

*Göreme National Park and  
the Rock Sites of*  
**Cappadocia**



*by*  
*Murat Ertuğrul GÜLYAZ*



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## Contents

<i>Katpatuka-Cappadocia</i> .....	19
<i>Volcanoes and the Geological Structure of Cappadocia</i> .....	22
<i>The Formation of Fairy Chimneys</i> .....	29
<i>The First Living Beings of Cappadocia</i> .....	34
<i>The First Inhabitants of Cappadocia (500,000 - 2,000 BC)</i> .....	34
<i>The Written Historical Periods of Cappadocia (2000-1750 BC)</i> .....	41
<i>The Edict by the Great King Wasusarma:</i> .....	51
<i>The Göreme National Park, Natural and Cultural World Heritage</i> .....	60
<i>The Underground Settlements of Cappadocia</i> .....	107
<i>Structural Characteristics</i> .....	109
<i>Historical Background</i> .....	119
<i>UÇHİSAR</i> .....	123
<i>ÇAVUŞİN</i> .....	128
<i>AVANOS</i> .....	129
<i>ÜRGÜP</i> .....	132
<i>ÜRGÜP-Church of Forty Martyrs</i> .....	134
<i>ORTAHİSAR</i> .....	134
<i>MUSTAFAPAŞA (SİNASOS)</i> .....	136
<i>GÜLŞEHİR</i> .....	138
<i>HACI BEKTAŞ</i> .....	139
<i>THE IHLARA VALLEY</i> .....	145
<i>SOĞANLI VALLEY</i> .....	148
<i>THE PIGEONRIES OF CAPPADOCIA</i> .....	150
<i>CIVIL ARCHITECTURE OF CAPPADOCIA</i> .....	153
<i>CAPPADOCIA- NATURE SPORTS AND ACTIVITIES</i> .....	156





Uçhisar





Ak Valley/Uçhisar

# Cappadocia

*Cappadocia, included in the UNESCO World Natural and Cultural Heritage List in 1985 as the 'Göreme National Park and Cappadocia,' is one of the most original examples of harmony between nature and human settlements.*



Zemi Valley/Göreme







Kızılçukur Valley/Ürgüp





Uçhisar Castle





Uçhisar Castle

# Göreme National Park and Cappadocia

*With its fascinating geological structures, as well as its settlements carved into the rocks, its churches, pigeonries and its still enigmatic underground cities, Cappadocia is one of those rare places on earth that are both natural and cultural centres.*

Communities that lived and still live in Cappadocia, which has been chosen as a settlement site by numerous civilisations throughout history and has been the stage of important events in the cultural history of Anatolia, have become completely integrated with nature and history; they have maintained their lifestyles in spite of all the hardships deriving from the wind, the weather and the natural environment.

The first inhabitants of Cappadocia were hunters and gatherers. They fed on wild plants and game they hunted using tools made of obsidian and flintstone, which are found in great quantities in the region. In the face of harsh weather conditions and the many dangers of nature, they sought sanctuary in the nearest enclosed space, until eventually abandoning their nomadic lifestyle and settling into shelters, such as the caves so abundant in this area.

The tuff that covers the Cappadocia region is carved very easily and this was the first reason why people chose to settle here. Settlements were constructed mostly on the steep slopes of the valleys or within the fairy chimneys and new dwellings were carved into the rocks as needed and in accordance with people's lifestyles. The carving technique remained unchanged

throughout centuries, and due to the dry climate, the traces of carvings on walls and ceilings have been preserved to this day.

These spaces carved into the rocks are very suitable for human habitation, as they are lukewarm during the winter and cool in the summer, which is why people continued living in them for many centuries. The rocks also constituted an ideal place of worship for both monks who chose to retreat here and for colonies that led monastic lives. Consequently, different architectural types of rock churches and monasteries developed in this area.

The underground settlements, which constitute one of the most interesting cultural features of the Cappadocia region, were mainly constructed as temporary shelter, by digging vertically into the soft tuff in valleys and plateau slopes. Inhabitants of the area used to keep the foods they produced in spaces carved into the rocks. Even nowadays, citrus fruits brought from the Mediterranean are kept in natural storage areas of this type.

In 1985, Cappadocia became the 357<sup>th</sup> site to be included on the UNESCO World Natural and Cultural Heritage list. Listed as the 'Göreme Natural and Historical National Park,' Cappadocia thus received the recognition it

deserves thanks to its extraordinary natural formations as well as the diverse cultures it has hosted over time.

## Cappadocia's Location

In his 17 volume work, *Geographica*, (Anatolia XII, XIII, XIV) Strabo, who lived under the Roman Emperor Augustus, described Cappadocia as a vast region extending to the Taurus Mountains in the south, Aksaray in the west, Malatya in the east and the Eastern Black Sea shores in the north.



The present day region of Cappadocia consists of the provinces of Nevşehir (Nyssa), Aksaray (Kolonoëia), Niğde (Nakida), Kayseri (Kaisareia) and Kırşehir (Thermae). The rocky region of Cappadocia, which covers a smaller area, consists of Uçhisar, Göreme, Avanos, Ürgüp, Derinkuyu, Soğanlı, Ihlara and surroundings.

## Katpatuka-Cappadocia

The word 'Cappadocia' first appears in Antiquity, in an inscription dated to the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC and describing the reliefs carved onto the rocky surface of Mount Behistun, situated between



## Göreme National Park and the Rock Sites of Cappadocia



Ürgüp/Texier-1844 Göreme/Texier-1844

Kermanshah and Hamadan in Iran. Darius I, King of Persia, had the names of tribes and lands that he had conquered carved onto the Behistun inscription in ancient Persian, Elamite and Akkadian, as proof of his victories. Among the lands mentioned in the inscription was the name of 'Katpatuka,' which reminded Persians of 'the land where beautiful horses are bred.' In orthostats found in the Palace of Persepolis, of the delegates from 23 countries bringing gifts to the Persian King, Babylonians were featured

Göreme/Texier-1844





Zelve

bringing bulls and rams, Syrians bronze bracelets and Cappadocians fine breeds of horses.

According to some scholars, the word 'Cappadocia' derives from the Delice Stream, a tributary of the Kızılırmak River known by Greeks in Antiquity as 'Cappadox'; however, it is highly unlikely that this is the true source of the name. According to another view, the name 'Cappadocia' is of Anatolian origin and is derived from the name of Khepat, the Hittite Mother Goddess. Still, although there is no strong basis upon which to make the claim, due to Cappadocia's longstanding fame for horse breeding dating back to Antiquity, the name 'Land of Beautiful Horses' is indeed very appropriate.

## Volcanoes and the Geological Structure of Cappadocia

The Central Anatolian volcanic region, which includes Cappadocia, covers an area of 25,000 square kilometres. Approximately 12 million years ago, the area consisted of land as it does today. There were lakes covering large areas and the climate was hot and rainy. Erciyes (3916 m),



one of the highest and youngest volcanoes of the area, Hasandağ (3268 m) and Göllüdağ (2142 m) were among the most active volcanoes of this period.

The activity of these volcanoes, as well as many other volcanoes in this area, began in the

Hasandağ seen from Mamasun Dam





Upper Miocene Era (12 million years ago) and continued until the Holocene Era (the present day). Pyroclastic material, such as volcanic tuff, rich in gas, and ashes, originating from many volcanic output centres, scattered and spread over vast areas as a result of huge explosions.

Erciyes was the only active volcano in historical ages. No indicators of return to activity, such as the sudden melting of snows on the peak,



Fairy chimney of Cappadocia

the rapid drying up of lakes around the volcano, output of gas or the death of birds and plants, have been observed on Erciyes, Hasandağ or Göllüdağ, all of which are volcanoes that rose erupting and later became inactive. However, the fact that such events are currently absent does not mean that these three volcanoes will never erupt again.



The lava erupting from volcanoes under neogene lakes has formed a 100 to 150 m thick layer of tuff of various degrees of hardness, on plateaus, lakes and river beds. Apart from ignimbrite, which is formed from the hardening and petrification of layers of very hot volcanic tuff and ashes, the region has geological rock types such as tuffite, tuff, lahar, volcano ash, sandstone, marn, agglomerates and basalt. The



Mt Erciyes from Göreme

plateau, which was shaped by material ejected from the main volcanoes, continued to undergo changes as a result of eruptions from minor and weaker volcanoes. From the Upper Pliocene Period onwards, especially the Kızılırmak River, but also rivers such as Melendiz and Mavrucan, determined the hydrographic structure of the



Mt Erciyes from Pigeon Valley

region and gave the area its present appearance by eroding the layer of tuff.

Erciyes, referred to in Antiquity as ‘Argaios,’ is known as the tallest and mightiest of mountains. In Greek, ‘Argaios’ meant ‘white, sparkling mountain.’ Referring to the majesty of the mountains, Strabo writes: ‘Argaios, the tallest of mountains, the peak of which is never devoid of snow... when those who climb it—and they are very few in number—reach the peak, they can easily see both seas, that is to say, the Pontus (Black Sea) and the Issikos (Mediterranean).’ These volcanoes that rose towards the skies were either considered equal to God or were seen as the abode of God or of gods and were thus declared to be places of cult.

The oldest document to show the effect volcanoes had on populations is a wall painting discovered

during excavations at Çatalhöyük, the largest and oldest urban centre yet discovered. The wall painting in the sacred venue dating to 7000 BC featured Mount Hasandağ during an eruption. This is also the oldest ever landscape painting found anywhere in the world. The people who saw the volcano erupt and painted it most probably saw it as an image of God and therefore considered the mountain to be sacred.

## The Formation of Fairy Chimneys

The erosion of the masses of tuff by the wind and by flood waters descending from valley slopes has resulted in fascinating structures known as 'fairy chimneys.' The courses created on the steep slopes by flood waters caused hard rocks to crack and break away. As the highly erodible material in the lower layers was deeply carved, the slope fell back and the conical shapes emerged which

Bağlıdere/Göreme







Paşabağları/Avanos

were protected from erosion because of the hat-like structures above them. The fairy chimneys, which are mainly to be found around Ürgüp, are conical in shape and are topped off by a large block of rock. The body is of tuff, tuffit or volcano ash, while the hat is made of hard rocks such as lahar or ignimbrite. The material of which the hat is formed is therefore more resistant than the mixtures of rock forming the body. This is the first condition for the formation of a fairy chimney. Depending on the resistance of the rock forming the hat, the fairy chimneys can stand for a long or short time. The fairy chimneys formed by erosion in the Cappadocia area are of numerous shapes and are called by such





Zelve Valley

names as capped, conic, mushroom-shaped, columnar and pointed.

The greatest number of fairy chimneys is found in the valleys within the Ürgüp-Uçhisar-Avanos triangle, the area between Ürgüp and Şahinefendi, around the town of Nevşehir Çat, in the Kayseri Soğanlı valley and around the village of Selime in the province of Aksaray. Besides the fairy chimneys, interesting creases formed on valley slopes by rain waters add to the striking aspect of the region. A harmony of pink, yellow and white is visible on some slopes because of the oxidation and difference in heat occurring during the volcano eruption. Such formations can be seen in the valleys of Uçhisar, Çavuşin-Güllüdere, Göreme-Meskendir, Ortahisar Kızılçukur and Pancarlı.

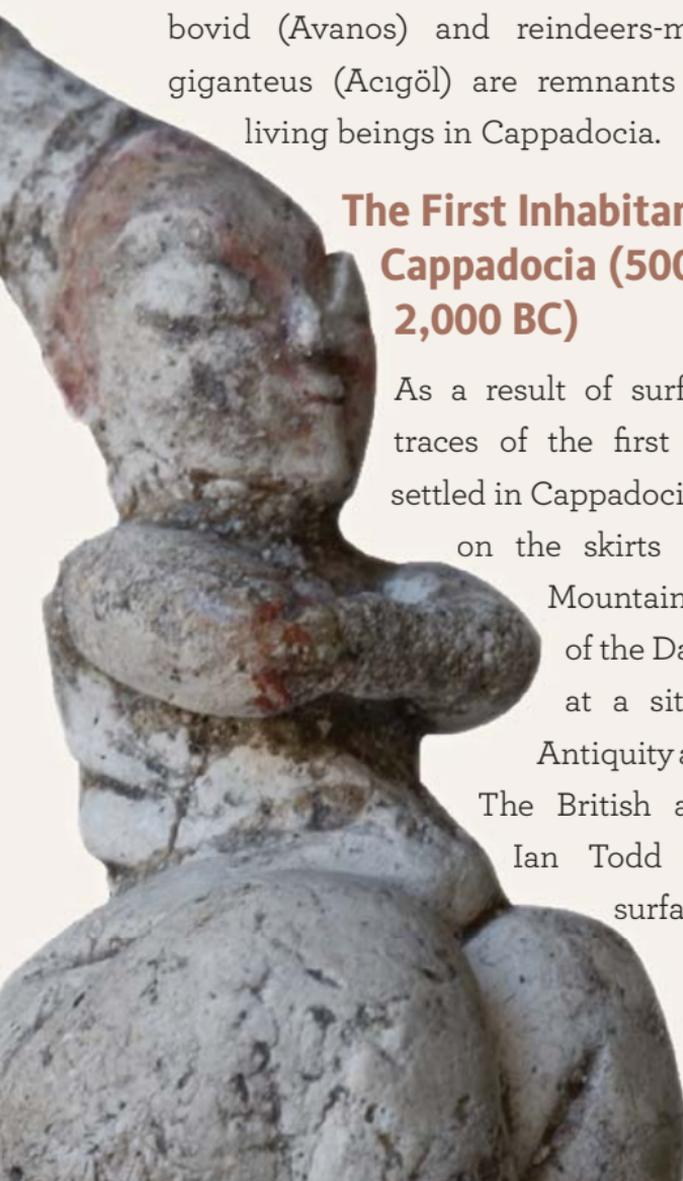
## The First Living Beings of Cappadocia

12 million years ago lacustrine, terrestrial and volcanic sediments were widespread in Central Anatolia and a rich variety of animals existed in this period. Though obtained haphazardly, the fossils of mammut-mammuthus primigenius (Ürgüp, Avanos), rhinoceros (Avanos), wild horses-hipparion (Ürgüp), mountain goats-bovid (Avanos) and reindeers-megaloceros giganteus (Acıgöl) are remnants of the first living beings in Cappadocia.

## The First Inhabitants of Cappadocia (500,000 – 2,000 BC)

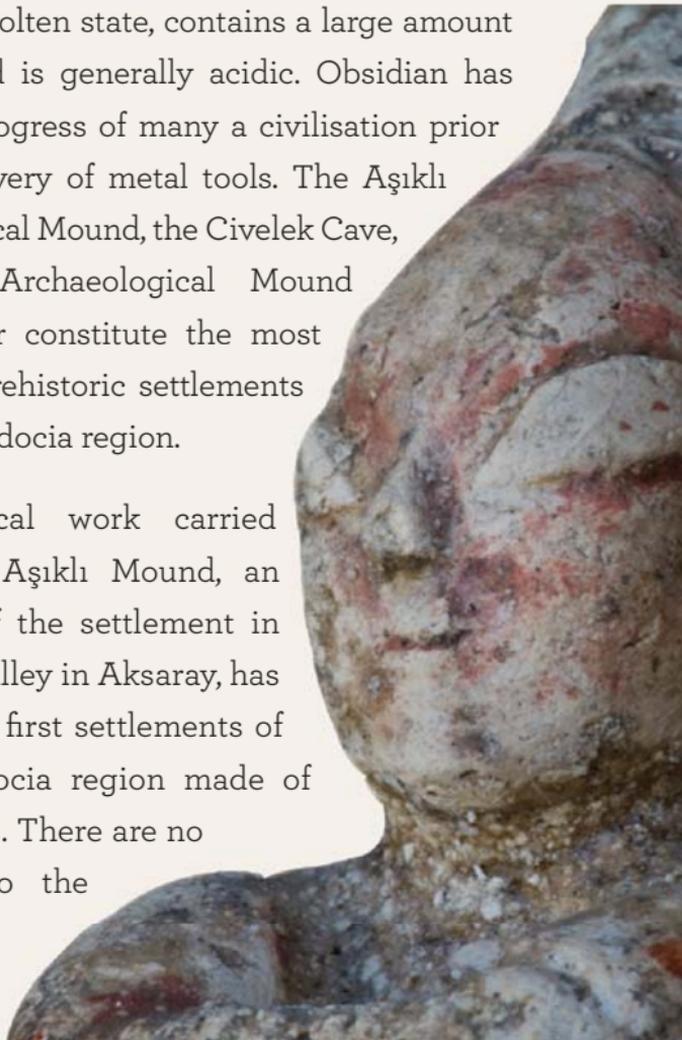
As a result of surface surveys, traces of the first people who settled in Cappadocia were found on the skirts of the Avla Mountain, to the east of the Damsa Stream, at a site known in Antiquity as 'Tomissos.' The British archaeologist Ian Todd carried out surface surveys

A Mother Goddess Statue/  
Köşkhöyük-Niğde  
Museum



which unearthed many tools made of obsidian and flintstone, dating to the Paleolithic Period. Stone axes and tools made of obsidian and flintstone dating to the Paleolithic and Epipaleolithic Periods (500,000-10,000 BC) were found around the Suvermez town of Derinkuyu and the Soğanlı Valley of Kayseri. The Paleolithic people's preference for obsidian must have been due to the abundance of obsidian deposits in Cappadocia. Used in the making of cutting and digging tools, obsidian is a type of volcanic glass formed by the rapid cooling of magma, which is found in a molten state, contains a large amount of water and is generally acidic. Obsidian has aided the progress of many a civilisation prior to the discovery of metal tools. The Aşıklı Archaeological Mound, the Civelek Cave, the Köşk Archaeological Mound and Musular constitute the most important Prehistoric settlements of the Cappadocia region.

