A FAIRY TALE THAT CAME AND WENT

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Category: Opinions

By Melinda Andonyan, Istanbul, 22 September 2025

"Mesmerized."

This was the only word that could describe how I felt after my visit to Iğdır-Doğubayazıt. As if under a spell, I was captivated by the allure of Mount Ararat.

From the moment it first appeared as we drove along the road, I sensed it was more than just a mountain. It felt like a protective force, embracing the people living at its foothills and the awe-struck visitors with a fatherly affection. While its summit was shrouded in clouds, a mystical peace lay hidden in its foothills. The divine energy it radiated seemed to envelop my heart. I let go of my logic and listened only to my heart. All the clutter in my mind vanished instantly. The nagging thoughts, the endless to-do list, the heavy responsibilities—all of it disappeared. I began to hear only the voices of what I truly wanted to do, realizing I had always put my deepest longings aside. It was a moment of profound awareness, as if I were rediscovering myself. Or perhaps I had simply neglected myself in the daily grind, ignoring my true dreams.

I gazed at the mountain, took photographs, and pondered. I sighed, lamenting what I would write if I could stay here. So many peoples have lived in these lands: Hurrians, Urartians, Arabs, Armenians, Seljuks… Each with their own story about the mountain. Some considered it sacred, while others, like Marco Polo, called it "inaccessible." They gave it different names—Ararat, Masis, Kuh-i Noah, Çiyaye Agiri, Glidağ, Eğri Dağ, or Cebel'ül Haris. The power of this place isn't in its name but in the countless stories and legends it has hosted. Some have sung folk songs here, while others have lamented this magnificent landscape. Whichever it is, you feel it deep in your soul.

Of course, it wasn't just Mount Ararat that captivated me. I also had the chance to see the Ishak Pasha Palace, a stunning example of exquisite stone carving and decoration. This structure, considered the most important social complex in Turkey after Istanbul's Topkapı Palace, drew me in with its architecture. The immense effort that went into building such a massive and magnificent structure was clear. The motifs carved into those enormous stones, which were transported solely by human and animal power in a time before modern technology, along with the verses and couplets on the palace walls, were captivating. For a moment, I felt like I was living in that era. When I touched the stones, the warmth of those masterful hands still lingered. Who knows what lives and events this palace has witnessed?



This palace, whose construction began in 1685, still retains its majesty today. It has been visited by countless generations and inspired them. While witnessing such a vibrant history filled me with delight, it also made me sad. I couldn't help but wonder what remarkable works people had created in the past to be passed down from generation to generation. But what about us? What will we leave behind? Is our purpose in this world to act selfishly and carelessly waste all this beauty? When you're young, these thoughts might not cross your mind, but as you get older, you can't help but wonder.

It's heartbreaking to see the slow deterioration of our precious land, a land so rich with history and culture. They call it the East, but it is a place of incredible abundance. You can pick a variety of fruits right from the branches. The fresh air you breathe makes you feel intoxicated. And seeing the hospitality you may have forgotten in the big cities shows you that not all is lost for humanity.

Then, you remember you are at the very edge of Eastern Anatolia. Border crossings appear before you: Iran, Nakhichevan, Azerbaijan, and Armenia. You long to see a true brotherhood among these peoples who have influenced each other throughout history. You can't help but wonder, "Was it so difficult to live freely in a world without classes, exploitation, and wars that they had to impose these boundaries?" Were the people on the other side of the border so different from us? After all, wasn't living in prosperity all anyone truly wanted?

Finally, I found myself at Iğdır Airport for my return journey, my mind full of questions. My body might have been in motion, but I had left my soul behind. What I experienced in that short time wasn't an unfamiliar feeling. A familiar voice whispered in my ear, "You will come again." Who knows, perhaps some divine force I was unaware of was drawing me to these lands. What I was certain of,

however, was that I was meant to experience this moment with my dearest friends.

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Melinda Andonyan was born in Istanbul-Türkiye in 1982. She is a Turkish-Armenian whose ancestors have lived in these lands for centuries. She graduated with honors from the Department of Teaching. She studied linguistics in Germany, on a scholarship from the German government. She has been actively involved in educational activities in various countries and worked as a teacher at private schools and universities in Türkiye. In addition to her teaching career, she has been an active translator and interpreter in four languages (English, German, Armenian, and Greek) since 2014. She first translated a Turkish book into English, called "Chaldee Letters and The Chaldeans," (written by Mgr. Francois Yakan) in 2014. This translation has been acclaimed worldwide and has found its place in libraries in many countries. Currently, she is translating books for many publishing companies and also writing articles and texts for various magazines and online platforms.



Comments

Melinda Andonyan – 2025-10-17 04:20:04
Dear Nurnisa, Thank you for your heartfelt comment. I'm so glad I could convey my feelings to you. With my warmest regards,



Nurnisa Erismis – 2025-10-14 13:45:19
Dear Melinda, your travel essay touched me deeply. The way you described Mount Ararat and Ishak Pasha Palace carries not only beauty but also a quiet spiritual depth. Through your words, I could almost feel the mountain's breath and the weight of history in those stones. You have an extraordinary gift for blending emotion, history, and reflection — it's as if your ancestral memory guides your pen. Thank you for taking us on this heartfelt journey.