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Who Built Jisr (Banāt) Yaʿqūb over the Upper Jordan?

> *...And over this River there is a faire Bridge, the one end whereof is out of the Holy Land, the other in it.* (William Biddulph, 1600)[1]

Introduction

The crossing of the Upper Jordan River *(Nahr al-Sharīʿah)* to the north of the Sea of Galilee has always been of strategic importance for the inhabitants of the area. The well-known Acheulian site excavated since the 1930s has brought much attention to this location, which bridges the Dead Sea Rift.[2]

Later on, it was the excavation project at the Crusader fortress of Vadi Iacob (Chastelet according to William of Tyre, Meẓad ʿAteret in Hebrew, and Qaṣr ʿAtrah in Arabic)[3] that brought further attention to the historicity of the

Our heartfelt thanks extend to Prof. Amikam Elad of the Hebrew University for his invaluable assistance in researching relevant literary sources across various digital media platforms. We are also appreciative of Dr. Amir Mazor's efforts to enhance the literary evidence supporting the hypothesis presented in this article, despite encountering limited success in uncovering further mentions of the patronage of Banāt Yaʿqūb bridge. Our gratitude also goes to Idan Shaked, who actively participated in the fieldwork to inspect the remains and offered significant contributions based on his own research in this region and its northern vicinity. See I. Shaked, "The Settlements Pattern and the Road System in the Hula Valley During the 10th–13th Centuries" [in Hebrew] (unpublished M.A. thesis, Bar-Ilan University, 1998). Lastly, sincere thanks to Mr. Eli Satt, a member of Kibbutz Gadot, who provided valuable insights and data regarding the bridge under discussion. See his online publications: https://www.yoaview.com/Yoaview/SITE/?action=showobject&sn=2_873 and https://www.yoaview.com/Yoaview/SITE/?action=showobject&sn=2_864

[1] William Biddulph, "Part of another Letter of Master William Biddulph, from Jerusalem," in *Purchas his Pilgrimes in Five Bookes,* Part Two, Eighth Book, *Peregrinations and Travels by Land in Palestina, Natolia, Syria, Arabia, Persia, and Other Parts of Asia* (London, 1625), 1344–53.

[2] N. Goren-Inbar, "Gesher Benot Ya'aqov," in *Quaternary of the Levant: Environments, Climate Change, and Humans,* ed. Yehouda Enzel and Ofer Bar-Yosef (Cambridge, 2017).

[3] For the final report of this site's excavations, see K. Raphael, *The Excavations of the Templar Fortress at Jacob's Ford (1993–2009)* (Jerusalem, 2023). William of Tyre (d. 1186) was apparently the first to coin the name Chastelet: ibid., 2. On Qasr ʿAtrah, see also D. Pringle, *Secular Buildings in the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem: An Archaeological Gazetteer* (Cambridge, 1997), 85. See also R. Ellenblum, S. Marco, A. Agnon, T. Rockwell and A. Boas, "Crusader Castle Torn Apart by Earthquake at Dawn, 20 May 1202," *Geology* 26 (1998): 303–6.

DOI: 10.6082/vgdx-kf24. (https://doi.org/10.6082/vgdx-kf24)
DOI of Vol. XXVII: 10.6082/msr27. See https://doi.org/10.6082/msr2024 to download the full volume or individual articles.

crossing of the Jordan in this area, which was witness in modern times—especially in the 1940s—to battles and settlement shifts.[4] This fortress was erected by the Knights Templar in 573/1178 in Muslim lands on the western side of the river to control Jacob's Ford (Vadum Iacob), and was destroyed by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn in 575/1179, eleven months after its construction had commenced, once negotiations to halt the works and maintain the status-quo *vis-à-vis* the passage to southern Greater Syria and the way to Egypt had failed.[5]

A now-destroyed stone bridge (figs. 1–5), located approximately one kilometer north of Meẓad ʿAteret (New Israel Grid 259099/768851, figs. 6–7),[6] has often been credited to the Mamluk sultan Baybars (r. 658–76/1260–77).[7] He is known to

[4]On the bombing and destruction of this bridge in 1946 by the Palmach, see U. Ofek, *Night of the Bridges* [in Hebrew] (Bene Brak, 1981) https://benyehuda.org/read/14096#%D7%92%D7%A9%D7%A8%D7%91%D7%A0%D7%95%D7%AA%D7%99%D7%A2%D7%A7%D7%91. On the shelling and eventual evacuation in 1948 of the moshava Mishmar haYarden on the western bank of the river, facing the bridge, see E. Lewin, "The Mental Cleavage of Israeli Politics," *Israel Affairs* 22, no. 2 (2016): 355–78 (especially 363–64).

[5]Raphael, *Excavations of the Templar Fortress,* 29–32.

[6]The few remains of the bridge are located 260 meters north of the modern steel bridge, erected just before the demolition of the former by the Syro-Ottoman Agricultural Company Ltd. in 1932. See fig. 8 for the exact location of the remains (labeled as number 1) as documented by M. Stekelis in 1937 (Israel Antiquities Authority/Mandatory Archive/SRF 76 (98/98) as part of his archaeological campaign in 1936–37 following the draining of the riverbed in 1933, towards the construction of the new bridge (M. Stekelis, "The Palaeolithic Deposits of Jisr Banāt Yaqūb," *Bulletin of the Research Council of Israel Section G* 9 [1960]: 61–90). The demolition of the ancient bridge has been attributed to "Jewish colonists," as claimed by A. Petersen in his "Medieval Bridges of Palestine" and repeated elsewhere, yet in fact it was recommended and coordinated by the British Government of Palestine. The full correspondence between 1932 and 1934 between the District Commissioner's Office (Northern District-Haifa), the Chief Secretary of the [Mandate] Government Offices in Jerusalem (C. J. Evans), and the Director of the Department of Antiquities (E. T. Richmond) is available in the archives of the Israel Antiquities Authority (also online). On 5 November 1932, H. H. Foot (then the acting district commissioner) wrote to the Director of Antiquities: "I confirm that the new bridge is being built at some little distance down stream [sic] from the present bridge by the Concessionaires of the Hulleh. The construction of this bridge has been ordained by Government under the terms of the Hulleh Concession. Full particulars may be obtained from the Director of Public Works." (IAA/Mandatory Archive/ATQ 428). On 5 February 1934, the Director of Public Works wrote an official letter to the Manager of the Syro-Ottoman Agricultural Company Ltd. (Ṣafad), which reads: "I am instructed to hand over the old bridge at Jisr Banat Yaʿqub to you for demolition, it being understood that you will: (a) Hand over all materials recovered from the demolition of the old bridge to the Engineer in Charge Nazareth district." Part of this correspondence has already been commented on and clarified by E. Satt in his online article "Benot Yaʿkov Bridge—Who Destroyed the Ancient Bridge?" http://www.yoaview.com/Yoaview/SITE/?action=showobject&sn=2_960.

[7]M. Saig, "The Organization of the Barid in the Latter Part of the Middle Ages" [in Hebrew] (unpublished M.A. thesis, Bar Ilan University, 1977), 94, does not refer specifically to Baybars but

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have built a series of bridges to enhance the road network within his territory. The available sources, however, do not mention his direct involvement in the construction of this particular bridge. On the other hand, we do learn that he crossed this bridge while on route to besiege Ṣafad.

