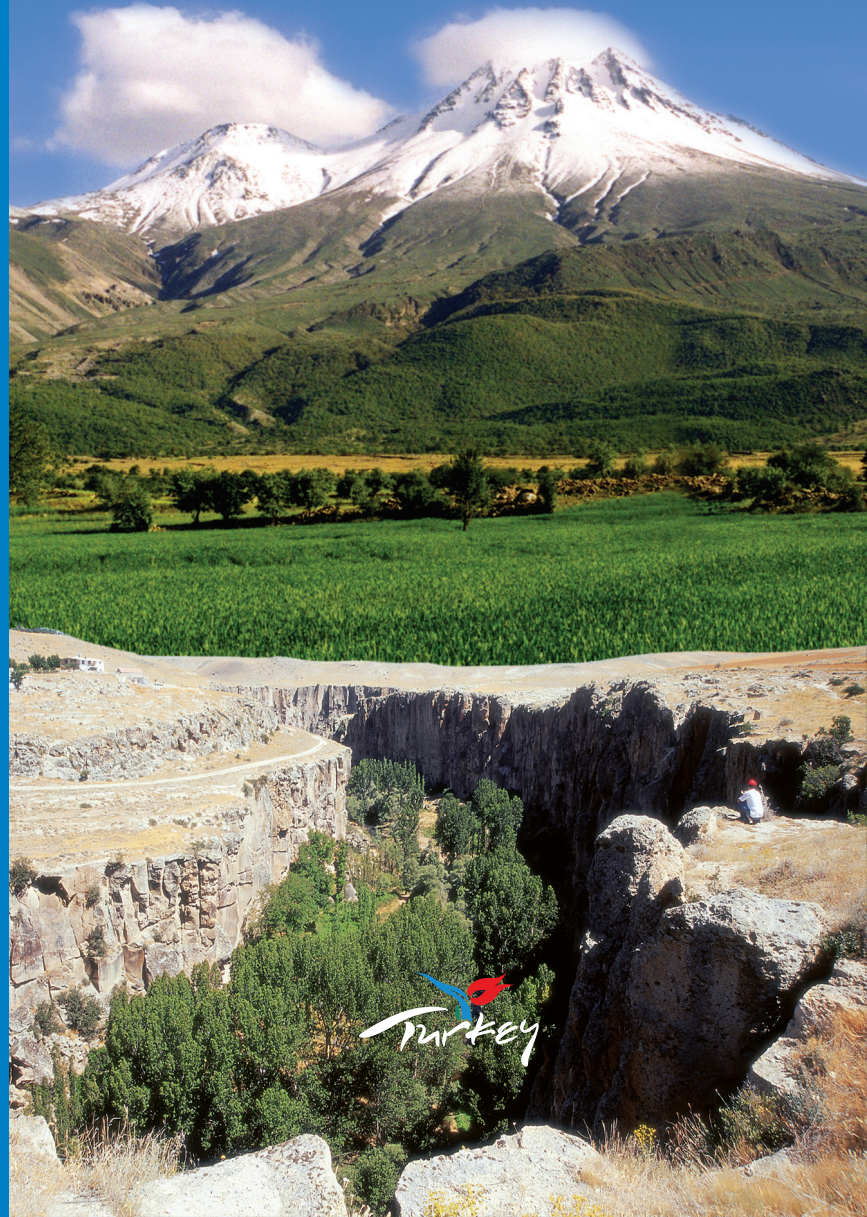


*Aksaray is the gate to the
Cappadocia region*



Turkey

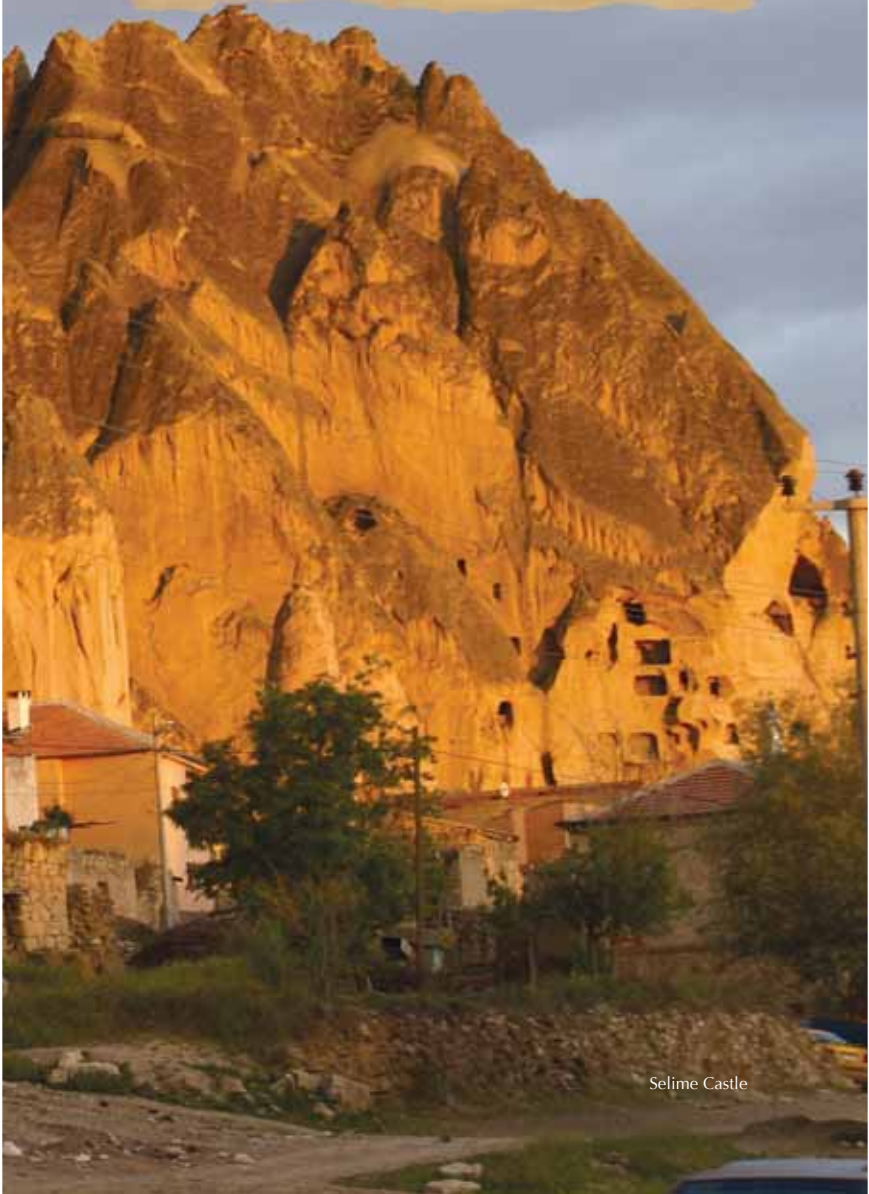
AKSARAY



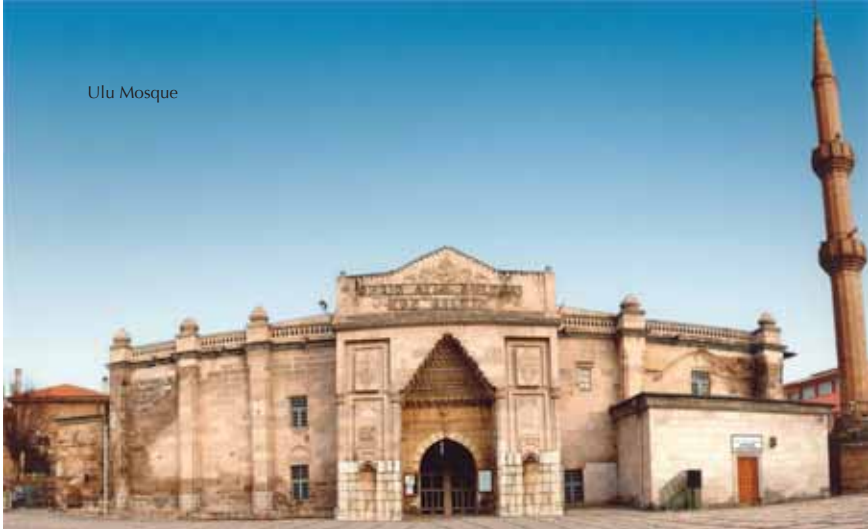
Turkey

In the fairy land of Cappadocia, Aksaray promises a joyful travel beyond dreams.

Ihlara Valley, faith tourism spots, underground cities, the stops on the Silk Road, Lake Tuz, Mount Hasan, ancient cities and spa centres are just some of the riches of your travel.



Selime Castle



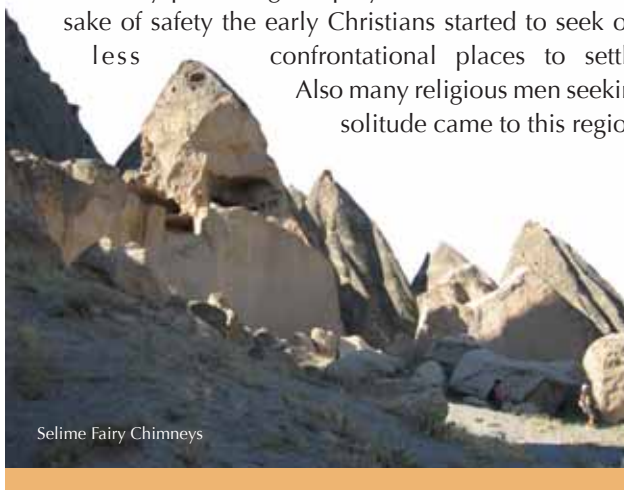
AKSARAY

The first civilisation at Aksaray on the volcanic tufa-rock lands of Cappadocia was at Aşıklı and dates from 8,000 years B.C. At Aşıklıhöyük (mound) is the oldest village belonging to the Neolithic Period in Anatolia and the Near East.

In its long history Aksaray has been the cradle to various civilisations. From 3000 B.C. to 2000 B.C. the Hatti tribes lived in Anatolia. During this period Assyrian merchants traded in this area.

Towards the end of the period of colonisation, the Hittites coming from the Caucasus around 1700 B.C. founded small city-states and made Anatolia into a military state.

In the 1st C. A.D. St. Paul and the disciples began to spread Christianity provoking the polytheistic Romans. For the sake of safety the early Christians started to seek out less confrontational places to settle. Also many religious men seeking solitude came to this region.



Selime Fairy Chimneys

Abbasids took Aksaray from the Byzantium and imposed a tax on it. Later, Ahmet Ghazi, a Turkoman Bey of the Danishmends conquered the entire Cappadocia region. Aksaray came under the domination of the Seljuks after the Danishmend expedition of Seljuk Sultan Rukneddin Mesud I.

Aksaray came under Seljuk sovereignty in 1142. During the reign of Kılıçarslan II, palaces, madrasas, lodges and caravanserais were built.

Kılıçarslan II built a palace and changed the name from Arkhelais to Aksaray (lit. pure palace) and it became a virtual second capital city. The city did not allow bad

people to enter. And because of this it was known as "Şehr-i Süleha" meaning the place where good people live. Aksaray became part of the Ottoman Empire in 1470 when it passed to İshak Pasha. After the conquest of İstanbul the city was under populated and many Aksaray people were resettled in İstanbul, which is the reason that there is a district in İstanbul named Aksaray.

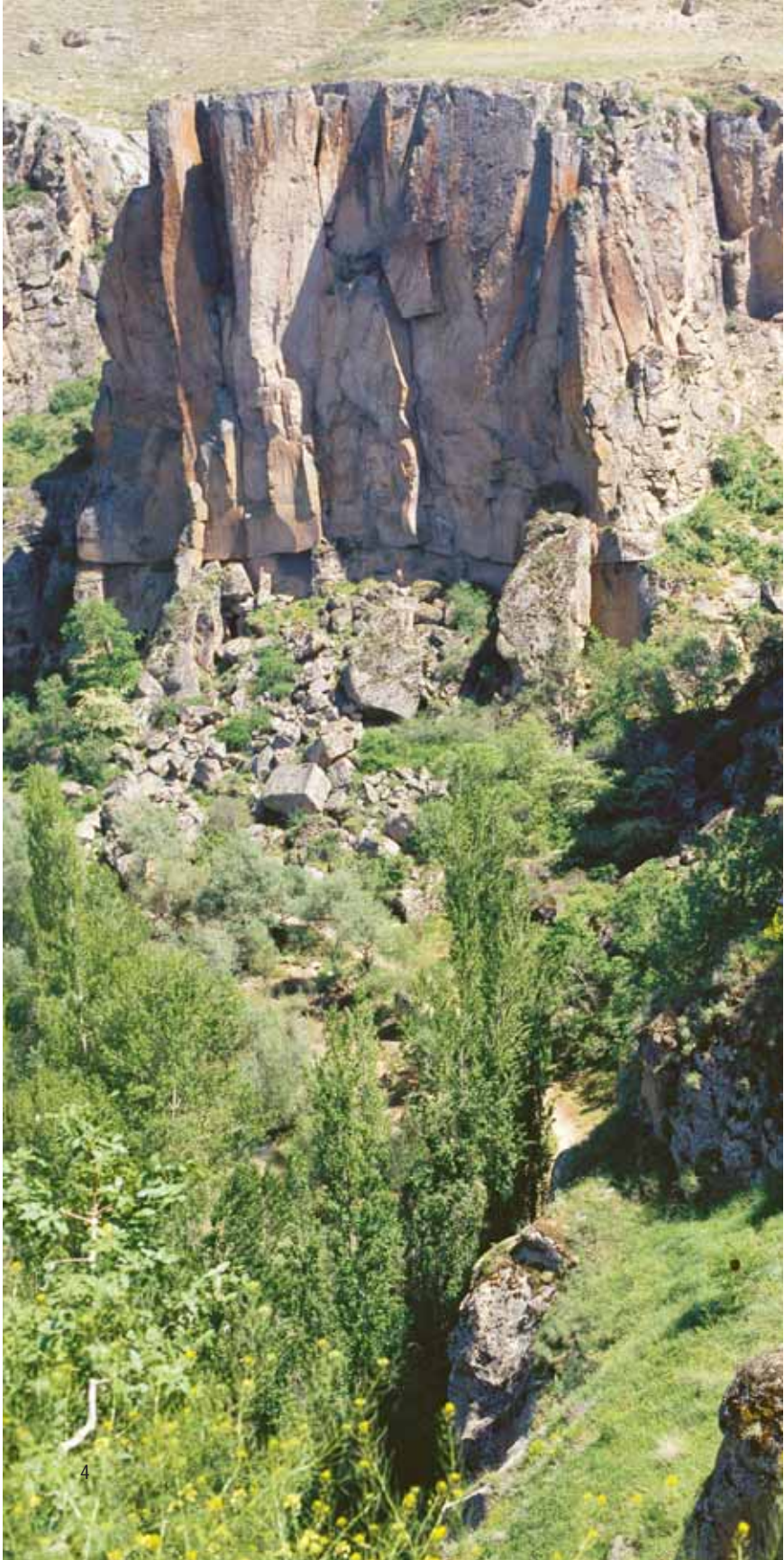
The region has been home to different religions and has been involved in their promulgation and there are many religious artefacts found here belonging especially to the Islamic and Christian periods.



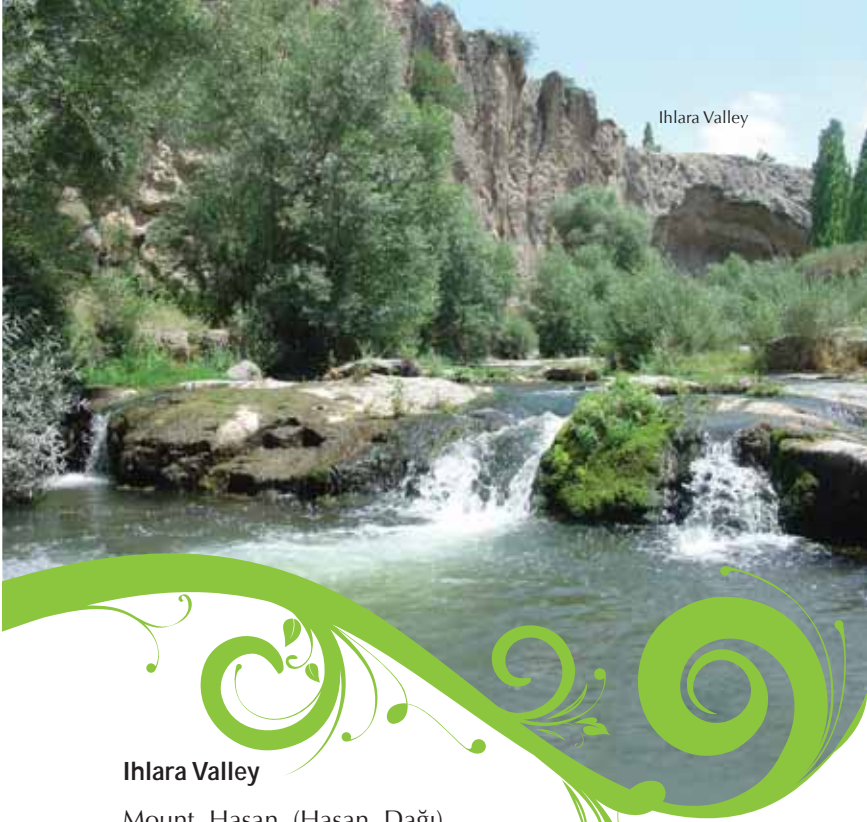
Kızıl Minaret (Eğri Minaret)



Aksaray City View







Ihlara Valley

Ihlara Valley

Mount Hasan (Hasan Dağı), near to the valley, and its environs was formed during the 1st and 2nd periods. Despite the elevations occurred during the Neogene period and the 4th period, the basins stayed in a lower position. The volcanic eruption of Mount Hasan led to tectonic movements that left the surface of the region covered with a layer of volcanic rock. The same volcanic activity led to pressure and heat being put upon the limestone causing it to crack and create naturally spouting springs of hot water; these can be seen at the Ziga Springs between Ihlara and Yaprakhisar. The structural characteristics of the region due to volcanic eruption produced tufa outcrops which were moulded by wind, erosion and other natural phenomena



