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3. A Levite

Joram is a member of the house of Amram and descendant of Moses' son Eliezer (2 Chr 26:25, cf. 2 Chr 23:6–24). He appears in a list of Levites serving in the temple. The list is ascribed to the time of David, though it more likely reflects the temple administration from Persian period Jerusalem.

4. A Priest

According to the Chronicler, Joram was a priest from the time of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah (2 Chr 17:8). He was sent by the king together with another priest, eight Levites and five officials to instruct the book of the law of God. The historicity of this text is questioned, as it expresses the Chronicler's theological concepts regarding the loyalty of king Jehoshaphat to the Yahwistic cult.

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5. Son of Toi

Joram was the son of Toi, king of Hamat (2 Sam 8:10). After David's victory over the Aramaean king, Hadadezer of Zoba, who according to v. 10 was at war with Toi, Toi sent his son, Joram, to bring tribute to David (2 Sam 8:9–12). This verse has often been taken as evidence that David subjugated the Kingdom of Hamat, located in central Syria. Yet, the entire account of David's wars with Israel's neighbours in 2 Sam 8 reflects the geo-political reality of a much later period (Na'aman). The parallel version of this story in 2 Chr calls the Aramaean prince Hadoram instead of Joram (1 Chr 18:10). This is because, given the fact that the chief Aramaean deity was Hadad, the Chronicler likely felt that this theophoric was more fitting of an Aramaean prince than a Yahwistic name.

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6. Brother of Tibni

Joram is the Brother of Tibni, the individual who was Omri's rival in the struggle for the throne of Israel (1 Kgs 16:21–22). The phrase "Joram, his brother" does not appear in the MT version of Kings; it is to be found only in the LXX version, but since the origin of this additional phrase in LXX cannot be explained, a strong claim is made for its originality.

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Omer Sergi

Jordan River

- I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament
- II. New Testament
- III. Judaism
- IV. Christianity
- V. Literature
- VI. Visual Arts
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I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament

The headwaters of the Jordan River (MT *Yardēn*; LXX *Ἰορδάνης*) lie at the foot of Mount Hermon. They flow through the Huleh Valley before entering the Sea of Galilee. The Jordan flows southward from there, winding tortuously on its journey to the Dead Sea, into which its waters empty. The river is a political boundary in modern times; it seems to have occasionally been a tribal and political boundary in antiquity as well. According to the biblical record, the river could pose difficulties to commerce and travel, especially when at flood stage. The river's status as a political and economic boundary in antiquity, although not impassable, led to its uniquely symbolic position in the text of the HB/OT.

1. Name and Derivation. The linguistic origin of the Jordan River's name has been heavily debated, in large part because of the varying forms in which it was preserved in antiquity. The name is *yardēn* (<**yardin*) in Biblical and Modern Hebrew (see also *yardēnā'* in Aramaic [e.g., TO Gen 13:10–11]), but *Ἰορδάνης* (<**yurdān*) in Greek texts (see *ywrđn'* in the Aramaic of TPss [e.g., 42:7]), and *Urdunn* (< *yurdun*/?) or *Urdan* (< *yurdān*/?) in modern Arabic (Thompson: 954; Hommel: 169). The river is named in an Egyptian text of the 19th Dynasty (13th cent. BCE) as *ꜥꜣꜣꜣ n yrdwnꜣ* "the river (of) Jordan" (p. *Anastasi* 1: 22–8–23.1, for which see Gardiner: 68; = ANET, 477; see also Ahituv: 123). Albright rendered this spelling syllabically as *Ya-ar-du-na* (1934: 36, iv.6; 1968: 111–12, esp. n. 5). He considered this orthography to betray the name's West Semitic origin (which he esteemed to show the development **yurdān* > **yurdōn* [Canaanite shift] > *yardōn*/ [dissimilation of *u-u* vowels]). The name is also commonly identified with entry 150 (*jwrwdn*) in the Bubastite Portal list of Sheshonq (22nd Dynasty, 10th cent. BCE; see Ritner: 208, 210). Albright considered *yardēn* to be an "Aramaizing development from Canaanite-Hebrew" (1968: 111n.5).

Some have argued for a Semitic derivation of the name, citing either the verbal root *y-r-d*, "to descend," or the common noun *yē'ōr*, "river," followed by the element *dān* (purportedly incorporating the name of the city at the river's headwaters). This etymology is typically credited to Jerome (e.g., Hommel: 169), and was preserved by several Medieval and Renaissance cartographic representations

(e.g., the Sanudu-Vesconte map [ca. 1320 CE] and the Sanudo map [1611 CE]). These maps trace two sources of the river, the “Ior” and the “Dan” (for further discussion, see North), probably under the influence of Jerome. As Köhler has argued, however, this Semitic derivation is contradicted by the distribution of rivers with similar names throughout the Mediterranean basin. Throughout the area one finds rivers with phonologically related names: e.g., the Jardanos in Crete, Vardanes (or Vardanos) and Vuardo (or Vardo) in the Rhone Valley of France, and the possibly related Rhodanos river; see detailed discussion in Hommel). This distribution casts doubt on the possibility of a Semitic origin.

