

# GET CLOSE TO THE STONES



THE CULTURE OF GÖBEKLI TEPE & THE  
CIVILISATIONS OF ANCIENT ANATOLIA

An exceptional tour of the Megalithic sites of Turkey

EasternTurkeyTours

# *The Culture of Göbekli Tepe & the Civilisations of Ancient Anatolia*

## *An exceptional tour of the Megalithic sites of Turkey*

**Principle Sites visited:** Çatalhöyük. Konya. Ankara (Museum of Anatolian Civilisations, Anıtkabir). Boğazkale (Hattuşa, Yazılıkaya and Alacahöyük). Cappadocia (Derinkuyu, Kaymaklı, Selimiye Rock Monastery). Nemrut, Mountain of the Gods. Şanlıurfa (Göbekli Tepe, Şanlıurfa Archaeological Museum, Pools of Abraham and Citadel).

**Tour Extension:** Cevuştepe. Van Citadel. Upper Anzaf Fortress. Ayanis Castle (ongoing excavation).

**Day 1:** Arrive Konya. Settling in and orientation meeting. Depending on arrival times optional city tour and visit to the Mevlana sites. (overnight Konya)

**Day 2:** Visit Çatalhöyük & Konya.

**Day 3:** Ankara. (overnight Ankara)

**Day 4:** Ankara. Museum of Anatolian Civilisations and Anıtkabir. (overnight Ankara)

**Day 5:** Boğazkale. Alacahöyük and Yazılıkaya. (overnight Boğazkale)

**Day 6:** Hattuşa. Depart Cappadocia. (overnight Cappadocia)

**Day 7:** Underground Cities and Rock Churches and Monasteries. (overnight Cappadocia)

**Day 8:** Cappadocia to Gaziantep. Zeugma Mosaic Museum. (overnight Gaziantep)

**Day 9:** Şanlıurfa. Şanlıurfa Archaeological Museum, Necropolis and Pools of Abraham. (overnight Şanlıurfa)

**Day 10:** Göbekli Tepe and Nemrut Mountain Sanctuary. Early morning visit to Gobekli Tepe. Cendere Bridge. Mountain of the Gods. (overnight Adiyaman)

**Day 11:** Depart or continue with tour extension to the Urartian capital of Tushba on the shore of Lake Van.

### **Optional Tour Extension**

**Day 11:** Tour extension depart for Van after lunch. (overnight Van)

**Day 12:** Urartian fortress and Royal Palace of Cevuştepe. Upper Anzaf. (overnight Van)

**Day 13:** Ayanis Castle (current excavation). Van Citadel. (overnight Van)

**Day 14:** Depart.





## ÇATALHÖYÜK

An ancient town just south of Konya on the Konya Plain considered to be the "first city". While the word "city" is clearly an exaggeration, this settlement is probably the oldest sophisticated urban environment discovered so far. First excavated in 1958 the settlement had no "public" buildings, but was rather a close knit agglomeration of domestic buildings without streets but connected by rooftop pathways housing up

to 10,000 people at its peak. In contrast to many urban environments, both ancient and modern, the settlement was scrupulously clean with midden piles outside the town's precinct and sites for the disposal of human, animal and household waste. However, burial practices were extremely distant from our own as individuals were buried within the settlement under floors and in walls of domestic buildings after having been

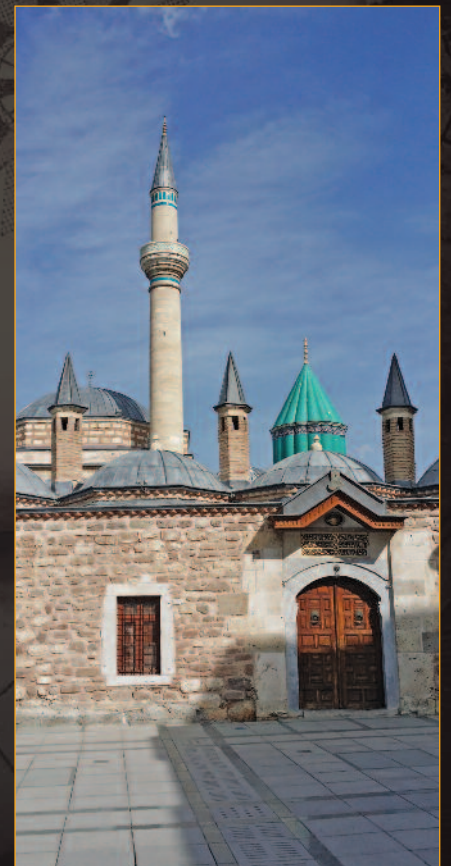


defleshed by the elements. Çatalhöyük is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

