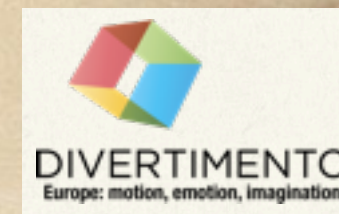


EUROTHENTICA

Connecting Cultures

COS-TOUR - 699493 DIVERTIMENTO

**Diversifying tourism offers in peripheral destinations with heritage-based products
and services, stakeholder-skills alliances to internationalize
locally operating micro-enterprises**



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Connecting Cultures

A truly Eurasian Story.

ISBN: 9788890859274

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EUROTHENTICA

Following the COE tradition for the European Cultural Routes, DIVERTIMENTO innovates not through the assemblage of geo-locations across a line, but with an integrative experience at each location. By defining the places as the great imperative a scenario full of objects is created for each place represented, enabling visitors to select desired objects in the locations of interest with a total of 70 different heritage objects unified as a pluralistic experiences in the Project Area. Capturing realism and providing for emotional impact creating bridges between areas interpreted and visitors the Transnational Cultural Route EUROTHENTICA becomes an interactive learning space, revealing common values and cultural diversity in the Project Area, raising the awareness of policy makers and the general public for the values and fragility of European natural ecosystems and cultural diversity.

GREECE

*THE UNITED STATES OF EUROPE.
Dress Rehearsal: Rhodes, 1306-1522.*

ITALY

*LOOKING FOR MYTHS
Frederick II Hohenstaufen: Governance as Culture*

SPAIN

*SPAIN MAZARICOS
The inner journey on the Santiago Way*

SLOVENIA

*THE LAST CONSPIRACY
The Plot of Fate in Castle Race, 1668*

ROMANIA

*THE PEOPLE'S VERDICT
Alba Julia, 1st of December 1918.*

BULGARIA

*THE GOLDEN ANCHOR.
Varna, 1869*

TURKEY

*CONNECTING CULTURES
A truly Eurasian Story.*

INTRODUCTION

What is the ingredient that makes

A truly Eurasian Story?

At Cape Jason, Medea, the princess of Colchis confesses: I killed my children with Jason, captain of the Argonauts. Love and hate know no limits in this world. At the Zigana Pass Xenophon and his Myriads are crossing one of the highest mountain passes in the world, ending their exciting march from Mesopotamia to the Anatolian highlands.....



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At the Zigana Pass Xenophon and his Myriads are crossing one of the highest mountain passes in the world, ending their

exciting
Mesopotamia
Anatolian

While outside
walls Grand
Pasha
Persian

*Since the sun
fallen, let us
city tomorrow,*
Ferhat agreed
then he
the abbot's
the Sumela

Do not put
tomorrow what you can do today. He seized Baghdad the
same night escaping the trap the Persians have set for him.

A shadow is moving in the narrow alleys around the Bedesten
Bazaar in Trabzon: it is *Evliya Celebi*, who is writing down
every flavor and every custom in *Seyahatname*, his Book of
Travels.



march from
to the
highlands.

of Bagdad's
Vizier Ferhat
received a
delegation.
*had already
surrender the
they said.*
at first, but
remembered
advice from
Monastery:
off till

The monks of the
Emperor Justinian,
who smuggled the
silk worms from
China, are returning
home following the
serpentine body of the
Silk Road unfolding down the
Firtina Valley across the gold and silver
mines of the Empire.

I have not told you half of what I saw, says *Marco Polo*, the only
European with a 'diplomatic passport', the *Golden Tablet of
Command* – a 30 cm long and 2 cm wide golden bar, issued by
Kublai Khan in 1298.

Jean-Michel Tancoigne, writes in his diary *Journey to Persia* on
the 4th of July, 1808: *Just before reaching Trebizond, a magnificent
wood formed a curtain of verdure round this mountain, before us was
the entrance of one of the most beautiful valleys perhaps in the world.*
*My companion, who had travelled over the whole of Switzerland, had
never seen any scenery there that could be compared with what we now
surveyed.*

In a silent summer night on the 11th of June 1937 at the
Soguksu Kiosk Mustafa Kemal Ataturk is writing his will to
the Turkish nation: *the wealth of a person is within his own morale.*

The world is a stage and all men are actors.

William Shakespeare, *Merchant of Venice*, 1598.





CONNECTING CULTURES

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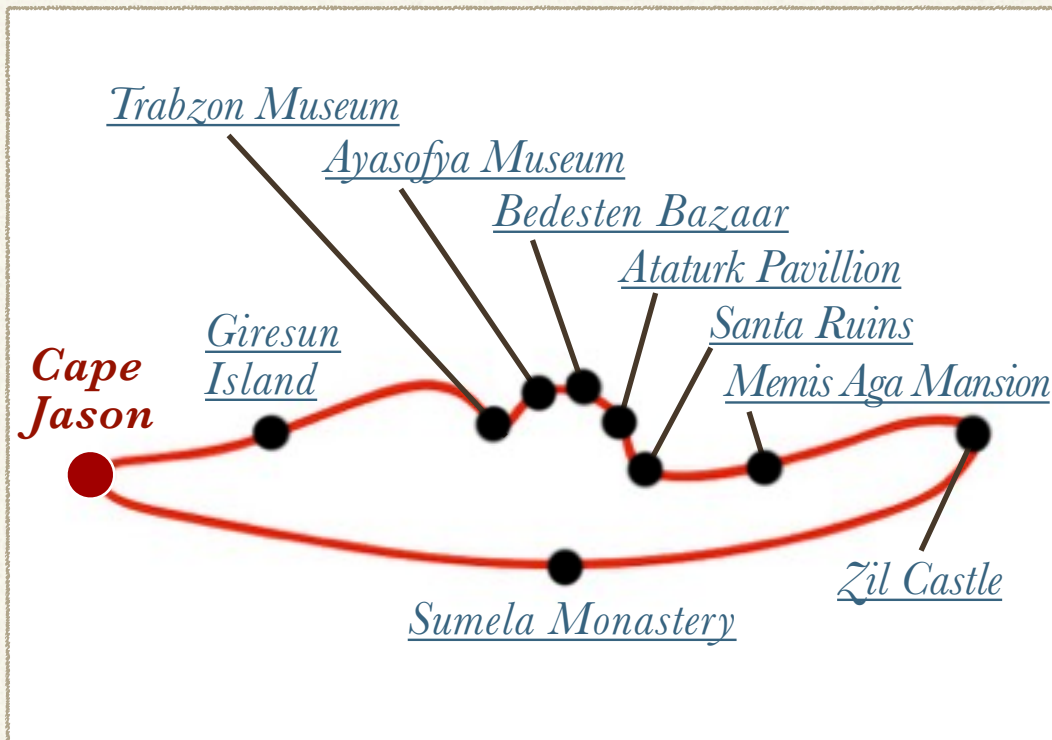
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Jason and Medea

Jason, king of Iolkos

“Before I start to narrate my story, I've got to start with another one: long before my time, Phrixus, prince of Boetia, discredited by his father's wife, was to be sacrificed. But Zeus, the father of the gods in mount Olympus, could not tolerate the injustice: a golden ram appeared and carried Phrixus and his sister Ellie away. Passing over the sea strait that connected Europe and Asia, Ellie fell from the ram to the water and drowned. The sea got her name: Hellespont.

Phrixus, who now remained without any relatives, arrived in Colchis, where he sacrificed the ram to Zeus giving its skin to king Aetes, whose



CAPE JASON

Cape Jason lies on the north east shore of Turkey in the Ordu province, opposite of Georgia's Batumi. It is named after Jason, the legendary captain of the Argonauts. Cape Jason harkens back to ancient times when a temple of Jason was protecting the sailors from the treacherous waters of the Black Sea. Later a church replaced the temple with the same mission. It now sits in total solitude next to a lighthouse overlooking the roaring waves of Euxenos Pontus, the Hospitable Sea, as ironically the ancient Hellenes called its waters.

name means ‘eagle’. The king hanged the precious skin, called Golden Fleece, on an oak tree and put a dragon to guard it. When I heard the story for the first time, I had no idea, that much later I would be involved in the adventure.

My name is Jason, meaning ‘the healer’. I am the son of the king of Iolkos whose brother Pelias had unrightfully overturned him and seized the throne. The oracle had told Pelias that a one-sandal man would take his place. To hide me and protect me from any harm, my father sent me to the wise centaur, Cheiron, on mount Pelion, who had the mission to educate me. With twenty years I returned to Iolkos, but in the journey I lost one sandal when crossing a river. When Pelias met me, he was reminded of the oracle and got worried. To get rid of me he promised the throne only if I would bring him the Golden Fleece.

To regain my throne, I had no other choice, but to sail to the eastern end of the Black Sea to fetch the Golden Fleece. Eighty five heroes from the Trojan War decided to sail with

me: Heracles, Orpheus, Castor and Pollux and Atalanta, queen of the Amazons were among them. The goddess of wisdom, Athena, gave us a piece of the holy oak of Zeus in



Dodona to build our ship. The shipwright Argos, the son of Phrixus, has built it and we named it after him: the Argo.

It is Argo that gave us our eternal name, Argonauts. We navigated between the Clashing Rocks and the Wandering Rocks. We escaped the fatal allure of the Sirens. We sailed through the northern Bosphorus, where the Argo narrowly escaped shipwreck; we met the fierce Amazons in Kerasous, their homeland. We finally arrived in Colchis, where King Aeetes, who was jealously guarding the Golden Fleece, asked us to make a series of labors to avoid deliver it. It is there that I have fallen in love with Medea, the King’s daughter. It is she that helped me capture the Golden Fleece. We escaped Colchis forever sailing away on the board of the Argo.”



Medea, Princess of Colchis

“I am Medea, princess of Colchis. But I am remembered as a sorceress and for having killed my children with Jason, captain of the Argonauts. Love and hate know no limits in his world. I helped him gain the Golden Fleece sacrificing my family and homeland. We escaped my father’s wrath

sailing away on the board of the Argo. To delay the Colchian ship which came after us, I killed my brother Absyrtus, who was with me on Argo and threw his pieces into the sea, so that my father be delayed by gathering the limbs of his son while we were sailing away.



Our children were born in Corinth, where we settled down. But one day Jason thought, to marry king Creon's daughter. He said that it would add to his own power and the rights of the children. *Our children!* Betrayed, divorced and then exiled by Creon my rage knew no limits. I sent a dress drenched in poison as a wedding present to the bride. She wore it on her wedding day and she and all the palace vanished in flames. Still that was little relief for how much rage I felt. Yes, I am a sorceress, but I cannot bring back the time. I cannot make all what I did for him undone. Undone, undone!

Much later I remarried King Aegeus in Athens. I thought I had found a refuge, but one day, his son Theseus came to claim the throne from our son Medus. I missed to poison Theseus and then we had to escape. On the flying chariot of

my grandfather Helius I arrived with Medus to the Persian plateau, where the Aryans gave us a home renaming themselves to Medes."

Although it is unlikely to encounter strange peoples and monsters that figure in the Argonautica, joyful adventures are awaiting the visitors at the southern shores of the Eastern Black Sea. The Hellenes, the Persians, the Chinese, the Romans, the Byzantines, the Venetians, the Genoese, the Mongols, the Ottomans have left untold stories, the stories in our collection.

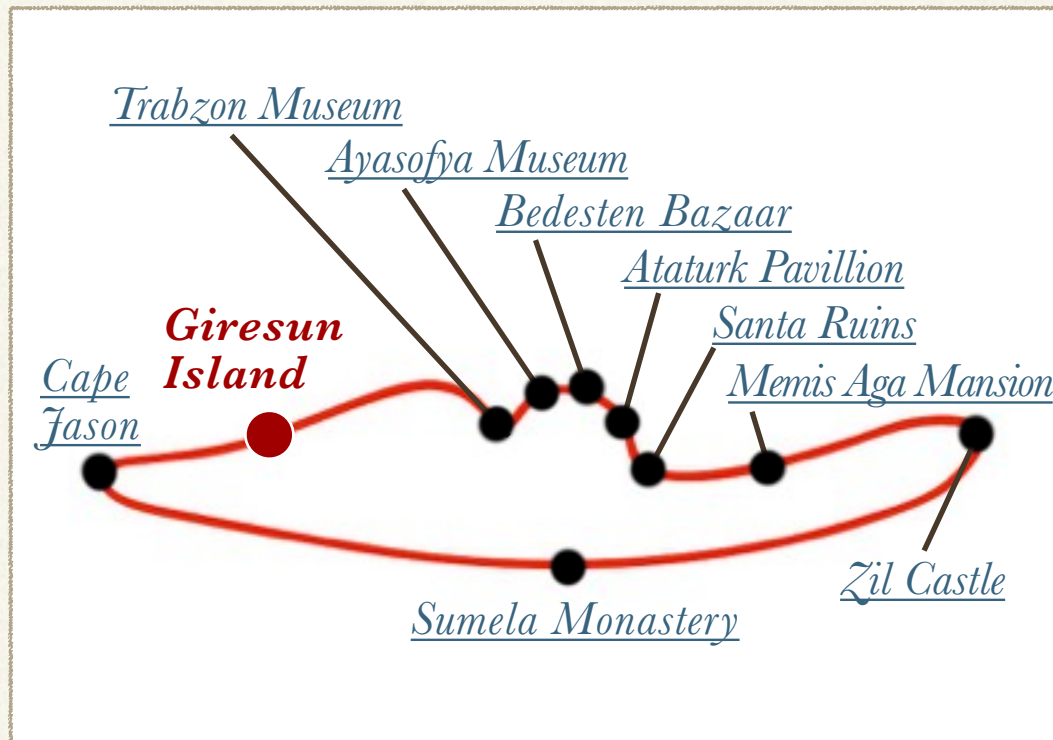


Birds with Arrow Feathers

A General with ... taste!

“My name is Lucius Licinius Lucullus and I descent from a noble family of Tusculum. As a Roman general I have conquered the East, returning to Rome with so much captured booty, that we were not able to account for the whole of it! My fame as a gastronome is even greater: lavishing and luxuriant banquets are called after me. In Kerasous I discovered the cherry-tree. I brought it to Rome and from there to the whole world.

A breath away from Kerasous, lies Aretias, the island of Ares, god of the war. There exists a black rock-altar, where the Amazon queens, when going to battle, sacrificed horses to



GIRESUN ISLAND

Giresun Island is a 40.000 m² island, 1.7 km off the modern-day Giresun in the Eastern Black Sea. The first settlement in the island, today a protected area, was related to the ancient Kerasous, a Greek colony in the 6th century BC and was called Aretias, after Ares the god of war. It was thought to be the sacred island of the Amazons. This one and only island along the whole south coast of the Black Sea, is a place of ancient rites with the mystic stone of Hamza, where all wishes shall become true.

honor Ares. The myth says, that bloodthirsty birds immigrated to the island. Before that those creatures lived in Arcadia breeding quickly and destroying crops, fruit trees, and people. Hercules eradicated them in his *Sixth Labor*, assisted by Athena, goddess of wisdom. Hercules employed first a rattle to rouse them from the lake, and then he shot them down one by one with bow and arrow. The surviving birds are said to have made a new home on the island of Aretias. Later the Argonauts came to the island, looking for the Golden Fleece. The dragon-like birds with brazen claws, teeth and wings have attacked them throwing their sharp metallic feathers like arrows. But in the end the Argonauts managed to escape.”

