The Enduring Landscape: How Afrin's Geography Shaped its History Before 2010

Introduction

The Afrin region, nestled in the northwestern corner of Syria, presents a compelling case study in the profound and enduring influence of geography on human history. Defined by the rugged contours of the Kurd Dagh (Kurd Mountain) range, the life-sustaining Afrin River flowing through its fertile valley, and a location historically poised at the nexus of major civilizational spheres – Anatolia, the Levant, and Mesopotamia – Afrin's landscape is far more than a passive backdrop.[1] Its character as a perennial borderland, abutting modern Turkey and subject to the ambitions of successive empires, further underscores its geographical significance.[2] Rich in agricultural potential, particularly renowned for its vast olive groves since antiquity, the region's natural resources have also played a crucial role in its development.[3] This report argues that Afrin's unique geographical attributes have not merely influenced but actively determined the course of its history up to the cusp of the transformative events beginning around 2010. The rugged highlands, offering both refuge and defensibility; the fertile river valley, enabling sustained settlement and agricultural prosperity; the inherent resource base; and its critical position as both a transit corridor and a contested frontier zone have consistently shaped patterns of human settlement, economic activity, socio-cultural identity formation, and the very nature of conflict and political control experienced by the region's inhabitants across millennia. From the earliest Neolithic settlements to the complex dynamics of the modern Syrian state, Afrin's geography has been an inescapable and defining force.

I. The Enduring Landscape: Geographical Foundations of Afrin

The historical trajectory of the Afrin region is fundamentally rooted in its distinct physical geography. The interplay between its mountainous terrain, the vital river valley, its strategic location, and its climatic conditions created a unique environment that profoundly influenced settlement, economy, culture, and conflict over centuries.

A. The Kurd Dagh (Mountain of the Kurds): Topography, Defensibility, Resources, and Cultural Zone

The dominant geographical feature of the region is the Kurd Dagh, often translated as the "Mountain of the Kurds." This highland area is part of the Limestone Massif of northwestern

Syria and represents a southern extension of the highlands found on the western Aintab plateau.[2] Characterized by a rugged, hilly landscape, its peaks generally rise between 700 and 1269 meters, though some sources note that the mountains within the Syrian part do not exceed 1,000 meters in altitude.[1] This topography, while less formidable than the towering Zagros Mountains of Iraqi Kurdistan, still distinguishes Afrin as more rugged than the small hills around Kobanî or the vast plains of Jazira in eastern Syrian Kurdistan.[1] The local name, Çiyayê Kurmênc, meaning "Mountain of the Kurmanj," directly reflects the long-standing presence of the Kurmanji-speaking Kurdish population who have historically formed the majority in these highlands.[2]

The very nature of this terrain has historically offered significant natural defensive advantages. Mountainous regions are inherently more challenging for invading forces and centralized states to control compared to open plains.[1] This geographical reality made the Kurd Dagh more conducive to resistance and refuge than flatter areas.[1] Throughout history, the mountains served as a sanctuary for various groups, enabling the preservation of distinct identities, particularly Kurdish identity, and fostering a degree of local autonomy or resistance against external powers.[2] The landscape provided a natural redoubt, a place to retreat and regroup, as evidenced by its use as a refuge for anti-French resistance fighters in the 20th century.[10] This "refuge" characteristic, directly stemming from the rugged geography, not only shaped the region's demographic profile, making it a predominantly Kurdish heartland, but also defined its often-tense political relationship with larger state entities, creating a persistent dynamic between local aspirations for autonomy and external attempts at control.

Beyond defensibility, the Kurd Dagh possessed valuable natural resources. Historically, its forests were exploited for timber and charcoal production.[2] While many sources discussing deforestation focus on the post-2011 conflict, the mention of charcoal production as a known activity suggests longer-term exploitation.[2] More significantly, the climate and soils of the hillsides proved exceptionally suitable for olive cultivation, which became a defining feature of the region's landscape and economy.[5]

The combination of defensibility and resources contributed to the Kurd Dagh becoming a distinct ethno-cultural zone. It has long been recognized as the most densely Kurdish-populated part of Syria, sometimes described as "homogeneously Kurdish".[2] The relative isolation afforded by the mountains helped consolidate this demographic reality.[3] The very name "Kurd Dagh" and its variants (Arabic: Jabal al-Akrad; Kurdish: Çiyayê Kurmênc) underscore this deep connection between the people and the land.[2] The persistence of this name, despite official attempts in the 20th century to replace it with designations like "Jabal al-`Uruba" (Mountain of Arabism), highlights the resilience of this geographically rooted identity against assimilationist pressures.[2] The mountains provided not just a physical space but a symbolic heartland where Kurdish culture and identity could be nurtured and sustained, making complete erasure by external powers exceedingly difficult.

B. The Afrin River and its Valley: Lifeline for Agriculture and Settlement

Complementing the mountainous highlands is the Afrin River and its valley, the region's vital

artery. The river originates in the Kartal Mountains of Turkey's Gaziantep Province, flows south through Syria, passing the city of Afrin, before re-entering Turkey to join the Karasu River and eventually flow into the Orontes River (Nahr al-Asi) near Antakya.[20] With a total length of 131 kilometers, a significant portion (54 kilometers) runs through Syrian territory.[21] The river has borne various names throughout history, including Apre (Assyrian), Oinoparas (Seleucid), and Ufrenus (Roman), the latter likely being the root of its modern Arab and Kurdish names.[7]

The primary historical significance of the Afrin River lies in its role as a source of water for irrigation, supporting a remarkably fertile valley.[3] This agricultural abundance has been the bedrock of the region's economy for millennia. While various fruits, nuts, and vegetables were grown, Afrin became particularly renowned for its olive cultivation.[8] Some archaeologists suggest olive trees have existed in the region for over 4,000 years, and ancient Roman presence is also associated with olive growing.[5] The high-quality olives and olive oil from Afrin were famous across the Levant, forming the basis for products like the celebrated Aleppo soap since antiquity.[3] This specialization in olive cultivation, deeply intertwined with the region's geography (soil, climate) and hydrology (river for irrigation), created a distinct agro-economic identity that proved remarkably resilient, linking Afrin to broader regional markets, particularly the major urban center of Aleppo, across various political regimes.[23]

The availability of water and fertile land made the Afrin Valley a natural corridor and an attractive location for human settlement from the earliest times.[9] Archaeological evidence indicates continuous habitation since the Neolithic and Chalcolithic periods.[3] Sites like the tell of Ain Dara, overlooking the valley, attest to its importance in the Bronze and Iron Ages.[25] The river valley acted as a consistent "pull factor," drawing populations and enabling the development of complex societies whose sustenance was intrinsically tied to the river's flow and the valley's soil fertility. This long history of settlement created a rich palimpsest of cultures within the valley, sustained by its geographical endowments. The river was the lifeline that allowed communities not just to survive but to thrive, making its management (eventually leading to the construction of the Maydanki Dam in 2004) a critical aspect of life in the region.[9]

C. Strategic Crossroads: Geographical Position and its Consequences

Afrin's location places it at a significant geographical and historical crossroads. It lies at the intersection of major historical spheres: Anatolia to the north, Mesopotamia to the east, the Levant to the south, and the Mediterranean coast to the west.[3] Ancient sites like Ain Dara strategically overlooked trade routes connecting these vast regions [25], while the Roman city of Cyrrhus commanded the route between the major centers of Antioch (Antakya) and Zeugma on the Euphrates.[27] This position made the Afrin region a natural conduit for trade, cultural exchange, and the movement of peoples for millennia.

However, this connectivity came at a price. The same valleys and passes that facilitated trade also served as invasion routes for armies moving between Anatolia and Syria.[6] The wider Orontes valley system, into which the Afrin flows, was a well-known corridor for military campaigns due to its relatively flat and fertile terrain, suitable for large armies.[30]

Consequently, Afrin has perpetually existed as a borderland, its control contested by a succession of regional and imperial powers. From the Hittites and Assyrians to the Romans, Byzantines, various Islamic Caliphates and dynasties (Rashidun, Umayyad, Hamdanid, Ayyubid, Mamluk), Crusaders, the Ottoman Empire, and finally the French Mandate and the modern Syrian state, external forces have consistently sought to dominate this strategically vital area.[3] The drawing of the modern Syria-Turkey border in 1923, and the subsequent annexation of Hatay province by Turkey in 1939, solidified Afrin's status as a sensitive frontier zone, almost entirely surrounded by Turkish territory.[5]

This enduring role as a crossroads and borderland created a dual legacy for Afrin. On one hand, its geographical position fostered interaction and cultural exchange, enriching the region's heritage. The archaeological record, with sites revealing Hittite, Aramean, Roman, Byzantine, and Islamic layers, is a physical testament to this layering of influences brought about by its accessibility and strategic value.[25] No single cultural imprint could remain entirely dominant or isolated for long. On the other hand, this same geography subjected Afrin to recurrent conflict, political instability, and shifting allegiances as empires and states vied for control of its territory and routes. This constant external pressure likely fostered resilience and adaptability among the local populations, who had to navigate the complexities of living in a perpetually contested space.

D. Climate and Natural Resources: Shaping Sustenance and Economy

Afrin's climate conforms to a Mediterranean pattern, characterized by hot, dry summers and moderate to cold, wet winters.[37] Average annual rainfall is around 390mm, concentrated in the winter months, while summer temperatures frequently exceed 30°C.[37] This climatic regime directly influences the region's natural vegetation and agricultural potential.

The climate is particularly well-suited for the cultivation of crops adapted to seasonal rainfall and summer drought, most notably the olive tree.[3] The historical dominance of olive groves is a direct adaptation to these environmental conditions. Beyond olives, the fertile soils of the valley and adequate winter rainfall support the growth of cereals, fruits, and vegetables, contributing to the region's reputation for agricultural richness.[8] The climate dictated the rhythm of agricultural life and necessitated practices, such as reliance on winter rains and river irrigation, to sustain production through the dry season. This dependence on seasonal water availability also implied an inherent vulnerability to climatic fluctuations like droughts, a factor that would become increasingly relevant in later periods.[26]

Besides agriculture, other natural resources have played a role. The Kurd Dagh highlands historically supported forests, which were likely exploited for timber and charcoal production, meeting local energy and construction needs.[2] Water resources, primarily the Afrin River and its tributaries, along with springs, were crucial not only for irrigation but also for drinking water.[9] The importance of managing this vital resource is underscored by the construction of the Maydanki Dam (officially the April 17 Dam) in 2004, designed to provide hydroelectric power, drinking water for roughly 200,000 people, and irrigation for 30,000 hectares of land.[9] While aimed at securing water supply, this large-scale intervention also represented a significant alteration of the natural hydrology, creating new dependencies and potentially

altering traditional water access patterns even before the crises of the 2010s.
The interplay of climate, water, and soil thus shaped Afrin's primary economic activities and the very fabric of life for its inhabitants. The success of its agricultural economy, particularly the olive industry, was a direct outcome of these geographical factors, providing a relatively stable foundation that persisted across centuries.

