



## Summary :

Ancient town of Cappadocia cited for the first time in the Hellenistic period. It had been the capital of the Hellenistic kingdom and later of the Roman Province of Cappadocia and the seat of an important imperial mint. During the Late Antiquity it was re-established at the site of the Byzantine Caesarea.

## Other Names

Mazaca, Mazacos, Mazacum, Mazax, Eusebeia on Argaeon, Eski Sehir, Eski Kayseri, Zorzot

## Geographical Location

South Turkey

## Historical Region

Cappadocia

## Administrative Dependence

Cappadocia

## 1. Introduction

Ancient town of [Cappadocia](#), built at the foot of Mt Argaios, 2 km south of the most recent town Kayseri. It is identified with the modern location of Eski Sehir or Eski Kayseri, whereas in the Armenian language it was called Zorzot.<sup>1</sup>

It is also mentioned as Mazaca, while Xenophon the Ephesian refers to the place name of Mazacos. In [Pliny](#)'s work it occurs as Mazacum and Appian delivers the name Mazax. The residents of the town were called Mazacans. According to a tradition, Mazaca was named after the Cappadocian ancestor Mosoh, but this etymological explanation has been rejected by modern scholars. The place name might have derived either from names rendered in cuneiform inscriptions or could have had Iranian origin. It is rather unlikely to have derived from the name of the Iranian god Mazda or Mazdaka.<sup>2</sup>

The Greek name of the town 'Eusebeia at Argaios' is related with a certain Cappadocian king who was called Eusebes, most likely [Ariarathes V Eusebes](#) (164/163-159 and 157/156-130 BC), who adopted a pro-Hellenic policy. Between 12 and 9 BC the Cappadocian king [Archelaos](#) renamed the city to Caesarea in honour of the emperor [Augustus](#).<sup>3</sup> Despite those changes of the town's name, the original national Mazacenos remained in use in later years. Finally, in epigraphical and numismatic sources of the Imperial period the name "Caesarea at Argaios" occurred.<sup>4</sup>

## 2. History

During the Persian period of occupation, Mazaca was probably under the administration of the [satrapy](#) of [Cilicia](#) initially and later it was incorporated into the homonymous south Cappadocian satrapy. Towards the end of the 5th cent. BC it might have been the seat of Camisaris, dynast of Cilicia, and later it came under the power of his son [Datames](#), the subsequent [satrap](#) of Cappadocia.

In the first quarter of the 4th cent. BC the dynast of Cataonia Aspis might have had his seat there.<sup>5</sup> The first historical reference of the town is related with the dominance of the dynasty of Ariarathids in south Cappadocia, when Mazaca emerged as the capital of the



Cappadocian kingdom and administrative centre of the strategy of Cilicia.<sup>6</sup>

Circa 81 BC, during the [Mithridatic War II](#), the town suffered great destruction when [Tigranes the Great](#), king of [Armenia](#), invaded Cappadocia, urged by [Mithridates VI](#), the king of [Pontus](#). According to Appian, Tigranes displaced 300,000 residents. Some of them were taken to Mesopotamia, whereas the Mazacans became residents of Tigranocerta, the new capital of his state. The exile of the Mazacans ended in 69 BC when the Roman general [Lucullus](#) occupied Tigranocerta. After the end of the Mithridatic Wars Mazaca was rebuilt by the Roman general [Pompey](#) and was probably among the eight cities he founded in Cappadocia.<sup>7</sup>

In 47 BC, after the end of the Civil War at Rome, [Caesar](#) visited Mazaca and during the two days he stayed there he settled the domestic affairs of the Cappadocian kingdom.<sup>8</sup> During the Imperial times, the town competed with [Tyana](#) for obtaining privileges, which did not involve only honours but also substantial economic rewards. Numismatic sources testify that the title of metropolis was awarded by the emperor [Commodus](#) (180-192). The title of [neocoros](#) is also dated to the same period, which implied that the town had the privilege of a temple for the [Imperial cult](#). However, the earliest reference to this honour dates to the period of the Severus dynasty (193-217).

