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Negotiating between the Independent and Groups of Courtyard Complexes in Cappadocia

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The so-called courtyard complexes in Cappadocia, central Turkey, are easily recognizable by their receptional and utilitarian spaces, which are usually carved around three-sided courtyards and adorned with elaborate rock-cut façades. Dating back to the tenth to eleventh centuries, these complexes were at first thought to be monastic Byzantine establishments; however, scholars have more recently argued for secular use. The absence of any written evidence of monasterial function and the distinctive architecture of courtyard complexes compelled the author to make a study of these medieval structures, which led to a comparative architectural analysis of the more than forty courtyard complexes in the region, all of which have been surveyed either by the author or by other scholars. Interestingly, besides the concentrated groups of complexes in Açıksaray, Çanlı Kilise and Selime-Yaprakhisar, at least one-quarter of the more than forty courtyard complexes under scrutiny were carved as independent establishments. Focusing on this distinction, this paper seeks to answer the following questions: How was the same typology appropriate for both independent and concentrated groups of complexes? Which spaces within the architectural organization were (in) dispensable for the independent complexes? In the case of concentrated groups of complexes, does the lack of repetitive distinctive spaces within the individual complexes indicate shared use and/or a hierarchy? In answering these questions, the comparative study outlined above will allow the variations of spaces and their frequency within the architectural organization, among other factors, to be tested for the first time, which in turn will illuminate the nuances between independent complexes and concentrated groups of complexes.



The so-called courtyard complexes in Cappadocia, central Turkey, are easily recognizable, having receptional and utilitarian spaces, usually carved around three-sided courtyards and adorned with elaborate rock-cut façades (figs 1, 2). Dating back to the tenth to eleventh centuries, these complexes were initially considered to be monastic Byzantine establishments, although scholars have more recently suggested that they may have belonged to the landowning elites, and probably had military associations.¹ Over forty such examples have been discovered within the 100 km diameter area that encompasses the modern cities of Aksaray, Nevşehir, Kayseri and Niğde. A concentration of complexes can be found at three strategic sites close to fortresses or military roads at Çanlı Kilise, Selime-Yaprakhisar and Açıksaray;² while others are dispersed across the volcanic valleys (figs 3, 4).

The complexes usually feature a vestibule lying parallel to the cliff, and a perpendicular longitudinal hall—together forming an inverted T-plan—at the core, at the prolongation of the central axis of the courtyard across from its entrance (fig. 2). These apparent reception areas, which bear no evidence of monastic use, are often carved behind high and elaborately decorated façades that could have been seen from a considerable distance (fig. 1).³ The courtyard complexes occasionally include a humble private church, a spacious kitchen and a large stable, as well as rooms that were apparently multifunctional (figs 2, 5). These Cappadocian complexes, which are obviously not typical of rural Byzantine dwellings, are testimony to more sophisticated architectural traditions that, on the whole, have been completely lost in larger cities.⁴

1. Thomas Mathews and Anna-Christie Daskalakis-Mathews, "Islamic-Style Mansions in Byzantine Cappadocia and the Development of the Inverted T-Plan," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 56, no. 3 (Sept. 1997): 294-315; Robert Ousterhout, "Questioning the Architectural Evidence: Cappadocian Monasticism," in *Work and Worship at the Theotokos Evergetis 1050-1200*, ed. Margaret Mullett and Anthony Kirby (Belfast: Belfast Byzantine Enterprises, 1997), 420-31; Veronica Kalas, "Rock-Cut Architecture of the Peristrema Valley: Society and Settlement in Byzantine Cappadocia," PhD diss., New York University, 2000; Filiz Tütüncü, "The Land of Beautiful Horses: Stables in Middle Byzantine Settlements of Cappadocia," MA thesis, Bilkent University, 2008; Fatma Gül Öztürk, "A Comparative Architectural Investigation of the Middle Byzantine Courtyard Complexes in Açıksaray—Cappadocia: Questions of Monastic and Secular Settlement," PhD diss., Middle East Technical University, 2010. Although, Lyn Rodley, *Cave Monasteries of Byzantine Cappadocia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), classifies these complexes as monasteries (except for Açıksaray), she proposes the same date interval. For historical and administrative changes of this period that witnessed security and prosperity between the Arab attacks in the eighth and ninth centuries and the Seljuk occupation following 1071 see Friedrich Hild and Marcell Restle, *Kappadokien (Kappadokia, Charsianon, Sebasteia und Lykandos)* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1981), 70-105. For Cappadocian aristocracy during this period see Jean-Claude Cheynet, "L'aristocratie cappadoçienne aux X^e et XI^e siècles," *Dossiers d'Archéologie* 283 (May 2003), 42-49.

