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# 'The Hub'. A Concept for a Modern Visitor Centre and Museum-Museum for Cappadocian Cultures

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*Abstract: 'The Hub' is planned as a modern documentation and visitor centre as well as a new 'museum-museum' for the UNESCO World Heritage Site Göreme-Cappadocia in the centre of Turkey. It would be provided with modern IT and would be easily accessible from the main tourist sites. A wide range of information options and other facilities like a bistro cafe, a museum shop, an IMAX cinema and presentation areas in different rooms would help maximize the value of information offered to visitors within a limited time span. While already existing museums in the area deal with past epochs, hardly any historical and ethnographic information is yet provided on the background and circumstances of these periods. 'The Hub' also would act as an academic institution, interlinking existing collections and research resources concerning Cappadocia, inter alia with respect to historical remains, relevant open air sites, archaeological excavations, etc. in a modern and well-presented way. This would also include the intense use of modern IT and WIFI access would enable visitors to the centre to gain more information with their own modern smart phones and handheld devices. Information would be provided in different languages and via public displays and broadband inter/intranet links. 'The Hub' would also act as an 'inclusive' museum itself, providing well-presented objects displayed in a modern and communicative way with direct involvement of local stakeholders. Exhibitions would highlight examples of the natural geology and geography of Cappadocia, provide insight into the ethnography, and material and intangible culture of the region taking into account the various levels of complex history that are to be found in Cappadocia including the long history of peaceful coexistence of Christian and Muslim religions existing in historic Cappadocia.*

Keywords: World Heritage Site, Cappadocia, Cultural Heritage, Heritage Management, Museum Management, Museum Concept, Inclusive Museum, Information & Documentation Centre Visitor Centre, Digital Technology, Digital Museum, IT, Tourism, Tourism Anthropology

## The Idea of 'The Hub'

**T**HE FOLLOWING TEXT is not meant to be a highly academic paper, but rather is a new proposal for the creation of a state-of-the-art and 'inclusive' museum for one of central Turkey's most important UNESCO World Heritage Sites (WHS), the 'Göreme National Park and the Rock Sites of Cappadocia' in the province of Nevşehir. The concept would be designed to integrate the interests of the local population with the needs of a burgeoning tourism industry and its associated businesses, along with helping to meet the expectations of growing numbers of domestic and foreign visitors from all over the world.

This proposal is based on my observations as a cultural- and museum anthropologist experiencing the last 30 years of rapid cultural change in Cappadocia and the tremendous growth of tourism<sup>1</sup>. The international tourism industry has grown into multi-million dollar sector in Cappadocia, and I have been concerned about the need for a new, modern and

functional interface between the visitor and the museums and points of interest, wondering why something like this did not yet exist. Local people and authorities, as well as international experts and visitors, can attest that, at most of the region's key tourist sites, hardly any accurate or detailed background information on the history and culture of Cappadocia is provided so far. Beyond getting bits of information from a few signs and billboards, visitors must hire a capable guide or study this unique region on their own to be able to understand its complexity and historic wonders.

The idea for 'The Hub' came up some month ago when I visited an abandoned stone quarry carved out by huge machines. As I wandered through the vast, empty tunnels and hallways, I imagined a modern visitor centre as a documentation site and museum, as a place that could link to other, already well-established visitor sites in Cappadocia in a modern digital way. Since more and more people use smart phones and small computers like iPads etc., I thought about how a modern information centre could include indigenous, as well as quality digital information concerning Cappadocia in the widest sense. I imagined the building as a functioning visitor centre, which could include both 'local' and more in-depth digital information, providing a two-way flow like a computer HUB, so I thought about this term as working title. The place I envisaged would not only be a 'museum-museum'; it would also be a centre for information on Cappadocia, combining modern use of IT with inclusive museum presentations, a 'visitor centre+'.

There is no doubt that there will be huge costs and coordination issues to be solved given the great variety of local, national and international authorities that would need to be involved. However, a modern visitor centre is clearly needed, and there is no alternative to it that I can see. I would like to thank all the international and local colleagues and people from Cappadocia who contributed importantly to the development of this proposal.

Andus Emge, © October 2010

## **Aims**

Cappadocia presents itself mainly as a cultural WH and tourism destination site and as one of the major tourist destinations in central Turkey. Because of rapid social and economic changes and more and more culturally interested tourists visiting Cappadocia, there is a growing need not only to document the rapidly vanishing traditional culture of the area, but also to present cultural tourism in the area in a modern and efficient way.