Table 1: Key Geographical Features of Afrin and Their Primary Historical Implications (Pre-2010)

Geographical Feature	Description	Primary Historical Implications (Pre-2010)
Kurd Dagh Mountains	Rugged, hilly limestone massif (part of Limestone Massif); 700-1269m elevation [2]; Kurmanji-speaking Kurdish population.[2]	Defensibility, refuge for local populations/resistance movements [1]; Preservation of distinct Kurdish cultural identity [2]; Resource base (timber, charcoal, olives).[2]
Afrin River Valley	Fertile alluvial plain fed by Afrin River (Orontes tributary) [9]; Known for olive groves since antiquity.[5]	Consistent corridor for settlement since Neolithic [3]; Sustained agricultural abundance (esp. olives), economic backbone [8]; Lifeline for water resources.[20]
Strategic Location	Crossroads of Anatolia, Levant, Mesopotamia, Mediterranean routes [25]; Perennial borderland (Hittite, Roman, Ottoman, Syria-Turkey).[3]	Hub for trade and cultural exchange [25]; Frequent military corridor and invasion route [27]; Consistently contested territory by empires/states.[3]
Mediterranean Climate	Seasonal rainfall (concentrated in winter), hot/dry summers.[37]	Favored cultivation of drought-tolerant crops (esp. olives) [5]; Shaped agricultural calendar and practices; Necessitated water management (river irrigation, dam).[20]

II. Antiquity's Imprint: Geography's Role from Early Settlements to Roman Hegemony (c. Neolithic – 4th Century CE)

The deep history of human occupation in Afrin, stretching back to the dawn of agriculture, was profoundly shaped by the region's geographical endowments. The fertile river valley, defensible terrain, and strategic location dictated where people settled, how they sustained themselves, and how they interacted with the burgeoning powers of the ancient Near East.

Table 2: Chronological Overview of Afrin's History and Key Geographical Influences (Pre-2010)

Period	Key Geographical Determinants Active	Major Historical Developments/Characteristics in Afrin Linked to Geography
Antiquity: Neolithic-Iron Age	Fertile valley, river access, defensible locations, trade routes	Early settlements (Neolithic onwards) [3]; Rise of Ain Dara as religious/trade hub at crossroads [25]; Hittite influence/control facilitated by valley routes [25]; Development of Syro-Hittite culture.[25]
Hellenistic-Roman Era	Strategic military location, river valley route, defensible terrain	Founding of Cyrrhus on strategic Antioch-Zeugma route [27]; Roman military base (Legio X Fretensis) & commercial center [7]; Valley as corridor for Roman campaigns [27]; Integration into Roman provincial system (Coele Syria, Euphratensis).[3]
Byzantine Era	Strategic frontier location, defensible sites (Cyrrhus)	Continued importance of Cyrrhus (Hagiopolis) [27]; Fortification against Sassanid Persia [27]; Region as part of Byzantine defensive frontier system.[39]
Early Islamic-Medieval Era	Strategic crossroads, fertile valley, contested frontier	Islamic conquest (637 CE) [7]; Part of Jund Qinnasrin [3]; Periods of local rule (Hamdanids) [3]; Crusader presence/contestation (Principality of Antioch, County of Edessa) [27]; Ayyubid and

		Mamluk control.[3]
Ottoman Era (1516-1922)	Mountainous refuge (Kurd Dagh), fertile valley, proximity to Aleppo	Incorporation into Vilayet of Aleppo [34]; Recognition of Kurd Dagh as distinct Kurdish area [42]; Persistence of Kurdish tribal structures, indirect rule dynamics [3]; Continued dominance of olive-based agricultural economy supplying Aleppo.[19]
French Mandate (1923-1946)	Imposed borders cutting through Kurd Dagh, rugged terrain for resistance	Detachment from historical hinterlands (Kilis) [5]; Development of Afrin town [7]; Kurd Dagh as refuge for anti-French resistance [10]; Emergence of Syrian Kurdish political consciousness [11]; Isolation increased by Hatay annexation.[5]
Syrian Republic (1946-2009)	Mountainous Kurdish enclave, border proximity, agricultural resources	State Arabization policies targeting Kurdish identity [2]; Continued economic role (olives, some industry) [19]; Strong Kurdish identity persistence, PKK presence/influence (pre-1998) [11]; Relative isolation from other Syrian Kurdish areas.[4]

A. Genesis of Settlement: Neolithic, Chalcolithic, Bronze, and Iron Ages

Human presence in the Afrin region dates back to the earliest phases of settled life in the Near East. Evidence points to settlement beginning in the early Neolithic period, with continued occupation through the Chalcolithic (Copper Age).[3] The primary drivers for this early habitation were undoubtedly the geographical advantages the region offered: the fertile lands of the Afrin River valley, the reliable water source provided by the river itself, and the availability of defensible locations, either on natural rises or within the foothills of the Kurd Dagh.[9] During the Copper Age (roughly 6000-3000 BC), settlement patterns across Syria were heavily influenced by the interaction between human needs and the physical

environment, with river valleys being particularly favored locations due to their suitability for agriculture, which was becoming increasingly sophisticated.[24]

The Bronze and Iron Ages saw the emergence of more complex societies and prominent settlements. The most significant known site from this era in Afrin is the tell of Ain Dara, located strategically overlooking the Afrin Valley, about 8 km south of the modern town of Afrin.[7] Founded perhaps as early as 1300 BC and flourishing until around 740 BC, Ain Dara is renowned for its impressive Syro-Hittite temple complex.[25] Its location was not accidental; it commanded a critical junction where trade routes converged, connecting Mesopotamia to the east, Anatolia to the north, the Levant to the south, and the Mediterranean coast to the west.[25] This geographical positioning made Ain Dara a vital hub for commerce and cultural exchange, likely functioning as a significant religious center, perhaps an oracle, on what has been termed the "international coastal highway".[25] The choice of this location, and its persistence over centuries resulting in the formation of a tell (an artificial mound built up by successive layers of occupation), underscores how early inhabitants strategically utilized the landscape's opportunities – the fertile valley for sustenance, the river for water, the routes for trade, and likely elevated positions for defense. The very existence of such a major center demonstrates that Afrin's fundamental geographical assets were recognized and exploited from the earliest stages of complex society in the region.

B. The Hittite Sphere: Afrin Valley in Imperial Networks

Around the mid-14th century BC, the political landscape of northern Syria was transformed by the expansion of the Hittite Empire based in Anatolia. Following the conquests of Suppiluliuma I, who defeated the Mitanni kingdom and established control west of the Euphrates, the Afrin Valley likely fell within the Hittite sphere of influence.[25] Hittite viceroyalties were established in nearby Aleppo and Carchemish, effectively bracketing the Afrin region.[25] The initial construction phase of the Ain Dara temple (c. 1300 BC) coincides with this period of Hittite dominance, suggesting the settlement thrived under, or interacted significantly with, Hittite power.[25]

The geography of the Afrin Valley played a crucial role during this era. It served as a natural and important corridor for Hittite military and administrative movements between their Anatolian heartland and their newly acquired territories in the Northern Levant.[25] Hittite armies mobilizing south towards Egypt or east towards Assyria would have traversed routes passing through or near the valley.[25] Ain Dara's location placed it directly on these significant pathways.[25] The presence of a major Syro-Hittite settlement like Ain Dara, exhibiting cultural elements influenced by Hittite traditions, illustrates how the region's geographical accessibility facilitated its integration into the Hittite imperial system.[25] Afrin's geography, therefore, transitioned its significance from a primarily local context to becoming a vital component in a larger imperial strategic network, its valley serving as a conduit for the projection of Hittite power. This period demonstrates how a region's inherent geographical features can be re-contextualized and utilized according to the strategic objectives of dominant external powers.

C. The Hellenistic and Roman Eras: Cyrrhus and the Imperial Corridor

Following the collapse of the Hittite Empire and subsequent periods of Neo-Assyrian and Achaemenid influence, the conquests of Alexander the Great ushered in the Hellenistic era. In the early 3rd century BC, Seleucus I Nicator, one of Alexander's generals and founder of the Seleucid Empire, established the city of Cyrrhus (modern al-Nabi Houri) near the Afrin River.[3] Named after a city in Macedonia, its location was strategically chosen along the vital ancient route connecting the Seleucid capital of Antioch on the Orontes with the crucial Euphrates River crossing at Zeugma.[27]

Under Roman rule, which began when Pompey annexed Syria in 64 BC, Cyrrhus flourished, transforming from a Seleucid foundation into a major Roman administrative, military, and commercial center.[3] Its strategic importance was paramount; it served as a base for the Roman legion X Fretensis and was used for launching campaigns against the Armenian Empire to the north.[7] The city minted its own coinage, signifying its economic standing.[7] The Afrin Valley itself, known as Ufrenus in the Roman era, became part of the province of Roman Syria (later divided, with Cyrrhus falling into Coele Syria and then Euphratensis).[3] Roman engineering left its mark, with impressive stone bridges spanning waterways near Cyrrhus, some of which remain in use today, attesting to the importance of maintaining communication routes through the valley.[27]

The rise and prosperity of Cyrrhus exemplify how imperial powers strategically leveraged Afrin's geographical endowments. The river provided water, the surrounding hills offered defensible positions for the city and fortifications, and the valley served as a critical corridor for troop movements and trade.[7] The Roman investment in Cyrrhus integrated the Afrin region firmly into the broader imperial network of the Mediterranean and Near East. The historical shift in prominence from Ain Dara, likely a center rooted more in local Syro-Hittite traditions, to Cyrrhus, an explicitly imperial foundation focused on military control and state-managed commerce, reflects how the interpretation and utilization of a region's geography can be fundamentally altered by the scale and nature of the political power controlling it. Afrin's landscape was thus actively reshaped and repurposed to serve Roman imperial objectives.

III. Contested Terrains and Shifting Powers: From Byzantine Frontiers to Ottoman Rule (c. 4th Century CE – 1922)

The strategic importance and geographical characteristics that defined Afrin in antiquity continued to shape its destiny through the Byzantine, Islamic, and Ottoman periods. It remained a region of significant military and economic value, often situated on the volatile frontiers between major powers.

A. Byzantine Fortifications and Imperial Defense

As the Roman Empire transitioned into the Byzantine Empire, the Afrin region retained its

strategic significance. Cyrrhus, renamed Hagiopolis, continued to be an important center, evolving into a prominent Christian bishopric.[27] It housed relics of saints and was the seat of influential bishops like Theodoret in the 5th century.[29] Crucially, its military role persisted. Facing the resurgent Sassanid Persian Empire to the east, the Byzantines recognized the need to secure their frontiers. Emperor Justinian I, in the 6th century CE, invested heavily in strengthening the fortifications of Cyrrhus, adding to its already formidable defenses.[27] This investment underscores the continued perception of the Afrin region as a critical point in the empire's defensive strategy against Persia.

The wider Kurd Dagh area likely functioned as a buffer zone or part of the Byzantine *limes* (frontier defense system). While specific Byzantine fortifications across the entire Kurd Dagh are not extensively detailed in the provided sources, the existence of sites like Rawendel castle, potentially having Byzantine phases, near the Afrin valley suggests a broader defensive network.[39] The general context of Roman and Byzantine frontier defense in northern Syria, involving fortified cities, watchtowers, and military roads, would have applied to this region.[40] The Byzantine efforts demonstrate a clear continuity from the Roman period in utilizing Afrin's geography – its defensible terrain and control over routes – for imperial military purposes. The landscape's inherent strategic value remained a constant concern for successive empires defending their eastern borders.

B. The Rise of Islam and Medieval Dynamics

The geopolitical landscape shifted dramatically with the Arab Muslim conquests of the 7th century CE. Byzantine control over Syria ended, and the Afrin region, including Cyrrhus (known thereafter as Qorosh), fell to Muslim armies around 637 CE.[7] Under the Rashidun and Umayyad Caliphates, the area was incorporated into the administrative district (Jund) of Qinnasrin.[3] During the subsequent Abbasid period, northern Syria experienced fragmentation, and local dynasties emerged. The Hamdanids, based in Aleppo, likely exercised control over the nearby Afrin region, benefiting from its agricultural output and strategic position relative to their capital.[3]

The medieval period brought renewed conflict to the region with the arrival of the Crusaders in the late 11th century. Afrin's location on the frontier between Muslim-held territories and the newly established Crusader states made it a contested zone once again. The valley was briefly conquered and incorporated into the Crusader Principality of Antioch, while Cyrrhus came under the control of the County of Edessa for a time before being recaptured by the Zengid ruler Nur ad-Din in 1150.[7] This Crusader interlude highlights the persistent strategic vulnerability and desirability of the region due to its geography.