This article brings to light a so-far overlooked piece of textual evidence dealing with the patronage of this bridge, placing its erection (or repair?) during the Ayyubid period. Despite being the sole source of information, it should not be overlooked but rather evaluated according to its face value and its historical-archaeological context.

Historical Background

Jacob's Ford/Vadum Iacob has, over the ages, been a crucial land bridge connecting the two sides of the Upper Jordan.[8] During the Crusader and post-Crusader periods, this was the main passage connecting Damascus and other important centers nearby with Ṣafad and Acre.[9]

Tradition has this location named after Jacob, as it was believed to be the "the Ford of Grief" *(makhāḍat al-aḥzān)* where he cried for his son Joseph,[10] even though many sources have acknowledged the impossibility of such an identification since Biblical Dothan—where the main events related to Joseph's destiny at the hands of his brothers took place—was in Samaria and not in the eastern Galilee.[11]

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generally to the Mamluk period, yet writes: "probably erected in the days of the Mamluks, as Jindās bridge [Ludd, erected by Baybars]."

[8] *Via Maris* is the ancient route that mostly followed the Mediterranean coastal plain until it turned east via the Jezreel Valley, and from the Sea of Galilee it continued north to cross the Upper Jordan, thus connecting Egypt to the northern regions of the ancient Middle East.

[9] For a concise background on this bridge, see R. Hartmann, "Ḏjisr Banāt Yaʿḳūb," *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* 1st ed., http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2214-871X_ei1_SIM_2097; J. Sourdel-Thomine, "Djisr Banāt Yaʿḳūb," *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* 2nd ed., http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_2089.

[10] Yāqūt (Shihāb al-Dīn al-Ḥamawī al-Rūmī al-Baghdādī), *Kitāb muʿjam al-buldān,* ed. F. Wüstenfeld (Leipzig, 1866–73), 1:775.

[11] The denomination "Banāt Yaʿqūb," related to the bridge and to the fifteenth-century road-inn *(khān)* nearby, appears only from the seventeenth century or early eighteenth century. The Syrian mystic and traveler Muṣṭafá ibn Kamāl al-Dīn ibn ʿAlī al-Bakrī al-Ṣiddīqī (d. 1162/1749, on whom see C. Brockelmann, "al-Bakrī," *EI2,* https://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_1114), traveling in 1710, writes in his *Al-Khumrah al-ḥasīyah fī al-riḥlah al-qudsīyah* (after G. Weigert, "Eigtheenth Century Travel Diary: From Damascus to Jerusalem" [in Hebrew], *Cathedra* 68 [1993]: 49–56): "...we came close to the bridge of Banāt Yaʿqūb...and we are next to a khān." "Banāt Yaʿqūb" also designates a few other sites in the vicinity, such as those referred to by V. Guérin in his *Description géographique, historique et archéologique de la Palestine* (*Galilée,* part 3/vol. 1) (Paris, 1880), 342–43, 350, 369) and repeated in the *Survey of Western Palestine:* "A little north of

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It is not clear if an actual bridge to allow wheeled vehicles and engines to cross the river was erected next to this ford; this is a matter yet to be explored. In any case, we do not hear about a bridge in this location in either early Islamic sources or in those relating to Crusader times.

On the other hand, the growing significance of the passage north of Vadum Iacob is underscored by its utilization by the Mamluk postal service *(barīd),* which linked Egypt and Syria and was established at the time of Baybars. While the primary route of this service predominantly traversed via Jisr al-Majāmiʿ, approximately 10 km south of the Sea of Galilee[12] and was known as the quickest means of connecting Egypt and Syria (typically a four-day journey on horse-

the bridge Guérin found a circular reservoir called Hummâm Benat Yakûb, the 'Bath of Jacob's daughters,' close to which are a few ruins on a hillock called Kh. el Hummâm. These names are not on the map [i.e., not in the PEF map Sheet IV from 1880; they do appear in Guérin's map from 1875]. Still farther north, Guérin came upon a tomb of circular form, built of basaltic stones, called the Kubûr Benât Yakûb, 'the Tombs of the Daughters of Jacob.' Here the Bedouins have hollowed out places where they store grain under the protection of the tomb. An adjacent hill is covered with tombs, and on another mound, in the midst of more tombs, the remains of some small houses. The legends of the bridge, the baths, and the tomb of Jacob's daughters seem to be entirely of Mussulman origin" (C. R. Conder and H. H. Kitchener, *Survey of Western Palestine* (London, 1881), 1:226. The same designation is attributed to a cave in Ṣafad: Mughārat Banāt Yaʿqūb (Conder and Kitchener, *Survey of Western Palestine,* 1:255). Charles Clermont-Ganneau, surveying Palestine in 1873–74, gives an explanation for the above designation, according to the legend of Nabī Ma'in (Benjamin, son of Jacob): "When Neby Ma'in died, his five sisters hastened to come from the Jisîr Benât Yaʿkûb, or 'Bridge of the Daughters of Jacob,' which is on the Jordan to the south of Lake Hûleh, in order to be present at his funeral. They all however died before reaching their destination, at different places in the neighbourhood, where their tombs are still the object of veneration." See Ch. Clermont-Ganneau, *Archaeological Researches in Palestine during the Years 1873–1874* (London, 1896), 2:78. For further insights and passages on the designation of the bridge but also on the identification of this region with the Biblical passages related to Jacob and Joseph, see R. Ellenblum, "Frontier Activities: the Transformation of a Muslim Sacred Site into the Frankish Castle of Vadum Iacob," *Crusades* 2, no. 1 (2003): 83–97. On the references of some of these locations to Jacob, see also Raphael, *Excavations of the Templar Fortress,* 1–2.

[12] A *markaz* (station) of the *barīd* was established at Jisr Majāmiʿ in the 1340s to ease the crossing over the River Jordan, located previously east of Baysān (Cytryn-Silverman, *Road Inns,* 59–61). On the postal system in the Islamic world in general, see A. J. Silverstein, *Postal Systems in the Pre-Modern Islamic World* (Cambridge, 2007); and more specifically on the Mamluk period, see J. Sauvaget, *La Poste aux Chevaux dans l'Empire des Mamelouks* (Paris, 1941), which includes a discussion on the various branches of the postal route, on which we will not dwell in this article. One will find a thorough description in al-ʿUmarī's *Al-Taʿrīf bi-al-muṣṭalaḥ al-sharīf,* ed. M. Ḥ. Shams al-Dīn (Beirut, 1988), 239–58 (including the description of the pigeon post and snow transportation), repeated by Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-aʿshá fī ṣināʿat al-inshāʾ,* ed. M. Ḥ. Shams al-Dīn (Beirut, 1987), 14:418ff. A French translation of the latter is in M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *La Syrie a l'époque des Mamelouks* (Paris, 1923), 239ff. See also K. Franz's recent article,

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back), the crossing at Jisr Yaʿqūb in the contemporary road network is also notable.[13]

By the mid-fourteenth century, Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Faḍl Allāh al-ʿUmarī (d. 749/1349), in his administration manual *Al-Taʿrīf bi-al-muṣṭalaḥ al-sharīf,* refers to the route (and its stations, *marākiz*) for those coming from Damascus to Ṣafad as passing via Laghrān [*sic,* Naʿrān][14] and thus heading to the aforementioned bridge,[15] and in the 1480s Ibn al-Jīʿān, who wrote a travelogue of his journey with al-Ashraf Qāytbāy (r. 872–901/1468–96), mentions it as a relay-station *(markaz)* of the *barīd:*[16]

> And [the noble retinue] stopped at [Jisr Yaʿqūb], by the river bank which links to Birkat Qadas. And the amir Bardī Bek held a great banquet. And between this station *(maḥaṭṭah)* and Damascus are six relay stations *(burud):* al-Murayj [Burayj?], Saʿsaʿ, al-Uraynbah, al-Qunayṭrah, Naʿrān, and Jisr Yaʿqūb.

