

Neiel

Neiel (MT *Nē'ī'ēl*, maybe “dwelling-place of God”) is a town in the tribal allotment of Asher near Beth-Emek and Cabul, marking the eastern border of Asher (Josh 19:27). According to archaeological evidence dating to the Iron Age I/II and to the Persian

period, Neiel has usually been identified as Khirbet Ya'nīn (1711.2553) in the eastern Akko plain. The modern name might derive from the LXX transcription Ιναηλ/Αναηλ with metathesis *n'* to *'n* and the last consonant *l* changed to *n*. Similarly, the Latin tradition transcribes the name differently (Vg. *Neihel*; Jerome *Aniel*). However, the syntax of Josh 19:27, the only HB/OT text that mentions the name, is difficult. Due to these problems, it might be a town list and not a border description, which means a proper boundary line cannot be constructed. Even so, Beth-Emek is mentioned first in this list, which is usually situated at Tell Mīmās (1646.2634), north of Cabul and Neiel, with nearby 'Amqā preserving the biblical name. Therefore, this part of the Asherite borderline might be running north to south reaching Cabul *miššēmō'l* "from the north" (Beth-Emek – Neiel – Cabul). The LXX seems to add another place called Zephath (Σαφθα) after the Valley of Iphtah-el and before Beth-Emek. But this is probably a misreading. Furthermore, Neiel was sometimes identified as Tamra (1695.2506), located south of Cabul, with archaeological evidence of the Iron Age. Eusebius identifies the biblical place with a village called Baitoanaia, 15 miles east of Caesarea, located on a mountain with healing baths (*Onom.* 30.5–7). This identification is unrealistic since this site is not located in Asher, but in Manassch.

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