Archaeological work carried out in the Aşıklı Mound, an extension of the settlement in the Ihlara Valley in Aksaray, has revealed the first settlements of the Cappadocia region made of adobe bricks. There are no entrances to the





*Obsidian tools from the Musular Höyük-Aksaray*

houses, and access to the houses was therefore most probably via flat roofs and portable ladders. The houses, which had complex plans, had walls and floors covered with yellow and pink clay plaster. According to Prof. Ufuk Esin, who has conducted research at the Aşıklı Mound, the density of the districts in the settlement and the multitude of houses indicate the presence of a greater population than previously thought to exist during the Aceramic Neolithic period. The interiors of the houses, initially painted in ochre, underwent repairs from time to time and were then painted in limonite. We can say that, in a sense, this is proof of humankind's first ever attempt at restoration.

Brain surgery (trepanation) carried out on a 20-25 year-old woman of the Aceramic Neolithic



Period whose remains were uncovered in the Aşıklı Mound is yet another example of a world first. We can see that the tissue near the hole in the woman's skull had begun to regenerate, which tells us that the woman did not die immediately but rather lived for a while after having had brain surgery. Performed on an organ of vital importance, this operation realised ten thousand years ago shows that the patient was cared for and treated insofar as conditions of the time allowed. Considering the evidence of witchcraft during the Aceramic Neolithic Period, it can be assumed that trepanation would have been carried out on women believed to suffer from madness, insanity, menacing of evil spirits, headaches, dizziness, dementedness and epilepsy.

The settlers of this region belonged to the Mediterranean race and buried their dead in the floors of their houses, in an embryo position, with their knees pulled up towards their stomach. While some men lived until the age of 55-57, the age of death among women varied between 20 and 25. Analysis of animal bones uncovered during excavations has indicated that animals such as sheep, goats, cattle and pigs had not yet been domesticated in Aşıklı. A large variety of animals was hunted; in fact, it was in Aşıklı



that the presence of horse meat among game meat was first established. Game meat, a variety of edible wild vegetables, nuts and fruits and a small amount of agricultural products, such as wheat and barley, were the primary sources of sustenance. The Civelek Cave, located close to the Civelek Village, 4 km to the east of Gülşehir, was the oldest settlement not only of Gülşehir but also of Nevşehir. The calcareous cave is accessed via a 14 m deep gallery. With a main space of 22 x 11 m, it contains stalactites of calcite crystal, measuring 5-15 cm in length. As a result of studies realised jointly by the Nevşehir Museum and Italian speleologists, hand-shaped, single-handled cups, pots of various sizes, spindle whorls used in weaving and stone and bone tools dating to the Chalcolithic Period (5,000-3,000 BC) were discovered on a cave floor, mostly among



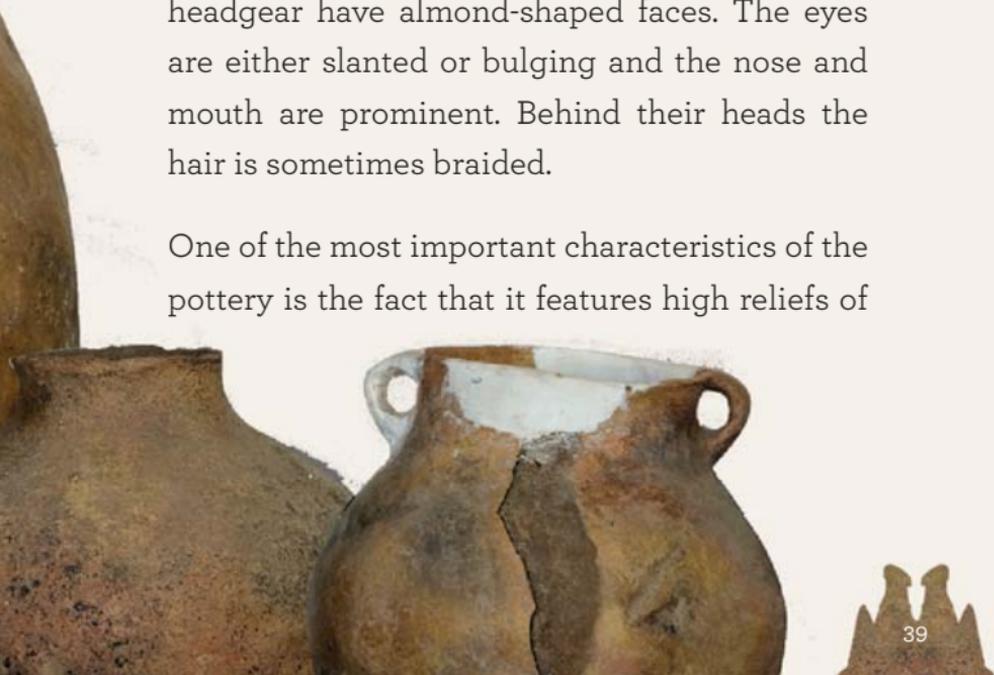
*Chalcolithic artifacts from the Civelek Cave in Gülşehir/Nevşehir*

collapsed rock and in galleries. The similarity between a pitcher found in the cave and similar specimens found in Palestine is especially intriguing.

The Köşk archaeological mound, at a distance of 7 km from the Bor county of Nevşehir, is another important settlement dating to the Neolithic Age. The stream that runs at the very base of the mound was also the source of water for the aqueduct in Tyana. A pool was built here at the time of the Roman Emperor Trajan, destroying part of the mound. Houses uncovered at the site generally have 1-3 rooms and measure 3 x 5 m.

Earthenware human figurines discovered during excavations are mainly in the form of a mother goddess in a sitting position and generally represent naked women holding their breasts. Some of these goddesses with cylindrical headgear have almond-shaped faces. The eyes are either slanted or bulging and the nose and mouth are prominent. Behind their heads the hair is sometimes braided.

One of the most important characteristics of the pottery is the fact that it features high reliefs of



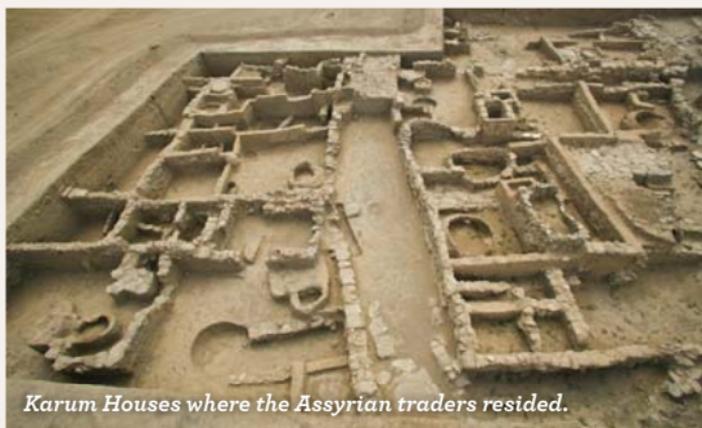


human and animal figures. Besides the mother goddess and the god, popular reliefs include figures of bulls, cows, sheep, goats, donkeys, antilopes, deer and snakes. The heads of animals are depicted frontally, while the bodies and feet are depicted laterally. Although the majority of graves are simple graves in the ground, stone sarcophagi and jar tombs have also been used. The variety of tombs is an indication that the people who lived here most probably belonged to different traditions and to different communities. The settlement dates back to the late 7000s or early 6000s BC.

## The Written Historical Periods of Cappadocia (2000–1750 BC)

In the Early Bronze Age, Anatolia was rather advanced in the field of mining. As a result, the region was becoming increasingly engaged in interregional and international trade. Though it had rich resources of gold, silver and copper, Anatolia lacked the tin necessary for bronze alloy. The wealthy tradesmen of Assyria, in Northern Mesopotamia, aware of this situation, founded trading posts with no political affiliations around 2000 BC, under the auspices of local Anatolian kingdoms, thus forming the world's first international trade organisation.

In the Assyrian Trade Colony Age, these trade organisations founded by Assyrian tradesmen next to important settlements were called 'Karum.' A 'Karum' consisted of a port, a bay, a centre where the trade organisation was located



*Karum Houses where the Assyrian traders resided.*

and the people who dealt with trade in this centre. A 'Wabartum' was the place where the tradesmen lodged and temporarily stored their goods. The word 'Wabartum,' which referred to a smaller trading post than a 'Karum,' actually meant 'guest.'

The 'karums' and 'wabartums', the territory of which can be roughly drawn between Malatya and Konya, were affiliates of the principal trading post of Kanesh-Karum, which was under the auspices of the Kanesh Kingdom, and of Kültepe, close to Kayseri. The Kanesh-Karum was accountable to an organisation back in Assyria. Some of the karums mentioned in ancient texts include Hahhum, Hattush, Kanesh, Hurama, Purushattum, Turshamit, Wahshushana and Urshu, while some of the wabartums named are Ma'ma, Patna, Ulama, Salatuwar, Karahna, Washania, Zalpa and Ankuva.

Of karum and wabartum sites in Cappadocia, Kanesh-Karum (Kültepe-Kayseri) is the only one whose location has been identified with certainty. The important settlement of Acemhöyük (Acem Mound) near Aksaray is thought to be that of ancient Karum-Purushattum, though this has yet to be established for certain. Other karums and wabartums are to be found in Central and South Eastern Anatolia.



A golden plate with  
a Hittite God relief/  
Kültepe Kanesh  
Kharum Kayseri  
Museum

Providing us with a wealth of information about Bronze Age Anatolia and beyond, Kültepe is one of the most important excavations in the world. The settlement consists of Kanesh, where the king's palace was, and Karum, the trading post. In this period, the political appearance of Central Anatolia was as follows: Anatolia was divided into small kingdoms and principalities with extensive territories and dense populations.



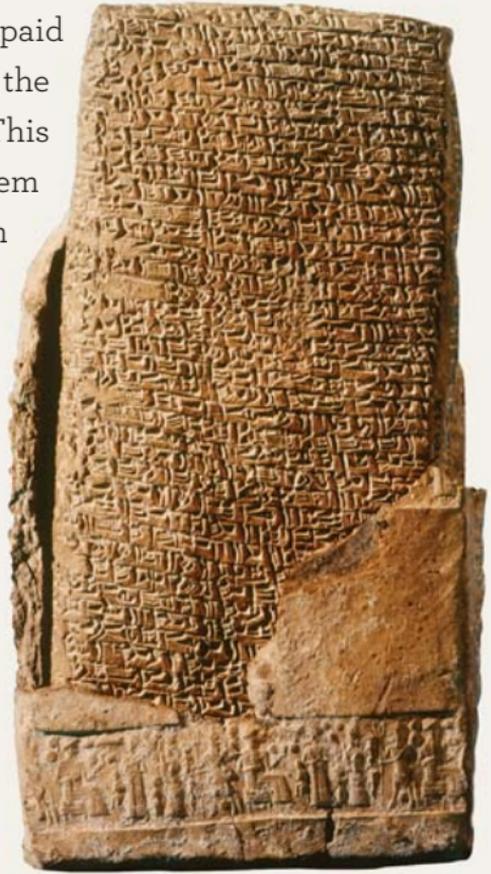
Idol/Kültepe Kanesh Kharum/Kayseri Museum

The kingdoms, which were like city-states, were ruled by kings called 'rubaum.' Besides the rubaum/kings, rubatum/queens also had a say in the government.

Black donkeys were used in trade caravans. It is understood from the tablets found that every tradesman or company left Assyria with a few donkeys, that they later merged to form a convoy and that there were people who guarded the caravan. When colonies were established, their locations were chosen with an eye to their proximity to natural roads and raw material

resources. Caravans paid 15% road taxes on the roads they used. This well-organised system was administered from Assyria. The colonists, who never acquired political superiority, pursued their trade under the auspices of the local princes. The local kingdoms had the power to punish Assyrian traders if necessary.

The documents in cuneiform script, uncovered in their thousands in Kültepe, are the oldest written documents to be found in Anatolia. This is how recorded history began here. According to these cuneiform texts in ancient Assyrian, known as 'the Cappadocia tablets,' tradesmen paid 10% road tax to princes whose lands they crossed, collected 30% interest from their debtors and paid Anatolian princes 5% tax on sold goods. Other taxes were also paid for goods that were bought and sold within the country and did not leave Anatolia.



Cuneiform clay tablet/ Kültepe Kanesh Kharum



Fraktin Rock Monument/Kayseri

The 'limu' referred to in the cuneiform texts was a kind of governor appointed by Assyria. A 'limu's term of office lasted one year and he was responsible for overseeing and making final judgment concerning legal, political, financial and commercial matters within the karum. Whenever there was an unresolved issue within a karum, the Assyrian prince would send a representative. The decisions taken by the representative had the power of warrant of execution and the karum had no choice but to

support it. The names of limus are referred to frequently, especially in loan contracts, and the events occurring in a particular year were known by that limu's name. These tablets were prepared in a public office known as 'Bit Karim' but not yet discovered in Kanesh-Karum. Tradesmen also had their own archives and used a room within their homes for this purpose. Assyrian tradesmen were required to swear allegiance to the kings of Anatolia and the kings in return

The golden diadem and the eye and mouth plates left in Kanesh Kharum's grave as the gifts to dead/Kayseri Museum





Kültepe Kanesh Kharum

were required to provide for the security of the tradesmen. The tradesmen paid taxes to the princes whose jurisdiction they were under and their commercial activities in Anatolia were recorded down to the most minute detail, on clay tablets in the Mesopotamian tradition. Some even had envelopes. These tablets also contained information on marriages between Assyrian tradesmen and Anatolian women and it is clear from the marriage contracts that they contained articles that ensured the protection of the Anatolian women vis-à-vis their husbands.