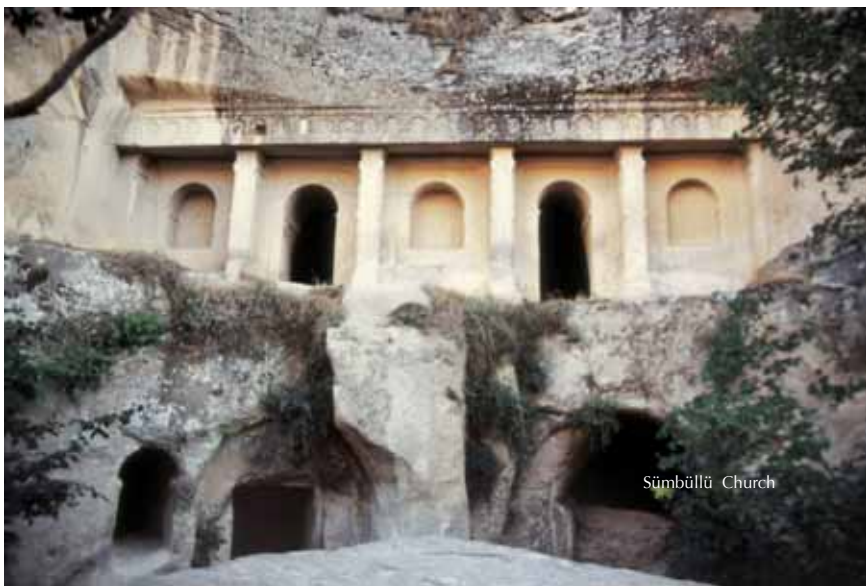
Karagedik Church

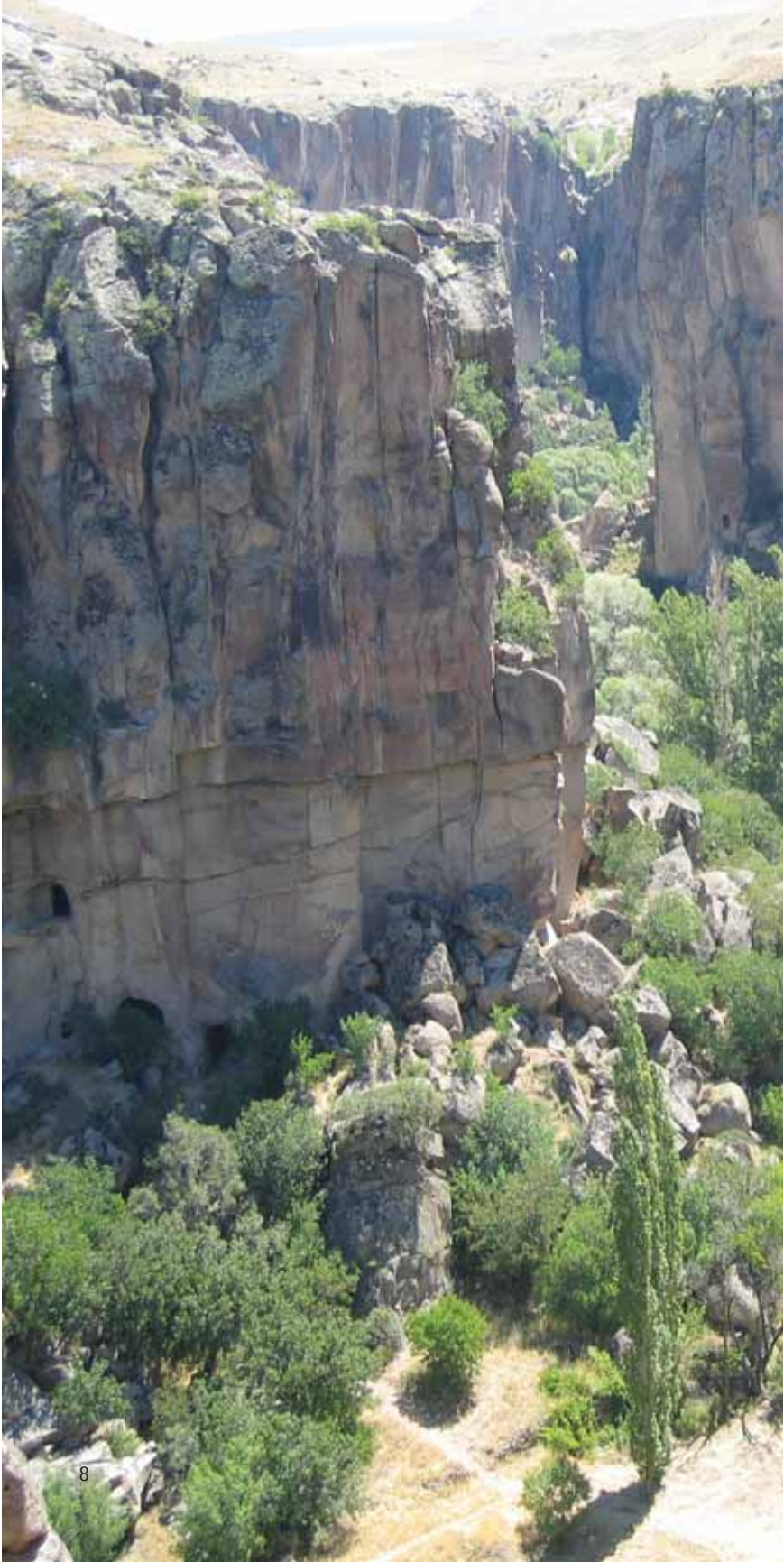
and created the strange and colourful Fairy Chimneys that are also encountered at Selime and Yaprakhisar. The tectonic movements produced tufa rock that in some places is soft and in others is coloured grey, green and brown. Huge areas of crumbling rock completely covered the area in its debris. The Ihlara Valley alongside the Melendiz River is a result of this disintegration that created a canyon with a deep base. The fast flowing river is between 100 and 200 m deep in places and it divides the valley into two; it continues towards Aksaray with the

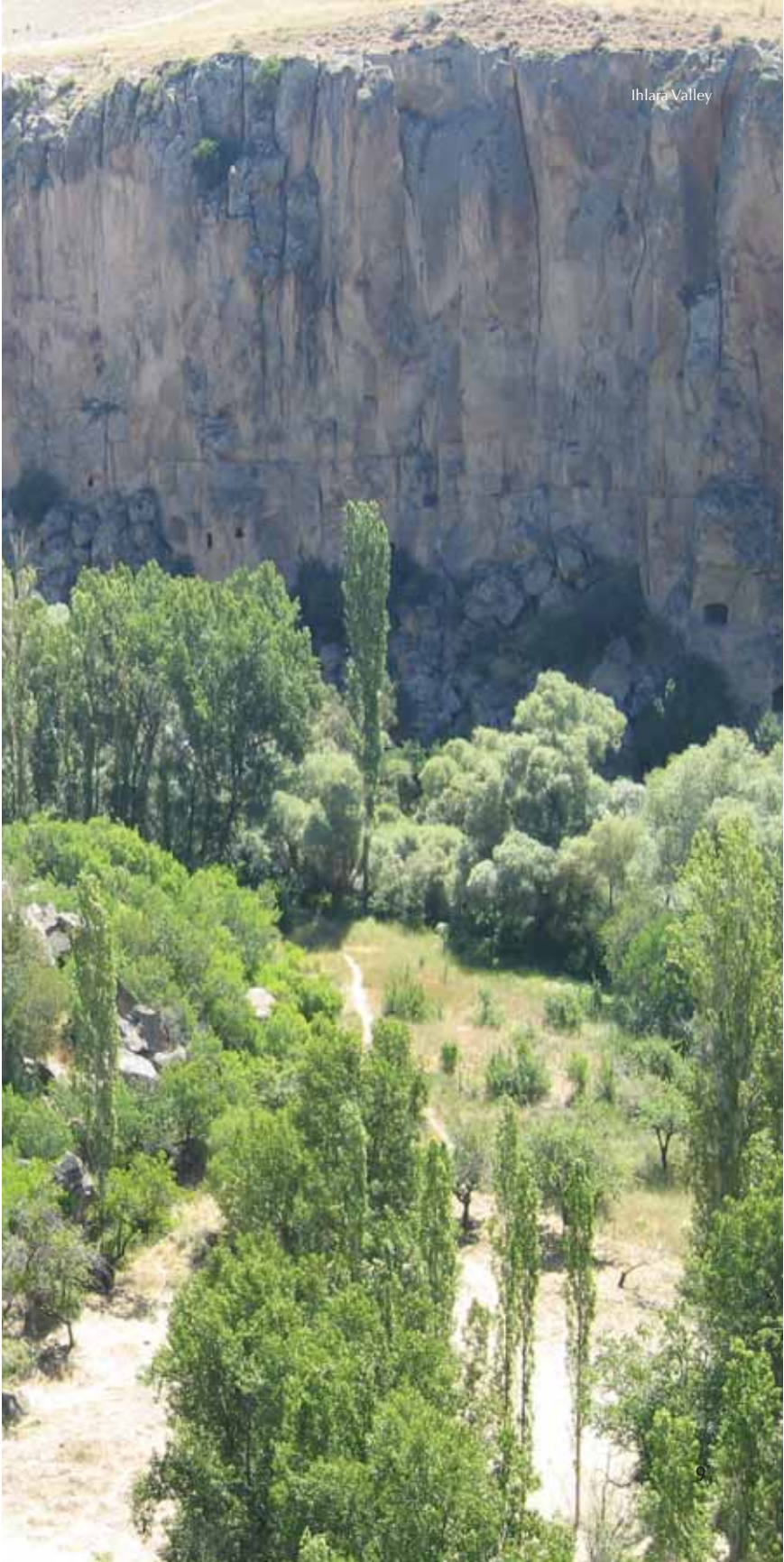


name Ulu River until it reaches Lake Tuz (Salt Lake). There are restaurants and recreation spots in Belisirma Village located over Melendiz River.

The Ihlara Valley will open itself out to you, revealing the secret of how it is a rare and tactful symbol of nature,









Yılanlı Church, Ihlara



Ağaçalı Church, Ihlara



humanity, history and art in harmony.

Aksaray was an important religious centre in the very earliest days of Christianity. Founders of orders like Basil of Kayseri and Gregory of Nazianos lived here in the 4th C. A different set of monastic rules other than the system used in Egypt and Syria was determined here, giving birth to the Greek and

Slavic systems. Although the monks in Egypt and Syria cut themselves off from relationships with the worldly things, the monks under Basil and Gregory did not. The birthplace for this concept was Belisırma.

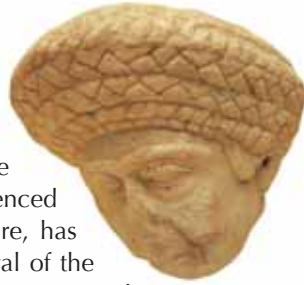
Gregory, offering a new explanation for the Holy Trinity, brought about a debate concerning the divinity of Christ. His ideas prevailed at the Council of İznik. Thus an innovator became a saint for the first time in the history of Christianity. Rock cut churches dotted the rocky region of Belisırma, Ihlara and Gelveri where Gregory lived. With the defensive castles of Mount Hasan providing defence against Arab invasions the churches were able to continue in peaceful worship.

The Ihlara Valley has protected these rock-cut dwellings and churches with frescoes and they come down to us as a unique historical treasury. These frescoed churches and dwellings easily carved into rock from the early years of Christianity are scattered all along the way from Ihlara to Selime through the Ihlara Valley.

The earliest examples of these churches in Ihlara Valley, in the middle of the Cappadocia River in antiquity, where the nature and history come together, date back to the 4th C. The painting technique of the churches of the Ihlara Valley can be divided into two. The ones around Ihlara show all the peculiarities of the type known as Cappadocian Style. On the other hand, the ones around Belisırma are decorated with paintings in the Byzantine Style. Therefore the region has to be divided into two because the two parts have distinct influences. In the first group are counted the churches of Eğritaş, Ağaçalı, Kokar, Pürenliseki and Yılanlı.



Dating from the early Christian Period these churches have scenes from the Bible influenced by the teachings of Basil and Gregory. There are long texts included. The Ağaçalı Church, being more influenced by late Roman and Sassanid Empire, has a more eastern flavour. The portrayal of the saints is very different from the Byzantine and Cappadocian styles. The other three churches in this section are classed differently. The representations of the saints are similar but they are much more Mediaeval. There are few texts from the Bible. And they have a definite Syrian inspiration. They are not comparable to the churches in and around Göreme. It is noticeable that all the Biblical scenes are done in a symbolic style. In these scenes evil is represented as coming from the devil and woman. The style of clothes is Syrian and Persian, the clothes are of the style worn in the regions under the Islamic Caliphs of the 9th and 10th C. The trappings of the Last Supper, the animals ridden etc. are far removed from the Byzantine and Cappadocian styles and have more in common with Egyptian Christian and Romanesque art. The churches in the Belisırma section are clearly of Byzantine style.

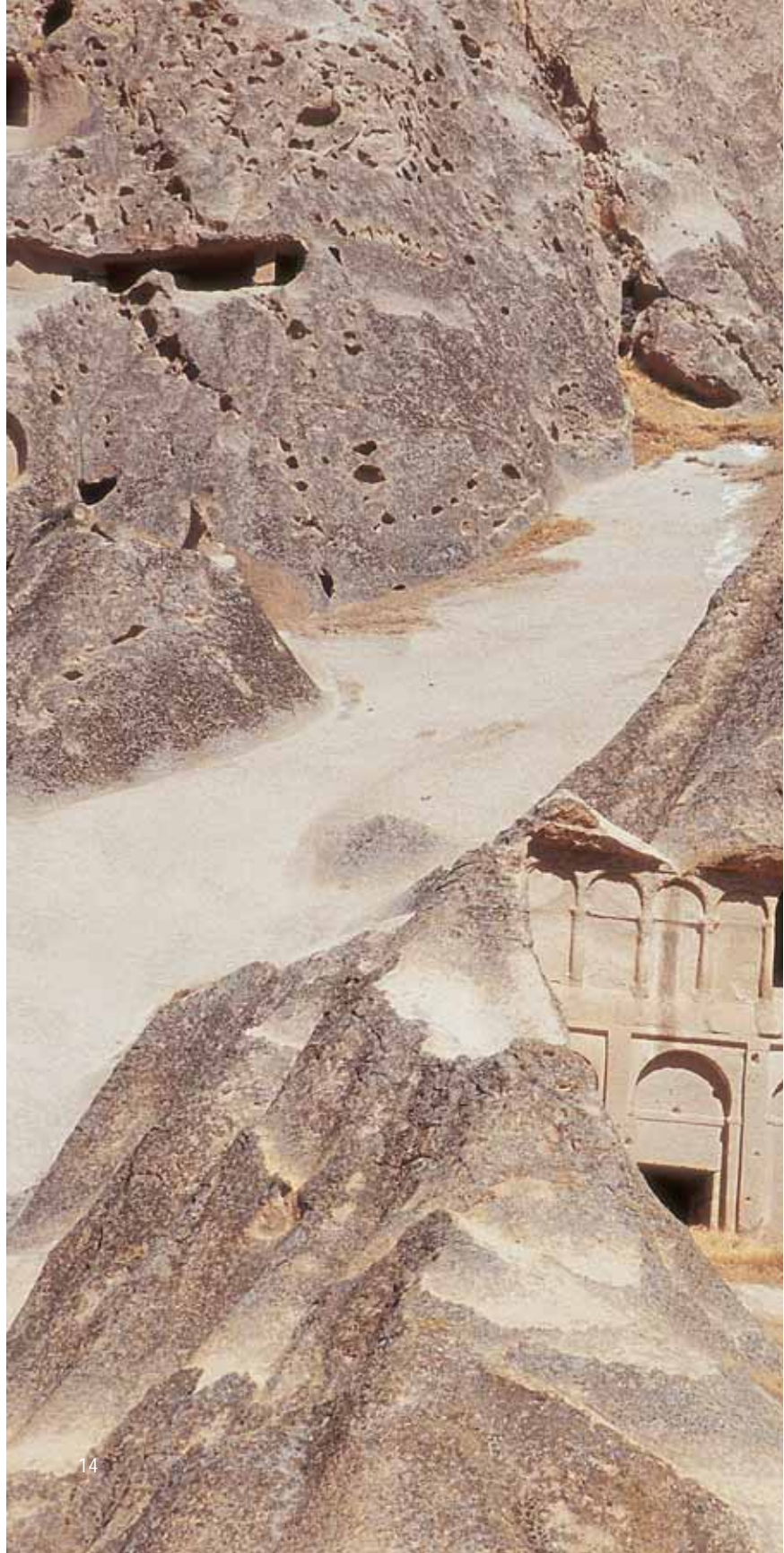


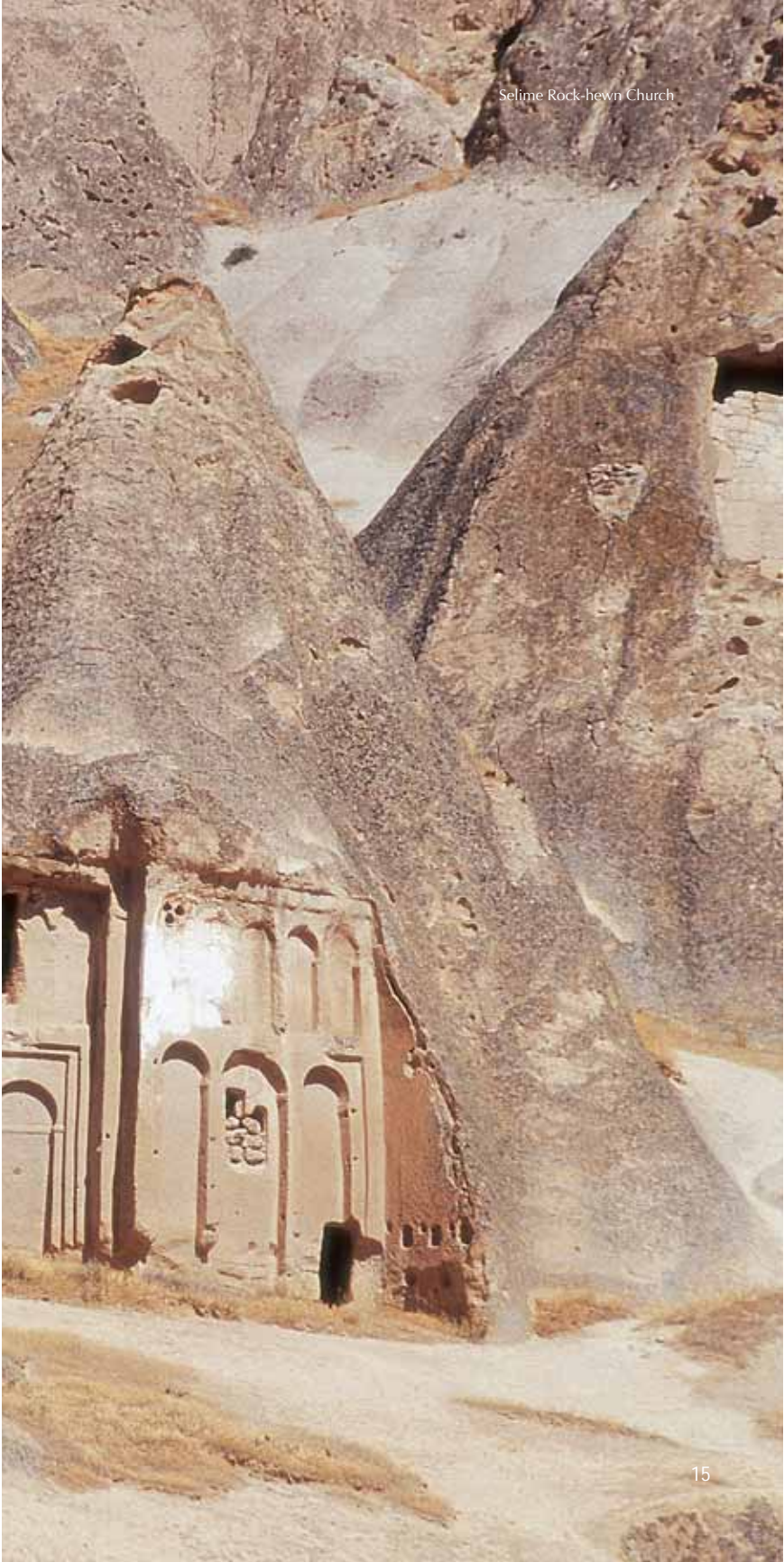
The Direkli (Columned) Church dates from 976-1025, and St. Georges Church dates from 1283-1295. The representation of a Seljuk Sultan in typical dress in the Church of St. Georges demonstrates that this church was constructed with the protection and support of the Seljuk authorities.

