



Take me to another old volcano

HONOR AUCHINLECK
TNA Guest Writer

Once a hill-walker and climber, always a hill-walker and climber! Having enjoyed walking and sometimes climbing in mountains at other times in other countries, it was impossible to visit Cappadocia and see that majestic old volcano Hasan Dağı dominating the surrounding landscape and not to want to reach the summit!

From a distance, Hasan Dağı looks fairly benign. We were soon to discover it is not to be underestimated as it offers some considerable challenges and risks for those who do not know the route. On each of several previous attempts it prevented us reaching its summit! When we finally made it, it was thanks to Atıl, our guide from Middle Earth Travel in Goreme who made it all possible.

All the same, for me our recent expedition in early September was not entirely free of feelings of trepidation. Mountains never seem to age like knees, ankles and hips do. It hadn't helped that our son had sent us a text saying, "Act your age!" Also adding to my disquiet were visions of precipitous mountainsides and slipping down steep slopes of shaley scree.

These concerns were only partially dissipated when we woke to the light of a full moon flooding into our bedroom. Hasan Dağı was silhouetted against the moonlit sky. The beauty and magic of that moonlit landscape made up for having to get up at such an early hour. It seemed to promise a great day, although at that time I was still reluctant to believe it!

Twin peaks

Fatma, a friend in Ankara, had explained that as Hasan Dağı has two peaks — a big one and a smaller one — it is a "Catal Dağı" or fork mountain. According to legend a lion guards the peaks from his lair on the pass between the two peaks. Fatma is a great source of information about mythology and old Anatolian sayings and similarly has enriched many of our experiences in Turkey. She sung us a song about a girl not trusting a boy enough to climb the mountain with him. She wrote down the words of the song and I had them in my notebook. For me it wasn't so much a question of trusting others, it was more a matter of being able to trust my own fitness for the adventure ahead!

We had an early start at 4:00 a.m. to be at the Hotel Kar Beyaz, on the lower slopes of Hasan Dağı, just above the village of Helvadere in time for a 5:30 a.m. start. Atıl,

our guide, had camped the night outside the hotel. The hotel, along with a smaller establishment nearby, has recently opened and although closed in the summer months, it is open for skiing in the winter.

When we arrived Atıl already had a teapot heating on a gas burner and breakfast was all laid out in the back of his van. Beyond that there was a fabulous red dawn coming. If there is any truth in the

tain-climbing and enjoying the whole experience. Once that comfortable rhythm was established, I had the freedom to look around and absorb and enjoy the surroundings. Looking down from somewhere near the summit I realized that small birds were swooping and gliding around on currents of air beneath us.

I had never climbed as high as I was now aiming, if we were to reach Hasan Dağı's 3,268-meter

us. At long last we had reached the summit — well, not quite, but the edge of the crater. The summit is on a slightly higher rocky outcrop on the southern side of the crater. But it was good enough for us, as we never felt that we would see over the edge into the scree-filled crater.

Picnic by the ruins of a church

Although it seemed we had eaten enough during breaks in the

Anatolia. The view can only be second to that of the 3,916-meter summit of Erciyes Dağı, some 648 meters higher than Hasan Dağı. In the distance the peak of Erciyes was standing majestic above the haze. From the northern side of the crater one can see two or three other small volcanic hills or mini-old volcanoes dotting the landscape. Further north still would be Nar Gölü, a beautiful circular volcanic lake surrounded by a crater of hills. One spring when we were there, the air was filled with the scent of wild thyme and the slopes were covered with wildflowers. Poppies were flowering right down to the edge of the lake.

For us it had been a long road to the summit. It was my fourth attempt and Mark's (my husband) fifth, stretching over at least three years and many enjoyable visits to Cappadocia. While we didn't build a cairn, we savored every moment.

The descent was every bit as challenging as the ascent, but in a very different way. If the shale was slippery on the way up, it was all the more so on the way down. Atıl and his companion were competent at "skiing" down it, while I was not so confident that my knees were strong enough and I could stay upright if the stones began to slip fast. I concentrated on finding footholds on strong clumps of grass and picking the most stable looking rocks. I slid down some of the steepest bits on my bottom. For once I was grateful that it was reasonably padded! All the same it is a wonder I still have a backside left in my jeans!

Our descent took us three hours while the ascent had taken four. With about an hour for our picnic it meant that we had spent eight hours out on the mountain-side. The guardian at the Kar Beyaz hotel prepared as much tea as we could drink and kindly let us use the facilities to freshen up.

Although we were tired by the time we arrived towards the end of the afternoon at Güzelyurt, we didn't feel so stiff and weary as we had after our previous attempts. We can only be grateful to our good guide for showing us the most effective techniques and manageable route! A little bit of knowledge and a slightly different route can make all the difference in the world.

Despite our son's text reminding us to "act our age," I think we had shown that we were happily still capable of reaching the summit of an old volcano! Now the question remains whether it will be Erciyes or Mt. Ararat next? Either one would do, so long as I manage to do both in the end.



On the summit. Our guide Atıl reading the words of the folksong "Hasan Dağı."

old wives' tale, "Red sky at night, shepherd's delight, red sky in the morning, shepherd's warning" it was not so today. Darkness, such as it was when there was such a bright full moon, faded to a clear sky and a sun rising strongly in the east. As we started our expedition, the first rays were catching the burnished autumn color on the ridges.

Before we set off, Atıl indicated our route following a long shallow gully up the northeastern slopes of the mountain. In spring this route is more easily identifiable as the snow seems to lie longer in the shade of the gully. It seemed that today's proposed path was only a couple of hundred meters to the east of our route on an earlier attempt.

