

Tel Balata Archeological Park

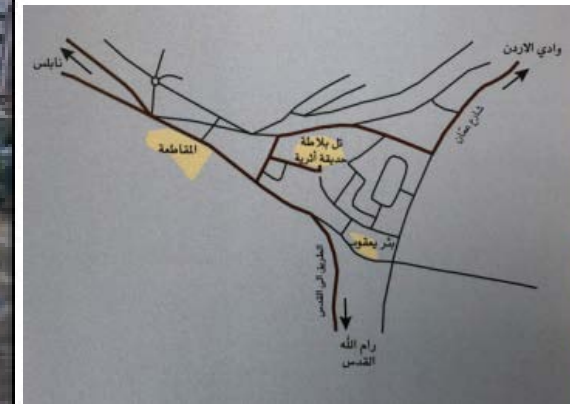
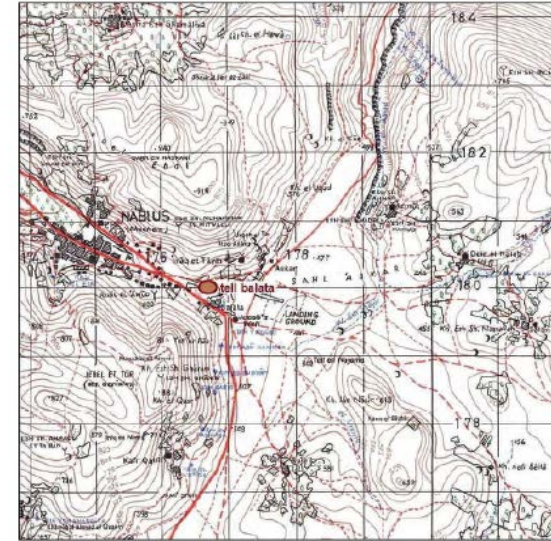
Eman Assi

**CIVVIH
Scientific
Symposium
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Introduction

Tell Balata is the remains of what is believed to be the first settlement in Nablus, the Canaanite town of Shechem, dating from the **first and second centuries BCE**. Shechem was orientated around a spring in the valley between two mountains, Gerizim and Ebal. Close to Jacob's Well.



Ancient Egyptian and other texts mention Sekmen or Shakmu, during **the 1400 BC**, when the town was the capital of a large city-state.

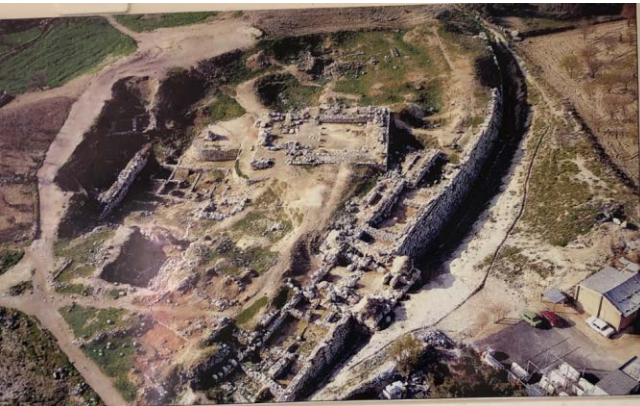
An influential **commercial center**, the city prospered from trade in locally produced **grapes, olives, wheat, and livestock** from the Middle Bronze Age to the Late Hellenistic Period (ca. 1900–100 BC).

732 BC, when the city was destroyed by **the Assyrians**. Later on it was **the centre of the Samaritan community** until its final destruction in 128/107 BC.



