The Old City

Introduction[1]

Jerusalem has over the millennia been both a destination in and of itself and a junction leading many travelers on to other ends. Triumphant or defeated, armies have stormed the city from the four corners of the earth. And so have traders, making gains on some occasions and suffering losses on others. Pilgrims too have frequented the city, and some remained while others departed. Jerusalem has therefore morphed into a melting pot of ethnicities, thought, accents and scriptures. The living as well as the dead who once meandered through its hills have stored their memories in the city, imbuing it with an endless cumulative cultural heritage.

Zionist propaganda, on the other hand, promotes a unilateral narrative of Jerusalem, presenting an exclusively Jewish character of the city. Contrary to this spin, though, history attests to the diversity and the cultural exchanges that have always distinguished Jerusalem.

The Old City covers an area of 900 donums, just less than one square kilometer. It resembles an irregular quadrilateral from above, surrounded by walls. The walls were rebuilt for the last time in the 16th century under the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent. Foundations and significant sections of the walls remained in place while others were demolished and reconstructed.[2]

Some 3,662 meters long and 11.6 to 12.2 meters high, the walls encircle the Old City. They surround it without interruptions or openings, with the exception of the western side near Jaffa Gate. In 1898, the Ottomans dug a hole in the wall on that side in order to facilitate the entry of the convoy of the German Emperor Wilhelm II, who visited Jerusalem that year.[3] This remains the only section where the barrier is interrupted. As Wilhelm II entered Jerusalem through Jaffa Gate at the tail end of the 19th century, the drums of modernity beat louder as did the manifestations of colonialism. It was also through Jaffa Gate that Field Marshal Edmund Allenby entered Jerusalem following the city's occupation by British forces in December 1917. This history gave Jaffa Gate its nickname — the "invaders' gate."[4]

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[1] It should be noted that a significant portion of the information provided in this section is either directly cited from or based upon the research published by Enjoyjerusalem.com, a Jerusalemite tourism association.
[2] Al'Aref, A. Al-Mufassal in the History of Jerusalem. Pp 436
[3] Jawhariyah, W. (2003). Ottoman Jerusalem in the Jawhariyah Memoirs: Volume One of the Memoirs of the Musician Wasif Jawhariyah, 1904-1917. The Institute for Palestine Studies.
[4] Jaffa Gate: Jerusalem's Gate to Western Modernity. (2017, April 12). Al-Quds Newspaper.

In 1981, the Old City and its walls were recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site following a request submitted by Jordan. One year later, they were listed on UNESCO's World Heritage in Danger list in light of the political situation and the serious threats facing the site. The Old City and its walls remain on both lists.[5]

The Old City Gates

The Old City has seven open gates and four — or five according to some — closed ones. The open gates are: Bab al-Amud (Damascus Gate), Bab al-Nabi Daoud (Zion Gate), Bab al-Khalil (Jaffa Gate), and Bab al-Asbat (Lions' Gate). These are the main entry gates into the Old City on its four sides. The design of these gates resembles the letter "L" for defensive purposes and to impede the movement of enemies attempting to push into the city. The other three open gates are Bab al-Magharibah (Moroccan Gate, also known by locals as Dung Gate), Bab al-Jadid (New Gate) and Bab Al-Sahirah (Herod's Gate).

The Old City's closed gates all simultaneously serve as gates into the al-Aqsa Mosque compound. These are: Bab al-Rahmah (Mercy Gate or Golden Gate), Bab al-Muzdawaj (Double Gate), Bab al-Thulathi (Triangular Gate) and Bab al-Munfarid (Separate Gate). Some sources add Bab al-Janaiz (Funeral Gate), located on the eastern wall of al-Aqsa Mosque, to this group.

[5] UNESCO: "The Old City of Jerusalem and Its Walls." Retrieved from Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls - Documents

Damascus Gate

Damascus Gate is the most prominent gate for Palestinians in Jerusalem. The main northern gate to the Old City, it has the most distinctive and grand architectural design among all the other gates. It is the epicenter for Palestinian life in the Old City, serving as a square where Jerusalemites gather to carry out political, social and economic activities.[6]

Politically, the square opposite Damascus Gate has witnessed several confrontations between Palestinians and Occupation forces over the past decade. These clashes usually erupt following protests held at Damascus Gate to mark the Nakba and Naksa, protests in solidarity with the Gaza Strip, and protests in solidarity with the hunger strikes launched by Palestinian prisoners in Israeli prisons. Since 2015, Palestinians have taken to calling Damascus Gate "martyrs' gate", as several Palestinians have been killed in the area while carrying out stabbing attacks or shooting attempts against Israeli occupation forces, especially during the Jerusalem uprising of October 2015.