2. For the strategic position of Çanlı Kilise, see Robert Ousterhout, *A Byzantine Settlement in Cappadocia*, *Dumbarton Oaks Studies* 42 (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2005), esp. 7-9, 172-73, 182-84; of Selime-Yaprakhisar, see Kalas, "Society and Settlement," esp. 156-59; and of Açıksaray, see Rodley, *Cave Monasteries*, esp. 150; Alexander Grishin, "Açık Saray and Medieval Military Campaigns," in *Our Medieval Heritage: Essays in Honour of John Tillotson for his 60th Birthday*, ed. Linda Rasmussen, Valerie Spear, Dianne Tillotson and John H. Tillotson (Cardiff: Merton Priory Press, 2002), 164-71; and Öztürk, "Açıksaray," 157-97.



Figure 1: Açıksaray. View of the northwest corner of Area 5 showing the three-sided courtyard, the partly damaged main façade exposing the vestibule behind it, and the partly collapsed kitchen with a conical chimney-vault on the right (photograph by the author, 2012)

3. Mathews and Daskalakis-Mathews, "Islamic-Style Mansions," were first to offer the inverted T-plan as an argument for the secular function of the courtyard complexes, while pointing to its domestic use by the Muslim neighbours of Byzantium.

4. For references and a useful summary of the evidence related to Byzantine dwellings, as well as discussions concerning their identification, see Öztürk, "Açıksaray," 60-63.

5. For detailed descriptions and a comparative analysis of the courtyard complexes, and for additional references, see Öztürk, "Açıksaray." For the survey and the plans of the Çanlı Kilise group, see Ousterhout, *Byzantine Settlement*; of the Selime-Yaprakhisar group, see Kalas, "Society and Settlement"; and of the Açıksaray group, see Öztürk, "Açıksaray." For Selime, see also Rodley, *Cave Monasteries*, 63-85; for Açıksaray, see also Rodley, *Cave Monasteries*, 121-50. For more information and plans of the independent complexes (Erdemli excluded), see Rodley, *Cave Monasteries*, 11-118. For the survey and plans of Erdemli, see Nilay Karakaya, "2005 Yılı, Kayseri'nin Yeşilhisar İlçesi, Erdemli Vadisi'ndeki Kaya Yerleşimi, Yüzye Araştırması," in *24. Araştırma Sonuçları Toplantısı: 29 Mayıs-2 Haziran 2006, Çanakkale*, vol. 2, ed. Fahriye Bayram and Birnur Koral (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı DÖS MM Basımevi, 2007), 501-10.

Most recently, the author made an examination of 43 courtyard complexes; however, since not all 43 complexes were accessible, an assessment could be made of the internal organization of only 31 of them, working from earlier surveys of both the author and other scholars. The complexes under consideration are: nine complexes at Çanlı Kilise (Areas 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 12, 13, 15, 16); four complexes at Selime-Yaprakhisar (Areas 2, 5, 7, 8); eight complexes at Açıksaray (Areas 1, 2, 3.1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8); and ten isolated examples at Direkli Kilise, Karanlık Kale, Eski Gümüş, Soğanlı Han, Erdemli, Şahinefendi, Aynalı Kilise, Hallaç, Kılıçlar and Bezir Hane (fig. 3).⁵

To date, none of the courtyard complexes has been subjected to archaeological investigation, and literary evidence referring to them directly is entirely lacking. Fortunately, the complexes have been well preserved—often retaining their initial form—within the volcanic rock into which they were carved. Moreover, the large number and close geographical and chronological proximity of sites facilitate comparison, which will enable the variations of distinctive