One early attempt to derive the toponym from Indo-European traces the name to Persian *yār-dan(uš)*. The components of this derivation, *yār/yor*, “year,” and *don*, “river,” seem to assume a “perennial river” (Cohen: 973). Accordingly, the river’s title would have described accurately the river’s uncommon status as such in the southern Levant (Köhler). The similar river names from around the Mediterranean basin seem to support the general meaning, if not the linguistic origin. Although toponyms prove to be durable, von Soden challenges a putative Persian origin of the name on historical rationale: the Jordan River under discussion drastically pre-dates Persian involvement in the Levant, and the Persians would not have had the opportunity to name so many rivers across such a wide expanse. Homer knew rivers by the same name (Ἰαο-δάνος) in Crete and Elis (Homer, *Od.* 3.292; *Ill.* 7.135) already, and Persian settlement of Gaul is unattested. Drawing on previous work by Hempel (64: loanword from Anatolia) and others, von Soden (154) suggests that the name should be considered “an old Mediterranean designation, which was obtained from the Indo-germanic or Semitic settlement from much earlier times.” The identification of the toponym as a common noun that spread across the Mediterranean cultural sphere may be bolstered by the toponym’s attestation in the HB and Targumim as an articulated (definite) noun (Heb. *hay-yardēn*; Aram. *yardēn-ā*; cf. Arab. *el-Urdunn*) and frequently in the construct phrase *Yardēn Yēreḥō*, “the Jordan of Jericho” (e.g., Num 22:1). The word appears unarticulated in Job 40:23, where it may either be a common or a proper noun (“It [Behemoth] is secure when/because [*kī*] ‘Jordan’ flows against [*el*] its mouth”; cf. NRSV: “It is confident though Jordan rushes against its mouth”), and Ps 42:7, where it seems to function (anomalously) as a proper noun (*mē’ereš Yardēn*, “[the] land of Jordan”). Conversely, Jacob’s exclamation upon arriving at the Jabboq River (a tributary of the Jordan) that he had earlier “crossed over *this* Jordan (*hayyardēn hazzeh*)” with only his staff (Gen 32:11 [ET v. 10]) may also reflect the more general meaning of the name. (It is also possible, however, that the

exclamation is meant to mirror the location with which Deuteronomy relates Moses’ prohibition from crossing “*this* Jordan” (*hayyardēn hazzeh*) into Canaan (Deut 3:27; 31:2; also Josh 4:22). In the end, the difficulty of identifying a secure Semitic etymology of the river’s name, in combination with the most common morphosyntax of biblical attestations, suggests caution in assigning a derivation.

2. Physical Attributes. Geographers typically recognize four streams feeding the upper reaches of the Jordan River: the Bareighit, Hasbani, Lidani (Tel el-Qadi = Dan), and Banyasi (Baniyas) rivers (Baly: 193–94). These rivers rise from the base of Mount Hermon, dropping precipitously in their approach to the Huleh Basin (ca. 300 m in 11 km), about 70 m above sea level. From there, they descend another ca. 300 m to the Sea of Galilee (ca. 212 m below sea level) (Baly; Glueck 1943; 1946; Cohen; Thompson; Van Zeist). Below the Sea of Galilee, the Yarmuk River enters the Jordan River, bringing with it a large portion of the river’s total volume. Below this junction, the river winds another ca. 200 km before it empties into the Dead Sea (ca. 392 m below sea level). In sum, the meandering river covers 100 km linearly, but winds 300 km over the full course of its run (North: 206), approximately two-thirds of that distance between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea. During this portion of the river’s course several major torrent valleys, often called by the Arabic term *wādī*, contribute to the river’s flow. Most of these descend from the east, carrying relatively small amounts of water year-round (e.g., the Wadi Zarqa [i.e., the biblical Jabbok River]), if not only intermittently. From the drier area west of the Jordan River, fewer valleys carry any significant amount of water through the Judean and Israelite “wilderness” (*midbār*).

The high, flat plain of the Jordan River Valley (the *Ghor*) usually remains very arid (for extended discussion, see Shehadeh); its hot, dry climate prevents the development of lush vegetation. Inside this *Ghor*, however, the river carves out its much narrower and somewhat lower channel (the *Zor*, “thicket”). Here can be found a variety of vegetation dependent on the river’s water (al-Eisawi); the lush thickets that develop along the banks of the river – “the pride of the Jordan” (*gē’ôn hayyardēn*; e.g., Jer 12:5) – contribute to its ominous reputation for harboring wild animals such as lions (Jer 49:19; 50:44; Zech 11:3; Baly: 95; Har-El). The word *gē’ôn*, meaning “pride” (and, by extension, “haughtiness” or “arrogance”), sometimes conveys mythological overtones, both positively (when used of YHWH: Exod 15:1, 7, 21; also Isa 2:10, 19, 21) and negatively (when used of humans and the enemies of YHWH: Ps 89:10 [=ET v. 9]; 94:5; 140:6 [=ET v. 5]). At times, the Jordan River is cast in mythological overtones as well, insofar as it is linked to the primordial “deep” (*tēhôm*: Ps 42:7–8 [=ET vv. 6–7];

see also the personification of the river in Ps 114:3, 5; see Hall; and Hutton 2008b for further discussion of reception).

At times (spring rains) the river would reach flood stage, overflowing its banks (see, e.g., Josh 3:15; Ezek 47:5) and spreading across the Zor. Under these conditions, the river became impassible (cf. the remark in 1 Chr 12:16 [ET v. 15]). With the increase in population dependent upon the river's water for sustenance and irrigation farming in the modern period, the Jordan River carries much reduced rates of flow. Even when the river remained passable, the approaches to its banks were limited. The "fords of the Jordan" (*ma'bērôt hayyardēn*) become the site of a few important battles narrated by the biblical text (Judg 3:28; Judg 12:5–6; see also Josh 2:7, which assumes that they delimit the extent of the Canaanites' jurisdiction). It is now possible to trace the major roadways of antiquity using GIS (geographic information systems) and archaeological data; this reconstruction permits the discovery of major fords in antiquity, although yearly fluctuations in the riverbed could shift the site of fords. Modern cartographers provide counts of the fords up to about fifty-four (Har-El: 69) or even sixty (Thompson: 957, citing Condor). Among these, a handful are extremely important, figuring as they do in the biblical narratives. The *Maḥāḏat* ["ford", hereafter *M.ʿAbārah* was near Beth Shean, and has been associated with Gideon's seizure of the fords at Beth Barah (*bēt bārā*) in Judg 7:24 (Lightfoot: 1:332–33; Conder/Kitchener: 2:79; Thompson: 957; Dorsey: 111), but this identification has probably been influenced by the similarity of the names. More sober consideration of the text and its reception suggests that if this Beth Bara is indeed to be identified with the Bethabara of early Christian texts and cartography, it should be further south (Hutton 2008a).

