The Monastery of Bir El-Hamam

Description of the site: The monastery is distinguished by its beautiful view of the city of Nablus, facing it from the eastern side of Tel al-Ras. It was synchronous with the nearby Church of the Virgin Mary on the top of Mount Gerizim. In the Byzantine period, Palestine witnessed a proliferation of churches and monasteries. The majority of agricultural lands became managed by these monasteries, which adopted planning and architectural design that met religious needs and practiced the profession of agriculture. Allocating parts of the monastery's building for housing, others for the church, and sections related to stores and animal stables.This monastery is not mentioned in archaeological surveys or historical sources, except for the well (Bir al-Hamam), being recorded in surveys and official records. At the end of the nineties, the last century, the monastery was accidentally discovered during dredging to build the palace of the businessman Munib al-Masri. As soon as the ruins of the monastery began to appear, construction work stopped. As a result, the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and An-Najah National University carried out archaeological excavations, which resulted in discovering all its parts.Archaeological excavations showed that this monastery consisted of three main sections:The first section is the outer section from the eastern side. It is accessed through the main gate on the east facade. It included an animal stable and a drinking pool for animals that was attached from the south.The middle section can be accessed through the main lobby entrance by an indoor gate facing the outer gate, and this section consists of an open paved courtyard with large white mosaics. In the middle of it is the Al-Hamam well, a large tank for collecting rainwater, and it was directed to it from the roof of the church through clay pipes and ground channels as It was designated for the use of monks. At the end of this square from the western side, a staircase extends several meters towards the south. The church is located and consists of an external room paved with white mosaics, and two connected rooms, the first is from the western side, which is the prayer hall, and the second is on the eastern side, which represents the church's structure. The altar is still in its location, and the prayer hall is separated from the temple by stone slabs decorated with beautiful decorations. The floors of the two rooms were paved with colored mosaics with Latin inscriptions, but they were not complete, and in some of its sections, it included pieces of glass.The third section, the western suite and was designated for housing. It was bulldozed, and only its eastern end remained. The monastery was surrounded by an impregnable stone wall supported by several protection towers. It was rehabilitated with wooden paths, and a small museum was attached, displaying the finds during the excavations. It consisted of stone decorations, storage jars, metal chandeliers, and tiles that covered the ceiling, most of which date back to the Byzantine period, and some date back to the Mamluk period.After the construction of the palace, the archaeological monastery became preserved within the settlement of the palace's structure, and the responsibility for its management lies with the palace's owner in coordination with the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities.

Sites & Attractions: Type

- An ancient monastery

Address

This monastery was discovered on one of the peaks above Mount Gerizim from its northern side, overlooking the city of Nablus. It is currently located within the lands of the Palestinian Businessman, Munib al-Masri, and his private palace stands on to...
Palestine House, Nablus.
PS-NBS
Palestinian Territories

32.210213,35.26506
View in Google Maps

Booking On Site

No

Booking Online

No

Fee: Special Group Rate

No

Booking via Phone

No

Advance booking required

No

Agent Voucher Accepted

No

Handicap bathroom

No

Stairs

No

Wheelchair Friendly

No

Stroller Friendly

No