Following the decline of the Crusader states, the region came under the sway of the Ayyubid dynasty, founded by Saladin, who himself was of Kurdish origin.[41] While the direct impact on Afrin's demographics is unclear from the sources, the Ayyubid period may have reinforced or contributed to the Kurdish presence in the wider Syrian landscape. Subsequently, the Mamluks of Egypt governed the area, integrating it into their Syrian provinces until the Ottoman conquest in the early 16th century.[3]

Throughout this long medieval period, Afrin's geography consistently placed it in the path of

major conflicts and shifting political boundaries. It functioned as a "shatterbelt" – a region caught between larger, competing powers and ideologies (Byzantine vs. Sassanid, Islamic Caliphates vs. Byzantines, Crusaders vs. Muslim states, Ayyubids vs. remnants of Crusader states, Mamluks consolidating control). Its strategic routes and agricultural wealth ensured it could not remain isolated, but its frontier position meant that control was often transient and violently contested. This likely fostered a sense of local resilience and necessitated adaptability among the inhabitants who endured centuries of political turbulence shaped by their geographical circumstances.

C. The Ottoman Centuries (1516 – 1922)

With the Ottoman victory over the Mamluks at the Battle of Marj Dabiq (north of Aleppo) in 1516, Afrin and the surrounding region were incorporated into the expanding Ottoman Empire.[19] For the next four centuries, the area was administered as part of the Vilayet (Province) of Aleppo.[3] The Ottomans recognized the distinct character of the mountainous western part of the region, sometimes referring to it in documents as the "Sancak of the Kurds" or simply Kurd Dagh (Kurd Mountain).[2]

This period saw the consolidation of the Kurdish presence in the Kurd Dagh highlands. The mountainous terrain continued to serve as a refuge and homeland for various Kurdish tribes and communities.[2] Ottoman administration in such challenging terrain often relied on indirect rule, interacting with and sometimes co-opting local Kurdish tribal leaders (aghas and sheikhs).[43] Powerful Kurdish tribal confederations, such as the Reshwan and the Milli, held significant influence in northern Syria during different periods of Ottoman rule.[3] Notably, the Janbulad family, of Kurdish origin, even served as Ottoman governors of Aleppo in the late 16th and early 17th centuries, indicating the integration of some Kurdish elites into the Ottoman system.[3] The geography of the Kurd Dagh, being somewhat peripheral to major imperial centers yet strategically located near Aleppo, facilitated this complex relationship, allowing for the persistence of Kurdish social structures while integrating the region into the broader Ottoman framework. A British traveler in 1599 even noted the presence of "Coords" (likely Yezidi Kurds, a distinct religious group within the Kurdish population) dwelling in the mountains, highlighting the region's role as a sanctuary for diverse groups.[7]

Economically, Afrin retained its agricultural significance throughout the Ottoman period. The fertile valley, watered by the Afrin River, continued to be a major producer, especially of olives and olive oil, which were crucial commodities for the markets of nearby Aleppo, the provincial capital.[5] The famous Aleppo soap relied heavily on Afrin's olive oil.[23] This enduring agricultural productivity, rooted in the region's favorable climate and fluvial geography, provided a stable economic foundation and ensured Afrin's continued integration into the regional economy of the Aleppo Vilayet. This economic role, particularly the specialization in olives, proved remarkably resilient, persisting across centuries and political changes, demonstrating how specific geographical advantages can create long-lasting economic niches that transcend imperial transitions. The Ottoman centuries, therefore, saw Afrin defined by a combination of its recognized Kurdish character, shaped by the Kurd Dagh's refuge potential, and its vital agricultural role, determined by the fertility of its river valley.

IV. Lines in the Sand: Afrin in the Age of Modern States (1923 – 2009)

The collapse of the Ottoman Empire after World War I and the subsequent imposition of new political boundaries by European powers dramatically reshaped the geopolitical context of Afrin, embedding its historical geographical characteristics within the framework of modern nation-states.

A. The French Mandate (1923 – 1946)

The establishment of the French Mandate for Syria and Lebanon fundamentally altered Afrin's geographical and political reality. The drawing of the Syria-Turkey border in 1923, formalized by agreements like the Treaty of Lausanne which superseded the unratified Treaty of Sèvres (that had initially envisioned Kurdish autonomy elsewhere), cut through the historical Kurd Dagh region.[5] Afrin became part of French-administered Syria, initially within the short-lived State of Aleppo.[3] This demarcation severed Afrin from its traditional northern hinterlands, including the town of Kilis (now in Turkey), which had previously served as an administrative and economic center for the region.[5] The process effectively created a "truncated geography," isolating the Syrian Kurd Dagh from its northern continuations.[10] This isolation was further exacerbated by Turkey's annexation of the Sanjak of Alexandretta (renamed Hatay) in 1939, which cut off Afrin's historical connection to the Mediterranean coast around Antakya and left the Syrian district almost entirely bordered by Turkey.[5]

Despite this fragmentation, the French Mandate period saw some development. The town of Afrin itself, established as a market in the 19th century, was further developed by the French administration, growing from around 800 residents in 1929 to 7,000 by 1968.[7] However, the new political geography also spurred Kurdish political responses. The imposition of the border, combined with the harsh Kemalist policies and suppression of Kurdish uprisings in Turkey (like the Sheikh Said and Ararat rebellions), led to significant waves of Kurdish refugees fleeing south into the Syrian Kurd Dagh and Jazira regions.[3] This influx reinforced the Kurdish character of the region and contributed to the rise of modern Syrian Kurdish political consciousness. Early petitions for autonomy for Kurdish-majority regions were made to the French authorities, originating from Kurd Dagh delegates as early as 1924.[41]

The Kurd Dagh's geography continued to play a dual role. While the valley and developing town facilitated French administration, the rugged, mountainous terrain provided sanctuary for resistance against French rule.[10] Figures like Meho Îbshashê utilized the mountains as a refuge and base for ambushing French forces, often leveraging cross-border connections and mobility facilitated by the porous nature of the new frontier.[10] The French authorities were wary of Turkish influence and potential annexationist ambitions, accusing Turkey of supporting anti-French movements like the Murud revolt in the Kurd Dagh during the 1930s.[10]

The Mandate period thus demonstrated how modern borders, superimposed on historical geographies, generated new conflicts and political dynamics, while the enduring features of

the landscape – the accessible valley versus the defensible mountains – continued to shape the actions of both the colonial power and the local population.

B. Post-Independence Syria (1946 – 2009)

Following Syria's independence in 1946, Afrin's unique geographical and demographic profile continued to influence its relationship with the central government in Damascus. Successive Syrian regimes, particularly under the Ba'ath Party from the 1960s onwards, implemented Arabization policies aimed at fostering a unified national identity and asserting state control over peripheral regions.[2] Afrin, being a distinct, geographically concentrated, and overwhelmingly Kurdish region, became a target of these policies. Measures included the banning of the Kurdish language in official contexts, restrictions on property ownership and construction for Kurds, and the symbolic renaming of geographical features – most notably, the official attempt in 1977 to rename Kurd Dagh as "Jabal al-`Uruba" (Mountain of Arabism).[2] These policies can be understood as the state's attempt to overcome the perceived challenge posed by Afrin's distinct ethno-geographical character to centralized authority and a homogenous national narrative. The persistence of Kurdish identity and the local use of traditional names despite these efforts underscore the resilience of geographically rooted cultures.[2]

Economically, Afrin maintained its significance within Syria before 2010. Its agricultural sector, founded on the geographical advantages of its fertile valley and climate, remained robust, with olive cultivation continuing as a mainstay.[5] The region served as a key economic supplier for Aleppo.[19] Furthermore, during periods of instability affecting major urban centers like Aleppo, Afrin's relative stability, partly due to its somewhat isolated geographical position, allowed it to become an alternative center for economic activity. Notably, a significant portion of Aleppo's industrial production, particularly textile manufacturing (like jeans), relocated to Afrin district, showcasing its capacity to absorb economic activity due to its local resource base (labor, relative security).[23] The region's scenic landscapes also supported a degree of domestic tourism.[23] This economic resilience suggests that Afrin's geographical assets provided a buffer and alternative opportunities even within the constraints of the Syrian state system.

Politically, the Kurd Dagh's geography continued to shape Kurdish identity and dynamics. Its mountainous terrain and border location made it a significant area for Kurdish political movements. The Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), originating in Turkey, established a strong presence and enjoyed considerable support in Afrin from the late 1970s until Syria, under Turkish pressure, expelled PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan in 1998.[9] The PKK effectively filled a political vacuum in Afrin, which was geographically and sometimes politically disconnected from the other main Syrian Kurdish centers in Kobani and Jazira.[4] This geographical separation contributed to Afrin developing a somewhat distinct trajectory within the broader Syrian Kurdish context.[11]

C. The Kurd Dagh as Refuge and Resistance Hub (Revisited in modern

context)

The historical pattern of the Kurd Dagh serving as a space conducive to resistance and refuge, owing to its challenging terrain, persisted into the late 20th and early 21st centuries. This geographical characteristic influenced the strategies of Kurdish political movements operating in the region and shaped the security perceptions of neighboring states, particularly Turkey.[11] The PKK's ability to establish a strong foothold in Afrin for two decades underscores the region's suitability as a base or area of significant influence, facilitated by the terrain and the sympathies of the local population.[11]

The proximity to the Turkish border remained a defining and often volatile feature of Afrin's geography. This contiguity influenced security dynamics, facilitated cross-border movements (for familial, economic, or political reasons), and heavily impacted the strategic calculations of both the Syrian state and Turkey.[4] Turkey's long-standing security concerns regarding PKK activities, viewing Afrin as a potential launching pad or support base, culminated in diplomatic pressure on Syria (leading to the 1998 Adana Agreement) and laid the groundwork for future interventions.[4] The Syrian government's relationship with the PKK, allowing its presence in areas like Afrin for a period as leverage against Turkey, was itself a geopolitical calculation influenced by the border geography.[11] Thus, the Kurd Dagh's enduring geographical nature as a rugged borderland ensured its continued political and strategic significance, making it a focal point for transnational Kurdish aspirations and a persistent security concern for Turkey, thereby influencing Syrian state policies towards the region right up to the eve of 2010.

V. Synthesis: The Geographical Determinants of Afrin's Pre-2010 Historical Narrative

The history of Afrin before 2010 is inextricably linked to its geography. Far from being a mere stage, the region's physical characteristics – its mountains, valley, location, climate, and resources – consistently acted as primary determinants, shaping the contours of settlement, economy, conflict, and culture across millennia.

A. Isolation and Connectivity: The Dual Impact of Terrain

Afrin's historical narrative is marked by a fundamental tension, a duality imposed by its terrain. The rugged Kurd Dagh mountains fostered a degree of isolation, providing refuge, enabling the persistence of a distinct Kurdish cultural identity, and facilitating resistance against centralized control.[1] This mountainous character contributed to the region's perception and reality as somewhat peripheral. Yet, simultaneously, the fertile Afrin River valley acted as a natural corridor, and the region's overall position at a strategic crossroads ensured constant connectivity with, and often intrusion from, the wider Near East.[3] It was never truly isolated, always being drawn into the orbit of larger powers due to its value as a transit zone and agricultural resource base. This interplay between geographically induced isolation and connectivity generated a unique historical dynamic – a "paradox of the periphery." Afrin's marginality allowed local characteristics to flourish, while its centrality ensured it was

perpetually contested and integrated into larger systems. This tension is arguably the core engine driving its pre-2010 history.