Hippolyta's Girdle

“I, Hercules, was given the labour by king Eurystheas of Tyrins to fetch him the Girdle of the Amazon Queen Hippolyta. Hippolyta is very proud of her golden girdle, a gift from her father Ares, the God of War. When I first approached her, she willingly consented to give me the girdle. However, Hera, the wife of Zeus and father of the gods in Olympus, approached the Amazons, disguised herself as one of them, and told them that I was there to steal the girdle. When I realized what Hera was doing behind my back, I started to believe that Hippolyta was selected by the Amazons to set me up. Believing that I had no choice but to kill her

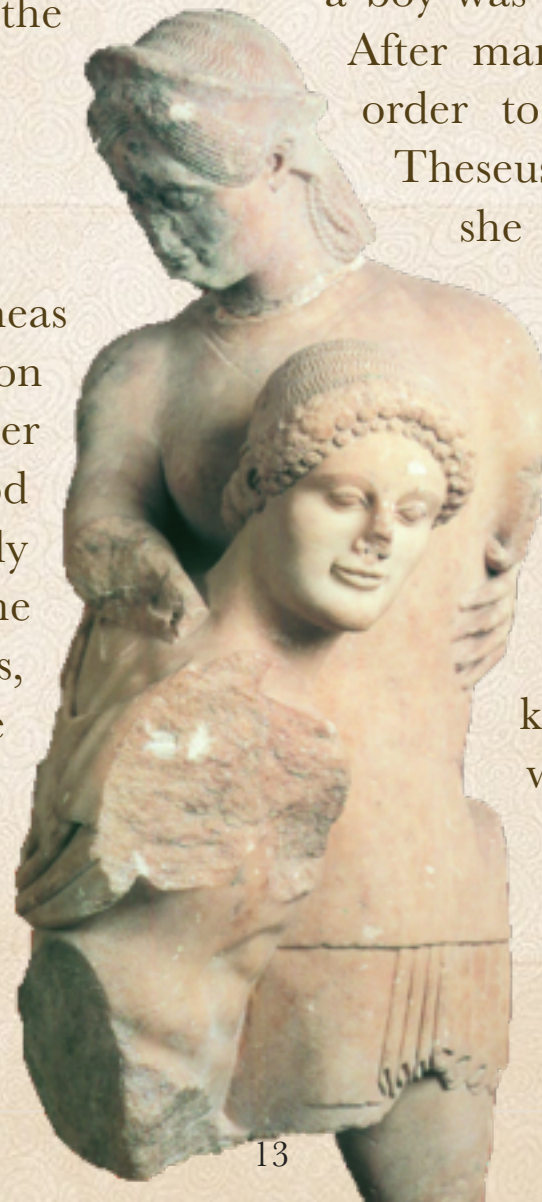
and right after I found myself engaged in a massive battle with the Amazons. When the battle was over, I was the only survivor...

With the girdle of Hippolyta safely in hand, I have returned to Tiryns to continue my labors.

On my way to the land of the Amazons in search of Hippolyta's girdle, I was accompanied by my friend Theseus, King of Athens. Theseus was seduced by Antiope, one of Hippolyta's sisters, whom he abducted and carried back to Athens. But soon the fierce Antiope fell in love with him and a boy was born, Hippolytus, in memory of Antiope's sister.

After many years the Amazons have attacked Athens in order to rescue Antiope, thought to be abducted by Theseus. When the Amazon Molpadia, found Antiope, she refused to leave her husband and thus Molpadia ran her spear through her. The battle went in favor of the Athenians and Molpadia herself was slain by the enraged Theseus.

But if you ask me, Penthesilea was the greatest warrior amongst the Amazons. She was extremely skilled and renowned for her wisdom. One day, while she was hunting, she accidentally killed her sister, also named Hippolyta. Her grief was so deep that she left her tribe and joined the Trojan War in search of redemption. Accompanied by twelve brave women, she joined the war on the side of the Trojans and together, they killed many of the Greeks. But not before





long, in the middle of the battle, Penthesilea came face to face with the invincible Achilles, who did not hesitate to kill his opponent. But when he removed the helmet from the corpse, the sight

that greeted his eyes brought him to his knees: it was a woman, who he killed...

After the Trojan War, the Amazons started an expedition in search of Achilles' ashes, to revenge the death of their Queen Penthesilea. Their quest took them to the mouth of the river Danube and the island of Leuke, where the sea-nymph Thetis, mother of Achilles, had scattered the ashes. But they were forced to retreat in shame as the ghost of Achilles blocked their way and their terror-stricken horses ran amok and threw their riders to the ground."

The Birds of the God of War

When going into war on a black rock-altar of the island Aretias the Amazons sacrificed horses for the war god, Ares. Countless birds were living on the rocky coast with no respect to humans. One day the Argonauts arrived at the shores of the island rowing from the mainland, as they suspected that the Golden Fleece was hidden here. They were welcomed by dragon-like, man-eating birds with beaks of bronze, sharp metallic feathers they could launch at their victims, and poisonous dung. They were the birds of Ares, the god of war. Driven away by Hercules from the surroundings of the Lake Stymphalis, they settled on the island. The Argonauts tried to defend themselves with their shields, but still could not escape from losing one of their friends, before they could kill the birds. Cursing the island, they left when they could not find the Golden Fleece.



The story of Mother Earth

Giresun, Aretias or Khalkeritis is a small island (40.000 m²), 1.7 km away from present-day Giresun in the Eastern Black Sea. The first settlement on the island was related to the ancient city of Kerasous. Xenophon refers to Kerasous in his *Anabasis* as a Greek colony dependent on Sinope at the end of the 5th century B.C.

As it was close to Kerasous, the island also must have been inhabited already in that period. Its location on the sea route between the ancient cities of Sinope and Trapezus attracted settlement already in the archaic period. The small island must have attracted the Greek colonists with its closeness to the main land and its favorable topography in terms of defense. The natural bay used as a harbor and the coast where the ships may anchor to be protected against northern and western winds made it attractive for settlement. Life in the island has continued uninterruptedly. In the Middle Ages the Trapezuntine Emperor Alexios II Comnenos fortified the island. Size and construction techniques of the rampart, the big cistern and the government house indicate the significance of the island as a military guard post for the city of Kerasous in the reign of the Trapezuntine Empire (1204-1461) until the latter fell to the Ottoman Sultan Mehmet II. Military forces on the island became a significant assistant against attacks from both the land and sea. With this military force and the busy harbor, the island gained increasingly significance in maintaining the safety of both

the trade ships and the Eastern Pontus trade route against the increasing number of pirate attacks.

In the Ottoman times Evliya Celebi refers to the island was used by Don-Volga Kazakhs as a base and a hiding place for their boats while looting Giresun and its coasts in 1634. The island maintained its strategic significance for the control of Black Sea until the late Ottoman Period.

The Hamza Stone, a 4 meter large stalagmite located on the island, is thought to symbolize the mother goddess Cybele. It is a wish stone that gives hope to young and old, and is a resource of strength for the family culture, a fertility rite of four thousand years. Every year in May at opposite of the island at the mouth of the Aksu River, local people perform an ancient ritual jumping over a trivet, stoning the creek circling Giresun island in boats.

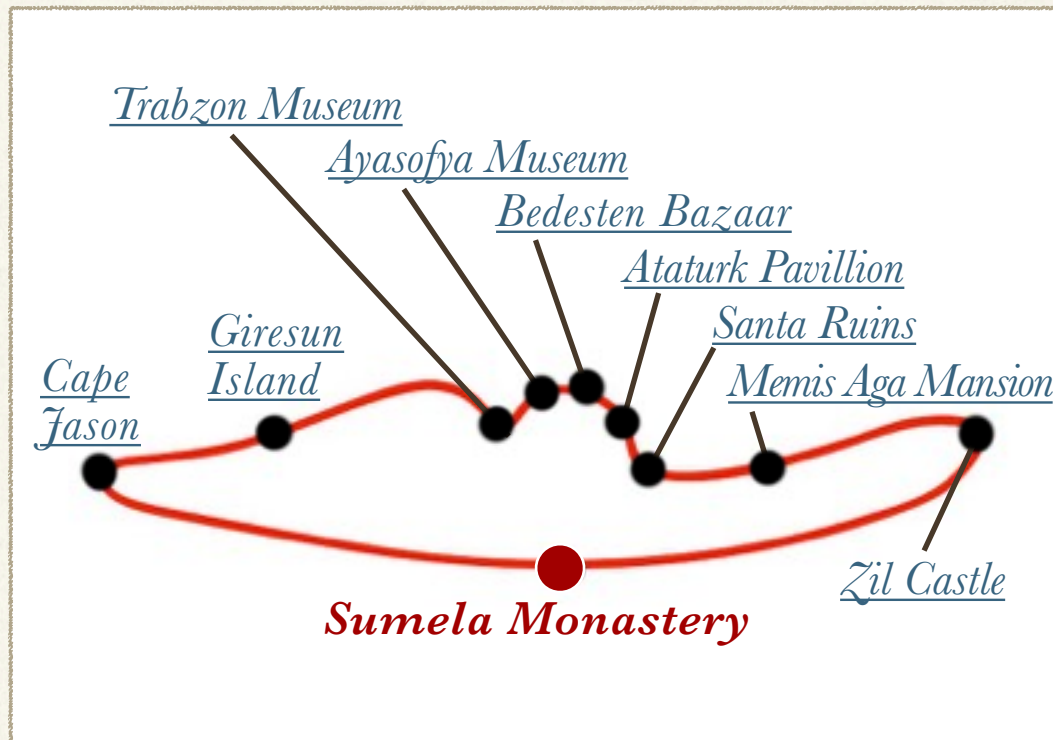


The Vergin of the Black Rock

The Shrine of the Golden Forest

“Welcome to our Monastery. My name is Nikon and I am a monk, skilled in writing and copying ancient texts and in icon painting as most monks are. In the early Christian years, the first monks lived by themselves a truly secluded life seeking perfection. Later they were Christians standing between the clergy and the people. They were men of letters educated in the monasteries. They preserved all fiscal and legal documents, copied the ancient texts, painted icons and frescoes and composed new prayers. Monks never went to war.

Our story starts 1600 years ago with the icon of Virgin Mary in Athens. Painted by Apostle Lucas, it was the first image of the



SUMELA MONASTERY

Located in the Macka valley, south of Trabzon, 1200 metres above the sea level, the 1600 old Monastery arrived its peak in 1360 under Alexios II of the Grand Comnenoi dynasty, which ruled the Empire of Trebizond from 1204 to 1461, founded right after the Latin conquest of Constantinople. In 1461 it fell to the Ottoman Sultan Mehmet II. The monastery enjoyed privileges also under the Ottoman rule. It was abandoned following the population exchanges as set by the treaty of Lausanne in 1924.



Virgin Mary painted in life and every copy had to remain faithful to the prototype since then.

One day, Sophronius and Varnavas, two pious monks from Athens, as they knelt before the

icon to honor it, Mary spoke to them, telling them to follow her to the east. All of a sudden they saw the icon lifted from its shrine by two angels who disappeared with it towards the eastern horizon. The icon was never seen in Athens again and the two monks set out to search it. A vision has guided them to the mountains of Pontus, where they found it on the foot of a steep cliff facing Altindere, the golden forest, close to the sky. Climbing up, they found a large dry cave, and as they entered, the miraculous icon appeared in front of them on a high ledge, bathed in light. The pious monks decided not to return the icon to Athens, but to build a shrine around it, calling it *Virgin of the Black Rock*. Although they have realized that this was the place intended for them, there was no source of water nearby, and it was thus impossible to live there. They turned to Mary, begging her for help that they might continue in the place where her icon rested. Once again they heard her assuring them that she would give

water for the body and the soul. As she spoke, a rock above the cave split, and fresh, cool water sprang forth. This miraculous spring became one of the great treasures of the monastery, and continues to flow today.”





Three Emperors

“Our story continues with three Emperors, who have kept the monastery alive. Emperor Theodosius has founded the monastery in year 386 of our Lord. Two centuries later Emperor Justinian, sent his general Velissarios to restore the Monastery. A thousand years later Mary has saved young Alexios. Emperor of Trabzon, from a storm and he promised to restore the monastery to honor her.

Built on the steep cliff on rocks, and reached by a path through the forest, our monastery grew and became and the early warning system of the Empire of Trebizond. As it became wealthy, it was attacked by outlaws, therefore an entrance was built at a width of one person with eyelets to watch outside and guard insiders.

When penetrated from the entrance the narrow passage to the interior allowed the insiders to defend themselves. Our entrance gate is guarded by watchmen and it was accessible by using a wooden ladder. A ladder is being pulled up at nights and the monastery is inaccessible to any outsider. We have a small chapel, a library, a kitchen and the cells of the monks. The top floor of the farthest part of the building is



reserved for the accommodation of guests and travelers, who come from far to see the story of Christ and the Virgin Mary on the chapel walls. By the imperial edict of Emperor Alexios we are exempted from taxes and may exploit the lands in the Macka valley. After the fall of the Empire of Trebizond, Sultan Mehmet granted his protection to us and gave us rights and privileges that were renewed by the Sultans who came after him.”



The March of the Myriads in Mesopotamia

From the Macka valley the transit road climbs steeply to the Zigana Pass, following the trajectory of the ancient Silk Route to Erzurum and beyond. At 2025 meters, the Zigana Pass is one of most dramatic mountain passes in the world due to the extremely sharp climb from the sea coast only 50 kilometers to the north. The sea is visible from a hilltop which requires a 40 minutes' walk from the highest point of the Pass. This is conceivably the exact spot where in 399 BC Xenophon's ten thousand mercenaries, the Myriads, first sighted the sea, ending a year of tribulations in Mesopotamia and the Anatolian highlands. After crossing present-day Malazgirt, Kars, Yusufeli and Bayburt, at Gumushane they climbed over the Zigana Pass reaching the Black Sea where they happily started screaming *thalatta, thalatta* (the sea, the sea)!

“My unintentional mercenary career started by coincidence in Persia. I was invited by my friend Proxenos, to meet prince Cyrus. Indeed I, Xenophon, proud student of Socrates the Athenian philosopher, have accepted the challenge of this adventure and travelled to Sardeis to the court of the prince. I admit that I was fascinated by Cyrus. Even today I truly believe that he would have been the right king for Persia. I still remember what cardinal virtues and dignity Cyrus displayed when he was invited to look upon the most beautiful woman in Asia, who happened to be his prisoner of war. He firmly declined the temptation; his general Araspas by contrast, stared at her endlessly, fell in lust, insulted her

honor and ignited a chain of events that ended in her suicide over her husband's corpse...

It is a fact that Clearchos in Byzantium was helping Cyrus to raise secretly an army. So Cyrus had the money, he offered one golden daric per day to each man,- and the Greeks offered the supply because peace has left unemployed many restless young men!

