Abstract
Tariq Bab al-Silsila (Chain Street) is a major historical commercial and residential street in the old walled city of Jerusalem. The road displays an architectural museum, exhibiting tens of historical buildings with strikingly beautiful facades. Most of the existing buildings date to the Mamluk period (1260–1516), and some to the Crusader period (1099–1189). Besides being an exhibition of historical buildings, the road also bears testimony to the cultural life of Jerusalem over more than seven centuries. The mixture of commerce, industry, pilgrimage, charitable foundations, and education can be seen in its zenith in Tariq Bab al-Silsila, which today is also a suq that since 1967 resists for its survival.

Keywords
Tariq Bab al-Silsila (Chain Street); Old City of Jerusalem; Mamluks; architecture; suq; commerce.

The current plan of Jerusalem’s Old City was laid out by the Roman emperor Hadrian (117–138 CE), who reestablished the city of Jerusalem, known then as Aelia Capitolina, in 135. The city originally consisted of a colonnade street (Cardo Maximus) that began at today’s Damascus Gate and crossed it in a north–south axis. It is uncertain where the colonnade street ended in the south, but it certainly went beyond al-Bashura market (al-Qasaba/city center) and was extended later during the reign of the Byzantine
emperor Justinian I (565–527) in the mid-sixth century after he constructed the Nea Maria Church near Mount Zion’s Gate (Bab al-Nabi Dawud). The second Hadrian street also began south of Damascus Gate and continued along the Tryopoeon ravine (Tariq al-Wad) exiting the Old City at Dung Gate (Bab al-Maghariba). It is unknown whether or not Hadrian also built the east-west road (Cardo Decumanus) that crossed the main colonnade street, but it is certain that such a road existed in Byzantine Jerusalem, beginning at Jaffa Gate (Bab al-Khalil) and extending east towards al-Aqsa Mosque. The north-south axis intersected with the east-west axis south of the Triple Market (Suq al-‘Atarin (Spice Market), Suq al-Lahhamin (Butchers Market), and Suq al-Khawajat ( Merchants Market). These features can be identified on the mid-sixth-century Madaba map mosaic. The street has remained as it was, except for an elevation of a few meters from the city’s level in the Roman-Byzantine-Early-Islamic periods, clearly seen in excavated parts of the city, such as in the southern part known as the Cardo. The city’s layout has not changed since the Byzantine period except for some size reduction in the south.

Tariq Bab al-Silsila (Chain Street) starts in the east, immediately after the point where al-Bazaar, Butchers Market and Bashura Market meet and slopes to the east. Suq Bab-al Silsila (Chain Gate Market) is a long market that ends at al-Aqsa Mosque’s gate, lending its name to the market. Nowadays, the suq is around 308 meters long and has 110 shops, although few in the eastern part. It is abound with public Mamluk buildings, especially mausoleums and schools, with the most important landmark located in the western part, Khan al-Sultan, considered one of Jerusalem’s largest and most beautiful khans or travelers’ inns.

As we will discuss later, Suq Bab al-Silsila had various functions during the Mamluk and Ottoman periods. In the twentieth century, it went through several transformations: as handicrafts shops began to disappear, they were replaced by grocery shops, restaurants, and cafés. Changes continued after 1967 when the suq became more open to tourism and visitors to al-Buraq Wall (Wailing Wall) and al-Aqsa...
Mosque, and encouraging souvenir shops to appear. Tourism soon dominated the suq, but restaurants, cafés, groceries and butcher shops did not disappear entirely until the intifada (1987–1991) when touristic activity stopped and most shops closed. Importantly, the way to al-Buraq Wall was diverted and access became possible only through the Armenian Quarter and Dung Gate, and no longer through Tariq Bab al-Silsila.

At the beginning of the 1990s, the suq was revived and souvenir shops, restaurants, and a few spice shops took the place of the former butcher shops and cafés. Over the past two decades, since the eruption of al-Aqsa Intifada (second intifada) in 2000, Suq Bab al-Silsila has suffered the closure of most of its shops – with the COVID-19 pandemic only worsening the situation.

Suq Bab al-Silsila descends gradually from west to east through flat terraced steps that facilitates movement of pedestrian traffic and allows for shops on both sides. The suq is connected to the surrounding residential neighborhoods at several points: from the southern side, the Jewish Quarter, al-Sharaf Quarter, and the Moroccan Quarter; and from the northern side, ‘Aqabat al-Khalidi, Tariq al-Qirami and Tariq al-Wad. Along the suq, several entrances to main residential complexes (hawsh) can be identified, which indicates the functions of the market changed throughout its various periods. In Tariq Bab al-Silsila there is a mixture of commercial and industrial buildings, including khans, residential buildings, mausoleums and schools (madrasas). Although not much is known about its role before the Crusader period, it is one of the more diverse old streets representing the composition of the old town from that period to today. It has not been possible to inspect all buildings on both sides of the road, but below we will try to present those that are most significant.

The exact date of construction of the suq’s shops is difficult to determine, but their current state is consistent with the Crusader-Mamluk period,¹ which suggests that it dates at least from the Mamluk period. There is much architectural evidence indicating the existence of small markets and shops from the Crusader period, but they are not connected with each other. While the suq may pre-date the Crusader period,²

Figure 2. Six vaulted sections of today’s suq alternate with open sections.
the Mamluk style is dominant in the many facades. Most of the *qanatir* (vaulted-ceiling passages) date from the Mamluk period, while the height of the identified Mamluk buildings are consistent with the current suq levels. The sizes of stores vary: some have large halls, which is unusual, indicating that many changes have occurred over the different periods, especially during the Islamic periods.

Tariq Bab al-Silsila is one the most famous in the Old City for its abundance of wooden and stone mashrabiyyas (projected latticed windows). Mashrabiyyas were common in the period when houses were built atop the shops overlooking the suq, enabling onlookers to see the street without being noticed by passersby.