B. Agricultural Lifeline: The Unwavering Economic Pillar

Throughout the vast expanse of Afrin's history, from the earliest Neolithic farmers to the cusp of the 21st century, the agricultural productivity of the Afrin River valley served as a constant economic foundation.[5] The combination of fertile alluvial soils, water from the river, and a climate highly suitable for valuable crops, especially the olive, provided a reliable means of sustenance and generated wealth. This inherent geographical endowment made the region consistently attractive for settlement and control. Regardless of whether Hittites, Romans, Byzantines, Caliphates, Crusaders, Ottomans, or the modern Syrian state held sway, the agricultural engine of the Afrin valley continued to function, linking the region to major markets like Aleppo and ensuring its enduring economic relevance. This agricultural lifeline provided a measure of stability and continuity that persisted despite political upheavals, demonstrating the profound power of geographical resources in shaping long-term economic trajectories.

C. Strategic Imperative: The Constant of Contested Space

Afrin's geographical location rendered it an unavoidable strategic piece on the chessboard of Near Eastern geopolitics. Positioned on natural routes connecting Anatolia, Mesopotamia, and the Levant, and possessing defensible terrain features, it was consistently viewed as a strategic asset or a critical chokepoint by military planners and imperial administrators.[4] From Hittite campaigns and Roman legions establishing bases like Cyrrhus, through Byzantine frontier defenses and Crusader battles, to Ottoman administration and modern border sensitivities involving Syria and Turkey, Afrin was perpetually implicated in larger conflicts and power struggles. Its geography essentially dictated that it could not remain aloof from regional dynamics. This "geostrategic imperative" meant that periods of peace or local autonomy were often precarious, subject to the shifting interests and interventions of more powerful neighbors. The landscape destined Afrin for a history characterized by interaction, and frequently collision, with external forces.

D. Cultural Topography: Landscape, Identity, and Tradition

The physical landscape of Afrin, particularly the Kurd Dagh, became deeply interwoven with the cultural and ethnic identity of its inhabitants. The mountains provided a sanctuary where a predominantly Kurdish population settled and thrived, leading to the area being known for centuries as the "Mountain of the Kurds" (Kurd Dagh / Çiyayê Kurmênc).[2] This geographical space fostered a distinct cultural homogeneity and served as a repository for Kurdish traditions, language (Kurmanji dialect), and social structures.[2] Furthermore, the relative seclusion offered by the mountains allowed religious minorities, such as Yezidis and Alevis (many of the latter having sought refuge there from persecution in Anatolia), to maintain their presence and practices in specific locales within the Kurd Dagh.[2] Shrines and specific landscape features became imbued with religious and cultural significance.[54] Thus, Afrin's

geography was not merely a container for culture but an active participant in its formation and preservation – a "cultural topography" where landscape and identity became inextricably linked, resisting external pressures towards homogenization.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the history of the Afrin region prior to 2010 serves as a powerful illustration of geographical determinism. The enduring features of its landscape – the protective yet isolating Kurd Dagh mountains, the fertile and connective Afrin River valley, its strategic position at a continental crossroads, and its Mediterranean climate – were not passive elements but active forces that consistently shaped the human experience within its boundaries. These geographical factors dictated the logic of settlement from prehistory onwards, established the foundations of its resilient agricultural economy centered on olives, and rendered it a perennial object of strategic desire and conflict for empires and states. The mountains fostered a distinct Kurdish cultural heartland, providing refuge and reinforcing local identity, while the valleys and routes ensured continuous interaction, exchange, and contestation with the outside world. This inherent geographical duality programmed Afrin for a history defined by both opportunity and vulnerability, resilience and recurring conflict. The deep-rooted influence of its physical environment created a unique historical trajectory, ensuring that Afrin, though often on the periphery, remained a significant and contested space within the broader tapestry of the Near East, its past intricately carved by the enduring contours of its land.

Works Cited

(Note: A full academic Works Cited requires complete bibliographic details. The following list uses snippet IDs and URLs as placeholders based on the provided research material.)

- [1] Geopolitique.eu. (2023, March 4). "Iraq and Syria: Kurdish autonomous regions under threat." URL: https://geopolitique.eu/en/2023/03/04/iraq-and-syria-kurdish-autonomous-regions-under-threat/
- [6] Glaphyridae.com. "Biogeografia/SAR." URL: https://www.glaphyridae.com/Biogeografia/SAR.html
- [20] Water Inventory. "Chapter 07 Orontes River Basin." URL: https://waterinventory.org/sites/waterinventory.org/files/chapters/Chapter-07-Orontes-River-Basin-web_1.pdf
- [21] Wikipedia. "Afrin River." URL: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afrin_River
- [30] Livius.org. (2020, August 13). "Orontes (Nahr al-Asi)." URL: https://www.livius.org/articles/place/orontes/
- [37] Tomorrow.io Weather. "Afrin District Radar." URL: https://weather.tomorrow.io/SY/HL/Afrin_District/104943/radar/
- [38] USAID/WB CCKP. "Syria - Climate Fact Sheet." URL: https://prddsgofilestorage.blob.core.windows.net/api/documents/Syria_-_Climate_Fact_

Sheet/SYRIA_Climate_Fact_Sheet_EN.pdf

- [8] Youth4Nature. "A Tale of Afrin." URL: https://www.youth4nature.org/stories/tale-afrin
- [13] Living Agro Lab. "Over half of forest cover lost since Turkish takeover of Syria's Afrin: report." URL: https://www.livingagrolab.eu/news/over-half-of-forest-cover-lost-since-turkish-takeover-of-syrias-afrin-report/
- [32] The Kurdish Project. "Afrin Syria." URL: https://thekurdishproject.org/kurdistan-map/syrian-kurdistan/afrin-syria/
- [23] Wikipedia. "Afrin District." URL: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afrin_District
- [25] Wikipedia. "Ain Dara (archaeological site)." URL: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ain_Dara_(archaeological_site
- [36] Hittite Monuments. "Ain Dara Hittite Temple." URL: https://www.hittitemonuments.com/aindara/
- [59] Rome Art Lover. "Deinair." URL: https://www.romeartlover.it/Deinair.html
- [33] The Kurdish Project. "Afrin Syria." URL: https://thekurdishproject.org/kurdistan-map/syrian-kurdistan/afrin-syria/#:~:text=Afrin%20History,Principality%20of%20Antioch%20took%20control.
- [28] World Monuments Fund. "Cyrrhus-Nebi Houri." URL: https://www.wmf.org/projects/cyrrhus-nebi-houri
- [39] Vici.org. "Location 68613." URL: https://vici.org/vici/68613/
- [60] Wikipedia. "Exarchate of Africa." URL: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exarchate_of_Africa
- [61] Reddit. r/byzantium. "What was the relationship Byzantium had with the..." URL: https://www.reddit.com/r/byzantium/comments/10pgzwi/what_was_the_relationship_byzantium_had_with_the/
- [62] Wikipedia. "Byzantine North Africa." URL: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Byzantine_North_Africa
- [63] Wikipedia. "Caliphate." URL: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caliphate
- [64] Wikipedia. "Fatimid Caliphate." URL: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fatimid_Caliphate
- [65] CTC West Point. "Caliphs of the Shadows..." URL: https://ctc.westpoint.edu/caliphs-of-the-shadows-the-islamic-states-leaders-post-mawla/
- [34] Wikipedia. "Afrin Region." URL: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afrin_Region#:~:text=During%20the%20Ottoman%20Empire%20(1299,eventually%20also%20settled%20throughout%20Anatolia.
- [3] Wikipedia. "Afrin Region." URL: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afrin_Region
- [66] ECCHR. "Crimes in Syria: The Neglected Atrocities of Afrin." URL: https://www.ecchr.eu/en/case/crimes-in-syria-the-neglected-atrocities-of-afrin/
- [35] Wikipedia. "Afrin, Syria." URL:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afrin,_Syria#:~:text=in%20Ottoman%20documents.-,Modern%20era,the%20state's%20formation%20in%201961.

- [67] Lima Charlie News. "The French in Syria..." URL: https://limacharlienews.com/foreign-policy/french-in-syria/
- [9] DianaDarke.com. (2018, February 28). "Syria's Afrin: A Perennial Battleground." URL: https://dianadarke.com/2018/02/28/syrias-afrin-a-perennial-battleground/
- [19] NLKA.net. "Destroying Afrin: The Historical Roots of Turkey's Occupation." URL: https://nlka.net/eng/destroying-afrin-the-historical-roots-of-turkeys-occupation/
- [56] GfbV. "Syrian Arab Republic: Alevis and Yazidis in Afrin threatened with extinction." URL: https://www.gfbv.de/fileadmin/redaktion/UN-statements/2020_2/Syrian_Arab_Republic_Alevis_and_Yazidis_in_Afrin_threatened_with_extinction.pdf
- [16] ResearchGate. "The governance structure of Turkish-controlled Afrin." URL: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/371482361_The_governance_structure_of_Turkish-controlled_Afrin
- [68] Kurdistan24. "Afrin celebrate Newroz after Eight Years of Demographic Change." URL: https://www.kurdistan24.net/en/story/831399/afrin-celebrate-newroz-after-eight-years-of-demographic-change
- [69] DCKurd.org. (2023, March 30). "Turkish de-Kurdification Afrin." URL: https://dckurd.org/2023/03/30/turkish-de-kurdification-afrin/
- [70] Syrians for Heritage. "Archaeological Reports." URL: https://syriansforheritage.org/?page_id=403
- [71] Rojava Information Center. (2023, January). "Explainer: Afrin, 5 years under Turkish occupation." URL: https://rojavainformationcenter.org/2023/01/explainer-afrin-5-years-under-turkish-occupation/
- [72] ASOR Cultural Heritage Initiatives. "Intentional Destruction of Religious Sites in Afrin." URL: https://www.asor.org/chi/reports/incident-report-feature/Intentional-Destruction-of-Religious-Sites-in-Afrin
- [2] Wikipedia. "Kurd Mountain." URL: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurd_Mountain
- [73] Journal of Political Science. "The Kurdish Question..." URL: https://digitalcommons.coastal.edu/context/jops/article/1191/viewcontent/jops_v19_1991_09_macdonald.pdf
- [74] Kurdshop.net. "Qaradagh District." URL: https://kurdshop.net/en/geography/3905
- [3] Wikipedia. "Afrin Region." URL: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afrin_Region [3]
- [7] Wikipedia. "Afrin, Syria." URL: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afrin,_Syria [35]
- [24] Arqueología y Territorio. "Chalcolithic settlement patterns in Syria..." URL: https://www.ugr.es/~arqueologyterritorio/PDF12/2-Watfa.pdf
- [75] Britannica. "Syria/Settlement patterns." URL: https://www.britannica.com/place/Syria/Settlement-patterns