At that time Cyrus had but one in mind: to overthrow his brother Artaxerxes, king of the Persian Empire and holder of the throne. He therefore established strong relationships with the Greeks of Sparta, to acquire a strong army of Greek mercenaries.

In the spring of the year 401 Cyrus set off to march from Sardis to Mesopotamia with the Myriads, the ten thousand mercenaries, he has collected in Greece with the help of Clearchos, who became their general. During their long journey through parts of Anatolia, Cyrus did not reveal his real intention. He told the soldiers that the campaign was against Tissaphernes, governor of Caria, who betrayed him. Only in Cilicia has Cyrus revealed his soldiers the truth. They confronted the Persian army led by his brother Artaxerxes in Cunaxa, near Babylon. During the battle Cyrus died leaving the Myriads unpaid in a hostile territory. Losing their leader, the battle and the cause, the Myriads, who were actually thirteen



thousand when they started the campaign, were stranded in the midst of nowhere. After Cyrus's death the Persian idea was to kill the leaders, Clearchos and the other generals, and then the army would disperse and the soldiers be easily killed. Artaxerxes sent envoys requesting us to lay down our arms, but we decided that we would better to die fighting him than to become his slaves, so we refused. For a few days Artaxerxes did not seem to have made up his mind what to

do with us, so nothing happened. Finally he agreed to a truce and asked the Greek generals to come and parley. As soon as they got to his camp he murdered all of them, Clearchos, the general of the Myriads, and Proxenos, my friend, were among the slaughtered.

Then Artaxerxes sent us again a messenger. He ordered us one last time to lay down our weapons and serve him. As I said, I was invited by Proxenus to join the campaign, but I was neither a general, nor

officer nor mercenary at that time. But I was a true student of Socrates, the Athenian, skilled in the art of dialogue and reasoning, so I said to the Persian envoy: *Remind the king of Persia that by killing our generals he has broken his oath and made himself despicable to the gods.* The messenger galloped away.

That last night I had a terrible dream seeing my Athenian house on fire, struck by lightning. Awaken by the nightmare I started thinking: Artaxerxes will come to get us first thing in

the morning. Are we going to keep lying here doing nothing for the rest of the night? I stood up and hurried over to the tent where the officers lay, to wake them. I told them: Listen to me, we're going to save ourselves. You must realize that in this situation we will die if we disintegrate. We must vote for new commanders, and we must return to our homeland following a different route. Some men said, that we were too few to escape and that we should submit to Artaxerxes. I answered back: Do you wish to be subjected to torture and slavery? Because this will be your fate, if you lay down your weapons! The Persians do not keep their word. You have seen how ruthlessly they killed our generals, when they went to parley. Why do you think they will keep their word now? Another man raised his voice and said again that we were too few and that we would be slaughtered if we resisted. Then I addressed him personally: Why do you think that Artaxerxes has not attacked us up to now? He did not give me any answer and then I knew that it was high time to persuade him and all the others by encouraging them and at the same time reveal the true reason:. I therefor raised my voice and said: The king of Persia has not attacked us for so many days, because he fears our bravery! Instead is looking to gain time and outnumber us by far by collecting more forces and crush us by the number of his subjects and not by bravery. I



added without a pause: If we don't leave now, this new much bigger army will be here soon!

Thanks to my great teacher Socrates, who has taught me the art of dialogue and reasoning, I succeeded to persuade the men and the newly elected generals, who then ordered all the soldiers to assemble. It was a little after midnight. I advised the men to get out of here as fast as we could and to

get rid of everything but our weapons and marching food, as we couldn't possibly have good fighting with men acting as porters and wagon drivers. I asked everyone to burn everything he can't carry as we couldn't allow to be slowed down.

The men have heartily agreed and during the next hour the camp was a place of great excitement. They tore down what could not be carried and at dawn we formed columns, ready to march. I told

the officers: We've always marched ahead of our baggage train and it holds us back. Sometimes the vanguard goes ahead so fast it separates from the column. We should march in a hollow column, our provisions and camp servants in the middle and armed soldiers all around them. So at dawn we told the Persian envoy, who had come with the order for us to lay down our arms, that we were leaving. A short distance after we started out, the Persians attacked our rear. We charged and ran after the enemy until we were out of breath.

We started our journey home heading north, along the Tigris River, passing the Carduchian and the Armenian territory. In December of the year 400, we left the inhospitable land of the Carduchians and camped at some villages in the plain of the Centritis River, feeder of the Tigris and border between Armenia and Carduchia. Nevertheless, hardships awaited us there as well, as the Armenian infantry and cavalry tried to stop us from crossing the river, while behind us the Carduchians were ready to attack. We finally managed to trick the troops of satrap Orontes waiting for us on the opposite bank escaping the Carduchians at the same time.

After crossing the river, we reached Armenia without being seriously bothered by any army, but we had to deal with the tough climate, the impassable mountains and hunger. While crossing the Phasis river, the one flowing into the Caspian Sea, we saw the tribes of Chalybes, Taochi and Phasians, which were rebellious and wild peoples, but we managed to defeat the barbarians and move on. Seldom were left to their fate disabled soldiers, struck down with snow-blindness or with toes mortified by frostbite. As to the eyes, it was some alleviation against the snow to march with something black before them. In those inhospitable climates we used pig fat to cover our bodies, as there was no oil in Asia, and keep us warm in the harsh winter.

In the land of the Taochians we got the necessary supplies after occupying a fortified village. Then we turned southwest

and crossed the land of the Chalibians without taking anything from there before we reached the Harpassus river. After crossing it, we entered the country of the Scythini, where we found food. After a march of four days, we reached the city of Gymnias, the first big and rich city of that area which welcomed us. The locals informed us that we were only a few days away from Trapezous. The city governor gave us a driver who promised within five days to lead us in a place from which we could see the sea. If he failed, he was ready to pay with his life.



After five days of marching we reached a mountain called Theches, which we climbed. Near the top of the vanguard, we heard a great cry. Being at the rearguard I envisioned that we had been attacked from the front. I saw the soldiers climbing the mountain running. Thus taking with me the cavalry I began to gallop towards the top. Approaching the highest point of the mountain, we caught a glimpse of the sea, the shout *Thalatta! Thalatta!* (the Sea! the Sea!) echoed through the ranks as the soldiers threw down their weapons and began to jump and weep in joy. When all reached the narrow plot overlooking the sea, they started hugging each other in tears, without being able to believe they had finally made it. They heaped up wood and stones, on top of which they placed offerings, such as animal skins and some shields they had looted during their adventure, in order to celebrate the happy ending of their troubles. I have ordered sacrifices to the gods and organized Olympic Games with a wrestling

tournament as well as foot and horse races. In May of the year 399 we reached the first Greek city we found in their way, Trapezous. The city welcomed us warmly and we stayed there for a month, celebrating our success, making sacrifices to the gods and organizing games. The great adventure that had started on the day after the battle at Cunaxa ended in Trapezous. During the long march numerous casualties were caused because of the enemy attacks, the cold, the famine and the diseases. Traveling in hostile territories for two whole years we lost four thousand and a half men confronting the locals, the icy winter and the harsh nature, the wild people. From the thirteen thousand men who had joined forces with Cyrus eight thousand and six hundred made it to their homeland again...”

The conquest of Bagdad

“I am Ferhat Pasha, the Grand Vizier of our Sultan Murad. On my way to conquest Bagdad, I made a stop to rest at the Sumela Monastery. The monks, men of God, received me cordially and hosted me. The beauty of the place, the splendid monastery with its buildings, wall paintings, libraries, kitchens, bakeries, farms and the community of monks in full bloom have impressed me. I asked the Abbot how he managed so well, so far away from the world and he gave me an advice: *Do not put off till tomorrow what you can do today*. I immediately ordered this saying be engraved on my silver prayer jug, so not to forget and moved on with my troops towards Bagdad.

While still outside of Bagdad’s walls, I received a Persian delegation: *Since the sun had already fallen, let us surrender the city tomorrow*, they said. I accepted and went to pray. But then I remembered the abbot’s advice and seized Baghdad that same night. The city was not guarded and in a few hours it was in my hands. The next morning, while riding around the city walls, I saw the Persian army approaching.



Only then I have realized their deceitful plan: while I would have been in the city, the Persian forces would perform a double attack and I would have lost my army and my life.

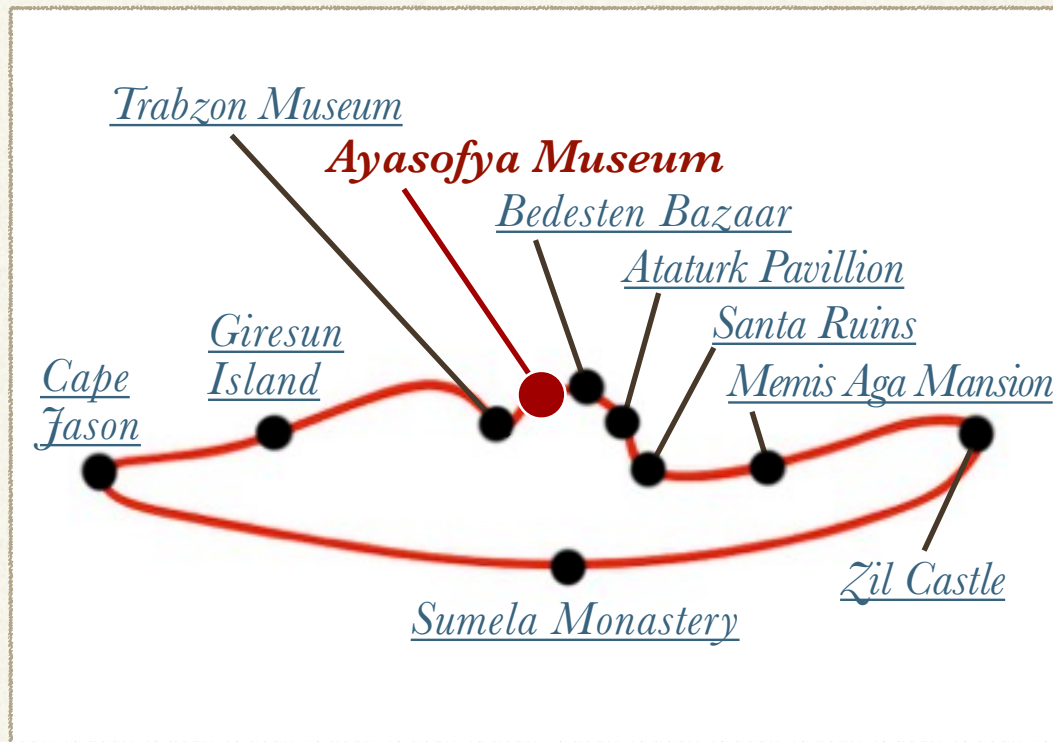
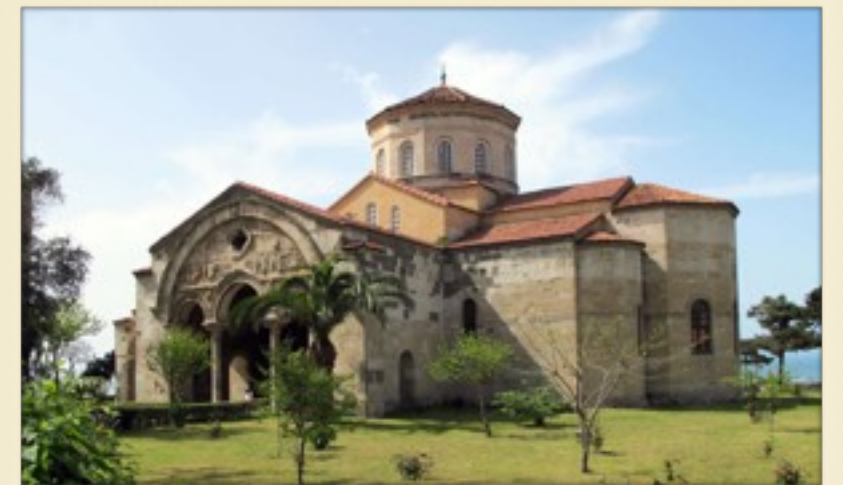
When I informed Sultan Murad of the incident, he decided to express his gratitude by ordering to cover the roof of the monastery with pure silver. However, the Sultan's envoy was taken by surprise when the abbot politely refused and advised him: *Do not raise such an issue, because you will insult the Sultan and his gratitude will turn to rage.* The envoy ordered the workers to cover the roof with silver and left.

Fearing predatory attacks, the alarmed Abbot asked the Metropolis of Trabzon to mediate to Sultan Murad and change the firman and so to avoid attracting robbers. Soon a second firman was issued allowing the silver coverage to stop. At this point however a small part in the middle of the roof of the sanctuary was already covered with silver. The Abbot and the monks kept it to demonstrate to pilgrims Sultan Murad's donation to the monastery."



A Pocket Empire

In his *Book of Travels*, Evliya Celebi, the famous Ottoman travel writer, refers to Aghia Sophia: *It was built at the time of the unbelievers, later a governor and philanthropist informed the Sultan about the building and by his decree it was converted into a mosque and used for that purpose from then on.* But our story is older than a thousand years and starts with Flavius Valerius Aurelius Constantinus, the Roman Emperor, who in the year of the Lord 324 has moved the capital of the Empire from Rome to the Greek city of Byzantium, named after him, Constantinople. Twelve years earlier Christianity was recognized as the official religion of the Roman Empire by the Edict of Mediolanum. Christians ceased to be persecuted and their art emerged from the catacombs and mutated into the art of society.



AYASOFYA MUSEUM

On the west entrance of present-day Trabzon on a foothill along the coast way, Aghia Sofia was built as a Christian church during the reign of the Trapezuntine Emperor Manuel I (1238-1263). Through the centuries Aghia Sophia was converted to a mosque, a military depot, a hospital, a museum and again to a mosque today. Its artistic narration displays the making of a pocket empire on the fringes of the Greek world, surrounded by Armenians, Georgians, and Seljuks in the wake of the Mongol invasion, which lasted from the Latin conquest of Constantinople 1204 until it fell to the Ottoman Sultan Mehmet II in 1461.

But where could all the faithful go to pray? The ancient Greek and Roman temples were very small to receive the congregation. The solution offered the basilica, a building widely used in the Roman world in justice and commerce, as it was shaped to accommodate the meeting needs of large audiences. This architectural solution had permanent consequences: for the centuries to come, the layout of Christian temples followed the Roman model. As the number of faithful grew, more space was needed. To accommodate more people, aisles are added to the basilicas: the 'cross-in-square type' is born.


As all religious buildings, Aghia Sophia, that literally means 'God's wisdom', has a religious and a political meaning. It was built at a time when the refugee Byzantine court strived to establish the alternative to the Empire seized by the Latins in 1204: the artistic narration

displays the making of the Trapezuntine Empire, its links to the neighbors and trading partners. The Empire's standard, the double-headed eagle, lost one head after 1261 when the Byzantine capital was regained from the Latins to demonstrate the recognition of the Byzantine Emperor.

