

World Heritage and Cultural Tourism The Case of Cappadocia in Turkey

Hazel Tucker and Andus Emge

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Introduction

Situated two hundred kilometres south east of Ankara, the Göreme-Cappadocia region is set amongst a "moonlike" landscape of giant rock cones with historic cave dwellings and Byzantine churches. In 1985, the 'Göreme Open-Air Museum', a particularly well-preserved caved monastic site was afforded UNESCO World Heritage Site status and, at the same time, the wider area became the Göreme National Park. In turn, a steadily increasing number of cultural tourists have visited the area since that time. However, over the last two decades, developments surrounding the increase in cultural tourism to the area have led to a problematic relationship between the key heritage attraction(s) in the area, tourism and the local community. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss this relationship in order to elucidate the management issues associated with the development and preservation of heritage for tourism at this World Heritage Site. Whilst cultural tourism has a broader presence throughout Cappadocia, this chapter focuses in particular on the Göreme area as that is the central point of the World Heritage Site (WHS) designation.

Heritage management has been described by Hall and McArthur (1996:19) as 'the process by which heritage managers attempt to make sense of the complex web of relationships surrounding heritage in a manner which meets the values and interests of many of the key stakeholders'. This raises questions, however, as to what occurs in situations where the management of heritage sites is split between various organising bodies with differing function and status and where there is no single coordinating body which brings these organisations together. Contrary to broad expectations, UNESCO designation does not involve an overarching control of the management of sites (Bianchi 2002; Bianchi and Boniface 2002; Evans 2002). Rather, World Heritage Site status inevitably exposes designated areas to a complex web of national and regional policies and regulations (Hall 2006). These policies tend to arise from a discourse of heritage as having primarily a cultural tourism purpose, thus necessitating that the heritage sites be conserved

and presented appropriately for international tourist consumption. This emphasis on conservation and presentation to cultural tourists often means that less heed is paid to local community issues as well as contemporary use and practice (Garrod and Fyall 2000).

WHS designation and cultural tourism development therefore have important implications for the communities and local residents living in and around these sites (Bianchi and Boniface 2002). As it has been noted in relation to many heritage and cultural tourism sites, tourism representations and practices inevitably produce contradictions and tensions concerning the sites' rights of ownership and access, presentation and profitability (for example, Edensor 1998; Evans 2002; Harrison 2005; Leask and Fyall 2000; Winter 2005). For local and regional authorities, WHS designation and the increased level of tourism it brings is often valued for the economic benefits it brings to the region. Simultaneously however, the processes of site demarcation and 'monumentalisation' associated with WHSs can often lead to the disenfranchisement and marginalisation of local communities (Bender 1999; Bianchi and Boniface 2002; Edensor 1998).

In this chapter, we discuss the contested nature of Cappadocia's 'tourism' landscape, looking at the relationship between the varied facets of Göreme's cultural heritage, the Göreme local community and cultural tourism. Indeed, Göreme is an example of a WHS in which the responsibilities for different aspects of heritage and the associated tourism are divided between various organising bodies. A key aim of the chapter is to describe the contradiction and lack of clarity between the preservation rhetoric and work of these different bodies, as well as the way that this impacts on the social and physical environment of Göreme.

This chapter is based on the authors' ethnographic research and long term involvement in Göreme. Tucker conducted her ethnographic study over a ten year period between 1995 and 2005. The main initial research questions addressed the change that tourism had brought about in the village, how villagers had involved themselves with tourism, and how the interactions were played out between tourists and tourism and villagers and village life (the work is published as a whole in Tucker, 2003). The fieldwork took place during multiple periods of between one month and one year in length spent in the village. The main method employed was a combination of participant observation and semi-structured interviews with both villagers and tourists which produced comprehensive field-notes and interview transcripts.

