

AI

The Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature. James Strong and John McClintock; Haper and Brothers; NY; 1880.

A'i (Hebrew *Ay*, אַי, *ruin*, perh. so called after its destruction, [Ge 12:8](#); [Ge 13:3](#); [Jos 7:2-5](#); [Jos 8:1-29](#); [Jos 9:3](#); [Jos 10:1-2](#); [Jos 12:9](#); [Ezr 2:28](#); [Ne 7:32](#); [Jer 49:3](#); always with the art., אַיָּ, except in the passage last cited; Sept. Γαῖ in Joshua, Αἴγαι in Genesis, Αἴα in Ezra, Αἴβ in Nehemiah, Γαῖβ in Jeremiah; Vulg. *Hai*; Auth. Vers. "Hai" in Genesis: also in the prolonged forms *Aya'*, אַיָּא, [Ne 11:31](#), Sept. Αἴα, Vulg. *Hai*, Auth. Vers. "Aija;" *Ayath'*, אַיָּת, [Isa 10:28](#), Αἴαθ, *Ajath*, "Aiath;" v. r. אַיָּר, text [Jos 8:16](#); אַיָּרָה, Samar. [Ge 12:8](#), comp. Αἴβ, Josephus, *Ant.* 5, 1, 12; Jerome *Gai*), the name of one or two places. See also AVIM.

1. A royal city of the Canaanites ([Jos 10:1](#)), the site of which (not necessarily then a city) is mentioned as early as the time of Abraham, who pitched his tent between it and Bethel ([Ge 12:8](#); [Ge 13:3](#)); but it is chiefly noted for its capture and destruction by Joshua ([Jos 7:2-5](#); [Jos 8:1-29](#)). *SEE AMBUSH*. At a later period Ai appears to have been rebuilt, for it is mentioned by Isaiah ([Isa 10:28](#)), and it was inhabited by the Benjamites after the captivity ([Ezr 2:28](#); [Ne 7:32](#); [Ne 11:31](#)). The site was known, and some scanty ruins still existed in the time of Eusebius and Jerome (*Onomast.* s.v. Αἴγαι), but Dr. Robinson was unable to discover any certain traces of either. He remarks (*Bib. Researches*, 2, 313), however, that its situation with regard to Bethel may be well determined by the facts recorded in Scripture. That Ai lay to the east of Bethel is certain (comp. [Jos 12:9](#); "beside Bethaven," [Jos 7:2](#); [Jos 8:9](#));

and the two cities were not so far distant from each other but that the men of Bethel mingled in the pursuit of the Israelites when they feigned to flee before the king of Ai, and thus both cities were left defenseless ([Jos 8:17](#)); yet they were not so near but that Joshua could place an ambuscade on the west (or south-west) of Ai, without its being observed by the men of Bethel, while he himself remained behind in a valley to the north of Ai ([Jos 8:4,11-13](#)). A little to the south of a village called Deir Diwan, and one hour's journey from Bethel, the site of an ancient place is indicated by reservoirs hewn in the rock, excavated tombs, and foundations of hewn stone. This, Dr. Robinson inclines to think, may mark the site of Ai, as it agrees with all the intimations as to its position. Near it, on the north, is the deep Wady el-Mutyah, and toward the south-west other smaller wadys, in which the ambushed party of Israelites might easily have been concealed. According to Schwarz (*Palest.* p. 84), the ancient name is still preserved in some ruins called *Khirbet Medinat Gai*, near the edge of a valley, two English miles south-east of Bethel; a position which he thinks corresponds with a rabbinical notice of Ai (*Shemoth Rabbah*, c. 32) as lying three Roman miles from Bethel (erroneously written Jericho). Thenius, however (in Kauffer's *Exeget. Studien*, 2, 127 sq.), locates Ai at *Turmus Aya*, a small rocky mound east of Sinjil (Robinson's *Researches*, 3, 85), a position which is defended by Keil (*Comment. on Jos 7:2*); but in which he has been influenced by an incorrect location of Bethel (q.v.). Stanley (*Palest.* p. 200 note) places it at the head of the *Wady Harith*. For Krafft's identification with *Kirbet el-Haiyah*, see Robinson (new ed. of *Researches*, 3, 288). Van de Velde, after a careful examination, concludes that no spot answers the conditions except *Tell el-Hajar*, about 40' E. by S. of Beitin, on the southern border of Wady el-Mutyah, with no remains

but a broken cistern (*Narrativiii. 278-282*). This position essentially corresponds to that assigned by Robinson.

⇒ [Bible concordance for Ai](#).

It is the opinion of some that the words AVIM *SEE AVIM* in [Jos 18:23](#), and GAZA *SEE GAZA* in [1Ch 7:28](#), are corruptions of Ai.

2. A city of the Ammonites, apparently opposite Heshbon, and devastated next to it by the Babylonians on their way to Jerusalem ([Jer 49:3](#)). Others, however, regard the name as an appellative here.