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ŞANLIURFA İLİ KÜLTÜR EĞİTİM  
SANAT VE ARAŞTIRMA VAKFI



# GÖBEKLİTEPE

12.000 Years The Oldest Archeological Temple All Over The World



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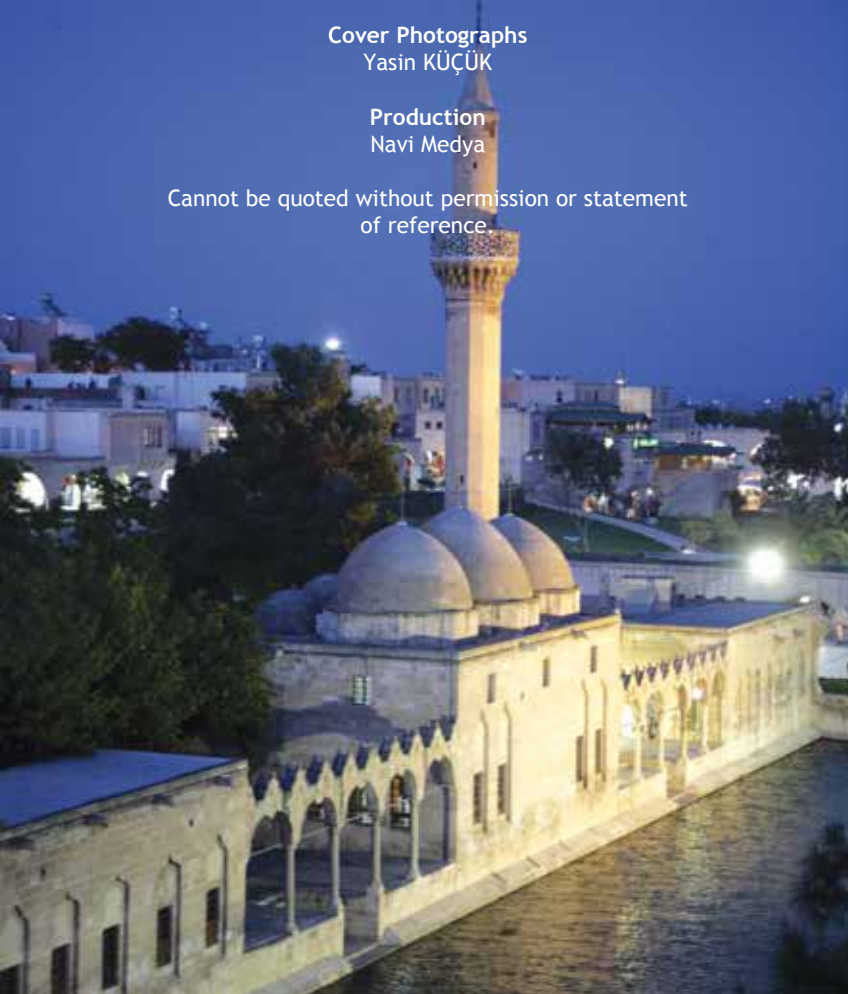
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## 12.000 YEARS THE OLDEST ARCHEOLOGICAL TEMPLE ALL OVER THE WORLD

### INTRODUCTION

Şanlıurfa is one of the oldest settlements on the Silk Road, neighboring Syria in Southeast Anatolia region of Turkey. Being located at the intersection of trade routes connecting the East to the West has attained a strategic importance to the city. Because of its strategic location the city has been host to many states and beylics.

Şanlıurfa is the center point of the fertility crescent. It is a very old city, where agriculture was first made, the first university was set up, three celestial religions sprouted, the fire did not burn Prophet İbrahim, different cultures lived together in harmony and hospitable people resided for eternity. Humanity needed these attributes in the past, it needs them today and most certainly it will need them in the future. Turkey will continue to be a country, where people will not go to sleep with a full stomach while their neighbors go hungry.

According to data gathered through the excavations in Balıklıgöl, Nevalıçori, Göbeklitepe and other areas in the city, Şanlıurfa has a history going as far back as 12,000 years. World's oldest statue, which has the size of a real human being, from 12,000 years ago was unearthed in excavations around Balıklıgöl. Şanlıurfa is also called "The city of Prophets" for being host to many prophets throughout the course of the history. Serving as a cradle of civilizations with its historical richness, the city has been a center of tolerance as the meeting point of different religions, languages, races, cultures and civilizations.



