

2

INDEX

4-5

MY COUNTR

TURKEY
ITALY
GERMANY

6-7

MY CITY

GERMANY
ITALY
TURKEY

8-10

MY SCHOOL

ITALY
GERMANY
TURKEY

11-14

LEGEND

ITALY
TURKEY
GERMANY

15-17

MARRIAGE

ITALY
GERMANY
TURKEY

18-21

FESTIVALS

GERMANY
ITALY
TURKEY

22-27

STUDENT CORNER

TURKEY
ITALY
GERMANY



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Introduction

Our difference is our richness! Feeling the importance of that we set off for the intercultural dialogue. That is why, "Culture Bridge" is not just a Project for us it is also a lifestyle.

Who encounters in this richness? We are here to create a documentary film of the cultures, Turkish, Italian and German. As a first step we have prepared Culture Bridge magazine which includes introduction of each member of the project, current issues, free writings from students, historical and cultural values of our countries. Our main aim is to enrich our point of view about other cultures and their values. Being European citizens, teenage students need to understand that living in one country does not mean being different from others. On the contrary; being European means sharing the same values, celebrating the same important holidays as young people from other countries or at least respecting each other. The other point is that working on the documentary film and publishing magazine "Culture Bridge" will enable the students to actively reflect upon the cultural issues dealt with and understand what they have in common with other teenagers from different countries.

With the wish of meeting at the festivals, trips to the member countries, and different activities in different fields.

Magazine Coordinators



ISTANBUL



ABOUT TURKEY

Turkey is a marvellous country where you can find famous ancient cities, seaside resorts, thermal resorts and winter sports destinations..

It's a peninsula surrounded by the Mediterranean Sea, Aegean Sea and Black Sea with long beaches, high mountains and a mild climate.

As it is known Turkey is a bridge between Asia, Africa and Europe so in Turkey a variety of seasons are seen concurrently. Turkey is divided into 7 seasonal and geographical regions and 81 provinces. Each province has its historical places. As Anatolia (Mainland of Turkey) is famous for its civilizations on it such as, Phrygian, Ionian...etc. You can find a number of monumental places from the oldest age to present.

Some of the most popular cities of art are İstanbul, İzmir and Antalya where a lot of tourists from all continents visit ancient buildings, monuments and museums. Especially the sea which is in our country attracts tourists such as Russians, Germans...etc. They not only have holiday but also settle down our country in particular Bodrum.

During the winter people go Uludağ, Palandöken for skiing and Moda coast in İstanbul for hiking. Besides in Antalya you can both swim in the sea and go skiing in winter. On the other hand our city, Afyon, doesn't have sea but it has thermal spring water. People who are patient come from other cities to get over. Particularly people who have rheumatism benefit from our Turkish Bath.



As Turkey is between Europe and Asia like a bridge, there is much various food. People who live in the east region of our country prefer faty, hot, spicy for instance kebab, içli köfte, mantı, çiğ köfte whereas people who live in the west of our country prefer lighter food with vegetable. Our city is famous for kaymak (cream), lokum (Turkish Delight), sucuk, bükme, ağzıaçık, ekmek kadayıfı with kaymak

BETÜL KONUK

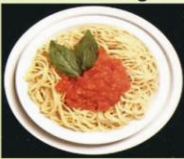
MY COUNTRY / ITALY - GERMANY



Italy is a beautiful country where you can find famous art cities, seaside resorts and winter sports destinations. It's a peninsula surrounded by the Mediterranean Sea with long beaches, high mountains and a mild climate. It is divided into 20 regions and each region has small medieval villages, old churches, cathedrals and castles.

Some of the most popular cities of art are Rome, Florence and Venice where a lot of tourists from all continents visit ancient buildings, monuments and museums.

In Italy there are a lot of cultural, religious and sports events, festivals and concerts. During the summer people and especially young people have great fun: there are a lot of discos on the beach and restaurants opened all night. During the winter people go skiing, hiking and they can relax drinking a cup of hot chocolate in the mountain huts.



Italians are proud of their cuisine: every region has different local dishes and wines and pasta, pizza, ice-cream, caffè espresso and Italian wines are famous all over the world.