When the Byzantines got the control of the Taurus Mountains and Cilicia back in the middle of the 10th century, new churches were built in the Ihlara Valley. The paintings in Bahattin Samanlığı Church, Sümbüllü Church and Direkli (Columned) Church were done in that century. The art of Ala Church, Çanlı Church (in Akhisar) and Karagedik Church was done in the early 11th C. and is typical Byzantine. Byzantine style paintings were later additions to the old churches. This practice ended with the arrival of the Seljuk Turks in the 11th C. But religious life in the region continued.



Kırkdamalı Church

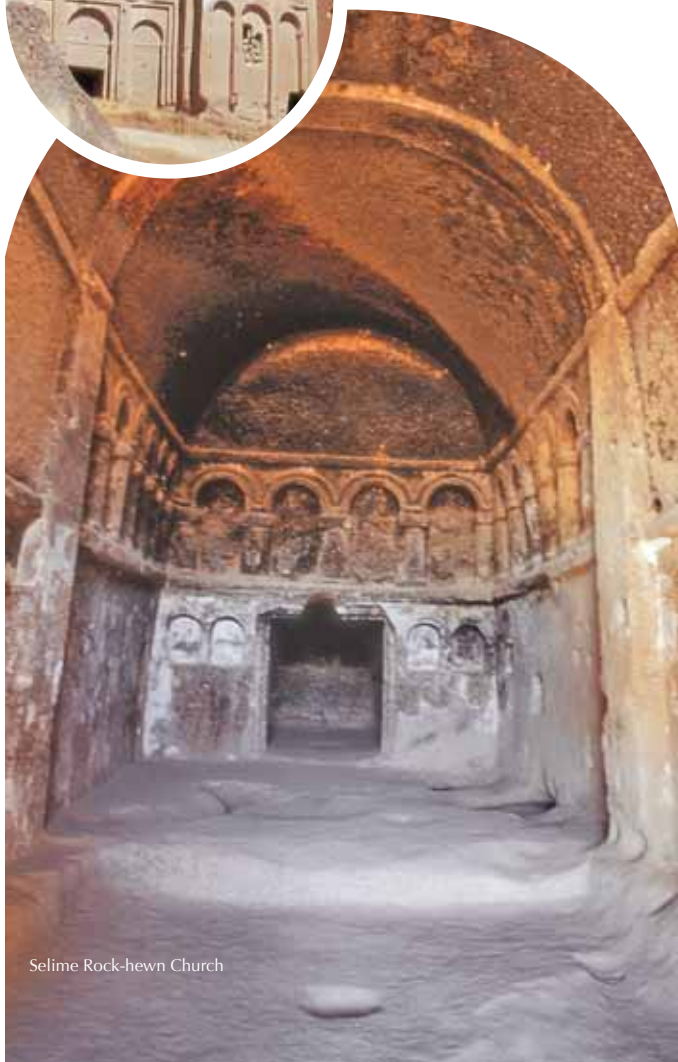




Selime

Situated 28 km from Aksaray, Selime is a town that was established at the end of the Ihlara Valley. Like Ihlara, Yaprakhisar, Belisırma and Güzelyurt there are rock cut churches here of which the most important is known as the Selime Cathedral. The cathedral has been hollowed out of the rocks on a rather elevated site. Inside there are two rows of rock columns. These columns divide the cathedral into three sections. Built on a basilica plan with three naves separated by rows of columns, the cathedral

has, between ceiling and arches, the scenes of Ascension, Gospel, the Nativity, Koimesis, Escape to Egypt, Following of Elizabeth,

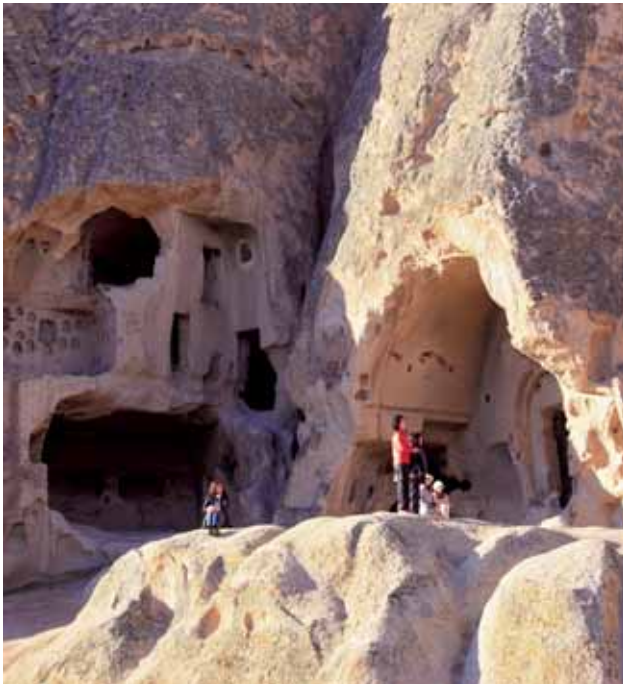


Selime Rock-hewn Church

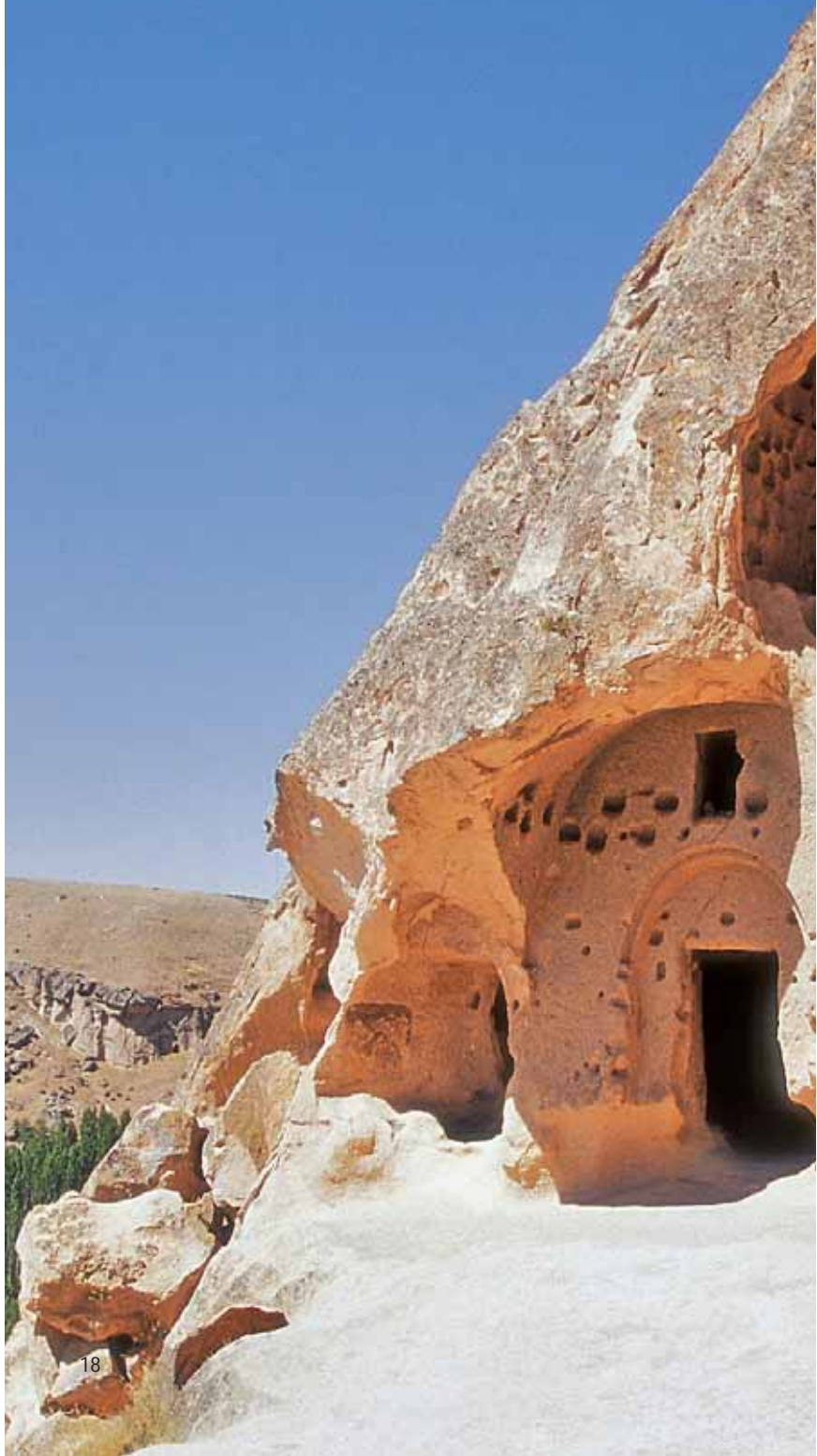


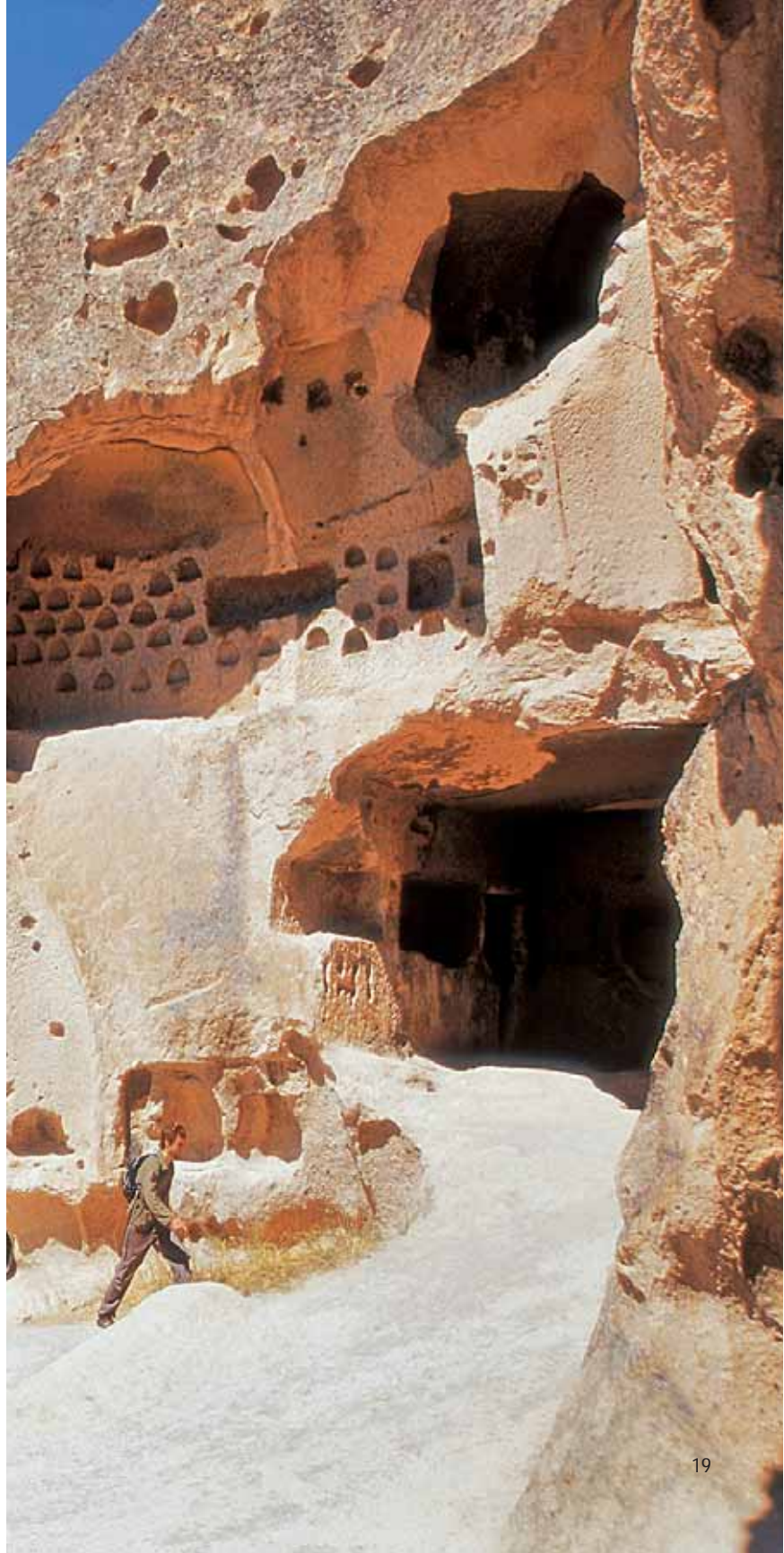
Selime Cathedral

Killing of Three Psychics etc. The figurative frescoes of the largest religious edifice in Cappadocia, the 8th C. Kale Monastery, were painted at the end of the 9th C. or beginning of the 10th C. A.D. The fairy chimneys that can not be seen in other parts of the valley can also be seen in the village of Selime.



