

From Edessa to Urfa

The Fortification of the Citadel

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Cover image: General view of the citadel from the north-east. Photo Luca Tarducci (2015).

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Conventions

For the sake of simplification, the modern name of Urfa is used in this publication instead of the various historical possibilities, and instead of the most recent version of it, Şanlıurfa.

For the transliteration of the names of people and places, each chapter dealing with a specific language follows the transliteration system in use in the field of studies concerned. In the rest of the volume, the current version of place names is provided (for example Harran, as it is spelled in today's Turkey, and not Ḥarrān), while for historical toponyms and people the traditional transliterated version of the language of reference is used (*Nūr al-Dīn Zangī*; *Kāhtā* if we use the ancient Arabic toponym for today's Yeni Kale).

Years referring to the Muslim and Syriac calendars are preceded respectively by H (*hijri*) and AG (*Anno Graecorum*), while those relating to the Christian era are not indicated by AD to avoid overloading the text.

Credits

Texts and photos are by C. Tonghini except where specified otherwise.

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Abstract

The study offered in this volume is the outcome of an archaeological research project focused on a specific monumental area in the city of Urfa: its citadel.

Urfa is better known to the general reader by its ancient name, Edessa. Most of the studies concerned with Edessa/Urfa have so far been based on the written documentation and are dedicated to the earlier part of its long history. The post-classical period has rarely been the object of dedicated research, especially as far as the material evidence is concerned. This is due in part to the fact that little evidence of the earlier Urfa survives in the modern urban fabric of today. An exception is the city walls, fragments of which can still be seen, including an imposing citadel. An archaeological project was therefore set up to help the potentials of this specific evidence to emerge.

Three seasons of field-work were carried out (2014-2016), concentrating on the study of the evidence preserved above ground and employing the methods of stratigraphic analysis to identify the building sequence of the citadel and to characterise the various building phases. Transformation of the relative sequence into absolute chronology depended primarily on inscriptions *in situ*, but also on typological elements (masonry type, decorative elements, specific architectural forms). A survey of the abundant written sources from different periods, in different languages (Byzantine Greek, Syriac, Armenian, Arabic, Medieval Latin, Persian and Ottoman Turk) contributed relevant information regarding Urfa and the development of the fortification works.

The volume is organised into three parts. The first contains the results of the survey of written sources, organised according to the language or period involved. The second part offers a study of the inscriptions found at the citadel. The third part presents and discusses the results of the archaeological and architectural analysis, organised in relation to the sequence that was established and arranged into nine different periods. A study of classical decorative elements re-employed in the masonry and a general typology of the masonry of the citadel complete this third part, offering new evidence on the evolution of building techniques through a detailed characterization of the various building phases and their components.

Özet

(translated by O. Usta)

Bu ciltte yer alan çalışma Urfa şehrindeki özel bir anıtsal alanı, şehrin kalesini, ele alan bir arkeoloji projesinin sonucudur.

Genel okuyucu için Urfa daha çok antik ismi ile bilinmektedir, Edessa. Edessa/Urfa ile ilgili şimdiye kadar yapılan çalışmaların çoğu yalnızca yazılı belgelere dayanarak şehrin uzun geçmişinin daha erken dönemlerine odaklanmaktadır. Özellikle maddi kanıtlar söz konusu olduğunda klasik sonrası dönem nadiren özel bir çalışmanın konusu olmuştur. Bu kısmen erken dönem Urfa'dan geriye az sayıda kalan kanıtın modern kentsel dokunun içinde yer alması nedeniyledir. Görkemli kalesi de dahil olmak üzere bölümleri hala görünen şehir duvarları ise bir istisna oluşturur. Bu nedenle bir arkeoloji projesinin bu özel maddi mirasın potansiyellerinin ortaya çıkması için hazırlanması gerekti. 2014 ve 2016 yılları arasında toplam üç sezonluk bir saha çalışması gerçekleştirildi. Bu çalışmalar yüzeyde kalan korunmuş maddi kalıntıların incelenmesine hasredildi. Çalışmalarda stratigrafi analizi metotları kullanarak kalenin yapım dizileri tanımlandı ve çeşitli yapım aşamalarının özellikleri saptandı. Birbiriyle bağlantılı olan yapım dizilerinin kronolojik bir sıraya dönüştürülmesi öncelikle yerinde bulunan yazıtlara bağlı olsa da tipolojik unsurlara (duvar tipi, dekoratif unsurlar, özel mimari biçimler) da bağlıydı. Farklı dönemlerden ve farklı dillerden zengin yazılı kaynakların (Bizans Grekçesi, Süryanice, Ermenice, Arapça, Ortaçağ Latincesi, Farsça ve Osmanlı Türkçesi) etüt edilmesi Urfa ve tahkimat çalışmaları ile ilgili bilgilere katkı sağladı.

Bu cilt üç kısma ayrılmıştır. İlk kısım yazılı kaynakların araştırma sonuçlarını içermektedir ve ilgili dil ve döneme göre bölümlere ayrılmıştır. İkinci kısım kalede bulunan yazıtların incelenmesine ayrılmıştır. Üçüncü kısım dokuz farklı döneme ayrılmış yapım dizilerini inceleyen ve tartışan arkeolojik ve mimari analizlerin sonuçlarını sunmaktadır. Üçüncü kısım klasik süsleme unsurlarının duvarcılıkta yeniden kullanılmasının ve kale duvarlarının genel bir tipolojisinin bir incelenmesi ile tamamlanmaktadır. Bu inceleme de çeşitli yapım aşamalarının ve bileşenlerinin ayrıntılı bir tavsifi sayesinde yapım tekniklerinin gelişimi üzerine yeni kanıtlar sunmaktadır.