Near the confluence of the Jordan River with the Zarqa (i.e., the ancient Jabbok River), two significant fords could be found: the more northern of the two was the *Umm Sidre* ford (Dalman: 70), where a major east-west highway crossed (Dorsey: 174–75), and just to the south was the *Damiyeh* ford at biblical Adam (Steuernagel: 140, 145). Together, these fords and the roads associated with them seem to have formed the conceptual and geographical backdrop for several biblical episodes, including Gen 32 and Judg 8 (Hutton 2006b). Several fords cross the Jordan River to the east and south-east of Jericho. One such ford was the *M. al-Ḡoranīya*, where the modern Allenby Bridge now crosses the river. A few miles to the south are two closely related fords, the *M. el-Maḡtas* and, just below it, the *M. Haḡla*. This cluster of fords is commonly associated with the site of Jesus' baptism (see below "II. New Testament"), and was commemorated as such by the Bourdeaux Pilgrim already in 333 CE. The

Pilgrim also recognized this area as the place above which could be found the site of Elijah's translation in 2 Kgs 2:1–14 (*Itin. Burd.*, 19; see also Hutton 2008a; 2014). Significantly, Israel's crossing of the Jordan (Josh 3–5) is also associated with this area (Thompson: 957; Hutton 2014; see also below).

3. Historical, Literary, and Theological Symbolism. Historically and traditionally, the Jordan River (indeed, the Valley as a whole) seems to have functioned as a natural boundary. Although it was not impassible, it does seem to have posed a significant enough hindrance to passage that its usage as a territorial marker was convenient. The biblical authors occasionally use the term "across the Jordan" with both east-facing and west-facing orientations in mind (MT *ʿēber hayyardēn*, LXX πέραν τοῦ Ἰορδάνου; Gen 50:10–11; Num 32:19, 32; 34:15; 35:14; Deut 1:1; Matt 4:15, 25 [citing Isa 8:23 [ET 9:1]; Matt 19:1; Mark 3:8], and the river seems to have served as a line of demarcation between some tribes or, in the case of Manasseh, sub-tribal units (Num 32:5, 19, 21, 29, 32; 34:15; Deut 3:17, 20; Josh 1:14, 15; 13:8, 23, 27, 32; 14:3; 17:5; 18:7; 22:4; Judg 5:17; 1 Chr 12:38 [ET v. 37]). In some systems of thought – particularly that of the Priestly school – the Jordan itself serves as the eastern boundary of Israel (Num 34:12; Josh 15:5; 16:1, 7; 18:12, 19, 20; 19:22, 33, 34; 22:7; 23:4; 2 Sam 24:5; 1 Chr 26:30). This perception may be rooted in historical fact, since Hazael reportedly conquered the Israelite Transjordan in the middle of the 9th century BCE (2 Kgs 10:33); the biblical text reports a brief reoccupation under Jeroboam II (2 Kgs 14:25). Tiglath-Pileser III seems to have annexed the land permanently in the mid-8th century (2 Kgs 15:29). Prophetic writings indicate that that some Judahites held out an eschatological hope for the eventual repatriation of the Transjordan to Israel (Isa 8:23 [ET 9:1]; cf. Ezek 47:18, in which the eastern boundary of the land remains the Jordan River).

It is the perception of the eastern bank as somehow *outside* the land that motivates the eastern tribes to build an altar in Josh 22:10–29. Most views, however – including that of the Deuteronomists – allow for authentic Israelite settlement east of the Jordan River (e.g., the Levitical cities and the cities of refuge; Num 35:14; Deut 4:41; Josh 20:8; Josh 21:27, 36–39; see also 1 Chr 6:63–66 [ET vv. 78–81]; for fuller discussion of the variant views of the Jordan, see Jobling; Weinfeld; Havrelock). Even in narratives taking place before the Israelite conquest of Canaan (see below), the Jordan River plays the role of a significant geographic marker: Lot chooses to occupy the area of the valley immediately north of the Dead Sea (the *kikkar hayyardēn*) because of its fertility and abundant resources (Gen 13:10–11; see also 1 Kgs 7:46 par. 2 Chr 4:17). This phrase "beside the Jordan" (*ʿal yad hayyardēn*)

is used to describe the Canaanites' residence in Num 13:29.

Because of its history as an occasional geopolitical boundary and a perennial topographical barrier to travel, the Jordan River came to be invested with symbolic meaning in the biblical texts. As noted above, the exodus of Israel from Egypt culminates at the fords of the Jordan; after crossing over the river a new period of Israel's history, the "conquest," begins. The moment of this transition is anticipated in the books of Numbers and Deuteronomy, which narrate Israel's encampment in the Plains of Moab (i.e., on the eastern bank of the river), across from Jericho (Num 22:1; 26:3, 63; 31:12; 33:48-50; see explicit reference to the *Yardēn Yēreḥō*). Here, by the Jordan, Moses delivers the *tôrâ* a second time (in the literary conceit of the Pentateuch; e.g., Num 36:13; Deut 1:1, 5), prefacing that document with a retelling of Israel's wanderings east of the Jordan (Deut 2:29; 3:8; 4:46, 47, 49; see also Josh 2:10; 24:8; Judg 11:13, 22). Not permitted to enter the Promised Land of Canaan (Deut 3:25, 27; 4:21, 22; 31:2), Moses may only catch a glimpse of it before his own death on the eastern slope of the Jordan River Valley (Deut 34:1-8).