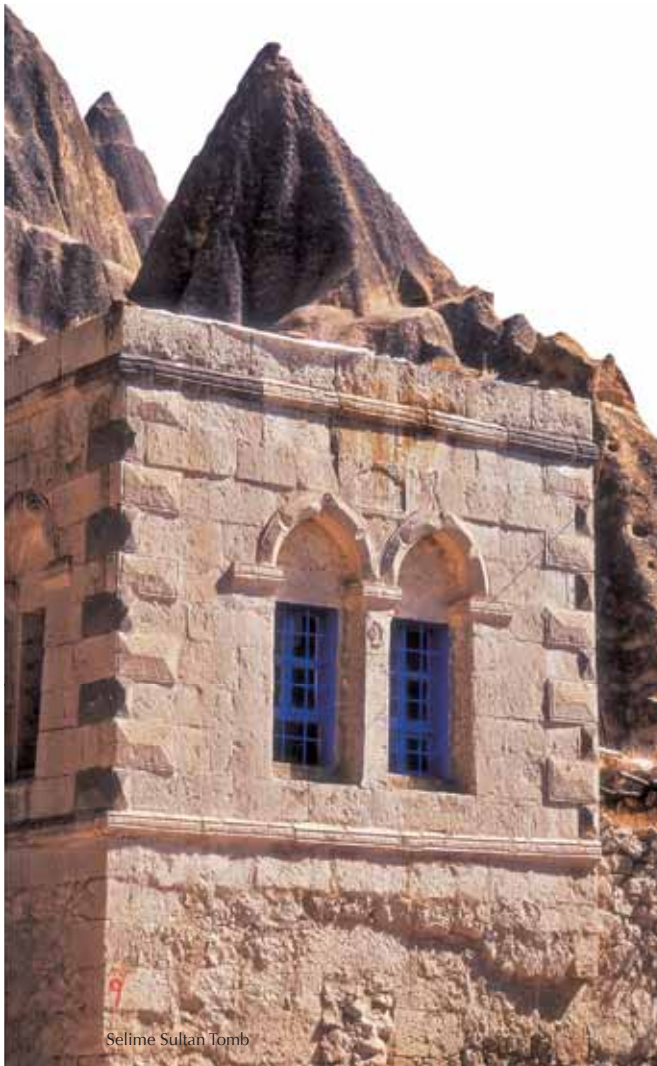
Selime Cathedral





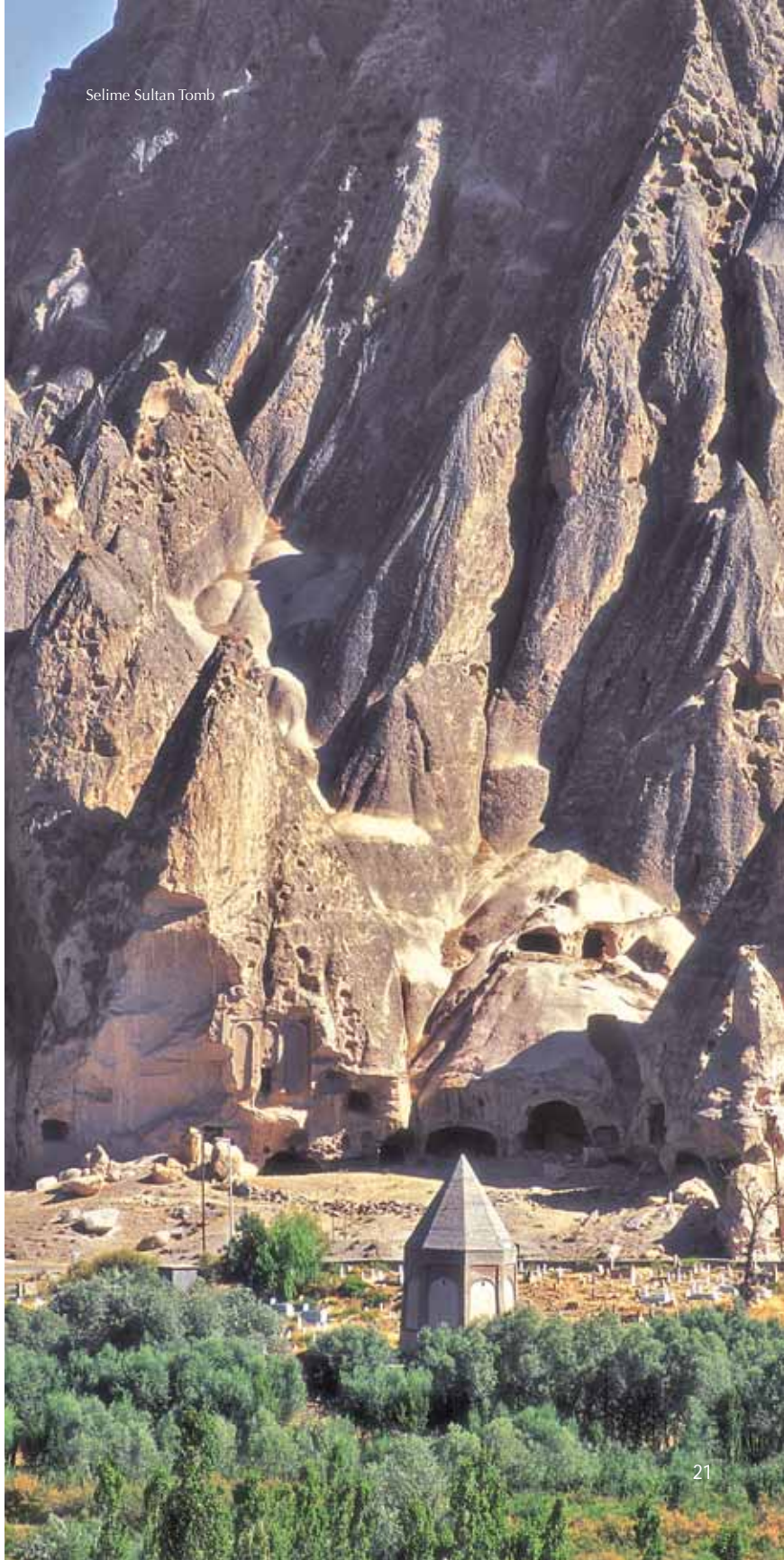
Selime Sultan Tomb

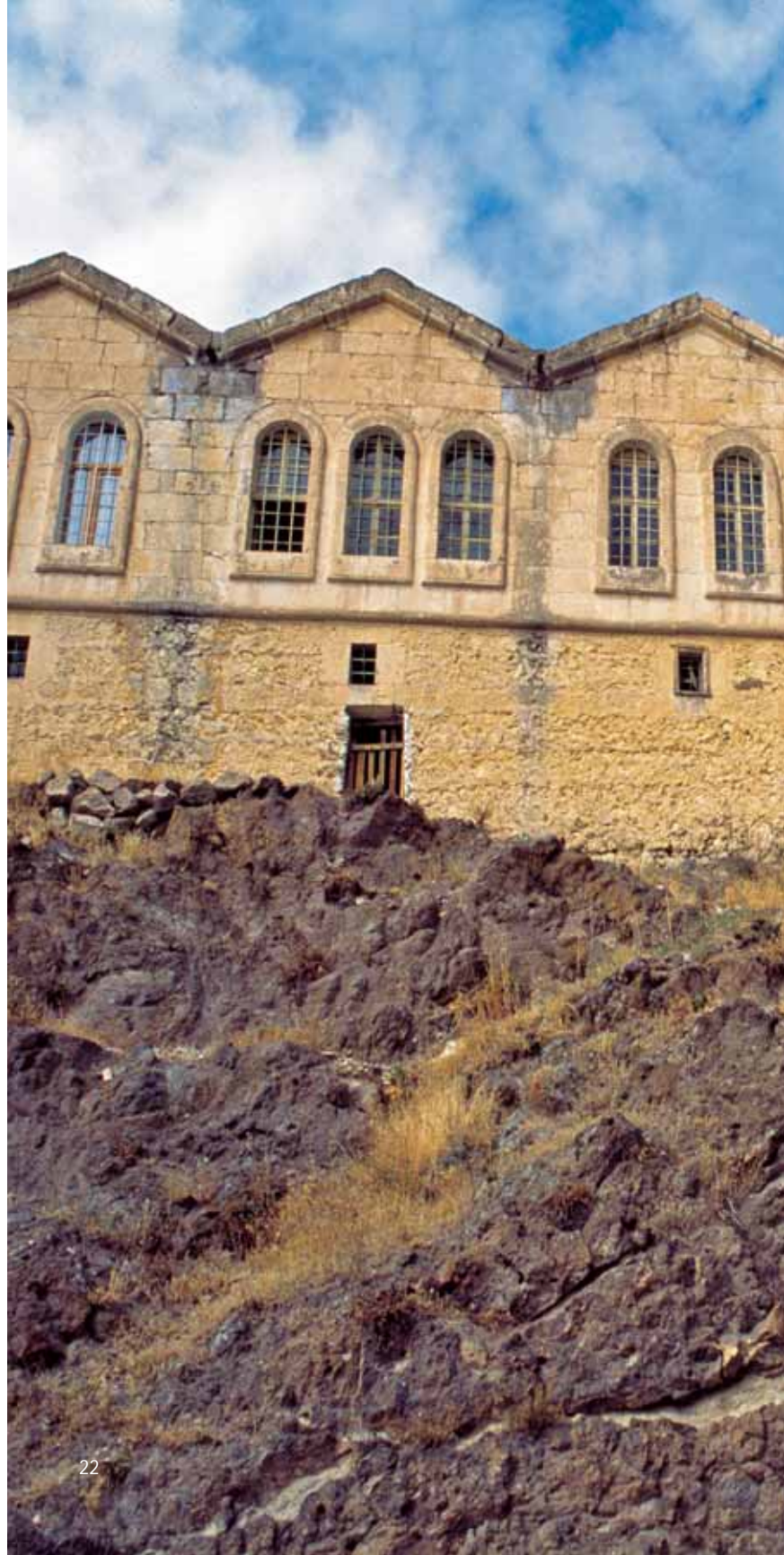
The tomb, located in Selime town, has the architectural and decorative characteristics of an early period piece. A rare example of its type in Anatolia it has an octagonal base and is conical. In the tomb stonework and brickwork are interconnected. From the architectural style and materials it must date from the 13th C. A.D. This tomb, known as Selime Sultan Tomb, was built for Ali Pasha, one of the Seljuk Beys.



Selime Sultan Tomb

Selime Sultan Tomb







Güzelyurt

Güzelyurt, drawing the visitors' attention with its natural beauties and historical riches, is a favourite spot for natural and cultural tours.

The number of axe-heads and ceramic pieces made of obsidian (natural volcanic glass) encountered around the Analipsis Peak on which the Yüksek (High) Church is located show that this region must have been inhabited in the Chalcolithic Period.

Over time the area has seen Hittites, Persians, Cappadocian Kingdom, Romans, Byzantines, Seljuks, Ottomans and the Turkish Republic.

From the beginning of history the area has also been setting for many different religions. Christianity, which was introduced to the region by St. Paul, met much resistance in the early years. Until it was accepted by the Roman Empire as an official religion Christians hid themselves in places like Güzelyurt and its environs, the Ihlara Valley and Soğanlı.

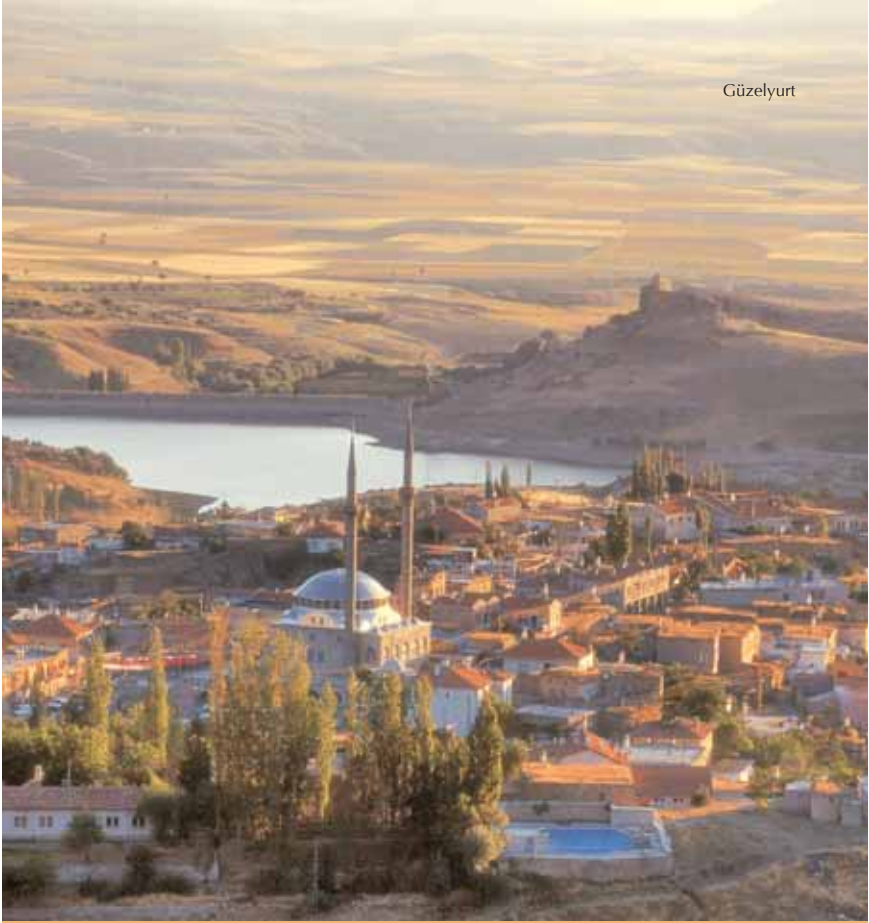
The ideas put forward by St. Gregory of Güzelyurt and Basil of Kayseri led in time to the foundation of the Orthodox denomination; connected to this was the foundation of the first monastery in Güzelyurt.

The "Iconoclastic Movement" began as a reaction to the Roman pressure over religion. At this time the religious system proposed by Saint Gregory was so powerful that the region was not affected by these actions and those Christians against the Iconoclastic Movement found protection here.

Yüksek Church, Güzelyurt



Güzelyurt



Kirkdamalti Church, Güzelyurt



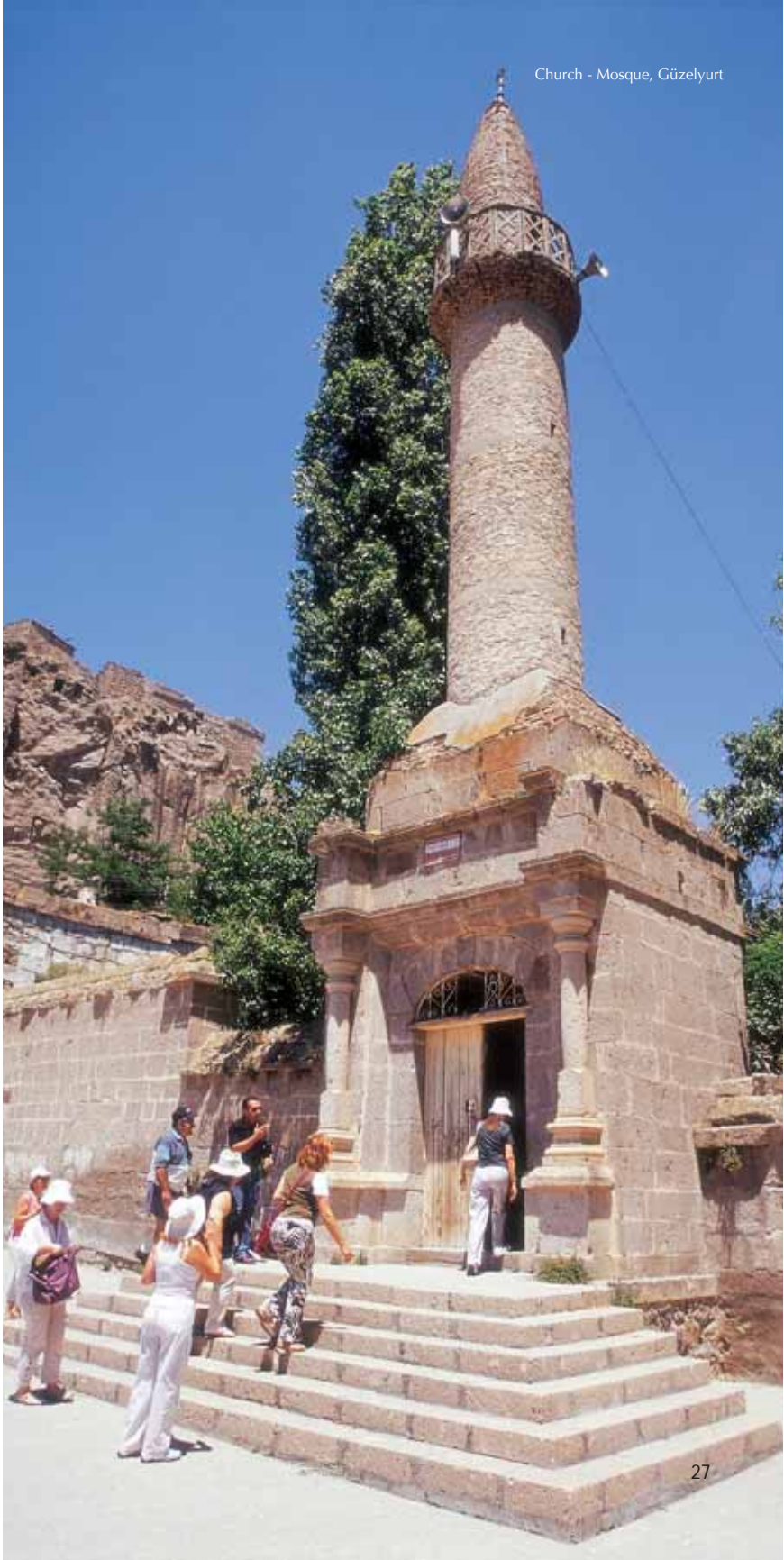
In the 12th C. the Seljuks took control of Anatolia; Christians and Moslems began to live side-by-side. There is a fresco in the Church of St. George (Kırkdamaltı) in Belisırma in the Ihlara Valley that depicts the governor (*beylerbeyi*) of that period, Basil Güyakupos in Turkish dress and the inscription of the fresco describes Sultan Mesud II as “a high and mighty Sultan”.

Güzelyurt, located 45 km to the east of Aksaray has survived from its foundation, with some changes, to the present day. It was originally known, in the Roman and Byzantine periods, as “Karaballa”. In Seljuk times the name was changed to “Gelveri” and it was administered by Selime Castle. Later, Gelveri came under the rule of the Ottomans. The inhabitants were part of the population exchange in 1924. Today, those who immigrated to Greece, their children and grandchildren visit Güzelyurt and are welcomed with open arms.

The local architecture is also noteworthy; all the houses and workshops are constructed of cut stone and possess a special beauty.

Kızıl (Red) Church

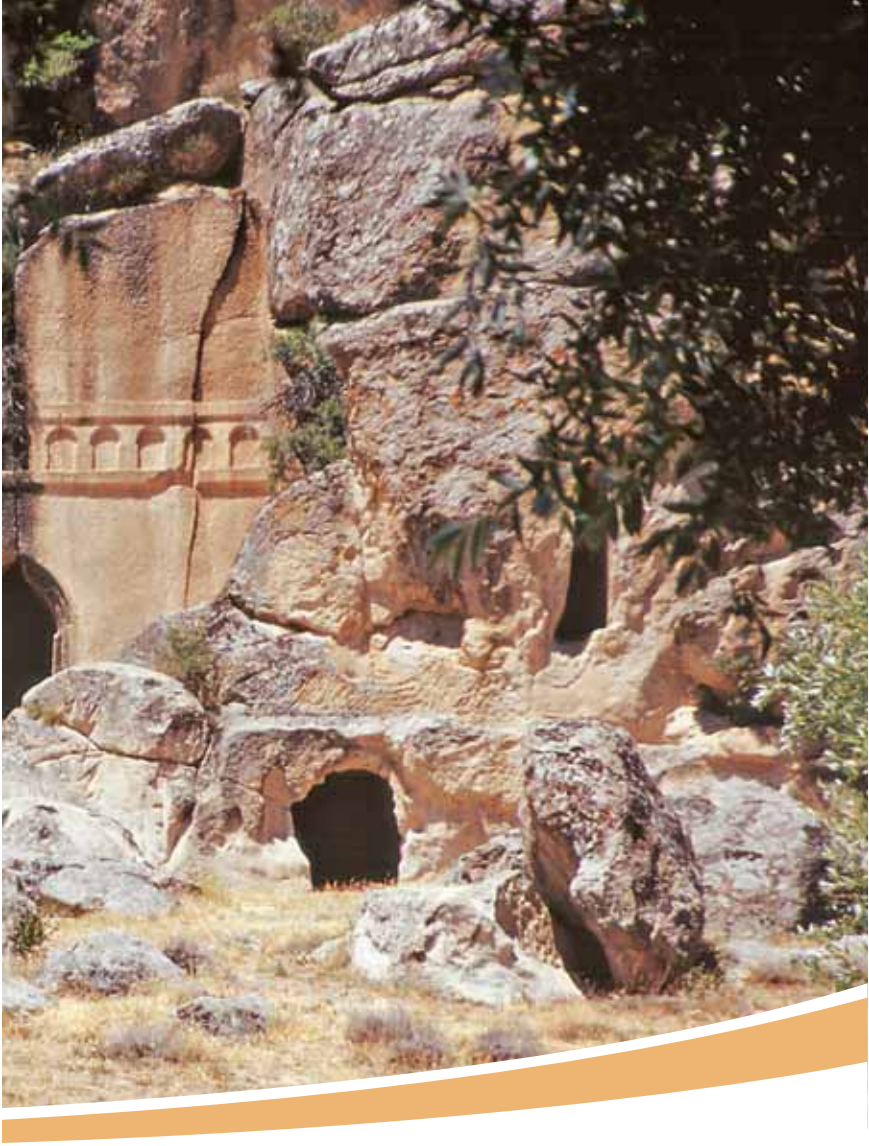






Güzelyurt and its environs bring together all that is special about Cappadocia. The **Monastery Valley**, 5.5 km long, is bordered on both sides by high rocks, is covered in willow trees and a river runs through it. Within there are many churches, rock cut residences and settlements, both above and below ground.