Germany is a country in central Europe. It is a federal republic and divided into 16 federal states. There are lowlands at the coasts to the North Sea and the Baltic Sea. South to the lowland area there is an area of moderately high mountains. In the south there are the Alps, the high mountain area. Especially the Frisian Islands in the North Sea, but also the islands and coast of the Baltic Sea and Bavaria with the Alps are favourite holiday destinations.

After World War II Germany was divided into two parts and people could no longer travel freely between the eastern, the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and the western part, the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). In 1961 the GDR built a wall around the eastern part of Berlin and later also at the border to the FRG. On October 3, 1990 East and West Germany were officially reunited and both parts now form the Federal Republic of Germany. Now Berlin is again the capital city and it is also the biggest one with around 3 million inhabitants.

German cuisine varies from region to region. More than 1500 different types of sausage are produced in Germany and more than 300 types of bread are sold in the bakery shops across the country. Of course, Germans also love their cakes.



As a country with many immigrants, Germany has adopted many international dishes into its cuisine and daily eating habits. Italian dishes like Pizza and Pasta, Turkish and Arab dishes like Döner Kebab and Falafel are well established especially in bigger cities.



DUISBURG



<http://www.duisburg.de/>

Duisburg lies on the Rhine in the West of Germany, in Northrhine-Westphalia. Around 500.000 people live here. Duisburg is known for its inland harbour, one of the biggest in the world, and for its steel industry.

Duisburg is a city full of culture, too. For fans of history, culture and art, there are four interesting museums to choose between. If you are interested in music, you can go to the opera or listen to the Duisburg Philharmonic Orchestra. The inner city of Duisburg is really nice. There is the Forum, for example, a great shopping center which opened last year and is full of different shops for clothes, electronic devices and

It is a lot of fun to go shopping there. One important thing in Duisburg is sport. International sport events like the World Games (2005) and the Canoe World Cup (2005) took place here. We have got a few different sports clubs, which are more or less successful. The football club MSV Duisburg is mostly known. Of course there are also some nice places in Duisburg to sit down and relax.

This is the area of the Six Lakes, for example where you can go for waterskiing or swimming or just enjoying nature. Robin



RIMINI



Rimini is the main centre of our province. It was founded as a Roman town in 268 BC with the name of Ariminum but its history can be dated back further to the Etruscans.

During the Middle Ages it was an independent city, then at the end of the XIII century, under the rule of the Malatesta family, it became a centre of art and culture. Today the city still maintains its cultural aspect with its churches, Medieval palaces, libraries and museums.

The Tiberius Bridge and the Arch of Augustus have been the 2 symbols of the city since the Middle Ages.

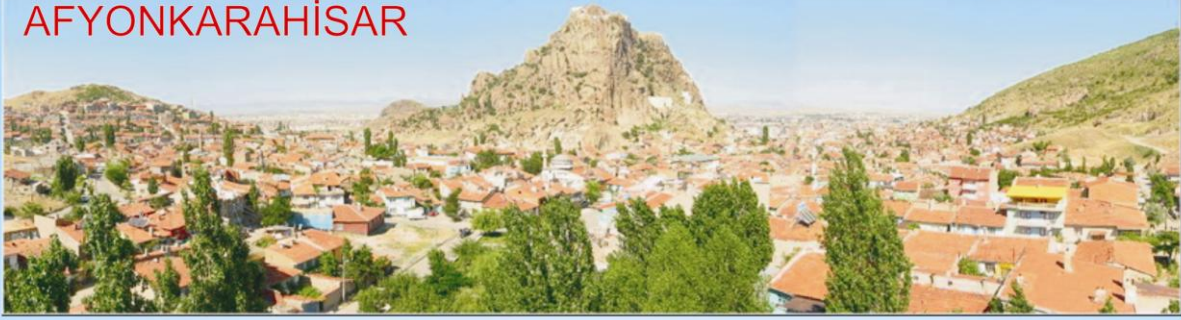
The Roman Bridge on the Marecchia river, was named after the Emperor Tiberius. It is situated in the centre of Rimini and it's over 70 metres in length and 8 in wide. According to the inscriptions on the internal side of the parapet, it was built 2000 years ago: the Emperor Augustus started it in 14 AD and his successor the Emperor Tiberius completed it in 21 AD. It stands on 4 piers which were built in a small slanting direction to favour the flow of the river and with breakwater spurs to brake the force of the running water. Over the century the bridge has endured earthquakes, floods, erosions and battles but it is still well kept. During the Second World War it was the only bridge in town which wasn't demolished despite repeated attempts. Today the bridge is open to normal traffic but, paradoxically, its daily use tends to make the monument "ordinary".

