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Maralah/Mareal

Maralah (MT *Mar'ālā* “site on a mountain spur” or “trembling”) is a place on the southern border of the tribal inheritance of Zebulun (Josh 19:11). The syntax of Josh 19:11 is problematic since it describes the border running up towards the sea and towards Maralah such that Maralah could be the next town or another remarkable landmark outside the actual border. Therefore, Maralah’s precise location is uncertain. If Maralah is a place on the border of Zebulun, it lies between Sarid (Josh 19:10), Tell Šadūd (1723.2296) and Jokneam, Tell Qēmūn (1605.2300). Since the boundary went up *layyāmmā* (“westwards”), Maralah lies west of Sarid. Due to several transcriptions of the name of the site which suggest that the consonant ʿ has the valor of ġ, biblical Maralah might be identified as Tell Ġalṭa (1666.2321), which contains archaeological evidence from the Late Bronze Age to the Byzantine Period. Sometimes Maralah is also identified as Tell Tōra (1660.2287), Tell eš-Šemmām (1649.2306) or Tell el-Bēda (1687.2315), sites with ceramic finds from the Iron Age. There are various transcriptions of Maralah. The LXX and Vg. have a variety of forms (LXX Μαροῦλα, Μαροαλα, Μαροαγεῖδα; Vg. *Medala*, *Merala*, *Marala*). According to Eusebius, Marala is an ascent to Zebulun (*Onom.* 130.17). Jerome believes it to be a position on a hill and translates Marala with “sad ascending” (*Nom. Hebr.* 29.8–9). There is no need for a *he*-locale in Josh 19:11, so it is unlikely that the text referred to Mareal.

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