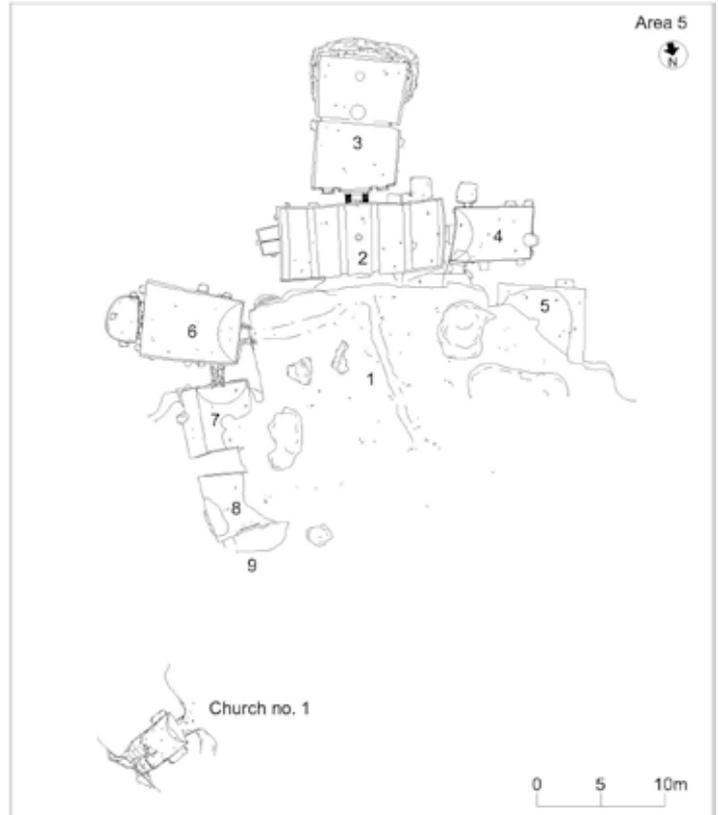


Figure 2: Açıksaray. Plan of Area 5 (surveyed by the author and Aykut Fenerci/drawn by Aykut Fenerci)



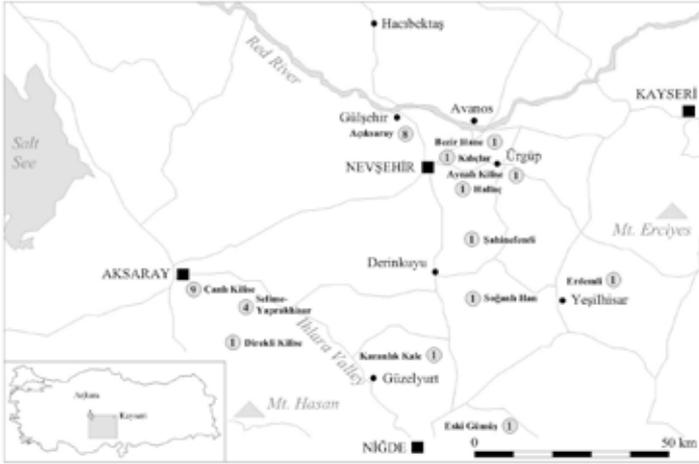


Figure 3: Map of Cappadocia (the number of courtyard complexes taken into consideration for the comparative study conducted by the author are noted in a circle for each site)

spaces and their frequency within the architectural organization to be tested, and will illuminate the nuances between the independent complexes and the groups of complexes that, at first glance, exhibit no apparent differences. Accordingly, while charting, reevaluating and reinterpreting the results of architectural surveys, the discussion below will focus on: (i) external organization: topographical settings/ orientations, courtyards and façades (tested for 43 complexes); and (ii) internal organization: ceremonial spaces (vestibules and halls), churches, utilitarian spaces (kitchens and stables) and multifunctional rooms (tested for 31 complexes).⁶

6. Unless otherwise stated, the contemporaneity of individual spaces within a complex is accepted based on the evaluation of their overall design and architectural and stylistic features.

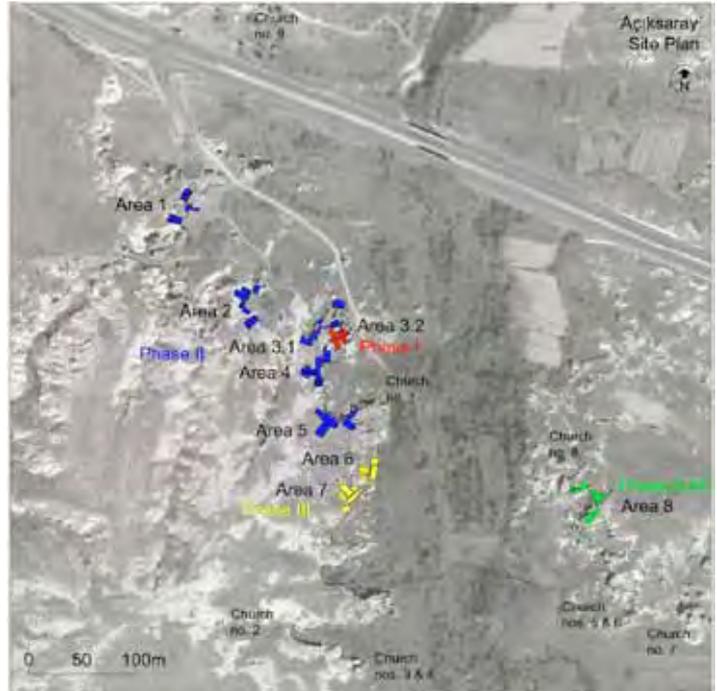
Architectural Reassessment: Topographical Settings/Orientations

