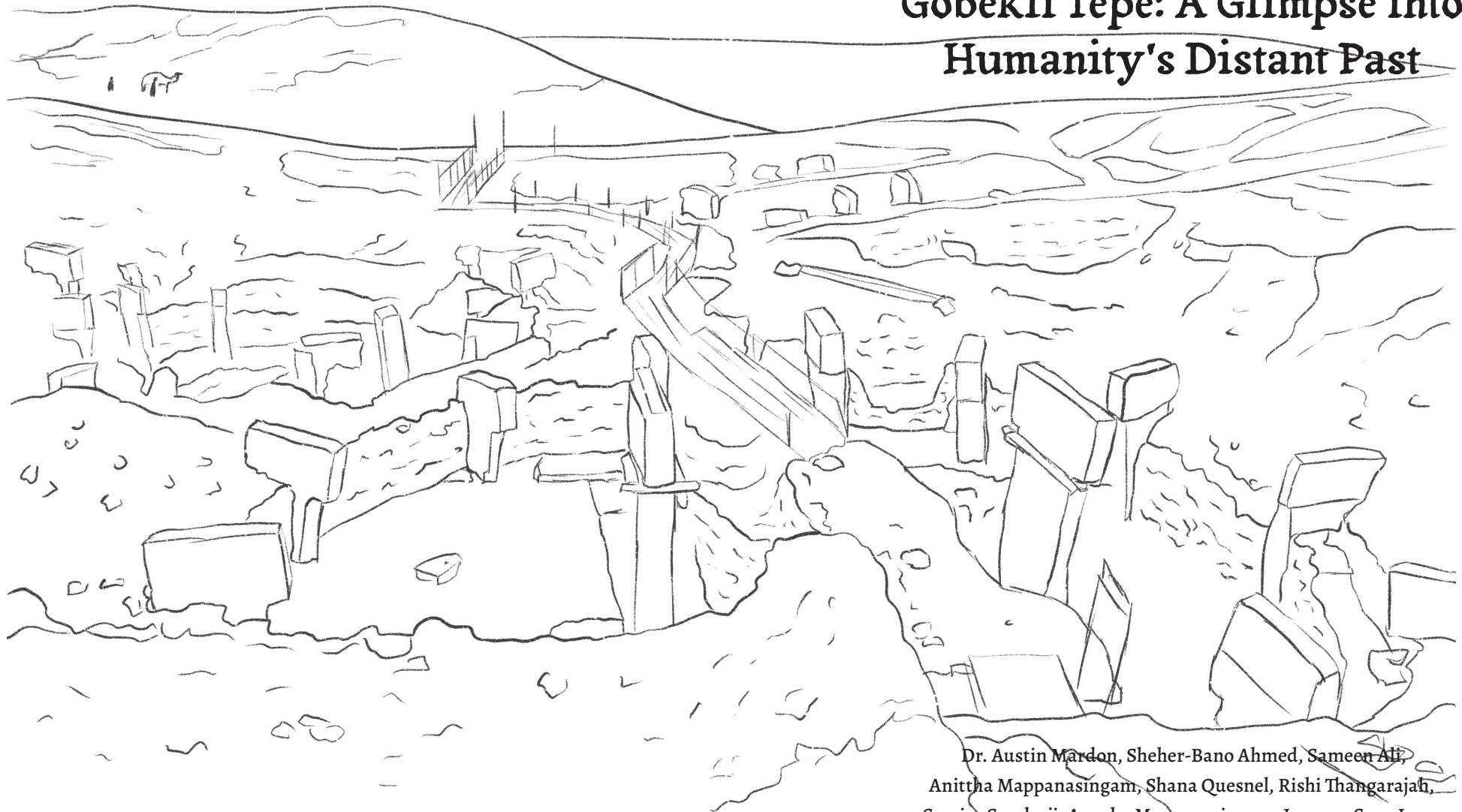


Göbekli Tepe: A Glimpse into Humanity's Distant Past

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“For humanity and the development we have made
and will continue to make.”

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Introduction

This book was created through the Antarctic Institute of Canada as a project sponsored by the Government of Canada's innovative Work-Integrated Learning program, Level Up. The Antarctic Institute of Canada is a non-profit Canadian charity organization founded in 1985 by former Antarctic researcher Austin Mardon. Its original aim was to lobby for the federal government of Canada to increase the extent of Canadian research in the Antarctic. Today, its objectives also include supporting scholarly research and academic writing.

A group of twelve postsecondary students worked on this book over a period of seven days. Each chapter was written by a different student, with some chapters being created through the collaborative efforts of multiple authors. All editing, graphic design, and audiobook production was also carried out by postsecondary students.

Thank you for picking this book up to learn more about Göbekli Tepe.



What is The Göbekli Tepe?

Written By Sameen Ali

Introduction

Göbekli Tepe—Turkish for “Hill of the navel” is the world’s most ancient piece of architecture. Located in the Germus Mountains of southeastern Turkey and erected fifteen kilometers high at the peak of this elongated mountain ridge (Haughton, 2011), the structure is known to be the oldest human made temple on Earth (Briticana, 2020). The discovery of this 12 000 year old temple—the earliest surviving religious site in the world—in 1974 left archaeologists and scientists shocked. Some researchers even went as far to claim that this site was the biblical garden of Eden (Betz, 2020). The property is made up of layers of carved megaliths which are huge stones, used in various types of monuments—including the Göbekli Tepe. There are 43 megaliths in the shape of a “T”, these pillars average a height of 16 feet (Haughton, 2011). The location was also found to have remains of wild animal bones which indicate the fact that the creators had not yet begun domesticating animals or begun farming (Haughton, 2011). The presence of such remains at the site indicate that the structure was erected by hunter gatherers also called foragers which are individuals who depend widely on wild foods and life for sustainability. Thus, the site has prompted reconsideration between settlement and sociocultural development (Briticana, 2020). The sculptures and architecture at Göbekli Tepe predate pottery, writing, the wheel and the beginning of agriculture

(Haughton, 2011). Not only does its existence give important value to learning about our history, the Göbekli Tepe has a rich geography, location and unique architecture. The former will be discussed in chapter 10, but first let's delve into the visuals of the Göbekli Tepe—both today and millions of years ago, the megaliths located in the region and similar locations that exist in the same area.

Description of The Göbekli Tepe

The design and history of Göbekli Tepe have captured the imagination of the public for decades as the subject of various documentaries, news stories, as well as countless conspiracy theories (Betz, 2020). Göbekli Tepe is a 1000 foot diameter mound, around 14.5 km northeast of the town of Sanliurfa (Urfa) (Norman, 2021). The Göbekli Tepe consists of four separate arrangements of monolithic pillars linked together by segments of coarsely built dry stone walls to form circular structures (Haughton, 2011). The limestone megaliths are T-shaped and surpass 5 meters in height, weighing as much as 50 tons (Briticana, 2020). They are arranged in a circular formation with two large pillars in the center of each complex which are encircled by slightly smaller stones facing inside the circle (Briticana, 2020). Archeologists believe that these pillars could have once supported roofs. The floors are made of terrazzo (burnt lime) and the structure ranges in diameter between 10 and 30 meters (Haughton, 2011). Researchers have even found pillars within the circle were intricately decorated with carvings of foxes, scorpions, lions and other imagery (Briticana, 2020). These carvings in stone were found once researchers began analysis since the stones had been buried. The T-shaped megalith pillars are positioned on top of one another. Each completed circle was buried and the exact process was repeated at the same location (Briticana, 2020). At first, the odd placement of the pillars had gone unnoticed. At a glance, Göbekli Tepe looks like an ordinary hill; however, the discovery of these structures by a German archaeologist sparked global interest in its study (Betz, 2011). Through further analysis, it became more and more apparent that it was human hands who created the location (Betz, 2021). The Tepe is large and complex and continues to be analyzed today. This chapter will focus on those aspects of its physical appearance which have been discovered so far.

To give context to how old this temple is—it predates Stonehenge by 6000 years, it is older than humanity's oldest known civilizations such as the mesopotamian civilization (3500 BC) and the indus valley civilization (3300 BC), in addition, its megalithic temples were cut from rock 1000 years before the pyramids in Egypt were created (Betz, 2020). Considering that the Tepe was built in 9000 BC, the question that arises is “why were the pillars buried?”—researchers have debunked the theory that the burial may be due to nature (Storm, 2018), which was the initial hypothesis due to the age of the site. The Tepe resides on a hill that rises out of the landscape (Storm, 2018). Unlike the surrounding plateaus of the area, it has a gentle slope like a mound and the top curves down, looking like a belly button, hence its name “Hill of the navel”. Such a location would not be able to accumulate sediments regardless of how ancient the site is (Storm, 2018). Such zones tend to erode, rather than accumulate, sediment. As a result, archaeologists have concluded that humans likely purposefully buried the pillars. The discovery of human bones buried alongside these decorated T-pillars further supports this conclusion. The possible reasons as to why this may have occurred and what it means are discussed in detail in later chapters.

Another factor that makes Göbekli Tepe an interesting discovery is the Neolithic flint tool that the hill was found to be littered with. These tools included knives, choppers and projectile points. Although these tools themselves are common for this time period, the sheer number of them is incredible. Göbekli Tepe is one of the UNESCO World Heritage Sites, and rightfully so (Jones, 2021). Its history and architecture is unique, unlike any other structure on Earth. By studying Göbekli Tepe, we can learn more about humanity's past. .

To get to the site, you must drive through the surrounding villages including Derman Köyü, Göktepe Köyü, and Örencik Köyü (Jones, 2021). Once these villages are crossed, you are directed to the ancient temple by spray-painted signs on the wall leading up to the site (Jones, 2021). The drive to Göbekli Tepe, which is at the highest point of this area, is largely uphill, surrounded on both sides by fields that have been worked by farmers for centuries. (Jones, 2021). The location was first recognized as a place of archeological significance in

a survey project by the University of Chicago and Istanbul in 1963. In this survey conducted by Peter Benedict, he described the place as “...complex of round-topped knolls of red earth with slight depressions between (...) littered with flint artifacts” (UNESCO, 2017).

Göbekli Tepe is an archaeological mound made primarily of limestone and located near the plateau that makes up the archaeological conservation area, which is approximately 126 hectares. (UNESCO, 2017). In addition, the buffer zone—which is a neutral zonal area that usually divides two separate lands—includes an area covering the limestone plateau around the archeological mound and the surroundings around it (UNESCO, 2017). In the Göbekli Tepe the several circles of structures are each separated by the buffer zone. The boundary follows the natural topography of the site. In the place where the layout of the Göbekli Tepe is less distinct, the buffer zone is drawn to all areas which contribute to the visual setting of the site and feature its historical significance (UNESCO, 2017).

The Megaliths at The Göbekli Tepe

As mentioned before, the 43 megaliths which have been discovered so far are mainly T-shaped pillars of soft limestone up to 16 feet in height (Haughton, 2011). They were excavated and transported from a stone quarry on the lower southwestern slope of the hill, away from their original location (Haughton, 2011). Surveys of the hill and its geophysical features indicate that as many as 250 megaliths are lying buried around the site (Huaghton, 2011). Let's discuss this in a more detailed view.

Most pillars have carvings. Some of the designs on the pillars include abstract shapes, for example, one pillar has a carving of a naked woman, posed in a sitting position. Several T-shaped stones have depictions of what appear to be arms at their sides; these may have represented unique humans or perhaps Gods for the people who drew them (Haughton, 2011). Although the pictograms drawn on the pillars do not represent writings (no letters are on the pillars— only drawings), they may have functioned as sacred symbols

with meanings that were implicitly understood by the population of the time (Haughton, 2011). Some of these carvings have parallels with other sites, such as the vultures depicted on the pillars (Haughton, 2011). The presence of these vulture depictions suggest a funerary cult or other death-obsessed group (Haughton, 2011). However, such theories are further expanded upon in later chapters. To completely describe the visual of the individual megalithic and monuments let's look at each structure (circle of pillars) individually. These structures are labelled from A to H and will be described and listed in order of discovery.

Structure A



Figure 1. Structure A (Image: Piesker, 2008; Copyright: © DAI)

This building, which has been dated to be from the tenth or ninth millennium BCE, is not as rounded as other structures and has upright walls with an opening at its northern edge. (UNESCO, 2017). This building has not been excavated completely and as a result, its true shape is still unknown (UNESCO, 2017). The T-shaped limestone monolith in the building is decorated with images of wild animals, such as a net of snakes. It also includes an unidentified image of an animal with four feet on the western pillar (UNESCO, 2017). In addition, the eastern pillar has depictions of aurochs, foxes and cranes (UNESCO, 2017). Since this monolith is still being excavated, there is the possibility of the discovery of future monoliths in this structure. (UNESCO, 2017).

