

GAZIANTEP



THE WORLD GROWS, GAZIANTEP IMPROVES

Irregular urbanization associated with extraordinary development and uncontrolled and unplanned housing projects in an attempt to deal with the massive influx of people to the city negatively affected the fabric and outlook of Gaziantep.

In consideration of this problem, the Gaziantep municipality started a new project. Thanks to the project, the general outlook of the city has significantly changed over the last nine years. The municipality has acted decisively to use opportunities in the city to combine culture, history and art in tourism efforts and to resolve social problems. By these actions, the municipality has set an exemplary model of modern local administration style.

The municipality has completed a number of infrastructure projects in an attempt to improve the image of the city. It has also paid attention to social studies, as well as health, culture and art issues for a better outlook and life in the city.

The municipality, which has focused on improving the physical environment, decided to change the entire infrastructure of the city for a lasting solution. Over the last nine years, the municipality has for the most part renewed the infrastructure and groundwork.

The Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality, which has provided a lot of services over the last nine years, has introduced significant changes and transformed the city. As a result of this effort and work, Gaziantep has become a European city, as evidenced by the improved employment, development, economy and cultural fabric of the city.

Gaziantep Mayor Asım Güzelbey notes that the current outcome is the result of longstanding efforts and plans drafted nine years ago. Güzelbey, stressing that Gaziantep has been picked as one of the 10 fastest-growing cities in Turkey and the world, further says that Gaziantep is now able to compete with European cities.

Güzelbey further says: "With its scientific centers, museums, roads, airport, entertainment centers, role as a modern transportation hub, giant shopping malls and grand hotels, Gaziantep is making huge progress. When there is no turmoil, private and public sectors take action to contribute to the process."

Cities compete

Noting that cities are now in bitter competition in such fields as the economy, culture and social issues, Güzelbey says: "Cities are making efforts to become a center of attraction by reliance on their cultural and economic assets."

Recalling that developing cities pay attention to their values and assets in an attempt to raise the living standards of their residents, Güzelbey notes that public institutions should cooperate with private actors and local ele-

ments to attain this goal.

Noting that they are working on a new vision of Gaziantep to combine history, culture and art, as well as tourism, Güzelbey further says:

"It is of utmost importance to preserve cultural assets and use them for tourism purposes. We have made significant investments in this field. We have done extensive work involving restoration, leisure and landscaping in the city of Gaziantep. We have redesigned and recreated this great city, which played an important role in the War of Liberation."

As local administrations, they would like to contribute to economic growth and visibly striking performance on the national level, Güzelbey says, adding that they are particularly eager to accentuate the importance of history and culture in the city. Noting that they have done extensive work to promote local tourism, the mayor argues that the city of Gaziantep is becoming a dream city for its residents and visitors.

Gaziantep: rising star of Turkey

Güzelbey, pointing out that Gaziantep is one of the most historical cities in the world, says: "Gaziantep, located at the intersection of different cultures, bears the legacies and traces of different civilizations. From this perspective, it holds visible importance in the field of tourism. Gaziantep is a fast-growing city; to this end, it is fair to refer to it as a rising star in Turkey. In recent years, the city has been changing. It is becoming a star city through modern urbanization projects and social initiatives, paying attention to its history and culture."

Noting that the city is attracting a great deal of attention in tourism and economy, Güzelbey recalls that the city has shown a visibly good performance that is well above the national average. Güzelbey notes that Gaziantep has attracted attention

from hotel managers and shopping mall administrators to become a center of attraction for the Middle East and is a candidate to become a center of congress tourism.

Güzelbey, noting that Gaziantep has always been an exemplary and model city throughout its history, says: "The city has made this huge progress without receiving state support. We have realized that not only states but also cities are in bitter competition in the world. Our model projects and development have attracted the attention of the World Bank and other major institutions. Recently, officials from the World Bank picked Gaziantep as a model city in energy efficiency. This is the outcome of our good performance."

Recalling that the world's leading problems include global warming, environmental degradation and water scarcity, Güzelbey says: "The Gaziantep municipality is the first municipality to draft an action plan on climate in Turkey. We have implemented this project under the support and sponsorship of the French Development Agency [AFD]. Our projects have also attracted the attention of the World Bank ... The bank is extending support to us on this matter. Gaziantep has become a city that contributes to Turkey and its residents. With these strategically important steps, Gaziantep has become a city that plays a leading role in Turkey's relations with its neighbors. If big institutions and companies pick Gaziantep as a pilot city in their model projects in Turkey, this should mean something."

Gaziantep is a global city now

Today, Gaziantep is a global city. On the one hand, it provides people with modern city life; on the other hand, it is also a city that acts responsibly, as evidenced by its social projects. It sends peace messages for its country and region through bonds of brotherhood. Gaziantep, which is referred to as a children-friendly city, baby-friendly city and a city of sisterhood and womanhood and nominated as a city of sports, has also been picked as one of the cities that pay attention to local democracy via its activities focusing on promotion of human rights; to this end, it was ranked among the top 12 cities in Europe in this category. Gaziantep has received the European Diploma 2012 by the sub-commission of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE).

Pointing out that the creation of a livable and better city depends on effective use of different and diverse ideas, Güzelbey says: "We pay attention to common sense. I believe that every project offered for the betterment of the city of Gaziantep will make a huge contribution to our city, region and country. As we all know, the communities are in a bitter race in the global order. In this race, those who use technology best and invest in education will make progress. These works in Gaziantep will play a huge role in Turkey's bright future."



An artifact from the Zeugma Mosaic Museum



Depiction of the Independence War at Panaroma Museum



Planetarium



Rumkale Castle



Asım Güzelbey

ROYAL CARPET'S ANTIMICROBIAL CARPET SETS GLOBAL EXAMPLE



Aydoğan Yıldır

The antimicrobial, antimitite and antifungal features -- the main aspects of its "3 Effect Carpet Project" -- presented by Royal Carpet in 2009 as the result of intense research and development stood as an example to the rest of the world. Royal Carpet, which has been a constant innovator in its sector, sells its special antimicrobial carpets nationally in Turkey, as well as to 30 countries around the world, including China.

Royal Carpet started its existence in the Turkish city of Gaziantep in 2005 as part of leading industrial company NAKSAN. Since its inception, it has made sizeable investments in research and development as well as general innovation, making it a leader in its sector as a result. Royal Carpet has implemented its effective antimicrobial, antimitite and antifungal properties in all of its projects. In doing so, it now

stands as an example to the rest of the world. Royal Carpet produces 400 different kinds of carpets and sells them not only within Turkey, but also in Germany, Italy, Canada, Australia, Saudi Arabia, Russia, Ukraine, Mauritania, Algeria, Libya, China, India and Japan, as well as in many other countries.

The assistant general manager of Royal Carpet in charge of marketing, Aydoğan Yıldır, talks about the importance placed by this company on investment and research and development, noting: "Having implemented for three years our special antibacterial, antimitite and antifungal properties in all our carpet models, we were awarded an Antibacterial Certificate in 2009 from the Ecological Test Research and Development Center, while in 2011 the Ministry of Health gave us the Biocidal Product Certificate because of the antimicrobial properties of all our products. We

set up our own laboratories with these certificates in hand. Our carpets were registered with all relevant authorities in Turkey along with the biocidal certificate awarded by the Ministry of Health."

