


# HISTORY MODULE



Name:.....



Jericho is known as one of the oldest settlements in the world, and, at 230 metres below sea level, it is the lowest point on earth. Jericho is mentioned in ancient historical and biblical sources. It is also called the City of the Moon as the city is named after the ancient God of the Moon: Yarikh.

In this module we will be looking at the hunter-gatherers who wandered the region of the Jericho Oasis long, long ago. We also will discuss the first people that settled at the site of Tell es-Sultan permanently. How did they live? What did they eat? Why did they choose Jericho as destination?

## Task 1: The beginnings of Jericho

Before we start to discuss the first inhabitants of Jericho we should take a look at the timeline. When looking at the history of Jericho we can divide the thousands of years of habitation history into several periods. This timeline shows five important periods in the most distant past of the region.

**1a.** What is the oldest period mentioned in the timeline?

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**1b.** Which period in the timeline is the longest one?

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**1c.** Which period in the timeline is the shortest?

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**1d.** All periods in the timeline are called after a material. Which materials are the periods named after and for what reason, do you think? \_\_\_\_\_

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The first people in history who wandered through the Jericho region, were the 'hunter-gatherers'. We call them hunter-gatherers, because they lived from hunting wild animals and gathering berries and nuts. They lived like nomads, moving from place to place.

**2a.** Why did the hunter-gatherers live like nomads, do you think?

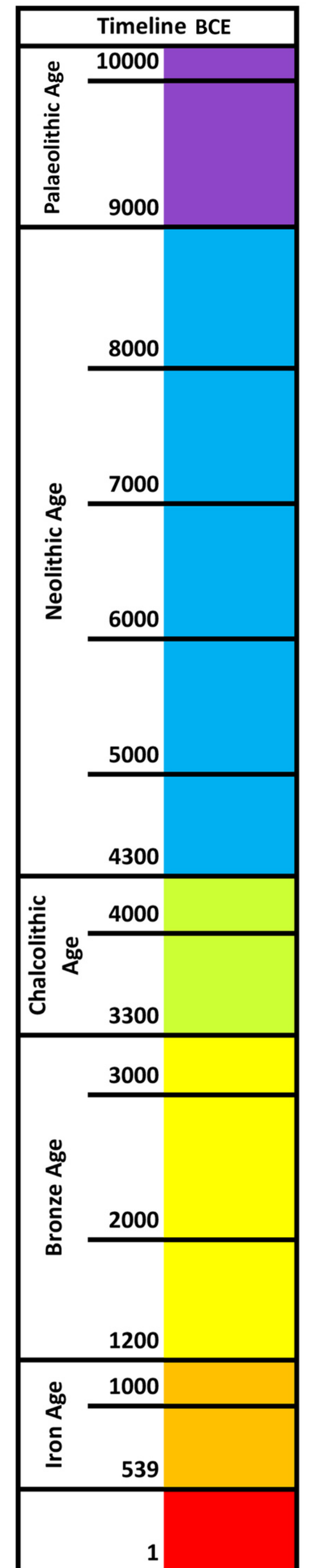
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These people did not live in big houses in villages or towns, but they lived in huts they could break up easily and carry on their travels. Due to their frequent travels they could not have many possessions. They could only bring along the necessary items to survive.

**2b.** Try to think of three items the hunter-gatherers had to take on their travels. \_\_\_\_\_

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In the Neolithic Age the first people started to settle down instead of being nomads. This also happened in Jericho. More specifically, at the place that is called today Tell es-Sultan, located at the oasis Ein es-Sultan. They also made an irrigation system to distribute water over the lands.

**3a.** Imagine that you and your friends are living in the Neolithic Age and want to build a new settlement. Therefore you are looking for an area to settle. What features does the area need to build your settlement? Think of at least two more aspects than access to water and explain why they are required. \_\_\_\_\_

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The inhabitants of the first settlement in Jericho produced mainly seeds, like wheat. They could eat the seeds or make bread or porridge from them. Later they domesticated animals they could use for animal husbandry.

**3b.** What benefits do you think animal husbandry had for them? \_\_\_\_\_

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So the people who lived in Jericho in the distant past had quite a varied diet based on wheat, fruits, meat etc. Are you curious how dishes from ancient Jericho taste? No problem at all.