Socially and economically, Damascus Gate constitutes the Old City's main outlet. Palestinian women farmers have long showcased their produce for sale near the gate and the nearby Palestinian commercial hub that is al-Musrarah neighborhood. The gate is also a landmark and meeting point. In recent years, the steps opposite Damascus Gate have become a favorite hangout spot for people, especially the

[6] Sharqawi, F. (2017, June 19). "The Gate of our City Shall Not Be closed." Bab al-Wad. Retrieved from لن يُقفل باب مدينتنا

youth, a place where friends congregate. There is also a bus station nearby that provides transportation to the eastern part of Jerusalem and to Ramallah.

Another main entryway to the Old City is Jaffa Gate, known by Palestinians as Bab Al-Khalil (Hebron Gate). It is on the western side of the Old City and leads to Omar ibn al-Khattab Square. Just like the other main entryways, Jaffa Gate was built as a defensive gate to hinder enemy movement. As previously noted, part of the Old City's walls near Jaffa Gate was demolished in 1898 to allow the German emperor's convoy to enter the city. During their occupation of Jerusalem, British forces demolished several structures and shops close to the Old City's walls, particularly near Damascus and Jaffa Gates. Among the artifacts and structures they removed was the clock tower near Jaffa Gate, built in 1908 to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the ascendance of Sultan Abdul-Hamid II to the throne of the Ottoman Empire.[7]

While Damascus Gate has recently been transformed into a political and social hub for Palestinians, Jaffa Gate has been transformed, since the occupation of the eastern part of the city in 1967, into a gateway for Western tourists and an entry point for colonists heading to al-Buraq Wall (known by Israelis as the Western Wall or Wailing Wall). Jaffa Gate has witnessed an ongoing process of Judaization that has unfolded in several episodes. In 1969, Occupation forces left an inscription on the gate indicating the "Israeli rehabilitation of the wall." Placed next to four Ottoman inscriptions, it was a clear attempt to compete with that character and impose an Israeli identity on the area.[8]

West of Jaffa Gate, the uprooted Palestinian neighborhood of Mamilla, also known as Maamanuallah, was later rebuilt by Occupation authorities as an upscale mall, inaugurated in 2008. Occupation authorities built a pedestrian bridge to connect the mall to Jaffa Gate and the Old City. The bridge and its nearby spaces now host Israeli festivals and events in the city, particularly those dedicated to imposing a Jewish-Zionist character on the city. Among these festivals are the annual Festival of Lights, in addition to several celebrations held in 2017 to mark 50 years since the occupation of the eastern part of Jerusalem.[9]

In sum, over the past two decades, Jaffa Gate and its touristic, archaeological and recreational sites have witnessed an escalating process of Judaization. It has been transformed into the most bustling and frequented "Israeli" site in the Old City.

Palestinians drew attention in July 2017 by holding midday Friday prayers in the square at the gate, part of a mass sit-in protest of the Occupation's closure of the

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[7] Badriyah, O. I. (2012). Jerusalem's Old City: Markets and shops. Pg 46.
[8] Ibid, pp 43.
[9] 50th Jerusalem Day greeted with joyful color and ceremony. (2017, May 22). Retrieved from 50th Jerusalem Day greeted with joyful color and ceremony

al-Aqsa Mosque compound and the installation of metal detectors at its entrance that summer. The sit-in included demonstrations and public prayers on the steps of the Old City, pressuring the Occupation government to reverse its measures. It was one of the rare occasions when Jaffa Gate hosted an event with a clear Palestinian-Arab identity since the 1967 occupation. This Palestinian-Arab presence stood in contrast to the most modern Israeli mall in the city, in a square brimming with settler activity. The media cited the event as the only time Palestinians have held a mass prayer at Jaffa Gate.