The Arch of Augustus, the oldest preserved triumphal arch in northern Italy, marks the entrance to the city from the via Flaminia, a road built by the Consul Flaminio in 220 BC to link Rimini to Rome. The arch was built in 27 BC to celebrate Octavian Augustus, as indicated by the inscriptions above the archway. Today it is isolated but it was part of the ancient city walls which were demolished. The original building was completed with a statue of the Emperor on horseback or on a Quadriga, perhaps collapsed for earthquakes in the Middle Ages.

The monument conveys a strong political and religious message. The structure of the arch has a rich variety of decorations and its wide opening, which can't be closed with doors, is a reference to the new peace achieved after a long periods of civil wars. The gods represented in the round elements, Jupiter, Apollo, Neptune and Minerva, recall the grandeur of Rome and the power of Augustus.



AFYONKARAHİSAR



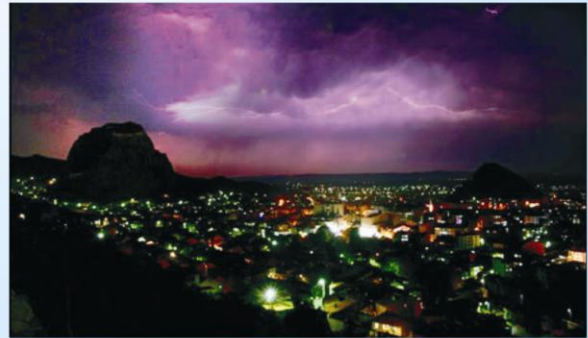
The province, known also as Afyonkarahisar, is located as a gateway between the Aegean sea and inner regions of Anatolia, locating at the crossroads of 3 different regions of Turkey. Afyon is bordered with Konya to the east, Usak to the west, Kutahya to the northwest, Denizli to the southwest, Burdur to the south, Isparta to the southeast, and Eskisehir to the north. Total area of Afyon is 14.570 square km and its elevation is 1.034 meters. The city has a continental climate; hot and dry summers, mild and rainy springs, cold and snowy winters.

The history of Afyon dates back to 3000 BC. It was home to Hittites, Phrygians, Lydians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Seljuks and Ottomans. The city is famous for its specific "Turkish Delight" and "Kaymak" (a kind of hard cream put on desserts), its "Sucuk" (special spicy sausages), its Opium fields (under strict supervision by the Government), its marble quarries, and for its various thermal baths.



Afyon is a spa-center with thermal baths in Gazligol Kaplicasi (25 km northwest), Gecek and Omerli Kaplicalari (15 km and 14 km northwest respectively), Hudai Kaplicasi 68 km southwest of the town, and Heybeli Kaplicasi at 30 km from city center. Sandikli is also famous for its mud baths, too. All these resorts have board and lodging facilities.

The Archaeological Museum and the War of Independence Memorial are places to visit in the city and to the north of Afyon there are Phrygian remains in the form of monumental cult rocks. Aslantas and Aslankaya are the largest of these. The lion relieves, which gave the name to these rocks are seen on sides of the rock and cult temples. This area is known as Phrygian Valley. Afyon Citadel which was built during the Byzantine period previously was used as a fortress by the Hittite King Mursil II, is another monument to see in the city.



The citadel was called as Karahisar by the Seljuks, meaning Black Castle in Turkish. Ulu (Grand) Mosque and Altigoz bridge are other sites of interest. The town of Dazkiri on the Denizli highway is famous for its carpets and kilims.

Afyon has a small international festival celebrated during the week August 30th every year since 1998. It's an activity of concerts, exhibitions and folk dances, performed for 4 days in different locations.

ISSS GOBETTÌ DE GASPERÌ

My school is situated in Morciano di Romagna and its name is "ISSS Gobetti-De Gasperi" ISSS stands for "State School of Secondary Education" and it has a technical and a vocational school with different specializations: in commerce, in industry and in tourism.