Suq Bab al-Silsila boasts four separate roofed sections of barrel vaulting (*qanatir*) of various lengths, interrupted by short open areas – making it the most covered suq in the Old City. The first third of the suq from the west, about one hundred meters, is covered with a barrel vault (*qantara*) with openings for light and ventilation. From there one can access Khan al-Sultan. The next fifty meters of the suq is unroofed, followed by a small section covered with a barrel vault and topped with a high multi-story building overlooking both east and west sides of the suq. After another uncovered fifty meters, the suq is again covered with another barrel vault with light and ventilation openings. It is uncovered for another stretch before it is covered again with the Tashtamuriyya school’s vaulted ceiling for about seventy meters, the top of which is used for building. The market is roofless in the area around al-Kilaniyya mausoleum, the Khalidi Library and Sabil al-Khalidi, and then is covered again for eighty meters until Sabil Bab al-Silsila and al-Tankiziyya School. From there it leads to a wide open square that facilitates movement to al-Aqsa Mosque, followed by the vaulted entrance hall to Bab al-Sakina and Bab al-Silsila.

The market was famous for selling foodstuffs until the end of the twentieth century, when it began to accommodate to the growing tourism activity by changing their merchandise to attract tourists. The northern part of the market once had two working sesame presses that produced sesame oil and sesame paste (tahini) and were housed in two of the biggest commercial buildings in the Old City. Abu Kamil al-Salihi’s sesame press is still operating, preserving the traditional hand press methods. Sa‘ad al-Salihi’s press was closed in the 1970s with the press still intact; a small area was turned into a souvenir shop. The suq also had several coffee shops: Rishiq, Kurdiyya, al-Dirr, and al-Khalis.

Two types of residential buildings are found along the suq, with the exception of the western third. The first type directly overlooks the suq, while the second is concealed behind serpentine paths that lead to huge residential complexes, especially in the northern part, forming ahwash (s. hawsh, residential complex). The most famous of these are Hawsh Ghayth and Hawsh Narsat (referring to nurses). Both were probably khans or soap factories in the past that changed over time to become residential complexes. Residential buildings increase in the last third of the suq closer to al-Haram, where there are almost no shops. Most probably these buildings were public buildings in the past, then turned into private property, and with time lost the features of public buildings.
A number of roads connect directly to Bab al-Silsila. On the south side (and then onward to the west and east) there is the street known as Daraj al-Tabuna (Daraj al-Harafish) that leads to al-Sharaf neighborhood and the Jewish quarter. To the east of the Jewish quarter there is a huge hall, known as al-Amana Bakery (previously Sunuqrut Bakery), which may have been originally a khan or soap factory. It is difficult to determine the date of construction, but possibly it dates to the fifteenth century Mamluk period. On the opposite side of Tariq Bab al-Silsila is a large store of two intersecting halls, which could have been used for industrial purposes or even a khan.

At al-Sharaf neighborhood intersection, located in the first (eastern) third of the suq, there is a huge hall that is now a restaurant (Rishiq restaurant), that was a famous coffee shop in the past. While the size of the hall suggests that it was used for industrial purposes or a khan, no evidence remains to prove that other than the basic foundations that are still intact. Most probably this hall also dates to the Mamluk period. On the opposite side of the road, another huge Mamluk hall is also used as a restaurant (Burbara restaurant). It is possible that this hall was part of al-Fahm Khan that is mentioned in early Mamluk and Ottoman sources.

The last intersection, located opposite to al-Kilaniyya mausoleum, leads to ‘Aqabat Abu Madyan al-Ghawth that used to lead to the Moroccan Quarter before its destruction in 1967, and now leads to Sahat al-Buraq (the Buraq plaza of the Western Wall). Al-Khalidi Library is located east of ‘Aqabat Abu Madyan, while the Mamluk-era Zawiyat Abu Madyan al-Ghawth is on the south side.

North of Bab al-Silsila are two intersections; the first (from west to east) leads to ‘Aqbat al-Hakkari and al-Qirami neighborhood that were famous in the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods for being inhabited by Hakkaris (Kurds) who built al-Badriyya School and Maqam al-Qirami. On the corner of the intersection is a large Mamluk period building used now as public bathrooms after it was divided into several small cells. To the east is a big store (Karama Store) that seems to have been used for commercial purposes and goes back to the Mamluk period.

The second intersection in the east part of the road, leads to Daraj al-Wad (stairway) near Sabil al-Khalidi. This stairway links the bridge that holds up the eastern part of Tariq Bab al-Silsila with Tariq al-Wad which is twelve meters below the bridge.

The eastern part of the suq (the last 120 meters) is built over a bridge that goes back to the ‘Umayyad period, as suggested by its current condition. Additional structures and supporting foundations were added to the bridge during the Fatimid period. However, many of the bridge’s stones suggest that it was originally built in the Roman period. The bridge links between al-Kilaniyya mausoleum, al-Khalidi Library, and Bab al-Silsila leading directly to al-Aqsa Mosque. The bridge spans Wadi al-Tawahin (Tryopoeon ravine), also known as Tariq al-Wad. It is impressively sturdy, still existing fourteen centuries after its construction and supporting several multi-leveled residential and public structures with large and heavy facades.

Michael Burgoyne’s *Mamluk Jerusalem* identifies four Crusader markets in Suq
Bab al-Silsila; some are covered market halls and the rest are rows of shops. The first market consists of a large hall (stable) that was annexed to Khan al-Sultan later on, and is located to the left (west) of the Khan, right before the entrance. The second market is the vaulted entrance to the Khan that leads to an open courtyard with two rows of shops. The third market is located west of al-Kilaniyya mausoleum; it is a large hall – its area is not exactly known – but the visible part corroborates the enormous size of the market. The fourth market is located south of the Khalidi Library (Baraka Khan mausoleum). Burgoyne’s assertion was based on the existence of Crusader-style architectural elements and texts from the same period.8

Tariq Bab al-Silsila is well documented, given its central location and the numerous public buildings found along the street. Many books describe Jerusalem during the Crusader period, but the most important is by the famous late-Mamluk Jerusalem chronicler, Mujir al-Din al-Hanbali, who mentions:

The David Axis, peace be upon him, which is the greatest road (al-shari’ al-‘adhim), starts at al-Aqsa Mosque’s gate, known as Bab al-Silsila and continues until Bab al-Mihrab, which is the gate known as Bab al-Khalil [Jaffa Gate].9 The road is divided into several parts: the first part extends from the Mosque’s gate to Dar al-Qur’an al-Salamiyya10 known as Suq al-Sagha [Goldsmith’s Market]; the second part extends from Bab al-Salamiyya to Bab Harat al-Sharaf,11 and it is known as Suq al-Qashash [Straw Workers Market]; the third part extends from the gate of Bab Harat al-Sharaf to Khan al-Fahm12 and is known as Suq al-Mubaydat [Copper Bleachers Market];13 the fourth part extends from Bab al-Khan to Qantarat al-Jubayli to Daraj al-Harafish,14 and is known as Suq al-Tabbakhin [Cooks’ Market]; the fifth part extends from Daraj al-Harafish to the Jewish Quarter’s gate,15 and is known as the Caravan. It was a great Khan, part of al-Aqsa Mosque endowments, that was rented for 400 dinars per year [in the fifteenth century according to Mujir al-Din], and various merchandise used to be sold in it. The sixth part of the street extends from the Jewish Quarter’s gate to Khan al-Suf [wool],16 and it is also known as Suq al-Harir [Silk Suq]. The final part extends from Khan al-Suf to the city’s gate that was known as ‘Arsat al-Ghilal [Crops Market].17

It is important to note here that the southern part of Tariq Bab al-Silsila was confiscated in 1969 and annexed to what has become known as the extended Jewish Quarter, but the annexation decision was not enforced and most of Tariq Bab al-Silsila is still in the hands of its Palestinian owners, except for three shops that were confiscated. One is opposite to Khan al-Sultan, the other is located in the middle of the suq facing the upper Salihi press and the third is facing the lower Salihi press. Kurdiyya coffee shop, at the beginning of “Aqbat Abu Madyan” which leads to the Moroccan Quarter (Sahat al-Buraq), was also confiscated. Shlomo Goren, head of the Israeli military rabbinate in 1967, confiscated the building located east of the
Khalidi Library and turned it into his headquarters. He built an additional level over the eastern wing of the library for use as the Talmud Torah School. If it was not for al-Khalidi family’s diligent efforts to defend their library, it would have also been confiscated, just as al-Tankaziyya school was in 1969. Tariq Bab al-Silsila is targeted by settlers and constantly threatened with confiscation given its location on the northern boundaries of the extended Jewish Quarter next to Sahat al-Buraq, but the resistance of its residents and proprietors formed an impenetrable wall that has prevented attempts to take over this central area.

Several Jerusalemite families lived on Tariq Bab al-Silsila in the past and still own real estate there, in addition to the properties of the Jerusalem Islamic Waqf. They include the Qutayna, ‘Asali, Hadiyah, Imam, and Khalidi families who owned the most of the estates in this area, especially in the eastern third of it. Most of the family estates in this area are inherited family endowments (waqf thurri). Images of Tariq Bab al-Silsila from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries abound with beautiful mashrabiyyas decorating the facades of upper floors, some of which can still be seen in the vicinity al-Tashmuriyya school and opposite to al-Khalidi Library.

Despite numerous studies done on some of its buildings, Tariq Bab al-Silsila still entails a challenge to researchers, as it hides within its folds much historical, archeological, and architectural information requiring further exploration and documentation from the Crusader and Mamluk periods, in addition to remains Roman and Umayyad eras. Below we will explore the most important historical buildings that can be studied along Tariq Bab al-Silsila from west to east.

**Khan al-Sultan**

Khan al-Sultan, known also as Khan al-Wakala, is located in the heart of the city’s commercial center near the intersection of two axes on the western side of Suq Bab al-Silsila. Although it is believed that the current khan (or at least the part near the entrance) used to be a vaulted market hall dating to the Crusader period, Khan al-Sultan was built in 1386–87 CE at the time of Mamluk sultan al-Dhahir Barquq, during the rule of Amir Baydamur, governor of Bilad al-Sham kingdoms, the Mamluk ruler of Syria, by Asbugha b. Balat, superintendent of the two holy mosques in Jerusalem and Hebron, as cited in the inscription on the western side of al-Khan’s entrance. The khan was built to be a commercial market, incorporating parts of the Crusader market, as well as hospice, and destination for trade caravans, and endowed to the al-Aqsa Mosque. Apparently the khan was not specifically named after the “sultan” who founded it, although this cannot be ruled out, but was a center to collect taxes (rasm al-qabban) on merchandise entering Jerusalem for later sale in the markets. Mujir al-Din at the end of the fifteenth century wrote the following about the khan: “It is a great khan that was endowed to al-Aqsa Mosque. It was rented out for 400 dinars per year, and a variety of merchandise was sold in it.”

To avoid interrupting the continuity of the suq, a zuqaq (vaulted passageway) was built to join the khan with Tariq Bab al-Silsila through a long corridor that ends with
the khan’s huge gate and then continues to form a suq hall with five stores on the right and four on the left forming a vaulted market that precedes the two-story market hall. At the center of the western side (between the four stores on the left) there is a modest gate that leads to a large rectangular hall of about 100 square meters. Most probably this hall was used as a stable for animals; it was still used for that purpose until five decades ago, and now it is used as public bathrooms. These structures date back to the Crusader period.

Behind the gallery at the upper floor of the entrance hall is a series of small chambers – six on the left and six on the right – that were used to accommodate lodgers, in addition to al-Suwayqa hall that has a barrel vault built from a series of pointed arches. This beautiful hallway, which has undergone renovation, has maintained its original elements. It allowed for commercial use of its ground floor and use of the upper floor for accommodation. At the end of the hallway there is a large open courtyard in the center of the building at the end of the vaulted market. The yard is rectangular with uneven dimensions, 14 meters wide and 28 meters long, and is surrounded by spacious halls and chambers on the ground floor. Apparently during the Ottoman period (1763 CE), a sabil (drinking water fountain) was built in the square’s northern wall where there is a deep water well, but the sabil was removed some time later (date unknown) and all that is left is an inscription that refers to the construction date.