- [76] DCKurd.org. (2025, January 18). "Cost of Arbitrary Borders." URL: https://dckurd.org/2025/01/18/cost-of-arbitrary-borders/
- [4] Harmoon Center. (2018, February). "Military Operation in Afrin..." URL: https://www.harmoon.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Military-Operation-in-Afrin-Implications-Risks-and-Options.pdf
- [1] Geopolitique.eu. (2023, March 4). "Iraq and Syria: Kurdish autonomous regions under threat." URL: https://geopolitique.eu/en/2023/03/04/iraq-and-syria-kurdish-autonomous-regions-under-threat/ [1]
- [49] CSIS. "Understanding Turkey's Afrin Operation." URL: https://www.csis.org/analysis/understanding-turkeys-afrin-operation
- [52] FAO. "Farming Systems and Poverty..." URL: https://www.fao.org/4/y1860e/y1860e05.htm
- [77] MNopedia. "Agricultural Depression, 1920-1934." URL: https://www.mnopedia.org/agricultural-depression-1920-1934
- [26] Syria Direct. (2023, September 17). "Earthquake and climate change: Afrin River dries, farmers lose out." URL: https://syriadirect.org/earthquake-and-climate-change-afrin-river-dries-farmers-lose-out/
- [78] New Georgia Encyclopedia. "Flint River Farms Resettlement Community." URL: https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/business-economy/flint-river-farms-resettlement-community/
- [79] Irish Studies in International Affairs. "Why has sub-Saharan Africa's agricultural production..." URL: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/07900627.2020.1739512
- [80] ResearchGate. "Geopolitics in history." URL: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/233080829_Geopolitics_in_history
- [81] University of Reading CentAUR. "Geopolitics, Geography and Strategic History." URL: https://centaur.reading.ac.uk/47837/1/Geopolitics%20Geography%20and%20Strategic%20History%20(2).pdf
- [82] The Cairo Review of Global Affairs. "The Return of Geopolitics." URL: https://www.thecairoreview.com/essays/the-return-of-geopolitics/
- [50] Journal of International Affairs (SIPA). (2016, May 19). "Schrödinger's Kurds..." URL: https://jia.sipa.columbia.edu/news/schrodingers-kurds-transnational-kurdish-geopolitics-age-shifting-borders
- [83] South African Journal of International Affairs. "From hyper-globalisation..." URL: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10220461.2023.2226108
- [84] Wikipedia. "Deportations of Kurds (1916–1934)." URL: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deportations_of_Kurds_(1916%E2%80%931934
- [41] Wikipedia. "Syrian Kurdistan." URL: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syrian_Kurdistan
- [85] Human Rights Watch. (1993). "Iraq's Crime of Genocide: The Anfal Campaign Against

the Kurds." URL: https://www.hrw.org/reports/1993/iraqanfal/ANFALINT.htm

- [43] ECOI.net / BFA. (2015). "The Kurds." URL: https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/1262738/90_1447760239_bfa-regiones-et-res-publica e-the-kurds-2015.pdf
- [19] NLKA.net. "Destroying Afrin: The Historical Roots of Turkey's Occupation." URL: https://nlka.net/eng/destroying-afrin-the-historical-roots-of-turkeys-occupation/ [19]
- [46] Doha Institute for Graduate Studies. "Syria's Kurds: Hopes of Independence Clash with the Reality of Geography and Demographics." URL: https://www.dohainstitute.org/en/PoliticalStudies/Pages/Syrias_Kurds_Hopes_of_Indepe ndence_Clash_with_the_Reality_of_Geography_and_Demographics.aspx
- [27] Wikipedia. "Cyrrhus." URL: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyrrhus
- [57] NLKA.net. "Afrin's Rich and Millennia-Old Yazidi Culture Edges to the Precipice." URL: https://nlka.net/eng/afrins-rich-and-millennia-old-yazidi-culture-edges-to-the-precipic e/
- [29] Syria Photo Guide. "al-Nabi Houri." URL: https://syriaphotoguide.com/al-nabi-houri-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D8%A8%D9%8 A-%D9%87%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A/
- [10] ResearchGate. (2021, January). "Contested Terrain: Cross-border Violence, Politics and Memory in Syria's Kurd Dagh Region." URL: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/384185610_6_Contested_Terrain_Cross-borde r_Violence_Politics_and_Memory_in_Syria's_Kurd_Dagh_Region/fulltext/66ed734d750ed b3bea5f1dc2/6-Contested-Terrain-Cross-border-Violence-Politics-and-Memory-in-Syri as-Kurd-Dagh-Region.pdf
- [25] Wikipedia. "Ain Dara (archaeological site)." URL: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ain_Dara_(archaeological_site [25]
- [31] Archeologia e Calcolatori. "From the river to the sea of the setting sun..." URL: https://www.archcalc.cnr.it/indice/PDF35.1/17_Montesanto.pdf
- [86] Brill. "Historical Geography of Syria Palaestina and Arabia Petrea..." URL: https://brill.com/downloadpdf/book/edcoll/9789004349391/B9789004349391_s026.pdf
- [87] YouTube (Heimler's History). "AP World History - Unit 2: Trans-Saharan Trade Routes." URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vi6aLWr6HZw&pp=0gcJCdgAo7VqN5tD
- [22] DCKurd.org. (2022, March 9). "Withering Branch: The Story of Afrin..." URL: https://dckurd.org/2022/03/09/withering-branch-the-story-of-afrin-and-its-peoples-pr e-post-operation-olive-branch/
- [9] DianaDarke.com. (2018, February 28). "Syria's Afrin: A Perennial Battleground." URL: https://dianadarke.com/2018/02/28/syrias-afrin-a-perennial-battleground/ [9]
- [58] Peace in Kurdistan Campaign. "The file of religions and nationalities in Afrin." URL: https://www.peaceinkurdistancampaign.com/the-file-of-religions-and-nationalities-in-a frin/
- [54] Études rurales. "Sufism as a Mediator of the Rural-Urban Divide..." URL: https://journals.openedition.org/etudesrurales/9290?lang=en

- [88] Virus Editorial. "The Battle for the Mountain of the Kurds." URL: https://viruseditorial.net/libreria/the-battle-for-the-mountain-of-the-kurds/
- [89] NLKA.net. "Archaeological Heritage Crimes in Occupied Afrin." URL: https://nlka.net/eng/archaeological-heritage-crimes-in-occupied-afrin/
- [90] PM Press. "The Battle for the Mountain of the Kurds..." URL: https://www.pmpress.org/index.php?l=product_detail&p=1039
- [3] Wikipedia. "Afrin Region." URL: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afrin_Region [3]
- [91] Cambridge University Press. "A Historical and Topographical Guide to the Geography of Strabo." URL: https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/historical-and-topographical-guide-to-the-geography-of-strabo/assyria-syria-phoenicia-and-arabia/882E4157C16D2363D77B1E62720EFEDD
- [7] Wikipedia. "Afrin, Syria." URL: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afrin,_Syria [35]
- [92] MERIP. (2020, August). "The Kurdish Movement's Relationship with the Palestinian Struggle." URL: https://merip.org/2020/08/the-kurdish-movements-relationship-with-the-palestinian-struggle/
- [47] Arab Center Washington DC. "Why Federalism Is a Bad Idea for Syria." URL: https://arabcenterdc.org/resource/why-federalism-is-a-bad-idea-for-syria/
- [10] ResearchGate. (2021, January). "Contested Terrain: Cross-border Violence, Politics and Memory in Syria's Kurd Dagh Region." URL: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/384185610_6_Contested_Terrain_Cross-border_Violence_Politics_and_Memory_in_Syria's_Kurd_Dagh_Region/fulltext/66ed734d750edb3bea5f1dc2/6-Contested-Terrain-Cross-border-Violence-Politics-and-Memory-in-Syrias-Kurd-Dagh-Region.pdf [10]
- [93] ResearchGate. "The Political Geography of Kurdistan." URL: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/237425416_The_Political_Geography_of_Kurdistan
- [94] International Studies Quarterly. (2024, February 23). "The Political Geography of Globalized Civil Wars..." URL: https://academic.oup.com/isq/article/68/1/sqad060/7613190
- [51] NLKA.net. "Geographical Division: An Ignored Factor Affecting Kurdish Division." URL: https://nlka.net/eng/geographical-division-an-ignored-factor-affecting-kurdish-division/
- [95] Five Books. "The Best Books on The Kurds." URL: https://fivebooks.com/best-books/the-kurds-peter-w-galbraith/
- [96] Journal of Refugee Studies. (2024, June). "The geopolitical dimensions of multi-scalar integration." URL: https://academic.oup.com/jrs/article/37/2/518/7668384
- [97] International Journal of Middle East Studies. (2023, November 1). "Jin, Jiyan, Azadî and the Historical Erasure of Kurds." URL: https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/international-journal-of-middle-east-studies/a

rticle/jin-jiyan-azadi-and-the-historical-erasure-of-kurds/ABD2F2585A3AD4F0FF3735CD0B4FECAA

- [98] Cambridge University Press. (2021, April). "The Cambridge History of the Kurds." URL: https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/cambridge-history-of-the-kurds/BDA1E4CBEA98ADFDC471D89A251C3FD4
- [99] MERIP. (1993, March). "Recent Books on the Kurds." URL: https://merip.org/1993/03/recent-books-on-the-kurds/
- [100] Wikipedia. "Kurdistan." URL: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurdistan
- [101] CORE. "Beyond Scarcity: Rethinking the Resource Curse..." URL: https://core.ac.uk/download/157569798.pdf
- [102] ResearchGate. "Environmental Racism and Resistance in Kurdistan." URL: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/359700543_Environmental_Racism_and_Resistance_in_Kurdistan
- [103] ResearchGate. "The Middle Paleolithic of the East Mediterranean Levant." URL: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/226817344_The_Middle_Paleolithic_of_the_East_Mediterranean_Levant
- [104] METU Open Access. "Tracing the Impact of 4.2 ka and 3.2 ka BP Climatic Events..." URL: https://open.metu.edu.tr/bitstream/handle/11511/99488/EBRAR-S%C4%B0NMEZ-TEZ.pdf
- [105] Propylaeum-DOK. "Levantine Kingdoms of the Late Bronze Age." URL: http://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/propylaeumdok/2856/1/Pfaelzner_Levantine%20Kingdoms%202012.pdf
- [106] American Journal of Sociology. (1999, September). "Marx's Theory of Metabolic Rift..." URL: https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/210315?mobileUi=0&
- [107] Ancient Ports Antiques. "Levantine Kingdoms of the Late Bronze Age." URL: https://www.ancientportsantiques.com/wp-content/uploads/Documents/PLACES/Levant/LevantLBA-Pf%C3%A4lzner2012.pdf [105]
- [108] Universität Tübingen Publikationen. "Archaeobotanical Investigations..." URL: https://publikationen.uni-tuebingen.de/xmlui/bitstream/10900/98496/1/Dissertation-Karakaya-TOBIAS.pdf
- [109] Durham e-Theses. "Pottery and Social Dynamics..." URL: http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/2539/1/2539_550_-_vol_1.pdf
- [110] Harvard University ISL Projects. "Across the Spectrum of Socioeconomics Issue 3." URL: https://projects.iq.harvard.edu/files/isl/files/across_the_spectrum_of_socioeconomics_issue_3.pdf
- [53] Kurdland.net. "History." URL: https://kurdland.net/english/history
- [111] MDPI Books. "Sustainable Organic Agriculture..." URL: https://unglueit-files.s3.amazonaws.com/ebf/3034dd79baba429194eabc6203f98d72.pdf
- [112] CABI Digital Library. "Climate Change Impacts on Agriculture..." URL: https://www.cabidigitallibrary.org/doi/pdf/10.5555/20183018175