Fig. 4

Landscape of the site ,

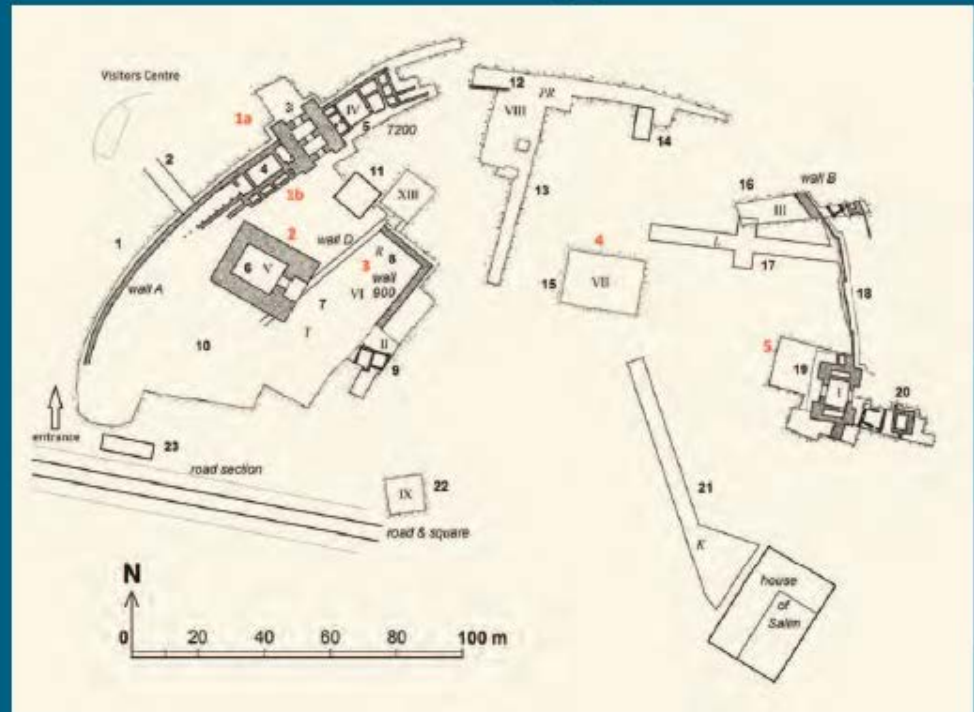


Excavations have revealed the occupational history of the site, particularly during the **Middle and Late Bronze Ages** – the second urbanization period in Palestine – from around 2000 till ca 1100BC.

Several impressive ruins from this period are visible, such as the **'fortress' temple** on the summit of the hill, used for public worship. Other ruins **include two monumental gates, massive city walls, and a governor's palace with a small private shrine, guardrooms, an assembly, living quarters, and a kitchen.** Of the following Iron Age few remains are to be seen, but some other building remains date from Hellenistic times.

Later on the site of Balata was abandoned, but a new town was established by the Romans further west, in 72 AD, named Flavia Neapolis, called Nablus under the khalifs since 636 AD, continuously being a trading and agricultural centre in northern Palestine: called, together with Tell Balata in the past, "the uncrowned queen of Palestine".

Archaeological site plan, with areas of interest; those in red are signposted



Human activities at the site: different socio-economic stages, from village to town and city, with periods of abandonment: time line (from bottom up).

Around 72 AD the city of Neapolis was founded 2 km west of the abandoned site, and in the medieval period the village of Balata was established south of the tell.

325 BC – large town with some new fortifications in Hellenistic period (area 20); several houses are discovered (area 9). Destroyed ca 100 BC.

950 BC - new small town growing into a large town during the 8th century BC (Assyrian rule); domestic quarters are excavated (areas 11, 15). Continues under Persian rule ca 500 BC (areas 15, 23).

1450 BC - fortified city (Late Bronze Age); struggle for independence from Egypt (Amarna letters). Burning destruction ca 1150 BC (area 14).