In the mean time in the opposite part of the world, in Spain, Don Quixote de la Mancha, the world's famous dreamer, is dreaming richly. He is the world's poorest knight, but already fancied himself crowned by the valor of his arms, at least with the Empire of Trebizond. An Emperor in exile? Actually this was not the case. Don Quixote is dreaming of becoming heir to the Roman Empire, an Empire that has no limits in time and space, meaning that Don Quixote's veiled desire was to become Emperor of the whole world!

Today audio-visual technology presents artworks, knowledge and meanings in multi-





media formats. Back at those times the story formats of Aghia Sophia, - 55 frescoes, sculptures and architecture - have succeeded to narrate how the Byzantine imperial ideology has survived in exile. The deep spirituality and the solid design of the compositions is often lightened with realism. They turn away from formalism moving towards an artistic renaissance putting the people in the center of a realistic life. A powerful narrative, told on the exterior walls, is uniting all cultures and beliefs: ship carvings are created by sailors among 1450-1850. They are all praying for safety and protection while fishing and sailing.

The handsome belfry added in 1443 reflects the Italian influence that was

dominant in the late years of the Trapezuntines. It contains frescoes of inferior quality dating from a later period.

The 55 frescoes in the interior of Aghia Sophia constitute an iconographic programme with theological and political significance. Theologically they frescoes reflect the Christian orthodox faith. After the Latin conquest of Constantinople in 1204, the dynasty of the Grand Comnenoi were not the only aspirants to the Byzantine throne; the Emperors of Nicaea and Epirus were also looking towards the same direction. Considering this, the Comnenoi presented themselves as the true defenders of Orthodoxy, which had always been one of the Byzantine Emperor's major duties. A characteristic example of this attempt is the multiple presence of the Mother of God, which is in line with the increasing popularity of her worship during the Middle Byzantine period. The genealogy



of Jesus Christ with the Tree of Jesse is an attempt to establish the lineage and legitimacy of the Grand Comnenoi as a dynasty, who through their marriage alliance with the

Bagrationi family of Georgia could claim descent from the prophet David.

A capital in the main portal shows eagles looking westwards and eastwards. The double-headed eagle was the symbol of the Byzantine Empire which spread from the west to the east. The Emperors of Trebizond used as standard the double-headed eagle of Byzantium. However they recognized the restored Byzantine Empire proclaimed by the Emperors of Nicaea who recaptured Constantinople from the Latins in 1261. As an immediate result, the eagle of Trebizond lost a head on the relief on the apse of the church. Connecting cultures, the Austrian Emperors, heirs to the Sacred Roman Empire, had also a standard showing the same eagle, whereas the double-headed eagle marched to Moscow, which became the Third Rome.

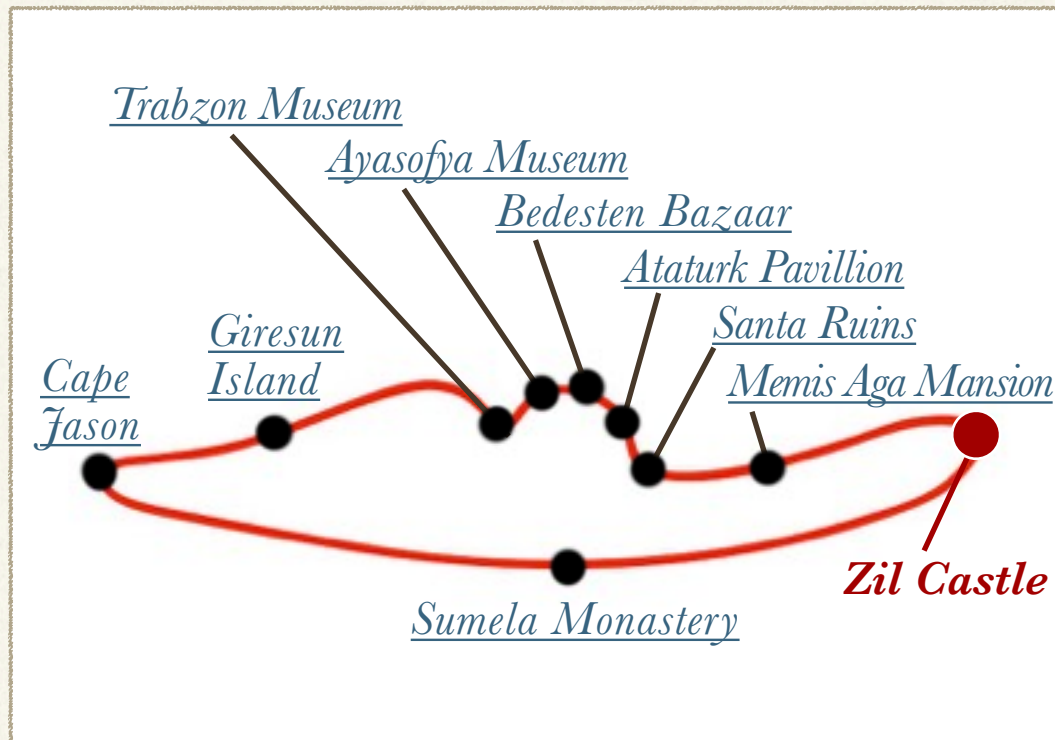


Legendary Lady Hsi

The state of thousand cities

As early as in the Cycladic civilization in the 3rd millenium BC, the Hellenes began to have contacts with the Near East, but it was in the period of the Persian Empire that direct, extensive contacts between Hellas and the East really developed. Two historic personalities played an important role in the opening of the Silk Road to the West: Zhang Qian, a Chinese envoy from the court of Han Woudi to the western regions of the Han Empire and Alexander the Great. The creation of his empire and the

enlargement of the Hellenistic world by him and his successors have facilitated both contacts and communication between the Hellenes and the East and thus



ZIL CASTLE

Zil Castle lies on the historical Silk Road and functioned as a security and check point for caravans and troops. Built by the Grand Comnenoi in the 13th century the medieval castle in the Firtina valley, served as watchtower over the Silk Road, the network of trade routes established between ancient China and Europe. It linked the East and the West from 130 BC to 1453 AD. When the Ottoman Empire closed the Silk Road, merchants took the sea route to continue trading. Thus the Discovery Age started in 1453 lasting until 1660. Zil Castle fascinates the visitors with its breathtaking vistas and stories.



unintentionally prepared for the emergence of the Silk Road. Those who forged the links to connect the two ends of Eurasia, were Alexander the

Great and Han Wudi in the 4th century BCE (156–87 BCE), through his emissary Zhang Qian. Alexander has conquered the entire Persian Empire adding some areas to it. After his sudden death at the age of 33 his empire was divided into several kingdoms, but the pattern of Hellenic governance in the East did not change. Hellenic culture spread over the areas they occupied and beyond, causing the fusion between Hellas and the eastern cultures. A new network of communication and exchanges connecting West and East emerged in the Hellenistic world and its neighboring areas, the facilitated the exchanges in culture and commerce reaching to the Middle Ages and the Discovery Age.

Herodotus, Father of History

“To control his vast empire across Asia, Africa and Europe, Darius the Great, king of Persia, has built a road system which led in all directions. The most famous was the Royal Road which started at Susa, one of the capitals of his empire, passed through Mesopotamia, and ended at Ephesus on the coast of Asia Minor. The Persians have no images of the gods, or temples or altars, and consider the use of them a sign of folly. This comes, I think, because they do not believe that the gods have the same nature with men, as the Hellenes think. They likewise offer sacrifices to the sun and moon, to the earth, to fire, to water, and to the winds. These are the only gods whose worship has come down to them from ancient times.

Under the dominion of the Medes, several nations of the empire exercised authority over each other in this order: the Medes were lords over all, and governed the nations upon their borders, who in their turn governed the states beyond, who likewise bore rule over the nations which adjoined on them. And this is the order which the Persians also follow in their distribution of honor; for they had, like the Medes, a progressive scale of administration and government. There is no nation which so readily adopts foreign customs as the Persians. Thus, they have taken the dress of the Medes, considering it superior to their own. In war they wear the Egyptian breastplate. As soon as they hear of any luxury, they instantly make it their own. Every year the king sends rich gifts to the man who have the largest number of sons.

Their sons are carefully instructed from their fifth to their twentieth year to ride, draw the bow, and speak the truth. Until their fifth year they are not allowed to come into the sight of their father, but pass their lives with the women. In this way, if the child dies young, the father is not be afflicted by its loss.

I learned from hearsay that there was one country in the east which produced a cloth substance called silk. The physician and historian Ctesias calls this country Seres. I also happen to know Aristes, a brave traveler, who went into the East as far as the land of the Issedones, that is behind the Urals extending to the Tuanshan mountains.”

Zhang Qian, envoy of Emperor Han Wudi in the western regions

Our Emperor Han Wudi has sent me twice to the western regions, to Dayuan, Kangju, Dayueshi, and Daxia, that lies outside of the territory of the Huns, and where I received some hearsay information about five other large countries: Wusun, Yancai, Anxi that was called also Persia, Tiaozhi, and Shendu that was called also India. Later I have visited Wusun, and from there I have sent my vice-envoys to Dayuan, Kangju, Dayueshi, Daxia, Anxi, Yutian, Hanshen, as well as other neighboring countries. Since these areas once had been ruled and influenced by the Hellenes, I have included their legacy in my report to the Emperor and have provided some specific evidence about the remains of their culture. The territory of the Hellenes in Central Asia had been greatly reduced, but the influence of their culture stretched much wider and deeper. Wherever the Hellenes went far away from their homeland, they kept a tradition of founding cities or settlements and living together. Many walled cities and houses had been built in Dayuan, Anxi, and Daxia. They might have founded more than three hundred cities and settlements in the



East and we know of nineteen cities in Bactria and twenty seven in Shendun and Alexandria beside the river Oxus with features of their culture still visible statuary: Corinthian capitals, coins, a gymnasium, a theater, and inscriptions of maxims and philosophical texts, that confirm the existence of the Hellenic style was prevalent, although they have been then thousand thousand li away from their homeland!

Having toured through these cities and towns left in Bactrian by the Hellenes, I admit that I saw a wholly different world from the one I am familiar with in the middle of our own Empire. Although their king, Alexander, is dead for two hundred years now, his style to govern is still followed! When I arrived in the former territory of the Hellenes, called Bactria and the other neighboring areas, I have immediately realized the changes of their cultural frame of mind. The Parthians adopted this calendar and issued coins in his style, set up the statues of his gods, performed his plays, and even built a gymnasium in their palace. In these regions, not only grain (rice and wheat) was produced, but also the grapevine was planted, which gave good wine. It is correct to say that the Hellenes were the first to introduce the new viniculture in the Western regions and I brought all the information back to the central part of our Empire. In particular, the land of Aria bordering on Bactria, is exceedingly productive of wine, which keeps well for three generations in vessels. Wine is one of the special products of Anxi,

Dayuan and other areas. The winemaking was so productive that the rich men even stored more than ten thousand dan of and the wine would keep well for several decades. When I returned I passed on the knowledge of viniculture and the name for this grape, *botrus*, we call it now in our language *putao*.

The government style in these countries, is monarchy or kingship, but it appears that the local principals play important roles at key moments. For example, the aristocrats of Dayuan could form a strong body all together and decide to refuse to contribute the precious blood-sweating horses to our Han dynasty, attack and kill our envoys, and even murder their own king!

There were many marketplaces in Daxia and Anxi and they use very different coins from ours to trade: their coinage is of silver with the face of their king on the obverse. As soon as he died, the coin had to be changed immediately. The new king's face appears then on the new coin. To my great surprise

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used to write vertically from top to bottom on bamboo and wood slips, but on their records are written horizontally on leather. And I heard that the use of the animal skin to write on, the parchment comes from one kingdom,



far beyond the western regions, called Pergamos. And the hearsay goes on that it was the king of Pergamos, who had invented parchment. It seems that the people in Anxi have acquired parchment from Pergamos and I saw this parchment as well as the hellenic script written on it in Daxia.

The Smugglers

“Silk is the most desirable luxury good after gold since the ancient times and our imperial city, the reigning among the cities of this world, is the largest consumer of silk and other precious goods like spices and gems – lapis lazuli, emeralds, and pearls needed for the arts, the rich citizens and the



court. As the Reigning City lies on the junction between the continents of Europe and Asia, is commanding all the trade in the East and the West. The imperial workshops for the production of silk fabrics and clothing from the imported silks are guarded within the precincts of the Royal Palace. Only members of the imperial family were allowed to import or wear silk, and only relatives of silk trading merchants were allowed to export what little silk was not directly used.

It was forbidden to export the silk production knowledge from the silk making country in the Farthest East, called Serinda, and the punishment for such an attempt is unspeakable torture and death. Monks who traveled to preach the true faith in Serinda narrated that the making of



silks is very ancient ancient and start before the written history and the wonders of this world. They spoke of the legendary Empress Hsi-Ling-Shih, who has ruled in Serinda in about three thousand years before the birth of our Lord, when the early writing was discovered. The Empress is said to have introduced the silkworm breeding, and she also the inventor the loom.

I, Procopius, the palace historian, have written down the story as narrated to me by the missionaries of the Emperor, and how they smuggled the silk worms and the secrets to their culture. The monks told me that there exist three trade routes between India and our Empire: On the northern one goods are brought through Bactria, then along the Oxus river to the Aral Sea, and from there further to the Black Sea. The middle route has two tracks: one leads by the sea from the western part of India to the Gulf of the Persia, then goes up the Tigris River to Seleucia, which was once capital of the ancient kingdom of the Seleucids, part of the inheritance of Alexander, but today it makes part of the kingdom of the Sassanids and the Persian king Chosroes rules over it. The other road er ran by land across the Hindu Kush to Bactra, traversed the Iranian plateau, and descended again Seleucia. From there a road westwards crossed the Syrian Desert to Antioch on the river Orontes, the other capital of the Seleucids, that was destroyed by the great earthquake in the



year of our Lord 526 and that our Emperor Justinian has rebuilt and name it to Theopolis, the city of God, which Chosroes, the Sassania, destroyed a little later and three hundred thousand lives were lost. This road turns its branches to the west and southwest towards the coast along Tripolis, Sidon and Tyros, and northwest across Asia Minor, finally to reach Ephesus on the Aegean. A southern sea route leads to the Red Sea. From the head of the Red Sea at Aqaba a land road ran northward to Petra, Damascus, and Antioch, whilst from the Gulf of Clysma the canal dredged

by King Ptolemy II allowed Indian goods to be shipped across to the Nile and downriver to Alexandria. The discovery of the monsoon in the Indian Ocean around the year one hundred before the birth of our Lord, made the sea route safer and more convenient. There was also one other route from the Hexi Corridor to the Pamirs, which was becoming shorter because of our actions of in the distant kingdom to the Farthest

East beyond India, that we call Serinda, meaning the silk country. They know of us for our gold and silver glass wares and the works of art inlaid with precious stones and they call us Fulin. But the art of making silks is a secret guarded with the cost of life and many tortures.

