

## Mahaneh-Dan

Mahaneh-Dan (MT *Maḥānēh-Dān*, “camp of Dan”) was the camp of the Danites at the time of the judges. The name refers either to a campground of nomads or to the encampment of armies. At Mahaneh-Dan the Spirit of the Lord is said to have stirred Samson in his fight against the Philistines (Judg 13:25). Moreover, Mahaneh-Dan is a campsite at the time of the northern migration of 600 Danites (Judg 18:12) situated within the territory of the tribe of Judah behind Kiriath-jearim. The term used betrays the fact that Jerusalem was the point of reference for the biblical author who situates Mahaneh-Dan west of Kiriath-jearim, which can be identified with *Dēr el-ʿAzhar* (1599.1353).

However, Judg 13:25 claims that Mahaneh-Dan lies between Zorah and Eshtaol – maybe in the *Wādī el-Muṭlaq* (1510.1320) – which, however, is not fully in accordance with the other statements and could still be explained in a number of different ways. Maybe there were two separate temporary Danite settlements: one west of Kiriath-jearim and one between Zorah and Eshtaol. These settlements might also have been the seasonal camps of the tribe of Dan during the period of transhumance. However, it is possible that Mahaneh-Dan is a secondary gloss of Judg 13:25 based on a similar geographical setting in Judg 18:11. Finally, the juxtaposition of the two different locations could have been motivated by literary and theological grounds. Whereas the Danites did not fight the indigenous population and had to move to the north, Samson himself did. All in all, Mahaneh-Dan does not seem to have been a permanent settlement which can be identified. This is corroborated by both the LXX and Vulgate which translate this toponym as *παρεμβολὴ Δαν* or *castra Danorum*. Clearly, the translators did not consider Mahaneh-Dan to be a proper toponym.

There is no reason to conjecture that Mahaneh-Dan is Manachat-Dan, a place deduced from information in 1 Chr 2:52–54 which mentions Manahathites along with Zorathites and Eshtaolites. In addition, there would be no reason for the name Mahaneh-Dan to change into the place name *maḥānēh dayyān* (“camp of judges”).

**Bibliography:** ■ Abel, F.-M., *Géographie de la Palestine*, vol. 2 (EBib; Paris 1938). ■ Gaß, E., *Die Ortsnamen des Richterbuches in historischer und redaktioneller Perspektive* (ADPV 35; Wiesbaden 2005). ■ Hart, R. van der, “The Camp of Dan and the Camp of Yahweh,” VT 25 (1975) 720–28. ■ Irwin, B. P., “Mahaneh-Dan (Place),” ABD 4 (New York 1992) 473–74. ■ Kallai, Z., *Historical Geography of the Bible* (Jerusalem 1986). ■ Naʿaman, N., *Borders and Districts in Biblical Historiography* (Biblical Studies 4; Jerusalem 1986). ■ Niemann, H. M., *Die Daniten* (FRLANT 135; Göttingen 1985). ■ Niemann, H. M., “Zorah, Eshtaol, Beth-Shemesh and Dan’s Migration to the South: A Region and Its Traditions in the Late Bronze and Iron Ages,” JSOT 86 (1999) 25–48. ■ Schick, C., “Artuf und seine Umgebung,” ZDPV 10 (1887) 131–56. ■ Simons, J., *The Geographical and Topographical Texts of the Old Testament* (SFSMD 2; Leiden 1959). ■ Vos, J. C. de, *Das Los Judas* (VTSup 95; Leiden 2003).

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