

Archaeologists Discover Biblical City Where King David Fled From Saul

Researchers from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, the Israel Antiquities Authority and Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia, believe they have discovered the Philistine town of Ziklag, immortalized in the biblical narrative.

Ziklag is mentioned multiple times in the Bible in relation to David in 1 and 2 Samuel. According to the biblical narrative, Achish, King of Gat, allowed David to find refuge in Ziklag while fleeing King Saul.

It was from Ziklag that David departed to be anointed king in Hebron. According to Scripture, Ziklag was also the scene of a dramatic event, in which the Amalekites, desert nomads, raided and burned the town, taking women and children captive.

The excavation, which began in 2015 at the site of Khirbet a-Ra'i in the Judaeen foothills—between Kiryat Gat and Lachish, has proceeded in cooperation with Prof. Yosef Garfinkel, head of the Institute of Archaeology at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Saar Ganor of the Israel Antiquities Authority and Dr. Kyle Keimer and Dr. Gil Davis of Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia.

The excavation was funded by Joey Silver of Jerusalem, Aron Levy of New Jersey and the Roth Family and Isaac Wakil, both of Sydney. The excavation has been ongoing for seven seasons with large areas being exposed—approximately 1,000 square miles, leading to this new identification for Ziklag.

The name Ziklag is unusual in the lexicon of names in the Land of Israel, since it is not of the local Canaanite-Semitic language. It is a Philistine name, given to the town by an

alien population of immigrants from the Aegean.

Evidence of a settlement from the Philistine era has been found there, from the 12-11th centuries A.D. Spacious, massive stone structures have been uncovered, containing finds typical of the Philistine civilization.

Additional finds are foundation deposits, including bowls and an oil lamp—offerings laid beneath the floors of the buildings out of a belief that these would bring good fortune in the construction.