



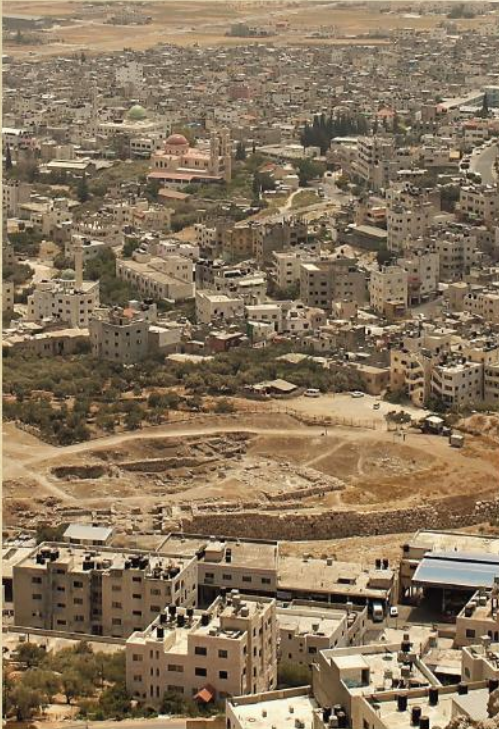
TELL BALATA
ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARK

at the
HEART
of
VILLAGE
LIFE

*Leiden University
NEARCH project
Palestinian Ministry
of Tourism and Antiquities*

TELL BALATA ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARK

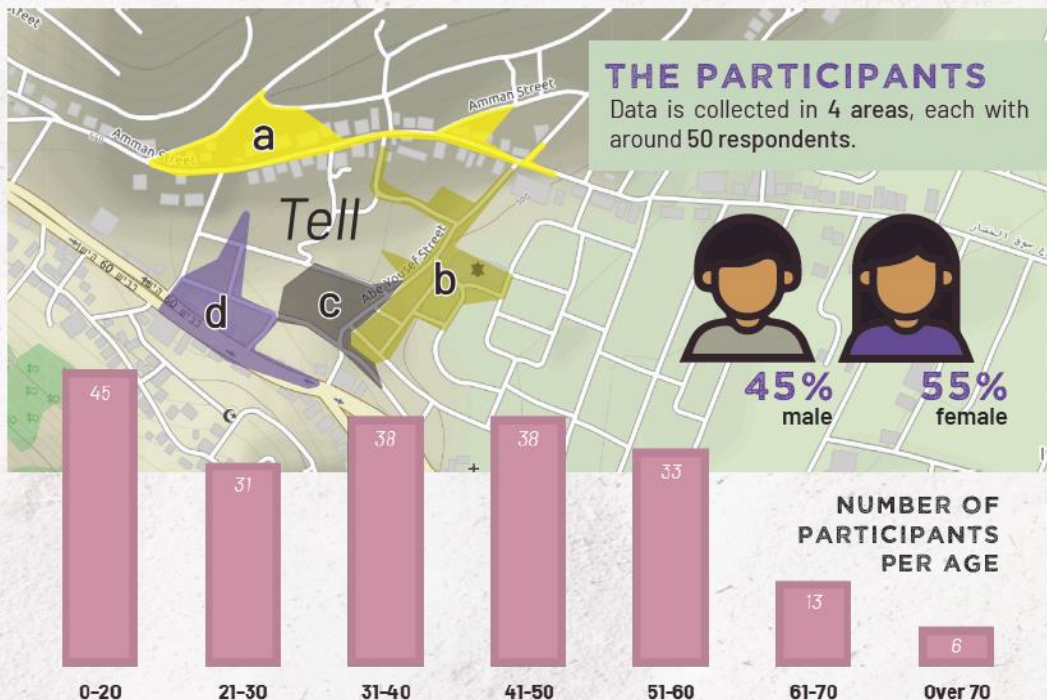
The ancient remains of Tell Balata are famous for their cultural importance and beauty. The site is known as the 'uncrowned queen of Palestine' and forms part of the 'Old town of Nablus and its environs', which is on Palestine's list of Sites of Potential Outstanding Universal Value (tentative list for World Heritage).



