

THE JERUSALEM POST

Skeleton found during earthwork in Recife, where Portuguese Jews in 1636 built the first known synagogue in the New World.



Recife, Brazil 370. (photo credit: Wikimedia Commons)

Brazilian archaeologists unearthed what they said are the 500-year-old remains of a Jewish man in Recife.

A report Thursday in the online edition of the Rio de Janeiro-based *O Globo* described the discovery earlier this month as a perfectly-preserved skeleton of a male adult. The skeleton was found during earthwork in Recife in northern Brazil, where Portuguese Jews in 1636 built the first known synagogue in the New World.

Marcos Albuquerque of the Federal University of Pernambuco, who oversaw the dig around the skeleton, told *O Globo* he had no doubt the man was Jewish and that he was buried sometime in the 16th century.

“In Christian tradition, it is customary to bury the dead with their hands crossed over

their chest, but this man was buried with hands laid alongside his body before rigor mortis set in,” Albuquerque said. “Furthermore, the body was buried in simple shroud without jewellery or any other private belonging and without casket.”

The body was found five feet underground, *O Globo* reported, during the construction of a tunnel, Tunel da Abolicao, in Recife’s central neighborhood of Madalena. The tomb is situated approximately 1.5 miles east of the Kahal Zur synagogue, which Jews who fled the Portuguese and Spanish Inquisitions built in Recife, which was then still a Dutch colony.

Determining exactly when the man was buried would require the removal of a piece of the skeleton for carbon dating. “But out of respect to the religious issue, we left the body where it was found,” Albuquerque said.

Fonte:

<http://www.jpost.com/Jewish-World/Jewish-News/500-year-old-Jewish-skeleton-found-in-Brazil-320391>