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TEŞEKKÜRLERİMİZLE

**TANRI'NİN YAŞADIĞI BİR YER. NEVŞEHİR BÖLGESİ'NDE
HRİSTİYAN KİLİSESİNİN GELİŞİMİ (IV-XIII YÜZYILLAR ARASI)
VE BU KİLİSENİN GÖRSEL SANATLARDAKİ ROLÜ**

*A LAND DWELT BY GOD. THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHRISTIAN
CHURCH IN THE REGION OF NEVŞEHİR (IV-X CENTURIES) AND
ITS ROLE IN VISUAL ARTS*

Chiara BORDINO*

ÖZET

Bu çalışmanın amacı, görevleri Hristiyanlığı dört bir yana yaymak olan ve M.S. V. yüzyılda bunun için çok çaba gösteren başlıca Hristiyan yazarlar zamanından, Bizans hükümdarlığının hakim olduğu yüzyılların da sonrasına kadar olan dönemde, Nevşehir Bölgesi'ndeki Hristiyan Kiliseleri'nin gelişimini, yazılı kaynaklar ve kullanılan malzemeleri inceleyerek ortaya çıkarmaktır. Nevşehir Bölgesi'nde, hatta daha genel anlamda Kapadokya'da yer alan ve yüzyıllar öncesine dayanan keşiş kiliselerinin tüm özellikleri ile gözler önüne serilmesi, bölgede Bizans döneminde son derece gelişen olağanüstü güzellikteki sanat ile ilişkisinin tam olarak ne olduğunu anlamada çok faydalı olabilir. Konuyla ilgili olarak çalışmada farklı özellikler ele alınacaktır: rahiplerin, keşişlerin bölge toprakları üzerinde dolaştıkları yerler, papazların konakladığı mekanların bölge topraklarında yayılımı ve bu kişilerin, eserlerin yapılmasını emreden, finansman sunan kişilerle aralarındaki ilişkiler; ikonografik çalışmalarda Kapadokya'da mevcut olan teolojik düşüncelerin etkisi; gerçek inancın, Hristiyanlık içinde mevcut olan sapkınlıklara karşı savunulması ve aziz rahiplerin tanıtılması ile Hristiyan olmayan işgalcilerin etkileri. Bu araştırma, Tuscia Üniversitesi'nin, 2006 yılından beri Nevşehir Bölgesi'nde yürüttüğü kayalık resimlerle ilgili çalışmalar çerçevesinde gerçekleştirilecektir. (Bakınız M. Andoloro'nun ve P. Pogliani'nin bu Sempozyum'daki katkıları).

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Anahtar Kelimeler: Bizans, V. yüzyılın Hristiyan Yazarları, Rahipler, Keşişler, Kayalık Resim, İkonografi.

ABSTRACT

From the time of Church Fathers to the subsequent centuries of the Byzantine era, the paper aims to investigate written sources and material evidence in order to retrace the development of Christian Church in the region of Nevşehir. A clearer focus of the several faces of Church in Nevşehir and more generally in Cappadocia will be useful for a better understanding of its role in the extraordinary artistic flowering that occurs in the region in the Byzantine era. Concerning this, several aspects will be considered: the spread and circulation of bishops, presbyters and monks on the territory and their role in artistic patronage; the influence of Cappadocian theological reflection on the elaboration of iconographic programs; the defence of orthodoxy against christian haeresies and non Christian invaders through the representation of the series of saints bishops. This investigation will be conducted within the context of the study of rock paintings in the region of Nevşehir that Tuscia University is carrying out since 2006 (see also M. Andaloro and P. Pogliani in this Symposium).

Key Words: Byzantium, Church Fathers, Bishops, Monks, Rock painting, Iconography.

Within the research project of the University of Tuscia in Cappadocia, presented in this symposium by Maria Andaloro and Paola Pogliani¹, we're carrying out studies on written sources and material evidence in order to reconstruct the development of Christian Church in Cappadocia in the Byzantine era and its role in the realization of cave churches and pictorial decorations.