- [113] ISAC (University of Chicago). "Excavations at Tell Kurdu..." URL: https://isac.uchicago.edu/sites/default/files/uploads/shared/docs/OIP_131.pdf
- [114] Dokumen.pub. "The Origins of Western Economic Dominance in the Middle East..." URL: https://dokumen.pub/the-origins-of-western-economic-dominance-in-the-middle-east-mercantilism-and-the-islamic-economy-in-aleppo-1600-1750-9780814754351.html
- [115] ResearchGate. "Le dualisme agraire méditerranéen..." URL: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Claude-Napoleone-2/publication/302942785_Le_dualisme_agraire_mediterraneen_disparition_ou_resilience_de_l'agriculture_familiale/links/57bd91cf08ae37ee394ba44b/Le-dualisme-agraire-mediterraneen-disparition-ou-resilience-de-lagriculture-familiale.pdf?origin=scientificContributions
- [116] BORIS (University of Bern). "Tell Al-Hamidiya 3..." URL: https://boristheses.unibe.ch/1947/1/20fakhro_m.pdf
- [117] Dokumen.pub. "Egypt and Syria under Mamluk Rule..." URL: https://dokumen.pub/egypt-and-syria-under-mamluk-rule-political-social-and-cultural-aspects-2021024342-2021024343-9789004459519-9789004459717-9004459510.html
- [98] Cambridge University Press. (2021, April). "The Cambridge History of the Kurds." URL: https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/cambridge-history-of-the-kurds/BDA1E4CBEA98ADFDC471D89A251C3FD4 [98]
- [118] ResearchGate. "The Kurdish Movement and the End of the Ottoman Empire, 1880-1923." URL: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/351379626_The_Kurdish_Movement_and_the_End_of_the_Ottoman_Empire_1880-1923
- [119] Ser Bexo Yi. "Decolonizing Kurdistan..." URL: https://serbexoyi.com/files/167.pdf
- [44] Wikipedia. "History of the Kurds." URL: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Kurds
- [5] Amazon.com. "The Battle for the Mountain of the Kurds..." URL: https://www.amazon.com/Battle-Mountain-Kurds-Self-Determination-Cleansing/dp/1629636517
- [120] The Anarchist Library. "Thomas Schmidinger - The Battle for the Mountain of the Kurds." URL: https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/thomas-schmidinger-the-battle-for-the-mountain-of-the-kurds
- [121] PM Press. "Kairos Books." URL: https://pmpress.org/index.php?l=product_list&c=111&display=list
- [122] Edopoly Classroom. "The Battle of the Mountains." URL: https://classroom.edopoly.edu.ng/results/Resources/fetch.php/the_battle_of_the_mountains.pdf
- [123] Amazon.com. "The Cambridge History of the Kurds." URL: https://www.amazon.com/Cambridge-History-Kurds-Hamit-Bozarslan/dp/1108473350
- [124] Barnes & Noble. "The Cambridge History of the Kurds." URL:

https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/the-cambridge-history-of-the-kurds-hamit-bozarslan/1137964695

- [125] Cambridge University Press. Product Page 9781108473354. URL: https://www.cambridge.org/9781108473354
- [126] Dokumen.pub. "The Cambridge History of the Kurds..." URL: https://dokumen.pub/the-cambridge-history-of-the-kurds-9781108623711-9781108473354-2020035613-2020035614.html
- [127] Amazon.de. "The Battle for the Mountain of the Kurds..." URL: https://www.amazon.de/-/en/Thomas-Schmidinger-ebook/dp/B093XY7YLD
- [128] Edopoly Classroom. "The Battle of the Mountains." URL: https://classroom.edopoly.edu.ng/book/browse/Download_PDFS/the%20battle%20of%20the%20mountains.pdf [122]
- [129] Neliti. "The Battle for the Mountain of the Kurds..." URL: https://media.neliti.com/media/publications/351699-the-battle-for-the-mountain-of-the-kurds-03d67865.pdf
- [130] ResearchGate. "The battle for the mountain of the Kurds..." URL: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/356787113_The_battle_for_the_mountain_of_the_Kurds_self-_determination_and_ethnic_cleansing_in_the_Afrin_Region_of_Rojava
- [10] ResearchGate. (2021, January). "Contested Terrain: Cross-border Violence, Politics and Memory in Syria's Kurd Dagh Region." URL: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/384185610_6_Contested_Terrain_Cross-border_Violence_Politics_and_Memory_in_Syria's_Kurd_Dagh_Region/fulltext/66ed734d750edb3bea5f1dc2/6-Contested-Terrain-Cross-border-Violence-Politics-and-Memory-in-Syrias-Kurd-Dagh-Region.pdf [10]
- [73] Journal of Political Science. "The Kurdish Question..." URL: https://digitalcommons.coastal.edu/context/jops/article/1191/viewcontent/jops_v19_1991_09_macdonald.pdf [73]
- [131] DCKurd.org. "Kurds." URL: https://dckurd.org/kurds/
- [11] Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. (2012, October). "Syria's Kurds: Troubled Past, Uncertain Future." URL: https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2012/10/syrias-kurds-troubled-past-uncertain-future?lang=en&center=middle-east
- [69] DCKurd.org. (2023, March 30). "Turkish de-Kurdification Afrin." URL: https://dckurd.org/2023/03/30/turkish-de-kurdification-afrin/ [69]
- [19] NLKA.net. "Destroying Afrin: The Historical Roots of Turkey's Occupation." URL: https://nlka.net/eng/destroying-afrin-the-historical-roots-of-turkeys-occupation/ [19]
- [71] Rojava Information Center. (2023, January). "Explainer: Afrin, 5 years under Turkish occupation." URL: https://rojavainformationcenter.org/2023/01/explainer-afrin-5-years-under-turkish-occupation/ [71]
- [17] Bellingcat. (2019, July 11). "Afrin Incidents of Desecration and Destruction of Cultural

Sites." URL: https://www.bellingcat.com/news/mena/2019/07/11/afrin-incidents-of-desecration-and-destruction-of-cultural-sites/

- [132] Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History. "Archaeology of Atlantic West Africa." URL: https://oxfordre.com/africanhistory/display/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277734.001.0001/acrefore-9780190277734-e-837?p=emailAWSUm3Ju0hBIs&d=/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277734.001.0001/acrefore-9780190277734-e-837
- [133] ResearchGate. "Settlement and Landscape Transformations in the Amuq Valley, Hatay." URL: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/250138513_Settlement_and_Landscape_Transformations_in_the_Amuq_Valley_Hatay
- [134] CORE. "Settlement and Landscape Transformations in the Amuq Valley..." URL: https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/149241545.pdf
- [40] University of Exeter ORE. "Roads and Communications in the Roman Near East..." URL: https://ore.exeter.ac.uk/repository/bitstream/handle/10036/68213/ComfortA.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y
- [45] Britannica. "Kurdistan." URL: https://www.britannica.com/place/Kurdistan
- [135] Wikipedia. "Kurds." URL: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurds
- [55] Nishtman. "The Kurdish National Movement in West Kurdistan..." URL: https://nishtmansi.com/blog/rojavanationalmovement
- [42] Wikipedia. "Kurds in Syria." URL: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurds_in_Syria
- [14] Enab Baladi. (2024, January). "Who stops the destruction of vegetation in Syria?" URL: https://english.enabbaladi.net/archives/2024/01/who-stops-the-destruction-of-vegetation-in-syria/
- [136] Syria Forest Foundation. "Research Report English." URL: https://www.syriaforestfoundation.org/6667024a2f9a1c02abc691d7/Research_Report_English.pdf
- [15] North Press Agency. "Illegal tree-cutting, charcoal trade continue in Syria's Afrin." URL: https://npasyria.com/en/118107/
- [137] Geneva Academy. "Climate Insecurity, Environmental Rights Violations and Conflict..." URL: https://geneva-academy.ch/joomlatools-files/docman-files/Climate%20Insecurity%20Environmental%20Rights%20Violations%20and%20Conflict%20in%20Fragile%20Settings.pdf
- [41] Wikipedia. "Syrian Kurdistan." URL: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syrian_Kurdistan [41]
- [18] Ceasefire Centre for Civilian Rights. (2020, July). "Cultivated Chaos: The Destruction of Afrin." URL: https://www.ceasefire.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/CFR_Syria_EN_July20.pdf

- [12] ResearchGate. (2021, January). "Contested Terrain: Cross-border Violence, Politics and Memory in Syria's Kurd Dagh Region." URL: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/384185610_6_Contested_Terrain_Cross-border_Violence_Politics_and_Memory_in_Syria's_Kurd_Dagh_Region [10]
- [48] Stratfor Worldview. "Fragile Gains for Syria's Kurds." URL: https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/fragile-gains-syrias-kurds
- [1] Geopolitique.eu. (2023, March 4). "Iraq and Syria: Kurdish autonomous regions under threat." [1]
- [30] Livius.org. (2020, August 13). "Orontes (Nahr al-Asi)." [30]
- [25] Wikipedia. "Ain Dara (archaeological site)." [25]
- [3] Wikipedia. "Afrin Region." [3]
- [2] Wikipedia. "Kurd Mountain." [2]
- [9] DianaDarke.com. (2018, February 28). "Syria's Afrin: A Perennial Battleground." [9]
- [54] Études rurales. (2013, March 11). "Sufism as a Mediator of the Rural-Urban Divide..." [54]
- [50] Journal of International Affairs (SIPA). (2016, May 19). "Schrödinger's Kurds..." [50]
- [10] ResearchGate. (2021, January). "Contested Terrain..." [10]

Works cited

1. Iraq and Syria: Kurdish Autonomous Regions Under Threat - Groupe ..., accessed May 6, 2025, https://geopolitique.eu/en/2023/03/04/iraq-and-syria-kurdish-autonomous-regions-under-threat/
2. Kurd Mountain - Wikipedia, accessed May 6, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurd_Mountain
3. Afrin Region - Wikipedia, accessed May 6, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afrin_Region
4. Military Operation in Afrin: Implications, Risks and Options, accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.harmoon.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Military-Operation-in-Afrin-Implications-Risks-and-Options.pdf
5. Battle for the Mountain of the Kurds: Self-Determination and Ethnic Cleansing in Rojava (Kairos) - Amazon.com, accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.amazon.com/Battle-Mountain-Kurds-Self-Determination-Cleansing/dp/1629636517
6. Syria - Glaphyridae, accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.glaphyridae.com/Biogeografia/SAR.html
7. Afrin, Syria - Wikipedia, accessed May 6, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afrin,_Syria
8. A Tale of Afrin - Youth4Nature, accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.youth4nature.org/stories/tale-afrin
9. Syria's Afrin, a perennial battleground - dianadarke, accessed May 6, 2025, https://dianadarke.com/2018/02/28/syrias-afrin-a-perennial-battleground/
10. Katharina Lange - ResearchGate, accessed May 6, 2025,