A third open gate to the Old City is the New Gate, also known as Sultan Abdul-Hamid Gate. It leads to the Christian Quarter. Located on the northwestern side of the Old City, the New Gate was built in 1898 during the rule of Abdul-Hamid II. It was opened under French pressure that sought to grant better access for Christian pilgrims to their holy sites.[10]

Neighborhoods of the Old City

The Old City, its people and its neighborhoods form a unique social tapestry. The Old City is composed of several neighborhoods, most of which are characterized by the intermingling of historical, archaeological and religious sites with residential units and shops. Palestinian daily life has been tied to the Old City for nearly three centuries, a period in which the city of Jerusalem remained confined within its old walls. With the exception of the countryside, no urban neighborhood was established in Jerusalem until the mid-19th century.[11]

When Palestinians, westerners and Zionist colonists began constructing houses and neighborhoods outside the walled Old City, the spaces they created were commonly known as the "new Jerusalem." This "new Jerusalem" outside the walls includes al-Musrarah, al-Qatamon and al-Sheikh Jarrah neighborhoods among others.

[10] See note 7, p. 43.
[11] See note 2.

According to the Occupation Municipality in Jerusalem, the Old City's Palestinian population is estimated at 35,000.[12] Other estimates raise the number to nearly 37,000 Palestinians and 5,000 Israeli colonists. By 2010, the population density of the Old City had reached 36.6 people per donum, a relatively high figure.[13]

Many attribute this high population density to the internal migration that the Old City has witnessed since the second Intifada and the beginning of the construction of the Annexation and Expansion Wall. Many Palestinians were compelled to look for

[12] The data was collected following a survey of the Muslim and Christian quarters according to the divisions of the Occupation Municipality. Needless to say, there are other Palestinians who live in other neighborhoods of the Old City such as the Armenian Quarter and al-Sharaf neighborhood, currently known as the Jewish Quarter. Available at: https://www.jerusalem.muni.il/en/CapitalofIsrael/neighborhoods/Pages/default.aspx

[13] "The Old City in Occupied Jerusalem," (2011, April 9). Retrieved from https://bit.ly/2R1hH4W

smaller homes with low rent inside the walls of the Old City. This internal migration into the Old City was propelled by fear of Israeli closures and the threat of Palestinians losing their Jerusalem residency. The threat of residency revocation spikes when Palestinian Jerusalemites move to the West Bank.

The supposed division of the Old City, which can also be seen on most maps, splits the Old City into the Muslim Quarter, the Christian Quarter, the Armenian Quarter and the Jewish Quarter. Many researchers note that these divisions were only coined under British colonialism from 1917 to 1948. They add that the division was meant to facilitate colonial control over and administration of the Old City. Thus, prior to the British colonial period, the Old City had not been divided across sectarian lines. Neither symbolic nor physical boundaries had existed in the Old City across sect or religious affiliation.[14]

The holy sites scattered across the Old City illustrate the religious and cultural diversity that characterizes it. For instance, the Muslim Quarter is home to 11 churches, while the Christian Quarter is home to six mosques.

Therefore, you will be hard pressed to encounter any Jerusalemite who uses the term "Muslim quarter," as it is not part of the local vernacular. Instead, locals use the original names of their neighborhoods, such as Bab Hutta or Harat al-Saadiyah. Even when some say Harat Al-Nasara (the Christian neighborhood), they use an old name that is unrelated to the British delineations.

The following is a review of some neighborhoods in the walled Old City.

Bab Al-Majlis: This neighborhood was named after an eponymous gate to the neighboring al-Aqsa Mosque. Al-Majlis (the council), refers to the Supreme Islamic Council, the body tasked with running the city's waqf (endowment) and religious affairs. Established during the British colonial period, the Council's headquarters was located in the al-Manjakiyah school next to Bab al-Majlis Gate. To this day, the waqf's offices remain in the same building.

Palestinian families of African descent live on either side of the alley that leads from al-Wad Street to Bab al-Majlis. These families are originally from Sudan, Nigeria, Chad and Senegal, among other countries, and their community is estimated at about 300 to 400 people. They made their way to Jerusalem in one of two ways:

Some arrived in the city after concluding their pilgrimage to the Muslim holy city of Mecca in modern-day Saudi Arabia. They followed a tradition known as the

[14] Dumper, M. (2002). The politics of Sacred Space: the Old City of Jerusalem in the Middle East Conflict. Lynne Rienner Publishers.

"consecration of the pilgrimage" by visiting Jerusalem and its al-Aqsa Mosque. This tradition honors a saying by the Prophet Muhammad, which recommends visiting three major mosques and the holiest places in Islam: Mecca's Grand Mosque, the Prophet's Mosque in Medina, and al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. Some of those who arrived in Jerusalem after the pilgrimage to Mecca decided to remain in the city.