The above-mentioned relay station at Jisr Yaʿqūb most probably refers to the road-inn *(khān)* erected on the eastern bank of the river facing the bridge during the first half of the fifteenth century. The patron was a rich merchant named

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"Handlist of Stations of the Ayyubid and Mamluk Communication Systems," in *Egypt and Syria under Mamluk Rule,* ed. Amalia Levanoni (Leiden, 2022), 295–369.

[13] The fact that the bridge might have been repaired during the reign of Barqūq (r. 784–91/1382–89, 792–801/1390––99) emphasizes the importance of this crossing as an official route, but this repair has so far only been mentioned by Ch. Schefer, translator and editor of Bertrandon de la Broquière's *Le Voyage d'Outremer* (Paris, 1892), 52, n. 1 (his travels took place between 1432 and 1433), without any historical reference. There is a chance Schefer mixed up the repair of Majāmiʿ bridge with Jisr Yaʿqūb. In any event, this information was repeated (quoting la Broquière) by E. T. Richmond (IAA/Mandatory Archive/ATQ 428) in his letter of 1933 to the Chief Secretary of the Mandate Government Offices in Jerusalem, in his attempt to avoid the demolition of the bridge.

[14] This should be considered as al-ʿUmarī's misspelling (*Taʾrīf,* 250) (copied by al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ,* 428), as both in Khalīl al-Ẓāhirī (Ghars al-Dīn Khalīl ibn Shāhīn al-Ẓāhirī, *Kitāb zubdat kashf al-mamālik wa-bayān al-ṭuruq wa-al-masālik,* ed. P. Ravaisse [Paris, 1894], 120) and in Ibn al-Jīʿān (see below, n. 16) it reads Naʿrān.

[15] Jisr Yaʿqūb is mentioned by the polymath Shams al-Dīn Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad Abī Ṭālib al-Anṣārī al-Ṣūfī al-Dimashqī (also known as Shaykh Ḥiṭṭīn, d. 1327 in Ṣafad), in his geographical treatise *Nukhbat al-dahr fī ʿajāʾib al-barr wa-al-baḥr* from 1300–23 when describing the course of the River Jordan. See *Nukhbat al-dahr,* ed. A. F. Mehren (Saint Petersburg, 1865), 107.

[16] Ibn al-Jīʿān, *Al-Qawl al-mustaẓraf fī safr mawlānā al-Malik al-Ashraf,* ed. ʿUmar ʿAbd al-Salām Tadmurī (Tripoli, 1984), 91; translated into French by R. L. Devonshire, "Relation d'un Voyage du Sultan Qâitbây en Palestine et en Syrie," *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale du Caire* 20 (1922): 28.

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Ibn al-Muzalliq (d. 848/1444), who also built inns at Minyah on the northwestern bank of the Sea of Galilee and Qunayṭrah in the Golan Heights.[17]

The bridge was repaired in the eighteenth century by the governor of Acre, Aḥmad Jazzār Pasha. By the end of that century the bridge and *khān* next to it were the furthest point reached by Napoleon's troops during the siege of Acre. On 2 April 1799, the French attacked and drove away the Ottoman soldiers stationed at the *khān,* apparently also causing damage to the latter.[18]

Description of the Bridge and Modern Research

Jisr Yaʿqūb was originally constructed as a triple-arched structure in limestone, which has weathered over time and developed a gray hue due to natural decay.[19] The structure measures approximately 50 meters in length and 5.5 meters in width (fig. 9). Rectangular piers and abutments carried pointed arches and

[17] ʿAbd al-Qādir ibn Muḥammad al-Nuʿaymī al-Dimashqī, *Al-Dāris fī tārīkh al-madāris* (Beirut, 1990), 2:224; Cytryn-Silverman, *Road-Inns,* 31. Al-Nuʿaymī (d. 927/1520) writes: "...and he [Shams al-Dīn ibn al-Muzalliq] built lofty inns *(khānāt)* in Qunayṭrah, Jisr Yaʿqūb, al-Minyah, ʿUyūn al-Tujjār, on the route between Syria and Egypt. And he spent over a hundred thousand dinars on their erection. Inside each of these inns there is water. They are said to be of extreme beauty, in a way never surpassed by any king or caliph." In a personal communication (15 February 2024), Eli Satt from Kibbutz Gadot identified a spring located 200 meters southeast of the *khān* as the most probable water source.

[18] E. T. Richmond (IAA/Mandatory Archive/ATQ 428) (see n. 13), quoting U. J. Seetzen, *Reisen durch Syrien, Palaestina, Phoenicien, die Transjordan-Laender, Arabia Petraea und Unter-Aegypten* (Berlin, 1854), 1:341–42. The passage reads: "On the hilly bank on the west side of the bridge was a cluster of Arab tents where my Arab guide stood quietly. I walked across the bridge to the khān (Chân). The bridge is in very good condition, wide, has 3 arches, and I now found the width of the river to be 35 paces, although the bridge is almost half longer. At the west end of the bridge is a water mill. The khān on the other side lies on the high bank, about 100 paces from the bridge. It is built entirely of basalt stones, but inside almost completely ruined, which may have been partly due to the French under Bonaparte, one of whose corps attacked and drove away an Ottoman corps in the khān. There are a few soldiers here from the mutesellim of Ṣafad (Mützellim Szóffat), who leased the passage money to be collected here from the Pasha of Damascus. There is a miserable coffee shop and boutique with the most necessary foodstuffs. In the middle of the sizeable courtyard there is a destroyed water basin, which was built of beautiful basalt blocks and appears to be of old architecture. Since everything here is made of basalt, the bridge and the entire khān are also made of it. From the bridge to Lake Hule is about half an hour." Also quoted in A. Petersen, *A Gazetteer of Buildings in Muslim Palestine* (London, 2001), 182–83.

[19] Saig, in his abovementioned thesis on the *barīd* (n. 7), notes that originally the bridge crossing the Upper Jordan had only two arches, most probably a confusion on his part. Saig, "Barīd," 94. The gray hue of the building material led some of the nineteenth-century explorers such as Seetzen (see above) and Guérin (*Galilée,* 342) to describe the bridge as being built of basalt stones.

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their respective barrel vaults, which are set back some 35 cm from the edge of the piers. All arches consist of voussoirs joining at the mid-point and lack keystones. The central arch is wider than the side ones, which are slightly horseshoe-shaped. Cutwaters abut the piers on the upstream sides (figs. 10–11).

