

18:15). The text in Josh 18:15 might be corrupt since Nephtoah is not located *yāmmā*, “west,” of Kiriath-jearim. Perhaps this mislocation just refers to a western progression of the boundary with no fixed point in the west, whereas the following text describes the border eastwards. Or, perhaps, *yāmmā*, “west,” intruded accidentally from v. 16 or from the Judah list (Josh 15:8) and, therefore, should be deleted. The toponym Nephtoah is only attested in the construction *ma‘yan mē neptōah*, “spring of the Waters of Nephtoah,” (Josh 18:15) where the double reference to a water source is redundant. The construct *ma‘yan mē neptōah* is often related to the Egyptian pharaoh Merneptah, since there is a “well of Merneptah” located on the mountain, most probably on the ridge west of Jerusalem (Pap Anastasi III vs. 6,4). Since the singular is to be read in this diary, there is no indication of a road running along a series of wells which might be identified with the later Roman road. Nephtoah is usually identified with Liftā (1687.1338) or ‘Ayn Liftā (1686.1337), because the consonants lamed and nun are interchangeable. The existence of a nearby settlement at Liftā (1687.1338) in biblical times is not necessary, since wells are only mentioned in the sources. Eusebius literally renders *ma‘yan mē neptōah* as “spring of waters” and locates it within the tribe of Benjamin (*Onom.* 136.18–19), though the biblical description is not precise enough. Jerome renders Neptoe as “dissolution or deception” (*Nom. hebr.* 29.12–13).

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Nephtoah

Nephtoah (MT *Neptōah*, “opening”; LXX Νεφθω) is a boundary marker of Benjamin and Judah between Mt. Ephron and the Valley of Hinnom (Josh 15:9;