Other families arrived in Jerusalem with the army of Salah al-Din al-Ayubi during the liberation of Jerusalem from the Crusaders in the 12th century.

The African families, therefore, are tightly woven into the city's Palestinian social fabric and are an integral part of the Palestinian struggle.

The Armenian Quarter: Armenians make up the majority in this neighborhood in the southwest of the Old City. Most researchers trace the beginnings of Armenian presence in Jerusalem to the fourth century, when Armenian pilgrims began visiting the city. Their presence has been rooted in the city ever since, with a majority in the community speaking Arabic and English in addition to Armenian. Jerusalem's Armenians have always been famed for their fine artisanal work, including ceramics and photography. They were pioneers of Jerusalem's printing sector, opening a printing press in the city at the beginning of the 19th century. Armenians were also the first to establish a commercial photography establishment in Jerusalem. This explains why the oldest photographs of Jerusalem were captured by Armenian photographers.

The Armenian Quarter is home to the Saint James Cathedral, a 12th-century Christian Orthodox church and the main church of the Armenian Patriarchate. The cathedral contains a museum and a library that includes manuscripts dating back to the late-medieval period. It has hosted pilgrims and provided shelter for refugees who fled the fighting during World War I and the Armenian Genocide in Turkey. It also provided asylum for Palestinian and Armenian refugees during the 1948 Nakba.[15]

The Moroccan Quarter: This neighborhood sits next to al-Aqsa Mosque in the Old City's southeast and was built during the Ayubid and the Mamluk eras nearly 700 years ago. The quarter was for centuries home to Muslim immigrants from Morocco and North Africa. Prior to the 1967 war, some 650 residents (100 families) lived in the quarter.[16]

On June 11, 1967, shortly after the occupation of the eastern part of Jerusalem, Israeli occupation authorities expelled all Palestinian residents of the neighborhood and destroyed all 135 houses. On its ruins opposite the al-Buraq Wall, the Occupation

[15] Hintlian, G. (1998). "Armenians in Jerusalem." Journal for Palestine Studies, 2.
[16] Abowd, T. (2000). "The Moroccan Quarter: a history of the present." Jerusalem Quarterly File, 7, 6-16.

authorities built a large plaza, known by Israelis as the Western Wall Plaza. One of the largest open spaces in the Old City, it now hosts masses of Jewish worshipers trampling over the history of the area. In a 1999 interview, an Israeli army major who participated in the demolition, said Palestinians were prevented from collecting their furniture and belongings before the destruction began because "there was no time. That day was Saturday and the next Tuesday observed the Old Testament feast of Passover. At that time, many Jewish people were expected to arrive at the Wailing Wall, and we had two days only to prepare the yard."[17]

When visiting this area, one ought to be conscious that the square was the site of destruction and displacement. The plaza stands on the very spot where Palestinian families of North African descent once lived. These families were forcibly displaced from their homes.

Sites in the Old City

Jerusalem's most significant historical and religious sites can be found in the Old City. They epitomize and capture the long and rich history of the city. We will detail the most important sites that we recommend should be visited, but we are fully aware that we cannot truly do them justice. Jerusalem is permeated with treasures and secrets, and we will uncover some of them:

Al-Aqsa Mosque Compound: If the Old City is the heart of Jerusalem, then al-Aqsa Mosque is the heart of the Old City. Located in the southwest of the city's historic center, the mosque and its surrounding compound span 144 donums, making up one-sixth of the Old City.[18]

Aside from being a holy site for Palestinians, al-Aqsa Mosque also serves as an active social and political space. It is linked to the Prophet Muhammad, and particularly to the Israa and Miraj miracle. According to the Islamic faith, the Prophet Muhammad's night journey from Mecca to the site of al-Aqsa Mosque was immediately followed by his ascension from there to the heavens. Additionally, al-Aqsa Mosque was the first Qiblah, the direction towards which Muslims pray. This remained the case for 16 months before the Qiblah was switched to the holy Kaaba at the center of Mecca's Grand Mosque.

The mosque compound itself contains several important Islamic sites, including places for prayer, schools and minarets. These sites were built over different periods, beginning in the Umayyad era, on through the Ottoman period.

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[17] Ibid.