Assyrian tradesmen therefore brought to Anatolia not only their script but also their cylindrical seals. Under the cultural influence of the Assyrians and the influence



General view of Kültepe Kanesh Kharum

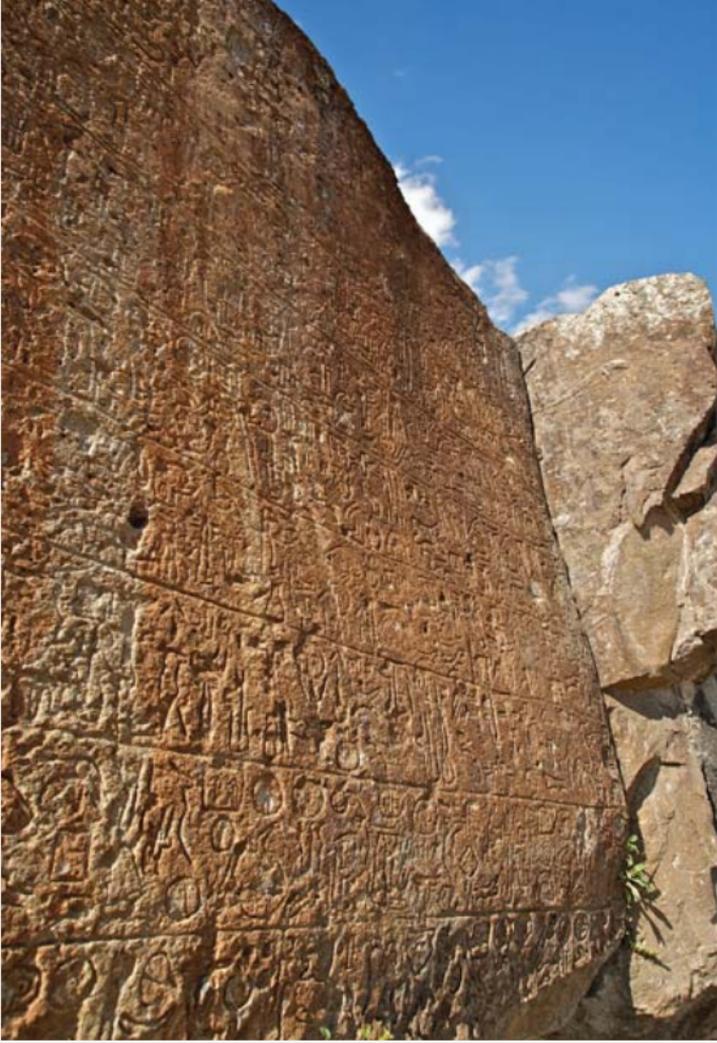
of Mesopotamian art, local art developed and created a synthesis characteristic of Anatolia, also laying the foundations for Hittite art.

The Hittites, who came to Anatolia via Europe or the Caucasus at the beginning of 2000 BC, settled in Cappadocia (1750-1200 BC) and formed the Anatolian Empire by merging with the local population. Their language belonged to the Indo-European group of languages. Their capital was Hattusha and other important cities of theirs included Alacahöyük and Alishar. One can find remains from this Hittite culture in all the archaeological mounds of Cappadocia.



Late Hittite rock monument from Sivasa/Gülşehir

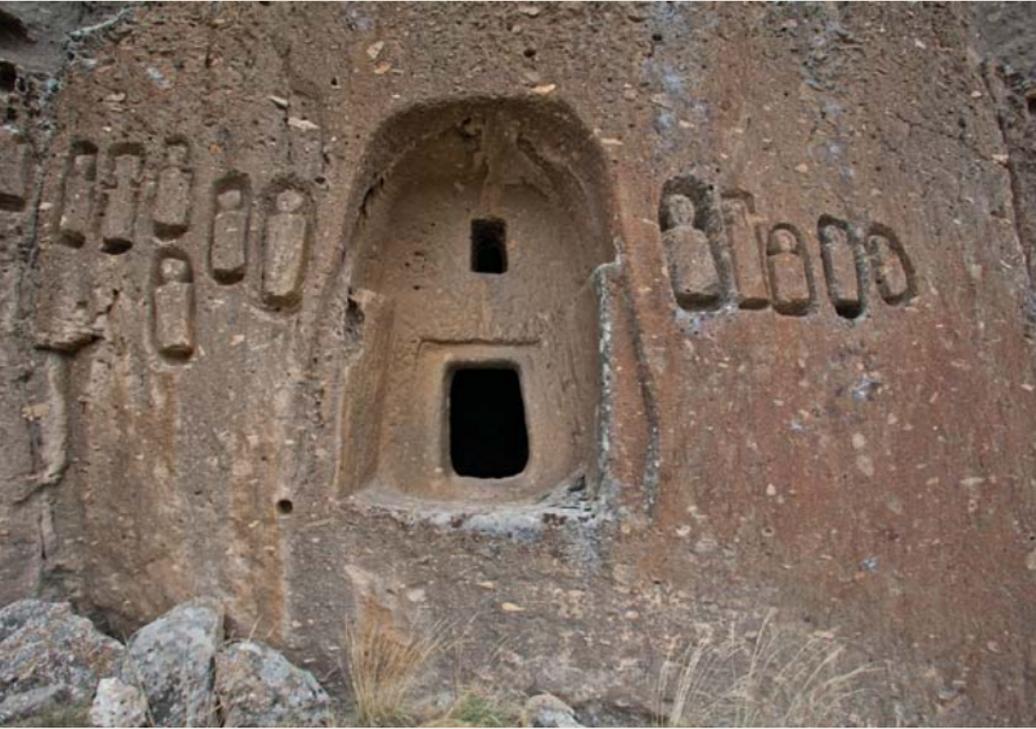
Moreover, in Cappadocia there are also monuments dating to the Hittite Empire that have been carved as reliefs on high rocks by river shores and in strategically important mountain passes. Thanks to these rock monuments, it has been possible to identify the routes used by Hittite kings to reach lands in the south. The Fraktin, Taşçı and Imamkulu rock monuments, located within the province of Kayseri, to the south of Mount Erciyes, not only show the gratitude of the Great King (Hattushili III) and the Queen (Puduhepa) to the gods, but they



Hittite hieroglyphic inscription at Topada near Acıgöl

were also monuments of propaganda indicating the immense power of the Hittite Empire.

After the Phrygians destroyed almost all of the main cities of Central Anatolia and demolished the Hittite Empire, Late Hittite Kingdoms emerged in Central and South Eastern Anatolia (1200-700 BC). The Late Hittite Kingdom of Cappadocia was called Tabal and it included Kayseri, Niğde and Nevşehir.



Cappadocian rock tomb used in the Late Roman-Early Byzantine period/Ürgüp

There are rock monuments written in Hittite hieroglyphs dating to this period in Gülşehir-Sivasa (Gökçetoprak), Acıgöl-Topada and Hacıbektaş-Karaburna Village.

The Topada monument, the most important of the rock monuments written in Hittite hieroglyphs, is situated close to the district of Acıgöl, 25 km to the west of Nevşehir. The text, which consists of eight lines, refers to the political situation of Cappadocia at the time. Below is a short summary of the inscription:

## The Edict by the Great King Wasusarma:

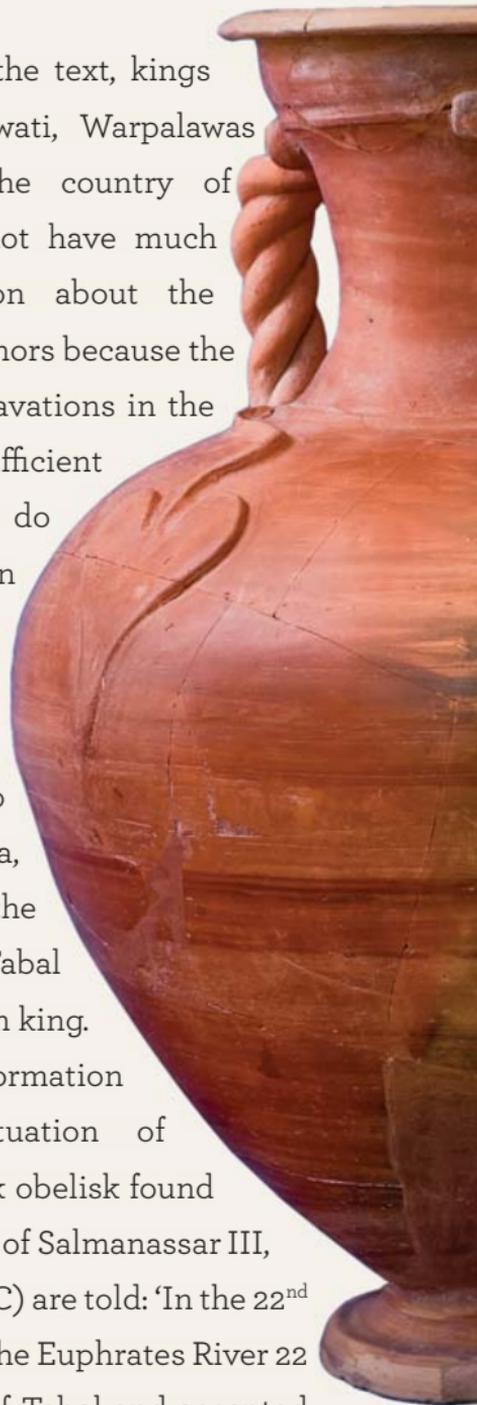
*I am Wasusarma, son of the Great King Tuwati. There were seven great kings in the city of Parzuta. Three of these, Warpalawas, Kiakki and Tuwata, were friends. I arrived here with my royal army. The whole city, all the cavalry men and infantry stood up against me and I opposed them. The city Parzuta stood up (against me) on its own land. The city walls were destroyed. My Lords, the God Tarhu (God of Air), Sarumma (son of Teshup, God of Storms) and (two more gods) have shown me the way. Whoever takes these gods, let these gods in return take away their offspring and their land. Whether they be kings or commoners, let their off-*

Marble sarcophagus/Roman Imperial Period-Kayseri Museum



*spring and lands be destroyed.'*

As can be inferred from the text, kings such as Wasusarma, Tuwati, Warpalawas and Kiakki governed the country of Tabal. However, we do not have much archaeological information about the cities ruled by these governors because the number of systematic excavations in the Cappadocia area is insufficient and the information we do have is mainly drawn from Assyrian sources. According to these documents, Warpalas, King of Tabal, is referred to as Urballa, King of Tuhana, and he is said to be one of the local kings of the land of Tabal to pay taxes to the Assyrian king. We gain the following information about the political situation of Cappadocia from the black obelisk found in Nimrut, where the deeds of Salmanassar III, King of Assyria (858-824 BC) are told: 'In the 22<sup>nd</sup> year of my reign I crossed the Euphrates River 22 times. I entered the land of Tabal and accepted the gifts of 24 kings of the land of Tabal.'

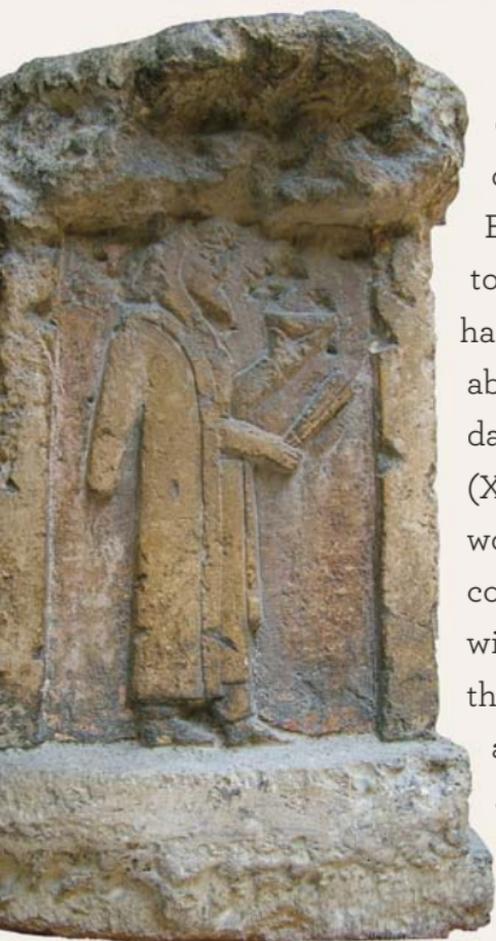




An inscription written in Hittite hieroglyphs, located in the Karaburna village, in the district of Hacibektaş, close to Nevşehir, and dating to the Late Hittite Period, refers to a pact reached between King Sapas and NIAS SAPAS and states that if this pact is not abided by, the parties will be scorned by Armas, God of Harran, his Goddess Kumiapi and Datti Kubaba.

Following the defeat of the Phrygians by the Cimmerians, Cappadocia was politically dominated first by the Medians (585 BC), then by the Persian Kingdom (547 BC). The Persians ruled the region via governors called 'satrap.' Cappadocia was under the jurisdiction of the Satrap of Daskyleion and it paid 360 silver talents (1 talent = 26.196 kg of silver), 1,500 horses, 2,000 mules and 5,000 sheep in tax each year.

As the Persians were of the Zoroastrian religion and considered fire to be sacred, they



Fire altar with depictions of Persian priests found in Kayseri

considered the volcanoes of this region, especially Erciyes and Hasandağı, to be sacred as well. Strabo has the following to say about the many fire temples dating to this period (XV, 3. 15): ‘The priests would keep a fire burning continuously on the altar within the temple, where they would go every day and perform elegies for almost an hour. During the ceremony, they held a bunch of sticks and wore a tiara made of felt. The corners of this headgear hung down the sides of their

faces and covered their mouths, because human breath was not supposed to touch the fire.’ The reliefs found above the fire altar in Bünyan, Kayseri, confirm the information supplied by Strabo.

Alexander the Great, King of Macedonia, defeated the Persian army successively in 334 and 332 BC, thus putting an end to the great Persian Empire. After he destroyed the Persian

Empire, Alexander the Great encountered significant resistance in Cappadocia. When Alexander appointed one of his commanders, called Sabiktas, to gain control of the region, the population objected and enthroned Ariarathes, a noble Persian. Ariarathes I (332-322 BC) was a hard-working ruler and he expanded the borders of the Kingdom of Cappadocia. The Kingdom, which lived in peace until the death of Alexander the Great, had to fight continuously against the Macedonians, the Kingdom of Pontus, the Galatians and the Romans, until it became a province of Rome in 17 AD.

In 17 AD the Roman Emperor Tiberius annexed Cappadocia to Rome, thus putting an end to the turmoil in this region. Once the Romans had captured this area, they built a road towards the West for transportation to and from the Aegean region. This road was of great importance both militarily and commercially. During the period of Roman sovereignty, there were arrivals to the region from the East, due to attacks as well as migrations. The Romans resisted the attacks by means of military units called 'legions.' Kayseri, the centre of Cappadocia, which prospered economically under the rule of the Emperor Septimus Severus, was attacked by the Sassanids from Iran in the following years. Gordianus II

had the city surrounded by walls to protect it against these attacks.

The ancient city of Sobesos, situated close to the Şahinefendi village, on the road from Ürgüp to Soğanlı and at a distance of 30 km from Ürgüp, was an important settlement of the Late Roman period. Though referred to in ancient sources and therefore known by name, its location remained a mystery until its accidental discovery in 2002. Excavations carried out at the site have revealed buildings that may have been administrative units, as well as a bath compound. The building that may have been an administrative unit covered 400 square metres; two rooms, one of which has mosaics and the other a tomb, as well as a courtyard paved with mosaics and supported with columns and with plastered walls, have been excavated. The structure is thought to date back to the mid-4<sup>th</sup> century or 5<sup>th</sup> century.

A braided swastika, a meander and cross patterns stand out in the mosaic-covered floor, which is made of stones of various colours and decorated with geometrical motifs. An open-air chapel was later built over the mosaic-covered courtyard. According to a coin found during excavations, the chapel, which exhibits a rough style of workmanship, dates to the mid-6<sup>th</sup> century.