Structure B

Figure 2. Structure B (Image: DAI, Göbekli Tepe Project)

This structure is located in the Southeast-Hollow, which is the main excavation area of Göbekli Tepe (UNESCO, 2017). It is more round than Structure A and has a diameter of 10 meters (UNESCO, 2017). There are a total of 9 T-shaped pillars that have been discovered in this structure so far. These pillars are inside the circular wall. Out of the 9 pillars, 2 of them are located in the center of the circle (UNESCO, 2017).. The floor between the two pillars located in the center was excavated over several square meters. (UNESCO, 2017). The floor is made of lime mortar and the inner facings of the two central pillars have carvings of life-size foxes (UNESCO, 2017). This structure is also not completely excavated and more pillars may still be found (UNESCO, 2017)

Structure C

Figure 3. Structure C (Image: DAI, Göbekli Tepe Project)

Structure C features between two to three walls. It has a circular floor with a diameter of 30 meters, making it the largest megalithic monumental building that has been discovered so far in Göbekli Tepe (UNESCO, 2017). Like many other structures, this also has two T-shaped central pillars with others surrounding it, embedded within the walls (UNESCO, 2017). The central pillars appear to have been destroyed, seemingly intentionally. The pillar also has a flakey appearance and it is hypothesized that this is as a result of its destruction; it is possible that someone attempted to burn it down (UNESCO, 2017). It is unclear why, although researchers are studying this area currently.. The most intriguing feature of this structure is that the central pillars are carved into pedestals, which is unlike the other structures and indicates a unique function for this structure (UNESCO, 2017). The floor is smooth and is made of natural rock (UNESCO, 2017). The western central pillar, which was restored in 2009, has a carving of a large fox on it (UNESCO, 2017). The pillar's original height is 5 meters, although only three meters have been excavated so far. (UNESCO, 2017). The rest of the pillars are found in intervals within the walls and there are eleven pillars so far; however, like the other structures, there may be more pillars yet to be discovered (UNESCO, 2017).

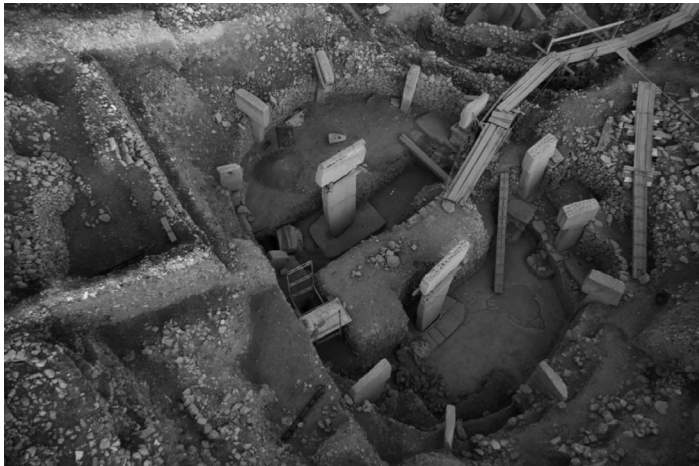
Structure D

Figure 4. Structure D (Image: DAI, Göbekli Tepe Project)

This oval-shaped building has a diameter of 20 meters and has 11 T-shaped pillars which have been discovered so far (UNESCO, 2017). The two central T-pillars are carved into a pedestal, similar to structure C (UNESCO, 2017). The central pillars also have carvings, these include representations of arms and hands with images of belts and fox fur (UNESCO, 2017). They are still not fully excavated but have a total height of 5.5 meters (UNESCO, 2017). The eastern pillar depicts a fox being carried under its outstretched “arm”. The northern area has yet to be excavated, and, as a result, the number of monoliths is likely to increase.

Structure E

Figure 5. Structure E (Image: DAI, Göbekli Tepe Project)

Located within the southwestern corner of the mound, this area appears to lack the structure and pillars characteristic of the other structures excavated so far.. It consists of two pedestals cut from the natural limestone bedrock and smooth limestone floor (UNESCO, 2017). It was excavated in the mid-1990s; however, it was not until the discovery of structures C and D that the features of this monument were identified as structures. To the north of the building are two large pits carved into the surface of the rock (UNESCO, 2017). This large pit was intentionally created and existed at the same time as the other monuments that make up Göbekli Tepe.

Structure F

Figure 6. Structure F (Image: DAI, Göbekli Tepe Project)

This building is also located southwest of the mound, near the top (UNESCO, 2017). Due to its position on top of the mound, the building is likely from an earlier era than the rest of Göbekli Tepe (UNESCO, 2017). Nonetheless, it still shares common attributes to the newer monuments discussed before.

These similarities include having a ground floor and having central pillars (UNESCO, 2017). However, the T-pillars surrounding the two circular ones are smaller in size (UNESCO, 2017).

Structure G



Figure 7. Structure G (Image: DAI, Göbekli Tepe Project)

Building G is located on the western edge of the southeast hollow, which is the main excavation site. Similar to building F, this structure is in a higher position compared to the other monuments (UNESCO, 2017). However, it does not have a round base like most of the other monuments. This structure also has smaller T-pillars (UNESCO, 2017). More information on this structure has yet to be discovered through the process of excavation.

Structure H



Figure 8. Structure H (Image: DAI, Göbekli Tepe Project)

This structure is the most recent discovery at Göbekli Tepe. The structure lies in the northwest hollow of Göbekli Tepe. So far, only one central pillar has been discovered (UNESCO, 2017). This pillar has a carving of a punching leopard (UNESCO, 2017). However, there is likely a second pillar nearby that still needs to be excavated (UNESCO, 2017). However, similar to structure C, the second undiscovered pillar may have been intentionally destroyed. Lastly, the base of this structure has not yet been reached in the excavation process (UNESCO, 2017).

Conclusion

The structure of the Göbekli Tepe is unique, the architecture, geography and details of the ancient site give us insight into human history, civilization and architecture. There are many mysteries still being unravelled, hidden amongst the megalith T-shaped pillars that are still buried underground. As time progresses, and more structures are unearthed, who knows what else we could learn about this mysterious site. To understand more about what exactly Göbekli Tepe is, and what it means for humanity, it is important to understand the structure's significance, background and impact. The discovery of such a site brings chaos to what we believed to be true for so long. In his book, *Magicians of the Gods: The Forgotten Wisdom of Earth's Lost Civilization* Graham Hancock writes, "We are used to things starting small and simple and then

progressing—evolving—to become ever more complex and sophisticated, so this is naturally what we expect to find on archaeological sites. It upsets our carefully structured ideas of how civilizations should behave, how they should mature and develop when we are confronted by a case like Göbekli Tepe that starts perfectly at the beginning and then slowly devolves until it is just a pale shadow of its former self.” This will be further expanded upon in the coming chapters.



What is the Background Behind Göbekli Tepe?

Written By Anittha Mappanasingam

Introduction

Göbekli Tepe is one of the oldest and most significant archaeological sites in the world. The creation of Göbekli Tepe dates back to the Pre-Pottery Neolithic Era (PPNE) (Dietrich et al., 2019). The PPNE occurred just before the Neolithic era and took place in areas of the Mediterranean Levant (Crassard et al., 2013). As indicated by the name of the era, the Pre-Pottery Neolithic Era, many of the tools used in this era involve some type of mud, rather than pottery (Crassard et al., 2013). The PPNE can be further split into two eras: Pre-Pottery Neolithic Era A (PPNA), and Pre-Pottery Neolithic Era B (PPNB). The earliest Neolithic age, the PPNA, includes the years 10,000 to 8500 BCE (Finlayson, 2014). The PPNB includes the years 8500 to 6300 BCE (Finlayson, 2014). These two eras are considered the most important eras for understanding the development in the Levant (Crassard et al., 2013).

Throughout the chapter, the settlement in the PPNE will be discussed in greater detail. Specifically, the architectural discoveries of these settlements will be highlighted in order for individuals to better understand and appreciate what life may have been like during this era. In addition to the settlement, there were two major occurrences of the PPNE that are going to be discussed—the conversion of foraging to farming, and mortuary rituals of the PPNE.

Settlement in PPNE

In the PPNE, architecture served as a key indicator of various lifestyle choices such as lifestyle, changing social structures, and food production (Finlayson et al., 2011). This section of the chapter will look into architectural developments of two major settlements during the PPNA: Gilgal in the Jordan River, and WF16, and one major settlement during the PPNB: Ayn Ghazal.

PPNA: Gilgal in Jordan River

The Jordan River is a well-regarded site in Christianity. To some individuals, the Jordan River is of significant importance as it is where Jesus was baptized by his cousin, John the Baptist (Jordan River | River, Middle East, n.d.). The Jordan River is located in the Middle East and lies at the border between Syria and Lebanon (Jordan River | River, Middle East, n.d.). It flows through Israel to the Sea of Galilee and eventually empties into the Dead Sea (Jordan River | River, Middle East, n.d.). Along the Jordan River, in the Jordan Valley, is the Gilgal site. The Gilgal is an important archaeological site (Yizraeli Noy, 1989). It is believed to have been around during the PPNA and is located near Jericho (Yizraeli Noy, 1989).

To be specific, the Gilgal sites are located within a vegetative zone in the Lower Jordan Valley (Yizraeli Noy, 1989). It is believed that this region has a desert climate, receiving annual rainfall of about 150-200 mm (Noy et al., 1980). In the Gilgal region, the warm winters are followed by the extremely hot summers (Yizraeli Noy, 1989). Most of the time, the land in this region remains infertile, except during the winter when there are small patches of grass covering the area (Noy et al., 1980).

The structure of the Gilgal sites is very unique. It covers up to ten dunams—a form of land measurement used in the former Turkish empire (Noy et al., 1980). One dunam is equivalent to 1000 square meters, making the Gilgal area about 10,000 square meters (Dunam | Definition of Dunam by Merriam-Webster, n.d.). In this vast space, 13 abandoned houses were discovered (Yizraeli Noy, 1989). These buildings were constructed of mud and rock (Yizraeli Noy, 1989). Archaeologists found many stone circles within this area and were able to

remove eight of them (Yizraeli Noy, 1989). Many of these stone circles were not only found in the houses but also around other small buildings, which resemble huts and tents (Yizraeli Noy, 1989; Noy et al., 1980). When archaeologists examined seven of these miniature buildings, they found that the structures had a semi-oval design and had walls reaching a minimum of 40 cm in height (Noy et al., 1980). Throughout both the small structures and the houses, small, flat stones with cup-holes were found within the walls (Yizraeli Noy, 1989; Noy et al., 1980). These cup-holes were round and about 10 cm in diameter (Noy et al., 1980). In addition to that, some of the small structures also had multiple stories which were coated with a flat stone, and limestone (Noy et al., 1980).

On the floors of the buildings, individuals collected various tools such as grinders, arrowheads, borers, blades, and axes (Yizraeli Noy, 1989). These items specifically were made of limestone (Noy et al., 1980). Upon further examination, they were able to detect indicators of previous use (Noy et al., 1980). Although much is known about the physical attributes of these cup-holders, not much is known about their function, although archaeologists have many preliminary theories (Noy et al., 1980). The querns, hand-mill tools consisting of two rounded stones, that were located by archaeologists were believed to be ancient devices made of limestone used for grinding food and other tools (NOY et al., 1980; Quern | Tool, n.d.). The arrowheads were all small but varied significantly in shape (Noy et al., 1980).

Along with the discovery of these tools, archaeologists also located animal remains at the Gilgal site (Noy et al., 1980). In particular, they located remains of vertebrates, with the only discovered evidence of invertebrates being animals belonging to the Mollusca and Arthropoda family such as snails (Noy et al., 1980). Due to the presence of large water bodies in Israel, there were many remains belonging to animals and plants associated with wet habitats such as water birds, and aquatic plants (Noy et al., 1980). The specific species of the vertebrates remain a mystery due to limited amounts, and how fragmented the remains were (Noy et al., 1980). Unlike with the vertebrates, the archaeologists seemed to be able to identify the herbivores and carnivores with better

accuracy. It is believed that they had located remains belonging to hedgehogs, jackals, fox, crows, deer, and hare (Noy et al., 1980).

The most interesting discovery at the Gilgal site, however, was that of ancient figs, carbonized and preserved (Kislev et al., 2006). Archaeologists believe these figs came from intentionally planted figs, a form of pseudo-agriculture. This predates the start of cereal domestication by a thousand years, pushing back our estimate of when agriculture began. (Kislev et al., 2006)

The discoveries made by archaeologists were extremely significant in the development and understanding of the PPNE. The Jordan River remains one of the most useful places to indicate changes in settlements during this era, hence, giving this discovery a significant place in history (Finlayson et al., 2011).