The school year lasts from September to June and we have a two-week break at Christmas and a one-week break at Easter. We go to school every morning from Monday to Saturday and lessons start at twenty past eight and finish at ten to two p.m.. At about eleven, there is a break of ten minutes, and

students can go to the garden or to the school cafeteria to have something to eat. Unfortunately, the break is too short and we haven't got much time to relax. We have literary, scientific, technical and practical subjects, so we have lesson in class or in laboratories. We don't have school in the afternoon, so our teachers give us some homework: sometimes we have to study really hard because we often have oral and written tests in each subject.

Fortunately, every year each class goes on a school trip and it can last from two days in the second year to one week in the fifth year.

During the afternoon the school organizes remedial classes or courses for the students who want to get a further certification. There are also sports clubs and drama groups.

We don't have to wear a uniform at school and there aren't very strict rules: of course we have to be on time, we can't go out of school during the morning and we have to turn off our mobile phones during lessons. At the end of the fifth year, the last year, we have to take a school-leaving examination called "Esame di stato" to get our diploma and then we can choose whether to work or go to university



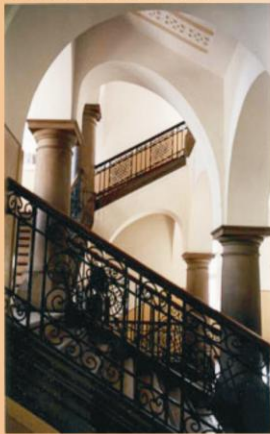
Landfermann-Gymnasium Duisburg, Germany



Next year the Landfermann-Gymnasium will celebrate its 450th year of existence and it is thus one of the oldest schools in the region. However, the old school building that you can see on the picture is only a little bit more than 100 years old.

There is a new part that has been built adjacent to the old building, as there are now many more students attending the Landfermann-Gymnasium. Here a few pictures from the inside of the old building.

The Landfermann-Gymnasium is a secondary school with the aim to enable the students to study at a university later. In 1925 it was named after a former headmaster, Dietrich Wilhelm Landfermann (1800-1882), who was headmaster of the school from 1835 to 1841.



The official founding year of the school is 1559. It then was called Gymnasium or Latin school, as Latin was an important subject at that time. However, the roots of the Landfermann-Gymnasium are even older than 450 years. There already existed a 'Schola Duisburgensis' (that is Latin and means School in Duisburg) before the year 1280.

As festivities took place 50 years ago, because the founding year of the Latin School in 1559 was commemorated then, the Landfermann-Gymnasium will celebrate its 450th year of existence next year, although it is even older.

Around 1200 students attend the Landfermann-Gymnasium. The students in Year 5, the youngest ones, are around 10 years old. Year 12 or 13 students are around 18 years old and they have to pass a final, central exam, the 'Abitur' to be able to start their studies at a university.

When the students come to the Landfermann-Gymnasium, they have to decide whether they want to be in the bilingual or the Latin-English group, or whether they want to join a group that has more education in natural sciences.

The bilingual students have more English lessons in Year 5 and Year 6. From Year 7 onwards they have the regular number of English lessons and the subjects Geography, History and Politics are taught in English then.

The Latin-English group starts learning English and Latin at the same time and there is the group of Year 5 students having more Maths and Physics lessons. All students have to learn a second foreign language from Year 6 onwards. They can choose between French and Latin. The English-Latin group can of course only choose French.



In their later school career they can choose to learn Spanish or Greek. There is also a club for learning Portuguese or Chinese. Other clubs are, for example, a rowing club, a hockey team, a choir, a school orchestra, a jazz-dance club and, right now a club for performing the musical Grease.



The lessons usually start at 8 o'clock in the morning. Each lesson is 45 minutes long and after each lesson there is a short break of five minutes, so that teachers and students can go to other rooms. After two lessons there is a longer break of 15 minutes, in which the students can eat something. They usually take something to eat from home to school. Very often it is a 'Pausenbrot', a slice of bread with sliced meat or cheese on it. However, there is also a small cafeteria on the school ground in which the students and teachers can buy something to eat. Most students, and especially the younger ones, leave school after the sixth or seventh lesson, which means at 1:15 p.m. or 2:15 p.m. and then they go home. In the afternoon they have to do their homework for school.

The Landfermann-Gymnasium is located in the centre of Duisburg, right next to the Central Business District. If you want to find something out about Duisburg, you might visit www.duisburg.de. There also exists an English version of the homepage of Duisburg.

