Introduction

The Citadel (al-qal‘a) of Jerusalem is one of the most significant landmarks in the topography of the city. For nearly a millennium, the citadel served as Jerusalem’s main military stronghold, during which it played a vital role in the political, economic and social life of the city. Following Israel’s occupation of Jerusalem in 1967 and its subsequent annexation, the citadel was renamed the “Tower of David” as part of the general Israeli policy to “Judaize” archaeological and historical sites in order to promote Israel’s historical claims to them. It was subsequently transformed into a major tourist and cultural attraction aimed at serving ideological and political purposes. The so-called “Tower of David Museum of the History of Jerusalem,” established at the citadel in 1988, presents a biased narrative of the history of Jerusalem. While using the citadel as an archaeological setting, the museum attempts to bridge three millennia of history and thus promote continuity between the Jewish past and present and make exclusionary historical claims, with complete disregard and contempt for the indigenous Palestinian Arab inhabitants of the city. The site itself, with its multi-layered excavated archaeology, is very poorly presented and interpreted. The standing monument is referred to as vaguely dating back to “the Middle Ages,” with a focus on its ancient biblical history. However, the citadel is a remarkable monument to contemporary Islamic military architecture, equal in significance to citadels found elsewhere in the Levant such as those of Damascus and Aleppo. It was essentially rebuilt by the Mamluk sultan al-Nasir Muhammad in 1310, incorporating earlier remains of fortifications from Hellenistic to Crusader and Islamic periods. Further restoration works carried out by the Ottoman sultan Sulayman the
Magnificent in 1531-2 brought it to its final form. As it stands today, the citadel, within the historical and architectural fabric of the Old City of Jerusalem, is part of the cultural heritage of the Palestinian people.
The Present Site

The Citadel of Jerusalem is one of the most significant landmarks in the topography of the city. It is situated at the western entrance to the Old City, standing at an elevation of 780 meters, immediately to the south of Bab al-Khalil (Jaffa Gate). It is strategically located at a vulnerable low spot where the southwestern and northwestern hills meet, and where remains of earlier fortifications form an elbow of the city wall, at a point where strong defenses are critically needed (Figure 1).

The citadel has an irregular rectangular plan built south and west of a massively constructed large tower (the northeast tower) astride the existing city wall. Three sides are nearly straight, but the fourth, the south side, meanders, probably following the course of earlier fortifications (see Figure 2, ground plan). The structure consists of curtain walls connecting six massive towers round an inner courtyard, while the whole is surrounded by a ditch or moat (Figure 3). The courtyard consists of archaeological remains and walls belonging to different periods. The present fabric of the standing citadel is the result of a long and complex structural development (Figure 4).
Figure 3: General view of the Citadel from the southwest. Source: Photo by M. Hawari.

Figure 4: Interior courtyard of the Citadel, looking southwest. Source: Photo by M. Hawari.
Primary Sources and Modern Research

There is a plethora of descriptions of the citadel by historians, travelers, and pilgrims who visited Jerusalem over the centuries, many of them intending only to report on the holy sites. These accounts are often short but contain hints concerning the state of the citadel, and in the best cases indications of construction and reconstruction which can be useful. In addition there are two other important primary sources for the medieval history of the citadel. The first are the registers (sijills) of the Ottoman shari’a court in Jerusalem, a collection of unpublished sixteenth-century and later legal documents. The second are numerous inscriptions, mainly in Arabic, found at the citadel and giving explicit and definitive accounts of what the purpose of construction was, who built it and when it was completed. Most of these inscriptions are published in a monumental corpus of the Arabic inscriptions from Jerusalem, transcribed and compiled by the famous Swiss epigraphist Max Van Berchem.²

Most modern research carried out on the citadel by westerners is concerned principally with its ancient biblical history. Biblical illustration is the foremost concern, though descriptions frequently include incidental details of later periods. They also produced a large collection of illustrations, survey plans and old photographs. It is regrettable that not more use had previously been made of this formidable and valuable body of information.

Archaeological excavations have greatly improved our knowledge of the citadel’s history. In the 1930s and 1940s the British archaeologist C.N. Johns conducted excavations at the citadel on behalf of the British Mandate’s Department of Antiquities in Palestine.³ These excavations were the first and perhaps the last serious attempt at investigating the structural history of the citadel and made a valuable contribution to our knowledge of the monument. Sadly Johns made only limited use of the related primary historical sources, and stopped short of making a full-scale architectural analysis of the structure.