Christianity grows in Cappadocia in really ancient times, in the Apostolic age (I a.D.)². The first Epistle of Peter (1, 1) mentions the Christian commu-

¹ For the research mission of Tuscia University in Cappadocia, see ANDALORO 2008, ANDALORO 2009 a, ANDALORO 2009 b, ANDALORO 2010, ANDALORO 2011 a, ANDALORO 2011 b, ANDALORO 2011 c.

See also the contributions of Maria Andaloro and Paola Pogliani in these proceedings.

² For the beginning of Christianity in Cappadocia, see KOSTOF 1972, pp. 6-8; THIERRY 2002, pp. 61-63.

nities of Cappadocia, along with those of Bithynia and Galatia. Caesarea (Kayseri) was bishopric since the 2nd century. In the 3rd century it was a metropolitan see and an important centre for theological reflection at the time of the bishops Alexander and Firmilianus.

In the 4th century Cappadocian Church lived a golden season, being in a position of power never gained again. The metropolis of Caesarea was the ecclesiastical centre of the Diocese of Pontus and also the Mother of Armenian Church: Bishop Leontius of Caesarea consecrated St. Gregory the Illuminator, sending him to baptize and evangelize the Armenian King Tiridates and his people³.

Meanwhile, an articulated system of dioceses had been established. The Council of Nicaea of 325 (first ecumenical council) was attended by five cappadocian bishops: the bishops of Cesarea, Tyana, Kybistra, Komana, Parnassos. Each of them was accompanied by five *chorepiscopi*, rural bishops, who were intermediaries between episcopal sees and countryside⁴. In the second half of the century Cappadocia becomes one of the most important regions of the Christian world, thanks to the three Cappadocian Fathers, Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa⁵. Bishops and figures among the most important of the Early Christian Church, they were actively engaged in theological debates, exegesis of the Holy Scriptures, Christian preaching; they're venerated as saints in both Western and Eastern Church, and with their writings they've transmitted an outstanding theological and doctrinal heritage to all Christendom.

Basil, M metropolitan of Cesarea, appointed his brother Gregory bishop of Nyssa, diocese that he established after losing control on many bishoprics due to reform of Emperor Valens, who, in 372, divided Cappadocia into two smaller provinces: Cappadocia Prima, whose metropolis was Caesarea, and Cappadocia Secunda, with metropolis Tyana⁶.

The acts of ecumenical councils and the *Notitiae Episcopatum* (i.e. documents that provide the list and hierarchical rank of bishoprics in a region) allow us to reconstruct the evolution of the system of dioceses in the

³ GAIN 1985, pp. 6-7.

⁴ HILD-RESTLE 1981, pp. 112-113.

⁵ GAIN 1985; THIERRY 2002, pp. 65-67; VAN DAM 2003; MÉTIVIER 2005.

⁶ HILD-RESTLE 1981, pp. 112-113; MÉTIVIER 2005, pp. 41-42.

provinces corresponding to the territory of present-day Cappadocia, from 5th to 9th century:

province of **Cappadocia Prima**: metropolis: Caesarea; suffragan sees (under the control of metropolitan bishop): Nyssa (4th century), Basilica Therma (5th century), Kamulianai (6th century), Theodosiupolis Armenias, Kiskisos;

province of **Cappadocia Secunda**: metropolis: Tyana; suffragan sees: Kybistra, Phaustinopolis, Sasima;

province of **Cappadocia Tertia** (founded by Justinian): metropolis: Mokissos; suffragan sees: Nazianzus, Koloneia, Parnassos, Doara.

Province of **Armenia Secunda**: metropolis: Melitene; suffragan sees: Arka, Kukusos, Ariaratheia, Komana, Arabissos⁷.

From the 7th to 9th centuries no further development of the episcopal structure could take place in Cappadocia, since the region had to fight with recurrent invasions and attacks by Arabs. The conformation established in the previous centuries remained formally unchanged; anyway, not in every time and not in all dioceses the Church was able to maintain a real control on the territory; sometimes the bishops were forced to live outside the province⁸.