**4. Go to your Activity Book and do the assignment 'Cooking from the past'. Enjoy your meal!**

The people of the Neolithic Age started to build houses. These houses were built on stone or clay, the walls were made of mud bricks and the roof of reed and clay. The houses were round and included several rooms. The

diameter could be more than six metres. They also made other buildings, for example, a huge tower. This tower had a diameter of eight and half metres and a height of about eight metres! Here is a photo of the remains of the tower as it is today.

**5a.** The tower was located on the edge of the settlement. What function did this tower have, do you think?

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Two Dutch students standing next to the Neolithic tower.

**5b.** What other structures or buildings will the inhabitants have built? Can you mention two structures/ buildings and explain why you chose them?

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The people that settled permanently in Jericho started to create different products and tools than the ones the hunter-gatherers used when they were wandering in the region in earlier times.

**6a.** What kind of tools did the people who settled permanently in Jericho require that the hunter-gatherers did not need? \_\_\_\_\_

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The hunter-gatherers could not bring any pottery on their travels, because pottery can be too heavy to carry and can break into pieces easily. However, the inhabitants of the permanent settlement in Jericho did not need to travel. So they did not have problems with pottery, in contrast with the hunter-gatherers. Here is a photo of pottery found at Tell es-Sultan.

**6b.** Try to think of at least two benefits of having pottery. \_\_\_\_\_

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It is clear that the community of one of the oldest cities in the world – Jericho – had very skilled potters in its midst. Therefore it would be good to experience what it is like to be a potter. Because an unadorned pot is a bit dull, you first have the opportunity to try designing your own decorations.



**7. Go to your Activity Book and do the assignment 'Design your own pattern'**

**8. Go to your Activity Book and look for the assignment 'Become a potter'**

## Task 2: The Umayyad and Hisham's Palace

The cultures present in Jericho in the Neolithic period were succeeded over time by many others. Every culture has its own story; sadly we cannot discuss each of them in this module. Now we will focus on one very important empire that has left its footprint on Jericho till this day: the Umayyads, the builders of Hisham's Palace (Khirbat al-Mafjar or Qasr Hishamor).

The site of Khirbet el-Mafjar – also known as Hisham's Palace or Qasr Hishamor – is an important early Islamic site. It was built in the 8th century and named after Hisham ibn Abd al-Malik, the caliph of the Umayyads.

**9a.** Try to think of a reason why Al-Walid ibn Yazid wanted to build this imposing building complex. \_\_\_\_\_

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Here is a timeline of the last 3,000 years.

**9b.** Look at the timeline. When did the Umayyad dynasty start to rule the region and when did it come to an end?

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**9c.** What is the name of the period that followed after the fall of the Umayyad Caliphate? \_\_\_\_\_

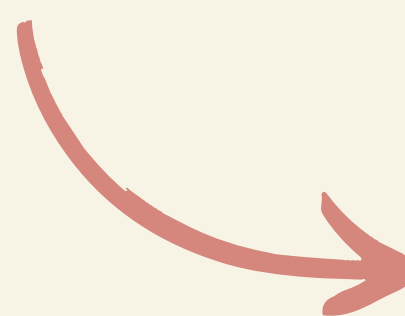
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**9d.** In what way is that period related to the fall of the Umayyad empire, do you think?