Israeli excavations at the citadel began as early as 1968 and were also principally concerned with its ancient biblical history. Unfortunately, except for short preliminary reports, the results of these excavations were not fully published.⁴ From 1980 until 1988 the citadel of Jerusalem underwent a large scheme of excavation and restoration works in order to transform the structure into a museum. Although excavations in the courtyard, the interior of towers and in the moat surrounding the monument have exposed additional architectural features, these were rather clearance works, or “earth removing” operations aimed at creating spaces for the proposed museum.⁵ No full-scale research was carried out on the structure’s historical development, nor was an interpretation presented of its different construction phases.

In order to fill this gap, my research project at the citadel was initiated to study its history, and survey and analyze its architectural fabric. The historical and documentary research serves as a background on how it functioned, and the vital role it played in the political, economic and social life of the city of Jerusalem. I conducted a full-scale survey of the structure by providing first-hand ground plans, elevations and sections of the interior and exterior of curtain wall and towers. In addition I carried out a thorough examination and full-scale analysis of the structure and its architectural development,
including an interpretation of the citadel’s evolution, through producing survey drawings and photographs of the structure and its distinctive features (see Figure 5 for an example of an elevation showing phases of construction). So far the results of this research project are published in part, and more will be forthcoming in a series of articles and a monograph. During the course of my fieldwork investigation and analysis, new significant findings were made, and thus the structural history of the citadel has been reinterpreted.

**Historical and Architectural Interpretation of the Citadel**

The development of the citadel is part of a long historical process. A complex patchwork of earlier remains of fortifications from Hellenistic to Crusader and Islamic periods are incorporated into the standing monument. These earlier surviving remains undoubtedly influenced the structural development of the citadel and its present form.

Literary evidence and archaeological excavations and observation have been used for reconstructing the evolution of the citadel during various periods. In the following...
account of the historical and architectural development of the citadel I have endeavored to summarize the published archaeological evidence and to introduce new and partly unpublished discoveries resulting from my project at the site based on many years of careful survey and analysis, as well as personal observation.

The Hellenistic and Roman Remains

The earliest fortification remains in particular sections of a wall with two massive towers, dating back to the Hellenistic period (late second century B.C.), were unearthed in archaeological excavations in the center of the courtyard of the citadel. These portions of fortifications probably testify to the Jerusalem Hasmonean rulers’ first effort to fortify this strategically vulnerable spot of the city. The same wall and two towers seem to have been repaired and enlarged by King Herod in the first century B.C. These two towers, and a third one that still stands at a considerable height at the northeast corner of the citadel, are probably those mentioned by the first-century Roman historian Flavius Josephus, according to whom King Herod re-enforced Jerusalem’s fortifications on the west side by adding three large towers.

Following Jerusalem’s destruction by the Roman army in A.D. 70, it seems that the site became a camp for the Roman garrison, as Josephus tells us. Numerous round clay pipes and roof tiles bearing the seal of the Roman 10th Legion were found in the courtyard of the citadel.

The Byzantine and Umayyad Remains

The Herodian tower was first called the “Tower of David” by the Italian pilgrim/monk Antoninus of Piacenza in the account of his visit to Jerusalem (circa. 570) when reporting that Christian pilgrims prayed at the site. It seems that a popular legend in sixth-century Byzantine Jerusalem associated King David with the first-century B.C. Herodian tower, which had survived and still rose to a considerable height (the northwest tower, Figure 1). A map of Jerusalem portrayed on a sixth-century Byzantine church mosaic floor from Madaba in Jordan depicts the tower next to the Gate of David, the main western gate of the city. The Hellenistic-Roman wall was probably restored and incorporated in the western wall of the Byzantine city. The remains of this wall underneath the line of the east curtain north of the northwest tower, as well as the remains of monastic structures with mosaic floors and an inscription dating to the early Byzantine period, were uncovered.

Based on both the historical and archaeological evidence it seems that throughout the Byzantine period a Christian shrine revering King David, which was visited by pilgrims, existed at this site.

During the Umayyad period, the same shrine may have been shared by Muslims, or subsequently converted into a Muslim shrine or mosque named Mihrab Dawud (David’s Prayer Niche), as stated by numerous Arab historians and geographers. The mihrab
was probably located in a mosque built on top of the ancient podium of the tower. This assumption is supported by the fact that the “Tower of David” was absent from the accounts of Christian pilgrims from the time of the Muslim conquest of the city (circa 637) until and the arrival of the Franks in 1099.