We cannot think of Şanlıurfa as a separate place than Harran, which is another historical host city of civilizations. Besides being the center of the Sabi religion, in which people worshipped the moon, the sun, planets and stars, Harran also hosted the first Islamic University of the world, which taught positive sciences.

Just like it had in the past, Şanlıurfa has a lot to offer to the humanity at present. What we are trying to do is to shake off the dust upon us and uncover our true potential for the benefit of humanity. Our goal is to work together to take Şanlıurfa -the city of history, culture, peace and tranquility up to higher levels, with a bright future and huge potential. A future, in which citizens will be embraced by the state.

I congratulate everyone, who contributed to the preparation and publication of this great piece “Göbeklitepe” and I hope this valuable piece will benefit the readers.

Celalettin Güvenç  
Şanlıurfa Governor



Photo 1: Location of Göbeklitepe

Groundbreaking information on the transition to settled life was gathered in Göbeklitepe excavations. Göbeklitepe is a worship center from the Pre-Pottery Neolithic Era dating back to 10,000 B.C., which means it is 12,000 years old. 80 hectares big area was declared as 1st Degree Archeological Site by Culture and Tourism Ministry in 2005.



Photo 2: Göbeklitepe excavation works

In order to understand the settlement conditions of Göbeklitepe, we must first talk about the Neolithic Era. Neolithic Era comes after Paleolithic and Mesolithic Eras. Neolithic means “New Stone”. This period is also called New Stone Age. In Neolithic Era, for the first time in history mankind upped their hand against nature and focused on agriculture besides hunting and gathering.



Photo 3: Göbeklitepe Temple

Through trial and error, humans began planting wheat, barley, lentil vs. which used to grow wildly. In time, they found the best products. Also in this period animals were tamed and first religious and civilian architectural structures emerged.



Photo 4: Human skull in Göbeklitepe

Göbeklitepe, Karahantepe, Sefertepe, Hamzantepe, and Balıklıgöl environs surround Harran Plateau like a crescent at 30-40 km distances from each other. These are the most important settlements of the Neolithic Era. Almost all of these settlements are 1st degree Archaeological Sites dating back to 12,000 years.

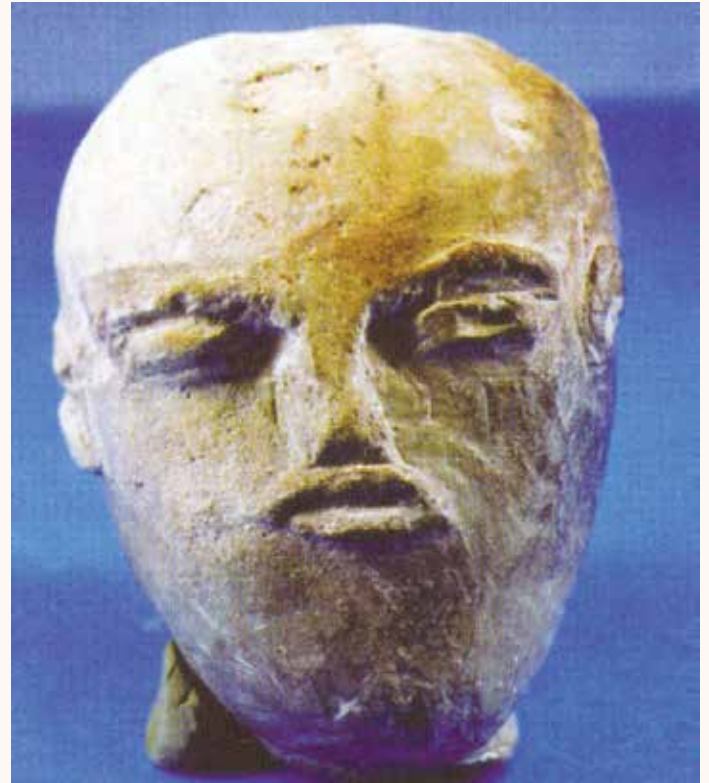


Photo 5: Limestone Male Head in Nevalı Çori

Also dated back to the same period Nevalı Çori (Valley of Illnesses) located between Hilvan township's Kantara village and Süleyman Bey neighborhood, Biris cemetery in Bozova township, Söğüt Field, Akarçay Tepe and finally about 250 mounds in Harran plateau are settlements with architectural structures from the Neolithic Era.