19 creations, 400 kinds of carpet

Yıldır talks about the showroom goals in place for the company, noting: "We will bring the number of showroom stores up to 250. In fact, we have largely achieved this goal already." He added: "Also this year, we have worked on five creations: Pegasus, Flash, Royal Melodi, Yeni Flora and Poem. And we have persisted in our status of being a sector leader, with all the innovations we have done on carpets."

Elaborating on the features of these new products, Yıldır noted: "Pegasus has been made using pink and earth tones, and of course features a non-slip underside. Our Flash creation is also a wonderful mixture of colors as well as having the non-slip underside. As for Royal Melodi, it features mostly cream and beige colors and is produced with a fringe and generally has a very fresh look and feel. The creation Yeni Flora brings together the most beautiful tones of pastel, with each design produced like a separate art piece. As for Poem, it offers all the nobility of the color gray as well as the serenity of brown, and it possesses the romanticism and melancholy that so inspire poets around the world."

With 19 creations and more than 400 different kinds of carpets offered at Royal Carpet, Yıldır asserts: "Our aim is to see a 30 percent growth rate by the end of this year. At this point, there are around 1,000 stores throughout Turkey and more than 200 showrooms." Yıldır reiterated that the company's general goal was to see these numbers increase by the end of 2012.

Turkey's first full-warranty carpet

Yıldır talks about the innovation of the company's "Full-Warranty Carpet" project in Turkey, noting: "Any damage that occurs to a carpet from stains resulting from consumer errors, rips, water stains, fire stains, theft and errors made during production of the carpet now falls under the warranty. We have now added a one-year warranty for all other situations that may arise with the carpet, in addition to the two-year warranty we already had in place in situations where there was a production error." Yıldır talks about the "Innovation is Unique" philosophy that drives the company's work, noting that the company brought the Turkish handicraft Ebru (paper marbling) to carpets, and in doing so signed off on one more innovation. Talking about carpets featuring the art of ebru, Yıldır said: "This will be produced in small numbers, like handmade carpets. We can produce about 10-15 of these per day."

Exports to 30 countries

Yıldır notes that Royal Carpet employs around 600 people, and that around 25 percent of all its carpets are exported to 30 countries around the world, including notably Germany, Italy, England, Canada, Australia, Saudi Arabia, Russia, Ukraine, Mauritania, Algeria, Libya, China, India, Japan and many others. Yıldır talks about the company's goal of continued growth, saying: "We produce 400 different kinds of carpet at our factory in Gaziantep, where we have 6.5 million square meters of production capacity and a 100,000-square-meter closed production facility. We sell to Turkey and the world."

Main sponsor of Gaziantep BŞB basketball team

Explaining that Royal Carpet has become the main sponsor of the Gaziantep BŞB Basketball Team, which rose to the Beko Basketball 1st League, Yıldır said: "The team will compete through the 2012-2013 season under the name of the Royal Carpet Gaziantep Municipality Basketball Team." He further added: "Gaziantep, which was already powerful in the area of industry, has after 20 years seen its team rise to the first spot in the Beko basketball league. Gaziantep looks set to play an important role from now on in Turkish basketball. We at Royal Carpet will be supporting the full success of the team in the coming season."

Royal Carpet's success chart

- 2005: The company was founded.
- 2007: Became licensed producer of Pierre Cardin Carpets after receiving global production rights.
- 2007: Received the Research/Development Innovation Award for its metal brocade carpet project.
- 2008: Received the Research/Development Award for its project concerning carpets made using bamboo thread.
- 2009: Received the Research/Development Award for its Antibacterial Carpet Project.
- 2009: Receiving the Ecoteks Certificate, it began production of antibacterial carpets, with products under both the Royal Carpet and the Pierre Cardin labels being produced as antibacterial carpets. This way, the company signed off on a notable Turkish first.
- 2009: Received the Year's Golden Brand award.
- 2011: With the Biocidal Certificate awarded by the Ministry of Health, the company's carpets were registered as being officially antimicrobial.
- 2011: Company received the Jury Special Award in the Istanbul Chamber of Industry (ISO) Research and Development Innovation Awards contest.
- 2011: Signed off on one more global first by engaging in the Ebru Carpet Project, bringing the traditional Turkish art of ebru to carpets.
- 2011: Another global first occurred with the new Full-Warranty Carpet project, which offered expanded warranties to consumers.



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ROYAL
HALI
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IT'S NOT A DREAM, IT'S ROYAL

Gaziantep continues to be the quintessence of Turkey

ABDULKADİR KONUKOĞLU*

Gaziantep is writing history once again. The people of Gaziantep, who were honored by Parliament as gazis (veterans) because of their sacrifices during the War of Independence, are now acting as role models for Turkey in terms of economic growth.

As their success during the war is rightfully praised by the words of the founder of the Republic of Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk: "This sole Turkish city saved itself without financial aid, but by their own heroic deeds. Hence, the people of the city earned the right to the gazi title. Every city, every town and even the smallest village that calls itself 'Turkish' may take Gaziantep as an example."

The people of Gaziantep are staying leaders in industrialization, production, employment, export and modern urbanization. Gaziantep exports a sizeable amount of the valuable products that are produced in the four organized industrial sites. With \$5 billion worth of exports in 2011, Gaziantep became the sixth biggest exporter in Turkey, and because of the high demand for a fifth organized industrial site, the planning for the sixth



Abdulkadir Konukoğlu

has already begun. Gaziantep has become the "supply base" for Iraq and other neighboring countries. Gaziantep exported goods to 123 countries in 2001 and manage to bump that number up to 171 countries in 2011.

As I always say, "at the moment at least 10 of our city's people are traveling all around the world in search of new markets." The greatest asset this city has is its entrepreneurs. The golden key to our success is the unity and solidarity of our people in promoting Gaziantep. Gaziantep has the widest range of products in Anatolia and is involved in production within many sectors, leading it to become the

producing center in many of them. Gaziantep, which has 63 firms in the list of the country's top 1,000 exporters, is also home to 19 of Turkey's 500 largest corporations. Gaziantep is not walking, it is running. And because it is running, five organized industrial sites aren't enough to meet demand, so preparations are under way for a sixth organized industrial site. On the centennial of the founding of the Republic of Turkey, I believe Gaziantep will become the production, export and employment base of Turkey. I would like to reiterate a commonly quoted fact: In Gaziantep, there isn't enough agricultural land and there is almost no state investment. And that's a good thing.

If we had agricultural land or state investment, our grandfathers and our fathers would have worked in agriculture or for the state and we would follow their lead, thus being unable to succeed in industrialization. Gaziantep, a city which has a small number of bureaucrats and a large number of craftsmen, owes a large part of its success to being at the crossroads of many civilizations that were home to people of various religions. Gaziantep became successful because of that structure. Our fathers took our grandfathers' crafts and

turned them into workshops. And we took our fathers' workshops and turned them into holdings.