PPNA: Excavation of WF16

WF16 is an archaeological site, similar to the Gilgal site, that dates back to the PPNA. The WF16 was uncovered over the span of three years between 2008 and 2010. (Finlayson et al., 2011). This site provided historians with a lot of information regarding previous settlements and lifestyles during the PPNA.

The WF16 is located at the Wadi Faynan, a region located in southern Jordan (Finlayson et al., 2011). Based on what archaeologists know, the WF16 contains an astounding 30 structures (Mithen, 2020). In general, these structures have pits dug into the ground, with mud-filled floors, and walls lined with stiff clay known as pisé (Mithen, 2020). However, the information gathered on the settlement during the PPNA can be divided into the architectural analysis of three major structures: O75, O45, and O12.

Out of the 30 structures in WF16, structure O75 was one of the larger structures to be excavated. The dimensions of this structure were roughly 22-m by 19-m by 0.5-m (Finlayson et al., 2011). This structure was bilaterally symmetrical and also consisted of floors made of mud plaster (Finlayson et al., 2011). The main portion of the building was designed similar to a theatre, with benches surrounding the center of the structure (Finlayson et al., 2011). In one area of

the structure, archaeologists located broken stone bowls, and cup-holes on the side walls (Finlayson et al., 2011). The entire structure was sealed with charcoal deposits, which were used in carbon dating to date the structure back to the PPNA (Finlayson et al., 2011). Currently, another structure, structure O100, exists within the space of Structure O75 (Mithen, 2020). Structure O100 is the only intact structure in the WF16 and is believed to have been built after Structure O75 fell (Mithen, 2020).

A lot is known about structure O45 because it burned down in a fire, which allowed archaeologists to preserve the architectural information and reconstruct the structure (Mithen, 2020). The structure formed an oval-like shape with dimensions of 5.5-m by 4.5m (Finlayson et al., 2011). The entire floor of the building was lined with pisé along with the walls which extended above ground level (Finlayson et al., 2011). This specific structure originally had multiple compartments, and smaller structures within it, most of which were made of similar material (Finlayson et al., 2011). Researchers believe that the raised floor, its internal dome-shaped structure, and the internal compartmentalization is an indication that building O45 was used as a storage unit in the PPNA (Mithen, 2020).

The last of the three buildings to be discussed is structure O12. Structure O12 appears similar in build to structure O75 as it also follows a theatre-like design with benches surrounding the centre stage (Finlayson et al., 2011). Unlike building O75, O12 is much smaller, with its uncovered portion measuring 5.0-m by 3.3-m (Finlayson et al., 2011). The whole building appears to be about 2m deep and contains a well-built wall that separates the area into two uneven parts (Finlayson et al., 2011). While the wall is made of pisé, the flooring of the main area is made of mud plaster (Finlayson et al., 2011). Archaeologists believe that this structure may have been a store during the PPNA due to indicators of a suspended floor (Finlayson et al., 2011).

Most believe that structures present during the PPNA served the purpose of domestic gatherings or simply housing (Finlayson et al., 2011). However, findings discussed from the WF16 site allows individuals to ponder upon the use

of the larger building such as O75. The WF16 site had a significant impact on expanding the interpretations of past findings to possible alternative theories.

PPNB: Ayn Ghazal

The last site that is going to be discussed has received a lot of attention from archaeologists all over the world. Ayn Ghazal, located in the east end of Amman, Jordan, was excavated over the span of six years beginning in 1982 and ending in 1989 (Rollefson et al., 1992). After examining the architecture, many believe that Ayn Ghazal is one of the largest prehistoric settlements in the Near East (Rollefson et al., 1992).

Researchers found the location of Ayn Ghazal to hold prime importance to the settlement of individuals during the PPNB. In Amman, Ayn Ghazal was specifically located between mountainous regions in the West, and Jordanian Badiya in the East (Kafafi, 2014). This allowed individuals living in these regions to use Ayn Ghazal as a communication hub between the two settlements for several eras (Kafafi, 2014). Ayn Ghazal is believed to have started off as a farming village covering about two hectares which eventually expanded (Kafafi, 2014). Archaeologists concluded that there were two main types of architectural structures in Ayn Ghazal: houses, and religious buildings (Kafafi, 2014). Most of the walls of these buildings were made of stone while the floors were made of lime plaster (Rollefson et al., 1992). The common dimensions for the rooms in buildings located at the Ayn Ghazal were 5-m by 5-m, however, these measurements changed over time as renovations took place (Rollefson et al., 1992). Red pigments of paint were present across the walls and floors, which possibly was an indication of finger-painting, for either decorative or religious purposes (Rollefson et al., 1992). After excavation, researchers believed that many of the buildings on the North and East end of Ayn Ghazal were dedicated to religious practices (Kafafi, 2014). They located skulls, human and animal fragments, and other items that indicated religious rites were typically practiced in these buildings (Kafafi, 2014). Similar to other sites, tools were also uncovered in this area. For example, bone tools were located and are believed to have been used for sewing (Rollefson et al., 1992).

Overall researchers believe that life in Ayn Ghazal was full of rituals, and religious practices. Individuals believe that these practices were created and sustained with a tightly-knit population of around 2500 to 3000 people (Kafafi, 2014). These practices will be further discussed throughout the chapter.

Foraging to Farming

The shift from foraging to farming is one of the most significant cultural processes occurring during the PPNE (Kuijt & Goring-Morris, 2002). During the PPNA, researchers believe that consumption of cereal and legumes, and the hunting of medium-sized mammals, fish, reptiles and birds were the most significant forms of food intake (Kuijt & Goring-Morris, 2002). In most of the southern Levant, incorporating seeds and fruits into an individual's diet was common, and in some regions, wheat was specifically harvested (Kuijt & Goring-Morris, 2002). The existence and the role of plants in the PPNA economy are currently under debate (Kuijt & Goring-Morris, 2002). Although there seem to be indicators of the hunting of foxes and birds, it is believed that these animals may have been hunted for symbolic, and non-dietary purposes (Kuijt & Goring-Morris, 2002). Wild plants continued to play a major role in the PPNB, as they did during the PPNA (Kuijt & Goring-Morris, 2002). However, during the PPNB, foraging began to shift to farming. Researchers observed such a large variety, and quantity of plant crops, leading them to believe that plants may have been the main source of diet (Kuijt & Goring-Morris, 2002). These plants included wheat, barley, peas, lentils, chickpeas along with some nuts (Kuijt & Goring-Morris, 2002). The evolution of agriculture during this era, specifically at the time of the Göbekli Tepe, will be discussed in chapter 4.

Mortuary Rituals in PPNE

Another highly significant cultural practice to shape the PPNE was the ritual surrounding mortuary practices. While examining various established sites, archaeologists also investigated the various skull, and bone fragments that were found in these sites. Upon examination, many were able to grasp a better understanding of the social practices for the remembrance of the dead during these eras.

The practice of cranial removal was dated back to the PPNA (Fletcher et al., 2008). Cranial removal is the surgical removal of part of the skull. Researchers believe that cranial removal was performed sometime after burial (Fletcher et al., 2008). They suspect that individuals at the time would return to the grave, uncover the buried corpse of their loved one, remove an area of the skull, which was believed to be the crania (Kujit & Goring-Morris, 2002). The portion of the brain that is removed was then cleaned and prepared for use by the community (Kujit & Goring-Morris, 2002). Afterwards, individuals would rebury the remaining corpse during a community event (Kujit & Goring-Morris, 2002). Not only were archaeologists able to identify this practice in the human fragments, but it also appeared to be displayed symbolically in wall artwork, and figurines (Fletcher et al., 2008). Specifically, such masterpieces were found at sites such as Ayn Ghazal (Kujit & Goring-Morris, 2002).

Along with the cranial removal, another fairly common practice during the PPNE was plastered skulls (Fletcher et al., 2008). The plastered skull practice is the reconstruction of the facial features during burial (Fletcher et al., 2008). Although the actual reason behind this practice remains unknown, some individuals believe that it was carried out to preserve life-like features, while others believe that the purpose may have been to remove cultic waste (Kujit & Goring-Morris, 2002; Fletcher et al., 2008). This practice was considered a secondary mortuary practice and mainly developed during PPNB (Kujit & Goring-Morris, 2002).

The mortuary rituals hold a significant spot during the PPNE. Beginning from the earliest Neolithic era—the PPNA, these rituals have grown and changed over the PPNE. These practices are not only performed as a celebration for those who have passed but also for the living. The rituals pertaining to Göbekli Tepe in particular will be discussed in chapter 8.

Conclusion

Archaeologists have been uncovering and learning from various sites from the Neolithic era for years. Göbekli Tepe was one of the major areas to be excavated from the PPNE. To create a more detailed picture for the readers

of this book, the various major elements of the PPNE were discussed using the example of various settlements of this era, such as the Gilgal in Jordan River, and the MF16 and Ayn Ghazal in Jordan. In addition to these settlements, two important practices were discussed—the transition from foraging to farming, and the mortuary rituals of the PPNE. Although not much can be known with certainty about life during this time, a lot can still be interpreted from the findings that are recovered at these sites. Uncovering historical sites is important in order to understand the reasons behind some of the things we do in our world today.

The following chapter will discuss the discovery of the Göbekli Tepe.



How was Göbekli Tepe Discovered?

Written By Shana Quesnel

THE GÖBEKLI TEPE SITE can seem hard to miss but for centuries it was an archaeologist's dream hidden in plain sight. The site was first discovered by a joint team from the University of Chicago and Istanbul in 1963. It attracted more and more attention from archaeologists until it piqued the interest of Klaus Schmidt who is mostly responsible for bringing Göbekli Tepe the attention it deserved. After reading the joint university report, the excavation of Göbekli Tepe started. The excavation needed to be delayed for a brief period since it was probably menaced by a farmer clearing their land. The discovery of the site brought up multiple theories on its origin and timeline. Even after decades of excavation, there are still years of research just to scratch the surface of the site.

The First Sissimal of the Göbekli Tepe Site

The Göbekli Tepe was first observed by a University of Chicago and Istanbul team in 1963 (Curry, 2008). The mound was observed in a larger survey of the region where multiple other sites were observed in the Southeastern region of Anatolia (Curry, 2008). The first written mention of the rediscovery of Göbekli Tepe was mentioned by Peter Benedict, a part of the joint university team, in his article "*Survey Work in Southeastern Anatolia*" (Schmidt, 2000). In his article, Benedict described the site as "A complex of round-topped knolls

of red earth with slight depressions between, located on a high limestone ridge trending.” (Benedict, 1980). Benedict gave a precise description of what Göbekli Tepe looked like to them at the time but what lay under the surface of the molassic was hidden. What the team didn't expect was a pre-pottery mound that would be between 3 to 4 meters. In the end, they concluded that the large limestone that covered the mound was what was leftover of a medieval Islamic cemetery (Schmidt, 2000).

After this first observation by the University of Chicago and Istanbul team, they turned away from the site in dismay for some time. In the meantime, the joint team focused on the excavations at the site of Çayönü “an important and unexpected site because of its elaborate architecture” (Benedict, 1980). From 1983 to 1991 the region was chosen for large-scale excavations at Nevalı Çori. This excavation had a certain sense of urgency behind it since it was done in the shadow of the construction of the Atatürk barrage that was built between 1983 and 1990. This excavation can be classified as a rescue excavation (Dietrich, 2016). It was under the direction of Harald Hauptmann that “a Neolithic settlement was excavated that had large rectangular domestic buildings often similar to Çayönü’s channeled buildings.” (Dietrich, 2016).

Another building was found during the excavation that had three construction phases (Dietrich, 2016). This construction was not like any other seen before for a structure in the Neolithic of the Near East; it had multiple monumental stone sculptures. It had T-or Gamma-shaped pillars running along the walls that were interconnected by a bench with two T-shaped pillars in the center. The structure was understood by the members of the excavation as an abstract representation of a human because of the representation of arms and hands (Dietrich, 2016). Since it vividly differed from the rest of the settlement architecture wise the excavation team believed that they found a communal building that may have been used for ritual gatherings (Dietrich, Dietrich & Notroff, 2021). This site was flooded by the Atatürk bridge in 1991. However, the new, uncommon discovery made on the site did push Klaus Schmidt, who was part of the excavation team, to try to find more settlements like Nevalı Çori in the region.