## KONYA

Konya was the capital of the Selçuk Sultanate of Rum but has a history reaching back to pre-classical times. We are here to visit the tomb and mosque complex of Jalal ad-Din Muhammed Balki-Rumi, better known as Mevlana, and founder of the mystic Sufi order. The Mevlana was a poet, mystic, jurist and teacher who lived in the 13th century. His order is more popularly known as the whirling Dervishes for their

distinctive ceremonies which communicated with the divine through the medium of a rhythmic trance inducing dance. The Dervishes are one of the iconic cultural images of Turkey. In 2005, UNESCO proclaimed the "The Mevlevi Sema Ceremony" of Turkey as amongst the "Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity."





Anıtkabir



## MUSEUM OF ANATOLIAN CIVILISATIONS, ANKARA

The museum is one of the great museums of the world. While not a large museum, it contains a significant and important collection of artefacts from the Neolithic and early Bronze Ages, the great civilisations that have left their mark on Anatolia from the Hittites, Urartians, Assyrian Trading Colonies, Phrygian, Greek, Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, Selçuk and Ottoman periods. Some of the museum's most outstanding

exhibits come from the Neolithic and Bronze Age periods (Hittite) where the collection and their display are truly remarkable. The museum is housed in the beautifully restored Mahmut Paşa Bazaar, storage rooms and the 16th century Kursunlu Han Caravanserai which is adjacent to the Citadel. It was recognised as the very first "European Museum of the Year" in 1997.



## ANITKABIR, ANKARA

Completed in 1953 this remarkable monument is the last resting place of Kemal Atatürk, the founder of modern Turkey. Its design captures the spirit of the monumental architecture of Anatolia from

the Hittites through to the Romans and the Selçuk Turks. Its final effect is both ancient and modern; a stark memorial to an impressive man.





*Get close to the stones*



## HATTUŞA & YAZILIKAYA, BOĞAZKALE

Hattuşa, the capital city of the Hittite Empire. Although this settlement site is considerably older, from about 1800BC to 1200BC Hattuşa was the Imperial capital and today is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Discovered in the Royal Archives of the city is a copy of what is considered to be the first recognisable peace treaty on record, between the Hittite King Hatusilli III and Ramses the Great of Egypt signed in 1258BC. The treaty contains all the components of a treaty between states that we would recognise today: non-aggression and mutual assistance clauses, expressions of peace and brotherhood and provisions for the extradition of criminals and political opponents. Hattuşa was unique in that it

was the only capital of an ancient Empire located away from main arteries of communication, instead being located in a remote highland fastness. The city was finally abandoned after civil conflict and a break down in the governing system in around 1200BC only a few years after the Hittites were recognised as important and equal partners by the Super Power of the age, Egypt. It is a salutary lesson that the great Hittite Empire, only a generation after its crowning glory, simply vanished without trace and was only rediscovered in the mid 1800's; its language was only deciphered between 1906 and the 1940's revealing a hitherto unknown history and filling a major blank space in our knowledge of the Near



East and our own cultural roots. A copy of this Peace Treaty can be found at the United Nations Head Quarters in New York. The religious Rock Sanctuary of Yazilikaya is nearby and a short distance is the Hittite fortress of Alacahöyük.