In the southern western and the southern eastern corners, two stone staircases lead to the upper floor; other staircases are in the western facade of the courtyard. In the upper floor there is a long series of chambers of various sizes and shapes, some of which appear to have been residential apartments. Most probably, during the Ottoman period the northern western hall in the upper floor was converted into a praying hall without any major changes except for the addition of a prayer niche (mihrab).

Many changes have been made in most of the building, especially in the courtyard and surrounding rooms in the ground and upper floors. Minimal changes have been made in the corridor market where corbels hold ornamented cornices underneath the corridor of the upper floor. The ornamentation is similar in style to that found in Crusader architecture in Palestine, confirming the date of construction of this part of the building complex. As for other changes, they are mainly additional cement structures that deformed parts of the building, especially in the courtyard and the large halls surrounding it. Parts of the upper floor have also been deformed by the different users of these spaces.

Information in the records of the shari‘a court in Jerusalem indicate that the khan was no longer used for the function it was built for originally during the Mamluk period; it was turned instead into a market for various merchandise, and later into a vegetable market that became known as Dar al- Khudar (house of vegetables). Nevertheless it continued to serve one of the purposes it was built for during the Mamluk period: weighing wheat and other types of grain to collect taxes.

In the nineteenth century the building gradually turned into a center for handicrafts and industrial workshops, with its spaces divided to serve these purposes, negatively affecting the khan’s integrity of internal and external appearance. In very recent years
most of the structure was used as housing for the poor as a solution for the growing housing shortage in Jerusalem. The khan has become overcrowded with tenants with families occupying one room or more, and living conditions khan are substandard.

The Islamic Waqf Department in Jerusalem partially renovated the khan in the 1990s, mainly renovating and protecting the entrance and entrance hall (the vaulted market at the beginning of the khan). The courtyard was tiled and some of the chambers were renovated, all of the facades were grouted, and roofs and vaults were renovated and insulated. The Welfare Association (Ta‘awon) conducted another partial renovation of some rooms to improve living conditions. However, the conditions that surround the building – the political and legal situation in the occupied city – leading to most of it turned into residential apartments, prevent the implementation of a complete project that would guarantee the preservation of the historical integrity of the building and the protection of its aesthetic value.25

Tashtamuriyya School

Al-Tashtamuriyya school, built in 1382 CE by the Mamluk amir Sayf al-Din Tashtamur al-‘Ala‘i,26 is located south of Tariq Bab al-Silsila on the eastern end of Tariq Harat al-Sharaf and west of Tariq Abu Madyan. The building has a beautiful Mamluk northern facade with Mamluk ornamental elements including different colored stone courses, curved stone stalactite work, symmetrical facade, beautiful stone porch, large windows, and a small water fountain. On the western side of the ground floor, the hall that overlooks Tariq Bab al-Silsila has the Amir Tashtamur mausoleum, covered with a beautiful two-story high dome that houses a mihrab. From inside, the building has four vaulted iwans with a large vaulted hall in the middle. The building was built on three levels, with a mezzanine and an upper floor, and includes a large

Figure 3. The Mamluk ornamented facade of the Tashtamuriyya School.
number of rooms of different sizes that were used as classrooms (especially on the
ground floor) and for the accommodation of teachers and students.

The ground floor is currently used as the headquarters for the Islamic Higher
Committee, while the rest of the building is a residence for the Imam family, who
became in charge of the building (the reason that the building has also been known as
Dar al-Imam).27

The Crusaders’ Meat Market (Abu Khadija Restaurant and
Coffee Shop)

This market is mentioned in Crusader sources28 but without details. Burgoyne and
others inspected part of it while studying al-Kilaniyya mausoleum located to the
east of the market.29 The market is to the north of Tariq Bab al-Silsila opposite al-
Tashtamuriyya school. The building consists of a huge rectangular hall of over 500
square meters, recently renovated, with a hall below of almost the same size. It was
used as a grocery for a while and then turned into a restaurant and coffee shop on
the upper floor. The ground floor has not been used for a while, although it has been
protected and renovated. The foundations of both halls are in excellent condition, but
have been divided into several parts; one was annexed to al-Kilaniyya mausoleum
and others to adjacent shops, while the main space between the shops was unused.
The owner has been gradually emptying the rubble from inside since 2015. In 2017 a
large part was renovated for commercial utilization. Excavations at the site revealed
another floor below the current one built in the same way. The dimensions of the
newly discovered hall have not been identified yet, but it is clear that it goes back to
the same historical period as the upper floor. The author has examined it several times
during the renovation process.

Al-Kilaniyya Mausoleum

Al-Kilaniyya mausoleum is located opposite ‘Aqbat Abu Madyan, on the northern
side of Tariq Bab al-Silsila. The mausoleum was built a couple of years after 1352
CE, the date that the estate was endowed by its owner. We know very little about
the owner, Jamal al-Din Bahlavani al-Kilani /al-Jilani,30 or when he was reputedly
buried there, Al-Kilaniyya mausoleum is one of the few Mamluk buildings that do not
have any inscriptions or documents with information about the establishment of the
structure.31

The use of the building as a school is not certain, although the name “al-Kilaniyya
school” was mentioned in the records of al-Shari’a Court in Jerusalem during the
Ottoman period between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries,32 but “al-Kilaniyya
mausoleum” is more precise and corresponds to the text of the endowment.33

One of the building’s facades can be seen from the road, while the others are
hidden by the surrounding buildings. It is actually difficult to identify the extent of
the building because it connects with adjacent buildings, and has been always divided throughout various periods into small units. The symmetrical facade is decorated with curved stone stalactite work, large windows, and high domes. Al-Kilaniyya mausoleum\textsuperscript{34} consists of two burying chambers that overlook Tariq Bab al-Silsila, separated by a high-walled entrance decorated with three levels of stone stalactites and an open courtyard with two large iwans on the east and west, in addition to several rooms on the ground and upper floors. The main facade is symmetrical and topped with three beautiful stone domes. The burying chambers are square-shaped, and the original ceilings of both rooms are more than eleven meters high, but the rooms were made later into two floors for residential purposes. The first addition (the lower one) was likely completed during the Ottoman period, but the second upper addition was apparently made in the middle of the twentieth century using cement. The visitor can imagine the grandeur of the original burial chambers which extended from the floor to the dome, which was visible from the inside where its windows lit the chambers.

