

always were surrounded by strong walls. Even in peacetime the height of a city kept growing, since refuse was simply thrown into the street, and when old houses were destroyed, new ones were built on top of the ruins. Eventually the city would be attacked by an enemy strong enough to destroy it. The conqueror might simply leave the town in a state of ruin, its people having fled or having been killed. Eventually either the enemy or someone else would desire to build a new town in the area. Looking for a place that could be easily defended, and that had a good spring, the selection was quite apt to fall upon the place previously used. So a new city would be built on the ruins, the old walls being to some extent utilized and enlarged, or new walls built above them. Thus cities tended to rise, the city of one period being above the remains of the city of a previous period. Such an artificial hill, covering the remains of ancient cities, is designated as a "tell," using the Arabic word for mound, or hill, and is somewhat like a layer cake, with different layers preserving the remains of occupation at different periods.

Petrie had been asked to excavate Lachish, which was thought to have been at a place called Umm Lakis. He quickly saw that Umm Lakis was merely a late village, not going back into Old Testament times, and transferred his attention to Tell el-Hesy, a conspicuous mound in the neighborhood, thus discovering a matter of prime importance to Palestinian archeology. Many of the ancient names preserved in Palestine are at villages that do not go back further than the time of Christ. Yet such a town may preserve the name of a place that was important in the time of Abraham. This is because the Romans introduced a measure of safety into Palestine that had usually been unknown before their time. Roman legionaries sought out the bandits and destroyed them, and established such control over the area that people no longer felt the need of strong walls for protection. As each morning they would leave their homes on top of a tell, which