

## Mozah (Place)

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## Mozah (Place)

Mozah (MT *Mōšā* “oil/wine press” or “source/origin”) is a town belonging to the tribal inheritance of Benjamin and is located near Mizpeh and Chephirah (Josh 18:26). The name Mozah is also found as *Mōšā* in the genealogy of Benjamin (1 Chr 8:36) and of Caleb (1 Chr 2:46). The place name Mozah is inscribed on a jar handle discovered north of Jerusalem and dated paleographically to the 7th century BCE and on stamp impressions from the Persian period, which indicates that Mozah was a local center for liquids – either wine or oil – thus corresponding to the place name. Whether it was an administrative or a pottery manufacturing center is debatable. Due to the preservation of the biblical name, Mozah has been searched in the environs of Khirbet Beit Mizze (1651.1348), which contains archaeological evidence from the Iron Age II and the Hellenistic to Early Islamic period. Mozah was renamed Emmaus by Vespasian who settled 800 veterans in this town – the name etymologically related to *Αμωσα*, the Greek rendering of Mozah – distant 30 στάδια (~6 km) from Jerusalem (Josephus, *J.W.* 7.217). This place was later renamed Colonia-Emmaus or simply Colonia due to the Roman settlers, whereas the Jewish population might have moved to Khirbet Beit Mizze transferring the biblical name to that place. Rabbinic sources similarly relate Mozah with Colonia (ySuk 4:3). Mozah was a place where willows were gathered for Sukkoth. The name Mozah is related to the root *y-š-ʿ* “exclude” since this place was exempt from taxes (bSuk 45a). One of the springs there is mentioned as “Source of Colonia” by Cyril of Scythopolis (*Vita Sabae* 67).

For these reasons biblical Mozah is located in the environs of Qālūniyeh (1656.1333) and could be identified with modern Tel Moza (1654.1335) with archaeological evidence dating mainly to the Iron Age and to the Hellenistic to Byzantine period. Remains of an east-west orientated, long-room temple have been excavated in area B that originated in the 9th century BCE (stratum VI). This 18 × 13 m large structure had a portico consisting of two pillars flanked by antes, and a main room with benches on the walls and five sacred stones. In the eastern courtyard, a square altar made of unhewn field-stones, a refuse pit for pottery sherds and bones, a podium, perhaps used as an offering table, as well as numerous cultic objects and figurines have been found. In the 8th century BCE, the benches and standing stones as well as the altar and refuse pit were sealed by a floor, and thus intentionally abandoned, which maybe reflects a cultic reform (stratum V). The later colonnaded “Building 500” dated to the 7th–6th century BCE (stratum IV) is hardly a temple complex due to the lack of cultic objects. Mozah might have been a provincial administrative settlement for marketing grain to the capital in the Iron Age II. Since Mozah is written with a definite article in Josh 18:26, LXX and Vg. transcribe it as *Αμωσα*/Ammosa. It is questionable whether Mozah could be equated with NT-Emmaus (Luke 24:13), a place 60 στάδια from Jerusalem. Eusebius locates Amsa in the territory of Benjamin (Eusebius, *Onom.* 28.11). Jerome translates Messa as “quarrel” or “un-leavened” (Jerome, *Nom. Hebr.* 29.8).

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