

Thesis Title: EXPOSING DAVID'S ZIKLAG:
A CASE FOR KHIRBET AL-RA'I

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Summary	iii
Statement of Originality	iv
List of Figures	v
Abbreviations	vi
Acknowledgements	vii
1. Introduction, Context, Aim and Methodology	1
1.1. Introduction	1
1.2. Context of study	1
1.3. Aim	2
1.4. Methodology	3
1.5. Overview of the Study (Step-By-Step Processes)	4
1.5.1 Evaluated the biblical sources to establish a geographical range for Ziklag's location	4
1.5.2 Identified the sites that have been archaeologically explored within the geographical range for Ziklag's location based on <i>Section 1.5.1</i>	5
1.5.3 Analysed the archaeology of the selected sites based on their settlement profile	5
1.5.4 Analysed the material culture to determine which of the selected site fits the specific historical details presented in the text.	5
1.5.5 Analysed the physical setting of each site in light of biblical Ziklag	5
1.5.6 Developed the selection criteria from an archaeological and geographical perspective.	6
1.5.7 Analysed and compared competing sites by using the selection criteria developed.	7
1.5.8 Articulated which site's archaeological profile best fits the selection criteria.	7
1.6. Site Identification	7
1.7. The Origin of the Name Ziklag	8
1.8. The Negeb	9
2. Proposed Sites from Previous Studies	12
3. Analysis of Biblical Texts	13
3.1. Biblical Mentions of Town Lists and its Context	13
3.2. Dating in the Bible	13
3.3. Boundary-System and Town Lists	16
3.4. Simeon's Town list	17
3.5. The Book of Samuel	20
3.6. Biblical Interpretation and Historicity of Ziklag	23
4. Ziklag, David and the Bible	25
5. Geographic Analysis	30
5.1. David's Travel Times between Ziklag, Gath and Aphek	30
5.2. Ziklag's Location	34
6. Criteria for a Site to be Identified as Ziklag	37
7. Analysis of Proposed Ancient Sites for Ziklag	40
7.1. Tell el-Hesi	40

	Tell el-Hesi versus Criteria	42
7.2.	Khirbet Zuheilikhah near Gaza	43
	Khirbet Zuheilikhah versus Criteria	43
7.3.	Elusa/Haluza south of Beer-sheba	43
	Elusa versus Criteria	44
7.4.	Tel Ḥalif/Tell Khuweilifeh	44
	Tel Ḥalif versus Criteria	47
7.5.	Tel es-Sera'/Tell esh-Shari'ah.....	47
	Tel es-Sera' versus Criteria.....	48
7.6.	Tel Māsōś in the Beer-sheba Valley.....	49
	Tel Māsōś versus Criteria.....	51
7.7.	Tel Malḥa/Tel el-Muleihah	51
7.8.	Tell es-Seba'/Tel Beer-sheba.....	52
	Tel es-Seba'/Tel Beer-sheba versus Criteria	55
7.9.	Tel 'Erani/Tell 'Areini/'Areq el-Menshiyeh	55
	Tel 'Erani versus Criteria.....	56
7.10.	Tel Nagila/Tell Nejileh	57
	Tel Nagila versus Criteria.....	58
7.11.	Tel el-Far'ah South/Tel Sharuhen.....	59
	Tel el-Far'ah South/Tel Sharuhen versus Criteria.....	60
7.12.	Khirbet al-Ra'i.....	61
	Khirbet al-Ra'i versus Criteria.....	68
8.	Comparison Grid.....	69
9.	Summary and Conclusions	70
	Bibliography	71
	Appendix A: Map of Excavation Sites in the Holy Land	83
	Appendix B: Calculation for David's Walking Times and Distances.....	84
	Appendix C: Biblical Backgrounds Regional Study Map 4	85

Summary

According to the Bible, Ziklag was David's base of operations prior to his rise to power before moving to Hebron, where he became the Judahite monarch (1 Sam 27, 2 Sam 2:1-3). David served as a vassal to the Philistines during his one year and four months stay at Ziklag in Philistine territory (1 Sam 27:6-7). Identifying Ziklag's modern correlate is of great importance because it will supplement the biblical portrayal of this time period, and especially the nature and location of Ziklag. Twelve sites have been proposed as Ziklag, including the latest, Khirbet al-Ra'i, an identification that was proposed by the directors of the ongoing archaeological project at the site.

Khirbet al-Ra'i, a small site on a hill above the southern bank of Naḥal Lachish, close to the border of three geographical regions: the coastal plain, Judean Shephelah and the Negeb. It was a Judean/Philistine border town in ancient times. In a 2013 archaeological survey of Khirbet al-Ra'i, 11th-10th century potsherds (Iron-I/II) were found – the period of Ziklag's main occupation. In 2015, excavations commenced that unearthed a building complex that was destroyed in the early 10th century, corresponding with the Bible's claim that Ziklag was destroyed at this exact time period. Khirbet al-Ra'i's geopolitical location is close to Tell es-Safi/Gath and opposite to Ashkelon, that overlooks and controls the route to and from the Shephelah and the coastal plain.

A set of evaluation criteria was developed to identify Ziklag's modern correlate. All proposed sites were tested against these criteria. Khirbet al-Ra'i is the only site that meets all criteria.

Statement of Originality

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

(Signed) _____

Date: 2019-11-20

Patricia Yolanda Dean

List of Figures

Fig. 1 Map of Philistia and Judah marking the location of Khirbet al-Ra'	2
Fig. 2 Map of David's biblical Negeb	26
Fig. 3 David's Travel Times between Ziklag, Gath and Aphek	33
Fig. 4 Geographic Analysis Showing Likely Area Containing Ziklag	35
Fig. 5 Map of southwestern Palestine depicting Tel Milh	52
Fig. 6 Map of Philistia and Judah marking the location of Khirbet al-Ra'i	61
Fig. 7 Aerial Photograph of Khirbet al-Ra'i taken on Feb. 14, 2019	62
Fig. 8 Area A – Photograph of mid to late 11 th century buildings	64
Fig. 9 Area B – Photograph of 11 th /early 10 th century complex	65
Fig. 10 Area D2 – Photograph of Iron-I to the Hellenistic Period buildings	66

Abbreviations

4QSama	The Book of Samuel found in Cave 4 at Qumran, dating from 50-25 BCE
4QSamb	Parts of the Book of Samuel found in Cave 4 at Qumran, dating to the end of the 3rd/beginning of the 2nd centuries BCE
4QSamc	The Book of Samuel found in Cave 4 at Qumran, which was written by the same scribe who wrote the Rule of the Community.
ADT	Actual Distance Travelled
Dtr	Deuteronomist editor/writer/historian
DtrH	Deuteronomistic History
kpd	kilometre per day
mpd	miles per day
SLD	Straight Line Distance

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1. Introduction, Context, Aim and Methodology

1.1. Introduction

The location of biblical Ziklag (Hebrew: זִקְלָג) is one of the great archaeological biblical mysteries.¹ Identifying Ziklag's location is important because it will supplement Ziklag's biblical portrayal within its cultural and historical context. Ziklag's modern location has been the subject of much debate and eleven sites have been proposed in past scholarship. However, each of these proposals has its problematic elements, casting doubts on its identification.

1.2. Context of study

Ziklag is mentioned fifteen times in the Bible, twelve of them relating to David.² According to the biblical text, when David had a falling out with King Saul of Israel, he sought refuge with King Achish of Philistine Gath (1 Sam 27:1-2), who gave Ziklag to David, for his 600 men and their families to live in (1 Sam 27:6). Ziklag was significant during David's rise to power as it was his headquarters when he transitioned from a Philistine mercenary to a Judahite monarch (1 Sam 27:5-8, 2 Sam 2:4). After Saul's death, David and his men left Ziklag and settled in the towns of Hebron (2 Sam 2:1-3). The people of Judah seceded from Saul's kingdom then went to Hebron, where they anointed David king over the house of Judah (2 Sam 2:4). Saul's son, Ishbaal, was made king by Abner over all of Israel without Judah (2 Sam 2:8-10).

Khirbet al-Ra'i is a small site at the foothills of Southern Judah (see *Fig. 1*). It is located atop a hill on the southern bank of the Lachish River; situated on what was Judah's western border next to the eastern fringe of Philistia in ancient times. In a 2013 survey of Khirbet al-Ra'i, archaeologists uncovered a number of potsherds that were subsequently dated to the late 11th/early 10th century,³ which was the period of time the Bible associates with David. This led Garfinkel and Ganor⁴ to commence excavations at the site in 2015.

¹ Biblical Ziklag will be referred to as Ziklag for the rest of the case study; All dates indicated as "century BCE" or "centuries BCE", will be written as plain "century" or "centuries".

² The fifteen references to Ziklag in the Bible are: Josh 15:31; Josh 19:5; 1 Sam 27:6, 30:1, 14, 26; 2 Sam 1:1, 4:10; 1 Chronicles 4:30, 12:1, 21 and Neh 11:28.

³ Y. Garfinkel and S. Ganor. 2018a: 944. The survey was conducted by Saar Ganor, Yeshayahu Lender and Maya Oron

⁴ Prof. Yosef Garfinkel is the Head of the Institute of Archaeology at Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Mr. Saar Ganor is an Israeli archaeologist, who surveyed Khirbet al-Ra'i and works for the Israel Antiquities Authority. Garfinkel, Ganor and Dr. Kyle Keimer of Macquarie University, Australia direct the archaeological dig at Khirbet al-Ra'i.

This is currently a joint expedition by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel Antiquities Authority and Macquarie University, Australia.

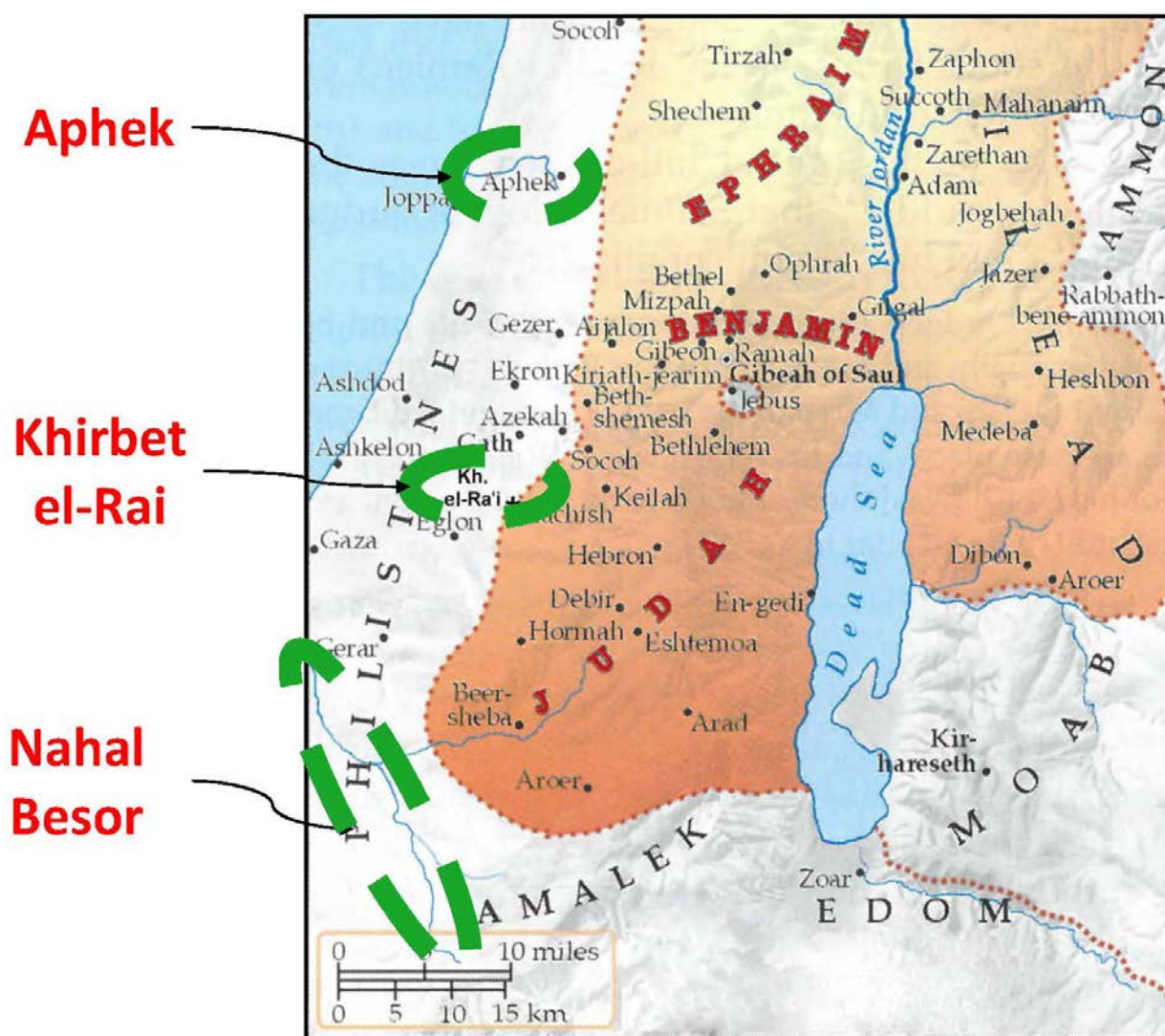


Fig. 1 Map of Philistia and Judah marking the location of Khirbet.al-Ra'i ⁵

1.3. Aim

Over the last century, archaeology has assisted in the identification of several biblical sites. However, an ongoing debate within archaeological scholarship and the history of David still rages over which modern site can be identified with Ziklag. Gaps in history and archaeological findings have obscured Ziklag's location and the ancient sources are challenging. Not all fifteen biblical references to Ziklag are clear and helpful. Thus, identifying Ziklag's modern correlate is of paramount importance because it will allow us to supplement the biblical portrayal of King David's period and the nature and location of Ziklag itself.

During the 2015-2016 excavations of Khirbet al-Ra'i, late 11th/early 10th century burned

⁵ A. F. Rainey and R. S. Notley. 2014: 146.

buildings were exposed.⁶ This coincides well with the biblical account (1 Sam 30:1) that describes the burning of Ziklag by the Amalekites while David and his men were with Achish at Aphek (1 Sam 29:1-2).⁷ Aphek is in the north near Aendor in Jezreel, where the battle took place with Saul.⁸ The material finds from these excavations include Iron I/IIA remains such as Canaanite and Philistine pottery demonstrating a history of habitation that fits with the textual references to Ziklag. These and other material finds (i.e. tabuns, figurines, jewellery etc.) from the site have led to the announcement by the directors of the excavations that they have identified Khirbet al-Ra'i as Ziklag,⁹ thereby increasing the number of proposed identifications of Ziklag to twelve. A significant contribution to archaeological research will be made if Khirbet al-Ra'i is proven to be the modern correlate of Ziklag.

This project presents an archaeological case study that discusses the historical geography of Southern Judah, where the late 11th/early 10th century King David roamed before he became king. Therefore, the different sources pertaining to Ziklag were discussed and the identifications suggested for Ziklag's modern correlate were assessed.

1.4. Methodology

The methodology employed in this study included the collecting, analysis and summarisation of the available archaeological data of each of the twelve sites that have been proposed as Ziklag. This included any relevant research that have been undertaken and other sources of information about the potential for locating and dating Ziklag, and more specifically if the recently proposed Khirbet al-Ra'i is Ziklag's modern correlate. Since this analysis was based upon vast amounts of archaeological, geographical and historical research, it was vital from the outset that a history of scholarly developments and opinions related to the topic of Ziklag was provided. This analysis detailed discussions on

⁶ K. H. Keimer. 2018: 2-3.

⁷ P. K. McCarter, Jr. 1986: 119. McCarter writes that David's public career began sometime in the last quarter of the 11th century BCE. Following the internal evidence of David's reign of forty years, this would put David's reign between the late 11th/early 10th century BCE;

Y. Garfinkel and S. Ganor. 2018b: Section 11.1. In this report, the radiocarbon dates for the destruction levels in Areas A and B of Khirbet al-Ra'i, though noted by Garfinkel and Ganor as 1050 and 1000, are likely much closer in date. In their article in which the first radiocarbon samples from al-Ra'i are published, there is little difference chronologically between them. They are all dated to the late 11th century.

⁸ Eusebius of Caesarea. 2003: 26.

⁹ On July 8, 2019, Garfinkel, Keimer and Ganor, the directors of the Khirbet al-Ra'i archaeological dig, made a public announcement to the press that Khirbet al-Ra'i is the modern correlate of Ziklag. This identification has yet to be accepted by the academic community.

the historical-geographical setting of Ziklag, a comprehensive analysis of the archaeological remains from competing sites, and a linguistic analysis of the name 'Ziklag'.

As the biblical references to Ziklag are each related to the tribes of Judah and Simeon, only the relevant parts of the Bible were analysed. This included an analysis of the Book of Joshua, particularly the boundary allocations and town lists within chapters 15 and 19, the Book of 1 Samuel particularly chapters 27-30, 1 Chronicles 4, 12 and Neh 11:28. To identify the location of Ziklag, a geographical analysis was done based on the biblical information pertaining to Ziklag and of David's travels around the Negeb of Southern Judah. Once the information was collected, a selection criteria was developed with which to identify which of the twelve proposed sites is best suited to be Ziklag's modern correlate. The outcome of this selection is summarised and included in this study.

It should be noted that since this analysis was heavily dependent on available information gathered from the archaeological projects of the sites that were proposed as Ziklag, only sites that have been surveyed, sites that have been excavated and sites that have been proposed as Ziklag were included in this study. In addition, only the sites that lie within the Negeb of Southern Judah were included.

1.5. Overview of the Study (Step-By-Step Processes)

The following sections describe in detail the steps that were taken to complete this project. Each proposed site's challenging elements were identified to determine whether said site is Ziklag or not. The following steps were followed that shaped this project. A set of criteria was developed based on the findings derived from each step.

1.5.1 Evaluated the biblical sources to establish a geographical range for Ziklag's location.

Establishing the geographical range for Ziklag's location was the first step taken in identifying its location. This was achieved by analysing the fifteen biblical references to Ziklag, particularly in the biblical town lists, and the discussions in academic literature. Understanding Ziklag's function and geographic location within the identified geographical range was critical. The etymology of the name Ziklag was analysed for the information that helped ascertain the geographic, cultural, and linguistic history of Ziklag. The Bible narrates that David raided the southern tribes of the Negeb from ancient times on the way to Shur and on to Egypt (1 Sam 27:8). This positions David in the northern Negeb.

1.5.2 Identified the sites that have been archaeologically explored within the geographical range for Ziklag's location based on *Section 1.5.1*.

Because the analysis for this project required archaeological data, the output of the analysis outlined in *Section 1.5.1* was narrowed down further to the sites surveyed and/or excavated within the selected geographical range of the northern Negeb. This was achieved by analysing the literature and archaeology reports on those selected sites. Available excavation reports for each of the proposed sites were the major sources that were consulted. Sources apart from the Bible such as encyclopedias, literature published by the Israel Antiquities Authority, by other archaeological organisations, and academic literature were reviewed for the most recent and relevant information pertaining to Ziklag and newly proposed sites.

1.5.3 Analysed the archaeology of the selected sites based on their settlement profile.

The archaeology and literature for each site selected in *Section 1.5.2* were examined to determine each site's settlement profile, as defined by the following:

1. Site location and name
2. Occupation periods (e.g. Early, Middle or Late Bronze Age; Iron-I, II, Roman, Persian)
3. Settlement group types (e.g. Canaanite, Philistine, Israelite)

1.5.4 Analysed the material culture to determine which of the selected site fits the specific historical details presented in the text.

The material culture found in the sites selected in *Section 1.5.2* were analysed for 10th century occupation and were defined by the following:

1. Material culture that can be associated with groups that occupied the site, i.e. Philistines, Canaanites, Israelites.
2. Material finds like burnt wood, seeds, olive pits that can be carbon dated.
3. Signs of burned layers and/or buildings that are dated to Iron-I/II.

1.5.5 Analysed the physical setting of each site in light of biblical Ziklag.

To determine the potential locations for Ziklag, the biblical verses narrating David's departure from Apehek early in the morning and arrival at Ziklag on the third day were analysed (1 Sam 29:11-30:1). In the Ziklag pericope, it is reasonable to take the third day literally in order to determine Ziklag's location for the Bible gives us geographical

information with which to work. It can be deduced that Ziklag is south of Gath for David raided the tribes in the southern Negeb and that it is north of Naḥal Besor for after reaching Ziklag and finding it sacked, David crossed Naḥal Besor in his pursuit of the Amalekites in the Negeb's open country.

In the Bible, the number three can signify different meanings, which may be read figuratively and/or can be taken literally. The number three may have been used in the Bible as a literary motif to help readers recall events for it signals that new information will be generated by a significant event. It also may have been used to unify the narrative. When used at the beginning of a narrative, it signals the reader to expect more details to the account. In 1 Sam 30:1, it highlights David's decision to pursue the Amalekites and points toward his success for Yahweh instructed him to pursue for he will overtake the Amalekites and rescue his people (1 Sam 30:8). On the third day after David returned to Ziklag from his raid of the Amalekites, a man arrived to inform David of Saul's death (2 Sam 2:2). This third day motif signals the reader that this is the start of a new narrative in David's life.¹⁰ Although the Ziklag pericope was disrupted by the insertion of the episode of Saul at En-Dor, this does not necessarily mean that this affected David's travel time from Aphek to Ziklag.¹¹

While there may be a symbolic element to the use of the number three, it can also be understood literally. In 1 Sam 30:1, it literally means that David and his men arrived at Ziklag on the third day after leaving Aphek. Similarly, in 2 Sam 1:2, David was literally back at Ziklag for three days from the Amalekite raid. The three days in these narratives could have been coincidental with the three day motif used to enhance the narrative.

1.5.6 Developed the selection criteria from an archaeological and geographical perspective.

In this step, a selection criteria was developed based on the findings from the previous steps, *Sections 1.5.1-1.5.5*. Detailed descriptions of this criteria can be found in *Section 6* below.

¹⁰ R. D. Patterson and M. Travers. 2009.

¹¹ Noted that the sequence of events narrated in 1 Sam 28-31 is not consistently in chronological order. The narrative of David at Ziklag is disrupted by the Séance at En-Dor where Saul out of desperation coerces a medium to conjure the dead prophet Samuel, who reiterates that Saul had lost all favour from Yahweh for his disobedience and predicts that Saul and his sons will fall in the upcoming battle against the Philistines. McCarter(1980a: 422-423) notes that this episode looks out of place and that it was the editor's intention to prepare the reader for David's punishment of the Amalekites in 1 Sam 29-10 and set the tone for the report of Saul's and Jonathan's death.

