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THE EARLY PRE-POTTERY NEOLITHIC B SITE AT NESHER-RAMLA QUARRY (NRQN), ISRAEL

The Zinman Institute of Archaeology
University of Haifa

Bouky B. Management
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With contributions by Amos Frumkin, Michael B. Toffolo, Elisabetta Boaretto, Lena Brailovsky, Julia Abramov, Roni Zuckerman-Cooper, Lior Weissbrod, Heeli C. Schechter, Daniella E. Bar-Yosef Mayer, Valentina Caracuta and Steve Weiner

Scientific editor
Reuven Yeshurun

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Dedicated to my grandparents
Yehuda and Simcha Avrahami

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PREFACE

The Pre-Pottery Neolithic B site of Nesher-Ramla (hence forth NRQN — Nesher-Ramla Quarry Neolithic) is a small filled sinkhole that was excavated by the author from September 2015 to May 2016. The site is situated within the greater el-Khirbeh archaeological site, which has been excavated since 1996 as a salvage project deriving from the ongoing work at the Nesher-Ramla quarry operated by the Nesher Israel Cement Enterprises Ltd, which has sponsored the project from its beginning until the present.

Exploration of the site started during the 1990s by the Archaeological Institute of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. It was subsequently continued by the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA), and since 2006 the excavations have been directed by the University of Haifa. The large-scale excavations at the site have been directed by Shlomo Kol-Ya'kov on behalf of the Zinman Institute of Archaeology at the University of Haifa. Results of the excavations have been continuously published, pertaining mainly to the Chalcolithic and Roman-Byzantine periods (see Chapter 1). The present volume focuses exclusively on the Pre-Pottery B Neolithic site.

The main author of this volume, Micka Ullman, had the honor of taking part in the excavations from 2015 until 2016, under the supervision of excavation director Shlomo Kol-Ya'kov and field director Vladimir Wolff Avrutis. Ullman led the excavations of the NRQN site and its publication, presented in this volume.

I wish to thank Shlomo Kol-Ya'kov and Vladimir Wolff Avrutis for their kind permission to work on and publish the NRQN site and its finds. Many thanks are due to the excavation team — Salim, Wahid, Said, Mustafa, Abu Ali, Mumtaz and Mhamad from Kfar Manda as well as to Asaph Levy of the Hebrew University who worked tirelessly under harsh winter conditions and made fieldwork possible. Thanks to Viatcheslav Pirsky and Sergey Alon for producing field measurements, 3D documentation, plans and sections of the site during the excavation, and for processing the graphics for this publication. Thanks go also to Tomer Appelbaum for field photography and to Anya Hayat and Tal Rogovsky for studio photography of the various finds. Thanks to Ortal Harush, from the Computational Archaeology Laboratory of the Hebrew University's Institute of Archaeology, for 3D scanning of some of the finds. I am grateful to Yuli Gekht for designing, programing and maintaining the excavation's computerised database, which made data management fluent and efficient. Thanks to Gadi Herzlinger for his assistance in conducting statistical analysis and operating the JMP software, to Noa Klein for her help in preparing some of the graphics and assistance in operating the Illustrator software, and to Oz Varoner, of the Nesher-Ramla excavation team, for his advice and knowledge regarding prehistoric research and raw material spatial distribution of the Nesher-Ramla area.

The author is grateful to Dr. Reuven Yeshurun for his work as scientific editor of this volume and for his patient support and helpful advice during the process, to Miriam Feinberg Vamosh,

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Special thanks are due to Bouky Boaz, the logistic manager and administrator of the project. I am grateful to the Zinman Institute of Archaeology at the University of Haifa for the academic patronage. Thanks are due to the Nesher Israel Cement Enterprises Ltd for financing this long-term project and providing plenty of technical assistance in the field. Thanks in particularly to Yoram Golan, the Nesher-Ramla quarry planning and development manager.

