

## Archaeological Treasures of Eastern Turkey May 18—June 3, 2012

We arrived in Ankara on May 19<sup>th</sup> and settled into our hotel. The first person we met was our Turkish guide, Namik Ilksoy, who was working with the hotel staff as we checked in. We were really fortunate, as he is extremely knowledgeable, nice, and funny. We had met one of our fellow travelers in Chicago before the trip, and have known the academic leader for several years...Gil Stein, who is the Director of the Oriental Institute and has done 20 years of excavation in Turkey, speaks Turkish, and is very, very funny and nice. We met the rest of the group at dinner in the hotel. There were only 12 of us, plus our two guides and the bus driver, and it was a good group.

The food on the trip was very good, especially in the east where all of the vegetables were freshly harvested, the cheese, yoghurt, and honey were local, and the breads freshly baked. Lots of eggplant, olives, fresh tomatoes, potatoes, and so forth. We had a different soup at every lunch and dinner, often a kind of lentil soup, but also sometimes yoghurt, mushroom, vegetable, or tomato. Lunches were a soup first course with salads, a main course, and a dessert...often baklava which got better and better as we moved to the southeast. Dinners were mostly buffet, and in the hotel. Our breakfasts were all buffets in the hotel, the variety of choices varying from hotel to hotel, but always including fresh honey still in the honey comb, fresh yoghurt, boiled eggs, cheese, fruit, and fresh bread. There were usually western choices as well. There were bowls of different kinds of honey, in addition to the honey comb. My favorite was pine honey, which is very distinctive.

Our days started early, so by the end of dinner we were ready to fall into bed. Because the sites were so far apart, we had long periods on the bus, which was surprisingly tiring. The sites involved walking and sometimes hiking over rough terrain.

I'll put photos at the end, by site, so I can make them larger than if I embedded them in the text, and that way you won't have to print out photos if you decide to print the text only.

On May 20<sup>th</sup>, we started at the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations in Ankara, which is in a refurbished building that used to be the bazaar, and has a wonderful collection. They have a few displays from early periods: Paleolithic, Neolithic, and Early Bronze, and really great artifacts from the different civilizations that we would be exploring on the trip: Assyrian trading colonies, Hittite, Phrygian, and Urartian sites, and some more "modern" artifacts from the Greek, Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, Seljuq and Ottoman periods. We spent the morning in the museum and it wasn't nearly enough time.

Driving to the next site, the Temple of Augustus, built between 25 and 20 BCE, we passed the Ataturk mausoleum, but there wasn't time to stop. The Castle of Ankara was close to the Temple of Augustus, so we got some photos of the castle from the bottom of the hill. The temple remains are on a square, with a nice overlook of part of the city. One of the interesting things about the temple is that after Augustus died in 14 AD, the "The Deeds of the Divine Augustus" was inscribed inside the pronaos part of the temple in Latin and on the outside wall in Greek.

After lunch in the area, we drove about 70 miles southwest to Gordion, which had been the capital of Phrygia during the 8<sup>th</sup> century, BCE. Midas is the most famous king

of the Phrygians, and one of the giant burial tumuli in the area is called the Midas Mound because of the richness of the burial goods. In the middle of the tumulus (164 feet high by 1000 feet in diameter) is a giant log structure that held a coffin, pottery and bronze vessels, bronze fibulae, and carved and inlaid wooden furniture. There are about 150 tumuli in the area, most between 10 and 40 feet high. We were able to go into the Midas Mound via a ground-level tunnel, and it was incredible. You really felt the weight of all that earth above you, and we could see the log "cabin" still in place, though cut when they removed the artifacts.

Nearby, there is an Iron Age citadel, dating to the 9<sup>th</sup> century BCE, which included buildings that have evidence of state-run textile and food production. The adjoining museum includes bits of a mosaic floor found on the site, made out of colored pebbles, and artifacts from the tumulus.

This is where Alexander the Great is supposed to have cut the Gordian Knot.