MY SCHOOL / TURKEY

KOCATEPE ANADOLU LİSESİ

My school, "Kocatepe Anatolian High School", which is a secondary school is situated in Afyonkarahisar. It is a foreign language high school, so foreign language is important for us so much.

We entered this school after an exam which was taken by every student who finished primary school but, it was abolished this year. Thanks to this exam, each student's level was determined, and then the students chose any high school and if their grades which they took from this exam was adequate, they used to be registered.

We start education in the second week of September and it ends in the second week of June. We have several breaks within this period for regional and national festivals. Regional festivals are the Muslim festival of sacrifices and Ramadan festivals are important for us as well such as other Muslims. The Regional festival of sacrifices is a four-day break for a reunion with our family and elders. On the first we give sacrifice because in our religion, it is incumbent that all Muslims who are rich enough to give a sacrifice. After we give a sacrifice, we hand out it to people who are in great need, and so we teach sharing and helping these people. Ramadan Festival is a three-day break, which is another reunion with our family and elders observing a month-fast which is one of the conditions of Islamism.



National Festivals are Republic Festival, National Sovereignty and Child Festivals, Youth and Sports Festivals and Victory Festival. They are one-day breaks and held with a great enthusiasm in my whole country. Republic was proclaimed on 29 October 1923, so Republic Festival is held on each 29 October. Turkish Great National Assembly was opened on 23 April 1920 and Atatürk made a present of that day to all the world children, so National Sovereignty and child Festival is held on each 23 April. Atatürk set foot in Samsun on 19 May 1919 to start Turkish Independence War and he made a present of that day to the young, so Youth and Sports Festival is held on each 19 May. Finally, Turkish War of Independence was gained on 30 August 1922, so Victory Festival is held on 30 August every year.

In addition to these, we have a two-week semester holiday. We go to school every morning from Monday to Saturday and lessons start at half past seven a.m. and finish generally at three p.m. At about twelve, there is an-hour break and students can eat their lunch. After this break, lessons start again at ten past one p.m. and two or three lessons are given.

We have literature, science, history, geography, Maths, Art, Music, P.E, oral and foreign language subjects, so we have lessons generally in class or sometimes in laboratories. Although we have school in afternoons, our teacher give us some homework sometimes; we have to study really hard because we have some tests on subjects.

After the tiring school year, willing students can go on a school trip which is traditionally organised. Additionally, spring carnival which is organised every year is held with a great enthusiasm by all the students. On the day, concerts, drama displays and competitions are arranged.

We have to wear a school uniform at school, yet there aren't very strict rules: we have to be on time, we can't go out of school during the school duration, we have to turn off our mobile phone during lessons and we have to come school regularly and obey the rules.

At the end of the fourth year, the last year, we get our diplomas with marks we get during four years. Then we take the university exam. Depending on the result of the university exam we go to a university.

PAOLO AND FRANCESCA

Gradara is an ancient medieval village situated few kilometres far from our school. Its fortress was the background of the love story between Paolo e Francesca, the two lovers celebrated by Dante in his Divine Comedy.

The Malatesta were the lords of Rimini and to consolidate their alliance with Guido da Polenta, lord of Ravenna, decided the marriage between Giangiotto Malatesta, who was described as ugly and lame, and the beautiful Francesca da Polenta.

Legend has it that to convince Francesca to marry Giangiotto, she was deceived: she thought she would have married the handsome Paolo, Giangiotto's brother. So the marriage was celebrated in 1275 and Francesca found out the truth only after her marriage.

Giangiotto was lord of Pesaro and he couldn't keep his family with, him so he left his wife in the nearby fortress of Gradara.



During his absence, his brother Paolo often visited Francesca and they fell in love.

"But one day we read, to our delight, of Lancelot and how love constrained him.....that book was a "galeotto", a pander and he who wrote it, that day we read no more".

Unfortunately Giangiotto discovered them and caught them in each other's arms: Francesca was killed in the attempt to defend Paolo and then Giangiotto killed his brother.

The story of love and death inspired lots of poets of all times. Still today, during the "Seduction at the Castle", a manifestation which takes place in July, the magic atmosphere of that tragic love is re-created with dances, melodies and poetic verses.