The Rediscovery of Göbekli Tepe

In 1994, Oliver Dietrich started working on a survey of the prehistoric site of the region. It was after he read about it in the report of the University of Chicago and Istanbul University that he stumbled upon the mention of the stone-littered site. Captivating his curiosity, in 1994 he went to visit that same site. From the moment he got there, he knew the place was extraordinary. With his previous experience at the Nevalı Çori site, he was able to identify the Neolithic work-pieces and T-shaped pillars which were thought to be medieval, Islamic tombstones. He would go on to describe what he saw as “A carpet of flint covered the bedrock, and sparkled in the afternoon sun [...]. not only caused by nature, humans had assisted in staging it. We assured ourselves several times: These were not flint nodules fragmented by the forces of nature, but flakes, blades and fragments of cores, in short artifacts. [...] We reached the first long-stretched stone heaps, obviously accumulated here over decades by farmers clearing their fields [...]. One of those heaps held a particularly large boulder. It was clearly worked and had an easily recognizable form: it was the T-shaped head of a pillar of the Nevalı Çori type...” (Dietrich, 2016)

Göbekli Tepe is gently rounded and a bit more than a 15-meter rise from the rest of the landscape. To Schmidt, it became obvious that this kind of shape could only be man-made and that it was impressive in size for the stone age (Curry, 2008). The site was almost completely untouched, and it was only possible to get there by foot or with the help of a horse. There were multiple walls of cleared stone. They also determined it was only used for agriculture without deep plowing. The theory is that since they had heavy winter rains, the agriculture is prosperous in the region except for Göbekli Tepe since it is the arable land in the greater region. (Dietrich, 2016),

In this first systematic survey of the first fieldwork of the site, Göbekli Tepe proved itself rapidly to be rich in discovery, including sculptures similar to the ones already known from Nevalı Çori. The excavation, initiated by Schmidt as a cooperative project with The Museum of Şanlıurfa (an archaeological museum in Şanlıurfa, Turkey) started in 1995. The excavation was made under the direction of Adnan Misir and the Istanbul Harald Hauptmann

(representing the Istanbul branch of the German Archaeological Institute). The first trench was opened at the base of the southeastern slope. There was already a modern pit cut through a terrazzo floor (Dietrich, 2016). Already Göbekli Tepe was showing unique traits. For example, its sediments were largely made of Limestone cobbles, bones, and filth, mixed with very little earth. The trench goes on to reveal rectangular buildings “characteristic for what was later determined as Layer II, dating to the early and middle PPN B” (Dietrich, 2016). A discovery similar to what was found in Nevalı Çori was two rest pillars. (Dietrich, 2016).

Göbekli Tepe is a very unique site, it's unlike any other Neolithic site in the Near East. It's not possible to pin down exactly essential data of the site, not because of lack of work research or work on the site, but because of the uniqueness of the site. The buildings unearthed were all of the unexpected sizes and were intentionally buried under 3 meters of dirt. Before the Preliminary Report on the 1995-1999 Excavations of Göbekli Tepe by Schmidt, no structure below the fill had yet been exposed. So that meant that no sealed deposits had been encountered, which would have allowed them to determine the service levels (Schmidt, 2000). Adding to the confusion, there is no connection between the southeastern peak, the southern slopes, or the southeastern slopes. This made it impossible to have continuous numbering of several layers. However, it was possible with the deposited animal bones to reveal the rich biodiversity of the region which included multiple wild species for example wild cattle, wild ass, and wild pig. There were no domesticated animals found and it dominated by botanical plants. The plants they found were all wild, for example, wild nuts like almonds and pistachios, and the slopes were still covered in multiple spots by wild cereal. There was also no sign of settlement like cooking hearths, houses, trash pits, or clay fertility figurines that were found on other sites of the same age. There was also no evidence of tools, like hammers and blades. The artifacts on site did resemble others on nearby sites which were dated to 9000 B.C. Schmidt's team assumed that the stone structures were the same age and the carbon dating of the site confirmed that theory (Curry, 2008). Schmidt concluded that the lower layers of the site with the megalithic

pillars were not Neolithic, but Proto-Neolithic/Mesolithic. In other words, the megalithic was built by a hunter-gatherer society.

The Brief Pause of the Evacuation and the Discovery of Two T-Shaped Pillars

However, the evacuation of the area that was being explored came to a stop because during the first field season one of the landowners in the area began clearing his fields in the southeastern depression of stones that hindered plowing. From there, the landowner dug out the head of two large T-Shaped pillars and smashed one of the pillars' heads with a sledgehammer. To the relief of the people that studied the site and historians, the farmers were convinced to stop. Finally, the excavation of the area was able to start again to explore the area started in 1996. Rapidly it gave up the first monumental enclosure of Layer III of Göbekli Tepe (the older layer of the archaeologist site) (Dietrich, 2016). Those grounds would become Enclosure A. Those two pillars that were badly damaged by the landowner became the central pillars of Enclosure A. The Pillars were excavated and they discovered the pillars were heavily adorned. On the left side of Pillar one, there could be found a net-like pattern, which the archaeologists hypothesized to be snakes. The front of this same pillar carries “a central groove running vertically from below the head to its base, covering about one-third of its width.” (Dietrich, 2016). This particular groove and its raised bands were on sides with snakes in bas-relief. It's theorized that they represent a real object, probably some kind of stola-like garment (the equivalent of the toga for man traditional garment in Rome, usually made of whole and was the equivalent of the toga, traditional roman clothing for men) (Dietrich, 2016). The second pillar for its part was decorated quite differently. On its right side, there are vertical sequences of three different animals, those being foxes, cranes, and bulls. The backside was decorated with bucranium in between the vertical bands of Stola—like a garment. It was more recently discovered that the second pillar was not in its original position so what they thought was the front side was the backside (Dietrich, 2016).

The Estimated Time of the Site

The biggest T-pillar weighed a total of over 45,000 kilograms. Rapidly the question came into play: how was the construction of such an immense structure organized by a prehistoric society? The most solid conclusion was that it took several groups of hunter-gatherers from the region of Göbekli Tepe which was likely to be rooted in a ritual background (Dietrich, 2016). It was impossible for them to work in quarries, that were all over the limestone plateau and the megalithic could have been done by a small group in a small amount of time. On the other side, Hunter-gatherers if they would have stayed on-site would have had over-exploitation. The hypothesis that came out of those assumptions was that the human population developed a controlled use of some resources, like the cereal, “which led to incipient cultivation” (Schmidt, 2000). The idea to meet repetitively at the same spot was one of the founding factors of the origins of neolithization. Even if it can be confidently said that the ground of Göbekli Tepe was used for some kind of ritual purpose, the exact function, their timeline, and who in the region came to meet at the site is unknown. (Schmidt, 2000). Even if the T-Shaped pillars seem to have an anthropomorphic design it's still unknown the intent of the pillars. It is not known if Göbekli is a unique site or not, but there could be another similar site waiting to be discovered too. However, it is known that the events that took place at this particular site have a “*a terminus ante quem* with the final LPPNB, and today we also know that Jacques Cauvis's title *La Naissance des divinités—La Naissance de l'agriculture*, Cauvin's connection between the profane and the sacred, is the perfect guide to understand the change of the hunter way of life” (Schmidt, 2000). Cauvin's book analyses their way of life through the economic lense and the ecological lense and the impact of the transcendental sphere.

The Continuous Excavation of Göbekli Tepe

The site is still being excavated today. Schmidt worked on the Göbekli site until he died in 2014. Before his death, he was in charge of 50 local laborers and a stream of students. He would be excavating the site for two months in the spring and fall, since it was too hot in the summer (reaching over 45°C) and too rainy in the winter. The archaeologist even bought a house in the courtyard in

1995. Ever since his death, the site is still explored and will be for a long time since Göbekli Tepe is far from giving up all its surprises. Schmidt mapped the whole summit of Gebelik Tempe with the help of ground-breaking radar and geomagnetic surveys. With those tools, he was able to chart not one or two more megaliths, but at least 16 megalith rings in the over 89,000 square meters that cover the summit. (Curry, 2008) In 2008 the excavation was only covering 5 percent of that ground. According to Smith, the archaeologist would not miss any work soon, 50 more years would only scratch the surface of the immense site (Curry, 2008).

To conclude, history, especially the period called prehistoric, is full of gaps, and Göbekli Tepe could be an important piece to fill many of the holes in our knowledge of that time. The site was not always thought to be as important as it is and was first dismissed by the joint team of the University of Chicago and Istanbul in 1963 that simply saw the site as round-topped knolls of red earth. It's not until Klaus Schmidt read the university joint report that the site started to be excavated. The site needed to stop the excavation for a brief period when the farmer was clearing the land damaged T-pillars and it was necessary to stop them to assure the conservation of the site. The further the site was examined, the more theories popped up about its usage and the time period became more precise through carbon dating. The site of Göbekli Tepe is still excavated today and there is still a lot of information about the past to be revealed.



How has the Discovery of Göbekli Tepe Impact Our Understanding?

Written By Rishi Thangarajah

Introduction

When Göbekli Tepe was first discovered in 1994 by Klaus Schmidt, it altered what anthropologists thought they knew about social evolution. The name Göbekli Tepe translates to Potbelly Hill in English and based on the evidence surrounding its discovery, Schmidt believed that it was the oldest temple in known existence. The goal of this chapter is to assess the impact that the discovery of Göbekli Tepe has had. In order to accurately do so, a brief introduction into the field of anthropology and what it entails will be stated. After this, the previous anthropological dogma, or widely accepted principles, will be examined. In the latter portion of the chapter, the archeological evidence found at the excavation site will be used to indicate how exactly Göbekli Tepe impacted the field of anthropology.

Anthropology: an Advancement Towards the Truth

Before delving into the content of this chapter, it may be useful to first define key terms that will appear throughout the upcoming discussion. Anthropology is defined as the study of human beings throughout history and over civilization (Borofsky, 2002). This definition, by nature, is broad, meaning that anthropology itself is a broad subject. As a result, anthropology is often subcategorized into the following four major fields; archaeology, biological

anthropology, cultural anthropology, and linguistic anthropology (Borofsky, 2002). Anthropologists, the individuals who study anthropology, use these various sub-disciplines to uncover the way of life of human beings in different time periods and geographic locations. The evidence they gather provides them with insights into how these different civilizations operated. Essentially, anthropologists are responsible for putting together an extensive jigsaw puzzle encompassing humankind's past, with just a limited amount of pieces to go off of.

Anthropology is a science, and like all sciences, experts in the field utilize the evidence they gather to put forward theories of the most likely explanations for events. These theories will likely be influenced by the inherent bias of the theorist. This is an unavoidable outcome. Fortunately, this pitfall can be mitigated by hearing the accounts of other anthropologists. In some cases, the theories put forward will be strengthened by the perspectives of other anthropologists, and other times the initial theory will be met with harsh criticism. Ultimately, this refinement process results in a better understanding of what the pieces of the past really mean. This also means that the results drawn from anthropologists are largely speculative. After all, only the individuals belonging to civilizations from the past can provide accurate accounts of their way of life. The evidence provided within this chapter regarding Göbekli Tepe is also based upon the consensus drawn from the interpretations of anthropologists.

It is important to note that while an anthropologist's interpretation can influence how we view evidence from the past, this relationship can also occur inversely. The addition of a new piece of the past can alter what we understand the puzzle to be. This means that new evidence can completely shatter pre-existing theories that have been widely accepted for decades. The discovery of Göbekli Tepe is an example of this scenario. When German archeologist, Klaus Schmidt, came across Göbekli Tepe he did not just discover the world's oldest temple; he quite literally rewrote our understanding of human history.

The Neolithic Revolution

You might think that the aforementioned statement regarding the impact of the discovery of Göbekli Tepe is an over-exaggeration. However, this is not the case. To better comprehend the magnitude of the impact of Göbekli Tepe's discovery, it is important that you first understand some of the widely accepted theories involved in social anthropology. Social anthropology is one of the major subfields that constitutes the overarching subject of anthropology (Borofsky, 2002). Social anthropology is concerned with understanding human institutions and societies (Evans-Pritchard, 2013). By utilizing a social anthropological approach to uncovering what the discovery of Göbekli Tepe entails, a better understanding of the impact it has can be gained.

As mentioned in previous chapters, the construction of Göbekli Tepe is believed to have occurred over 11,000 years ago (Curry, 2008). Anthropologists believe that all human beings alive during this time were part of hunter-gatherer societies (National Geographic Society, 2019). Hunter-gatherer societies are made up of groups of individuals that rely on hunting wild animals and gathering wild vegetation to sustain themselves (National Geographic Society, 2019). The number of individuals in a hunter-gatherer society can range from the members of a family to nearly 100 people (National Geographic Society, 2019). In addition to this, hunter-gatherers tend to be nomadic, meaning that they do not reside in one area for too long (National Geographic Society, 2019). This is because hunter-gatherers typically deplete the resources in their proximity. Which in turn means that members of a hunter-gatherer society must closely follow the animals they hunt in order to receive their next meal. Although this may seem tedious, the lifestyle of a hunter-gatherer has many biological benefits, including reduced exposure to transmissible diseases, high aerobic fitness, low body fat levels, low blood pressure levels, low cholesterol levels and a lower risk of cardiovascular complications (Dounias & Froment, 2006).