The majority of complexes (26 of 43) in the sample face south, southwest or southeast. In Çanlı Kilise, an extended south-west-facing outcrop would have been an ideal location for a large community to settle.⁷ Selime Kalesi, the main complex in Selime-Yaprakhisar, faces south, while the complexes in Yaprakhisar, located opposite Selime, and some in Açıksaray face north. In Yaprakhisar and Açıksaray, the close proximity to other complexes must have been a more decisive factor in the choice of location than the ideal southerly orientation; although most (seven of ten) of the independent courtyard complexes open to the south, southwest or southeast.

7. Ousterhout, *Byzantine Settlement*, 170-71; Ousterhout spoke of twenty-three areas here, at least eleven of which bear characteristics of courtyard complexes.

It is apparent that the topography was utilized to impress and control others. Interestingly, the remote independent complexes of Soğanlı Han and Şahinefendi, are almost identical in terms of their dimensions, commanding position and isolation, and both lean

Figure 4: Açıksaray. General Site Plan (Areas on the site plan redrawn/ corrected by the author from Rodley, Cave Monasteries, fig. 19–27, and individually adapted to the aerial photograph from Google Earth, accessed 19.03.2009)



back onto a rising hill that overlooks the valley below, along which an ancient road is likely to have passed. Likewise, Areas 6 and 7 in Çanlı Kilise; Selime Kalesi (Area 2) in Selime-Yaprakhisar; and Areas 4 and 5 in Açıksaray (see fig. 4), being the largest and most elaborate complexes within their respective settlements, occupy topographically prominent locations that would have given the occupants a measure of control over others in the vicinity.

Courtyards

The courtyards, whether naturally occurring or cut into the rock, determine the plan of the majority (37 of 43) of complexes, six of which can be found in the independent complexes. More than half of the complexes in the sample have a three-sided courtyard, with the only true four-sided courtyard found at the independent complex in Eski Gümüş, surrounded by carved rooms on all four sides (see fig. 3). In offering direct access to a large number of rooms, the courtyard plan allowed compactness and control; however they were not truly private since they allowed access to outsiders, and as such were rather buffer zones between the protected interior and the unpredictable outside world (see figs 1 and 2).



Façades

The high and ornate façades of the Cappadocian courtyard complexes would have made them somewhat of an attraction and a mark of status, and would have been visible from great distances (fig. 1). Although the complexes are usually single-story, the façades give the impression of a multi-story built house.⁸ Indeed, while there was often room for the carving of a second story, all receptional and utilitarian areas are usually found on the ground floor. The majority (26 of 43) of complexes still bear evidence of a façade; however they have suffered greatly from erosion over the centuries. The fact that the majority (seven of ten) of independent complexes have partly survived façades supports the importance given to the meaning they were meant to instil. Multiple registers and odd numbers of bays, decorated by blind horseshoe and/or keyhole-shaped niches; or a blind arcade, also consisting of an odd number of arches, are used to form the façades. In both cases, the principal entrance is set into the central bay or the central arch of the lowest register, meaning that the façades are symmetrically designed.⁹

8. Robert Ousterhout, "The Ecumenical Character of Byzantine Architecture: The View from Cappadocia," in *Byzantium as Oecumene* (Athens: National Research Foundation; 2005), 214-16, esp. 215; and Veronica Kalas, "The 2004 Survey of the Byzantine Settlement at Selime-Yaprakhisar in the Peristrema Valley, Cappadocia," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 60 (2007), 290; and Kalas, "Challenging the Sacred Landscape of Byzantine Cappadocia," in *Negotiating Secular and Sacred in Medieval Art*, ed. Alicia Walker and Amanda Luyster (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009), 165, 168-69, interpret the façades of courtyard complexes as symbols of status. See also Mathews and Daskalakis-Mathews, "Islamic-Style Mansions," esp. 299-300; Ousterhout, *Byzantine Settlement*, 142-45; Kalas, "Society and Settlement," 114-15; and Kalas, "Cappadocia's Rock-Cut Courtyard Complexes: A Case Study for Domestic Architecture in Byzantium," in *Housing in Late Antiquity: From Palaces to Shops*, Supplementary Volume to *Late Antique Archaeology* 3, no. 2, ed. Luke Lavan, Lale Özgenel and Alexander Sarantis (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 403-404.