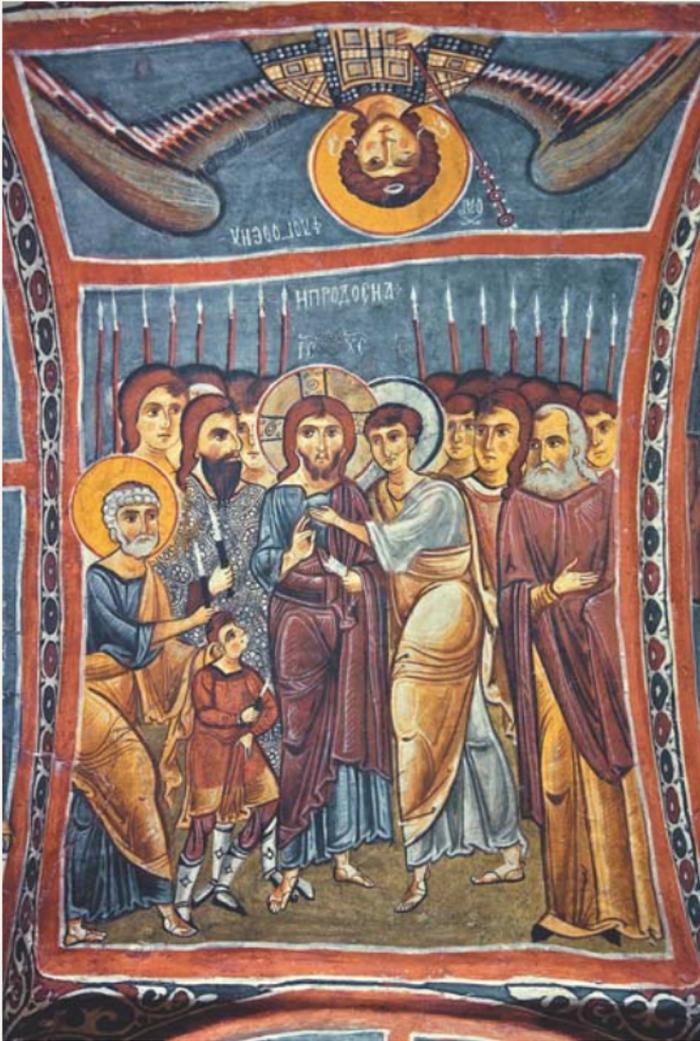
The bath compound situated 30 m to the north of the mosaic-paved structure has been completely uncovered. The bath, which consists of a mosaic-covered apoditorium (changing room), a tepidarium (tepid section), a caldarium (warm section) and a cistern supported by a semicircle, was a 'hypocaust,' that is to say, it was heated with hot air. Only a few pieces of the pavement, which was supported by round structures of terracotta, have been preserved. The bath, which dates to the Late Roman period, underwent functional changes in the Early Christian period.

Around this time, part of the Christian population, which was in the process of dispersing throughout Anatolia, began to migrate from major cities to villages. Although the earliest archaeological finds in Cappadocia from the Christian period date to the 6<sup>th</sup> century onwards, it is widely thought that the Christians who discovered the rocky Göreme area and its surroundings from the 4<sup>th</sup> century onwards adopted the world view of St. Basil, Bishop of Kayseri, and began leading a monastic life within the rocks.

When the centre of the Roman Empire shifted to the East in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, this changed the destiny of Cappadocia, for it was subjected to the influence of the new capital Constantinople on

the one hand and of the Syro-Palestine region – the Eastern provinces of the Empire – on the other. That was how the religious, social, political and cultural life of the region was shaped. As in other regions of the Empire, Christianity spread rapidly in Cappadocia too and between the 4<sup>th</sup> century and the 6<sup>th</sup> century, it became the official religion, leaving its mark on the region. In the first years of the 7<sup>th</sup> century there were intense wars in Cappadocia between the Sassanids and the Byzantines. The Sassanids occupied the region for 6-7 years. When the Caliph Osman destroyed the Sassanids in 651, the region began to suffer the raids of Arab and Omayyad forces. The sectarian wars that continued for many years reached their peak when Leon III banned icons. The Iconoclastic Movement lasted over one hundred years (726-843). Although some churches in Cappadocia were affected by Iconoclasm in this period, those who supported icons were able to hide here and continue their worship.

Under the rule of the Emperor Nikephoros Phokas, Cappadocia played an important role in the military success achieved against the Arabs after the 9<sup>th</sup> century. In the long period between 397 and 1071, when it came under Byzantine rule, Cappadocia became an important centre of Eastern Christianity. Between the 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>



Betrayal of Judas/Karanlık Church-Göreme Open Air Museum

centuries, Göreme and surroundings achieved prominence in this vast region.

## The Göreme National Park, Natural and Cultural World Heritage

Korama, Matiana, Maccan, Avcılar... For anybody well acquainted with the Nevşehir-Ürgüp-



Elmalı Church- Göreme Open Air Museum

Avanos triangle and this area surrounded by valleys, these names all point to the same place: Göreme.

The most obvious clue for those not already familiar with the area is the name Korama, which is one of the ancient names of the town of Göreme. Since the name Korama first appears in a document dating to the 6<sup>th</sup> century, it is believed to be the old name of Göreme. It is said that St. Hieron was born in Korama at the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, that he was martyred together with 30 friends in Malatya and that his hand was cut off and brought to his mother at Korama. The church where this sacred relic was preserved should have been in a place called 'Kadessane,' close to Matiana (Avcılar) and Korama (Göreme).



Karanlık Church-Göreme Open Air Museum

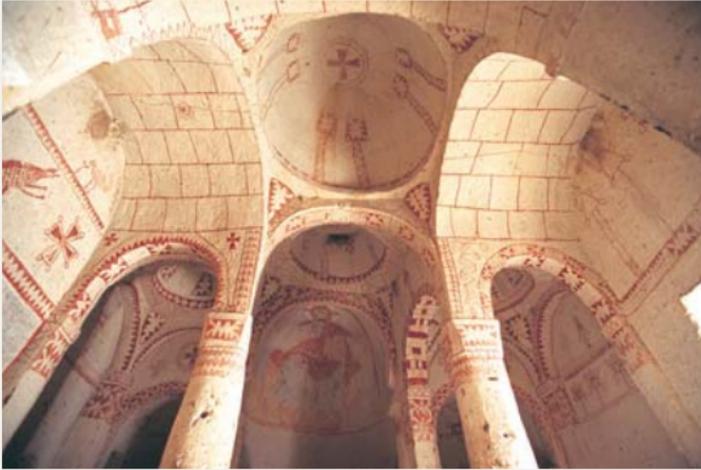
Unfortunately, the location of Kadessane has still not been identified. We know of St. Hieron from a large-sized depiction of him on a wall of the Tokalı Church.

Besides religious structures such as churches, chapels and monasteries, quite a number of tombs dating to the Roman period are also found in and around Göreme. This brings to mind



Stylites Niketas (Nicetas) Church in the Kızılçukur Valley/Ürgüp

## Göreme National Park and the Rock Sites of Cappadocia



General view of St. Barbara Church-Göreme Open Air Museum

the fact that the area was used as a necropolis by the people of Venessa (Avanos). The most interesting of these tombs is a Roman tomb with two columns, carved into a large fairy chimney that rises like a huge monument in the heart of Göreme.

A Christian community of significant size already existed in the area at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup>



General view of St. Barbara Church-Göreme Open Air Museum

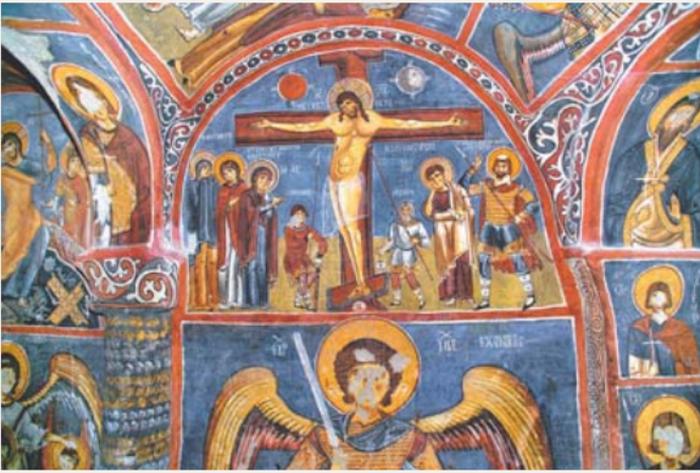


Shepherd/Çarıklı Church- Göreme Open Air Museum

century. The centre of the Cappadocia region during the Roman period, Kayseri (Mazaka-Kaisareia), was also an important episcopal centre for a long time under Byzantine rule. Malatya was another episcopal centre of the area. Unfortunately, no inscriptions have been found to indicate the construction dates of



Transfiguration/ Karanlık Church-Göreme Open Air Museum



Crucifixion/ Karanlık Church-Göreme Open Air Museum

the many monasteries, churches and chapels located around Göreme. That is why the religious structures in the area are generally dated based upon the iconography of their paintings or the architectural characteristics of the buildings.

At that time, ascetic monks who lived the life of hermits constituted a significant social community in Cappadocia, though they were



Gümüşler Monastery/Niğde

independent from monasteries and churches. These people did not work even to meet their needs but instead received help from the local inhabitants, who felt deep respect for them, or from the monasteries in the region. The monastery system practiced in Cappadocia was a combination of a 'cenobitic' and an 'anachoretic'



General view of Karanlık Church



General view of El Nazar Church

system. Monks who led a heretic life would go to the monasteries to have their one meal a day or on particular days of the week for mass.

It was the presence of ecclesiasts of strong character that made Cappadocia into a centre of religious thought and life in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. In the following century, the region began to be known



Virgin Mary Church/Göreme

as the homeland of three major ecclesiasts. These were Basil, Bishop of Caesarea (329-379), his brother Gregory of Nyssa (335-394) and Gregory of Nazianus (329-394). Although this was a glorious period from a cultural point of view, the region was frequently raided by the Isaurians and Sassanids in the 5<sup>th</sup> century and



First Diacons/Tokali Church- Göreme Open Air Museum

IVON OCTOVM

ΑΠΕΤΡΟΕΧΟΡΙΣΕΝΤΟΣΕΥΤΑΔΙΑΚΟΝΑΣΕΝ  
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ΑΘΗΤΑΣΟΙΛΑΣΕ



Virgin Mary and Jesus/Tokalı Church- Göreme Open Air Museum

the early 6<sup>th</sup> century and later on by the Huns. A subsequent series of raids by the Arabs would affect not only Cappadocia, but the whole of Byzantium.



The man who would become known as ‘Saint Basil the Great’ was the son of a land-owning family in Cappadocia. He received both classical education and Christian education, first at Constantinople, then in Athens, where he met

## Göreme National Park and the Rock Sites of Cappadocia



General view of Karanlık Church



A female mummy from the Early Christian Period/Niğde Museum



Zelve

Gregory of Nazianus. Although at first he planned to become a preacher, he then returned to his birthplace, Ceasarea, which was the administrative centre of the Cappadocia region, in order to devote himself to a monastic life. After having visited monasteries in Egypt and Syria, he settled in the Neocaesarea Monastery close to Pontus.

Basil, who was influential in the spread of cenobitic life, attempted to convince monks who lived the lives of hermits to gather in a monastery, saying that if the monks preferred to lead individual lives of seclusion, then they would not be able to serve common good in accordance with God's will.

The behaviour and doctrines proposed by Basil, who wrote many works on the hermit lifestyle, theology and ecclesiastical law, are still valid for Christian communities even today. For example, he advised that a Christian who has a single piece of bread at time of drought should divide the bread into two, give half to somebody who is hungry and leave himself to the protection of God. Rather than preferring a very ascetic lifestyle, Basil established small settlements that were sufficiently distant from villages and towns and acted as spiritual shelters for communities.



St. Onesimus, St. George, St. Theodore, Constantine and  
Helena/Yılanlı Church

The monasteries in Cappadocia were generally not very large; it is doubtful that they could contain more than 20 people. The Boys and Girls Monastery and the Dark Church Monastery within the Göreme Open-Air Museum are among the most important of such examples.



Daily worship was presided over by a preacher, but those who lived in these settlements were not made into special and privileged groups, separate from other Christians, as was the case in Egypt and Syria. Basil had buildings constructed for medical treatment and care, thus beginning a tradition of aiding patients. Basil was always depicted as the central figure in paintings of



Last Judgment/St. Jean Church

the six major Church Fathers in the apses of churches in Cappadocia.

One of the major reforms brought by Saint Basil the Great, who died on 1 January 379 and whose feast is celebrated each year on 1-2 January, was his re-establishment of congregational prayer. The area that is currently under protection as the Göreme Open-Air Museum is where this education system began. The same system was later implemented in other centres of Cappadocia, such as Soğanlı, Ihlara and Açıksaray.

St. George, whose feast is celebrated on 23 April, was most probably the son of a Christian family from Cappadocia. George enrolled in the Roman army but was the victim of persecution ordered by the Roman Emperor Diocletian and was subjected to all kinds of torture; he was burned,

scalded and crushed under wheels, but every time, he miraculously survived. He was finally beheaded around 303 in Lydda (Palestine). The legend about how, with God's help, he rescued the daughter of a king from a terrible dragon emerged later on.

Churches in and around Göreme were carved into the rocks of tuff that define the landscape of Cappadocia. The architects of such churches were able to design architectural plans and carve the volcanic rock as they wished, but stonemasons had to be careful because mistakes were almost impossible to redress; a column or dome broken during the carving could not be corrected. The barrel vaulted, single nave plan especially common in these structures was the most suitable architectural style for the religious communities and ascetic monks living in the



Göreme Open Air Museum

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ



area. Such structures were sometimes used as tombs as well. Another architectural plan seen in Göreme is the latitudinal rectangular plan, which is actually of Mesopotamian origin. Structures of this type were most probably built for foreign communities that settled in the region. Although the two-nave plan is only to be found in the St Eustatathios Church in Göreme, it was very popular in churches in Soğanlı and Ihlara as well.

The three-nave basilica plan, preferred for episcopal churches, such as the one in Durmuş Kadir, is also quite rare in Göreme. Such churches generally have three apses, and in every apse there are an altar and a banquette in the south west corner for the clergy. The reason why there are so few examples of this type of rock church in Göreme is most probably their dimensions and the variety of their architectural elements.

Following the carving of the tuff rock, the walls of the church, that is

to say, the surface of the rock was leveled and plastered with a combination of straw, tuff and lime. The fresco plaster, which gave the walls a semblance of dried clay, was a mixture of straw that contained large amounts of volcanic ashes, rather than sand. The thickness of this coat of plaster varied between 2-4 millimetres and its surface was then painted using different techniques. Natural minerals were ground into a powder and then mixed with organic substances such as egg white that would ensure its adherence.

Important minerals foreign to this region, such as lapis lazuli, were sometimes imported from distant countries like Afghanistan. Once the dye was obtained from the minerals, the rest was up to the mastery of the artist!

Two types of painting technique were used in the churches of Göreme. The first consisted of red ochre paint applied directly on the rock surface, without an undercoat of plaster. In this technique the main rock acted as background surface. Red ochre motifs such as Maltese crosses and geometric and floral designs were most probably made immediately after the carving of the rock, with the aim of 'consecrating' the church, that is to say, for getting it ready for worship. The church was thus blessed even

before the painters arrived and it was thus in a sense turned from a recess in the rock into a place of worship.

There is a widespread belief that the rather poorly rendered paintings of the St. Basil and St. Barbara chapel, located within the Göreme Open-Air Museum and dated to the late 11<sup>th</sup> century or early 12<sup>th</sup> century, were made by local painters possessing little skill in their art. In later periods these paintings were covered with plaster and repainted with scenes from Christian liturgy. The best examples for this type of painting are the El-Nazar, Tokalı, Karanlık (Dark), Elmalı (Apple), Çarıklı (Sandal) and Kılıçlar (Swords) Churches. The second technique consisted of paint applied onto an undercoat of plaster. In this case, the technique employed was either that of fresco (the only example is the Tatların Church), applied onto wet plaster, or that of tempera (secco), applied onto dry plaster.

Two colours were generally used as a background to the figures; green to symbolise the earth and blue for the sky. Besides the brushes that were generally used, there are also examples showing that dyes were also applied with the help of pieces of fabric rolled up into a ball. The Saklı (Hidden) Church is one such example. As the church walls were not first covered with plaster,



Nunnery/ Göreme Open Air Museum

one hypothesis has it that artists preferred to apply the dye onto the bare walls using these fabric balls rather than brushes because it was an easier method. Once the painting was completed, a type of glue obtained from plants was applied onto the surface in order to make the paintings appear brighter.

The scenes depicted in churches and chapels were generally taken from the life of Christ, the Bible and the Torah. Saints from the world of Christianity and important personages of Cappadocia were also featured. Immortal souls were generally depicted on the dome, mortals on the walls and the main apse contained the

'Deisis,' that is, a scene featuring Christ flanked by the Virgin Mary and St. John, who are imploring Him for the salvation of humankind. As in the Dark Church, Christ the Pantocrator occupies a central position in almost all churches. He holds the sacred book in one hand and blesses humankind with the other hand. The term 'Pantocrator' means 'creator and saviour,' in other words, 'the lord of the universe.' These paintings in rock churches are very important in that they reflect the medieval Eastern Christian Art of Cappadocia.