Tell Balata has a long history of habitation and research. The first signs of habitation, some pottery and flint tools, date from 3500 BC. They represent ordinary village life. Between c. 1750 till around 1150 BC (the Bronze Age), it was an important capital-city, protected by high walls and entrance gates. Since the city's destruction, the site has seen various episodes of small scale habitation and agricultural use which continue up until the present day. Excavation work was conducted frequently during the 20th century. The local community played an important role in this by accommodating the research. Recently, research was continued, now with the aim of preparing the site for the future and to make it welcoming to visitors. Facilities were created that let the site tell its story, such as information panels, a guidebook and an interpretation centre. With this preservation work, a new phase is added to the long history of Tell Balata. As an archaeological park, the site now welcomes visitors and invites local community members to further strengthen their engagement with it.

SURVEY RESEARCH AT BALATA

Over 200 villagers living in Balata participated in a study set up by the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and the Dutch Faculty of Archaeology. The aim was to hear from local community members what they think of Tell Balata Archaeological Park. What is its impact on daily life, and do villagers want to strengthen their relationship with the park?



HOW VILLAGERS USE THE PARK

One third (34%) of the people living in Balata village visit the park daily or often, another 45% occasionally. Men go more often than women (22% of women visit often – 46% of men). The most frequent visitors are young and elderly people. People in area C, where lots of young people live, visit the site the most; 53% goes often.

For local community members, Tell Balata Archaeological Park has an important social function. The prime reason for visiting is to enjoy the place (31%) and to make an outing with friends or family (22%). A smaller group (17%) uses the site to go from one side of the village to the other, mostly people living in area A.

The majority (53%) visits with family members, 36% with friends. Only 9% goes alone.

The park also functions as a place to meet other people, to get in touch with other villagers and tourists. Economic reasons for visiting hardly play a role, as only 1% goes to sell things.

PEOPLE VISITING THE SITE DAILY OR OFTEN



45%
visits with
friends



65%
visits with
family
members



*The park is a way for the village to **breathe***

man, over 70



I like to go there to have fun!
boy, under 20

WISHES FOR THE FUTURE

People provided useful suggestions for strengthening the relationship between the community and the park. Many (71%) would like to get more involved with the park, 74% of the women, 69% of the men. Survey participants in section C were most interested (82% said yes).



A large group (41%) wants to pay more visits, some (14%) want to learn more. Many (79%) would like to see the park used as a location for events. Cultural events are wished for most often (44%). Nearly all (88%) would visit events organised at the park. What's more, 63% would be willing to contribute to the park in person, for instance in cleaning or promoting the site, in organising activities or being a guide. Over a third (35%) is



Houses and streets around the park should be modernized as well
girl, under 20

interested in developing business activities, both men and women. Most think of selling food (55%). People aged 51 to 60 have the highest interest (50%).



Nearly all (98%) would like Tell Balata to become a World Heritage site. A quarter expects this to further improve the preservation and development of the site. The prime reason (39%) is that villagers are very proud of the site and want to show it to the world.



The park needs more investment to earn a better income
man, 41-50

IMPACT ON DAILY LIFE

The majority (73%) experiences positive effects of the park, while 15% experience negative effects. Individuals benefit the most in terms of opportunities for leisure and enjoyment.

Over half of the villagers (59%), mostly those living near the entrance (area C), think more people come to Balata due to the archaeological park. Some (15%) experience an increase in employment and business opportunities. Positive effects for the neighbourhood are a less neglected looking site (33%), more community cohesion (21%), and a better infrastructure (17%).



Less positive effects are a more limited access to resources (37%), pollution (25%), noise (12%) and a restricted accessibility (12%). Limited access irritates people in area C most, pollution and noise the people in areas A, B, and D.



It's an improvement for the region
lady, 51-60



A lot of international people come there
young man, 31-40

ABOUT THIS FOLDER



*This information brochure is created as part of the European cooperation project **NEARCH**, which is funded by the European Commission (2013-2018). NEARCH explores and creates new scenarios for community involvement in archaeology and heritage.*



**Universiteit
Leiden**
The Netherlands

Leiden University (Faculty of Archaeology) is a partner in the NEARCH project. It conducted some of its project activities in favor of the development and management of Tell Balata Archaeological Park.



Work at Tell Balata is conducted in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MOTA) in Ramallah.

RESEARCH

Monique van den Dries, Krijn Boom, Ihab Daoud, Dergham Fares, Arnout van Rhijn, Sjoerd van der Linde, Janne Polman.

TEXT

Monique van den Dries

ENGLISH EDITING

Jessica Palmer

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Giulia Osti / G0digitalcorner.eu

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