

# Ancient Lands of Eastern Turkey

Royal  
Academy  
of Arts

23-29 September 20112 with Konstantine Politis • 7 Days / 6 Nights from £1,545



## KONSTANTINE POLITIS

Konstantine Politis is a Greek archaeologist and published scholar specialising in the early Byzantine-Christian and early Islamic periods. Educated in Greece, the United States, Belgium and Britain, he is now based at the British Museum.

## SPECIAL FEATURES

- Meet with curators
- Meet a reader of Urartian letters
- Ishak Pasha Palace
- The ancient ruined city of Ani
- Sumela monastery

Greeks, Romans, Persians, Byzantines, Armenians and Turks have settled in eastern Turkey, each leaving their imprint. Explore their legacy on this tour, which starts at the Black Sea port of Trabzon and delves into the eastern Anatolian heartlands, a little-known part of Turkey. Explore some of the region's greatest monuments, including the magnificent Ottoman palace of Ishak Pasha and the medieval ruined capital city of Ani.



*Ishak Pasha Palace, Dogubeyazit*

## THE JOURNEY

**Day 1 – To Trabzon:** Fly from London Heathrow to Trabzon, via Istanbul, with Turkish Airlines. Transfer to the Zorlu Grand Hotel for 2 nights. (D)

**Day 2 – Trabzon:** Morning visit to the impressive Byzantine church of St Sophia, where the internal frescoes are some of the finest in Turkey. Continue to the eighth-century St Anne's Basilica and the Trabzon citadel monuments. Afternoon visit to the summerhouse of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, founder of the Turkish republic. (B)

**Day 3 – To Erzurum:** Drive to Erzurum, with a stop to explore the sixth-century cliff-side Sumela monastery complex and its unique frescoes. The monastery is situated on the plateau of a mountain and has panoramic views of the nearby pine forests and valleys. The rock church here contains remarkable frescoes depicting biblical scenes. Afternoon drive up Pontic mountain towards Zigana Pass, through which Xenophon's 10,000

marched. Stay overnight at the Dedeman Hotel. (B, D)

**Day 4 – To Kars:** Morning tour of Erzurum to view the twin minarets madrasa, the Three Tombs burial site, Yakutiye madrasa and the Grand Mosque. Drive to Kars through the region's tea plantations. Visit Kars castle and the church of the Holy Apostles, then make a special visit to the archaeological museum, with its impressive display of rugs and carpets. Here you will meet with the curator. Stay 1 night at the Simer Hotel. (B, D)

**Day 5 – To Dogubeyazit:** Morning visit to Ani, ancient Armenian capital of 'a thousand churches'. Once a rival of Constantinople and Cairo, with a population of more than 100,000 inhabitants, it is now a ruined and desolate city. See the cathedral, the Church of the Holy Redeemer and the city walls. Drive to Dogubeyazit with a stop at the Ishak Pasha Palace and mosque. Built on the side of a mountain with views of Mount Ararat, it offers a glimpse into the lifestyle of an Ottoman

governor. Stay 1 night at the Simer Hotel. (B, D)

**Day 6 – To Van:** Drive to Van with a stop to view the Muradiye waterfall. Afternoon visits to Van Castle and Van Evi, then meet the curator of the archaeology and ethnography museum. The museum contains many impressive artefacts, including fine gold and jewellery. Continue to the ruined Urartu fortress of Cavustepe for a special lecture on the iron age Urartian civilisation from Mehmet Mustepe, a reader of Urartian letters. Stay 1 night at the Elite World Hotel. (B, D)

**Day 7 – To London:** Morning visit to Akdamar, located on an island in Lake Van. Visit the 10th-century Armenian church with ornate bas-relief carvings and friezes depicting the bible on its exterior walls. The frescoes that adorn the interior walls and cupola are remarkable. Afternoon transfer to the airport for a flight to London, via Istanbul, with Turkish Airlines. (B)

**Meal basis:** As per itinerary – B: Breakfast, L: Lunch, D: Dinner, N: No meals.