Literary and theological resonances between the crossing of the Jordan River (Josh 3-5) and the earlier crossing of the Red Sea (Exod 14-15) have long been recognized (esp. Josh 4:23). Foremost among the literary tropes uniting these two pericopae is the "dry-shod" crossing of each (esp. Josh 3:8, 13-15, 17; 4:1, 10, 16-19; see, e.g., Dozeman; Hutton 2014), which serves to intimidate the Canaanites currently living in the land (Num 33:51; 35:1, 10; Deut 9:1; 11:30-31; Josh 1:2, 11; 3:1, 11; 5:1; 7:7; 9:1-10; 12:1, 7; 24:11). This crossing and the ensuing conquest of the land constitutes the fulfillment of YHWH's promise to the patriarchs; as such, the Israelites are subject to the laws of the covenant, under pain of removal from the land (Deut 4:26; 12:10-11; 27:2, 4, 12; 30:18; 31:13; 32:47). This agreement is codified physically in the erection of a memorial site at the fords of the river at Gilgal (Josh 4:3, 5, 7-9, 20).

The Jordan's stature as a political boundary occasioned an entire type-scene: the battle at the fords. Biblical narratives frequently report flight (sometimes only assumed) across the river (Josh 2:7; 1 Sam 13:7; 2 Kgs 7:15) or battles fought at its fords (Judg 3:28; 7:24-25; 12:5-6). Equally important are the reports of Cisjordanian Israelites crossing eastward in order to fend off enemies (Judg 8:4; 1 Sam 11; 2 Sam 10:17; 1 Chr 19:17; 1 Macc 5:24; 9:42-49). Cisjordanian Israelites – usually prominent political figures – also sought refuge in the east (2 Sam 2:8, 29; 13:37-38; 17:22, 24, 27). The literary combination of these texts, in which the Israelite leader almost uniformly returned west-

ward with the (often reasonable) expectation of assuming increased authority (Judg 8:22-23; 12:7; 1 Sam 11:12-15; 2 Sam 19; 20:2; 1 Kgs 2:8) led to a new symbolic attribute of the Jordan River. It became a place of incubation and transformation (Brodsky; Hutton 2009), particularly for prophets (1 Kgs 17; 2 Kgs 2; see also 6:1-6; Levine), although not limited to them (2 Kgs 5; Havrelock).

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II. New Testament

The Jordan River is an important part of the setting for major salvation-historical events in the NT. The Jordan River is explicitly referred to by name in all four Gospels (6 in Matthew, 4 in Mark, 2 in Luke, and 3 in John) and appears a total of fifteen times in the *Nestle-Aland*²⁸ (2012). As a geographical phenomenon, it is the chief river of Palestine. The river flows directly south to the Sea of Galilee with its ultimate destination being the Dead Sea (Ryken: 459). The river was important because it functioned as a natural boundary marker for centuries.

The first major salvation-historical event was John the Baptist's use of the Jordan River as a site for preaching repentance and for water baptism (Matt 3:5–6; Mark 1:5; Luke 3:3, and John 1:28). The Gospel of John indicates that John the Baptist was near the village of Bethany (some manuscripts have Bethabara), on the east side of the Jordan (John 1:28). Matthew describes this location as being "in the wilderness of Judea" (Matt 3:1). The river provided a natural substitute for the deep water baths used around the Jerusalem temple for ritual washing. The dialogue between John the Baptist and other Jews indicates that there was some expectation that those who baptized as he did were functioning in a prophetic manner or associated with a messianic figure (John 1:24–25).

The second major event was Jesus' own baptism in the Jordan River in anticipation of his public ministry before Israel. Jesus was baptized by immersion in the water of the Jordan in order to associate himself with John's message of repentance before God. The significance of the water is also tied to Israel's history and Jesus' mission. Israel as a nation was born as they left Egypt and moved through the Red Sea. Thus, when Jesus moves through the Jordan in baptism he is providing a "miniature second exodus" that anticipates Israel's restoration (Beale: 412). Passages such as Isa 63:11–15a and 64:1 anticipate a new exodus for Israel in which moving through water figures prominently. Jesus' mission is tied to his status as the Israelite-par-excellence. This means that Jesus must fulfill God's requirements for his covenant people by associating himself with repentance and a circumcised heart as demanded in the law of Moses (Deut 30:6).

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III. Judaism

Due to its natural position, and its prominent place in biblical history, the river Jordan received considerable attention in Jewish sources. The question whether the Jordan belongs to the land of Israel or represents its eastern border is not answered unequivocally in the HB; a similar ambivalence is to be found in rabbinic sources. On the one hand, the narrative of the conquest of the land makes clear that the eastern bank of the river does not belong to the land of Israel; on the other hand, the same narrative mentions that some of the people of Israel lived on the eastern side (Num 32; Josh 22). During late Roman and early Byzantine times a significant Jewish population lived in villages and cities east of the Jordan in territories which were included in Judea and the Byzantine provinces Palaestina Prima and Secunda (Brawer/Avi-Jonah: 196).