Photo 6: Lion Stela in Göbeklitepe

Situated 3 km northeast of Örencik (Karaharabe) village, which is 17 km to the east of Şanlıurfa city center, Göbeklitepe derives its name from an entombed saint in the area. The site was discovered by Prof. Dr. Hallet Çambel, Pre-history Department Head of Istanbul University and Prof. Dr. Robert Braidwood of Chicago University in the surface research carried out as part of the “Southeast Anatolia Research Project” in 1963.

Surface research was made in 1995 under the supervision of Şanlıurfa Museum Management and with the counseling of Archeologist Harald Hauptmann from German Archeology Institute. Excavation process continued from 1996 to 2006 under the supervision of Şanlıurfa Museum Management and with the counseling of Archeologist Klaus Schmidt from the German Archeology Institute. Since 2007, excavation efforts continue under the supervision of German Archeologist Klaus Schmidt with the decision of Council of Ministers.



Photo 7: Stela with bull, fox and crane engravings in Göbeklitepe



Photo 8: Stela with lion engraving in Göbeklitepe

Among the strange findings in Göbeklitepe, there are desert monitor, reptile engravings, gruesomely depicted wolf heads with open mouth and teeth, boars, cranes, stork, fox, snake, scorpion, wild sheep, lion, spider and headless human body, and male statues with exaggerated penises are important ones in understanding the belief systems of the people who adopted settled life 12,000 years ago.

In geomagnetic and geo-radar scans of the area, about 20 circle shaped worship grounds with 20-30 mt diameters were spotted. Only some of them have been brought to daylight so far.



Photo 9: Special figurines from Göbeklitepe





Photo 11: Small handcrafts

Photo 10: Stela with snake in Göbeklitepe

Archeological excavations suggest that Göbeklitepe with its extraordinary findings was a religious/holy gathering center. At least all the publications on the place point to that way. One of the common mistakes about Göbeklitepe is thinking of the place as a settlement ground, which it is not.



Photo 12: Stela with fox engraving

Archeological excavations have proven that Göbeklitepe Neolithic Worship Ground was a praying ground, where people of the era gathered from time to time. It is not certain yet, but it is thought that the temple was buried by the people who worshipped there.



Photo 13: Water and water bird figures in Göbeklitepe

Finally;

Architecture begins with humans' transition from hunter-gatherer life style into settled life. 12,000 year old structures in Göbeklitepe are considered as the birth-place of architecture. Previously, the temple dating back to 4,000 B.C. in Malta was thought to be the oldest temple before the monotheistic period.



Photo 14: Stela with animal and plant engravings

With the discovery of Göbeklitepe, these information have lost their validity and it was scientifically proven that "Göbeklitepe Temple" dated back 12,000 years was the first worship ground of human beings. With this information the history of archeology had to be re-written.





Photo 15: Stela made in human form in Göbeklitepe

Wild animal and plant figures engraved on the stelae (T shaped obelisks) in Göbeklitepe are considered as the first examples of sculpting and plastic arts. That is oldest examples of pictures engraved on rock in today's sense of pictures are those found in Göbeklitepe.