The modest width of the bridge allowed each of its piers and their respective vaults to be built as a single unit, with no need to move scaffolding (centering) or to reinforce inner seams with stone belts (unlike some more renowned bridges by Baybars; see below). Limestone blocks and ashlars covered the whole surface, concealing the *debesh* (soil mixed with undressed stones) used as infill. Many of the ashlars had drafted edges typical of Crusader monumental architecture (fig. 11), some still in situ these days (fig. 12).[20] The roadway (deck) rose towards the center (figs. 1–2), and was apparently topped by fieldstones packed in earth.

A fourth, round-shaped arch was added to the east in later times (figs. 2–4)[21] and also used local materials, including Crusader spolia.[22] A parapet made of small basalt blocks was added to the bridge sometime between 1912 and 1918

[20] It is worth mentioning that among the finds collected at the site of the bridge after its destruction in 1934 is a dressed basalt ashlar with a carved cross [fig. 13], though it may date from the Byzantine period. See IAA/Mandatory Archive/Jisr Banat Yaʿqub, SRF 76 (98/98).

[21] G. Dalman, *Palaestinajahrbuch (PJb) des Deutschen Evangelischen Instituts* 5 (1909): 19ff. (and E. T. Richmond in IAA/Mandatory Archive/ATQ 428, see n. 13, who quoted him) date the erection of the fourth arch to 1904. Following the testimony of the Swiss explorer J. L. Burckhardt from 1812 (J. L. Burckhardt, *Travels in Syria and the Holy Land,* ed. W. M. Leake [London, 1822], 315–16; repeated by La Broquière, *Le Voyage d'Outremer,* 52, n. 1; see also in Cytryn-Silverman, *Road-Inns,* 107), a fourth arch might have already existed in the early nineteenth century: "At thirteen hours is the bridge over the Jordan, called Djissr Beni Yakoub.... The bridge is of a solid construction, with four arches: on its E. side is a Khan, much frequented by travellers, in the middle of which are the ruins of an ancient square building constructed with basalt, and having columns in its four angles. The Khan contains also a spring." In a personal communication (13 February 2024) Eli Satt, a member of nearby Kibbutz Gadot and a researcher of the region, claimed that Burckhardt might have seen the bridge from afar and thought the shape of some overgrown vegetation to be an arch. Satt also appended a photograph by Dalman from 1905–8, where a bush between the second and third arch could have been misinterpreted as an extra arch. The present authors nevertheless still do not reject the possibility of an early date, especially as between Burkhardt's description and Dalman's photo there is a gap of ca. 15 years, during which that very bush might not be relevant. In addition, it is hard to believe that an explorer of Burckhardt's standards would be fooled by an illusion created by a bush. On the many readings on this meticulous explorer, see W. Y. Adams, "J. L. Burckhardt, Ethnographer," *Ethnohistory* 20, no. 3 (1973): 213–28, and C. Ansorge, "Study and Travel: John Lewis Burckhardt's Remarkable Journey Traced through Archives and Manuscripts in Cambridge University Library," *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society* 15, no. 3 (2018): 455–86.

[22] See Y. Stepansky's report on IAA Survey Map Rosh Pina (18), Benot Yaʿaqov Bridge, Jisr Banāt Yaʿqub (site 109), https://www.antiquities.org.il/survey/new/default_en.aspx?pid=447. See also A. Petersen, "Medieval Bridges of Palestine," in *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mam-*

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(fig. 10).[23] In 1918 the central (second) arch was blown-up by Ottoman forces attempting to slow down the British army on its way from Tiberias to Damascus (fig. 3). It was soon repaired by soldiers of the Australian expeditionary force.[24]

Little of the bridge remains: the landing of the modern eastern arch is still partly exposed, its arch possibly buried under the dirt; the springing of the second arch (originally the first) from the east is visible (figs. 4–5); on the western side it is possible to see some accumulation on the river bank, potentially hinting at remains of the western pillar.[25]

The bridge was documented by the Survey of Western Palestine in the late nineteenth century,[26] but it is not until 1919 that we get a detailed technical description (also relating to the abovementioned additions, as well as partial demolition from 1918), when the renowned historian of Islamic art K. A .C. Creswell visited the bridge after World War I:[27]

> A bridge of four arches, of which the first commencing from the W. end is of good masonry, the 2nd has been blown up, the 3rd resembles the first, and the fourth of wider span is braced from side to side by two tie bars with "S" ends and must be quite modern. The masonry of the 1st and 3rd arches is of fair sized blocks, many of which have rusticated centres and drafted edges. The stone has taken a pale golden-brown tint. The arches have a median joint. Between the first arch and the W. bank there are irregularities in the masonry, but elsewhere it appears to be uniform. The masonry, of fine large blocks, of the 1st arch is not carried right through, the lining of the tunnel being of smaller stones. There are two "V" shaped piers on the N. side, but where the third would be there is a long spit of land rendering a third less necessary. That part of the bridge above the 4th arch is narrower than the last. The parapet is modern, and is built of small blocks of basalt.

luk Eras VI, ed. U. Vermeulen and K. D'Hulster (Leuven, 2010), 295. The concrete landing of this fourth arch can still be seen today, hinting at the buried structure underneath.

[23] Satt suggests dating the east parapet to 1905–8, coinciding with the construction of the new arch, and the west parapet to a period before 1918, when the central arch was destroyed (personal communication, 15 February 2024). He draws upon the photograph by Dalman mentioned earlier, despite Dalman dating the addition of the arch to 1904. Based on this same photograph, however, the parapet over this addition appears to be of a different fabric from the arch, while the ancient bridge retains its original masonry without any additional basalt parapet.

[24] Satt, "Benot Ya'kov Bridge."

[25] Site last visited (Katia Cytryn) on 21 May 21 2023.

[26] Conder and Kitchener, *Survey of Western Palestine,* 1:206, 226.

[27] Quoted in Petersen, "Medieval Bridges," 295.

DOI: 10.6082/vgdx-kf24. (https://doi.org/10.6082/vgdx-kf24)
DOI of Vol. XXVII: 10.6082/msr27. See https://doi.org/10.6082/msr2024 to download the full volume or individual articles.

As for the original structure, we must note the presence, as pointed out by Creswell, of "rusticated centres and drafted edges," and we agree with archaeologist Y. Stepansky, who surveyed the region, that this masonry most likely originates from the Crusader fortress downstream, as this is the typical masonry of the period (see below).

As pointed out above (n. 6) the ancient bridge was intentionally demolished in 1934, while a new steel bridge was erected to its south.

A Short Note on the Bridges by Baybars in Southern Bilād al-Shām[28]

Unlike the study of Roman roads, where the exposure of paved sections and milestones allows for fine-tuning the determination of the actual routes followed by travelers, the study of terrestrial networking under the Mamluks, which primarily relied on dirt paths and apparently lacked road markers, is a complex endeavor. In fact, it seems that routes changed organically, according to travelers' different necessities (e.g., an official messenger as opposed to a merchant carrying commodities), weather, and security conditions. Nonetheless, it remains feasible to delineate the broad contours of these routes by following the administrative manuals (for further details, see al-ʿUmarī and al-Qalqashandī, n. 12), by the identification of *khān*s sponsored through diverse forms of patronage, and by mapping bridges that facilitated the traversal of natural barriers.

