CHAPTER THREE

THE GEOGRAPHICAL HISTORICAL IDENTIFICATIONS

In the identifications, use has been made of the new archaeological material found during the survey. Previous proposals have also been either supported or disproved.

East Manasseh has relatively few multi period sites, tells, geographical historical texts and identification options. Effort was made to use the available sources. The identifications are based, as usual, on the similarity and preservation of names, on the archaeological finds and on the geographical historical contexts. Next to each site is a short discussion, bibliography and, if relevant, our new proposal for identification.

The identifications from the Onomasticon of Eusebius are based on the new edition by Freeman-Grenville, Chapman and Taylor 2003.

Site no. 1: Khirbet ‘Anahum

Lemaire (1977, 63) has suggested identifying this site as No’ah of the Daughters of Zelophohad (Joshua 17:3; Samaria Ostraca, no. 50, 52, 64). This identification, supported by Taylor and Taylor (1992), is based upon the preservation of the name and the context. The presence of Iron Age I pottery does not add or detract, since the date of division into Manasseh’s family allotments has not been thoroughly researched. This identification, however, “stretches” the borders of the “Land of Hepher” (I Kings 4:10), to which the Daughters of Zelophohad belong (and see discussion in Zertal 1984, 50-58). In the Zebabdeh Valley four Iron Age I sites adjacent to the large Late Bronze Age site (Sheikh Safiriyeh, no. 2) were found, and it seems that the entire valley was called No’ah.

The site was also identified by Zussman and Demsky as ‘Ananin (עֲנָנִין) of the “Permitted Villages” of the territory of Sebasteh in the Rehov Mosaic Inscription. This identification is based on the similarity in name and the archaeological finds. ‘Ananin is located between Shapirin (Kh. ash-Sheikh Safiriyeh, no. 2) and Bil’am ‘Aliata (בדעם عليאתה, Kh. Bel’ameh; see Zertal 2004, site no. 26). Thus, a logical sequence exists for the location of Kh. ‘Anahum and the identification is reasonable.

Bibliography: Lemaire 1977, 63; Demsky 1979, 189; Zussman 1981, 166.
Site no. 2:

**Khirbet esh-Sheikh Safiriyan**

It is suggested that Canaanite Bezeq, mentioned in Judges 1:4-5 as the city of Adonibezeq, might have been at this site. His name, which means “Ruler of the city [Bezeq]” correlates with Adonizedeq of Jerusalem (Joshua 10:1-3) and Adoniyah (II Samuel 3:4). However, a Canaanite god named Bezeq is unknown (although the meaning of the name Bezeq – “flash, lightening, swift” is close to Hadad, the god of the storm, rain, thunder and lightening (Maier 1992). The identity proposed by Wright (1946) of Adonibezeq with Adonizedeq seems to be unfounded.

The Bezeq traditions echo the Canaanite Israelite conflicts during the early Iron Age, and the existence of Judah and Simeon inside Manasseh (Zertal 2000, 280-285).

The geographic proximity of Safiriyan to Kh. Ibziq (no. 44) and Kh. Salhab (no. 23, the candidate for the other Bezeq) supports the identification of the former with Canaanite Bezeq. The place name may have been transferred about 5 km (from Safiriyan to Salhab) and then again to Kh. Ibziq. Such transferal is reasonable, and may echo the Israelite Canaanite conflict within the boundaries of the eastern valleys.

The site was also identified by Zussman as Shapirin (שפירין), line 27 of the Rehov Inscription, of the “Permitted Villages”. The finds, location and context make this identification possible.


Site no. 14:

**el-Khirbeh (ez-Zard)**

Two options have been considered for this site:

1. The village of Kfar Zir (כפר ציר), line 27 of the Rehov Inscription. Zussman has proposed identifying Kfar Zir as the nearby village Sir (no. 20). However, the Byzantine Period site there is small. el-Khirbeh (ez-Zard), in contrast, was a large town 24 dunams (6 acres) in area, and thus appears to be a better candidate, although the finds and location fit both of them.

2. In a discussion of Kfar Casdia (כפר כשדיה) from the Rehov Inscription, the argument was raised (Zertal 2004, 71) that the finds there are insufficient for identification. Thus we proposed identifying Kfar Casdia as el-Khirbeh (ez-Zard). If so, Kfar Zir would remain in nearby Sir.