1.5.7 Analysed and compared competing sites by using the selection criteria developed.

All twelve proposed sites were analysed and evaluated against the selection criteria (see *Section 6*) to determine their suitability as Ziklag's modern correlate.

1.5.8 Articulated which site's archaeological profile best fits the selection criteria.

The output of this final step is this report which discusses the evidence that support or eliminate the claim that Khirbet al-Ra'i is a strong candidate for Ziklag's modern correlate. It is argued in this report that the site whose archaeological profile best fits the selection criteria is the most likely candidate for Ziklag.

1.6. Site Identification

H. J. Franken believes that archaeologists should limit identifications to those supported by actual archaeological remains.¹² Franken observed how archaeologists explored the limits of archaeological discovery in relation to historical and biblical reconstruction to identify biblical sites, which are: (1) the study of Arabic place names; (2) geographical identifications found in historical texts dating from different times; (3) dates based on biblical evidence and (4) archaeological evidence often consisting of surface finds, primarily broken pottery and sometimes, from the reconstruction of historical maps.¹³

Blakely and Horton (2001) disagreed with Franken. They argued that the identifications from points (1) to (3) can only create *proposed* identifications while point (4) merely tests proposed identifications against the archaeological record, which in most cases may more easily disprove an identification than prove it. Only in exceptional cases can archaeological discoveries prove an identification without the need of points (1) to (3). An example of this is the recovery of a dedicatory inscription at Tel Migne, identifying a temple built by the rulers of Ekron, makes it reasonable to believe that this site was biblical Ekron. As this is a rare occurrence, most site identifications will be scholarly constructs that do not measure up to the certainty of rare excavation finds such as that of Ekron. Therefore, identifications should not be rejected because they do not have inscriptional support. For example, there

¹² H. J. Franken. 1976: 3; J. A. Blakely and F. L. Horton Jr. 2001:25-26; Rainey and Notley discusses this in detail in the opening chapter of their book, *The Sacred Bridge*".

¹³ H. J. Franken. 1976: 3; It can be assumed that Franken meant the archaeological evidence from the 19th and early 20th centuries.

is no inscriptional evidence in the archaeological record at Tell el-Hesi to unequivocally confirm or deny the site's ancient identity.¹⁴ Tel es-Safi was identified as Gath through the endeavours of scholars, including archaeologists, who worked on the site, studied in detail the material finds and made connections from other studies.¹⁵

Early scholars like Albright and Petrie made mistakes in some of their site identifications. Albright was mistaken in his identification of Tel 'Erani as Philistine Gath as was Petrie in his identification of Tell el-Hesi as Lachish. These mistakes were made due to their reliance on data derived from points (1) to (3) and even on point (4) but without the advantage of modern archaeological methods and analysis.

It would be ideal if a sign or an inscription is found that identifies a site as Ziklag, but it is highly unlikely that this will happen. To determine Ziklag's modern correlate, we are currently only able to rely on the conclusions arrived at from the critical analysis of the data derived from biblical, historical, geographical and linguistic studies and from the archaeological finds to determine which of the proposed sites Ziklag is.

1.7. The Origin of the Name Ziklag

The etymology of the name Ziklag is difficult to pinpoint. Ziklag is mentioned 15 times in the Bible and there are no known extra-biblical sources that mention Ziklag.¹⁶ Some scholars believe that Ziklag is most likely a Philistine name. It is a non-Semitic name for it has a quadriliteral root and Semitic names have a trilateral root.¹⁷ It may have originated from "Sekel/Tjekker/Tjekker", a group of "Sea Peoples" in the Egyptian records of the New Kingdom period.¹⁸ Ziklag may be the only place name on the territory of Philistia assumed to be Philistine for the Philistines did not leave a meaningful imprint on the local toponyms of Canaan.¹⁹ The Egyptologist, Heinrich Brugsch, first suggested a link between Ziklag and the "Sea People" as found as *Tkr* or *Tkkr* in the Egyptian texts.²⁰ J.D. Ray, in his article, queries if these early intruders, the Philistines, may have imported the name during their

¹⁴ J. A. Blakely, and F. L. Horton Jr. 2001: 26.

¹⁵ J. R. Porter. 1868: 238; A. F. Rainey 1966a: 30-38, 1966b: 23-24, 1975: 63*-76*; W. M. Schniedewind. 1998: 69; All these scholars wrote that Tel es-Safi's modern correlate is Gath.

¹⁶ V. Fritz. 1990. 1990: 79.

¹⁷ J. D. Ray. 1986: 356.

¹⁸ J. D. Ray. 1986: 356-357.

¹⁹ I. Shai. 2009: 17.

²⁰ See A. H. Gardiner. 1947. *Ancient Egyptian Onomastica I*. pp. 199-200; H. Brugsch. 1858.

movement from the Aegean into Ancient Israel and other areas of the Near East.²¹ Knauf and Nienann claim that Ziklag was known in Gath as “Siklu-Place”, referring to its first “Sea People” occupants or military garrison.²² This may be true, but Knauf and Nienann have not backed up this claim with any evidence.

There are Biblical references to Caphtor (Crete) as the homeland of the Philistines (Amos 9:7; Jer 47:4; Zeph 2:5 and Ezek 25:16), which may have been a general designation for the Aegean world or the Anatolian coasts. The five main cities of the Philistines, namely: Ashdod, Ashkelon, Ekron, Gath and Gaza, as well as like Timnah (Tel Batash) are mentioned in these biblical references and are confirmed by recent archaeological discoveries. Due to intensive excavations at Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron, and Gath, four of the five major Philistines cities mentioned in the Bible, the Philistine culture is well-known and has been identified as an urban culture of immigrants who arrived from the west, either from Greece or from the eastern Aegean islands, Asia Minor, or Cyprus.²³ These immigrants brought with them Aegean traditions, which were preserved in many aspects of their daily life such as architecture, pottery production, artistic styles, weaving, and dietary customs (i.e. they raised pigs, unlike the Canaanites and the hill-country settlers).²⁴ The archaeological finds/objects that were used in daily life that have been dated from the 12th to 11th centuries seemingly confirm the stories referring to the Philistines in Judges and Samuel as well as other biblical traditions related to the Philistines.²⁵

1.8. The Negeb

In this section, we are concerned with the Northern Negeb as the southern border of Judah. The Hebrew word Negeb is translated as south and can literally mean dry or parched land. The Negeb (נֶגֶב) is mentioned forty-one times in the Bible and is used in different ways.

The modern Negeb is shaped as a triangle with its eastern border running north from the Gulf of Aqaba/Elath through the Arabah valley to the Dead Sea. Its western border begins from the Dead Sea running northwest to Raphiah. The northern border is not defined clearly and is sometimes thought to correspond with Naḥal Beer-sheba drainage but some

²¹ J. D. Ray. 1986: 356; See N. K. Sanders, *The Sea Peoples*.

²² Knauf and Nienann. 2011: 280.

²³ Due to the current political situation involving Gaza, no recent excavations were done there making it difficult to further research the culture of the Philistines there.

²⁴ L. Sapir-Hen, M. Meiri, I. Finkelstein. 2015: 307-308.

²⁵ J. D. Ray. 1986: 355-356.

scholars put it as far north as Qiryat Gat and Naḥal Shiqma drainage. Modern Negeb excludes the hilly regions to the east and the coastal area to the west. Generally, the Negeb is an extension of the Arabian-Saharan subtropical desert zone and a geographic continuity with the Sinai. It should be noted that although the biblical Negeb is thought of as being exclusively incorporated in the northern Negeb, the Bronze Age predates most of the biblical narratives. S. Rosen reports that in the Bronze Age, the northwest Negeb included sites such as En Besor and farther north as at Tell 'Areini, which had significant Egyptian influence. Reurbanisation in the Middle Bronze Age centered around the northwest Negeb at sites like Tell Haror, Tell Nagila and sites closer to the coast such as Tell Jemmeh and Tell el-Farah South.²⁶ The vast region of the northern Negeb is south of the Lachish Brook (Wadi Suchein), covered largely by loess soils.²⁷

The Negeb is first mentioned in the Bible when Abram journeyed in stages towards the Negeb (Gen 12.9). Here, Abram is journeying towards the south, indicating the direction of travel. In Genesis 13:1, Abram with his wife and Lot journeyed out of Egypt into the Negeb, a place somewhere north of Egypt in the desert. The tribal inheritance of Judah is located in four major geographic regions (Josh 15:20-63), which are: (1) in the southern country or *Negeb* (בְּנֶגֶב), (2) in the lowland or *Shephelah* (בְּשֶׁפֶלָה), (3) in the mountain or hill country or *Har* (וּבְהָרִים), and (4) in the wilderness or the Judean Desert called the *midbar* (בְּמִדְבָּר).²⁸ These four major regions comprise the twelve administrative districts, which appears to reflect the zenith of Judah's settlement in the seventh century B.C.E., as several of the places mentioned were not founded until that time, such as En Gedi and 'Aroer in the Negeb.²⁹

Yohanan Aharoni coined the term "the biblical Negeb" to suggest that the Negeb applies only to the basins surrounding Gerar (western Negeb), Beer-sheba (central Negeb) and Arad (eastern Negeb), and which excludes the Negeb Highlands that are south of said basins.³⁰ According to George Adam Smith, the Negeb extended from the Arabah to the coast, and had sub-regions with different names according to the people who inhabited the places north of it. It was known as the part to the south of Philistia, south of the Shephelah, south of Hebron and to the eastern most part to the south of the seats of the Kenites.³¹

²⁶ S. A. Rosen. 1992: 1061-1062.

²⁷ A, Mazar. 1990: 7.

²⁸ Note: (1) Josh 15:21, (2) Josh 15: 33 (3) Josh 15:48 and (4) Josh 15:61

²⁹ A, Mazar. 1990: 417

³⁰ C. C. McKinny. 2016:79; Y. Aharoni. 1958: 26-27

³¹ G. A. Smith. 1894: 278 n. 3.

In Samuel 27:10, David reported to Achish that he raided against the south (*Negeb*) of Judah, the south (*Negeb*) of the Jerahmeelites, or the south (*Negeb*) of the Kenites. Then in Samuel 30:11-14, the young Egyptian slave of the Amalekites, who was captured by David's men, reported that the Amalekites made a raid on the south (*Negeb*) of the Cherethites and against that belongs to Judah and on the south (*Negeb*) of Caleb and burned Ziklag down. In Numbers 13:29, the spies sent by Moses to explore Canaan reported that the Amalekites lived in the Negeb. The word Negeb was also used by the prophet Ezekiel to refer to Judah (Ezek 20:46-47) in his prophecies against Israel. In Daniel 8:9, 11:5-6, the Negeb stands for Egypt. The Negeb was used as a generic word to indicate travel/movement towards a southerly direction. It was also used to mean south, southern country, the south border or as a boundary as in Joshua 15:2, 4, 18:19. It appears that the Negeb included regions beyond the Beer-sheba basin.

The southern country (Negeb) is the largest Judahite district in terms of both number of towns and land-size (Josh 15:21-32). As previously discussed, part of the tribe of Judah and the tribe of Simeon were located at the Negeb. During the Iron Age, Simeon was absorbed by Judah (Josh 15:20-32; 19:1-9), which also absorbed other tribes that included the Kenites (Judg 1:16), Jerahmeelites (1 Sam 27:10), Cherethites (1 Sam 30:14) and the sons of Caleb (1 Sam 30:14). The Kenites lived in the eastern Negeb, the Jerahmeelites in the southeast, the Calebites in the northeast and the Cherethites in the western Negeb. Some scholars locate the Simeonites in the central Negeb and some place them further to the north east, while others locate them between the west (See Section 3.4 of this thesis for further discussion on Simeon's town list.). ³²

³² I. Beit-Arieh. 1992: 1064-1065; See Fig. 2 for an approximate location for these tribes.

2. Proposed Sites from Previous Studies

Blakely (2007) and Harris (2011) each identified locations that were proposed for Ziklag.³³ In addition, Garfinkel, Keimer and Ganor proposed that Khirbet al-Ra'i is Ziklag's modern correlate.³⁴ Below is the list of these sites in chronological order with the names of each site's proposers and are depicted in the map in *Appendix A*.³⁵

1. Tell el-Hesi (Ritter 1866:247; Harris 2011:127-129).
2. Khirbet Zuheilikhah near Gaza (Kitchener 1878:12-13; Harris 2011:122-123).
3. Elusa/Haluza South of Beersheba (Cheyne and Black 1903:5416-5417).
4. Tel Halif/Tell el-Khuweilifeh near Kibbutz Lahav (Alt 1935:318; Abel 1938:465; Seger 1984; Borowski 1988; Zadok 2009:660-663; Harris 2011:121).
5. Tel es-Sera'/Tell esh-Shari'ah (Press 1955:806-807; Mazar 1957; Aharoni 1979:260; Na'aman 1980; Oren 1982; Blakely 2007:24-25; Harris 2011:121).
6. Tel Māsōś in the Beersheba Valley (Crüsemann 1973).
7. Tel Malha/Tell el-Muleihah (Rainey 1975:71, note 70).
8. Tell es-Seba', the classical identification of Beersheba (Fritz 1990, 1993).
9. Tel 'Erani/'Areq el-Menshiyeh (Harris 2011:123-124).
10. Tel Nagila/Tell en-Nejileh (Harris 2011:129-131).
11. Tel el-Far'ah South/Tel Sharuhen (Knauf and Nienann 2011).
12. Khirbet al-Ra'i (Garfinkel, Keimer and Ganor 2019).

³³ J. A. Blakely. 2007: 21-16; H. Harris. 2011b:119.

³⁴ Y. Garfinkel and S. Ganor. 2018b: Section 11.3; Y. Garfinkel, K.H. Keimer, S. Ganor, C. Rollston and D. Ben-Schlomo. 2019: 6.

³⁵ See Y. Garfinkel and S. Ganor, 2018b: 5 for the list for the previous eleven sites proposed; The background map is from the inside cover of E. Stern's "The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land Vol. 1. 1993. The map was modified to include locations previously proposed as Ziklag.

3. Analysis of Biblical Texts

Relevant parts of the Bible were analysed to determine if they are able to assist in the identification of Ziklag's precise location and the specific era(s) that it existed. Since four town lists mentioned Ziklag within three books of the Bible (Judah in Josh 15, Simeon in Josh 15 and 19 and in 1 Chr 4), the inheritances of Judah and Simeon that are mentioned in these books were assessed. The named towns that received the Amalekite spoils that David distributed (1 Sam 30:26-31) were also discussed. Since these assessments drew upon the information found in the biblical chapters outlined above and in the research done by biblical scholars, a history of the scholarly developments related to the Bible is provided.

3.1. Biblical Mentions of Town Lists and its Context

The Bible contains the Israelites' collective memory of the past and archaeological findings can help confirm or deny what the Bible reports. It should be noted that these confirmations can change depending on new archaeological finds. The Book of Joshua informs us that Ziklag was allotted to Judah and that it is situated in the extreme south toward the boundary of Edom in the Negeb (Josh 15:21-32). When it came to the allotment of the land among the seven minor tribes (Josh 19), Simeon's inheritance lay within Judah's (Josh 19:9). The reason given by the Bible is that the portion given to the tribe of Judah was too big for them. Ziklag was one of the Simeonite towns that was allotted to Judah (Josh 19:2-8). In Neh 11:24-30, Ziklag is located within the inheritance of Judah's descendants, which is from Beer-sheba to the valley of Hinnom. In 1 Chronicles 4:24-43, Ziklag is one of the towns that Simeon's descendants lived in until David became king. Ziklag's allotment to Judah and to Simeon has caused confusion as to which tribe Ziklag actually belonged to. In 1 Sam 27:6, the Philistine king of Gath, Achish, gave Ziklag to David and the biblical author says that "Ziklag has belonged to the kings of Judah to this day", making it royal property. This indicates that Ziklag was in Philistine territory but then subsequently became a part of Israelite territory. This raises the question of when the biblical author wrote the story of David's sojourn in Ziklag. Who were the kings of Judah mentioned in this verse? Do we assume that the Bible provides us with the correct geographical description of Ziklag's location?

3.2. Dating in the Bible

There are several studies on the concept of time in the Bible (e.g. Childs 1963; De Vries, S. J. 1975; Bergman; 1982, Blenkinsop 1997; Brin 2001; Geoghegan 2003). The phrase עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה

(ad hayom hazzeh), which is found in 1 Sam 27:6 and in other biblical verses (i.e. Deut 10:8, Judg 6:24, 2 Sam 18:18 etc.), means in plain English “to/until this day or ever since”. This phrase is frequently employed by the Dtr as a redactional commentary to validate aspects of traditions that could be verified in his own time and to determine the geographical, political and cultic realities mentioned in the sources he used that existed at the time of the text’s composition.³⁶ Whenever time is indicated by עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה, it is probably pre-exilic and these pre-exilic notices confirm the southern perspective of the author employing it.³⁷ Therefore, it is necessary to understand the meaning of the phrase עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה to provide us with an idea of when Ziklag existed.

Noth accepted Albright’s and Bright’s explanation that עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה is one of the most characteristic elements used in an etiological story and that a genuinely historical tradition might assume an etiological form.³⁸ For Noth, the prime question that should be asked is not whether the etiology created the tradition or not, but rather how the tradition employed in the story is related to the phenomenon which it seeks to explain and whether the connection between the event and the phenomenon is a genuine historical link, or a later, secondary development.³⁹ It is by determining the nature of the link between the tradition and the phenomenon itself that important information is gained with regards to the development of the etiology, as well as to the relative reliability of the tradition.⁴⁰

There are various uses for עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה, some of which are:⁴¹

(1) *Etymological etiologies* point out the history of a given place and explain the time at which the name of the place was fixed. The etymology of the name of the city of Beer-sheba can be found in Gen 26:33, when in the covenant made between Isaac and Abimelech, “He called it Shibah; therefore the name of the city is Beer-sheba to this day”.

(2) *Historical, ethnic and geographic etiologies* indicate that the phrase “to this day” modifies the verb which establishes etiologically a geographic, historical or ethnic relationship, whose signs and traces remained until a later period. The phrase “to this day”

³⁶ J. C. Geoghegan. 2003:202.

³⁷ J. C. Geoghegan. 2003:209; Probably is used here as there may be some scholars who might disagree with this.

³⁸ W. F. Albright. 1939: 11-23; J. Bright. 1956: 91 ff.; M. Noth. 1960: 277 ff.; B. S. Childs.1963: 280.

³⁹ M. Noth. 1960: 277 ff.

⁴⁰ B. S. Childs.1963: 280.

⁴¹ B. S. Childs.1963: 281-292; G. Brin. 2001: 125-138; J. C. Geoghegan. 2003: 202-219.

serves as a secondary function to the tradition. The event is related, and the causal connection is made by *לָכֵן* or *עַל־כֵּן*, an adverb meaning “therefore” or “so”. An example is the phrase “So Hebron became the inheritance of Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite to this day, because he wholeheartedly followed the Lord, the God of Israel” (Josh 14:14). Another example is “So that day Achish gave him Ziklag; therefore Ziklag has belonged to the kings of Judah to this day” (1 Sam 27:6). In the second example, there is an anachronistic reference to the “kings of Judah” as there were no “kings of Judah” during the time of Samuel, which was the time of the United Monarchy. This suggests that this phrase was added to a pre-existing tradition by a later author, that is, by the Deuteronomistic Historian (Dtr), who reflects the general concern for inheritance rights during his time.

(3) *Cultic etiologies* connect objects, especially holy ones that people relate to particular stories concerning the manner of the object’s creation and for establishing a causal relationship for an existing cultic practice. There are three traditions that arise in Gen 32:24-32, which are: the naming of Jacob to Israel (an etymological etiology), the naming of Bethel (a geographic etiology), and the prohibition to eat the thigh muscle (a cultic etiology).

(4) *Political, Legal and Sociological etiologies* detail matters that are of a secondary character. Verse (2 Kings 8.22), “So Edom has been in revolt against the rule of Judah to this day. Libnah also revolted at the same time” (political etiology) describes the political situation at the time of the biblical writer. Verse (1 Sam 30:25) “From that day forward he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel; it continues to the present day” (legal etiology) marks the extent of a period from the earliest plausible date that a fact could have occurred, written or fixed while “to this present day” establishes the final goal in time of the redactor, marking an extension in time rather than establishing a causal link. Verse (Deut 10:8) “At that time the LORD set apart the tribe of Levi to carry the ark of the covenant of the LORD, to stand before the LORD to minister to him, and to bless in his name, to this day” (sociological etiology) informs us that the Levites served in the holy place until the biblical author’s time, which was something known and accepted. The author’s use of “to this day” was to mark the beginning of the phenomena and its establishment, not the fact that it continued to the biblical author’s time.

A major implication of the analysis of עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה indicates the existence of a pre-exilic, even Josianic, Dtr.⁴² A single evidence may be considered as inconclusive, but the intersecting of numerous pieces of evidence establishes that “to/until this day” is a formula created by a pre-exilic Dtr. The redactional nature of the phrase, its southern perspective and its pre-exilic background are important starting points. When these points are combined with every source that is used in the construction of the Deuteronomistic History (DtrH), (e.g. History of David’s Rise, Acts of Solomon, Chronicles of the Kings of Israel/Judah and others) and its use in connection with Deuteronomic interests (e.g. the removal of the high places, rights and responsibilities of the Levites, etc.) and Josianic policies (e.g. centralized worshipping, the Passover, etc.), it becomes certain that the unity of use and purpose is most likely from the hand of a single redactor.⁴³

3.3. Boundary-System and Town Lists

The boundary and towns lists in Joshua are of major importance in the study of Ancient Israel’s history.⁴⁴ Alt (1925-1927) concluded that there are two different literary genres in Joshua regarding the boundary descriptions of the various tribes.⁴⁵ These traditions list the individual tribe’s territory in the form of boundary descriptions, and the reconstructions of tribal territories are based on the town lists within the borders of each tribe.⁴⁶ The first genre is very old for it is pre-monarchical, between the settlement and the establishment of the monarchy, towards the end of the second millennium.⁴⁷ The second reflects on Josiah’s restructuring of Judah after his conquests and therefore cannot be earlier than the second half of the seventh century.⁴⁸

Alt’s view is that Joshua is the work of an editor and of redactors who lacked an understanding of topology, thereby making mistakes in the description of the boundaries and on the allocation of towns.⁴⁹ The lists of towns were illogically grafted onto the list of boundaries. The town lists were apportioned to the twelve tribes and towns were

⁴² J. C. Geoghegan. 2003: 225.