In *Tārīkh al-Malik al-Ẓāhir,* also known as *Al-Rawḍ al-ẓāhir fī sīrat al-Malik al-Ẓāhir,* by Baybars's administrator and biographer ʿIzz al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Shaddād (613–84/1217–85), we read of seven bridges erected by this sultan in the southern districts of Bilād al-Shām:[29]

> ...he built a bridge near the village of Dāmiyah on the Jordan River ("the river in the Ghawr"), and he established a *waqf* for it intended for [the upkeep of] whatever gets damaged on it; and he

[28] Dror Czitron wrote his masters thesis, "Building Technology and the State of Conservation of the Baybars Bridges in Israel: Lod Bridge as a Case Study," in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree in Conservation at the Department of Archaeology, Haifa University (2019), under the supervision of Dr. Ravit Linn and Dr. Katia Cytryn. Special thanks to Prof. Reuven Amitai of the Department of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, who was the external reader of this thesis and contributed with valuable input. For a recent, in-depth study on the roads and bridges under Baybars, see K. Raphael and R. Amitai, "Bridges and Roads to Mamluk Gaza and Beyond," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 54 (2023): 133–79.

[29] On Baybars's bridges in Cairo and its surroundings, see Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Khalīl ibn Aybak al-Ṣafadī, *Kitāb al-wāfī bi-al-wafayāt* (Beirut, 2004), 10:212.

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> erected three bridges over the Yarkon (ʿAwjāʾ) river and surroundings: he erected a bridge near Ludd, a bridge in Imdūd [*sic,* Isdūd] and a bridge near Yabnā [Yubnā]. And [he built] a bridge near Dayr Sunayd in the proximity of Gaza; and a bridge near Rubīl [probably Nabī Rubīn], and near Qāqūn. **And he endowed funds [as *waqf*] for each one of them [to cover] the expenses for repairs of what might get damaged or destroyed** [emphasis added].

Among these seven bridges, those which best survived are the one near Ludd (also known as Jisr Jindās following its proximity to the no longer extant village by that name), Yubnā (Hebrew: Yavne), Isdūd (Hebrew: Ashdod), and Dayr Sunayd. The remains of Jisr Dāmiyah are located in a military-controlled area on the Jordanian side of the Jordan River,[30] and apparently little has survived anyway. A site called "el-Jisr,"[31] located ca. 1.5 km southeast of Nabī Rubīn on the eastern bank of the Soreq River, should be the very bridge described by Ibn Shaddād.[32] As for a bridge near Qāqūn, research is yet to be done.[33]

The absence of Jisr Yaʿqūb in the above description is noteworthy, especially given its strategic location, but it does appear in a crucial event in the life of Baybars: his active role in transporting siege machines towards the conquest of Ṣafad in Shaʿbān 664/May 1266.

The Egyptian chronicler Ibn al-Furāt (735–807/1334–1405) writes:[34]

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[30] Unfortunately, the authors did not manage to analyze these remains.

[31] The site named "Dhahrat al-Jisr" according to the Mandatory Archive file should be read as Ẓahrat al-Jisr, i.e., "back of the bridge." See IAA/Mandatory Archive/ATQ 14a (el Jisr), where the description reads: "Ancient tombs (MBA) [necropolis of Tell es Sultan], rock-cut bombs. Rock-cut foundations of ancient bridge, rubble foundations, quarries [strokethrough], anc[ient] reservoir, medieval transitory settlement [the latter added in blue]."

[32] New Israeli Grid 1761/6479. M. Fischer and I. Taxel ("Yavne, Survey Map," *Hadashot Arkheologiyot* [Excavations and Surveys in Israel] 118 [2006], https://www.hadashot-esi.org.il/report_detail_eng.aspx?id=437&mag_id=111) describe El Jisr thus: "Located on a low kurkar hill along the eastern bank of Nahal Soreq, at the confluence with a small tributary, opposite Tel Mahoz. A concentration of dressed kurkar stones in the wadi channel probably belonged to a bridge that once spanned it."

[33] Israel Antiquities Authority archaeologist Dr. Eli Yannai (personal communication, 7 August 2023), who surveyed the maps concerning Qāqūn and its environs, suggested Jisr al-Maktabah as a possible identification. Jisr al-Maktabah, located west of Kibbutz HaOgen in the central Sharon Plain, is a Roman bridge that was reconstructed during the Ottoman period (https://www.antiquities.org.il/survey/new/default_en.aspx?surveynum=2173.

[34] Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥīm ibn al-Furāt, *Ayyubids, Mamlukes and Crusaders: Selections from the* Tārīkh al-Duwal wa'l-Mulūk *of Ibn al-Furāt,* trans. U. and M. C. Lyons (Cambridge, 1971), 1:113–16, 2:89–91. The present translation is my adaptation. A summarized version was also

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> The sultan stayed by Acre until the arrival of those troops whom we have already mentioned as raiding Tyre and other places. He had a number of mangonels [*manjāniq,* most probably trebuchets] constructed and these he distributed amongst the amirs to be transported. He then went off with his troops, wearing their armor, and, riding up close to the gate of Acre, he halted at Tall al-Fuḍūl (Toron Saladini), after which he left for ʿAyn Jālūt.
>
> The amir Sayf al-Dīn al-Zaynī had set off to bring up the mangonels from Damascus; he worked hard to get this done and the amir Jamāl al-Dīn al-Najībī (also) took a hand in the task. The mangonels were carried on the men's shoulders.
>
> The sultan marched off and came down against Ṣafad on Monday, the 8th of the great month of Ramaḍān in this same year (13 June 1266) that we have mentioned, after which he laid siege to it....
>
> On 21 Ramaḍān (26 June), the aforementioned month, the *manjāniq* arrived and the sultan, in his concern for them, sent out the amir ʿIzz al-Dīn, amir al-Jāndār, to meet them. Yet the camels were unable to carry the *manjāniq,* so the sultan commanded the amirs, the soldiers, and the rest of the people to carry them on their shoulders and necks from Jisr Yaʿqūb, which is one stage of marching from Safad *(marḥalah min Ṣafad).* The sultan himself, along with his elite, came out and dragged the wooden beams with the oxen.
>
> The qadi Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn ʿAbd al-Ẓāhir, author of the biography of al-Ẓāhir [Baybars], said: "[al-Malik] al-Mujāhid, ruler of al-Jazīrah, said, 'I hauled with the sultan until I got tired and left to rest, after which I came and hauled for a while, then I went several times, but the sultan stayed put, taking no rest, and continuing his work of transporting the wooden beams, together with his entourage and his servants of the houses and stables. The *manjāniq* began to shoot on 26 Ramaḍān (1 July).'"

This information was repeated (with some shortening and changes) by the fifteenth-century Cairene historian al-Maqrīzī in his *Al-Sulūk li-maʿrifat duwal al-mulūk.*[35]

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transmitted by Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Nuwayrī (d. 733/1333), *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab* (Cairo, 2002), 30:286.

[35] Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-sulūk li-maʿrifat duwal al-mulūk,* ed. M. M. Ziyādah (Cairo, 1942), 1:2:545–46; idem, *Histoire des Sultans Mamlouks de l'Égypte,* trans. M. Quatremère (Paris, 1845), 1:2:28. See

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Who Built Jisr Yaʿqūb? And Why?