9. Kalas, "Domestic Architecture," 403-404.

Ceremonial Spaces

The inverted-T plan layout of the ceremonial core, comprising a rectangular vestibule (or seldom a porch) set parallel to the cliff, usually behind the rock-cut façade, and a perpendicular hall, can

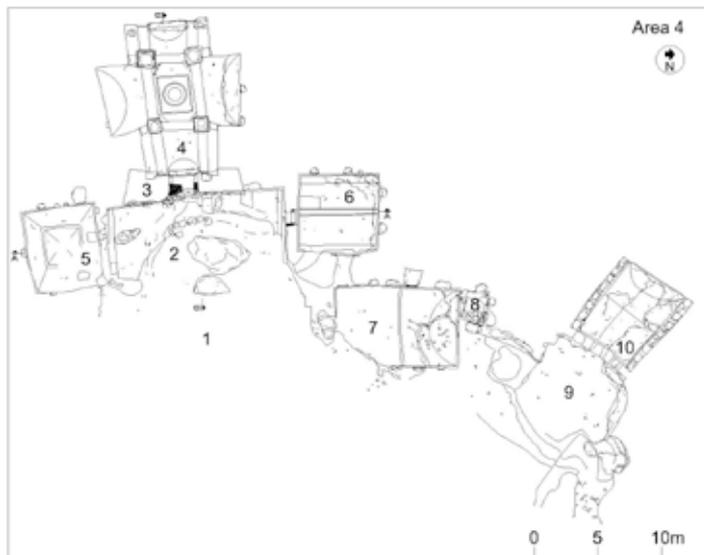


Figure 5: Açıkсарay. Plan of Area 4 (surveyed by the author and Aykut Fenerci/drawn by Aykut Fenerci)

be found in more than two-thirds of the complexes, of which seven are in the independent complexes. The only inverted-T plan core found on an upper floor was in Açıksaray Area 8.

Half of the surviving vestibules feature a barrel-vault ceiling (ten of 22) with a standard height of 4.5–5 meters, while a further six have a flat ceiling (fig. 6, see room no. 2 in figs 2, 5). The independent complex in Şahinefendi has a unique vestibule, comprising two parallel sections with a narrow flat ceiling and a barrel-vault; and a single example found in Çanlı Kilise Area 6 was likely covered with groin vaults.¹⁰ Four other probable vestibules have been almost entirely destroyed, such that no clue as to their form has survived. It is worthy of note that nearly one-third (seven of 22) of the vestibules, particularly those in the group at Çanlı Kilise, feature a carved niche in one of their short walls, and two of this number can be found in the independent complexes.

10. Ousterhout, *Byzantine Settlement*, 92.

Besides being a connection between rooms opening into it, the vestibules may well have functioned as a waiting area for visitors seeking an audience with the head of the household in the main hall. The vestibules containing a niche indicate a hierarchical order, similar to that seen usually in the main halls. Correspondingly, besides serving as the waiting area, in some complexes the vestibule could also have served as a secondary hall for the receiving of visitors of lower status or rank. Porches were occasionally applied where the morphology of the rock was unsuitable for the carving of large vestibules, such as in Selime Kalesi (Area 2) in Selime-Yaprakhisar.

The majority (25 of 31) of complexes in the sample had at least one longitudinal hall that constituted the main reception area. Of these, three were three-aisled basilica, while the rest were rectangular in form, and with barrel-vault or flat ceilings in almost equal quantities. The halls were generally voluminous, varying in height from 4.5 to 6 metres, and the majority (23 of the total 28) were located on the main axis of the courtyard, accessed by either a vestibule or porch; and half of them had either a niche or a small room carved into the farthest end facing the central entrance. Aside from Aynalı Kilise, all of the independent complexes had longitudinal halls, of which six had emphasized ends. This, and the fact that only a few halls had more than one entrance, as well as the insistence on placing an intermediary space between the courtyard and the main hall, all point to the importance given to dramatizing meetings with the head of the complex, who would most likely welcome visitors in the emphasized end.¹¹

11. See Mathews and Daskalakis-Mathews, "Islamic-Style Mansions," esp. 300; and Ousterhout, *Byzantine Settlement*, 145-49.