The building was renovated in the mid-1980s by the Jerusalem Islamic Waqf and the Islamic Antiquities Department, but its use for residential purposes again damaged the building. It was renovated again in 2013 by Ta‘awon.

This building is an example of the complex relationship between preserving cultural heritage on one hand and using historical buildings for residential purposes, especially in cases like Jerusalem’s Old City where housing is a major socio-political challenge. Al-Kilaniyya building, similar to many other historical buildings in the city, has undergone numerous changes, including supplementary structures added to it suitable for housing. The current circumstances in Jerusalem make it difficult to reasonably preserve the architectural integrity of the building. It is possible, however, to preserve at least the historical components, especially since it stands witness to a historical period in which Jerusalem had an abundance of architectural gems. Preservation of the building requires frequent renovation, especially because of its intensive use as a residential space requiring several additional structures and adaptions. In fact, preserving the historical appearance for the hundreds of historical buildings in old Jerusalem has become a continuous challenge.

Taziyya School (Madrasa)

East of al-Kilaniyya mausoleum, opposite al-Maktaba al-Khalidiyy, is Taziyya school on the northern side of Bab al-Silsila. The school was established by the Mamluk amir Sayf al-Din Taz in 1361 CE, and there is a cartouche on the facade that has his emblem in the shape of a cupbearer. This amir was highly important among the Mamluks as one of the six amirs who were members of the Supreme Council of the Mamluk state. He died in Damascus and was buried in the school named after him, in some documents the building bears the name Taz mausoleum. Taz endowed al-Minya village, located on the northwest corner of Lake Tiberias, with a shop, bakery and mill to finance this school.

The Taziyya school’s beautiful facade features Mamluk ornamental and
architectural art. The school is L-shaped, probably determined by the layout of the buildings surrounding al-Kilaniyya mausoleum. The school consists of three rooms: a main entrance, and a staircase leading to two rooms on the upper floor. The passage on the ground floor leads to two vaulted halls; the western one extends to reach the north side of al-Kilaniyya mausoleum, while the other hall extends west to the street. The upper part of the school was destroyed.

Al-Maktaba al-Khalidiyya (Turbat al-Amir Baraka Khan)

Al-Maktaba al-Khalidiyya (Khalidi Library) is located on the eastern side of Tariq Bab al-Silsila, the eastern corner of ‘Aqabat Abu Madyan, facing al-Kilaniyya mausoleum and Taziyya School. In fact, until the beginning of the twentieth century this building was known as Turbat al-Amir Baraka Khan, for the commander of the Khawarizm forces, that had been called upon by Najm al-Din Ayyub to reclaim Jerusalem from the Crusaders in 1244.

This amir was killed in Homs in 1264, his body is believed to have been taken to Jerusalem and buried in this location. Although there is a tombstone with his name and date of death on it in the building’s courtyard, his burial here remains unconfirmed. As suggested by the tombstones, his sons Badr al-Din Muhammad (1279) and Husam al-Din Kara Bey (1263) were also buried in the same location.35 The building, constructed between 1264 and 1279, has a beautiful Mamluk facade that leads to the open courtyard where the graves are located, and then to a large hall with a mihrab on the right and a smaller one on the left. In the front end of the turba there is a small sabil.36 It seems that the remaining parts of the complex were removed or annexed to adjacent buildings, to the extent that it has become difficult today to imagine the original shape of the building. If the documentation is correct, this building is the second oldest Mamluk building that still existing in the Old City of Jerusalem, predated only by the northern portico of al-Aqsa Mosque (built in 1213) and completed in 1432.

Little is known about the history of the building’s usage, but the complex, part of the Khalidi family endowment in the Old City, was turned into a library in 1900 to house a large part of the family’s book collection. The library is the largest family library in Jerusalem and consists of more than twelve hundred manuscripts (more
than two thousand titles), some which are rare or more than a thousand years old and
cover many disciplines, especially Islamic sciences, and a collection of 5,500 books
printed mainly in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The library has an
annex, fifty meters away to the east. The annex consists of three floors and is also
from the Mamluk period. It houses printed volumes, and al-Khalidi family documents
and papers, in addition to a lecture hall and Ottoman-era accommodation facilities for
researchers.

**Dar al-Qur’an al-Salamiyya**

Dar al-Qur’an al-Salamiyya is located on the south side of Tariq Bab al-Silsila, opposite
of al-Turba al-Jalaqiyya. Dar al-Hadith used to be in front of it, a few buildings east of
the Khalidi Library. It was established by Siraj al-Din ‘Umar al-Salami in 1360. The
building consists today of one hall, but it is possible that once other spaces existed
that may have been annexed to adjacent buildings, especially on the southern side. It
is, therefore, difficult to imagine what the building originally looked like. It seems
that this Qur’anic school was still active in the eighteenth century, but it was not used
afterwards. It is part of the Khalidi family endowments. There is a late Ottoman grave
in the hall known as “Musa’s grave,” on the belief that Musa al-Khalidi is buried
there, but this has not been confirmed.

**Jalaqiyya School**

Al-Jalaqiyya is located south of Taziyya school and on the edge of the stairway
descending from Tariq Bab al-Silsila to Tariq al-Wad. It is also known as Turbat
Baybars al-Jaliq (Baybars al-Jaliq mausoleum). According to the inscription on the
facade, the school was built in 1307. The building has a beautiful Mamluk facade
with a large window overlooking Tariq Bab al-Silsila and a vaulted burial hall in
which the grave of Amir Baybars al-Jaliq al-Salihi is located, in addition to a small
grave where a child might have been buried. This room is decorated on the inside
with beautiful stalactite work. There is an antechamber behind it to which a number
of rooms on two levels were added later.