Excavations conducted at the citadel by Johns and Geva uncovered a three-quarter round corner-tower and two walls attached to it in the far southern end of the courtyard. Based on the archaeological evidence, namely the architecture and the ceramics, Johns claims this structure was presumably what remained of the Governor’s Palace (or Dar al-Imara) that the Umayyads founded at the end of the seventh century or the beginning of the eighth. However, re-examination of the architectural and ceramic evidence associated with the round tower, as well as the historical sources, indicate that a later date can be proposed (see next section). The remains of Umayyad palaces (possible location of Dar al-Imara) in the form of large complex structures dating to the early eighth century have since been uncovered by Israeli excavations outside the southwest corner of the Haram al-Sharif. In addition, it is possible to assume with certainty that surviving fortified Umayyad towns in the Levant have no citadels or fortresses.

The First Citadel – Founded by the Saljuqs

The Saljuq Turkomans led by Atsiz al-Khawarizmi captured Jerusalem in 1071. Four years later, a revolt by the inhabitants of Jerusalem was crushed by Atsiz, leaving many dead. Reporting on these events, contemporary Arab historical sources mention Mihrab Dawud and Burj Dawud (the Tower of David) intermittently where the Saljuq garrison was based. It is quite clear that the site had become a military stronghold and it might have still incorporated the old shrine of Mihrab Dawud. In 1079 the Saljuq governor of Damascus Tutush eliminated Atsiz and appointed Artuq ibn Aksab as vassal ruler (muqta’) of Jerusalem.

However turbulent were the first few years of Saljuq rule in Jerusalem, the city witnessed a period of peace, prosperity and cultural revival that lasted over twenty years. Ibn al-Arabi, an Andalusian scholar and pilgrim who resided in Jerusalem from 1093-1096, writes that religious teachings thrived in the city. He describes Mihrab Dawud as “a formidable structure built with hard finely-cut stones … It was seen to have three walls … It had a small door and wide stairs, and it contained houses and dwellings. There was a mosque at its top.” We can learn from al-Arabi’s description that Mihrab Dawud served as a military stronghold and residence for the non-Arab Saljuq ruling elite in Jerusalem, while the shrine of Mihrab Dawud on top of the ancient tower was included within this stronghold.

Based on the detailed descriptions of Ibn al-‘Arabi, corroborated by observation and archaeological evidence, a few surviving remains of the Saljuq stronghold were identified. These remains include the three-quarter round tower mentioned above, with two associated sections of wall, at the far southern end of the courtyard of the citadel (see Figure 2). Based on the architecture and the ceramic material, this round tower was
attributed by Johns, and later by Geva, to an eighth century Umayyad palace or fortress. However after thorough re-examination of the ceramic material associated with the round tower it was found to include glazed wares typical of the eleventh century instead of the eighth. In addition, the remains include the lower courses of the east curtain wall of the citadel, clearly built on bedrock and abutting the distinctive massive masonry of the Herodian northeast tower to the north, and found underneath later typical Crusader construction (Figure 5).

In fact the emergence of citadels as centers of power and royal residences coincided generally with the arrival of the Saljuqs in Syria/bilad al-sham. Following tradition, and in an attempt to consolidate their rule after the conquest of Jerusalem in 1073 and the suppression of the revolt by the city’s population, the Saljuq Turkomans founded a citadel in the city. They chose the location of the former shrine of Mihrab Dawud, built on top of the “Tower of David,” and its vicinity for this citadel. They sought to establish a stronghold for the military Turkic Saljuq elite in the midst of a hostile local Arab population.

In July 1098 Jerusalem was taken by the Fatimids, and the Saljuq Artuqid rulers fled the city. Numerous Arab and Frankish chroniclers report that in July 1099 the Fatimid garrison fought their last battle in the citadel against the Crusader onslaught and from it negotiated their surrender.

Expansion of the Citadel in the Crusader Period

The Saljuq citadel continued to serve as a military stronghold throughout the first six decades of Frankish rule. A drastic change, however, occurred in the 1170s, when the citadel was extensively enlarged and thoroughly fortified following the model of the new generation of Crusader castles. The Frankish chronicler Theodorich stated in 1171 that the citadel included “a royal palace and was defended by ditches and outworks.” The Tower of David, labeled with its Latin name, Turis David, was repeatedly portrayed on illustrations and maps of Jerusalem throughout the Crusader period.

Johns’s excavations showed that the Crusader citadel was indeed enlarged to the west and south of the former eleventh-century Saljuq structure, which included segments of the defensive outwork made out of a series of towers, curtain walls and posterns, as well as a strong bastion at the southwestern corner. The outline of the Crusader citadel seems to have survived in the present structure.