That being said, the lifestyle of a hunter-gatherer was not without its share of downsides. A lifestyle in which one is constantly traveling from one meal to the next comes with an increased energy expenditure. In addition to this, if

all your time is spent searching for food, it leaves you with less leisure time to develop other skills. Finally, as a hunter-gatherer your survival is increasingly dependent on the surrounding environment. For instance, if the quantity of available prey were to experience a population decline, then the survival of any hunter-gatherers relying on them as a food source would also be in jeopardy. To overcome these limitations posed by the hunter-gatherer lifestyle, human beings shifted to an agricultural one (National Geographic Society, 2019). This paradigm shift is referred to as the Neolithic Revolution (Weisdorf, 2005).

The Requirements for a Civilization

The Neolithic Revolution is estimated to have occurred relatively close to the time of the construction of Göbekli Tepe (Weisdorf, 2005). An agricultural society diametrically opposes that of a hunter-gatherer society. An agricultural society is made up of members that take part in the practice of harvesting crops and domesticating animals (Higgs & Jarman, 1969). Those that are a part of an agricultural society are sedentary, meaning that they do not migrate from the location they inhabit (National Geographic Society, 2019). The benefit to living in an agricultural society is that less energy and time is expended for the purpose of sustenance. This provides members of an agricultural society with more time for leisure, which they can use to develop other skills. This is why anthropologists believed that agriculture was the catalyst that initiated the development of civilizations (Fuller & Stevens, 2019).

Prior to the discovery of Göbekli Tepe, the common consensus was that agricultural societies provided the foundations for civilization (Fuller & Stevens, 2019). In agricultural societies, former hunter-gatherers would settle on a portion of land to specialize in the production of a particular type of food source (Fuller & Stevens, 2019). This produce would sustain them, and any surplus they produced could be exchanged for the goods from other specialists in the nearby area (Fuller & Stevens, 2019). This community would also continue to grow in population size, because there was no longer the same limitation on food production as there was in a hunter-gatherer society (Fuller & Stevens, 2019). Eventually, the society would evolve in turn allowing economics, politics, and culture to be injected into this community (Fuller & Stevens,

2019). Social hierarchies would be formed and an increasing attention to art and culture would occur (Fuller & Stevens, 2019). As a result, these humble agricultural beginnings would blossom into socially-complex civilizations. This was the anthropological dogma regarding the development of ancient civilizations (Weisdorf, 2005).

Which Came First, Agriculture or Civilization?

The discovery of Göbekli Tepe poked holes in this line of thinking. As stated previously, Göbekli Tepe is believed to be a sacred place of worship associated with mythology or religion. Based on the previous anthropological dogma associated with the development of civilization, agriculture should have preceded the emergence of these complex aspects of society. However, the evidence that archaeologists came across suggests that this was not the case. Instead of finding evidence that pointed to the existence of agriculture, they found the remains of various animals at the site of Göbekli Tepe (Peters, Schmidt, Dietrich, Pöllath & Smith, 2014). These animals included wild cattle, wild boar, wild sheep, deer, hare, and a variety of bird species to name a few (Peters et al., 2014). This indicated that the individuals that visited Göbekli Tepe were not agriculturalists, instead they were hunter-gatherers (Peters et al., 2014). In addition to this, archeologists were unable to find any evidence of residential structures near the site of Göbekli Tepe (Peters et al., 2014). This finding only widened the holes in the previous dogma that agriculture was the prerequisite for civilization.

In regards to evidence for agriculture, those studying Göbekli Tepe only found wild einkorn, wheat and barley at the site (Peters et al., 2014). Interestingly, the first instance of agriculture being conducted near Göbekli Tepe did not occur until centuries after the construction of the temple began (Richmond-Crosset, 2016). Contrary to the established belief, Schmidt believed that the shift to agriculture in this region may have actually stemmed from the construction of Göbekli Tepe (Richmond-Crosset, 2016). The individuals involved in constructing the sacred structure must have required increased sustenance (Richmond-Crosset, 2016). So it is quite possible that the production of cereals was used to supplement this caloric need (Richmond-Crosset, 2016). Although

it is important to note that other drivers of agriculture, such as a shift in climate conducive to agricultural production, could have also played a role in this explanation (Richmond-Crosset, 2016). Nonetheless, the idea that agriculture is necessary to create a civilization was flipped on its head by the evidence found at Göbekli Tepe. Ironically, the discovery of Göbekli Tepe brought up the idea that complex aspects of civilization, like mythology or religion, could give rise to agriculture.

Social Stratification Amongst Hunter-Gatherers

If complex components of a civilization did indeed arise prior to establishment of agriculture, that also means that some form of social stratification took place as well. Social stratification refers to the grouping of individuals within a society. In the case of an agricultural society, there will be certain individuals that have a surplus of a specialized good that they harvest or manufacture (Fuller & Stevens, 2019). The basic economic principle of supply and demand stipulates that if the demand for a produced good exceeds its supply, then the cost of the good will increase. This principle gives rise to socioeconomic disparities between the members within a civilization and results in social stratification (Summers, 2005). Individuals that are higher up on the social ladder within a society often gain more political influence and can thus affect the developmental roadmap of a civilization (Summers, 2005).

In contrast to this, the population of a hunter-gatherer society is typically much smaller than its agricultural counterpart (National Geographic Society, 2019). Due to this fact, there is more of an equal distribution of resources between the members in a hunter-gatherer society (Summers, 2005). Paired with a lack of time for leisure, the complexity of social organization amongst hunter-gatherers was believed to be rudimentary. However, the discovery of Göbekli Tepe suggested that this may not be the case. As previously stated, all available evidence indicates that Göbekli Tepe was created by hunter-gatherers. Consider the point in time that Göbekli Tepe was built. Göbekli Tepe was constructed 11,000 years ago, thousands of years before the first pyramids in Egypt were. In addition to this, consider the physical features of the Göbekli Tepe. The site consists of multiple limestone pillars, with the largest of them

being 16 feet tall and weighing many tons (Curry, 2008). In a time where tools were primitive and agriculture had yet to be implemented, a feat like the construction of Göbekli Tepe would have required an extensive amount of physical effort and social organization (Richmond-Crosset, 2016). It is believed that to achieve the establishment of Göbekli Tepe, hunter-gatherers organized themselves into groups; some were responsible for the construction of the Göbekli Tepe while others were responsible for acquiring the food needed to feed the workforce (Peters et al., 2014). Therefore, the discovery of Göbekli Tepe challenged the previously held ideal that hunter-gatherer societies were incapable of complex social organization.

More Than Just a Place of Worship

In previous chapters, as well as this one, it has been stated that anthropologists believe that Göbekli Tepe was a religious site created by hunter-gatherers. This assertion is supported by a plethora of evidence found at the excavation site. An analysis of this evidence, and the importance behind it, is examined in greater detail within Chapter 5. However, there is some evidence that alludes to the possibility of Göbekli Tepe being more than just a place of worship. For instance, the quantity of arrowheads, spear tips and flintstone tools suggest that Göbekli Tepe could have been a trading center for hunter-gatherers (Bengisu, 2020). Some of these tools are made from limestone, a material that was within the local proximity of Göbekli Tepe, while others were made of obsidian (Bengisu, 2020). Analyses of these tools revealed that they were from regions up to 500 km away (Bengisu, 2020). This suggests that, in some capacity, different hunter-gatherer societies were interacting at the site of Göbekli Tepe. It is possible that Göbekli Tepe was viewed as not just a religious site, but a social hub for the trading of tools and information. That being said, this borders more on speculation surrounding Göbekli Tepe—which is explored in Chapter 8.

Conclusion

The main takeaway from this chapter is that the discovery of Göbekli Tepe had a massive impact on the way anthropologists view the evolution of civilization. Those in the field of anthropology believe that Göbekli Tepe temple,

and its time of construction makes it the oldest one discovered to date. Prior to the discovery of Göbekli Tepe, anthropologists believed that agriculture was the catalyst that initiated the development of civilizations. It was only after gathering archeological evidence that anthropologists began to piece together that Göbekli Tepe was most likely constructed by hunter-gatherers. This not only challenged the idea that agriculture came before religion, but suggested that a complex aspect of civilization, in this case mythology, could instead lead to implementation of agriculture. In addition, the remains of Göbekli Tepe hint that the hunter-gatherer society that built Göbekli Tepe had a relatively advanced level of social organization amongst its members. Finally, the tools found at the excavation site originate from regions up to 500 km away from the site, indicating that Göbekli Tepe could have been a social hub where different bands of hunter-gatherers flocked to, to exchange knowledge and tools. The upcoming chapter will delve into the mythological aspects of Göbekli Tepe and its overall importance.



Why is Göbekli Tepe Important?

Written By Samira Sunderji

Introduction

The discovery of Göbekli Tepe has attracted widespread attention from academics in various disciplines across the globe, leading to a significant amount of interest from the media and the general public. Though only partially excavated, it has become increasingly obvious that this archaeological site could significantly contribute to our understanding of humanity's transition from a nomadic lifestyle, to a culture exclusively based on hunting and foraging (Schmidt, 2011). Various theories regarding Göbekli Tepe's true significance continue to circulate in the world of academia, as well as in the public eye, through extensive media coverage detailing the various excavation and discovery processes being undertaken. However, one thing is known for sure—Göbekli Tepe is one of the most important archaeological discoveries of the 20th century (Dietrich et al., 2012). While the origin story of this Neolithic site stretches back over several millennia, this chapter will divulge into the importance of this archaeological discovery that may be the key to unlocking an entire civilization's worth of history.

History of Göbekli Tepe

The archeological ruins of Göbekli Tepe were first discovered in the 1960's by Peter Benedict, an American archaeologist working in collaboration with the

University of Chicago and the University of Istanbul on a large-scale survey project of prehistoric Southeastern Anatolia (Schmidt, 2000). It was reported in his article, *“Survey Work in Southeastern Anatolia”*, that the large limestone slabs covering the grassy hills over acres of land were remains of a prehistoric Neolithic cemetery. After this discovery, however, Göbekli Tepe seemingly faded out of the media's limelight into oblivion. No other archaeologist went back to Göbekli Tepe and no excavation project took place until the mid 1990's. Göbekli Tepe recaptured the attention and fascination of scholars and media outlets worldwide when Klaus Schmidt, a German archaeologist from the German Archaeological Institute, led an excavation project in collaboration with the Archaeological Museum in Sanliurfa, a city in Southeastern Turkey. According to a 2011 interview, Schmidt reported that only 5% of the entire site had been excavated and surveyed. His remarkable findings began to answer the questions that remained after the initial survey work led by Benedict in the 1960's, with the most important one being, “why is Göbekli Tepe even important?”. While Benedict was correct in interpreting the ruins as Neolithic, the archaeological site was discovered to not be a cemetery; rather, it was a sanctuary.

As stated in chapter 2, the construction of Göbekli Tepe dates back to the Pre-Pottery Neolithic Era (PPNE). According to archaeological studies and excavation reports, it is hypothesized to have been built by those who led a hunter-gatherer lifestyle. A hunter-gatherer society is a type of nomadic, subsistence-based lifestyle that heavily relies on mobility as a survival strategy (National Geographic Magazine, 2018). Hunting, fishing, and foraging were at the forefront of this society until approximately 12 000 years ago, when humans began relying on farming and agriculture as a means of survival (Mann, 2021). The beginning of the Neolithic Revolution transformed civilization as agricultural practices were developed and permanent settlements were established that had the ability to provide for larger populations. This phenomenal discovery sparked an interest in the academic community as archaeologists only had evidence of farming and settlement communities being able to construct temples and social structures, while Göbekli Tepe was constructed by a hunter-gatherer one. Given previous knowledge and research

of hunter-gatherer culture, a construction of such large and complex nature is thought to have required a vast amount of organization and resources that archaeologists assumed to not have been possible in that type of society (Schmidt, 2000). Thus, Göbekli Tepe is of great importance as it reveals how hunter-gatherers may have been more sophisticated and knowledgeable than previously thought.

Comparing Göbekli Tepe to Other Prehistoric Sites

To give context into how significantly this discovery has shifted the understanding of archaeologists, consider how the assemblage is over seven millennia older than the construction of Egypt's Great Pyramids, including the Great Pyramid of Giza (Mann, 2021). This places a great amount of emphasis and perspective on the value of Göbekli Tepe as a historical site capable of unveiling an entire civilization's historical and cultural practices, one that existed before we believed humans were capable of creating such monuments.