We just keep developing. We are working towards more productivity, more employment and more exports. Also, provinces in Gaziantep are not migrating to other provinces in the west thanks to the notable increase in employment that has accompanied the successful industrialization. Gaziantep is the center of industrialization in the region; hence it is Turkey's gateway to the Middle East. Further development in relations with neighboring countries will increase the importance of Gaziantep. The people of Gaziantep receive their education at home or abroad and then return to Gaziantep to make that education worthwhile. The people of Gaziantep use the money they make to expand their businesses. While working and investing, the people of Gaziantep take my motto "Turkey is the country, Gaziantep is the city" into consideration. It is this understanding that is going to carry Gaziantep to new heights.

SANKO, while planning our investments, first considers investing in Gaziantep. If it is not possible to invest in Gaziantep, we first consider the neigh-

boring cities and then other options. Because of this understanding, despite the increase in cost, we built our heavy construction equipment factory not in the Marmara region but in Gaziantep. We produce in 12 different sectors and we employ about 14,000 people. Last year, we exported goods worth over \$500 million. We export to over 100 countries, from the EU countries to the US, from Middle Eastern countries to African nations and to China. Investing in accordance with the market demand, high-quality products and sensible export planning are the keys to our success. Guided by its founder Sani Konukoğlu's motto "the trick of the business is honesty," SANKO has become a group of corporations that offer products and services worldwide. SANKO, which puts the happiness of its business partners, employees and society first, ensures it does not involve itself in any affairs that don't benefit society.

We work thinking "Where we stand is not where we are going to stand," and my understanding of the quote "If the wind doesn't blow, hit the row" keeps guiding us.

*Chairman of the board of SANKO Holding.

TERRY RICHARDSON*

To say that Gaziantep, a city standing astride the historic Silk Road in Southeast Turkey, has changed considerably in the last couple of decades is a massive understatement.

Until relatively recently most tourists and travelers viewed the city as little more than the gateway to more exciting places further east across the Euphrates -- the bustling bazaars of Şanlıurfa, the giant heads of classical gods erected atop Mount Nemrut by the megalomaniac petty-ruler Antiochus of Commagene, or the gorgeous tiers of honey-hued mansions gazing down on the Mesopotamian plain from Mardin. Today, however, people are drawn to this vibrant city for its own sake. So what has changed?

Even with the civil war unfolding horribly across the nearby Syrian border, Gaziantep is a booming "Anatolian Tiger." The massive Southeast Anatolian Project's (GAP) irrigation and hydro-electric power generation scheme is undoubtedly the major reason why Gaziantep has become the economic giant of the region, with both agriculture and industry flourishing. This economic boom has enabled the city to significantly improve infrastructure - which is always an attractive prospect for the visitor in search of a comfy hotel room and a charming restaurant. But more importantly, from the point of view of tourism, this newfound wealth coupled with some bold thinking by the local municipality has enabled the city to make the most of a history so impressive that Ottoman traveler Evliya Çelebi described it, in 1671, as "the city that is the apple of the world's eye."

'Damied' for the better?

The major turning point for tourism in Gaziantep, however, was the construction of the Birecik Dam on the Euphrates, some thirty-odd kilometers east of the city. It was well-known that there was a Greco-Roman settlement of some importance on the river banks, not far northwest of Birecik. However, it wasn't until the remains were threatened by an inundation of floodwaters from the dam that there was an international outcry, which allowed first French, in 1995, and then an international team of archaeologists, in 2000, to rescue a simply stunning collection of mosaics. The name of the ancient settlement was Zeugma (link or bridge in Greek). Founded in 300 B.C. by a successor of Alexander the Great, it later became a wealthy trade entrepot and military post on the Roman frontier. The beautiful mosaics, most picturing delightful scene from Greek mythology, adorned the floors of the mansion-houses of rich merchants.

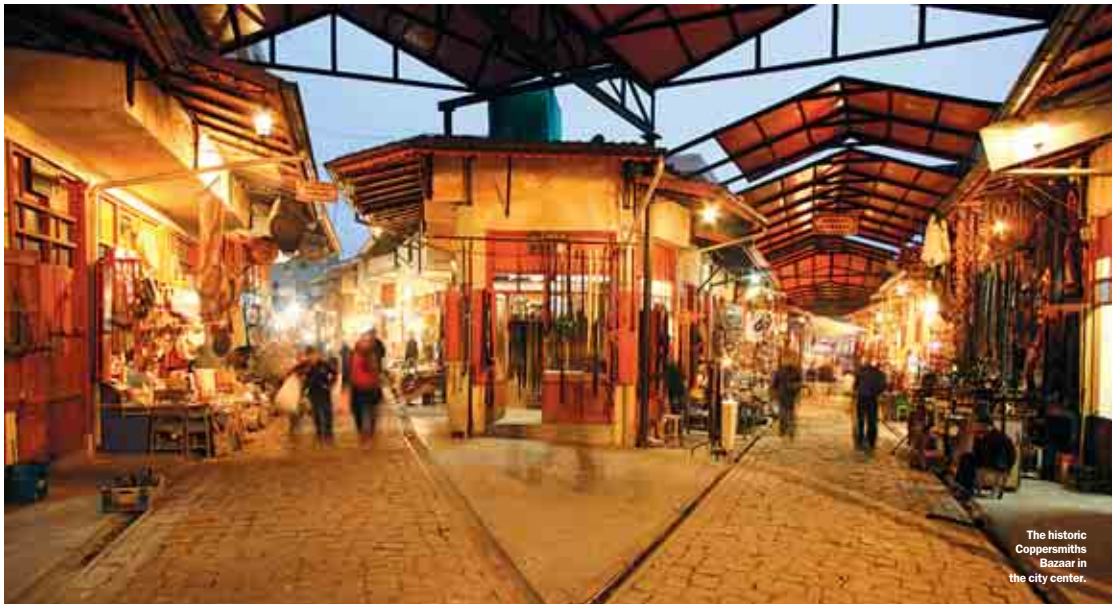
Gaziantep now has in its possession one of the most incredible and beautiful collections of mosaics in the world. The city did not waste its treasures. A massive new wing was added to the Gaziantep Museum of Archeology and intrigued visitors began to come -- Gaziantep was suddenly on the world map. Encouraged, the city began -- and continues to do so -- putting ever more resources into developing its obvious tourism potential as one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world. But just what is there to see, mosaics apart, in a city still huddled, as it has been for a millennia, around a spectacular castle-mound dating back some 5000 years?

Heritage -- big time

Over the last few years, literally dozens of buildings in and around the center, from historic stone houses to Arab-style

mosques and spacious "hans," have been restored. Heritage is big-time here, and virtually every building of any historic note has a sign-board next to it giving some explanation of what you are looking at. Museums of all types have sprung-up, which revel in the city's past and its unique Arab-influenced culture, from the tiny but exquisite museum devoted to Roman glass and other ancient artifacts through to one specializing in Gaziantep's distinctive and famous cuisine.

