

ANCIENT UNDERGROUND CITIES

Compiled by

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Turkey - Underground Cities

In the region surrounding Nevsehir and Kayseri, in central Turkey, an ancient people dug over 200 underground cities. The deepest of these is located under the present day town of Derinkuyu, and descends over 280 feet below the surface.

Several levels underground tunnels and caves can be found in Derinkuyu, Özkonak, Kayamaklı, Mazi, and Gaziemir that were similarly constructed in consequence of the Arabian attacks during the İstanbul invasion.

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Derinkuyu - Turkey

Derinkuyu is located in the Cappadocia region of Turkey, and at the dawn of time volcanoes in the area covered it with a thick layer of ash which, over the years, transformed into a soft rock suitable for tunnelling, etc.

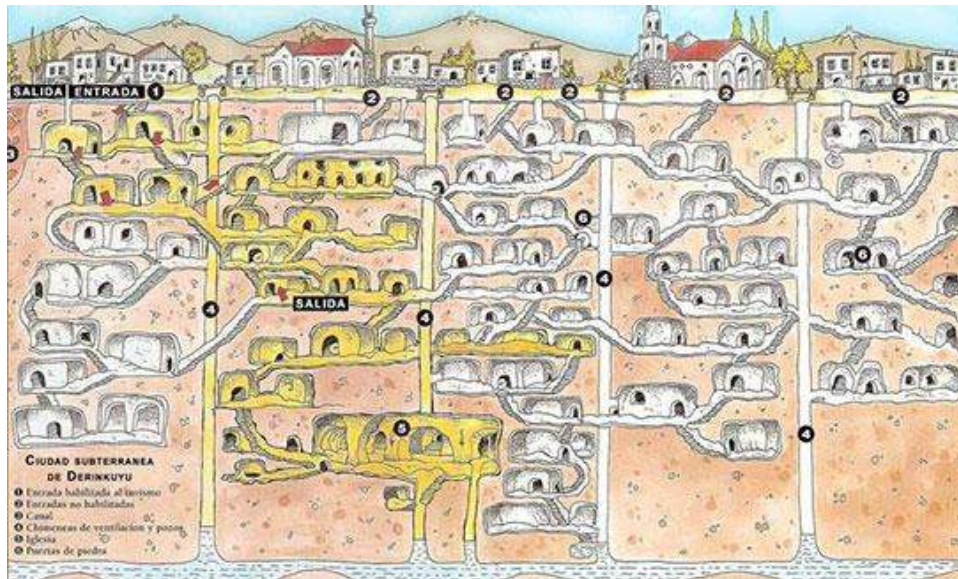
At Derinkuyu, in 1963, a cave wall was opened which revealed a passageway to an underground city more than 280 feet deep and thousands of years old. The construction would have been a massive undertaking and would have required specific equipment, planning, and extensive knowledge of the terrain and geological composition.

Additionally, because of the softness of the stone at Derinkuyu it was essential to provide enough pillar strength to support the floors above; otherwise, there would be catastrophic cave-ins. Nevertheless, there is no evidence of such cave-ins, which testifies to the knowledge and ability of the original builders.

Derinkuyu has 8 levels, and has sophisticated shafts, some as long as 180 feet, which provide ventilation to the complex's multitude of rooms and passages. It is 70-85 m / 230-300 ft deep with 53 airshafts. The original ventilation system still functions remarkably well. The city also has enough wells to provide fresh water that many scholars agree that could have easily supported as many as 20,000 inhabitants.

Some researchers suggest that the earliest construction started with the Hittites in the 15th century BC. The Anatolian Hittites, as distinct from the group described in the Christian Bible, controlled a large portion of Asia Minor extending from the Black Sea to the Levant. Consequently, Cappadocia, and Derinkuyu, was located in the middle of their territory.

Regardless of who built it, later generations and groups have inhabited it. Many scholars believe that early Christians used the underground cities of Cappadocia, including Derinkuyu, as a refuge to hide from Roman persecution.



The underground city of Derinkuyu



The underground city of Derinkuyu was comprised of passages, rooms, halls, wells, ventilation shafts, and niches for lamps.



Carefully balanced stones were used to seal off parts of the city - these stone could only be operated from one side.