After showing that not only does the bridge under discussion not appear in the very clear list of bridges erected by Baybars, but that in fact this sultan crossed it on his way to Ṣafad, where he established the capital of the province *(mamlakah),* we are left with the open question: who built it?

With the aid of online digital databases for Arabic sources, a singular piece of evidence has surfaced. Though it stands alone and its interpretation is somewhat puzzling, its significance cannot be overlooked, particularly when taking into account that it aligns remarkably well with the overall historical context.

In the biographical encyclopedia *Aʿyān al-ʿaṣr wa-aʿwān al-naṣr,* al-Ṣafadī writes of the renowned Shaykh Ḥiṭṭīn, who died in 727/1327:[36]

> And he died—may God Almighty have mercy on him—as I think in Jumādá I in the year 727/1327 in Ṣafad. He was born in the year 654/1256. And the following is from the writings of Shaykh al-Birzalī: "...And when he came to Ṣafad and I saw him there, he was the shaykh of the village of ʿAlamīn al-Fuqarāʾ," a village near Maghrān [*sic,* read Naʿrān] at the Jordan River (al-Sharīʿah), near Jisr Yaʿqūb, *waqf* of Sultan Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Yūsuf, may God Almighty wrap him with His mercy.[37]

There are basically four ways to understand this passage: the first, that the village of ʿAlamīn was Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's *waqf;* the second, that Maghrān (i.e., Naʿrān)[38] was his *waqf;* the third as referring to the bridge itself; and the fourth,

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discussion on Baybars's conquest of Ṣafad (in Hebrew) in J. Drory, "Baybars and the Conquest of Safed," in *Studies in the History of Eretz Israel Presented to Yehuda Ben Porat,* ed. Y. Ben-Arieh and E. Reiner (Jerusalem, 2003), 410–22.

[36] (Also called al-Dimashqī; see note 15, above.) Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Khalīl ibn Aybak al-Ṣafadī, *Aʿyān al-ʿaṣr wa-aʿwān al-naṣr,* ed. ʿAlī Abū Zayd et al. (Damascus, 1998), 4:475–76. On him see also O. Amir, "Muslim Religious Life in the Safed Area during the 13th and 14th Centuries according to a 'New-Old' Source" [in Hebrew], *Cathedra* 156 (2015): 53–54.

[37] Al-Ṣafadī, *Aʿyān al-ʿaṣr,* 4:475–76.

[38] Maghrān is possibly a misspelling of Naʿrān, already mentioned above. On this town, which was the center of the province of the same name, see the article in this volume by Kate Raphael, Mustafa Abbasi, and Eran Meir, "Between Safad and Damascus: Excavations at the Village of Naʿarān and Mamluk and Early Ottoman Rural Settlements in the Golan." It is true that al-Ṣafadī's passage on Shaykh Ḥiṭṭīn hints at a village next to the Jordan River and Naʿrān is ca. 6 km east (thanks to Dr. Or Amir and to Eli Satt for sharing their concerns on this matter), yet in a regional point of view, this is the closest administrative center to the river crossing. Satt has suggested identifying ʿAlamīn al-Fuqarāʾ with the site of ʿAlmin (Archaeological Survey of Israel, Map Katzrin 18/1, site no. 49) at HaKtzinim Pool/ʿAyn Almin (32°59'40"N 35°38'23"E), ca.

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that all three were part of his endowments.[39] As observed in Ibn Shaddād's passage above, bridges were endowed with properties[40] whose revenues would provide for their maintenance. We suppose the same system already existed under the Ayyubids.

In fact, associating the erection of Jacob's Bridge with Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn makes sense when analyzed in context. In 575/1179, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn ordered the destruction of the Crusader fortress of Chastelet, whose erection had only commenced in 573/1178, and that following Baldwin IV's (r. 1174–85) breaking off the *status quo* in that area—the very border between Muslim and Crusader territory.[41] This was an attempt by the Templars—after the victory at Montgisard in 1177—to control the best ford on the Upper Jordan (Vadum Iacob), believing that such a fortification would contain the Ayyubids from pressing towards Jerusalem, especially as this was the very place where Baldwin III was defeated by Nūr al-Dīn in 552/1157.[42]

Having destroyed Chastelet and the Crusaders' plans to control the ford, it seems only natural that Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn himself would see the necessity of guaranteeing a comfortable passage for his armies. A bridge just one kilometer north of the destroyed fortress (and apparently erected with *spolia* from that very place) would not only put the Crusader fortress of Ṣafad under pressure *vis-à-vis* possible faster advances of Muslim armies (as eventually happened under Baybars), but also better connect the Muslim villages on the eastern side of the Jordan with the sacred site of Nabī Shuʿayb. It seems Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn developed this site of pilgrimage,[43] in addition to the restoration of the pilgrimage to Bayt al-Aḥzān (Jacob's House of Grief; on Joseph, see above, n. 11), which seems to have stood at the very site of the Crusader fortification.[44]

One should see this "religious act" not unlike the later erection of pilgrimage sites by Baybars, which among other purposes aimed at effectively protecting and populating the roads in areas still abounding with Christian activity through a legitimate religious program.[45]

1.5 km from the ford on the Jordan River near Meẓad ʻAteret, and some 2.5 km from Jisr Banāt Yaʿqūb.

[39] Thanks to Prof. Amitai for giving his input on this passage.

[40] Raphael and Amitai, "Roads and Bridges," 147.

[41] Ellenblum, *Frontier Activities,* 90–91.

[42] Sourdel-Thomine, "D̲ j̲ isr Banāt Yaʿḳūb."

[43] See Amir, "Muslim Religious Life in the Safed Area," 60.

[44] Ellenblum, *Frontier Activities,* 86.

[45] Nimrod Luz dwells on such a background for the development of the site of Nabī Mūsá (on the way between Jerusalem and the Dead Sea/Jordan River) by Baybars in his article in this volume ("GISing Baybars: Unraveling the Odd Location of Maqām Nabī Mūsá"). See also H. Tara-

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It is worth noting that in the Mamluk period, this is the very route of the *barīd* reaching Ṣafad from the south,[46] while Jisr Yaʿqūb was on the messengers' route from Damascus to Ṣafad. It can thus be assumed with a high degree of certainty that this was the very road used for the *ziyārah* to Nabī Shuʿayb, even before the Mamluk period, and even before Ṣafad fell to Baybars.

The Earthquake of 1202

One difficulty when hypothesizing that the bridge was built sometime between 1179 and 1193 (i.e., the death of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn) is the severe earthquake of 1202 (with an estimated magnitude of 7.6), which, judging by its effect at Meẓad ʿAteret as analyzed by archaeo-seismologists,[47] should also have affected the alleged Ayyubid bridge.[48]

Such an earthquake would not leave the bridge without damage; it would certainly need repair. Rebuilding such a strategic bridge would be a logical undertaking, even if we do not find evidence for that either. A good example to which such a suggestion could be referred to is the case of Jisr al-Majāmiʿ, believed to have been erected in the early Islamic period, rebuilt during the Ayyubid period by Usāmah al-Ḥalabī, an amir of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, and apparently rebuilt once more by Sultan Barqūq, as mentioned in al-Maqrīzī's *Sulūk:*[49] "And [he] built [or rebuilt] a bridge over the Jordan River in the Ghawr, on the route to Damascus. Its length [is] 120 cubits [ca. 70 m], and [its] breadth 20 cubits [ca. 11.5 m]."