May 21<sup>st</sup> we checked out of our hotel after breakfast and drove about 125 miles east to Hattasa, the capitol of the Hittite empire between the 18<sup>th</sup> century BCE and 1200 BCE. This is a large (1.3 by 0.8 miles) UNESCO World Heritage Site. There are remains of city walls and buildings, a tunnel through the walls that we walked through, and a temple dedicated to the god of storms and the goddess of the Sun, Arinna. The wall includes remnants of the Lions' Gate, the Kings' Gate, and the Sphinx Gate. Thousands of cuneiform tablets were found in this area...some are at the Museum of Anatolian Civilization. There is a very beautiful green stone that must have served some ceremonial purpose that has been left on the site, but of course all of the artifacts are in museums.

A short distance from Hattasa is Yazılıkaya, a sanctuary of the Hittites. There are two areas of rock-cut reliefs of the gods of the Hittite pantheon, now more worn than we expected but still very impressive.

We then drove about 150 miles south to Cappadocia, arriving in time to walk around one of the areas of strange rock formations, called fairy chimneys, before sunset. The formations are formed by weathering of volcanic rock, and since the rock is soft, people have carved homes, churches, and fruit storage areas into the rock. The area has a long history, influenced by the Hittites, Phrygians, Persians, Byzantines, Seljuks, and Ottomans.

May 22<sup>nd</sup> we were in Cappadocia for the entire day, so had the luxury of two nights in the same hotel, and very short bus rides. We spent the morning in the Göreme Open Air Museum, another UNESCO World Heritage Site. This was a Byzantine monastic settlement, and has churches, monasteries, and chapels carved into the rock, as well as homes. Unfortunately, we were not allowed to take photos inside the churches...the frescos are really interesting...but the spaces are tiny (some just one small room, others large underground complexes of tiny rooms) and the crowds large.

Our next stop was The Kaymakli Underground City, which is one of the largest underground cities in the region. It has 8 floors underground, and low, narrow, sloping passages. We had to walk stooped over in some sections, and we were really glad that our hats had padding in the top, since we bumped our heads on the ceiling

occasionally. There is evidence that people could live in the space for long periods of time, so probably used the space to hide from enemies. There are a lot of storage rooms and places to put earthenware jars, and grinding stones. We walked past the ventilation shaft, which is about 80 meters deep, and we could feel cool air on your face, but I couldn't see either the top or the bottom of the shaft.

We now had some "photo opportunities" at overlooks of fairy chimneys, lunch in a restaurant that had served as the set for a Turkish soap opera, 'Asmalı Konak,' (our guide described the soap opera as a Turkish "Dallas," where the family dynasty was based on something like olive oil, though we can no longer remember if this is correct), and a visit to a family who live in a fairy castle. Throughout Turkey, we were given tea when we visited families or offices or businesses. This was our first experience with this custom. We were offered Turkish Tea or Apple Tea. Both were very good. We had been coached in the proper Turkish phrases to greet our hosts when we arrived at the home, and the parents were so impressed as we mimicked the correct phrases in unison that they brought their child in to repeat the performance. It was all very interesting.

Our final two stops of the day were a pottery "factory," where replicas of ancient pots were made by hand, and a Whirling Dervish religious ceremony in an old Caravanserai. We were given tea and a demonstration by several potters at the pottery "factory," as well as the opportunity to buy the finished products. We were not allowed to take photos of the Whirling Dervish ceremony, but could take photos of the Caravanserai.

May 23<sup>rd</sup> we drove to Gaziantep, with a stop at Karatepe. The distance from Cappadocia to Karatepe is 237 miles, and then another 86 miles into Gaziantep. The first part of the drive was mostly south, through the Taurus Mountain range, which was really spectacular. Lots of rugged peaks and bits of snow on the tops of the mountains. When we came down to the plains, as we approached the Mediterranean, the air changed to moist sea air, the temperature rose, and the vegetation changed from alpine to lush fields of fruit and olive trees and vegetables. It was very dramatic and beautiful.

Karatepe is a Neo-Hittite fortress that is especially important because of 8<sup>th</sup>-century BCE bilingual inscriptions, in Phoenician and Hieroglyphic Luwian which helped in the translation of Luwian. It is in a beautiful setting, on a hill top along a river, with forests all around. The orthostats (upright, carved panels) at the site are really interesting, and you can see both the Hittite and Phoenician influences in the carvings.