The *Notitiae Episcopatum* issued in the 10th century by Emperor Leo VI and by the Patriarch Nicholas Mystikos (901-907) record a considerable increase of dioceses in Cappadocia I, while the situation did not change substantially in Cappadocia II and III. Cappadocia I had now fifteen suffragan sees: Nyssa, Basilica Therma, Dasmendron, Kamulianai, Kiskissos, Euaissa, Seberias,

Ariaratheia (Kase), Aipoloi, Aragenia, Hagios Prokopios, Sobesos Tzamanos, Siricha. It is important to notice that some of these are located in the territory of cave churches, monasteries and buildings (Haghios Prokopios, Sobesos, Tamisos), as well as some newly founded bishoprics in other cappadocian provinces: Balbissa in Cappadocia II and Matiane, near the settlement of Göreme, in Cappadocia III⁹.

⁷ HILD-RESTLE 1981, pp. 112-114.

⁸ IBID., pp. 114-115.

⁹ IBID, pp. 116 ff.

We have briefly traced the evolution of the system of diocesis. Aiming to investigate the different faces of the Church in Cappadocia in the Byzantine age, we must nevertheless take account also of another important component, that is, monasticism. In the 4th century Basil founded the monastic system of the region, establishing a rule that would have been the most followed in Eastern Christianity. This rule, although admitting moderate forms of asceticism, was based essentially on cenobitism, the most perfect form of monastic life in Basil's opinion. The life of monks was marked by work and prayer, obedience and poverty. Monastic communities were subordinate to the authority of the Bishop, so as to integrate the monastic system in the structure of the Church¹⁰.

Sources of the subsequent centuries provide us very few news about the development of monasticism in Cappadocia. We know that Cappadocian monks played an active role in founding Palestinian monastic communities¹¹. Sabas, leader of the palestinian monasticism, was born in Cappadocia. In the Middle Byzantine Period eminent monks or nuns belong to families of the cappadocian aristocracy: among them, Irene of Chrysovalantou (9th century)¹² and Michael Maleinos, uncle of Nicephorus II Phocas¹³.

The sources so far considered allow us to reconstruct the evolution of the Episcopal structure and of the monastic system in Cappadocia in the Byzantine period, but offer us few evidence about the role actually played by bishops, priests and monks in patronage and attendance of cave churches.

For this it is essential to link the study of the sources with survey and direct observation of monuments. First of all we must consider the distribution of cave churches and monastic settlements in the territory. Studies of ecclesiastical topography led notably by Frederick Hild shows that churches and monastic settlements were located near major civic centres, Urgup, Avcilar, Sovis, Ortakoy, Avanos, Niğde, Nevşehir, and of the main arteries of the region's highway system¹⁴.

In addition to that, within the survey that we are conducting since 2006

¹⁰ PATRICH 1995, pp. 28 ff.; CREMASCHI 2001; KOSTOF 1972; RODLEY 1985.

¹¹ PATRICH 1995, pp. 39, 45, 47-48, 68, 227.

¹² STAVRAKAS 1978, p. 104; TETERIATNIKOV 1996, p. 191.

¹³ PETIT 1902; TETERIATNIKOV 1996, p. 191.

¹⁴ HILD 1981; TETERIATNIKOV 1996, pp.184-187.

in the region of Nevşehir, and that in the last campaign was particularly focused on the territory of Göreme Open Air Museum, we aim not only to study the individual monuments and their pictorial decorations, but also to reconstruct the general context in which they are placed, investigating the dynamics of the progressive spread of churches and monastic settlements and trying to understand relationships between churches, monasteries and rock buildings with civil function¹⁵. We are conducting this survey also taking account of more recent studies, due to american scholars, like Robert Ousterhout and Veronica Kalas, which are particularly attentive to the extent of civil architecture in Cappadocia, and tended to reduce the importance of monastic presence, interpreting as aristocratic residences cave buildings which had previously been identified as monasteries¹⁶.