But when the Persian king Chosroes took over in the year of our Lord 531 trouble began. Before him the source of silk was found in Serinda. But that cursed man started his reign

with obstacles to our trade and the purchasing of silk became vastly more expensive and many necessary middlemen along the way were adding their profits to the original cost. Thus, the greater the distance, the greater the cost, and the land of the silks is said to be was at least twenty million feet away either by land or sea and the caravan land routes require the crossing of mountain passes like the Pamirs, the Hindu Kush, the Elbruz and the Caucasus up to sixteen thousand foot high or greater full of wild brigands and with inhospitable climate. Great deserts like the Gobi, the Dasht-I-Lut and the Nefud with frequent horrific sandstorms and few oases were also on the route and much too often cause many men to perish. The sea shipping routes were no less dangerous, either pirate-ridden or difficult to cross even in good sailing weather and the crews had to stress themselves in the Indian Ocean, the Caspian Sea, Black Sea and the Gulf of Persia and to struggle with many different cultures along these routes who were not our trade partners and most unfriendly and dangerous. The time that the journey required to bring silk directly from Serinda would be as much as nearly two-thirds of the year, and the much worse route through the Persians lands required many more months. But the appetite of the Emperor's court for luxury goods was not diminishing but increasing demand of the barbarians for silk such as the Ostrogoths and the Langobards, whose new wealth was



acquired from the demise of Rome. But Chosroes, ruling from his capital in Ctesiphon had controlled the territory of Mesopotamia and dominated most of the southern access to the silk trade along the Gulf of Persia and the watersheds of the river Tigris and the river Euphrates.

This tightening situation urged our Emperor Justinian to seek some access over the northern land and the sea routes, as our Empire was conveniently situated at the western end of the Black Sea through the Bosphorus. Thus, along the

northern route, wisely thinking, the Emperor started to employ the route through the Lazican kingdom on the Caucasus as his intermediary route for silk, and his envoys began asserting control over northern routes - beyond Persian hegemony - by utilizing margins of the Gobi desert in the north part of the vast empire of the Serinda, the route to the north of the Elbruz Mountains, along the Caspian Sea and the Caucasus

mountains and into the Black Sea along its northern side with Crimea and further west.

In the south, temporarily using the Ethiopian merchants from the kingdom of Aksum as intermediaries along the eastern coast of Africa, our merchants temporarily bypassed the Persian Gulf by sailing instead into the Red Sea and around the Persian Gulf. But while the northern route was more successful, the Persians continued dominating much of

the silk trade coming through and out of India and the Indian Ocean. Many times they have caught our ships along the coast of Persia in the Indian Ocean and confiscated the entire boats with their crews in order to protect what they assumed was their part of the silk trade route.

Since true raw silk is produced only by the silkworm, who consume vast amounts of mulberry leaves, several monks who returned from India, have reported to the court that our merchants could bypass Persia and India by dealing directly with Serinda. Acting on an imperial mission, those monks returned to Serinda by the northern route along the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea using Turfan to bypass Persia - and smuggled back silkworm eggs. The monks have the worms hidden in bamboo canes until they arrived in Constantinople. The young mulberry plants were also needed and the monks had expressed interest in and were given gifts of small mulberry shrubs in earthenware pots with root balls, treasures they have kept watered even if it meant they themselves were thirsty. Because they were likely to know they were being watched by or sought by different suspicious groups along the routes, the monks have returned with their smuggled silkworms and potted mulberry shrubs by the northernmost route in order to avoid Persia interception, and arrived back to Constantinople two years after their initial setting out. They have kept in their memory the art of silk production as they secretly snapped it: the eggs

must be kept at warm at which point they hatch. After the eggs hatch, the new worms feed day and night every half hour on fresh, hand-picked and chopped mulberry leaves until they are very fat. Also a fixed temperature has to be maintained throughout. Thousands of feeding worms are kept on trays that are stacked one on top of another. The monks said that a room full of munching worms sounds like heavy rain falling on the roof. The newly hatched silkworm multiplies its weight ten thousand times within a month, changing color and shedding its whitish-gray skin several

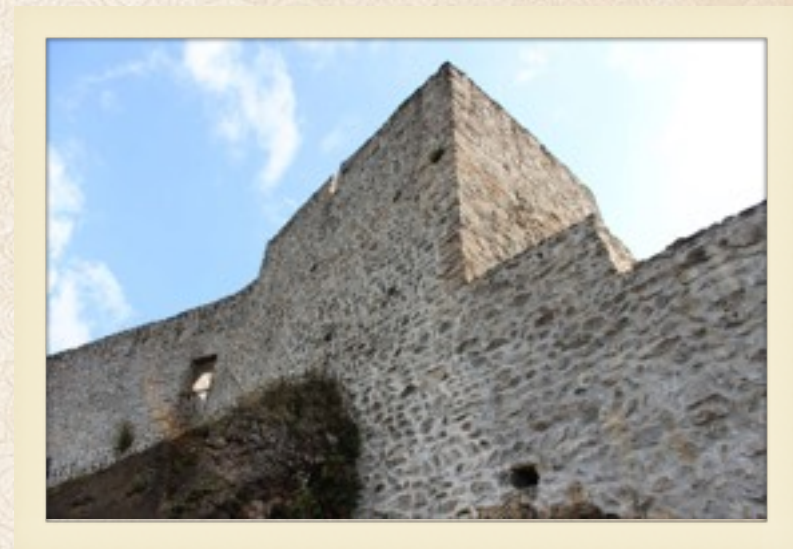
times. The silkworms feed until they have stored up enough energy to enter the cocoon. While they are growing they have to be protected from loud noises, drafts, strong smells such as those of fish and meat and even the odor of sweat. When it is time to build their cocoons, the worms produce a jelly-like substance in their silk glands, which hardens when it comes into contact with air. Silkworms spend three or four days

spinning a cocoon around themselves until they look like puffy, white balls. After eight or nine days in a warm, dry place the cocoons are ready to be unwound. First they are steamed or baked to kill the worms. The cocoons are then dipped into hot water to loosen the tightly woven filaments. These filaments are unwound onto a spool. Each cocoon is made up of a filament between up to three thousand feet long! Between five and eight of these super-fine filaments are



twisted together to make one thread. In this way within a few years we started the silk production first in Berytus, which soon became the silk center of our Empire, later Morea in the Peloponessos has become the best or most important place to grow the mulberry trees, that stood under imperial monopoly, and by imperial edict and control Prussa became famous for its silks. Some raw silk and sewn cloth were still imported, but now the home-grown silk trade to the West became one of our most important endeavors and economic benefits were many and great. Before the home-grown silk industry, only members of the imperial family were allowed to import or wear silk, and only relatives who were mercantile associates were allowed to export what little silk was not directly used. Access to silk became much greater for the entire West and silk became one of the most important diplomatic gifts, utilized for royal clothing, ceremonial robes and vestments of the highest clergy, burial wraps for kings and clergy as well as precious textiles wrapped around the most important religious reliquaries of pilgrimage cathedrals and basilicas.

This how some humble and faithful monks event changed the course of history and how the silk monopolies in Serinda and Persia were broken spying and smuggling by us to set up a competing silk monopoly in the West. We made thus silk more accessible and less prohibitively expensive by installing silk workshops in our Empire as a new source for silk, which removed the middlemen and the danger of fetching it from Serinda in the Farthest East.



The Golden Passport

“I was born in 1254, in Venice to a wealthy merchant family, but unfortunately I spent most of my childhood parentless being raised by my mother’s sister. My own mother died when I was very young, and my father Niccolo Polo and his brother Maffeo, were in Asia for much of my youth. Their journeys brought them to the Mongol Empire, where they joined a diplomatic mission to the court of Kublai Khan, the Mongol leader whose grandfather was Genghis Khan, the conqueror of Asia. In the year of our Lord 1269, my father and his brother returned to Venice, and immediately started making plans for their return to Khan's Court. During their stay with the Khan he had expressed his interest in Christianity and asked my father to bring to his Court one hundred priests and a collection of holy water. Three years later my father and my uncle set out for Asia again, taking me with them. We had originally planned to be gone for only some time, but it lasted all in all twenty-three years. During this time I have come to realize that is was the Khan's extensive communication rule, which built the foundation for his rule. In my memory I kept the details, how the empire's information highway with cavalry men covered millions of acres. The Khan's acceptance of my family has opened his empire for us. My father Niccolo and his brother Maffeo were granted important positions in the Court and I have impressed the Khan myself, who thought



highly of my abilities as a merchant and my mastering of the four languages. Soon the Khan has employed me as a special envoy and sent me into far flung areas of Asia never before explored by Christian people: Burma, India, Tibet and other areas were among the places that I ventured into. With me was always a stamped metal packet from Khan himself that served as my official credentials from the powerful leader. As the years wore on, I was promoted for my work. I served as governor of a city, and then later, the Khan appointed me as an official of the Privy Council and tax inspector in the city of Yanzhou.

Around 1292, I left China, acting as consort along the way to a Mongol princess who was being sent to Persia. To make sure my family would be given every assistance on our travels, Kublai Khan presented us with a golden tablet a foot long and three inches wide inscribed with the words: *By the strength of the eternal Heaven, holy be the Khan's name. Let him that pays him not reverence be killed.* The golden tablet was our special passport, authorizing us to receive throughout the Great Khan's dominions such horses, lodging, food and guides as we required. This dreadful sea voyage passed through the South China Sea to Sumatra and the Indian Ocean, and finally docked at Hormuz. There we learned that the princess’s future husband, Arghun, had died two years previously so she was married to his son, prince Ghazan, instead. In Persia we also learned of the death of Kublai

Khan. However his protection outlived him, for it was only by showing his golden tablet of authority that we were able to travel safely through the bandit-ridden interior. Throughout the Khan's dominions we were supplied with horses and provisions and everything needful. I assure you that on many occasions we were given two hundred horsemen, sometimes more and sometimes less, according to the number needed to escort us and ensure our safe passage from one district to another.

From Trebizond on the Black Sea coast we went by sea, by way of Constantinople, to Venice, arriving home in the winter of 1295. After my return to Venice, I commanded a ship in a war against Genoa. I was captured and sentenced to a Genoese prison. There I met Rustichello da Pisa, whom I described my journeys and he wrote my biography "*The Travels of Marco Polo, the Venetian*", but few readers believed the tales. They called the book, *Il Milione*, the million lies, without understanding that a million miles was meant by that... Anyway, after my release from the prison I married in Venice the daughter of the merchant Vitale Badoer, Donata, and carried the family business for the next 25 years."

"In 1323, my husband Marco was confined to bed, very ill. By the next year, despite the doctors' efforts to treat him he was lying in his deathbed. On January the 8th, , we

requested Giovanni Giustiniani, a priest of San Procolo to write and certify his will. Myself and our three daughters Fantina, Bellela, and Moreta, were appointed by Marco as co-executrices. The Church was entitled by law to a portion of his estate; he approved of this and ordered that a further sum be paid to the convent of San Lorenzo, the place where he wished to be buried. My beloved husband died at his home in Venice on January 8, 1324. Me as his wife and our three daughters inherited his fortune; his Mongol servant

was set free. His possessions of cloths, valuable pieces, coverings, brocades of silk and gold and other precious objects were exactly like those mentioned in his book. Among them there was the *Golden Tablet of Command* given to him by the Great Khan on his departure from the Mongol capital.

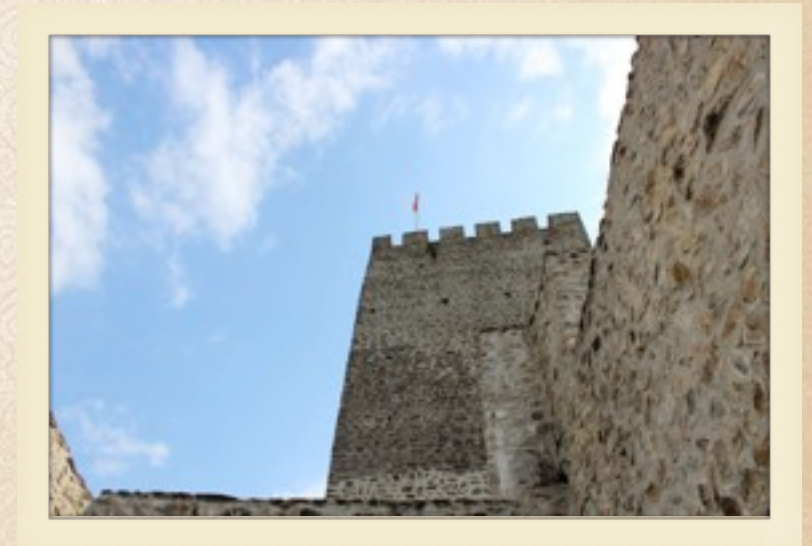
At his deathbed, his final words were: "I have only told the half of what I saw!"



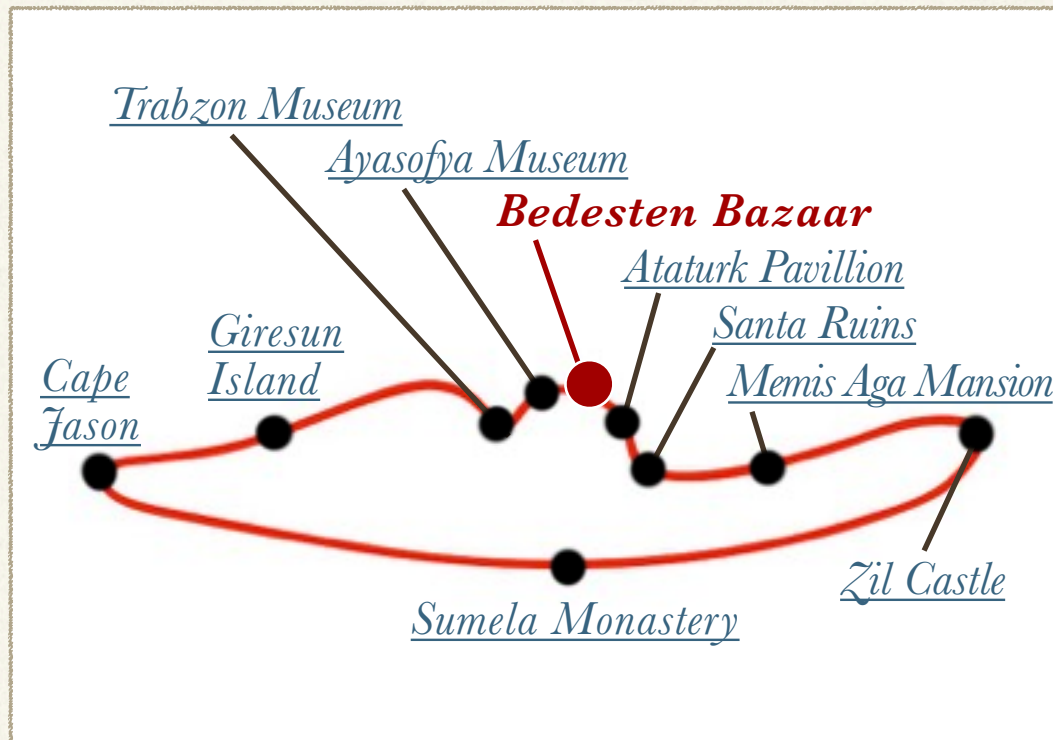
The French Ambassador

In 1807 French Ambassador Gardane starts his journey from Istanbul to Persia. The diplomat Joseph-Michel Tancoigne keeps the journey's diary:

“When our caravan reached the fortress of Zil on the 6th of October 1807, at a short distance from Kizildjic, the governor Tchapanoglou Bey, provided for our safety, by ordering an escort of twenty of his cavalry, to accompany us to the frontiers. Today it is used by the Sultan for military purposes and the passing of information to the Rize Castle. According to the hearsay the Castle was built in the reign of the Emperor Justinian, who built Aghia Sophia in the year of the Lord 537. The Castle was later used by the Empire of Trebizond that lasted from the Latin conquest of Constantinople in 1204 until 1461, when it fell to Sultan Mehmet. Rich traders and Silk Road caravans used the Castle as hospice for many centuries. We heard the story of the legendary Lady Hsi, wife of the Yellow Emperor, by a local guide. According to the legend Lady Hsi has introduced the silkworm rearing in ancient times and was the inventor of the loom. The guide said that also Marco Polo passed by, on his way to Trebizond, returning to Venice through the Persian Gulf.”