The role of the town as capital of the [Roman Province of Cappadocia](#) in the 2nd and the 3rd cent., when the province included parts of [Galatia](#), Pontus and Armenia, is highlighted with the title 'Supreme, eminent, fairer, of Galatia, Pontus, Cappadocia, Armenia, metropolis Caesarea twice neocoros', which occurs in abbreviation on the coins of the emperor Severus Alexander (222-235).<sup>9</sup> During the hegemony of the emperor Decius (249-251) riots broke out in Cappadocia and a rebel captured Caesarea and Tyana. That person is probably identified with the landowner Palmatius, who was accused of usurpation of the imperial power by the emperor [Valerian](#) and as a result his estate was expropriated.<sup>10</sup>

Few years later, about 259, [Sapor](#), the ruler of the Sassanid Persians, invaded Cappadocia and other regions of the Southeast Asia Minor. Caesarea resisted under the leadership of a certain Demosthenes, but eventually it was conquered when a captive revealed a secret entrance to the Persians. The town was looted and many of the 400,000 inhabitants were taken prisoners.<sup>11</sup>

In Late Antiquity, certainly prior to [Justinian](#)'s period (527-565), Caesarea was transferred to the modern site of Kayseri and flourished in the Byzantine era.<sup>12</sup>

### 3. Economy

As [Strabo](#) explicitly states, the location of Mazaca was not suitable for habitation. The land was volcanic, infertile and arid, due to the fact that the underground water did not emerge to springs but to swamps. Nevertheless, the Cappadocian kings had chosen Mazaca as the centre of their realm for its wealth in timber and other building materials, as well as for the area's terrain, which was ideal for animal husbandry. Moreover, the location of the city on the intersection of the main routes facilitated its commercial and economic development.<sup>13</sup>

It is possible that the mint of the Ariarathids' state was located in Mazaca, since the era of [Ariarathes IV](#) (220-164/163 BC) onwards. However, the earliest coins issued in the town with certainty are dated to the 1st century BC.<sup>14</sup> The mint of Caesarea became very important after the conversion of the kingdom to a Roman province in 17, during [Tiberius](#)' time. Until the middle 3rd century it was a significant imperial mint on the East border and issued both silver and bronze coins.<sup>15</sup>

### 4. Religion

Information on religious practices in Mazaca during Antiquity is rather scanty. According to later literary sources, there were in Caesarea sanctuaries of [Apollo](#) Patroos, [Zeus](#) Poliouchos and a great sanctuary of goddess [Tyche](#), which were destroyed by the Christians. The cult of [Mithras](#) is also attested during the Imperial period.<sup>16</sup> Other sources complete our knowledge, although fragmentary, on local deities. The most prevalent was the deified and sometimes personified mountain Argaios, the highest mountain in



Asia Minor, which was rising above Mazaca. The cult originated in the period of the Hittites, but evidently it became very important during the Late Hellenistic and Imperial times when it appeared in the iconography of the Mazaca coins, as well as on seals and sculpture. Its prominent position in that period is probably associated with the increased political influence of Rome on the affairs of the Cappadocian Kingdom and later with the proclamation of Caesarea as the seat of the new Roman Province of Cappadocia. Taking into consideration the particular time of the popularity of that cult and the decorative elements in the representation of god Argaios we can conclude that during the Imperial period Mt Argaios evolved into the symbol of Roman domination in Cappadocia, and consequently it was associated with the imperial cult. On the summit there was probably a fire cult which was related with the Persian cult of the summits.<sup>17</sup>

The coinage of the city indicates the cult of many other deities, such as [Athena-Ma](#), [Heracles](#), [Aphrodite](#), [Ares](#), [Artemis](#), Serapis, Ammon-Zeus, Nike, [Amazons](#), Vejovis<sup>18</sup> -the Roman God- and probably [Hera](#) and [Helios](#). According to the representations on the coins, it seems likely that personified ideas were also worshipped, particularly Justice, Peace, Freedom, Piety, Honesty, Concord, Providence and Rome.<sup>19</sup>

## 5. Institutions-Administration

Mazaca, like other Cappadocian cities, was not part of the Cappadocian administration system based on strategies. Nevertheless, the central royal administration imposed certain restrictions on its autonomy, as testified by epigraphical evidence. According to the inscriptions, the governor of Mazaca was a royal officer, responsible for the city. Another officer had his seat in Mazaca as a chief commander, supervising the economics of the Cappadocian cities. The official titles are a strong indication that the administrative system of Mazaca comprised institutions common in other Hellenistic kingdoms. The legislation was a loan too, the archaic laws of Charondas, which were probably introduced from mainland Greece, while a legislator was appointed for its interpretation.