Other channel to be considered for the study of religious patronage in Cappadocia is that of the portraits and inscriptions that mention the role of purchasers and donors in the paintings of rock churches. Here the direct observation of monuments has to be placed side by side to wide-ranging studies of Nicole Thierry and Catherine Jolivet Levy¹⁷ and filings of donor portraits and inscriptions made by Natalia Teteriatnikov and Lisa Bernardini¹⁸. A general consideration in this regard reveals a mixed role of civil society and religious patronage (monks, priests, deacons) and the existence of close relations between secular and monastic communities, with the first ones supporting even economically, the monks coming from Cappadocian aristocracy and middle class.

Among the many possible cases, we remember here two inscriptions that are object of study in our mission: the dedicatory inscription of the Forty martyrs Church in Şahinefendi, which mentions the patron, abbot Markarios, and the painter, the monk Etius¹⁹;

¹⁵ TETERIATNIKOV 1996, pp.184-187; 230-232.

¹⁶ See MATHEWS-DASKALAKIS MATHEWS 1997; OUSTERHOUT 1997; KALAS 2004; OUSTERHOUT 2005; KALAS 2006; KALAS 2007; KALAS 2009.

¹⁷ THIERRY-THIERRY 1963; THIERRY 1983; THIERRY 1994; THIERRY 2002; JOLIVET-LÉVY 1991; JOLIVET-LÉVY 2001 (2002).

¹⁸ BERNARDINI 1992; TETERIATNIKOV 1996, pp. 187-224. On portraits of donors in Cappadocian painting see also LAFONTAINE-DOSOGNE 1963; SCHIEMENZ 1976; JOLIVET-LÉVY 2001 (2002), pp. 55-90.

¹⁹ DE JERPHANION 1925-1942, texte vol. II.1, pp. 158-159; RESTLE 1967, vol. I, p. 159. English translation by Chiara Bordino.

«Ἀνεκενίσθην ὁ πάνσεπτως να[ό]ς [οὔ]τος
τὸν τοῦ Χ(ριστοῦ) μαρτήρων μ', δηὰ σινδρ[ομῆ]ς
τοῦ δούλου τοῦ Θεοῦ Μακάρει εἰερομο(νά)χ(ου), ἀντ' ἄδι
[κημάτων]
αὐτ[οῦ, χι]ρι Ἐτίου μο(νά)χ(ου), ἔτους ,ςψξε', ἐνδ(ικτιῶνος) ε',
ἐπὶ βασιλέος
[Θεοδώρου Λάσκαρι]»

This most august Temple of the Forty Martyrs of Christ was renovated by abbot Makarios, in expiation for his sins, at the hand of Aetius monk, in the year 6725, 5th indiction, at the time of emperor (Theodore Lascaris) (picture 1).



Picture 1. Şahinefendi, Forty Martyrs Church, dedicatory inscription.

and that of saint Basil in Mustapaşa, which names the patron Nicander, perhaps belonging to military aristocracy, and the priest Constantine, in addition to the painter, whose name is missing²⁰:

²⁰ DE JERPHANION 1925-1942, texte vol. II.1, p. 109. English translation by Chiara Bordino.

Κοσμος Ν]ικαντ[ρου δαπ]α[νη σ]εβ(α)σμ[ιος]
κ(ε)νοτα τ[υ]χη τυς ενδο[ξου] κησας,
ηκον υπαρχη του σεβας[μ]ηου ξυλου.
Κ(υρι)ε παντοτε φυλατε [τ]ω σω δουλ[ω Νικαντρω?] κ(ε)
Κοσταντηνο πρεσβυτερον
χαρησε αυτους αφεσην αμαρτηον χαρη [σε κ]ε ελεος κε) βοηθηαν
το σο δουλο ζουγραφο.

The venerable decoration that, at the expense of Nicander, renews the walls of this glorious residence, consists of an image of the Holy Wood. Protect your servant Nicander and priest Constantine always, oh Lord. Grant them forgiveness of sins and give your compassion and your help to thy servant, the painter (picture 2).



Picture 2. Mustafapaşa, Church of saint Basil, dedicatory inscription, detail.