Repair of the Citadel by Salah al-Din and the Ayyubids

Following the re-conquest of Jerusalem by Ayyubids in 1187 Salah al-Din ordered the restoration of the citadel, including the old mosque on top of the Tower of David. This is perhaps due to an early Islamic veneration for David, who is regarded by Islam as the Prophet Dawud. It is also an indication that in addition to fulfilling a military function the
citadel became a site of Islamic religious visitation, a tradition that may have prevailed under Saljuq rule in Jerusalem. A decade later al-Malik al-Mu‘azzam ‘Isa, Salah al-Din’s nephew, who ruled southern Syria and Palestine from Damascus, undertook a large project to reinforce Jerusalem’s fortifications from 1202 until 1213-14. An inscription dated to 1213-14 and found in the citadel mosque, though not in situ, refers to the construction of a tower in the citadel. It is ironic that al-Mu‘azzam himself ordered the dismantling of parts of the city walls and the citadel in 1219, fearing the city might fall to the Franks who had launched a new Crusade. Further destruction of the citadel was carried out by al-Nasir Dawud, son of al-Mu‘azzam, when he captured the city from the Franks for three months in 1239.

It is likely that the Ayyubid citadel continued to follow the same layout as its Crusader predecessor. However, based on the literary sources and the epigraphic evidence, its defensive system was reinforced during the time of al-Mu‘azzam ‘Isa in the early thirteenth century. This includes the southwest tower, the lower part of the east tower and the southern part of the present eastern curtain wall, all previously considered by Johns to belong to the Crusader period.

Rebuilding of the Citadel by the Mamluks

The citadel remained in ruins until the early fourteenth century, when it was completely rebuilt by the Mamluk sultan al-Nasir Muhammad, son of Qalawun. A dedication inscription dated A.H. 710 (1310-11) and placed over the main entrance, was recorded as recently as 1894 by Max van Berchem, but later disappeared. Another inscription bearing the name of the same sultan is found, though not in situ, in the mosque of the southwest tower. The historian al-Qalqashandi (d. 1418) mentions this restoration work, but gives the date as 1316. Relying on contemporary historical sources, it is plausible to assume that al-Nasir Muhammad rebuilt the citadel as part of a series of castles and citadels in Palestine and southern Syria, such as those at Shawbak and Karak, to protect his rule.

The Mamluk rebuilding work at the citadel follows the Crusader layout and consists of the existing perimeter wall and towers (see Figure 2). It predominantly belongs to a consistent style of construction and defensive system, one which largely derives from an architectural concept that was developed and matured in Islamic fortifications of the Levant throughout the early thirteenth century. A comparative examination shows that it is built in the style of the main works of Ayyubid and Mamluk fortifications found in the principal citadels and strongholds of bilad al-sham and Egypt, such as Damascus, Aleppo, Bosra, ‘Ajlun and Cairo. It includes towers and curtain walls of large dimensions, multi-level galleries on curtain walls and towers, loopholes, and a gate with a bent access. This Mamluk defensive system represents the apogee of Islamic military architecture, one that witnessed a remarkable development in the space of a century.
Restoration and Additions by the Ottomans

Following the arrival of the Ottomans in Jerusalem in 1516 the city enjoyed a great deal of prosperity and architectural development. In an attempt to gain glory and fame for the new Islamic rule Sultan Sulayman the Magnificent (1520-1566) embarked on an extensive restoration project in Jerusalem, including rebuilding the city walls and refurbishing the citadel. Unlike the city walls which had been in a dilapidated state for nearly three hundred years since the end of the Crusader wars, the citadel was relatively in good condition and continued to serve the Mamluk garrison. While the actual restoration works at the citadel began in 1531, as testified to by a dedication inscription at its main gateway, the rebuilding of the city walls was undertaken a few years later. The repair works were intended to adapt the structure to provide a suitable power base for the Ottoman garrison stationed in the city.

Of great significance for the identification and dating of architectural constructions added during the time of Sultan Sulayman the Magnificent are two primary sources. The first are the inscriptions found on various structural components. The most important of these is a two-line elaborate Arabic Ottoman inscription above the portal of the main eastern gateway of the citadel, which explicitly refers to the restoration of the citadel by Sultan Sulayman in A.H. 938 (1531-32).