[18] Al Jazeera Encyclopedia. "What do you know about al-Aqsa mosque?" Available at: https://bit.ly/2F5uVIr

Among the most prominent sites is the Dome of the Rock, whose construction was ordered by the Umayyad Caliph Abdul-Malik bin Marwan in the seventh century. It is one of the oldest buildings in Jerusalem. The Sacred Rock is surrounded by a wooden fence, and a stairway leads to a natural cave beneath it. It is believed in Islam that the Prophet Muhammad ascended to heaven from this spot during the Israa and Miraj miracle.

It also contains al-Qibli Mosque, a grey-domed structure in the southern part of the compound (Qilbli refers to the direction of the Qiblah). It was built in the eighth century during the era of the Umayyad Caliph Abdul-Malik bin Marwan and his successor and son Walid bin Abdul-Malik. The mosque in its current state is not entirely Umayyad, as it has been struck by both earthquakes and fires. It was rebuilt on several occasions, which explains its Abbasid, Fatimid and Ottoman characteristics. You can also see remains that date back to the era of the Crusaders, who transformed the mosque into a royal palace when they occupied Jerusalem in the 11th century.[19]

On August 21, 1969, Dennis Michael Rohan, an Australian citizen and a Christian Zionist affiliated to the Church of God, set fire to al-Qibli Mosque. He believed in the need to support the Israeli state and to construct the third temple to pave way for the return of the Messiah.[20]

[19] Al-Jallad, I. (2017). Al-Aqsa Mosque in the Spotlight. Bayt al-Maqdis for Literature. Pp 56.
[20] Hasan, H. (2017, August 21). "Remembering the arson attack on Al-Aqsa Mosque." Middle East Eye. Retrieved from Remembering the arson attack on Al-Aqsa Mosque

The arson damaged a significant portion of the mosque, particularly its roof and famous pulpit, which had been brought by Salah al-Din al-Ayubi when he liberated Jerusalem from the Crusaders in the 12th century.

The al-Aqsa Mosque compound has 10 open gates on its northern and western sides. Yet Palestinians are prohibited from using al-Magharibah Gate on the southwestern side of the mosque. This gate overlooks the so-called Western Wall Plaza (mentioned earlier). Occupation authorities confiscated the keys to this gate from the Islamic waqf after the occupation of the eastern part of Jerusalem in 1967. Meanwhile, this same gate is open to foreign tourists who wish to visit the compound. It is also used by Israeli colonists during their provocative visits to the compound.

Al-Aqsa Mosque is regularly targeted by settler groups that call for the daily invasion of the mosque and permission for Jews to pray inside it. Other groups call for the demolition of al-Aqsa and the construction of a Jewish temple on its ruins. Amid these threats, recent years have seen several clashes within the mosque compound. These confrontations highlight the determination of Palestinians to protect al-Aqsa Mosque as a holy site and a Palestinian–Arab social and political epicenter that they are unwilling to give up. In doing so, many Palestinians have been martyred and others arrested on charges of standing their ground steadfastly in the compound. Many Palestinians also receive continually renewed orders banning them from entering the area. Orders prohibiting the entry of these activists into al-Aqsa Mosque range from three to six months in duration.

Church of the Holy Sepulchre: Arguably the most important and famous church in Jerusalem (and perhaps the world), the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was constructed during the Byzantine period. Since the second century, it has been a pilgrimage destination for Christians the world over. As its name indicates, its location is where Jesus Christ is believed to have been crucified and buried, and where he is also believed to have been resurrected according to Christian creed. The church stands out amongst other churches as a sacred and holy site for all Christians, irrespective of their denomination.

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre is, in fact, a complex that contains various smaller churches covering an area of over five donums.[21]

[21] This community story is based on the information provided by the guide published in enjoyJerusalem.com.

The Salahi School / Saint Anne Church: The Saint Anne Church, formerly a school for Islamic Shafei jurisprudence called the Salahi School, lies 20 meters to the west of Bab al-Asbat (Lions' Gate).

This site is blessed with a rich and eventful history that dates back to the Greek period. At its inception, a large pool was constructed on the site. It was comprised of two basins: the northern basin (40 x 40 meters) and southern basin (65 x 50 meters). The two were separated by a 60 meter-long and six-meter-thick dam. This structure was designed to allow water to collect. No sooner was this pool created than the sick and the ailing began flocking towards it, seeking healing from the Greco-Egyptian pagan deity Serapis Asclepics. It is believed that Jesus Christ witnessed remnants of this ritual, and he is thus believed to have performed his miracles of healing the sick at the same location.