The aim of this paper is to propose a modern information and documentation centre for the UNESCO WHS of Göreme-Cappadocia in Turkey. This visitor and documentation centre could be a place where visitors would get information on this area and learn about the many existing points of interest and already existing small museums in the extended area. A variety of exhibitions and a modern presentation approach, including a possible IMAX theater, could provide detailed information concerning Cappadocia in relevant foreign languages.

'The Hub' would provide a place for visitors to gain an overview of Cappadocia with regards to nature, geology, history, indigenous culture and social changes. The proposed visitor centre would provide a variety of background information, which is currently inaccessible for the short-term visitor. The existing individual points of interest and established places to visit in Cappadocia would continue to play their individual and independent roles as before. But all these remote sites, sometimes quite far away from each other, would be connected with modern IT to link to the central 'Hub' information centre. These satellite sites would,



tufa rock due to their particular needs of habitation, which, during the 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Centuries, was living in a hidden way, and which then became a more secure and open way of using space during the later Ottoman Turkish period. While in early times, the first cave dwellings had been hewn mainly for reasons of the remote and isolated living of hermits, the area became very popular during the main and later Byzantine period when more and more Christian communities settled in a hidden way in these many secluded valleys of Cappadocia.

On the plains close by, mysterious huge underground cave systems had been carved out to function both as secure bunkers and sealed storage areas. Possibly they had even been used as a kind of ‘Trojan horse’, as the Byzantine troops by that time had been posted for many generations at this old East Roman borderline to confront the repeated incursions of Arab and Persian troops. And as the Byzantine troops were generally paid in goods rather than in money, it could also be that many of these underground fortresses were used as extended storage silos for food as well as army stacks. These so-called ‘underground cities’ are nowadays popular with tourists despite the fact that they can be experienced as quite claustrophobic. During the later, pacified Turkish times, new tufa caves were created as combined carved out and agglutinated houses for daily living, storage and pigeon houses, as the former main purpose of living defensively and secretly was not the priority any more.

## **A Living Landscape**

The living landscape is one of Cappadocia’s main treasures. For centuries, local farmers took advantage of the fertile soil and established agricultural forms, which directly relate to the traditional way of living and storing in the caves. In the areas around the national park, most of the classical agriculture and garden techniques have disappeared and only fields easily to be reached by tractors are maintained until today. The various colourful gardens with their vines, apricot trees, and pumpkins are fading more and more into wilderness, which fortunately has some kind of charm by itself.

But the living culture landscape should also be seen as a part of the WHS itself. The national park of Göreme-Cappadocia is more than just unique rocks and old Byzantine cave monasteries and churches. The actual landscape is formed not only by geology and erosion, but also by many aspects of culture and tradition. Thus, if one wants the old cultural landscape to be sustained, it requires public investments coupled with regional cooperative work.

## **Existing Museums and Points of Interest**

The whole area of Cappadocia can be seen as a ‘museum’ by itself. Throughout the area, some of the world’s most unique geologic formations appear suddenly without even being sign posted as particular points of interest. Of course, the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism does present very important sites of the area as special tourist hotspots, and one can also find a few museums to be visited. As the area of Cappadocia is widely spread, up to more than 100 km, many of these points of interest are rather far away from each other and difficult to reach. Unfortunately, many of the visitors who come from different countries and age groups only have limited time, between two and three days, to visit Cappadocia, and therefore visits to remote museums and points of interest are not always possible.

Most of the already existing museums and points of interest in Cappadocia were established and are managed by the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism ('Göreme Open-Air Museum', 'Zelve Open-Air Museum', 'Underground Cities', 'Nevşehir Archeological Museum', etc.), while various other points of interest are under the control of the Ministry of Forest and Environment or the regional municipalities. Even as we find more and more well prepared information boards at some of these sites, many sites on the official governmental and municipality level exist without representing the complex history and natural environment of that WHS. Simply put, visitors are not getting the cultural and historical information they crave.