May 24<sup>th</sup> started with the wonderful Zeugma Mosaic Museum, the world's largest mosaic museum, one of the best museums we have ever seen. It is not completed, but the sections that are open are incredible. Many of the mosaics are from Zeugma, and were rescued in 2000 when plans for new dams on the Euphrates meant that much of Zeugma would be flooded. Zeugma is thought to have been founded by a general in Alexander the Great's army. Outside the museum is a line of camel statues to commemorate the Silk Road.

From Gaziantep, we drove east about 105 miles to Gobekli Tepe, crossing the Euphrates on the way. Gobekli Tepe is the site that made us decide to take this trip. We have both wanted to see it since first hearing about it. It is an early Neolithic "sanctuary" (called the earliest human-built temple yet found, about 11,000 years old), has T-

shaped limestone pillars set in circles in thick interior walls, with two taller pillars at the center. Four circles have been found so far, but surveys have found 16 more probable structures. The circles were probably roofed. Amazing reliefs are carved into some of the stones, and some have arms carved into the sides. We also saw carved animals from the site in the museum in Urfa the next day. The hotel had given us sandwiches to take along, so we had a picnic of sorts before starting the site.

After dragging ourselves away from this site, we drove about 34 miles south (actually, this is such a remote area that the roads are not direct, so there was a certain amount of retracing our steps in this area) to Harran, the legendary home of Abraham. Ancient Harran was a major commercial, cultural, and religious center first inhabited in the Early Bronze Age III (3rd millennium BCE) period, but was influenced by Assyrians, Hittites, Persians, Romans and Greeks. During the late 8th and 9th centuries Harran was a center for the translation of works of astronomy, philosophy, natural sciences, and medicine from Greek to Syriac. The ruins of the city walls and fortifications are still in place, with one city gate still standing. In the town, there were 'beehive' adobe houses, constructed entirely without wood, and we were able to tour one that is being kept open as a museum. We were served tea. It was a long, hot day, so we were happy to arrive in Urfa for the night, just 30 miles on the bus.

May 25<sup>th</sup>, we spent most of the day in Urfa. For the Armenians, Urfa is considered a holy place since it is believed that Armenian alphabet was invented there. The Pool of Sacred Fish is where Abraham was thrown into the fire by Nimrod, and the fire went out. Urfa was renamed Şanlıurfa (Urfa the Glorious) in 1984. We started with the Urfa Museum, which contains artifacts from Gobekli Tepe and Harran, as well as several other sites in the area. The artifacts from Gobekli Tepe include the oldest life-sized statue of a human, carvings of animals, and a wonderful "totem". Our academic leader, Gil Stein, had set up the display for his nearby excavation site, which was especially interesting. We then visited the Sacred Fish and the bazaar, had lunch and drove the 92 miles to Kahta.

In Kahta we checked into the hotel, the Hotel Zeus, and pulled our heavy coats and walking sticks out of the suitcases while Namik arranged for small buses to take us to Nemrut Dağ, 10 miles, or so, which felt a lot further because of the bumpy road. When Alexander the Great died and his kingdom broke up, Commagene, was formed and became semi-independent from 162 BC to 72 AD. Nemrut Dağ is where the tomb site of one of the rulers, of Antiochos I (69-34 BC), is found. The tomb is a cone of gravel, 165 feet tall and 500 feet in diameter, on a mountain top 7000 feet high, with colossal statues, 23 feet tall, sitting in lines on terraces. The heads have all fallen off now. The statues represent gods, Zeus, Tyche, Apollo, etc., and of course Antiochos himself. We climbed up from a parking lot to the summit, and we know how much work that was, so we couldn't really imagine how hard it was for the workers to build the tumulus and get the statues up there. An incredible place!!



May 26<sup>th</sup> we left the hotel early so we could catch a car ferry across the top end of a lake to avoid retracing our steps and save a couple of hours of driving. We probably drove 150 or so miles instead of 210 to get to our next stop, Mardin. And it was interesting to see the back road. I really loved Mardin. Partly because we spent time in the beautiful old town on a hillside, and we hadn't spent much time in the old sections of the cities we had visited. Partly because it was on the Syrian border, and we could see Syria from one of our stops. Partly, I'm sure, because we were in a good hotel (a Hilton Garden Inn) for two nights, so could do laundry. And maybe a little bit because of the break in the long bus rides.