Of the one-third (ten of 31) of courtyard complexes with a centrally planned hall, it is noteworthy that most (6) can be found in Çanlı Kilise, and that only two of the independent complexes feature such a hall. Aside from the example in Açksaray Area 4 (fig. 7, see room no. 4 in fig. 5), which was the main hall *per se*, all of the other centrally planned halls were used as secondary receptional spaces, complementing the longitudinal main halls.¹² Usually smaller than the longitudinal halls, the majority (eight of ten) feature a domed cruciform plan, and half are accessed through the vestibule. Area 12 in Çanlı Kilise even has an additional separate vestibule, located between the cruciform hall next to the main hall and the common vestibule. The cruciform halls in Selime Kalesi and Karanlık Kale are accessible only through the main longitudinal hall, and their secluded nature indicates that only selected/invited outsiders were permitted to enter, in that they afforded more privacy than the longitudinal main halls.

12. See Ousterhout, *Byzantine Settlement*, 149-51.



Figure 6: Açksaray. Barrel-vaulted vestibule of Area 5 set parallel to the façade. View towards the northern short wall (photograph by the author, 2011)



Figure 7: Açksaray. Cruciform hall of Area 4. View towards the south (photograph by the author, 2012)

Horizontal halls, similar to vestibules in form but not leading to other rooms, are rare within the courtyard complexes, as only the halls in Açıksaray Area 1 and Area 3.1 could be referred to with any certainty as horizontal halls rather than vestibules (see fig. 4). The central entrance on the long wall of the horizontal hall in Açıksaray, dividing the space into two equal parts and providing direct access from the courtyard, offers a different spatial perception and use that was certainly not as hierarchical as the longitudinal halls, and not as secluded as the centrally planned ones.

Churches

The majority (21 of 31) of complexes in the sample had at least one attached church (numbering 25 in total); while within the independent courtyard complexes, only Kılıçlar has no church. At the opposite extreme, only two complexes in the group at Açıksaray include attached churches.¹³ In Çanlı Kilise an additional masonry-built church seems to have functioned as the parish church of the settlement.¹⁴ The majority of churches in the sample, mostly unpainted, were cross-in-square in plan, which was typical for the Middle Byzantine period, and appeared in Cappadocia only during this era.¹⁵ The churches were usually located on one of the lateral wings of the complex, opening off the courtyard (see room no. 6 in fig. 2); and at least five had an additional entrance from the vestibule or a neighbouring room, supporting the notion of private use. A narthex or porch preceded the naos in the majority of churches, but due to the limitations afforded by the topography, their location in relation to each other is inconsistent. More than half of the narthexes or porches contained burial areas in the form of *arcosolia*, or graves cut into the floor; and four narthexes had additional burial chambers, while four churches had an adjacent side chapel containing graves. The fact that the majority of these extra funerary spaces are found in the half of the independent complexes, points to the importance of private commemoration. In Çanlı Kilise, on the other hand, dozens of rock-cut graves can be found carved into the rock-mass covering some of the churches;¹⁶ while Açıksaray features a common open-air cemetery containing more than 100 graves, cut into the plateau that forms the roof of the complexes in Areas 3.1 and 3.2 (see fig. 4). In Selime-Yaprakhisar, funerary churches outlined the boundaries of the settlement.¹⁷ Graves of infants and children found throughout courtyard complexes evidence presence of families.

13. Most recently the survey at Açıksaray conducted by the author revealed large number of isolated churches in the vicinity. Publications on the Açıksaray settlement and on the newly discovered and recorded churches are under preparation.

14. See Ousterhout, *Byzantine Settlement*.

15. Natalia B. Teteriatnikov, *The Liturgical Planning of Byzantine Churches in Cappadocia*, *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 252 (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 1996), 50.

16. See Ousterhout, *Byzantine Settlement*, 87, 91, 93.

17. See Veronica Kalas, "Sacred Boundaries and Protective Border: Outlying Chapels of Middle Byzantine Settlements in Cappadocia," in *Sacred Landscapes in Anatolia and Neighboring Regions*, BAR International Series 2034, ed. Charles Gates, Jacques Morin and Thomas Zimmermann (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2009), 79-91. For the burial practices in the region in general, see Robert Ousterhout, "Remembering the Dead in Byzantine Cappadocia: The Architectural Settings for Commemoration," in *Architecture of Byzantium and Kievan Rus from the 9th to the 12th Centuries*, *Materials of the International Seminar, November 17-21, 2009* (St. Petersburg: State Hermitage Publishers, 2010), 89-100.