⁴³ J. C. Geoghegan. 2003: 225.

⁴⁴ See Aharoni 1979, Kallai 1986, Eshel 1995, Hess 1996, de Vos 2009, Tappy 2008 and Rainey and Notley 2014.

⁴⁵ J. A. Soggin. 1989: 193; F. M. Cross and G. Ernest Wright. 1956: 203; See A. Alt. 1925 and 1927.

⁴⁶ F. M. Cross and G. Ernest Wright. 1956: 203.

⁴⁷ J. A. Soggin. 1989: 193; M. Noth. 1991: 24-25; See A. Alt. 1925 and 1927.

⁴⁸ J. A. Soggin. 1989: 193; See A. Alt. 1925 and 1927.

⁴⁹ Y. Kaufmann. 2009: 25.

artificially allocated to Simeon and Dan, revealing the lack of knowledge of the lists' collator, who gave Simeon the first district in Judah's list (Josh 15:28-32) and fabricated Dan's territory by combining areas belonging to Judah and Ephraim; for the purpose of completing the number of twelve portions, one for each tribe. ⁵⁰

Kallai surmised that the boundary-system is possibly based on David's census and that it replicates the state of affairs under David and Solomon. ⁵¹ The editor used documents that were available to him, which belonged to the reigns of David and Solomon, therefore describing the state of the country and the tribal divisions when they were at the highest peak of its territorial expansion and when Israel had not yet split to north and south. ⁵² Kallai's view is that the list of the unconquered areas (Judg 1:21, 27-33) is an exact mirror of the boundary-system. ⁵³

There is no agreement regarding the dating of the town lists and separate analysis of each list shows that the lists do not complement each other regarding their creation date. Alt dates the boundaries to a pre-monarchical period, Albright points to David's time, Cross-Wright proposes that Judah's and Benjamin's town lists originated from Jehoshaphat's reign, while Kallai believes that Judah's should be dated to Hezekiah's reign and Benjamin's to Abijah's reign. Alt-Noth puts the date of the town lists during Josiah's reign at the end of the 7th century; but Noth believes that the division actually occurred much earlier because Josiah made changes adapting the list to new conditions and that it is this version of the list that has been preserved. ⁵⁴

For the purposes of this project, the boundary lists provide a picture of where Judah and Simeon are located and what areas surround them. The boundary system locates Ziklag in the Negeb of southern Judah from the pre-monarchical period regardless of when the lists were written.

3.4. Simeon's Town list

Simeon's town list seems to be the earliest of the town lists. ⁵⁵ There are no signs that the

⁵⁰ Y. Kaufmann. 2009: 23-24.

⁵¹ Z. Kallai-Kleinmann. 1958: 135.

⁵² W. F. Albright. 1968: 123-124; Z. Kallai-Kleinmann. 1958: 148 n.1.

⁵³ Z. Kallai-Kleinmann. 1958: 136.

⁵⁴ Z. Kallai-Kleinmann. 1958: 141, 135-139; Y. Aharoni. 1959: 239.

⁵⁵ A. Alt. 1925: 105-106, 113; Simeon's town list are those in Josh 19:1-9 and 1 Chronicles 4:28-31.

editor copied Simeon's town list from Judah's town list. Although the editor was aware that Simeon was incorporated into Judah (Josh 19:1-9), he inserted an old town list of Simeon's which does not replicate the corresponding areas in Judah's town list.⁵⁶ There are differences between the town lists found in Josh 15:28-32 and Josh 19:1-9, which are: the towns are listed in a different order, there are differences in the way that some of the town names are spelt and the number of towns in one list differ from that in the other list.⁵⁷

The inheritance of Simeon was problematic for the biblical authors who created the concept of the "twelve tribes" of Israel.⁵⁸ The authors sustained this "twelve tribes" concept by assigning towns that were partially or totally inhabited by Simeonites, hence the contradictory terms "Negeb of Judah" and the "inheritance of Simeon".⁵⁹ A comparison of Simeon's town list (1 Chr 4:28-33) indicates a great similarity with that in Josh 19 and these two lists are differentiated from the "Simeonite" portion in Josh 15.⁶⁰ 1 Chronicles 4:31 dates Simeon's town list to the reign of David, which could be the date for Josh 19.⁶¹ This list in Chronicles is one of the few literary traces of David's census, which registered families for fiscal and military purposes and registered land-holdings for taxation purposes. It also provided the exact boundary-delimitations of families, towns and tribes and for the formation of the administration districts.⁶²

There are three different complete lists and two partial lists of Simeonite towns. Since there are minor variations between the three complete town lists and since Judah's southern borders remained the same during the Divided Monarchy, these three complete town lists must have been created within a short time span of each other.⁶³ In the order of their importance and relative age, the creation of these lists are: (1) Josh 19:1-9 dated to prior the amalgamation of Simeon into Judah, (2) Josh 15:28-32 from the time of the 'Greater Judah', (3) 1 Chronicles 4:28-33 which is a fourth century list based on earlier traditions, (4) Neh 11:25-30 which is a partial list of Simeonite towns that were re-occupied in the 5th century by the returning Jews, and (5) 1 Sam 30:27-31 based on 10th century tradition.⁶⁴

⁵⁶ Z. Kallai-Kleinmann. 1958: 158-159.

⁵⁷ Z. Kallai-Kleinmann. 1958: 159.

⁵⁸ Y. Kaufmann. 2009: 23-24; the concept of the twelve tribes was mentioned in the previous section.

⁵⁹ N. Na'aman. 1980: 147.

⁶⁰ Although a Simeonite portion is not specifically named in Josh. 15-32, there are towns that are in common with the Simeonite town list. Some of these towns are Ziklag, Eltolad, Hormah, Beer-sheba, Ain, and Rimmon.

⁶¹ Z. Kallai-Kleinmann. 1958: 159.

⁶² Z. Kallai-Kleinmann. 1958: 159-160.

⁶³ N. Na'aman. 1980: 143-145.

⁶⁴ W. F. Albright. 1924: 149-150.

There are two distinct groups in the town lists of Judah in Josh 15:21-32, one that is located in the east and the other in the west. In his publication of the Arad inscriptions, Aharoni points out that the towns mentioned at the beginning of the list are located on the eastern peripheries of the Negeb.⁶⁵ In 1924, Albright suggested that Simeon's town list was arranged in a roughly east-west direction⁶⁶ and Alt expanded on this by proposing a southeast-northwest alignment.⁶⁷ From this, one can conclude that the town list of the Negeb had a logical arrangement from southeast to northwest, beginning from the Arad area and ending with the Hormah and Ziklag regions.⁶⁸ Judah's towns of Hormah, Ziklag, Madmannah and Sansannah are all mentioned in the closing verses of Josh 15:30-31, and are situated in Judah's northwestern end of the Negeb on the border of Philistia.⁶⁹ Madmannah and Sansannah, do not appear in Simeon's town list, but Madmannah appears in 1 Chronicles 2:49 as belonging to the Calebites. Another toponym, Beth-pelet from Josh 15:27, does not appear in Simeon's town list, but is shown as belonging to the Calebites (1 Chr 2.47). As these towns are also listed in Josh 15:27-31 interspersed among those towns that are in the Simeonite town list, it can be concluded that Simeon's inheritance bordered on the Calebite's settlements, which includes Hebron (Josh 14:14).⁷⁰

The towns mentioned in David's distribution of the Amalekite spoils (1 Sam 30:26-31) all belonged to non-Judahite/new Israelite tribes located in the south, which is incompatible with the phrase "the elders of Judah" (1 Sam 30:26). Na'aman explains that because the Judahites and the Simeonites ultimately unified under David, the editor meant for the phrase "the elders of Judah" to denote the Judahites, while the towns listed (Bethel, Ramoth, Jattir, Aroer, Siphmoth, Estemoa, Racal), the towns of the Jerahmeelites, towns of the Kenites, Hormah, Ror-ashan, Attach and Hebron represented the southern tribes (1 Sam 30:27-31). Na'aman further explains that because Beer-sheba was a prominent Judahite town, it was not mentioned in the list and that the Simeonite tribe was represented by Bethel.⁷¹

In summary, most of Simeon's inheritance was located in the western Negeb which was

⁶⁵ Y. Aharoni. 1981: 145-147; N. Na'aman. 1980: 142.

⁶⁶ W. F. Albright. 1924: 159; N. Na'aman. 1980: 145.

⁶⁷ A. Alt. 1935: 314-323; N. Na'aman. 1980: 145.

⁶⁸ N. Na'aman. 1980: 142.

⁶⁹ N. Na'aman. 1980: 145.

⁷⁰ N. Na'aman. 1980: 145.

⁷¹ N. Na'aman. 1980: 147; N. Na'aman. 2010: 178ff.

partially located in the southern Shephelah while bordering on Caleb's and Jerahmeel's area in the east and north-east. As the settlements of Simeon were located within the inheritance of Judah (Josh 19:1), this region was not exclusively inhabited by the Simeonites and it would have been cross-populated by Judahites; thus the eastern part of Simeon's inheritance is called "the Negeb of Judah" (1 Sam 27:10; 1 Sam 30:14; 2 Sam 24:7). ⁷²

Ziklag is mentioned as one of the towns that was repopulated by the post-exilic Jews during the Persian Period (Neh 11:28). Grabbe comments that the town lists in Neh 11:25-30 is problematic for these towns would not have been in the province of Judah for that area was under Edomite control. ⁷³ But then, Ziklag may have been in the geographical location of Judah's province but under Edomite control, just as Ziklag was under Philistine hegemony during David's time.

Ziklag was one of the Simeonite towns mentioned in all three tribal lists. It is listed as one of the towns that fall under the phrase "These were their towns until David became king" (1 Chr 4:24-31). This may appear to contradict 1 Sam 27:6 where the Philistine King Achish gave Ziklag to David, meaning that Ziklag belonged to the Philistines and not to the Simeonites nor to the Judahites. However, this is not necessarily a contradiction for Ziklag could have been under Philistine political control but its inhabitants could have considered themselves as Simeonites. ⁷⁴ This will be discussed further in *Section 4* below. As the Ziklag pericope is narrated in 1 Samuel, a discussion of this book is required to understand the Ziklag narrative.

3.5. The Book of Samuel

To date, scholars have not been able to determine when the Book of Samuel was written and who this book's author is, based on unequivocal and unbiased evidence. 1 Chronicles 29:29 states that the events of David's reign were recorded by Samuel, Nathan and Gad. Samuel could not have written the entire book as it refers to his death (1 Sam 25:1; 28:3) and the book proceeds to narrate the history of Saul and David. However, since Samuel was the kingmaker who established the monarchy, it is fitting that the book is named after him. ⁷⁵ This book was divided into two books in the 15th century CE. ⁷⁶

⁷² N. Na'aman. 1980: 147.

⁷³ L. L. Grabbe. 1998: 58.

⁷⁴ Z. Kallai. 1986: 355.

⁷⁵ D. T. Tsumura. 2007: 2.

The accounts narrated in the Book of Samuel were based on historical sources, some of which may have been from oral tradition. These sources relied on different documents such as the list of David's officials (2 Sam 8:15-18, 23:8-39).⁷⁷ Apart from the Masoretic Text, the various textual traditions for these books are: the Dead Sea/Qumran Cave Scrolls (4QSam^a, 4QSam^b, and 4QSam^c), the Septuagint, the Codex Vaticanus, the Codex Alexandrinus, the Lucianic Manuscripts, the Targum Jonathan, the Syriac, the Vulgate, the Archaic Samuel Scroll and Josephus' Jewish Antiquities.⁷⁸ The Masoretic Text of Samuel was corrupted by transcriptional errors due to peculiar and unintelligible spellings and grammatical forms. However, in light of the Septuagint, other versions of the Bible and the Qumran texts, scholars have "corrected" these errors.⁷⁹

It seems that the Book of Samuel was composed in several stages. The Ark Narrative (1 Sam 4:1-7:1) may have originated from the pre-Davidic era. The Story of Saul and David (1 Sam 16-31) and the Story of David (2 Sam 1-20) may have been written between David's reign in Jerusalem and during David's last years or during Solomon's reign. The final editing of these books was possibly done no later than the late 10th century BCE in light of 1 Sam 27:6.⁸⁰ As mentioned in *Section 3.2*, the phrase "to this day" is used in different ways to validate aspects of traditions, including inheritance rights. The phrase "Ziklag belonged to the kings of Judah to this day" (1 Sam 27:6) suggests that this phrase was pre-exilic, which was added to a pre-existing tradition by a later author, the Dtr, who reflects the general concern for inheritance rights during his time.⁸¹

Jones (2007) reports that it has been suggested that the Book of Samuel was written in the 10th century when Solomon's reign was in danger when a Saulide faction threatened the unity of the kingdom. To mitigate this threat, a member of Solomon's court wrote this history to justify David's conduct prior to ascending to the throne and gave a positive outlook towards Saul.⁸² According to Jones, another proposal dated the writing of this book to the early years of the divided kingdom, not long after Solomon's death, with the specific aim of supporting Davidic and Jerusalemite claims to sovereignty over all of

⁷⁶ P. K. McCarter, Jr. 1980a: 3; 1 Samuel and 2 Samuel.

⁷⁷ A. E. Steinmann. 2016: 1.

⁷⁸ P. K. McCarter, Jr. 1980a: 8-11.

⁷⁹ D. T. Tsumura. 2007: 2-3.

⁸⁰ D. T. Tsumura. 2007: 11.

⁸¹ J. C. Geoghegan. 2003: 209.

⁸² G.H. Jones. 2007: 198.

Israel'. ⁸³ This dating fits with the theory mentioned above as to when the phrase “to this day” dates the Ziklag pericope.

McCarter in his 'The Apology of David' concludes that the formulation of the story of David was of a Davidic date for it shows that David's accession to the throne was lawfully gained, free of guilt and that all possible charges of wrongdoing were frankly answered and shown to be false, very similar to the rise of Hattushilish III, the 13th century Hittite king who rebelled against his nephew and predecessor. ⁸⁴ Both David's and Hattushilish's ascension to their respective thrones was through the power of their deity; Ishtar for Hattushilish and Yahweh for David. Additionally, McCarter opines that it is unlikely that David planned from the beginning to seize Saul's kingship for himself, but that it is difficult to believe that he was unaware of the political assassinations that eventually placed him on the throne. ⁸⁵

The Book of Samuel is included among the books of the DtrH, which according to Noth is the work of an author who wrote in the exilic period, in the middle of the sixth century. ⁸⁶ Steinmann wrote that it is common for critical scholars to date Samuel to the post-exilic period. However, Steinmann argues that this is probably too late for although the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings are part of the DtrH, it does not necessarily make them late compositions. ⁸⁷ This reasoning is in keeping with Noth's DtrH hypothesis that it was the Dtr who brought the older (pre-exilic and pre-monarchical) material together and incorporated them into his history by a series of redactional links and editorial expansions. ⁸⁸ Steinmann advises that although a more precise date cannot be determined for the composition of this book, it is best to view Samuel as a pre-exilic book written by a Judean author after Rehoboam's death in 915 BCE but before the Babylonian exile (587 BCE). ⁸⁹ McCarter believes that the writer was a northern writer whose orientation was to the south, who acknowledges the legitimacy of the Davidic throne and was writing during or after the collapse of northern Israel around the end of the eighth century. ⁹⁰ This northern writer based his interpretation of history from the teachings of the prophetic

⁸³ G.H. Jones. 2007: 197.

⁸⁴ P.K. McCarter, Jr. 1980b: 496.

⁸⁵ P.K. McCarter, Jr. 1980b: 502 note 24.

⁸⁶ M. Noth, 1991: 9.

⁸⁷ A.E. Steinmann. 2016: 2

⁸⁸ P.K. McCarter, Jr. 1980a: 14.

⁸⁹ A.E. Steinmann. 2016: 2-3; It is difficult to understand how Steinmann can be so precise in his dating when the sources are very imprecise, which is why other scholars provide a rough range of dates.

⁹⁰ P.K. McCarter, Jr. 1980a: 21-22.

circles of the north. His work wound up in the south, and the Dtr slightly revised it to smoothly incorporate it into his larger history and to introduce the readers to southern concepts, particularly the dynastic promise to David.⁹¹

The Deuteronomistic redaction of Samuel was done sparingly for the sources came into the Deuteronomic circles as long narratives, pre-arranged in accordance with a “proto-Deuteronomic” perspective.⁹² In McCarter’s opinion, that in light of verses 1 Sam 8:11-18, the primary form of 1 Samuel was from a pre-DtrH that was composed from a prophetic perspective that was suspicious of any form of monarchy due to a bitter experience with the monarchic institution.⁹³ Beyond this negative reason, this history was written to demonstrate that Israel would be governed by a king according to a new system from a prophetic perspective. The king was the head of the government, but he would rule under the instruction and admonition of the prophet and is subject to prophetic election and rejection at Yahweh’s pleasure and choosing, just like David.⁹⁴

There are many hypotheses/theories regarding the composition of Samuel but none yet definitely proven. That said, suffice it to say that the stories narrated within this book has enriched biblical and historical studies. 1 Samuel plays a vital role in the story of David and Ziklag in that it is the only source for this story. Ziklag is mentioned in Joshua but only as one of the cities in the town lists. 1 Samuel provides us with the backdrop to David’s rise.

3.6. Biblical Interpretation and Historicity of Ziklag

Although the authorship, date, composition and historicity of the Bible is not universally agreed upon and is beyond the scope of this discussion, it should not disallow the possibility that the Bible is based on much earlier traditions that reflect pre-Israelite real life situations. Therefore, biblical data in the form of the town lists (Josh 15:21-62, 19:1-9; 1 Sam 27-30; 1 Chr 4:27-33; Neh 11:24-36) was analysed to provide critical information for identifying the location of Ziklag.

The historical reality of some of these towns have been demonstrated by a number of studies. Some of the towns have been identified by archaeologists while others have yet to be discovered or identified. What is currently being debated in current scholarship is when

⁹¹ P.K. McCarter, Jr. 1980a: 17, 22-23.

⁹² P.K. McCarter, Jr. 1980a: 15.

⁹³ P.K. McCarter, Jr. 1980b: 21-22, 491.

⁹⁴ P.K. McCarter, Jr. 1980a: 21.

exactly the lists were created, the specific period that the towns existed, and where the unidentified towns might be located. The prevailing view in modern scholarship is that the Dtr used various sources that were available to him during the time of Josiah, or the exilic period, or both.⁹⁵ With this in mind, the town lists are a record of towns that existed in sub-periods of the Iron Age, before and during the monarchical period. What this thesis intends to determine is where Ziklag is actually located.

⁹⁵ F.M. Cross. 1973; G. McConville. 2007: 159.

4. Ziklag, David and the Bible

Biblical references to Ziklag are found in Josh 15:31, Josh 19:5, 1 Sam 27:30, 2 Sam 1-4 and 1 Chronicles 4:30, 12:20 and Neh 11:28. Ziklag is named in Judah's town list (Josh 15:31) and in Simeon's town lists (Josh 19:5 and Neh 11:28). These lists are problematic and have been the subject of much discussion.⁹⁶ The appearance of Ziklag in the city list of the returnees to Zion is challenging as all the areas in Southern Judah were occupied by the Edomites.⁹⁷

During Saul's time, Ziklag was included in the territory of Philistine Gath (1 Sam 27:3-6). If Ziklag had been located further south and more east, less under the observation of the Philistines, Ziklag may have been vulnerable to attack.⁹⁸ When Saul was informed that David had fled to Philistine Gath, Saul ceased looking for David (1 Sam 27:4). David felt secure under Gath's protection and he successfully requested that he be given one of the country towns to live in (1 Sam 27:5). It was at Ziklag that David gained his first experience as a ruler, albeit being a vassal of the Philistines. David utilised Ziklag as an outpost from which he launched raids on the nomadic tribes of the Geshurites, the Girzites and the Amalekites, who lived in areas south of Achish's kingdom, bordering on territories frequented by nomadic tribes in the Negeb and Sinai, from ancient times on the way to Shur and on to the land of Egypt (1 Sam 27:8). This suggests a location in the border area between Philistia's coastal plain and the east and south-eastern steppe and desert areas.⁹⁹

The Bible tells us that David lived in Ziklag for sixteen months (1 Sam 27:6-7) and that David informed Achish that he and his men raided against the Negeb of Judah, the Negeb of the Jerahmeelites or the Negeb of the Kenizzites (1 Sam 27:10).¹⁰⁰ The Egyptian lad, who was found by David's men during their pursuit of the Amalekites, reported that they raided against the Negeb of the Cherethites, Negeb of Judah, Negeb of Caleb and they set Ziklag aflame (1 Sam 30:14). The Cherethites were identical or closely associated with the Philistines, who were the Israelite's traditional enemies throughout the biblical period and who lived in the southern desert on Philistia's seacoast to the west of Judah (cf. Ezek.25:16; Zeph.2:5).¹⁰¹

⁹⁶ See Aharoni 1967: 232-262; Kallai 1967; Na'aman 1980.

⁹⁷ A. Negev and S. Gibson. 2001: 239-240.

⁹⁸ H. Harris. 2011b: 123.

⁹⁹ Volkmar Fritz. 1990: 79-80.

¹⁰⁰ The map in *Fig. 2* provides a visual reference to the different Negebs.

¹⁰¹ P.K. McCarter, Jr. 1980a: 105, 435.



Fig. 2 Map of David's biblical Negev ¹⁰²

The Negev of Judah encompassed all the cities of Judah listed in Josh 15:21-32 and was centered on Beer-sheba (cf. 2 Sam 24:7, 2 Chr 28:18). ¹⁰³ The Jerahmeelites were one of the groups that were recipients of David's spoils (1 Sam 30:29) and lived in the region south of Beer-sheba, although its precise location is unknown. It was an independent tribe that was later incorporated into Judah (1 Chr 2:9, 25-27, 33, 42). ¹⁰⁴ The Kenites, like the

¹⁰² A. F. Rainey and R. S. Notley. 2014: 149.

¹⁰³ P.K. McCarter, Jr. 1980a: 415.