Derinkuyu, the underground city.  
Get close to the stones





## CAPPADOCIA

Meaning “Land of Beautiful Horses”. Cappadocia has a very ancient history that stretches back before the Hittites who are probably responsible for the early rock carved castles and underground cities, of which there are many. The region is known today for its profusion of rock cut cities,

churches and monasteries and was, in the Byzantine period, a centre of Christian monastic life. St. Nino, credited with the conversion of the Georgians to Christianity (327AD) came from Cappadocia. She was considered to be the “equal of the Apostles” and was reputed to be related to

St. George. While there are many rock valleys containing hundreds of Churches and underground cities, the highlights are the subterranean complexes of Derinkuyu and Kaymaklı and now an extensive, even bigger rock city beneath Nevşehir.

## GAZIANTEP & ZEUGMA MUSEUM

The Zeugma museum houses one of the great collections of mosaics from the Classical period. Comprised of items from the region with a superb collection of mosaics recovered from the town of Zeugma, now submerged under the waters of the lake created by the GAP project which

dammed the Euphrates. In its day, it was an important road junction crossing the Euphrates as well as a commercial and military base for the Roman administration, and consequently amassed great wealth from the traders and soldiers who passed through. The city was finally abandoned in



the late 7th century but it is the legacy of the days of wealth and strategic importance that produced the impressive display at the museum today. The collection is housed in an striking modern building which, appropriately, sits on a branch of the Silk Road entering Gaziantep.





Haleplivahçe Mosaics



Urfa man



## ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM, ŞANLIURFA

The new museum development covers a 200,000 square metre area set within the path of the dried up Karakoyun river bed in the centre of the city and includes an "Archaeology Park", ornamental gardens with fountains and a plaza in which there are two significant buildings. The main archaeological museum building encompasses 60,000 square metres over three floors, houses archaeological finds from across the region along with interactive displays, film and lecture theatres and activity centres. The building is thoroughly modern in concept, and takes the visitor through the entire history of the Şanlıurfa region starting with the Neolithic

and Chalcolithic periods and progresses through Hittite, Babylonian, Persian, Ancient Greek, Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, Islamic and Ottoman periods. The centrepiece of the museum simply has to be the Neolithic room, featuring a full-scale reproduction of Enclosure D from Göbekli Tepe that you can walk into and which allows you to fully appreciate the magnificence and the scale of the Neolithic builders' achievement. Adjacent to Enclosure D is a reconstruction of the Cult House from Nevalı Çori which is particularly exciting because this is the original building which has been crated up and not seen since it was recovered from the site just

prior to its inundation from the rising waters of the Ataturk Dam in 1991. Alongside the reconstructed buildings are dozens of unique sculpted items from the two sites including stone animals, statues and stone carved totem poles. But the Neolithic and Chalcolithic rooms are just an appetiser for the extraordinary riches of the rooms and displays to follow, which include statues and numerous other finds recovered from sites around Urfa as recently as January 2018, and in some cases, literally a few yards from the museum itself. Adjacent to the museum is the recently cleared and newly opened Classical period Necropolis of ancient Edessa.



Necropolis, Edessa.

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## GÖBEKLI TEPE

It is widely accepted that Göbekli Tepe is one of the most important archaeological digs currently being undertaken anywhere. This site represents a major shift in our understanding of man's early history. Here lie the remains of the earliest religious structures built by man yet to be discovered and, at about 11000-13000 years old, pre-

dates pottery, writing, Stonehenge and the Pyramids. Comprising a series of stonewalled enclosures with massive stele carved to represent human beings and cult representations of animals, Göbekli Tepe is an enigmatic monument to the birth of culture and civilisation that is slowly revealing its secrets to us today. Closed for

nearly 2 years for the construction of a protective roof, the site is now open for visitors and it is impossible not to be impressed by not only this ancient site, but also by the roof, a perfect marriage of ancient and modern.