Utilitarian Spaces

Especially remarkable in the sample is the high frequency of kitchens, identifiable from their huge conical, domed or pyramidal vault ceilings, and the central chimneys and hearths occasionally carved into the walls (see fig. 1). Indeed, almost two-thirds (18 of 31) of the complexes—six of which are independent—in the sample feature spaces that would appear to have been especially designed for cooking for large numbers of people.¹⁸ Some two-thirds of the kitchens open directly onto the courtyard or a front door space, with the remainder being accessed through the vestibule (see room no. 5 in figs 2, 5). Only the kitchen in Eski Gümüş was upstairs, in order to facilitate ventilation.¹⁹

Stables found in courtyard complexes with separate high mangers and rings for tethering indicate the presence of tall draft animals such as horses. The number of mangers varies from five to twenty, although most have more than fifteen, indicating fifteen horses (see room no. 10 in fig. 5).²⁰ Scholars associate stables related to the courtyard complexes with the “tradition of horse breeding in Cappadocia.”²¹ Alexander Kazhdan and John Nesbitt point to the late Byzantine *praktika*, suggesting “Only the richest peasants could afford horses.”²² Consequently, stables in courtyard complexes housing up to twenty horses have led scholars to insist on the “elite status” of their owners. Of the sample, one-third (ten of 31) of the complexes had stables, usually at the outermost end of the complex, and of these almost half were in Açıksaray, where more than 50 horses could be housed at one time. Ousterhout mentions several stables in Çanlı Kilise, while only two in Areas 1 and 15 are related directly to a courtyard complex.²³ Only Şahinefendi and Erdemli of the independent complexes contain stables, although others have been found near Selime Kalesi and Eski Gümüş. None of the above-mentioned stables, aside from the one in Area 15 in Çanlı Kilise, was as elaborate as the barrel-vaulted stables of Açıksaray.

Multifunctional Rooms

Besides the receptional core, church and utilitarian spaces (such as the kitchen and the stable), a series of rooms without an obvious function have also been found attached to the courtyard complexes. The vast majority are much smaller than the main receptional spaces, and are distributed around the courtyard

18. Rodley, *Cave Monasteries*, 248; see also Kalas, “Society and Settlement,” 89; and “Domestic Architecture,” 407-8. For further readings on Cappadocian kitchens see Kalas, “The Byzantine Kitchen in the Domestic Complexes of Cappadocia,” in *Archaeology of the Countryside in Medieval Anatolia*, PIIANS 113, ed. Tasha Vorderstrasse and Jacob Roodenberg (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 2009) 109-127; and Fatma Gül Öztürk, “The Unusual Separation of Cappadocian Refectories and Kitchens: An Enigma of Architectural History,” *Middle East Technical University Journal of the Faculty of Architecture* 29, no. 1 (June 2012), 153-69.

19. Rodley, *Cave Monasteries*, 110.

20. Kalas, “Society and Settlement,” 137-38; “Domestic Architecture,” 407; Ousterhout, *Byzantine Settlement*, 152-53; Tütüncü, “Stables,” 62.

21. Ousterhout, *Byzantine Settlement*, 153; see also note 20 above.

22. Alexander Kazhdan, and John Nesbitt, “Horses,” in *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 948.

23. Ousterhout, *Byzantine Settlement*, 152-53.

24. For a comparative study of other utilities such as storage areas, wine presses, mills, cisterns, dovecotes, as well as refuges, further investigations that include archaeological surveys are required. The degree of natural and especially man-made alterations complicate their identification, and their contemporaneity with the complexes is often questionable.

(see room nos. 7, 8, 9 in fig. 2). Additional rooms, accessed either through the vestibule or via the main hall, are occasionally found within the receptional core (see room no. 6 in fig. 5), and the occasional larger and/or distinctively decorated rooms found in prominent locations may have been supplementary reception areas (see room no. 7 in fig. 5). Although multifunctional rooms were rarely fully separated from the rest of the complex, they must have allowed some level of retreat for individuals, while some were probably reserved for female occupation.²⁴

Conclusions

25. See references in note 1 above.

Courtyard complexes have been generally identified in literature as the houses of landowning elites.²⁵ Although these complexes strongly differ from the more crudely carved structures in Cappadocia, the differences in scale and design between those in the sample are often negligible. In addition, while there is no obvious difference between the independent complexes and those grouped together, the study outlined here points to some nuances that exist not only between the individual complexes, but also between different groups.