Large rooms, generally containing a long table and benches made of stone, served as dining halls for monastery and church functionaries. At one end of the dining hall, or sometimes at both ends, as in the Dark Church, there were apses built as seats of honour. According to Basilean rules, this seat belonged to the administrators of the monastery.

Besides the damage unwittingly caused by people in the past, the high number of visitors to the churches in our day and age has only served to accelerate the deterioration of their tuff surfaces and paintings. Natural cracks caused by rain and frost have caused small pieces to break off in some churches, thus resulting in



Nunnery/ Göreme Open Air Museum

the loss of the architectural integrity of the structure. Added to these are inscriptions carved by Christians in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the destruction carried out unwittingly by local shepherds on the faces of figures about fifty years ago and various graffiti carved into the rock by visitors wishing to leave a lasting reminder of their visit before they go. All of these factors put together have resulted in irreparable damage to the churches. Moreover, the fact that casein, the substance used in paintings to make them stick to the wall, gradually loses its adhesiveness over time, has caused the layer of paint on the walls to flake off, the straw within the plaster to disappear and the paint to blister and crumble away. The restoration and conservation work initiated within the Göreme Open-Air Museum with the aim of erasing the traces of all of these

negative effects and all of this destruction has been picking up pace over the last few years.

The Zelve Archaeological Site is situated on the steep northern slopes of Aktepe, at a distance of 5 km from Avanos and 1 km from Paşabağları. It consists of three valleys and it is the area where the pointed fairy chimneys with wide bodies are most densely located. Zelve, where the exact starting date of troglodyte life is unknown, as is the case with the Uçhisar, Göreme and Çavuşin carved rock venues, was an important Christian settlement and religious centre from the 9<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> centuries; the first religious seminaries for priests were also most probably held in this region.

The Direkli Church, or Church with Columns, situated at the base of the slopes, dates to the first years of monastic life in Zelve. The relief crosses used frequently in church decorations are closely connected to the 'Holy Cross' originating from Palestine.

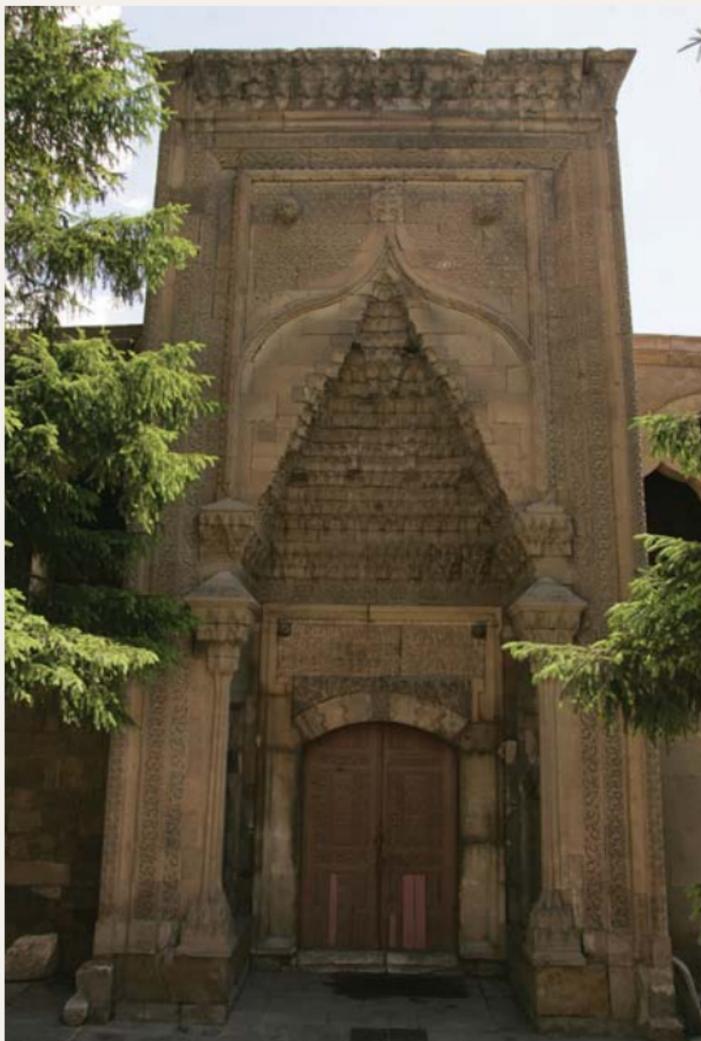
Other important churches of the valley include the Balıklı Kilise (Church With Fish), Üzümlü Kilise (Church With Grapes) and Geyikli Kilise (Church With Deer), all dated to before the Iconoclastic Period. Besides monasteries and churches, the valley, which was inhabited until 1952, contained other settlements, two tunnels



Hüdavent Hatun Turbe/Niğde

that open onto the other valleys and structures such as a mill, a mosque and a pigeonry.

Situated to the right of the Göreme-Ävanos road, 1 km from the main road, the area once known as 'Valley of Priests' and now as 'Paşabağı,' stands out with its characteristic fairy chimneys. Chapels and residential spaces have been carved within the multi-bodied, multi-headed fairy chimneys. One of the fairy chimneys with three heads contains a chapel and a seclusion cell named after St. Simeon. The entrance to the cell, which can only be accessed via a narrow chimney, is adorned with antithetic crosses. The cell also contains a hearth, space to sit and to sleep and a window slit permitting the entrance of some light.



Ak Medrese/Niğde

In the 5<sup>th</sup> century, when it was heard that St. Simeon, who led the life of a hermit near Aleppo, performed miracles, in order to escape the excessive interest of people, he sought refuge first on a column 2 m high, and then on one 15 m high, where he started to live his life. St. Simeon used to come down from this column only for the small quantities of food and beverage that



Alparslan, grandson of Seljuk Bey, this marked the onset of the Byzantines' decline and of a brand new period for Anatolia.

The Anatolian Seljuk State was founded in 1075. In 1082, Kayseri was conquered, thus making Cappadocia part of the Seljuk state. As of this date Anatolia, which had been an important region for the spread of Christianity, became part of the Islamic region that extended from North Africa to the Near East.

The conquest of Anatolia by the Seljuk Turks is thought not to have weakened the administrative efficiency of the Patriarchate, because the Seljuk Sultan Mesud II and the Byzantine Emperor Andronicus II are praised in the inscriptions of the Church of St. George, situated in the Ihlara region and dating to the 13<sup>th</sup> century. When the Anatolian Seljuk State began to weaken at the end of this century, various principalities emerged all over Anatolia. In 1308 the Ilkhanates, a state of Mongol origin, occupied Anatolia

and the important Cappadocian city of Kayseri was burned down. The Seljuk Sultans entered the dominion of the Mongols and lost their independence. Anatolia was now to be ruled as a group of principalities founded by Turkish tribes. In the glorious period of the Anatolian Seljuks, the Sultans had the various settlements connected to each other via a well-organised network of roads and had bridges, fortresses, inns, caravanserais, theological schools, mosques and tombs constructed. As these structures were built via foundations formed by sultans, grand viziers and wealthy people, they had sources of continuous income. Although the Seljuks were greatly influenced by the Arab and Persian cultures, they also developed their own understanding of art.

Roads, caravans and inns constituted the most important three elements of trade in the Seljuk State. Especially during the time of Sultan Kılıçarslan II and Alaeddin Kayqubad I, the

Döner Kumbet/Kayseri





DÖNER KUMBET  
SAKIHAN HATUN TÜRBESİ  
XIII YÜZ YIL

## Göreme National Park and the Rock Sites of Cappadocia

caravanserais. Although dragons, lions and floral designs were the most popular motifs used in Seljuk stone carving in general, in Cappadocia there was a strong preference for geometric decorations. The caravanserai gates themselves were made of iron and were as strong as fortress gates.

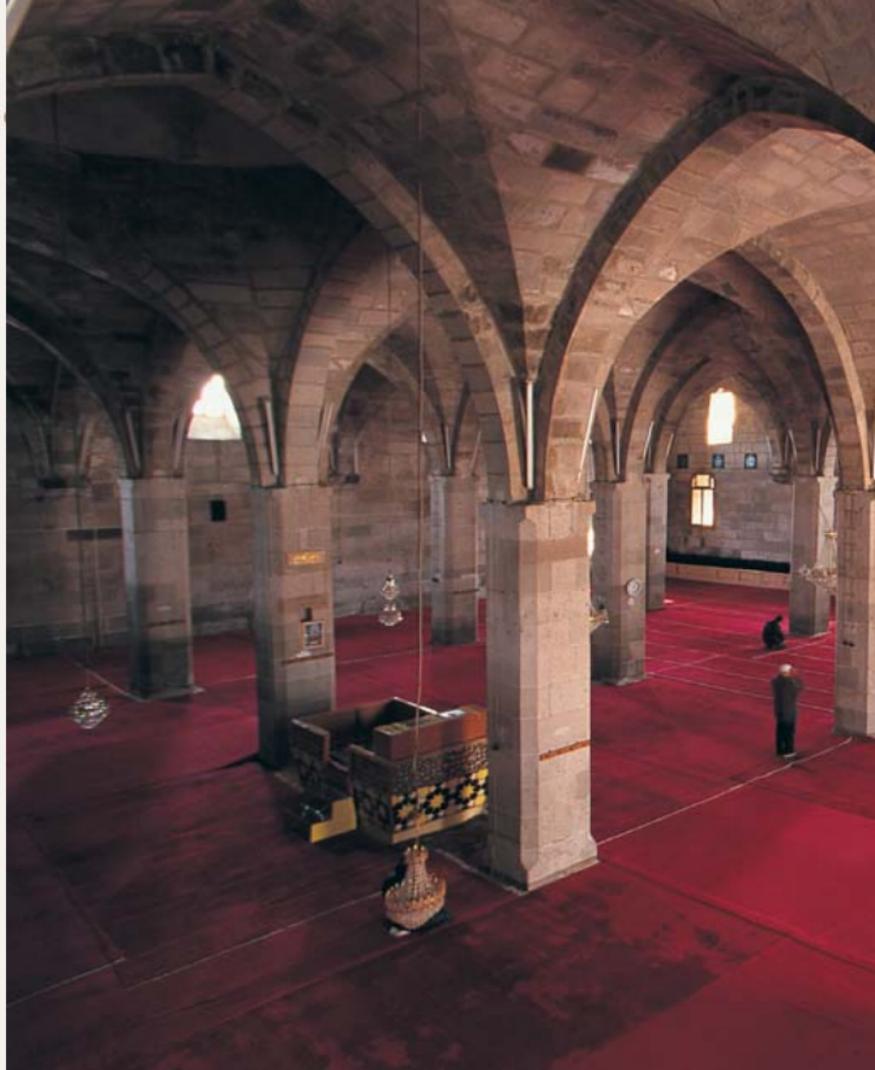


## Göreme National Park and the Rock Sites of Cappadocia

Caravanserais were built within distances of one day from one another—30-40 km—on the routes that extended from Antalya-Konya-Aksaray-Kayseri to Erzurum-Tebriz and from there to

Sultanhanı/Aksaray



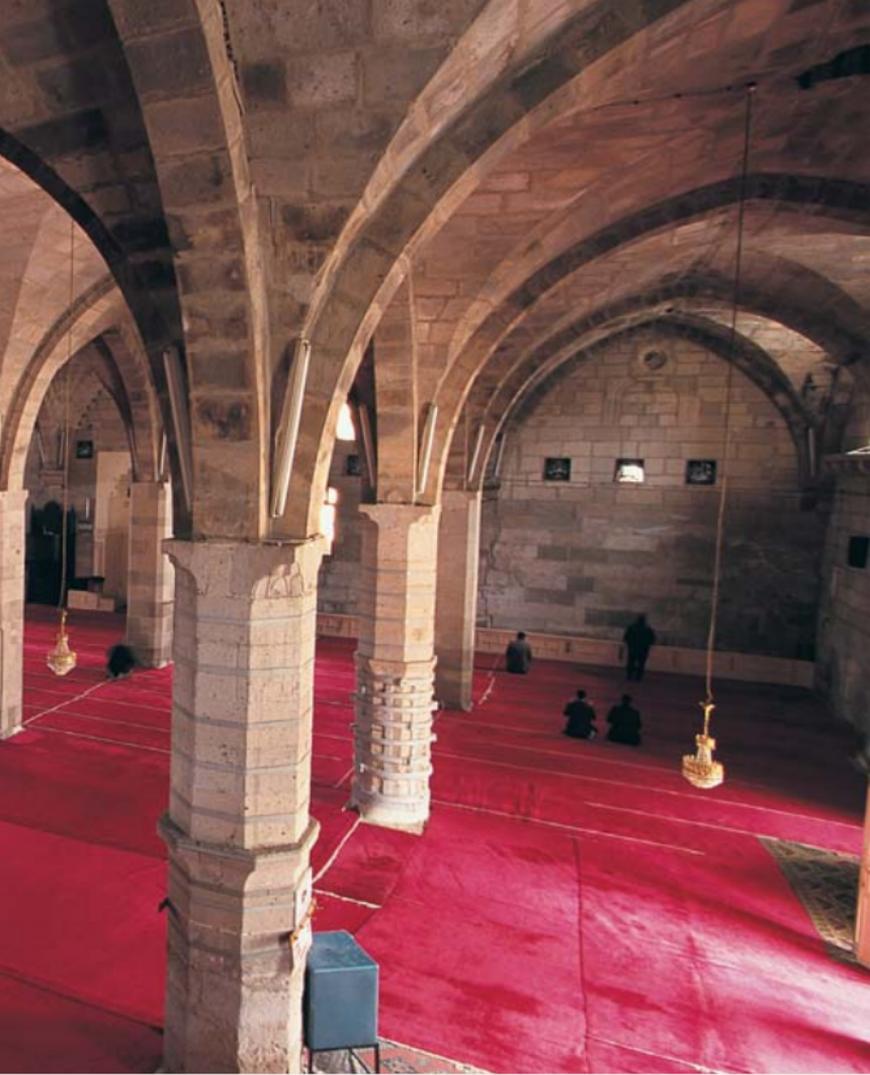


Ulu Camii/Aksaray

Turkestan, and from the Black Sea shores to Amasya-Tokat-Sivas-Malatya-Diyarbakır and from there to Iraq.

The caravanserais situated in the Cappadocia region are particularly important examples because of their locations on the intersections of the Kayseri-Aksaray route, the east-west and the north-south routes.

The Seljuk theological schools, where people received training in culture, science and art,



provided an education that was a blend of present day secondary and higher education.

Education covered four main areas: religion and law, language and literature, philosophy and basic sciences. There wasn't a set duration of education. As graduation depended on the completion of books, students completed their education at different times. Education began following morning prayers and continued until noon prayers. Students would then retire to their study cells, situated around a courtyard, with



Hüdavent Hatun Turbe/Niğde

Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays usually being days of rest.

The first *madrasahs* were affiliated with particular mosques or masjids. The schools were located within or right next to mosques or masjids, in special places allocated for education. Later on,



Seljuk sultans had theological schools—mostly specialising in the field of medicine—built in their names and in their wives' names. From the 12<sup>th</sup> century onwards, Seljuk theological schools in Anatolia had covered or, more commonly, open-air courtyards. The structure consisted of one, two, three or four vaulted halls and some



### Karatayhan/Kayseri

structures were of two storeys. The second basic type of structure for the theological schools were those in which courtyards were replaced by a central space covered by a large dome. The most important theological schools in Cappadocia are Hunda Hatun and Giyasiye in Kayseri and Taşkınpaşa in Nevşehir.



The term 'türbe,' which means 'dome covered tomb' in Arabic and 'structure with a roof in the shape of a dome' in Persian, is used for structures that are generally of two storeys and have a lower floor accessed by stairs. This lower floor is where the burial chamber is located and this is where the embalmed deceased was put into a sarcophagus or buried. This chamber, used for



Sultanhanı/Bünyan-Kayseri

visits or for worship, may contain a mihrab as well as a symbolic sarcophagus. Its grandiose entrance, which faces the east, west or north, is accessed by a single staircase or two facing staircases. These mausoleums, which sometimes



have different exterior and interior plans, come in a variety of shapes, from polygonal and cylindrical, to square. They are covered with a dome on the inside and a conical or pyramidal roof on the outside. Complex geometrical and floral decorations cover the external surfaces,



Sungurbey Mosque/Niğde



Taşkınpaşa Medresse (detail)

the doors and windows and the eaves and roofs. The most important examples of mausoleums in the Cappadocia region are Döner Kümbet, Hunad Hatun and Çifte (Double) Kümbet in Kayseri, Hüdavent Hatun in Niğde, Taşkınpaşa and Altı Kapılı (Six Doors) Türbe in Ürgüp.