While Num 34:10–12 clearly refers to the Jordan as the eastern border of the land of Canaan, the Targum of this passage as well as the so-called "Tannaitic List of Boundaries" do not exclude locations east of the Jordan from the land of Israel (Alexander: 42–46; Fritz: 27–32). Generally, rabbinic references to the river Jordan are based on biblical contexts, for example, an etymology of the name Jordan is derived from the combination of the two words *yored dan* (Heb. "descending [from the biblical town] Dan [Josh 19:47; Judg 18:29]"), matching the explanation that the fountain is located in the cave of Paneas (ancient Caesarea Philippi, today Banyas), then the river passes through the lakes of Sibkay (Samachonitis/Merom [Josh 11:5]) and Tiberias, eventually reaching the great sea and the mouth of the Leviathan (*bBekh* 55a, and *bBB* 74b, re Job 40:23). The interpretation in *bBekh* 55a places the "Lake of Sodom" (i.e., the Dead Sea) before the great sea, so the question arises as to whether a subterranean connection from the Dead Sea to the Mediterranean Sea must be assumed (Neubauer: 30). In fact, particular attention is given to the problem of how the Jordan is to be reckoned in relation to the land of Israel. According to *bBekh* 55a, areas could be connected for the tithing of sheep by bridging a river – and this might also be the case with the Jordan. The phrasing "beyond the Jordan at Jericho eastward, toward the sunrise" in Num 34:15 is understood as meaning that both the Jordan and Jericho belong to the land. Another statement proposes that only from Jericho downwards the river is called Jordan.

Medieval exegesis supports the view that the Jordan belongs to the land of Israel: Rashi explains Exod 16:35 ("until they came to the border of the

land of Canaan”) as referring to the plains of Moab, thus indicating that they reached the border before they crossed the river; and David Qimḥi (1160–1235) explicates Jer 12:5 with a metaphorical reading of “in the thickets of the Jordan” (Heb. *bi-ge’ on ha-yarden*) as standing for the proud “princes of Judah and Jerusalem,” because the river Jordan is situated “within the land of Israel” (*ad loc.*).

The Jordan River has figured prominently in Zionist history in the 20th century. The 1917 Balfour Declaration spoke of establishing a Jewish homeland in Palestine, many Zionists hoped that Transjordan, or at least part of it would be included in that homeland. But the British soon decided, in 1922, to transfer Transjordan to Arab rule and most Zionist leaders accepted this decision, thereby limiting their aspirations to the territory west of the Jordan. However, the fiery leader, Vladimir (Zeev) Jabotinsky (1880–1940), refused to accept this position, insisting that the land on both sides of the Jordan belonged to the Jewish people and should be part of their homeland. He then formed a break-away movement called Revisionist Zionism, founded on this principle. Indeed, Jabotinsky himself penned the anthem of Betar, the Revisionist youth movement, entitled “Šemol ha-Yarden” (The left bank of the Jordan) which has the refrain: “There are two banks to the Jordan, this one is ours and so is the other” (Havrelock: 234). The Revisionist Movement is the ideological precursor of the Likud party, the ruling party in Israel today. While many of its members aspire to maintain full control of the West Bank of the Jordan, control of the East Bank is no longer seen as an achievable goal.

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Johannes Thon and Gerold Necker

IV. Christianity

The Jordan River is a prominent landmark in the sacred geography of the Bible. The Israelites cross the Jordan to enter the land of Canaan, Namaan the Syrian was cured of leprosy by washing in it, and John the Baptist preached repentance and baptized Jesus in the Jordan.

Christian interpretation of Jordan River varies throughout history. Some of the earliest interpretations of the Jordan are found in the Apocalypse of John as it included aspects of the biblical geography. The most prominent Christian interpretation of the Jordan is as a metaphor for death in baptism. Paul’s epistles made recurrent connections between baptism, as passing through the Jordan, and death. And, Cyril of Jerusalem’s lectures to the catchmen

offer some of their earliest Christian reflections on metaphor between baptism, death, and the Jordan.

In the late 4th century, the Jordan River returned to prominence in Christianity as a pilgrimage site. Egeria’s *Peregrinatio* records her experience of visiting the Jordan River while on pilgrimage noting that her goal, as was the goal of all pilgrimages, was to traverse the geography of the Bible. She noted that the Jordan was a site of baptism and the bottling of its water as a holy object, a practice continued to the present day. The Jordan River also appeared in liturgical practices surrounding Christian baptism. Martin Luther’s *Dictata Super Psalterium* (1513–16) referenced the Jordan as mystically denoting baptism. He argued that Christ’s baptism in the Jordan had sanctified all water so that he read all biblical passages of people passing through water as references to baptism.

For some reformers, this eliminated the need for the blessing of the water, a common outdoor liturgical practice of blessing the waters used for baptism, as it was seen as superfluous. For example, the Swiss reformer Leo Jud retained it, but Thomas Cranmer, the 16th-century English reformer, eliminated the blessing of the water and replaced it with a consecration of the waters used in the baptismal font. Emmanuel Swedenborg, an 18th-century Swedish Protestant, likened the passing of the Israelites through the Jordan into Canaan to entering the church through baptism. Twentieth-century Baptist traditions like those found in *Orders and Prayers for Church Worship: A Manual for Ministers*, reflect on Jesus’ baptism in the Jordan as an example for those being baptized to emulate; but there is no typological or sacramental interpretation of the Jordan given in these traditions.

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James Adams

V. Literature

The River Jordan is a common literary synecdoche for the entry into the Promised Land and for the baptism of Jesus. It also combines with the generalized motif of the river as signifier of the liminal. In medieval literature it is often proximatized to the geography of Europe, as in Tasso’s *Ierusalem Liberata*, where it and its environs take on the appearance, according to Eitan Bar-Josef of “an eastern Ferrara” (Bar-Josef: 23). The biblical tropes are rehearsed in *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville* (ca. 1356), a work which relates in a matter-of-fact way the location of the riverside church where John the Baptist baptized Jesus (Mosley [trans]: 90).