It is worth noting the discussion by M. Sharon in his *CIAP* concerning a certain inscription found in Bāniyās and dated 623/1226.[50] It deals with a block of

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gan, "Politics and Aesthetics: Sultan Baybars and the Abu Hurayra/Rabbi Gamliel Building in Yavneh," in *Milestones in the Art and Culture of Egypt,* ed. Asher Ovadiah (Tel Aviv, 2000), 122, on the strategic interest of Baybars in developing the tomb of Abū Hurayrah in Yavne as a site of *ziyārah* (Islamic pilgrimage), thus also encouraging the population to transfer from the coast to the plain. "Presumably, Baybars also wished to retain and renew the road from Cairo to Damascus, which passed through Yavne, Ramla and Lydda, for the sake of comfort and delivery of mail—despite Yavne is not even mentioned in Muslim sources as a station on the *barid* road—as well as for strategic reasons, since he had two bridges built in the vicinity of Ramla: one, the Jindas Bridge, at Lydda (1273/671), the other at Yavne (672). The area was thus clearly a bustling thoroughfare."

[46] We read in al-ʿUmarī's passage on the *barīd* (*al-Taʿrīf,* 248): "...and whoever is on the road to Ṣafad arrives at Nayin, then to Ḥiṭṭīn—and there is found the tomb of Shuʿayb, may peace be upon him—then from there to Ṣafad."

[47] Ellenblum et al., "Crusader Castle Torn Apart," 303–6.

[48] We would like to thank Dr. Kate Raphael for bringing this fact to our attention.

[49] Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk,* 3:2:946.

[50] M. Sharon, *Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum Palaestinae* (Leiden, 1999), 2:57–59.

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limestone which originally was about 3 meters wide, with a nine-petalled rosette engraved on each side of the inscription in *naskhī* script. While Sharon reads *thaghr* (a frontier) and believes this long inscription was set over a monumental gate, Clermont-Ganneau suggested in 1887 reading either *khān* or *jisr* (bridge), the latter being Clermont-Ganneau's preference by comparing it to Jisr Jindās at Ludd.[51] Sharon states that "if Clermont-Ganneau is right, then the inscription could have commemorated the building of one of the bridges on Wādī Zaʿārah (Ṣaʿār)" by al-Malik al-Azīz ʿUthmān ibn al-Malik al-ʿĀdil ibn Ayyūb (who received the dominion over Bāniyās from his brother al-Muʿaẓẓam ʿĪsá in 608/1211).

Either a *jisr* or a *thaghr,* this construction relates to the main northern thoroughfare connecting Damascus and Tyre, which crossed near Bāniyās and was used during the Crusader period, but for which archaeological evidence points to an apparent development already during the Fatimid period (tenth century) as part of the postal route.[52]

We are not suggesting here that the inscription at Bāniyās refers to the rebuilding of Jisr Yaʿqūb. It most probably refers to one of the buildings in the vicinity of Bāniyās. It may suggest, however, that the Ayyubids were busy not only with Bāniyās itself and its immediate surroundings (including the erection of al-Ṣubaybah by al-ʿAzīz ʿUthmān), but with the region's infrastructure in general, especially after the harsh earthquake of 1202, in their attempts to control the passes that connected the northern fortifications of the Latin Kingdom, and in this case also the razed fortress at Vadum Iacob.

Conclusion

For many generations the remains of the stone bridge connecting the Upper Galilee and the Golan Heights over the Upper Jordan River was considered to have a Mamluk origin, and, more specifically, to be one in the series of bridges erected by Baybars in southern Bilād al-Shām. The original bridge, before Ottoman additions, was erected over three arches, in an architectural scheme reminiscent of the well-known bridge at Ludd, which can be attributed to Baybars by its famous inscriptions and carved lions.

Perhaps now one should think the other way around: perhaps the builders working for Baybars were the ones who saw Jisr Yaʿqūb—the very bridge over which the sultan had helped roll the wood for the *manjāniq* toward his victory

[51] See Ch. Clermont-Ganneau, «Le Pont de Lydda Construit par le Sultan Beibars,» *Journal Asiatique,* 8th series, vol. 10 (1887): 512.

[52] I. Shaked, "The Tenth- and Eleventh-Century Mail Route from Banias to Tyre, and Identification of 'The Black Watch'" [in Hebrew], *Cathedra* 103 (2002): 21–32.

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over Ṣafad's Franks—as a source of inspiration both architectural and perhaps even symbolic.

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Figure 1. Banāt Yaʿqūb Bridge, 1912. Photo by Leo Cahen, Vienna. Caption reads: "Jacob's Bridge near Mishmar HaYarden." From Shulamit and Dov Goldshtein Collection, Shoshana and Asher Halevi photo archive, Yitzhak Ben Zvi (YBZ_0019_009).

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Figure 2. General view of the bridge, showing added arch on the eastern bank of the river. Note remains of *khān* on the far right. Caption reads: "Jordan near Mishmar haYarden." Yechiel Zehavi Collection, Shoshana and Asher Halevi photo archive, Yitzhak Ben Zvi (YBZ_0045_182).

DOI: 10.6082/vgdx-kf24. (https://doi.org/10.6082/vgdx-kf24)
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Figure 3. Banāt Yaʿqūb Bridge under repair, 1919, looking southeast. L. A. Mayer Collection, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Dept. of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies (Mayer_28A).

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Figure 4. Destroyed bridge, 1937. Photo by M. Stekelis. Photo courtesy Israel Antiquities Authority/Mandatory Archive/SRF 76(98/98).

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Figure 5. Mr. Idan Shaked, former IAA district archaeologist, standing on remains of bridge on east bank of the Jordan River, 21 May 2021. Photo by Katia Cytryn.

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Figure 6. Satellite image, Google Earth, 13 July 2024.

