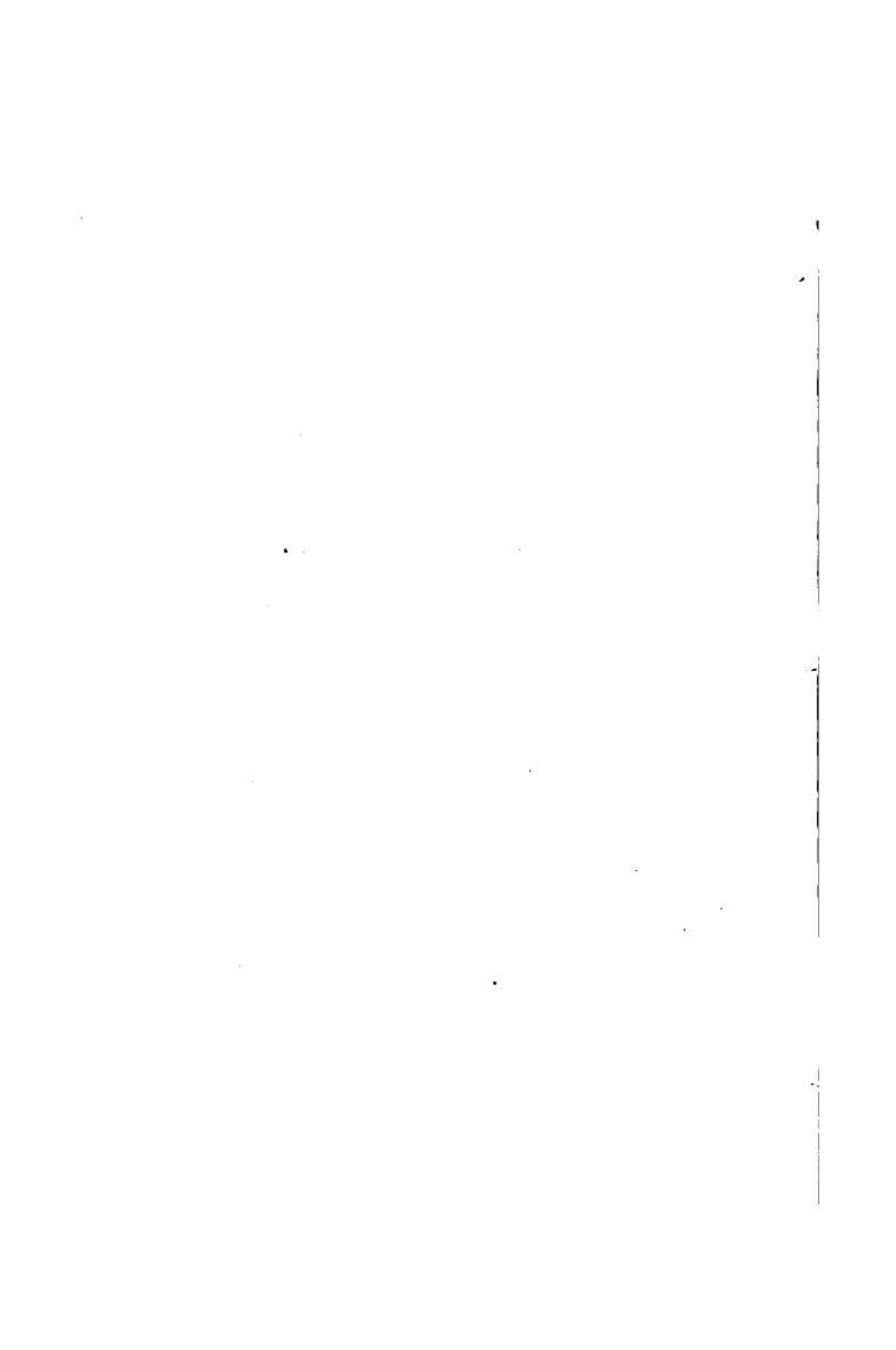
PREFACE

The text of this study was prepared and printed before the war, but owing to the fact that I was confined behind the Turkish lines in Syria during the whole of the war, it was impossible to secure the cuts of the illustrations and maps till some time after the conclusion of hostilities. Meanwhile the photographs had suffered from the lapse of time and an effort to secure new ones in the summer of 1920 failed owing to the stupidity of certain Syrian auto-drivers. But the photographs, such as they are, will nevertheless serve to illustrate the text.

Had the University of Chicago regulations governing the publication of theses permitted, I would gladly have rewritten the whole manuscript in the light of the recent campaign of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force under Lord Allenby in the same region in which Thutmose III, nearly 3,500 years earlier, also defeated an enemy advancing from the north toward Egypt. There are certain interesting and striking parallels and contrasts between the strategy of the earliest and of the latest victorious commanders of campaigns in central Palestine.

This study is confined almost entirely to an effort to interpret the Annals of Thutmose III in the light of the geography of the environs of Megiddo. I have entered into no philological discussion, although such points were thoroughly considered in preparation of the translation of the Annals. I regret that I am unable to incorporate certain material bearing on the subject of this study which has appeared since the text was printed in Beirut, Syria, in 1913, and also that I cannot make use of certain valuable suggestions made by those who campaigned in Palestine in 1917-18. A number of typographical errors have crept into the text which were unavoidable under the circumstances in which it was printed.