Derinkuyu



Derinkuyu



Derinkuyu



Derinkuyu

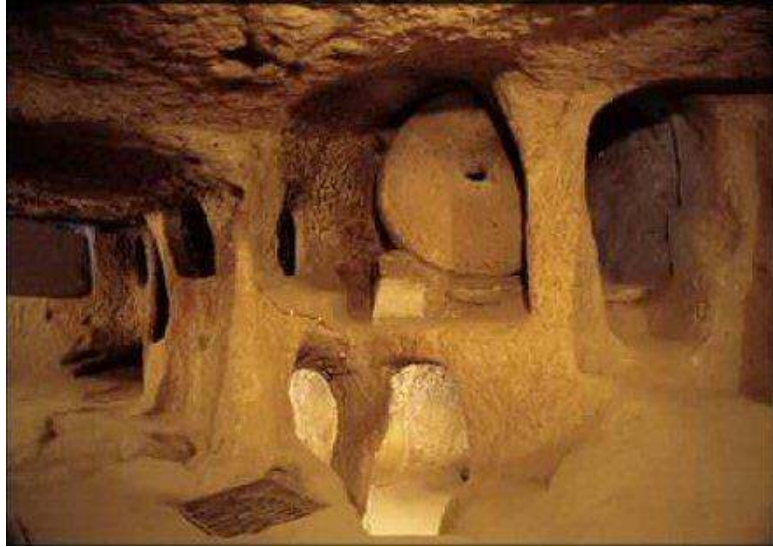


Derinkuyu

In later years Christians used Derinkuyu as a refuge from Roman persecution.