The obvious place to begin your exploration



The historic Coppersmiths Bazaar in the city center.

GAZIANTEP: APPLE OF THE WORLD'S EYE

is the kale (castle), a massive structure built atop a towering mound, which is half-natural and half the result of detritus built up over a millennia of occupation. The walls you see today date back to the time of the Byzantine emperor Justinian in the sixth century, but were re-modeled under the Mamluks during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

Unfortunately, it's not possible to make the most of the grand views over the old city from the top owing to renovation work, but you can still approach the castle through the main gate and wander around the Panorama Museum, which is housed in a tunnel built into the ramparts. The museum gives vivid insight into Antep's struggle against the French, who attempted to annex the city to French-mandated Syria during the Turkish War of Independence in 1920. Antep, as it was then known, was given the honorific prefix Gazi (warrior of Islam) as a result of that momentous struggle.

Exploring the bazaar quarter

Radiating-outwards from the skirts of the castle is the sprawling old bazaar quarter, which has recently morphed into a tourist-orientated cafe and shopping haven. It hasn't lost its character, however, and there are still plenty of old stone buildings awaiting restoration amidst already made-over structures such as the smart Ottoman-era Zincirli Han, and even further out, the Şıra Han, which houses the posh Sahar restaurant. Many of the mosques planted on these quaint streets

boast distinctive Syrian-style minarets, and elaborate balconies topped by ornate conical wooden roofs -- such as the Ottoman-period Sirvani and Tahtani mosques. The curving street north and west of the castle still rings to the sound of traditional copper beaters, and you can relax on a low-wooden stool on the pavement to enjoy the city's famous lahmacun (a tortilla-style bread cooked in a wood oven and smeared with spiced mince) from a hole-in-the-wall bakery.

When approaching Gaziantep by road, you can't fail to note the literally millions of pistachio trees planted across the bleached landscape which have done so much to boost the local economy. The bazaar is full of small shops specializing in local produce, including big sacks full to the brim with the nut that Gaziantep has made its own, so much so that it is usually known in Turkey today as Antep Fıstığı -- literally "Antep nut." You can even buy small brass nut-crackers, hand-made in the bazaar, designed especially to tackle those rogue, nail-nipping nuts that have failed to split properly in the roasting process. The vast array of pungent spices on offer, along with the delicious smells wafting from restaurants like the famed İmam Çağdas can't help but stimulate your interest in the local cuisine. One way to learn more is to check-out the intriguing Emine Gögüs Müzesi (Museum) (9 a.m. - 6 p.m. daily, TL 1), set in an old house in a back-street north of the castle.

More museums -- and the Armenian quarter

Also worth seeking out in these lively streets is the wonderful Medusa Glass Artifacts and Archeology Museum (9 a.m. - 7 p.m. daily, TL 4). The exhibition space may be just a few small rooms in an old courtyard house but the quality of artifacts is stunning -- from terracotta toy Hittite war chariots to exquisite Islamic-era gold work and much else besides. It's also a great place to unwind with a coffee or cold drink and watch the pet-monkeys squabble in their cage. A ten-minute walk to the northwest, past Gaziantepspor's stadium, the Gaziantep Museum of Archeology may have been stripped of its Zeugma mosaics but is packed with interesting objects -- don't miss the relief carved basalt slab in the garden with a vivid representation of the Hittite storm-god Tešheba.

The area southwest of the city center is the old Armenian quarter. This maze of alleys running between beautiful old courtyard houses is home to the Hasan Süzer Ethnography Museum (Daily 8 a.m. - noon and 1 p.m. - 5 p.m., TL 3). Although set in a nineteenth-century Armenian house, the museum captures the essence of the home as it was in the 1930s with its new Turkish owners, and gives a vivid insight into a bygone Gaziantep.

Around the corner is another old Armenian house, now the fine Pappas Cafe, where you sit in a shady courtyard and enjoy a Turkish coffee, and then pop upstairs to see some incongruous European style

and scene wall paintings. Further up the hill is the Kurtuluş Camii, a massive black and white domed stone structure, which previously was the Armenian St. Mary's Church, built in Italianate style in 1892. At the foot of the hill on busy Atatürk Bulvarı is the Kendirli Kilise, the city's former Armenian Catholic Church, also black and white, but quite different in style from its apostolic rival up the hill. Further west is the state-of-the-art Gaziantep City Museum (open 9 a.m. - 6:30 p.m., free), with all kinds of displays dealing with the history, culture and social life of the city -- especially in the 19th and 20th centuries.

It would be nigh on criminal, of course, to leave this fascinating city without visiting the Zeugma Mosaics Museum (Tues. - Sun., TL 8), an inconvenient but easily "bus-able" kilometer or two northeast of the center on the ring road. It's the jewel in Gaziantep's already well-burnished crown and truly a world-class museum.

How to get here

Gaziantep Airport, some 20 kilometers from the city center and linked by Havaş bus, can be reached from most Turkish cities with AnadoluJet via Ankara. There are also direct flights from Antalya with Sunexpress, from Izmir with Sunexpress, and from Istanbul with Sunexpress, Pegasus and Turkish Airlines.

Where to stay

Budget: Evin, Kayacak Sok. 11 Tel.: 0 (342) 231 34 92. Central, clean and comfortable and a bargain with double rooms from TL 45.

Mid-range: Zeynep Hanım Konağı, Eski Sinema Sok. 17, off Atatürk Bulvarı. 11 Tel.: 0 (342) 232 02 07, www.zeynephanimkonağı.com. The boutique hotel set around the small courtyard of a former-Armenian house provides compact and comfy accommodation in this historic part of town. Double rooms TL 95.

High-end: Tuğcan, Atatürk Bulvarı No. 34. Tel.: 0 (342) 220 43 23, www.tugcanhotel.com.tr. It is a luxury five-star establishment with spacious rooms tastefully furnished in contemporary style -- and a pool. Doubles from TL 160.

*Terry Richardson is a travel guide.

OSB PRODUCES SOLUTIONS TO BOOST THE CITY'S INDUSTRY, NOT COMPLAIN



Cahit Nakıbođlu

Our industrial zone is continuously expanding and developing, and with the completion of the fifth organized industrial zone (OSB) it will have a surface area of 35 million square meters, and continue to take confident steps toward becoming the investment hub of Turkey.

Our guiding policy is to help industrialists at all times and keep our industrial entrepreneurs at the center of all our investments. We are implementing this policy at full steam. As a result, Gaziantep has evolved into a world-renowned city with its achievements in the textile, food, machinery and packaging sectors.

The inhabitants of Gaziantep have an entre-

neurial spirit, and this entrepreneurship and assiduity provides a good model for Turkey as a whole. It is also the main driving force behind the achievements of the city's business circles. Sector diversity and the sheer number of countries to which the city exports goods make Gaziantep unrivaled among other industrial cities, boosting its competitiveness.

Our industrial zone hosts 700 big industrial companies, employing about 100,000 people. Companies that are leaders in their respective sectors in the country, and even around the world, are operating in our zone. Excluding the firms that generate power for internal use, our OSB consumes 270 million KW of electricity, 1 million tons of water

and 20 million cubic meters of natural gas monthly.