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/384185610_6_Contested_Terrain_Cross-border_Violence_Politics_and_Memory_in_Syria's_Kurd_Dagh_Region/fulltext/66ed734d750edb3bea5f1dc2/6-Contested-Terrain-Cross-border-Violence-Politics-and-Memory-in-Syrias-Kurd-Dagh-Region.pdf
11. Syria's Kurds: Troubled Past, Uncertain Future, accessed May 6, 2025, https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2012/10/syrias-kurds-troubled-past-uncertain-future?lang=en¢er=middle-east
12. 6 Contested Terrain: Cross-border Violence, Politics and Memory in Syria's Kurd Dagh Region - ResearchGate, accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/384185610_6_Contested_Terrain_Cross-border_Violence_Politics_and_Memory_in_Syria's_Kurd_Dagh_Region
13. Over half of forest cover lost since Turkish takeover of Syria's Afrin - Livingagro ICT Platform, accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.livingagrolab.eu/news/over-half-of-forest-cover-lost-since-turkish-takeover-of-syrias-afrin-report/
14. Who stops the destruction of vegetation in Syria? - Enab Baladi, accessed May 6, 2025, https://english.enabbaladi.net/archives/2024/01/who-stops-the-destruction-of-vegetation-in-syria/
15. Illegal tree-cutting, charcoal trade continue in Syria's Afrin, accessed May 6, 2025, https://npasyria.com/en/118107/
16. (PDF) The governance structure of Turkish-controlled Afrin - ResearchGate, accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/371482361_The_governance_structure_of_Turkish-controlled_Afrin
17. Afrin: Incidents Of Desecration And Destruction Of Cultural Sites - bellingcat, accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.bellingcat.com/news/mena/2019/07/11/afrin-incidents-of-desecration-and-destruction-of-cultural-sites/
18. Cultivating Chaos: Afrin after Operation Olive Branch - The Ceasefire Centre for Civilian Rights, accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.ceasefire.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/CFR_Syria_EN_July20.pdf
19. Destroying Afrin: The Historical Roots of Turkey's Occupation - The Kurdish Center for Studies, accessed May 6, 2025, https://nlka.net/eng/destroying-afrin-the-historical-roots-of-turkeys-occupation/
20. Chapter 7 - Orontes River Basin - Inventory of Shared Water Resources in Western Asia, accessed May 6, 2025, https://waterinventory.org/sites/waterinventory.org/files/chapters/Chapter-07-Orontes-River-Basin-web_1.pdf
21. Afrin River - Wikipedia, accessed May 6, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afrin_River
22. Withering Branch: The Story of Afrin and its Peoples, Pre & Post “Operation Olive Branch" | Washington Kurdish Institute, accessed May 6, 2025, https://dckurd.org/2022/03/09/withering-branch-the-story-of-afrin-and-its-peop

les-pre-post-operation-olive-branch/
23. Afrin District - Wikipedia, accessed May 6, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afrin_District
24. CHALCOLITHIC SETTLEMENT PATTERNS IN SYRIA - Universidad de Granada, accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.ugr.es/~arqueologyterritorio/PDF12/2-Watfa.pdf
25. Ain Dara (archaeological site) - Wikipedia, accessed May 6, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ain_Dara_(archaeological_site)
26. Farmers 'ruined' as earthquake and climate change leave Afrin River dry - Syria Direct, accessed May 6, 2025, https://syriadirect.org/earthquake-and-climate-change-afrin-river-dries-farmers-lose-out/
27. Cyrrhus - Wikipedia, accessed May 6, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyrrhus
28. Cyrrhus (Nebi Houri) - World Monuments Fund, accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.wmf.org/projects/cyrrhus-nebi-houri
29. al-Nabi Houri النبي هوري - Syria Photo Guide, accessed May 6, 2025, https://syriaphotoguide.com/al-nabi-houri-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D8%A8%D9%8A-%D9%87%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A/
30. Orontes (Nahr al-Asi) - Livius, accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.livius.org/articles/place/orontes/
31. FROM THE RIVER TO THE SEA OF THE SETTING SUN: ROUTE NETWORKS BETWEEN THE EUPHRATES AND THE MEDITERRANEAN DURING THE IRON AGE - Archeologia e Calcolatori, accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.archcalc.cnr.it/indice/PDF35.1/17_Montesanto.pdf
32. Afrin Syria - The Kurdish Project, accessed May 6, 2025, https://thekurdishproject.org/kurdistan-map/syrian-kurdistan/afrin-syria/
33. thekurdishproject.org, accessed May 6, 2025, https://thekurdishproject.org/kurdistan-map/syrian-kurdistan/afrin-syria/#:~:text=Afrin%20History,Principality%20of%20Antioch%20took%20control.
34. en.wikipedia.org, accessed May 6, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afrin_Region#:~:text=During%20the%20Ottoman%20Empire%20(1299,eventually%20also%20settled%20throughout%20Anatolia.
35. en.wikipedia.org, accessed May 6, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afrin,_Syria#:~:text=in%20Ottoman%20documents.-,Modern%20era,the%20state's%20formation%20in%201961.
36. Ain Dara - Hittite Monuments, accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.hittitemonuments.com/aindara/
37. Weather Radar in Afrin District, Syria | Tomorrow.io, accessed May 6, 2025, https://weather.tomorrow.io/SY/HL/Afrin_District/104943/radar/
38. SYRIA Climate Fact Sheet - NET, accessed May 6, 2025, https://prddsgofilestorage.blob.core.windows.net/api/documents/Syria_-_Climate_Fact_Sheet/SYRIA_Climate_Fact_Sheet_EN.pdf
39. AFRİN HARABESİ - Vici.org, accessed May 6, 2025, https://vici.org/vici/68613/
40. Roads on the frontier between Rome and Persia: - Open Research Exeter (ORE), accessed May 6, 2025,

https://ore.exeter.ac.uk/repository/bitstream/handle/10036/68213/ComfortA.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y
41. Syrian Kurdistan - Wikipedia, accessed May 6, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syrian_Kurdistan
42. Kurds in Syria - Wikipedia, accessed May 6, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurds_in_Syria
43. THE KURDS | Ecoi.net, accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/1262738/90_1447760239_bfa-regiones-et-res-publicae-the-kurds-2015.pdf
44. History of the Kurds - Wikipedia, accessed May 6, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Kurds
45. Kurdistan | History, Religion, Map, & Facts | Britannica, accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.britannica.com/place/Kurdistan
46. Syria's Kurds: Hopes of Independence Clash with the Reality of Geography and Demographics, accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.dohainstitute.org/en/PoliticalStudies/Pages/Syrias_Kurds_Hopes_of_Independence_Clash_with_the_Reality_of_Geography_and_Demographics.aspx
47. Why Federalism Is a Bad Idea for Syria - Arab Center Washington DC, accessed May 6, 2025, https://arabcenterdc.org/resource/why-federalism-is-a-bad-idea-for-syria/
48. The Fragile Gains of Syria's Kurds - Stratfor, accessed May 6, 2025, https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/fragile-gains-syrias-kurds
49. Understanding Turkey's Afrin Operation - CSIS, accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.csis.org/analysis/understanding-turkeys-afrin-operation
50. Schrödinger's Kurds: Transnational Kurdish Geopolitics In The Age ..., accessed May 6, 2025, https://jia.sipa.columbia.edu/news/schrodingers-kurds-transnational-kurdish-geopolitics-age-shifting-borders
51. Geographic Division: An Ignored Factor Affecting Kurdish Unity, accessed May 6, 2025, https://nlka.net/eng/geographical-division-an-ignored-factor-affecting-kurdish-division/
52. middle east and north africa - Farming Systems and Poverty, accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.fao.org/4/y1860e/y1860e05.htm
53. History of the Kurds - Kurdland - Your gateway to Kurdistan, accessed May 6, 2025, https://kurdland.net/english/history
54. Kurdish Sufi Spaces of Rural-Urban. Connection in Northern Syria, accessed May 6, 2025, https://journals.openedition.org/etudesrurales/9290?lang=en
55. The Kurdish National Movement in Western Kurdistan from 1914 to 1957 - Nishtman Strategy Institute (NSI), accessed May 6, 2025, https://nishtmansi.com/blog/rojavanationalmovement
56. Syrian Arab Republic: Alevis and Yazidis in Afrin threatened with extinction - GfbV, accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.gfbv.de/fileadmin/redaktion/UN-statements/2020_2/Syrian_Arab_Republic_Alevis_and_Yazidis_in_Afrin_threatened_with_extinction.pdf

57. Afrin's Yazidis: An Ancient Culture Edges Toward the Precipice - The Kurdish Center for Studies, accessed May 6, 2025, https://nlka.net/eng/afrins-rich-and-millennia-old-yazidi-culture-edges-to-the-precipice/
58. The file of Religions and nationalities in Afrin - Peace in Kurdistan, accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.peaceinkurdistancampaign.com/the-file-of-religions-and-nationalities-in-afrin/
59. Ain Dara - Disputed Land - Rome Art Lover, accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.romeartlover.it/Deinair.html
60. Exarchate of Africa - Wikipedia, accessed May 6, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exarchate_of_Africa
61. What was the relationship Byzantium had with the African world during the peak of its imperial reign? - Reddit, accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.reddit.com/r/byzantium/comments/10pgzwi/what_was_the_relationship_byzantium_had_with_the/
62. Byzantine North Africa - Wikipedia, accessed May 6, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Byzantine_North_Africa
63. Caliphate - Wikipedia, accessed May 6, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caliphate
64. Fatimid Caliphate - Wikipedia, accessed May 6, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fatimid_Caliphate
65. Caliphs of the Shadows: The Islamic State's Leaders Post-Mawla, accessed May 6, 2025, https://ctc.westpoint.edu/caliphs-of-the-shadows-the-islamic-states-leaders-post-mawla/
66. Crimes in Syria: The neglected atrocities of Afrin - ECCHR, accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.ecchr.eu/en/case/crimes-in-syria-the-neglected-atrocities-of-afrin/
67. The French in Syria - a long and tortured history - Lima Charlie News, accessed May 6, 2025, https://limacharlienews.com/foreign-policy/french-in-syria/
68. Afrin celebrate Newroz after Eight Years of Demographic Change - Kurdistan24, accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.kurdistan24.net/en/story/831399/afrin-celebrate-newroz-after-eight-years-of-demographic-change
69. Afrin: A Case Study in Turkish de-Kurdification - Washington Kurdish Institute, accessed May 6, 2025, https://dckurd.org/2023/03/30/turkish-de-kurdification-afrin/
70. Reports - Syrians for Heritage (SIMAT), accessed May 6, 2025, https://syriansforheritage.org/?page_id=403
71. Explainer: Afrin, 5 years under Turkish occupation - Rojava Information Center, accessed May 6, 2025, https://rojavainformationcenter.org/2023/01/explainer-afrin-5-years-under-turkish-occupation/
72. CHI – Incident Report Feature – Intentional Destruction of Religious Sites in Afrin - American Society of Overseas Research (ASOR), accessed May 6, 2025,

https://www.asor.org/chi/reports/incident-report-feature/Intentional-Destruction-of-Religious-Sites-in-Afrin
73. The Kurds - CCU Digital Commons, accessed May 6, 2025, https://digitalcommons.coastal.edu/context/jops/article/1191/viewcontent/jops_v19_1991_09_macdonald.pdf
74. "Qaradagh" Somewhere Between History and a Charming Nature - KURDSHOP, accessed May 6, 2025, https://kurdshop.net/en/geography/3905
75. Syria - Urbanization, Agriculture, Deserts - Britannica, accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.britannica.com/place/Syria/Settlement-patterns
76. The Cost of Arbitrary Borders: Syria's Division and the Kurdish Quest for Recognition, accessed May 6, 2025, https://dckurd.org/2025/01/18/cost-of-arbitrary-borders/
77. Agricultural Depression, 1920–1934 | MNopedia, accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.mnopedia.org/agricultural-depression-1920-1934
78. Flint River Farms Resettlement Community - New Georgia Encyclopedia, accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/business-economy/flint-river-farms-resettlement-community/
79. Why agricultural production in sub-Saharan Africa remains low compared to the rest of the world – a historical perspective - Taylor & Francis Online, accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/07900627.2020.1739512
80. Geopolitics in history - ResearchGate, accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/233080829_Geopolitics_in_history
81. Geopolitics, geography and strategic history - CentAUR, accessed May 6, 2025, https://centaur.reading.ac.uk/47837/1/Geopolitics%20Geography%20and%20Strategic%20History%20(2).pdf
82. The Return of Geopolitics - The Cairo Review of Global Affairs, accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.thecairoreview.com/essays/the-return-of-geopolitics/
83. The 'new geopolitics' of mineral supply chains: A window of opportunity for African countries, accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10220461.2023.2226108
84. Deportations of Kurds (1916–1934) - Wikipedia, accessed May 6, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deportations_of_Kurds_(1916%E2%80%931934)
85. Introduction : GENOCIDE IN IRAQ: The Anfal Campaign Against the Kurds (Human Rights Watch Report, 1993), accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.hrw.org/reports/1993/iraqanfal/ANFALINT.htm
86. The Historical Geography of Hittite Syria: Philology - Brill, accessed May 6, 2025, https://brill.com/downloadpdf/book/edcoll/9789004349391/B9789004349391_s026.pdf
87. Silk Roads, Indian Ocean, & Trans-Saharan Routes [AP World History Review]—Unit 2 Topics 1, 3, 4 - YouTube, accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vi6aLWr6HZw&pp=0gcJCdgAo7VqN5tD
88. The Battle For The Mountain Of The Kurds - Virus Editorial, accessed May 6, 2025, https://viruseditorial.net/libreria/the-battle-for-the-mountain-of-the-kurds/

