

# Art-Sanat

## Research Article

## Open Access

## Lost Historical Bridges of Malatya: Kırkgöz and Deir Massiah

Malatya'nın Yitik Tarihi Köprüleri: Kırkgöz ve Deyr-i Mesih



Enver Çakar<sup>1</sup> , Korkmaz Şen<sup>2</sup> , Yavuz Kısa<sup>3</sup> , Tuba Nur Olğun<sup>4</sup> , Murat Şahin<sup>5</sup>  & Ahmet Toprak

<sup>6</sup> 

<sup>1</sup> Fırat University Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of History, Elazığ, Türkiye.

<sup>2</sup> Fırat University, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of Art History, Elazığ, Türkiye.

<sup>3</sup> Fırat University, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of History, Elazığ, Türkiye.

<sup>4</sup> Fırat University, Faculty of Architecture, Department of Architecture, Elazığ, Türkiye.

<sup>5</sup> Fırat University, Faculty of Architecture, Department of Architecture, Elazığ, Türkiye.

<sup>6</sup> Fırat University, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of Geography, Elazığ, Türkiye.

### Abstract

Malatya, which is located at the intersection point of the roads reaching from Mesopotamia to the interior of Anatolia and the Black Sea, lies in a geography rich in water resources. The Tohma Stream, which originates in Uzunyayla, reaches Malatya by incorporating the water of Gürün, and from there flows into the Euphrates River. Other waters, especially Sultansuyu and Derme Creek (Deir Massiah) in Malatya, also flow into the Tohma Stream. Large and small bridges were built during and before the Ottoman period to provide transportation over these waters, which played an important role in the development of Malatya agriculture. The most important of these is the Kırkgöz Bridge, which provides transportation between Sivas-Malatya-Diyarbakır and Malatya-Erzincan-Erzurum. The Deir Massiah Bridge is also one of the important historical bridges of the city. However, none of these bridges has survived to this day. The aim of this study is to reveal the importance of Kırkgöz Bridge, which is located on historical transport networks, and the Deir Massiah Bridge, which also served as an aqueduct, in terms of architecture, transport and economic history. The main sources of the study are Ottoman archive documents, Ottoman yearbooks, travelogues, periodicals and research and studies on the subject.

### Öz

Mezopotamya'dan Anadolu içlerine ve Karadeniz'e ulaşan yolların kesişme noktasında yer alan Malatya, su kaynakları bakımından da zengin bir coğrafyada bulunmaktadır. Uzunyayla'dan doğan Tohma Çayı, Gürün suyunu da bünyesine alarak Malatya'ya ulaşmakta ve buradan da Fırat Nehri'ne karışmaktadır. Yine Malatya'daki Sultansuyu ve Derme Deresi (Deyr-i Mesih) başta olmak üzere, başka sular da Tohma Çayı'na akmaktadır. Malatya tarımının gelişmesinde önemli rol oynayan bu sular üzerinde ulaşımı sağlamak için Osmanlı Dönemi'nde ve öncesinde irili ufaklı köprüler inşa edilmiştir. Bunlar içinde en önemlisi de Sivas-Malatya-Diyarbakır ve Malatya-Erzincan-Erzurum arasındaki ulaşımı sağlayan Kırkgöz Köprüsü'dür. Yine Deyr-i Mesih Köprüsü de şehrin önemli tarihi köprülerinden biridir. Fakat bunların hiçbiri günümüze ulaşmamıştır. Bu çalışmanın amacı, tarihî ulaşım ağları üzerinde yer alan Kırkgöz Köprüsü ile bir su kemeri olarak da vazife gören Deyr-i Mesih Köprüsü'nün mimarlık, ulaşım ve iktisat tarihi açısından önemlerini ortaya koymaktır. Çalışmanın başlıca kaynakları ise Osmanlı arşiv belgeleri, salnameler, seyahatnameler, süreli yayınlar ve konu ile ilgili araştırma ve incelemelerdir.

### Keywords

Malatya · Kırkgöz Bridge · Deir Massiah Bridge · Tohma Stream · historical bridges.

### Anahtar Kelimeler

Malatya · Kırkgöz Köprüsü · Deyr-i Mesih Köprüsü · mimarlık tarihi · tarihî köprüler.



“ Citation | Atif: Çakar, Enver Korkmaz Şen, Yavuz Kısa, Tuba Nur Olğun, Murat Şahin & Ahmet Toprak. "Lost Historical Bridges of Malatya: Kırkgöz and Deir Massiah". *Art-Sanat*, 24 (2025): 181-205. <https://doi.org/10.26650/artsanat.2025.24.0003>

© This work is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License. 

© 2025. Çakar, E., Şen, K., Kısa, Y., Olğun, T. N., Şahin, M. & Toprak, A.

✉ Corresponding author | Sorumlu Yazar: Enver Çakar [ecakar@firat.edu.tr](mailto:ecakar@firat.edu.tr)



**Author Note**

This study is a revised and expanded version of the summary paper titled “Malatya Kırkgöz and Deir Massiah Bridges in the Light of Archival Documents”, which was presented at the 27th Symposium on Medieval and Turkish Period Excavations and Art History Research held in Samsun on October 25-28, 2023.

**Yazar Notu**

Bu çalışma, 25-28 Ekim 2023 tarihlerinde Samsun'da düzenlenen 27. Ortaçağ ve Türk Dönemi Kazıları ve Sanat Tarihi Araştırmaları Sempozyumu'nda sunulan “Arşiv Belgeleri Işığında Malatya Kırkgöz ve Deyr-i Mesih Köprüleri” başlıklı özet bildirinin gözden geçirilmiş ve genişletilmiş hâlidir.

**Genişletilmiş Özet**

Malatya, Anadolu'nun doğusundan batısına, kuzeyinden güneyine geçişte kullanılan güzergâhların kesişme noktasında yer aldığı için tarih boyunca önemini korumuştur. Ayrıca Malatya'nın su kaynakları açısından da oldukça zengin bir coğrafyada yer alması şehrin stratejik önemini arttırmıştır. Bu bağlamda, Malatya'nın içme ve sulama suyu ihtiyacını karşılayan birçok önemli su kaynağı bulunmaktadır. Bu su kaynaklarından en önemlisi ise Tohma Çayı'dır. Orta Torosların nispeten az arızalı kısmındaki Uzunyayla'dan doğan bu çay, Gürün suyunu alıp Malatya'ya ulaşmakta, Sultansuyu ve Derme gibi sularla birleşerek Fırat'a dökülmektedir. Tarımda önemli olan bu sular üzerinde Osmanlı ve öncesinde birçok köprü yapılmıştır. Bu köprülerden günümüze ulaşamamış olan ancak gerek tarih gerekse mimari özellikleriyle öne çıkan ve ilgili kaynaklarda da önemine vurgu yapılan Kırkgöz Köprüsü ile Deyr-i Mesih Köprüsü bu çalışmanın ana konusunu oluşturmaktadır. Her iki köprü de yalnızca Malatya'nın tarihi için değil, özellikle Doğu Anadolu ve bu bölgeyle bağlantılı coğrafyalar için de önemli tarihî verileri içermektedir. Bununla birlikte, Osmanlı döneminin köprü inşaa teknikleri, yapım yönetimi ve mimarlık tarihi bilgilerine dair belge niteliği taşıyan yönleriyle de önemli bulgulara ev sahipliği yapan nitelikli yapılarıdır.

Kırkgöz ve Deyr-i Mesih Köprüleri'ni konu edinen bu çalışma nitel araştırma yöntemlerinden doküman ve içerik analizleri ile ele alınmış, bu kapsamda ilgili yapılara dair alanyazını detaylı olarak incelenmiştir. Kaynaklardan elde edilen bilgiler uygun şekilde bir araya getirilmiş ve her bir köprünün tarihî sürecinin akıcı ve anlaşılır bir biçimde ortaya konulması hedeflenmiştir. Bu süreçlerden elde edilen bulgularla çeşitli çıkarımlar yapılmış, dönemin mimarlık tarihi ile yapıların bakım, onarım ve yönetimleri hakkında da değerlendirmelerde bulunulmuştur. Bu konuda başvurulacak temel kaynakların başında ise Cumhurbaşkanlığı Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı Osmanlı Arşivi belgeleri gelmektedir. Ayrıca vilayet salnameleri ile seyahatnameler de konunun aydınlatılmasında kullanılan kaynaklar arasında yer almaktadır.

Çalışma kapsamında ele alınan yapılardan olan ve Sivas-Malatya-Diyarbakır ve Malatya-Erzincan-Erzurum arasındaki ulaşımı sağlayan Kırkgöz Köprüsü, İstanbul-Tokat-Sivas istikametinden gelip Malatya'dan Diyarbakır'a, oradan da Bağdat'a ulaşan ana yol üzerinde bulunmaktaydı. Ayrıca Samsun Limanı'ndan Diyarbakır'a uzanan yolun da buradan geçtiği bilinmektedir.

Birçok kaynakta Kırkgöz Köprüsü ele alınmış ancak kitabesi bulunmadığı için yapının tarihlendirilmesinde farklı dönemlere işaret edilmiştir. Bulunduğu güzergâh başta olmak üzere mimari özelliklerinden yola çıkılarak Kırkgöz Köprüsü kimi kaynaklarda Roma, kimi kaynaklarda da Selçuklu, Artuklu veya Memlük Dönemleri'ne tarihlendirilmiştir. 19. yüzyıl Osmanlı arşiv belgelerinde ise bu köprünün Sultan IV. Murad (1612-1640) tarafından yaptırıldığı ifade edilmektedir. Fakat yapıya dair pek çok kaynak detaylı ve karşılaştırmalı olarak incelendiğinde bu arşiv bilgisinin doğru olmadığı anlaşılmaktadır. Çünkü 16. yüzyılın ilk yarısında (1519-1530) hazırlanan Malatya Sancağı tahrir defterlerinde Kırkgöz Köprüsü'nde bac vergisi (bac-ı rah) alındığına dair kayıtlar mevcuttur. Bu kayıtlara göre, satmak amacıyla dışarıdan Malatya'ya getirilen ipek, meta, kuru ve yaş meyveler ile cariyeler, köle ve çeşitli hayvanlardan alınan tamga vergisi, şehir ve Kırkgöz Köprüsü olmak üzere, iki yerde tahsil edilmekteydi. Bu durumda köprünün Osmanlı hâkimiyetinden önce de mevcut olduğunu söylemek mümkündür. Nitekim Evliya Çelebi, Rum (Sivas) ve Divriği tarafından gelip geçen tüccarların Tohma Çayı üzerindeki Sultan Hasan Mansur'un ibret verici Kırkgöz büyük köprüsünden geçip Malatya'ya ulaştıklarından bahsetmekte ve bu köprünün herkes tarafından bilinen ünlü bir köprü olmakla birlikte, Batman ve Hasankeyf köprüleri kadar yüksek olmadığını belirtmektedir. Evliya Çelebi'nin bahsettiği Sultan Hasan, Memlük sultanlarından olup 1347-1351 ve 1354-1361 yılları arasında iki defa hükümdarlık yapmış, nihayet 1361 yılında Memlük emirlerinden Yelboğa tarafından öldürülmüştür. Evliya Çelebi'den farklı olarak İngiliz oryantalist Guy Le Strange ise Kırkgöz'den antik köprü olarak bahsetmekte ve eski kentin kalıntılarından da bir fersah uzaklıkta olduğunu belirtmektedir. Yine 1894 yılında köprüden geçerek Kebanmadeni'ne giden Seyyah Vincent W. Yorke de iyi durumda bulunan köprünün Antik Dönem'den izler taşıdığı görüşündedir. Bütün bu bilgilerden hareketle, Kırkgöz Köprüsü'nün Roma Dönemi'nde yapıldığı fakat daha sonra yıkılmasından dolayı, Memlük Dönemi'nde Sultan Hasan

Mansur tarafından yeniden inşa ettirildiği, Osmanlı Dönemi'nde ise IV. Murad tarafından tamir ettirildiği söylenebilir. Nitekim köprünün sık sık yaşanan taşkınlar sırasında zarar gördüğüne dair çok sayıda Osmanlı arşiv belgesi bulunmaktadır. Bu kayıtlara göre Kirkgöz Köprüsü 1854 yılında kullanılamayacak derecede hasar görmüştür. Yapılan tamir faaliyetlerine rağmen 1878 yılında da oldukça kötü bir durumda olduğu seyyahların gözlemlerinden anlaşılmaktadır. Bundan dolayı halkın da bağışlarıyla 1883-1884 yıllarında tekrar tamir edilerek kullanılabilir duruma getirilmiştir. 1905 yılında yeniden bakım ve tamir çalışması geçiren Kirkgöz Köprüsü, Cumhuriyet Dönemi'nde de Karayolları Genel Müdürlüğü tarafından birkaç kez çeşitli onarımlara tabi tutulmuştur. Uzun süre bölge halkına ve gelip geçmekte olan yolculara hizmet veren bu tarihî taş köprü, 1987 yılında Karakaya Barajı'nın göl sahası altında kalmıştır.