The first time I tried to climb Hasan Dağı, it was spring and miniature roses were flowering among the clumps of grass and rocks on the lower slopes. This time the same plants were laden with bright red rosehips. Some hardy thistles still had brilliant purple flowers.

Surprisingly it was not long before I found a good, steady rhythm, essential to combining the exertions and challenges of moun-

summit. For the first time in my life I felt I had achieved the privilege of having a bird's-eye view of the landscape spread out beneath. Beside us were the visions that had disturbed my sleep the previous night — the steep, rock and shale covered slopes of Küçük Hasan Dağı, which we climbed almost two years ago before we left Ankara.

The last few hundred yards of the climb are very steep and I thought they would never end. At the top Atıl was waiting with his hand outstretched to congratulate

climb, we picnicked in the ruins of an old church. Atıl said that it is the highest church in Anatolia — and probably in Turkey. Almost every stone in the ruin has a name scribbled on it. Atıl went on to say that the church had been built on the foundations of a Zoroastrian temple. Surrounding the ruins of the church and dotted around the crater are small cairns marking the achievements of other climbers.

Had we circumnavigated the jagged edge of the crater, we would have had one of the best views of Cappadocia and Central



The crater.



"Peasant Woman with Buckets: Dynamic arrangement," 1912-13. Oil on canvas, 80.3 x 80.3 cm., Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Malevich and the 'Black Square'

The New Anatolian / Istanbul

Works by suprematism pioneer Kazimir Malevich, a prominent figure of Russian avant-garde art, are now on display at the Ezcacıbaşı Virtual Museum.

İdil Ergün is the curator of the exhibit entitled "Malevich and the Black Square," which consists of 90 digital images.

Kazimir Malevich's painting "Black Square" (1913) has been recognized as a milestone

of the 20th century art. It was also a turning point for Russian artist Malevich. The artist first started painting under the influence of impressionism, but later total abstractionism began to dominate and he set in motion an undeniable effect across the art world by launching the suprematism wave. Despite all the obstacles and difficulties of Czarist-era Russia and its restrictions on art, Malevich opened the door for new discoveries by exploring different dimensions and expressions in a comprehensive manner through his paintings.

Malevich studied at the Kiev Art School and was very open to the influence of impressionism, especially Cezanne, in his early period paintings. Later as he leaned towards the avant-garde a change took over his works. In the period when peasants became the subject of his paintings, as in "Peasants in the Church" (1910-11) and "Gardener" (1911), one can see neo-

primitivist traces. In his later periods, he was influenced by Leger and, as can be seen in paintings like "Peasant Girl" (1912-13) and "The Knife Grinder" (1912-13), he was leaning towards cubo-futurism. The point where he began the suprematism wave is exemplified by the painting "Suprematist Painting: White on White" (1917-19), which may be described as the pinnacle of his work.

Against all odds and pressure from the regime, Malevich did not compromise his artistic approach for the sake of acceptance, whether socially, politically or artistically. The artist, who wished to be a part of universal art without any restrictions, died in May 1935.

Regarding Malevich's art, İdil Ergün says, "The core of cores, the meta of meta and eternity... I think these are the primary concepts that Kazimir Malevich aimed to attain through his paintings. He always preferred the universal as his subject and disassembled the forms and colors to their simplest and purest state. The figures he depicted usually have no faces, are devoid of clues on their personalities and are compositions made up of geometric forms. I think instead of reflecting a specific individual or subject, Malevich created works that intended to awaken the virgin spaces of our brain and trigger the common memory laying in the subconscious." www.sanalmuze.org

Berlin prepares to open restored Bode Museum



Arne Effenberger, headmaster of the Bode Museum poses between collection pieces in Berlin. AP Photo

The Associated Press / Berlin

Berlin's famed Museum Island complex moves a big step closer to recovering its former glory this week when the Bode Museum, home to the city's sculpture collection, reopens after six years of restoration.

The domed building, which juts out into the Spree River in the heart of former East Berlin, is the second of the five neoclassical museums to get a full makeover as part of a government-funded €1.2 billion (US\$1.5 billion) overhaul.

It houses some 1,700 sculptures, along with Berlin's Museum of Byzantine Art and Numismatic Collection. The museum will reopen to visitors on Thursday.

Visitors can expect "an overview of the history of European sculpture from late antiquity, around 300 (AD), to about 1800," said Arne Effenberger, the sculpture collection's director.

The collection ranges from medieval works such as Giovanni Pisano's "Man of Sorrows" and Presbyter Martinus' Madonna, through Renaissance pieces such as Donatello's "Pazzi Madonna," to German sculpture of the 18th century. Effenberger said in an interview that visitors also will see about 150 paintings from

the city's Gemäldegalerie museum, illustrating "aspects of the mentality of a particular era in art history" that are common to painting and sculpture.

The Byzantine collection features works from the third to the 15th centuries, including Roman sarcophagi, ivory carvings and mosaic icons.

Culture Minister Bernd Neumann said the €162 million (US\$230 million) restoration of the Bode Museum and its spacious rooms allows Berlin to show off "another jewel in Germany's treasure chamber."

The mammoth project is expected to continue until 2015 or later.

The five museums, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, suffered severe damage during World War II and were only partly restored by communist East Germany.

In parts of the complex, restorers face crumbling interiors and facades still pockmarked by bullet holes from the war.

The renovation project started with the Alte Nationalgalerie, which houses a prestigious collection of 19th century art and was reopened in 2001.

The complex was built over a century, ending with the completion in 1930 of the Pergamon Museum. The Bode Museum, originally known as the Kaiser Friedrich Museum, was opened in 1904.