89. Archaeological Heritage Crimes in Occupied Afrin - The Kurdish Center for Studies, accessed May 6, 2025, https://nlka.net/eng/archaeological-heritage-crimes-in-occupied-afrin/
90. The Battle for the Mountain of the Kurds: Self-Determination and Ethnic Cleansing in the Afrin Region of Rojava (e-Book) - PM Press, accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.pmpress.org/index.php?l=product_detail&p=1039
91. Assyria, Syria, Phoenicia, and Arabia (Book 16) - A Historical and Topographical Guide to the Geography of Strabo - Cambridge University Press, accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/historical-and-topographical-guide-to-the-geography-of-strabo/assyria-syria-phoenicia-and-arabia/882E4157C16D2363D77B1E62720EFEDD
92. The Kurdish Movement's Relationship with the Palestinian Struggle - MERIP, accessed May 6, 2025, https://merip.org/2020/08/the-kurdish-movements-relationship-with-the-palestinian-struggle/
93. (PDF) The Political Geography of Kurdistan - ResearchGate, accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/237425416_The_Political_Geography_of_Kurdistan
94. Political Geography of Globalized Civil Wars: Networked Actors and Multi-Scalar Strategies in the Kurdish Conflict Assemblage - Oxford Academic, accessed May 6, 2025, https://academic.oup.com/isq/article/68/1/sqad060/7613190
95. The Best Books on The Kurds | Five Books Expert Recommendations, accessed May 6, 2025, https://fivebooks.com/best-books/the-kurds-peter-w-galbraith/
96. Multi-scalar and diasporic integration: Kurdish populations in Europe between state, diaspora and geopolitics | Journal of Refugee Studies | Oxford Academic, accessed May 6, 2025, https://academic.oup.com/jrs/article/37/2/518/7668384
97. Jin, Jiyan, Azadi and the Historical Erasure of Kurds | International Journal of Middle East Studies | Cambridge Core, accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/international-journal-of-middle-east-studies/article/jin-jiyan-azadi-and-the-historical-erasure-of-kurds/ABD2F2585A3AD4F0FF3735CD0B4FECAA
98. The Cambridge History of the Kurds, accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/cambridge-history-of-the-kurds/BDA1E4CBEA98ADFDC471D89A251C3FD4
99. Recent Books on the Kurds - MERIP, accessed May 6, 2025, https://merip.org/1993/03/recent-books-on-the-kurds/
100. Kurdistan - Wikipedia, accessed May 6, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurdistan
101. Hoffmann C (2018) Beyond the resource curse and pipeline conspiracies: Energy as a social relat - CORE, accessed May 6, 2025, https://core.ac.uk/download/157569798.pdf
102. (PDF) Environmental Racism and Resistance in Kurdistan - ResearchGate, accessed May 6, 2025,

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/359700543_Environmental_Racism_and_Resistance_in_Kurdistan
103. The Middle Paleolithic of the East Mediterranean Levant - ResearchGate, accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/226817344_The_Middle_Paleolithic_of_the_East_Mediterranean_Levant
104. TRACING THE IMPACT OF 4.2 KA AND 3.2 KA BP CLIMATIC EVENTS ON THE AGRICULTURE OF TELL ATCHANA AND TOPRAKHISAR SITES IN THE HATAY - Middle East Technical University, accessed May 6, 2025, https://open.metu.edu.tr/bitstream/handle/11511/99488/EBRAR-S%C4%B0NMEZ-TEZ.pdf
105. Levantine Kingdoms of the Late Bronze Age, accessed May 6, 2025, http://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/propylaeumdok/2856/1/Pfaelzner_Levantine%20Kingdoms%202012.pdf
106. Marx's Theory of Metabolic Rift: Classical Foundations for Environmental Sociology1 | American Journal of Sociology: Vol 105, No 2, accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/210315?mobileUi=0&
107. Levantine Kingdoms of the Late Bronze Age - Ancient Coastal Settlements, Ports and Harbours, accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.ancientportsantiques.com/wp-content/uploads/Documents/PLACES/Levant/LevantLBA-Pf%C3%A4lzner2012.pdf
108. Botanical Aspects of the Environment and Economy at Tell Tayinat from the Bronze to Iron Ages (ca. 2.200 – 600 BCE), in south- - Universität Tübingen, accessed May 6, 2025, https://publikationen.uni-tuebingen.de/xmlui/bitstream/10900/98496/1/Dissertation-Karakaya-TOBIAS.pdf
109. a reconsideration of the role of ceramics in reconstructions of the Iron Age Northern Levant - Durham E-Theses, accessed May 6, 2025, http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/2539/1/2539_550_-_vol_1.pdf
110. Untitled - Projects at Harvard, accessed May 6, 2025, https://projects.iq.harvard.edu/files/isl/files/across_the_spectrum_of_socioeconomics_issue_3.pdf
111. Sustainable Organic Agriculture for Developing Agribusiness Sector - AWS, accessed May 6, 2025, https://unglueit-files.s3.amazonaws.com/ebf/3034dd79baba429194eabc6203f98d72.pdf
112. Soil and Water Conservation, - Climate Change and Environmental Sensitivity - CABI Digital Library, accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.cabidigitallibrary.org/doi/pdf/10.5555/20183018175
113. oi.uchicago.edu/OI/DEPT/PUB/SRC/OIP/131/OIP131.html ORIENTAL INSTITUTE PUBLICATIONS • NO. 131 THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE OF THE UN - Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures, accessed May 6, 2025, https://isac.uchicago.edu/sites/default/files/uploads/shared/docs/OIP_131.pdf
114. The origins of western economic dominance in the Middle East: mercantilism and the Islamic economy in Aleppo, 1600-1750 9780814754351 - DOKUMEN.PUB,

accessed May 6, 2025, https://dokumen.pub/the-origins-of-western-economic-dominance-in-the-middle-east-mercantilism-and-the-islamic-economy-in-aleppo-1600-1750-9780814754351.html
115. Watch Letter - ResearchGate, accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Claude-Napoleone-2/publication/302942785_Le_dualisme_agraire_mediterraneen_disparition_ou_resilience_de_l'agriculture_familiale/links/57bd91cf08ae37ee394ba44b/Le-dualisme-agraire-mediterraneen-disparition-ou-resilience-de-lagriculture-familiale.pdf?origin=scientificContributions
116. Strategies for reconstructing and restructuring of museums in post-war places (National Museum of Aleppo as a Model) - BORIS Theses - Universität Bern, accessed May 6, 2025, https://boristheses.unibe.ch/1947/1/20fakhro_m.pdf
117. Egypt and Syria under Mamluk rule political, social and cultural aspects 2021024342, 2021024343, 9789004459519, 9789004459717, 9004459510 - DOKUMEN.PUB, accessed May 6, 2025, https://dokumen.pub/egypt-and-syria-under-mamluk-rule-political-social-and-cultural-aspects-2021024342-2021024343-9789004459519-9789004459717-9004459510.html
118. The Kurdish Movement and the End of the Ottoman Empire, 1880–1923 - ResearchGate, accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/351379626_The_Kurdish_Movement_and_the_End_of_the_Ottoman_Empire_1880-1923
119. Contemporary Colonialities: Kurds and Kashmiris, accessed May 6, 2025, https://serbexoyi.com/files/167.pdf
120. The Battle for the Mountain of the Kurds | The Anarchist Library, accessed May 6, 2025, https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/thomas-schmidinger-the-battle-for-the-mountain-of-the-kurds
121. Kairos - PM Press, accessed May 6, 2025, https://pmpress.org/index.php?l=product_list&c=111&display=list
122. The Battle Of The Mountains [PDF], accessed May 6, 2025, https://classroom.edopoly.edu.ng/results/Resources/fetch.php/the_battle_of_the_mountains.pdf
123. Amazon.com: The Cambridge History of the Kurds: 9781108473354, accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.amazon.com/Cambridge-History-Kurds-Hamit-Bozarslan/dp/1108473350
124. The Cambridge History of the Kurds by Hamit Bozarslan, Hardcover | Barnes & Noble®, accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/the-cambridge-history-of-the-kurds-hamit-bozarslan/1137964695
125. The Cambridge History of the Kurds, accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.cambridge.org/9781108473354
126. The Cambridge History of the Kurds 9781108623711, 9781108473354,

2020035613, 2020035614 - DOKUMEN.PUB, accessed May 6, 2025, https://dokumen.pub/the-cambridge-history-of-the-kurds-9781108623711-9781108473354-2020035613-2020035614.html
127. Battle for the Mountain of the Kurds: Self-Determination and Ethnic Cleansing in Rojava (Kairos) (English Edition) - Amazon.de, accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.amazon.de/-/en/Thomas-Schmidinger-ebook/dp/B093XY7YLD
128. The Battle Of The Mountains, accessed May 6, 2025, https://classroom.edopoly.edu.ng/book/browse/Download_PDFS/the%20battle%20of%20the%20mountains.pdf
129. The Battle for the Mountain of the Kurds: Self-Determination and Ethnic Cleansing in the Afrin Region of Rojava - Neliti, accessed May 6, 2025, https://media.neliti.com/media/publications/351699-the-battle-for-the-mountain-of-the-kurds-03d67865.pdf
130. (PDF) The battle for the mountain of the Kurds: self- determination and ethnic cleansing in the Afrin Region of Rojava - ResearchGate, accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/356787113_The_battle_for_the_mountain_of_the_Kurds_self-_determination_and_ethnic_cleansing_in_the_Afrin_Region_of_Rojava
131. KURDS | Washington Kurdish Institute, accessed May 6, 2025, https://dckurd.org/kurds/
132. Archaeology of Slavery in Atlantic West Africa, 1450–1900 | Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History, accessed May 6, 2025, https://oxfordre.com/africanhistory/display/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277734.001.0001/acrefore-9780190277734-e-837?p=emailAWSUm3Ju0hBIs&d=/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277734.001.0001/acrefore-9780190277734-e-837
133. Settlement and Landscape Transformations in the Amuq Valley, Hatay - ResearchGate, accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/250138513_Settlement_and_Landscape_Transformations_in_the_Amuq_Valley_Hatay
134. Settlement and Landscape Transformations in the Amuq Valley, Hatay. A Long-Term Perspective Introduction - CORE, accessed May 6, 2025, https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/149241545.pdf
135. Kurds - Wikipedia, accessed May 6, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurds
136. Research Report English - Syria Forest Foundation, accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.syriaforestfoundation.org/6667024a2f9a1c02abc691d7/Research_Report_English.pdf
137. RESEARCH BRIEF NAVIGATING THE NEXUS: CLIMATE INSECURITY, ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AND CONFLICT IN FRAGILE SETTINGS, accessed May 6, 2025, https://geneva-academy.ch/joomlatools-files/docman-files/Climate%20Insecurity%20Environmental%20Rights%20Violations%20and%20Conflict%20in%20Fragile%20Settings.pdf