Bazı kaynaklarda 23, bazılarında ise 22 kemeri olduğu belirtilen Kirkgöz Köprüsü'nün IV. Murad tarafından 40 gözlü olarak inşa edildiği fakat sonraki yıllarda nehrin taşıdığı alüvyonlarla 14 gözünün kapandığı şeklinde yaygın bir inanış mevcut olmakla birlikte, ünlü Fransız arkeolog ve gezgini Charles Texier'e göre aslında bu ad Asya'da belli sayıda kemeri olan bütün köprülere verilmiştir. Nitekim 1883 yılında 23 kemeri olan Kirkgöz Köprüsü'nün bir kemeri 1907 yılından önce yapılan bir onarım sırasında ortadan kalktığı için son zamanlarında sadece 22 kemeri kalmıştır. Cumhuriyet Dönemi'nde çeşitli onarımlara tabi tutulan bu tarihî taş köprü, 1987 yılında Karakaya Baraj Gölü altında kalmadan önce 222.5 metre uzunluğunda ve 3.60 metre genişliğindeydi.

Kirkgöz Köprüsü hakkında bilgi veren seyyahların gözlemleri başta olmak üzere, Karakaya Barajı'nda suyun tutulmaya başlanmasından önce yerinde yapılmış olan inceleme ve hazırlanan raporlar da dikkate alındığında köprünün oldukça büyük; bölgedeki diğer köprüler göz önünde bulundurulduğunda da emsallerine nazaran oldukça uzun bir yapı olduğu anlaşılmaktadır.

Kirkgöz Köprüsü'nden geçiş ücreti alınıp alınamayacağı da 19. yüzyılın son çeyreğinde bir tartışma konusu olmuştur. Halkın şikâyetlerine de sebep olan bu husus 12 Temmuz 1899'da devletin en yüksek karar organı olan Şura-yı Devlet'te görüşülmüş ve uzun süren tartışmalar ve yazışmalardan sonra köprünün tamiri için gereken nakdi bedeli vermekle mükellef olan Malatya ahalisinden geçiş ücreti talep edilmemesine, köprüden istifade eden civar ahaliden ise cüz'i bir miktar alınmasına karar verilmiştir.

Malatya'nın günümüze ulaşmayan önemli tarihî yapılarından bir diğeri de Deyr-i Mesih Köprüsü'dür. Tohma Çayı ile birleştikten sonra Fırat Nehri'ne karışan Derme Deresi (Deyr-i Mesih) üzerindeki bu köprüden geriye sadece mermer kitabesi kalmıştır. Malatya Müzesinde bulunan ve birkaç parçaya ayrılmış durumda olan bu kitabede Deyr-i Mesih Köprüsü'nün 1254 [M 1838/1839] yılında Muhammed Ağa ibni el-Hac Mustafa Ağa tarafından yaptırıldığı yazılıdır. Kaynaklardaki bilgiler ve mermer kitabesinden anlaşıldığına göre, bir su kemeri özelliğine de sahip olan bu köprü sayesinde hem Malatya'nın tarımında hayati öneme sahip olan Deyr-i Mesih suyunun bahçe ve bostanlara nakli hem de yaya geçişine imkân sağlanmıştır. Dolayısıyla bu suyun 1838'den önce de benzer bir yapıyla tarım alanlarına nakledilmiş olması kuvvetle muhtemeldir. Nitekim Osmanlı arşiv belgelerinde bu suyun şehre nakledilmemesi durumunda halkın susuzluktan kırılabileceği gibi bağ ve bahçelerinin de kuruyacağı ifade edilmiş olması bu kaynağın şehrin içme ve sulama suyu ihtiyacının karşılanmasında son derece stratejik bir öneme sahip olduğunu göstermektedir. Fakat bu yapı yaşanan doğal afetler, özellikle de zaman zaman meydana gelen su taşkınları sebebiyle kullanılamayacak derecede hasar görmüştür. Hayati önemi sebebiyle de tamir edilerek veya yeniden inşa edilerek tekrar halkın hizmetine sunulmuştur. Bu bağlamda, 19. yüzyılın son çeyreğinde köprü yıkılmış olduğundan iki kemer üst üste olacak şekilde yeniden yapılmıştır. Yapı sadece suyun akıtılmasında kullanılan bir kemer olmayıp aynı zamanda yaya geçişini sağlayan bir köprü özelliğine de sahipti. Bu özelliğiyle Malatya'daki Deyr-i Mesih Köprüsü'nün İstanbul'daki Mimar Sinan yapılarından olan Mağlova Köprüsü'ne benzediği söylenebilir. Fakat tek sıra, üst üste iki kemerli olarak inşa edilen bu yapı kısa bir müddet sonra meydana gelen sellerden dolayı büyük hasar görmüş ve kullanılamayacak duruma gelmiştir. Nitekim Malatya Mutasarrıfı İbrahim tarafından 6 Mayıs 1879'da Dahiliye Nezaretine gönderilen telgraftan anlaşıldığına göre, anılan köprünün yeniden inşası için 90.250 kuruşa ihtiyaç duyulmaktaydı. Bu meblağın hazine tarafından ödenmesinin mümkün olmadığı bildirildiği için köprünün hayırsever Malatya ahalisi tarafından yaptırılmasına karar verilmiş ve bu maksatla da hükümetten izin talep edilmiştir. Anlaşıldığı üzere bu yazıdan sonra 1 Haziran 1879 tarihinde devletin en yüksek karar mercii olan Şura-yı Devlet toplantısında bu konu tartışılarak bir karara bağlanmıştır. Buna göre, halktan zorla bağış toplanmaması şartıyla köprünün halkın bağışlarıyla yapılmasına izin verilmiştir. Aksi durumda ise Malatya mutasarrıfının sorumlu tutulacağı belirtilmiştir. Yapılan bütün bu tamir ve yenileme faaliyetlerine rağmen Deyr-i Mesih (Derme) suyunun kaynağına yakın bir yerde ve dere üzerinde inşa edilmiş olan ve aynı adı taşıyan köprü zamanla yıkılarak tamamen ortadan kaybolmuştur. Kirkgöz Köprüsü gibi günümüze ulaşmayı başaramayan ve 19. yüzyılda defalarca onarımdan geçen bu köprünün 19. yüzyıldan önceki dönemlerde varlığını konusunu aydınlatmak başka bir belge ve bilgi de yoktur. 17. yüzyılda yaşamış olan Kâtip Çelebi ve Evliya Çelebi Deyr-i Mesih suyundan bahsetmekle birlikte, bunun üzerinde bir köprü olup olmadığı hususunda herhangi bir

bilgi vermemişlerdir. Ayrıca köprünün 19. yüzyıldaki durumunu yansıtacak günümüze ulaşmış bir fotoğraf veya resim de mevcut değildir. Bu sebeple köprünün görünümü ve tarihî geçmişi konusunda kesin bir yargıya varmak da pek mümkün değildir. Ancak köprü yıkıldıktan sonra, suyun şehre naklinde önce ahşap, daha sonra da beton bir köprünün kullanıldığı bilinmektedir. Bu bilgiden hareketle, Deyr-i Mesih suyunun önceki dönemlerde de şehre nakledildiğini ve bu sayede şehrin içme ve özellikle de sulama suyu ihtiyacının karşılandığını söylemek mümkündür.

Köprü yapılarının Anadolu ve çevre coğrafyaların gelişiminde, bu coğrafyaların birbirine bağlanmasında, kültürel aktarımlarda, mimari tasarım ve yapım yönetimi gibi alanların düzenlenmesinde ve günlük yaşamın içinde önemli bir yere sahip olduğu göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, Kırkgöz ve Deyr-i Mesih Köprülerinin de tarihî birer belge niteliği taşıdığını belirtmek mümkündür. Bu bağlamda, her iki yapıya dair kaynakların birlikte incelenmesi ve değerlendirilmesinin, bu kaynaklardan elde edilen bulgularla çıkarımların ortaya konulmasının ve yapıların bölge için öneminin vurgulanmasının ele alınan yapılara benzer nitelikler taşıyan yitirilmiş başka köprülerin de araştırmacılar tarafından dikkate alınmasına ve bölgenin tarihinin derinlemesine incelenmesine katkı sağlayacağı düşünülmektedir.

## Introduction

Located in the Upper Euphrates Basin of the Eastern Anatolia Region, Malatya was founded on the edge of the plain bearing its name. This plain is bounded by the Euphrates-Ceyhan valleys of the Taurus Mountains in the South. To the south of the city rises Beydağı, which is also included in this mass. The Euphrates River runs along the eastern edge of Malatya Plain, separating it from a mountainous area within its arc. Again, the Malatya Plain is surrounded from the west and east by the hills and plateaus between Arapgir and Akçadağ. The Tohma Stream, which originates in Uzunyayla in a relatively less faulted part of the Central Taurus Mountains, reaches the western edge of the Malatya Plain after flowing in a deep valley with the Gürün water passing in front of the towns of Gürün and Darende. Here, the stream separates the eastern part of the plain (Yazihan Plain) from the main plain to the south with its west-east oriented valley and flows under the bridge where the Sivas road passes and merges into the Euphrates River. This stream carries the excess water of the streams (Sultansuyu, Derme Stream, etc.) descending from the high mountains in the south, some of which are used for irrigation of Malatya gardens, to the Euphrates River<sup>1</sup>.

Malatya consists of two separate settlements, old and new. The Malatya mentioned in historical sources is today's Battalgazi (Old Malatya) district located 7-8 km west of the Euphrates River. The city was moved to its present location in 1838, and the Malatians, who lived in their summer houses in Aspuzu until this date, did not return to their winter houses, which had become dilapidated after the army, which was transferred from Elazığ to Malatya for a while, left the city, and continued to live in Aspuzu. Thus, this place formed the nucleus of the New Malatya<sup>2</sup>.

The history of Malatya, which was established at the intersection of important roads from Mesopotamia to the interior of Anatolia and the Black Sea, dates back to 3600 BC. After the Hittite, Assyrian, Persian, Seleucid, Pontus, Commagene and Roman-Byzantine sovereignties and the Byzantine-Arab struggles that followed, the city was taken by the Turks and after being ruled by the Danishmendids, Seljuks, Artuqids, Ilkhanids, Dulkadirs and Mamluks in various periods, it finally came under Ottoman rule in 1516<sup>3</sup>.

Malatya's deep-rooted history and strategic location have enabled it to host many transportation structures. In Malatya, which has witnessed the development of many civilizations throughout history, road networks were built from one end to the other in order to meet transportation-based needs such as communication, military activities and trade. Bridges, which are an important part of the transportation system in this process, have become a complementary element of the history of culture and architecture over time as useful structures that serve societies in many ways<sup>4</sup>.

Historical bridges in Malatya have been discussed in various studies by different disciplines. In the studies, it was mentioned that many bridges were built throughout history due to the high number of rivers in Malatya. It has been determined that some of these bridges have been destroyed, some of them have remained under the waters of the Karakaya Dam, and some of them have changed their function today and constitute an important source of cultural and historical tourism<sup>5</sup>. However, there are also studies that

<sup>1</sup> Besim Darkot, "Malatya," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. 7 (İstanbul: Ministry of National Education Press, 1988), 225-226.

<sup>2</sup> Gökür Göğebakan, "Malatya," *Turkey Religious Foundation Encyclopedia of Islam*, vol. 27 (Ankara: Turkey Religious Foundation Press, 2003), 471.

<sup>3</sup> For more information on the political history of Malatya, see Darkot, "Malatya," 225-239; Göğebakan, "Malatya," 468-475; Memet Karagöz, *XVII. ve XVIII. Asırlarda Malatya* (İstanbul: Karizma Press, 2003); Mevlüt Oğuz, *Malatya Tarihi ve Sosyoekonomik Durumu (M.Ö. 5500-M.S. 1920)* (İstanbul: Kurtiş Printing, 2000).

<sup>4</sup> F. Meral Halifeoğlu, Halide Sert and Süheyla Yılmaz, "Tarihi Kurt Köprüsü (Mihraplı Köprü, Vezirköprü) Restorasyonu Proje ve Uygulama Çalışmaları," *METU Journal of the Faculty of Architecture* 30/2 (2013), 82.