The second are the registers (sijlis) of the shari‘a court of Jerusalem which reveal a great deal of information concerning the citadel, the bulk of which is dated from the late 1530s until mid-1560s. According to a number of sijill documents, Muhammad Çelebi al-Naqqash, a high-ranking Ottoman official, arrived in Jerusalem to collect taxes in order to provide funds for the project of rebuilding the city walls and repairing the citadel. According to another sijill document, dated 1545, the garrison consisted of 64 Janissaries, 12 porters at the city gates, 2 at the citadel gates, 10 soldiers serving in maintenance and administration, 5 soldiers as an artillery unit, one soldier as a prison warden, one carpenter, one baker, one soldier in charge of the ditch and one responsible for the water aqueduct. At the head of the garrison stood a duzdar (commandant), a katkhuda (deputy), a khatib (preacher), an imam, and a mu‘azzin. The total number of the garrison was 104 soldiers.

The duzdar of the citadel was responsible for both the garrison and the military equipment and arsenal. Compared with the mutasallim (governor) of the city who was answerable to the wali (district governor) of Damascus, the duzdar, appointed from Istanbul, enjoyed considerable independence and was occasionally used by the Ottoman ruler to subdue rebellious governors. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries there was apparently some confusion between the duzdar, the agha (chief) of Janissaries and muhafiz al-qal‘a (officer responsible for the guards): sometimes the agha was also the duzdar and at other times these posts were filled by two different people. The duzdar was also responsible for appointing guards on the city walls and at the city gates. He actually kept the keys of the city gates and had to hand them over when his term came to an end.

The citadel also contained a large stock of arms and military equipment, and at one point an arsenal for the manufacture of cannons. Detailed inventories of arms, ammunition
and other military equipment in the citadel were listed in several sijill documents. The citadel served other minor functions, including that of a prison, a Friday mosque – the only one in the city apart from al-Aqsa Mosque – and a storehouse for agricultural produce such as oil.

The well-known Turkish traveler Evliya Çelebi, who visited Jerusalem in 1672, reports that “… in the citadel live the duzdar (commandant), the kekhya (agent of the governor), an imam, a khatib (preacher), a mu’azzin and soldiers.” Abd al-Ghani al-Nabulsi, a sufi traveler from Damascus who visited Jerusalem in 1689-90, described the citadel as “a well fortified castle within the city wall” with a “… mosque situated inside the citadel, in which there is the Mihrab of Dawud … which is known as the place where Dawud, peace be upon him used to sit …” This last detail testifies to the fact that as late as the seventeenth century the citadel was still associated with the traditional shrine of Mihrab Dawud, an early Islamic notion which presumably began in Byzantine times.

During the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the citadel and its garrison played an important role in Jerusalem’s popular rebellions against Ottoman rule, particularly over taxation. Of particular importance is the rebellion of 1702-06 led by Naqib al-Ashraf Muhammad b. Mustafa al-Husseini against the mutasallim of Jerusalem, Jurji Muhammad Pasha. The rebels captured the city and expelled the mutasallim. In 1705 a force of Janissaries was sent by the wali of Damascus, Muhammad Pasha, which captured the city by force and shelled the Dome of the Rock with cannon from the citadel and subsequently executed al-Husseini in Istanbul the following year. Learning a lesson from the rebellion, the Ottoman authorities in Istanbul decided to appoint Palestinian family notables to various influential posts. Several members of the al-Nimr family, who were governors of Nablus in the eighteenth century, cooperated with the al-‘Alamis and al-‘Asalis of Jerusalem. Members from the al-‘Asali family were the duzdar s of the citadel.

Following the launch of Napoleon Bonaparte’s campaign to Egypt and Palestine in 1798, some preparations were made at the citadel. Although the French expedition ended a few months later after failing to take Acre, it was viewed in Syria and Palestine as a renewal of the Crusades. According to a sijill document, the governor of Damascus sent a military force equipped with cannon to reinforce the garrison at the Citadel of Jerusalem. According to another document the people of Damascus and Jerusalem donated funds to supply gunpowder and cannon for the citadel.

Another major popular uprising which featured the citadel in an important role broke out in Jerusalem in 1826-27 in response to the large increase in taxes imposed by the new wali of Damascus, Mustafa Pasha. The rebellion began with the fallahin (peasants) of the villages around Jerusalem and Bethlehem. They were later joined by the duzdar of the citadel, Ahmad Agha al-‘Asali, who took control of the city and its citadel and expelled the mutasallim. The wali of Sidon, Abdullah Pasha, sent a force which besieged the city and bombarded it with artillery from the Mount of Olives. After tough resistance the rebels agreed to end the uprising and were allowed safe exit from the city.