Just as the Old English *The Descent into Hell* included the stopping of the waters of the Jordan as

part of the cosmic stasis induced by the birth of Christ (lines 105–7), so the analogous legend that the waters of the River Jordan stood still at Jesus' baptism was invoked in a multitude of medieval charms dating from the 9th to the 15th centuries. McBryde translates a Vatican Latin MS of the 9th or 10th century:

Christ and holy St. John were walking to the River Jordan. Said Christ to St John: "Stop, River Jordan." Immediately the River Jordan stopped. So may the veins in this mean cease to flow. In nomine patris ... (McBryde: 299–300)

Irish biblical apocrypha of the medieval period emphasize the purgatory qualities of the Jordan. *The Penance of Adam* has Adam after the Fall prescribing forty-seven days for himself in the river Jordan and thirty-three days for Eve in the river Tiber. The Archangel Michael arrives to take those rescued from Hell to be baptized in the Jordan at the end of the Irish *Gospel of Nicodemus* (Herbert/McNamara: 8–9, 87–88).

The Jordan featured prominently in the hymnody of 18th-century revivalism, including Isaac Watts's "The Land of Pure Delight" (1715) where "Not Jordan's stream, nor Death's cold flood/Should fright us from the shore" and the French priest Charles Coffin's Latin hymn translated into English as "On Jordan's Bank" (1727). William Blake used the trope more combatively in *Milton* (bk. 1.19.7) to represent the negative effect of the Hebraic traditions on Milton, with Urizen scooping up water from the river Jordan and "pouring on/To Milton's brain the icy fluid" (Blake: 500). More positively in the poem *Jerusalem* it supplies the fountain in Urizen's temple in 58.23, 33 and "the heavenly Jordan" flows into the Thames in the Age of Innocence in 79:35 (Blake: 690, 720).

From the Crusades through to the end of the British Mandate in Palestine the river Jordan marked the boundary for the territory known as "Oultrejordain" or "Transjordan." The novelist Anthony Trollope's short story "Crossing the River Jordan" (1860) is about an identity crisis experienced by a European traveller traversing this area. In S. Y. Agnon's novel *Only Yesterday/Tmol Shilshom* (1945), set in the 1930s, the businessman Shoel Hirschl imports Lulavs from across the Jordan after the example of the prominent Jerusalem family who quasi-symbolically cross the Jordan to bring back these durable palm branches: "The people of Jerusalem rejoice at the Lulavs that come from across the Jordan" (Agon: 520). Set in 1961 in the post-Mandate period Muriel Sparke's novel *The Mandelbaum Gate* (1965) has the family of Abdul Ramdez find it highly beneficial to cross the Jordan in the other direction for employment reasons.

In Alicia Ostriker's poem "Moses to Joshua" (1993) there is an earthbound reality to the Israelites as human beings who cross the Jordan into Canaan. But at least they are at this point in the as-

cendant. Whereas the Haitian men, women and children massacred in the "river of blood" by the soldiers of the Dominican Republic under General Trujillo in Edwidge Danticat's *The Farming of Bones* (1998) are, like the Ephraimites slain in the fords of the Jordan in the passage in Judg 12:4–6 which informs this novel, victims of extreme racial violence using a pronunciation test to identify its prey.

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Anthony Swindell

VI. Visual Arts

In the visual arts, the Jordan River is shown either in cartographic representations of the Holy Land/Palestine, or as a geographical marker for depictions of OT/NT narrative scenes as well as for vita episodes of biblical figures and saints (e.g., Elijah, John the Baptist, St. Gerasimus). According to the river's various symbolic ascriptions, images might allude to the Jordan as the boundary of the promised land or paradise, or as a place of miracles, purification, and healing.

Early Christian art works feature Christ's eternal reign in paradisiacal landscapes, sometimes surrounded by the Jordan River, labelled *IORDANES* (e.g., apse mosaic, ca. 526, Ss. Cosma e Damiano, Rome). The earliest known cartographic depiction of the river is given in the Madaba mosaic map (middle of the 6th cent. CE), displaying both banks of the stream. Along the river, a number of locations where biblical events transpired are marked by inscriptions. While medieval and early modern maps of the Holy Land usually show both river banks, the map produced by the Palestine Exploration Fund's Survey of Western Palestine (published in 1880) became influential and is the first building block towards the river being recognized as a (also politically significant) border (Havrelock). Nineteenth-century travel accounts and regional studies of Palestine by Westerners include engravings with views of the landscapes along the Jordan (e.g., David Roberts, *Banks of the Jordan*, 1839, published in 1843).



Fig. 15 “Baptism of Jesus with personified River Jordan and John the Baptist” (ca. 500 CE)

The most frequent biblical scene featuring the Jordan is the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist. OT Jordan scenes are less common in art and typologically often refer to Jesus’ baptism: the crossing of the stream by the Israelites under Joshua (Josh 3:15–17, e.g., mosaic, ca. 432–40, S. Maria Maggiore, Rome; Vatican Loggia fresco planned by Raphael, ca. 1518/9), the crossing by Elijah and Elisha (2 Kgs 2), and the healing of Naaman (2 Kgs 5). The Jordan is also shown as the place of Elijah’s ascension (2 Kgs 2, e.g., sarcophagus, late 4th cent., Milan).

The river is depicted either as a horizontal, vertical or bell-shaped stream, or as a male personification (Appuhn-Radtke). The latter, in antique Roman tradition, is a reclining, bearded figure, resting on a jug, naked to the waist, sometimes with attributes, i.e., headdress/sceptre with water plants or animals, (dome mosaic, so-called Arian baptistery, ca. 500, Ravenna, see fig. 15). This portrayal can already be seen on a relief showing the triumphal pompa on the Arch of Titus in Rome (last quarter 1st cent. CE). As a second type, the personified Jordan can be found to be a male figure partially submerged in the water (e.g., Cathedra of Maximianus, 546–556, Ravenna; mosaic, 11th cent., Hosios Loukas, near Delphi). This second type continues to appear in Byzantine and later Orthodox icons of Jesus’ baptism. In reference to Ps 76(77):17 and 113(114):3, both personifications often show expressions of fright or ovation witnessing God’s epiphany during Christ’s baptism (Schrenk). Jordan and Dan, the Jordan’s two tributary streams, are also personified in art (illustration of Ps 41[42]:7–8, *Stuttgart Psalter*, ca. 830, Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesbibliothek Cod. bibl. fol. 23, fol. 54r).