<sup>5</sup> İrfan Tapan, "Cultural Heritage Remains in Malatya and Their Relationship with Cultural Tourism and Sustainable Rural Development," *Ağrı İbrahim Çeçen University Journal of Institute of Social Sciences* 8/2 (2022), 461, <https://doi.org/10.31463/aicusbed.1080664>.



address the structural qualities of the bridges and the construction technologies of the period and examine the behavior of the bridges under seismic effects. One of these is the study on the Uzunok Bridge located on the Tohma Stream<sup>6</sup>. In another study, the current conditions of the historical stone bridges in the Arapgir district were examined<sup>7</sup>. However, when these studies are evaluated in general, it is seen that the bridges that have survived to the present day are intensively discussed, while the studies on the lost bridges in Malatya do not contain in-depth information and documents. In addition, some of these bridges have not been mentioned in detail in the relevant literature. From this perspective, Kirkgöz and Deir Massiah bridges are two of the most important and strategically important bridges.

On the other hand, it is possible to say that there is an accumulation of publications on bridges by local and foreign researchers in Turkey. However, most of these studies have only dealt with visual and architectural documentation. Therefore, in such studies, it is seen that the problems of bridges that have been used for various purposes for centuries, constantly intervened and repaired, have not been sufficiently addressed. It is also observed that the information given on this subject is not sufficiently questioned. However, travelogues and state archives (Ottoman Archives, Foundations Archives, etc.) contain important historical, geographical, architectural, military and economic information on bridges that are relevant to different disciplines. The Kirkgöz and Deir Massiah bridges discussed in this study are also important structures that have been lost, but about which various information can be found in the relevant sources.

It is known that the Kirkgöz Bridge in Malatya was built on the Tohma Stream. According to some sources, the bridge was built by the Ottoman ruler Murad IV, according to others by the order of the Mamluk Sultan Hasan Mansur, and according to others in ancient times. It is known that the Deir Massiah Bridge is located on the Deir Massiah water, known today as Derme, which has an important place in the agriculture of Old Malatya (Battalgazi) and today's Malatya. Considering that the Deir Massiah Bridge also served as an aqueduct, its importance is even more clearly understood. These two structures, which stand out in terms of their historical and strategic importance, constitute the main subject of this article. The sources of the study are primarily Ottoman archival documents, yearbooks (salnames), travelogues and periodicals produced in different disciplines. All of the archive documents and yearbooks were written in the 19th century and these documents generally contain information about the importance of repairing strategic bridges. Since there are no written documents from earlier periods, an attempt was made to fill the historical gap by comparing the information given by travellers and the bridges examined with other structures showing similar architectural features.

In general terms, a bridge is a wooden, masonry, suspended or free-standing structure that makes it possible to cross a land with obstacles such as streams, rivers, canyons and valleys, or that connects the two sides of a land from above in order to facilitate crossing and ensure the continuity of transportation<sup>8</sup>. The Kirkgöz Bridge in Malatya is also a stone bridge that connects important transport networks. Deir Massiah, on the other hand, in addition to being a bridge for travelling back and forth, is also an aqueduct since it was used to transport the water of the same name to the city. In this context, both bridges are worthy of a multifaceted analysis in terms of their contributions to the city and the region. The study aims to contribute to the relevant field by bringing archival documents and visual resources related to these two bridges to the literature and by including detailed evaluations and inferences about the history of the region.

---

<sup>6</sup>Esra Adsız, Erkut Sayın and Alper Özmen, "Seismic Analysis of a Masonry Arch Bridge under Artificial Earthquake Records," *Dicle University Journal of Engineering* 15/3 (2024), 678.

<sup>7</sup>Ayşe Levent and Cumali Levent, "Arapgir Historical Stone Bridges," *Journal of Social, Humanities and Administrative Sciences* 7/45 (2021), 1997, <http://dx.doi.org/10.31589/JOSHAS.773>.

<sup>8</sup>Doğan Hasol, *Ansiklopedik Mimarlık Sözlüğü* (İstanbul: Yem Press, 2008), 280.

## 1. The Kırkgöz Bridge

### 1.1. Location and Route

The Kırkgöz Bridge in Malatya is located on the Tohma Stream<sup>9</sup> near the village of Sinanlı in the district of Yazıhan on the historical road route north of Malatya. The bridge, which is 17 km from Malatya province and 5 km from Battalgazi (Old Malatya)<sup>10</sup>, was also located on the main road from Istanbul-Tokat-Sivas and from Malatya to Diyarbakır and from there to Baghdad (Figure 1). In addition, the road from Samsun Port to Diyarbakır also passed through here. It is also possible to mention a route connecting Malatya to the Black Sea and from there to Crimea. Malatya was a particularly important center for Mamluk trade. So much so that goods or slaves bought from the north of the Black Sea would first be brought to the Crimean port, from where they were transported to Sinop or Samsun. From there, it would be taken to Egypt via Antalya and the Mediterranean Sea, or to Aleppo via Malatya and Sivas, and from there to Egypt. For example, al-Malik al-Ashraf, who ascended to the throne as the Mamluk Sultan in 1422, was brought to Malatya from Crimea, where he was purchased in 791 AH (1389-1390 AD), and after being bought by al-Amir Dokmak al-Muhammadi, the Naib of Malatya at the time, he was sent to Bilad al-Sham, where he was sold to al-Malik al-Zahir Berkuk. Therefore, Malatya was also important in terms of the slave trade<sup>11</sup>.

Josaphat Barbaro, who visited Uzun Hasan of Akkoyunlu in the fifteenth century, states in his travelogue that he set out from Erzincan to Aleppo by joining the caravan of Aleppo, via Cymis (probably Çemişgezek), Arapgir, and then Casseg<sup>12</sup> to the trading center of Malatya, the beautiful city on the border of the country of the sultan of Egypt<sup>13</sup>. The mentioned route coincides exactly with the Kırkgöz Bridge. It is not possible to reach Malatya without a bridge. It is also understood from these statements that Malatya was an important trade center. In the following period, it is understood that Malatya maintained its importance for the East-West and North-South road routes.

In the Malatya Sanjak's Qanunname dated 1559, where and how the baj tax was levied is explained in detail. Accordingly, the tamga tax, which was levied on silk, commodities, dried and fresh fruits, concubines, slaves and various animals brought to the city from outside to sell in Malatya, was collected in two places: the city and Kırkgöz Bridge. However, the baj tax was not levied twice both in the city and at Kırkgöz, but only in one place<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>9</sup>The Tohma Stream is the largest river in the province after the Euphrates River, which forms the eastern border of Malatya. The stream has a length of 52.5 km and consists of two branches. Ayvalı-Tohma Stream, the longest tributary, originates from Uzunyayla and Hajılar Tohma, the other tributary, originates from the Tahtalı Mountains. The Medik Dam, which forms Yazıhan Irrigation and also generates electricity, was built on these two tributaries, which enter the provincial border and merge on the Mıgdi Plain. While the Tohma Stream flows through the Malatya plain, it flows into the Euphrates River by receiving the Halavun Stream and the Epreme Stream in the north, the Dipsiz Stream in the south, Sultansuyu, which is 21.5 km long and originates from the western borders of Doğanşehir district, Beylerderesi and the Horata Stream and the Orduzu Stream, which take their first branches from the bases of Pınarbaşı Beydağları. These waters play an important role in the irrigation of Sultansuyu, Doğanşehir and the Malatya plains. The canyon formed by the Tohma Stream while passing through the borders of Darende district is one of the natural beauties worth seeing. "Başlıca Akarsularımız", Maski, accessed September 10, 2023, <https://www.maski.gov.tr/sayfa.asp?id=232>.

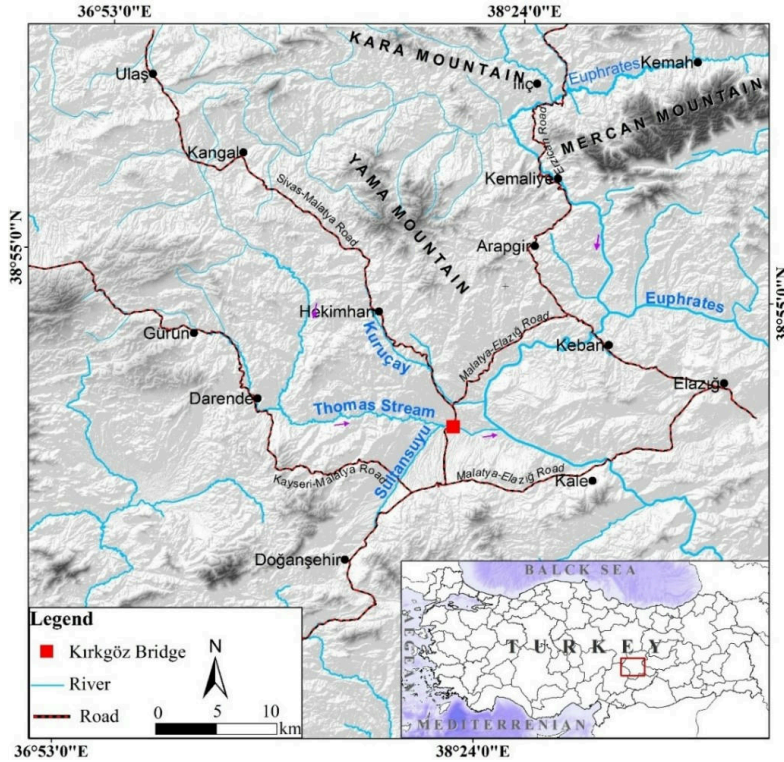
<sup>10</sup>Tülay Metin, "Türkiye Selçukluları Devrinde Malatya" (PhD thesis, Gazi University, 2010), 153-154.

<sup>11</sup>Murat Zengin, *İlhanlılar-Eratnıllılar-Memlûklar Dönemi Malatya (1295-1401)* (Malatya: Malatya Library Governorship of Malatya Press, 2017), 141.

<sup>12</sup>Casseg may be the Roman Hastek in the Agin district of Elazığ. There was a castle in Hastek and the Karamağara Bridge dated to the Byzantine period was located nearby.

<sup>13</sup>Josaphat Barbaro, *Anadolu'ya ve İran'a Seyahat*, trans. Tufan Gündüz (İstanbul: Yeditepe Press, 2009), 102.

<sup>14</sup>"Ammâ Kırkgöz'e uğrayıp bâcın vere; şehre geldükde tekrâr alınmayub bâc verür ya Kırkgöz'de veyahut şehirde alınub tekrâr alınmaya." Ahmet Akgündüz, *Osmanlı Kanunnâmeleri ve Hukukî Tahlilleri*, 6. Kitap Kanunî Devri Kanunnâmeleri II. Kısım Eyâlet Kanunnâmeleri (II) (İstanbul: Fey Foundation Press, 1993), 6: 277.



Source: "OpenStreetMap data for this region: Turkey," <https://www.geofabrik.de/>

**Figure 1: Geographical Location of the Kırkgöz Bridge and Its Connection with Historical Roads**

In the 1301 AH (1883/1884 AD) dated the *Vilayet of Mamuret-ul-Aziz Yearbook*, the land transport network between Samsun and Diyarbakır was shown as Samsun-Amasya-Tokat-Sivas-Alacahan-Hasançelebi-Hekimhan-Hasanbadrik-the Kırkgöz Bridge-Malatya-İzoli-Mamuret-ul-Aziz-Ergani-Diyarbakır<sup>15</sup>. Since there was no bridge on the Euphrates River between Malatya and İzoli on this route, crossings were made by boats called sefine (ship). As a matter of fact, in the report of Karakin Vertabed Sırvantsdyants, it is mentioned that in 1878 they crossed the Euphrates in ten minutes with a large ship<sup>16</sup>. Again in the *Vilayet of the Mamuret-ul-Aziz Yearbook* dated 1301 AH [1883/1884 AD], it is mentioned that the crossings to Malatya were made by the Herdi and İzoli boats operated by the Malatya Municipality<sup>17</sup>.

During the Ottoman period, Anatolia and Rumelia were surrounded by a network of military and postal routes. Ottoman land routes, centred in Istanbul, extended in Anatolia and Rumelia in three main branches as right, left and middle branches and were connected to each other by secondary roads. The Middle Branch, one of the Anatolian transport networks starting from Istanbul and extending to Baghdad, reached Tokat via Üsküdar-Gebze-İznik-Bolu-Tosya and Merzifon, and from there to Basra via Sivas-Hasançelebi-Malatya-Harpur-Diyarbakır-Nusaybin-Musul-Kerkük and Baghdad<sup>18</sup>. Since the road between Sivas and Malatya was cut by the Tohma Stream near Malatya, the transport was provided via the Kırkgöz Bridge. Therefore, Kâtip Çelebi referred to this bridge as the great bridge on the great road leading to the city<sup>19</sup>.