The Book of Travels



BEDESTEN BAZAAR

The single-domed covered bazaar among Turkey's covered bazaars is detailed described by the Ottoman traveler Evliya Celebi in 1640. The Bedesten, 'the place for valuable merchandise' lies in the centre of Trabzon. It is the oldest commercial building of the city, with a rectangular plan of 20.60 x 22.60 m. The edifice was constructed by Genoese merchants in the 14th century and modified in the Ottoman period. The Bazaar had been one of the Silk Road export centers for such as silk and spices looking to the cities in the west, most notably to present-day Istanbul.

"My name is Evliya Çelebi and it means the blessed one. I was born in 1611 in the capital of our Empire and thus I was fortunate enough to receive a good education. For 40 years now I am touring all our lands. My passion is to observe the everyday life: buildings, markets, landmarks, nations, customs and traditions. People call me scholar, raconteur, dervish, musician, and linguist. I call myself world traveler! I travel on official business, but also for pleasure. For this reason I have commissioned a ring with the inscription *The World Traveler Evliya*. I write down everything I see in my journeys, in *Seyahatname*, my Book of Travels. I have also visited Nile, Caucasus and Persia. I have observed all the customs and



traditions other than ours. Let me narrate the customs of the infidels in the walled town of Vienna: All the notables take their pleasure for weeks and months in this city in its gardens and orchards. And their darling boys and lovely girls swim in the river that flows through the city. Warmed with wine and arak, they embrace one another and enjoy themselves in every nook and cranny. Indeed, the men and women do not flee from one another. The women sit together with us Ottomans, drinking and chatting, and their husbands do not say a word but rather step outside. And this is not considered shameful. The reason is that throughout Christendom women are in charge, and they have behaved in this disreputable fashion ever since the time of the Virgin Mary.



Let me narrate another dazzling story from the Black Sea: I have arrived in Trabzon in August 1640 following a protégé of my father's, Omer Pasha Ketenci. I have realized immediately that the citizens of Trabzon are educated people, cleanly dressed, fond of good talkers, fond of reading and writing poems. There are seven classes of them: notables and nobles with sable skin coats, scholars, merchants wearing broadcloth, craftsmen who can mint and can masterly make all kinds of gold and silverware and weapons, sea conveyors

and merchants with salwar and dolman made of broadcloth, and sailors, gardeners and fishermen.

The best place to observe life and customs is the Bazaar. Therefore I have visited the Trabzon Bazaar right upon my arrival to the city. I was told that the ancient edifice was built by Genoese merchants long before Fatih Sultan Mehmet took the city in 1461. This construction coincides with the travel of Marco Polo to the Court of Kublai Han two hundred and fifty years ago. Marco Polo was a Venetian

merchant and the only Christian trusted by Kublai Han. He was so trusted that he possessed a golden passport issued by the Mongol Emperor himself: *By the strength of the eternal Heaven, holy be the Khan's name. Let him that pays him not reverence be killed.*

The Trabzon Bazaar is the only single-domed covered bazaar among the bazaars of our Empire. It is close to the Market Mosque and the Stone Inn in Orta Hisar. It is one of the foundations of Gulbahar Hatun. The people of Trabzon told me that Gulbahar was the Pontic Rumeli wife of our Prince Bayezid II, the son of Fatih Sultan Mehmet. They married in Amasya and their son was the future Sultan Selim. However Gulbahar Hatun did not become Valide Sultan, as the poor woman died before Sehshade Selim



became Sultan of our Empire. The Bazar is the shown among the foundations of Gulbahar Hatun in the tahrir defteri as well as her mosque and her tomb are close by.

The Bazaar is a rectangular building, like as if it were sitting on four elephant legs, a true Caravanserai, with great stone doors to protect it. There is an inscription that I cannot understand on the eastern side door and a well, which has a beautiful drinking water in the middle of four iron gates. The interior walls are skillfully carved with seventy or eighty crowded shops inside with rich merchants and all kinds of tradesman. There are crowded shops inside with rich merchants and all kinds of tradesman. Great stone doors protect the Bazaar. There is an inscription that I cannot understand on the eastern side door of the Bazaar and a well, which has a beautiful drinking water in the middle of four iron gates. Its interior walls are skillfully carved with seventy or eighty shops inside, called little Bazaar. Diamond and jewelry as precious as corn, dazzle in the wealthy merchants' cases and 60 night watchmen safeguard the Bazaar.



The nearby Stone Inn, known as Tas Han or Vakıf Han, is one of the many structures of its kind in the Bazaar which serves as a mall for local craftsmen and small merchants of a specific line of trade

as well as an inn for visiting long distance traders. It was built in 1531 by Iskender Pasha during the reign of our Kanonu Sultan Suleiman. It follows the plan we are used to: a rectangular courtyard, surrounded by arched enclaves where the camels of the visiting merchants are stabled while their owners stayed upstairs in rooms which also served as shops. I heard that the traveller and merchant Marco Polo visited Trabzon on his way to Venice from the domains of the Mongol Khan Kublai, who was the grandson of the great Cengiz Khan. Today Trabzon is one of biggest merchant



centers for silk and spices that flow to the capital of our Empire and the cities of the west. Believe me, the goldsmiths of Trabzon are the best in the world. Diamond and jewelry as precious as corn, dazzle in the wealthy merchants' cases and 60 night watchmen safeguard the Bazaar."

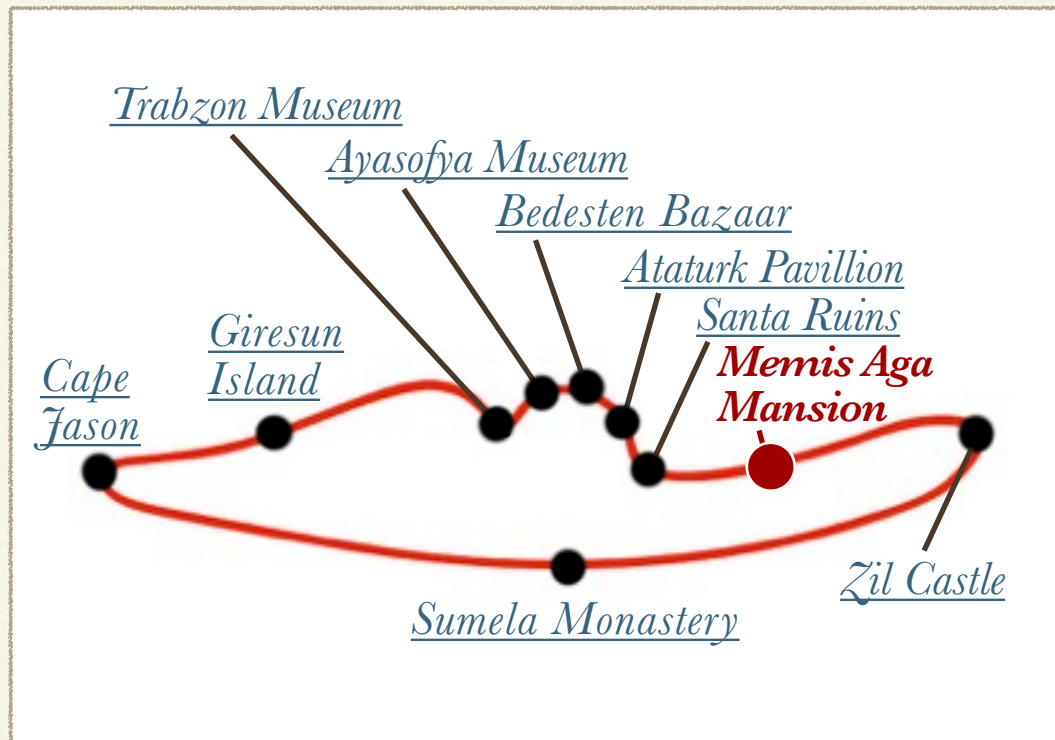


Insurgents by Habit

Powerful Aghas and Derebeys

In the Ottoman period the territory of the Empire was divided into administrative divisions, the *eyalets*. The central government needed to collect taxes and provide for security. Influential, powerful and wealthy local people were chosen to implement this task. These functionaries usually bore the title *Agha* or *Derebey*. Occasionally they are leaders of social and military formations. They were recruited from local elites who held government positions and appointments in the Ottoman administration. Thus they were able to set down family lines because

t h e i r



MEMIS AGA MANSION

Built in 1856 by the Derebey Memis Agha Yakupoglou as private mansion and local administration it is a fine example of defensive architectural structure with incorporated luxury facilities, a combination of stone and half-timbering, decorated internally with richly carved wood and frescoes of fruit and flowers. A private hamam doubled-up to provide the central heating. Rifle slots are spread along the parapets and a small jail was located on the first floor. The intricately painted carved wood ceilings and the stone fireplaces of the second-floor indicate the highly refined lifestyle of the Yakupoglu family.



positions in the state system were perpetuated from generation to generation. Their mansions expressed their power and role in society. They were constructed to emulate the residences of state officials. They symbolized the occupants' rights to represent the state by collecting taxes, conscripting recruits, imposing forced labor, and enforcing judicial decisions. As such, they had constructed large, semi-fortified mansions to serve as their personal residences, seats of government, reception halls and prison rooms. In the course of time these lords maintained their own troops, fought their own battles, and were not averse to some old fashioned banditry or sea piracy in lean times. Their power was only broken at the cost of prolonged and bloody conflicts during the modernizing reign of Sultan Mahmut II (1808-1839).

In 1834 the central

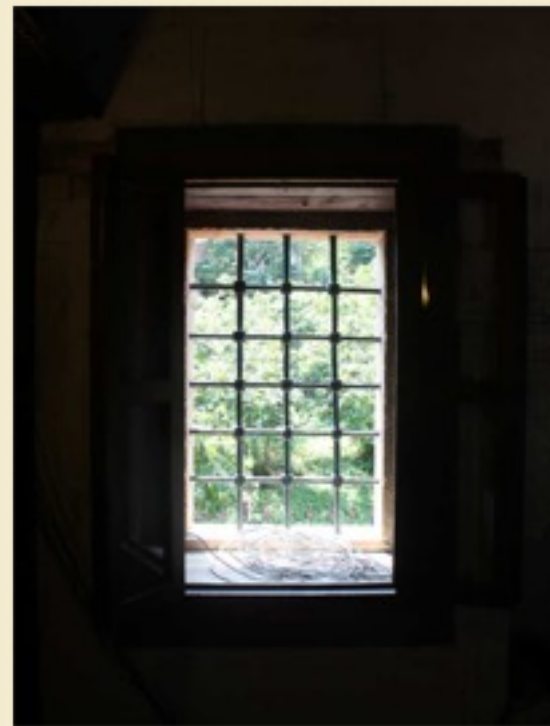
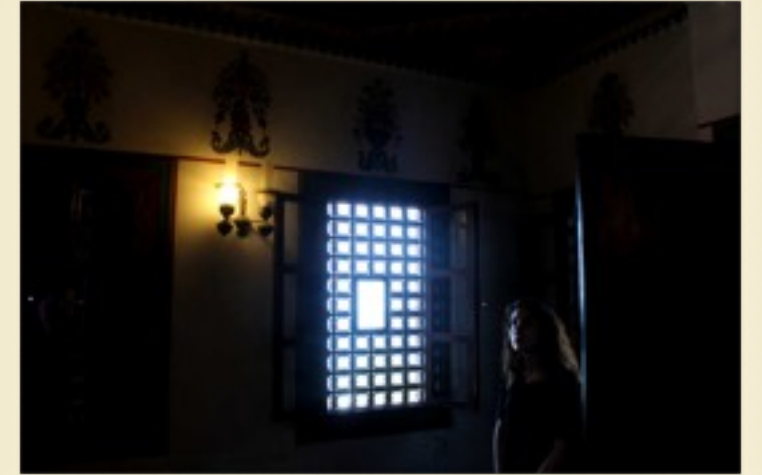
government was very well aware that the readiness of local elites to challenge district officials, hold back tax collections, and interfere in the courts was most certainly diminished, but not eliminated. All these mansions of the old social order were said to have been razed in the 1830s by Osman Pasha Hazinedaroglou. He was credited with having restored centralized government in the coastal region, but only by resorting to drastic measures. Large numbers of troops invaded and occupied the outlying districts, where they burned the mansions of the aghas and destroyed the villages of their followers. Inexplicably, a number of old mansions had somehow escaped these depredations and remained standing. Oddly the mansions saved were those of the most powerful aghas: the mansions one would have expected to be destroyed.



Osman Pasha Hazinedaroglou

“I am the governor of Trabzon, Osman Pasha Hazinedaroglou. Our Sultan trusts me to collect taxes and provide for security. The territory of our Empire is divided into local

administrative units, the *eyalets*. My assistants are influential, powerful and wealthy local people called *aghas* or *derebeys*. I recruit them from well-known families who hold high government positions and appointments. Thus they are able to set down their family lines and perpetuate their positions from generation to generation. They are entitled to collect axes, conscript recruits, impose forced labor, and enforce judicial decisions. Their power and role in society must be understood by all. Therefore they need large, semi-fortified mansions to serve as personal residences, seats of government, reception halls and prisons. Usually they are very prudent, but in the course of the time some lords started to maintain their own troops, fight their own battles and to support banditry and sea piracy. Our Sultan has assigned me to break their power. After prolonged and bloody conflicts I have finally managed in 1834 to restore the order in the coastal region.



Memis Agha Hacı Yakupoglu

My name is Memis Agha Hacı Yakupoglu. I was born in 1804 in Surmene. My family is serving the state since 1700. My father, Hacı Yakup, immigrated to Romania, as result of his conflicts with local aghas. They tried to challenge our Sultan holding back the collected taxes, and interfere with justice. When I was 15 years old, I took control of the region putting up resistance to these aghas who took my father away. After a while the troops of Osman Pasha Hazinedaroglou invaded and occupied the outlying districts, burned the mansions of the disobeying aghas and destroyed the villages of their followers.

