

Nezib

Nezib (MT *Nēšīb*, “post” or “place of pillars”) is a town in the tribal allotment of Judah next to Ashnah and Keilah, located in the fourth district of the Shephelah like Libnah and Maresha (Josh 15:43). Contrary to earlier proposals, Nezib is neither mentioned in the Thutmosis list (No.11: *qrt nḏn*) nor in the Amarna letters (EA 206:4 *Naziba*). This is because Nezib is given a different name and should be south of Damascus, for EA 206 belongs to a series of similar letters (EA 201–6) pointing to places in the north. According to Eusebius, Nesib is located 9 miles from Eleutheropolis to Hebron which seems to be exaggerated (*Onom.* 136.21–22), whereas Jerome has the right distance of 7 miles and refers to the modern name Nasibi (*Sit.* 137.24–25). Jerome correctly relates the toponym Nasib to the root *n-š-b* and translates it as “title or standing” (*Nom. hebr.* 29.13). Nezib is usually identified with Khirbet Bēt Nešīb eš-Šerqīye (1511.1104). This site is located near Keilah, about 7 miles away from Eleutheropolis in the direction of Hebron, matching the distance given by Jerome. Furthermore, the Arabic name could be related easily to the biblical toponym. Archaeological evidence for the town dates from the Iron Age II to the Byzantine period, so that Nezib could securely be identified with Khirbet Bēt Nešīb eš-Šerqīye.

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