<sup>15</sup>*Sâlnâme, Târih-i Hicret-i Nebeviyye 1301, Târih-i Rûmî 1300*, Def a: Ulâ (The Mamuret-ul-Aziz Printing House, 1301), 98-99.

<sup>16</sup>V. Bardizaktsi, B. Natanyan and K. Sırvantsdyants, *Palu-Harpur 1878 Çarsancak, Çemişgezek, Çapakçur, Erzincan, Hizan ve Civar Bölgeler-Raporlar*, trans. S. Malhasyan, A. Yarman, prepared by Arsen Yaman (İstanbul: Derlem Press, 2010), 2: 343.

<sup>17</sup>*Sâlnâme, Târih-i Hicret-i Nebeviyye 1301*, 117.

<sup>18</sup>Ümit Ekin, "Organization of Transportation and Shipping in the Ottoman Empire," *Kadim 3* (2022), 36, <https://doi.org/10.54462/kadim.1075652>

<sup>19</sup>Kâtip Çelebi, *Cihânnümâ*, ed. Sait Öztürk (İstanbul: İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality Culture Inc. Press, 2010), 682.

The 17th century traveller Evliya Çelebi mentioned that merchants travelling from Rum (Sivas) and Divriği reached Malatya by passing through the Kırkgöz Bridge<sup>20</sup>. Yorke, who travelled with a team in 1894 to search for traces of the Roman Empire's defence system, crossed through the Kırkgöz Bridge over the Tohma Stream on his way from Malatya to Erzincan<sup>21</sup>.

Suleiman the Magnificent used the Sivas-Erzurum route on the Left Branch<sup>22</sup>, not the Sivas-Malatya route on the Middle Branch, during his Iranian campaigns<sup>23</sup>. Sultan Murad IV also preferred this route during his Erivan and Baghdad campaigns, but on his return from Erivan, he followed the routes of Tabriz, Van, Erciş, Adilcevaz, Tatvan, Bitlis, Diyarbakır, Kara Köprü, Pağınık, Euphrates River, Malatya, Hasan Batrik, Hekim Khan, Hasan Çelebi Village, Kangal Village, Sivas, Tokat, Amasya, Bolu, Iznikmid, Hereke, Pendik and Üsküdar<sup>24</sup>. Therefore, although it is not mentioned in the sources of the period, Murad IV must have passed through the Kırkgöz Bridge on his way from Malatya to Sivas. However, although this main road was utilized in military campaigns during the 17th century, it appears that its primary function was for communication and trade purposes. Indeed, Franz Taeschner states that two routes, Malatya and Divriği, were used for the road between Sivas and Diyarbakır, but only the first of these (Sivas-Malatya) was the main caravan route, and also describes this road between Sebastia (Sivas) and Melitene (Malatya) as an ancient road<sup>25</sup>.

## 1.2. Construction Date of the Bridge

It is not exactly known by whom and when the structure was built, as there is no inscription on it. However, the researchers suggest different dates: Çulpan believes it may have been built in the 15th century, Tunç in the 14th century, and İlter suggests it could have been constructed in the early 13th century<sup>26</sup>.

In the archival sources of the Ottoman Empire from the 19th century, it is stated that Kırkgöz Bridge was built by Sultan Murad IV<sup>27</sup>. However, upon examining other sources, it becomes evident that this information is inaccurate. As mentioned above, the fact that Barbaro passed through here with a trade caravan in the 15th century and the fact that it was stated in the tahrir registers prepared in the first half of the 16th century (1519-1530) that the toll tax (baj-ı rah) was collected on the Kırkgöz Bridge makes it necessary to date this structure to an earlier period. Moreover, the fact that the Roman stone-paved road and two bridges (the Karamağara Bridge<sup>28</sup> in Ağın and the Suceyin Bridge<sup>29</sup> in Arapgir) on this route have survived to the present

<sup>20</sup>Evliyâ Çelebi, *Günümüz Türkçesiyle Evliyâ Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi: Bağdad-Basra-Bitlis-Diyarbakır-İsfahan-Malatya-Mardin-Musul-Tebriz-Van*, book 4, vol. 1, prepared by Seyit Ali Kahraman and Yücel Dağlı (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Press, 2010), 17.

<sup>21</sup>Vincent W. Yorke, "A Journey in the Valley of the Upper Euphrates: Part I," *The Geographical Journal* 8/4 (1896), 328, accessed September 10, 2023, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1774053>.

<sup>22</sup>The Left Branch between Istanbul and Erzurum follows the Middle Road until Merzifon. From Merzifon, it travelled to Hasankale via Ladik-Niksar-Karahisar-ı Şarkî-Kelkit-Aşkale-Erzurum, and from there one branch reached Kars and another branch reached Tabriz. Ekin, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Ulaşım ve İletim Örgütlenmesi", 36.

<sup>23</sup>Nasûhü's-Silâhi (Matrâkçı), *Beyân-ı Menâzil-i Sefer-i İrakeyn-i Sultân Süleymân Hân*, prepared by Hüseyin G. Yurdaydın (Ankara: Turkish History Institution Press, 2014), 223-237; Orhan Cezmi Tuncer, *Anadolu Kervan Yolları* (Ankara: General Directorate of Foundations Press), 51.

<sup>24</sup>*Mecmû'a-i Münşe'atü's-Selatin-i Feridun Bey* (İstanbul: 1275), 2: 408-410; Mustafa Naima, *Tarih-i Naima* (İstanbul: Matbaa-i Amire, 1281), 3: 224-241; Zeynep Aycibin, "Kâtib Çelebi, Fezleke, Tahlil ve Metin" (PhD Thesis, Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University, 2007), 849-857, 881-891.

<sup>25</sup>Franz Taeschner, *Osmanlı Kaynaklarına Göre Anadolu Yol Ağı*, trans. Nilüfer Epçeli (İstanbul: Bilge Kültür Sanat Press, 2010), 2: 31.

<sup>26</sup>Cevdet Çulpan, *Türk Taş Köprüleri Ortaçağdan Osmanlı Sonuna Kadar* (Ankara: Turkish History Institution Press, 2002), 119; Fügen İlter, *Osmanlılara Kadar Anadolu Türk Köprüleri* (Ankara: General Directorate of Highways Press, 1978), 155; Gülgün Tunç, *Taş Köprülerimiz* (Ankara: General Directorate of Highways Press, 1978), 118-119.

<sup>27</sup>Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, Directorate of State Archives Ottoman Archives (BOA), Dahiliye Mektubi Kalemi (DH.MKT), 1439/38, 23 Dhu al-Qa'dah 1304 [August 13, 1887].

<sup>28</sup>Doomed by The Dam, *A Survey of The Monuments Threatened By The Creation of The Keban Dam Flood Area, Elazığ 18-29 October 1966* (Ankara: Middle East Technical University Press, 1967), 54; İsmet İlter, *Keban Projesi 1972 Çalışmaları* (Ankara: Middle East Technical University Press, 1976), 203.

<sup>29</sup>Korkmaz Şen, *Arapgir İlçesinin Tarihçesi ve Kültür Varlıkları* (Ankara: Akademisyen Press, 2018), 106.



day makes it possible to date the construction of Kırkgöz Bridge to the Roman period. Otherwise, it does not seem possible to use the route of the Roman bridges mentioned above.

On the other hand, Evliya Çelebi mentions that the merchants travelling from Sivas and Divriği reached Malatya by crossing Sultan Hasan Mansur's exemplary Kırkgöz Bridge over the Tohma Stream and states that this bridge, although it was a famous bridge known by everyone, was not as high as the bridges of Batman and Hasankeyf<sup>30</sup>. The Sultan Hasan mentioned by Evliya Çelebi was one of the Mamluk sultans and ruled twice between 1347-1351 and 1354-1361 and was finally killed by Yelboğa, one of the Mamluk emirs, in 1361<sup>31</sup>. Unlike Evliya Çelebi, the English orientalist Guy Le Strange refers to Kırkgöz as the ancient bridge and states that the ruins of the old city are one league away<sup>32</sup>. The traveller Yorke, who travelled to Kebanmadeni by crossing the bridge in 1894, thought that the bridge, which was in good condition, bore traces of antiquity<sup>33</sup>.

Based on all this information, it can be said that Kırkgöz Bridge was probably built during the Roman period, but due to its destruction, it was rebuilt by Sultan Hasan Mansur during the Mamluk period. Although the information given by travellers should be treated with skepticism, there is no other source that clarifies this issue. In 19th century Ottoman archive documents, the information that Kırkgöz Bridge was built by Murad IV is completely fabricated. Because Evliya Çelebi travelled to Malatya in 1655<sup>34</sup> and Murad IV died in 1640<sup>35</sup>. If Murad IV had built the bridge, Evliya Çelebi, who travelled to Malatya 15 years after the death of the sultan, would have been aware of this. Therefore, it can be concluded that Murad IV was not the original builder of the bridge, but rather commissioned its restoration.

The Kırkgöz Bridge was also repaired in the following periods. In fact, it is evident that the bridge was in a state of disrepair by 1854. Since its repair was essential, a local official named Topaloğlu Ahmed was assigned for this work and it was determined that the cost would be ten thousand piasters. Of this amount, 5.212 piasters were to be paid by the people by collecting aid and 4.700 piasters were to be paid by the treasury. However, this issue was discussed in the Supreme State Council (Meclis-i Vâlâ) and it was determined that a maximum of 4 thousand piasters could be spent for the buildings to be constructed in the provinces according to the legislation. It was decided that the 797 piasters exceeding the expenditure limit would be covered from the public works budget since it would be deemed as *juz'iyat* (unimportant) and this decision would be referred to the relevant ministry. In addition, the issue of how to act on this issue was submitted to the Sadaret Dairesi (Grand Vizier's Office) on April 15, 1854<sup>36</sup>.

Again, in the reports of Sirvantsdyants prepared in 1878, it was stated that the bridge was in a very bad condition and that some parts of it had turned into corpses and some into skeletons<sup>37</sup>. Therefore, since the bridge was in need of major repairs, it was repaired again during the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II. Most of the arches were completed and the remaining part was planned to be completed by the end of the year<sup>38</sup>.

<sup>30</sup>Evliya Çelebi, *Günümüz Türkçesiyle Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi*, book 4, vol 1: 17.

<sup>31</sup>Murat Zengin, "The Turkish Mamluk State During the Reign of Sultan Hasan: An Overview," *İnönü University International Journal of Social Sciences* 5/1 (2016), 79-90.

<sup>32</sup>G. Le Strange, *The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate, Mesopotamia, Persia, and Central Asia from the Moslem conquest to the time of Timur* (Cambridge: at the University Press, 1905), 121, not: 1.

<sup>33</sup>Yorke, "A Journey in the Valley of the Upper Euphrates: Part I," 328.

<sup>34</sup>Evliya Çelebi, *Günümüz Türkçesiyle Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi*, book 4, vol. 1: 1-24.

<sup>35</sup>Ziya Yılmaz, "Murad IV," *Turkey Religious Foundation Encyclopedia of Islam*, vol. 31 (Ankara: Turkey Religious Foundation Press, 2020), 182.

<sup>36</sup>Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, Directorate of State Archives Ottoman Archives (BOA), İrade, Meclis-i Vala (İ.MVL), 303/12391, 17 Rajab 1270 [April 15, 1854]. See also Sevim Erdem, "The Use of Malatya Tokma (Tohma/Tokhma) River As Drinking Water and Land in the Last Century of Ottomans," *Firat University Journal of Social Sciences* 27/2 (2017), 288-289.

<sup>37</sup>Bardizaktsi, Natanyan ve Sirvantsdyants, *Palu-Harput 1878*, 2: 326.

<sup>38</sup>*Sâlnâme, Târih-i Hicret-i Nebeviyye 1301*, 138.

This issue was reported in the *Mamuret-ul-Aziz Newspaper* dated December 7, 1883 under the title “Vekâyi’-i Vilayet” and it was stated that the 23-arched historical bridge was completely ruined and the Baghdad road had become dangerous due to this reason, and it was also stated that permission was obtained from the Ministry of Public Works for its repair and construction. It was also stated in this news article that after a sufficient number of architects, craftsmen and labourers were procured, a large number of stones were obtained from the ruins of the old city of Malatya and 11 arches of the bridge on the land side were built in a short time and the water channel was diverted to these new arches. According to another article in the *Mamuret-ul-Aziz Newspaper* dated June 16, 1884, half of the repair cost of the Kırkgöz Bridge was covered by donations collected from the public.

