

FOREWORD

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This volume treating *The Shechem syncline* is the first of a series consisting of five volumes. The intention is to summarize in detail the results of the archaeological survey carried out by Adam Zertal and his team in the Manasseh Hill Country.

This comprehensive and important publication is arranged according to the system of research developed during years of fieldwork. Some important principles and innovations developed during the Manasseh Hill Country survey have been incorporated in the conventional system used in Eretz Israel.

Those innovations concern the various fields of archaeological survey. Among other matters the Manasseh Hill Country system deals with the territorial division into landscape units. In this area, those mostly match the Biblical division of settlement allotments (see Manasseh domains, Joshua 17:5).

Special attention was paid to ecological data, with their growing importance in modern research. These data include exact recording of water sources, soil, rock formations, agricultural installations, and other features. Increasing

importance was ascribed to the systematic collection, analysis and recording of pottery shards according to periods. One more considerable innovation was the exact recording of geographical names used in the area. The last time these were recorded was by British surveyors over a century ago.

As stated, some of these principles have since been adopted by surveyors in other regions of this country. Zertal and his team invested immense efforts and skills, deserving the highest respect. Zertal merits special praise for his interesting research, dealing with settlement and economic problems in this important region in proto-historic and historic times. Furthermore, great credit is due to the team that recorded the pottery and other data according to periods with the closest attention.

The publication of the first volume of the Manasseh Hill Country survey (in Hebrew) adds a basic, primary, innovative and important work to the archaeological and historical literature of Eretz Israel. Generations of scholars and students will undoubtedly study this research.

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