¹⁰⁴ Shawn Zelig Aster in his comments on this thesis has provided additional information on the Jerahmeelites, which is "This is one of the only tribes in the region whose name seems to survive to the modern period - it is attested at Bir Rekhmeah near modern Yeroam, southeast of Beersheva, and the name Yrhm is also attested in Shishak's inscription, as a location near Arad. The mention of Yrhm in Shishak suggests that the Bir Rekhmeah name, near Arad, preserves an ancient name. This is because it would really be an unusual coincidence to find both in ancient and in modern times a location named "Yrhm" near Arad without any connection."

Jerahmeelites received some of David's spoils (1 Sam 30:29), are those who live in the vicinity of the Calebite city of Hebron and Debir (Khirbet Rabud). ¹⁰⁵ The Jerahmeelites and the Kenizzites were Judahites and thus in Israelite territory. ¹⁰⁶

By the time that the biblical books and the descriptions of the territorial geography pertaining to Ziklag were composed, the territorial boundaries between Judah and Simeon had become blurred. When David ordered a census to be taken from Dan to Beer-sheba (2 Sam 24:2), the census takers reported that they went to the Negeb of Judah at Beer-sheba, which defines the southernmost territory and towns of Judah (2 Sam 24:6-7). This assimilation of Simeon into Judah was so complete that there was no mention of Simeon's territory in David's census. Simeon's territory became part of the "Negeb of Judah" just as other subunits, namely: the Negeb of Caleb, the Negeb of the Kenite and the Negeb of the Jerahmeelite. David's census also served as a basis for establishing the territories within the boundary system. ¹⁰⁷ It is noteworthy that Beer-sheba is defined as the southernmost boundary of Judah during Saul's time (2 Sam 3:10), implying that Simeon had been absorbed into Judah before David's reign.

Difficulty arises with regards to the location of Ziklag, one of Gath's outlying towns which Achish gave to David (1 Sam 27:6). Here, the biblical author is giving the impression that in order for a Philistine king to grant Ziklag to David, it must have belonged to the Philistines. This contradicts the town lists in Joshua 15 and 19. However, this matter can be explained by 1 Chronicles 4:24-31, which enumerates the towns of Simeon's clans but not its political borders. ¹⁰⁸ It is a historical reality that the Philistines had penetrated Israelites territories as when the Philistines defeated the Israelites at Aphek and captured the Ark (1 Sam 4:1-11), as when the Philistines established garrisons in the Benjamite towns at Geba (1 Sam 13:3) and at Michmash (1 Sam 14:1-5), and when the Philistines defeated the Israelites on Mount Gilboa, killing Saul and his three sons (1 Sam 31:1-12). ¹⁰⁹ Therefore, it should not be astonishing that a Simeonite town such as Ziklag was subjugated by the Philistines under Achish, who gave David a city that was under Philistine hegemony but

¹⁰⁵ P.K. McCarter, Jr. 1980a:435; Tell Beit Mirsim was originally identified as ancient Debir by W.F. Albright but this identification was revised to Khirbet Rabud by M. Kochavi during the excavations carried out on this site in 1968 and 1969.

¹⁰⁶ P.K. McCarter, Jr. 1980a: 415.

¹⁰⁷ Z. Kallai. 1986: 349.

¹⁰⁸ Z. Kallai. 1986: 355.

¹⁰⁹ See K. H. Keimer. 2019: 7-10 for the latest theories on Philistine garrisons in Benjamin in light of the archaeological evidence.

was inhabited by Israelites, not by Philistines.¹¹⁰ Crüsemann expands this theory by suggesting that during David's time, Ziklag must have been a non-Philistine city for a Philistine ruler would never have his own people subjugated by an Israelite.¹¹¹ The tribe of Simeon is not mentioned at all in the Ziklag episode of David's history.

Achish trusted David's reports that he was raiding against the new Israelite settlements of the Negeb of Judah, the Negeb of the Jerahmeelites and the Negeb of the Kenites (1 Sam 27:10), all situated in southern Judah, away from Achish's oversight.¹¹² This indicates that Achish used David to fortify Philistia's southeastern border against the encroaching Israelite tribes.

As Ziklag was an outlying city of Gath, this explains how David had the freedom to attack the nomadic tribes of the Geshurites, the Girzites and the Amalekites, who threatened the new Israelite settlements of the Negeb.¹¹³ By doing so, David was gaining the political support of the leaders of the new Israelite settlements, while deceiving Achish by reporting that he raided Judahite territories (1 Sam 27:5-11). There was no contrary evidence to David's report for he left no witnesses, ensuring that Achish was ignorant of his raiding practices (1 Sam 27:9-12). David always brought back cattle and other booty, and he would have given Achish his due share. Therefore, Achish trusted David for there was proof that he went raiding. It is in this manner that David managed his duplicitous relationship with Achish. David was very skillful at deceiving other people as he had done throughout his career as in the case with Ahimelech, the priest from Nob (1 Sam 21:1-6). David used his gift of gaining people's good will to his benefit.

Assuming that Kallai and Crüsemann are correct, that the inhabitants of Ziklag were Israelites from the tribe of Simeon and because David was their *de facto* leader and protector, they would have benefitted from the spoils they partook from David's raids, thereby making them complicit to David's secret. This is in keeping with 1 Sam 30:26-31 where David shared portions of his plunder from his raid of the Amalekites with the other clans, calling it "a blessing to you from the spoil of the enemies of the Lord". Most likely the Amalekites knew that David was away at Aphek, they took the opportunity to retaliate against David by raiding, plundering and burning down Ziklag (1 Sam 30:1-3). The Amalekites killed no one when they raided Ziklag, but carried off the women, children,

¹¹⁰ Z. Kallai. 1986: 355.

¹¹¹ F. Crüsemann. 1973: 220f.

¹¹² A. F. Rainey and R. S. Notley. 2014: 149-150.

¹¹³ A. F. Rainey and R. S. Notley. 2014: 149.

animals and goods. Ziklag may have been unfortified to be easily overcome by the Amalekites. David and his men chased after the Amalekites to recover their families (1 Sam 30:8-9) and all that was taken by the Amalekites from Ziklag and from the other areas that they ransacked (1 Sam 30:18). Booty sharing was one of the means by which David gained the respect of the people of the southern towns of Judah and the Negeb, which served him well after Saul's death. The areas that the Amalekites raided at the time that they burned Ziklag were in the south of Philistia and of Judah in the northwestern Negeb. As Ziklag was under Philistine hegemony in "the country of the Philistines", indicating that Ziklag is located in the northwestern Negeb that is part of southwestern Judah,.

McCarter ¹¹⁴ and Kallai ¹¹⁵ mention that although it has long been proposed that Ziklag's modern correlate is Tel Ḥalif (Tell el-Khuweilifeh), which is approximately 22.5 km (14 miles) north of Beer-sheba, ¹¹⁶ they preferred the proposal that Ziklag's modern correlate is Tel Sera' (Tell esh-Shari'ah), which is approximately 24.1 km (15 miles) southeast of Gaza on the north bank of the Wadi esh-Shari'ah and about 56.3-64.3 km (35-40 miles) southwest of Tell es-Safi (Gath). ¹¹⁷ This preference is based on Tel Sera' being further south from Gath than Tel Ḥalif, making it easier for David to hide his deception from Achish from Tel Sera'. As Judah's town list encompasses a large proportion of the Negeb and all of Simeon's territory and Tel Ḥalif lies deep within Judah's territory that is far away from Philistia proper and is not under Philistia's hegemony, this eliminates Tel Ḥalif from being identified as Ziklag. ¹¹⁸ Judah's town list indicates that the western edge of Simeon is the western edge of Judah and of the Israelite territory. There is no Israelite territory that is west of Simeon and the town lists points to the western edge as being close to Ziklag. ¹¹⁹ As Tel Sera' was in Philistine territory in the Negeb of the Cherethites, it did not belong to Simeon nor to Judah. Oren, who conducted six excavations seasons at Tel Sera' reported that this site cannot be Ziklag for there were no signs of destruction and no gap in occupation. ¹²⁰ Therefore Tel Sera' cannot be identified as Ziklag. Ziklag should be south of Gath, not easily accessible to Achish and at the western edge of Israel's territory that was under Philistine hegemony.

¹¹⁴ P. K. McCarter, Jr. 1980a: 414.

¹¹⁵ Z. Kallai. 1986: 355-356.

¹¹⁶ Alt in 1935, Abel in 1938, Seger in 1984, Borowski in 1988, Zadok in 2009, and Harris in 2011 have identified Tell el-Khuweilifeh (Tel Halif) as Ziklag's modern correlate.

¹¹⁷ Press in 1955, Mazar in 1957, Aharoni in 1979, Na'aman in 1982, Blakely in 2007 and Harris in 2011 have identified Tell esh-Shari'ah (Tel Sera') as Ziklag's modern correlate.

¹¹⁸ A. F. Rainey and R. S. Notley. 2014: 148.

¹¹⁹ Z. Kallai. 1986: 356-358; Y. Aharoni. 1979: 260, 291.

¹²⁰ E. D. Oren. 1993: 1331.

5. Geographic Analysis

5.1. David's Travel Times between Ziklag, Gath and Aphek

There are several reasons why Ziklag must be located south of Gath and north of the settlements that David raided, which are as follows: (1) Achish would not have given David a site in the north for that would be too close to Israelite territory and/or to the city of Ekron.¹²¹ (2) It would have been impractical for David to have launched his raids from a location north of Gath as the tribes he attacked were located south towards Egypt. (3) By being close to the south, David was protecting the new Israelite communities who settled in Southern Judah. (4) Ziklag must have been located at a safe distance from the southern border so that it could not be easily attacked by the southern nomadic tribes; although, this did happen when the Amalekites made a raid on Ziklag and burned it down (1 Sam 30:14). (5) David and his men pursued the Amalekites to the south and they crossed Naḥal Besor (1 Sam 30:9-10), which indicates that Ziklag is north of Naḥal Besor.¹²²

From the map in *Fig. 2*, one can see that apart from the Negeb of the Cherethites, which lies in the western Negeb, the Negeb of Judah and the Negeb of Caleb are located in Israelite territory within Simeon's territory and north of Naḥal Besor.

In an attempt to determine a more exact location for Ziklag, David's travel time was analysed. Detailed calculations are shown in *Appendix B*. Here, travel time is defined as time spent travelling after regular meals and rest breaks. The methods used by Harris (2011b) and Dorsey (1991) were used to estimate the distance travelled by David and his army after King Achish sent David back to Ziklag (1 Sam 29:9-11). Estimates for two and three days are calculated for the Bible informs us that David arrived at Ziklag on the third day, but it does not inform us what part of the day he arrived. David may have arrived at Ziklag in the very early hours of the morning or very late during the night of the third day; meaning that David could have travelled between 2-3 days.

Dorsey provides estimates of the daily travel distances achieved either on foot, on horse or mule, by camel, chariot and more specifically estimated travel times for armies.¹²³ He suggests that armies travel between 22.5-24.1 kpd (14-15 mpd), making the distance travelled by David's army between 45-72.4 km (22.5 km x 2 days and 24.1 km x 3 days) from

¹²¹ E. A. Knauf and H. M. Nienann. 2011: 281.

¹²² H. Harris. 2011b; E. A. Knauf and H. M. Nienann. 2011: 279.

¹²³ D. A. Dorsey. 1991: 12-13; 1 mile = 1.609344 km. Please note that the resulting distances are rounded; Note that kpd = km per day and mpd = miles per day.

Aphek to Ziklag. As the distance between Aphek and Gath (Tel es-Safi) is close to 46 km, David's travel speed must have been slightly greater than Dorsey's estimate.

Harris provides estimates for distances from Aphek to Gath and from Gath to Tell el-Ḥesi (his proposed location for Ziklag). Harris estimated that the distance from Aphek to Gath is 112.7 km (70 miles) and he even allows for a further 16.1 km (10 miles) for the possible winding nature of the roads, giving us an actual distance travelled (ADT) of 128.7 km (80 miles) from Aphek to Gath. ¹²⁴

Harris also estimates that the distance from Gath to Tell el-Ḥesi is 20.9 km (13 miles) but, he does not include an allowance for the possible winding nature of the roads. Assuming that the ratio for this allowance is the same as that from Aphek to Gath, which is $128.7 \text{ km} \div 112.7 \text{ km} = 1.14$. ¹²⁵ and by applying this ratio to the 20.9 km, this gives us an allowance of 3 km (1.86 miles) for the possible winding nature of the roads between Gath to Tell el-Ḥesi. Thus, the ADT from Gath to Tell el-Ḥesi is $20.9 + 3 = 23.9 \text{ km}$ (14.9 miles).

Without the allowance for winding roads, the distance from Aphek to Tell el-Ḥesi is 133.6 km ($112.7 + 20.9$) or 83 miles. With the allowance for winding roads, the ADT is 152.7 km ($112.7 + 16.1 + 20.9 + 3$) or 94.9 miles. This informs us that the total ADT from Aphek to Tell el-Ḥesi is between 133.6-152.7 km (83-94.9 miles). ¹²⁶

Since the Bible does not specify where David and his men crossed Naḥal Besor, one of the southernmost points on the river was selected to test the validity of the distances Harris provides. The site of Shiqmim was selected. Using Google Maps, it is ascertained that the distance from Aphek to Shiqmim is approximately 107 km. ¹²⁷ If the modern correlate of Ziklag is Tell el-Ḥesi and using Harris' distances, this would then locate Ziklag between 26.6-45.7 km south of Naḥal Besor at Shiqmim. We know that this is incorrect as after David discovered Ziklag sacked, he pursued the Amalekites south and crossed Naḥal Besor before catching up with them. ¹²⁸ According to Horton Harris (2011b), Gama Junction near Tell Jemmeh is the traditional crossing point on Naḥal Besor, which is approximately 92 km

¹²⁴ H. Harris. 2011b:128; Miles are provided in brackets as Harris used miles in the distances he provided.

¹²⁵ $80 \text{ miles} \div 70 \text{ miles} = 1.14$.

¹²⁶ Without the allowance for winding roads, the distance between Aphek and Tell el-Ḥesi is 70 miles + 13 miles = 83 miles = 133.6 km; With the allowance for winding roads, the distance between Aphek and Tell el-Ḥesi is 70 miles + 10 miles + 13 miles + 1.9 miles = 94.9 miles = 152.7 km.

¹²⁷ See the map in *Fig. 3* for Shiqmim's location.

¹²⁸ Horton Harris (2011b: 128)

from Aphek, as the crow flies. See *Fig. 3* for this location. Using Harris' distances would locate Ziklag between 41.6-60.7 km south of Naḥal Besor at the Gama Junction. This reinforces the conclusion that the distances that Harris provided are incorrect.

More recent estimates for travelling speed are made by Yang and Diez-Roux, who estimate walking speed between 12-16 minutes per kilometre.¹²⁹ This equates to between 5-3.75 km per hour. Note that the walking times referred to here apply to shorter walks on average, so the slower time is probably more appropriate particularly as David's army would be slowed down by equipment and supplies. It is also reasonable to assume that David's army travelled faster than Dorsey's estimates as David was not travelling into enemy territory having to fight off attacks; they were just returning home. If we use the slower estimate provided by Yang and Diez-Roux of 3.75 kph and David and his men travelled 8 hours per day, the estimated ADT is between 60-90 km over 2-3 days.¹³⁰

Investigating the roads used to determine how much distance is wasted in indirect routes, the Google Earth application informs us that the modern backpackers' route from Aphek to Gath is a total distance of 74.5 km for a Straight Line Distance (SLD) of 46.4 km.¹³¹ The distance wasted is calculated at 37.7% due to the sightseeing nature of their route.¹³²

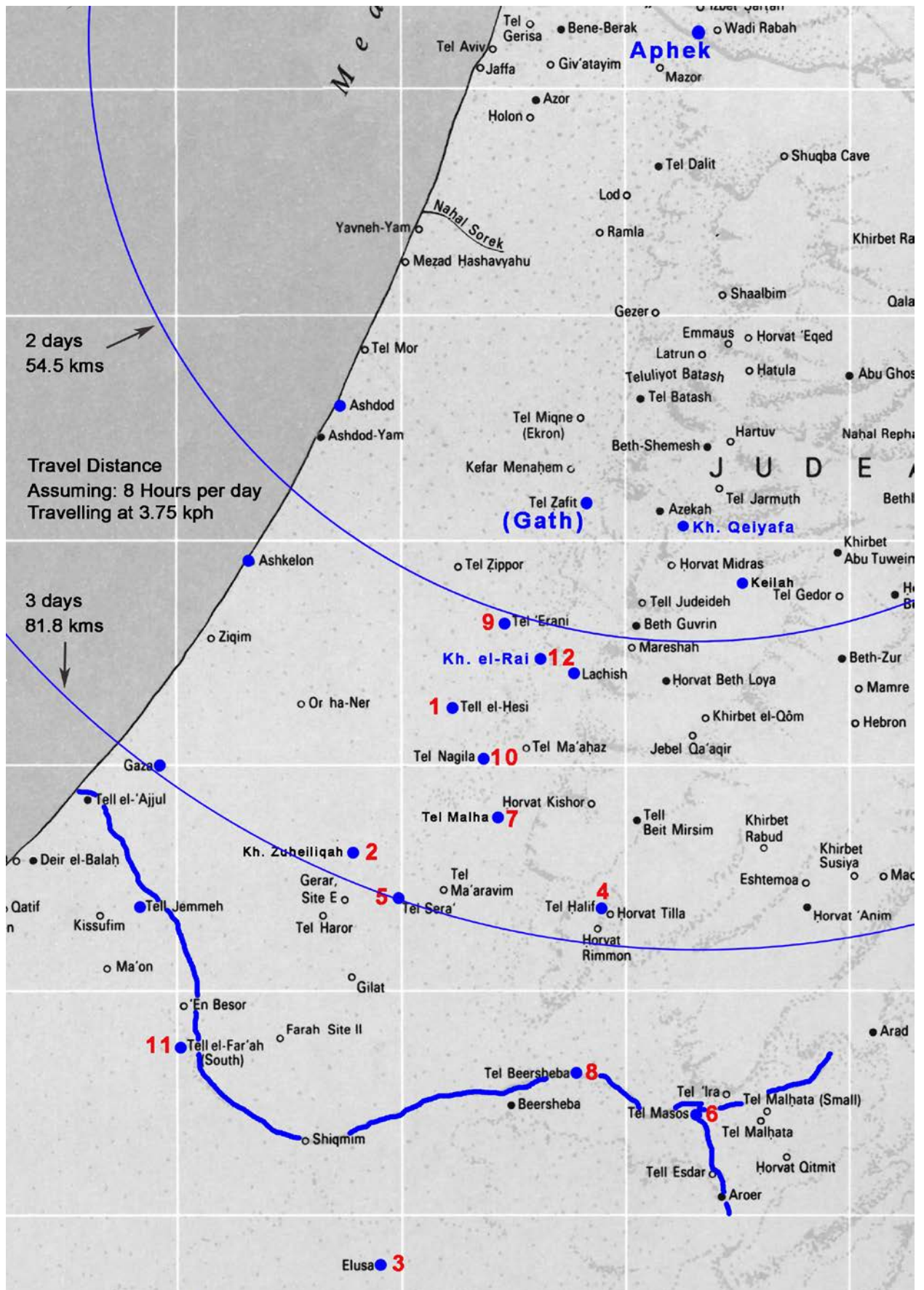
In the Regional Study Map 4 showing ancient travel routes (*Appendix C*), it can be seen that an ancient road existed that was almost straight from Aphek through Gath, so it is reasonable to assume only 10% wastage for an almost straight route. Here, this means that the ADT is equal to SLD plus 10%, i.e. $ADT = (SLD \times 1.1)$ or $SLD = (ADT \div 1.1)$. Applying the ADT of 60 km over two days and 90 km over three days, which were calculated above, this gives us an SLD from Aphek to Ziklag between 54.5 km for two days of travelling and 81.8 km for 3 days of travelling. This is shown on the map in *Fig. 3*. Note that Dorsey's faster travel speed over three days gave us 72.4 km which is just a little over half way between the 54.5-81.8 km calculated here.

¹²⁹ Y. Yang and A. Diez-Roux. 2012: 11; Walking Distance by Trip Purpose and Population Subgroups. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*. 43: 1, 11-19. doi: 10.1016/j.amepre.2012.03.015.

¹³⁰ At the slower speed of 3.75 per hour, the ADT = 3.75×8 hours = 30 km per day or 60 km over 2 days or 90 km over 3 days of travel.

¹³¹ Straight line distance is the distance measured from one point to another in a straight line ignoring topographical features. In other words, it is the distance as the crow flies without wind to divert the crow from his course.

¹³² $(74.5 - 46.4) \div 74.5 = 37.7\%$ wastage. See *Appendix B* for a more detailed explanation.



¹³³ Basic map is from the inside cover of E. Stern's "The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land Vol. 1. 2008.

5.2. Ziklag's Location

When David and his men were up north with Achish in Aphek, the Philistine lords did not trust David and his men to fight against the Israelites. Therefore, Achish ordered David and his men to return to Ziklag (1 Sam 29:3-9). David left early in the morning of the next day (1 Sam 29:11) and arrived at Ziklag on the third day (1 Sam 30:1) only to find Ziklag sacked.

After subduing the Amalekites, retrieving his people and properties and acquiring the properties of the Amalekites, David sent gifts from his booty to the elders of the different tribes of Judah (1 Sam 30:26-31). These were southern tribes who settled in the towns in the Negeb, cities of the Jerahmeelites, Kenites, and in the southern Judean hill country. This was a political move. David was wooing the support of those tribes that were part of Judah but had no affinity to the Israelite alliance and the House of Saul.¹³⁴

After Saul's death, David was anointed king of Judah (2 Sam 2:4). War ensued between the Houses of Judah and of Saul (2 Sam 2:8-32), which ended after Ishbaal's death (2 Sam 4:6-12). David was then made king over all of Israel with Hebron as his first capital for over seven years (2 Sam 5:5). After David moved to Jerusalem, Ziklag's location was not mentioned in the Bible until the relocation of the returnees from the Babylonian exile (Neh 11:28). This is the last biblical reference to Ziklag.

As Ziklag was given to David, it earned the unique designation, "Ziklag has belonged to the kings of Judah to this day" (1 Sam 27:6).¹³⁵ This confusing biblical reference is commented on by Harris in his various identifications of places that could be Ziklag, and are echoed by Knauf and Nienann.¹³⁶ As a result, Garfinkel and Ganor suggests Ziklag seems to have been added to these three lists when it no longer existed and its location had been forgotten.¹³⁷ However, from the analysis in *Section 3.2* on the dating in the Bible, Ziklag did exist except that it was not mentioned in the Bible until Neh 11:28 during the restoration period when the returnees from the Babylonian exile were allocated to Ziklag.