As a matter of fact, this issue was reported in the *Mamuret-ul-Aziz Newspaper* dated December 7, 1883 under the title “Vekâyi’-i Vilayet”. In this news article, it was stated that the historic bridge with 23 arches was completely ruined and therefore the Baghdad road had become dangerous. After obtaining permission from the Ministry of Public Works for the repair of the bridge, a sufficient number of architects, craftsmen and laborers were procured and a large amount of stones were obtained from the ruins of the old city of Malatya. The 11 arches of the bridge were repaired in a short time and the water channel was diverted to these new arches<sup>39</sup>. According to another news article in the *Mamuret-ul-Aziz Newspaper* dated June 16, 1884, half of the cost of repairing the Kırkgöz Bridge was covered by donations collected from the public<sup>40</sup>.

Despite this radical repair in 1883, it is understood that the bridge was still unusable in 1887<sup>41</sup>. However, it must have been repaired again because in the *Vilayet of Mamuret-ul-Aziz Yearbook* dated 1325 AH [1907/1908 AD], this bridge, which is stated to be located between Fethiye Village and Malatya on the Istanbul road, is mentioned as a large and excellent bridge with 22 arches and 230 meters in length<sup>42</sup>. These data suggest that the bridge was repaired again.

On the other hand, the issue of whether or not tolls could be charged at the Kırkgöz Bridge was also a matter of debate in the last quarter of the 19th century. As a matter of fact, according to a letter dated July 13, 1899 and signed by Mamuret-ul-Aziz Governor Rauf to the Council of State<sup>43</sup> (Şûrâ-yı Devlet), the Mutasarrıflık of Malatya, which was then a part of the Mamuret-ul-Aziz Province, was asked whether it was suitable to charge a toll from the Kırkgöz Bridge and how much revenue would be generated annually. In the reply received from this mutasarrıflık, it was stated that the bridge was a work of charity built on the Tohma Stream three hours away from Malatya and that if a toll was charged to the locals and passers-by using this bridge, many people would not cross the bridge and would try to cross the water from the crossing area. Although it is clear that this situation would cause many deaths, especially in the spring and winter seasons when the water overflows, it is also emphasized that the fee to be charged this year would be a very low amount<sup>44</sup>.

<sup>39</sup>“Vekâyi’-i Vilayet”, *Mamuret-ul-Aziz* 10, 6 Safar 1301 AH/December 7, 1883 AD, 1.

<sup>40</sup>“Vekâyi’-i Vilayet”, *Mamuret-ul-Aziz* 35, 21 Sha’ban 1301 AH/June 16, 1884 AD, 1.

<sup>41</sup>Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, Directorate of State Archives Ottoman Archives (BOA), Dahiliye Mektubi Kalemi (DH.MKT), 1439/38, 23 Dhu al-Qa’dah 1304 [August 13, 1887].

<sup>42</sup>1325 *Sene-i Hicriyesine Mahsûs Sâlnâme-i Vilâyet-i Mamuret-ul-Aziz*, Def’a 9 (the Mamuret-ul-Aziz Vilayet Printing House, 1325), 207.

<sup>43</sup>Established in 1868 and consisting of five departments, the main duties of the Council of State (Şûrâ-yı Devlet) are; to prepare draft laws and ordinances, to examine the civil affairs, to resolve disputes between the judiciary and administrative officials in the appeal of decisions of courts or assemblies, to hear cases between the government and individuals, to interpret the texts of laws, to examine the conditions of civil servants and to judge them when necessary, and to discuss and decide on the decrees issued by public assemblies, which would convene once a year in each province to discuss the problems of the province according to the 1864 Vilâyet Nizamnâme. These matters would be referred to the assembly by the office of the sadrazam (grand vizier), and the assembly would submit a report on the issues it discussed to the office of the sadrazam. The bills prepared by the assembly would be enacted into law after the approval of the government and the sultan. Ali Akyıldız, “Şûrâ-yı Devlet”, *Turkey Religious Foundation Encyclopedia of Islam*, vol. 39, Istanbul: Turkey Religious Foundation Press, 2010, 236.

<sup>44</sup>Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, Directorate of State Archives Ottoman Archives (BOA), Şura-yı Devlet (ŞD), 1479/4, 4 Rabi’ al-Awwal 1317 [July 13, 1899].

In line with this letter, a decision was taken by the Council of State on July 12, 1899<sup>45</sup> and this decision was notified to the Ministry of the Interior<sup>46</sup> by a letter dated July 17, 1899 from the Sadaret office and to the Mamuret-ul-Aziz Province on August 8, 1899 from this ministry<sup>47</sup>. According to the decision, the toll would not be collected from the people of Malatya, who were obliged to pay the cash price for the repair of the bridge, but a small amount would be collected from the neighbouring communities.

It seems that Kırkgöz Bridge was frequently repaired in the following years. For example, in 1905, a new attempt was made by the Governorate of Mamuret-ul-Aziz for the repair of the bridge, and reports on the estimated cost were prepared and notified to the government with a letter. This letter and its annexes were examined by the Turuk and Maabir Administration, which is responsible for the construction and repair of roads and bridges, and it was understood that it was estimated to be completed with a cash cost of 14 thousand piasters and 360 labourers. However, reports on estimated cost sent from the province were not approved on the grounds that the wages of the craftsmen to be employed for the chipped stone were not specified in the survey compass and some calculation errors were made. In addition, it was requested that the estimate be redrafted in duplicate, that the repaired parts of the bridge be shown in different colours and resubmitted with a sketch, and that 6.900 piasters, which was deemed appropriate by the supervision to be spent out of the 14 thousand piasters estimated cost, be duly covered from the cash price. Along with this request, the employment of 360 labourers was deemed appropriate and the decision was notified to the Mamuret-ul-Aziz Province by the relevant supervision<sup>48</sup>.

### 1.3. Architectural Features

The first documents on the architectural structure of the bridge, which has not survived to the present day, were provided by the traveler Yorke and the *Mamuret-ul-Aziz Newspaper* dated 1883. According to the information in these sources, the Kırkgöz Bridge had 23<sup>49</sup> arches, and according to the Vilayet of the *Mamuret-ul-Aziz Yearbook* dated 1325 AH [1907/1908 AD], it had 22 arches (Figure 2).

In this case, it is noteworthy why the bridge was named Kırkgöz<sup>50</sup>. In the existing sources, there is no information on how many arches it had before the 19th century<sup>51</sup>. In some studies, it is stated that the bridge built by Murad IV was built with 40 arches, but 14 arches were closed by the alluvium carried by the river in the following years; however, the famous French archeologist and traveller Charles Texier stated that this name was actually given to all bridges with a certain number of arches in Asia<sup>52</sup>. As a matter of fact, the Kırkgöz Bridge in Bolvadin also had 64 arches. It seems that an arch of the Kırkgöz Bridge in Malatya, which had 23 arches in 1883, disappeared during a repair before 1907.

<sup>45</sup>Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, Directorate of State Archives Ottoman Archives (BOA), Bab-ı Ali Evrak Odası (BEO), 1341/100516/2, 3 Rabi' al-Awwal 1317 [July 12, 1899].

<sup>46</sup>Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, Directorate of State Archives Ottoman Archives (BOA), Bab-ı Ali Evrak Odası (BEO), 1341/100516/1, 8 Rabi' al-Awwal 1317 [July 17, 1899].

<sup>47</sup>Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, Directorate of State Archives Ottoman Archives (BOA), Dahiliye Mektubi Kalem (DH.MKT), 2230/138, 30 Rabi' al-Awwal 1317 [August 8, 1899].

<sup>48</sup>*Umûr- Nâfi ve Zirâat Mecmuası*, 1 Dhu al-Qa'dah 1323 [December 28, 1905], 314.

<sup>49</sup>*Mamuret-ul-Aziz* 10, 6 Safer 1301 [December 7, 1883], 1; Yorke, "A Journey in the Valley of the Upper Euphrates: Part I," 328.

<sup>50</sup>Kırkgöz is a name used to indicate that the structure has forty arches.

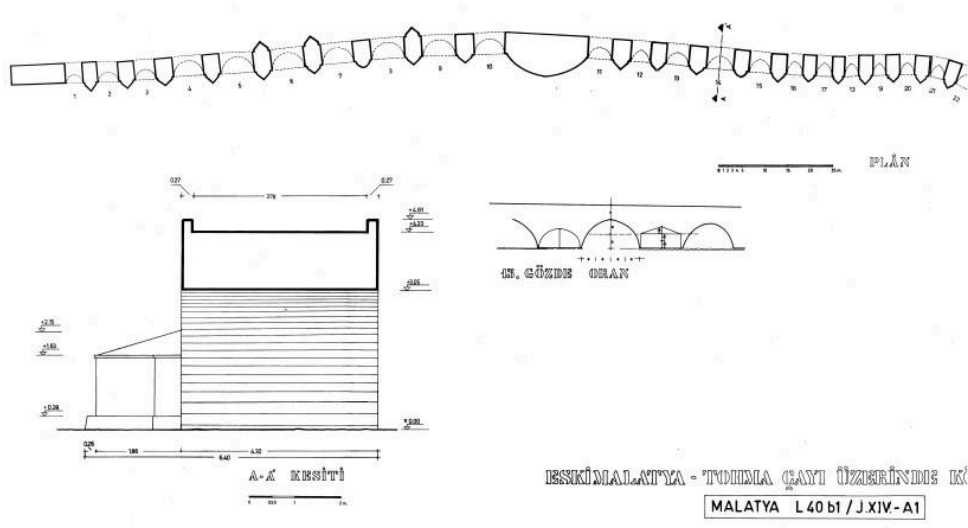
<sup>51</sup>Oğuz, *Malatya Tarihi ve Sosyoekonomik Durumu*, 189.

<sup>52</sup>Charles Texier, *Küçük Asya Coğrafyası Tarihi ve Arkeolojisi*, trans. Ali Suat (Ankara: Information and Documentation Services Foundation Press, 2002), 3: 146.



Source: Gögebakan, "Malatya," 472

**Figure 2: The Kırkgöz Bridge in 1929**



Source: Serdaroğlu, Aşağı Fırat Havzasında Araştırmalar 1975

**Figure 3: Plan and Section of the Kırkgöz Bridge**

According to the 1975 on-site survey, the bridge is 214 meters long and 4 meters wide (Figure 2, Figure 3). The structure has 22 arch spans and the highest point is 4.33 meters relative to the water surface. The highest and widest arch span is in the middle of the bridge and is about 3 meters high. The bridge slopes slightly toward the sides and the width and height of the arch spans and the piers decrease proportionally. When the arch openings to the right and left of the wide and high arch opening in the center were analyzed in terms of downstream and upstream, they showed differences in terms of size and style. Starting from arch opening no. 11 on the right in the upstream direction, they have sharp ridges and vaults, giving the appearance of pointed arches. The ones to the left of the middle arch have semicircular arches. The difference in the texture of the stone material and the stone masonry technique in the vaults and piers is immediately noticeable. Although spurs were placed in the upstream direction to reduce the impact and pressure effect of the water, the structure is not in a smooth direction and fractures are given at various distances. There are spurs in front of the piers, but the stylistic differences between them are also noteworthy. Spurs with the same shape and characteristics are also located in the downstream direction. The most striking point is that when the bridge is examined from the facade, the deck is sloped in 1/3 and 2/3 ratios from the main arch to the starting points. The proportion between the arch and the spur brought a very balanced solution to the building

composition. As the arches get smaller toward the sides, the widths and heights of the arch piers and spurs also get smaller progressively<sup>53</sup>.

Considering the fact that the bridge deck rises in proportion to the main arch and that the main arch is wider and higher than the others, as well as the presence of spurs on some piers, it can be said that it shows very close similarities with the Bolvadin Bridge (13th century), the Palu Bridge (19th century) and the Murat Bridge in Muş province, which is not known for certain when it was built<sup>54</sup> (Figure 4).

The Kırkgöz Bridge, which is understood to have important architectural features, was submerged after the construction of the Karakaya Dam. Following the loss of the bridge, the new Tohma Bridge or Şehit Gaffari Güneş Bridge, which was built adjacent to the existing bridge on the road connecting Malatya and Sivas and over the Tohma Stream that divides the Malatya Plain into two, provides both road and rail transportation today. This bridge is 517.5 meters long and was opened on February 6, 2021<sup>55</sup> (Figure 5).



Source: Şen, "Muş Bridges in The Ottoman Archive Documents," 535

**Figure 4: The Murat Bridge in Muş**

<sup>53</sup> Ümit Serdaroğlu, *Aşağı Fırat Havzasında Araştırmalar 1975* (Ankara: ODTÜ Lower Euphrates Project Press, 1977), 32-33.