**Dar al-Hadith**

It is not easy to identify the location of this building that used to be adjacent to al-
Jalaqiyya from the west. Available information indicates that the school was there,
and that it taught al-Hadith al-Sharif. Mujir al-Din al-Hanbali mentions it and so does
‘Arif al-‘Arif. It was mentioned as “Dar al-Hadith al-Hakkariya” established in 1267
by Sharaf al-Din ‘Isa al-Hakkari. The architectural remains of the building may have
been conjoined with the building west of al-Jalaqiyya, and the building is part of the
Khalidi family endowment.
Sabil al-Khalidi

Sabil al-Khalidi is located at the intersection between Tariq Bab al-Silsila and Daraj al-ʿAyn, the stairway that descends to Tariq al-Wad. Sabil al-Khalidi was built in 1713,⁴⁴ and is comparable to others built by Sultan Sulayman al-Qanuni (the Magnificent), although there is an obvious difference in grandeur. It is a simple wall fountain located in a recess similar to the recess of Sulaymani sabils, crowned by a pointed arch framed with zigzagged white and red stones. Behind the main southern facade is a square-shaped chamber with a door on the west side. It has two big windows overlooking the sabil’s facade. The windows are very similar to that of Sabil al-Shurbaji at Damascus Gate. Most probably Sabil al-Khalidi was connected to the ‘Arrub-Bethlehem-Jerusalem aqueduct. There are some modest ornamental murals on different parts of the wall. It seems the water trough was lost as a result of changes in the level of Tariq Bab al-Silsila.⁴⁵

Turbat Turkan Khatun

Located on the north side of Tariq Bab al-Silsila and west of al-Saʿadiyya school, Turbat Turkan Khatun consists of a burial chamber with a high dome and an antechamber behind. This small mausoleum is distinguished by its small symmetrical facade artistically ornamented with inscriptions and intricate arabesque decoration. The mausoleum was built in 1352 and is the burial place of Lady Turkan Khatun, daughter of Tuqṭay al-Saljuqi al-Uzbaki⁴⁶ according to the inscription on the facade.⁴⁷

Turbat al-Saʿadiyya

The Turbat al-Saʿadiyya is located on the northwest corner of Bab al-Silsila courtyard behind Sabil Bab al-Silsila. It was built in 1311 by Amir Masʿud B. Sunqur al-Jashinkir.⁴⁸ It has a burial chamber separated by a corridor from a large hall on the opposite side. The building is distinguished by a beautiful Mamluk-style ornamented facade which has a large door and a double window that opens to the road. The
building has two floors\textsuperscript{49} and it is currently part of the Khalidi family endowment, currently used as a private residence.

**Tankiziyya School**

Al-Tankiziyya School was founded by Tankiz al-Nasiri, governor of Bilad al-Sham (Great Syria) and one of the most important Mamluk amirs who generously invested in Jerusalem and the renovation of the two mosques, decorated them with marble and gold and added structures such as Bab al-Silsila’s minaret, Bab al-Qatanin and other architectural structures. Suq al-Qatanin, the adjacent khan, two public baths, and the beautiful Bab al-Qatanin, one of al-Aqsa Mosque’s gates, are standing proof of his interest in Jerusalem.

Al-Tankiziyya school is located on the south side of Bab al-Silsila just before entering al-Aqsa Mosque. It shares the western wall with al-Aqsa and the school’s roof overlooks the mosque. The school is located behind the mosque’s western portico; part of its upper floor was built over the portico itself, marking the beginning of the main axis, Tariq Bab al-Silsila. The huge building represents the influence of its owner, and his immense wealth, yet it respects the aesthetic aspects of al-Aqsa Mosque. The building nowadays overlooks al-Buraq Wall after Israeli occupation forces destroyed the buildings adjacent to it in 1967.

Tankiz established this school and endowed it\textsuperscript{50} in 1328–29, according to the inscription written in al-Naskhi script on the facade.\textsuperscript{51} Tankiz built the building as multipurpose: as a school, Sufi center, orphanage, and school for hadith. It became one of the most important educational establishments in the city, and played an active role until the fifteenth century. It hosted many of Jerusalem’s esteemed visitors including sultans, princes, and scholars. Later it was turned into a courthouse (mahkama) because of its central location and size.\textsuperscript{52} It regained its educational role again a century later, and then became Jerusalem’s Shari’a Court\textsuperscript{53} in the seventeenth century. It is still known as “al-Mahkama” today. It continued to serve this function throughout
the British Mandate, and then Hajj Amin al-Husayni converted it into his place of residence and office when he became the head of the Supreme Muslim Council. After 1948 it was turned into a school for teaching Islamic jurisprudence until 1969 when it was confiscated by the Israeli occupation forces and turned into a border police station, which it remains as of this writing. The Jerusalem Islamic Waqf Council, the legal owner of the building, is not even allowed to enter to check on it.54

A visitor standing in the small square in front of Bab al-Silsila (al-Aqsa Mosque Gate), surrounded by Mamluk and Ottoman buildings, is at the culmination point of the long series of Mamluk buildings located in Tariq Bab al-Silsila to the west, considered to be the longest Mamluk street.

Al-Tankiziyya building, made up of three floors visible from the north facade, is considered a special architectural landmark in the Old City and a classic example of Mamluk architecture. The plan of al-Tankiziyya school is an example of the cross plan of a central hall with four iwans. The square hall in the middle has an octagon stone water fountain in the center that is linked to al-Qanat al-Sabil that brings water from al-'Arrub through al-Maraji’ (Sulayman) pools south of Bethlehem. The central hall’s ceiling is vaulted with a folded arch and there is an octagon-shaped oculus with dimensions similar to those of the water fountain beneath it.