The 14 km long **Ihlara Valley** is within the borders of Güzelyurt. There are many **fairy chimneys** located at the Analipsis Peak where the **Yüksek (High) Church** is, and at Selime and Yaprakhisar. Ziga Thermal Springs are important in terms of thermal tourism. Located at an altitude of 1485 m in the foothills of Mount Hasan,



Güzelyurt boasts a mountain plateau climate and is famous for its **recreation spots** that offer different colours in each season.

Amongst the important buildings in Güzelyurt are its churches including St. Gregorios Church (Kilise Mosque) built for the founder of the Orthodox Faith St. Gregory in 395 AD, and the churches of Sivişli, Yüksek (High), Saint Anargiros (Bucak), Kızıl (Red), Koç (Ram), Kömürlü (Charcoal), Kalburlu (Screened), Çömlekçi (Potters), Azizler Damı, Cafarlar, Kulluk (Adoration) churches plus lots of underground cities and the Acropolis and civil architecture.

Nora (Viranşehir) Ancient Site





Mount Hasan (Hasan Dağı)

This mountain was named after Ebul Gazi Musa Hasan Bey who was appointed as the governor by the Seljuk Sultan Süleyman Shah. With an altitude of 3268 m Mount Hasan is Central Anatolia's second highest peak. It is a volcanic formation and is covered by oak forests up to an altitude of 1750 m. Mount Hasan is an important centre for mountaineering, summer migration, forestry retreats, adventure sports, skiing and cultural tourism. It is not difficult to reach and the road continues as far as the ski centre, being just off the E-90 Highway; 28 km from the centre of Aksaray and 15 km from Ihlara.

There are important cultural remains on the slopes of the mountain; amongst the significant remains can be included: **Nora (Viranşehir) Ancient Site**, **Sarıgöl Church** 3 km to the northeast of Yenipınar, **Yardıbaşı Church** and **Süt Church** 1 km to the southwest of Viranşehir, the 6th C. A.D. **Bozboyun Church** 3 km to the southwest of Viranşehir, the mountaintop **Tepe Church**, the cruciform **Çukurkent Church** in Dedesivri, the cruciform **Kale Church** in Yenipınar and the other churches of Nora (Viranşehir), plus the Seljuk edifice **Karahan (Eshab-ı Kefh Hani)** found on the road to the ski centre.



Mount Hasan

Mount Hasan



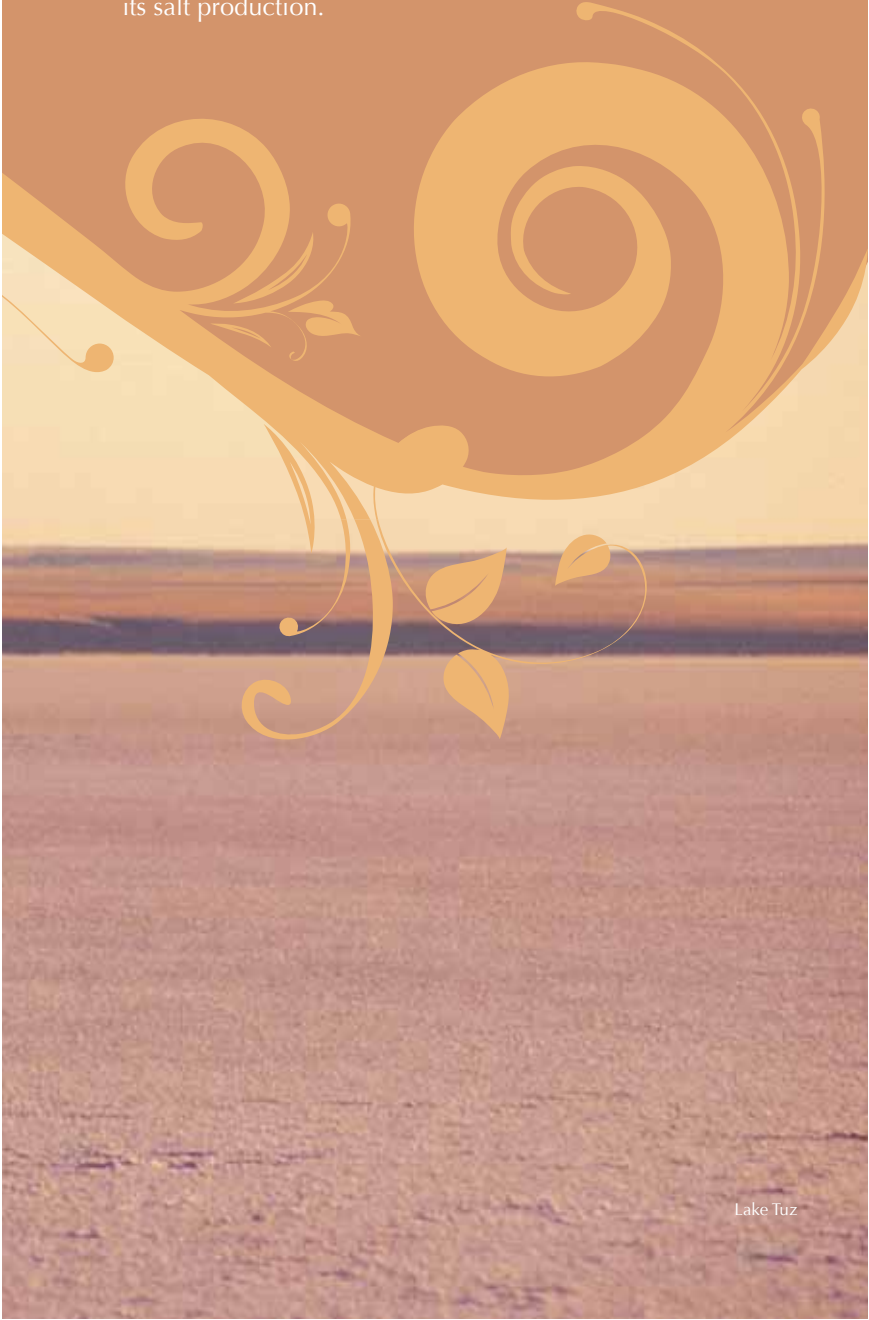
Mount Hasan



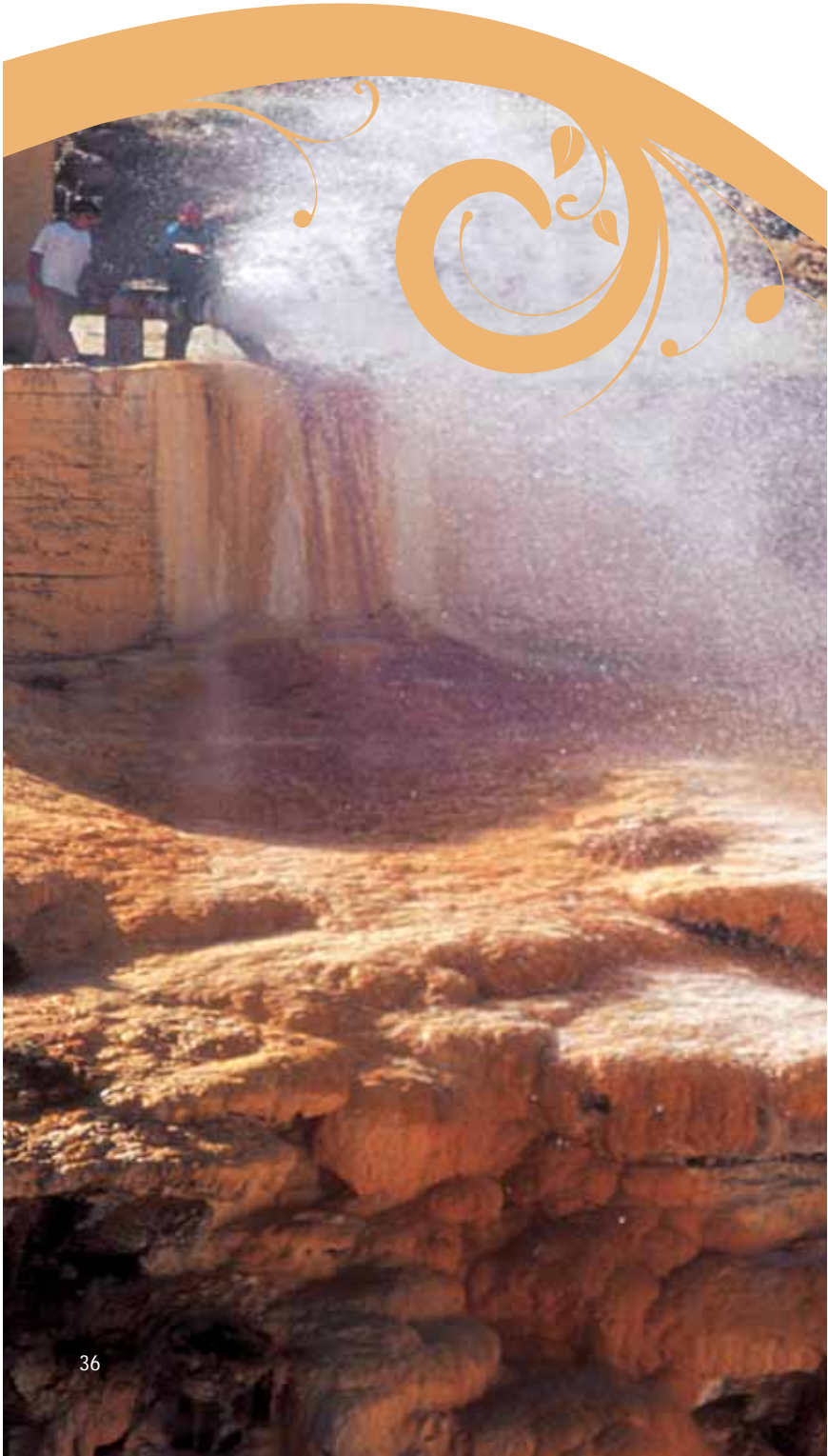
L ake Tuz



Turkey's second largest lake, Lake Tuz (lit. *Salt Lake*), makes Aksaray an ideal attraction centre with the visual aesthetics that it adds to the natural and historical richness of the city. The Lake, a favourite for photo safari in the international level, is the focus of interest of the tourists. Much of the perimeter is marshland; the land beyond the marshes has become arid. At its deepest it is 1 metre. It is 890 m above sea level. It is very important to Turkey for its salt production.

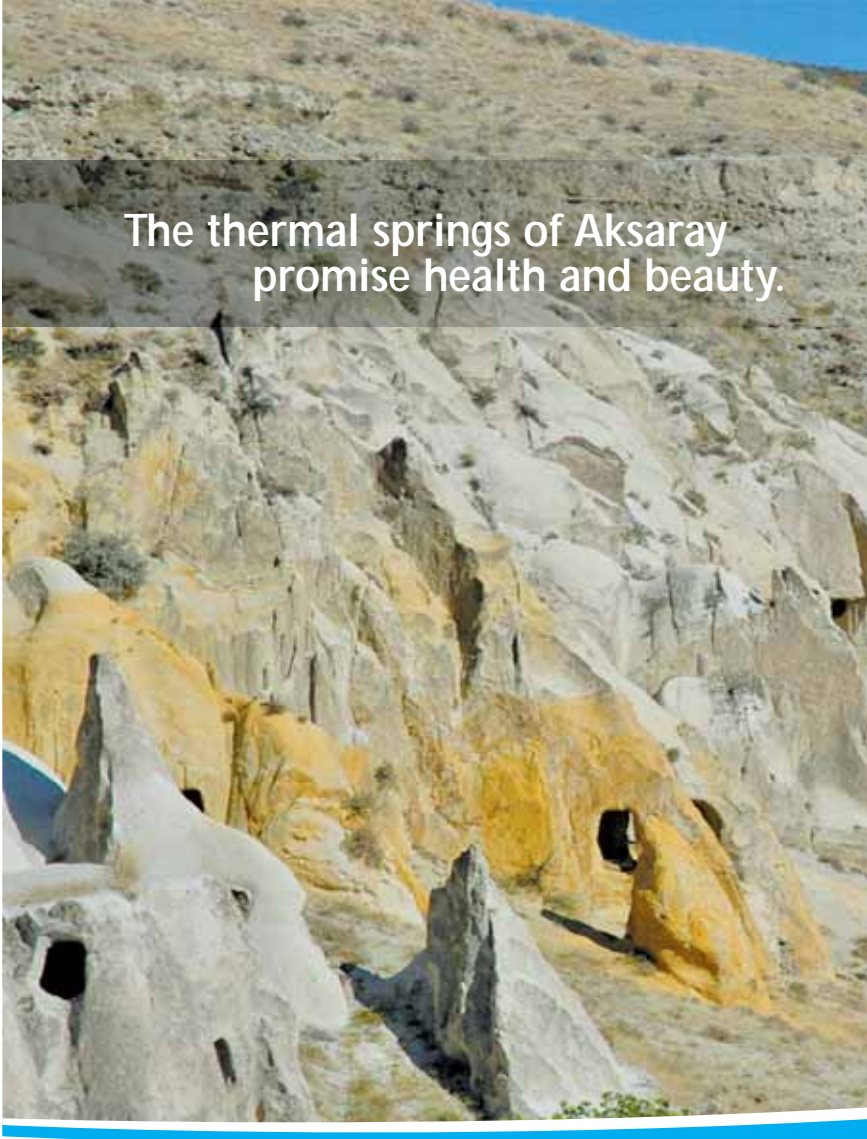


Lake Tuz



Thermal Tourism

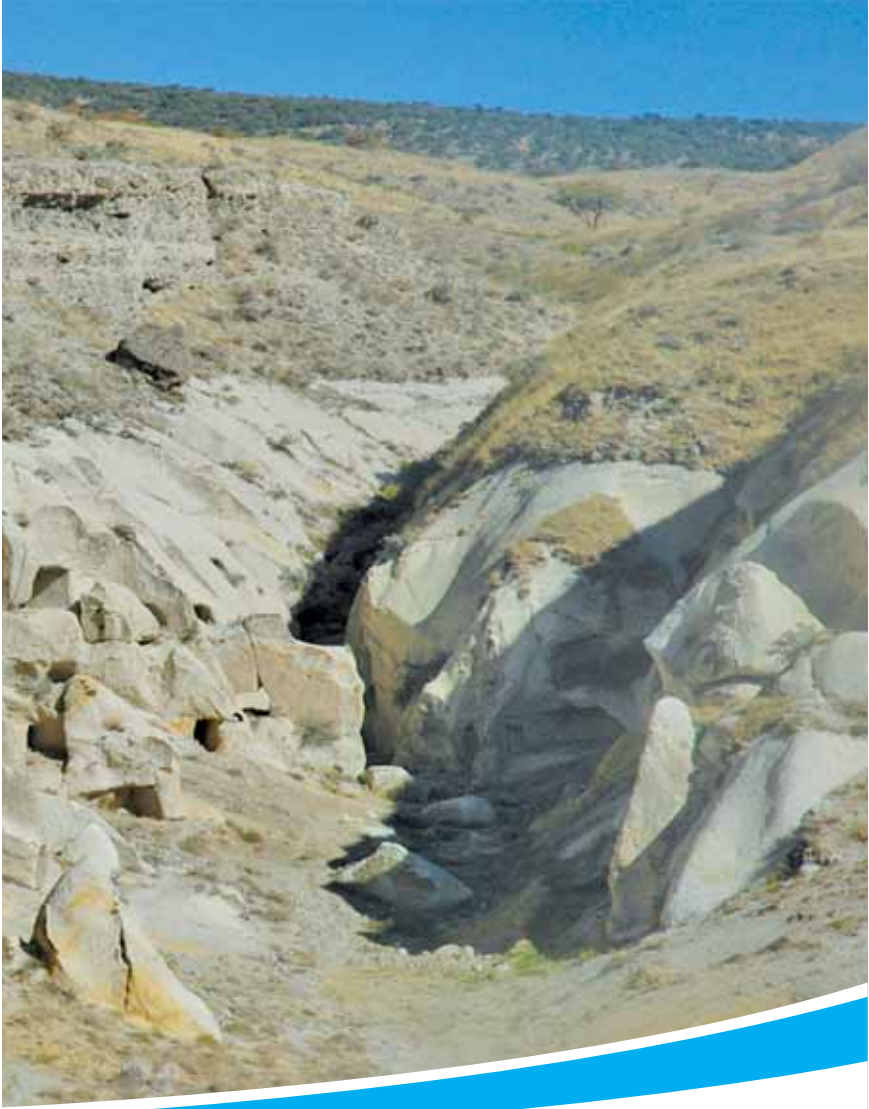




The thermal springs of Aksaray
promise health and beauty.

Ziga

The Ziga Springs are located just next to the Ihlara Valley in the village of Yaprakhisar in the district of Güzelyurt. The waters have a temperature of 47°C and run out at a rate of 150 litres per second. The hot waters of Ziga are composed of a mixture of many minerals and contain a high level of calcium, sodium, chlorine ions and hydrocarbon ions. They are said to be efficacious in the treatment of rheumatism, metabolism disorders, nervous disorders, skin conditions, eyesight problems and gynaecological problems.



