CHAPTER TEN


INTRODUCTION

The first two seasons of excavations at Fazael 2 (map ref. old Israel Grid 1913/1618) were conducted during February–May 2007 and February 2008. The site was selected for excavation for the following reasons:

1. It is located in the centre of a large group of Chalcolithic sites in Wadi Fazael, one of the main settlement regions in the Jordan Valley during that period.
2. Preliminary survey data indicated that this is a very late Chalcolithic site, dating from close to the elusive transitional phase between the Chalcolithic and EB I periods.
3. Modern destruction, caused to parts of the site by bulldozers, has rendered some elements especially vulnerable to degradation, making excavation a priority.

The site is situated along the edge of the valley in Wadi Fazael, and extends west from the Fazael settlement along both sides of the old road to Ma’ale Ephraim (Figs. 10.1–10.2). The size of the ancient site is presumed to be about 20 ha, and includes a number of non-contiguous secondary sites spread along the northern bank of the ancient river channel in Wadi Fazael (Fig. 10.2). The segment that was excavated (Fazael 2) is located on the south-eastern slope of a rocky spur that

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1 This chapter is based on a report accepted for publication by the Journal of the Israel Prehistoric Society - Bar et al. in press.
2 The excavation was directed by the author, with assistance from Ziv Leiba and Ari Levi (administration), Haim Winter (flint), Dror Ben-Yosef (stone), Nili Liphshitz (dendrochronology), Sapir Haad (illustrations), Elisabetta Boaretto (\(^{14}\)C analysis), Michael Eisenberg and the Zinman Institute of Archaeology of the University of Haifa (scientific and logistic support), the Manasseh Hill Country Survey (scientific and logistic support), and the Jordan Valley Regional Council (logistic support).
3 Two of the sites were partly excavated and have been published: Porath (1985) and Peleg (2000).
4 In the absence of architectural contiguity between the small mounds it was decided to define them for the time being as separate sites. One of the aims of future research at the site will be to ascertain if the different sites are in fact one large site.
was damaged by earthmoving work between the end of the 1960s and during the 1970s.

The site was first described briefly by Porath (1985), and in 2006, an in-depth survey was conducted at the site within the framework of the Manasseh Hill Country Survey. Small mounds with building remains are scattered throughout the area, apparently randomly. Some of these