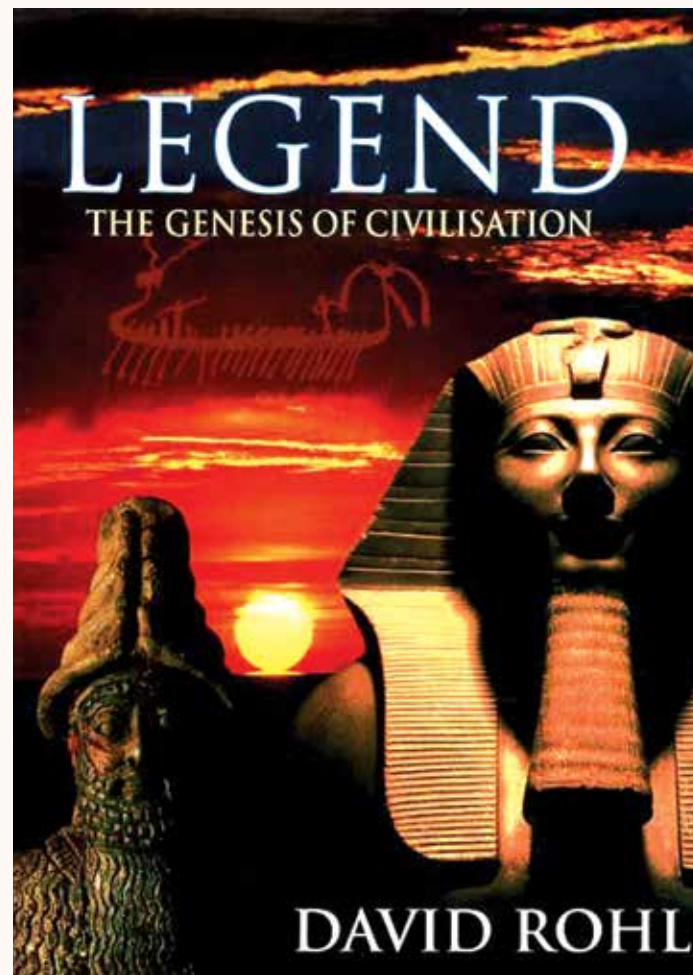


Photo 16: Legend

Göbeklitepe excavations have proven that civilization was born in these lands and spread out to the whole world. British author David Rohl says in his book “Legend” that after being expelled from heaven, Adam and Eve came together in Göbeklitepe. According to David Rohl Adam and Eve continued their lives in Göbeklitepe, worked on the soil and were the first ones to start agriculture.



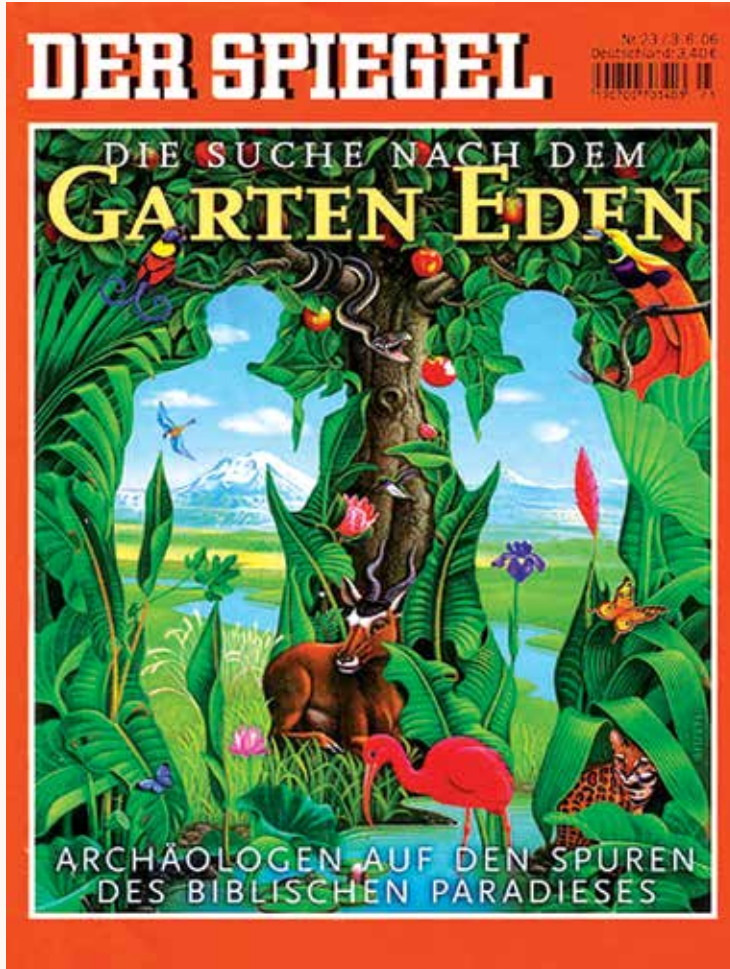


Photo 17: Der Spiegel (June 3, 2006)

23<sup>rd</sup> edition of Der Spiegel magazine of Germany, dated June 3, 2006 (pages 158-170) quotes Rohl's book and gives 11 pages long information about Göbeklitepe.