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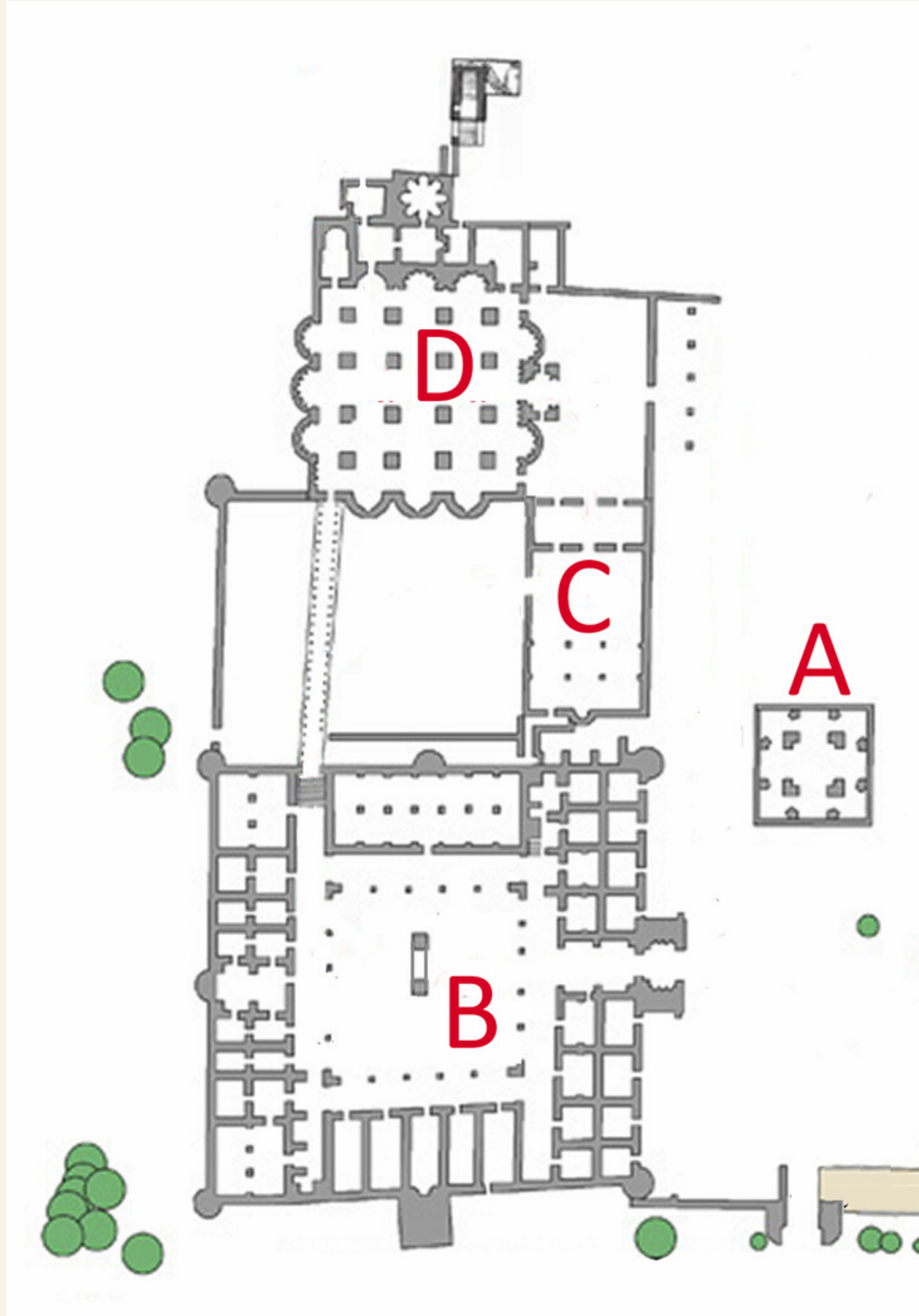
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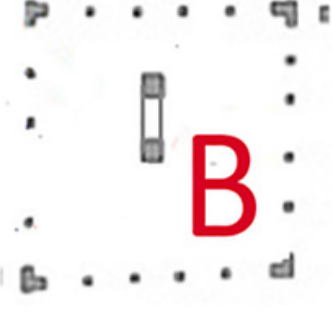

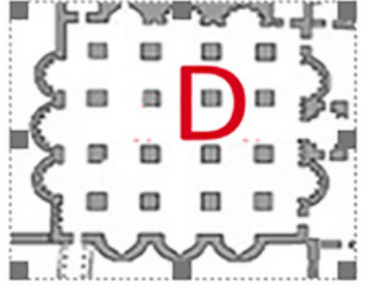
Hisham's Palace was a large building complex consisting of several buildings, each with its own function. Watch the film carefully so you are able to do the next assignment.



Timeline	
	1000 BCE
Iron Age	535
Persian Period	333
Hellenistic Period	63 BCE
Roman Period	1 324 CE
Byzantine Period	632
Rahidun	661
Umayyad	750
Abbasid Period	1000 1099
Crusader Period	1250
Mameluk Period	1516
Ottoman Period	1918
	2000

**10a.** Here is a map of Hisham's Palace. Unfortunately the architect forgot to put the names of several spots on the map. Fill in the missing terms: courtyard; bath house; mosque; pavilion.