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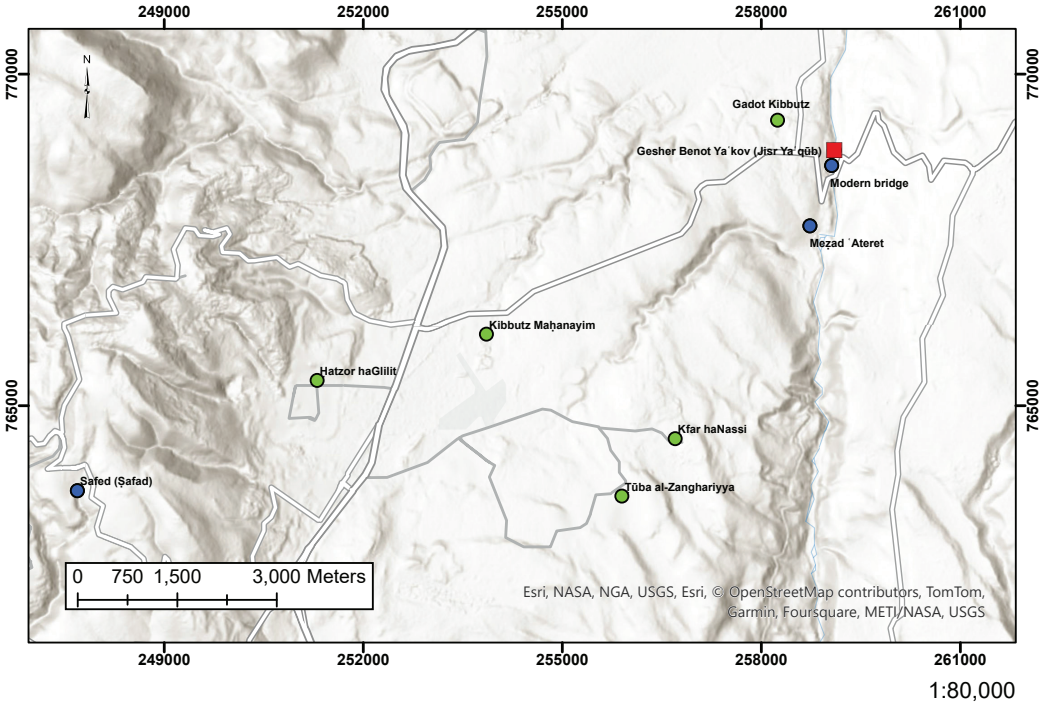

Figure 7. Location map of bridge. 1:80,000. By Dror Czitron, courtesy of Israel Antiquities Authority.

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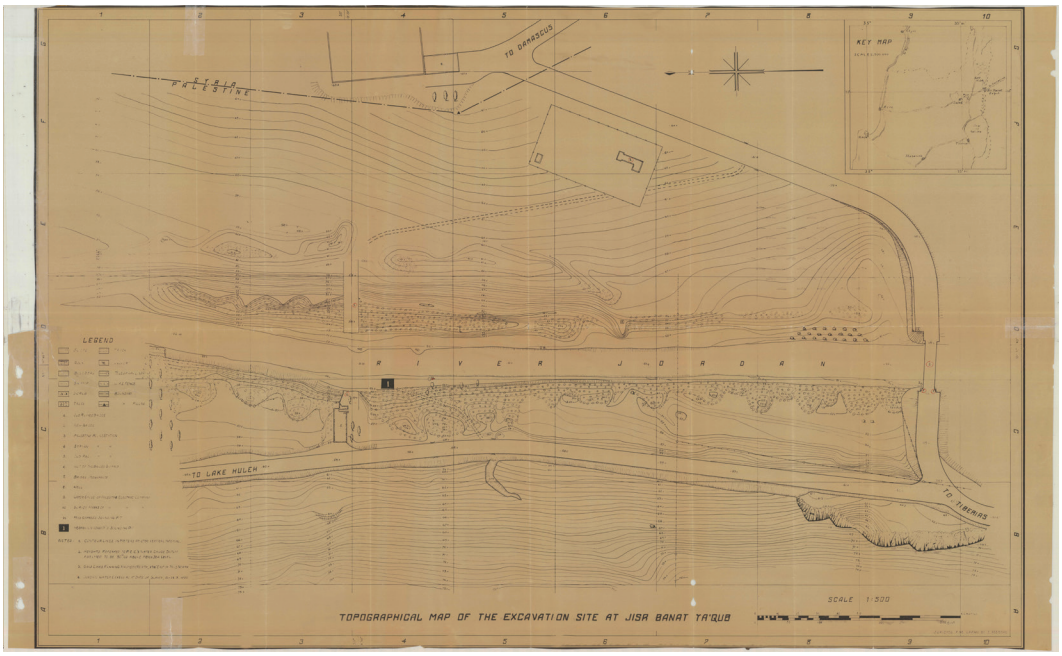

Figure 8. Topographical map of M. Stekelis excavations, 1936–37. Courtesy of Israel Antiquities Authority/Mandatory Archive/SRF 76(98/98).

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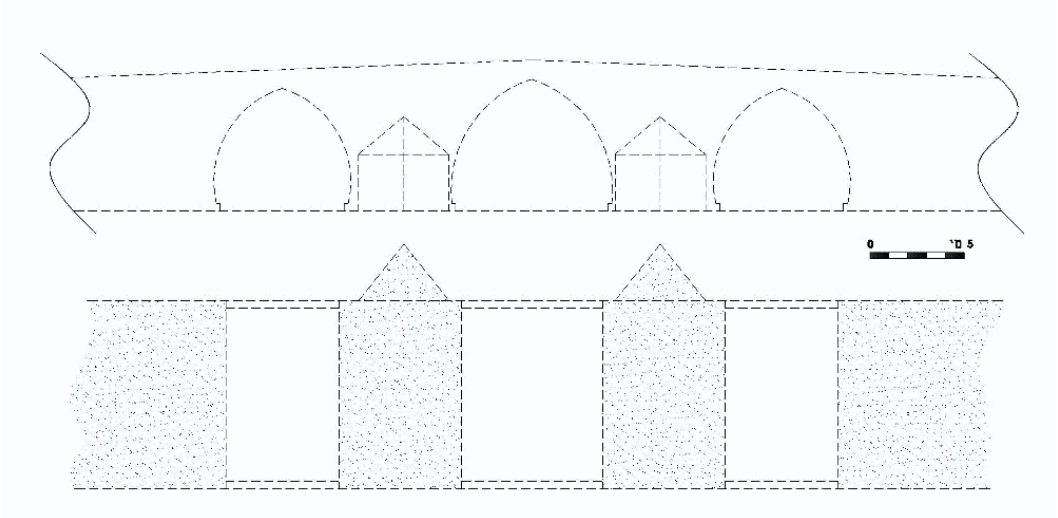

Figure 9. Schematic plan and section of Banāt Yaʿqūb Bridge by Dror Czitron and Erez Mizrachi.

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Figure 10. Bridge, with second arch from west (originally middle arch) repaired, January 1929. From Bohman Max Collection, Shoshana and Asher Halevi photo archive. Yitzhak Ben Zvi (YBZ_0358_336).

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Figure 11a. German-Israeli architect Eliezer Yellin and British-Israeli cellist Thelma Yellin-Bentwich with her father Herbert (Zvi) Bentwich (d. 25 June 1932), near the westernmost arch of the bridge, after repair of second arch. Shoshana Israeli house of Yellin Collection, Shoshana and Asher Halevi photo archive, Yitzhak Ben Zvi (YBZ_0388_0451).

DOI: 10.6082/vgdx-kf24. (https://doi.org/10.6082/vgdx-kf24)
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Figure 11b. Bridge, from southwest, with second arch under repair, 1919. Note Crusader masonry between arches. L. A. Mayer Collection, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Dept. of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies (Mayer_30A).

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DOI of Vol. XXVII: 10.6082/msr27. See https://doi.org/10.6082/msr2024 to download the full volume or individual articles.

Figure 12. Detail of drafted masonry, likely of Crusader origin, on the surviving section of the east bank bridge, looking north. Photograph by Katia Cytryn, May 21st, 2021.

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Figure 13. Cross carved on a basalt ashlar found at the site of Banāt Yaʿqūb Bridge after its destruction in 1934. See IAA/Mandatory Archive/Jisr Banat Yaʿqub, SRF 76(98/98).

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