The Döner Kümbet, built for Shah Cihan Hatun, is particularly striking with its ornate conical

roof, its double-headed eagle relief in between two-winged panther figures with human heads on the façade of the monumental gateway and its double-headed eagle relief above a date palm, to the left of the gateway. The Hüdavent Hatun Mausoleum, built by the Seljuk Sultan Rükneddin Kılıçarslan IV, for his daughter Hüdavent Hatun, in 1312, during the Ilkhanate rule of Anatolia, is covered with ostentatious decorations consisting of high and low reliefs depicting human beings hidden among lions, double-headed eagles, complex beings and floral designs. According to Central Asian shamanist beliefs, these beings in the shape of birds accompany people and protect them on their journeys on earth and in the sky.

Besides caravanserais and mausoleums, one finds the most prominent characteristics of Seljuk art in mosques too. The Sungur Bey Mosque, built by Seyfeddin Sungur Agha in 1335, under the rule of the Ilkhanate Sultan Abusaid, constitutes an exquisite example of Seljuk architecture with its eastern and western monumental gates and the stone decorations of the mihrab. Lion heads and griffon heads and depictions of rapacious birds, horses and gazelles stand out among the decorations. The double-headed eagle above the southern monumental gateway and the Gothic decorations on both monumental gateways are

of particular interest. The mosque was originally supported by three low arches and consisted of three naves. The wider central nave was covered with three domes, while the side naves were covered with three transversal vaults each. As the mosque burned down in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the upper cover was supported with wooden beams and it has lost its original structure. The monumental gateway of the Sungur Bey Mosque, with double minarets, is an interesting example of how Gothic and Islamic art can mingle together.

The Niğde Alaaddin Mosque, an early example of classical Seljuk architecture, was built by Abdullah bib Beşare in 1223, under the rule of Sultan Alaaddin Kayqubad.

The monumental gateway, situated on the eastern façade and higher than the wall itself, is where decorations are most dense; carvings of semicircles, semi-stars and eight-point stars leave very little empty space. The gateway has seven rows of grooved muqarnas. The reliefs on the two sides of the inscription have been interpreted by researchers as women's heads or lion heads. Close to the minaret on the north eastern corner there is a second, smaller gateway.

The Alaaddin Mosque, which is built on nearly square, rectangular plan, is divided into three

naves by two rows of four beams each. The central nave, wider than the others, contains four rows of muqarnas and a skylight. The ceiling above the mihrab is covered with three domes. The dome to the west is supported by squinches with eight sections of muqarnas. The dome to the east, on the other hand, is supported by two pendants and two squinches. The five corner mihrab niche is decorated with muqarnas and the side borders are covered with dense geometric motifs.

With its stone carvings, its original minaret, the higher number of domes covering the internal spaces and its skylight, the Alaaddin Mosque is one of the best examples of Anatolian Seljuk mosques. Cappadocia lived a peaceful period under Ottoman rule. Until the time of Damat Ibrahim Pasha, Nevşehir was a small village within the Niğde province. In the early 18<sup>th</sup> century and especially under Damat Ibrahim Pasha, public works were carried out and mosques, compounds and fountains were built in Nevşehir, Gülşehir, Özkonak, Avanos and Ürgüp. The bridge built during Sultan Yavuz Selim's Eastern Campaign (1514) and situated in the centre of the town of Özkonak is very important in that it is the oldest Ottoman structure of Nevşehir.



Kaymaklı Underground City

## The Underground Settlements of Cappadocia

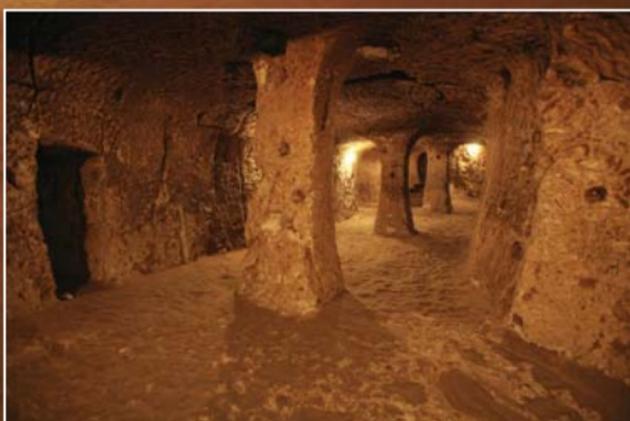
The some 150-200 underground settlements of various sizes found in Cappadocia constitute some of the most interesting natural and cultural characteristics of the region. This number may actually be higher, since there are rock-cut settlements of various sizes in all the towns and villages of Cappadocia, which covers an area all together of 25,000 square km.

The majority of these rock-cut settlements has been built by digging vertically into the soft tuff. Not much is known about building techniques, other than what can be derived from the marks left by carving tools. The upper floors of these underground settlements were more roughly carved and less orderly, while the lower floors were neater and better organised. This fact is an important piece of evidence indicating that these underground settlements were inhabited by different tribes at different times. However, we still do not have sufficient information on the number of people who lived in these underground settlements. As the term 'underground city' is used very commonly and some of these settlements could shelter up to thirty thousand people, it is possible to define



some as ‘underground cities’ and others as ‘underground villages.’

Since the region of Cappadocia was frequently subject to raids, the main objective behind the construction of these cities was the provision of temporary shelter for the population at times



Derinkuyu Underground City

of danger. These underground cities were also connected to almost all of the houses in the area via hidden passage ways. In the quest for safety from attackers, the inhabitants of the region set up traps and prepared rooms difficult to exit within their rock-cut houses and when

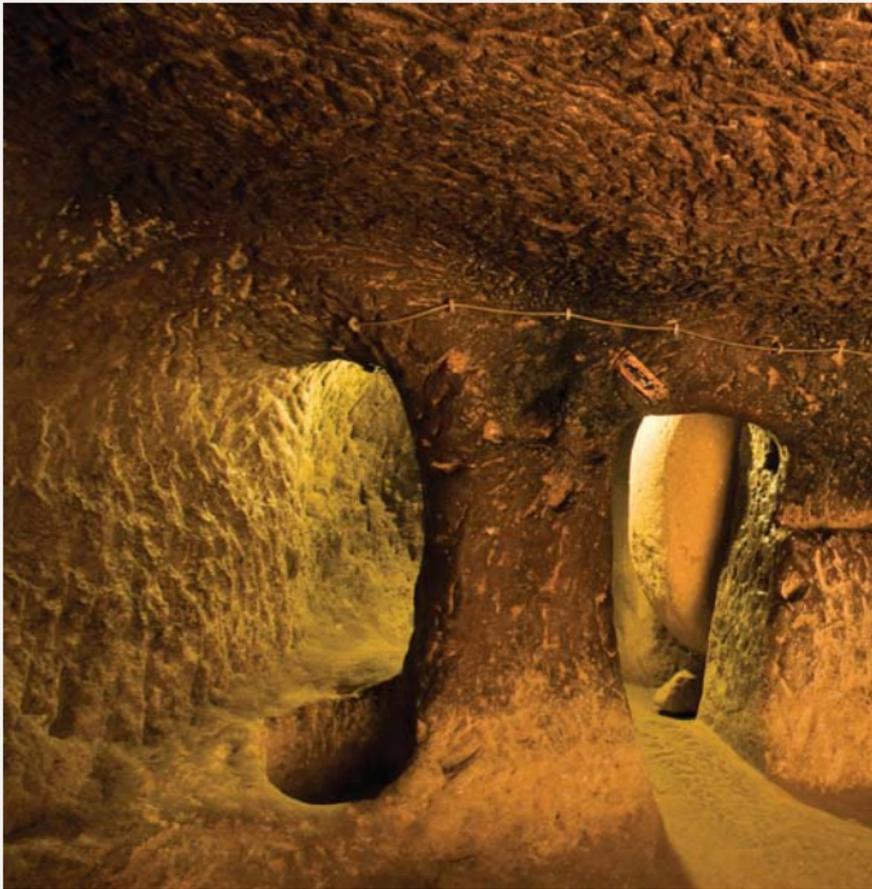




diametres of 1-2.5 m and weighed between 200-500 kg. The hole in the middle of the stone made it possible to open and close the passageway, as well as observe the enemy and attack it with arrows and spears. Apart from a few specimens, most of these stones were carved and produced on-site. There were also wooden doors in the underground cities that served the purpose not of security but of delineating private property and had two to three bolts.

The Özkonak underground city is different from other underground cities in that small vertical holes were carved into the ceiling of the corridors, right next to the bolt stones, with the aim of pouring scalding oil onto the enemy or shooting arrows at him. Another security measure taken within underground cities was to prepare traps in the form of pits measuring 2-3 m deep.

The oldest floors of underground cities are generally the entrance floors and



Özkonak Underground City

these were generally used as stables, as it would have been difficult to take the animals to lower floors. In the stables, which were carved out quite roughly, there were cavities in the lower parts of the walls from which animals could feed and holes for hitching the animals.

The underground cities were tepid both in winter and summer; places for producing grape-juice were generally located in the upper floors so that locally produced grapes could be easily



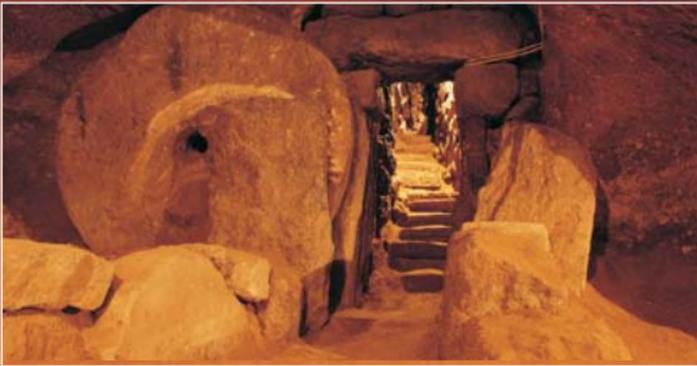
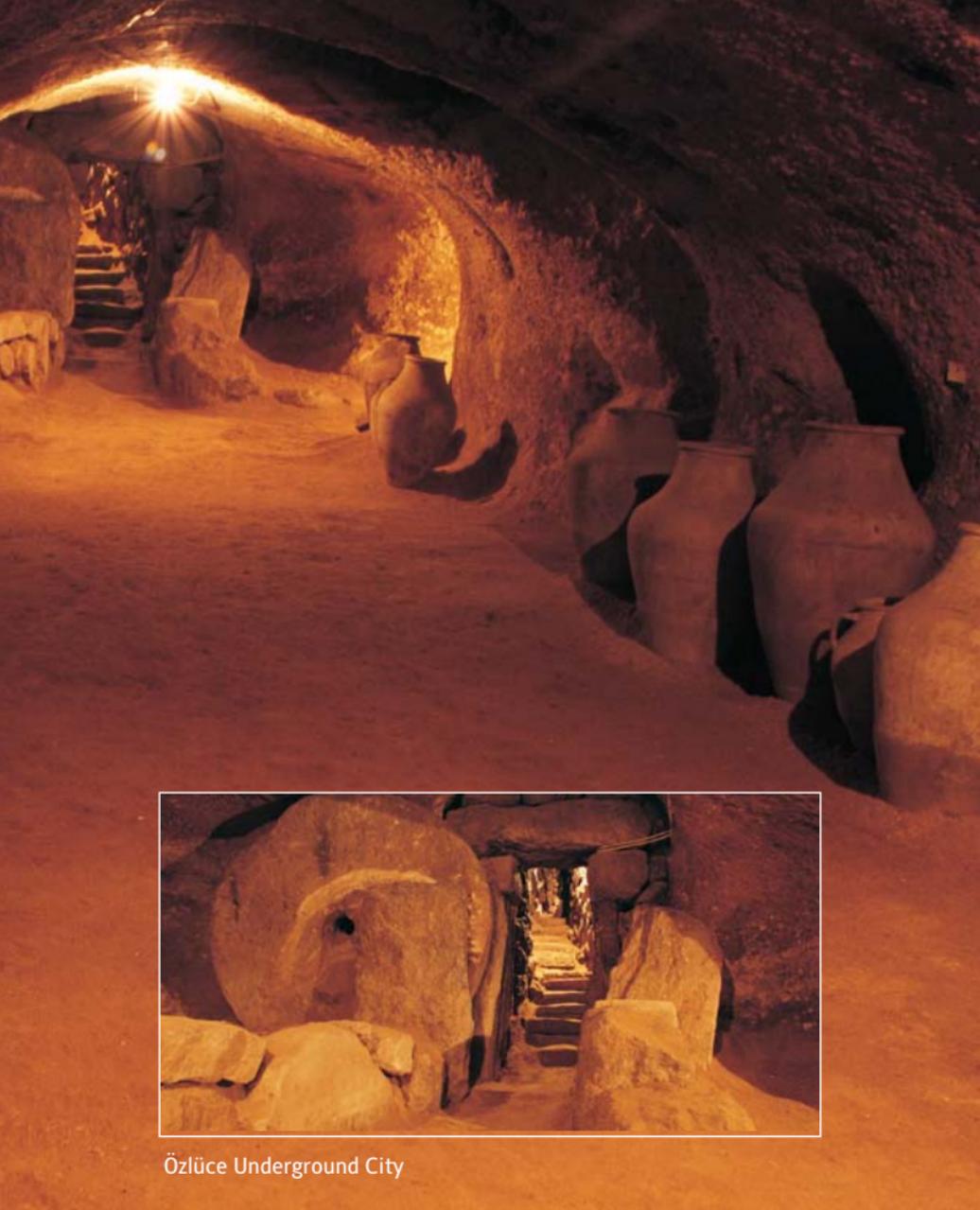
transported and stored until they were crushed and processed.

Considering the limited number of kitchens found in the underground cities, it is clear that each family did not have its own kitchen but rather that kitchens were shared. The kitchens contained the ‘tandouri’ ovens that are still in use today in the towns and villages of Cappadocia. It is also clear from some traces that small cavities were opened into the floor all around the kitchens, in order to place provision jars in an orderly manner. These jars were used to



store barley, wheat and corn, which is still locally produced in large quantities, as well as various vegetables.

In between floors are communication holes with diametres of no more than 5-10 centimetres, carved into the floor and ceilings of rooms, with the purpose of facilitating communication. Thanks to these holes, the inhabitants of the



Özlüce Underground City

underground cities were able to communicate without having to walk through long and tiring tunnels and to act quickly and easily in emergency situations.

The toilet issue has still not been completely elucidated. Toilets have been found only in the underground cities of Tatlarin and Güzelyurt (Gelveri). What these two toilets have in



Toilet/Tatlarin Underground City

common is an ‘L’ shaped corridor.

These settlements, which were to be used for a long period of time during states of emergency, contained not only living quarters but also burial spaces. It is not clear yet whether these graves belonged to the clergy or to notables. Within the underground settlements there are shafts built with the purpose of

both ventilation and communication and they generally reach down to the ground floor of the settlement. These shafts were also used as wells. Some wells did not connect to the surface of the earth, in order to prevent the enemy from poisoning the water. Although some researchers claim that the underground settlements were connected to each other via tunnels, findings to verify this claim have not yet been discovered.

The inhabitants of the village of Kaymaklı, known in Antiquity as ‘Enegüp,’ built their homes around the hundred or so tunnels of the underground city. Nowadays the local

population pass through these tunnels, which open onto their courtyards, to reach parts of the underground cities that they use as pantries, depots or stables. The Kaymaklı Underground City differs from the Derinkuyu Underground City both in plan and in construction. The tunnels are narrow, low and inclined but the rooms have higher ceilings and are mainly situated around ventilation shafts. Although the underground city has not yet been cleared completely and only four floors have been revealed, it is for sure one of the biggest in the area. Based on the number of pantries found even within a small area, there is a higher probability that a large number of people lived in this underground city.