Since definitive archaeological proof for Ziklag's location does not exist, all textual arguments for the location of Ziklag are based on inferences drawn from these biblical

¹³⁴ Y. Aharoni. 1979: 292.

¹³⁵ See Section 3.2 above for an explanation for this designation.

¹³⁶ H. Harris. 2011b: 123; E. A. Knauf. and H. M. Nienann. 2011: 279.

¹³⁷ Garfinkel and Ganor 2018b: 4.

Using the borders in *Fig. 1*, a pink line is drawn through the map in *Fig. 4* to indicate the changeable border between Judah's east side and Philistia's west side during the time of David's service to the Philistines. The border on the map in *Fig. 1* was reconstructed from many sources, among which are from the geographical information contained in the biblical texts of Joshua, Kings and Chronicles. Passages in Joshua lists the boundaries and town in Jos.15 and 19. Rainey (2014:12) mentions that Alt (1925) recognized that the list on Josh 15:20-62 described four geographic areas, which are the Shephelah, Negeb, Hill-country and the Steppe (Wilderness).

Any proposed site that is located on the Judah side or is south of the outer blue ring or is south of Naḥal Besor was immediately eliminated from this study. However, for completeness' sake, these sites will be discussed. *Fig. 4* shows that the possible area where Ziklag may have been located is on the Philistia side between the inner and outer blue circles. To allow for marginal errors, sites that sit on the changeable border between Philistia and Israel or are close to the outer blue ring are included in the study. The working table in *Appendix B* explains the calculations of how the area was identified.

6. Criteria for a Site to be Identified as Ziklag

When Oren revisited the question of Ziklag's location, it sparked renewed interest.¹⁴⁰ In his analysis of the question, Seger lists five historical and archaeological criteria for a site to be Ziklag's correlate.¹⁴¹ Garfinkel and Ganor added the sixth criteria to this list.¹⁴² These are:

1. The site should be located in the northern Negeb area of southern Israel on the southern to southwestern border region between Judah and Philistia.

The tribal allotments in Joshua names Ziklag in the inheritance of Judah (Josh 15:31) and in the inheritance of the tribe of Simeon (Josh 19:5), both of which are located in southern Israel. During the pre-Davidic monarchy, Ziklag lay within the area controlled by the Philistines (1 Sam 27:5). It was from Ziklag that David exercised control over the southern areas and kept in check the nomadic tribes of the Negeb and Sinai deserts as far as the border of Egypt (1 Sam 27:8-10). David's operations only make sense if he is based in a location in the northern Negeb at the lower part of the Judean Hills that is in the south of Israel close to the Philistine plain on the west and to the Judean Hills across the valley to the east. This location would have been within easy range of the Negeb regions to the south, away from Achish's view. It makes political sense that David shared his booty with the elders of the tribes of southern Judah for this provided him with safe passage to the southern Negeb.

2. Evidence of Philistine influence (pottery, hearths) should exist on the site's occupation during the late Iron-I period (11th-10th century).

Since the Bible locates Ziklag in the "country of the Philistines (1 Sam 27:6-7), it is logical to expect that Philistine influence would be found in the site's occupation, regardless of the site being inhabited by Simeonites.

3. Signs of destruction by fire prior to David's ascent to kingship (around 1000 BCE) should exist.

This is because the Amalekites burned Ziklag while David was away at Aphek (1 Sam 30:1).

¹⁴⁰ E. D. Oren. 1982; J. A. Blakely and F.L. Horton: 2001: 31.

¹⁴¹ J. D. Seger: 1984: 49-52.

¹⁴² Y. Garfinkel and S. Ganor. 2018b: Section 11.4.

4. The site was occupied during the Iron-I and the early Iron-II periods (11th-10th centuries).

The occupation of the site should be dated to the 11th-10th centuries for it is around this period that David dwelt at Ziklag. Oren believes that the phrase “Ziklag has belonged to the kings of Judah to this day” (1 Sam 27:6) establishes Ziklag as an important landmark in dynastic tradition.¹⁴³ Oren discusses that since Ziklag is associated with David, the founder of the Davidic dynasty, there would have been royal building activities in the form of a reconstruction program of the site exhibiting ashlar-type masonry, which is indicative of royal architectural traditions.¹⁴⁴ However, Seger advises caution as to the extent to which Ziklag received preferential treatment by David’s successors for the phrase could simply be an affirmation by the biblical authors that Ziklag had remained under Judean control since David’s time.¹⁴⁵ Therefore, the signs of occupation should be identified as belonging to Iron-I or to the early Iron-II period and not necessarily one that was built by a Judean king.

5. Evidence of occupation during the Persian period in the late 5th-4th centuries.

The Book of Nehemiah describes the reconstruction of the Jewish state after the destruction by the Babylonians in 587/586, which is late 5th-4th centuries.¹⁴⁶ Ziklag is mentioned as one of the towns that was repopulated by the post-exilic Jews during the Persian Period (Neh 11:28).

6. The site should be located south of Tel es-Safi (Gath), north of Naḥal Besor, not located in Judah, i.e. within the geographic range identified in Section 5.2.

The sites north of Gath are too close to Israelite territory and Achish of Gath used David to secure his southern borders (1 Sam 27:8). If Ziklag is located north of Gath, it would be located close to Ekron for the distance between Gath and Ekron is only 10 km apart, which would make these two Philistine cities less than a day’s walk from each other.¹⁴⁷ In the David and Achish episode, Ziklag is only mentioned in connection with Gath and not with any other Pentapolis cities. Therefore, it is logical that Ziklag would be

¹⁴³ E. Oren. 1982: 156.

¹⁴⁴ E. Oren. 1982: 162-63.

¹⁴⁵ J.D. Seger. 1984: 51.

¹⁴⁶ L. L. Grabbe. 1998: 1.

¹⁴⁷ Garfinkel, Kreimerman and Zilberg. 2015: 227

located to the south of Gath at the eastern border of Philistia and the Shephelah within the sphere of Gath's control.

David travelled southwards from the direction of Aphek before he arrived at Ziklag, yet when he arrived, he found a Ziklag that was sacked and burned by the Amalekites. David then crossed Naḥal Besor (1 Sam 30:9-10) to chase after the Amalekites, who lived in the Negeb (Num 13:29). Therefore, sites located north of Naḥal Besor and south of Gath are possible sites for Ziklag. During their pursuit of the Amalekites from Ziklag, 200 out of the 600 of David's men had to stay behind for they were too exhausted to cross Naḥal Besor (1 Sam 30:10 and 21) and they protected their baggage (1 Sam 30:24). This suggests that Ziklag must be located some distance from Naḥal Besor to exhaust 200 able bodied warriors. Therefore, sites too close or south of Naḥal Besor are excluded. When David returned to Ziklag, he sent a portion of his spoils to the elders of various allied clans (1 Sam 30:26-31). These sites were named and are located in the southern mountains of Judah and in the Negeb, which provide geographical information on the general location of Ziklag, which is in the south of Gath. One can conclude from this discussion that Ziklag is south of Gath and north of Naḥal Besor.

7. Analysis of Proposed Ancient Sites for Ziklag

The sites listed in *Section 2* were analysed against the evaluation criteria listed above in *Section 6* to determine which site can be considered as Ziklag. Several locations especially those close to the Negeb and the Shephelah have been proposed for Ziklag. In Harris' survey of candidate sites for Ziklag, he named six sites for Ziklag's modern correlate, three of them are in the southern part of southwest Judea and the other three are in the northern part of southwest Judea. The three southern locations that he considered are Tel Ḥalif/Tell Khuweilifeh, Tel Sera'/Tell esh-Shari'ah and Khirbet Zuheilikah near Gaza. For the possible northern sites, Harris chose Tell el-Ḥesi, Tel 'Erani/Tell "Areini and Tell Nagila/Tel Najileh. Harris chose these northern sites based on events of later periods that were connected with David, Saul and the Philistines, and their proximity to Gath. ¹⁴⁸ These sites are shown on the map in *Appendix A* and listed in *Section 2*. Each of these sites and other sites that have been proposed were reviewed for their viability as Ziklag.

In 2019, Khirbet al-Ra'i was identified as Ziklag. As this site is located south of Tel es-Safi (Gath) and within the area of David's travel times from Aphek to Ziklag, ¹⁴⁹ it was included in the list of possible sites for Ziklag.

7.1. Tell el-Ḥesi

Tell el-Ḥesi is located in the south-eastern Coastal Plain, 26 km north-east of Gaza, 7 km south of modern Qiryat Gat and south-west of Lachish in modern Israel. ¹⁵⁰ Harris opines that Tell el-Ḥesi meets the distance and time requirements for Tell el-Ḥesi to be Ziklag. ¹⁵¹ It has been demonstrated in *Section 5.2* that Harris' distances are erroneous.

Karl Ritter suggested that Tell el-Ḥesi was Ziklag. ¹⁵² Robinson did not make this identification for he did not find an Arabic village named Ziklag. However, he suggested that Tell el-Ḥesi was the site that Felix Fabri visited in 1483, which Fabri's guide identified to him as Ziklag. ¹⁵³ Ritter's identification lost support when Tell el-Ḥesi was erroneously identified as Lachish. The identifications for Tell el-Ḥesi were Lachish and Eglon; later

¹⁴⁸ H. Harris. 2011b: 119.

¹⁴⁹ See *Fig. 4*.

¹⁵⁰ V. M. Fargo. 1993: 630.

¹⁵¹ H. Harris. 2011b: 128.

¹⁵² K. Ritter 1866: 247.

¹⁵³ E. Robinson. 1841: 48 n. 1; F. Fabri. 1843: 359; 1893: 428–29; J. A. Blakely. 2007: 21; H. Harris. 2011a: 19.

candidates were Gath, Ziklag and Yurza, which Blakely and Horton believe are wrong. ¹⁵⁴

The first excavation project of Tell el-Hesi was by Petrie and Bliss. This was the first site to be scientifically excavated by Petrie in 1890 and Bliss from 1891-1894. In this excavation, Petrie developed the modern archaeological methods using the principles of stratigraphic excavations and ceramic chronology.¹⁵⁵ Bliss's excavation produced eleven occupation levels which he grouped into eight strata or "cities".¹⁵⁶ After an 80-year interval, a second excavation project took place over 8 field seasons from 1970-1983. The interesting periods in determining a biblical identity for this site correspond to Strata-IX, VIII and VII. ¹⁵⁷

The Late Bronze Age settlement was substantial and Bliss recovered a cuneiform tablet from the Amarna Period in his "City-III". The Iron-IA period (Stratum X, first half of the 12th century) was reached in one probe. This revealed Petrie's "Plaster Building", a mud-brick wall about 4.9 feet (1.5m) wide, with an interior plaster floor that was covered by a heavy layer of destruction debris made of brick and charcoal. The few sherds found were dated to the 9th century. ¹⁵⁸

Petrie unearthed in Stratum-VIII^d (Iron-II, 9th century) the "Manasseh Wall", a mud-brick wall with cross-walls, about 9.8 feet (3m) wide at the upper wall and an outer wall measuring 39 feet 4 inches (12 meters) wide. ¹⁵⁹ The ceramics associated with this structure are late 10th and early 9th century that are typical of Judah's hill country. Only a handful of Philistine sherds were found, which are viewed as trade goods. The same ceramic picture emerged for Strata-VIII^c through VII^a (Iron-II, 9th-8th centuries). ¹⁶⁰

In November 1891, Bliss discovered in Stratum-IX (Iron-I/II, 10th to the early 9th centuries) three tripartite pillared buildings that were dated based on ceramic evidence to the early 10th century and their ultimate burial to the beginning of the 9th century. Some

¹⁵⁴ J. A. Blakely and F. L. Horton. 2001:25.

¹⁵⁵ V. M. Fargo. 1993: 630; Petrie's publication was the first to correlate pottery and artifacts with stratigraphy and to illustrate pottery in section drawings.

¹⁵⁶ V. M. Fargo and K. G. O'Connell. 1978: 167.

¹⁵⁷ J. A. Blakely and F. L. Horton. 2001: 27.

¹⁵⁸ V. M. Fargo. 1993: 632; J. A. Blakely and F. L. Horton. 2001: 30; It should be noted that Fargo erroneously identified this stratum as Stratum-VIII. Blakely and Horton identified this correctly as Stratum-X. The few sherds found were not typed by either Fargo or Blakely and Horton.

¹⁵⁹ V. M. Fargo. 1993: 631-633; J. A. Blakely and F. L. Horton. 2001:30; It should be noted that Fargo erroneously identified this stratum as Stratum-VIII^d. Blakely and Horton identified this correctly as Stratum VIII^d.

¹⁶⁰ J. A. Blakely and F. L. Horton. 2001: 28-29.

10th/9th century ceramics were found, but no Philistine pottery was found, except for a few sherds. ¹⁶¹

During the 10th century, Tell el-Ḥesi was located on a major road leading from Egypt and Gaza to Judah, a road leading from Gaza to Tell el-Ḥesi to Hebron and then up to Jerusalem. This site was one of several locations with tripartite pillared structures that served a governmental and possibly economic function on the borders of Israel and Judah. ¹⁶² Tell el-Ḥesi's location dominates the surrounding plain and provides an excellent view of all roads in the area. It is one of a group of small Iron Age sites that runs along the inner Shephelah, which may have served as border outposts along the outer defense perimeter for Lachish and southwestern Judah that may have been established by Rehoboam to protect the southern and western borders of Judah from Egyptian raids (2 Chr 11:5-12). ¹⁶³

When the site was rebuilt at the end of the 10th century or the beginning of the 9th century, the function of Tell el-Ḥesi's Stratum-IX was transferred to neighbouring Lachish. ¹⁶⁴ The ceramic picture that emerges for the use of this fortress are late 10th and early 9th century materials that are typical of hill country Judah. Again, only a handful of Philistine sherds were found, which are viewed as trade goods. The material culture suggests that this site was Judahite and not Philistine. ¹⁶⁵

Iron-I material was minimal but the entire 'acropolis' in the 9th century (or upper tell) was surrounded by an impressive wall. Tell el-Ḥesi's Iron-II occupation came to an end in the 6th century, possibly at the hands of the Babylonians. The site continued to play a military role in the Persian and Hellenistic periods. No residential dwellings were found in the Stratum-Vd identified for the Persian Period and there was little architecture in the Hellenistic phase. ¹⁶⁶

Tell el-Ḥesi versus Criteria

A comparison against the criteria for a Ziklag identification shows that: (1) Tell el-Ḥesi is located in the northern Negeb. (2) There is no evidence of Philistine influence. The site is

¹⁶¹ J. A. Blakely and F. L. Horton. 2001: 28-29.

¹⁶² J. A. Blakely and F. L. Horton. 2001: 29.

¹⁶³ V. M. Fargo. 1993: 633.

¹⁶⁴ J. A. Blakely and F. L. Horton. 2001: 29.

¹⁶⁵ J. A. Blakely and F. L. Horton. 2001: 29.

¹⁶⁶ V. M. Fargo. 1993: 633-634.

Judahite and not Philistine. (3) No signs of destruction were found for David's period of 1000 BCE. (4) The site was occupied during Iron-I and Iron-IIA in the late 11th and the early 10th centuries. (5) This site was not occupied in the Persian period. (6) Tell el-Hesi is located south of Tel es-Safi (Gath), north of Naḥal Besor and is located in Philistia, not in Judah.

Tell el-Hesi cannot be Ziklag for it does not meet points 2, 3 and 5 of the criteria for a site to be identified as Ziklag.

7.2. Khirbet Zuheilikhah near Gaza

Currently, this site is not visible for it has been ploughed over.¹⁶⁷ According to Harris, this site from a toponymical point of view has a claim to be Ziklag. Conder, while surveying Western Palestine, learned that there were three small hills in the form of an equilateral triangle located 17.7 km (11 miles) southeast of Gaza was known as Khirbet Zuheilikhah. Conder suggested that the name was equivalent to Ziklag, which was accepted by Kitchener, who reported it in the *Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement*.¹⁶⁸ In 1924, Albright accepted this identification as Ziklag although it seems that he never visited the site. In October 1924, Albright and his party set off from Gaza but could not find the site. When Alt visited the site in 1935 he could not find any ancient pottery. Therefore, Alt declared that Khirbet Khuweilifeh was more suitable for Ziklag than Khirbet Zuheilikhah, based on a dubious similarity of name.¹⁶⁹

Khirbet Zuheilikhah versus Criteria

A comparison against the criteria for a Ziklag identification shows that criteria (1) is met for Khirbet Zuheilikhah is located in the northern Negeb. However, due to a lack of archaeological findings, criteria (2)-(5) are not met. Criteria (6) is met for Khirbet Zuheilikhah is located south of Tel es-Safi (Gath), north of Naḥal Besor and is located in Philistia, not in Judah. Therefore, Khirbet Zuheilikhah cannot be identified as Ziklag.

7.3. Elusa/Haluza south of Beer-sheba

Elusa/Haluza is a town in the Negeb desert about 20 km southwest of Beer-sheba and was founded in the Hellenistic period and existed until the beginning of the Arab period. E.

¹⁶⁷ H. Harris. 2011b:132 note 7.

¹⁶⁸ C. R. Conder and H. H. Kitchener. 1883: 288; H. H. Kitchener 1878: 12-13.

¹⁶⁹ A. Alt. 1935: 318; H. Harris.2011b: 122-123.

Robinson discovered this site in 1838.¹⁷⁰ T. K. Cheyenne disagreed with Conder's identification of Ziklag with Khirbet Zuheilakah. Instead, he proposed the site of Halūsah (Elusa/Haluza) based on its name sounding like *ḥalsu*, meaning "fortress", an ancient and famous city in the Wādy 'Aslūj, south of Beer-sheba on the way to Ruḥeibeh or Rehoboth.¹⁷¹ This is an odd suggestion for the Bible never refers to Ziklag as a fortress.

An extensive survey of the site was undertaken in 1973, 1980 and 1990 under the direction of Negev. Elusa was founded by the Nabataeans in the third century.¹⁷² Based on this, Elusa cannot be considered as Ziklag's modern correlate, for it did not exist during the Iron-I/II and Persian periods.

Elusa versus Criteria

Elusa does not meet any of the criteria for a site to be considered as Ziklag based on a lack of archaeological findings prior to the Hellenistic period and that this site is located south of Naḥal Besor (see *Appendix A*).¹⁷³

7.4. Tel Ḥalif/Tell Khuweilifeh

Tel Ḥalif/Tell Khuweilifeh is a prominent three-acre (1.2 hectares) mound located in the northeastern Negev on the border between Judah's hill country and the Shephelah. It is in the western foothills of Mount Hebron that overlooks the Shephelah and the plain of Philistia to the west and borders the Negev desert to the south.¹⁷⁴ It is a strategic site for it commands the route from Egypt and the seacoast into the Judean Hills towards Hebron and Jerusalem.¹⁷⁵

In 1938, Abel suggested that Tel Ḥalif be identified as Ziklag based on its proximity to Horvat Rimmon (Khirbet Umm er-Rammamin), which is less than 1 km to its south. Conder and Kitchener had proposed that Khirbet Umm er-Rammamin be identified with the biblical city of Rimmon, for the reason that it is mentioned in the town lists of Judah (Josh 15:32) and that it is part of the inheritance list of Simeon (Josh 19:7). Abel supplemented this suggestion by arguing that since Ziklag is mentioned in the Simeonite

¹⁷⁰ A. Negev. 1993: 379.

¹⁷¹ T. K. Cheyne. 1903: 5417.

¹⁷² A. Negev. 1993: 379.

¹⁷³ See discussion in Section 5.2.

¹⁷⁴ J. D. Seger and O. Borowski. 1977:156.

¹⁷⁵ J. D. Seger. 1993: 553.

town list (Josh 15:31), it too should be identified with Tel Ḥalif.¹⁷⁶ In 1980, Na'aman identified Tel Ḥalif as Hormah. Aharoni initially suggested Goshen and then changed his mind in favour of Rimmon, which Borowski supported in 1980.¹⁷⁷ In 1984, Seger suggested that Tel Ḥalif is Ziklag, despite noting the dearth of Philistine material culture, and stressed Tel Ḥalif's strategic position regarding David's movement in 1 Sam 27:8-12 and 30:26-31.¹⁷⁸ Seger accounts for the lack of Philistine pottery by postulating that Achish would not have given David a thriving Philistine city. Dessel informs us in his report, Lahav I, that Stager and Aharoni remark that there is no real Philistine presence east of Gat and additionally, Aharoni notes that Tel Halif is too far east to be Ziklag.¹⁷⁹

Proximity to another site in the Bible is no guarantee that the information given by the Bible is correct. For example, Hormah is mentioned several times with Arad (Deut.21:3, Josh 12:14, Judg.1:16-17). Yet, Na'aman argues that Hormah is not situated near Arad. However, two biblical passages (Num 14:45 and Deut 1:44) suggest that Hormah was not on a hill but in the lowlands, possibly near Arad or even further south. These inconsistencies are what makes it difficult to rely on biblical passages alone for the identification of sites. This fits the selection criteria that Franken mentioned in *Section 1.7* when he observed archaeologists were using the Bible for identifying their sites without using historical and archaeological data.

In his 2011 article, "The Location of Ziklag", Harris describes different candidate sites for Ziklag. His article is supposed to be a review of these sites based on topographical and archaeological evidence.¹⁸⁰ However, Harris mainly uses topographical evidence that is linked to the Bible and hardly mentions archaeological evidence despite archaeological explorations at and around Tel Ḥalif in the 1950s with intermittent salvage operations in the 1970s. In 1976-1989, J.D. Seger led the excavations of Tel Ḥalif as part of the Lahav Research Project, a consortium of American scholars and institutions, which launched an integrated study of the Tel Ḥalif region.¹⁸¹

Evidence of Iron-I (Stratum-VII, 1200-900 BCE) occupation at Tel Ḥalif was found in almost

¹⁷⁶ J. D. Seger. 1993: 554.

¹⁷⁷ O. Borowski. 1988: 21.

¹⁷⁸ J. P. Dessel. 2009:12.

¹⁷⁹ Y. Aharoni. 1979: 291, 318 n. 11; L. Stager. 1995: 332-348; J. P. Dessel. 2009: 13.

¹⁸⁰ H. Harris. 2011b: 119.