Emge's involvement in Göreme began in 1983 when he started ethnographic fieldwork on the change of traditional habitat and life in the troglodyte village of Göreme. He mainly focused on indigenous cave-dwelling life in terms of rapid changes caused by government resettlement projects (AFET) and the rise of tourism and 'modern' life in the village during the 1980s. Combining methods of participant observation, interviews and vernacular architectural analysis, he ascertained the pros and cons of traditional Cappadocia cave and Ottoman style arched-room architecture versus the houses built within the AFET relocation programs allocated by the central Turkish government. Emge's fieldwork took place in multiple periods through to 1989 when he presented his results in a Ph.D. dissertation at the University of Heidelberg in Germany. Emge returned to Göreme in 1997 and, restoring an old cave-house, he established the Cappadocia Academy as an independent forum and network of regional experts (platform_C). He continues to live in the village as director of the Academy and as a small tourism accommodation operator.

The next section will provide a brief overview of cultural tourism development in the Göreme – Cappadocia region in order that the wider context of the issues discussed later in the paper is understood. From there the chapter will describe the foci of the heritage attraction in the area, before going on to address the preservation rhetoric and the problematic relationship between heritage tourism and the local community.

Tourism Development in Göreme – Cappadocia

Since the mid-1980s, Göreme and the wider Cappadocia area has become a major focus of Turkey's 'cultural tourism' development. Whilst much of the earlier tourism development took place around Turkey's south and west coasts, certain inland regions and towns were also identified under the Tourism Encouragement Act in the early 1980s as potential tourism centres. It was then that Cappadocia was identified as a "cultural tourism" centre, and the Tourism Encouragement Act had significant implications for the way that tourism would develop there. This important piece of legislation ensured generous incentives for private tourism investment whilst also annulling the prohibition of foreign companies acquiring real estate. As a consequence, large scale tourism facilities grew rapidly in the region, particularly in the towns of Ürgüp, Avanos and Nevşehir.

According to Tosun, however, this growth took place largely 'in the absence of proper planning and development principles' (1998:595). Tosun based

his observations on the small town of Ürgüp, situated nine kilometres from Göreme, where the generous incentives to the large-scale sector of the tourism industry ensured that foreign tour operators together with national and international hotel chains were quick to move in. With their own marketing, together with the promotion of Ürgüp by the regional Ministry of Tourism and Culture office, Ürgüp became known as the 'tourism centre' of Cappadocia.

However, the main tourist attraction in the region is the Göreme Open-Air Museum. In its early days the museum was managed by the Ürgüp municipality, but later the site was appropriated by the regional government under the auspices of the Ministry of Tourism and Culture. It was then in the early 1980s, following the passing of a national law which stated that the municipality closest to any historical site could claim 40% of the site's income, that the then-named Avcılar village appropriated the name of the museum and became Göreme. By the late 1990s the museum was receiving up to half a million visitors yearly, three quarters of whom were international tourists. The majority of tourists visit Cappadocia on 'cultural' package tours and stay in the large hotels in nearby towns.

It was because of its close proximity to the Open-Air Museum site in the Göreme valley that Göreme township was also included in the Göreme National Park area. The area officially became a national park in 1985. Situated within the park, Göreme village became subsumed under protection laws decreeing the preservation of all rock structures and houses and severely restricting building and construction in the area.

The larger foreign and national hotel chains were therefore unable to obtain permission to build large hotels within or close to Göreme, so they built on sites outside of the National Park area, particularly in the nearby towns of Ürgüp, Avanos and Nevşehir. So whilst Göreme remained relatively undisturbed by the 'mass' tourism moving into the region, these other towns saw the hasty construction of large 3, 4, and 5 star hotels. Today, most of the package tour groups visiting the region are accommodated in these larger hotels, and because the package tours are generally 'all-inclusive', many of the smaller, locally-owned tourism-related businesses in Ürgüp and Avanos have been forced to close because of imperfect market competition (Tosun 1998). According to Tosun (1998), this situation has occurred because all decisions related to tourism planning are made by central government: 'This highly centralized planning approach to tourism development is the main source of problems in tourism development at the local level in Ürgüp,

which, indeed, has planted the seeds of unsustainable tourism development' (ibid.: 603).