Considering now specifically the paintings, I should like to suggest some food for thought about the role of the Church in the elaboration of the iconographic programs. It seems that Cappadocian bishops and presbyters were very actively involved in ideating pictorial decorations, supported by a deep, original and long lasting tradition of theological reflection and biblical exegesis.

Cappadocian church had to face specific problems and conditions, and, although it maintained relations with the Patriarchate of Constantinople, to whom authority it was subjected, it was also able to develop a considerable autonomy, thanks to the distance from Byzantium. All these circumstances had consequences in artistic production.

Many issues would be implied, and we cannot dwell on them here; we mean to focus on one element, the glorification and commemoration of local early Christian church. This attitude developed little by little from the early Christian times to the subsequent centuries of the byzantine era, and it was particularly strong and aware in 10th century. The theological school of Caesarea is supposed to be the birthplace of this attitude, which we can find both in literary works and in pictorial decorations.

Cappadocian Church boasts its really ancient origins referring particularly to the figure of the Apostle Peter. Already in previous centuries there was an early and wide diffusion, in this region, of the many apocryphal writings concerning Peter or attributed to him, like the Gospel, the Preaching, the Apocalypse and the Acts²¹. The commentary on the Apocalypse by Andrew of Caesarea, written in the 6th century, quotes the apocryphal Acts of Peter²². Little by little a legendary tradition takes hold, according to which Peter was the first bishop of Caesarea, after having been Bishop of Antioch and before leaving for Rome. In the first half of 10th century this legend is upheld by Arethas (860-930), bishop of Caesarea, in a letter addressed to Eustathius, Bishop of Side²³:

Πέτρος σοι, βέλτιστε, τῶν τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἀποστόλων ὁ πρόκριτος
καὶ τῆς κατὰ Χριστὸν πίστεως ὁ θεμέλιος, τὴν τῶν μεταθέσεων
ἐμπεδοῖ ἀταξίαν, ἐξ Ἀντιοχείας δῆθεν τῆς Συρίας εἰς τὴν
Καππάδοσσαν Καισάρειαν μεταβαίνων κἀντεῦθεν εἰς τὴν ἐπὶ
Θύμβριδι Ῥώμην;
ἀλλ' ὃ περιττὴ τὴν πολυπλανεστάτην σοφίαν, εἰ πρὸς τὰ

²¹ NORELLI 1991; THIERRY 2002, p. 62.

²² Andrew of Caesarea, *Commentary on Apocalypse*, XXXVII, in MIGNE 1857-1866 (PG), vol. 106, 340. See VOUAUX 1922.

²³ *Arethae archiepiscopi caesariensis Scripta minora*, recensuit L. G. Westerink, Lipsiae, 1968-1972, vol. I, 1968, 298.9-14-299.1-3. English translation by Chiara Bordinò. The role of Arethas in transmitting the tradition of Peter first bishop of Caesarea is affirmed also by C. Jolivet and N. Thierry, although without mentioning the letter to Eustathius: THIERRY 2002, p. 62, n. 4; JOLIVET-LÉVY 2001 (2002), p. 246.

ἀρχαίζοντα τῆς ἡμῶν πίστεως ἀναλάμενος καὶ τὰς οἰονεὶ κρηπίδας τῆς μετὰ ταῦτα ἀσφαλεστέρας ἐποικοδομηῆς κατολιγωρεῖς.

So, my excellent friend, does Peter, first among the Apostles of Christ and foundation stone of the faith in Christ, support you in your insubordination about changing episcopal see, because he moved from Antioch of Syria to Caesarea in Cappadocia and later to Rome on Tyber?

Your extraordinary wisdom actually leads to many mistakes, if, wandering in this way among the antiquities of our faith, you disregard the fundamentals of the safe construction which is based on them.

Extolling the link with the Apostle, Caesarea of Cappadocia presented itself as a new Rome, alternative and not inferior to the old one and to Byzantium.

The exaltation of Peter is evident even in paintings. First of all we remember how in the complex iconographic program of Tokalı Kilise Peter has, in some scenes of Acts of the Apostles painted on the ceiling (the Sending out the Apostles on a mission and the Consecration of the first deacons), a leading role, which is not expressly attributed to him in the text of the Acts²⁴.