Gaziantep has the sixth highest volume of exports in Turkey, and this is a major achievement. We feel happy and proud to have contributed to the nation's growth by boosting our exports to \$4.9 billion last year. Behind this achievement and verifiable figures is another story: All this was achieved by Gaziantep's industrialists under difficult conditions. Our city and OSB did not benefit from recent state incentives as they deserved, and were therefore faced with unfair competition from rivals in many sectors. Recent developments led to the disruption of trade with Syria and the closure of the border crossings, making transit through Syria virtually impossible and posing great problems for our city and industrial zone.

But Gaziantep's industrialists have chosen to seek solutions instead of merely complaining about these negative developments. With their experience and successful projects, they have managed to boost production, employment and exports even under such dire conditions. The main factor behind this success story is the unity, integrity and generous willingness to share experience among the industrialists of the OSB and the region. Our industrialists never acted selfishly. Rather, they saw the entire OSB as a single body and sought ways to achieve things collectively.

Cahit Nakıbođlu is the President of Gaziantep Organized Industrial Zone



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Zirve University: An international education hub at Gaziantep's heart

When the world's first international university came into existence in medieval times, it marked the start of a long tradition of teaching, cultural exchange and scientific inquiry that has endured long into the 21st century. Continuing this tradition, a center of scientific research and innovative instruction, Zirve University, is located in Gaziantep, in southeastern Anatolia.

Zirve, a newly established university, has already become a highly regarded educational institution and offers more than 20 departmental programs housed in seven faculties: health sciences, engineering, education, law, economics and administrative sciences, communication, and architecture and design. The newest faculty, health sciences, will begin admitting students to the departments of nursing, physiotherapy and rehabilitation, and nutrition and dietetics in fall 2013.

Zirve is not only a favorite education destination for Turkish students, it is also popular with international students. Despite being only 4 years old, Zirve University currently has 206 international students enrolled from 47 countries around the world.

Zirve University, as a leading international institution of higher learning in Turkey, is committed to attracting and nurturing outstanding scholars from around the world through excellence and innovation in teaching and learning and research and knowledge exchange, as well as contributing to the advancement of society and the development of leaders through a global presence, regional significance and engagement with the rest of Turkey.

The stated mission of Zirve University is to achieve excellence in teaching and research to produce graduates with a sound professional knowledge, integrity of character, a keen sense of social responsibility and a passion for life-long learning. The university stands committed to creating an environment conducive to attracting the best students, faculty and support staff to contribute to the development of a prosperous, peaceful and enlightened society.

The geopolitical position and influence of Turkey within the region is obvious and without question, and Zirve University in southeastern Anatolia makes it a university of significant geostrategic importance. The university, realizing this, established the Middle East Strategic Research Center, conducting scientific studies centered on the global impact of the political, economic and cultural attributes of the region.

Zirve University Rector Adnan Kısa states, "Zirve University understands that education must transcend borders to foster an interconnected world, to train students to become global citizens and build thriving communities."

GASKİ: an environmentally friendly institute in Gaziantep

Having earned the appreciation of Gaziantep's inhabitants with its investment in water and sewage systems, the Gaziantep Water and Sewerage Administration (GASKİ) is now investing heavily in raising environmental awareness.

According to GASKİ General Director Fahrettin Uslusoy, urban sprawl is quickly expanding the areas to which municipalities must provide services. Uslusoy explains that with the technological developments of the 19th century, ever-increasing human needs and the escalating use of industrial products, environmental pollution has skyrocketed, sparking new concerns about the environment around the globe. People from all over the world have started to

realize the damage done to the environment during the production of all sorts of technological products now considered essential for the future and welfare of human beings and countries. Uslusoy notes that the awareness of the general public should be raised regarding climate change, global warming and the pollution of water resources as well as the proper handling of domestic wastes, waste water, industrial wastes and medical waste in order to minimize their threat to people and nature.

Stressing that the need for awareness has come to the fore, Uslusoy said: "The most dangerous risk for our country is the pollution of water resources. When all environmental problems are assessed, I

think the most dangerous problem is the pollution of water resources." Uslusoy indicated that the pollution of water resources is a particular problem in Turkey's industrial zones and stated that the pollution in the Marmara, Thrace, Aegean and central regions of Turkey poses a serious threat to the country's future.

He added that GASKİ is working diligently to ensure the water resources in Gaziantep and its surrounding region are kept unpolluted. "Although the drinking water for Gaziantep is supplied by the water resources in Kahramanmaraş, we have allocated sizeable funds to ensure that the dam in question and its catchment basin are kept clean and uncontaminated. Likewise, we are investing heavily

in keeping the ground water resources within the province clean and unpolluted. In addition to this, we are working seriously to ensure the safe disposal of used [waste] water. First of all, we are trying to make sure that waste water is collected via a sewage system and then treated at waste water treatment facilities before it is discharged into nature. Currently, we treat nearly 100 percent of Gaziantep's waste water. This figure is very important for the city. Almost all waste water in the province is treated. Only a few villages do not have waste water treatment facilities. In those villages, waste is collected in cesspools. In this way, we prevent any contamination of the receiving environment," he said.



Fahrettin Uslusoy

Sezer Cihan



Gaziantep: a bountiful city

A diverse natural landscape combined with historical and cultural richness has shifted Turkey to a position where it can be a challenging provider in the area of culture tourism.

Local administrators of historical cities should first have an awareness of their cultural and historic heritage and decide on the projects that should be prioritized. To this end, the Historic Cities Association (TKB), jointly established by the municipalities, has introduced a new interpretation of cultural heritage to Turkey in the past decade.

The TKB is a prominent entity incorporating about 360 member municipalities that organizes and motivates them through gatherings, project funding and conservation projects, and incentive awards. It has brought about new opportunities in such endeavors as prioritizing conservation projects, assigning greater responsibilities and allocating greater financial resources to local administrations, raising incentive funds for private entities to run conservation activities, and legislative changes in the area of conserving natural and cultural assets. Driven by enthusiasm to protect our cultural heritage, and, more important, guided by the conviction that familiarity with our past is indispensable to a healthy future, we have become a city with the motto "Gaziantep turns its presence into bounty" and embarked on this endeavor by establishing a Conservation, Implementation and Inspection Office (KUDEB).

We have embarked on conservation projects that aim to restore the ancient city and preserve its cultural assets, so that we have ensured their passage from generation to generation. For an urban restoration project to bear positive results, we insist there is an organization in which all the participants -- the authorities, investors, users, experts and project owners -- take an active part.

In this regard, the solidarity among the city's local and public administration, its district municipalities, nongovernmental organizations and its populace sets an example for other provinces. Projects of this kind have gained a social dimension and come to be associated with the city of Gaziantep. What served as a catalyst to enable the completion of such projects in Gaziantep was the Foundation for the Promotion and Protection of the Environment and Cultural Heritage (ÇEKÜL), headed by a staunch restoration advocate, Professor Metin Sözen, and our mayor, Asım Güzelbey, who unwaveringly stood by these endeavors and attached great value to the cultural and historical heritage.