Reference map	Identification
	
	
	
	

Spot	Purpose
Courtyard	
Bath house	
Mosque	
Pavilion	

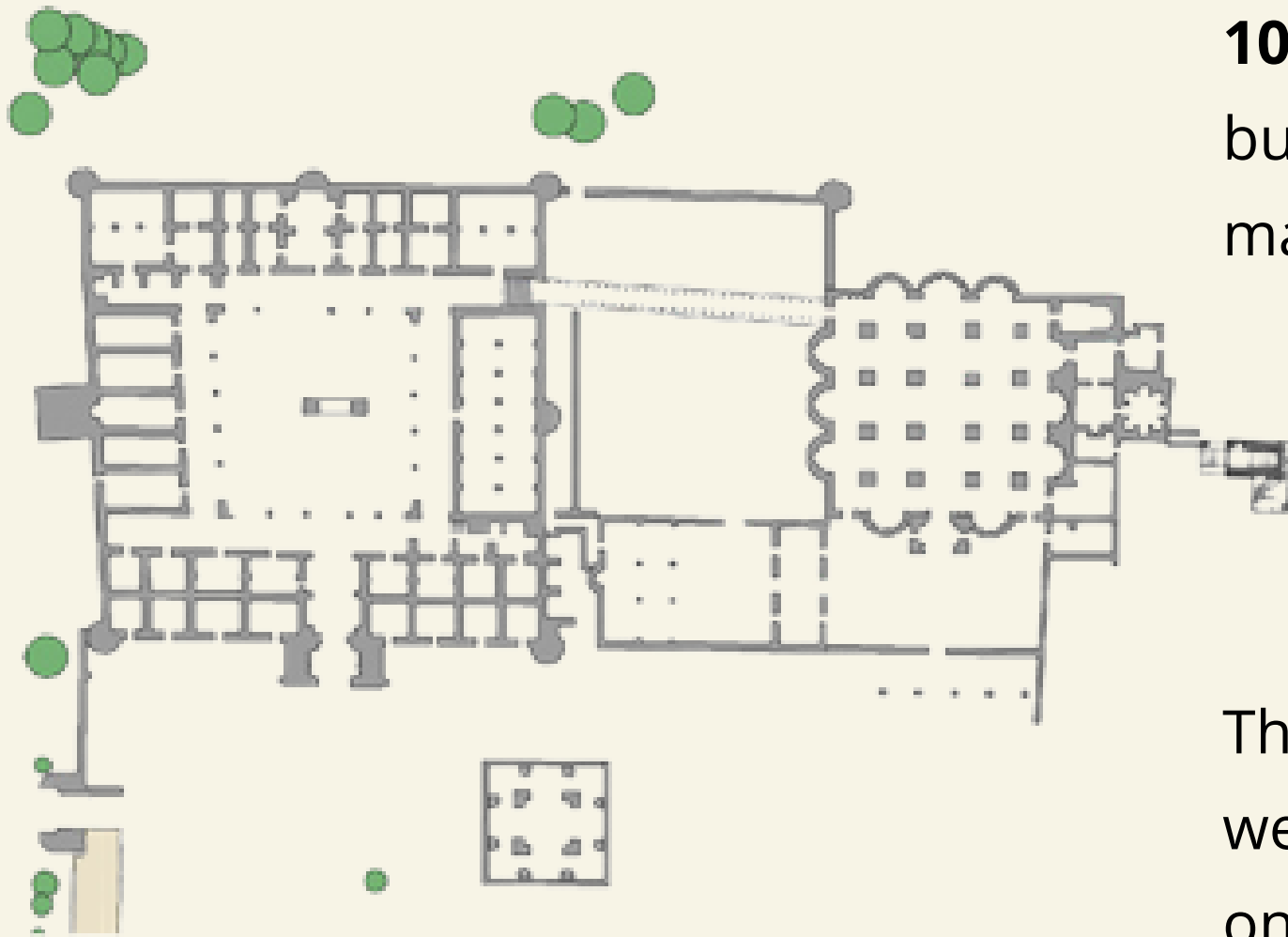
**10b.** Explain the purpose of each of the buildings.