Indeed, many visitors complain that the presentation of the individual sites does not really meet modern requirements of cultural tourism, where some relevant background information on signboards and well-presented exhibitions are expected. Hence, as more and more cultural visitors are coming to Cappadocia, there is a growing need for regional quality information. Tourist behavior not only matters to tourists, but also to public sector managers as well as to a variety of business interests. If we are thinking of heritage management, we need to see it as a process by which heritage managers attempt to make sense of the complex web of relationships surrounding this valuable history in a manner that meets the values and interest of many stakeholders.<sup>2</sup>

Today, however, there is unfortunately no modern concept yet that presents the different cultural aspects of this unique WHS in a thorough, easily-digestible way. In many cases, clear background information on Cappadocia is missing. Many visitors leave the area with unanswered questions, if not false impressions concerning the history, local culture, or nature of Cappadocia. Therefore, it is most often only left to the trained official tourist guides to provide the background information to the interested visitors of that WHS. In many cases, though, untrained, uninformed guides who market themselves to tourists provide even misinformation, for they are more interested in making quick money by getting high commissions in rug shops. Clearly, the current state of affairs does not do justice to the region's rich cultural and historic heritage.

## **Exploring Cappadocia**

Most of the more than one million people who visit Cappadocia each year come in organized package groups by bus on two or three day tours. Another type of visitor is the culturally and nature-interested individual who travels independently and who organizes the stay in Cappadocia with the help of hosts or small local travel agencies. Some of the best ways to explore the central area of the Göreme-Cappadocia National Park are by hiking, biking, horseback riding, and increasingly, hot air ballooning. Other sites and points of interest a little further afield are only accessible by bicycle, scooter, ATV, car or minibus tour. As there are many places to rent vehicles or go on a tour, visitors do have a variety of choice when it comes to exploring 'their own Cappadocia.' But a big part of Cappadocia is still not visited by tourists at all, a part that contains the traditional farming and rather simple lifestyle of present Anatolia, but since development in Turkey happens quickly, such things may soon be lost.

## **Economic Growth and Loss of Local Knowledge**

Cappadocia became a major tourist destination only in the last 25 years, stimulating huge economic growth in the region. Because the tourists who visit this area on their own are very concerned with their own experiences and how to maximize each one<sup>3</sup>, Cappadocia is one of the ultimate spots in the world for hike around an almost unreal landscape and seeing traces of a huge time span of history. But the processes of site demarcation and ‘monumentalization’ associated with a WHS can often lead to a disenfranchisement and marginalization of local communities. That noted, cultural tourism development and the status of a WHS do have important implications for the communities in the area and in particular for the local residents, who just one generation ago still lived a traditional subsistence life without major influence of tourism.<sup>4</sup> As *heritage* can be seen as a term which includes everything that people want to save, from clear air to intangible and material culture and nature, a status of a WHS could, without doubt, also create a new form of geographic identity, which could strengthen the meaning of the area.<sup>5</sup>

As modernization and the numbers of tourists visiting Cappadocia are growing, the ‘local knowledge’ in typical communities is disappearing rapidly.<sup>6</sup> To understand these changes, we also need to consider the social changes and loss of tradition in Cappadocia, which is a result of a general modernization and urbanization of present-day Turkey. But as there still exist significant numbers of relics of disappearing vernacular culture along with a notable village tradition, there is an urgent need to document the disappearing past in as many formats as possible. Were a centre established, this information would be made available to the public, and finding one’s own roots in a common past could even create an inclusive identity for the future.<sup>7</sup>

## **Various Stakeholders**

Since there is no real single coordinating body in Cappadocia working to bring together the various organizational bodies with different functions and status, ‘The Hub’ could serve as an independent interface for interlinking the activities and interests of these individual bodies via working groups and circles. This should also include close cooperation with the local authorities. Moreover, local community issues on a village level have to be taken into account. The emphasis on conservation and presentation to cultural tourists often means that less heed is paid to the indigenous level including local community contemporary use and practice related to the site.<sup>8</sup>

This proposal concept will also consider that there are various stakeholders and tourists from all over the world who either live in or visit Cappadocia. Thus, if we propose a project like ‘The Hub,’ we must always take into account that next to the international visitors are local inhabitants, domestic Turkish visitors, school classes and children to be reached as well. One aim of ‘The Hub’ would be to offer information and service facilities to various visitors of all age groups from all over the world concerning their specific needs and interest. It would be groundbreaking to experience how one actual exhibition site could be used and ‘seen’ in different ways depending on the visitor using it. The function of ‘The Hub’ as a multi-media interface would offer visitors, in their primary languages, very personalized information.