## 6. Culture

The rhetor Artemidorus, son of Eubulus, was born in Caesarea. The rhetor lived from the end of 1st cent. BC to the beginning of the 1st cent. AD and was honoured by the demos of Delphi for his educational work. The philosopher Pausanias, student of Herodes Atticus, was also from Caesarea.<sup>20</sup>

From Tiberius' reign (14-37) up until Severus' times (193-217), the games of the [Koionon](#) of Cappadocians took place in Caesarea. A festival called Commodeion is also testified, most likely initiated after the title of neocoros was bestowed to the city. Finally, in Severus' period, in 204/205, the games known as Philadelphia Severia were inaugurated in Caesarea and other cities in Asia Minor to celebrate the fraternal love between [Caracalla](#) and Geta, sons of the emperor [Septimius Severus](#).<sup>21</sup>

## 7. Topography-Architecture

Mazaca extended on the foot of the Argaios volcano and the adjoining valley to the northeast. River Melas flowed nearby. The location was one of the main road junctions in Asia Minor with great strategic, economic and commercial importance, since that was the crossroad for five ancient routes crossing Asia Minor from east to west and north to south. One of them was the road called by Strabo 'Koine odos', followed by all the travelers from [Ionia](#) towards the Cilician Gates and Syria or the River Euphrates.<sup>22</sup>

Despite the fact that Caesarea was the capital of the Cappadocian kingdom during the Hellenistic period, the city was not fortified. As Strabo explicitly reports, the kings used the city as a camp but relied on forts for their safety. Nevertheless, during Gordian's III reign (238-244) Caesarea was fortified as it is certified by the coins issued in that period to commemorate the celebration of the construction or the repair of the walls. The circuit of the fortification walls and its irregular shape rendered its defense difficult, thus its size was reduced during the Early Byzantine period.<sup>23</sup>

Mazaca has not been systematically excavated. At the end of the last century, parts of the fortification walls and two towers were still visible. However, only the ancient stadium, architectural remains of a monumental circular building of the Roman period and vaulted



constructions which were probably parts of funerary monuments have been identified.<sup>24</sup>