In comparison to other prehistoric monuments, Göbekli Tepe is vaguely reminiscent of Stonehenge. Stonehenge is located on Salisbury Plain in England and is a masterpiece of engineering built only using simple tools and technologies with significant efforts from hundreds of well-organized individuals. Built in a circular fashion using large sarsen stones and smaller bluestones, the enormous monument can be seen from miles away and attracts thousands of tourists each year. While there is no definite evidence as to the intended purpose of Stonehenge, most of the archaeological evidence points towards it being a burial site; however, scholars believe it also served other functions. Stonehenge presumably served as a religious site and was an expression of power and wealth by aristocrats and priests who had it built—many of whom were buried close by (Pearson, 2021). Thus, based on archaeological evidence and substantial media publicity (which inevitably led to an increase in tourist visits), Stonehenge was thought to be the most architecturally sophisticated prehistoric site in the world. However, with the discovery of Göbekli Tepe and the role it presumably played as a religious relic, this status has recently come under fire.

GöbekliTepe as a Religious Relic: History and Symbolism

Throughout history, religious sites have been destinations for pilgrims who are, most commonly, on a spiritual mission in search of finding life's meaning and purpose. These centers hold great significance for travelers who often travel great distances for their own, unique spiritual journeys (Mann, 2021). Some common destinations for pilgrimages include the Vatican, Mecca, and Jerusalem; could Göbekli Tepe have been the first out of such sites? This question has provoked a worldwide discussion and has caused experts to rethink the origins of religion and human civilization due to the time period in which GöbekliTepe was built (Mann, 2021). Could Göbekli Tepe be the birthplace of religion? While this question (and so many others) evoke strong emotions from believers of various faiths and provoke heated debates between scholars, it is something interesting to consider given Göbekli Tepe's history as a place of worship. The thought of Göbekli Tepe as a religious relic serves great importance to human civilization and is supported through the evidence noted by several archaeologists, including Klaus Schmidt (Mann, 2021). When Schmidt arrived at the site in 1994, and commenced excavation in 1995, it was discovered that the megalithic structures did not serve any residential purposes, as was previously thought; rather, they were used for religious and liturgical purposes (Özalp, 2019). While there is no definitive (or at least agreed upon) concept that accurately defines the relationship of prehistoric peoples to religious beliefs, the structure and symbols of GöbekliTepe could shed light due to its role as a place of worship for a neolithic people (Özalp, 2019).

Another thing to consider is the extent to which this supposed set of beliefs can be regarded as a religion. While this is difficult to determine, based on the excavation evidence, it is definitely true that these people did follow a belief system. This is due to Göbekli Tepe's overall appearance which does not seem to have been intended to be a place of residence or living based on the lack of water sources and the overall physical structure of Göbekli Tepe (Özalp, 2019). Physically, Göbekli Tepe consists of numerous T-shaped pillars in layered, circular arrangements which are thought to have an anthropomorphic design that attributes human traits or emotions to non-human objects or entities (Schmidt, 2000). Pillars within these circular arrangements are filled

with reliefs, a type of sculptural technique using two and three-dimensional components, as well as dozens of other figures and symbols. Rather than being crudely drawn, these figures seem to have been crafted by artists with skilled hands. This is important because historians and archaeologists did not think those who led a hunter-gatherer lifestyle had the physical capabilities and understandings of how to create such intricately carved symbols and images. These figures could have been intended to render the temple visually appealing, or hold symbolic meanings similar to hieroglyphs (Özalp, 2019). This symbolism could be another way of expressing faith or belief in a higher power or it could be a simple means of communication (Özalp, 2019). During the Pre-Pottery Neolithic Era, written language was not fully developed as far as we know—archaeologists hypothesize that symbolism must have been a very basic means of expressing and communicating needs, wants, and thoughts during this time period. By using symbols and various images, people could have also expressed their religious beliefs, which is why dozens of figures, reliefs, and symbols were found on the stones in Göbekli Tepe. This sheds light on the theory that Göbekli Tepe held a large amount of significance to people living in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic Era, for it was intricately designed with simple, prehistoric tools, took a considerable amount of time and effort, and held an immense amount of meaning shown through the use of symbolism (Özalp, 2019).

Theories of Göbekli Tepe's Religious Significance

While it is difficult to directly link Göbekli Tepe to a particular religion or faith based purely on symbols and stone carvings, when Holy Scriptures and archaeological research were studied, many scholars hypothesized that people of this region believed in celestial bodies, as well as divine entities (Özalp, 2019). For some historical background, the city of Ufra (officially known as Sanliurfa, as mentioned previously) is thought to be a magical city where religions and myths have intertwined (Özalp, 2019). This region is known to many as the "city of prophets" and is the region in which Göbekli Tepe was constructed. According to divine religions and believers of multiple faiths, Prophet Abraham, who is regarded as the father of monotheistic faiths by many, lived in this region for over 75 years (Özalp, 2019). The life of Prophet

Abraham corresponds to different periods in time than the people of the Pre-Pottery Neolithic Era who built Göbekli Tepe itself; however, it is thought that they inhabited the same region, hundreds of years apart. While this is yet again a controversial statement as there is no credible way to pinpoint with any degree of certainty where Prophet Abraham lived his life, it would not be far-fetched to make an association between Prophet Abraham and the beliefs of the people in this region (Özalp, 2019).

Theories of Göbekli Tepe's relevance to religion and faith have circulated across countries and continents since the archaeological site was discovered as a prehistoric religious relic. While some of these theories have been verified against concrete scientific evidence and research, others are thought to have been falsely created by tourism agencies to attract visitors from across the globe. Regardless of who proposed these theories, it is difficult to determine whether or not these theories hold any truth. For example, Göbekli Tepe has been referred to as the Garden of Eden, known to most as the biblical earthly paradise inhabited by the first created man and woman, Adam and Eve. Over the years, many have claimed the Garden of Eden has been found; however, the location of each "discovery" is different. In 2006, a German magazine by the name of *Der Spiegel* published a cover story on the Göbekli Tepe excavations and suggested that it was the prehistoric basis of the Garden of Eden. This story caught the eye of various religious leaders and believers and the spotlight was once again on Göbekli Tepe and the wonders it holds. However, discrepancies are noted between the descriptions within the Old Testament Book of Genesis, and excavation findings as detailed by archaeologists, including Klaus Schmidt. The Garden of Eden was described as having a single river flowing outwards, which split into four branches that began carrying water to the ends of the Earth. These four rivers each have different names—Pison, Gihon, Hiddekel, and Euphrates. However, according to Schmidt's excavation reports, the location of Göbekli Tepe is nowhere close to any water or arable land (Boric, 2014). Is this a reliable theory to consider or, is it simply a ploy to attract tourists to visit the city by exaggerating its supposed significance and similarity to the Garden of Eden? Regardless of whether or not the answer to

this question is determined, it sheds light on how Göbekli Tepe is a symbol of religion, faith, and divinity.

Göbekli Tepe in the 21st century

Today, Göbekli Tepe is a protected historical site under the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) World Heritage List. Since 2014, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism has granted excavation permits to the Sanliurfa Museum in collaboration with the German Archaeological Institute which allows for the ongoing archaeological excavation of the site. Moreover, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism has an effective system in place of monitoring the entirety of the Göbekli Tepe site and has implemented an ongoing maintenance program to ensure the site is preserved. Over 2 million people reside in the city of Sanliurfa, one of Turkey's largest metropolitan areas. The city is filled with an amalgamation of multicultural cuisines, hot weather, and tourist attractions, but what brings most visitors to this city is Göbekli Tepe itself. The religious significance behind Göbekli Tepe is what attracts these visitors, and has continued to do so for years on end.

Conclusion

Göbekli Tepe is a remarkable prehistoric site with secrets that could unravel an entire civilization's worth of historical practices and religious beliefs. World renowned archaeologists, such as Peter Benedict and Klaus Schmidt, laid down the groundwork and foundation for several excavation processes that have shed light on the sheer importance of this site and how it could contribute to our current knowledge of world history and religion. Despite the different excavation and survey projects that have been carried out over the past few decades, will we ever know the answer behind Göbekli Tepe's true religious significance and more importantly, how it was constructed by those leading a nomadic, hunter-gatherer lifestyle? Hundreds of questions about Göbekli Tepe, just like these, remain unanswered and have remained as such for years. Various hypotheses have circulated around conferences and discussions on a global scale that have all attempted to answer these questions and explain what Göbekli Tepe truly represents— from the various symbols and reliefs on the

T-shaped pillars, to the circular arrangements of the site itself. Göbekli Tepe could be the last piece of the puzzle in understanding the birth of different religions and various biblical stories, including the Garden of Eden and the life of Prophet Abraham. Compared to other prehistoric sites, Göbekli Tepe is truly one of the most remarkable parts of history to have survived millennia worth of erosion and global developments. Göbekli Tepe is by far unlike any other prehistoric site and is definitely more than what meets the eye.

The following chapter will divulge into the status of Göbekli Tepe in the 21st century. Topics will include conservation strategies, controversies, and the future direction of Göbekli Tepe's tourism status.



What is the Status of the Göbekli Tepe in the World Today?

Written By Anusha Mappanasingam

Introduction

Ancient sites very rarely lose their importance, and Göbekli Tepe is no exception. Found in south-east Turkey, Göbekli Tepe has managed to intrigue archaeologists for decades with its pillared structures and the surprising implications it has to our knowledge on the history of ancient foragers (Harai, 2014). In chapters 4 and 5, we discussed the impact of the discovery of Göbekli Tepe and its importance in society, respectively. From the information discussed, it becomes clear that Göbekli Tepe has had a profound impact on our knowledge of societal development; not only do individuals come to appreciate the relevance of Göbekli Tepe as a religious relic, but we also learn of its role in the domestication of wheat—more on the latter discovery is discussed in chapter 4. Göbekli Tepe's undeniable relevance to Turkey and the rest of the world has led to its continued preservation in the present day. In this chapter, we will look at the status of Göbekli Tepe in the world today. Specifically, this will be discussed by considering the efforts made toward the conservation of Göbekli Tepe and the implications of these corresponding efforts, along with a study of the tourism status of Göbekli Tepe in today's world.

Conservation

Before one begins to understand the role of the conservation of Göbekli Tepe,

it is important to understand the origins of conservation and the general role it has in society. To begin, think of an item you have that holds a lot of meaning to you. Intentionally or not, our favorite items are typically the ones that have special memories entangled with them; it is these memories that give these items their significance. Because of their significance, we tend to do whatever it takes to keep these items safe; from displaying them behind locked cases to hiding them in difficult to find locations. These measures we take to preserve our items and the memories they come with is similar to the idea behind conservation. The term 'conservation' refers to the planned preservation and protection of an item or location (Definition of CONSERVATION, n.d.). While this term is typically not used in individuals' pursuit to preserve their objects of interest, one of the areas in which this term is often used is in the context of the environment; there have been continuous efforts made in the past decades towards the conservation of natural resources (Petulla, 1977). While considering this conservation, it is also important to highlight that there are numerous discussions regarding the conservation of other forms of resources as well: from student resources to our energy resources. All these conservation efforts undergo different processes, but they all have a collective purpose: preservation. While the topic of conservation is one that cannot be adequately addressed in this chapter, we will focus on a particular kind of conservation that is relevant to our discussion: the conservation of historical sites.

In particular, it is the conservation of Göbekli Tepe that will be one of the primary topics of discussion. Göbekli Tepe has proven its relevance to society through its historical and cultural significance; more details on this importance can be found in earlier chapters (Centre, n.d.). While details of the significance of Göbekli Tepe and its architectural structure are discussed in chapter 5, it is the world's recognition of its importance that has led many to contemplate its longevity. Archaeologists quickly realized that with the lack of direct efforts made towards the preservation of Göbekli Tepe, the likelihood of it lasting for the exploration and study of future generations was low. Specifically, it was a farmer named Savak Yildiz that brought attention to the site (Scham, 2008). By enlisting the help of archaeologist Kluas Schmidt, Yildiz facilitated

what would be the beginning of an exhaustive excavation process in 1995, with Schmidt estimating the excavation to be an ongoing process for the next 50 years (Scham, 2008).