BEFANA

Befana is a typical Italian character, she is an old woman and she is very ugly! She has got long white hair and she wears dark rags. According to the tradition **B e f a n a f l i e s .**



over the houses riding her broom and during the night of the 6th January she enters through the chimneys. Befana visits all the children of Italy. They hang their socks near the fireplace because they would like to see them filled with presents and sweets. Befana leaves candies and gifts only for good children. If the children are bad, she leaves black coal. Befana is one of the most celebrated traditions in Italy



According to the legend three Wise Men (the Magi) were in search of the Infant Jesus but they were stopped by an old woman with a broom (Befana) who asked them where they were going.

They told her that they were following a star that would lead them to a newborn baby and invited her to come along

But she replied that she was busy sweeping and cleaning and did not go. After they had left, she realized she had made

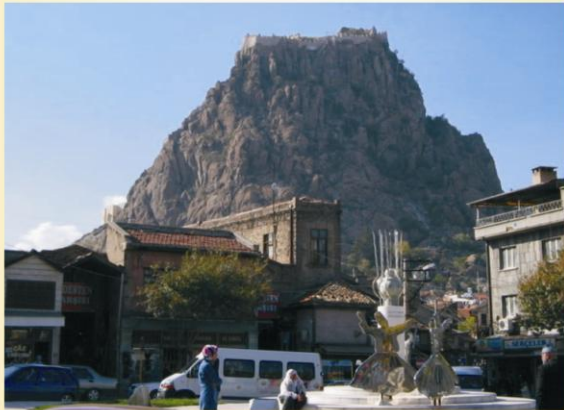


KARAHISAR CASTLE

When you come to Afyonkarahisar, the first thing you will realize is Karahisar Castle because you will be attracted by its fascinating appearance.

Karahisar Castle is a volcanic mountain which is in the city centre. The castle that is on natural rock, has 226metre altitude. It has a bewildering beauty and an interesting historical account. It is surrounded with magnificent city walls. At the peak of the castle there are many eccentric places such as frightening durpeons. When you climb there you get a bird's eye view of the surrounding city. You will find it fascinating. If you come to our city you should go there. We are sure you will be affected.

Although the castle's history is confusing, it is interesting because its history goes back to Christmas ages. So many nations conquered this castle. Mira Kuvalya Kingdom, Phrygians, Seljuk Empire, Ottoman Empire etc... during this period it was named in different ways such as Hpanuva (High Hill Of City). Now its name is Karahisar Castle. Since Seljuk Empire's period it has been named like that. The castle passed through many hands each time a new myth, a new epic was found out.



It isn't easy to conquer the castle which is on the top of a rock of mass that has 226 metre altitude. Because of this, from Battal Gazi to Hz.Ali, from Beybörek to Çavusbasi and to Horozdede many myths are narrated. These mythos' traces protect it from extinction even at present day.

According to the Hz Ali Myth (or Duldul's trail) Hz Ali who was one of the caliphs in Islam, had a horse whose name was Döldül. Hz Ali and his horse Döldül were making expedition from mountain to another mountain by flying. One day Hz Ali came to Afyon. They stopped off at Hidirlik which is a high hill in Afyon. From there Duldul flew to the castle and Hz Ali bridled Duldul there. Döldül's trail was left there. Then Hz Ali wanted to tie Duldul somewhere to give it water but he couldn't find. He hit a rock with his four fingers and holed. He tied Duldul there. At the castle Duldul's trail and the hole are still visible at present.



Another myth is about Battal Gazi who died in 740 in Afyon. Battal Gazi and his friend Ahmet Tarhan surrounded the castle to conquer it. The commander of the castle sent news to Byzantine Emperor to ask for help and Byzantine army came to Afyon, Byzantine commander's daughter saw Battal Gazi from the castle and she fell in love with him so she didn't want to harm him.

While Battal Gazi was sleeping on the grass, she bellowed him to be woken up but he didn't hear the girl. Later she wrote a note on a paper and threw it curling a stone.

There was no act from Battal Gazi. At this time she got worried about him and said to her father Battal Gazi had been sleeping on the grass and wanted a dagger which was poisonous. Of course she wouldn't do it. She just wanted to see him.

Later she came near him but he had already died because of the Stone which had been thrown him by the girl. The Stone had hit his ear so he died. When she learnt that his dying was just because of her she trusted dagger into her heart.

When Byzantine's trap came to the castle an onerous war began. Battal's corpse was drug through Eskisehir. So Byzantines couldn't understand that Battal Gazi had died and for along time living with his fright.

