

NOMINATION TO THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST

Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage

Name: GOREME VALLEY

Identification No: 357

Date received by WH Secretariat: 17.1.85

Contracting State Party having submitted the nomination of the property in accordance with the Convention: TURKEY

Summary prepared by IUCN (March 1985) based on the original nomination submitted by Turkey. This original and all documents presented in support of this nomination will be available for consultation at the meetings of the Bureau and the Committee.

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1. LOCATION: In Nevsehir Province of Central Anatolia, between the towns of Avanos and Urgüp. Anatolian-Iranian Desert Biogeographical Province.

2. JURIDICAL DATA:

Use and protection of the resources of the area is controlled by the Cultural and Natural Assets Act (2863) administered by the Directorate of Museums and Antiquities. Since 1968 a proposal to establish the area as a "Historical National Park" has been under consideration (Law 2873) by the Directorate of Forestry and National Parks.

3. IDENTIFICATION:

The Göreme Valley is an eroded plateau in a formerly active volcanic region. The topography is a result of differential erosion of the volcanic tuff sediments by wind and water erosion. Typical features are pillars, columns, towers, obelisks and needles that reach heights of 40 m. The major erosional remnant Akdag (1325 m) is the dominant feature in the valley. The nearby Erciyas volcano is still active with occasional minor eruptions. Within these rock formations people have excavated a network of caves which served as refuges, residences, storage, and places of worship dating from the 4th Century. The surrounding landscape is agricultural with a number of small scattered rural villages.

The historical setting, the rock-hewn churches, and the unusual eroded landforms combine to produce a mixed cultural/natural landscape of unusual appearance. Architectural styles are based on the local stone and the valley has changed little over the centuries.

The continuous occupation over the centuries has not been conducive to the original wildlife and natural vegetation and there are no species of particular significance in the valley.

4. STATE OF PRESERVATION/CONSERVATION:

Although the area has been extensively used and modified by man for centuries the resulting landscape is one of harmony and consideration of the intrinsic values of the natural landforms. There has been some earthquake damage to some of the cones and pillars but this is seen as a naturally-occurring phenomenon. Overuse by tourists and some vandalism have been reported and

some incompatible structures have been introduced. A tourism development plan and a master plan for the proposed park area have been prepared to deal with these problems.

5. JUSTIFICATION FOR INCLUSION ON THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST:

The Government of Turkey has submitted the Göreme Valley as a mixed cultural/natural site. Justification for inclusion on the List for its Cultural values is being examined by ICOMOS. For natural properties the nomination suggests the following criteria are met:

- (i) Outstanding example representing earth's evolutionary history. The nearby Erciyas Dag volcano is still active and the tuff deposits it has created in the past are vivid evidence of previous volcanic activity.
- (ii) On-going geological processes. The eroded landscape patterns are spectacular examples of the effects of weathering processes on the underlying tuff deposits.
- (iii) Superlative natural features and exceptional combinations of natural and cultural elements.

357 GOREME VALLEY (TURKEY)

1. DOCUMENTATION:

- (i) Nomination form
- (ii) Consultations: U. Hirsh, M. Zekai Bayer
- (iii) Literature Consulted:
  - Master Plan for Protection and Use - Göreme Historical National Park, 1971.

2. COMPARISON WITH OTHER AREAS

There are 20 protected areas within the Anatolian/Iranian Desert Biogeographical Realm but none have the combination of natural eroded volcanic features plus the cultural attributes as Göreme. The tuff pillars are themselves unique and of a much different origin than similar-appearing columns as found in the glacially-affected landscapes of the Dinosaur World Heritage Site or the Badlands area of the USA.

3. INTEGRITY

The Göreme Valley has been under continuous human occupation for at least 16 centuries. A relatively harmonious human-dominated landscape now exists which is integrated into a spectacular natural setting. The impacts of uncontrolled tourism are of some concern and would be mitigated if the long considered park proposal was acted upon. The question of inclusion of the Erciyas Dag volcano and in fact the exact boundaries of the property are not altogether clear in the nomination.

4. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

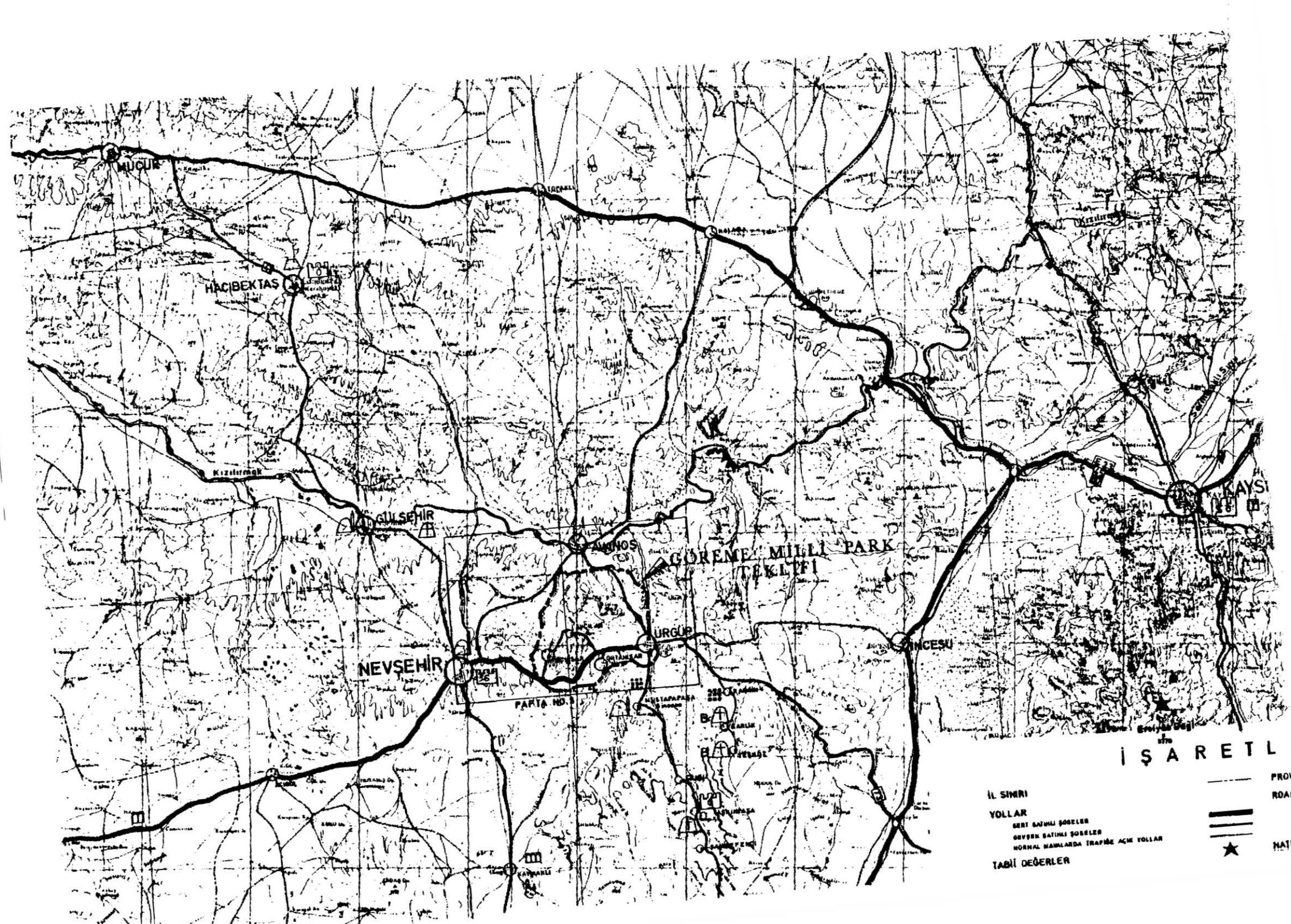
Further consultation with ICOMOS on the site is to be held during the coming Bureau meeting.

5. EVALUATION

The Göreme Valley meets criteria (iii) for natural properties as it contains unique natural features and displays a harmonious combination of natural and cultural landscape elements. Precise boundaries for the property need to be established and the Committee may wish to urge implementation of the 1968 proposal for protected area status to ensure future integrity.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Göreme Valley should be added to the World Heritage List on the basis of its values as a natural property. Boundaries of the site should ideally incorporate the 1968 park proposal. Based on the evaluation of the cultural values by ICOMOS, it may also be accepted as a mixed cultural/natural site.



# İŞARETLER

- İL SİMRİ
- YOLLAR
  - BERT SATHLI DÖRELER
  - DUYERK SATHINI DÖRELER
  - NORHAL HAMLARDA TRAFİKE AÇIK YOLLAR
- TABİİ DEĞERLER