## Museum-Hotels and Combined Models

Today we can observe the growing trend of marketing key heritage attractions and former traditional villages even on the most informal community level. The Cappadocians themselves now are influenced by applied marketing strategies and a general modernizing trend, so today we can find a rising number of 'boutique hotels,' restaurants and bars, as well as many other tourist establishments, which are locally owned and run in a professional manner.

As a result we can nowadays even see a new and quite noteworthy trend of connecting the 'brand' of the WHS of Göreme-Cappadocia with the locally owned business 'boutique' label. Private high-class tourist establishments are named '*Museum Hotel*' or '*Heritage Tours*' etc. Established by private equity without any accountability to the government, these 'museum hotels' and 'heritage establishments' can present small exhibitions with well-chosen high-quality objects. It is interesting to see that the museum-concept itself has become 'boutique', so a new style of high-end tourist establishment has been created. Sleeping in a '*museum*' – that's not only cool - that concept sells! But despite the elegant presentation of many beautiful objects in main displays of the 'museum-hotels', the exhibited items often do not represent the real 'key-objects' of Cappadocia, as the pieces are more often from other regions and cultures not related to the site.

There are a few exceptions like the 'Ortahisar Folklore Museum' which presents some typical ethnographical collections related to Cappadocia from old times of traditional living long before the tourist flow. The exhibition style is quite old fashioned, though, with dioramas using plastic mannequins that are incongruous with the museum's intent. Visitors do, however, get the opportunity to see some old artefacts and to gain an idea of the way in which they were (and in some cases still are) used in surrounding villages. However, although this museum is trying to explain the local material culture, it is self managed and privately owned. To support itself, it relies mainly to the income of the accompanying high-class restaurant. Another hidden museum example is a little '*Doll Museum*' in the old Greek-village of Sinasos/Mustafapaşa. Situated in a nicely restored old Greek house, it also makes revenues by renting rooms as a Bed & Breakfast.

Thus, as the years go by, one can find more and more combined models, where a cultural and business approach are presented together. This also gives the culturally interested tourist a higher grade of quality travel experience, so these combination models often function in a win-win mode. There is a significant variety amongst very individual places where one can find accommodation in Cappadocia, some even being modern art galleries or art-guest-houses like the 'Babayan Culture House', or even the authentic guestrooms of the 'Cappadocia Academy', called the 'Fairy Chimney Inn', where art and culture are presented by foreign expatriates together with their local partners.<sup>9</sup>

It is an interesting fact that we are now experiencing self-sustainable business-concepts initiated by private local investors who combine and brand the educational image of a museum with a clear business- oriented service company. As a result, we now have the well-branded concept of heritage and museum hotels, which respond to the tourism market seasonably and create their own income to become sustainable. But as these combination models contribute to aspects of culture and art on their own, all of these establishments finally only work if they are controlled by business thoughts, rather than by cultural messaging. Therefore, a modern independent cultural centre is still needed.

## **‘The Hub’ as a ‘Visitor Centre+’ for Cappadocia**

The main idea of ‘The Hub’ is to interconnect the numerous existing museums and points of interest in Cappadocia into one central informational clearinghouse to ensure a highly interactive experience. ‘The Hub’ would mainly act as an independent and non-hierarchical informational point of interest. But it is also meant to be a kind of ‘museum-museum’ by itself, respecting the absolute independence of the other points of interest and museum sites that exist in separate areas already. The idea is to interconnect the various points of interest sites in Cappadocia in a logical way via IT, served by ‘The Hub’ as a kind of ‘mainframe’ of a Cappadocia information centre. Information would always emanate multidirectionally, so people on different sites could get equal access to each other via individual terminals and WIFI.

‘The Hub’ would particularly provide information on the local nature and culture of the UNESCO WHS Göreme-Cappadocia in a modern way. While existing museums in the area offer building examples from the past, hardly any historical and ethnographical information is provided on the background and circumstances of the various periods of the Cappadocian history. ‘The Hub’ could therefore act as an academic institution, documentation centre and information-interface, where all sorts of existing regional material and intangible cultural information would be available. Ethnographical collections, historical photographs, documents, stories and intangible culture would be as well be archived and digitally accessible as information about points of interest and the most important regional archaeological excavation sites and a mapped guiding system.

Therefore, ‘The Hub’ would mainly work as a modern tourist ‘visitor centre+’, providing high quality information in a comfortable, relaxing easily-accessible atmosphere. Free space areas, as well as a wide span of information options via multi-language terminal points of interest and other facilities like a bistro café, a museum shop, an *IMAX cinema* and exhibition areas in different rooms, would all help to convey quality Cappadocia-related information to all kind of visitors.