1. Hild, F.-Restle, M., *Kappadokien (Kappadokia, Charsianon, Sebasteia und Lykandos) TIB 2*, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften philosophisch-historische Klasse Denkschriften 149, Wien 1981), pp. 193 ff.
2. X., *Eph.* 3.1; Plin., *HN* 6.8; App., *Mith.* 115; Str. 12.2.9; Const. Porph. *De them.* II, 60-61; Zgusta, L., *Kleinasiatische Ortsnamen* (Beiheft BN 21, Heidelberg 1984), p. 356, no 750.
3. About Eusebeia cf. Strab. 12.2.7; Cohen, G.M., *The Hellenistic Settlements in Europe, the Islands, and Asia Minor* (Hellenistic Culture and Society 17, Berkeley-Los Angeles-London 1995), pp. 377 ff. For the national names Ευσεβείος and Ευσεβείτης cf. Robert, L., *Hellenica* 2 (Paris 1946), pp. 81 ff.; Imhoof-Blumer, F., 'Zur griechischen Münzkunde. Eusebeia Kaisareia-Elaiusa Sebaste-Reichsmünzen der syrischen Provinzen-Die Ära von Paltos-Antiocheia Gerasa', *RSN* (1898), pp. 13 ff., p. 15.
4. For the word Mazacenos (Μαζακηνός) cf. Robert, L., *Noms indigènes dans l'Asie-Mineure réco-romaine I* (Paris 1963), pp. 490 ff., esp. p. 491 ff., n. 2. About Caesarea at Argaios cf. *IGRR IV*, 1588, 1645, *BMC Galatia*, p. 63 ff., no 147, 148, 156.
5. Briant, P., *Histoire de l'Empire Perse de Cyrus à Alexandre* 2 (Paris 1996), p. 1040 ; Davesne, A., 'La circulation monétaire en Cilicie à l' époque Achéménide', *REA* 91 (1989), p.167.
6. Str. 12.2.7.
7. Str. 12.2.9; App. *Mith.* 12.115,117; Plu., *Luc.* 29.4; Magie, D., *Roman Rule in Asia Minor* (Princeton-New Jersey 1950), p. 321, 1.232.
8. Caes., *Bell. Alex.* 66.6.
9. Sydenham, E. A., *The Coinage in Caesarea in Cappadocia* (Supplement by A.G. Malloy, New York 1978), pp. 23, 93, no. 374 ff, p. 98, no. 401; Mitchell, S., *Anatolia. Land, Men, and Gods in Asia Minor I: The Celts in Anatolia and the Impact of Roman Rule* (Oxford 1993), p. 211. See also Berges, D.-Nollé, J., *Tyana. Archäologisch-historische Untersuchungen zum südwestlichen Kappadokien* 1-2 (IK 55.1, Bonn 2000), p. 516, no. 98.
10. Berges, D.-Nollé, J., *Tyana. Archäologisch-historische Untersuchungen zum südwestlichen Kappadokien* 1-2 (IK 55.1, Bonn 2000), p. 298.
11. Zonar. 12.23; Magie, D., *Roman Rule in Asia Minor* (Princeton-New Jersey 1950), p. 708.
12. Gabriel, A., *Monuments Turcs d'Anatolie I: Kayseri-Nigde* (Archaeology and Art publications reprint series 6, Istanbul 1930), p. 7.
13. Str. 12.2.7-9. Magie, D., *Roman Rule in Asia Minor* (Princeton-New Jersey 1950), p. 201, 492, 1095, no. 3.
14. Regling, K., "Dynastemünzen von Tyana, Morima und Anisa in Kappadokien", *ZfN* 42 (1935), p. 5; Burnett, A.-Amandry, M.-Ripollés, P.P., *Roman Provincial Coinage I:I, From the Death of Caesar to the death of Vitellius. Introduction and Catalogue* (London 1922), p. 552.
15. See Burnett, A.-Amandry, M.-Ripollés, P.P., *Roman Provincial Coinage I:I, From the Death of Caesar to the death of Vitellius. Introduction and Catalogue* (London 1922), pp. 550 ff; Burnett, A.-Amandry, M.- Caradice, I., *Roman Provincial Coinage II:I, From Vespasian to Domitian (AD 69-96), Introduction and Catalogue* (London 1992), pp. 238 ff; Burnett, A.-Amandry, M.-Ripollés, P.P., *Roman Provincial Coinage, Supplement I* (London-Paris 1998), p. 39; Metcalf, W.E., "The Silber Pragung of Cappadocia. Vespasian-Commodus", *NNM* 166 (New York 1996), p. 83; Sydenham, E.A., *The Coinage of Caesaria in Cappadocia* (Supplement by A.G. Malloy, New York 1978), p. 1 ff.
16. Sozom. 5.4.2; Weiss, P., 'Argaios/Erciyas Dag?-Heiliger Berg Kappadokiens. Monumente und Ikonographie', *JNG* 35 (1985), p.46. On Mithras cult cf. *CIL* 3, n. 6.772.
17. Weiss, P., 'Argaios/Erciyas Dag?-Heiliger Berg Kappadokiens. Monumente und Ikonographie', *JNG* 35 (1985), p. 21ff; Briant, P., *Histoire de*



*l'Empire Perse de Cyrus à Alexandre 2* (Paris 1996), p. 732.