However, some archaeologists soon realized that efforts made toward excavation were insufficient on their own, and sometimes even dangerous to the site (Turkey, n.d.). A lecturer at the German Archaeological Institute and coordinator at Göbekli Tepe named Lee Clare stressed the importance of recognizing the potential impact that excavation could have: "...archaeological excavation also means destruction" (Turkey, n.d.). While Clare's specific claim was given to a writer at Anadolu Agency in 2020, it was claims like his that initiated the initial conservation efforts that began to emerge in the early 2000s (Turkey, n.d.; Centre, n.d.). Specifically, one of the earliest initiatives taken towards the conservation of Göbekli Tepe took place in 2010 when the Global Heritage Fund (GHF)—an international organization with a mission to protect, preserve and sustain cultural heritage sites around the world—developed their Master Plan that promoted conservation and would work sufficiently with ongoing excavation projects (GHF Annual Report, n.d.). The goals of this plan included designing an adequate shelter for Göbekli Tepe while allowing for continued conservation efforts to expand the roof, and building sustainable tourist assets, including a café and parking and toilet facilities (GHF Annual Report, n.d.). These efforts were taken alongside Turkish officials, including the German Archaeological Institute and German Research Foundation, who provided the funding needed for research and excavation efforts (GHF Annual Report, n.d.). Another initiative that was taken to protect Göbekli Tepe was by the National Geographic Society (Curry, 2016). In 2016, the National Geographic Society partnered with Turkey's Dogus Group to dedicate \$15 million for the next 20 years towards conservation (Curry, 2016). The goal of this initiative was to promote conservation by boosting tourism; they aimed to use this money to make a larger visitor's center, protective canopies for structures, and walkways and fencing to minimize tourism's impact on Göbekli Tepe (Curry, 2016).

While the events previously discussed were momentous in shaping the attitude

taken towards the conservation of Göbekli Tepe—they initiated conversations that would last a lifetime—other initiatives were made towards the conservation of this archaeological site. While most of these initiatives are of similar importance as the 2010 GHF Master Plan, the nature of this particular initiative is unique; although at a first glance, it might appear irrelevant to the conservation process. This initiative occurred in 2018, when the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) added Göbekli Tepe to their World Heritage List (Centre, n.d.). While this might initially seem to most as solely a form of recognition that has been achieved, the implications of this recognition go far beyond the action itself. Having this recognition means that acts towards conservation can be taken freely without having to exercise exhaustive efforts to advocate for Göbekli Tepe's conservation. Not only does this encourage actual preservation efforts in the name of protecting a historically and culturally important site—as declared by UNESCO—like the building of a shelter as proposed by GHF, but it also ensures that resources are expended towards the consistent research and education of Göbekli Tepe.

To rightfully appreciate Göbekli Tepe's journey onto the UNESCO's World Heritage List, it is essential to consider the specifics under which this recognition was offered. UNESCO presents the justification for this recognition in their nomination document; this title was given as Göbekli Tepe met four of their criteria (Centre, n.d.). The first criterion claims that Göbekli Tepe was nominated for inclusion in the World Heritage List as it represents "...a masterpiece of human creative genius" (Centre, n.d.). This ancient site fits this classification because the infrastructure used for the monuments and the ritual beliefs involved with Göbekli Tepe illustrate the complexity of human life (Centre, n.d.). The second criterion nominated the Göbekli Tepe because it showed a crucial exchange of "...human values...on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design" (Centre, n.d.). Specifically, it is the depiction of species and human imagery on the T-shaped pillars providing clarity into worldly human values and stories of people in that period that make Göbekli Tepe a worthy representative of this second criterion (Centre, n.d.). The third criterion states

that Göbekli Tepe was nominated to be included in the World Heritage List because it was a profound testament to a culture or civilization; Göbekli Tepe is a crucial tribute to the mid-10th and late 9th millennia BC Neolithic communities living in Upper Mesopotamia (Centre, n.d.). Lastly, the fourth criterion that allowed for Göbekli Tepe's nomination was the fact that it was a great "...architectural ensemble which illustrates a significant stage in human history" (Centre, n.d.). It is undeniable that Göbekli Tepe represents the beginnings of human civilization—through its T-shaped pillars suggesting the existence of human beings with specialized talents, and thus highlighting the present diversity amongst humans (Centre, n.d.). Overall, it was under these four criteria along with statements of integrity and authenticity that Göbekli Tepe was successfully nominated for inclusion in the World Heritage List (Centre, n.d.).

Taking into consideration the process taken by UNESCO to recognize Göbekli Tepe with an official title, it is important to recognize that this is not their only involvement in this architectural site: UNESCO made direct contributions to conservation efforts by creating a detailed management plan aimed to assist in the site's protection and preservation (Centre, n.d.). The management plan was made in 2013, and took around four years to complete, resulting in it being finalized in 2017 (Centre, n.d.). Although it was generally made to abide by revised conservation legislation—like the Protection of Cultural and Natural Properties Law—we will discuss the specifics of their site management plan to assist our understanding in conservation attempts that have been made in recent years (Centre, n.d.). The management plan breaks off into eight chapters: an introduction, description and significance of Göbekli Tepe site, research and state of conservation, the development of the site and its region, current management context, key management issues, management objectives, aims, and policies, and the implementation of the management plan (Centre, n.d.). While it is impossible to explore the entire 164-page document in its entirety within this chapter, we will discuss some of the key points of the plan that one should consider (Centre, n.d.). The first point reminds individuals of how Göbekli Tepe being an important ancient site makes it necessary to keep conservation and management efforts to the

highest standards; this should be done by using international resources and partnerships when available (Centre, n.d.). The second point discussed the opportunities for research that Göbekli Tepe offers; it could even become an official international research center on Neolithisation in Upper Mesopotamia (Centre, n.d.). The next point expresses the consequences that must be avoided due to the irreplaceable nature of Göbekli Tepe (Centre, n.d.). Because we have numerous archaeological sites worldwide, it is important to study the mistakes individuals have made with conserving these sites to ensure they are not made again; Göbekli Tepe's recent discovery means that it is possible to adapt it to touristic use while avoiding mass tourism (Centre, n.d.). The fourth key point states that it is important to enforce minimum excavation efforts of Göbekli Tepe that are only needed to make the site accessible to the public (Centre, n.d.). The fifth point is related to the previous one: while it is important to minimize excavation as much as possible, there is also a need for what is referred to as a 'Site Design Concept' (Centre, n.d.). This concept would work towards enhancing the character and highlighting the cultural significance of Göbekli Tepe while leaving the composition unaffected (Centre, n.d.). While UNESCO proposes an idea of having a "...landscape designer using vegetation to visualize hidden structures known from geophysical surveys", they also emphasize that this concept excludes ideas that could be disrespectful towards the heritage of Göbekli Tepe, including re-enactment ideas of the site (Centre, n.d.). The last key point covers the issue of communication and interpretation: visitors should be guided to a visitor center that can assist and accommodate in ways that will allow them to understand the significance of the monument they are about to see (Centre, n.d.).

Tourism

The cultural context of Göbekli Tepe and the implications of it for history make this ancient monument a site of interest to individuals all around the world. The fascination has only increased over the years, resulting in tourism being a primary component of what Göbekli Tepe has to offer. According to the National Geographic Society, in 2016 Göbekli Tepe received hundreds of visitors every day (Curry, 2016). Tourism at this monument has been promoted by various agencies offering to provide special tours that are both informative

and engaging (Curry, 2016). A lot of these tours are offered by different travel agencies and can be booked online (Curry, 2016).

Not only does tourism have serious implications for Göbekli Tepe, but it also carries a profound impact on surrounding regions and their economy. For this reason, tourism is often studied and deliberated to monitor its full impact. One of these efforts includes a 2019 study conducted by Ali Riza Manci in *Cultural and Heritage Tourism in the Middle East and North Africa* ("Visitors' Expectations in a World Heritage Site", 2020). This study aimed to present and reflect on visitor expectation and satisfaction towards Göbekli Tepe ("Visitors' Expectations in a World Heritage Site", 2020). 693 visitors were interviewed through a questionnaire with two parts ("Visitors' Expectations in a World Heritage Site", 2020). The first part inquired about personal information like visitors' demographics to more Göbekli Tepe-related questions like whether they visited other UNESCO World Heritage Sites and whether their expectations were met ("Visitors' Expectations in a World Heritage Site", 2020). The second part obtained information about the experiences of the visitors ("Visitors' Expectations in a World Heritage Site", 2020). For this chapter, the statistical tests completed and the specific values obtained are not needed to comprehend the conclusions made in this study; however, the conclusions are of utmost importance ("Visitors' Expectations in a World Heritage Site", 2020). Generally, it was found that the higher the quality of service often accompanied visitor satisfaction ("Visitors' Expectations in a World Heritage Site", 2020). Specifically, many were satisfied with the quality of service except for improvement in specific areas, including shopping, souvenirs, rest areas, and indoor spaces ("Visitors' Expectations in a World Heritage Site", 2020). While this might be expected information to obtain from a feedback questionnaire, it is their specific findings on differences in perceptions of service quality between different demographics and travel patterns that makes this study unique ("Visitors' Expectations in a World Heritage Site", 2020). Their results appeared to be hinting that adequate access could increase visitor satisfaction; they found that domestic visitors tend to be less satisfied than international visitors ("Visitors' Expectations in a World Heritage Site", 2020). They also found that younger visitors tend to revisit more than older visitors;

similar trends were seen in those with higher levels of education (“Visitors’ Expectations in a World Heritage Site”, 2020). While one cannot be certain that easy access to information will combat these revisitation patterns, it is worth attempting (“Visitors’ Expectations in a World Heritage Site”, 2020). Another interesting piece of information that was found was regarding entrance fees: domestic visitors were displeased with higher entrance fees, while international visitors were fine with it (“Visitors’ Expectations in a World Heritage Site”, 2020). While one could contemplate its relation to differences in satisfaction levels, this finding highlights the importance of maintaining separate fees for domestic and international visitors to ensure revisitation (“Visitors’ Expectations in a World Heritage Site”, 2020). Lastly, it was found that the older and more educated the visitor was, the shorter the visitation time; this was also seen in visitors travelling alone (“Visitors’ Expectations in a World Heritage Site”, 2020).

It is important to grasp the full potential of these findings for future tourism. Overall, these patterns found can help serve specific populations better, and thus expand the various demographics of visitors that are received each year. Higher tourism rates can mean that the needs of the domestic markets are met, and thus Turkey’s economy benefits (“Visitors’ Expectations in a World Heritage Site”, 2020). However, tourism efforts at Göbekli Tepe come with their controversy. The main issue arises when the safety and longevity of the historical monument are brought into question (Turkey, n.d.). As discussed previously in this chapter, this is one of the reasons why conservation efforts are implemented: they help to control the impacts of tourism on Göbekli Tepe by implementing safety measures and promoting education on the monument (Curry, 2016). Another issue arises when considering whether tourism will lead to the commercialization of Göbekli Tepe; although it might be unintentional, this can appear insulting to the cultural heritage of the archaeological structure (“Visitors’ Expectations in a World Heritage Site”, 2020). As discussed earlier, it is concerns similar to this one that UNESCO’s Site Management Plan attempts to address: one of the key points mentioned in this plan works to ensure that the cultural heritage of Göbekli Tepe is respected (Centre, n.d.).

Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter discussed the status of Göbekli Tepe in today’s world. Firstly, we looked at the role of conservation in preserving and protecting the Göbekli Tepe. Specifically, we discussed the integration of excavation and conservation efforts through the efforts of GHF. Then, we looked at the conditions under which Göbekli Tepe received its nomination on UNESCO’s World Heritage List, as well as the implications this title had for ongoing conservation efforts: details into UNESCO’s Site Management Plan were referred to interpret these implications. Lastly, we looked at the tourism status of Göbekli Tepe by presenting patterns found from a study looking into visitor expectation and satisfaction with Göbekli Tepe tourism.

Göbekli Tepe’s relevance to the various aspects of human life means that its continued study is necessary. The next chapter will discuss the science involved in studying Göbekli Tepe.



What is the Science Involved in Studying Göbekli Tepe?

Written By Joonsoo Sean Lyeo

Introduction

Ever since its discovery, Göbekli Tepe has captured the fascination of both academics and the general public (Schmidt, 2007). This fascination has made Göbekli Tepe the focus of extensive press coverage, numerous documentaries, and even the occasional conspiratorial blog post; all of which have sustained the archaeological site's popularity (Notroff & Dietrich, 2019). Much of this intrigue can be attributed to how little is known about the site. Despite being the focus of several decades' worth of research, Göbekli Tepe remains shrouded in mystery (Notroff & Dietrich, 2019). Göbekli Tepe has attracted researchers from all manner of different fields and disciplines, all of whom have sought to answer some of the lingering questions surrounding the site. This chapter will be dedicated to discussing the methodologies that researchers have employed to further our understanding of Göbekli Tepe.

Archaeology

Any overview of the study of Göbekli Tepe inevitably begins with the field of archaeology. After all, it was a German archaeologist, Klaus Schmidt, who discovered and subsequently led much of the initial research (Schmidt, 1995). For context, it should be noted that the term 'archaeology' refers to the study of physical artifacts to understand the past human activities which may have

produced them (Sinclair, 2016). It should also be noted that archaeology is an incredibly diverse discipline, consisting of a number of subfields (Sinclair, 2016). For this reason, the following discussion on the field of archaeology, as it applies to the study of Göbekli Tepe, will be divided into several subsections to reflect the relevant subfields of archaeology.