HAROLD H. NELSON



THE BATTLE OF MEGIDDO

INTRODUCTION

The Battle of Megiddo on May 15th, 1479 B.C. between the Egyptians under Thutmose III and the allied forces of the Syrian states is the first battle in history which we can study in any detail. Most of the ancient oriental accounts of battles are mere statements of the forces engaged and of the outcome of the conflicts. Among the Egyptian records, however, there are preserved in considerable detail the narratives of two or three engagements from which we can gather, with greater or less clearness, the general plan of each battle, the disposition of the troops and the manoeuvres of the opposing armies.¹ So far these battles have been studied either without reference to the topography of the battlefields, or with insufficient data regarding the physical features of the area of operations and the bearing they must have had on the course of the engagement. In the following discussion of the Battle of Megiddo it has been my endeavor to interpret the scanty records of the conflict preserved in hieroglyphic in the light of the topography of the region, which I studied on two visits to the battlefield in the summers of 1909 and 1912. On those two occasions I made a series of surveys and took a number of photographs which are here reproduced. They include a sufficient number of views to bear out my observations on the topography which are contained in the text of this discussion. I have used as the basis of my plan of the battlefield the excellent map in Schumacher's *Tell el-Mutesellim*, Band II, adding myself certain details not found on the original, especially the configuration of the hills to the west and

¹ Besides the Battle of Megiddo, compare, for the Battle of Kadesh, Breasted, *Battle of Kadesh*, and for the siege of Memphis by Piankhi see Breasted, *Ancient Records*, IV, 257-265.

south of Megiddo, and verifying most of the altitudes found on Schumacher's map. In this connection I wish to thank for their assistance my colleagues, Dr. Harvey Porter, of Beirut, Syria, who visited Megiddo with me in 1909, and especially Professor Alfred H. Joy, also of Beirut, who was with me in 1912, without whose assistance my work would have been attended with great difficulty and delay.

In the introduction to his "Antike Schlachtfelder in Griechenland" Kromayer says:

"Wenn es in der modernen Kriegsgeschichte von je her als unerlässliche Voraussetzung für die Erkenntnis gegolten hat, dass den Schilderungen der Feldzüge und Schlachten Karten und Pläne beigelegt seien, so muss man sich wundern, dass man bei der Behandlung antiker Schlachten so lange Zeit geglaubt hat, dieses Hilfsmittel entbehren und auch ohne dasselbe zu einem leidlichen Verständnis kommen zu können.

"Es braucht ja vor Leuten, die auch nur ein ganz klein wenig mit den Bedingungen dieses Studiums bekannt sind, eigentlich gar nicht mehr ausgesprochen zu werden, dass selbst die genaueste und lebendigste Schilderung solcher Ereignisse für sich allein tot und unanschaulich bleibt, dass ein Blick auf eine gute Karte mehr gibt als stundenlanges Studium oft nur irrtümveranlassender Beschreibungen."

I have quoted at such length from Kromayer on account of the importance, as it seems to me, of his position on the study of military history in its application to oriental military movements, a position which cannot be too much emphasized and which, if adopted by some oriental historians, would have prevented many of the impossibilities in the interpretation of ancient historical inscriptions which are now found in some of the current histories. It has been my effort in the following study to take Kromayer's position throughout. I have consulted the discussions of the battle contained in the chief histories, those of Breasted, Brugsch, Budge, Hall, Maspero, Meyer, Petrie and Wiedemann, and have also made use of Schumacher's topographical and archaeological studies in MuNDPV and in his Tell-el-Mutesellim. The chronology of the campaign is that of Breasted, as presented in his Ancient Records, II, 409, which is based on his studies in *ÄZ*, 37, 123 ff. and 39, 60-68. For a bibliography of the older publications of the hieroglyphic sources the reader is referred to Breasted's Ancient Records, II, 391, note a. The present study is based on the text of the Annals of Thutmose III in Sethe's *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie*, pp. 647-667, with a few changes and omissions where Sethe's text is entirely a restoration by the editor. I have

also taken into account such other references to the battle as may be found in the Eighteenth Dynasty inscriptions, all of which are published in Sethe's *Urkunden*.

At this point I wish to acknowledge my great indebtedness to Professor Breasted, from whom I have received constant encouragement and continued and most valuable suggestions. Any acknowledgment of the help and inspiration derived from his stimulating teaching is, at best, inadequate. Since the appearance of his *Ancient Records* any one who attempts to deal with historical subjects in the Egyptian field must consciously or unconsciously appropriate much from that valuable mine of information. Though the translation of the *Annals* appearing in the *Records* is based on an inferior text to the one I have been able to use (as the *Urkunden* did not appear till after the *Records* were already out), nevertheless I have drawn much assistance from Dr. Breasted's translation, in some cases even adopting his very words where I felt there was no reason for changing them. Many of the variations from his translation Dr. Breasted would himself incorporate in substance into a new edition of the *Records*.

I wish also to thank my colleague in Professor Breasted's seminar, Mr. George Allen, who has made several helpful suggestions on doubtful passages in the text.