The Zeugma Mosaic Museum, the Yesemek Stone Quarry and Sculpture School (which houses stonework that dates back thousands of years), the ancient city of Doliche, the Antep Castle, inns, mosques, churches, coppermithing, kutnu fabric, yemenis and other handicrafts, Antep pistachios, kebabs and the other 291 dishes from the local cuisine are just some examples of the richness and diversity that beckon visitors.

Sezer Cihan is secretary-general of the Historical Cities Association.

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GAZIANTEP'S FUTURE VISION AND EDUCATION

IBRAHİM ÖZDEMİR*



İbrahim Özdemir

Gaziantep is a historic and modern city founded at the intersection of the ancient Silk Road where people of different faiths, languages, races, cultures and civilizations coexisted in peace for many centuries. It is also one of the most remarkable economic centers in our country with its rapidly growing industrial and entrepreneurial activities.

Gaziantep seeks to increase the total amount of exports from \$5 billion in 2011 to \$30 billion by 2023. In addition to the growing employment opportunities based on its dynamic economy and industrial sectors, it is one of the cities that attract people by virtue of its opportunities as a modern city.

How will these dynamics affect the future of Gaziantep?

According to Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) data, the sustainability of modern economies depends on quality education. Is it therefore possible to achieve these goals without improving the current outlook of education in Gaziantep? To what extent will the existing and future universities in the city become determinative in this future?

Gaziantep needs to consider all these issues and take the necessary measures accordingly.

In fact, French futurist Jacques Attali had warned us with the following remarks: "The future outlook of the world in 2050 is being determined now. What will happen by 2100 is being considered now. Will our children live in a habitable world or will they live in hell and hate us? Our preferences will determine this. If we want to leave them a habitable world, we need to think about the future and understand how to shape it."

To this end, a review of the current outlook in educational activities in Gaziantep does not provide a good picture. Despite all recent efforts, there

are still many problems, including crowded classes, a lack of teachers and instructors and other serious issues associated with migration.

As underlined by Attali, it seems necessary to think about these intricate problems and offer short- and long-term solutions for the sustainability of our future and our dynamic economy. And if we fail to find solutions to these problems, we will need to face the social consequences of these problems. The recent tragic incidents that took place in our city should be evaluated from this perspective as well.

For this reason, the significance of universities for the community and people and the goals that they have to accomplish in the 21st century have become more complicated. In this period where globalization has become more influential in every field and holds new opportunities and risks for individuals and institutions, universities need to go through a process of transformation based on an integrated approach in economic, social and cultural fields. To this end, they have to consider the global tendencies, as well as their unique values and the strategic considerations in the region.

This has been stressed in the UNESCO World Higher Education Conference in 2009 on the new dynamics of higher education and research for social change and development. It was said in the conference that higher education needs to serve as an engine for economic, cultural and democratic change and transformation.

For this reason, education has become a matter of life or death for a nation or country

in the 21st century. Education is a strong asset in this world where people and places are interconnected and the planet has turned into a small village by virtue of advanced technology and communication tools. It is impossible for those countries who fail to train their children via quality education to acquire economic and political independence. In addition, only those countries with quality education and human capital can protect themselves against threats associated with globalization and benefit from its opportunities.

According to research conducted by the OECD, human capital offers a number of benefits. Some of these benefits could be relevant to individuals, including better health services, individual betterment and opportunities to take extensive part in social life.

From an economic perspective, the opportunities may be different: The benefits of human capital may directly affect the welfare of individuals and the nation as well. On an individual level, people make more money as they become more educated. The average income of a well-educated person is 25 percent greater than the income of those with

secondary education diplomas in Denmark and in New Zealand. This figure is as high as 120 percent in some other countries. In the meantime, national economies may grow by 3 to 6 percent for each year that the individuals reserve for education.

In conclusion, in a globalizing world, education is the key to resolving all major problems and to sustainable development. For this reason, education and training systems should be rearranged in a way to equip students with new skills that would enable them to be more innovative and creative. In addition, the education system should also make sure that students become flexible enough to adapt themselves to social developments and changes and improve their skills as well.

One of the best ways to tackle the crisis is to invest in human capital and education. In order to deal with not only economic but also social and cultural crises, we need quality human capital and creative individuals who offer new ideas and solutions.

At Hasan Kalyoncu University, one of our goals is to transform and change the society, economy and our cultural and artistic life based on knowledge and information and to prove our success in the globalizing world.

Rektor, Hasan Kalyoncu University, Gaziantep



Major urban transformation projects of municipality in Şahinbey help reshape district's appearance

The Şahinbey municipality, one of the largest in Gaziantep, has attracted countrywide attention for the public services it provides. Mayor Mehmet Tahmazoğlu said the municipality has made large investments in the town during his term as mayor.

Noting that they focus on the needs of the people in the city in their decisions-making process, Mayor Tahmazoğlu also said: "We will keep investing in our people. We would like to take our services to every street and neighborhood in our city."

Şahinbey picked as model municipality in urban transformation

In consideration of the growing problems associated with rapid urbanization and the flow of people from rural areas into town, the local authorities have initiated an urban transformation project in an attempt to raise the living standards of the residents.

Recalling that they would implement a comprehensive project of urban transformation, which will include 35,000 houses in 18 districts, Mayor Tahmazoğlu said they pay particular attention to make sure that this project does not create any problems for the people. Mayor Tahmazoğlu also noted: "Irregular urbanization is the greatest problem in the city. We need to implement proper urban transformation projects to address these problems. By the time the urban transformation project is done in 18 neighborhoods, we will have



created a modern Şahinbey and resolved the traffic problem in the city. It is hard to find green spaces and recreational areas in our region. We will create these kinds of people-friendly spaces within the urban transformation project. We also want to assure people that they will not be inconvenienced as we go through this transformation process."

Urban transformation work kicks off in four neighborhoods

Mayor Tahmazoğlu indicates that they have initiated the relevant work for urban transformation in four of the city's neighborhoods. Environment

and Urbanization Minister Erdoğan Bayraktar paid three visits to the city to see the progress. Mayor Tahmazoğlu notes that the minister referred to this work as exemplary.

For better implementation of the project, a large amount of land has been expropriated. A total of TL 12.644 million was paid to the owners of the various parcels of land in 2010 whereas this amount became TL 59.31 million in 2011, and TL 110 million has been reserved for further expropriation of land in 2012. There are four neighborhoods earmarked for urban transformation. The first is Nuripazarbaşı. Not-

ing that the houses are being demolished in the neighborhood, Mayor Tahmazoğlu said 993 out of 1,422 units in the area have been expropriated while 714 have been demolished thus far.

After the conclusion of the urban transformation, Özdemirbey Street, which has experienced serious traffic problems during the construction, will be reconstructed and have six lanes. Demolition will be completed by the end of this year. The local authorities will start the construction of modern buildings in the spring.

