

Ophrah (Person)

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Ophrah (MT *ʿŌprâ* = gazelle, deer; LXX Γοφρα; Vg. *Ophra*) is a child of Meonothai, son of Othniel. Ophrah is mentioned in the genealogical record of Judah (1 Chr 4:13–14) within the genealogy of Kenaz. Ophrah could be a grandchild of the judge Othniel, son of Kenaz (Josh 15:17; Judg 1:13; 3:9–11). Since *ʿoprâ* is a feminine form of the appellative *ʿōper*, “young gazelle, deer,” it might refer to a daughter of Meonothai, although genealogies usually contain names of sons. As towns are grammatically feminine, we may be dealing with a town established by the Maonathites and not with a Judahite clan. In that case, a place called Ophrah would be behind the personal name, which raises a

Judean claim on an Israelite town, either Benjaminite or Manassite Ophrah.

However, the Maonathites seem to be residents of the Judean town of Maon, Khirbet Maʿīn (1626.0908), about 12 km south of Hebron in the vicinity of Carmel, Ziph, and Juttah (Josh 15:55). Thus, Ophrah might be a site established or colonized by people of Maon, perhaps not in Benjaminite or Manassite territory but in the vicinity of Judean Maon. The toponym ʿōprâ, “place of dust,” is not specific but refers to the reddish-white color of the dust in the surrounding terrain and can be located anywhere in Israel.

The name ʿŌprâ is often associated with ʿifrīt (demon) in Arabic folklore, but this negative connotation would be removed by the supplementary name ṭayyib *el-ism* (the name is good). The site of Maonathite Ophrah could, thus, be found at Khirbet eṭ-Ṭayyib (1643.0818), 9 km south of the Judean place Maon.

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