

10. Kizoren Obrugu – Turkey



Kizoren Obrugu is situated in the centre of the Central Anatolian steppes, 65 km northeast of the province of Konya. In Turkish, the word *obruk* means a vertical depression or shaft in karst, developed by means of karstification, in two directions, downwards (from the surface towards the ground, through minor cracks and joints by infiltration) and upwards (from the karstic underground cavities towards the surface, through minor cracks and joints by evaporation). The term *obruk* is used to describe the rare karstic lakes, which are found exclusively in the district of Konya in Turkey. For a long time it was believed that obruk lake waters were still, but today it is known that underneath the earth surface, the water slowly flows from the one lake to the other. Located at an altitude of 1,030 m, Kizoren Obrugu is the only freshwater source for human use in the vicinity. The State Water Institute (DSI) has installed a pump at the obruk, in order to provide freshwater for human use.

The region of Konya was inhabited earlier than 7500 BC. One of the oldest and largest known human communities, the Neolithic settlement of *Catalhöyük*, where agriculture was initially practiced, is situated 50 km southeast of Konya. Although it is only partially excavated, the settlement covers an area of 15 acres and presents evidence of sophisticated town planning, art and ceremonial buildings.

The civilisation of the Hattians, developed in the region between 3000-2000 BC, was followed by the Hittites who conquered them and built their formidable empire. Around 1200 BC the Phrygians were among the Balkan people who came to Anatolia. During the ensuing centuries the region came under successive Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman rule. Human activity around the lake dates from the time of the Seljuk Empire. Being the sole source of water in the area, it gave its name to the settlement that is situated in the vicinity of the lake, the village of Obruk. Remnants of an inn, the Obruk Han, a caravanserai, are found 30 m from the lake. It was probably constructed during Byzantine times (1245-

1250 AD) and was operational under Ottoman rule. The dimensions of the building are indicative of the importance of the site as part of the Silk Road.

In the region of Konya, agriculture, mining and livestock breeding are important economic activities for the local population. Konya is also well known for its traditional hand-woven carpets. In addition, textiles and leather goods are manufactured, aluminium processed, and trade is well developed in the area. In recent years, tourism has been developed, as the region attracts visitors for its irrigated gardens, mosques and the monastery of the mystical sect known as the Mawlawiyah (in Arabic) or Mevlevi (in Turkish).