Introduction

The focus of my book is a particular region of the Byzantine Empire, Cappadocia, within Anatolia, in the centre of what is now Turkey. Its history as a part of this confederation of territories coincides with the medieval period in Europe. This monograph deals with various aspects of the province; it begins with its environment and climate, goes to some of its institutions and buildings, and ends with the paintings which the artists employed to decorate the latter, as well as with a particular type of inscriptions (those along the frontiers). It also considers education in Cappadocia during the Byzantines. The study is a scholarly/professional work that draws on my current research as well as on the material which I developed in the last four years while teaching for the University of Oxford. There are no substantial recent publications dedicated exclusively to this area—certainly not in the United Kingdom, where I work.

Due to the variety of aspects it encompasses, my volume about the area that was under the Byzantine rule for *circa* 700 years will appeal to students and researchers from the fields of Byzantine and Mediaeval Studies as well as from various other branches of History. In addition, researchers and students of Architecture and Religious Studies might find the publication of interest. Some parts of the book might also draw the attention of the educated general public. In terms of geography, the faculties and departments of History, as well as the general readership in the UK and the USA would be interested in buying such a book. In addition, those in Russia and Europe could find it of assistance in their scholarly pursuits. I am aware of expressions of interest concerning the book in France. Italy, Greece, Macedonia, Romania, and Bulgaria. The academic institutions that already have holdings of my other publications in their

libraries might want to acquire another book by the same author.

I expect the volume to have an impact on the scholarship within the field of Byzantine studies because of the novelties it brings to it: for instance, while there is a number of publications dedicated to inscriptions in Cappadocia, there is **none** that exclusively treats those along its frontiers, as chapter 5 in my book does. Also, nobody before has treated the topic in chapter 2: how the Cappadocians dealt with their environment. Hence the bibliography on this issue is almost non-existent. This particular topic is especially timely, and the chapter as well as the book in its entirety provide material from which we can learn today. The two most known volumes about Cappadocia—those published in the USA by Robert G. Ousterhout[1]—do not concentrate on this aspect. In any case, the information they contain needs to be updated. Additionally, my book makes particular aspects of Cappadocian culture not treated in depth in the past more known to the twenty first century readers.

1. The Content of the Chapters

The focal points of its divisions are as follows: the "Introduction" presents the purpose of the book and succinctly the content of each of its sections. Chapter 1 analyses the administrative as well as the political-cultural situation of Cappadocia during the Byzantine rule. Chapter 2 is preoccupied with its climate and the specific physical geography (i.e. meteorological aspects and the environment). It shows how people of this area coped with those in the respective period and after, what measures they took to alleviate some negative effects of their modifications and to

[1]Robert G. Ousterhout, *Visualizing Community*: *Art, Material Culture, and Settlement in Byzantine Cappadocia*, Dumbarton Oaks Studies 46, Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection and Harvard University Press, 2017; and *A Byzantine Settlement in Cappadocia*, *Dumbarton Oaks Studies* 42, Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection and Harvard University Press, revised edition 2011.

protect the milieu in which they lived, as well as how they made use of the local natural resources. Chapter 3 deals with what people created within their environment, mainly with the two main categories of their buildings. The chapter has two distinct parts: one refers to churches (i) and one to schools (ii) in Byzantine Cappadocia. Between the fifth and the eleventh centuries the churches in this province of the Empire were not only the places where the Liturgy was performed, but also the social and spiritual centres of villages, towns, army garrisons, monastic complexes, etc. They fulfilled the same specific functions regardless of the purpose and scale concerning the settlements in which they were located. The chapter provides evidence to illustrate what these functions were and, to some extent, by which means they were carried out. It also makes some suggestions with respect to the schools in the area, including to their physical appearance. As there is almost no information within the literature concerning Byzantium that refers to the physical setting and appearance of its schools, through what the book offers on this topic it allows plausible generalizations regarding the layout of educational establishments throughout the Empire. Hence the chapter and the monograph fill some of the gap within the field from this perspective.

Aspects of iconography in Byzantine Cappadocia will be introduced in chapter 4, which presents the interior decoration peculiar to one type of the above-mentioned buildings, the churches. The visual motifs that survived from the time when Cappadocia was a province of the Byzantine Empire are known to a certain extent today, but new iconographic themes have recently been discovered, and it is possible that others will be in the future. The section adduces supplementary information to that provided by the most recent publications about this geographical area. Chapter 5 deals with inscriptions on the borders of Byzantine Medieval Cappadocia. In addition to the traditional way of identifying the political frontiers of a stately unit: stones, fences, chains of fortresses, etc. the distribution of

inscriptions is another. The chapter maps epigraphic texts that survived along the Byzantine borders of Cappadocia. It takes into consideration the fact that the borders of the region partly changed from time to time during the era of Byzantine rule. But, despite the fact that these moved to a certain extent, the most important cities close to or along them where the inscriptions were numerous, remained the same. Chapter 6 concludes the book by summarizing the discussion in each of its sections and by considering aspects of the Cappadocian culture not discussed earlier.

