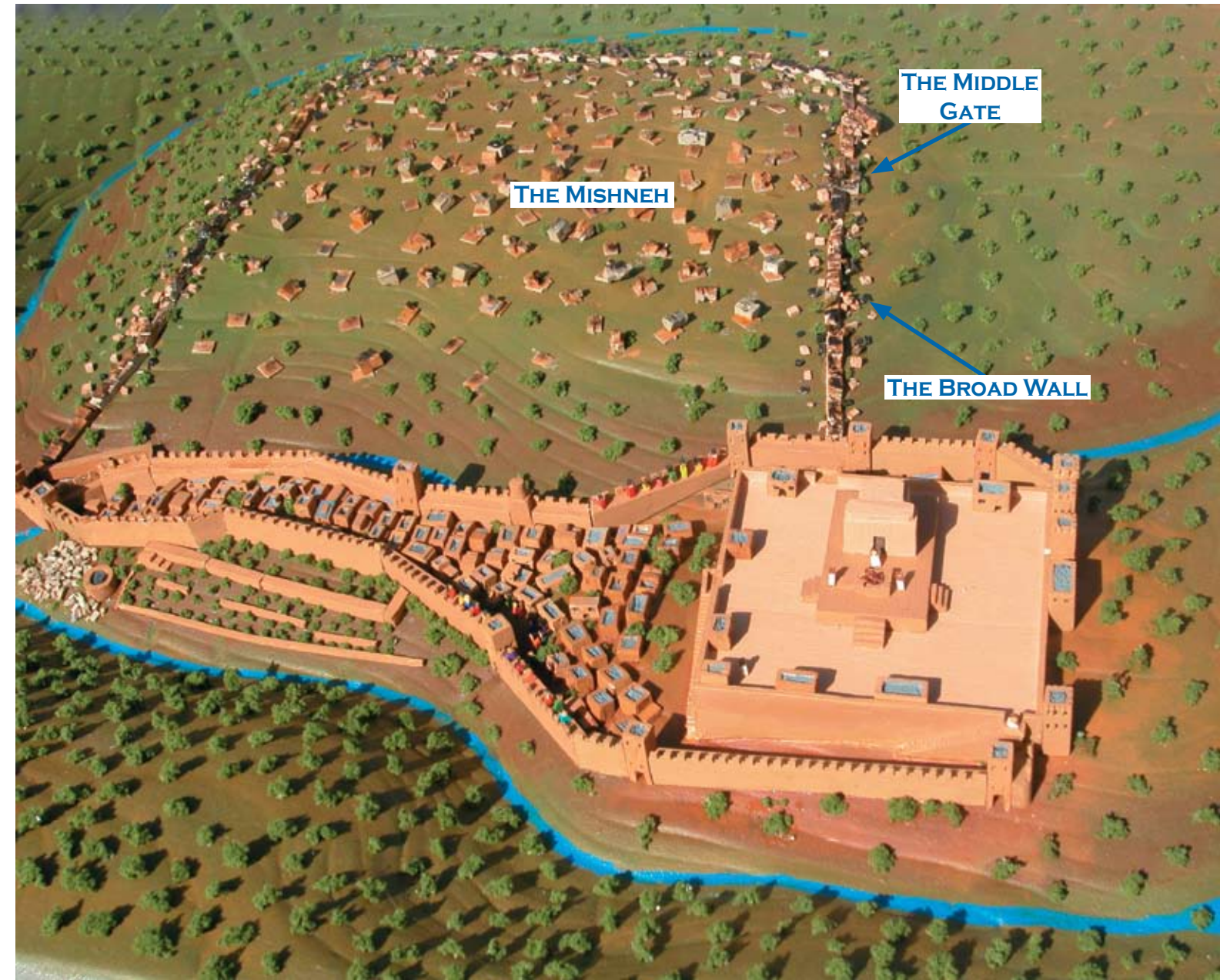




With the Broad Wall, we are again on archaeological terra firma. The finding of this wall was one of the highlights of the Jewish Quarter excavations led by Nahman Avigad from 1968 to 1982. Prior to its discovery, the “minimalist” position, which held that the Western Hill was not settled in the Israelite period, held sway.

However, the wall found by Avigad’s team was, judging by its thickness and height, clearly a city wall and was found running west from the Temple Mount towards the northwestern corner of the Western Hill. The continuous stretch of wall was 23 feet (7 m) broad and in places stood to seven courses of stones. Its dating to the Israelite period was never in doubt, as pottery consistent with Iron Age II was found along the entire base of the wall. When placed on a topographical

map of Jerusalem, it provided clear evidence that a new quarter, probably the Mishneh of 2 Kings 22:14 and 2 Chronicles 34:22, had been enclosed by a new city wall during this period. The most logical conclusion is that the new quarter was built to accommodate the influx of refugees from the Assyrian invasion in the eighth century B.C.



On the model, a gate is shown in the northern wall of the ruined Mishneh. In the area of the gate, the Broad Wall ran a little to the south, circumventing a small valley located in this area. Sometime after the time of Hezekiah, the line of the wall was straightened out and a gate built on foundations laid deep across the valley. This gate has been identified with the Middle Gate mentioned in Jeremiah 39:3, where the Babylonian princes sat following the conquest of the city by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C.

It is clear from the paucity of finds from the Persian period on the Western Hill that this area was unoccupied during this period. Thus, the formidable Broad Wall, the Mishneh quarter and the Middle Gate, all lay outside the area repaired by Nehemiah, but the ruins of this quarter would have been a notable feature of the city of the faithful builder. For us, the mention of the Broad Wall along this section of Nehemiah’s wall serves to confirm the truth of the record!

*Model of Nehemiah’s Jerusalem, looking west.*