The courtyard was the main generator of design, being applied wherever the topography allowed. The inverted T-plan layout, comprising the receptional core and usually adorned with an impressive rock-cut façade that imitated multi-story built architecture, was followed as the organizational scheme in the majority of independent as well as groups of complexes. Evidently, visibility and the projected status were of primary importance to the patrons. Additional centrally planned halls were rather peculiar to Çanlı Kilise, while horizontal halls were found only in Açıksaray. The strategic location of Çanlı Kilise and/or social stratifications might have required extra and more secluded meeting spaces, where the patrons would receive only selected/invited outsiders. Another possibility is that these secondary halls were reserved for female occupation,²⁶ as the rest of the complex and the settlement could be accessed freely by outsiders. The fact that vestibules in Çanlı Kilise often contain a carved niche on one of their short walls underlines the demand for multiple reception areas in the settlement.

26. See Mathews and Daskalakis-Mathews, "Islamic-Style Mansions," 301-2.

It is apparent that religion was part of daily life. Except for Kılıçlar, all of the independent complexes have attached churches, which also feature strongly in the groups of complexes. The exception to



this rule is the group at Açıksaray, where only two of the eight complexes contain churches. Nevertheless, Açıksaray, like Selime-Yaprakhisar, was home to a number of isolated churches that defined the boundaries of the settlement (see fig. 4), while Çanlı Kilise features also a masonry-built parish church. The churches found either within or near the complexes had usually a funerary function, although Açıksaray is unique in this regard, in that it features a large central cemetery. From this it can be deduced that places of worship and commemoration were indispensable in the private context,²⁷ and that alternative forms of both were offered within the periphery of a group of complexes.

27. See Teteriatnikov, *Liturgical Planning*, 178-82, esp. 181.

As for the utilitarian spaces, while the high frequency of kitchens is noteworthy within the independent complexes, the scarcity of stables is not peculiar to them, in that stables were rare also in the groups of complexes, aside from those in the Açıksaray group. Large kitchens indicate that the patrons had supplied large groups of people with food, including family members, dependents, and probably, from time to time, even military units.²⁸ The large stables at Açıksaray also point to intensive and permanent horse breeding.

28. Kalas, *Society and Settlement*, 89. See also note 18 above.

To conclude, for a landowner in the region, maintaining power and property would likely have depended upon their ability to provide such services to the military as accommodation, food, horses and even armed soldiers on occasions,²⁹ and may explain the appearance of courtyard complexes in isolation and as part of a group. Where the topography was suitable to accommodate several complexes side-by-side, and where the strategic position required such a concentration of forces, they would have had to coexist within a community, being unable to claim an entire slope for themselves. Still, a few complexes in the more prominent locations indicate a hierarchical order within the group, and may have functioned as anchors.

29. Evelyn Patlagean, "Byzantium in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries," in *A History of Private Life*, vol. 1, *From Pagan Rome to Byzantium*, ed. Paul Veyne (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987), 567, mentions that "military households" were obliged to supply "a family member fully equipped" to the army.

The creativity of the rock carvers, who were able to apply the same plan layout to varying morphologies, is remarkable,³⁰ in that it indicates the existence of a well-known plan type that was a source of inspiration, at least in the mind of the carver-architects and patrons, when not in their hands. The patrons of courtyard complexes, in adorning their houses with monumental façades, displayed their status, or perhaps the illusion of status, and it may be speculated that the local patrons of courtyard complexes, as part of the noble class, desired to live in houses that mimicked those of the civil aristocracy in the capital or of the military

30. For creative adjustment to topography, see also Ousterhout, *Byzantine Settlement*, 170.

31. See Rodley, *Cave Monasteries*, 4; see also George Ostrogorsky, "Observations on the Aristocracy in Byzantium," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 25 (1971), 7.

aristocracy, which were dominated by the few great Cappadocian families who owned extensive lands in the region from the ninth century onwards.³¹ In all likelihood, the question of patronage will never be answered with any level of certainty; ironically though, while almost nothing has survived of the palaces of the high aristocracy, the Cappadocian courtyard complexes that apparently imitated them are still standing, and await further research.

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