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Japhia (Place)

Japhia (MT *Yāpīā'*, "high lying place"; LXX Φαγγαί, LXX^A Ιαφαγγαί) is a town in the eastern part of the southern boundary of Zebulun mentioned in the book of Joshua after Chisloth-tabor and Daberath (Josh 19:12). Japhia is usually identified with *Yāfā* (1761.2325), at the lower edge of the hills of Galilee, with pottery from Iron Age I/II and Hellenistic to Byzantine periods, though *Yāfā* has topographical problems. Therefore Japhia is sometimes identified with *el-Mešhed* (1802.2382). However, since the neighboring town Daberath is also part of the Issachar list (Josh 21:28), the border town Japhia might belong to Issachar as well. Japhia is mentioned in the Amarna letters as one of several cities that supplied *corvée* (EA 365:26: *Yapu*). It probably belonged to the Egyptian vassal state of Megiddo. Japhia was one of the places fortified by Josephus (Josephus, *J.W.* 2.573; *Life* 188) and captured by Trajan (id., *J.W.* 3.289). According to Josephus Japhia was the largest village in Galilee with strong walls where he resided occasionally (id., *Life* 230, 270). Jerome translated *Iafie* with "aperture," "exhibit," or "surface" (*Nom. hebr.* 28.13–14) and also called it *loppe* (*Sit.* 109.25). According to late Christian tradition the apostle James, son of Zebedee, was born in Japhia.

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