2. Initial Remarks about the History of Cappadocia

Before going into the details announced, we have to briefly consider the early part of Cappadocian history. Between the second and the first millennium BC this province was the seat of the Hittite Empire, and then, in the sixth century BC it came under the Achaemenids (the Persians under the Achaemenid family) who divided it in two satrapies (546-334 BC). The earliest documentation of the name "Cappadocia" dates from this period; the word meant the country of beautiful horses. The territory was recorded in inscriptions dating from the ruling time of two early Persian kings, Darius I (550-486 BC; reigned in 522-486 BC) and Xerxes I (d. 465; reigned in 486-465 BC). According to Herodotus, at the time of the Ionian Revolt (499 BC) the Cappadocians occupied a region from Mount Taurus (**Figure 1**) to the vicinity of the Pontus Euxine (the Black Sea).[2] Therefore, the province was bordered in the south by the Taurus Mountains that separate it from Cilicia, to the east by the upper Euphrates, to the north by Pontus, and to the west by Lycaonia and eastern Galatia.

[2]Herodotus, *Histories*, Book 1, 71-73 and 76, in Herodotus, *Histories*, translated by Robin Waterfield; with an introduction and notes by Carolyn Dewald, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, new edition 2008, p. 32, respectively pp. 34-35. Herodotus, The *Histories*, translated by Robin Waterfield; with an introduction and notes by Carolyn Dewald, Oxford, 1998, new edition 2008, 1. 71-3.76; 5. 49, 52; 7. 26, 71-72; pp. 32, 34, respectively p. 41.

Figure 1. Mount Taurus. Source for the image: https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index=Taurus_Mountains; the access to this images is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 Generic.

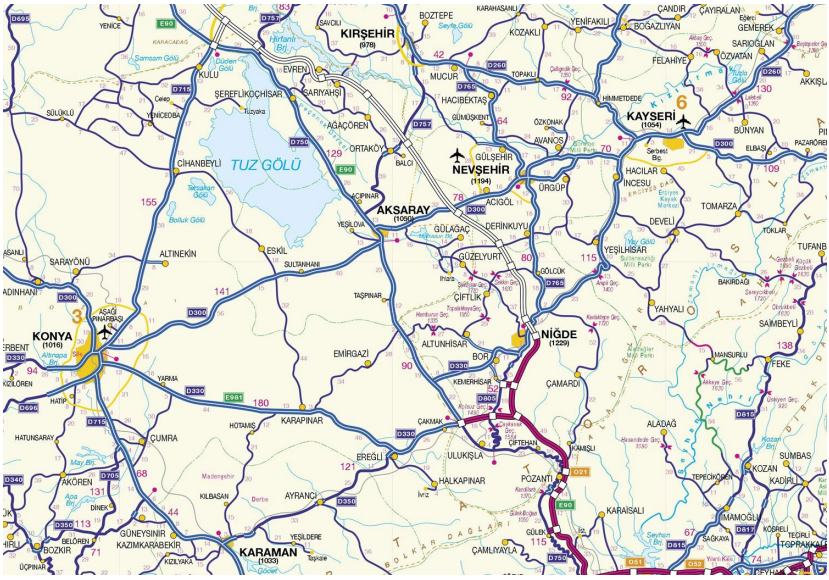

Figure 2. Map of Cappadocia today. Source: Cappadociaturkey.net; the access to this images is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 Generic.

The territory, very much the same as that of today (**Figure 2**), was conquered by the Greeks and then by the Romans, and became an important theme of the Byzantine Empire, often raided by the Arabs, between the seventh and eleventh centuries AD. It was eventually occupied by the Seljuk Turks (its capital, Caesarea, fell in 1082[3]). In 314 AD Cappadocia was the largest province of the Roman Empire and was part of the Diocese of Pontus. In 371 its western part was divided into *Cappadocia Prima*, with its capital at Caesarea (modern day Kayseri); and *Cappadocia Secunda*, with its capital at Tyana. By 386 the area to the east of Caesarea had become part of *Armenia Secunda*, while the northeast region belonged to *Armenia Prima*. Cappadocia largely consisted of big estates—as the one described at the outset of the book—owned by the Roman emperors and wealthy local families. The province became more important in the second part of the fourth century as the Romans—by now Byzantines—had disputes with the Sasanian Empire over the control of Mesopotamia and of the Armenian territories beyond the Euphrates. But for the rest of the Byzantine rule in the area the province was not involved in these conflicts. Cappadocia of that period is documented by the use of Iranian fire worship, which is attested in 465,[4] but the fourth century in particular is mostly known for the works of three famous thinkers, Basil of Caesarea (330-379 AD), Gregory of Nyssa (c. 335-395 AD), and Gregory Nazianzen (329-390 AD), who were often invited by the imperial family in Constantinople.

We move now to elaborate on various aspects of Cappadocia's existence while it was a part of the Byzantine Empire.

[3]We find this information, for instance in Nicole Thierry, *La Cappadoce de l'antiquité au Moyen Âge*, Turnhout: Brepols, Bibliothèque de l'Antiquité tardive 4, 2002, pp. 315-316.

[4]Stephen Mitchell, "Cappadocia", in Oliver Nicholson (ed.), *The Oxford Dictionary of Late Antiquity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018, p. 290.