Some images of Christ’s baptism indicate this specific holy place by adding a cross on a pedestal (this type of monument on site has been reported by pilgrims since the 6th cent.). From the 14th century on, the river landscape, in which OT/NT scenes were included, became increasingly naturalistic (Giotto, 1305, Scrovegni chapel, Padua).

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Ute Versteegen

VII. Music

There have been numerous references to the Jordan River throughout the history of religious as well as secular music. Appearing in a range of musical genres, historical periods, and diverse cultural musical traditions, the Jordan River is a symbolic borderline, demarcating the eastern border of Israel, and thus functions as a powerful image of national, religious, and cultural identity. As a theological symbol, particularly within the context of its reception in Christian hymnody and African American spirituals, its significance as a metaphorical threshold delimiting a journey toward healing, redemption, and deliverance has inspired the lyrics of numerous songs and hymns. The notion of crossing over Jordan (Deut 32:45–47) evokes the spiritual journey towards God’s kingdom and entrance into the metaphorical promised land of heaven. Drawing upon the rich tradition of spirituals and gospel music, modern songwriters continue to incorporate lyrical references to the Jordan River that evoke a longing for the attainment of a lost homeland and still more frequently lost love.

In Act 1 of Michel Pignolet de Montéclair and Simon-Joseph Pellegrin’s biblical opera *Jephthé* (1732), the opening act reaches its climax with the character of Jephthé surrounded by dancing Israelite warriors preparing to cross the Jordan River to attack the people of Ephraim. According to Rebecca Harris-Warrick, the act ends with the spectacle of the River Jordan separating as the warriors embark upon their military campaign. Responding to negative reviews of the opera’s ending, in a later addition to the opera, a new Act 5 was introduced in which the high priest of Israel, Phinéé, also known as Phineas (Judg 20:28), “invites those who live on the shores of the River Jordan to come and celebrate” (Harris-Warwick: 350). Similarly, in collaboration with composers Asi and Mansur Rahbani, in the late 1960s the popular Lebanese singer Fayruz incorporated references to the Jordan River in the

song “Zahrat al-Mada’in” (The Flowers of the City). In this song, the river is invoked as a redemptive symbol which could cleanse the city of Jerusalem of its political, interreligious, and intercultural strife, as Faryruz sings, “O River Jordan, you shall wash my face, with your holy water” (Massad: 182). In each of these musical settings, the dualistic nature of the Jordan River as a potent lyrical symbol both unity and disunity is apparent.

References to the Jordan River have featured prominently within the tradition of Protestant hymnody and gospel music (see “Gospel Music”). Martin Luther’s hymn “Christ unser Herr zum Jordan kam” (1539, “To Jordan Came our Lord the Christ”; Leaver: 135–36) was also used in J. S. Bach’s cantata *Christ unser Herr zum Jordan kam* (1724, *Christ our Lord came to the Jordan*; Stokes: 11–13). In Samuel Stennett’s hymn, “On Jordan’s Stormy Banks I Stand” (1787), the image of the Jordan River serves as a metaphor for the trials of earthly existence, juxtaposed with the image Canaan as a promised land where “sickness and sorrow, pain and death, are felt and feared no more” (Hymnary.org). Charles Wesley’s 18th-century revivalist hymn “He comes, He comes, the Judge Severe,” connects the powerful flow of the Jordan River to the impending judgment of God:

He comes, he comes, the Judge severe,
Roll Jordan, roll;
The seventh trumpet speaks him near,
Roll Jordan, roll;
I want to go to heav’n, I do, Hallelujah, Lord;
We’ll praise the Lord in heav’n above, Roll, Jordan, roll. (Chase: 198)

According to Gilbert Chase, this hymn drew upon the popular motif of the revivalist “as a pilgrim travelling through the wilderness, burdened with the sins of the world but rejoicing in a vision of the Promised Land, which is just across the Jordan River” (198). Reflecting this theological emphasis upon the Jordan River as a symbolic dividing line between temporal and heavenly realms, another of Wesley’s hymns entitled “Roll, Jordan, Roll,” became a popular African American spiritual (see “Folk Music and Folk Song.”) The song features prominently in the soundtrack to the film *12 Years a Slave* (dir. Steve McQueen, 2013, US/UK), composed by Nicholas Britell. Describing the significance of the image of the Jordan River for African American slaves, Ann Powers observes, “Songs like this one, speaking of rivers, often sent coded messages about the hope for escape – for passing over the Mississippi or the Ohio and northward.” Performances of the spiritual “Down By the Riverside” also often incorporate references to the Jordan River.

