

THE “CAPPADOCIA ACADEMY” A PROJECT ON DOCUMENTATION, PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT IN CENTRAL ANATOLIA

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ABSTRACT:

The UNESCO World Heritage Site of Göreme-Cappadocia in the middle of Turkey is experiencing rapid changes, which result from general modern developments as well as from fast growing tourism. The aim of the *Cappadocia Academy* has been to install an independent monitoring and research instrument, which is able to contribute with concrete proposals and professional advice towards a sustainable development of this ‘lunar’ tufa cave-dwelling area. Furthermore the international expert network on Cappadocia *platform_c* had been created to extend an interdisciplinary approach on the study and documentation. The *Cappadocia Academy* provides basic documentation and monitoring work, which is mainly focusing on visual and ethnographic databanks. An other aim is to provide culturally interested travellers with basic information about the area via its own website and further multimedia access with 3-D models of particular buildings from selected key periods in the future. The *Cappadocia Academy* is also contributing to a professional CD-Rom project on Cappadocia which provides well researched background information on this unique area as well as multiple 360° panoramic views, and other multimedia presentations concerning the nature, history and culture of the area.

KURZFASSUNG:

Die seit 1985 zum UNESCO Weltkulturerbe zählende Region Göreme-Kappadokien in Zentralanatolien erfährt seit etwa zwanzig Jahren einen rapiden Wandel, der vor allem durch den stark ansteigenden Tourismus in der Region, sowie durch allgemeine Modernisierungstendenzen begründet ist. Das Ziel der *Cappadocia Academy* ist es, ein unabhängiges und überregionales Instrument zu schaffen, um die rasanten Entwicklungen in der Region in vielfältiger Form dokumentieren zu können und um gegebenenfalls Expertisen und Ratschläge zur Lösung bestimmter regionaler Probleme hinsichtlich einer nachhaltigen Entwicklung der Region bieten zu können. In diesem Zusammenhang wurde auch das internationale und interdisziplinäre Expertennetzwerk “*platform_c*” ins Leben gerufen, welches sich mit verschiedenen Aspekten der kappadokischen Entwicklung beschäftigt und seit dem Jahr 2000 konkrete Pilotprojekte durchführt. Die *Cappadocia Academy* arbeitet ferner an dem Aufbau einer visuellen und ethnographischen Datenbank, professionellen CD-Rom Projekten und einer eigenen Webseite, die u.a. dem Kappadokien Interessierten gut fundierte Informationen über die Region bereitstellt. Ein längerfristiges Ziel ist die verstärkte Vernetzung mit anderen Spezialisten und Institutionen sowie die Nutzung neuer Technologien, um z.B. spezifische architektonisch bedeutsame Objekte aus verschiedenen Zeitepochen möglichst auch in 3-D Form dokumentieren zu können.



Vernacular cave dwelling in Göreme, Cappadocia



Contemporary building in Göreme

1. INTRODUCTION

The following paper will introduce to the planning and development process of the *Cappadocia Academy*. The general aim of this local academy is the formal establishment of a Cappadocia relevant scientific research and monitoring network to document the rapid changes of space and culture in the World Heritage Site of Göreme - Cappadocia and propose further solutions. The foundation of the *Cappadocia Academy* is a result

of 20 years of ethnological field research and observation done by the author from 1983 till now. In 1989 some results of the fieldwork led to a dissertation on the practical and social aspects of the traditional use of space in Göreme. Furthermore a 45 min. documentary film on the traditional cave dwelling life in the village of Göreme was produced. After establishing an informal expert network and base of a documentation centre in Cappadocia, further focus should be laid on improving the formal status of the *Cappadocia Academy* and the use of new technologies and digital techniques for documenting the traditional local architecture and change of the region. The text

will provide readers with basic information on the work, which has been done until recently, and the planned further steps towards a multiple approach for continuous monitoring of the local changes and the development of preventive maintenance programs.