¹⁸¹ J. D. Seger. 1983: 1; J. D. Seger. 1993: 554.

all areas that were excavated.¹⁸² In field I, area B10, immediately above the Stratum-VIII surface, another surface provided evidence of the earliest Iron-I, Stratum-VII occupation. Evidence of Iron-I occupation were also found in fields II and III in Stratum-VII levels. Two clear Iron-I phases were uncovered, the latest of these was represented by remains of a shallow, stone-lined bin, filled to a depth of over 35 cm with an accumulation of ash and bone fragments, which are not from a destruction layer. In this debris, special objects, which include an unusual clay female figurine as well as a small group of late 11th-10th century degenerated style Philistine potsherds were found.¹⁸³ Seger and Borowski, the directors of the excavations at Tel Ḥalif, reported that despite some connection with coastal Philistine centres during Iron-I is exhibited, there is no clear Philistine influence demonstrated at this site.¹⁸⁴

The Iron-II (Stratum-VI, 900-700 BCE) era was a period of growth and expansion and traces of occupation was found in almost all areas that were excavated. Remains of an Iron-II fortification system were discovered in Stratum-VIB. The initial construction of this complex took place in the early ninth century. Evidence of destruction were found in areas N3 and N4 of Stratum-VIB which is dated to the eighth century, probably in association with the Assyrian invasion of Sennacherib in 701 BCE,¹⁸⁵ which is well and truly outside David's period. Evidence indicates that for a brief period immediately following this destruction, structures in field III and field II of Stratum-VIA were occupied. No evidence of fire nor disruption were found. The materials found suggest that this phase ended in abandonment rather than in destruction.¹⁸⁶

There is evidence of Persian period occupation in a number of pits and bins in both fields I, II and III of Strata V-IV.¹⁸⁷ Substantial architectural remains were found, which overlay the Iron-II structures of Stratum-VIB and was below the early Hellenistic structure of Stratum-IV. The surfaces of Stratum-V walls were generally sterile but clear evidence of a Late Persian period were recovered in the foundation trenches. The substantial size of the walls indicates that they may have been part of a large storehouse, barrack or military building used during the Persian administration of the region. Architectural remains of a

¹⁸² J. D. Seger and O. Borowski. 1977: 161.

¹⁸³ J. D. Seger. 1993: 557; P. F. Jacobs and J. D. Seger. 2017: 547-549.

¹⁸⁴ J. D. Seger and O. Borowski. 1977: 166; J. D. Seger. 1993: 557; J. P. Dessel. 2009: 12.

¹⁸⁵ J. D. Seger. 1993: 557-558.

¹⁸⁶ J. D. Seger. 1993: 557-558.

¹⁸⁷ J. D. Seger. 1993: 558.

Hellenistic settlement was found in areas across the southern perimeter of field II in Stratum-IV. The domestic nature of this occupation was identified from the ovens on room surfaces. The sherds found date the initial construction of Stratum-IV buildings to the mid-fourth century.

Tel Ḥalif versus Criteria

A comparison against the criteria for a Ziklag identification shows that: (1) Although Tel Ḥalif is located in the Northern Negeb, it does not meet this first criteria for it is not in the border between Judah and Philistia. It has an eastern location in the south of Judah's territory. (2) There is no clear Philistine influence demonstrated at this site. (3) No signs of destruction by fire were found for David's period of 1000 BCE. (4) There is clear evidence that this site was occupied during the Iron-I and the early Iron-II periods in the late 11th and early 10th centuries. (5) This site was occupied in the Persian period. (6) The site is located south of Tel es-Safi (Gath) and north of Naḥal Besor but it lies within Judah and not Philistia.

Tel Ḥalif cannot be Ziklag for it does not meet points 1, 2, 3 and 6 of the criteria for a site to be identified as Ziklag. (Refer to the discussion regarding Tel Ḥalif's location in *Section-4*).

7.5. Tel es-Sera'/Tell esh-Shari'ah

Tel Sera'/Tell esh-Shari'ah is in a strategic location along the Wadi esh-Shari'ah/Naḥal Gerar, which is a tributary of Naḥal Besor/Wadi Gaza and the biblical valley of Gerar on the northern fringes of the western Negeb desert between Gaza and Beer-sheba. The site is in the southeast corner of the Plain of Philistia, around 20 km northwest of Beer-sheba, 24 km southeast of Gaza on the north bank of the Wadi esh-Shari'ah and about 56-64 km southwest of Tell es-Safi (Gath). ¹⁸⁸

Six excavation seasons were conducted by Oren between 1972 and 1978 at Tel es-Sera'. Thirteen major strata of occupation were identified, including significant remains of Iron-I (Stratum-VIII, 12th-11th centuries), Iron-II (Stratum-VII, 10th-9th centuries) and Persian period (Stratum-V, 5th-4th centuries). These reveal that the material culture found in this region were Canaanite, Philistine, Israelite, and of later periods. It also reveals the military, political and economic relations of the site to coastal Israel, Egypt and the Aegean. Significant remains of Iron I-II (Strata VIII-IV) and two distinct Persian periods building

¹⁸⁸ Press in 1955, Mazar in 1957, Aharoni in 1979, Na'aman in 1982, Blakely in 2007 and Harris in 2011 have identified Tell esh-Shari'ah (Tel Sera') as Ziklag's modern correlate.

phases (Stratum-III) were identified. ¹⁸⁹

Oren observed that the transition from Philistine Iron-I to Iron-II (Strata VIII-VII) did not involve any destruction or gap in occupation as there is continuity in the material culture that was apparent in the ceramic assemblages of both strata and that the city was occupied in Iron I-II by a Philistine population. However, due to the abundance of Philistine pottery, Oren suggested that Tel es-Sera' is a more likely candidate for Ziklag. ¹⁹⁰ Nevertheless, Oren was mistaken in his identification for the Bible states that the Amalekites burned Ziklag when they raided the site (1 Sam 30:1). Further research revealed that Oren later developed doubts regarding his pronouncement as he later wrote that no signs of destruction and no gap in occupation makes it problematic to identify Tel es-Sera' with Ziklag. ¹⁹¹

Some scholars have disputed the identification of Tel es-Sera' as one of the biblical cities in the north-western Negeb. Albright suggested that it is Hormah, Alt suggested Gerar and Wright suggested Philistine Gath. ¹⁹² Based on historical and geographical data that is supported by stratigraphic data and archaeological evidence that were excavated from Tell es-Sera', B. Mazar, Aharoni, Kallai, and Oren believed that Tel es-Sera' is Ziklag but developed doubts about his suggestion. ¹⁹³ There is no consensus on the matter.

Tel es-Sera' versus Criteria

A comparison against the criteria for a Ziklag identification shows that: (1) Tel es-Sera' meets the criteria for a northern Negeb location. (2) There is Philistine influence demonstrated at this site. (3) No signs of destruction were found for David's period of 1000 BCE. (4) There is clear evidence that this site was occupied during the Iron-I and the early Iron-IIA in the late 11th and the early 10th century. (5) This site was occupied during the Persian period. (6) This site is located south of Tel es-Safi (Gath) and north of Naḥal Besor and it lies in the plain of Philistia. The location of Tel es-Sera' is problematic for its identification as Ziklag (see discussion in *Section 4*). Although Tel es-Sera' falls at the edge of the upper limit of the range of time and distance travelled from Aphek to Ziklag, ¹⁹⁴ it is

¹⁸⁹ E.D. Oren. 1982: 155; J. D. Seger. 1984: 48.

¹⁹⁰ E. D. Oren. 1982: 163.

¹⁹¹ E. D. Oren. 1993: 1331.

¹⁹² E. D. Oren. 1982: 155.

¹⁹³ Eliezer Oren. 1982. pp. 155-156.

¹⁹⁴ See *Section 5.2*

closer to Naḥal Besor and therefore, it is unlikely that the distance travelled from Tel es-Sera' to Naḥal Besor would exhaust 200 men (1 Sam 30:9-10). In addition, Tel es-Sera' lies in Philistia in the Negeb of the Cherethites, it did not belong to Simeon and to Judah.

Tel es-Sera' cannot be Ziklag for it does not meet points 3 and 6 of the criteria for a site to be identified as Ziklag.

7.6. Tel Māsōś in the Beer-sheba Valley

Tel Māsōś is located in the Negeb desert approximately 12 km east of Beer-sheba, on the north bank of the Beer-sheba Valley. Its Arabic name is Khirbet el-Mashâsh (Ruin of the Cisterns) for it is close to several active wells. In 1962, Y. Aharoni surveyed the site and reported that the entire area was made up of settlements from the Middle Bronze Age II period, Byzantine period, Iron-III and a large settlement from the beginning of the Iron Age that was built over a Late Chalcolithic settlement. Aharoni identified the site as Hormah based on its proximity to Arad (Josh 12:14, Judg.1:16-17) and its location in the eastern Negeb (1 Sam 30:30), which was objected to by M. Kochavi and N. Na'aman.¹⁹⁵ Crüsemann (1973) identified this site with Ziklag based on its location in the Negeb, which he believes facilitated David's movement in and out of the Negeb, and because Tel Māsōś was unwalled and there was a strong expansion during the early royal period.¹⁹⁶ Fritz objected to Crüsemann's identification for the reason that there was a long gap of history of settlement from the middle of the 10th century until the second half of the 7th century.¹⁹⁷ Na'aman (1980) suggested that the site should be identified with Baalath-Beer in Josh 19:8 and Fritz and Kempinski (1983) considers the site to be either Siphmoth or Racal.¹⁹⁸

Three excavation seasons were carried out from 1972-1975, which were directed by Y. Aharoni, V. Fritz and A. Kempinski.¹⁹⁹ In 1979, A. Kempinski resumed excavations as part of the salvage operations conducted in the Beer-sheba Valley. These four excavation seasons uncovered about a tenth of an Iron-I town, a fifth of an Iron-III fortress, most of the Nestorian monastery and fragments of a Middle Bronze Age II enclosure. Chalcolithic remains were found in the excavations below the Iron-I and Iron-III strata as well as in the

¹⁹⁵ A. Kempinski. 1993: 986.

¹⁹⁶ F. Crüsemann. 1973: 222-223.

¹⁹⁷ V. Fritz. 1981: 61.

¹⁹⁸ F. Crüsemann. 1973: 222-224; N. Na'aman. 1980: 146; V. Fritz and A. Kempinski. 1983: 235-238.

¹⁹⁹ V. Fritz. 1992: 709.

pits in the gorge between the Iron-I settlement and the Iron-III strata.²⁰⁰ The pottery assemblage found in Stratum-III is typical of those found in the south and southern Shephelah at the end of the thirteenth and beginning of the twelfth centuries. There is an absence of Philistine pottery in the stratum's earlier phase of Stratum-IIIB, suggesting a date of pre-1150 BCE, which is corroborated by the discovery of a scarab of the Egyptian king Seti II (1204–1194 BCE).²⁰¹ Philistine pottery was found in Stratum-II, which is dated to post-1150 BCE,²⁰² the period of the Philistine takeover throughout Canaan.²⁰³

Although this site is an early Iron Age site located in the northern Negeb, it does not share the characteristics of Israelite sites in the Negeb or in other regions. The absence of collared rim jars like those found at other early Israelite sites is as significant as the presence of pottery originating from the coastal areas of Canaan (Phoenician “Bichrome ware”, Philistine pottery and Midianite ware).²⁰⁴ Due to the rarity of Philistine pottery, Aharoni excluded the possibility of identifying this site with Ziklag.²⁰⁵

The site's distinguishing features and architecture are of foreign influence and some of its structures seem to have been built by the Egyptian garrisons during the reigns of Seti II and Ramses IV (c. 1140 BCE). This is reinforced by the Egyptian pottery found in the site. There were trade ties with Philistia between the end of the twelfth century and the eleventh century. At the end of the eleventh century, the settlement was destroyed either by an Amalekite raid or by an earthquake.²⁰⁶ A settlement built at the beginning of the Israelite Settlement period was abandoned around 980-970 BCE.²⁰⁷ An Iron-III fortress with four phases were found, all dating from the seventh century.²⁰⁸ A caravanserai or fort existed during the Persian period, but this was destroyed by subsequent building activities.²⁰⁹

A third settlement area was a tell located around 200m southwest of the early Iron Age village. It was a small “fortress” about 1.25 acre (0.51 hectare) and dating to the

²⁰⁰ A. Kempinski. 1993: 986.

²⁰¹ V. Fritz. 1992: 710.

²⁰² A. Kempinski. 1993: 988.

²⁰³ A. Aharoni, V. Fritz, V. & A. Kempinski. 1977: 146.

²⁰⁴ V. Fritz. 1992: 710.

²⁰⁵ A. Aharoni, V. Fritz, V. & A. Kempinski. 1975: 117.

²⁰⁶ A. Kempinski. 1993: 989.

²⁰⁷ A. Kempinski. 1978: 30.

²⁰⁸ A. Kempinski. 1993: 989.

²⁰⁹ A. Kempinski. 1978: 30.

7th-6th centuries.

Tel Māsōś versus Criteria

A comparison against the criteria for a Ziklag identification shows that: (1) Tel Māsōś is not in the northern Negeb for it is located in the south close to Beer-sheba. (2) There is no Philistine influence demonstrated at this site for the late Iron-I period. (3) No signs of destruction were found for David's period of 1000 BCE. (4) There is clear evidence that this site was occupied during the Iron-I but not in the early Iron-II periods. (5) This site was not occupied during the Persian period. Only a caravanserai was found which was later destroyed. There are no other markers of settlement or additional occupation. (6) Tel Māsōś is located south of Tel es-Safi (Gath), is on the edge of the Wadi Beer-sheba which flows to Naḥal Besor and it is not located in the plain of Philistia. In addition, Tel Māsōś is outside the geographic range identified in *Section 5.2*.

Tel Māsōś cannot be Ziklag for it does not meet any of the criteria for a site to be identified as Ziklag.

7.7. Tel Malḥa/Tel el-Muleihah

A.F. Rainey (1975) suggested in a footnote that Tel Malḥa (Tel el-Muleihah) is a possible candidate for Ziklag but offered no explanation for his suggestion.²¹⁰ Blakely and Hardin (2002) discussed several sites in their article on southwestern Judah, which included the site of Tel Milḥ (Tel el-Muleihah) which is also known as Tel Malḥa or Tel Milḥa.²¹¹ As the map in *Fig. 5* below shows, it is located south of Tel Nejila and northeast of Tel Sera. At the time when Blakely and Hardin wrote their report, the site has not been excavated.²¹² Research on this site was done by this author, but no other information, archaeological or otherwise, had been found. A search on the website of *The Archaeological Survey of Israel* failed to show that this site had been surveyed.²¹³

Although Tel Malḥa meets criteria 1 and 6, this site cannot be considered as Ziklag. due to the lack of archaeological information.

²¹⁰ A. F. Rainey. 1975:71 note 70.

²¹¹ J. A. Blakely and J. W. Hardin. 2002: 14, 38.

²¹² J. A. Blakely and J. W. Hardin. 2002: 14, 40.

²¹³ Israel Antiquities Authority. http://www.antiquities.org.il/survey/new/default_en.aspx

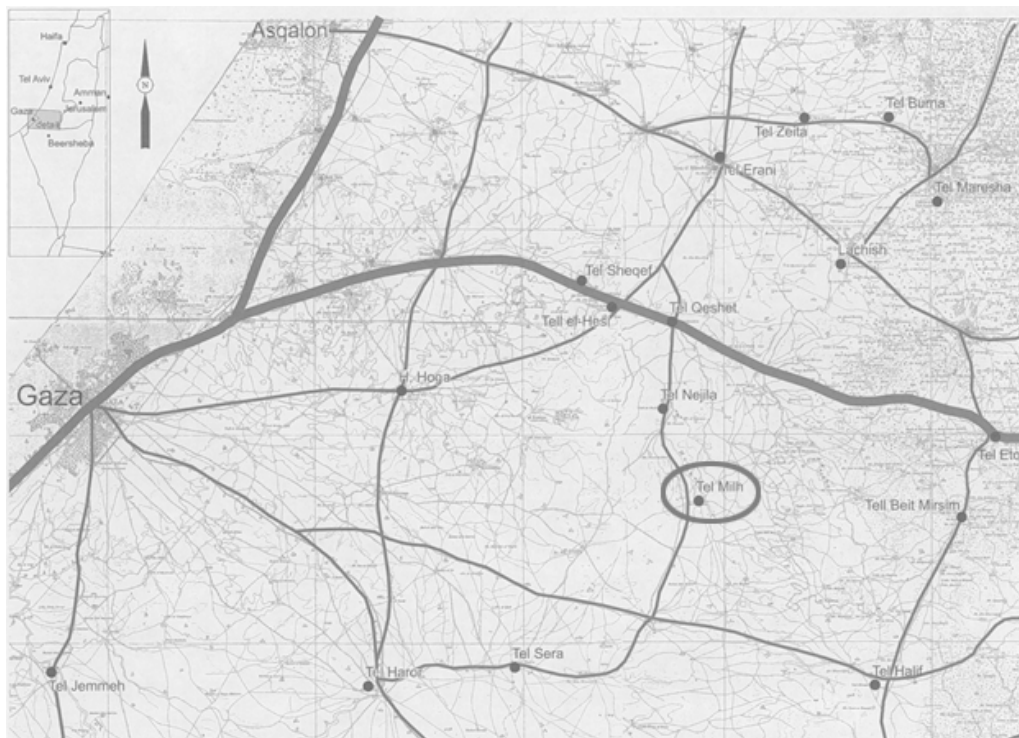


Fig. 5 Map of southwestern Palestine depicting Tel Milh ²¹⁴

7.8. Tell es-Seba'/Tel Beer-sheba

Tell es-Seba' (Tel Beer-sheba) is located in the South Judean desert, north of the Wadi es-Seba approximately 5 km east of today's city of Beersheba, on a hill overlooking the Beer-sheba and Hebron valleys at the juncture of Naḥal Hebron and Naḥal Beer-sheba. The city is located at the important crossroad going northward to Mount Hebron, eastward to the Judean Desert and the Dead Sea, westward to the coastal plain and southward to the Negev Hills, Kadesh-Barnea and Elath. ²¹⁵ It is a stratified tell made up of ancient cities. ²¹⁶

E.W.G. Masterman was the first to propose Tell es-Seba' as the biblical town of Beer-sheba. ²¹⁷ Tell es-Seba' was archaeologically explored from 1969 to 1975 and was identified by Y. Aharoni as biblical Beer-sheba, yet there are disagreements regarding this identification. Na'aman is of the opinion that ancient Beer-sheba should be sought at Bir es-Saba. ²¹⁸ Fritz suggests that Tell es-Seba' is Ziklag. He argues this for the site was fortified in the early 10th century at the beginning of the monarchy and that evidence shows that the site was a well-planned, fortified administration centre that was continuously

²¹⁴ J. A. Blakely and J. W. Hardin. 2002: 15.

²¹⁵ D.W. Evans. 1992: 641; Z. Herzog. 1993a: 167; Z. Herzog and L. Singer-Avitz. 2016: 1.

²¹⁶ V. Fritz. 1993: 60.

²¹⁷ D.W. Evans. 1992: 641.

²¹⁸ Z. Herzog. 1993a: 168.

occupied until Sennacherib destroyed it.²¹⁹ It should be noted that the Bible never mentions that Ziklag was a fortified site. If Ziklag was fortified, it would not have been easily attacked and burnt down by the Amalekites. Following Aharoni's death in 1976, Z. Herzog directed the eighth season.²²⁰ The excavations uncovered a well-planned administrative centre with several strata spanning from the tenth through to the eighth centuries.²²¹

The first occupation of the site was during the Chalcolithic period but that it was a habitation of limited scope as evidenced by the stray potsherds recorded in the different fill layers of the mound and by some of the pits used in Iron-I Strata IX and VIII.²²² The site was first settled in the Iron Age and to a certain extent, it was resettled during the Persian to the Early Arab periods and that the entire Beer-sheba Valley was completely abandoned for more than a thousand years from the Arab conquest in the seventh century CE until the nineteenth century CE.²²³

Four stratified layers at the site (Stratum-IX to VI) dating to Iron-I were uncovered on the southeastern slope of the mound.²²⁴ The first stone houses were built in Stratum-VIII. No remains of Strata IX and VIII were uncovered on the summit.²²⁵ There was very little occupational debris at the summit from the earliest Iron Age occupational phases. Strata IX and VIII of Iron-I were located on the south-eastern slope, which the first occupants chose for it best protected them from the western winter wind-storms.²²⁶ Beneath the structure of the city's external gates on the south-eastern slope of the mound, buildings and pits dating to Iron-I were found.²²⁷ Pottery finds, which include Philistine sherds, red-slipped and hand-burnished wares and two Egyptian scarabs were found and dated to the second half of the twelfth century.²²⁸ The ceramic found in Stratum-VIII is small and closely related to those of Stratum-IX than to later periods, therefore dating this stratum to the

²¹⁹ V. Fritz. 1993: 61.

²²⁰ Z. Herzog and L. Singer-Avitz. 2016: 1.

²²¹ D.W. Evans. 1992: 642.

²²² Z. Herzog and L. Singer-Avitz. 2016: 20.

²²³ Z. Herzog. 1993a: 167.

²²⁴ Z. Herzog. 1993a: 168.

²²⁵ Z. Herzog and L. Singer-Avitz. 2016: 21.

²²⁶ Z. Herzog and L. Singer-Avitz. 2016: 17.

²²⁷ Z. Herzog. 1993a: 168.

²²⁸ Z. Herzog. 1984: 42-43.

mid-late eleventh century. One building and part of another building that had stone foundations were found in this stratum.²²⁹ The Stratum-VIII settlement was not destroyed but was abandoned. The structures of Stratum-VII were built over it.²³⁰ In Stratum-VII, variations of four-room buildings were built encircling the perimeter of the mound with their rear walls connected and facing outwards for security purposes. The ceramics are dated to the late eleventh or early tenth century.²³¹ That the buildings in Stratum-VI were poorly built and arranged randomly suggests that the remains were camp that temporary housed workers during the construction of the Stratum-V city.²³² The fairly large ceramic collection of Stratum-VI is dated to the 10th century.²³³

Iron-II is the main period represented on the mound, with four strata identified. Beginning with Stratum-V, the settlement was fortified.²³⁴ However, the city was built and destroyed four times. The destruction as well as its pottery, that is evident in this Stratum-V, are characteristic of the second half of the tenth century, which indicates that the destruction may have occurred during Pharaoh Shishak's campaign.²³⁵ The city plan of Stratum-IV is identical to that of Stratum-V. It is assumed that the destruction seen in this strata was caused by an earthquake.²³⁶ The pottery of Stratum-IV has similarities to that of Stratum-V, which dates it to the end of the tenth and the beginning of the ninth centuries.²³⁷ In Stratum-III, casement walls were built on top of the ruined city. This is seen as innovation and a cost saving exercise for it used less building materials and labour and provided increased storage space, but the walls were weaker compared to the previous strata.²³⁸ Stratum-II was by a devastating conflagration dated to Sennacherib's campaign of 701 BCE.²³⁹ Stratum-H3 is dated to the late Persian period, which is represented by a fort and by dozens of ash pits and granaries,

²²⁹ Z. Herzog. 1984: 46.