Due to the influence of gospel music and spirituals on modern songwriters (see “Harlem Renaissance II. Music”), the River Jordan is firmly embedded within the lyrical vernacular of many popular

genres of music. In their song, “The River of Jordan” (1959), the country and gospel duo, Ira and Charlie Loudermilk, popularly known as the Louvin Brothers, invites listeners to contemplate the story of Jesus’s baptism in the Jordan River (Matt 3:13) as well as the story of Elisha instructing Naaman to bathe himself in the river to cure his leprosy (2 Kgs 5:1–19). Drawing upon traditional spirituals and gospel music, reggae artists have frequently employed references to the Jordan River in their songs in order to evoke a sense of longing for repatriation and return to a utopian vision of Africa. In many songs, Rastafarians identify themselves as “the wandering ‘lost’ Jewish tribe in search of the promised land” (King: 18). In his song “I am Going Home” (1964), Bob Marley sings of looking over the River Jordan, while his band, the Wailers, echo the refrain, “I am going home” (ibid.). Similarly, in “River Jordan” (1961), Clancey Eccles repeats the phrase “roll River Jordan roll” in the song’s chorus, and in the intervening lyrics, he echoes the theme of impending judgment evinced in Wesley’s hymn (ibid.). Originally written by Thomas Ramsey and Chas E. Durham in 1934, Johnny Cash recorded “I Won’t Have to Cross Jordan Alone” (1962) on his gospel album *Hymns from the Heart*. Once more, the lyrics of this song interpret the Jordan River as a dividing line between heavenly and earthly spheres of existence, the dividing line between life and the afterlife.

Josh Tillman’s song “An Occurrence [sic] at the River Jordan” (2005) situates the image of the river within the context of a pastoral rumination on lost love and mortality. He sings, “To the sky, on the far side, the River Jordan, I see magnolias around your feet.” The song employs a minimalist musical accompaniment to complement its spare yet evocative lyrics. Located outside of its strictly biblical and sociocultural embeddings, the reception of the Jordan River in popular music demonstrates a clear inclination towards a quasi-mythical interpretation which nevertheless resonates, in many respects, with its symbolic status in both the HB/OT and NT.

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Brian W. Nail

VIII. Film

Films often evoke the idea of the Jordan River to communicate a symbolic crossing over or a transformational moment. The connection links most directly back to the HB/OT where the river marks the boundary of the promised land itself (Josh 1:11; 3:14–17). More specifically, when the Israelites traverse the Jordan, they conclude the exodus from slavery in Egypt, complete a long period of wilderness wandering, and enter into the land of “milk and honey” (e.g., Exod 3:8 or 33:3).

One of the best examples in film of the river as an entrée in an imagined ideal comes in *The Grapes of Wrath* (dir. John Ford, 1940, US). Here, the Joad family travels in a much larger caravan of desperate and dispossessed people fleeing the Dustbowl and bankruptcy to seek a better life in California. The movie depicts their overloaded truck pulling over by the side of the road as they arrive at the Colorado River border crossing. Climbing out and looking across the water, Pa says “There she is, folks, the land of milk and honey ... California.”

Others in the family, however, express doubt about any positive association. From their vantage point, it looks less than impressive. Connie dubiously, begins “if that’s what we came out here for,” to which Rosasharn responds “maybe it’s nice on the other side. Them picture postcards, they was real pretty.” Grandma, to sum it all up neatly, simply spits. This idealized land of plenty seems far less inviting at first glance after a long and arduous journey. And what should feel momentous in the crossing actually happens without any dramatics. The bridge simply continues Route 66 right into the town of Needles.

A second biblical understanding of the River Jordan crops up in the NT. There, the tradition visualizes the Jordan as the location of Jesus’ baptism (Mark 1:9) and the site of the inauguration of his ministry. The movie *The Apostle* (dir. Robert Duvall, 1997, US) draws directly on this association. “Sonny” – the film’s protagonist – leaves Texas on the run from the law. To inaugurate his journey into a new life, he baptizes himself. In doing so, he asks God to accept him as an “apostle of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, of Nazareth.” In this moment, he becomes the self-declared apostle “E. F.” As with the encounter of John the Baptist and Jesus, E. F.’s version of the river Jordan sits away from any city or crowds. Further, his subsequent ministry will take place in similarly rural backwaters.

As the tradition of the Jordan River evolves, it also comes to designate the entry point to an eternal life in heaven. This understanding of the river comes across most clearly in *12 Years A Slave* (dir. Steve McQueen, 2013, US/UK). As a group of slaves buries one of their own (who drops dead while picking cotton), they sing the spiritual “Roll, Jordan,

Roll.” In giving voice to the words, the once free Solomon Northrup simultaneously accepts and resists his new life as a slave. The lyrics of the hymn claim a future freedom – albeit in heaven and not in any way apparent at that moment.

Roll, Jordan, roll
Roll, Jordan, roll
My soul arise in heaven, Lord
For the year when Jordan roll.

But they also evidence hope in a realized eschatology – that is, a dream that this eventuality will manifest itself in their lifetimes.

On film, then, the symbolic river Jordan functions both literally and figuratively.

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Sandie Gravett

Jorim

According to Luke 3:29, Jorim (Gk. Ἰωρίμ), son of Matthat and father of Eliezer, was an ancestor of Jesus. Nothing else is known about him. He is not to be identified with the Joram in Matthew’s genealogy of Jesus (Matt 1:8).

Dale C. Allison, Jr.

Jorkeam

The name Jorkeam occurs only once in the Bible in 1 Chr 2:44 (MT *Yorqō’ām*; LXX *Ἰερκααν*). In 1 Chr 1–9, which contains the genealogies from Adam to those of the tribes of Israel, the name Jorkeam appears among the genealogy of Judah, more precisely, in the genealogy of Caleb. It is sometimes suggested (so BHS) to read *Yodē’ām* instead of *Yorqō’ām*. This other name is that of a place attributed – among many others – to the tribe of Judah in Josh 15:56.

Since a figure bearing the name Jorkeam is otherwise unknown, a certain confusion between figures and places names in this genealogical list (Klein: 103) can be supposed. Two other names in the Caleb’s genealogy are place names from Josh 15:55: Ziph and Maon (1 Chr 2:42, 45). According to Japhet (85): “The designation of a locality as a ‘son’ would indicate a fuller identification between an ethnic group and the village or town.”

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Jean-François Landolt

See also → Jokdeam