Although in 1838 the main contingent of the garrison was moved to the adjacent newly built gishle (winter barracks), the citadel continued to serve as a military stronghold for the Ottomans. From travelers’ accounts and photographs of the late nineteenth and early
In the twentieth centuries we learn that the citadel was in a dilapidated condition. During this period the minaret of the mosque above the southwest tower, dated to the seventeenth century, was mistakenly given the name “the Tower of David.” From that time on it has ironically become a Jewish symbol of Jerusalem, appearing on various objects such as souvenir plates and prayer books. An Ottoman plan of the citadel, prepared before the German Emperor Wilhelm II’s visit to Jerusalem in 1898, shows that the moat between Jaffa Gate and the citadel had still not been filled to create a road through which the Emperor’s procession would enter the Old City (Figure 6). It also shows the Kişla-I Humayun (Imperial Barracks) to the south of the citadel which served as the new dormitories for the citadel’s soldiers and officers.

The major Ottoman components that were added to the Mamluk structure include: an outer gateway, a barbican with outer and inner moats spanned by a drawbridge and a stone bridge respectively, an open-air mosque on the east side of the citadel, another mosque with a minaret in the southwest tower, and an artillery terrace with a moat on the west side. Ottoman builders used homogenous small ashlar and well-dressed limestone in their construction works in the citadel. The citadel principally remained an independent structure with separate gates and its own defense system. Changes and alterations during the reign of Sultan Sulayman the Magnificent had been introduced to accommodate the advances made in ballistic techniques and strategy, and the introduction of firearms and artillery. The Citadel of Jerusalem as transformed by the Ottomans is a major example of Islamic military architecture.

Figure 6: Ottoman plan of the Citadel before 1898. Source: Yeldiz Collection, Istanbul.
The Citadel under the British Mandate and Jordanian Rule

Symbolically, the citadel’s primary role as a military stronghold came to an end on its outer steps on 11 December 1917, when General Allenby proclaimed the British conquest of Jerusalem. It was followed a few years later by the proclamation of the British Mandate over Palestine.

During the years from 1920-1922, the citadel was partially restored by the Pro-Jerusalem Society, as part of a scheme for the urban renovation and preservation of the city. The restoration works included the cleaning up of various dilapidated structures in the interior of the citadel, the conservation of the upper parts of the ramparts and the glacis. The citadel was subsequently used as a venue for various functions and activities, including exhibitions of Islamic and Palestinian crafts. An annual academy of the fine arts with an apprenticeship based on the guild-system was set up at the citadel.

Large-scale excavations were carried out at the citadel from 1933 to 1947 by C.N. Johns on behalf of the British Mandate Department of Antiquities in Palestine. During Jordanian rule over Jerusalem (1948-1967) the citadel was used as a military barracks by the Jordanian army and no substantial changes were made to its structure.

The Appropriation of the Citadel by Israel

Following the occupation of 1967, Israel sought to emphasize the Jewish character of archaeological and historical sites in the occupied West Bank and Jerusalem, while disregarding their universal value for the rest of humanity, particularly Muslims, Arabs, and Palestinians. Accordingly, many archaeological, historical and holy sites in Palestine which are an integral part of Palestinian cultural heritage have been expropriated as being “biblical” or “Jewish.” Major Jewish settlements are built around archaeological sites testifying to Israel’s transformation of exclusionary historical claims to the land into a colonial enterprise. In East Jerusalem Israeli archaeological institutions initiated large-scale excavations in and around the Old City primarily seeking to reveal the city’s biblical history and to promote its “Jewish character.” In recent years Silwan has come to be at the center of confrontation between its Palestinian residents and Jewish settlers backed by the state of Israel. The use and abuse of archaeology combined with a major plan to build a biblical theme park threaten to eradicate the entire neighborhood of al-Bustan, with its eighty homes and nearly one thousand inhabitants.

The citadel was seized by Israel and declared a “national monument.” It was subsequently renamed “the Tower of David” and became the focal point for Israeli activities. A large Israeli scheme purportedly to develop the Mamilla area outside Jaffa Gate, including the construction of a traffic underpass and a modern shopping mall, aimed at linking the citadel and the Old City with West Jerusalem (Figure 7). The motives behind the re-naming of the citadel as the “Tower of David” are political and ideological, which has had remarkable consequences for the understanding of its historical and cultural character. For nearly a millennium the citadel was known by its Arabic name...
al-qal‘a whether in contemporary literary sources or by the local Palestinian population of Jerusalem. Changing its name gives visitors an incorrect impression of its real history and cultural character, and creates unjustifiable misconceptions. This has been done in keeping with a standard Israeli practice of re-naming places so they are seen to have a biblical or historical essentially Jewish precedent.\textsuperscript{61} The impact of Israeli propaganda was so effective that in recent years many Palestinian Jerusalemites, especially those living in close proximity to the citadel, started regrettably to refer to it as “Qal’at Dawud” (the Citadel of David).