Secondly, we may focus on the representation, quite rare in Cappadocia, of the martyrdom of Peter and Paul in the vault of the north bay of the Church of Balkan Dere n. 4 near Ortahisar (pictures 3-4)²⁵. Peter, naked, wearing only a white cloth around his waist, stands in front of Emperor Nero in the western part of the vault, holding a big cross and being accompanied by two executioners. A long inscription states that the saint, declaring himself unworthy to be crucified like his master, is asking to be crucified upside down on an inverted cross. This painting follows the narrative of the apocryphal Acts of the Martyrdom of Peter and Paul,

²⁴ DE JERPHANION 1925-1942, vol. I, pp. 355-356; WHARTON EPSTEIN 1986 pp. 76-77; THIERRY 2002, p. 62; JOLIVET-LÉVY 2001 (2002), 259-260. Peter has a leading role also in the Great Dovecote of Cavuşin, where he is represented at the foot of the cross of Christ, receiving Jesus forgiveness for denying him, according to an apocryphal tradition echoed by Christos Paschon, mediaeval drama on the Passion of Christ attributed to Gregory of Nazianzus. See JOLIVET-LÉVY 2001 (2002), p. 246.

²⁵ DE JERPHANION 1925-1942, vol. II.1, pp. 53-56; JOLIVET-LÉVY 1991; JOLIVET-LÉVY 2001 (2002), p. 312.

although the inscription does not quote accurately the text of the Acts²⁶. The scenes of the martyrdom of the Apostles painted in the Balkan Dere have certainly a funerary meaning²⁷, but they are also connected to a strong purpose of celebration of the local church, as it's evident considering overall the iconographic program.

In the south arm of the church are depicted three episodes from the life of St. Basil: the baptism of Joseph the Jew and his family by the hand of dying saint Basil, the death and entombment of Basil (pictures 5-7)²⁸. These scenes are taken from an apocryphal Life of Basil attributed to Amphilochius of Iconium, but probably composed in the 8th century by a Cappadocian monk²⁹. On the same source was based the cycle of stories of saint Basil depicted in the northern part of west wall and in the northern wall of Tokalı Kilise, although a different selection of episodes took place here, focusing on the fight against Arian heresy and on the victory of orthodoxy³⁰. The scenes depicted in Balkan Dere and Tokalı Kilise prove the existence in Cappadocia, at least from 10th century, of a biographical cycle of Saint Basil which had been devised in Cesarea and was an illustrious model for other paintings in cave churches of Cappadocia³¹.

Returning to Balkan Dere No 4, the exaltation Early Christian Church is also confirmed by the representation of bishop saints in the apse.

Series of Church Fathers in the lower part of the apses are very frequent starting from 9th century³². Basil of Caesarea has generally a place of honour, next to John Chrysostomus, because of liturgical reasons: they are the authors of the two liturgies used in the Byzantine world³³. Beside them we can often see bishops who distinguished themselves in the defense of orthodoxy against heresies, like Gregory of Nazianzus, Epipha-

²⁶ DE JERPHANION 1925-1942, vol. II.1, pp. 54-55. The martyrdom of saint Peter and Paul is painted also in the Kubbeli Kilise of Soğanlı: see JOLIVET-LÉVY 2001 (2002), p. 312.

²⁷ JOLIVET-LÉVY 2001 (2002), pp. 312-313.

²⁸ DE JERPHANION 1925-1942, vol. II.1, pp. 52-53; WALTER 1978, pp. 245-247; DE JERPHANION 1931, p. 541.

²⁹ Besides bibliography indicated in the previous footnote, see: HARRELL 2001, pp. 134-141; VAN DAM 2003, pp. 162-169. For the text of the apocryphal life of saint Basil attributed to Amphilochius of Iconium, see: COMBEFIS 1644; BARRINGER 1980.

³⁰ DE JERPHANION 1925-1942, vol. I.2, pp. 358-366; WALTER 1978, p. 245; DE JERPHANION 1931, p. 535-541; WHARTON EPSTEIN 1986, pp. 77-78.