The second area facing urban transformation are Yazıcık and Türktepe. A total of 235 out of 662 housing units have been expropriated and 176 have already been demolished. In Güzelvadi, another neighborhood set to experience urban transformation, 25 buildings have already been demolished as part of the project. The other neighborhood is Perlikaya-Serinevler, where 300 housing units have been built. The units are being offered for sale to low-income families. The payments are to be made in small installments. The buildings also house social facilities, including childcare centers, training centers and workshops.

A total of 296 housing units have been built in Etiler, which are being offered for sale to people living within and outside the area. Evacuated homes will be demolished and replaced with newly constructed units as part of the urban transformation project.



Mayor Mehmet Tahmazoğlu

New creations from Pierre Cardin Carpet dazzle

Pierre Cardin Carpet, which entered the market in 2012 with the slogan "Fashion Impressions" and the aim of opening 159 showrooms, has managed to capture the hearts and minds of consumers with its new creations.

Pierre Cardin Carpet's national sales and marketing general manager, Aydoğan Yıldır, who notes that regional sales points for his company were completed in 2010, says, "When the power of a 100-year-old brand was combined with a wide range of different colors and the special designs of Pierre Cardin carpets, what came about was a company that conceptualized style, a company that took its place as the final word on fashion in its sector."

Yıldır notes that the four new creations from Pierre

Cardin Carpet this year have been very popular with consumers, saying: "Akantus is one such new creation in which classic designs are made to look older, and then reinterpreted through special dyeing methods. This creation is one which also boasts a non-slip bottom surface. The Sensitive creation has layered pastel tones and also boasts the non-slip bottom surface, offering up a carpet that has the ability to change the space it is in. Perspective carpets boast a harmony of white and other colors. And then there is Apero, which reinterprets all the most beautiful colors of nature."

150 showrooms for 2012

Yıldır says in the search for appropriate spots for its new showrooms, his company was looking for places that they

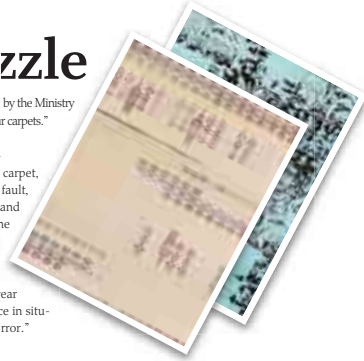
believe reflect the status of the brand, noting that "with more than 300 designs that define style in carpet trends, Pierre Cardin Carpet serves customers with 600 auxiliary sales spots and 80 showrooms." Yıldır notes that the company aims to see 150 showrooms for its products in 2012, saying, "We will achieve this goal by the end of the year."

Yıldır points to the importance placed by Pierre Cardin Carpets on research and development, as well as innovation, in helping the brand assume a leadership position in the sector. He says: "The antibacterial, anti-mites and antifungal qualities we have applied to our carpets in the past three years were awarded with a certificate for the 'Three Effect Carpet Project' in 2009. In 2011, we received the Biosidal product certificate declaring that our products are anti-

microbial. The Biosidal certificate was granted by the Ministry of Health for the antimicrobial nature of our carpets."

Carpet warranties expanded

According to Yıldır: "Any damages to a carpet, from stains as a result of consumers' fault, to rips, water stains, fire stains, thefts and errors made during production of the carpet, now falls under our guarantee. We have now added a one-year warranty for all other situations that may arise, in addition to the existing two-year warranty which we already had in place in situations where there was a production error."



Şehitkamil
Mayor
Muhammet
Rıdvan
Fadıoğlu

Architecture, tech. bring admiration to Şehitkamil culture, congress center

The culture and congress center that Gaziantep's Şehitkamil municipality opened last year has quickly emerged as an indispensable venue for cultural and artistic activities.

The center features the traditional architectural style unique to the city such as the main entrance courtyard, the places gathered around this courtyard and the decorative pond in the middle. Gaziantep's historical architectural elements such as copper and iron work, natural stone overlay, nacre (sedef) work, traditional handicrafts and nacar (a form of woodworking unique to the city) are salient architectural elements used in decoration.

With its ingenious architecture and state-of-the-art technology, the place is perfect for all sorts of events and brings style to the city's social and cultural life. The center offers trouble-free and satisfactory performance thanks to its technological infrastructure and opens global doors to its guests with its fast Internet access.

Inaugurated by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the center contributes greatly to the region's economy. Groups coming from all across the country hold large events at the center, which is also available for local events. With its capacity to boost employment in the region and hold a diverse array of events all year round, the center proves its merits.

The Şehitkamil Culture and Congress Center serves the needs of not only Gaziantep but also the whole region. It has thus far hosted large symposiums and meetings such as the Path of the Prophet and the Abant Platform.

With usable space of over 7,000 square meters, it is the biggest center in the region.

Its largest hall has a capacity of 1,070 seats and is perfect for stage plays and concerts. This main hall has a 300-square-meter stage.

The center also features three multi-purpose 300-seat halls, one multi-purpose 70-seat hall, two five-seat seminar rooms, one 35-seat full-fledged meeting room, an 800-square-meter main entrance lounge, two 300-square-meter side lounges, a 1,250-square-meter exhibition and fair hall, a VIP room, lobbies, administrative facilities, equipment allowing simultaneous translation in four languages and a parking lot for 500 vehicles.



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GAZIANTEP

SIGHTS BEYOND THE CITY

Much of old Halfeti, and many nearby villages, are today submerged beneath the waters of the Birecik dam, but what's left of the old settlement has a magnificent situation overlooking a dramatic gorge cut by the famous river

TERRY RICHARDSON GAZIANTEP



Euphrates at Halfeti

With its superb state-of-the-art Zeugma Mosaic Museum, housing one of the finest collections of Roman-era mosaics anywhere in the world, the wealth of recently restored stone houses, hans (urban caravanserais), mosques, baths and other fine period buildings sprawling out from the foot of its imposing citadel, its traditional bazaar quarter and justly famed cuisine, it's hardly surprising that the southeastern Turkish city of Gaziantep has become a major tourist draw. Much less visited, however, are the sights beyond the city, those set in pale, sun-bleached hills leavened by vivid green pistachio plantations, dotted with silvery-green-leaved olive trees and riven by gorges, or on broad, fertile plains that become a riot of color in autumn as villagers spread out masses of red peppers to dry in the sun. To the north and east sparsely populated and increasingly impressive hills presage the mighty Toros range, eastwards the turbid waters of the Euphrates coil their way through precipitous canyons, whilst to the south and west the hills begin to fade into the upper Mesopotamian plain and Syria.

With your own wheels it's easy to visit all the places mentioned below on day outings from your base in Gaziantep -- and some of them can be reached without too much trouble using local transport.

South-west to Tilmen Hüyük and Yesemek

Just 10 kilometers east of the market town of İslahiye, itself some 90 kilometers from Gaziantep, is the ancient settlement of mound of Tilmen Hüyük. First occupied by humans in the Chalcolithic age (around 6,000 years ago) it was in the second millennium B.C. a very important Hittite outpost, far from the imperial capital at Hattuşaş, east of Ankara. Settlement mounds are, of course, strewn liberally across the so-called Fertile Crescent, a broad arc of land sweeping northeast from the Sinai into southeast Turkey and down again to the head of the Persian Gulf, an area often dubbed the "cradle of civilization" as so many important civilizations sprang up here.