**10c.** The palace also had an irrigation system. Which of these four buildings needed the irrigation system to function? (Hint: the answer can include more than one building!) \_\_\_\_\_

**10d.** Imagine you live at Hisham's Palace in the Umayyad period. What building would you add to the building complex and for what reason?

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**10e.** Where would you place the building? Draw the building on the map.

The buildings of the palace's complex were decorated with statues, ornaments on the walls and pillars, and mosaics (as you can see on these two photos).

Are you curious in what way these ornaments decorated Hisham's Palace? Modern architects Omar Aboudi and Yousef Khatib have made 3D reconstructions of Hisham's Palace. Here you can admire two examples: one of the bath house and one of the pavilion. With your finger you can move the reconstruction in every direction and it is also possible to zoom in or out!



On the second floor of the palace there used to be a large rosette window with a star in it. Unfortunately it fell down during a devastating earthquake in the year 747 CE. It was shattered in to many pieces. In the 1930s it was restored by Palestinian masons and engineers. Today it is placed in the centre of the courtyard (see photo).

**12.** Why do you think decorations were so important for the Umayyad? \_\_\_\_\_

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The palace is famous for its mosaics. The entire floor of the bath house is covered with amazing mosaics. Despite the earthquake of 747 CE it still remains the largest surviving ancient mosaic floor in the world!

**13a.** Look at the photo of the mosaic. This is the most famous mosaic of Hisham's Palace: the 'Tree of life'. What features do you see in the mosaic? Try to describe as many details as possible.



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**13b.** What does this image tell you about life at Hisham's Palace in the Umayyad period? \_\_\_\_\_

In the Archaeology Module you have already worked on a scale model of Hisham's Palace. Now it is time to decorate the scale model with your own designed mosaics.

**14.** In this assignment you will add your designed mosaics to the scale model. Here you see some examples of mosaics that the Umayyad made. You can use them as a source of inspiration, but try to design your own patterns as well!

Remove the columns of the scale model so you have more space to work. Draw with a pencil your own design of the mosaics you want to create on the white paper which is on the floor of the scale model. You can use coloured pencils to indicate which colours the mosaics must have. Then cut the coloured paper with the scissors into small pieces. Use the glue to stick the pieces of coloured paper on your drawings. If the glue has dried, put back the columns in the scale model.

**What do you need?**

- \* Coloured paper
- \* Pencil and coloured pencils
- \* Scissors
- \* Glue

Have fun and good luck!



### Task 3: Experiencing the Umayyad past

It may be hard to imagine how Hisham's Palace used to look in the past and how daily life in this place was. Thanks to modern technology experts are able to create digital reconstructions of the archaeological site. These visualisations can be very realistic: it just seems like you are walking through the building complex in the 8th century!

#### 15. An Umayyad merchant

Before we tell you how you can make the journey to the past, we'll explain the assignment. Imagine you are a merchant living in the 8th century. You are travelling to Jerusalem for business and during the journey across the desert you pass Jericho and Hisham's Palace. The impressive building complex of Hisham's Palace imposes an irresistible attraction on you and you decide to interrupt the journey for a visit to the place. While you are wandering through the building complex you pay attention to all the places you come across. You notice all the remarkable details and remember the atmosphere of the different buildings.

Hisham's Palace made such an impression on you that you decide to write a letter about the visit to your family. In this letter you try to share your experience with your family by describing your impressions by being as detailed as possible. The account must include the following aspects:

- a description of the building complex in general and also the city gate, forecourt, palace court, garden, huge bath house and the fountain
- the atmosphere/ambiance you experienced at these spots
- remarkable features you noticed during your visit
- an overall account of the way you experienced the visit to Hisham's Palace; try to explain to your family why they should visit the palace themselves.

And don't forget: you are an 8th century merchant and you are writing from that perspective!



Start your travel through time with Virtual Reality here.



If you prefer to watch the film.  
(Created by Ramzi Hassan)

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#### **Task 4: The more recent past of Jericho**

Till now, we have focussed on the distant past of the Jericho Oasis. But what about the more recent past of the city? What if you were a reporter for a local newspaper in Jericho 50 or 60 years ago? What kind of stories, events or developments in the city would you have described in those days? Ask your family members for useful information.

**16. Go to your Activity Book and do the assignment 'History's Newspaper'**

**17. Go to your Activity Book and do the Endgame History**