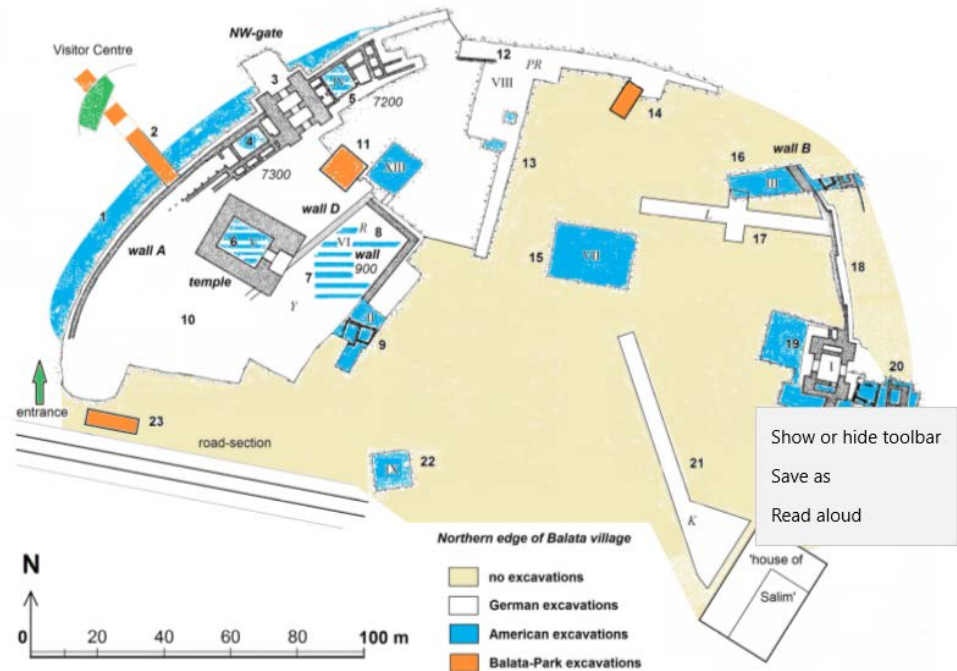
1650 BC - large fortified city (Middle Bronze Age IIC) with 'cyclopean' wall and NW and East gates (areas 1, 3, 19). Temple, 'palace' (areas 6 and 4) and other buildings (23). Important town in wide region with much trade. Burning destruction ca 1550 BC.

1900 BC - new village growing into town and city (area 8).

3500 BC - first village along the bottom of the valley, with pottery and flint tools (areas 22-23).

Tell Balata lays 2.5 Km East of the Historical Centre of Nablus and is important because of its cultural and historical significance in the past. The site is a key component of the potential World Heritage site “Old Town of Nablus and its environs”.

the city’s visible remains are a series of **defensive walls and gates, a palace or governor’s house, a residential quarter, as well as a fortified Canaanite temple and a portion of a temple to Zeus commissioned by the Roman Emperor Hadrian in the second century AD**>





Tel Balata site present day

In 2002 the World Heritage Committee launched an effort for the protection of Palestine's cultural heritage. The effort included the compilation of an Inventory of Cultural and Natural Heritage Sites of Potential Outstanding Universal Value in Palestine, which included Tell Balatah.

In 2009 UNESCO renewed its commitment to this effort, resulting in several conservation projects. A four-year effort at Tell Balatah took place until 2014 with funding from the Kingdom of the Netherlands.



The project

The project aims at contributing to the safeguarding of Palestinian cultural heritage and the enhancement of physical and economic situation through tourism development, by presenting and managing one of the most important archaeological resources, the archaeological site of Tell Balata.

Partners

- Palestinian Department of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage of the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities MOTA-DACH
- The faculty of Archeology of Leiden University , Netherlands
- United Nation Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

Components:

The major activities of the project **include scientific research** and the **formulation and implementation of a Management Plan**. For this the three involved institutions MOTA-DACH, the University of Leiden (Faculty of Archaeology), and UNESCO, work closely together with local stakeholders to implement the project.

Management policies

The following management policies have been developed on the basis of the significance, values, and management and conservation assessments of the site, its environment and its stakeholders:

1. Setting 2. Planning 3. Visitor Management 4. Protection and Conservation 5. Archaeology 6. Interpretation 7. Tourism 8. Education, Training and Outreach 9. Management

A detailed action plan

links actions to management policies and key players responsible for their implementation, which are described in terms of their

short-term (up to 3 years),

medium-term (3-10 years)

long-term (10+ years) timeframe.

Financial sources for management and maintenance of the Archaeological Park

The financial sources for management and maintenance of the archaeological park and staff of the visitors centre will be fully borne by the government;

Legal status

The archaeological site of Tell Balata and its environments are presently divided into several areas that fall under different legislation and ownership. For the purpose of this management plan, these can be described as follows:

Area 1) Archaeological Park under ownership of MOTA-DACH

The archeological sites are protected by a series of laws, including the Law of Antiquities no. 51 (1966), The Law of Environment no. 7 (1999), The Law of Tourism no. 45 (1965) and Building and Planning law no.