We arrived in Mardin in time for lunch and a walk through the old town, followed by a visit to the Deyrulzafaran Monastery. This was once the seat of the Syrian Orthodox patriarchate, and the first monastery was built in 495. It was destroyed by the Persians in 607, rebuilt, then looted in 1000. It is really beautiful, and has Syriac inscriptions, the patriarch's throne, the original sanctuary, etc. The gardens had roses and olive trees, as well as a view of Syria.

Our last stop of the day was the Kasimiye Medresi, back in Mardin. It was built in 1469 by Kasim Pasha for his sister and himself.

May 27<sup>th</sup> was spent in and around Mardin. We started with a walk through the old town. We had intended to go to the Mardin Museum, but it was closed on Mondays, and the guard who was supposed to let us into another medrese couldn't be found. The Post Office, which is supposed to have beautiful carvings, is being renovated and has not yet reopened. So we had tea, went to the bazaar and to a mosque, climbed up to the Forty Martyrs Church. The church was built in the 4th century, and was renamed in the 15th century to commemorate the Cappadocian martyrs. It is very beautiful, and has the same style of carvings as the Kasimiye Medresi and the Deyrulzafaran Monastery. Then lunch.

After lunch we went to an area close to a town called Matiat, to a Syriac monastery and then a Syriac church. Both were very beautiful and very interesting. At this point I should mention that our guides were adding things to our itinerary that they thought we would be interested in. We enjoyed the "add ons" tremendously, partly because they were really interesting, and partly because it was a joy to see our guides work out the visits. They really did want to make sure that we got to see things that other tour groups couldn't get into. Near Matiat, we first visited The Monastery of Mor Gabriel, which was founded by two monks in 397. We then went to the Syriac church that claims to be the first Christian church built, starting in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. Their story is that of the 12 kings in the area, 3 were chosen to follow the Star of Bethlehem. Mary gave the 3 Kings a piece of the swaddling clothes. When they brought it back, all 12 wanted their share, so they tried to cut it. It wouldn't cut, so they decided to burn it and

share the ashes. When they burned it, it turned into 12 gold disks, each with the image of Mary and Jesus on one side, and each of the individual kings on the other side. To celebrate this miracle, they built the church.

On May 28<sup>th</sup> we crossed the Tigris, which meant that we had crossed Mesopotamia, though to be honest, at one of the narrower points. Still, it was very exciting. It is very picturesque, with the remains of a Roman bridge still standing.

This was during our 273 mile drive from Mardin to Van. We arrived at the western end of Lake Van in time for lunch, then drove on into Van to visit the Van Kalesi. The castle is a huge stone fortification built by the ancient kingdom of Urartu during the 9<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE, and is the largest example. You can see the ruins of Tushpa, the ancient Urartian capital during the 9<sup>th</sup> century, on the plain below. Climbing down from the top of the fortress, you can see a trilingual inscription of Xerxes the Great from the 5th century BCE that is inscribed on the rock face. As we were coming down, some children wanted me to take their picture, and wanted to play with my walking stick. Steve was able to get a photo of their mother taking a photo of me with the children. We were really lucky with the weather on this trip, and just as we got back to the bus, it started to drizzle rain.

May 29<sup>th</sup> was another beautiful day, and we spent the morning on the island of Akdamar not far off shore in Lake Van. We had the boat pretty much to ourselves, which was nice. A very interesting 10<sup>th</sup> century Armenian Cathedral church, the Cathedral Church of the Holy Cross (915-921), is on the island. It was the seat of an Armenian Catholicos prelate from 1116 to 1895. There are amazing bas-relief carvings, mostly biblical scenes, on the outside of the church, and on the inside are beautiful friezes. After taking lots of photos of the church, a few of us climbed part way up a hill to get the view down over the end of the island. We had lunch when we got back to the mainland.