Derinkuyu



Derinkuyu



Derinkuyu



Derinkuyu Shaft



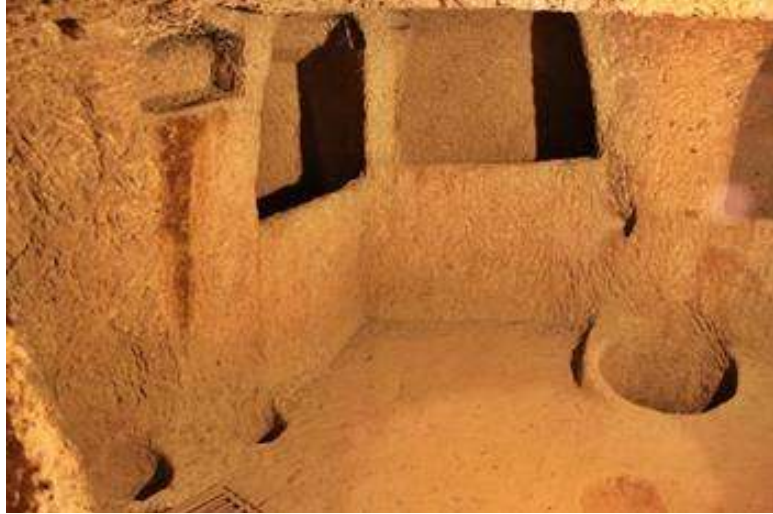
Derinkuyu Well



Derinkuyu Well



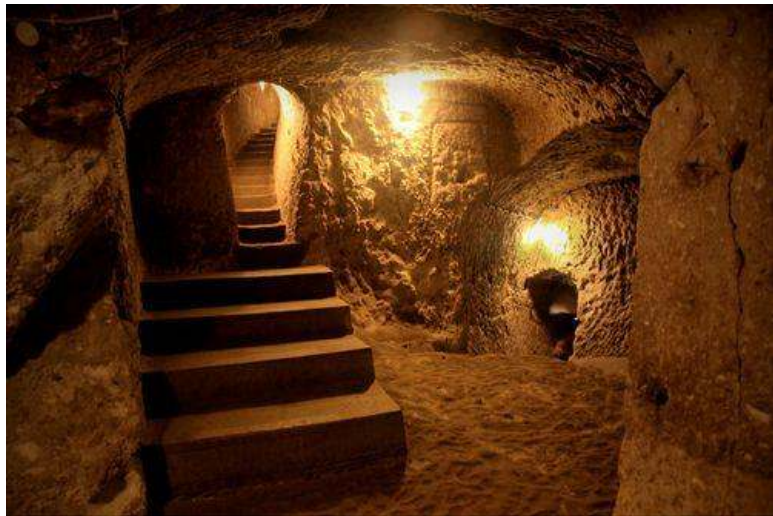
Derinkuyu Well



Derinkuyu Well/Ventilation Shaft



Derinkuyu Winery



Derinkuyu Eighth Level

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Ozkonak - Turkey

Özkonak Underground City is an ancient city built on the northern slopes of Mt. Idis about 14 km northeast of Avanos in Turkey. The city has strata made up of volcanic granite and its larger areas are connected to each other by tunnels. Özkonak had a built in communication system of pipes to each of its levels, unlike Kaymaklı and Derinkuyu which had no such systems. Each carved out room had ventilation provided by holes when the city was closed against enemies.

There is only one main passage, and the whole city is built along it by cutting into the volcanic rock. Ozkonak underground city has long, narrow connections, about 5 cm in diameter; which connect the different levels and the neighbouring chambers. These were used for communication between the levels and for ventilation. There are ten rooms, four big salons, eight water wells, four tombs, a ventilation system, winery and closable doors via circular stones like millstones. Additionally there were many ambushes in the long narrow tunnels deal with invaders.

Özkonak was discovered in 1972 and excavation revealed a whole complex which could possibly house 60,000 people for up to three months. Although only four floors are now open, the complex contains a total of ten floors, to a depth of 40m.

Unlike the other underground cities in this area, there were holes above the tunnels which were used to dump hot oil on the enemy; and like Kaymaklı and Derinkuyu, Özkonak has water wells, ventilation system, winery, and moving stone doors.



Ozkonak - Turkey



Ozkonak - Turkey



Ozkonak - Turkey



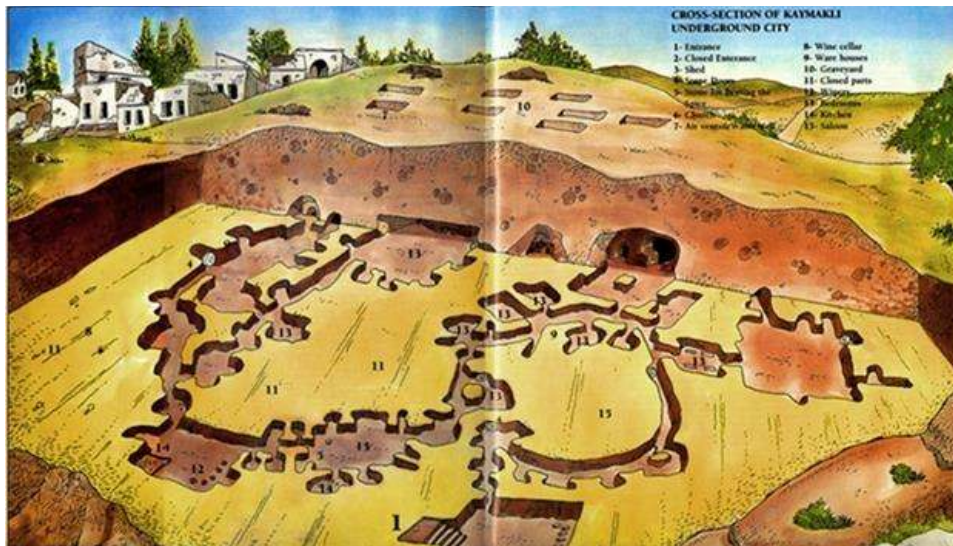
Ozkonak - Turkey

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Kaymaklı - Turkey

Kaymaklı Underground City is located in the Nevsehir province of central Turkey, and was built by early Christians to protect them from religious persecution. It is an elaborate labyrinth of tunnels and caves and is probably the widest of the underground cities.

Like all of the Turkey underground cities, Kaymaklı is an organised, structure with everything from living space, stables and communal kitchens to a church and a graveyard. Additionally it was well fortified to protect its inhabitants. The Kaymaklı Underground City also has an unusually large number of storage rooms.



Kaymaklı - Turkey



Kayamaklı - Turkey



Kayamaklı - Turkey



Kayamaklı - Turkey

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