Being inside the national park boundary, then, Göreme township has been largely protected from such large-scale capital investment and construction. Göreme's tourism has consequently remained relatively low on capital investment and has developed in a pattern of small or micro businesses that are mostly locally owned. Today, with a population of around 2000 permanent residents, Göreme has approximately seventy pansiyons (small accommodation establishments), plus a handful of more upmarket 'boutique' hotels and camping sites. Other tourism-related businesses include: approximately fifteen tour agencies; fifteen restaurants; five or six bar/discos; fifteen carpet shops; several general stores; and numerous other souvenir shops and souvenir stands (these stands are mostly situated near the entrance of the Göreme Open-Air Museum). There is also a horse ranch which runs horse-riding tours, and multiple hot-air ballooning operations organising flights over the 'moonlike' landscape of the area.

The situation thus exists today where the township of Göreme generates substantial income from tourism. At the municipality level, the town receives income from rent of land and buildings for tourism ventures and also from the museum (although the percentage has been significantly reduced in recent years, which is a bone of contention with the Mayor). Also at the household level, the majority of Göreme families engage in some tourism-related work or entrepreneurial activity. Unlike the situation in Urgup described by Tosun (1998), the local community of tourism has generally been able to benefit from the cultural tourism in the area through a pattern of locally owned and operated small business development which has fostered a successful host-guest relationship with visitors in the area (Tucker 2003). However, there are still significant contentious issues remaining surrounding the actual heritage focus in the Göreme valleys, particularly regarding the contradictions between conservation and development. These issues are to be discussed in the remainder of the chapter. The next section will explain what the actual focus of the heritage attraction in the Göreme -Cappadocia area is.

The heritage attraction in Göreme -Cappadocia

Göreme is situated in the middle of a triangle formed by the three towns of Nevşehir, Ürgüp and Avanos, and lies at the meeting point of four valleys in the middle of the Cappadocia region. Named the province of Nevşehir in modern Turkey, Cappadocia was the ancient name for this region where the land comprises the out-spill of two volcanoes. The volcanic ash hardened to become *tufa*, a soft porous rock. Over millions of years this rock has eroded to form natural cones and columns, locally termed *peribacalari*, or "fairy chimneys", on the landscape and, for centuries, these have been carved and hollowed to form cave-dwellings, stables and places of worship.

According to much of the tourist literature on Cappadocia, the region was "discovered" by the West in the early twentieth century when a French priest named Guillaume de Jerphanion conducted and published a study of rock-cut churches in the Göreme valley. Followed by other scholars, Jerphanion's work served to mark off the Byzantine churches in the Göreme valley as being of key historic significance. Other writings and photographic representations from the early twentieth century emphasise both the historic and visual significance of the churches and the frescoes on their rock-carved walls, thus denoting their value for tourist interest. Contemporary travel guide books and tourist brochures all repeat this emphasis with descriptions and photographs of the frescoes in the churches.

Approximately three hundred cave churches and monasteries dating between the 9th and the 13th centuries still remain scattered throughout the valleys in the entire region. The Göreme valley that was studied by Jerphanion, however, is a particularly concentrated area of monastic settlement. Part of the valley became enclosed as the Göreme Open-Air Museum in 1950, followed by UNESCO World Heritage Site designation in 1985. There are also many rock-cut churches in and around the site of the township named Göreme today (situated 1.5 kilometres from the museum site). This was originally settled as a Turkish farming village and the oldest mosque there is dated 1686.

It is partly because of these Byzantine church remains and also because of the general "lunar" landscape that the Göreme area is a designated national park. Besides the churches, the valleys filled with rock cones, referred to locally as "fairy-chimneys", are key tourist attractions in the Göreme area. It has been pointed out by Urry (1992) that for landscapes to be suitable for tourist consumption, they must be unique, unpolluted and

authentic. Representations of the Cappadocia landscape in the tourist literature certainly proclaim its uniqueness: 'The peculiar formations and sights of the region are definitely unique. One cannot help feeling that some majestic sorcerer has chosen this place to perform his magical wonders' (Erdogdu 2001). However, whilst uniqueness allows for some level of objective measure, the qualities of 'unpolluted' and 'authentic' necessitate a particular kind of scrutiny and protection against what are considered to be polluting or de-authenticating influences. These two concepts are highly negotiable and indicate where the contestation lies in the relationship between heritage, cultural tourism and the local community in Göreme. Building work associated with tourism development, along with other contemporary uses of the landscape by the local community, might be considered polluting and de-authenticating alterations to the heritage landscape.