## **Virtual Cappadocia**

The rapid advancement of technological options and interactive design in digital systems offers new options of integrating current media with heritage.<sup>10</sup> ‘The Hub’ would be provided with digital broadband access via a high-speed intranet server. The intense use of modern IT and audio-visual networking facilities and equipment would provide a high grade of interaction options to the visitor. In recent years, many modern travelers come with their own modern smart phone devices, which offer not only options of GPS and digital mapping, but also video and mp3 sound as well as WIFI, UMTS (G3) and now even the upcoming NGMN (4G) access. ‘The Hub’ could therefore also act as a *modern interface* for the visitor, where *digital* information on various levels (guiding files, GPS based points of interest information, special *apps* related to the region as well as historical and background information to other museums via WIFI or Internet) would be accessible for the visitor in a highly compatible format.

In planning ‘The Hub’, there is a particular danger that the audio-visual hardware and software network system could dominate the process of the visitor’s experience. The intention of ‘The Hub’ is to give options to combine the real-life experience on the site with today’s

digital IT so one can deepen one's knowledge of history in a modern way. Combined with classic analog information via tour guides, visitors could also get access to Cappadocia-related information while visiting the various sites of the area accompanied by modern digital multimedia. This digitized information should be accessible for a wide variety of stakeholders, depending on their actual needs. Foreign visitors could gain a general overview about the nature and history of Cappadocia, actual running projects, excavations, and exhibitions in the region in different languages via public displays and broadband inter/intranet links to either their own handheld devices, or with rental headphones or other handheld devices.

Even the Web 2.0 technology nowadays offers opportunities to interlink the sites on more than an audio-visual level; thus 'The Hub' would also be used to present itself via special blogs, Facebook, Flickr, You Tube, wikis and other prospective networks and information websites. Technical specifications of the upcoming *Semantic Web* 3.0 and HTML 5 will allow users to use the network as a platform to run special software applications through its own device browser. Possibly the most important invention for managing a WH site like Cappadocia in a modern way is that the *Semantic Web*, which can communicate with the user in a more sensible way, so searching for information can be done much more intelligently concerning individual personal interests.

As we can see, 'The Hub' would also work as a kind of digital interface which would be reciprocal towards the other sub-regional points of interest, where similar hardware and Network are interlinked and accessible. Client terminals and WIFI on remote sites in Cappadocia would link to the 'The Hub' via broadband network so other museums and points of interest all over Cappadocia could be accessible via site homepages (like [www.asikliho-yuk.org](http://www.asikliho-yuk.org)) where web cams and other audio visual methods could give the visitor mutual real-time access to the other far away site. Other links to important places and institutes outside of Cappadocia would be established, as with the '*Centre for Cappadocian Studies*' in Neas Kavalis in Northern Greece.

An important branch of 'The Hub' would be a daily updated website on the mainframe, which would be the backbone of its digital information network based on a compatible http protocol. Via this website all kinds of digital information, as well as information regarding or interlinking with the remote points of interest, information on exhibitions and other things to see or to do would be provided in several languages to the visitors. As most of the visitors come from English-speaking countries, Germany, France, Japan, Korea, Greece, Italy, Spanish-speaking countries and even now more and more from China and Russia, special translation of the information being provided would be presented concerning the areas of cultural interest.

### **The Sections of 'The Hub'**

The lobby of 'The Hub' would be the visitor's first and last impression. As a central welcome entrance, it would provide clear overview information about what to see and learn while visiting Cappadocia. Well-presented information and brochures at an information desk would provide advice about how to use 'The Hub.' At several places in the lobby area, there would be individual computer terminals for the visitors' individual use. All the major points of interest sites in Cappadocia would be interlinked via broadband, so web-cameras in remote places could give an insight into the actual visual situation at another site. Slide presentations and video-films could be run on separate screens on individual demand.

The museum-shop in 'The Hub' would be the place for displaying contemporary arts and crafts and encouraging their survival through appreciative commercialization. Other than in the existing chain shop in the 'Göreme Open-Air-Museum', visitors would have a chance to buy typical key objects<sup>11</sup>, which represent the area of the tourist experience. Items to be sold would be of good quality, varying from high quality tags, bags and other souvenirs, to all kind of handmade articles of various forms. A special bookshop would provide valuable regional literature, maps as well as good CD-ROMs, DVDs and memory sticks with relevant information on the area. The museum shop would also act as an online store, so visitors could purchase items from abroad and keep interest and memories from their Cappadocian visit.