In the south wall of the southern iwan, which is the largest, the school’s mihrab stands, which is considered to be very special. The walls of the mihrab are clad with Anatolian marble slabs. The dome of the mihrab is decorated with mosaics of intricate flora motives, made with workmanship that is as meticulous as the mosaic of Qubbat al-Sakhra. Mother-of-pearl is used extensively over a gilded background with inscriptions.55

There are nine spaces of different sizes and shapes on the ground floor. The small mezzanine has four relatively small chambers, while the Sufi corner is located in the spacious upper floor.56 The upper floor can be divided into two wings: the first (eastern) wing is located over the mosque’s western portico and has a spacious hall (sama’khana) used for prayer and study seminars, with an impressive ornamented facade that, the upper part at least, can be seen from the courtyard of al-Aqsa Mosque. It stands out as the highlight of the building. The second wing is located above the mezzanine in the western part of the building and has relatively small, irregular chambers.

Al-Tankiziyya school played an important role in the city’s cultural, social, and political history, and formed an important part of Jerusalemites’ collective memory. In addition to being used as a courthouse for a long period, all citizens have a special connection to it. It played a large role in active academic development.57 It was turned into a headquarters for the Supreme Islamic Council during the time of the British Mandate. When it was confiscated by the Israeli occupation in 1969, it had major repercussions for native Jerusalemites, since numerous worshippers pass by it daily in order to enter al-Aqsa Mosque through Bab al-Silsila, and see the sign over the gate with the emblem of the state of Israel and its police forces standing by it.
Sabil Bab al-Silsila

Sabil Bab al-Silsila is located in the open square between al-Aqsa Mosque and Bab al-Silsila. Sulayman the Magnificent built this wall fountain in 1537 and connected it to the water of al-Sabil aqueduct. Sabil Bab al-Silsila is in the same style as the five other water fountains built by Sultan Sulayman with minor differences. Sabil Bab al-Silsila takes the shape of a gate-facade framed with a pointed chevron arch. The sabil is recessed inside the wall embedding the water trough. In the center of the sabil’s facade is a large protruding inscription (1.72 x 0.70 meters). The very large size of the inscription compared to the facade might be intentional to display the power and strength of the sultan.

Ribat al-Nisa’i (The Women’s Hospice)

The Women’s Hospice was built by Tankiz al-Nasiri across the street from Tankiziyya school in 1330 to accommodate poor, single women in the city. The building has a modest appearance and structure and is squeezed between two buildings in the northwest corner of the square right before Bab al-Silsila. The building is marked by its high gate, although its location suggests that it was meant to avoid attention. The hospice has several levels and a number of rooms that accommodated the women; it is used now as residential apartments.

Bab al-Silsila

Bab al-Silsila is one of the most important accesses to al-Aqsa mosque. It is a huge double gate called Bab al-Silsila and Bab al-Sakina. The gate consists of two passageways with two large decorated shallow stone domes. The gate in its current state goes back to the Ayyubid period; it was built with Crusader construction material – marble columns and capitals – of which the gate’s building has a significant number. Apparently the gate was exceptionally impressive during the Fatimid period when it was beautifully described by the Persian traveller Nasir-i Khusro in 1047. The extent...
of Crusader intervention in the gate is unclear, but it seems that it was rebuilt during the Ayyubid period in 1198.

The Two Sesame Presses

The two sesame presses in Tariq Bab al-Silsila are still intact but, unfortunately, we have no historical information about them. Inspection of their architecture suggests that they date to the Mamluk period. It is not possible to determine whether they were originally built as sesame presses or as khans since there is much information about the existence of a number of khans along Tariq Bab al-Silsila, as mentioned by Mujir al-Din. What is certain is that they had been functioning as presses since the Ottoman period. The first is located in the west of Tariq Bab al-Silsila (Sa’ad al-Salihi Press), and the second in the east (Abu Kamil al-Salihi Press). The former stopped working in the 1980s and a part was turned into a souvenir shop, while the Abu Kamil Press is still working and demonstrating traditional production methods.

Other Buildings Worthy of Further Inspection

There is a number of important historical buildings in Tariq Bab al-Silsila still awaiting scientific inspection and research. These buildings are very interesting and represent the industrial and commercial sectors in Tariq Bab-Silsila especially during the Mamluk and early Ottoman periods. Of these buildings, we mention here: al-Kharbutli Butcher Shop facing Daraj al-Tabuna/ Daraj al-Harafish (a souvenir shop), al-Amana Bakery/Sunukrut (taken by Israeli settlers), Bab al-Silsila’s pubic bathrooms, Rishq cafe (now a restaurant) located left of Harat al-Sharaf’s Gate, and Burbara Restaurant facing Harat al-Sharaf’s Gate.
Finally, this review of part of the Old City demonstrates the great challenges that face studying the cultural, economic, and social histories of the old town. Tariq Bab al-Silsila has more than twenty historical buildings worth further study and documentation using archival and architectural material from Ottoman documents. Such studies can open up the door to a wealth of knowledge about Jerusalem, and we hope that this article would encourage just that.

Nazmi Jubeh is associate professor in the Department of History and Archaeology, Birzeit University.