<sup>54</sup> Ali Osman Uysal, "Seljuk Buildings in Bolvadin and Kırkgöz Bridge," *Journal of Seljuk Studies* 20 (2024), 98, <http://dx.doi.org/10.23897/usad.1422497>; Enver Çakar, "The Palu Bridge in The Light of Ottoman Archive Documents," *Fırat University Journal of Harput Studies* 5/1 (2018), 28; Korkmaz Şen, "Muş Bridges in The Ottoman Archive Documents," *Türkiyat Mecmuası* 29/2 (2019), 533, 10.26650/iuturkiyat.636824

<sup>55</sup> "Tohma Köprüsü," General Directorate of Highways, accessed September 07, 2023. <https://www.kgm.gov.tr/Sayfalar/KGM/SiteTr/Projeler/ProjelerDetay.aspx?q=23>



Source: General Directorate of Highways, <https://www.kgm.gov.tr/Sayfalar/KGM/SiteTr/Projeler/ProjelerDetay.aspx?q=23>

**Figure 5: The Tohma Bridge**

## 2. Deir Massiah Bridge

### 2.1. Location and Route of the Bridge

Although the Deir Massiah Bridge is one of the important transportation structures that have not survived to the present day, it is seen that there is information about this structure in travelogues, Ottoman yearbooks and archival documents. According to the records examined, the name of the structure in the Yeşilyurt district of Malatya is “Yel Bridge<sup>56</sup>”. However, the exact location of the bridge could not be determined.

Deir Massiah<sup>57</sup> is the most important river that has its source in Malatya and is known as Derme today and meets the irrigation needs of the city. In the Vilayet of the *Mamuret-ul-Aziz Yearbook* dated 1301 AH [1883/1884 AD], the Deir Massiah River is said to have originated from a four-cornered pool in the south of Old Malatya, at the site of a ruined church. It is also stated that half of this water was allocated to paddy ditches in New Malatya, while the other half flowed northward from the center of the city, irrigating vineyards, gardens and fields, and then flowed into the Euphrates River. In the same Ottoman yearbook, it is also mentioned that there is a huge bridge and about 20 other bridges on this river<sup>58</sup>. In the Vilayet of *Mamuret-ul-Aziz Yearbook* dated 1325 AH [1907/1908 AD], it is stated that the big bridge on Deir Massiah was located near the village named Çırmıktı and was called Yığküp, and the number of large and small bridges on this river was about 50<sup>59</sup>. The Çırmıktı village mentioned here is today's Yeşilyurt district.

<sup>56</sup>Adnan Işık, *Malatya 1830-1919* (İstanbul: Kurşit Printing, 1998), 273.

<sup>57</sup>Deir Massiah, which consists of the word "deir" meaning church, monastery and the word "Massiah", which is the nickname of Jesus Christ, means "Christ Monastery".

<sup>58</sup>*Sâlnâme, Târih-i Hicret-i Nebeviyye* 1301, 136.

<sup>59</sup>*1325 Sene-i Hicriyesine Mahsûs Sâlnâme-i Vilâyet-i Mamuret-ul-Aziz*, 207.

<sup>60</sup>There are various rumours about the source of this water in Malatya. For example, according to one of these rumours, Jesus Christ came with his disciples and struck his staff on the ground for people suffering from thirst near Gündüzbey and water flowed from there, so this water

## 2.2. Date of Construction of the Bridge

There is no information in the sources about when and by whom the big bridge on Deir Massiah<sup>60</sup> (Derme), which merges into the Euphrates after merging with the Tohma Stream, was built. There is also no detailed information about the physical characteristics of this bridge. The information in the Ottoman archive documents is mostly related to the repair of the bridge. However, a marble inscription was found stating that the Deir Massiah Bridge was built by Muhammed Aga ibn el-Haj Mustafa Aga in 1254 AH [1838/1839 AD]. This inscription, which was previously placed on the edge of the Derme Canal at Yelköprü in Yeşilyurt, with a width of 116 cm, a length of 88 cm and a thickness of 8-9 cm, has unfortunately been broken into five pieces. Although the fragments were joined together with concrete, they were later removed and placed in the Malatya Museum (Figure 6). Therefore, the inscription dates the bridge over Deir Massiah to 1838.

There is no documentation whether this bridge existed in the earlier period. However, it seems unlikely that this water, which is of vital importance for the agriculture of Malatya, was not used much earlier (e.g. during the Roman and Byzantine periods). As a matter of fact, Evliya Çelebi, one of the 17th century travellers, states that the Deir Massiah River, after irrigating the Aspuzu vineyards and beating the walls of Malatya Castle, merged with the Til River at the place called Dival Creek and then merged with the Tohma River<sup>61</sup>. Kâtip Çelebi, who lived in the same period, mentions that Deir Massiah passes through 15 villages with vineyards and gardens from its source until it reaches the city, and that it flows into the Euphrates after merging with Pınarbaşı in Malatya<sup>62</sup>. However, neither of them mentions any bridge or arch over Deir Massiah. In his letter dated September 2, 1838, Moltke, who also went to Malatya, wrote that he went to Aspuzu, the summer city of Malatya, that there were numerous water channels here and that he stayed on a bridge under a tree, but he did not mention the characteristics and name of this bridge<sup>63</sup>. In this context, according to the information in the archival sources and the inscription, it is clear that this structure served as both a bridge and an aqueduct. It is understood that the irrigation of the above-mentioned areas could only be possible through an aqueduct.



Source: E. Çakar, K. Şen, 2023

**Figure 6:** 1254 [1838/1839 AD] dated inscription of the Deir Massiah Bridge

was called Deir Massiah. Tahir Sağır, "Derme Suyunun Gizemi," *Sonsöz*, September 14, 2022, accessed September 13, 2023, <https://malatyasonsoz.com.tr/makale/15697862/tahir-sagir/derme-suyunun-gizemi#:~:text=hi%C3%A7%20durmadan%20akacak.->

<sup>61</sup> Evliyâ Çelebi, *Günümüz Türkçesiyle Evliyâ Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi*, book 4, vol. 1: 17.

<sup>62</sup> Kâtip Çelebi, *Cihânnümâ*, 682.

<sup>63</sup> Feldmareşal Helmuth Von Moltke, *Moltke'nin Türkiye Mektupları*, trans. Hayrullah Örs (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi Press, 1999), 258.

**Reading of the Inscription:**

*Fahr-i erbâb-ı himem Hac(ı) Muhammed Ağâ  
 Haj(ı) Kasımzâde o zübde-i ashâb-ı sehâ  
 Deir-i Massiah suyuna mecrâ yaptı bu kantaray  
 Bârekallah rehî cîsr-i latîf-i ra'nâ  
 Sebep ettikde anı hazret-i Hakk'dan (...)  
 Eyledi bağ-ı besâtini mücedded ihyâ  
 Cedd-i cehd eyledi ism-i sa'î belîğ-i mevkûf  
 Lütfe ana ecrini bî-had Mevlâ  
 Hüsn-i itmâm erince didi abdî târih  
 Ahsenallahu te'âlâ bâ du'âfete ve ilâ bânihâ  
 Benâhâ sâhibü'l-hayrât ve'l-hasenât el-Haj Muhammed Ağâ  
 İbn el-Haj Mustafa tekabballahu bi-kabûlin ahsenin  
 Ve âherehullahu te'âlâ bi-ecr-i cerîr (...) sevâb-ı  
 Cemîl âmin yâ mu'în fî sene 1254*

On the other hand, the Deir Massiah Bridge was repaired several times in the 19th century. For example, in 1876, the Ministry of Finance submitted to the Sadaret Office that the bridge was in a dilapidated condition and could be repaired at a cost of 36.770 piasters, and if deemed appropriate, a memorandum was issued on August 23, 1876 stating that its repair would be referred to this ministry<sup>64</sup>. However, since the bridge was in a dilapidated condition again in 1878, an application was made first to the province and then to the Ministry of the Interior for its repair, and in the reply received from the Ministry of the Interior, it was requested to make a good survey for the repair of the bridge in accordance with the order on the repair and construction of the buildings belonging to the state and to report the result. In line with this order, action was taken immediately, and a committee was formed to take architects, masons and other people who were familiar with the construction of the bridge. After the survey was made, the bridge was built on the stream that coincided with the river's course, which was approximately 50 meters deep, and was very strong, high and consisted of two arches on top of each other. On one side of the bridge was the travelling road and on the other side the river and ice water flowed. However, after a while, the bridge was ruined to the extent that it could not be repaired again due to the floods that occurred<sup>65</sup>.

In the official report issued for this purpose, it was stated that this water irrigated the lands of Malatya, which were 6 hours long and 4 hours wide after flowing into the vineyards, gardens and houses of Malatya, that agriculture could not be carried out if the water was cut off, and that the vineyards, gardens and crops of Malatya would dry up and perish for this reason. In addition, it was stated that the people would even have to move because they could not even find water to drink, and that the treasury, which could not receive the tithe from the harvest, would be damaged, and that the bridge should be built as soon as possible, and according to the reports of estimated cost made by the architects, the cost of building the bridge was determined to be 90.250 piasters. However, since the construction season had passed, it was requested to be done in the spring<sup>66</sup>.

<sup>64</sup> Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, Directorate of State Archives Ottoman Archives (BOA), İrade, Dahiliye (İ.DH), 729/50816, 2 Sha'ban 1293 [August 23, 1876].

<sup>65</sup> Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, Directorate of State Archives Ottoman Archives (BOA), Şura-yı Devlet (ŞD), 1456/20/10, 7 Muharram 1296 [January 1, 1879].

<sup>66</sup> Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, Directorate of State Archives Ottoman Archives (BOA), Şura-yı Devlet (ŞD), 1456/20/10, 7 Muharram 1296 [January 1, 1879].



Regarding the findings and demands related to the bridge, the memorandum written by the Malatya Administrative Council on January 1, 1879 and sent to the province of Diyarbakir was sent to the Ministry of the Interior on February 7, 1879 with a covering letter from the province. However, since the expected reply from this ministry was delayed, two telegrams were sent from Diyarbakir, signed by İzzet, on 13 March and 1 April, to remind the subject<sup>67</sup>. Finally, when the reply of the telegram sent to the Ministry of Finance on March 11, 1879 was received, it was sent to the Ministry of Public Works on April 6, 1879, and the reply of this ministry was sent to the Council of State on April 22, 1879<sup>68</sup>.

According to the telegram sent by İbrahim who Mutasarrıf of Malatya to the Ministry of the Interior on May 6, 1879, 90.250 piasters were needed for the reconstruction of the bridge. However, since it was reported that it was not possible to pay this amount by the treasury for the time being, it was decided that the bridge would be built by the charitable people of Malatya and permission was requested from the government<sup>69</sup>. Apparently, after this letter, a decision was taken at the meeting of the Council of State on June 1, 1879, and it was stated that donations should not be collected by force, otherwise the Malatya mutasarrıfı would be held responsible, and the bridge was allowed to be built with the donations of the people<sup>70</sup>.

In the aforementioned the Council of State decision, the stages of the development of the incident and the decision taken are explained as follows: It was stated that the bridge was intended to be built according to the rule of “ber muceb-i nizam-ı münasafa” (fifty-fifty), but there was no suitor for its deficiency, and therefore correspondence was made with the relevant ministries. Since the reply from the Ministry of Finance stated that each department should cover its own expenses as of March 1294 [March/April 1878], correspondence was made with the Ministry of Public Works to have the expenses covered by the Ministry of Public Works. However, in its reply, the Ministry of Public Works stated that the amount of money to be allocated to the Province of Diyarbakir in the next fiscal division had not yet been determined, and therefore they could not say anything about the cost of the bridge<sup>71</sup>.

Following these replies from both ministries, the issue was discussed at the Council of State, which decided that if the bridge remained in ruins, both the public would be victimized and the treasury would be damaged, and it was decided that it would be appropriate to begin construction as soon as possible. Since the amount of the discount during the reports of estimated cost and tender was in line with the existing practice, it was decided that the 90.000-odd piastres would be paid from the money to be allocated to the province of Diyarbakir from the amount to be allocated for "road and passage constructions" in the public works budget for the year 95. It was also emphasized that the bridge should be built in a strong and durable manner. The construction of the bridge was to begin immediately, provided that it did not exceed the cost of the survey, and a second report on the estimated cost was to be prepared and sent at the end of the construction. It was also deemed appropriate that the decisions taken be notified to the Diyarbakir Province by telegram and that the decision be referred to the Public Works and Finance ministries for the necessary action to be taken. However, while this decision had been reached, a telegram from the Malatya Mutasarrıflık was received by the Ministry of the Interior, which stated that the expenditure of the aforementioned sum

<sup>67</sup>Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, Directorate of State Archives Ottoman Archives (BOA), Şura-yı Devlet (ŞD), 1456/20/8, 1 Mart 1295 [March 13, 1879]; ŞD, 1456/20/17, 20 Mart 1295 [April 1, 1879].