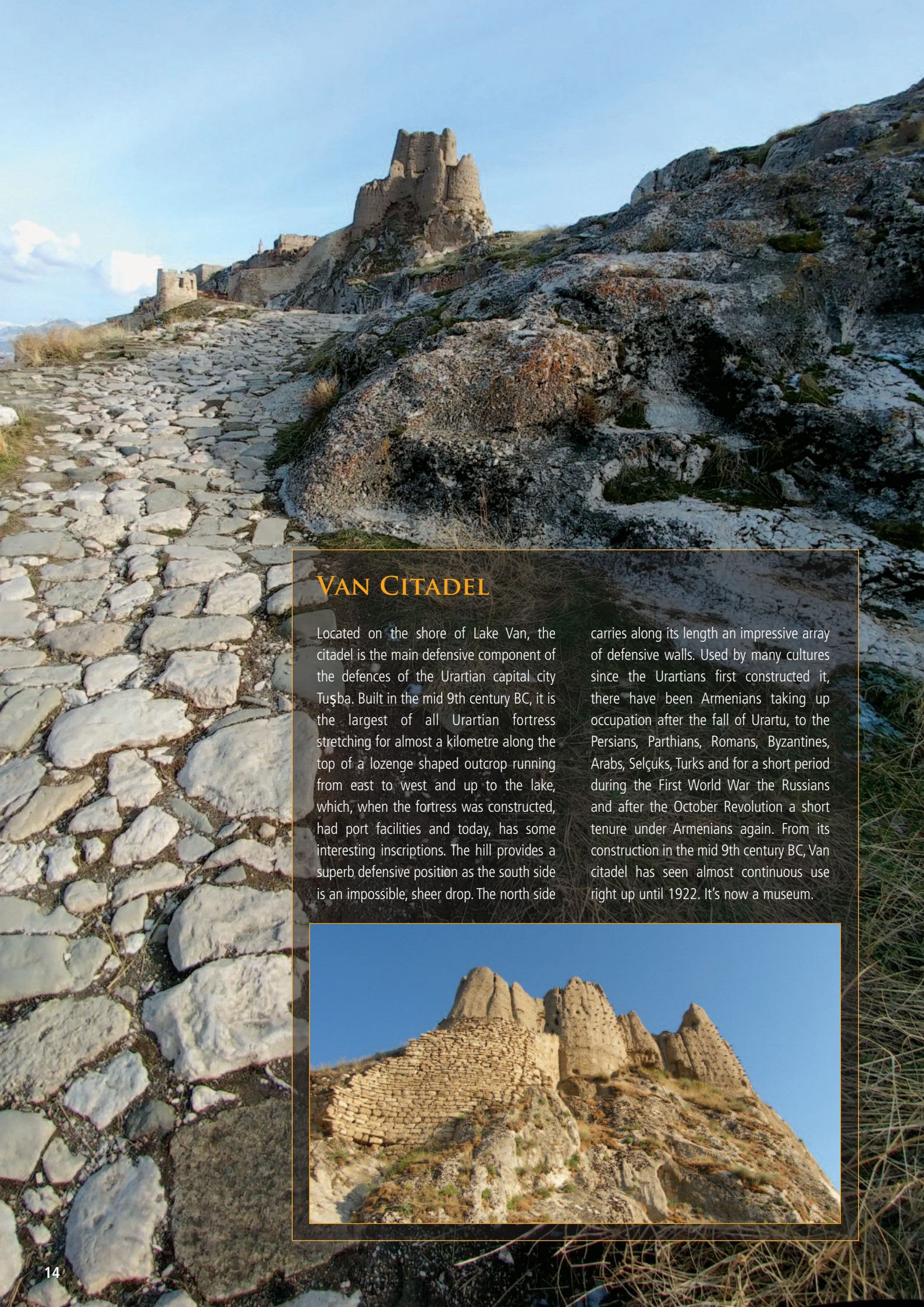
## NEMRUT, MOUNTAIN OF THE GODS, ADIYAMAN

This ancient funerary monument at the peak of Mt Nemrut was forgotten and lost to memory for nearly 2000 years. Constructed in 64BC, this iconic monument was only rediscovered accidentally by a surveyor working for the Ottoman government in the early 1880s. At the peak of the mountain, 2150m (7000 ft), there is a tumulus of crushed stones, beneath which, it is believed,

lie the remains of the monument's builder Antiochus I Epiphanes. To the east and west, facing the rising and setting sun, are platforms upon which are to be found giant statues representing Gods, Heroes and the King himself. If any monument deserves the description "enigmatic" this is surely the one. Representing himself within the pantheon of both Greek and Persian deities

part of his testament reads:

"When I had taken over the throne from my ancestors, I made my kingdom as the common land of all the Gods as a result of my religious beliefs....All the future generations of humans who will possess this land in the cause of the endless times, are asked to follow the holy law "



## VAN CITADEL

Located on the shore of Lake Van, the citadel is the main defensive component of the defences of the Urartian capital city Tuşba. Built in the mid 9th century BC, it is the largest of all Urartian fortress stretching for almost a kilometre along the top of a lozenge shaped outcrop running from east to west and up to the lake, which, when the fortress was constructed, had port facilities and today, has some interesting inscriptions. The hill provides a superb defensive position as the south side is an impossible, sheer drop. The north side

carries along its length an impressive array of defensive walls. Used by many cultures since the Urartians first constructed it, there have been Armenians taking up occupation after the fall of Urartu, to the Persians, Parthians, Romans, Byzantines, Arabs, Selçuks, Turks and for a short period during the First World War the Russians and after the October Revolution a short tenure under Armenians again. From its construction in the mid 9th century BC, Van citadel has seen almost continuous use right up until 1922. It's now a museum.



## ÇAVUŞTEPE

Just south of Van, the provincial capital, lies Çavuştepe, a fortress, royal palace and granary from the Urartian period. Built during the reign of King Sarduri II around 750 BC, Çavuştepe is the high point of



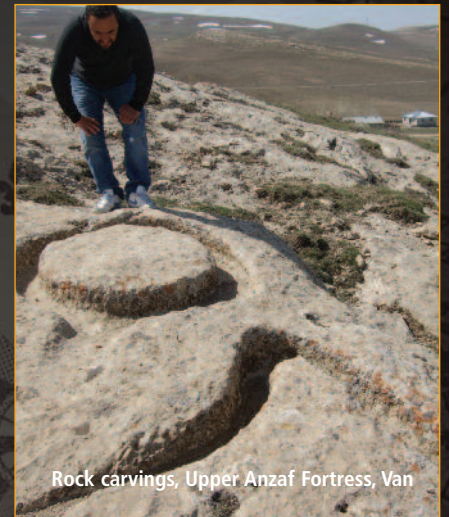
Urartian power and military engineering. Laid out in linear form along the crest of a saddle back shaped elongated hill, the castle is made up of upper and lower sections with the lower section housing the granary, accommodation and the Temple of Khaldi

which contains a series of superbly well preserved cuneiform inscriptions. Around the entire structure are rock cut wall foundations. The complex was destroyed in the mid 7th century BC, possibly by the Scythians.

## UPPER ANZAF

Just to the east of Van are the remains of Upper Anzaf fortress. Little remains of the castle itself other than sections of wall foundations. However, the notable feature of

the site are circular and curved rock carvings, which, until recently, had defied explanation but which had generated considerable speculation.

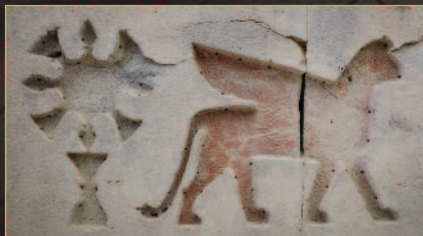


Rock carvings, Upper Anzaf Fortress, Van

## AYANIS CASTLE

Ayanis castle is one of the best preserved Urartian castles, and is located about 35 kilometres North of Van on a prominent conical mound overlooking the North east shore of Lake Van and to the North, the stratovolcano Mt Suphan. Strategically located on the lake's coastal road heading North from the Urartian capital of Tushba,

the fortress was about a day's walk. Ayanis was built in the mid 7th century BC by Rusa II, the last great King of Urartu. There are current excavations, which have been going on since 1989 and which have uncovered a temple complex with significant wall engravings and inscriptions, most recently a temple annex containing a sacrificial altar.



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***Included with this tour:***

*Half board, All site entries, English speaking guide & Tour Manager,  
4 star hotels\*, luxury A/C vehicle.*

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