Endnotes
1 It also corresponds to the Crusader (franji) construction level if we take into consideration that part of Khan al-Sultan was built during that period. But the suq level may date to the Umayyad period, especially since the current bridge that is located at the bottom of the eastern suq starts at the Khalidi Library and ends at the mosque's gate (Bab al-Silsila) dates to the Umayyad–Fatimid period. This means that if there was a change in the level, it took place before Islam and not after.
2 This can be seen in Abu Khadija’s shop north of Tashtamuriyya school and west of al-Kilaniyya mausoleum.
3 The building had been abandoned since the late 1980s, except for part that was turned into a house and later was overtaken by settlers.
4 It was previously Kharbutli Butchery, and today is a souvenir shop. The architectural style of the building suggests that it dates to the Mamluk period, but it warrants further investigation.
5 Although these two halls have not yet been architecturally surveyed, they are thought to date to the Mamluk period.
6 Hakkaris, Kurdish Turks from the Turkish-Iraqi border, actively participated in the army of Salah al-Din.
8 Burgoyne, Mamluk Jerusalem, 327, 336, 479-80; Adrian Boas, Jerusalem in the Time of the Crusades: Society, Landscape and Art in the Holy City under Frankish Rule (London: Routledge, 2001), 145. Although Burgoyne’s assessments are valid based on the knowledge available at the time, they should not be taken for granted. More research is necessary since differentiating between the Crusader and Ayyubid styles can be difficult. The possibility that the suq was built in the Mamluk period should not be completely ruled out. Unfortunately, available Arabic texts from the Ayyubid period do not offer an adequately detailed description of the city that would help us understand urban transformations.
9 The “Great Axis” or “David Axis” is the west-east axis that starts at Jaffa Gate and ends at al-Aqsa Mosque’s Gate, known as Bab al-Silsila.
10 This was east of Khalidi Library. Hence, the goldsmith’s market was relatively small, beginning at Bab al-Silsila and ending just before Khalidi Library. There were only a few shops since public buildings and houses take up most of the market.
11 The gate still exists and is located to the west of Tashtamuriyya school. It used to lead to al-Sharaf neighborhood but in 1969 it was appropriated by the Israeli occupation authorities and annexed to the Jewish quarter.
12 Based on available sources it is not possible to determine where the khan, which is known to have existed during the Mamluk period, was exactly located. The khan, an al-Aqsa Mosque waqf, consisted of two levels and an open courtyard. According to Mujir al-Din’s description, the khan may have been located where the public bathrooms are today, and a shop to the west and a house behind it to the north, since it is a central location.
13 Mubaydun (copper bleachers) treated the oxidization of copper pots by removing the oxidized copper and applying a layer of molten tin to the pot. Pots and cookware were usually bleached once a year, a process that was common in Jerusalem until the 1970s. The last bleacher (mubayyid) worked in Khan al-Sultan two decades ago.
14 Al-Harafish stairway, which still exists today and known as al-Tabuna, is located south of Tariq Bab al-Silsila and east of Khan al-Sultan.
23 The Israeli Antiquities Authority conducted archeological excavations in the hall in 2018 and uncovered remains that dated to the Abbasid period. Among the most important findings were the remains of a large building dating to the Fatimid period. The building’s function was not identified, but most probably it was a public building. There is a possibility that the Mamluk khan was built on the remains of the Fatimid building, and likewise the Crusader market, which is believed to have been built on the remains of the Fatimid khan. These possibilities cannot be confirmed, however, because the excavations were conducted only on the northeast side of the ground floor. For more information on the excavation and findings see David Yeger, “Jerusalem, the Old City (Khan al-Sultan),” Hadashot Arkheolgiyot 130 (2018), online at www.hadashot-esi.org.il/Report_Detail_Eng.aspx?id=25380 (accessed 23 September 2021).

24 On the architectural description and analysis and the khan’s plan see Kamil al-‘Assali, Min Atharuna fi Bayt al-Maqdis [From our antiquities in Bayt al-Maqdis] (Amman: Jordan University, 1982), 44–60 and Burgoyne, Mamluk Jerusalem, 479–84.

25 Al-Khan remains an important project for the future that could be transformed into a center for traditional handicrafts, a museum, or a cultural center. The building could be turned into one of Jerusalem’s architectural gems, given a change in circumstances to implement these ideas.

26 He was the dawadar, the first secretary of Sultan al-‘Ashraf Sha’ban, a job similar in function to that of a viceroy.

27 For more on Tashtamuriyya architecture, see Burgoyne, Mamluk Jerusalem, 460–75; van Berchem, Matériaux pour un corpus inscriptionum arabisarum, Part 2, Syrie du Sud T.1 Jérusalem (Ville) (Caire: Impr. de l’Institut français d’archéologie, 1923), no. 91, 299–303.


29 Burgoyne, Mamluk Jerusalem, 327, 399.


31 It is evident that what is currently left of the hall is part of a much larger one. It also seems obvious that parts were later annexed to adjacent buildings on the western side, in Suq al-Khawajat or shops south of it that are part of Suq al-Bashura. However we should cautious about this, since it is necessary to draw a complete plan of the area to understand the various relationships of the numerous important buildings in it that have not yet been sufficiently studied.

32 On the architectural description and analysis and the khan’s plan see Kamil al-‘Assali, Min Atharuna fi Bayt al-Maqdis [From our antiquities in Bayt al-Maqdis] (Amman: Jordan University, 1982), 44–60 and Burgoyne, Mamluk Jerusalem, 479–84.

35 For more on the tombstones, see van Berchem, *Matériaux pour un corpus*, no. 59, 60, 61,186–92.

36 For details on the building, see Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem*, 109–16.

37 For details on the library’s manuscripts see Jubeh, *Catalogue of Manuscripts*.

38 See Khalidi Library website, online at khalidilibrary.org/en (accessed 22 September 2021).


42 Mujir al-Din, *al-Uns al-Jalil*, vol. 2, 94.


44 Muhammad Ghosheh mentions al-Sabil al-Khalidi was built on the model of a previous one established by Prince Tankiz al-Nasiri in 773 H/1371 CE, see online www.akhbarelbalad.net/ar/1/10/2760/ (accessed 23 September 2021). However, this is definitely incorrect as Tankiz al-Nasiri died in 741 H (some sources say 744 H), that is, three decades before its construction.


47 Van Berchem, *Matériaux pour un corpus*, no. 84, 272–76.


52 It was used as headquarters for judges, rulers, personalities and public administrators during the rule of Sultan Qaitbay. This was confirmed by the Swiss Dominican traveler Felix Fabri (1441–1502 CE) who visited Palestine between 1480–1483 CE; Felix Fabri, *The Wanderings of Brother Felix Fabri*, trans. Aubrey Stewart (London: London Committee of the Palestine Exploration Fund, 1893), vol. II, 125.

53 Although this has been mentioned in several sources, the records of the shari’a court continue to refer to it as a school in the eighteenth century. The records mention the appointment of numerous shaykhhs, readers, teachers, endowment caretakers, and treasurers. This may be because part of the building continued to be used as a school. For more on the school in the Ottoman period, see al-Swarieh, *al-Hayya al-ijtima‘iyya*, 201–209.


55 According to the inscription the Tankiz meant this building to be a mosque for the public.


59 Almost all of the drinking water fountains built by Sultan Sulayman have the same inscription, with minor differences. All were built in 943 H. (1536–37 CE).