In 1968 various Israeli bodies initiated extensive excavations at the citadel which continued for the next two decades. Given the fact that these excavations went on for many years, hundreds of tons of earth were removed, revealing many meters of multi-period strata, and probably unearthing thousands of finds and artifacts. Yet the published results were astonishingly limited to only a few short preliminary reports. In addition, these excavations triggered two major anomalies. Firstly, these excavations were carried out in contravention of international treaties, particularly those regarding the protection of cultural property and the prohibition of excavations in occupied territory.\textsuperscript{62} Secondly, these excavations were motivated by the quest to find archaeological evidence to support a prior conception of history serving to enhance Israeli historical claims.\textsuperscript{63} This inevitably produced archaeological records which are both unscientific and unethical, and would ultimately lead to a biased interpretation of history.
“The Tower of David Museum for the History of Jerusalem” – Political Bias

The Tower of David Museum for the History of Jerusalem opened to the public in 1988 (Figure 8). The history of Jerusalem from ancient until modern times is told at the museum in displays using modern visual techniques. The permanent exhibit has no archaeological artifacts and consists almost entirely of reproductions of archaeological relics found in other places, along with reconstructions or simulations of architectural forms. It also makes use of maps, drawings, old photos, holograms and early films. The displays are housed in the halls of the towers surrounding and overlooking a courtyard. Temporary exhibits and displays are organized either indoors or in the courtyard among the archaeological remains. These occasionally include various activities and tours for schoolchildren and the general public.

The permanent exhibition presents the city’s history in chronological sequence, spanning four millennia from its beginnings as a Bronze Age Canaanite city until modern times, ending with Jerusalem becoming the capital of Israel. It is the display of Jewish history in Jerusalem that provides the thread of continuity weaving together successive exhibition halls and periods. Each hall represents a period or a series of related periods. These are the Canaanite period, the “First Temple” period telling the story of David’s conquest of the city and his transformation of Jerusalem into the spiritual and national
capital of the Jewish people, the “Babylonian exile,” the “Second Temple” period through the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, the Roman period, the Byzantine period, the Early Islamic, Crusader and Ayyubid periods, the Mamluk and Ottoman periods, and finally the late nineteenth century through the war of 1948 and the establishment of Israel. This last hall shows European influence and modernization together with Jewish immigration to Palestine. Reconstructions of architectural forms include a hologram of the “First Temple” and models of the “Second Temple” and the Dome of the Rock, a simulation of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and film footage of the railroad in early twentieth-century Palestine. Finally visitors view a nine-screen video montage of the events that led to the rise and fall of the British Mandate in Palestine, ending with the establishment of Israel (Figure 9). At this concluding moment of the display the Israeli national anthem is played as the Israeli flag rises to replace the British Union Jack.

Since the museum was designed as a “museum without objects,” the citadel serves only as a “historical setting,” to quote the original curator of the museum. The architecture of the citadel and the excavated archaeological remains in the courtyard provide the museum with a general aura of historical continuity and longevity. The juxtaposition of the historical and the modern in its design, and the fact that the citadel’s own structural history is neither presented nor interpreted in detail, are both essential to the manufactured credibility of the history that is told. This history, which is presented entirely in a biased manner, narrates a story with an Israelite beginning and an Israeli ending. It situates Jerusalem’s origin, identity, and destiny in its role as the spiritual and political capital of the Jewish people, while the centuries-long presence of other cultures and ethnic groups is treated as marginal.

Selective archaeology has played a decisive role in providing Israeli society with historical illustrations and myths to identify with, contributing to the emergence of Israeli national identity. It has also played an important role in providing Israel with historical claims over Jerusalem. But in the case of the citadel factual archaeology has been kept to a minimum. In the museum there is hardly any interpretation regarding the structure of the citadel or the archaeological excavations at the site, which contravene the guidelines of UNESCO. Most architectural features are not labeled, including the two Arabic inscriptions, the mihrab and minbar (pulpit) in the former mosque currently housing the display of the Early Islamic, Crusader and Ayyubid periods (Figure 10). These features are an integral part of the original function of the building itself and of the setting of the museum, but are not part of the display. The story narrated by the exhibit exploits this architecture as its casing, but makes no serious attempt to present an overall interpretation of the structure of the citadel. The fact that the site’s own history is not presented in detail, or even discussed, however briefly, as a prelude to the actual tour, gravely undermines the integrity and veracity of the history exhibited.