A further complicating factor is that the people who inhabit the caves and rock structures themselves are also part of the "extraordinary" landscape that is a focus of the heritage attraction in Göreme. This is shown in the following extract from a leaflet prepared by the Göreme National Park group in the mid 1980s:

The picturesque village life, the activities of the villagers, the small volcanic farming areas... All these peculiarities, the tufa rocks and fairy chimneys as they are in traditional relations, are ... the main theme of the administration, protection, presentation, and the development of this historical National Park. At the application of the National Park, the main policy has been adopted that the population living within the boundaries of the park, should be one of the main important elements, as well as giving support to the resources.

Similarly, tourism promotional literature and travel writing on the Göreme region also promote the contemporary troglodyte way of life as a cultural tourism attraction:

Even today many of these caves and grottoes serve as homes and store houses for peasant families. Whole villages of cave-dwellers still exist. (*Explore Worldwide Ltd.*

video promotion for Turkey, 1989)

Thousands of years after the Stone Age passed into history, here in the extraordinary landscape of the Cappadocia region cave life is considered healthy, economical and even chic. (S. Kinzer, in *The New York Times International*, 1997)

In sum, the aspects of Göreme-Cappadocia marked off as the foci of heritage attraction are its Christian (Byzantine) history, "lunar" landscape, and the contemporary troglodyte way of life in villages such as Göreme. The growth of cultural tourism has led to an aesthetic valuing of all of these features, and has hence served to promote their preservation. However, underpinning the management of this heritage site is a lack of clarity concerning why and how the different aspects of heritage attraction should be preserved and presented to tourists. It is this lack of clarity which is at the heart of the contestation in the area.

Heritage preservation in Cappadocia

Much of the directed preservation and restoration work, such as retouching frescoes and filling cracks in the rock to prevent rain water from further weakening the rock structures, is focused on the caved Byzantine churches in and around the Göreme Open-Air Museum site, and is funded by the Turkish Ministry of Tourism and Culture (previously the Ministry of Culture). Concurrently, the importance placed on the Cappadocia landscape in general has manifested in the formation of the Cappadocia Protection / Preservations Office (under the Ministry of culture) in the nearby town of Nevşehir. This organisation, together with the national park authority (under the Ministry of Forestry), pronounces strict regulations aimed at "protecting" the landscape from polluting elements, such as tall buildings, or anything that would damage the existing rock formations. So, whilst the Romantic view of the contemporary cave-life led to the decree that the villagers should be allowed to continue habitation and farming practices in the caves, all rock structures within the National Park, which includes many villagers' cave-houses, have been appropriated under government control. For anybody to carry out alterations to existing rock structures, such as in fairy-chimneys and cave-homes, or any new building work, plans must be drawn up and submitted to both the municipality office (*Belediye*) and the Cappadocia Protection / Preservations Office. If alterations are carried out to

any rock structure without obtaining the correct permission, the perpetrator can be subject to fines or imprisonment.

For preservation purposes, Göreme township and the surrounding area is zoned and the municipality office is charged with managing these zones. Around the main street in the centre of the town is the business or tourism zone. The older residential quarters of the village are situated up the slopes away from the central village. Some of the caves originate in Byzantine times, but most of what exist as cave-houses today were extended in the 19th and 20th Centuries with Ottoman style arched-room architecture constructed from cut stone added onto the original cave-dwelling (see Emge 1990; 1992). In certain areas, the older "fairy chimneys" and cave-houses have been evacuated because of crumbling and rock collapse. Many of the families who left their crumbling older houses were re-housed in government funded housing (*AFET evleri*) that was built in the 1960s and 1970s in the lower end of the village. As with other villages in the Cappadocia region, whole sections of Göreme village were deemed too dangerous for habitation because of erosion and threat of collapse, and declared 'disaster zones' and appropriated under the national Disaster Relief Directorate. At that time a general move towards more modern and prestigious housing was instigated, particularly on the part of the younger generation, and that lower part of the village continues to be the main residential 'building zone' with the ongoing construction of new concrete and brick housing.