Street scene in the old part of the town, Göreme

2. CURRENT SITUATION

UNESCO listed the unique area of Göreme-Cappadocia as both a cultural and natural World Heritage Site in 1985. Over the last decades modernization and mass tourism have brought fundamental changes to Cappadocia's environment. The region, which had existed on a subsistent traditional farming economy for many centuries, went through rapid changes. Tourism and modern developments caused many of the young generation to quit with the hard local traditional life and search for a new future based on a modern infrastructure and the rise of the tourism market. As there had only been about three pensions in the village of Göreme in the year 1983 compared to almost eighty nowadays, the traditional life in the village went through dramatic changes including the loss of tradition and major uncontrolled building activities.

Today it is very hard to find a traditional cave dwelling, which is not transformed into a pension or a modernized house. Most of these new built houses hardly respect to the old characteristics of the local way of architecture. Building forms, which had been different from Cappadocian village to village in former times, are now replaced with standard construction and decor elements without any sub regional differentiation. The result is a rapid loss of the particular historical character of the different Cappadocian villages, which sometimes originate from different cultures and ethnic groups, like the old orthodox Greek groups for instance.

Even being protected by UNESCO and the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism as well as the Forest Ministry (national park) till now no sustainable master plan has been developed which is based on the requirements and needs of the region and local people. Uncoordinated building activities both concerning tourism and the urbanisation caused by general development are hardly acceptable for a sustainable future of the region as a

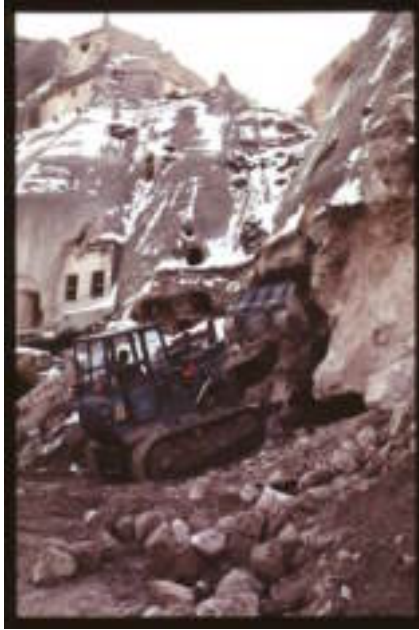
World Heritage area. On governmental side, many old local cave dwellers of the traditional parts of some Cappadocian rock-villages have been removed to new subsidized houses provided and planned for the local population without any respect to their traditional needs as traditional farmers. ("afet"-program of the 1970's). Returning guest workers from Europe introduced new ways of building ideas and prestigious life-style. General urbanisation, modernization and the extensive growth of the tourism market next to new building materials caused dramatic changes to the villages.

Unfortunately existing controlling instruments like the local protection board of the Ministry of Culture, UNESCO and the local authorities only have a small impact on saving the traditional habitat. Architectural and other study groups from Turkish and international universities reflected on some of the spatial changes in limited projects but till now there is no independent Site Commission involving responsible professionals from different fields for continuous monitoring and diagnose of the rapid changes happening in Cappadocia. The decay of tradition, vernacular cultural wealth and the unique Cappadocian building style is obvious all over the region. Further more, even permitted projects done by professional architects sometimes do not really respect the micro cultural aspects of traditional regional housing and design forms.

Till now activities by UNESCO concentrated mostly on the restoration of Byzantine churches and the protection of the art history of the region. Regional laws like the ban of future cave carving have been introduced. So the vernacular tradition of creating cave houses officially stopped. Today most of the new regional construction is happening in a way, which is by no means a proper answer to the ideas behind the claim of a World Heritage Site. More and more traditional houses are getting destroyed or sometimes redesigned in an often kitschy way.



Central courtyard and traditional Cappadocian "kemer" house in Göreme



Destruction of vernacular habitat at the end of the 1980's

Further more, even well intact cave houses have been destroyed with bulldozers by local municipalities. Until today there are no regular meetings extending the official protection board, which is mainly responsible for giving building- and restoration permissions. Even the official local decision making bodies are not really trained for seeing the important value of details and the complexity of the fast changing region and are therefore not able to give proper advice. The different working groups on the Cappadocia region do not really cooperate with each other or cross contact in order to present effective professional teams, an there are still no public meetings explaining the needs and strategies applied for the region to the local population.