Area 2) Archaeological Park not under MOTA-DACH ownership

Next to area A, there are areas that consist of land of the Tell that is not under ownership of MOTADACH. These areas are in the ownership of local villagers and of people living elsewhere. These areas are now protected by legislation.





Implementation of the Archaeological Park



Fig. B31

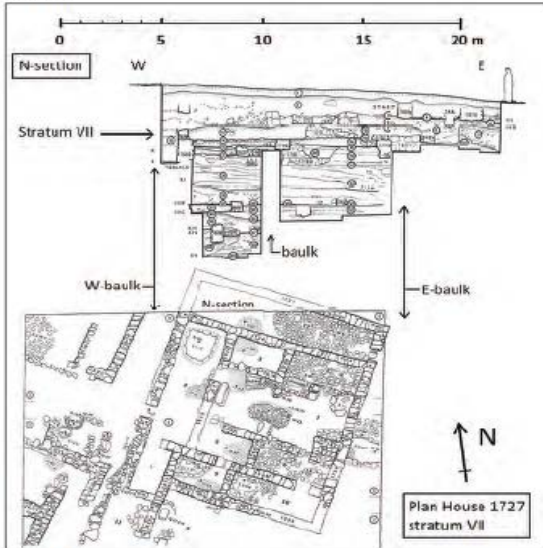


Fig. B32

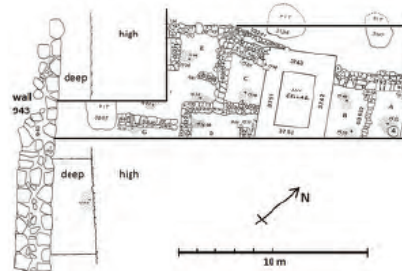


Fig. B19

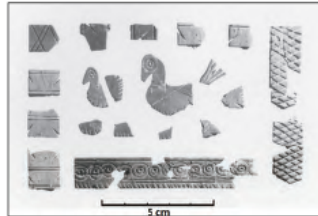


Fig. B20

The American expedition worked here in Field XIII. The bottom of the SE-part of this set of four 10x10 m squares (fig. B19) still shows domestic architecture from the Middle Bronze Age, with a cellar of a later house (Stratum XIII), dating to the Late Bronze Age. Beautiful bone inlay (fig. B20) to decorate a wooden box was found in room A, to the north (MBA). The cellar was used for storage (grain), but had clearly a

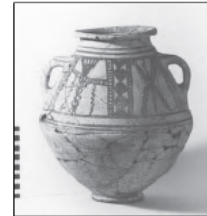


Fig. B21

water problem, and was filled with a large amount of debris including pottery sherds, such as from Cypriote bowls. On the floor above the cellar also much pottery was found, including a bi-conical jar (fig. B21) on a collar stand.

To the west of this Field further excavations were done in 2011 for the Park-project, in order to clarify some stratigraphic issues, in a 10x10 m area, with 4 squares. The upper houses (previously excavated by the German expedition) are from the Iron Age II period, with Late Bronze Age remains underneath. Remarkable objects retrieved are a double stamp (Iron Age IIB, fig. B22), a Late Bronze Age Cypriote bowl (fig. B23), a bone game piece (fig. B24), a flint adze (Chalcolithic type, fig. B25), and a toothed flint segment of an Iron Age sickle (fig. B26).



Fig. B22

Fig. B23

Fig. B24

Fig. B25

Fig. B26



شكل 8.7 توثيق ورسم للمباني والمقاطع الجيولوجية وعموديا باستخدام مقياس رسم 1:25 وورق رسم بياني.



شكل 12.7 تسجيل وتوثيق ووصف القطع الأثرية المكتشفة. توضع بعدها في أكياس بلاستيكية مع البطاقات التعريفية.

شكل 11.7 فريدة وفروخ الفخار، ثم تعبئة الاستمارات الخاصة بتسجيل الفخار.



شكل 10.7 عملية غسل الفخار باستخدام الفرشاة، ومن ثم يوضع في كيس شبكي للتنظيف، والغايات التجفيف السريع يتم نشر كثير الفخار على سطح نظيف ومكتشف.