Many of the mounds, however, despite the layers of history they contain, have either never been dug by archaeologists or, even if they have, little or nothing has been done to interpret them for the amateur. Tilmen Hüyük (open Tuesday-Sunday, 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., free) however, is an exception. Excavated first by Turkish and then by Italian archaeologists, not only have the walls of the various buildings -- including a royal palace -- built by the successive peoples who inhabited the site been meticulously uncovered, there's a number-sequenced walkway leading around the hill and a plethora of carefully thought out display boards in place actually explaining to visitors what they are looking at. Remarkably we still don't know the ancient name

of what must once have been the "capital" of a small "state." Even if you're not that interested

in archaeology or history, Tilmen is well worth a visit for its pleasant location in a broad valley (actually the northern reaches of the African Rift Valley) and the lazy, reed-fringed river looping its way around the mound, alive with bird and aquatic life. Twenty or so kilometers south of Tilmen lies another fascinating site, in the isolated village of Yesemek. Here, lining a hillside running up from a stream, is a remarkable collection of hundreds of Hittite statues (open daily dawn-dusk, TL 2) carved from the local basalt between the 14th and seventh centuries B.C. The most common types are lions and sphinxes, the former of which usually flanked the entrance to Hittite temples, though there are also mountain gods and chariot groups. In an age long, long before mechanized transport it seems incredible that the stone would be quarried here, hewn into both finished and semi-finished statues weighing many tons, and then transported to various locations across the largely hilly Hittite domains on rudimentary roads using beasts of burden.

East to Zeugma

The excavations of the ancient city of Zeugma, which have bequeathed the Zeugma Mosaic Museum in Gaziantep its riches, are still visitable. Even though much of the ancient settlement now lies under the limpid waters of the Birecik Dam on the Euphrates, some of the villas of the wealthy denizens of the former city have survived the deluge and one particular group of houses, terraced into the steep, rocky banks above the dam waters, has now been covered with an impressive steel and wire building complete with walkways, and you can still see some wonderful mosaics in situ. What's on show, in fact, is very much like the more vaulted terraced houses at Ephesus, over on Turkey's Aegean coast. Unlike the houses at Ephesus, however, Zeugma as yet has no entrance fee - though it does have a pistachio tree-shaded café overlooking the dam waters. The site of Zeugma is some 30 kilometers or so from Gaziantep and is best reached with your own vehicle by heading east on the E-90, then turning left (north) just past the village of Dut, not far east of Nizip, and following signs which lead you under the new 0-52 toll highway and thence to the site.

Across the Euphrates to Halfeti

Although strictly speaking it's actually in the province of Sanlıurfa, pretty Halfeti, perched above the dam waters northwest of Birecik (40 kilometers east of Gaziantep), a town straddling a major crossing of the Euphrates, is usually reached from Antep. Much of old Halfeti, and many nearby villages, are today submerged beneath the waters of the Birecik dam, but what's left of the old settlement has a magnificent situation overlooking a dramatic gorge cut by the famous river. Upstream the imposing fortress of Runkale was closed for restoration at the time of writing, but is actually much more impressive when seen from the water anyway. It's situated on the west (Gaziantep province) side of the river and is the goal of virtually all the boat tours which leave the palm-lined waterfront in Halfeti. The river trip allows visitors to experience the dramatic gorge scenery and gaze curiously at the minaret of a drowned mosque poking up above the dam waters. Most people only stay for the time it takes to enjoy a sarbot (a kind of catfish caught in the river/dam) or trout meal in one of the many waterside restaurants and take the boat tour upstream, but there a few very simple places to stay here, tucked away amongst the old honey-hued Armenian houses in the upper village, the steep backstreets green with fig, walnut and mulberry trees. It should take around an hour and half to get here from Antep in your own vehicle, alternatively take a dolmuş (minibus) to Birecik, from where there is a half-hourly dolmuş on to Halfeti.



Zeugma - courtyard house

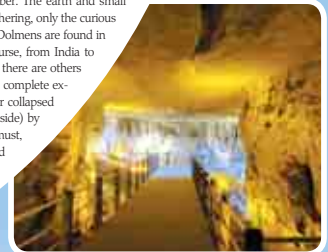
North to Doliche

Eleven kilometers to the north of the city is one of the province's least known ancient sites, Doliche. Once an important settlement in its own right, today it's tucked away behind one of the massive industrial estates that ring this booming city, above a scruffy railway line on the edge of the village of Dülük. In the early third century A.D. it was the cult center of one of the many mystery religions which spread like wildfire across the Roman Empire. The name of the god worshipped by initiates went by the rather grand and wordy title of Jupiter Optimus Maximus Dolichenus, a fusion of the chief Roman god Jupiter and an updated version of the Hittite storm-god Teišub (Tarhunza) -- who must have been worshipped here in an earlier period. Fittingly for a mystery religion, its secrets were known only to initiates so we know next to nothing about the theology behind the faith, nor its rituals. Shrines to the god whose worship centered on a hilltop here have been found as far afield as Austria, Germany, Hungary, Italy and Romania.

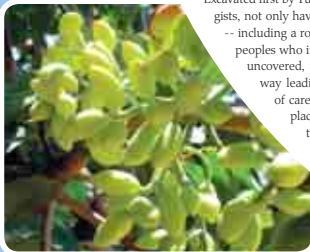
The chief focus for today's visitor, however, hidden in a cliff behind what looks like a giant BBQ-cum-picnic park (though the guards assured me that picnicking and barbecuing were strictly forbidden as this was an ancient site) are twin caves linked by a single entrance. Both have been much modified by the hands of men over the millennia, and both well-lit and explored by means of walkways. The caves are the twin chambers of the largest Mithraeum yet found in the world. Whilst initiates were worshipping Jupiter Doliche in the nearby hilltop temple, followers of the god Mithras were sacrificing bulls in honor of their deity in this underground temple and ritually washing themselves in the blood of the sacrificial victims. Mithraism, like the cult of Jupiter Dolichenus, was a mystery religion and even more widespread in the Roman world, with cult-shrines found as far away as northern England.

Mysterious dolmen

Found some 700 meters or so up in the Karadag mountains, beyond the small town of Yavuzeli, itself around 65 kilometers northeast of Gaziantep, is a curious relic of the Bronze Age, a dolmen, right by the main road and clearly signed. Comprising three or more upright stones capped by a horizontal stone, dolmens were tombs, originally covered with earth and smaller stones to make a barrow-like burial chamber. The earth and small stones having fallen prey to weathering, only the curious capped standing stones remain. Dolmens are found in many places in the world, of course, from India to Ireland and France to Korea and there are others to be found in Anatolia. The one complete example (there are around 25 other collapsed dolmens scattered across the hillside) by the roadside beyond Yavuzeli must, however, be the easiest to visit and has a very grand setting, with wonderful mountain and valley vistas.



Shrine at Jupiter Doliche



Pistachios in early summer