3. METHODS OF RESEARCH AND SURVEY

3.1. „platform_c“

One of the major tasks of the academy was a development of a wider network of specialists with some specific interest in Cappadocia. In September 2000 the first *platform_c* meeting was organized to invite architects, town planners, cultural anthropologists, historians, artists and other specialists from disciplines involved in the protection and sustainable development of historic areas. As a result of this first symposium a manifesto was written and handed in to the local authorities, focusing on the following questions and subjects:

- How can we protect and restore Cappadocia's natural and cultural heritage in a more comprehensive way?
- What are the future and modernization concepts for Cappadocia that will respect its unique character?

platform_c proposed that a powerful and transparent regional management board, which consists of representatives of all governmental and administration bodies involved in Cappadocia, non-governmental organisations and independent national and international experts from different fields, should be developed. The first symposium also came to the conclusion that a comprehensive regional protection and development plan should be worked out by national and international experts.

platform_c offers all its available resources for helping to save Cappadocia's heritage. In concrete terms the following activities have been planned and partly realized to support a sustainable future development in Cappadocia:

- Organization of an international and interdisciplinary academy with symposia, workshops and conferences on Cappadocia related topics.
- Creation of pilot projects on how to reuse and restore traditional buildings and develop a contemporary architecture that respects and protects Cappadocia's unique environment and culture.
- Establishment of a „Cappadocia Documentation Centre“, where all Cappadocia related knowledge is collected and accessible.
- Creation of a regional, national and international expert-network of people who support the protection and sustainable development of the Cappadocia region.

platform_c, which had its second meeting in September 2002 is willing to contribute its expertise to help building a better future for the Cappadocia region and is looking forward to collaborate on that aim with all involved institutions.

3.2. Documentation of a restoration project in Göreme An „organic“ approach.

The spatial base of the *Cappadocia Academy* is the private property of the author, who bought an old traditional Cappadocian house ruin with several added cave-rooms in 1998. The property, which consists of almost 20 rooms of different character, has been restored in an organic and traditional way and also in respect to modern needs and function. After cleaning the decayed site of rubble, a detailed documentation of the architectural relicts had been worked out by a group of architects and students from the Technical University of Berlin, using traditional classical methods of architectural measuring and photography to prepare ground plans and sections of the building and the added cave-rooms.



Documentation of the Cappadocia Academy site in the village of Göreme

As no major architectural changes on the outside and the character of the building had been strived for, basic restoration-permission was given by the authorities of the local protection board. The concept of saving as much of the traditional building and its particular character as possible and combine it with actual modern functions caused many stages of compromises which all had to be balanced very sensibly. Even though most of the cave-dwelling dates back to early Byzantine times, many rooms are now connected to the internet and have modern, but carefully designed bathrooms and invisible under-floor heating systems.

As the slowly growing restoration process continues, many variations have been discussed with specialists, revised and sometimes even rejected. The experience on the site shows, that an „organic“ approach to restoration was needed to find optimal, and in many ways, multifunctional solutions for the site. Most of the details and complex contexts only became obvious during the time of bringing the place back to life. Therefore many aspects, which had been by no means clear at the beginning of the restoration process, could be taken into consideration during the restoration process. This method of „organic restoration“ is also an aspect of the traditional vernacular way of the nonarchitectural building history in Cappadocia, which developed considering the spatial needs of the local population and regional resources.

4. RECORDING AND MONITORING OF THE ENVIRONMENT

4.1. Photography

As the author also documented the area of Cappadocia in visual ways for twenty years, he built up a negative-archive on clear defined objects within the village of Göreme and surrounding areas. The rapid changes of housing and building style became obvious by comparing photographs from the same positions, but from different time periods. With the use of computers, scanners and digital cameras, a visual database had been created to be able to search for specific headwords. The aim is to extend this visual database and even cross contact with other archives of regional photography in the future.



Example of a vernacular cave-dwelling site in change.
Göreme, 1984



Example of a vernacular cave-dwelling site in change.
Göreme, 1990

4.2. Plans and Survey

The general area of Cappadocia's villages and surroundings is surveyed and documented in ground plans of different measurements via the land registry office. Scientific work and research was done mainly in the beginning of the 1970's to document the general area in terms of nature, geology and art history. Older works concentrated on Byzantine art and the documentation of cave-churches and the multiple frescos of the region. Of course, architectural surveys and detailed plans have been worked out by numerous architects in Cappadocia for individual building projects, most of them related to tourism.