According to the Eastern Orthodox tradition, Saint Anne gave birth to the Virgin Mary in the cave next to the pool. This, in addition to the miracle, made the location a massive attraction for Christians. They began by visiting the nearby caves. During the Byzantine period, a massive basilica was built atop the remains of the pool extending to the pagan healing shrine. The basilica was destroyed during the Persian invasion but was later restored under the guidance of priest Modestus. The Crusaders built a small church, known as the Moustier, atop the ruins of the Byzantine basilica. A larger church was built on the ruins of the cave where the Virgin Mary is believed to have been delivered.

In 1182, following the liberation of Jerusalem from the Crusaders, the church was converted into an educational institute for Islamic jurisprudence. It was named al-Madrasah al-Salahiyah, or the Salahi School, as a tribute to Salah al-Din al-Ayubi who endowed it to the waqf.

The Salahi school remained one of the most famous educational institutions in Jerusalem until 1856. That year, the Ottoman Sultan Abdulmejid granted it to Napoleon III as an act of gratitude for and in recognition of France's support for the Ottoman empire during the Crimean War.

The school appointed the best and most notable religious scholars and was the most affluent of all endowments. It played a pioneering role in supporting thought and jurisprudence in Jerusalem.

Al-Zawiyah al-Qadiriyah (al-Afghaniyah): This zawiyah, or Islamic monastery, has preserved its original architectural character and continues to perform its mission. Its followers are devoted to appearing at the zawiyah, where they meet with their current Sheikh Abdul-Karim al-Afghani at least twice a week, as well as on Fridays.

Al-Qadiriyah was named after scholar Sheikh Abdul-Qadir al-Jilani, the founder of the Sufi Muslim Qadiri order. Currently known as al-Afghaniyah, the zawiyah acquired its name from the Afghan-Jerusalemites, who have resided in the city for the past few decades. The zawiyah has also been run by Afghan groups in recent times.

Muhammad Pasha, the 17th century Ottoman governor of Jerusalem, founded this zawiyah. He was known for sponsoring Sufi institutions in Jerusalem and attending to the city's architectural development.

Followers of this zawiyah hold special celebrations to commemorate the Israa and Miraj miracle and the Prophet Muhammad's birth.

The Jerusalem Citadel: Located on the western side of the Old City’s walls next to Jaffa Gate, the Jerusalem Citadel is widely regarded as one of the city's most notable sites. It offers an example of Islamic military architecture, having been built at a strategic site to defend the western entrance of the Old City. The presence of old fortifications in the area was a direct factor underlying the choice to build the citadel at this specific spot. Its current form dates back to the rule of Sultan al-Nasir Muhammad ibn Qalawun, the ninth Mamluk Sultan. He ordered the restoration of the castle in 1312 according to a formative inscription on the main entrance. The inscription was recorded by renowned Swiss epigraphist and historian Max van Berchem in 1894. The inscription has since been erased.

According to al-Qalqashandi, a medieval Egyptian historian and mathematician, Sultan al-Nasir bin Qalawun ordered the restoration of the citadel in 1316.

The citadel constituted a military stronghold and was the center for Mamluk administration in the city.

Following excavations conducted in the area during the 1930s and the 1940s, British archaeologist C.N. Johns concluded that the outside wall of the citadel, including the towers, was unique to a Mamluk style of architecture. This style can also be seen in several other Mamluk citadels that exist to this day, most notably the Karak and Shobak citadels in Jordan. The citadel's building does, however, contain parts that can be traced back to the Hellenistic and Roman period, as well as the early Islamic period. Other parts are as modern as the Ottoman period.

The citadel's design resembles a rectangle with high walls and five high towers. It is surrounded by external fortifications as well as a trench.

You can enter the citadel through the external eastern gate, which was added in 1532 following orders by the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent. Under Suleiman's rule, the hall in the upper floor of the southwestern tower was converted into a mosque with a beautiful pulpit. The minaret of the mosque was erected in 1655 and stands to this day.

The citadel has been recently converted into an archaeological museum that exhibits cultural and artistic displays. The Occupation authorities now control the building and have changed its name from the Jerusalem Citadel to the Tower of David. Renaming the citadel is yet another attempt to tie the city to a specific part of biblical history.

