

Monday, November 2, part 2

Then we were off again to see the three-headed chimneys and mushroom shaped chimneys at Pashabagi (The Pasha's Vineyard). In Ottoman times it was called "Papaz'in Bagi" or "The Monk's Vineyard" because Christian hermits chose to locate hermit cells and churches in these three-headed pinnacles symbolic of the Holy Trinity. They say that perhaps such symbolism helped these monks develop a greater understanding of God. The chimneys here are in the middle of the vineyard, thus the name as well.



A story about the hermits living here. Saint Simeon was living in seclusion near Aleppo in the 5<sup>th</sup> century. When rumors began to spread that he made miracles happen, he moved to a fairy chimney 50 feet high. From there he only descended once in a while to get food left for him by his disciples. The hermits of Cappadocia distanced themselves from the world by cutting into the fairy chimneys rather than living on top of them. They hollowed out the chimneys from the bottom up to create rooms 50 feet high.

The sun was moving across the sky and the shadows on the chimneys created their own shapes and forms.



We hiked around here as well, except this time there were a few tour buses there too. Nevertheless, it is so expansive, the people did not get in the way. We felt like miniatures standing next to some of the towering chimneys. Pashabagi contains some of the most striking fairy chimneys in Cappadocia with twin and even triple rock caps. Locals refer to them as the mushroom-shaped fairy chimneys.



It was now time for a snack, in fact we never had lunch. But this was the best snack. Homemade pancakes – made while we watched – with cheese and sweet potato, and a glass of tea. Two women who have probably been making these pancakes their whole

lives, sat on the low stools in front of a large flat area where they rolled the dough and then baked it on a low flat oven. The name of the place was Celal'in Yeri. Delicious!



The day was not over yet. We then went to a pottery demonstration in Avanos, a town famous for thousands of years of pottery making, with the red, iron-ore bearing clay found by the Kizilirmak (Red River). During the second millennium BCE, Avanos was inhabited by Assyrian traders and was later taken over by the Hittites. The techniques and designs used today by the potters date back to this period. We visited one family, Ozderin, at their studio, Kapadokya Seramik, who has been making pottery for 11



generations. We had a demonstration of them throwing the clay and hand painting it. The most famous design here is a wine decanter with a large hole in the center from the time of the Hittites. They worshipped the sun god Ra and so designed their wine jugs in the image of the sun, or in a big O in honor of Ra. The jugs were left in the sun which made them holy. They believed that the wine poured from these jugs then represented the blood of Ra so the servants pouring the wine had to hold the jug on their shoulder to as not to touch the wine.



In the center of town is a statue depicting the life of the village, called The Potter, by Homer Taskin in 1974. The potter is the main character but on one side there is a woman and her daughter weaving, another side shows a tourist with his camera, a third side shows a man on a donkey (the traveler) and the fourth side has a bust of the artist. At one time every house had a potter's wheel, and no



family would give their daughter in marriage if the groom could not make pots. On the other side, no woman could get married if she didn't know how to weave.

The Red River (for the color of the clay, not the water) runs through the town. We walked across the wobbly pedestrian footbridge, watching the late afternoon sun reflect in the water and listened to all the ducks and geese squak and fly and line up like good ducks all in a row.



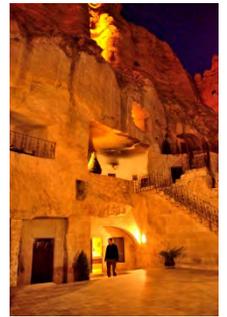


And then it was time to check into our cave hotel, the Yunak Evleri in Urgup. This hotel is carved into the mountain. There are seven cave houses with 40 cave rooms dating back to the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries. The entrance to the hotel is a 19<sup>th</sup> century mansion. Narrow passages and outdoor stone stair cases lead from one level to another, with the upper caves having views of the valley.



We were welcomed in the reception area which was like a living room and offered wine, beer, tea or coffee. I had wine. Andy had a beer. We were then shown to our room, which had been upgraded to a suite. You have to look at the pictures because it is hard to believe we really were in a cave. I've put in both night and day pictures. The walls were the walls of a cave. But the rest was comfortable and elegant, from the Turkish carpets on the floors, the couches in the living room area, the marble bathroom with a Jacuzzi tub, and the very

comfortable and cozy bed.



And dinner. We ate next door to our hotel at a local restaurant called Ziggy's. Into a courtyard, up some stairs and into a restored stone house. Ziggy is clearly the name of a dog as there were pictures of dogs everywhere, all in beautiful frames the way you would find in someone's living room. The room was brightly lit and decorated in Turkish style. It was a small place with only about 10-15 tables. The menu was typical Turkish with many mezas and kebabs. Meze are like tapas, small plates of cheese, slice melon, hot red pepper paste, yogurt with cucumbers and/or mint, cold eggplant salad, cold bean salad, potato salad, olives, cabbage, greens. As there were so many choices, we opted to share the 9-course sampler. Enough said!

