

# BATTLE DIGEST™

Lessons for Today's Leaders

Volume 3 ★ Issue 1

Ancient & Medieval:

## Megiddo

**DATE:**  
April 26, 1457 B.C.

**LOCATION:**  
Megiddo (in present-day Israel)

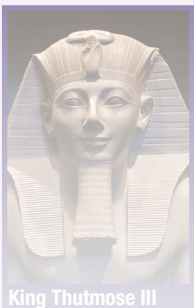
### OPPOSING FORCES

**Egyptian Army:** 10,000 men, commanded by King Thutmose III (Men-kheper-ra Thutmose). His army was organized into eight infantry regiments (1,000 men each) and two chariot regiments (500 archers and 500 charioteers each).

**Coalition Army:** 10,000 men from over 100 city-states located in Southern Syria, Southern Lebanon, and Northern Israel. They were organized by the Prince of Kadesh and led jointly by the Prince of Kadesh and the Prince of Megiddo. These forces included infantry, archers, and charioteers, but with over 30 local princes commanding their own armies, the organizations varied widely.

### HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Megiddo is the first recorded battle in human history. It is also the origin of the ancient word Armageddon. And even though records of the battle come only from Egyptian accounts, they still allow historians to see the breadth and scope of military operations in the 15th century B.C., when Egypt had become a dominant power in the Middle East. It was in this period, however, when Egypt's empire was in jeopardy. During a critical transfer of power, Egypt's tributary states in the Levant (a large area in the present-day Eastern Mediterranean region of Western Asia) saw an opportunity to reassert their independence. But a new young pharaoh, Thutmose III, marched north to meet them in battle. Megiddo established Thutmose III as one of the most powerful and significant rulers in Egyptian history, while also reestablishing the Egyptian Empire and setting its course for the next 450 years.



King Thutmose III

### STRATEGY & MANEUVER

**Actions by the Coalition** – By 1490 B.C., Egypt had conquered the entire region south of the Euphrates River where the old kingdoms of the Levant had devolved into city-states. (Map 1) For years, these vassal states had been forced to pledge their allegiance and pay tributes to Egypt. But around 1479 B.C., as Egypt shifted its priorities, rivals smelled an opportunity. One of them, the Mitanni kingdom, began taking advantage of the new strategic situation by



Map 1: Campaign overview.

Levant formed a Coalition to rebel. All they needed was an opportunity. It was in 1457 B.C., after the death of Egypt's de facto king, Hatshepsut, and the transfer of power to her stepson, Thutmose III, when they saw their chance. Leaders from some 100 city-states, from central Israel in the south to the Euphrates in the north, joined together in the hopes of finally breaking free from Egyptian dominance. The Coalition was organized by the Prince of Kadesh, but command was split between the rulers of the largest two city-states, Kadesh to the north, and Megiddo to the south. Due to Megiddo's more southern location, the plan was to assemble forces there before marching to Egypt. But when they received word that Egypt's young king was organizing an expedition to march on them, they changed plans.

Rather than proceeding south, the Coalition decided to remain in Megiddo and let the Egyptians come to them. If they could choose the location of the battle, while keeping it closer to their own lines of supply, they were sure to have an advantage. Plus, they knew that Thutmose could only take one of three routes into the southern plains in Megiddo. (Map 2) The southern