When tourism really got under way during the late 1980s, however, many of the re-housed villagers began to reclaim and restore their old homes for the purpose of making tourist accommodation businesses (*pansiyons*). The people of Göreme have repeatedly seen the visiting tourists' fascination with the 'cave-life' in the village, and have thus grown to appreciate the value of the caves and the opportunity to sell tourists the chance to become cave-dwellers themselves. Tourism promotional material offers tourists the opportunity to sleep in a cave, to drink in a cave-bar, and to eat "traditional", "home-made" food. Advertisements for Göreme's *pansiyons* highlight their "traditional" cave rooms and their breakfast-terraces overlooking views of the village and the fairy chimneys. Being in the older cave-houses, also, this accommodation for tourists is dotted throughout the older quarters of the village. Although all evacuated houses officially belong to the state treasury, this kind of activity has been tolerated because it has meant that such old properties are restored and maintained. This tolerance, along with the recent removal by the Department of Infrastructure of the 'disaster zones',

is indicative of an increasingly pervasive interest in the preservation of the older part of the village.

These practices and regulations can be viewed as the regional filter of a more global preservation rhetoric which became institutionally formalised through efforts such as the UNESCO World Heritage Convention in the early 1970s which decreed the need to preserve 'cultural landscapes of universal value' (Plachter and Rossler 1995:15). As Mowforth and Munt (1998) point out, these global socio-environmentalist movements, and the associated tourisms, are hegemonic in themselves in that they promote these values as global *needs* and in turn are blatantly neglectful of local voices.

Contestation and Göreme's heritage management

It is evident in the above that in recent decades, the Göreme region, which had previously existed on a subsistent traditional farming economy, has undergone dramatic change. Moreover, such change inevitably leads to contestation regarding which aspects of heritage should be promoted and how they should be managed (Harrison 2005; Timothy and Boyd 2003). Tourism-related developments have caused many of the younger generation to search for a new future based on a modern infrastructure and the rise of the tourism market. As there were only three *pansiyons* in the village of Göreme in the mid-1980s compared to over seventy now, World Heritage site status and the rapid increase in cultural tourism has inevitably brought about significant social as well as environmental change in the area.

However, much of the new regional construction is happening in a way which is inconsistent with the ideas behind the claim of a World Heritage Site. Despite regulations, many of traditional houses are being destroyed or at least redesigned in ways far removed from the traditional building practices. The recent trend in building so-called 'boutique hotels', along with returning guest workers from Europe keen to present a prestigious lifestyle, have introduced new ways of building so that building forms which had previously varied from village to village are now replaced with standard construction and decor elements without any sub-regional differentiation (Emge 2003:36). In addition, regional laws banning future cave-carving have been introduced, so that the vernacular tradition of creating cave houses has been officially stopped.

Despite being 'protected' by the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the National Parks authority, no sustainable master plan has yet been developed in order to coordinate the requirements

and needs of the region and the local community. Indeed, there is a general contradiction and lack of clarity between the different bodies that have a say in the management of heritage and tourism. As it was explained above, the main focus of the WHS designation and the consequent preservation work is the Byzantine history and the frescoes in the churches in the area. However, the Byzantine churches are of course Christian heritage and so, through the emphasis placed on the importance of these sites in tourism representations of Cappadocia, the more recent Islamic settlement in the region has in turn become de-emphasised (see Tucker 2000; 2001). The constant re-hashing of the images presented in up-dated versions of the travel literature, always providing great detail about Göreme's churches, perpetuates the tourist myth of Cappadocia as being a "Christian place".