18. Vejovis or Ve(d)iovis: Roman god, a form of Jupiter.

19. Cf. Sydenham, E.A., *The Coinage of Caesarea in Cappadocia 2* (Supplement by A.G. Malloy, New York 1978), p. 16 ff.

20. Robert, L., *Noms indigenes dans l'Asie Mineure Gréco-romaine I* (Paris 1963), p. 490 ff; Philostr., *Soph.* 593 K.



21. Mitchell, S., *Anatolia. Land, Men, and Gods in Asia Minor I: The Celts in Anatolia and the Impact of Roman Rule* (Oxford 1993), pp. 218, 221; Mitchell, S., "R.E.C.A.M. Notes and Studies no. 1: Inscriptions of Ancyra", *AS 27* (1977), pp. 63-103, pp. 75 ff in particular, no 8.

22. Hild, F.-Restle, M., *Kappadokien (Kappadokia, Charsianon, Sebasteia und Lykandos) TIB 2*, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften philosophisch-historische Klasse Denkschriften 149, Wien 1981), p. 194; Mitchell, S., *Anatolia. Land, Men, and Gods in Asia Minor I: The Celts in Anatolia and the Impact of Roman Rule* (Oxford 1993), p. 132; Str. 14.2.29; Magie, D., *Roman Rule in Asia Minor* (Princeton-New Jersey 1950), p. 201, 492, 1095, n. 3.

23. Str. 12.2.7; Procop., *Aed.* 5.4.7; Imhoof-Blumer, F., 'Zur griechischen Münzkunde. Eusebeia Kaisareia-Elaiusa Sebaste-Reichsmünzen der syrischen Provinzen-Die Ära von Paltos-Antiocheia Gerasa', *RSN* (1898), pp. 22 ff.

24. Hamilton, W.J., *Researches in Asia Minor, Pontus and Armenia; With some account of their Antiquities and Geology II* (London 1842), p. 262; Cuinet, V., *La Turquie d'Asie. Géographie Administrative. Statistique descriptive et raisonnée de chaque province de l'Asie Mineure 1* (Paris 1892), p. 312; Gabriel, A., *Monuments Turcs d'Anatolie I : Kayseri-Nigde* (Archaeology and Art publications reprint series 6, Istanbul 1930), p. 3 ff.

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	Caesarea of Cappadocia <a href="http://www.wildwinds.com/coins/greece/cappadocia/caesarea/i.html">http://www.wildwinds.com/coins/greece/cappadocia/caesarea/i.html</a>
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## Glossary :

**koinon, the**

The term koinon pertains to every confederacy of ancient cities.

**satrap, the**

The title designated a representative of the Persian king, and was widely used in the Persian language. In ancient writers the term usually designates an official of the Persian empire who assumes highest political and military power within the limits of his *satrapia*, the division under his command. Alexander the Great introduced the institution to the administrative organisation of his empire in the East.

In the Roman empire, the office of the satrap was hereditary for Armenian nobles who administered an Armenian klima (=canton, a historic-geographical unit); in the case of the Armenian territories inside the Roman Empire, the satrap yielded limited power under the suzerainty of the Roman emperor.

**satrapy, the**

1. Administrative division of the ancient Persian state. 2. The office of a satrap and the period of his government.

## Chronological Table

End of 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC: Mazaca was probably the seat of dynast Camisaris and then of the satrap Datamis.

First quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC: Mazaca was probably the seat of dynast Aspis

c. 255-17 BC: Capital of the Cappadocian kingdom

220-164/163 BC: Hegemony of Ariarathes IV Eusebes. The city was renamed to Eusebeia on Argaios.

81 BC: Destruction of the city by Tigranes the Great and banishment of the residents to Mesopotamia and Tigranocerta.

69 BC: Return of the residents of Mazaca to their city.

63 BC: The end of the Mithridatic wars. Restoration works by Pompey.

47 BC: Caesar's visit.

12-9 BC: The city is named Caesarea.

14-37 to 193-217: Caesarea is the seat of the Koinon of Cappadocia.

17: Caesarea is the capital of the Roman Province of Cappadocia and the seat of the imperial mint.

180-192: Hegemony of the emperor Commodus. Caesarea is appointed the titles of Metropolis and Neocoros. Celebration of the festival Commodeion.

193-217: Hegemony of the Severus dynasty. Earliest testimony of the nomination of the title neocoros.

204/205: Inauguration of the festival Philadelphieia Severeia