In addition the museum organizes various temporary exhibitions and other activities geared primarily to an Israeli Jewish audience, especially schoolchildren, although tours are sometimes organized for Palestinian schoolchildren from East Jerusalem, including courses for Palestinian tour guides. Among the list of past temporary exhibitions found on the museum’s Web site are topics such as: the Tower of David Days, the first culture
The museum organizes a program for young soldiers in the Israeli army “to enrich Israel’s next generation,” boasting it enrolled 60,000 soldiers since 2004. The museum also hosts Israeli national events and political rallies, such as Israel’s “Independence Day” and “Reunification of Jerusalem Day.”

Conclusion

For about a millennium the Citadel (qal’a) of Jerusalem has been closely linked with the city’s history, and thus it played a significant role in the political, economic and social life of the city. A comprehensive study of the standing monument demonstrates that the citadel can no longer be associated with biblical history, nor attributed vaguely to the “Middle Ages.” The study yields new significant findings: The first citadel was founded by the Saljuqs in the second half of the eleventh century and not by the Umayyads in the eighth century as was previously assumed; various segments of the Crusader layout and Ayyubid components of the citadel have been identified; most of the standing monument belongs to the Mamluk uniform construction which largely derives from the architectural concept and style that was developed and matured in the main works of Ayyubid fortifications found in the principal citadels of the Levant (bilad al-sham); the sixteenth-century Ottoman components were added to adapt the citadel to the advances made in ballistic techniques and strategy, and the introduction of firearms and artillery.

The Citadel of Jerusalem has been appropriated by the Israeli authorities to serve ideological and political purposes. The “Tower of David Museum of the History of Jerusalem” tells a biased story of the city using virtual reality and modern displays. It aims to promote continuity between the Jewish past and present, with complete disregard and contempt for the indigenous Palestinian Arab inhabitants of the city. The lack of presentation and interpretation of the architectural history of the citadel and the renaming of the site serve this purpose. The appropriation of the citadel and the museum’s design should be understood in the context of similar Israeli plans to “judaize” the city.

Figure 10: Interior of the mosque in the southwest tower of the citadel. Source: Photo by F. ‘Amirah.
of Jerusalem, particularly around the area of the Haram al-Sharif and in the village of Silwan. These plans have been carried out with the purpose of reinforcing Israel’s historical claims to the city and promoting its “unique” Jewish character. Such practices intrude on the rights of the indigenous Palestinian inhabitants and their cultural heritage and abuse Jerusalem’s status as a Holy City with a diverse cultural and historic heritage common to more than half of humanity.

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Endnotes
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2 Max van Berchem et al., Matériaux pour un Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum, 2, [2], 2 Pt. 2; Syrie du Sud; T.2, Jérusalem “Ville” (Cairo: Institut Français d’archéologie Orientale du Caire, 1922).
10 Josephus, The Jewish War, VII, 1-3.


24 Ibn al-Athir, Annals, 21; Sibt ibn al-Jawzi, Mir’at, 228.


26 Johns, The Citadel, 163-164, Figure 24.

27 Johns, The Citadel, 166, 171, 177, 179-180, Figure 25; Geva, “Excavations 1979-1980,” 70, Figure 6.

28 Johns, The Citadel, 165, Figure 25.

29 Imad al-Din al-Asfahani, Al-Fath al-Qussi fi al fath al-Quds (Leiden: Brill, 1904), 53.

30 Van Berchem, Matériaux, 131-132.

31 Johns, The Citadel, 170, Plate LVIII, 2.


33 Ibn Wasil, V, 246; Mujir al-Din, II, 5.

34 Van Berchem, Matériaux, (1922) no. 44, 141.

35 Van Berchem, Matériaux, no. 51, 160.


38 Van Berchem Matériaux, 443-444.

39 Van Berchem Matériaux, 146-147, no. 45.

40 Sijillat al-Mahkama al-Shar’iyya bil-Quds. Unpublished proceedings of the shari’a court of Jerusalem, vol. 5, 386; vol. 6, 68.

41 Sijillat, vol. 17, 583.


46 Sijillat, vol. 15, 524.


48 Stephan, Travels, 154.


57 See Johns, The Citadel.


60 Hawari, “Archaeology,” 19.


64 Abu El-Haj, Facts, 171.