³¹ WHARTON EPSTEIN 1986, p. 37.

³² WALTER 1982, pp. 171 ff.; JOLIVET-LÉVY 2001 (2002), pp. 139-141.

³³ JOLIVET-LÉVY 2001 (2002), p. 139; THIERRY 2002, p. 66. For the liturgy of saint Basil, see SCAZ-ZOSO 1975; GRIBOMONT 1983.



Picture 3. Ortahisar, Church of Balkan Dere n. 4, Martyrdom of Peter.



Picture 4. Ortahisar, Church of Balkan Dere n. 4, Martyrdom of Paul.



Picture 5. Ortahisar, Church of Balkan Dere n. 4, Basil baptizing Joseph the Jew and his family.



Picture 6. Ortahisar, Church of Balkan Dere n. 4, Death of Basil.

nus of Salamis, Proclus of Constantinople, or in performing miracles, like saint Nicholas of Myra.

The theme can assume then more specific declinations, depending on the meaning attributed to the iconographic program. In some cases is particularly evident an aim to celebrate the local Church through the depiction of bishop saints of the 4th century, intent that goes beyond the common devotion for local saints.

Thus, in the apse of the Balkan Dere No 4, the three great Cappadocian Fathers, Basil, Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory of Nazianzus, starting from left, open the series of bishops (picture 8). Contrary to what one might believe, it's not common to find them depicted together and in close position in the cave churches of Cappadocia.

Another noteworthy example can be seen in the Church n. 4 of Göreme, which we visited within the survey conducted in the Open Air Museum during our last campaign³⁴.

³⁴ RESTLE 1967, vol. I, pp. 40, 106-107; JOLIVET-LÉVY 1991, pp. 87-89.



Picture 7. Ortahisar, Church of Balkan Dere n. 4, Entombment of Basil.

Basil is painted in the wall to the right of the apse (picture 9), and, very close to him, at the beginning of the northern wall, there's a panel with three saints named Gregory: Gregory of Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory the Wonderworker (picture 10), who evangelized the area of Pontus at the beginning of 4th century and was highly venerated in Cappadocia³⁵.

In the lower part of the apse we find, as usual, figures of bishops. Most of them are no longer identifiable, but we can still recognize, thanks to the inscription, saint Leontius, bishop of Cesarea in the first half of the 4th century, who consecrated St. Gregory the Illuminator, sending him to evangelize the Armenia. Leontius appears quite frequently in the paintings of the region from 10th century³⁶.



Picture 8. Ortahisar, Church of Balkan Dere n. 4, apse, Basil of Cesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory of Nazianzus.

³⁵ VAN ESBROECK 1999; THIERRY 2002, p. 63.

³⁶ JOLIVET-LÉVY 1991, p. 89; JOLIVET-LÉVY 2001 (2002), p. 140.



Picture 9. Göreme, Church n. 4a, wall to the right of the apse, Basil of Caesarea.

All these paintings were done in the first half of the 10th century, at a time when Cappadocian Church was strongly turning her attention to the Early Christian era, and particularly to the Church Fathers of 4th century. Arethas is undoubtedly without comparison for the extent of his cultural interests: pupil of patriarch Photius, in close relations with Constantinople, he had collected a remarkable library, including works of authors of the first centuries of Christianity³⁷.



Picture 10. Göreme, Church n. 4a, southern wall, Gregory of Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory Thaumaturgus (Wonderworker).

But besides him other figures belonging to the *milieu* of Caesarea showed a deep interest in Cappadocian bishops of Early Christian Age.

Basilius Minimus, bishop of Caesarea at the half of 10th century, who took this epithet to distinguish himself from the illustrious predecessor, wrote Scholia to the Orations of Gregory of Nazianzus, dedicating his work to emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus³⁸.

We can suppose deep relations between written sources and pictorial decorations also for other themes, which will be object of future investigation within the Tuscia University research mission in Cappadocia.

³⁷ DVORNIK 1953, pp. 92-93.

³⁸ CANTARELLA 1925-1926; SCHMIDT 2001.

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