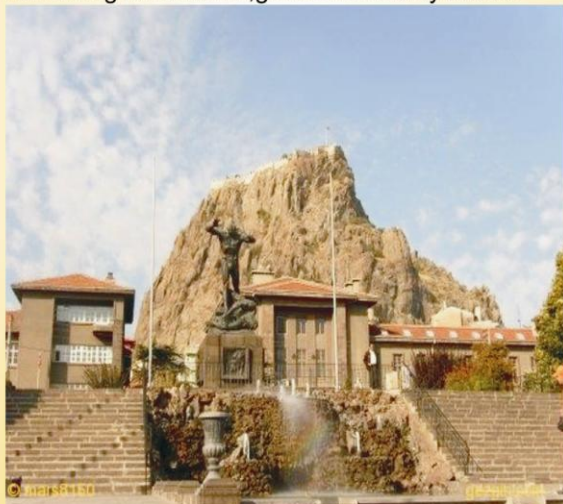
Cavusbasi Myth is another one of the myths about Karahisar Castle. Before the castle wasn't under sovereignty of Turkish, the Turkish monarch sent the ambassador to the castle to surrender. But he couldn't give any positive answer. For this he charged the strongest commender whose name was Çavusbasi to conquer it. Çavusbasi arrived there in a few days. The castle's commender got worried when he heard this news. Immediately he made a plan to defend his folk.

Next morning Turkish soldiers who reduced all their water arrived in Karakuyu where there was water. But they couldn't drink water from there because water wasn't healthy. They began to look for water but they couldn't find. This statement was told to Çavusbasi. When he heard the statement he went to Yagdan where there were high rocks, with some soldiers. Later he stopped in front of a huge rock and prayed.



Suddenly he hit the rock with his sword by saying "In here there will be water!!" From the rock, which had been cracked by sword, water gushed out. Soldiers drank water and had a rest well. Then the castle was conquered by Turkish soldiers. After that day in the public of Afyon it is said that water is curative...

There are so many myths about Karahisar Castle like these one. One of them is about wishes. According to the public girls who want to marry go to the castle. On Fridays girls climb to the castle with old women. They bring a padlock. It is locked before climb to it. When they arrive the top of the castle this padlock is unlocked by an old woman. According to the belief, girls have a lucky break.



Later girls say some wishes from Kız Kulesi or they throw stones through the hollow which is at the castle. They threw 3 stones. If all of them hit the target according to their belief their wishes will be real. Other beliefs are: If you climb the Karahisar Castle you can't leave Afyon throughout 7 years, If the back of the castle is black the weather will be rainy etc.. Ummahan ERDEM Rukiye YURTYAPAN İlknur BURSALIOĞLU

THE LEGEND OF GAZLIGOL

Gazlıgöl is a small town of Afyon which has natural thermal springs. Nowadays many people come here and look for a cure for their diseases such as skin disease, kidney disease and rheumatism.

A myth is traditionally known about Gazlıgöl. According to this myth, in the middle of Anatolia, there was a Phrygian Empire and its king was Midas, years ago. King Midas had all kinds of fortune; yet, he hadn't got a child. He was sorry for that and started to pray the God to have a child.

At last King Midas' beautiful daughter was born. Later on, the king's daughter Suna was caught a disease when she was a teenager. Boils appeared on her skin. Nobody could find a cure for this disease. The girl who was unable to resist suffering and pain, set up.

She came nearby Afyon which was in the borders of the King's land then.

She was thirsty and began to seek water. Finally, she reached a pond where Gazlıgöl Thermal Springs is situated at the moment. She ran towards the water since she was very thirsty. She drank the water and realized that her suffering began to diminish when the water touched her body.



The beautiful girl dived into the water. Her suffering started to diminish. She went asleep as she was very tired and sleepless for a long time. When Suna woke up, she realized that her suffering ended and the boils began to disappear.

She stayed nearby the water and her boils were completely cured after a week. She turned back to the palace.

King Midas was curious about his daughter, so he was very happy when he saw her. She told him that her boils were cured thanks to the water and then the King ordered a Turkish bath to be built there. It is believed that the Turkish bath has been visited and used since Phrygian ages.

Passing by Gazlıgöl, Fatih Sultan Mehmet usually paid a short visit there. He ordered this place to be reconstructed..