Namik and Gil had arranged for us to see Ayanos (an active archeological dig on the northeast side of the lake) by calling the Van region's minister of culture. He offered to take us himself and organized photographers, his driver, and a couple of his staff. They gave us a tour of the site, which has very unusual inscriptions in the temple, then gave us fresh homemade bread and cheese, along with tea, at the security guard's house. We were then given a slide show, back in Van, in the minister's office (tea and cookies), about the site we were going to visit the next day, Ishak Pasha Sarayi. The minister had been in charge of the reconstruction of the site. An amazing day!

May 30<sup>th</sup> was another long driving day, about 230 miles from Van to Kars. We started the day with a visit to a national carpet factory, which trains people to make traditional carpets and sells them. Tea was handed out. Around lunch time we arrived at

a plateau near Mount Ararat. The plateau is at about 5300 feet and the main peak of Ararat is 16,854 feet. Of course there was cloud cover, so we never saw the two peaks. After lunch in a small town, we went to Ishak Pasha Sarayi. The Ishak Pasha palace is Ottoman. The original construction was started in 1685, and “our” minister of culture completed the reconstruction recently. The point on the trip that was furthest east was on the stretch of road north of the palace. On this section, we drove past huge fields of lava flows, probably about 5000 years old, and from Mount Ararat. We drove along the Iranian border and the Armenian border briefly. There were fields of flowers, cows, goats, and sheep. Very pretty.

Kars itself is influenced by the Soviet occupation. The Soviets built buildings and left public art works in place when they left. We arrived late enough that we just had time to repack our luggage for the plane flight the next day before dinner, and did not venture out of the hotel.

May 31<sup>st</sup> we checked out of our last hotel in the east and drove east about 30 miles to Ani, on the Armenian border. This is another wonderful site. It was once the capital of a Medieval Armenian state that included current Armenia and eastern Turkey. The Akhurian river that runs past the site is now the border. The remains of a cathedral, several churches, a mosque, city walls, and a citadel still stand in a very large area.

We drove back to Kars for lunch (the mayor of the city was having lunch at a nearby table). We visited a church, a 10<sup>th</sup> century Armenian Church of the Holy Apostles, before heading for the airport for our flight to Istanbul. We were told that we had been driven almost 2000 miles since arriving in Ankara.

During the trip, we had not had time to read newspapers or watch TV news. So we were a little surprised when we arrived in Istanbul about 8pm or so, to be told about the demonstrations in Taksim Square, where our planned hotel was to. First, the tour group tried to get us in to our hotel, but we first tried a route that was full of demonstrators. The second attempt was up a narrow street with demonstrators pouring in, who started pounding on the bus, and there was at least one bottle thrown against the bus. The demonstrators were not mad at us, they just didn’t want us to be in their space. When the bus driver started turning us around, the demonstrators got out of the way and let us leave with no problem. The tour group first tried to get us into a really nice restaurant, but it was Friday night, so there was no room. They then found a restaurant that was perfectly fine and fed us while they were looking for another hotel. We had the best yoghurt ever at this restaurant. The hotel that they found was near the airport, so we were totally safe, and only somewhat inconvenienced by the longer bus ride each day to the tourist sites. And instead of being able to walk everywhere on our own, as we had expected, we were pretty much tied to the bus. All of the tourist sites were “normal” and everyone was very friendly to us. Since we had been to Istanbul

before, in 2001, the shorter amounts of time that we had in some of the sites was not a problem for us, because we already knew what we wanted to revisit.

June 1<sup>st</sup> we spent the morning at the Blue Mosque, the Hagia Sophia, and the Church of Kariye Camii Chora. We had not been to the Church of Kariye Camii, and it was really interesting. The Blue Mosque and the Hagia Sophia had been relatively empty when we had been there before, but all the tourist sites were very crowded this trip. We were told that this was because Turkey had been working hard on the tourist industry and on advertising itself.

The Blue Mosque (the Sultan Ahmed Mosque) has really beautiful frescoes and blue tiles. It was built from 1609 to 1616, by Ahmed I, and has 20,000 handmade tiles that include 50 different tulip designs. (I really love the Ottoman tulip tiles. They are very beautiful and the designs are very modern. I wanted to buy some, but the good ones were much too expensive and the cheap knock-offs were badly done. Oh, well. It saved a lot of weight in our suitcase!)