Via Dolorosa: This is the name given to the path Jesus Christ walked from his sentencing to the place of his crucifixion and burial according to the Christian faith. It extends from the Umariyah School east of the Old City, westward to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. It is divided into 14 stages, each of which commemorates an episode of Jesus's suffering from the moment of his arrest and sentencing until his crucifixion at the site of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. It is usually trodden by Christian pilgrims carrying the cross on their shoulders during religious celebrations and holy days in tribute to Christ's suffering.

The sections include:

Section III: This stage is located at the intersection of al-Wad Street (from Damascus Gate in the north to al-Buraq Wall in the south) with al-Mujahidin Street. It passes by

the Church of Our Lady of Sorrows, an Armenian Catholic chapel. It marks the first time Jesus fell while carrying the cross.

Section IV: This stage marks the meeting between Christ and his mother, Mary. After this section, Via Dolorosa veers west through the neighborhood of Uqbat al-Mufti and Khan al-Zeit market (the oil market), leading to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The final five stages of the Via Dolorosa trail are within the Church of the Holy Sepulchre itself. They mark the moment when Christ was stripped of his garments then nailed to the cross, the moment of his death and of being brought down and laid in the tomb.

The Markets of Jerusalem

Souk al-Attarin: The spice market extends from the end of Khan al-Zeit to the beginning of al-Bashurah market. Since it does not take too much time to walk through it, we recommend visiting the entirety of this market. It is relatively narrow and completely covered with small openings for light and ventilation. When the rays of sunshine peer through the openings in the roof, their reflection on the colorful array of goods in the shops creates moments of sublime beauty. It makes walking around the market a pleasure.

Not so long ago, this market specialized in Eastern and Arab perfumes and medicine. But development and modernity have reduced the number of these specialized shops. Only three shops in the market still sell these traditional items, while the rest of the shops sell all sorts of other modern goods.

As you walk through the Old City's markets, take note of the difficult economic conditions. The shops have been hit hard by a scarcity of visitors and customers, jeopardizing the survival of many.

Khan al-Zeit: The oil market extends from Damascus Gate to the beginning of Souk al-Attarin to the south. Until the mid-20th century, Khan al-Zeit had olive presses and workshops for making traditional soap. Each press had a large olive oil warehouse, which explains the origin of the market's name. The market is long, and shops occupy both sides of the street. Its floors are paved with Jerusalem’s signature stone tiles. While the first section of the market is open, the rest of the market is covered, protecting visitors from the heat or rain. The covering is characterized by a series of chains that include wide openings for light and ventilation.

This architectural design likely dates back to the Mamluk era, but the market itself has been restored several times.

Under the pressure of development, Khan al-Zeit, too, has given up its traditional specialization in the fabrication of soaps and the sale of olive oil. The shops now mainly sell modern goods, but they display a rich variety that meets the assorted needs of residents and visitors. The market contains popular restaurants, sweets and nut shops, falafel carts, butchers and produce sellers as well as souvenir shops.

Souk Aftimos: One of the Old City's most modern markets, Souk Aftimos was named after the Greek Archimandrite who built it in 1902. It lies west of the Lutheran Church of the Redeemer and southeast of the Holy Sepulchre.

This souk stands out because of its Western architecture. Its northern entrance is designed with a triumphal arch that consists of three large sub-arches with staggered bricks and white stones as a testament to the influence of Islamic architecture.

In the middle of the souk is a large, beautiful and classically designed fountain depicting nymphs and animal figures spewing water. Shops line both sides of the souk and circle the fountain. The souk mainly sells bags and leather products to visitors and tourists, but it also contains restaurants and cafes that offer Western and local cuisine and beverages.

Bab al-Silsilah Market: Named after Bab al-Silsilah, one of the gates to al-Aqsa Mosque, its Islamic heritage is evident in al-Khalidiyah library, the Graves of the Righteous, and the Bab al-Silsilah path.

Souk al-Qattanin: Built during Mamluk rule, this unique historical site lies west of al-Aqsa Mosque. It was once home to several Turkish baths and inns.

The Souk has been revived to serve worshippers heading to al-Aqsa Mosque. It is home to Abu Moussa Café, one of the most well-known cafes in occupied Jerusalem. Al-Ayn, an old Turkish bath within the market, has recently been restored. It hosts cultural events, and some of its areas serve as libraries run by al-Quds University. The bathhouse is set to be re-inaugurated in 2019 and is expected to serve its original function as a Turkish bath.