Ilisu

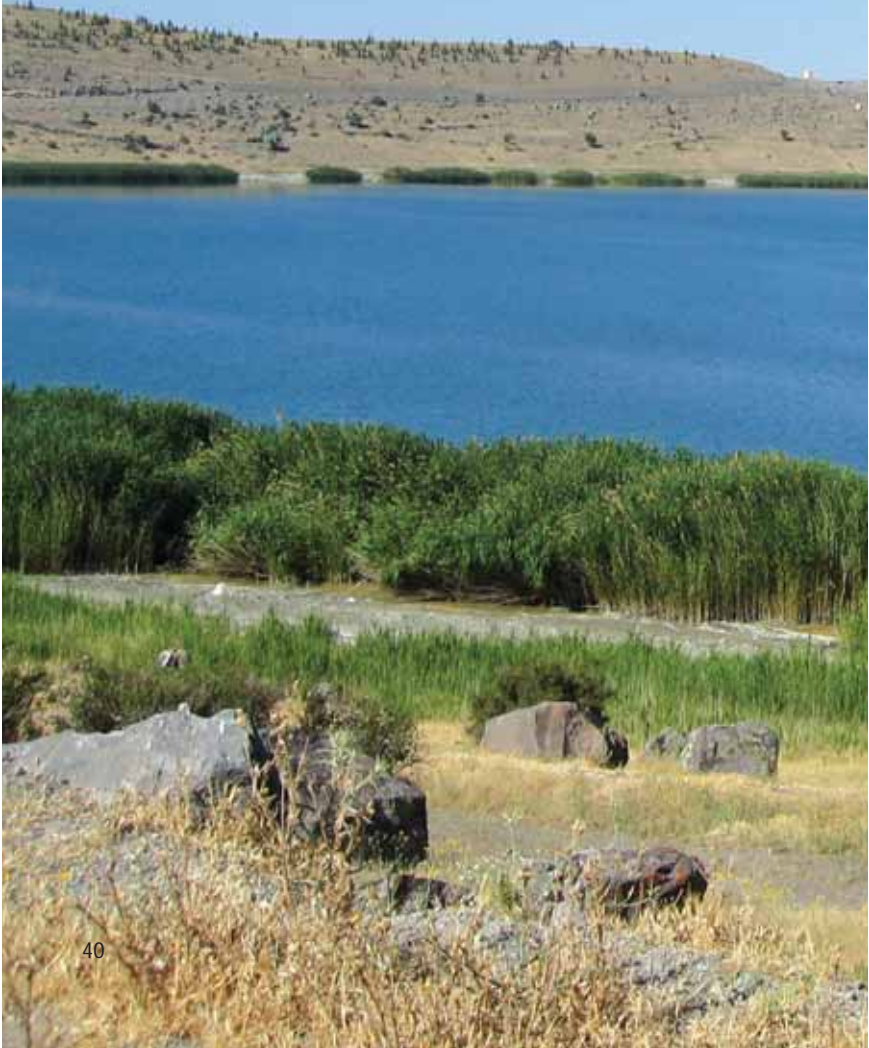
The Ihlara Valley peters out into the Melendiz Mountains through which runs the Melendiz River. Ilisu is to the east of Aksaray, at a distance of 48 km. There are cave houses and many churches and chapels hereabouts. As well as its obvious natural beauty there is also much history around and it has many of the famous characteristics of Cappadocia. As well as being blessed by natural beauty and a historical setting Ilisu also contains many thermal springs. Generally the thermal springs of Ilisu are rich in minerals and are used in the treatment of skin conditions.

Acıgöl (Narlıgöl)

This Crater Lake is found in the Sofular location of Gülağaç district to the east of Aksaray and to the northwest of Niğde. The distance to Aksaray is 60 km to Niğde is 80 km and it lies 50 km from Nevşehir. It can be approached by either the Niğde-Derinkuyu Highway or the Aksaray-Ihlara-Derinkuyu Highway.

Surrounded by mountains the lake has an altitude of 1363 m, covers an area of 57,800 m², and, in some places, is 65 or 70 m deep.

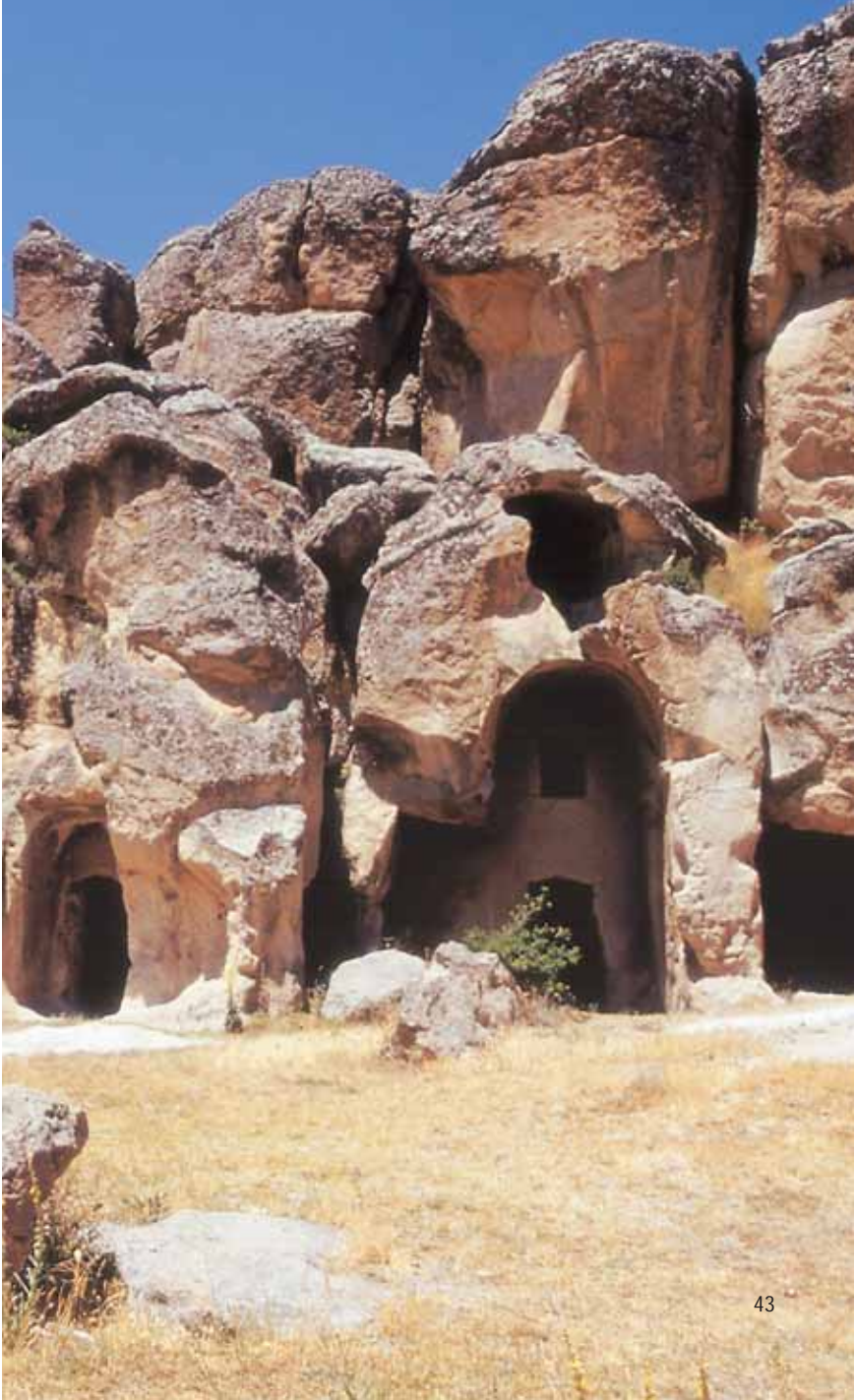
In its general characteristics it can be considered an extension of the Cappadocia, almost as a continuation of Aksaray-Ihlara-Derinkuyu Valley. The whole valley is covered in fairy chimneys.





*Sites of
Religious
Interest*





Yunus Emre Tomb



Aksaray, the cradle of different civilisations, also played an important role in the development and promulgation of different religions. From the Christian perspective it is important as the place where Saint Basil and Saint Gregory founded their orders and their people lived in places starting with Güzelyurt and along Ihlara, Belisırma and Selime, now important places of pilgrimage.

In and around Aksaray there are 21 places of interest to Christians and 8 places of interest to Moslems.

Tapduk Emre Tomb

It is located in the village of Tapduk, in the foothills of Mount Ekecik, 20 km from Aksaray. Environment of the mosque and the tomb has recently been arranged and trees have been planted. Over the tomb belonging to Tapduk Emre, a stone sarcophagus was built without giving any damage.

Yunus Emre Tomb

The pioneer of mysticism and Turkish poetry in Anatolia, Yunus Emre was born in 1240-1241, lived for between 82 and 87 years and passed away in 1329-1330. Documents that have come down to us demonstrate conclusively that he lived in Central Anatolia.

The tomb, which is located at Ziyaret Peak in the village of Reşadiye, is 20 km from the centre of Ortaköy district. It is set on a stone podium and a wall protects the northern part. There is a penance cell located 500 m east from the tomb. The tomb, which has a mescit (small mosque) and fountain, is made of cut stone.





Şeyh Hamid-i Veli (Somuncu Baba)Tomb

This is an open-air tomb located in the centre of Aksaray at the base of the Kılıçarslan Hill in Ervah Graveyard. The tomb, made of marble, has an inscription dating it to 1412 A.D. (815 Islamic Calendar). Also found here are the tombs of his close family and descendants. The room of the tomb keeper is entered by way of an iron gate. There is a penance cell with a single window off the inner room. There was a building for religious retreat behind the open tomb. The tomb of Yusuf Hakiki, the son of Somuncu Baba, is in the Şeyh Hamid Quarter of Aksaray.

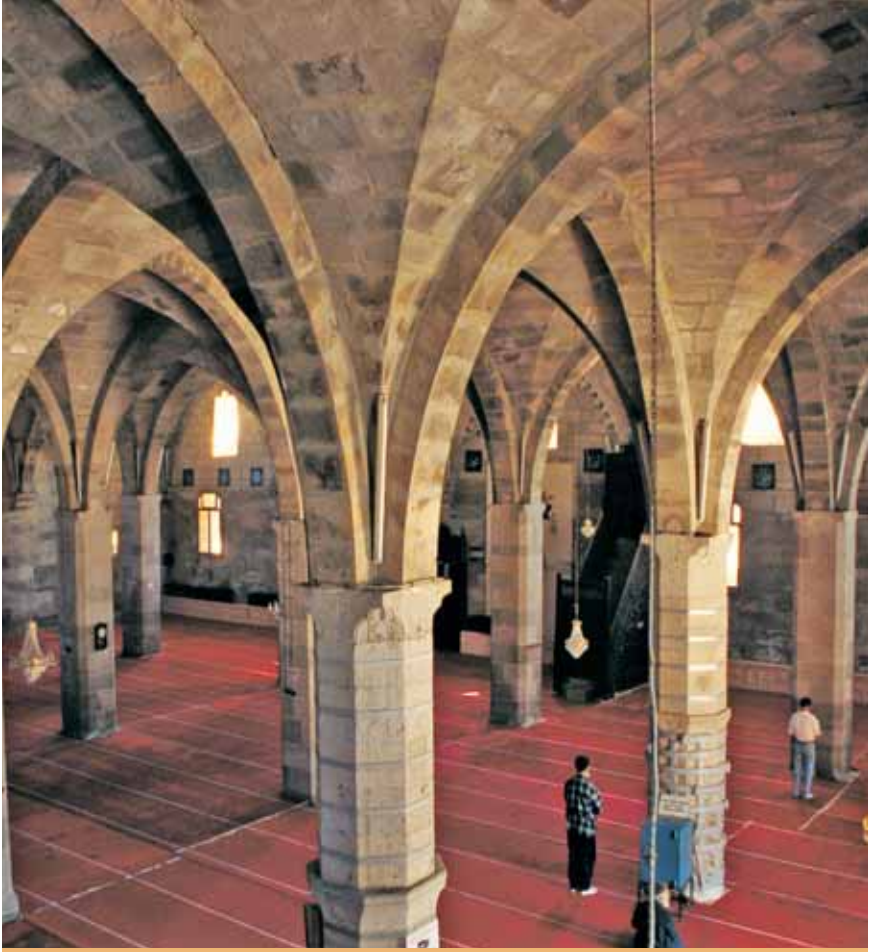
The Tomb of Kılıçarslan II

Located in the centre of Aksaray and built of cut stone, the tomb has a summer outbuilding. Inside are the tombs of Kılıçarslan II and Kılıçarslan IV. Originally built in Seljuk times the tomb has since undergone renovations.

Ulu Mosque (Karamanoğlu Mosque)

According to the inscription the mosque, built on a crowded peak, was built by the architect Mehmet Firuz Bey for Karamanoğlu Mehmet Bey between 1403 and 1409.

It is built on a horizontal rectangular plan. The inner hall of the mosque is entered by the western gate, decorated with typical ornaments of the Anatolian Seljuk Principalities. The pulpit made of ebony is particularly valuable.



Ulu Mosque





Eğri (Crooked) Minaret

The Minaret is a Seljuk edifice built between the years 1221 and 1236. The tower leans 27 degrees over. Because it is constructed of red brick it is sometimes referred as the “Red Minaret”.

It has a cylindrical trunk on a square base divided into parts by a narrow moulding. The bottom half has a zigzag pattern, the top half is covered in blue and green tile mosaics. There is one balcony and 92 steps. The mosque beside it is a later addition.



Kaya Mosque

Located in the centre of Güzelyurt and probably dating from the 14th C. the mosque was used by both Christians and Moslems. A large part of the mosque is hollowed out from rock and there is a part with a vaulted roof.

Saint Michael Church

There are caves, a monastery and churches located on the banks of the Mamasun Dam in the foothills of the plateaux at the village of Gökçe. Some of the frescoes have been preserved; there are representations of Christ and the disciples in the apse, the Presentation at the Temple on the north wall and, just next to the entrance, Saint Onophiros.

Çanlı Church



Çanlı Church



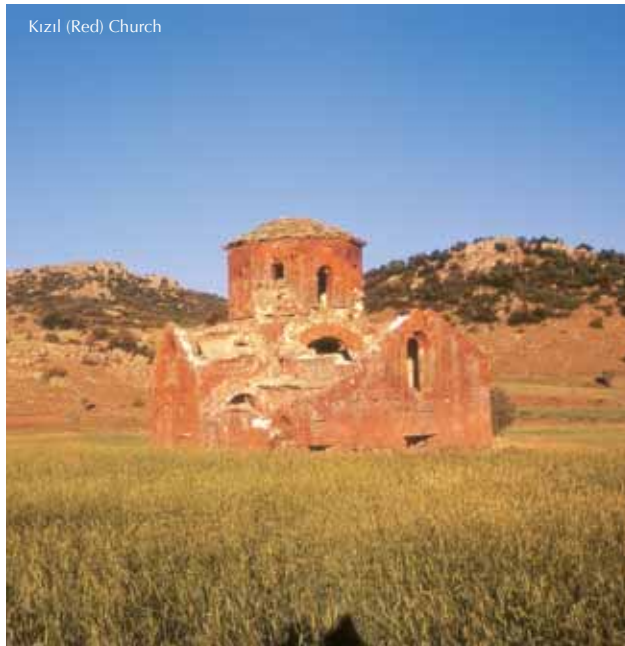
Çanlı Church

Located in the village of Akhisar, the church is built on a large rock from alternate layers of flat cut stone and brick.

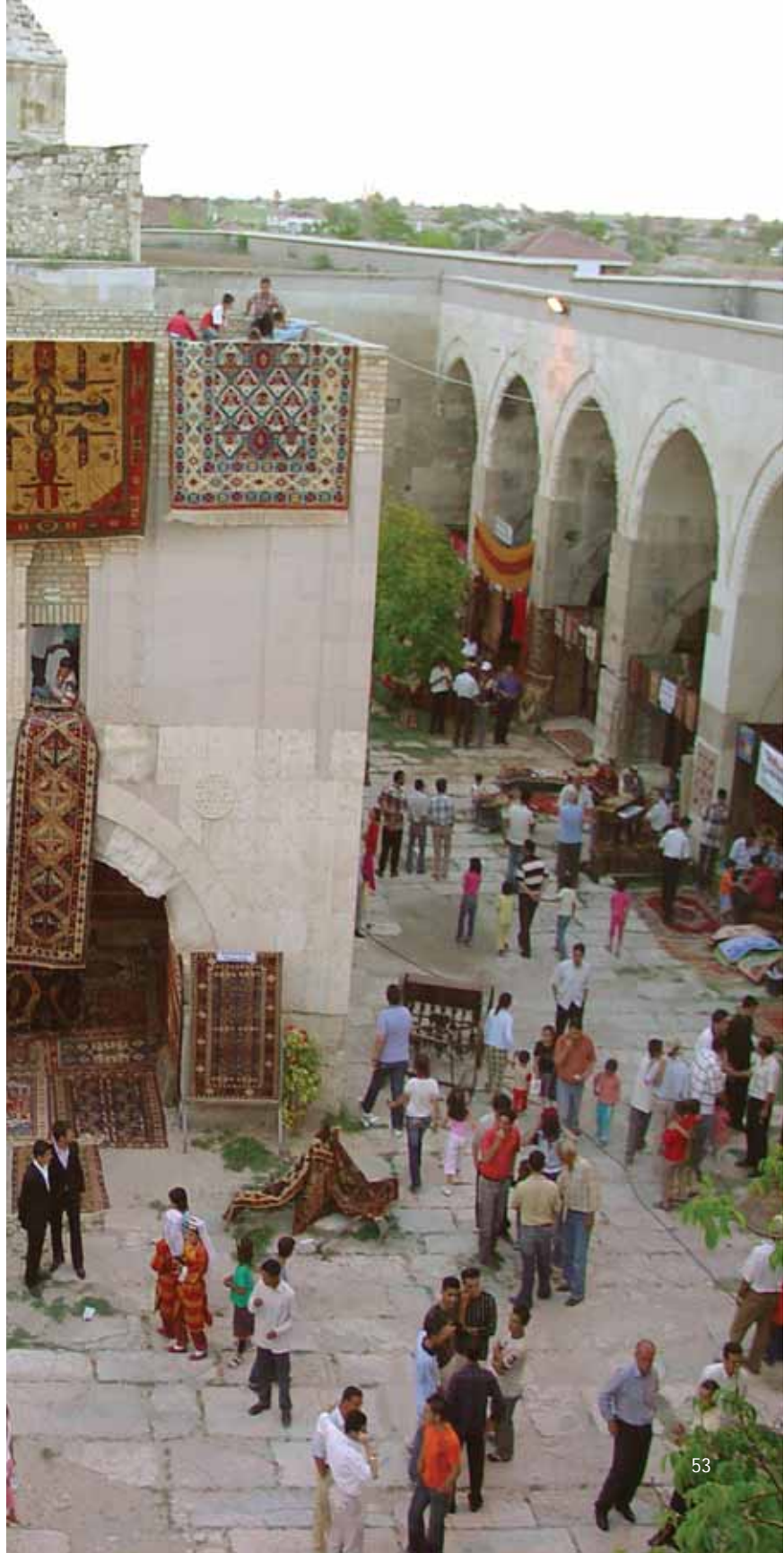
Built on a T-type cruciform plan, the church is, in its original, of capital style with its frescoes differentiating it from the local architecture of Cappadocia region. Inner parts of the building are decorated with frescoes depicting Jesus and his apostles.