<sup>68</sup>Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, Directorate of State Archives Ottoman Archives (BOA) Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, Directorate of State Archives Ottoman Archives (BOA), Şura-yı Devlet (ŞD), 1456/20/3, 10 Jumada al-Thani 1296 [June 1, 1879]

<sup>69</sup>Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, Directorate of State Archives Ottoman Archives (BOA), Şura-yı Devlet (ŞD), 1456/20/3, 10 Jumada al-Thani 1296 [June 1, 1879].

<sup>70</sup>Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, Directorate of State Archives Ottoman Archives (BOA), Şura-yı Devlet (ŞD), 1456/20/9, 14 Safar 1296 [February 7, 1879].

<sup>71</sup>Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, Directorate of State Archives Ottoman Archives (BOA), İrade, Şura-yı Devlet (İ.ŞD), 46/2488, 10 Jumada al-Thani 1296 [June 1, 1879].

was not authorized by the treasury for the time being. Since it was also stated that it was possible to build the bridge with the donations of philanthropists from Malatya, the matter was discussed again. As a result, it was decided that the bridge would be built with the donations to be collected, the upper part of the bridge would be paid for by the treasury, and the relevant province would be notified about the preparation of reports on the estimated cost<sup>72</sup>.

Until 1879, despite these repair activities, which can be followed from archive documents, the Deir Massiah Bridge has not survived to this day. However, it is known that other bridges were used for this purpose because it was essential to transport this water, known today as Derme, to the vineyards and gardens of Malatya. As a matter of fact, after the Deir Massiah Bridge was destroyed, a wooden bridge was first used to transfer the water to Malatya, and then a concrete bridge was built in the 1940s<sup>73</sup>.

On the other hand, the use of the Deir Massiah water was also regulated. For this purpose, in 1897, there were nine sâkî (watermen) working under the management of a mushir. The müşir was paid a monthly salary of 300 piastres and each Sâki a salary of 60 piastres<sup>74</sup>.

### 2.3. Architectural Features

According to the archive documents, the Deir Massiah Bridge has two arches in a single row and on top of each other, with water flowing on one side and people passing on the other side. In this case, it can be said that the bridge resembles the aqueduct bridge built by Sinan the Architect on Alibey Creek in Istanbul during the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent and known as the Maglova Aqueduct or the Muallak Aqueduct<sup>75</sup>. As a matter of fact, this structure, which is one of the works of the period when Ottoman architecture was at its peak<sup>76</sup>, consisted of two arches on top of each other like Deir Massiah. However, the number of arches side by side was considerably higher than that in Deir Massiah (Figure 7). However, it is known that there are also many aqueducts in the immediate vicinity. For example, the Pirot Village Waterway, Hervis Mevkii Water Canal and Zinar-ı Kazırka Mevkii Water Tunnel and Hazak, Kara Mehmet Creek, Nali Pira, Kulpusik, Kosan Aşutik, Alaköprü Aşutik, Momece, Nehali Nave and the aqueducts named Heri, Heri-Geli, Geli, Kani Spi (White Spring), Musi Herdi, Harabe Stream, Delavi Hınzır, Primice, Kuşkuş Stream, Gambeyi and Gevrik were built for similar purposes<sup>77</sup>. Therefore, it is understood that the aqueducts were very dense in the region. This situation shows that the people of the region had sufficient architectural and engineering knowledge, especially in the construction of aqueducts.

<sup>72</sup>Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, Directorate of State Archives Ottoman Archives (BOA), İrade, Şura-yı Devlet (İ.ŞD), 46/2488, 10 Jumada al-Thani 1296 [June 1, 1879].

<sup>73</sup>"İki Yıl Önce Yel Köprü Kitabesi'nin Müzeye Götürülmesi İstenmişti," *Haber 3*, October 23, 2021, accessed September 14, 2023, <https://www.haber3.com/guncel/iki-yil-once-yel-kopru-kitabesinin-muzeye-goturulmesi-haberi-1009806>.

<sup>74</sup>Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, Directorate of State Archives Ottoman Archives (BOA), Bab-ı Ali Evrak Odası (BEO), 976/73174, 4 Safar 1315 [July 5, 1897].

<sup>75</sup>In this respect, the Deir Massiah and Maglova aqueducts differ from the other aqueducts. For example, the İncekaya Aqueduct in Safranbolu is similar to these two aqueducts in terms of architectural design, but it is a single-function structure used only for water transportation (see Figure 8).

<sup>76</sup>For information on the Moghlova Aqueduct Bridge, see Hulya Sonmez Schaap, *Köprüyet Republican Heritage Bridges of Turkey* (Boca Raton, London, New York, Leiden: CRC Press Taylor&Francis Group, 2023), 15-16.

<sup>77</sup>Ülkü İzmirligil, *Aşağı Fırat Projesi 1978-1979 Çalışmaları* (Ankara: Middle East Technical University Lower Euphrates Project Press, 1987), 170-178.



Source: Sonmez Schaap, *Köprüyet Republican Heritage Bridges of Turkey*, 16

**Figure 7: The Maglova Aqueduct**



Source: "İncekaya Aqueduct," Archiqoo, [https://archiqoo.com/locations/incekaya\\_aqueduct.php](https://archiqoo.com/locations/incekaya_aqueduct.php))

**Figure 8: The İncekaya Aqueduct**

## Conclusion

Tohma and Derme (Deir Massiah) are the most important rivers of Malatya and both flow into the Euphrates. Of these, the Tohma Stream has a special importance as it is located on the road network between Sivas-Malatya-Diyarbakir and Baghdad and Malatya-Erzincan-Erzurum-Tabriz and the Black Sea. In order to ensure uninterrupted land transport between these places, it was necessary to build a huge bridge over this stream. Based on the information given by Evliya Çelebi, the history of this bridge can be traced back to the Mamluk period. Although 19th century Ottoman documents state that the bridge was built by Sultan Murad IV, there is no document or information written in the period to confirm this information. This is also the case for the previous periods. Some Western travellers refer to Kırkgöz as an “ancient bridge”.

The history of this bridge, which was repeatedly repaired during the Ottoman period until the end of the 19th century, can be evaluated together with the importance of the road on which it is located and the other bridges on the same route. Since the Roman paved road and two bridges (the Karamağara Bridge in Ağın and the Suceyin Bridge in Arapgir) have survived on this route, it is possible to date the first construction of the Kırkgöz Bridge to the Roman period. Otherwise, it does not seem possible to use the route of these Roman bridges. Therefore, the 19th century Ottoman archival documents stating that the Kırkgöz Bridge was built by Murad IV must have been the result of the last large-scale repair of this structure up to that time.

Another historical bridge in Malatya is the bridge over the Deir Massiah water, which supplies water to the city's vineyards, gardens and households. According to 19th century Ottoman archive documents, this bridge, which consists of two arches on top of each other and is quite high, was used both for passing water and for travelling on a separate road for pedestrians. Like Kırkgöz, there is no definite information about the date of this bridge, which has not survived to the present day and has been repaired several times in the 19th century. Although the 17th century Kâtip Çelebi and Evliya Çelebi mentioned Deir Massiah, they did not give information about whether there was a bridge over the water. There are also no photographs or pictures of the bridge that has survived to this day. For this reason, it is not possible to make a definite judgement about the historical past of the bridge.

Another feature of this structure is that it is located on water that comes out in the form of an ayazma. According to the information in the yearbooks, it is thought to be an ayazma considered sacred by Christians. It is also stated that an old church, which is considered sacred, is located above the place where the spring comes out. As the name suggests, the Deir Massiah/Messiah's Church River is considered sacred. This name must have been given before the Turkish conquest of Malatya. A similar church structure in the region is the Nigoghos Mazadoorian Church in the Yukarı İçme Village of Elazığ Province. This church was also built on the source of the water, and the water was divided into three parts with stone gutters carved from smooth cut stone.

Kırkgöz and Deir Massiah bridges have been one of the important parts of the historical transport networks of the region. While the Kırkgöz Bridge stands out among the bridges of the period in terms of its design and engineering features, the Deir Massiah Bridge is of great value in terms of the strategic and cultural importance of its location. These bridges also reveal the critical position of Malatya on historical trade routes in a striking way. Especially the Kırkgöz Bridge, located at a point where the trade routes between the west and east of Malatya intersect, contributed greatly to the development of the economic and social life of the region. The Deir Messiah Bridge, on the other hand, has a multifaceted importance due to its location in a qualified position in terms of both transport and faith. Although these bridges have not survived to the present day, they are among the important artefacts that should be researched and included in the literature with their historical values and architectural features; however, they are considered as a part of Malatya's rich cultural heritage in its history.

As a result, both bridges were analyzed for the first time considering archival documents. The structural analysis of the bridges was carried out through historical sources and visual documents, which had not been mentioned in the literature before. In this way, it can be stated that the Deir Massiah Bridge has been included in the literature for the first time.

In addition, through the two bridges analysed, the social, cultural and economic characteristics of the region and Malatya, as well as the processes and practices of building maintenance and repair, have been clarified. In this respect, it is thought that the study draws attention to the importance of the cultural and architectural heritage of the region through the analysed bridge structures.



|                      |                                                                                     |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Peer Review          | Externally peer-reviewed.                                                           |
| Conflict of Interest | The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.                                |
| Financial Support    | Financial support was received from TUBITAK with the 1001 project numbered 122K421. |
| Acknowledgment       | We would like to thank TUBITAK for their support.                                   |

|                       |                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Hakem Değerlendirmesi | Dış Bağımsız                                                                                                                |
| Çıkar Çatışması       | Yazarlar çıkar çatışması bildirmemiştir.                                                                                    |
| Finansal Destek       | Bu çalışma, Türkiye Bilimsel ve Teknolojik Araştırma Kurumu (TÜBİTAK) tarafından 122K421 numaralı proje ile desteklenmiştir |
| Teşekkür              | Projeye verdiği destekten ötürü TÜBİTAK'a teşekkürlerimizi sunarız.                                                         |

|                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Author Details  | <b>Enver Çakar (Prof. Dr.)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Yazar Bilgileri | <sup>1</sup> Fırat University Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of History, Elazığ, Türkiye.<br> 0000-0002-2601-2013  ecakar@firat.edu.tr     |
|                 | <b>Korkmaz Şen (Assoc.Prof.)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|                 | <sup>2</sup> Fırat University, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of Art History, Elazığ, Türkiye.<br> 0000-0003-4332-7567  ksen@firat.edu.tr  |
|                 | <b>Yavuz Kısa (Assoc.Prof.)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|                 | <sup>3</sup> Fırat University, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of History, Elazığ, Türkiye.<br> 0000-0001-7101-3085  yvzkisa@gmail.com.tr   |
|                 | <b>Tuba Nur Olğun (Assoc.Prof.)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|                 | <sup>4</sup> Fırat University, Faculty of Architecture, Department of Architecture, Elazığ, Türkiye.<br> 0000-0001-5654-0020  tnbaz@firat.edu.tr                  |
|                 | <b>Murat Şahin (Assist.Prof.)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|                 | <sup>5</sup> Fırat University, Faculty of Architecture, Department of Architecture, Elazığ, Türkiye.<br> 0000-0001-6733-1136  msahin@firat.edu.tr                 |
|                 | <b>Ahmet Toprak (Assist.Prof.)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|                 | <sup>6</sup> Fırat University, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of Geography, Elazığ, Türkiye.<br> 0000-0001-6790-1856  atoprak@firat.edu.tr |

## References | Kaynakça

- 1325 *Sene-i Hicriyesine Mahsûs Sâlnâme-i Vilâyet-i Mamuret-ul-Aziz*, Def'a 9 (the Mamuret-ul-Aziz Vilayet Printing House, 1325).
- Adsız, Esra, Erkut Sayın ve Alper Özmen. "Seismic Analysis of a Masonry Arch Bridge under Artificial Earthquake Records." *Dicle University Faculty of Engineering Journal of Engineering* 15/3 (2024): 677-688. <https://doi.org/10.24012/dumf.1458709>