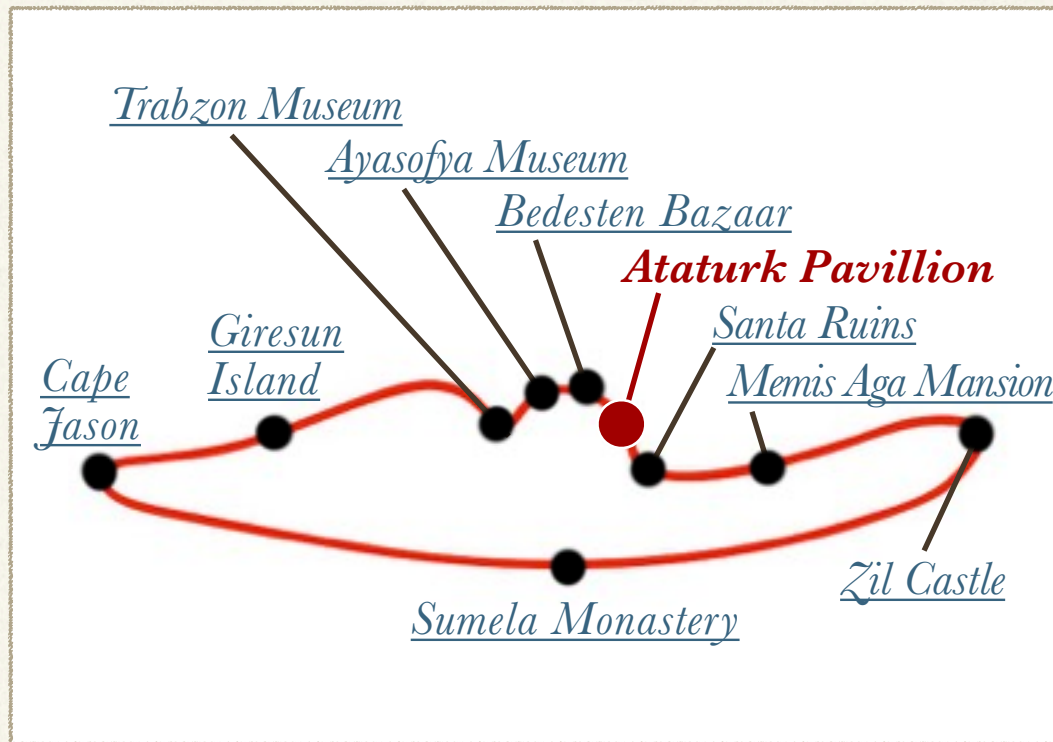
By staying loyal to the government I saved my family and properties. I was entrusted with new powers in 1824 and I have thus extended my rule to the neighboring settlements. I became captain of the armed forces in 1846. In 1854 I was charged with catching and delivering deserters. Siding with the government was a wide decision: I got stronger and

richer and two years later I built my mansion. The lower part is made of stone and the upper part of timber. I ordered its interior be decorated with richly carved wood



and frescoes of fruit and flowers. I let my hammam and central heating be built inside. In the upper floor a ventilator is spinning around a mill in the middle of the west room: it is cooling the air in the summer time and can be used as a windmill. In the second floor stone fireplaces keep my living quarters warm in the winter time. The military power of my mansion must be made clear to by passers: rifle slots are built along the parapets. I keep a small jail on the first floor suitable for all kind of trouble makers.”

The Autumn Tour



ATATURK PAVILLION

The Ataturk Pavilion is an exceptional example of European architecture, built in 1890 by the Greek banker in Trabzon Konstantinos Kapayannidis as his summer house. During the Turkish War of Independence the mansion was given by the people of Trabzon to Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, the founder of the Turkish Republic and reformer of the Turkish society, who wrote there his will to the Turkish nation on the 11th of June 1937. After the death of Ataturk the mansion opened to the public as museum.

“After the declaration of the Republic in 1923 we started the great tour of the nation from Dumlupinar. From there we reached Bursa and then we went to Mudanya and from there we sailed to the Black Sea via the Bosphorus on board the Hamidiye cruiser. On the 15th September 1924 I arrived in Trabzon at 11:00 p.m. with my wife Latife and close friends, where we have received a warm welcome from the people. We went directly to municipality and in the afternoon we went to the lodge at Soguksu to rest. The same night the mayor of Trabzon Husein

Kazazoglu gave a dinner and made a speech. In reply to this speech, I said: *Gentlemen, I have seen in almost all the people of Trabzon a mass of sincerity. I have seen tears in the eyes of women, children and elders. What an*



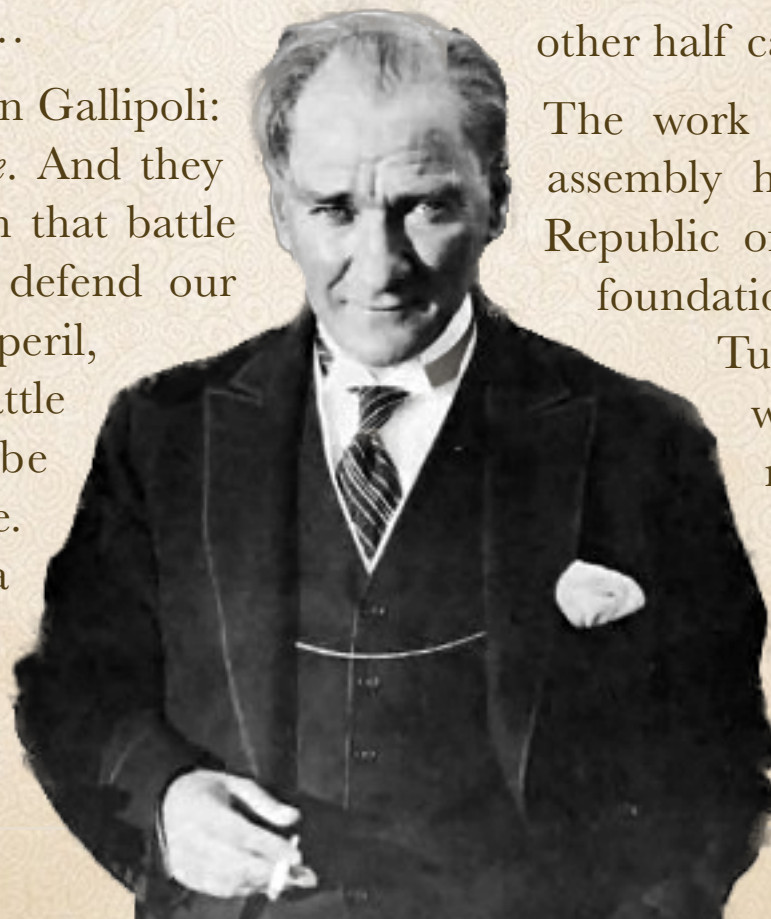
emotion, what compassion, and what nobility this is! And I thanked the people of Trabzon. The next day, after visiting the schools, the hospital and the yarn factory, in the morning of 17th of September 1924 we left Trabzon for Rize. After my visit in Trabzon the lodge that belonged to the Private Administration was purchased by the municipality of Trabzon and presented to me as a gift. A delegate of Trabzon arrived in Ankara and delivered the deed and keys of the lodge to me. Seven years later on the 27th of November in 1930, when I arrived from Samsun to Trabzon with the Ege steamboat, I spent the night in this lodge, before I returned to Istanbul. The lodge was named as Atatürk Lodge by the people of Trabzon and they took pride with it. It took me another seven years to return to Trabzon. On the 10th of June 1937, after arriving from Istanbul to Trabzon with the Ege steamboat, I went directly to my lodge and spent two nights in there thinking...

Yes! It is true that I have said to the soldiers in Gallipoli: *Men I don't order you to attack, I order you to die.* And they did. A quarter of a million men perished in that battle field in 1915. Why? For a just cause: to defend our nation. I tell you, that unless a nation faces peril, war is murder. But my biggest battle is the battle against illiteracy. Democracy cannot be established in a country with illiterate people. After 1923 I toured the whole country with a blackboard and taught the new alphabet. In the times of peace teachers are the one and only people who save the nations. Deeply

believing in this, I invited John Dewey to Ankara to advise me on the educational reform in 1924. A year later the fez and the chador were given up: the aim is to prepare citizens for roles in public life and modern dress code is part of it.

Primary education for both girls and boys has become compulsory. In 1930 I attended classes at the Law School of Istanbul University, because I believe that science is the most reliable guide in life. The Swiss Civil Law system replaced the old legal system and with the University Law in 1933 all academies, colleges and universities in Turkey equally accept women and men. In 1935 eighteen female members are elected in the Turkish Parliament. I keep repeating that humankind is made up of two sexes, women and men. Is it possible for humankind to grow by the improvement of only one part while the other part is ignored? Is it possible that if half of a mass is tied to the earth with chains that the other half can soar into the skies?"

The work that we succeeded since the last general assembly has drawn up the national aspect of the Republic of Turkey with definite lines: culture is the foundation of the Turkish Republic. The civilized Turkish society is the work of these last years with the new alphabet, national history, native language, art, science, and music, with technical institutions and with equal rights for both men and women. I would like to give many more things to my great people.



That night at the mansion in Soguksu I made a decision and gave my property to the treasure and sent it to Prime Minister İnönü by a telegram. The real estates and properties became a burden to me, I will be relieved when I donate these to my people. The wealth of a person should be within his own morale, therefore I donated all my belongings to the Treasury in the presence of the notary. On 12th of June 1937 morning I returned from Trabzon to Istanbul.”

An exceptional example of European architecture, the mansion was built in 1890 by the Greek banker Konstantinos Kapayannidis in Trabzon as his summer house. After the death of Mustafa Kemal, the mansion was bought from Ataturk’s sister Makbule by the municipality of Trabzon and was opened it as Ataturk Museum. Ataturk's belongings and photographs are exhibited in the museum. Today, in the entrance of the lodge, the full speech, made by Ataturk at his first arrival to Trabzon, hangs on the wall. The small room on the right is set with various photographs taken during his life and during his visits to Trabzon. In the next room the armchairs and the sofas where Ataturk rested, are exhibited. On one of them, the following sentence is written on a plate:

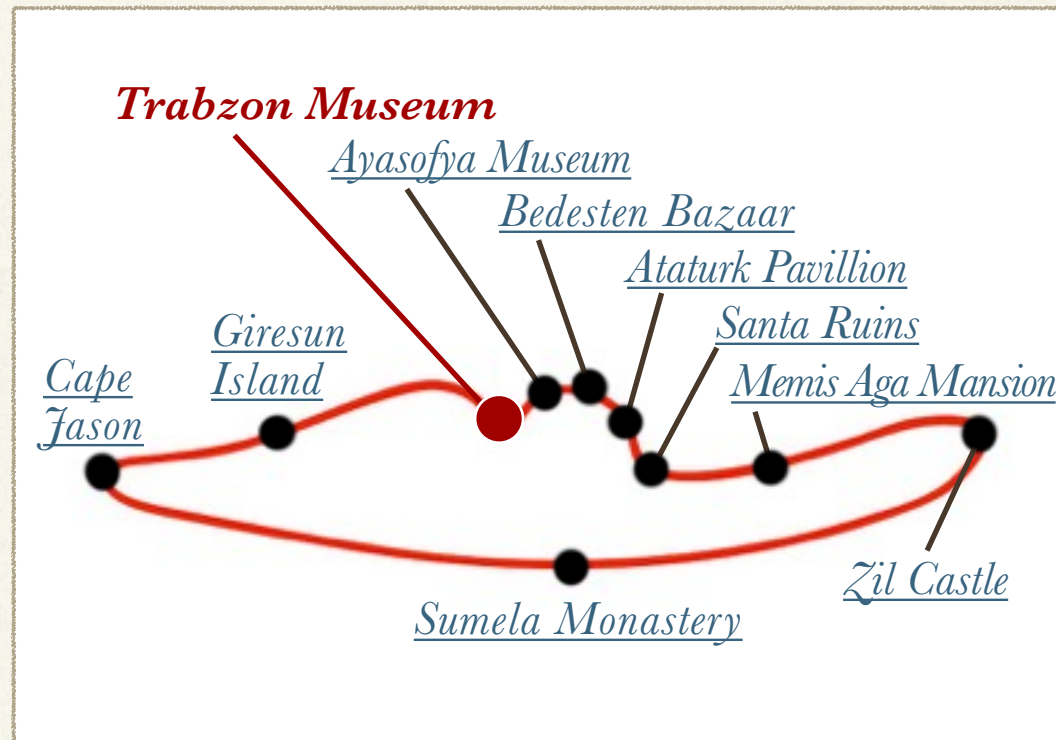


“In here Mustafa Kemal Ataturk signed the document stating the donation of all his belongings to the people”.

The other room was furnished as the dining room of Ataturk. In the third floor of the lodge Ataturk’s bedroom, bathroom, aide's rooms and the study room can be seen. Today the lodge, with its large flower garden, is one of the most beautiful houses of Trabzon.



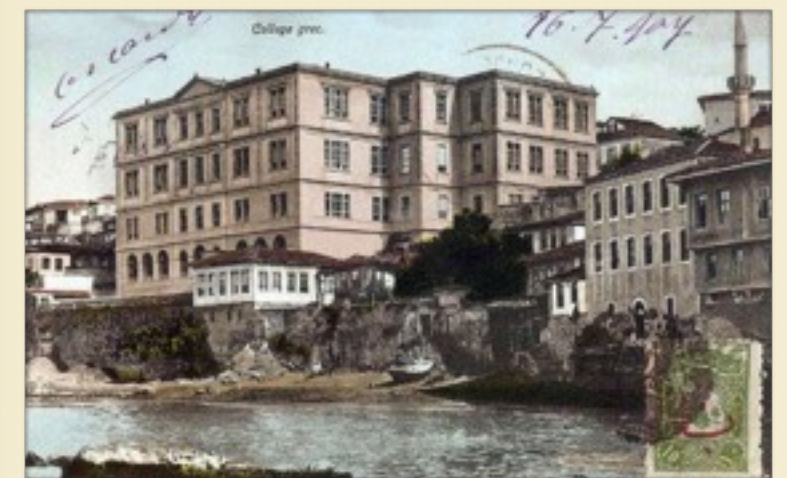
Beyond the Limits



TRABZON MUSEUM

The Italian-designed mansion in the center of Trabzon was built around 1913 by the Greek banker Konstantinos Theophylaktos as his private house. The ornate rooms, with painted ceilings, carved wooden doors and original furnishings mix rococo, art nouveau and neoclassical architecture. The building was used as headquarters of the army during the Turkish War of Independence. In 1924 Mustafa Kemal Ataturk stayed briefly in this mansion. Today it hosts the City Museum displaying Ottoman artifacts, a statue of Hermes unearthed in 1997 and Byzantine icons dating from the 5th to the 15th centuries.