Implementation of the Archaeological Park



Implementation of the Archaeological Park

‘community archaeology’:

bring local people in connection with this archaeological heritage, as part of their responsibility and their connection with the past. focus is on children, and organized with summer camps through the Multipurpose Community Resource Center in Nablus.



Implementation of the Archaeological Park

Site mangment through presentation and promotion of the site,

A reception space,

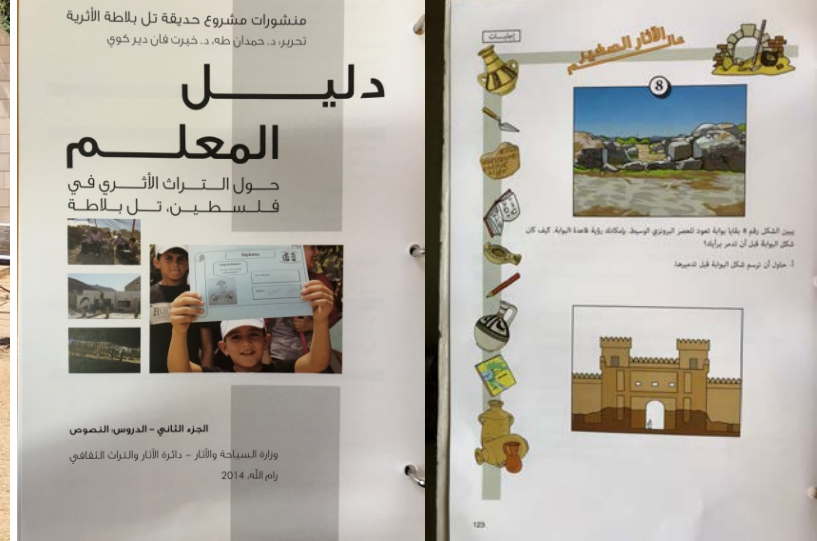
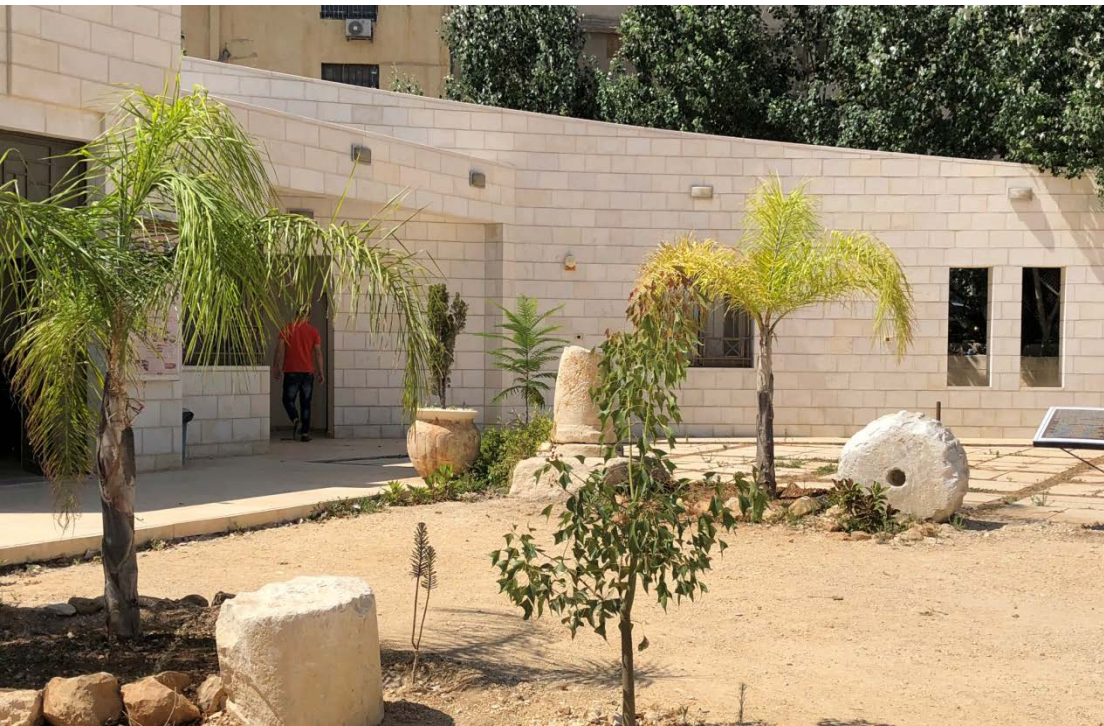
Interpretation Center,