The Derinkuyu Underground City, known as 'Melagobia' in the past, is around 85 m deep. Derinkuyu has many of the spaces that are generally to be found in an underground city, such as a stable, a pantry, a refectory, a church and a space for grape juice production. The missionary school on the second floor, which covers a wide area, has a very unusual ceiling for underground cities in that it is covered by a tunnel vault. After the third and fourth floors of the underground city, a stair leads downwards, to the church with a cruciform plan on the floor below. The 55 m deep ventilation shaft, which was connected to the surface, was also used as a

well. Not all floors were able to make use of the wells, which extended all the way down to the bottom of the city, and some wells did not have a surface connection in order to prevent the water from being poisoned during a raid.

Only ten percent of the Derinkuyu Underground City, which opened in 1965, can be visited.

## Historical Background

Although there are settlements dating to the Prehistoric Era in Cappadocia, it is not yet known whether they had any connections with underground cities. However, considering the geological structure of the region, one can reasonably assume that the inhabitants of the Prehistoric Era may have sought shelter in refuges of rock consisting of a few rooms, carved with tools made of obsidian and flintstone. There is a widespread belief that the Hittites must have played a role in the construction or the expansion of the underground cities, because a large number of rock reliefs and rock inscriptions dating to the Middle and Late Bronze Age are to be found in this area and because very skillfully constructed underground passage ways called 'Potern' are frequently encountered in the defence systems of Hittite cities. The secret tunnels found in Hittite cities generally served the purpose of laying an ambush for the enemy



Kaymaklı Underground City

or surrounding the enemy during attacks on the city. If some of these settlements were carved by the Hittites, then they must have been used for military purposes, which means that it is only normal that no archaeological findings should have been discovered. Furthermore, it is also possible that tribes who came after the Hittites erased any trace of the latter's use of the underground cities. Although there were no major Hittite settlements located in Cappadocia, one encounters remains and artifacts belonging to the Hittites in all the ancient settlements of this region. It is quite probable that Hittites living in this area carved the soft tuff rock for settlement purposes. The presence of underground cities right next to the inscribed monuments of Topada

(Ağılı) and Sivasa (Gökçetoprak) supports this view.

Especially around Nevşehir, rock tombs dating to the Roman period are situated right next to the underground cities and, like them, cover a wide area. Indeed, the niches found in the tomb chambers are also found in the underground cities. This is an indication that during Roman times too, the population played a role in the construction of the underground cities.

All the findings having to do with the underground cities date to the 5<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> century, in other words, to the Byzantine period. At this time there was an increase in the number of underground cities serving religious as well as shelter needs. When Arab-Sassanid raids began in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, Christian communities living in Cappadocia would retreat to their underground shelters when the enemy arrived and close the bolt stones at the entrances. Aware of the many dangers that awaited them inside, the enemy would then endeavour to draw the population out by poisoning its wells. The Seljuks are also thought to have made use of the underground cities for military purposes, for the Seljuk caravanserais in Cappadocia are only 5-10 km distant from the underground cities. Examples of this can be seen in the case of the Dolayhan

Caravanserai-Til Underground City, the Saruhan Caravanserai-Özkonak Underground City and the Pınarbaşı (Geyral) Underground City-Ağzıkarahan Caravanserai.

The oldest written record to make reference to the underground cities is the book entitled 'Anabasis,' by Xenophon, who says that people who lived in Anatolia and in the Caucasus dug themselves houses underground and that these houses were connected to each other via tunnels. Since Xenophon lived in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, the underground settlements can definitely be dated at least to this period. According to the German archaeologist Martin Urban, who undertook the most serious research in this area between the

### Uçhisar







Uçhisar Castle



Fairy chimneys from Uçhisar

years 1960-70, the underground settlements date to the 8<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> centuries BC.

As a result, in the light of available information, it would not be wrong to date the underground settlements to the same time as the first civilisations in this area, that is to say, to the Prehistoric Era. It was not difficult for the people of the Prehistoric Era, who were quite knowledgeable on the subject of stone masonry, to use simple tools to carve the soft tuff. Consisting only of a few rooms at that time, the underground settlements were then continuously expanded by the various communities that subsequently inhabited Cappadocia and that erased all archaeological traces of previous cultures, until reaching their present state. However, it was during the Byzantine period that the underground settlements were most frequently used.

## UÇHISAR

Uçhisar, situated on the Nevşehir-Göreme road, at a distance of 7 km from Nevşehir, is located on the highest point of the area. The date of the oldest settlement in Uçhisar is not known, but in terms of settlement pattern, it resembles Ortahisar and the Selime Fortress, in the Ihlara area. The peak of the Uçhisar Fortress also



provides an amazing panoramic view of the entire area.

The many rooms within the fortress are connected to each other via stairs, tunnels and corridors. At the entrances to the rooms there are bolts stones to control entrance and exit, just as in the underground settlements. As some spaces within the fortress, which used to consist of many floors, have collapsed, it is unfortunately impossible to access certain parts of it. A few churches carved into the rocks have been identified both on the skirts of the fortress and within it. This low number is most probably due to Uçhisar's proximity to Göreme, where so many churches and monasteries existed already. The simple rock tombs located on the peak of





Saruhan/Avanos

the fortress have been plundered and largely destroyed and therefore are not of great interest.

## ÇAVUŞİN

Çavuşin, one of the oldest settlements in the region, is situated on the Göreme-Avanos road, at a distance of 2 km from Göreme. The Church of St. John the Baptist, built in Çavuşin, on a site dominating the area, most probably dates to the 5<sup>th</sup> century and is the oldest church of the region.



It is in the ruins in the old Çavuşin Valley that Christian hermits and communities lived. In Güllüdere, which is right next to Çavuşin, there are five churches. The Haçlı Kilise, or Church with a Cross, close to the valley, was also used for defence purposes against Arab raids.

The Çavuşin Church, located at the entrance to Çavuşin, by the Göreme-Avanos road, was built in honour of the Emperor Nikephoros Phokas; it has a single, high nave and three apses and it is covered with a tunnel vault. The church, the nartex of which has collapsed, is dated to the years 964-965.

## AVANOS

In Avanos, located 18 km to the north of Nevşehir and known in Antiquity as 'Venessa,' there are many pottery ateliers. The ceramic mud obtained from the red soil and alluvion carried here by the Kızılırmak River, is shaped by ceramic artists from Avanos. Here, the craft



of pottery production, which has been practiced since the time of the Hittites, has been passed down from father to son over the centuries to the present day. Avanos is also an important shopping centre where local and foreign guests visiting Cappadocia can observe and try out the various types of handicrafts practiced in Cappadocia. Saruhan, situated 5 km to the south east of Avanos, was built in 1249, at the time of—or maybe even by—Sultan Izzettin Keykavus II. Situated on the East-West, Aksaray-Kayseri route, Saruhan covers an area of 2000 square metres. Local stones, yellow, reddish pink and light brown in colour, were cut and used in its construction. Decorative two-coloured stones have been used in the entrance arches of both the monumental gateway and the interior gateway. As is the case in other sultans' inns, geometric ornamentations have been preferred for the external gateway, the upper parts of which have partly collapsed. Contrary to other caravanserais, the domed kiosk masjid was built above the monumental gateway. The entrance to the masjid faces the courtyard and it is adorned with squinches of muqarnas. On some of the stones used in the portico one can see small lines that were special signs belonging to the stone masons. The hall in the inn where



Ürgüp

animals and their grooms were accommodated is very similar to its counterparts in the Aksaray Sultanhanı and Ağzıkaran. No other inn was built by Seljuk sultans after Saruhan, making it the last example of its kind.

## ÜRGÜP

Ürgüp, situated 20 km to the east of Nevşehir, is another important centre of Cappadocia. The city was known as 'Ossiana' (Assiana) or 'Hagios Prokopios' in the Byzantine period, as 'Başhisar' in the Seljuk period and as 'Burgut Kalesi' under Ottoman rule, and it has been known as 'Ürgüp' since the Republican period. An important

religious centre in Byzantine times, Ürgüp was once the episcopal centre of rock churches and monasteries. Then, in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, it became a major fortress that opened onto the important Seljuk cities of Konya and Niğde. The 'Altı Kapılı Türbe' (Mausoleum with Six Doors), built in the 13<sup>th</sup> century for a mother and her two daughters, is open at the top and has six facades, on each of which is an arched window. The two mausolea on the Temenni Hill are two more important monuments dating to this period.

Ürgüp, which became part of Ottoman territory in 1515, lost its importance when the Ottoman Grand Vizier Damat Ibrahim Pasha assigned the post of the Muslim judge to Nevşehir (Muşkara), the place of his birth. In the work on history and geography, entitled 'Kamus-ül Alam,' that he wrote in the years 1888-1900, Şemsettin Sami states that there were 70 mosques, 5 churches and 11 libraries in Ürgüp at the time.

## ÜRGÜP-Church of Forty Martyrs

This Church which has two apses and two naves is one of the exceptional examples of rock churches hewn-out of a fairy chimney in Cappadocia. At the upper parts of the naves which are supported by two columns, are well preserved wall paintings.



The Church gets its name from the 40 Martyrs killed by the Roman soldiers in Sebaste (modern Sivas) in 320 AD. According to an inscription found at the Church, it originated in 1216-1217.

The Church has attained its present condition at the end of a restoration and conservation work carried out by Italian and Turkish restorers.

Scenes: Deesis, Annunciation, Adoration of the Magi, Presentation of Jesus in the Temple, Ascension of Christ, Dormition of Mother Mary,

40 Martyrs naked on a frozen pond, and prophets and saints.

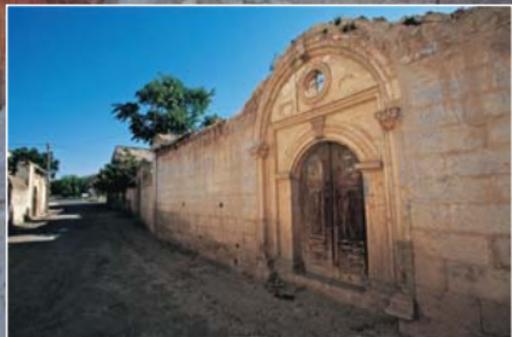
## ORTAHİSAR

Ortahisar is situated on the Nevşehir-Ürgüp road, at a distance of 6 km from Ürgüp. The fortress of Ortahisar, used both for strategic and settlement purposes, constitutes one of the most important historical centres of the region. On the skirts of the fortress you can see examples of civil architecture characteristic of Cappadocia. The cold storage depots carved into the slopes of almost all the valleys are used to store potatoes and apples grown locally, as well as oranges and lemons brought from the Mediterranean area. In the valleys of Ortahisar, too, there are very interesting monasteries and churches; the most important among these are the Sarıca, Cambazlı, Tavşanlı and Balkan Deresi Churches and the Hallaç Dere Monastery.

## MUSTAFAPAŞA (SİNASOS)

Mustafapaşa, a town situated 6 km to the south of Ürgüp, was inhabited by Orthodox Greeks until the beginning





of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Here, we find some beautiful examples of stone masonry in the form of old Greek houses dating to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Gömede Valley, located to the west of Mustafapaşa, is a smaller model of the Ihlara Valley from a geomorphological perspective. As in the case of the Ihlara Valley, in the Gömede Valley too there are rock-cut churches, shelters and a stream crossing the valley. The most important churches and monasteries of Mustafapaşa are the Saint Vasilios Church, the Konstantin-Eleni Church, the churches of the Monastery Valley and the Alakara Church and the St. Basil Chapel in the Gömede Valley.

In Mustafapaşa there is also a theological school with beautiful examples of stone masonry and wood carvings, built by Şakir Mehmet Pasha in the Ottoman period.

## GÜLŞEHİR

Gülşehir, situated at a distance of 20 km from Nevşehir, on the southern shore of the Kızılırmak River, was known in Antiquity as 'Zoropassos' and later as 'Arapsun.' Public works of the kind carried out by Damat Ibrahim Pasha in Nevşehir were realised in Gülşehir by the Ottoman Grand Vizier Karavezir Mehmet Seyyid Pasha, who had a compound consisting of a mosque, a

theological school and a fountain built in the town, which consisted of only 30 households. The ruins of Açık Saray (Open Palace), located on the Nevşehir-Gülşehir road, at a distance of 3 km from Gülşehir, was an important episcopal centre with numerous spaces carved into tuff rocks, rock tombs dating to the Roman period and rock-cut churches dating to the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>





Fountain/Second courtyard/Hacıbektaş Veli Museum

centuries. At this archaeological site there is also a unique fairy chimney shaped like a mushroom.

On the lower floor of the two-storey Church of St. Jean, which is situated right at the entrance of Gülşehir, there are a church, wine cellars, tombs, a water canal and attendants' rooms, while on the upper floor there is another church adorned



with scenes taken from the Bible. According to the inscription in the apse, the church was built in 1212.

## HACI BEKTAŞ

Hadji Bektash Wali, after whom the district situated on the Nevşehir-Kırşehir road, at a distance of 45 km from Nevşehir, has been named, was born in the 13<sup>th</sup> century in Khorasan,



Kitchen/ Second courtyard

in present day Iran. Hadji Bektash, who received his initial education from the famous thinker Ahmed Yasavi, followed the Turkish migration from east to west and arrived in Anatolia at a time when the political and economic order of Anatolian Seljuks was disrupted and divisions



were emerging in the administration. Hadji Bektash, who travelled from village to village, working hard for the achievement of Turkish unity and striving to successfully merge Turkish customs and traditions with Islamic faith, founded a school in a district once known as ‘Sulucakarahöyük,’ and here he trained students so that the Turkish language and culture would

be protected from foreign influences and from all kinds of corruption. The compound, where the mausolea of Hadji Bektash Wali and Balım Sultan are located, contains a mosque, a laundry, a bath, a soup kitchen, a guest house and fountains. Open to the public as a museum, the compound contains three successive courtyards. In the first courtyard, known as the Nadar Courtyard, there are the Üçler Foundation, built in 1902, a laundry and a bath.

The Dergah Courtyard is accessed via an entrance known as 'Üçler Entrance.' The fountain, built in 1554, which is to the immediate right of this entrance came to be known as 'Arslanlı (Lion) Fountain,' after the statute of a lion sent from Egypt by the daughter of Kavalalı Mehmet Ali Pasha was placed here in 1875. This courtyard contains a mosque built under the rule of the Ottoman Sultan Mahmut II, a guest house where guests and travellers visiting the dervish convent were accommodated and a soup kitchen. Valuable goods and food for the dervish convent were stored under the Pantry House, adjacent to the Square House. The Hazret Courtyard is accessed via the 'Altılar Entrance.' At the entrance there is a private garden, to the right there are the tombs of dervishes and elders and directly across there is the mausoleum of Hadji Bektash Wali, which

was built under Sultan Orhan Gazi and displays the main characteristics of Seljuk architecture. The Room of Asceticism, where Hadji Bektash used to seclude himself, and the Kırklar Square are in this part of the compound. Hadji Bektash's mausoleum has a green sarcophagus, a green drape and various candelabra and is decorated with hand-drawn ornamentations and lettering.