4.3. Ethnographic Documentation and Oral History

The author's interest as a cultural anthropologist is also the ethnographic documentation of objects of traditional use. With the methods of museology an ethnographic database had been developed to record different, more or less „valuable“ objects from the local village. This includes all kind of materials and in particular the „oral history“ recordings related to the objects. This database is just the beginning of a bigger approach of a recording, which could include other samples of the development of local and traditional architecture as well. This can provide a clearer definition of resources, local knowledge and historic values.

4.4. CD-Rom

A further result of *Cappadocia Academy's* „platform_c“ activities was a cooperation project with historians, anthropologists, geologists and multimedia specialists to prepare a scientifically well-founded CD-Rom on Cappadocia to provide interested people with some basic information on the area and multiple animated panoramic views. The CD will be published at the end of 2003 by www.mediacultura.de.

4.5. Modern Technology

As most of the recent monitoring and projects related to this field were done with more or less „classical“ methods, major focus must be laid on the use of new technologies for documenting processes in Cappadocia. Rapid development in computer technology and digital processes like photogrammetry and its related fields provide new chances of documenting, preservation and restoration of endangered architectural monuments. This should include the documentation of selected

traditional vernacular architecture in the same way as old Byzantine churches.

4.6. Cappadocia Academy Website

An actual aim of the *Cappadocia Academy* is the presentation of an informative website providing visitors with specific information on the scientific backgrounds of the region in terms of geology and the local environment, history and touristic travel advice, as well as to actual projects. The website of the academy fairychimney.org, which by now is just presented in German, will be translated at least into English in the nearer future.

5. THE FUTURE OF THE CAPPADOCIA ACADEMY

After twenty years of scientific and documentary observation by the author in Cappadocia and the creation of the *platform_c* network, basic knowledge and contacts have been provided to extend the activities and multiplicity of approaches towards a formal management structure and establishing a powerful and independent Site Commission next to the activities of other groups and the regional protection board. As the author is German with no formal institutional connections, many difficulties are experienced in finding serious and well-funded help from the Turkish governmental and local authority side to interlink officially to the actual discussion.

Ideas for the future rank from establishing an independent non-profit charity organization in Cappadocia or a foundation towards a private profit oriented consultant agency for monitoring, restoring and spatial development in Cappadocia. The actual work of the academy is dependant on free volunteering work of international students. But there is an urgent need to recruit finance sources in order to continue and develop projects related to the topic of the World Heritage Site of Göreme-Cappadocia in the future. The *Cappadocia Academy* is inviting all experts in Turkey and from other countries related to this field to advise help of any kind so we can establish an independent and official organisation and Site Commission to help saving and monitoring the Cultural Heritage of Göreme-Cappadocia.



platform_c 2002 multimedia presentation
in an old Byzantine cave room (picture by T. Spree)

CONCLUSION

This short paper introduced to some of the activities provided by the *Cappadocia Academy* and their cooperating networks. After comparing the old vernacular way of Cappadocian habitat to the contemporary processes, many questions rise up towards a sustainable and careful development concerning this both

natural as well as cultural UNESCO World Heritage Site. The non-profit organisation *Cappadocia Academy* tries to find answers concerning monitoring, restoring as well as the development of the region and realizes certain pilot projects on a limited base. The expert network *platform_c* met twice in Cappadocia since it's founding in the late 1990's and formulated a manifesto to present some professional ideas to the officials in the region. One of the other aims of the academy is the creation of an independent documentation centre for the region to record the local cultural changes and ethnography as well as some of the of the regional oral history. Further on the *Cappadocia Academy* will provide the interest group on Cappadocia with basic information via a actual CD-ROM and an own website. Next to methods of monitoring via photography, audio video as well as computer based databank activities of the *Cappadocia Academy* include the observation of a restoring project in Göreme in response to traditional building techniques and functions, but also tries to find an „organic approach“ towards modern needs of space and living.

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