The Hagia Sophia was built between 532 and 537 by the Emperor Justinian. It was designed by a physicist and a mathematician, so obviously we are especially fond of it. When we were there in 2001, large parts of the building were closed, so it was nice to be able to see so much of the building. In 1453 or so, it was converted to a mosque and the minarets were added, the Christian relics were removed, and the mosaics were either removed or plastered over.

The Church of Kariye Camii is a really lovely Byzantine church with wonderful mosaics and frescoes. The original church was built in the 5<sup>th</sup> century, and most of the current church was built between 1077 and 1081, with the frescos and mosaics probably added around 1315. It was converted to a mosque in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and the mosaics and frescos were covered, which protected them from deterioration.

Our lunch was the best meal that we had on the entire trip, in an Ottoman-recipe-based restaurant. Wonderful stuffed vegetables, salads, etc.

After lunch, some of the group went to the bazaar, but we really wanted to get back to the Cistern and the Hippodrome, so four of us split from the group and walked the few blocks to the Hippodrome. The cistern is a very large underground room, still with wooden walkways built over the water for the tourists. Columns were taken from the ruins of older buildings when it was built, so there is an eclectic mixture of capitals. There are 336 columns, in 12 rows of 28. This is one of our favorite places in Istanbul! The Hippodrome doesn't have much open space left. The three main landmarks are still there, a Serpent Column from ancient Delphi, a "Walled" Obelisk, and our own favorite, the Obelisk of Tuthmosis III. The modern art museum has been built along one side of the Hippodrome, but we didn't have enough time to go in.

We had the evening free, and when we met up with the group we were all taken back to the hotel now close to the airport, which limited the options. Most of the group

went to dinner in a restaurant not far from the hotel, but we decide to swim in the hotel's pool, have dinner in the hotel, and start the repack of the luggage for the flight home.

June 2<sup>nd</sup>, our last day of the tour, we had the morning on our own, so we walked around the neighborhood, found lunch, and pretty much finished the final pack. The bus picked us up at 1 pm or so, and we went back into the Sultanahmet area to Topkapi Palace. Topkapi was originally supposed to be an optional part of the tour, but because of the busing it was easier if we all stayed together. Because of the timing, we didn't feel that there was time to do the Harem tour (there are really beautiful tiles in the Harem rooms), but we had done it in 2001, so were not worried about this. Topkapi was used as the residence of the Ottoman Sultans from 1465 to 1856 (when Abdül Mecid I built Dolmabahçe Palace on the Bosphorus). The kitchen area and the porcelain collection were closed, but we could walk through a lot of the rooms, some with beautiful tile walls. A few rooms display objects from the royal treasury.

Our next stop was the Istanbul Archeology Museums, which includes the Archeology Museum, Museum of the Ancient Orient, and the Museum of Islamic Art. We spent much of our time in the Ancient Orient Museum, which includes artifacts from the Ishtar Gate of Babylon, Hittite orthostats, and the Treaty of Kadesh (the world's first treaty). The Archeology Museum includes a sarcophagus from Sidon that is claimed to be that of Alexander the Great (it really is wonderful), artifacts from the different levels of Troy, Roman and Greek artifacts, etc. Needless to say, we did not have enough time in this museum complex!

From here we were taken to the Bosphorus for a cruise which ended at a restaurant near Rumeli Castle. We zigzagged across the Bosphorus on our way, so we could see the famous Ottoman houses along the shorelines, including Dolmabahçe Palace. It was colder than we expected on the boat, so we wished we had our coats! The restaurant was nice, and afterward we were sent by taxis to the waiting bus, and taken a long way around the city to avoid the demonstrations. As we got close to our hotel, the roads were full of people demonstrating in support of the demonstrators, who waved and smiled at us. We made it into the hotel with no problems.

Our flight home the 3<sup>rd</sup> left really early, but was uneventful...just long!