The excavation team

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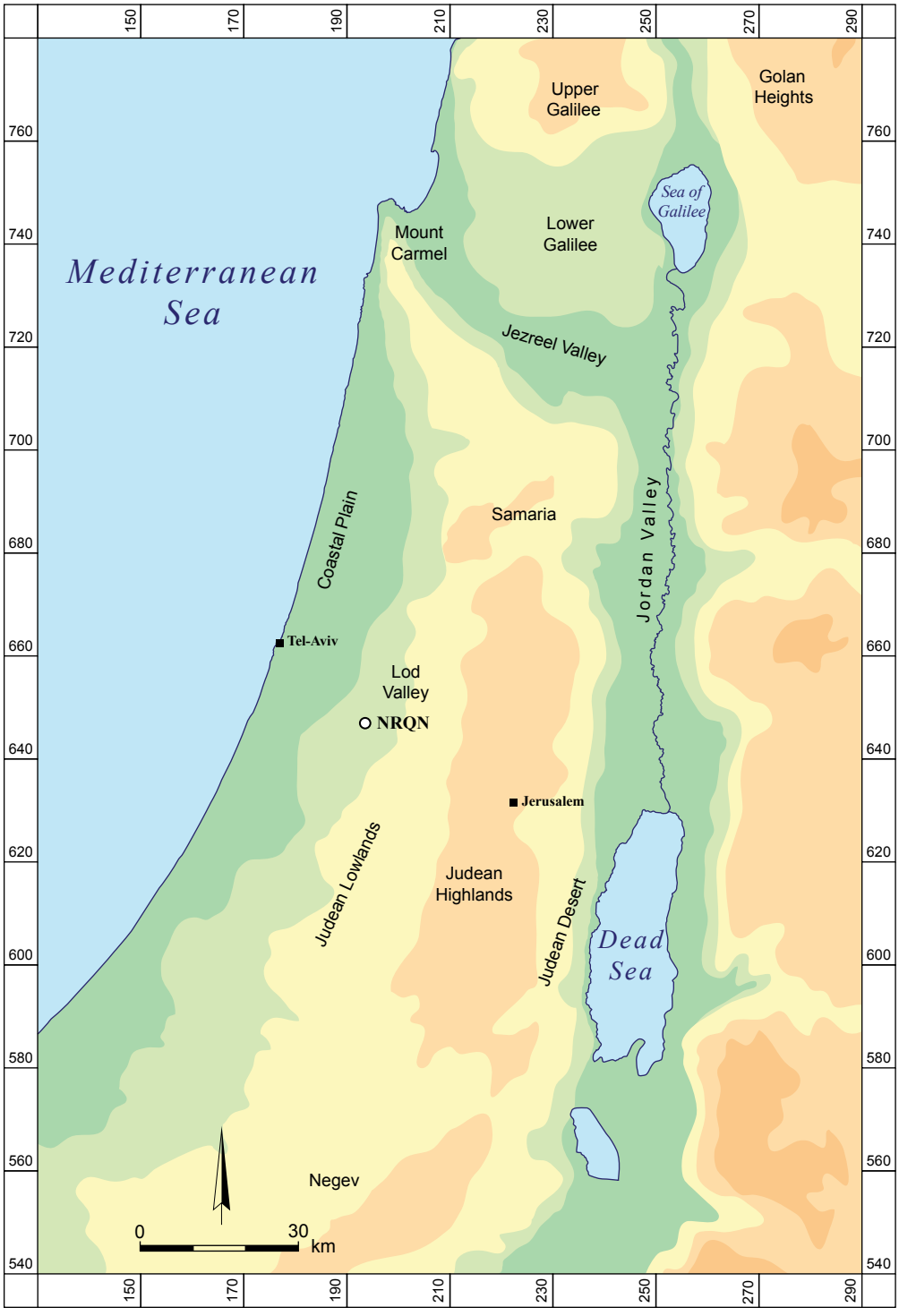

Fig. 1.1. Topographic map showing the geographical setting of NRQN site