Reconstruction models of the area, as well as posters, artifacts and labeled key objects would give the visitor a rough idea about Cappadocia's building history and arts and crafts. Next to the huge variety of options to log in to 'The Hub' as an information interface, there would be plenty of space provided as a relaxing and reflecting zone. It would be in such a place where visitors could reflect on their expectations concerning their visit, rest while waiting for others in the group, log into the local network via their personal devices (Netbook, iPad, smart phone, mp3 player etc.) or just write classic 'snail-mail' postcards. The Bistro at 'The Hub' would provide a refreshing and relaxing area where one could have snacks or coffee while reflecting on or preparing for the museum visit. It is where people could come and sit together for refreshment, prepare for the museum visit or reflect on the exhibitions and information they obtained.

The museum section would present all kinds of information on Cappadocian history, nature and culture of the region. As a documentation centre, it would also function to collect and store, including stories and archivable aspects of the local intangible culture. Archiving and digitizing local relevant culture and information in the widest sense via a central database would subsequently create a growing Cappadocia-related 'memory', which would be directly accessible and connected through 'The Hub'. Therefore, 'The Hub' would provide an interactive experience on many levels, combining 'classical' ethnographic communication objects within the exhibition and a modern audio-visual system, which would be easily accessible for multiple visitors.

## **A Cappadocia 'Museum-Museum'**

One of the main characteristics of 'The Hub' would be that it would act as a place where visitors could get direct real-time access to the other regional museums and points of interest via IT in Cappadocia. As all the important remote sites are connected to each other at least via data cable or WIFI, this helpful regional museum-network could create a virtual 'museum-museum' by itself, where many sites in Cappadocia could present themselves in a multimedia way.

'The Hub's' exhibition concept is focused to represent the already existing regional museums and points of interest of Cappadocia in individual separate stands. These could be similar to booths at a trade fair. At each stand, one could find the respective representatives of these individual points of interest, who would be responsible for their own sub region and who would answer questions and advise on their individual touristic products. Well presented ethnographic key-objects, along with photographs, brochures, posters and other information materials would serve to represent these individual stands in a modern and functional way.<sup>12</sup>

Flatscreen displays would provide audio-visual information on special themes (like traditional bread-baking, 'pekmez'- (grape syrup) production etc.). Within 'The Hub', all the sectors would be provided with their own IT terminals and displays. That way a full integration and interaction of all the information sections could be guaranteed.

'The Hub' would also function as a 'Museum of Cappadocian Cultures', with well-presented objects displayed in a modern and communicative way. Special exhibitions could explain examples of the natural geology and geography of Cappadocia and present noteworthy artifacts of the old Persian, Roman, Byzantine, Seljuk and Ottoman periods, all of which took root in Cappadocian ground. Another important sector of the museum exhibitions would be dedicated to ethnographical, material and intangible culture of the of the old local Turkish and Greek cultures, which existed next to each other peacefully for many hundreds of years. Other exhibitions could focus on the Byzantine church art and its restoration process. As Cappadocia is a region with early cultures living on its ground since Neolithic times almost continuously for 15.000 years, each of these cultures would be represented in form of a timeline, paying respect to a most neutral presentation of political and religious issues.

### **'The Hub' as an Academic Institution and Documentation Centre**

Since 'The Hub' would also work as an academic institution, there would be workshops and training seminars offered to interested participants. Frequent workshop series could focus on disappearing crafts and local knowledge, traditions and regional arts. Cooperation with other regional museum schools and minor organizations, like the early Neolithic excavation site at 'Aşıklı Höyük', the Roman excavation site of 'Sobesos' near Şahinefendi, the restoration school in Güzelyurt and the 'Old Göreme Restoration Fund' as well as many others, would be a major focus of the academic interest to share and interlink Cappadocia related information in a most sustainable and inclusive way.

An administrative section would be made up of not only the academic, documentation, technological, and as financial and service management, but also a well structured field of qualified associates and colleagues who head their own branches within 'The Hub' on a highly independent level. Invested and reliable staff and volunteers will be the real backbone of 'The Hub.' Well-educated employees will work hand-in-hand to provide the branded image, which is encouraged by a high standard of serious background information next to a well-functioning service department. 'The Hub' itself should be branded in a modern way to create a kind of corporate identity, where local staff-members feel responsible and included, directly contributing as a part of the whole idea.