**May 20<sup>th</sup> Museum of Anatolian Civilizations, Ankara**



Ceiling of the museum



Hittite orthostat

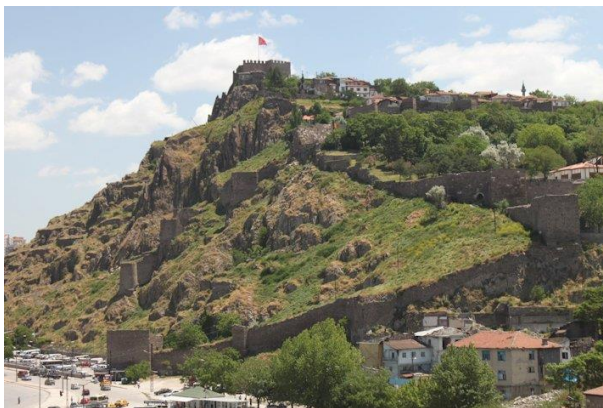


Tiny lion



Mother goddess

**The Temple of Augustus, Ankara**



The castle



Temple of Augustus





Minaret



On the square

## Gordion



The log "cabin" at the center of the Midas mound



Passageway into the mound



Mosaic floor



Production rooms at the citadel



May 21<sup>st</sup>, Hattusa



Lion



Remains of buildings in the lower town



Temple and storerooms



strange green stone



Lions' gate



Sphinx gate





King's gate



Temple District

## Yazılıkaya





## Cappadocia



**May 22<sup>nd</sup> Cappadocia**

**Göreme Open Air Museum**





## The Kaymakli Underground City



## Photo overlooks and Fairy chimney home





## Pottery factory and Caravanserai



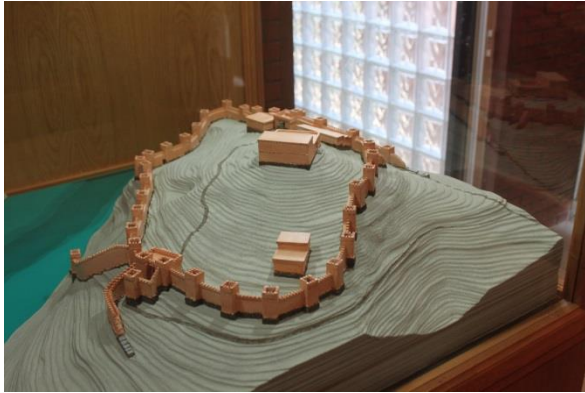
## May 23<sup>rd</sup> Drive to Gaziantep