Seda DÖNMEZ (11 E)

The "Martinstag" on the 11th November is a commemoration of 'Martin of Tours'

St Martin a brief description of the historic person
He was born in 316. He grew up in Italy and became a soldier. One day he met a beggar in rags on the street. The beggar did not have anything that protected him from the cold weather. So he froze awfully. Without hesitation Martin took off his coat and cut through it with his sword and gave one half of the coat to the beggar. In this night the Lord appeared to him and told Martin that the beggar had been himself. So Martin had given his coat to God. Martin then became a pupil of the bishop "Hilarius of Portiers" and founded an abbey. After ten years Martin was elected to be the "Bishop of Tours". However, he did not want to become bishop and he ran away. The people of Tours were running after him, because they liked him so much and wanted him to be their bishop. He hid in a stable full of geese. The geese made a lot of noise and the people of Tours found Martin, who then agreed to become bishop. He became a good and famous bishop. He helped poor people, homeless people, beggars. He travelled around and told many people about Jesus. He died on the 8th November 398. So he was buried on the 11th November.



The "Sankt Martins Zug" a children's procession through the streets

In many regions in Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Southern Tyrol, little children go along the streets of towns and villages. In their hands they hold lanterns. The children are usually making their own lanterns in primary school or nursery school. There are always some children who make a lantern that looks like a goose, because the geese once showed the people where Martin had hid, but there are also lanterns that look like suns, moons, all kinds of animals, houses or even racing cars. A St. Martin's procession is traditional in my region. In front of the children somebody rides on a horse, playing the Roman soldier Martin, who later became the bishop of Tours. On the evening of the 11th November, children and parents are walking down the streets with their lanterns and sing special St Martin songs. This is a ritual and very traditional. The children are learning these songs in their school lessons.



After half an hour of walking through the streets, they all assemble at a place where a man in rags is sitting. He is acting the beggar who is discovered by Martin. All the children and parents are standing around him. There is always a nice atmosphere, because it is dark already in the late afternoon and an open fire is burning where the beggar is sitting.

Everyone is singing and there is also usually a brass band accompanying the children on their way through the streets to the beggar. Then Martin appears on his horse. He is riding around the beggar. The beggar feels cold and so Martin gets off his horse, cuts through his coat and gives one half to the beggar. This is the moment in which all the people are quiet. After that, all the people get the traditional St Martin pretzel or other typical St Martin pastry. It depends on the region how the always sweet dough is formed. Here in Duisburg we can buy both, a pretzel and a 'Weckmann' in the bakeries. A 'Weckmann' is made of the same dough as a pretzel, but it has got the shape of a little man with raisin eyes and a plastic pipe on his belly. You can see it on one of the pictures.

I hope you found this information of St Martin interesting. Here are some translations of German "St Martin" songs (Of course the translated version does not rhyme)

St Martin St Martin was riding through snow and wind,
his horse was carrying him quickly off.
St Martin was riding with bravery,
his coat covered him warm and nicely.
In the snow, a poor man in rags was sitting in the snow.
"Please help me in my misery, otherwise I will freeze to death", he said.
I am going with my lantern and my lantern is going with me.
Above us the stars are shining, and here on earth we are shining.
How beautiful it sounds when everyone is singing
Oh, light of my lantern please do not expire.

Here is another song:

German:
„Laterne, Laterne,
Sonne Mond und Sterne!
Brenne auf mein Licht,
brenne auf mein Licht,
aber nur meine liebe Laterne nicht.
Laterne, Laterne,
Sonne Mond und Sterne,
Sperrt ihn ein den Wind,
Sperrt ihn ein den Wind,
er soll warten, bis wir zu Hause sind,

Laterne, Laterne,
Sonne Mond und Sterne,
bleibe hell mein Licht,
bleibe hell mein Licht,
denn sonst strahlt meine liebe Laterne nicht.

English:
Lantern, Lantern,
Sun, moon and stars!
Burn up, my light,
Burn up, my light,
but please, my beloved lantern, do not do that.

Lantern, lantern,
sun, moon and stars,
Lock up the wind,
Lock up the wind
until we reach our home

Lantern, lantern,
sun, moon and stars,
stay alight my light,
stay alight my light,
'cause otherwise my lantern won't shine bright
Lantern, lantern,
sun, moon and stars.