Locals as well as volunteers and interns should feel addressed and motivated to contribute their own workshops as pilot projects. In addition, children's workshops and English/Turkish speaking day camps will offer options for youngsters to learn while playing in a protected surrounding and for the parents to explore some time on their own. Also a 'walking school' could be established, where children together with trained personnel explore the area while learning as they walk.<sup>13</sup>

### **Cultural Agency**

International visitors to Cappadocia may join a Dervish '*Sema*' ceremony one evening or a '*Turkish Night*' on a different evening during their official tourist program. But formally

organized concerts are rare, and festivals on the municipality level are not well marketed. 'The Hub' would also take on the function of a cultural agency, mainly organizing all kinds of events which might include workshops, lectures, and various presentations, all kind of music concerts and festivals, cinema or events for special occasions like a 'Full Moon-2001-Night' in the remote fairytale valleys.

## **Branding, Marketing and Cooperation**

There is a growing need for a major sustainable approach within the Cappadocian tourism development.<sup>14</sup> A modern concept like 'The Hub' could only present itself on a sustainable level. Additionally, aspects of economic branding have to be taken into account within the whole strategy as ecological and sub-cultural issues. Branding in this case could be mainly understood as the centre's total interaction with the public. It would define and infuse every aspect of the museum and make the centre the standout collection, preservation, and interpretative institution of the region.<sup>15</sup>

Therefore, the proposed '*Hub*' would identify with, and represent, Cappadocia via a modern image. As a face to the public, 'The Hub' would not only represent an actual informational and academic approach, but also fit the needs of different stakeholders and international visitors. Marketing and promotion strategies would be an obligation as well as a modern always-updated Internet-platform, so visitors could find a direct link to well-presented databases and their individual information requests. Creating and branding a clean and modern 'image' does imply intense corporate partnerships and cooperation on the local governmental and municipality levels as well as a good dialog with the local and supra-regional VIP-network.

'The Hub' would be a huge and cost-intensive project. It could never succeed without tying in UNESCO and other international organizations and countries as participating parties for that World Heritage Site. With an independent structure within the decision-making processes, most of the staff would be employed on a governmental or provincial level on a regular basis. A reasonable method of realizing a project like this in an inclusive way is to organize it also from the local/regional level, not only involving interested locals, but also by cooperating with the local municipalities and even the regional *Kapadokya Rotary Club* and Cappadocia '*Peri Bacasi*' Culture and Publicity Magazine, which already takes responsibility and promote tourist sites in the region.

## **'The Hub' in a Cave: Possible Sites**

There are various sites in the area which could prove an ideal location for establishing 'The Hub' as a fundamental link to provide access to the various kinds of relevant regional information. One particular site, one that heavily influenced this idea, is a place with best infrastructural connections to the main tourist sites in Cappadocia. The place is close to the city of Avanos in the heart of Cappadocia. The site is well situated near the close main ring road, and many major points of interest in the Cappadocian central area are accessible within 15 kilometers or 10 minutes by bus. Ample parking space and land for service buildings make this location the perfect spot for implementing 'The Hub' concept. The site once had been used as a stone quarry and is now abandoned. Of course, this is just one possible option, and one can even think of placing 'The Hub' in the area close to the already existing 'Göreme

Open-Air Museum'. In that case, more than one million visitors who visit the classic museum with the famous Byzantine rock cut churches and well preserved frescoes would surely also visit 'The Hub' to deepen understanding of the area and history.

No matter its location, a modern architectural approach for the proposed 'Hub' museum would have to take into account the special characteristics of the Cappadocian cave architecture, where taking away the tufarock in a subtractive way creates the actual living space. As the proposed location is already a significant piece of landscape architecture by itself, an architectural concept should combine the existing site with separately created pieces of new high-tech architecture. With respect to the building-ecologic tradition of Cappadocia, aspects of low-energy consumption towards even an energy-producing place via soft energy (solar, thermal, wind, etc.) could become significant examples of a direct combination of traditional and modern concept architecture. In the old times, people used their perfect climate 'cool-in-summer-warm-in-winter' cave dwellings for daily living, as the porous tufa rooms could be heated up simply with a little fire in the morning and evening. For centuries, people used the energy efficiency of their traditional cave-dwelling lives not only for themselves but also for storing goods. A modern concept should acknowledge these traditional well-developed sustainable forms of using the habitat.