Kızıl (Red) Church

Known as the “Red Church” because of the colour of the cut stone used in its construction, the building is located in the village of Sivrihisar in Güzelyurt. The church has 3 naves; in the middle nave are 4 columns that support a dome. In various places there are frescoes that depict religious scenes and the disciples. The church dates from the 5th and 6th C. A.D.







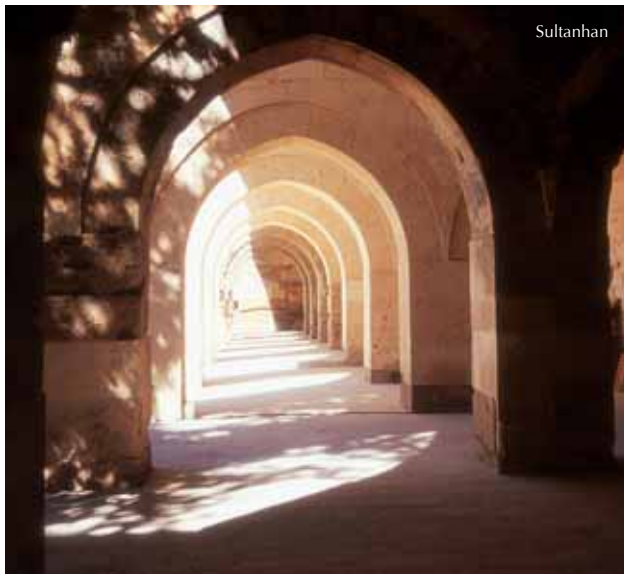
The Silk Road

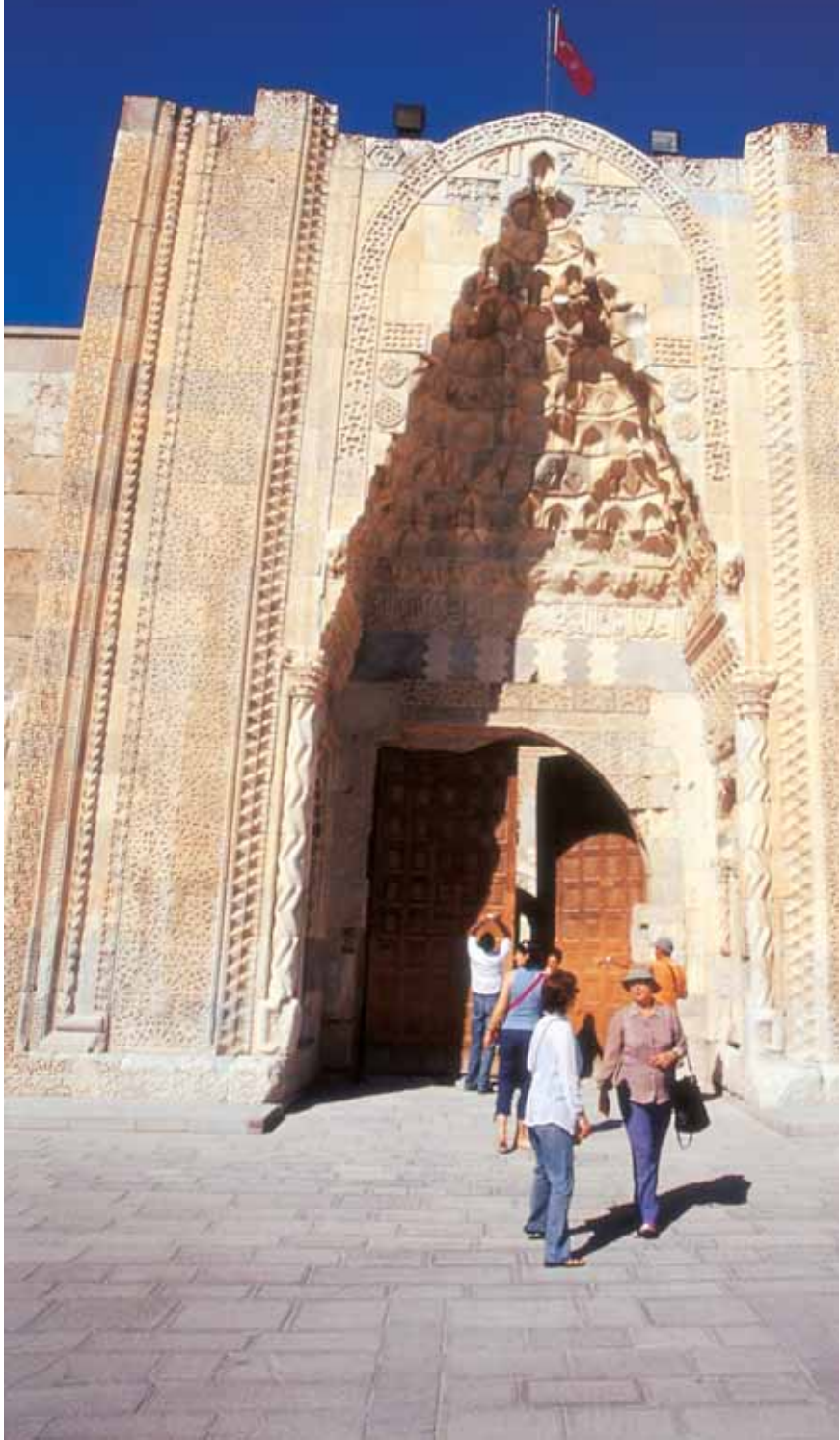
The historical Silk Road started in China and extended as far as Genoa, that is to say all the way to Europe, passing through Central Asia, Iran and Anatolia. Along it can be found various resting places. There are hans (inn) and caravanserais along an east-west axis through Anatolia. In the Seljuk Period these were built at 20 km intervals, a day's journey, to provide food, water, protection and security for the travellers and traders en route. These inns and caravanserais are considered amongst the best examples of "Seljuk Architectural Art".

In Aksaray, there are four remarkable buildings dating from that period which have reached today. These are Sultanhanı, Ağzıkarahan, Öresinhan (Tepesidelik Han) and Alayhan.

Sultanhan

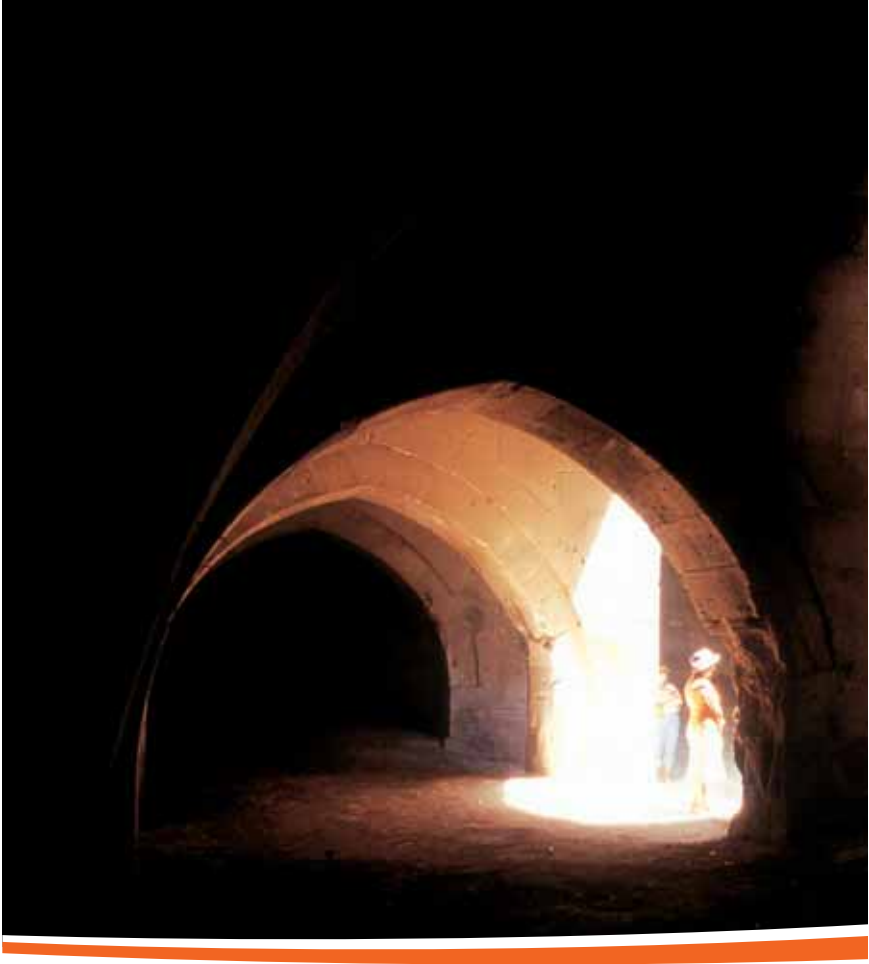
Built in the years 1228 to 1229 by Alaaddin Keykubat, this inn is an exceptional example of architectural stone work and decoration art from the Seljuk Period. It was constructed to provide security for the road from Konya to Aksaray that was an important trade and military route. It is a classic Seljuk inn with summer and winter quarters plus a mescit and stables. The inns built in the Seljuk Period were under the direction of the Hanbeyi (Lord of Han). His duty was to make sure that the trade routes were secure. There was always a cavalry force in each inn and in times of war these forces joined those of the Sultan. (The inn is 40 km along the Aksaray-Konya highway.)







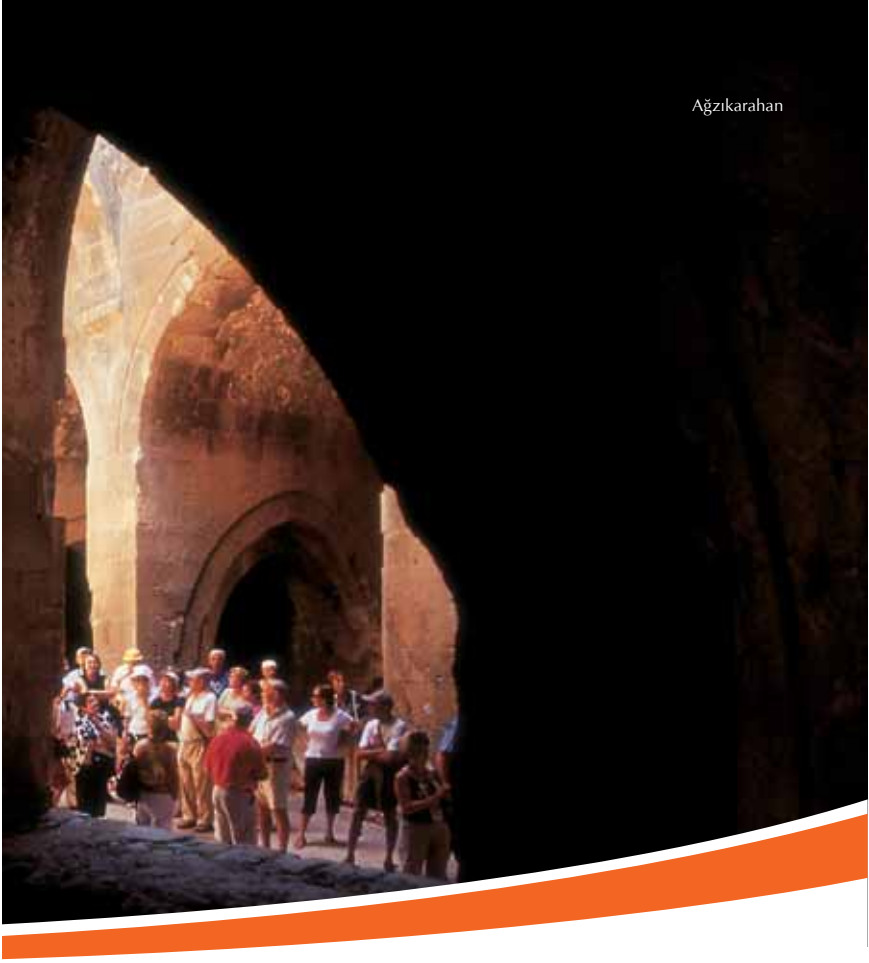




Ağzıkarahan

Located 15 km along the Aksaray to Nevşehir highway, the inn is mentioned as the Hoca Mesud Han in the Ottoman sources. Building was started in 1231 under





Alaaddin Keykubat and was completed under Gıyaseddin Keyhüsrev in 1239. It consists of a bath house (hamam), soup kitchen and summer and winter residences. The entrance has all the features of stonework and decoration peculiar to the Seljuks.

Alayhan

Situated 40 km along the Aksaray to Nevşehir highway within the village of Alayhan, the inn has no inscription. The front and courtyard sections are in ruins. It is guessed that it was built by Pervane Bey during the reign of Kılıçarslan II. It displays all architectural features of a traditional Seljuk caravanserai. The lion figure in the portal with double-casing and its head described frontally is symbolic and thought to have been placed as heraldry related to Kılıçarslan II.

Öresinhan (Tepesidelik Han)

It is situated 22 km along the Aksaray to Nevşehir highway. The inn seems bigger than it actually is and visitors find that it has a mysterious atmosphere. It has an unusual design with five naves with embrasure windows. There are sections each with 6 arches. Although there is no definite information it is believed that the inn was built towards the end of the 17th C. It has been restored in recent years.

Zinciriye Madrasa

Constructed by Yahşi Bey of the Karamanoğulları (1336-1338), the building is made of cut stone and brick and is the type of madrasas with four vaulted rooms with one side open to the courtyard, three porticos and a courtyard. It is topped by a vault and dome, with an eight-sectioned open top courtyard.

The entrance is by the eastern crowned door. Decorated with niches, the door is low arched. The vaulted rooms are covered with plant and geometric motifs. Its portal is embellished with plastic art motifs which continued the Seljuk tradition.

In the southern vaulted room is the tomb of Dingoz (Tingoz) Baba (Father Dingo) (18th C.). It functioned as a madrasa until the Republican Period and one of its peculiarities is that it has the appearance of a castle.







Aksaray Museum

The museum houses many architectural pieces that have survived to the present day dating from the Neolithic Period (7000 B.C) through the Chalcolithic, Early Bronze, Assyrian Trade Colonies, Late Hittite, Urartian, Phrygian, Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine and Seljuk ages.

Stone pieces amongst these include: hieroglyphic inscriptions from the Late Hittite Period; statues of eagles and lions, tomb ornaments, inscriptions from buildings, architectural remnants, mile stones, altars and sarcophagi from the Roman Period; Byzantine Period tomb pieces, sarcophagus doors. Plus ornamental coffins, tombstones, inscriptions, and architectural remnants from the Seljuk, principalities and Ottoman periods.

Amongst the earthenware collection can be seen medium and large sized jars for storing food and water belonging to the Assyrian Trade Colonies, Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman periods.



Amongst the various archaeological artefacts to be found in the museum's storage areas are earthenware dishes and pots, figurines, stone and agate necklaces, obsidian and bone instruments for cutting and piercing,

stone axes, glass teardrop bottles, bronze needles and bracelets, mummies and seals, and mineral and glass ornaments.

Amongst the pieces that are found in the museum's ethnographic collection are: regional clothing (local dresses, embroidered velvet, jackets and waistcoats), money and tobacco pouches, jewellery, various household appliances, weapons plus carpets and rugs.

As for coins there is money belonging to the Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, Seljuk and Ottoman ages made of materials such as gold, electron, silver, bronze and copper.

Also included in the pieces that can be seen is a cannonball dating to the First World War.







Ancient Sites and Excavations

Ancient Sites

* The Ihlara Valley which stretches 14 km from Ihlara town and in which 105 churches and close to 10,000 rock cut residences have been identified,

*The Monastery Valley of Güzelyurt district within which there are lots of churches, rock-cut houses and underground cities,

*The Ancient City of Nora (Viranşehir), found in Helvadere town on Mount Hasan, the Acemhöyük (mound) of Yeşilova and the Aşıklıhöyük (mound) of Kızılkaya Village.

Excavations

* Aşıklıhöyük Excavation

* Acemhöyük Excavation

* Güvercinkaya Excavation

* Kalebalta Ruins

Aşıklıhöyük (Aşıklı Mound)

Aşıklıhöyük is located on the banks of Melendiz River, 1 km south from the village of Kızılkaya. It is 25 km to the southeast of Aksaray. There have been ongoing archaeological rescue excavations since 1989.

Located in one of the areas of Cappadocian Aksaray's tufa rock regions, the first settlements of Aşıklı date back to 8000 B.C. Aşıklıhöyük is known as one of the oldest "first village settlements" of Anatolia and the Near East and is also one of the most important ancient sites belonging to the Neolithic Period.

The people who lived in Aşıklı were the first to cultivate types of wheat, barley and lentil. They were also intensively occupied with hunting.

It has been established that the earliest known brain operation (trepanation) was carried out on a young woman of Aşıklı. And there have been found signs of the first ever autopsy found on the jawbone of another woman here.



Yeşilova (Acemhöyük) (Acem Mound)

Yeşilova is 15 km to the northwest of Aksaray. The mound was first inhabited in 3000 B.C. and lived its most glorious period in the years 2000 to 1750 B.C.