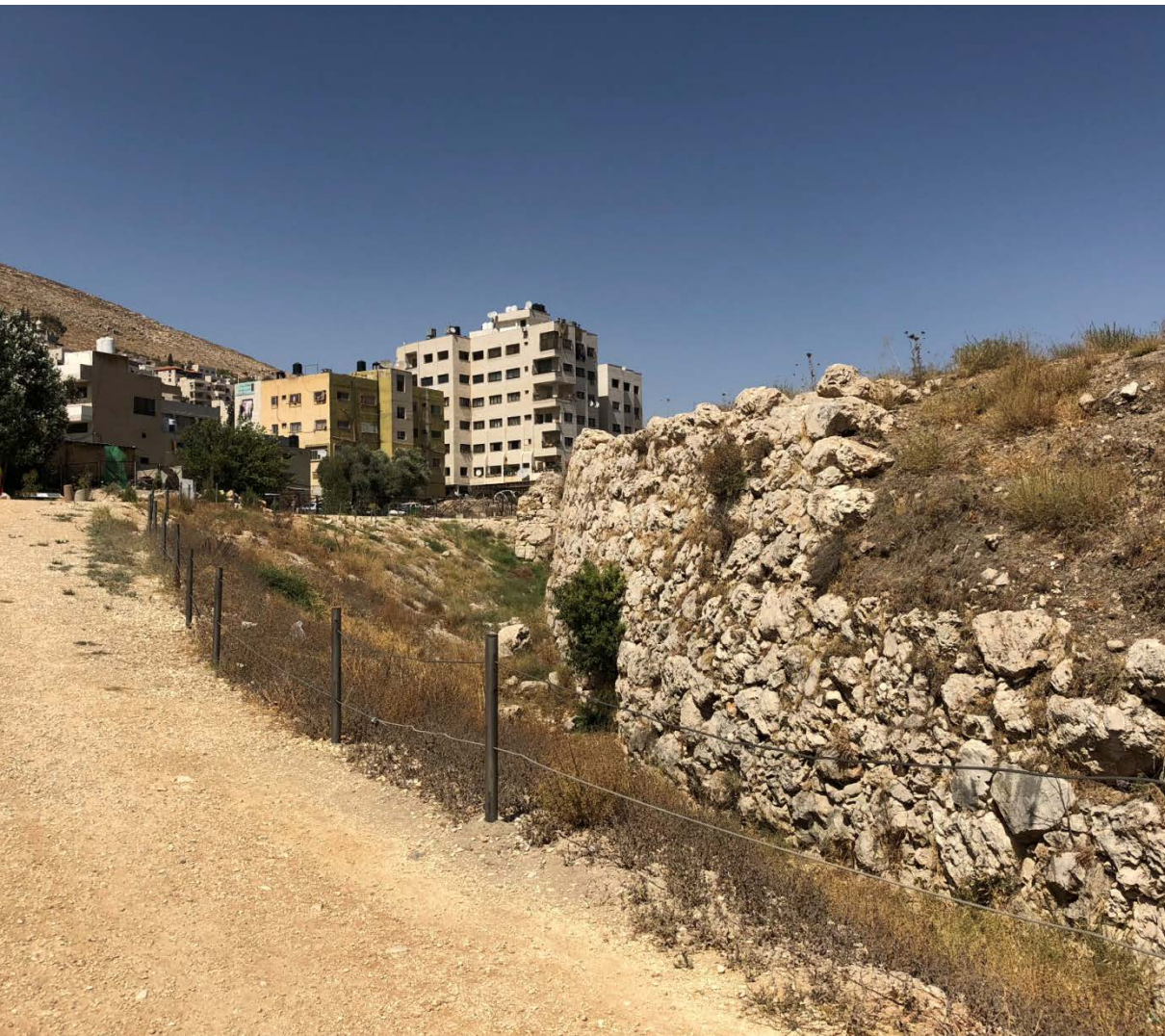
site museum,

visit-trail, and

written information

Teacher Guide











Thank you