

The Assyrian Rock Relief at Yağmur (Evrihan) in the Tur Abdin

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ARCHAEOPRESS ARCHAEOLOGY



ARCHAEOPRESS PUBLISHING LTD
Summertown Pavilion
18-24 Middle Way
Summertown
Oxford OX2 7LG
www.archaeopress.com

ISBN 978-1-80327-422-5
ISBN 978-1-80327-423-2 (e-Pdf)

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Preface

This work is an outcome of the survey of the western Tur Abdin initiated in 2020 under the direction of Dr. Bülent Genç, Associate Professor in the Department of Archaeology at Mardin Artuklu University, following the granting of a permit by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism through the General Directorate of Cultural Heritage and Museums. The aim of the survey is to record the settlements, routes, architectural remains and other material cultural assets from the diverse periods surviving in this region. Specifically, the survey covers the districts of Derik, Mazıdağı and Savur. The initial focus has been on the Mazıdağı Plain, where the work has recorded monuments belonging to many time periods. Among the results is the discovery on the edge of the village of Yağmur (Evrihan) of a previously unknown rock relief stemming from the Assyrian involvement in the region. The preserved remains include an image of an Assyrian king, divine symbols and traces of three panels of cuneiform inscription. Both the image and the panel preserving the most coherent section of legible text can be dated to the time of Tiglath-pileser I. The sequences which can be deciphered relate to the king's penetration into the northwest undertaken in the course of his third campaign against the Nairi lands. Towering above the relief are the remains of a fortress. While the full occupational history of the fortress remains to be established, a preliminary analysis of the ceramics recovered in surface survey indicates that it was occupied in the Iron Age. It must be likely that the relief marks the siege and taking of the fortress by Tiglath-pileser I, with the additions either celebrating further battles fought by the Assyrian army in the locality or later kings commemorating the monument as they passed by on campaign. It is very much to be hoped that future excavations at the site of the fortress at Yağmur will be able to cast light on these events.

The authors would like to express their deep thanks to the General Directorate of Cultural Heritage and Museums for the permit to carry out this work. We would also like to convey our profound gratitude to Alexander Edmonds, Hartmut Kühne, Jaume Llop and Nicholas Postgate for reading the manuscript of this work and making many helpful suggestions, and to David Davidson, Robin Orlić and all the staff at Archaeopress for their customary superb job in steering the work into print.

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