“My name is Nikolaos Theodorou and I am a native of Gumushane, the ancient Argyroupolis. Thankfully, I am a proud graduate of the *Tuition Center of Trapezous*. I say thankfully, because the recently closed mines of Gumushane urged many of my compatriots to emigrate in order to survive. I was fortunate enough to have been sent to the *Tuition Center* by my grandfather, Konstantinos, a miner who urged me to seek education *to change my life*, as he used to say, - bless his soul. I loved to study and graduated from the *Tuition Center* first in my class. Then I received a scholarship and I was sent to the Leipziger Bank in Germany to learn commerce and banking. I admit that I have grown homesick over the years, but the reason for my repatriation was another: the



Leipziger Bank filed for bankruptcy in 1901. And here I am at the bank of Mr. Konstantinos Theofylaktos in Trabzon, fluent in Turkish, French and German to take care of the exports. Our city has grown to a world trade center. Modern steam ships have replaced the sail boats. When I returned from Leipzig in 1901, I saw that the harbour of Trabzon was equipped with cranes by *Stothert and Pitt* from England. Now it is time to learn English, I thought, when I saw this transformation!

Our Black Sea is a free commerce zone for a hundred years now. In 1856 new laws introduced measures that benefited the bank system and supported commerce by reducing import and export taxes. To give you an idea the volume of shipping clearing at the port of Trabzon rose from an average 15,225 tons a year in the early 1830's to 483,732 tons a year in the early 1890's. By 1882 the steamships of 5 different companies called weekly at the port of Trabzon. All this activity needs to employ people with skills, therefore I advise all youngsters to study, study and study. Girls need to study as well to cope with the modern way of life and be able to supervise the education of their children. In our days the banks in Pontus cooperate closely with all important trade houses from Persia to Europe. Our ports are important trade hubs where banks,



commercial agencies, and maritime companies are established. Commerce in our region gained further benefits when the Russian railway connection to the Caspian Sea was shut down. Then the old caravan road was again in operation, ending in Trabzon like in the times of Marco Polo! But you should not think that all this wealth was the child of luck. Oh, no! It was the child of education, and me

Nikolaos, is a good living example! We are very proud of our commercial school, the *Tuition Centre*. It was founded in 1682 by Sevastos Kiminitis, one of the most respected Pontic Greek scholars of his time. In 1902, the Metropolite of Trabzon with the help of our community replaced the old

building with a new 4 storey building which sits proudly along the shoreline next to the grand temple of Saint Gregory of Nyssa. An important contribution was made by our bank: it was Mr. Theofylaktos who raised funds to reopen and has personally overseen the construction in 1883. No doubt about it, education is the key to progress: our port cities flourish thanks to the skillful merchants. To invest in education our community in Pontus operates 37 philanthropic and cultural foundations, 1047 primary schools and 10



schools where 1236 teachers and professors teach about 75,953 pupils. On the other hand the increased agricultural and industrial production in our region increased the exports, especially the tobacco in the area of Amasya, the ancient Amisos.

To keep the long story short: our complex economy needs banking and commercial skills. Only in Trabzon operate five banks: the banks of Theofylaktos, Kapagiannidis, Fostiropoulos, the Bank of Athens and the Ottoman Bank are the most prestigious institutions. In Giresun, the ancient Kerasous, operate the Bank of Athens, the Ottoman Bank and the Bank of George Pissanos, while in Amasya there is also a branch of the Bank of Athens. Our banks cooperate closely with all major trading houses, making our Pontus the main trade body for import and export from Persia to Europe.

Unfortunately in 1914 a war started in Europe and soon everybody was involved. The new government boycotted the Pontic businesses, but Christian and Muslim merchants worked together and have overcome the difficulties. In that year I have received an invitation to attend a dinner at the city mansion of Mr. Theofylaktos. The reason is that he has been elected mayor



of Trabzon. I have never visited the mansion before and I was struck by its beauty. It seems that the Italian architect has created an eternal art piece of art with his design. Mr. Theofylaktos explained to me that he has called from Italy the hand-drawing artists and has imported the glasses used in the inner spaces and the tiles. Stone and wood are local. The imaginary scenes and the impressive portraits inside the domes and on the walls create an immense sensation of luxury. The four columns in the main hall are completed in marmorina style, a marble technique imitation. In the ceiling of the hall Venus, Adonis and Eros hoping are dazzling the viewer...

Still I think, that there is a message beyond all that: the impression of *eternity beyond limits* must be related with his profession: being a banker Mr. Theofylaktos needs a luxury mansion to demonstrate the prosperity of his business. Would anyone entrust his money to a banker who looks and lives poorly? I very much doubt that!"

During the Russian occupation (1915-1917), the metropolis of Trabzon recommended an autonomous municipality and the first Greek mayor was Konstantinos Theofylaktos. However after the October Revolution in 1917 in Russia, Konstantinos



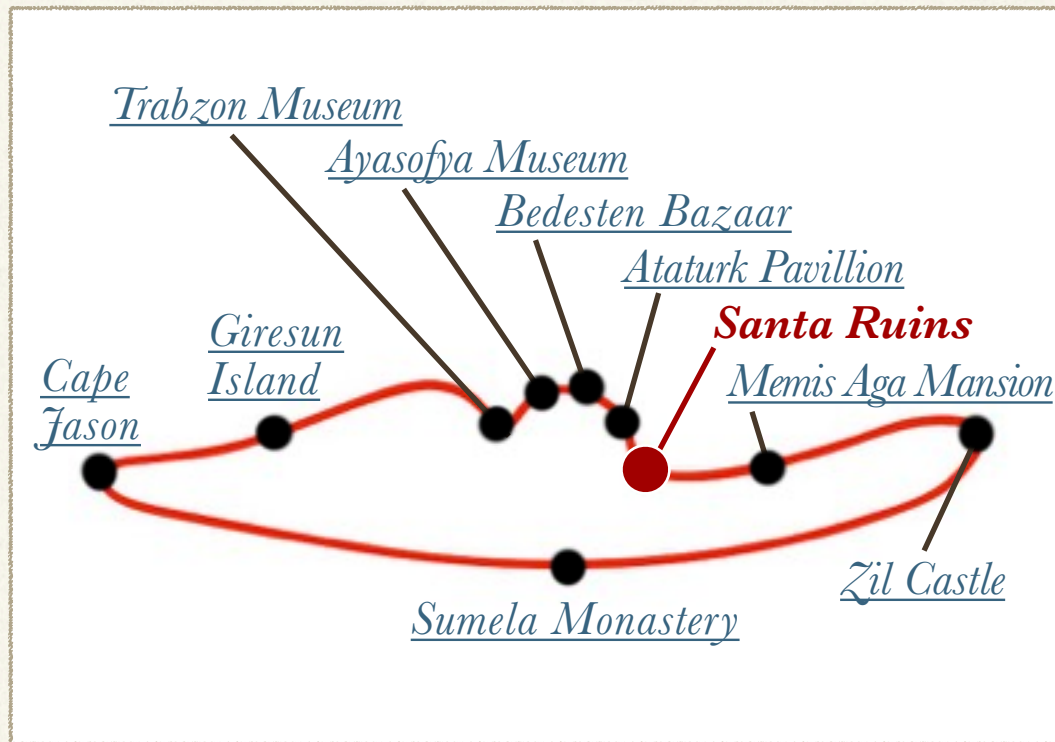
Theophylaktos went bankrupt and all his properties were confiscated. The building was acquired by the Nemlioglu family. During the Turkish War of Independence (1919–1923), the mansion was used as the headquarters for the military in the region. In 1924, it was prepared for the first visit of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in Trabzon. In September he, his wife Latife and travel companions stayed in the mansion. In 1927, the building was nationalized by the Governor of Trabzon Ali Galip Bey, and served until 1931 as the Governor's House. Between 1931-1937 the mansion was used as the inspector's office. The mansion was assigned in 1937 to the Ministry of National Education, and was used for fifty years long as a vocational high school for girls. Finally, in 1987, the building was handed over to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism to be transformed into a museum.



The British Consul

“My name is Willian Gifford Palgrave and I was appointed by the British Foreign Office in 1867 Consul of her Majesty the Queen Victoria in Trabzon, a remote city in the Black Sea, part of the Ottoman Empire. This unknown area to me has proved to be a land of surprises. I was impressed to find out that the area is so immensely rich in gold and silver deposits that exploitation of those precious metals has started already in the antiquity. The greatest part of ores was concentrated in Chaldia, the ancient historic region of Argyria, located in the

mountainous interior of the Eastern Black Sea. After the Roman Emperor Constantinus (306-337) legalized Christianity and moved the seat of the Empire from Rome to Byzantium



SANTA RUINS

Nine wealthy villages in Santa in Pontus, fell victim to World War I (1914-1918), the Russian occupation of Pontus (1916-1917), the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish War of Independence (1919-1923) that changed the course of history and the fate of countless people. Following the Treaty of Lausanne and the population exchange between the Kingdom of Greece and the newly born Republic of Turkey in 1923, the few remaining inhabitants of Santa settled in Greece, in the town of *Nea Santa*.



introducing the 4.5 gram solid gold coin, more slaves were needed in state-run mines. To face the shortage, criminals and political prisoners were sentenced to work in the mines. But soon it became very clear that a free prospector could extract more gold than the chained convicts. Rome withdrew as a mining operator, but kept controlling taxes and regulating the trade in precious metals.

The Byzantine Empire, heir to the advanced Roman mining tradition, operated immense mining districts yielding gold, silver, copper, iron, and other metal. The rich gold deposits in the border regions of Armenia were so important that the conflicts in the fifth to the seventh century between Byzantium and Sassanid Persia took on the character of economic wars.

In the late Middle Ages the area of Chaldia with its rich deposits formed the core of the Empire of Trebizond (1204-1461). Gold was so close to the surface on some mountain slopes that it was washed out by heavy rain and could be simply picked up from the ground!

Under the Ottomans the ancient Chaldian Argyroupolis was renamed to Gumushane, meaning once again the 'silver city' and has developed into a



metallurgy center where miners have enjoyed important privileges. The work in the mines was organized according to a strictly specialized and hierarchical system, which often influenced the community organization at the settlements of the miners. Needing much silver for the minting of coins and iron-steel for tools and weaponry, the Ottomans did not change the production technology in the

mines, which came under their control. The Jewish played onwards an important role in financing and coordinating such undertakings. The *maden emin*, the Commissioner in charge for the Mines, was assisted by skilled Greek chief-smelters. They coordinated the mining activity and ore transportation to Gumushane, seat of the local commander, who had the right to mint silver coins, collect taxes and safeguarded the silver, copper and lead transfer to the Sultan's treasury. With the help of the chief-smelters the

local commander investigated the possibilities for prospecting new mineral veins, initiating new shafts and appointing workers. These highly specialized Greek communities in the area of Gumushane were involved in mining and metallurgy all year long and were excluded from farming or herding.

The role of iron tools and weapons during the reign of Sultan Suleiman in the 16th



century was crucial for the military expansion of the Ottomans and gun and ammunition production was a matter of priority. The making of superior properties exercised pressure among the skilled craftsmen to look for solutions to improve the quality. In the sancak (the administrative region) of Trebizond, there were 21 mines of argentiferous lead, 34 copper mines, 3 of copper and lead, 2 of manganese, 10 of iron and 2 of coal. In the sancak of Gumushane there were 37 mines of argentiferous lead and 6 copper mines while the sancak of Samsun had only 1 mine of argentiferous lead.

The miners of Pontus and especially those from Gumushane, who spread across Asia Minor and beyond, became admirable prospectors. Those well-known miners searched for rich deposits beyond their homelands and established new metallurgical settlements. An example of their activity is described in a document dated 15 February 1774, according to which two Greek prospectors from Gumushane and Bursa discovered a silver bearing deposit on Bithynian Olympus at the site of Maden Deresi. As the mining businesses were in Greek hands, many miners in the regions were crypto-Christians. Trebizond, which was part of the Byzantine Empire, fell to Sultan Mehmet II in 1461. It was made quickly Muslim, partly by influx of Muslims, partly by deportation of Christians, but largely through conversion which was linked to considerable financial benefits. I managed to see with my own eyes an



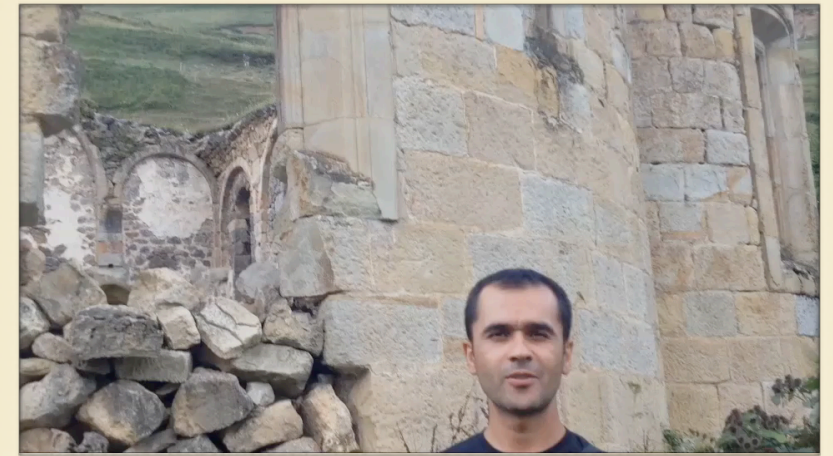
Ottoman tax register, a tahrir defteri of 1583, which counts one half of the city as Muslim, but almost everybody spoke Greek in the public sphere. After three centuries though, a lack in reforming the mining operations led to a recession of the output and the decline of the mines after 1829. The skilled craftsmen and their technical knowledge and metallurgical traditions immigrated to central and southern Asia Minor, Thrace and Macedonia.

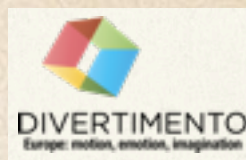
In 1843, a new penal code was introduced, which recognized equality of Muslims and non-Muslims. One year later, the death penalty for renouncing Islam was abolished. The Imperial Reform Edict of 1856, the Hatt-i Humayun, was promulgated by Sultan Abdulmecid. The Edict, prepared under strong pressure from foreign powers, laid down the equality of all Ottoman subjects irrespective of religion. It thus

allowed people to report their true religion in public without punishment. However not all crypto-Christians professed their faith after 1856. This year, having been appointed Consul, I have toured the land of this great mining tradition. I have witnessed that Ottoman mining and smelting service in the Pontus was a replacement of military service, so Christians of Kromni, a town located in the province of Chaldea and the region of Trebizond on the mountain Paryadres east of the Pontic Alps some 2,000 m above the

sea level, carried arms as Muslims but did not pay poll tax as Christians!”

The prosperity of the seven villages counting 1013 households in Santa before 1914 was connected to the efficient operation of mines. The Santa blacksmithing and silver smithing have promoted other skills like stone craftsmanship, tailors, gold and silver smiths, giving great impetus to arts, education and culture. At the dawn of 20th century major historic turns like the World War I, the October Revolution and the Turkish War of Independence have wiped out countless families in a territory that kept changing borders, masters and values.





EUROTHENTICA

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