Settler-Colonial Activity in the Old City

The Old City of Jerusalem is one of the most significant historical, religious and cultural centers in the world. Palestinians cling to it as the cultural and religious heart of their nation, and Arabs as a whole see it as a regional focal point. This has made the Old City a target for intensive settler-colonial activity. The Old City has faced a constant push by colonists and Occupation authorities to impose a Zionist identity onto it, aiming to alter its nature and twist cultural and historical facts to suit the settler-colonial narrative.

Settler-colonial activity in the Old City has been ongoing since its 1967 occupation, and while this guide does not aim to present an exhaustive list, it will cover some of the main stages. The Moroccan Quarter was the starting point for settler-colonial plans in the Old City in the first week of its occupation. Between 1967 and 1969, the Jewish Quarter was built on the ruins of al-Sharaf neighborhood and parts of the Moroccan Quarter. Native Palestinian residents were expelled, and the Jewish Quarter was expanded six-fold from 20 to 120 donums.[22]

Ateret Cohanim, a Zionist organization that seeks to expand colonies in the Old City and make Jews the majority, has been active in the Old City since the end of the 1970s. The organization seizes Palestinian property in the Old City using three main schemes: confiscation; availing of discriminatory Israeli laws such as the Absentee

[22] Ibid. Supra note 16.

Property Law; and purchasing the property through brokers and collaborators.

Ateret Cohanim controls nearly 70 colonial outposts scattered across the Old City. Some of the outposts were turned into synagogues and Jewish religious schools while the rest were inhabited by colonists. The last property to be seized by Ateret Cohanim-affiliated colonists was a massive property in the Uqbat Darwish neighborhood in the north of the Old City. The property was seized in 2018.

Additionally, the group has taken control in recent years of properties owned by the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate, such as Petra Hotel, the Imperial Hotel and the Jaffa Gate. Judicial procedures concerning the last two cases are still pending before Israeli courts. Palestinians accuse Greek Orthodox Patriarch Theophilos III of involvement in indirectly handing Church property to colonists in the Old City.

Ateret Cohanim and other settlement supporters work in tandem with official Israeli bodies such as the Municipality, the police, the government and the judiciary. Though Ateret Cohanim is registered as a nongovernmental organization, its wide scope of activities, coordination with officials and enormous budgets give it the weight of a quasi-governmental organization. Ateret Cohanim activists do not deny their direct relations with different levels of the Israeli government, and some have also assumed official positions.

Among the settler-colonial plans in Jerusalem's Old City is the attempt to increase Zionist presence in the so-called Holy Basin. This is the name given to the area that surrounds the Old City, a strip of land along the walls of Jerusalem, in addition to swaths of land in Silwan, Mount of Olives and Wadi al-Joz. Israeli colonists seek to establish a Zionist majority in this ring and have used two methods to do so. Firstly, they seize Palestinian properties and convert them into colonies or transfer colonists to them. Secondly, they push to declare the areas adjacent to the Old City as "national parks." Not only does this classification prohibit Palestinians from building homes in the area, it also prevents them from burying their dead, as is the case in the Bab al-Rahmah cemetery east of the Old City.

The concerted process of colonization in the Old City, which strips Palestinians of their homes and turns their properties into settlement outposts, is accompanied by human rights violations and egregious assaults on Palestinians.

The crudest manifestations of these violations are:

First, the surveillance cameras planted across the Old City. These cameras infringe on the privacy of Palestinians due to the overcrowded nature of the Old City, which places the entrances and windows of some homes under Israeli surveillance. Surveillance cameras provide the Occupation with troves of data on Palestinian

movement to, from and throughout the Old City.

Second is the threat to the safety of Palestinians posed by the Israeli colonists who reside in the narrow Palestinian alleys. The colonists are often armed or accompanied by armed guards and can be easily spotted by anyone walking through the Old City's streets. If you walk down al-Wad Street, for instance, a street that leads south from Damascus Gate, you will see massive Israeli flags towering over Palestinian homes that have been converted into colonial outposts. Walking the Old City's streets, you will encounter Israeli colonists roaming in groups and accompanied by watchful guards who are highly suspicious of Palestinians' every move. This poses a constant threat of harm to Palestinians.