Whilst the local residents in the region have also now appropriated this myth and there is a general adoption by the Göreme villagers of views concerning the importance of the preservation of the churches and their frescoes, the local community have become increasingly disenfranchised from the tourism and heritage management processes in the area. Moreover, the building regulations and the necessity to obtain permissions for any alteration work on cave-dwellings directly affects both residents of the cave-houses and entrepreneurs who attempt to make a living out of their cave-dwelling. The process of obtaining permissions is costly and can take a number of years as the official protection board which is responsible for giving permissions does not hold regular meetings. Moreover, the different working groups on the Cappadocia region do not cooperate with each other or cross contact in order to create effective professional management teams, and to date there have been no public meetings explaining the needs and strategies applied for the region to the local population (Emge 2003). In addition, the official local decision making bodies are not adequately trained to deal with the complexity of the fast changing region and are therefore unable to give proper advice to the local community. As a result, there have been fines and also prison sentences imposed on local entrepreneurs for undertaking building alterations which went against the regulations. Such actions have served to further alienate the local community from the heritage preservation and tourism management processes.

Conclusion and recommendations

Since UNESCO listed the unique area of Göreme-Cappadocia as both a cultural and natural World Heritage Site in 1985, the area has become one of

Turkey's major cultural tourism destinations. As this chapter has shown, however, the relationship between Göreme's cultural heritage, the local community and cultural tourism has become one of contestation and contradiction. With the Göreme villagers continuing to use the rock dwellings as both private homes and in their tourism commercial ventures, there is particular contention surrounding government appropriation and preservation of all rock dwellings in the Göreme valleys.

Moreover, a general picture of inappropriate architectural change has occurred which is inconsistent with WHS status in the area. This is due to the main focus of 'cultural tourism', and hence heritage preservation, being on the Byzantine churches, causing a lack of clarity as to what preservation measures should be in place regarding general rock structures, cave-houses and lived culture. In addition, the lack of organised control by the Protection/ Preservation Office has resulted in inappropriately transformed cave-dwellings into either tourist accommodation or modernized houses. In other words, because the tourism and heritage preservation focus is centred on the Byzantine archaeological remains, there is no clear preservation remit for the general landscape and more contemporary cultural heritage in the area. The lack of adequate control and community participation in building and alteration practices has in turn served to alienate the local villagers, especially those attempting to make a living from tourism.

In sum, there is clearly a need to develop a platform to facilitate cooperation and dialogue between the relevant local, regional, national and international stakeholders in order to develop an understanding of the WHS of Göreme-Cappadocia, not only as an historical Byzantine site, but also as a rapidly changing tourist site. The 'platform_C' organisation has already gone part way in this by forming a network and meeting of experts who support the protection and sustainable development of the Cappadocia region, establishing a 'Cappadocia Documentation Center', and creating a pilot project on how to reuse and restore traditional buildings and develop contemporary architecture. This platform takes into account, not only the needs of the official conservation board and international tourism with its mostly 'Romantic' view, but also those of the local population including their entrepreneurial needs.

As it was pointed out by UNESCO in their last convention on the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions, the knowledge systems of indigenous peoples and their positive contribution to sustainable development, has to be considered through dialogue and mutual respect. As

culture always takes diverse forms across time and space, this diversity is embodied in the uniqueness and plurality of the identities and cultural expressions of peoples and societies. To provide a sustainable approach towards a modern understanding of the Göreme-Cappadocia region, therefore, rather than a singular focus of heritage and cultural tourism taking precedence, multiple values and layers of culture and history need to be negotiated and included.

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Dr. Andus Emge

Project Director
Kapadokya Akademi Ltd.
Güvercinlik Sokak 3/7, Aydinli Mahallesi
TR 50180 Göreme, Nevsehir
Cappadocia, Turkey
Tel. 0090.384.2712655
Fax. 0090.384.2712862
Mob. 0090.533.2507883
eMail: aemge@fairychimney.com
web. www.fairychimney.org
web. www.platformmc.org