Kokar Church/Ihlara Valley



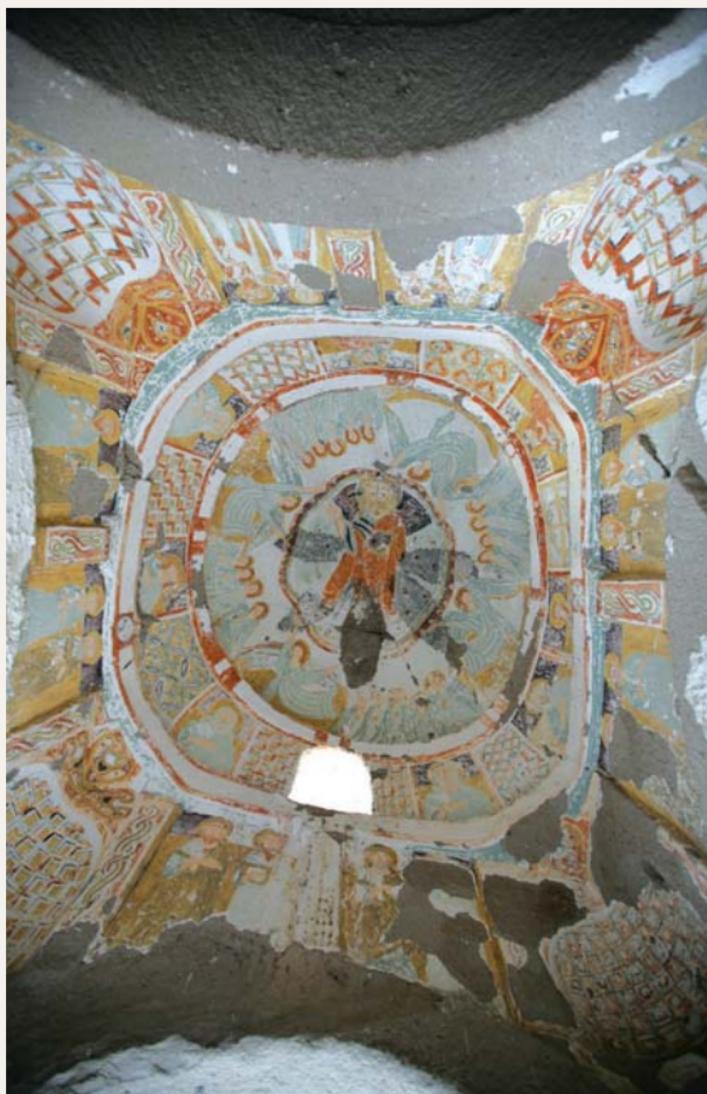


Kokar Church/Ihlara Valley

To the east of the Kırklar Square there are the graves of the Khorasan Soldiers and to the west graves said to belong to gentlemen and the mausoleum of Güvenç Abdal. To the right of the Hazret Square is the Mausoleum built in 1519 for Balım Sultan, who succeeded Hadji Bektash.

## THE IHLARA VALLEY

The Ihlara Valley, at a distance of 40 km from Aksaray, is reached by taking a turn at the 11<sup>th</sup> kilometre of the Aksaray-Nevşehir road. The canyon was formed by the cracks and slumps that arose when the lava of rich basalt and andesite content spewed from Hasandağı cooled. The Melendiz Stream, which has formed the canyon



Ascension/Ağaçaltı Church-Ihlara Valley

by carving its path through these cracks, was known in Antiquity as 'Potamus Kapadukus,' which means 'River of Cappadocia.'

The 14 km long valley begins in Ihlara and ends in Selime. Inside the valley, which reaches

a height of 100-150 m in some places, are numerous shelters, tombs and churches. Some of the shelters and churches are connected to each other via tunnels, just like they do in the underground cities. Because of its geomorphological characteristics, the Ihlara Valley served not only as an ideal location for monks and priests to go into seclusion and perform their worship, but also as a good shelter and hiding place during times of emergency, such as wars and occupations.

The decorations in the churches of the Ihlara Valley extend from the 6<sup>th</sup> century to the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The churches situated along the valley can be divided into two groups. While the wall paintings of the churches close to Ihlara are



Presentation of Jesus in the Temple/Karabaş Church



Saints/Karabaş Church

different from Cappadocian art and present an eastern influence, those of the churches close to Belisırma are of the Byzantine type.

In the Ihlara region there are very few inscriptions from Byzantine times. The Ağaçalı, Pürenliseki, Kokar, Yılanlı and Kırkdamalı churches are among the churches with the best preserved paintings in the Ihlara Valley.

## SOĞANLI VALLEY

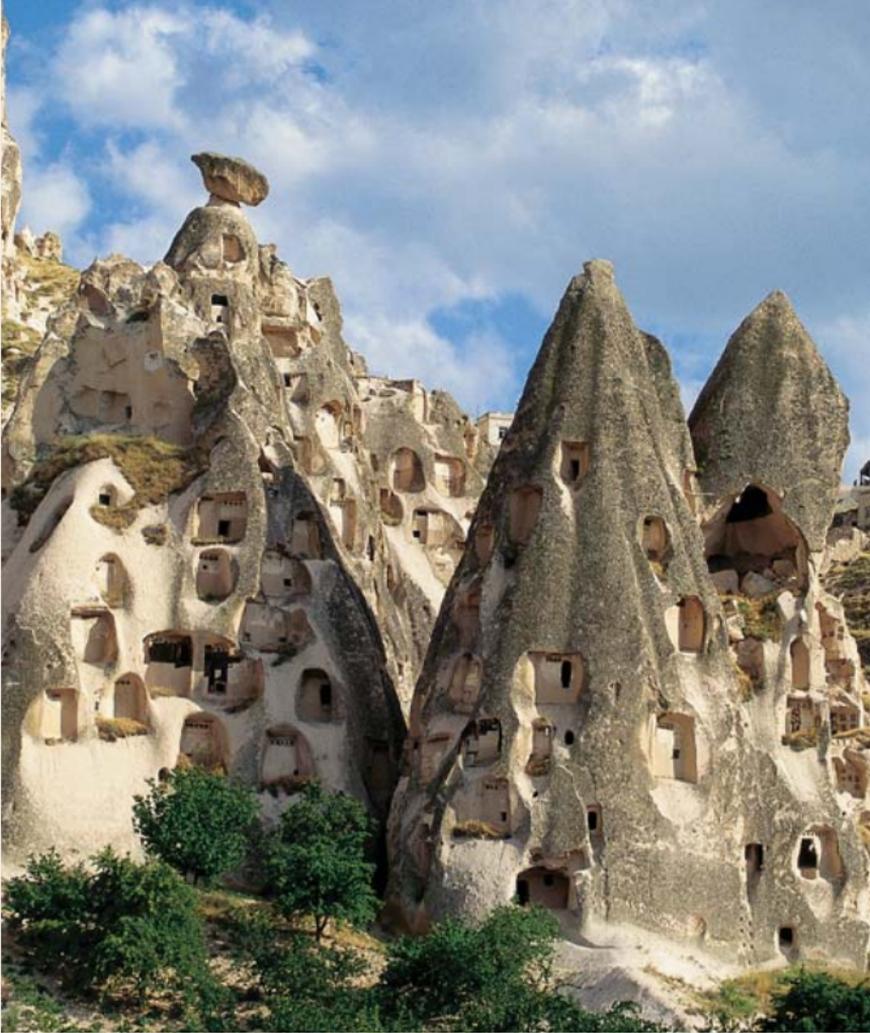
The Soğanlı Valley is within the Yeşilhisar district of Kayseri, 40 km to the south east of Ürgüp and 25 km to the east of the Derinkuyu Underground City. The Soğanlı area collapsed



Soğanlı Valley

during earthquakes and the collapsed area deepened as a result of natural causes and formed valleys and plateaus. The Soğanlı Valley, which consists of two parts, has been settled continuously from the Roman period onwards. The rocky cones situated on the valley's slopes were used as tombs by the Romans and as churches by the Byzantines. Looking at their frescoes, the churches can be dated to the 9<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> centuries.

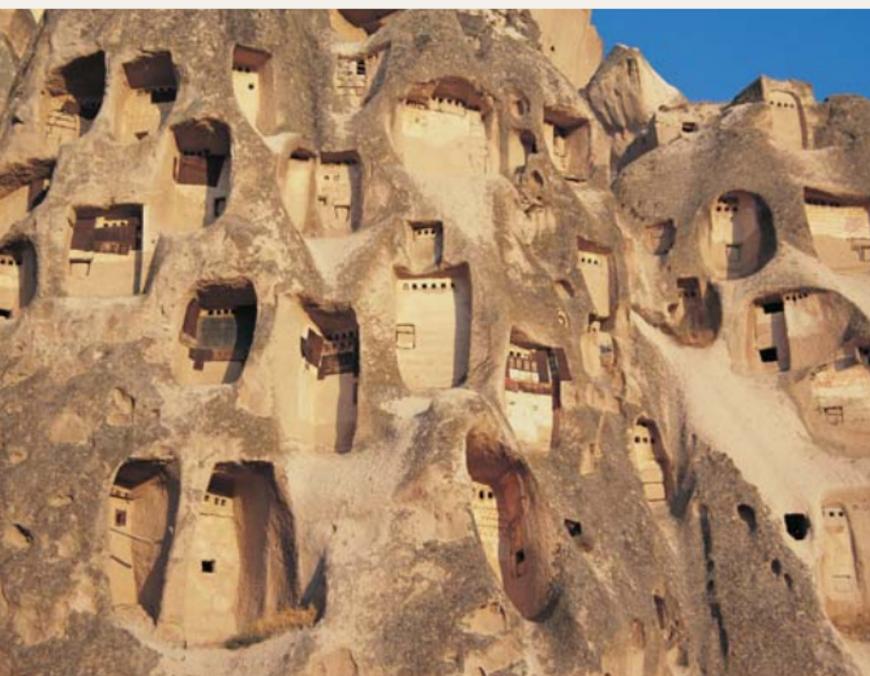
Karabaş, Yılanlı, Kubbeli and St. Barbara (Tahtalı) are the most important churches in the Soğanlı Valley. The Karabaş Church, located on the steep slope on the right side of the valley that extends from the Soğanlı village towards the north, contains many burial chambers, chapels with wide vaults and rooms used by church



Uçhisar

attendants. The church, which has a single nave and apse, dates to the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

The church referred to by the locals as Kubbeli Kilise (that is to say, The Domed Church) has side walls made to look as if lined with masonry and mortar, and domes which have been formed by very delicately carving the fairy chimney. With its vaults, domes and apses, this church



Uçhisar

possesses what are clearly very advanced architectural characteristics. Built in the style of a basilica, with three naves and an apse, the church is dated to the early 10<sup>th</sup> century.

## THE PIGEONRIES OF CAPPADOCIA

Though they tend to escape the attention of most of us, pigeonries actually contain some excellent examples of the Islamic art of painting in its local guise. Pigeonries have been carved into the rock surfaces of the slopes of almost all the valleys, or constructed out of local cut stone, all over the region. Another type of pigeonry is the type made by closing the entrances and windows

of previously constructed monasteries and churches. The external surfaces of pigeonries were generally heavily decorated by local artists, in accordance with the traditions and social life of the time. The wheel of fortune motif, which symbolises the rotation of the world, the turning of fortune and the circle of destiny or of love; the tree of life motif, which derives from shamanist traditions and ensures the passage to the other world; and the pomegranate, which symbolises heaven, abundance and fertility, are among the most commonly used motifs. In most cases, the date it the pigeonry was made and the words ‘Maşallah’ and ‘Allah’ were written on it in the old Turkish script, while some rare examples include

### Göreme





the name and profession of the pigeonry's owner as well. The motifs used in the pigeonries, which were very colourfully decorated, reflect the feelings, thoughts, messages and creativity of the local artists.

The decorations, which contain over one hundred different motifs identified thus far, demonstrate that Cappadocian artists of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries preferred patterns that were simple but mystical in meaning.

## CIVIL ARCHITECTURE OF CAPPADOCIA

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, houses in Cappadocia were either carved into rocks on slopes, or built in cut stone. The only architectural material readily available in this area, stone could be worked easily because, due to its volcanic origins, it was soft when it came out of the furnace, yet it also hardened soon after coming into contact with air, thus making it a very resistant construction material. Because of the abundance of such stone and the fact that it could be worked easily, a kind of stone masonry unique to this region developed and became an architectural tradition. The courtyards and the doors of houses were generally made of wood. The upper part of the arched entrances were decorated with stylised ivy and rosette motifs.

The spaces among the brackets in between the floors of houses were filled with one, two or three rows of rosette, star, palmette, fan, whirligig and stylised floral motifs. The surfaces of consoles generally resemble curtain tassels and are



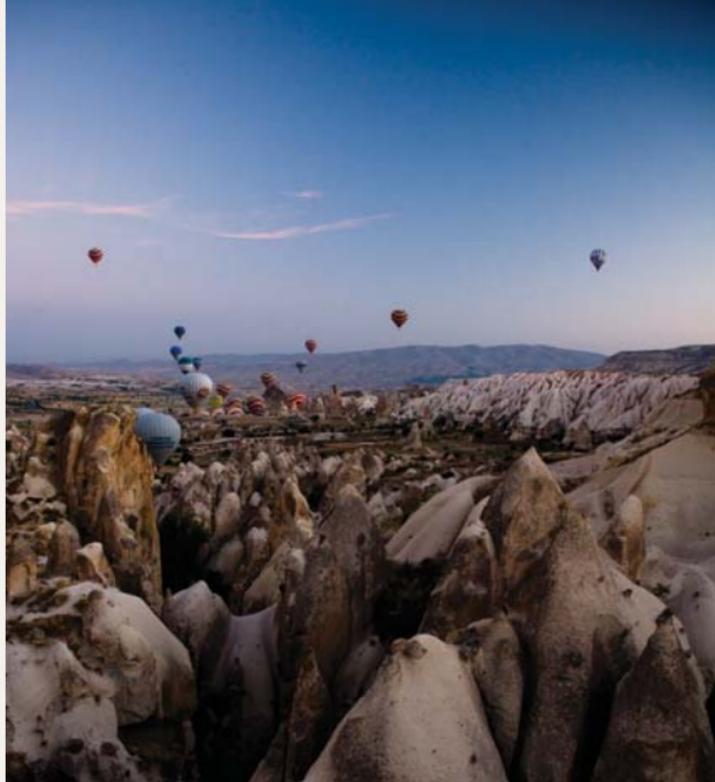
## Göreme

covered with high relief motifs. Windows are in groups of twos or threes and are surrounded by stylised floral motifs. Windows came in two types: either winged or sash windows. Houses consisted of many rooms, a kitchen, a pantry, a storage area, a tandouri oven, places for the production of wine or grape juice, etc. Niches in guest rooms are decorated with paint over plaster. Under curtain tassle motifs we generally find depictions of either vases with handles, full of flowers, or women either carrying or filling a vase with water. The most interesting examples of local architecture date to the late-19<sup>th</sup> century and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. This interesting architectural tradition can be seen in almost



all towns and villages of Cappadocia, starting with Ürgüp, Ortahisar, Mustafapaşa, Uçhisar, Göreme, Avanos and Güzelöz (within the limits of the province of Kayseri), nearby Başköy and Güzelyurt in the Ihlara Valley.

Cappadocia, situated in the centre of Anatolia, is a one-of-a-kind region that has bridged the East and the West from prehistoric ages to our day and has always constituted an indispensable crossroads with its perfect blend of natural, historical and cultural wealth. This region, where beautiful horses were once bred, at times resembles a desert, arid and barren; at times a wonderland, full of colourful vegetation; and at times another planet, boggling the mind with its fascinating rocky terrain. Indeed, it is thanks to both its exceptional natural features and its



history marked by an abundance of cultures, that Cappadocia has attained its rightful place in the World Cultural and Natural Heritage List.

## **CAPPADOCIA- NATURE SPORTS AND ACTIVITIES**

Popular outdoor activities in Cappadocia include hikes in the valleys, hot air balloon flights, horseback safaris, mountain biking and cross golf. The valleys of Gulludere (Rose Valley) I and II, Kızılıcukur (Red Valley), Meskendir, Gomedada - Uzengi, Ak Valley - Bağlıdere, some of the best known valleys of Cappadocia, offer some of the best trails for hiking. On these trails, one can wander through rock-hewn churches, fairy chimneys and dovecotes and along these valleys. It may also be possible to become familiar with the local fauna and flora.

Hot air balloon flights offer a unique experience for viewing the extraordinary geological formations of Cappadocia. The flights are offered throughout the year - weather and wind permitting. Horse-back safaris are offered in all the valleys of Göreme National Park and provide another way to become close to nature in Cappadocia. Along with valleys that can be discovered on horse-back, traveling on the old village roads provides the chance to learn about the folklore and traditions of the region.

Many mountain-bikers choose to visit Cappadocia because its unique valleys are also suitable for this activity. Because of the popularity of mountain-biking, an annual International Mountain Biking Festival is held in the region in June.

Cross Golf has been recently introduced to Cappadocia. Since Cappadocia is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site, organizers of cross golf and mountain biking, are keenly aware of their responsibility to not cause any permanent damage to the natural surroundings. Although cross golfing may be a popular sport elsewhere in the world, it is one of the newest alternative outdoor activities to be introduced to Cappadocia.