²³⁰ Z. Herzog. 1993a: 169.

²³¹ Z. Herzog and L. Singer-Avitz. 2016: 21.

²³² Z. Herzog and L. Singer-Avitz. 2016: 21.

²³³ D.W. Evans. 1992: 643.

²³⁴ Z. Herzog and L. Singer-Avitz. 2016: 22.

²³⁵ D.W. Evans. 1992:643; Z. Herzog. 1993a: 169.

²³⁶ Z. Herzog and L. Singer-Avitz. 2016: 24.

²³⁷ Z. Herzog and L. Singer-Avitz. 1993a: 171.

²³⁸ Z. Herzog and L. Singer-Avitz. 2016: 23-24.

²³⁹ Z. Herzog and L. Singer-Avitz. 2016: 26.

Beer-sheba has been mentioned several times in the Bible and has defined Ancient Israel's extreme southern territory in the formula "from Dan to Beer-sheba" (Judg.20:1; 1 Sam 3:20; 2 Sam 3:10, 17:11, 24:2, 24:15) or "from Beer-sheba to Dan" (1 Chr 21:2 and 2 Chr 30:5).

Tel es-Seba'/Tel Beer-sheba versus Criteria

A comparison of the analysis of this site against the criteria for a Ziklag identification shows that: (1) Beer-sheba does not meet the criteria for a northern Negeb location for it is located in the south at the southern Negeb. (2) There is Philistine influence demonstrated at this site but is dated to the second half of the twelfth century. (3) The destruction that was found in Stratum-IV, which is dated to the end of the 10th and to the beginning of the 9th centuries, which is not David's period, and is by earthquake and not by fire. (4) There is clear evidence that this site was occupied during Iron-I and more so in Iron-II. (5) This site was occupied by a fort during the Persian period. (6) Beer-sheba is located south of Tel es-Safi (Gath) and is on the edge of the Wadi Beer-sheba which flows to Naḥal Besor and it is not located in the plain of Philistia. In addition, Beer-sheba is not within the geographic range identified in *Section 5.2*.

Therefore, Beer-sheba cannot be Ziklag for it does not meet points 1, 2, 3 and 6 of the criteria for a site to be identified as Ziklag.

7.9. Tel 'Erani/Tell 'Areini/'Areq el-Menshiyeh

Tel 'Erani/Tell 'Areini is an ancient site located in the southeastern Coastal Plain, on Naḥal Lachish, at the twenty-fourth kilometre of the historic Ashkelon-Hebron Road.²⁴⁰ As previously mentioned, in the Bronze Age, the northwest Negeb included sites such as En Besor and farther north as at Tell 'Areini.²⁴¹ It is one of the three northerly sites that are south of Gath that were proposed by Harris as Ziklag, the reason being that since Eglon is identified with Tell el-Ḥesi, then this freed up Tel 'Erani to be identified with Ziklag.²⁴² In May 1867, V. Guérin was the first to visit the site and Conder visited it in 1870 and identified it with Libnah (Josh 15:41). H. Guthe was the first to identify it as Gath.²⁴³ Albright independently identified the site as ancient Gath and consequently, the Israeli

²⁴⁰ B. Brandl. 1997: 256; A. Kempinski and I. Gilead. 1991: 164; S. Yeivin. 1993: 417.

²⁴¹ S. A. Rosen. 1992: 1061-1062.

²⁴² H. Harris. 2011b: 119, 124.

²⁴³ B. Brandl. 1997: 256; A. Kempinski and I. Gilead. 1991: 164; S. Yeivin. 1993: 418.

Governmental Names Commission called it Tel Gat in 1953.²⁴⁴ However, the excavation of the site by S. Yeivin revealed a small site in the Iron Age, not commensurate to a large city, with no Middle Bronze Age material and that it was oriented towards Judah and not Philistia. This strongly suggested that the site's identification as Gath was incorrect.²⁴⁵ Thus, the site was renamed Tel 'Erani after its Arabic name, Tell eš-Šēḥ Aḥmed el-'Arēnī.²⁴⁶

S. Yeivin directed six successive seasons of excavations (1956-1961) at the site. In 1985, 1987-1988, further excavations were undertaken by A. Kempinski. Twelve occupational phases (Strata I-XII) were recognized here, spanning from the Late Chalcolithic to the Early Bronze Age III. The slope to the acropolis was covered by a continuous stretch of glacis that was laid over a layer of beaten earth that contained some Iron I sherds. In 1956-1957, two hundred burials dating from the early Arab period to the 17th century were uncovered in Area A. In their archaeological reports, both Yeivin and Kempinski did not find Philistine pottery in any of the strata. Pottery from the Late Bronze Age and remains from the Persian period in Strata III-II were found. Stratum-C was destroyed but this together with the pottery found there were dated by carbon-14 analysis to the Early Bronze Age.²⁴⁷ Some Iron-I pottery sherds were found in the glacis and in Area F some were found under the pebbles, which was indicative of temporary squatting by a seminomadic population. In Areas K-M, remains of a potter's kiln, a cooking oven and small sections of beaten-earth floors were uncovered that were all dated to the Iron-II period.²⁴⁸ No signs of destruction was reported by either Yeivin or Kempinski in their reports.

Tel 'Erani versus Criteria

A comparison against the criteria for a Ziklag identification shows that: (1) Tel 'Erani meets the criteria for a northern Negeb location that is on the south to southwestern border region between Judah and Philistia. (2) No Philistine influence is demonstrated at this site for no Philistine pottery sherds were found in any strata. (3) No signs of destruction by fire at the site was reported for the period around 1000 BCE. (4) Some pottery was found but it is not definitive that this site was occupied during Iron-I for the pottery may have been left by nomads who were temporarily squatting at the site. Some Iron-II remains were found.

²⁴⁴ H. Harris. 2011b: 119.

²⁴⁵ S. Yeivin. 1993: 418.

²⁴⁶ M. D. Press. 2014: 182.

²⁴⁷ S. Yeivin. 1993: 418-420.

²⁴⁸ S. Yeivin. 1993: 418-421.

(5) Remains from the Persian period were found. (6) Tel 'Erani is located south of Tel es-Safi (Gath), north of Naḥal Besor and it is located in the plain of Philistia. In addition, Tel 'Erani is within the geographic range identified in *Section 5.2*.

Tel 'Erani cannot be Ziklag for it does not meet criteria 2 and 3 for a site to be Ziklag.

7.10. Tel Nagila/Tell Nejileh

Tel Nagila/Tel Nejileh is an ancient site on the inner southern Coastal Plain about 28 km. east of Gaza and 6 km south of Tell el-Ḥesi, which is a transitional zone between the Negeb desert to the south, the Sharon Plain to the north the Judean Shephelah or foothills to the east and the Coastal Plain to the west.²⁴⁹ This site is one of the three northerly sites that are south of Gath that Harris proposed as Ziklag. Harris based his identification on a Bichrome krater that could be of Mycenaean or Cypriot origin that was discovered, which might be evidence of Philistine occupation and on Persian sherds that were found at the site, indicating a correlation with the mention of Ziklag in Neh 11:28.²⁵⁰

There were two seasons (1962 and 1963) of excavations directed by R. Amiran, assisted by A. Eitan. Prior to the excavations, it was believed that this site was Philistine Gath but because no Iron-I remains and no Philistine painted pottery were found, the identification was abandoned.²⁵¹ The excavations revealed that there was an extensive Middle Bronze Age town and limited Iron-II remains.²⁵²

An enclosure was found at the top of the tell with no surface indication of any buildings, walls, structures or partitions, apart from some heaps of stones and Arab tombs which belong to a later period.²⁵³ Tel Nagila was not occupied in Iron-I;²⁵⁴ and no Philistine ware was found in the site. The ceramics found might be Philistine in shape and material but they do they have the Philistine characteristic decorations, which according to B. Mazar may be an indication of differences in Philistine culture or that the site may have come under Philistine influence after the disappearance of the characteristic Philistine ware.²⁵⁵

²⁴⁹ I. Shai, D. Ilan, A. M. Maier and J. Uziel. 2011: 25.

²⁵⁰ H. Harris. 2011b: 119, 131.

²⁵¹ R. Amiran and A. Eitan. 1993: 1079; I. Shai, D. Ilan, A. M. Maier and J. Uziel. 2011: 26.

²⁵² I. Shai, D. Ilan, A. M. Maier and J. Uziel. 2011: 26.

²⁵³ S. Bülow and R. A. Mitchell. 1961: 102-103.

²⁵⁴ I. Shai, D. Ilan, A. M. Maier and J. Uziel. 2011: 37.

²⁵⁵ S. Bülow and R. A. Mitchell. 1961: 107; B. Mazar's comments were an oral suggestion to. S. Bülow and R. A. Mitchell

Around and within the enclosure, a large number of early Iron-IIA ceramics were found in Stratum-IV, which were mostly typical wheel-burnished type and far exceeded in number those of any other period. ²⁵⁶

Four areas on the mound were (A, B, C and F) and in addition, Area G and two tombs on the lower southern ridges of the mound were opened. At the centre of the mound, fourteen strata were identified down to bedrock. Iron-II remains were found in three strata, Strata-IV and II on the tell and Stratum-III in Area G. These Iron-II remains were not spread consistently across the excavated site and consisted of pits, truncated walls, some floors and living surfaces. ²⁵⁷

Stratum-IV remains came from pits which were secondary deposits that included a large assembly of pottery, ash, brick debris, stones and animal bones. The ceramic finds were mostly dated to Iron-IIA. The presence of a pre-LMLK jar in Stratum-IV implies a dating to the late Iron-IIA and a Judahite cultural affinity. The site may have been Judean during the late Iron-IIA. ²⁵⁸

Stratum-III is located 200 m south of the tell, on the banks of Naḥal Shiqma. A good deal of pottery was discovered, including 22 complete vessels and several base fragments. Almost the entire assemblage comprised of pottery with clear and numerous Judahite parallels for all forms. The lack of typical coastal ceramics, e.g. Late Philistine Decorated Ware point to Judean affiliation. ²⁵⁹

Stratum-II revealed the most diverse Iron Age pottery assemblages on the site. The vessels found are mostly cooking pots used for outdoor cooking. These pots are dated to the 7th century. ²⁶⁰

Tel Nagila versus Criteria

A comparison against the criteria for a Ziklag identification shows that: (1) Tel 'Nagila meets the criteria for a northern Negeb location that is on the south to southwestern border region between Judah and Philistia. (2) No Philistine influence is demonstrated at this site for no Philistine pottery sherds were found in any strata. (3) No signs of

²⁵⁶ S. Bülow and R. A. Mitchell. 1961: 107.

²⁵⁷ I. Shai, D. Ilan, A. M. Maier and J. Uziel. 2011: 26-27.

²⁵⁸ I. Shai, D. Ilan. A. M. Maeir and J. Uziel. 2011: 27-33.

²⁵⁹ I. Shai, D. Ilan. A. M. Maeir and J. Uziel. 2011: 33-35.

²⁶⁰ I. Shai, D. Ilan. A. M. Maeir and J. Uziel. 2011: 35-37.

destruction by fire at the site was reported for the period around 1000 BCE. (4) No Iron-I remains were found but a large amount of early Iron-IIA ceramics were found scattered throughout the site. (5) Only a small number of remains from the Persian period were found. (6) Tel 'Nagila is located south of Tel es-Safi (Gath), north of Naḥal Besor and it is located in the plain of Philistia. In addition, Tel 'Nagila is within the geographic range identified in *Section 5.2*.

Tel Nagila cannot be Ziklag for it does not meet points 2, 3 and 5 and partially 4 of the criteria for a site to be identified as Ziklag.

7.11. Tel el-Far'ah South/Tel Sharuhen

Tel el-Far'ah South/Tel Sharuhen is located in southwest Palestine approximately 24 km south of Gaza and 20 km west of Beer-sheba on a hill about 100m above sea level near Naḥal Besor. In the map on *Fig. 2*, it lies in the Negeb of the Cherethites. It is mentioned as one of the cities belonging to Simeon (Josh 19:2-8). Petrie erroneously identified this site with biblical Beth-Pelet (Josh 15:7) based on unsound etymological grounds. Albright disagreed with Petrie and instead suggested that this site be identified with Sharuhen, a Simeonite town, which was one of the centres of the Hyksos that resisted the Egyptians for three years and it is mentioned in the descriptions of Egyptian military expeditions and in the Bible. This identification has been accepted by most scholars.²⁶¹ However, Knauf identifies this site with Ziklag in his article but he does not say why he made this identification. Further down his article, he cites two reasons against his identification (see below).²⁶²

Petrie conducted two excavation seasons at this site in 1928 and 1929, which uncovered a nearly continuous occupation from the Middle Bronze Age IIB to Roman times. And the latest remains are World War I trenches.²⁶³ The first settlement on the site was established by the Hyksos. The east side of the mound is defended by a steep slope descending to Naḥal Besor, while on the north and south sides, the natural slopes descend to its tributaries.²⁶⁴ Ceramic finds, which include pottery from the Persian period, were mixed.²⁶⁵ Iron-I burial tombs dated from the 12th-11th centuries contained very rich finds,

²⁶¹ Y. Yisraeli. 1993: 441.

²⁶² E. A. Knauf and H. M. Nienann. 2011: 276; In their article, only Knauf is mentioned as identifying Tel el-Far'ah South wit Ziklag.

²⁶³ Y. Yisraeli. 1993: 441.

²⁶⁴ Y. Yisraeli. 1993: 442.

²⁶⁵ Y. Yisraeli. 1993: 442.

which include an especially large quantity of Philistine pottery.²⁶⁶ Iron-II burial tombs were found that dated to the 10th and early 9th centuries. Most of the finds included a large quantity of jewellery.²⁶⁷ Petrie ascribed level R-S to Pharaoh Shishak (Shoshenq I), who in Petrie's opinion rebuilt the cities of southern Palestine after conquering them. There is a gap in settlement between the middle of the 9th to 7th centuries for none of this site's cemeteries contained burials for that period.²⁶⁸ Burials from the Persian period were discovered in the cemeteries of this site.²⁶⁹

E.A. Knauf listed two reasons why Tel el-Far'ah South should not be identified as Ziklag. Firstly, Tel el-Far'ah South should have belonged to Gaza, not Gath. Secondly, the site is on the western bank of Naḥal Besor. David's men suffered from an exhausting march from Ziklag to Naḥal Besor. They would have had to cross Naḥal Besor marching east and then south from Tel el-Far'ah South, which would have taken them north instead of south. In any case, Tel el-Far'ah South cannot be considered as Ziklag as it is too far south from Gath and is not located in the northern part of the Negeb.

Tel el-Far'ah South/Tel Sharuhem versus Criteria

A comparison against the criteria for a Ziklag identification shows that: (1) Tel el-Far'ah South/Tel Sharuhem does not meet the criteria for a northern Negeb location that is south of Gaza in southern Philistia in the Negeb of the Cherethites. (2) Philistine influence is demonstrated from the burials dating to Iron-I and II that contained a large quantity of Philistine pottery. (3) No signs of destruction by fire at the site was reported for the period around 1000 BCE. (4) Iron-I remains were found and a large amount of early Iron-II ceramics and jewellery were found scattered throughout the site and tombs were dated to the late 10th and early 9th century. (5) Burials and ceramics from the Persian period were found. (6) Tel el-Far'ah South is located south of Tel es-Safi (Gath) but closer to Gaza, very close to Naḥal Besor and it is located in the plain of Philistia. In addition, Tel el-Far'ah South is outside the geographic range identified in *Section 5.2*.

Tel el-Far'ah South cannot be Ziklag for it does not meet points 1, 3 and 6 of the criteria for a site to be identified as Ziklag.

²⁶⁶ Y. Yisraeli. 1993: 443.

²⁶⁷ Y. Yisraeli. 1993: 443.

²⁶⁸ Y. Yisraeli. 1993: 442.

²⁶⁹ Y. Yisraeli. 1993: 444.

7.12. Khirbet al-Ra'i

Khirbet al-Ra'i is a small site on a hill located on the southern bank of Nahal Lachish. It is in a prominent location for it overlooks the narrow valley created by the Lachish River and has extensive views toward the coastal plain to the west, the Hebron hills to the east and a large part of the Judean Shephelah to the north. The valley creates a convenient route from the Shephelah down to the coastal plain. It is 3 km northwest of Tel Lachish, a day's walk west of Hebron, David's first capital city, and a day's walk south of Khirbet Qeiyafa, a strategic border site dating to the days of King David (11th-10th centuries).²⁷⁰ Fig. 6 situates Khirbet al-Ra'i in a map.

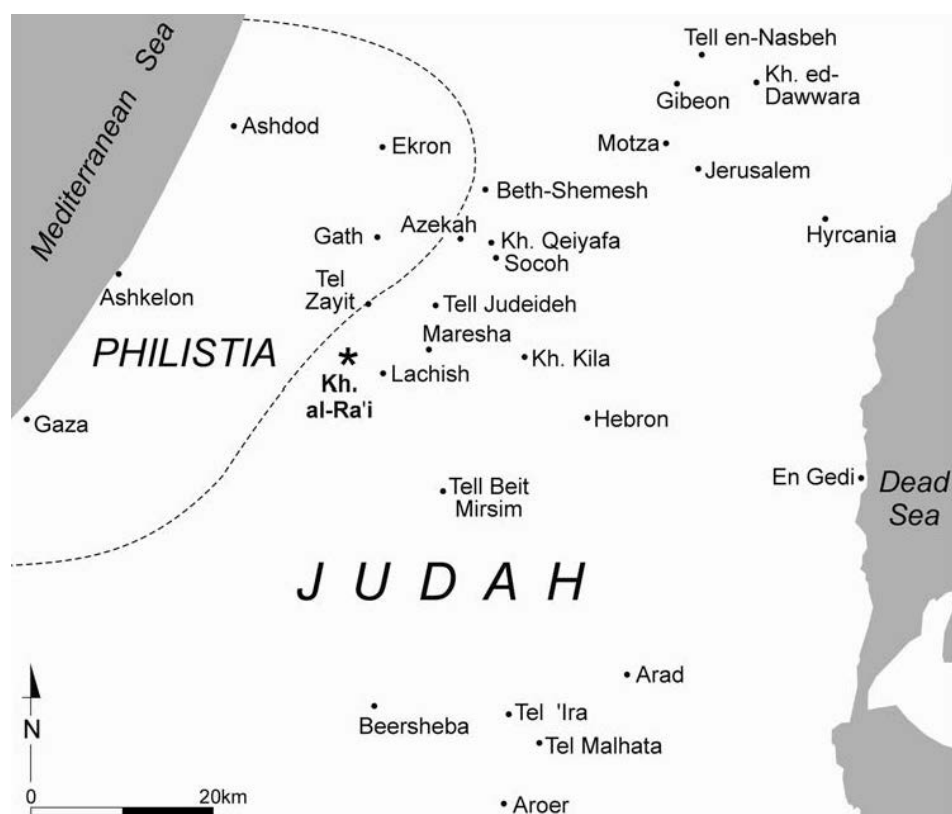


Fig. 6 Map of Philistia and Judah marking the location of Khirbet al-Ra'i²⁷¹

Presumably in ancient times, Khirbet al-Ra'i sat opposite the Philistine city of Ashkelon on the western edge of the Shephelah and was on the border between Judah and Philistia, controlling the main road running through the Lachish Valley from the coastal plain in the west to the Judean Shephelah and to the mountain top in the east.²⁷² Today, along this route, a police checkpoint is located just below the site, indicating its importance from a regional perspective.²⁷³ This geopolitical location is similar to that of Khirbet Qeiyafa,

²⁷⁰ Yosef Garfinkel and Saar Ganor. 2009: 8.

²⁷¹ Yosef Garfinkel and Saar Ganor. 2018a: 943.

²⁷² Yosef Garfinkel and Saar Ganor. 2017b: 53.

²⁷³ Yosef Garfinkel and Saar Ganor. 2018a: 943.

which sits opposite Philistine Gath (Tell es-Safi) and controls the road running through the Elah Valley.²⁷⁴

The Arabic name Khirbet al-Ra'i means "the ruins of the shepherds".²⁷⁵ This site is located close to the border of three geographical regions: the coastal plain, the Shephelah and the Negeb. It could have been and still is an ideal campsite for pastoralists, who move with their herds between geographical regions according to the seasons. Pastoral and nomadic population may not have left historical documents, but each generation would have preserved the traditional name of the place.²⁷⁶ Please take note of the herd of sheep that roams the site in *Fig. 7*.



Fig. 7 Aerial Photograph of Khirbet al-Ra'i taken on Feb. 14, 2019.²⁷⁷

Khirbet al-Ra'i was designated as "Tôr el Hiry" in the PEF Survey of Western Palestine map.²⁷⁸ It was called Khirbet Arai in the 1935-1940 maps of the British Mandate era.²⁷⁹ In the 1990s, Yehuda Dagan surveyed the site and recognized settlements of the Iron Age and

²⁷⁴ Yosef Garfinkel and Saar Ganor. 2017b: 53.

²⁷⁵ Yosef Garfinkel and Saar Ganor. 2018b: 2.

²⁷⁶ Yosef Garfinkel and Saar Ganor. 2018b: 2-3.

²⁷⁷ Photograph provided by Yosef Garfinkel.

²⁷⁸ Conder and Kitchener 1881: 380; Tôr el Hiry in English mean "the mount of the granary; a cliff formed apparently by a landslip."