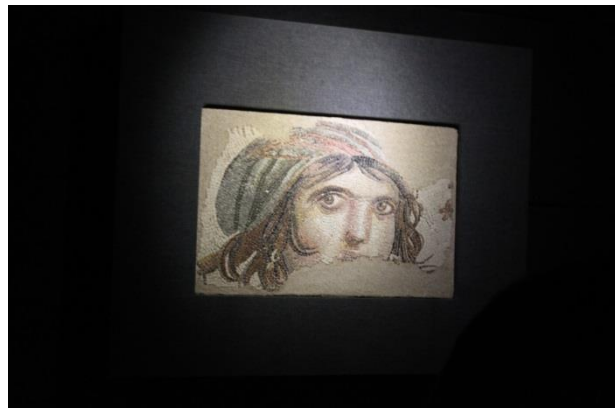
## Karatepe







May 24<sup>th</sup> Zeugma Mosaic Museum





## Crossing the Euphrates



## Gobekli Tepe





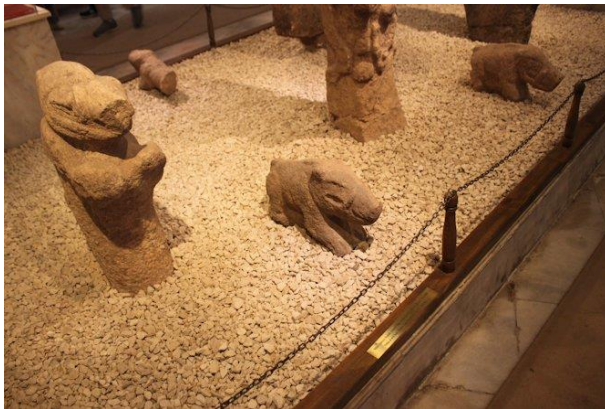


## Harran





May 25<sup>th</sup> Urfa Museum



Pool of Sacred Fishes





## Urfa Bazaar



## Nemrut Dağ





May 26<sup>th</sup> Mardin



Deyrulzafaran Monastery



## Kasimiye Medraesi



## May 27<sup>th</sup> Mardin 40 Martyrs





## The Bazaar



## Monastery of Mor Gabriel





## The first Christian Church



## May 28<sup>th</sup> Crossing the Tigris





## Van Kalesi



## May 29 Akdamar Island



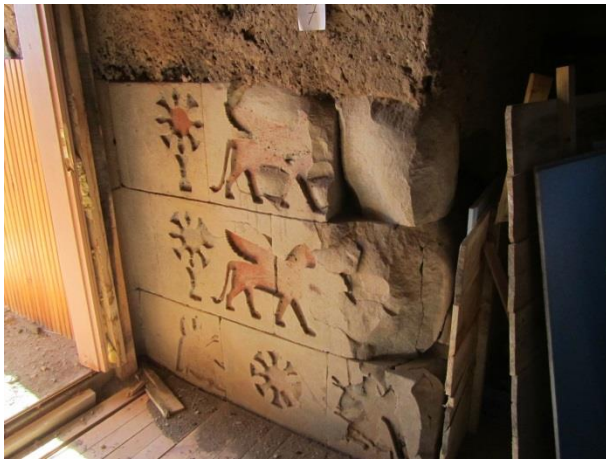




Ayanos







**May 30<sup>th</sup> Ishak Pasha Sarayi**







**Mount Ararat**

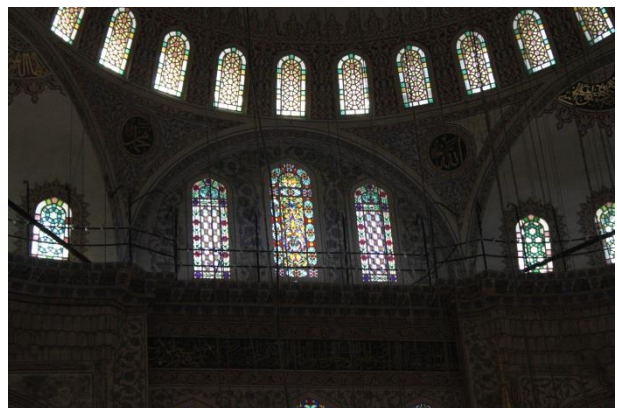


**May 31<sup>st</sup> Ani**





**June 1<sup>st</sup> Istanbul Blue Mosque**





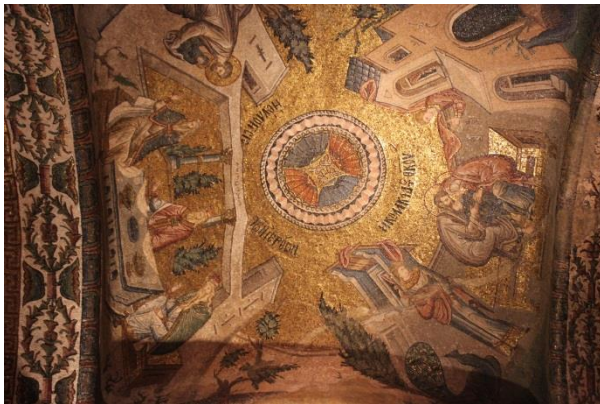


Hagia Sophia





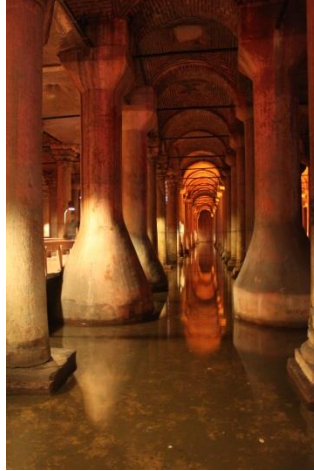
## Kariye Camii



## Cistern







## Hippodrome



## June 2<sup>nd</sup> Topkapi







## Archeological Museums



## Cruise on the Bosphorus