- Akgündüz, Ahmet. *Osmanlı Kanunnâmeleri ve Hukukî Tahlilleri*, 6. *Kitap Kanunî Devri Kanunnâmeleri II. Kısım Eyâlet Kanunnâmeleri (II)*. Vol. 6. İstanbul: Fey Foundation Press, 1993.
- Akyıldız, Ali. "Şûrâ-yı Devlet." *Turkey Religious Foundation Encyclopedia of Islam*. 39. İstanbul: Turkey Religious Foundation Press, 2010, 236-239.
- Archiqoo. "İncekaya Aqueduct." Accessed: January 20, 2025. [https://archiqoo.com/locations/incekaya\\_aqueduct.php](https://archiqoo.com/locations/incekaya_aqueduct.php)
- Aycibin, Zeynep. "Kâtib Çelebi, Fezleke, Tahlil ve Metin." PhD Thesis, Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University, 2007.
- Barbaro, Josaphat. *Anadolu'ya ve İran'a Seyahat*. Translated by Tufan Gündüz. İstanbul: Yeditepe Press, 2009.
- Bardizaktsi, V., B. Natanyan ve K. Sirvantsdyants. *Palu-Harput 1878 Çarsancak, Çemişgezek, Çapakçur, Erzincan, Hizan ve Civar Bölgeler-Raporlar*. Vol. II. Prepared by Arsen Yarman. Translated by Sirvart Malhasyan and Arsen Yarman. İstanbul: Derlem Press, 2010.
- Çakar, Enver. "The Palu Bridge in The Light of Ottoman Archive Documents." *Firat University Journal of Harput Studies* 5/1 (2018): 1-28.
- Çulpan, Cevdet. *Türk Taş Köprüleri Ortaçağdan Osmanlı Sonuna Kadar*. Ankara: Turkish History Institution Press, 2002.
- Darkot, Besim. "Malatya". *Encyciopedia of İslam*. 7. İstanbul: Ministry of National Education Press, 1988, 225-239.
- Doomed by The Dam: A Survey of The Monuments Threatened By The Creation Of The Keban Dam Flood Area, Elazığ 18-29 October 1966*. Ankara: Middle East Technical University Press, 1967.
- Ekin, Ümit. "Organization of Transportation and Shipping in the Ottoman Empire." *Kadim* 3 (2022): 31-52. <https://doi.org/10.54462/kadim.1075652>
- Erdem, Sevim. "The Use of Malatya Tokma (Tohma/Tokhma) River As Drinking Water and Land in the Last Century of Ottomans." *Firat University Journal of Social Sciences* 27/2 (2017): 277-296. <https://doi.org/10.18069/firatsbed.346539>
- Evliyâ Çelebi, *Günümüz Türkçesiyle Evliyâ Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi: Bağdad-Basra-Bitlis-Diyarbakır-İsfahan-Malatya-Mardin-Musul-Tebriz-Van*. Book 4, Vol. 1. Prepared by Seyit Ali Kahraman, Yücel Dağlı. İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Press, 2010.
- General Directorate of Highways. "Tohma Köprüsü." Accessed September 07, 2023. <https://www.kgm.gov.tr/Sayfalar/KGM/SiteTr/Projeler/ProjelerDetay.aspx?q=23>
- Geofabrik. "Download OpenStreetMap data fort his region: Turkey". Accessed December 06, 2023. <https://www.geofabrik.de/>
- Göğebakan, Gökür. "Malatya." *Turkey Religious Foundation Encyclopedia of Islam*. 27. Ankara: Turkey Religious Foundation Press, 2003, 468-475.
- Göğebakan, Gökür. *XVI. Yüzyılda Malatya Kazası (1516-1560)*. Malatya: Malatya Municipality Culture Press, 2002.
- Halifeoğlu, F. Meral, Halide Sert ve Süheyla Yılmaz. "Tarihi Kurt Köprüsü (Mihraplı Köprü, Vezirköprü) Restorasyonu Proje ve Uygulama Çalışmaları." *METU Faculty of Architecture Journal* 30/2, (2013): 81-104. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4305/metu.jfa.2013.2.6>
- Hasol, Doğan. *Ansiklopedik Mimarlık Sözlüğü*. İstanbul: Yem Press, 2008.
- Işık, Adnan. *Malatya 1830-1919*. İstanbul: Kurşit Printing, 1998.
- "İki Yıl Önce Yel Köprü Kitabesi'nin Müzeye Götürülmesi İstenmişti." *Haber 3*. 23 October 2021. Accessed September 14, 2023. <https://www.haber3.com/guncel/iki-yil-once-yel-kopru-kitabesinin-muzeye-goturulmesi-haberi-1009806>.
- İlter, Fügen. *Osmanlılara Kadar Anadolu Türk Köprüleri*. Ankara: General Directorate of Highways Press, 1978.
- İlter, İsmet. *Keban Projesi 1972 Çalışmaları*. Ankara: Middle East Technical University Press, 1976.
- İzmirli, Ülkü. *Aşağı Fırat Projesi 1978-1979 Çalışmaları*. Ankara: Middle East Technical University Lower Euphrates Project Press, 1987.
- Karagöz, Memet. *XVII. ve XVIII. Asırlarda Malatya*. İstanbul: Karizma Press, 2003.
- Kâtip Çelebi. *Cihânnümâ*. Edited by Said Öztürk. İstanbul: İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality Culture Inc. Press, 2010.
- Le Strange, Guy. *The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate, Mesopotamia, Persia, and Central Asia from the Moslem Conquest to the time of Timur*. Cambridge: at the University Press, 1905.
- Levent, Ayşe ve Cumali Levent. "Arapgîr Historical Stone Bridges." *Journal of Social, Humanities and Administrative Sciences* 7/45 (2021): 1995-2014. <http://dx.doi.org/10.31589/JOSHAS.773>
- Maski. "Başlıca Akarsularımız." Accessed September 10, 2023. <https://www.maski.gov.tr/sayfa.asp?id=232>.
- Mecmû'a-i Münşe'atü's-Selatin-i Feridun Bey*. Vol. II. İstanbul: 1275.
- Metin, Tülay. "Türkiye Selçukluları Devrinde Malatya." PhD thesis, Gazi University, 2010.
- Moltke, Feldmareşal Helmuth Von. *Moltke'nin Türkiye Mektupları*. Trans. Hayrullah Örs. İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1999.
- Mustafa Naima. *Tarih-i Naima*. Vol. 3. İstanbul: Matbaa-i Amire, 1281.
- Nasühü's-Silâhi (Matrâkçı). *Beyân-ı Menâzil-i Sefer-i İrakeyn-i Sultân Süleymân Hân*. Prepared by Hüseyin G. Yurdaydın. Ankara: Turkish History Institution Press, 2014.
- Oğuz, Mevlüt. *Malatya Tarihi ve Sosyoekonomik Durumu (M.Ö. 5500-M.S. 1920)*. İstanbul: Kurtiş Printing, 2000.

- Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, Directorate of State Archives Ottoman Archives (BOA), Bab-ı Ali Evrak Odası (BEO), 1341/100516/1, 8 Rabi' al-Awwal 1317 [July 17, 1899]
- Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, Directorate of State Archives Ottoman Archives (BOA), Bab-ı Ali Evrak Odası (BEO), 1341/100516/2, 3 Rabi' al-Awwal 1317 [July 12, 1899]
- Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, Directorate of State Archives Ottoman Archives (BOA), Bab-ı Ali Evrak Odası (BEO), 976/73174, 4 Safar 1315 [July 5, 1897].
- Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, Directorate of State Archives Ottoman Archives (BOA), Dahiliye, Mektubi Kalemi (DH.MKT), 1439/38, 23 Dhu al-Qa'dah 1304 [August 13, 1887].
- Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, Directorate of State Archives Ottoman Archives (BOA), Dahiliye, Mektubi Kalemi (DH.MKT), 2230/138, 30 Rabi' al-Awwal 1317 [August 8, 1899].
- Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, Directorate of State Archives Ottoman Archives (BOA), İrade, Dahiliye (İ.DH): 729/50816, 2 Sha'ban 1293 [August 23, 1876].
- Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, Directorate of State Archives Ottoman Archives (BOA), İrade, Meclis-i Vala (İ.MVL): 303/12391, 17 Rajab 1270 [April 15, 1854].
- Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, Directorate of State Archives Ottoman Archives (BOA), İrade, Şura-yı Devlet (İ.ŞD): 46/2488, 10 Jumada al-Thani 1296 [June 1, 1879].
- Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, Directorate of State Archives Ottoman Archives (BOA), Şura-yı Devlet (ŞD), 1456/20/3, 10 Jumada al-Thani 1296 [June 1, 1879].
- Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, Directorate of State Archives Ottoman Archives (BOA), Şura-yı Devlet (ŞD), 1456/20/8, 1 March 1295 [March 13, 1879].
- Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, Directorate of State Archives Ottoman Archives (BOA), Şura-yı Devlet (ŞD), 1456/20/9, 14 Safar 1296 [February 7, 1879].
- Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, Directorate of State Archives Ottoman Archives (BOA), Şura-yı Devlet (ŞD), 1456/20/10, 7 Muharram 1296 [January 1, 1879].
- Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, Directorate of State Archives Ottoman Archives (BOA), Şura-yı Devlet (ŞD), 1456/20/17, 20 March 1295 [April 1, 1879].
- Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, Directorate of State Archives Ottoman Archives (BOA), Şura-yı Devlet (ŞD), 1479/4, 4 Rabi' al-Awwal 1317 [July 13, 1899].
- Sağır, Tahir. "Derme Suyunun Gizemi." *Sonsöz*, 14 September 2022. Accessed September 13, 2023. <https://malatyasonsoz.com.tr/makale/15697862/tahir-sagir/derme-suyunun-gizemi#:~:text=hi%C3%A7%20durmadan%20akacak->
- Sâlnâme, Târih-i Hicret-i Nebiyye 1301, Târih-i Rûmî 1300, Def a: Ulâ (the Mamuret-ul-Aziz Printing House, 1301).
- Serdaroğlu, Ümit. *Aşağı Fırat Havzasında Araştırmalar 1975*. Ankara: METU Lower Euphrates Project Press, 1977.
- Sonmez Schaap, Hulya. *Köpriyet Republican Heritage Bridges of Turkey*. Boca Raton, London, New York, Leiden: CRC Press Taylor&Francis Group, 2023.
- Şen, Korkmaz. "Muş Bridges in The Ottoman Archive Documents." *Türkiyat Mecmuası* 29/2 (2019): 525-552. 10.26650/iuturkiyat.636824
- Şen, Korkmaz. *Arapgir İlçesinin Tarihçesi ve Kültür Varlıkları*. Ankara: Akademisyen Press, 2018.
- Taeschner, Franz. *Osmanlı Kaynaklarına Göre Anadolu Yol Ağı*. Vol. 2. Translated by Nilüfer Epçeli. İstanbul: Bilge Kültür Sanat Press, 2010.
- Tapan, İrfan. "Cultural Heritage Remains in Malatya and Their Relationship with Cultural Tourism and Sustainable Rural Development." *Journal of Agri Ibrahim Çeçen University Graduate School of Social Sciences* 8/2 (2022): 449-480. <https://doi.org/10.31463/aicused.1080664>
- Texier, Charles. *Küçük Asya Coğrafyası Tarihi ve Arkeolojisi*. Vol. III. Translated by Ali Suat. Ankara: Information and Documentation Services Foundation, 2002.
- Tuncer, Orhan Cezmi. *Anadolu Kervan Yolları*. Ankara: General Directorate of Foundations Press, 2007.
- Umûr-ı Nâfia ve Zirâat Mecmuası. 1 Dhu al-Qa'dah 1323 [December 28, 1905].
- Uysal, Ali Osman. "Seljuk Buildings in Bolvadin and Kırkgöz Bridge." *Journal of Seljuk Studies* 20 (2024): 81-134. <http://dx.doi.org/10.23897/usad.1422497>
- "Vekâyi'-i Vilâyet". Mamuret ul-Aziz 10, 6 Safar 1301 [December 7, 1883].
- "Vekâyi'-i Vilâyet", Mamuret ul-Aziz 35, 21 Sha'ban 1301 [June 6, 1884].
- Yılmaz, Ziya. "Murad IV". *Turkey Religious Foundation Encyclopedia of Islam*. 31. Ankara: Turkey Religious Foundation Press, 2020, 172-183.

- Yorke, Vincent W. "A Journey in the Valley of the Upper Euphrates: Part I". *The Geographical Journal* 8/4 (1896), 453-472. Accessed September 10, 2023. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1774053>.
- Zengin, Murat. "The Turkish Mamluk State During the Reign of Sultan Hasan: An Overview." *İnönü University International Journal of Social Sciences* 5/1 (2016): 79-90.
- Zengin, Murat. *İlhanlılar-Eratnalılar-Memluklar Dönemi Malatya (1295-1401)*. Malatya Library, Governorship of Malatya Press, 2017.

