

Excavations in the “Taş Tepeler” region of Şanlıurfa, Türkiye, open up new horizons in archaeological research

- The sculptures and architectural elements found in Türkiye date back to the Neolithic period. Archaeologists excavating at Göbeklitepe and Karahantepe sites, parts of the greater “Taş Tepeler” region, have uncovered several new monumental statues and architectural elements. Karahantepe and Göbeklitepe, one of the world's oldest Neolithic sites, has been attracting attention for its archaeological findings. The place was recognised as one of the nine most important “Field Exploration and Research” projects of 2023 at the Shanghai Archaeology Forum in China. The nine projects were selected from 973 evaluations submitted by participants from 32 countries.
- Göbeklitepe and Karahantepe stirred global archaeological circles with the latest findings unearthed in October 2023. Within the scope of the “Taş Tepeler” Project, Karahantepe is among those sites that have given us a deeper understanding of prehistory. These ground-breaking discoveries included the largest known human statue of the period, unearthed in Karahantepe. An outstanding example of prehistoric art is the 2.45-metre-tall figure sitting on what appears to be a bench, which is believed to depict a male. The statue’s seated position evokes a living person, featuring a realistic facial expression, while the emphasis on its shoulder bones and ribs suggests death. Adjacent to the human figure is a lower ledge upon which stone plates and a vulture statue were placed, indicating that the structure was built for special purposes.
- During excavations conducted by İstanbul University, a life-size limestone statue of a wild boar was found in Structure D at Göbeklitepe, dating from the same period as Karahantepe. Featuring traces of red, white, and black pigments on its surface, the wild boar is the first full-scale painted sculpture of its period to survive to the present day. It was found on a bench decorated with an H-shaped symbol, a crescent moon, two snakes, and three human faces or masks. The archaeological site of Göbeklitepe, about 12 kilometers from the Şanlıurfa city centre, is one of the most important heritages of human history. As Türkiye’s 18th UNESCO World Heritage Site, Göbeklitepe has significantly altered perceptions of hunter-gatherer societies such as in the Neolithic Age.
- To promote the “Taş Tepeler” Project in Sweden, an archaeology conference will be given by **Prof. Necmi Karul**, Head of the Department of Prehistoric Archaeology at İstanbul University.
- You can find more information about the project on the following link: <https://tastepeler.com/>