²⁷⁹ Yosef Garfinkel and Saar Ganor. 2018b: 1.

later periods.²⁸⁰ A survey conducted by S. Ganor, Y. Lender and M. Oron identified an Iron-II settlement, Roman-Byzantine remains and Ottoman pottery.²⁸¹

Excavation of the site commenced in 2015 and is ongoing to date. The yearly excavation reports (2016-2019) state that the main periods of occupation have been dated to the Middle Bronze Age to the Ottoman periods. Pottery sherds dated from the Middle Bronze age were found. Four excavation areas (A-D) were opened. Area A is at the southern edge of the site, Area B is the eastern side, Area C is at the northern edge of the site and Area D is at the centre of the site.

Approximately 500m² were excavated in Area-A. There are 8 phases in this area. Four connecting mid to late 11th century buildings with 3 floor levels were exposed (*Fig. 8*), which ended in a destruction by fire, where its stone walls cracked due to the high temperature.²⁸² This architecture was dated to Iron-I based on pottery recovered. A stoned-line silo containing several olive pits were recovered. Radiocarbon samples and the recovered pottery were dated to the mid- to late-11th century BCE. Also found was a shallow pit filled with 1,519 large, wide geometric flint flakes and blades, which are the blanks used for the preparation of Iron Age sickle blades.²⁸³

Middle Bronze Age potsherds were found. A foundation deposit of three bowls and a lamp were found; one of the bowls was an elaborate Philistine bell-shaped undecorated bowl. Several red slip and irregular hand burnished sherds typical of Iron-IIA (early 10th century) and pottery typical of the 7th century were found. Some potsherds from the Persian-Hellenistic period, including Attic black-glaze ware which is well-represented architecturally in Area-D, potsherds from the Roman-Byzantine era and a large rounded and a smaller stone installations were found. An Ottoman-period terrace wall runs along the southern edge of the excavation area was found.

²⁸⁰ Dagan 1992: II: 66, Site 197.

²⁸¹ Yosef Garfinkel and Saar Ganor. 2018a: 943; Report is in preparation.

²⁸² Y. Garfinkel, K.H. Keimer, S. Ganor, C. Rollston and D. Ben-Schlomo. 2019: 5.

²⁸³ Y. Garfinkel, K.H. Keimer, S. Ganor, C. Rollston and D. Ben-Schlomo. 2019: 6.



Fig. 8 Area A – Photograph of mid to late 11th century Buildings ²⁸⁴

Area-B has 3 sub-areas (B1-B3), which form a continuous excavation area (*Fig. 9*) with 12 phases of habitation, but only 3 phases are accompanied by architecture. These phases are mainly represented by pottery. Middle Bronze Age potsherds were recovered, a small sherd of a Cypriot milk bowl was found in the debris and an elaborate Bichrome Philistine pottery was uncovered below an architecture dated to an early phase of Iron-I.

The architecture of Area-B is monumental, which includes numerous walls, one stone-lined silo, two tabuns, a stone-lined drain and floor fragments. A fierce fire destroyed four contiguous rooms dating to Iron-IIA, ²⁸⁵ as demonstrated by the thick level of burnt mud bricks, white ash, large chunks of burnt wood, a mud-brick wall that was fired and hardened like pottery and collapsed roof fragments. ²⁸⁶ The level of white ash measured about 30 cm thick on the floor with a concentration of pottery vessels on top of it, which seem to have fallen from the roof or from the second storey. Small fragments of a ceramic portable shrine was found. The pottery is typical of Iron-IIA and includes sherds decorated with red slip, some of which were irregular hand burnished and others were wheel burnished. Approximately eighty complete and/or restorable vessels were recovered from this area. The eastern extent of this architecture was destroyed in the 1950s, when a dirt road was cut into the site.

²⁸⁴ Y. Garfinkel, K.H. Keimer, S. Ganor, C. Rollston and D. Ben-Schlomo. 2019. The dating of this complex still needs clarification.

²⁸⁵ Y. Garfinkel, K.H. Keimer, S. Ganor, C. Rollston and D. Ben-Schlomo. 2019: 17-18. Iron IIA is designated to the early 10th century.

²⁸⁶ Y. Garfinkel, K.H. Keimer, S. Ganor, C. Rollston and D. Ben-Schlomo. 2019: 8.



Fig. 9 Area B – Photograph of 11th/early 10th century Complex ²⁸⁷

Iron Age IB pottery such as sherds with Philistine Bichrome motifs and Philistine Monochrome sherds that are usually found in major Philistine centres were found. ²⁸⁸ A jar handle with a *lmlk* impressions and a *lmlk* type jar were found, dating within the second half of the 8th century. Iron-IIC sherds typical of the 7th century were found. Sherds were found in the robber trenches, among them were numerous Attic ware, suggesting that a settlement existed in the late Persian and the Hellenistic period (4th-3rd centuries). Roman-Byzantine, Islamic pottery sherds were found. An Ottoman pottery pipe was found and the large and massive stone fences on the site's surface were constructed in this period.

Area-C was opened to evaluate the site's northern limit and to determine if any fortification line could be identified. The pottery unearthed are dated to the 11th century. One Philistine Monochrome sherd dated to the 12th century was found. After five days of excavation, it was determined that the area was beyond the settled area of the site and so work ceased.

Area-D1 was opened in 2017 in a location where a rapid rise in the topography is visible to determine if there is an occupational sequence in this spot. Fragments of walls and floors

²⁸⁷ Y. Garfinkel, K.H. Keimer, S. Ganor, C. Rollston and D. Ben-Schlomo. 2019. The dating of this complex still needs clarification.

²⁸⁸ Y. Garfinkel, K.H. Keimer, S. Ganor, C. Rollston and D. Ben-Schlomo. 2019: 13.

dating to the 11th century were found below the topsoil. The architecture was badly disturbed most likely the stones were reused in later constructions.

In Area-D2, remains from the Hellenistic to the Iron-I periods were revealed (*Fig. 10*). So far, eight phases were identified in this area. Sherds of Cypriot milk bowls, a handle of a white painted juglet and a sherd of a Base Ring II Ware were found in Iron-I fills. A large building with two phases were unearthed. Over 25 restorable and complete bowls and a part of a decorated multi-handled krater were recovered. A number of cultic vessels, two kernoi, parts of an incense stand, a number of decorated multi-handled krater and a wall bracket were found. Among the numerous vessels were hundreds of animal bones, pottery sherds typical of the Philistine Bichrome horizon and a large pottery sherd decorated with white slip and a painted tree typical of Iron-I (12th and early 11th centuries). Below the floor of the upper phase was a layer of burned mudbrick, numerous restorable vessels and an equal number of animal bones. Some monochrome Philistine I sherds were recovered



Fig. 10 Area D2 – Photograph of Iron-I to the Hellenistic Period buildings ²⁸⁹

Typical 11th century vessels that included a debased Philistine pottery and several rounded pierced clay loom weights were found on the floor of a monumental building constructed of massive stones. Pottery sherds decorated with red slip, some of which were irregular burnished and others were wheel burnish, lamps with thickened bases and a jar handle

with an *lmlk* seal impression were uncovered. Iron-IIB/C remains were found that were disturbed by the later Persian/Hellenistic construction. A short inscription that was chiseled on a pottery jug was found. A large Persian-Hellenistic period structure made of massive stones with a large pit was recovered. Fragments of Roman period pottery and stone vessels of the Second Temple Period were found. Based on the numerous Philistine potsherds that were found, the Philistines may have settled in Khirbet al-Ra'i or that the inhabitants who lived there traded with the Philistines, who dominated the market for ceramics.²⁹⁰

The Khirbet al-Ra'i excavation directors arrived at the following conclusions:²⁹¹

- (1) The site was not an important Late Bronze Age city; therefore it is not mentioned in the New Kingdom Egyptian city lists or other documents relating to Canaan.²⁹²
- (2) The discovery of Philistine Monochrome sherds suggests that the site was potentially established in the very early phase of the Philistines' arrival. It is likely that this is when the non-Semitic toponym was given.
- (3) There is evidence of intensive activities during the Iron-I and in the early Iron-IIA periods dating to the 2nd half of the 12th century, the 11th and the very early 10th centuries.
- (4) The Iron-IB occupation bridges the gap between Lachish Level VI (late 12th century) and the fortified city of Khirbet Qeiyafa (early 10th century). The architecture at the site demonstrates social organisation as characterised by the dwelling units, the number of storage pits and the large public buildings at the top of the site, which indicates the location of the ruling class.
- (5) Judging by its pottery assemblage and the radiometric dating, the site's well-built Iron-IIA phase is contemporary with the fortified city of Khirbet Qeiyafa.
- (6) It was not an important Iron-IIB or Iron-IIC site. Therefore, it is not mentioned in the biblical traditions set in the periods between the 9th-6th centuries.

In modern times, Khirbet al-Ra'i is located in the Judean Shephelah. However, this was not the case in ancient times. As mentioned earlier, in the Bronze Age, the northwest Negeb

²⁹⁰ Yosef Garfinkel and Saar Ganor. 2018a: 945-950; Knauf and Guillaume. 2016: 52.

²⁹¹ Y. Garfinkel and S. Ganor. 2018b: 2.; Y. Garfinkel, K.H. Keimer, S. Ganor, C. Rollston and D. Ben-Schlomo. 2019.

²⁹² A. Yasur-Landau. 2010: 289; The Philistines continued to use of Semitic toponyms such as Gath, Ashkelon and Ekron. These names demonstrate a continuity from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age.

included sites such as En Besor and farther north as at Tell 'Areini. Reurbanisation in the Middle Bronze Age centered the northwest Negeb at sites like Tell Haror, Tell Nagila and sites closer to the coast such as Tell Jemmeh and Tell el-Farah South.²⁹³ From this, it can be concluded that Khirbet al-Ra'i was part of the northwestern Negeb as it is located south of Tell 'Areini and north of Tel Nagila. This is supported by the pottery that have been found in Khirbet al-Ra'i that were dated to the Middle Bronze Age.

Khirbet al-Ra'i versus Criteria

A comparison against the criteria for a Ziklag identification shows that: (1) Khirbet al-Ra'i meets the criteria for a northern Negeb location that is south of Gath in southern Philistia in the Negeb of the Cherethites. (2) Philistine influence is demonstrated from the Philistine pottery found in all areas. (3) Signs of destruction by fire at the site was reported for the Iron Age IIA period at the beginning of 10th century BCE. The excavations exposed the remnants of a great conflagration that have been dated to the early 10th century, which coincides with 1 Sam 30:1. The archaeological remains at Khirbet al-Ra'i, in conjunction with the biblical mentions of Ziklag, suggest that the two could be equated. (4) Iron-I remains were found and a large amount of early Iron-II ceramics were found throughout the site. (5) Signs of Persian occupation were found. (6) Khirbet al-Ra'i is located within a half day's walk south of Tel es-Safi (Gath), north of Naḥal Besor, located in the plain of Philistia that straddles the border between Philistia and Judah. In addition, Khirbet al-Ra'i is within the geographic range identified in *Section 5.2*.

Therefore, Khirbet al-Ra'i can be equated to Ziklag for it does meets all of the criteria for a site to be identified as Ziklag. It is the only one of the 12 sites reviewed that meets all the criteria.

In addition, Khirbet al-Ra'i sits within the Philistine sphere of influence from Gath and in the area where David and his men could walk from Aphek to Ziklag between 2-3 days.²⁹⁴ Combining this with the archaeological evidence from the excavations seasons and the geographic location of the site, there is a high probability that Khirbet al-Ra'i is the modern correlate for Ziklag.

²⁹³ S. A. Rosen. 1992: 1061-1062.

²⁹⁴ See *Fig. 4* above.

8. Comparison Grid

The table below summarises the analysis of the twelve proposed sites. Those sites that have their selection criteria greyed out were eliminated from the study based on the geographical analysis. However, for completeness sake, the evaluation for each site is shown. The table indicates that only Khirbet al-Ra'i meets all six criteria for a site to be considered as Ziklag's modern correlate. The following are the criteria, which was described in detail in the above *Section 1.8*:

- (1) The site should be located in the northern Negeb area of southern Israel on the southern to southwestern border region between Judah and Philistia.
- (2) There should be evidence of Philistine influence (pottery, hearths) on the site's occupation during the late Iron-I period (11th-10th centuries).
- (3) There are signs of destruction by fire just prior to David's ascent to kingship at around 1000 BCE.
- (4) The site was occupied during the Iron-I and the early Iron-II periods (11th-10th centuries).
- (5) Evidence of occupation during the Persian period in the late 5th-4th centuries BCE.
- (6) The site should be located south of Tel es-Safi (Gath), north of Naḥal Besor, not located in Judah, i.e. within the geographic range identified in *Section 5.2*.

Site/Criteria	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
1. Tell el-Hesi	✓	X	X	✓	X	✓
2. Khirbet Zuheilikhah near Gaza	✓	X	X	X	X	✓
3. Elusa/Haluza south of Beersheba	X	X	X	X	X	X
4. Tel Halif/Tell el-Khuweilfeh	X	X	X	✓	✓	X
5. Tel es-Sera'/Tell esh-Shari'ah	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	X
6. Tel Māsōś in the Beersheba Valley	X	X	X	X	X	X
7. Tel Malha/Tell el-Muleihah	✓	X	X	X	X	✓
8. Tell es-Seba'	X	X	X	✓	✓	X
9. Tel 'Erani/'Areq el-Menshiyeh	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓
10. Tel Nagila/Tell en-Nejileh	✓	X	X	X/✓	X	✓
11. Tell el-Far'ah South	X	✓	X	✓	✓	X
12. Khirbet al-Ra'i	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

X = does not meet criteria and ✓ = meets criteria

9. Summary and Conclusions

Apart from the study of ancient remains, archaeologists aim to identify the location of ancient sites and correlate them with modern sites. As with any site, only epigraphic finds can unquestionably identify the ancient name of Khirbet al-Ra'i. Archaeologists make their identification based on the state of the most up-to-date research and tools that are available during their time. Site identification has come a long way since the time of Albright's use of his mastery of ancient languages. Some of his identifications were correct and some were proven wrong by later excavations. Archaeology is an evolving science based on the identification of different sites, development of new techniques, science and analysis by many scholars. This is the reason why archaeological sites like Tell el-Ḥesi and other sites are revisited and re-excavated.

At the beginning of this study, the following were presented: (1) the main research question, (2) an outline of how the question would be approached, (3) the nature of the available evidence (biblical, geographical, archaeological, toponymical) that relate to David's sojourn in Ziklag and on Judah's and Simeon's town lists, and (4) the project plan and methodology used to achieve this project's aims. A brief history of biblical studies was included to help with the interpretation of the biblical verses and history, which portray the issues related to the allotment of towns between Judah and Simeon. The division of the towns and boundaries representing the biblical author's reality of the pre-exilic, exilic and post-exilic periods were established. The archaeology for each of the sites that were previously proposed for Ziklag were analysed and David's travel times between Aphek and Ziklag were discussed. Answers to the questions that were set at the beginning of this study were provided.

Archaeology has now reached a state of affairs where there are information and tools that can be used to review the available data and formulate conclusions. Based on the information discussed in this thesis, it can be concluded that Khirbet al-Ra'i is a prime candidate for the modern correlate of Ziklag. To confirm that Khirbet al-Ra'i is the only candidate for Ziklag, any site that meets the distance requirements will need to be excavated and then tested against the criteria developed in this study. It is likely that as new sites are excavated and existing sites are revisited, the criteria will need adjusting to accommodate new information.. If a new candidate emerges, then history will be all the more richer for it, just as history is richer now from the material finds from the excavations of Khirbet al-Ra'i.

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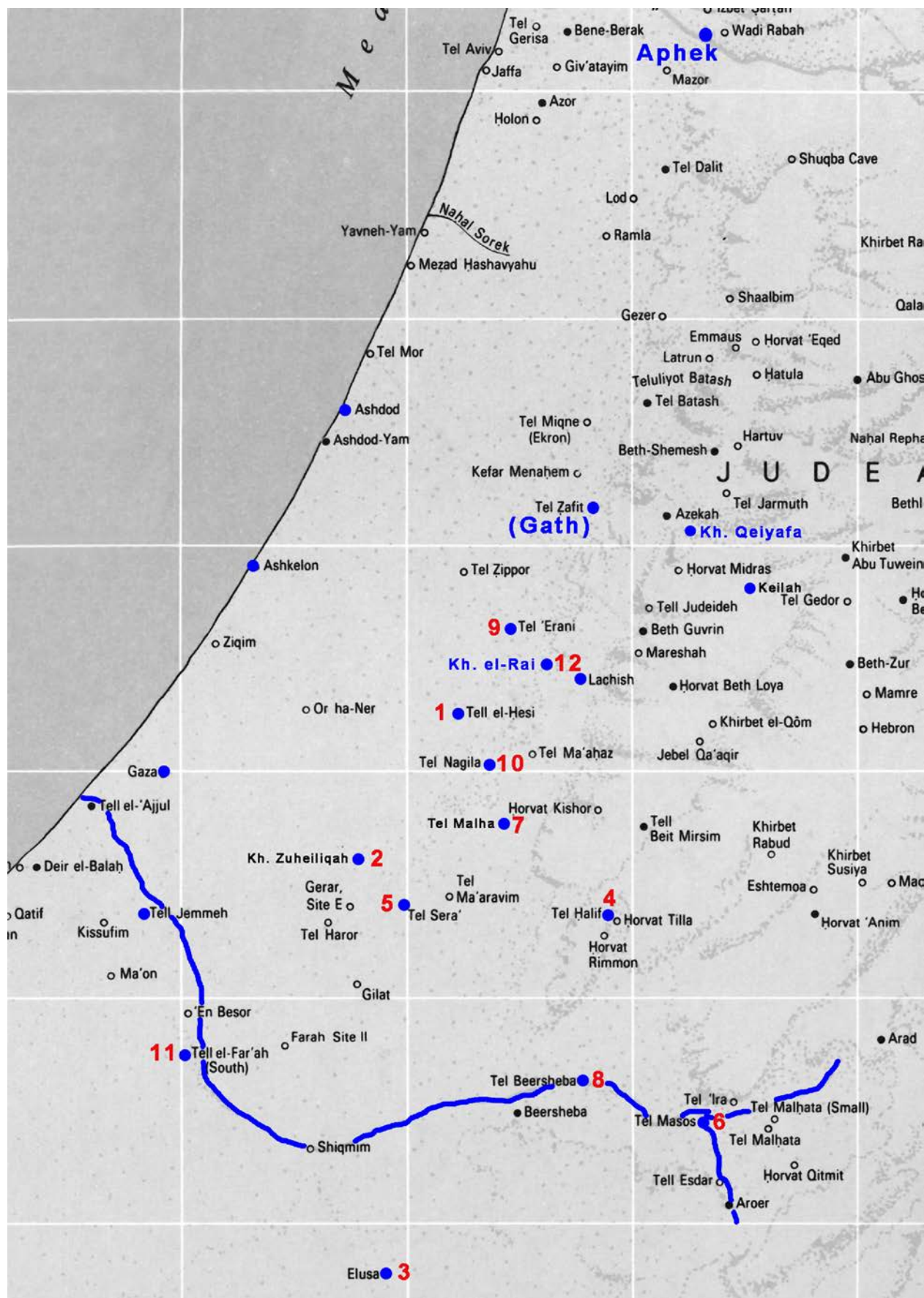
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Appendix A: Map of Excavation Sites in the Holy Land ²⁹⁵



²⁹⁵ E. Stern. 1993. The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land Vol. 1. The basic map is from the inside cover which was modified to include locations previously proposed as Ziklag.

Appendix B: Calculation for David's Walking Times and Distances

Travel times ex "The Roads and Highways of Ancient Israel" *					
	Method	Miles		Kilometers	
<i>Typical days journey:</i>	Foot	20		32.2	
	Horse	25	30	40.2	48.3
	Camel	25		40.2	
	Chariot	25	30	40.2	48.3
	Armies	14	15	22.5	24.1
<i>Distance Travelled (Army)</i>	<i>2 Day Travel</i>	28	30	45.1	48.3
	<i>3 Day Travel</i>	42	45	67.6	72.4

Travel times ex "Walking Distance by Trip Purpose and Population Subgroups" **				
		Minutes per Kilometer	Kilometres per hour	Distance Travelled 8 hour day
Walking Speed	Fastest	12	5.00	40
	Slowest	16	3.75	30
Distance Travelled (3.75 kph)		2 Day Travel		60
		3 Day Travel		90
Note that the walking times referred to here apply to shorter walks on average, so the slower time is probably more appropriate for a full day walk.				

"The Location of Ziklag: A Review of the Candidate Sites, Based on Biblical, Topographical and Archaeological Evidence" ***					
Journey		Miles		Kilometers	
		Straight	Actual	Straight	Actual
Aphek to Gath		70	80	112.7	128.7
Gath to Tell Hesi		13	14.9	20.9	23.9
Total Journey		83	94.9	133.6	152.7
Travel Distance per Day	2 Day Travel	42	47.4	66.8	76.3
	3 Day Travel	28	31.6	44.5	50.9

Google Earth provides data on a walk from Aphek to Gath				
<i>Straight-line distance</i>		46.4	Kilometers	
<i>Actual distance walked</i>		74.5	Kilometers	
<i>Percentage of Straight-line distance to distance walked*</i>		62.3%		
<i>Hours to walk 74.5 km</i>		15.42	Hours	
<i>Kilometers per hour</i>		4.83		
<i>Note that the walking times referred to here apply to modern backpackers carrying small loads and is probably an over-estimate for travel speed.</i>				

Biblical reference to David travelling from Aphek to Ziklag is that he travelled for at least 2 full days and potentially 3 full days (1 Sam 30:1)		
<i>Travel Speed (kilometers per hour)</i>	3.75	Allowing 10% for indirect route Actual distance travelled
<i>8 Hours Travelling After Breaks removed</i>		
<i>Distance travelled per day</i>	30	
<i>Distance covered in 2 days @ 3.75 kph</i>	60	54.5
<i>Distance covered in 3 days @ 3.75 kph</i>	90	81.8
Allowing 10% for indirect routes David travelled between 54.5 and 81.8 kilometres.		

* Dorsey; David A, 1991, *The Roads and Highways of Ancient Israel*, 122-123, The Johns Hopkins University Press

** Yang, Y., & Diez-Roux, A. 2012 Walking Distance by Trip Purpose and Population Subgroups. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*. 43:1, 11-19. doi: 10.1016/j.amepre.2012.03.015.

*** Harris, Horton. 2011b. The Location of Ziklag: A Review of the Candidate Sites, Based on Biblical, Topographical and Archaeological Evidence.

Appendix C: Biblical Backgrounds Regional Study Map 4 ²⁹⁶