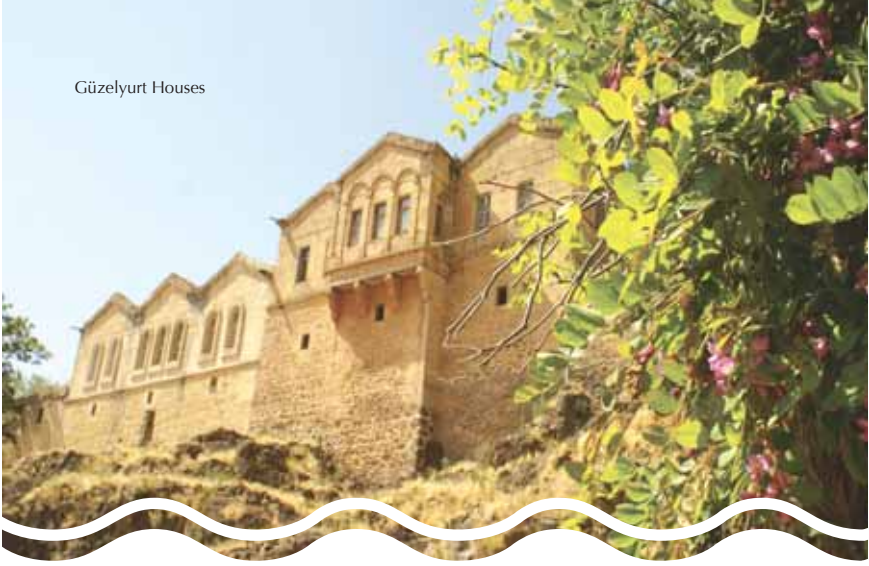
The mound has been systematically excavated since 1962. As a result of the excavations a large palace and depository belonging to the Assyrian Trade Colonies Period has come to light. There also have been found beak-mouthed vases, seals and ceramics.

Darphane (Mint)

This two storied building is one of the earliest known examples of an Anatolian Seljuk mint. One of the peculiarities of the site that show what it must have been is the two storied building found opposite the vaulted room at the entrance. When the ground floor of this building is examined there can be found places that must have been for the pressing of coins and there are no buildings to be seen on the outside from here. Also on this site there were coins ready to be imprinted that prove the point.

Civil Architecture

The traditional houses of Aksaray are well designed to keep out the heat of the summer and the cold of the winter and are tall and spacious, built of cut stone with large courtyards and balconies. Generally they are as one or two storied buildings. Architecturally they are from the recent past and usually have one large reception room



that has many doors opening onto other rooms. The back garden gate and the front face are usually decorated with ornate cut stone.

In the district of Güzelyurt there is a particular tradition of civil architecture to be observed. The buildings are completely of cut stone and have a maximum of two stories.

Belisırma Village

The most important feature of this village, situated within the borders of Güzelyurt, is its location in the Ihlara Valley. The Village is established on the slopes of the valley, to the right side of the Melendiz River that passes through the valley.

The name of Belisırma is thought to have been derived from the Greek word "Peristrema" according to the resources.

Ala Church, Direkli Church, Bahaddin Samanlıđı Church are in this village. Beside these churches, the village is also popular for its local houses with ornamental facades.



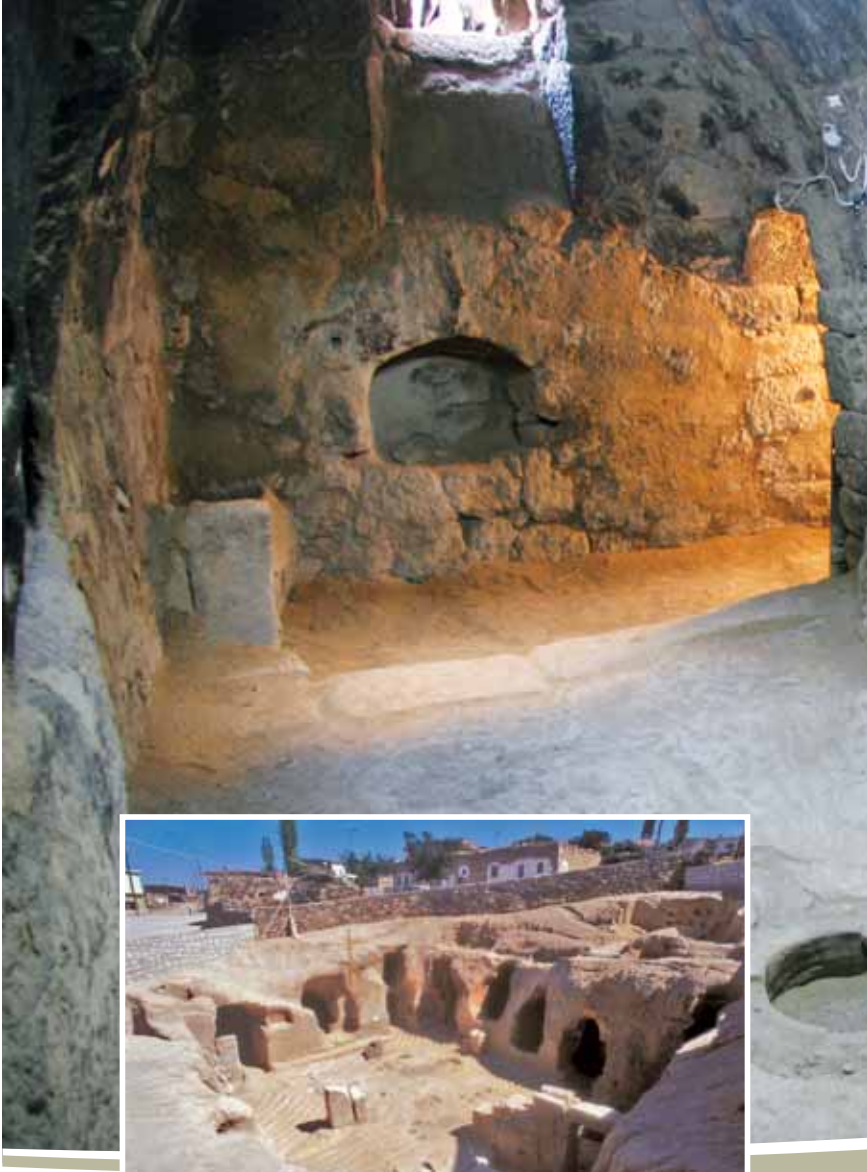


Sofular Valley Rock Dwellings and Settlement

Located in Sofular Town of Gülağaç District, Sofular Valley is on the Ihlara-Derinkuyu road, about 700 metres away from the town and about 100 metres from the main road. Sofular underground city entrances have been blocked in process of time. But inside open places still exist. There are churches, chapels and tombs in the multi-storey rock dwellings of the valley. Tırhaz stones, ventilation shafts, animal shelters and living places connected each other with tunnels show that these rock dwellings were used as underground cities. The ceramics on the surface reveal that it was also settled in Roman and Byzantine periods. Houses that were built of local hewn stones on the valley slopes still preserve their mystery.

Kalebalta Fortress and Its Environs

In the Kalebalta Village, ruins of the fortress from the Byzantine Period and natural setting surrounding it display a magnificent view. The fortress was built on high rocks. The environs of the fortress, especially its eastern side with granite stones, display a beautiful view. The fortress is surrounded by rocks with an outstanding natural beauty. It is understood that the fortress was also used in the Seljuk Period.



Underground Cities

There are many underground cities to chance upon in the area as is typical throughout Cappadocia. Ones that should be visited include: Eski and Erdođdu of Eřmekaya on the Konya highway; Urumdügün on the Ankara highway; Ersele at Ortaköy Ozancık, Saratlı on the Nevşehir highway; Çukurören at Gülağaç Gülpınar; and the Ihlara Valley and Güzelyurt.

Güzelyurt Underground City



Sarahlı Underground City





Examples of Handicrafts and Traditional Folklore

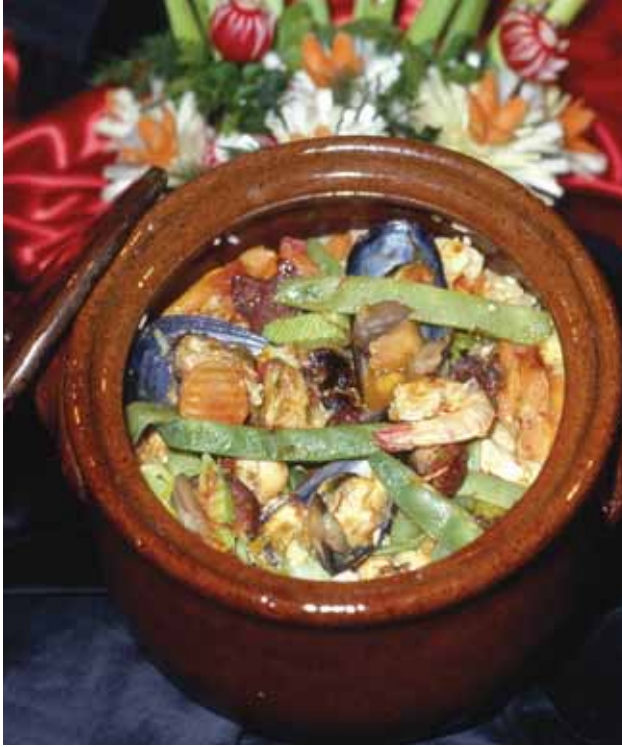
In Anatolia carpet weaving has a long tradition wherein each loop made and knot tied has come to down as a memento of the history of this particular art.

It is impossible to separate the history of carpet making from that of the Turkish people. The relationship with carpets that began for the Turks in Central Asia is still continued in many places in Anatolia to this day including Taşpınar in Aksaray.



Of the specialties preserved in Taşpınar carpets to this day is of “warp-weft and knot” threads that have to all be of wool. Natural dyes are usually used to colour the threads.

There are varieties of Taşpınar weaving known as floor, head, double bed, mat, pillow, saddlebag and cover. In recent years mostly cushions and side carpets known as twin carpets have been produced.



Aksaray Cuisine

Aksaray boasts a large area of fields producing grain that is used in the production of flour, much animal husbandry which produces meat and dairy products and vines and small gardens which produce a wide range of fruit and vegetables used in the local cuisine.

Amongst local specialities are included: *Yufka*, *Şepe*, *Sıkma*, *Çörek*, *Mayalı*, *Erişte*, *Couscous*, *Dolma Manti*, *Katıklı Aş*, *Pelte*, *Soğanlama*, *Pastries*, *Sarığlı Burma*, *Höşmerim*, *Arabaşı*, *Çullama*, *Ayva Borani*, *Çiğleme*, *Kalburbastı*, *Sac Böreği*, *Okra Soup* and *Kaygana*. Highly appreciated by the tourists, the delicious examples of the Aksaray cuisine can be tasted in local or modern restaurants.



Don't Leave Aksaray Without;

- Seeing the Eğri Minaret,
- Eating trout in Helvadere and *sac tava* (Turkish wok) in the Ihlara Valley,
- Getting a carpet from Taşpınar as a present,
- Attending the festivals in Ihlara and Güzelyurt,
- Trying the springs at Ziga



IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

**Provincial Directorate of
Culture and Tourism**
Taşpazar Mah. 800 Sok. No:1
(+90 382) 213 24 74

Museum Directorate
(+90 382) 215 56 36

**Güzelyurt Tourism
Information Bureau**
(+90 382) 451 24 98

**Ihlara Valley Entrance-Ticket
Office**
(+90 382) 453 74 82

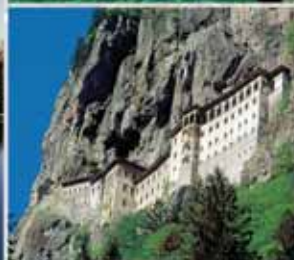
Governor's Office
(+90 382) 213 50 20

Municipality
(+90 382) 213 54 92

State Hospital
(+90 382) 212 91 00

Emergency Service 112
Fire 110
Police 155
Military Police 156





Cultural Heritage is Fragile

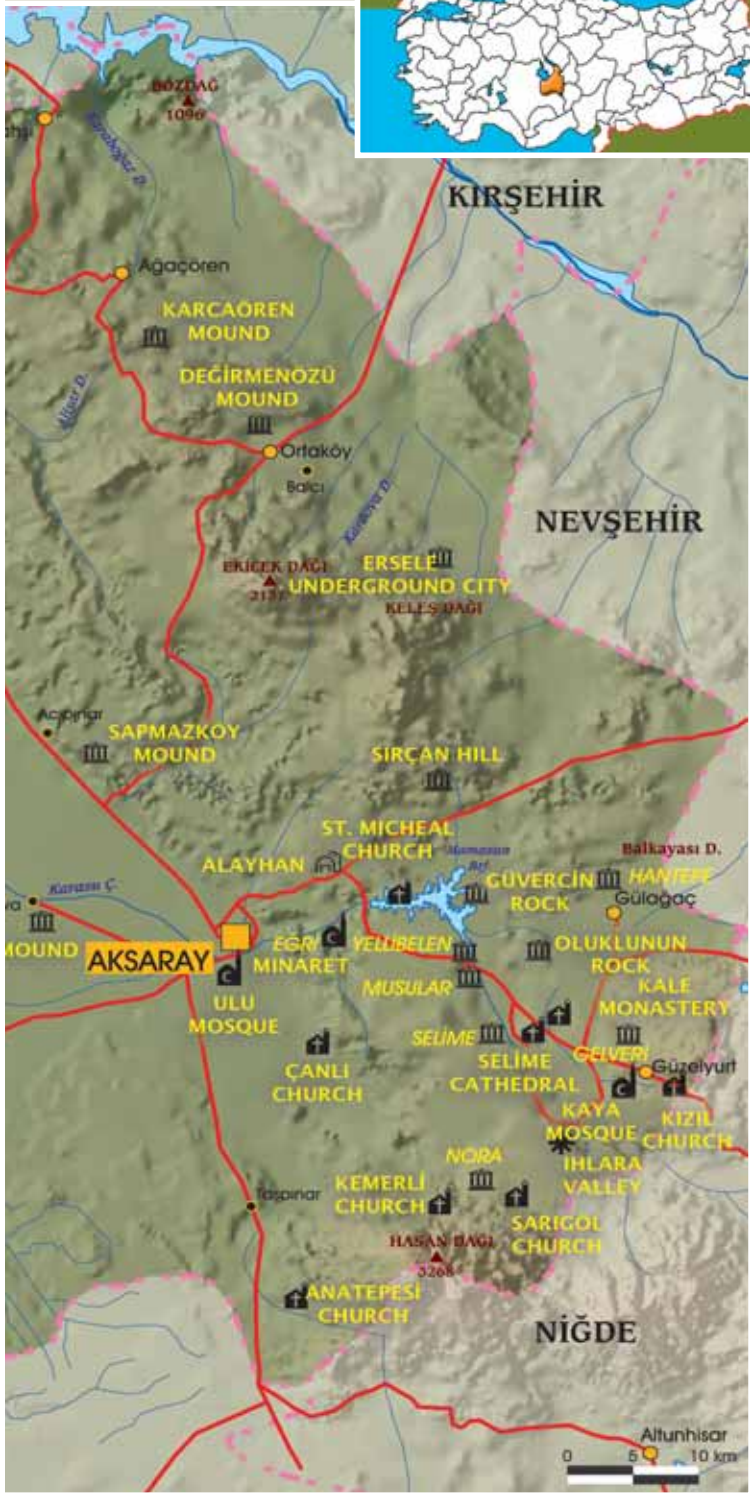
The world's cultural heritage is like a big puzzle. Each monument, each object, is an irreplaceable part of the overall picture which gives us insight into our origins, our development and our lives today. It helps us to understand and appreciate other cultures. Each discovery, each new interpretation adds to the puzzle and makes the picture clearer. We must ensure the protection of every single piece today, so that future generations may have the opportunities to enjoy the puzzle.

Many people are not aware that our cultural heritage is under stress from natural disasters such as earthquakes and floods, and from slower acting processes such as pollution or human actions. Even the most innocent gestures such as collecting ancient pieces of pottery or mosaics as souvenirs have a destructive impact if repeated by thousands. Touching an object of stone, metal or textile leaves traces of grease, acid or sweat on its surface. Climbing a monument wears down the structure underneath and can dismantle it. Writing or engraving names inflicts permanent damage. Strolling around narrow crowded places with bulky bags or backpacks might knock over an object or scratch a mural painting and ruin it. There are countless ways in which one can unknowingly contribute to the destruction of cultural heritage.

In 2020 there will be 1.6 billion visitors per year worldwide. Let us raise awareness of this issue so that we may join together to protect and enjoy the diversity and richness of our cultural heritage.

International Organization for Conservation of Cultural Heritage (ICCROM)





BÖZDAĞ
1090

KIRŞEHİR

KARCAÖREN
MOUND

DEĞİRMENOZU
MOUND

NEVŞEHİR

ERİCEK DAĞI
2137

ERSELE
UNDERGROUND CITY
KELES DAĞI

SAPMAZKOY
MOUND

SIRÇAN HILL

ST. MICHAEL
CHURCH

ALAYHAN

GÜVERCİN
ROCK

Balkayası D.

MOOND

AKSARAY

EGRİ
MINARET

YELİBELEN

HANİFEPİ
ROCK

Gülüoğaç

ULU
MOSQUE

MUSULAR

OLUKLUNUN
ROCK

KALE
MONASTERY

ÇANLI
CHURCH

SELİME
CATHEDRAL

GELVERİ

Güzelyurt

KEMERLİ
CHURCH

NORA

KAYA
MOSQUE

İHLARA
VALLEY

KIZIL
CHURCH

HASAN DAĞI
3208

SARIGÖL
CHURCH

ANATEPESİ
CHURCH

NİĞDE

Altunhisar
0 5 10 km



T.R. MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND TOURISM

General Directorate of Information©

www.kulturturizm.gov.tr

www.goturkey.com

Text

Aksaray Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism

Graphic Design

A S M E D Y A

Tel. 0 312 496 07 06

www.asmedya.com.tr

Photographs

Adem Koçak, Alev Han, Ayşe Ulu Kurtaran,
Dursunali Sarıkoç, Fahri Ayçin,
Murat Öcal, Rauf Miski, Savaş Ulukaya, Sıtkı Fırat,
Archive of the Aksaray Provincial Directorate of
Culture and Tourism

Print

Başak Matbaacılık ve Tanıtım Hiz. Ltd. Şti.

Tel: 0312 397 16 17 Fax: 0312 397 03 07

Ankara, 2011

For Free Distribution

