CHAPTER TWELVE

SHEIKH DIAB 2 – AN EARLY BRONZE AGE I PERIOD
HAMLET IN THE JORDAN VALLEY

Introduction

During February, March and September 2007 and April 2008 excavations were conducted at the site of Sheikh Diab 2 (Old Israel Grid ref. 1904/1616), located in the Jordan Valley, on a spur along the edge of Wadi Fazael, about 20 km north of Jericho (Fig. 12.1), and 1 km west of the settlement of Fazael.

The site was discovered in 2000, within the framework of the Manasseh Hill Country Survey, and has not yet been published. The site’s name derives from the nearby Tell es-Sheikh Diab.

This chapter presents the results of the excavation, and analyses the main archaeological finds, putting them into the broader geographical and cultural framework of the period.

The ancient remains cover a presumed area of 1.5 ha. The buildings are spread across the middle of the site and on the slopes of a steeply sloping spur (see Section A-A’ below), formed of limestone chalky rock belonging to the Mount Scopus group, and desert travertine soil. The hilltop at trig. point E.P. -86 overlooks the site from the south-west, as does the top of the spur on which the site is located (Fig. 12.2). Wadi Fazael flows by the northern slope of the site, and Fazael Springs are located about 2 km to the west. The EB I site of Fazael 4 (Chapter 13) is located across the wadi channel to the north. A large area on both sides of the wadi channel east of the site is flat, which allows agriculture and grazing.

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1 This Chapter is based on a paper published by the author and others in the *Journal of the Israel Prehistoric Society* (Bar et al. 2011).
2 The excavation was directed by Shay Bar, with assistance from Ziv Leiba, Hagar Ben-Bassat, Barak Verker and Eyal Dan (area supervision), Ophir Dror-Katz (administration), Yonatan Liberzon (surveying), Haim Winter (flint), Guy Bar Oz and Noa Raban-Gerstel (fauna), Dror Ben-Yosef (ground stone tools), Sapir Haad and Inbal Bar (plans, sections and illustration of artifacts), Michael Eisenberg and the Zinman Institute of Archaeology (scientific support), the Manasseh Hill Country Survey (scientific and logistic support), the Kinneret College on the Sea of Galilee, and the Jordan Valley Regional Council (volunteers and logistical support).
The site includes a large number of building remains, walls, and courtyards scattered across the slopes, and is covered with alluvium. The eastern part of the site has been damaged by construction activity.

Sites attributed to EB I are common in the lower Jordan Valley and include Jericho, 20 km to the south of the site (e.g. Kenyon and Holland 1982), Tell Um Hammad, 15 km to the north-east (Helms et al. 1992),

Figure 12.1. General location of Sheikh Diab 2.