Photo 18: Geo Magazine (January 1, 2008)

The article published on Der Spiegel was widely covered by the Turkish press. After that, Geo Magazine of Germany focused on Göbeklitepe, and made it a global story.





Photo 19: Göbeklitepe in Geo Magazine

Having found reverberations around the world, particularly in Germany, Göbeklitepe Neolithic Area managed to grab the rightful attention it deserved in Turkey and around the world.



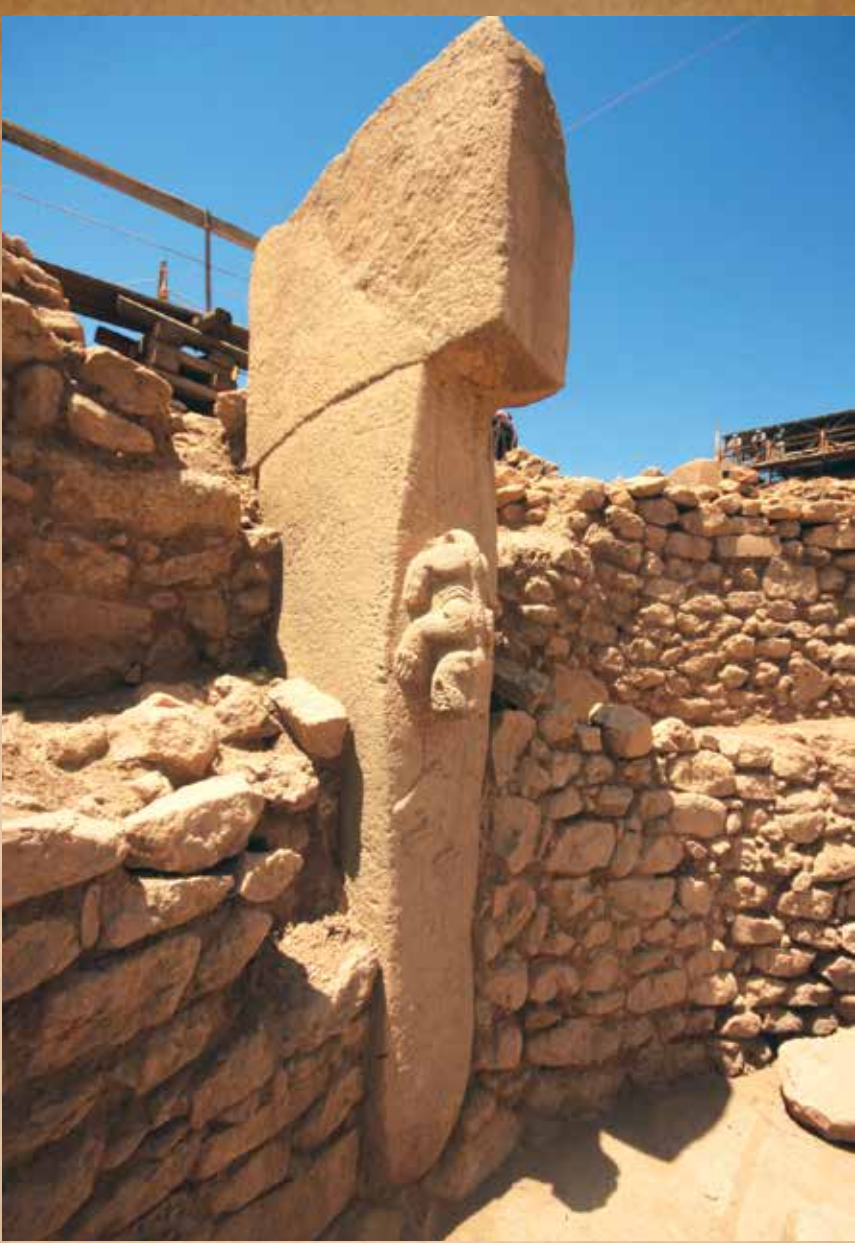
Photo 20: Göbeklitepe on National Geographic

According to the common archeological approach, the most important factors in mankind's transition from hunter-gatherer lifestyle to settled life were the fear of hunger and the instinct of protection. However, Göbeklitepe shatters this approach. Considering the period it was built, religious beliefs could also be a factor in the transition into settled life.

Apparently, future excavations will uncover that Göbeklitepe has more authentic secrets.







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