### **Financing Strategies**

The financial business concept of 'The Hub' will be planned as a combined approach of public funding via UN-like organizations, support from other countries, sponsorship<sup>16</sup> and a limited self-sustainable approach, all of which generate the money necessary for running the site. Business results will provide an income-mix together with other participation forms, like contributions from national and international investors and an admittance fee. The academic and documentation branch of 'The Hub' needs to be supported by strong organizations as well as charity to guarantee a wide spectrum of independence. A very real fund raising and advertisement strategy, as well as investments from private equity and income through sales, is essential to support the huge running costs of 'The Hub'. But as there is a need, we should presume there might be a way.

### **Conclusion and Perspectives**

Over the last thirty years I have seen the tourism industry in Cappadocia grow ever more rapidly into a multi-million dollar enterprise. Social and cultural changes are accelerating almost at the same pace with the result that Cappadocia runs the risk of losing its distinctive cultural character in a few short years. The danger of a 'disneyfication' of the area is rising from day to day. The challenge now lies in how to sustain growth in the tourism industry, so people can enjoy its economic benefits, while sustaining the region's special natural but also cultural character, which is what attracts the tourists in the first place. The concept of 'The Hub' is meant to address both these challenges.

At present, international tourists are poorly served by the almost total lack of coherent and reliable information on the complex natural and cultural history of the region, along with the dearth of any information in key languages like English, French, Spanish, Japanese or others. Sustainable growth in the industry requires a more professional approach on a region-wide basis that reflects tourist needs. Currently, there is no single centre of excellence

for Cappadocian history and culture that works to help sustain the region's once-distinctive way of life.

'The Hub' would serve both needs by linking relevant information of the most important existing museums (and universities) and points of interest in Cappadocia in a modern and well-presented way. That would include the use of state-of-the-art IT. 'The Hub' would serve as an interpretation centre to give tourists a complete and accurate perspective on the region and its people, link the region's widely-scattered museums and universities, welcome regional ethnographic and other exhibits, and have a mandate for regional educational and cultural outreach to teach new generations about Cappadocia's rich history and culture. 'The Hub' would also be a venue for academic symposia and seminars about the region.

The proposal may seem utopian and ambitious, but it is commensurate with the region's need for economic development through tourism and a cultural centre. Its realization would require a strong lobby group and the good-will and cooperation of the local authorities and institutions, the national government, bi- and multilateral as well as strong international partners like the UN and the EU, international associations and non-government partners. It would need tremendous moral and financial support from the private sector as it would require a strong local and 'inclusive' participation. The proposed venue is only minutes away from the *Göreme Open Air Museum*, by far the most important tourist site in the region. By showcasing the long history of peaceful coexistence of the many different groups and religious communities in Cappadocia, 'The Hub' would also help project a new and respectful image of Turkey in general to every visitor to Cappadocia.

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## About the Author

*Dr. Andus Emge*

Andus Emge's work in Cappadocia began in 1983 with ethnographic fieldwork on changing traditional habitat and life in the troglodyte village of Göreme, famous for its cave dwellings. Emge presented his results in a Ph.D. dissertation at the University of Heidelberg in Germany, and was awarded a doctorate in 1989. He later lectured at Heidelberg University and served as a scientific assistant at the ethnographic 'Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum' in Cologne. In 1997, Emge returned to Göreme and purchased an old traditional cave-house which he restored

in a traditional way. It now functions as a base for both the ‘Cappadocia Academy’ and as a the guesthouse ‘Fairy Chimney Inn’. An applied anthropologist, Emge is involved in World Heritage Site and preservation issues with a focus on material and intangible cultural museum projects. He initiated several small-scale local pilot projects through the ‘Cappadocia Academy’. Emge lectures part time in Istanbul at Koç-, Technical, and Yıldız Universities and in Ankara at Bilkent University. He is a member of the European Cultural Heritage organization ‘EUROPA NOSTRA’ and secretary at the ‘Old Göreme Restoration Fund’. Emge advocates alternative development strategies in Cappadocia and is exploring options on how best to operationalize them. With others, in 2000 he established ‘platform\_c’, as an independent forum and network of experts designed to improve knowledge about Cappadocia and to implement pilot projects contributing to its sustainable development. ‘platform\_c’ already presented a “manifesto” of ideas on sustainability to local authorities.



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