Archaeoastronomy—The term ‘archaeoastronomy’ refers to the study of past human activities in relation to astronomical events (Aveni, 1995). In the context of Göbekli Tepe, some researchers, such as the Italian astrophysicist Giulio Magli, have suggested that the megalith may have been built to venerate a particular astronomical phenomenon: Sirius (Magli, 2016). Sirius, colloquially known as ‘the Dog Star’, is currently regarded as the fourth brightest object in the night sky, and its periodic appearance and disappearance from the horizon has influenced the mythologies of the Ancient Egyptians, Greeks, and Polynesians (Holberg, 2007). Due to the Earth’s irregular ‘wobble’ as it rotates around its axis, the position of stars in the night sky are known to change, or disappear and reappear entirely, over the course of millennia; and Sirius is no exception (Holberg, 2007). To test the plausibility of this theory, Magli ran a simulation of Sirius’ historic movement through the night sky. This simulation revealed that to those living in the area of what is now Göbekli Tepe, Sirius would not have risen above the horizon until approximately 9300 B.C., preceding the earliest estimates for the site’s construction (Holberg, 2007). Magli explains that Sirius’ appearance would have been sudden, giving the appearance of a ‘new’ star being ‘born’ into the night sky (Holberg, 2007). Magli theorized that Göbekli Tepe may have been built to celebrate this astronomical event. Similar theories, put forward by other archaeoastronomers, have suggested that Göbekli Tepe may have instead been created as an observatory for meteor showers and other such encounters (Sweatman & Tsikritsis, 2017). This theory hinges on the observation that Göbekli Tepe was likely constructed during the Younger Dryas, a global event which oversaw a massive climatic shift, which is suspected to have been triggered by the impact of a large asteroid or comet (Sweatman & Tsikritsis, 2017). These archaeoastronomers argue that such a momentous event may have inspired the people of Göbekli Tepe to look to the night sky, either as early astronomers or as the source of inspiration for

religious practice (Sweatman & Tsikritsis, 2017).

Archaeobotany—The term ‘archaeobotany’, synonymous with ‘paleoethnobotany’, refers to the study of plants in the context of past human activity (Pearsall, 2015). In the context of Göbekli Tepe, some archaeobotanists theorize that the large-scale processing of plants to make food occurred at the site, as evidenced by the discovery of large caches of tools related to plant processing (Peters et al., 2014). Examples of plant processing tools uncovered from the site’s back-fill include: grinders, handstones, mortars, and pestles (Peters et al., 2014). These tools seem to have been created and standardized for the processing of wild plant seeds which, based on the carbonized plant remains retrieved from the site, were predominantly derived from undomesticated variants of einkorn, emmer wheat, and barley (Dietrich et al., 2019). Furthermore, because the majority of plant processing tools have been retrieved from a select few rectangular buildings in the main excavation area, some archaeobotanists have suggested that these buildings may have been specifically delineated as work areas for large-scale food preparation (Dietrich et al., 2019). This finding, coupled with the apparent lack of storage facilities, has led archaeobotanists to suggest that much of the food produced in these buildings was set aside for immediate consumption, in turn supporting theories that either a large workforce was present at Göbekli Tepe, or that the residents of Göbekli Tepe frequently engaged in a feasting culture (Dietrich et al., 2019).

Archaeozoology—Also referred to as zooarchaeology, it is the study of animal remains, such as bones or shells, to elucidate past human activity (Sutton & Yohe, 2006). In the area surrounding Göbekli Tepe, researchers have identified more than 100,000 animal bone fragments, with many fragments bearing signs of cuts and splintering (Curry, 2008). Dr. Joris Peters, an archaeozoologist from the Ludwig Maximilian University, has suggested that these cuts and splinters may have been produced when the animals in question were prepared for consumption (Curry, 2008). Thus far, all bone fragments identified in Göbekli Tepe seem to belong to wild game animals native to the surrounding Harran Plain, such as gazelle and red deer, suggesting that those who resided at this site had not yet learned to domesticate animals,

and instead subsisted on a hunter-gatherer lifestyle (Curry, 2008). These fragments have also allowed archaeozoologists to ascertain other insights into the lives of the residents of Göbekli Tepe. For instance, based on analyses of bone weight, archaeozoologists have determined that two animal species, onagers and aurochs, likely accounted for more than two-thirds of the total animal protein consumed by the residents of Göbekli Tepe (Pöllath et al., 2018). Furthermore, based on the types of injuries found on auroch skeletons, archaeozoologist have suggested that the residents of Göbekli Tepe may have engaged in large communal hunts (Pöllath et al., 2018). During these communal hunts, hunting parties may have worked together to drive large herds of aurochs into enclosures where they could be brought down more easily (Pöllath et al., 2018). It has been theorized that these communal parties may have served the dual-purpose of yielding large quantities of meat while also strengthening group cohesion (Pöllath et al., 2018).

Iconography—When discussed in reference to archaeology, the term ‘iconography’ refers to the study of symbols and images in the context of past human activity; specifically looking at what the intrinsic and extrinsic meanings of these symbols reflect about the people who produced them (Munson & Hays-Gilpin, 2017). In the context of Göbekli Tepe, the site offers prospective iconographers plenty of symbols to study and interpret. For instance, images of wild animals can be found sculpted onto several of the T-shaped pillars located throughout the site (Peters & Schmidt, 2004). The vast majority of these images are at least semi-naturalistic, meaning they depict animals as they would appear in nature, though there is a small number of more abstract exceptions (Peters & Schmidt, 2004). Conversely, comparatively fewer images of humans have been found at Göbekli Tepe, and in the few instances where humans are depicted, they tend to be shown as headless or decapitated figures surrounded by carrion-eating predators, such as vultures and hyenas (Fagan, 2017). Dr. Anna Fagan, an archaeologist from the University of Melbourne, notes several other details contrasting the depictions of humans and animals in the images found at Göbekli Tepe (Fagan, 2017). For starters, Fagan notes that there are several sculptures at site which depict decapitated human heads, with most of these sculptures being fairly naturalistic save for the absence of

a mouth (Fagan, 2017). Fagan argues that the lack of mouths may be a deliberate feature, one which is intended to remove the undesirable agency of a human-like statue by denying them the ability to eat or consume (Fagan, 2017). The depiction of mouthless human heads can be contrasted from the nearby imagery of emaciated animals with exaggerated rib cages, wide-open mouths, and sharp teeth (Fagan, 2017). Altogether, Fagan presents these interpretations as potential evidence of the importance of hunger and predation within the culture of the group that built Göbekli Tepe (Fagan, 2017). To this point, Fagan supplements her interpretations of these motifs with the evidence of feasting found at the site, mentioned at the end of the archaeobotany subsection, to suggest that Göbekli Tepe may have served as some sort of ritualistic site to which people came to ‘consume’ or ‘be consumed’ (Fagan, 2017).

Osteology—Within the broader discipline of archaeology, the term ‘osteology’ refers to the study of bones, in this case human bones, to learn more about past human activity (Blau, 2014). In the context of Göbekli Tepe, it should be noted that researchers have uncovered nearly 700 distinct human bone fragments from the site, with the vast majority of these bone fragments coming from parts of the skull (Gresky, Haelm & Clare, 2017). Curiously, several of these skull fragments appear to have been deliberately modified. For instance, just under 10% of the recovered skull fragments seem to possess cut marks caused by ‘defleshing’, suggesting that someone had deliberately removed the flesh from these bones before discarding them (Gresky, Haelm & Clare, 2017). A considerable number of the cervical (neck) vertebrae recovered from the site also seem to bear cut marks indicative of decapitation, suggesting that the skulls had been deliberately separated from the rest of the body (Gresky, Haelm & Clare, 2017). It should be noted that the relative frequency of decapitated human remains may tie into the observations made by iconographers, as mentioned prior. Perhaps the most intriguing findings are the seven skull fragments possessing grooves which run horizontally across the forehead, and sometimes even extend along the rest of the circumference of the skull (Gresky, Haelm & Clare, 2017). These grooves seem to be the result of deliberate cutting actions and, based on the lack of any signs of healing, seem to have been created sometime after the owner’s death (Gresky, Haelm & Clare,

2017). Osteologists have put forward several theories to explain these grooves, including: the veneration of deceased ancestors, the branding of dispatched enemies, and the functional modification of skulls for decorative purposes (Gresky, Haelm & Clare, 2017). These theories are in line with the discovery of several 'skull cults', a term referring to groups which deliberately modify skulls for religious or ceremonial purposes, throughout the rest of Neolithic Anatolia (Verhoeven, 2002).

Radiocarbon Dating—The term 'radiocarbon dating' refers to a method used by archaeologists to estimate the age of an object containing organic material (Bowman, 1990). The concept of radiocarbon dating is based on the premise that when a living organism dies, it stops absorbing new carbon from the external environment (Bowman, 1990). Furthermore, when an organism dies, any radioactive carbon it had accumulated up to that point will begin to decay (Bowman, 1990). By measuring the amount of carbon left in a sample of organic material, archaeologists can provide an estimate for how long the organism, from which the sample was derived, has been dead (Bowman, 1990). In the context of Göbekli Tepe, radiocarbon dating was used to provide an estimate for when the site was actively occupied (Dietrich, 2011). An analysis of a sample of plaster, which contained small amounts of charcoal derived from organic material, retrieved from the site provided evidence suggesting that construction of Göbekli Tepe may have begun as early as 9000 B.C., with a 95% degree of certainty (Dietrich, 2011).

Psychology

Beyond the discipline of archaeology, and its many subfields discussed in the previous section, the mystery of Göbekli Tepe has also attracted the intrigue of scholars from a whole slew of other fields of study. In recent years, a number of psychologists have been drawn to the study of Göbekli Tepe, with one notable example being Dr. Tracy B. Henley, a researcher from the Texas A&M University.

Through some of his recent publications, Henley has sought to recontextualize the construction of Göbekli Tepe as the product of a fundamental shift in

human psychology, one which may be attributed to the social psychological phenomenon of storytelling (Henley, 2018). For instance, Henley suggests that storytelling may have been a driving force behind the social evolution of hunter-gatherer bands, especially in the context of the large-scale cooperative acts preceding the construction of Göbekli Tepe (Henley, 2018). After all, the construction of Göbekli Tepe would have necessitated a considerable amount of organized manpower, making a departure from the more needs-based social behaviours expected of hunter-gatherers. Storytelling, as explained by Henley, would have allowed for the rapid dissemination of new ideas and expectations, in turn encouraging group norms and behaviours to take a particular direction (Henley, 2018). Furthermore, Henley argues that storytelling may have set the stage for an early form of social stratification, one in which storytellers could gain social power by controlling the spread of information to align with their interests (Henley, 2018). As such, Henley proposes that these two factors, the spread of information and the accumulation of social power, may have allowed storytellers to mobilize hunter-gatherer bands into completing complex tasks that weren't immediately relevant to the group's survival, such as the quarrying and sculpting of large stones, which in turn would've preceded the construction of Göbekli Tepe (Henley, 2018).

Architecture

Göbekli Tepe is also a site of fascination for many architects and architectural scholars who seek to answer questions about the site by looking at how its structures may have been planned, designed, or built. . For instance, an architectural perspective was employed by a research team from Tel Aviv University, which conducted a spatial analysis of the site using a computer algorithm (Haklay & Gopher, 2020). This algorithm mapped the spatial distribution and relative locations of key features from the site, allowing the team to identify any patterns shared by architectural structures of the same type (Haklay & Gopher, 2020). This algorithm revealed that three of the enclosures found at Göbekli Tepe—with each enclosure consisting of a large circular structure—seemed to have been designed together, as evidenced by the observation that their centre points formed a near-perfect equilateral triangle (Haklay & Gopher, 2020). This finding challenges the assertion that the enclosures were

built at different points of time, potentially by different groups of people, and instead suggests that they had been planned and constructed simultaneously to fit a coherent architectural design (Haklay & Gopher, 2020). This finding also challenges previous estimates of the level of organization and amount of manpower needed to construct Göbekli Tepe, suggesting that the actual number may be up to three times higher than previously anticipated (Haklay & Gopher, 2020).

Conclusion

This chapter sought to provide an overview of some of the academic disciplines and fields of study which have converged into the ongoing research surrounding Göbekli Tepe. In addition, this chapter also sought to showcase instances wherein the methodologies employed by the academics in different fields of study, disciplines as disparate as the subfields of archaeology and psychology, have furthered our collective understanding of the site. As research on Göbekli Tepe continues, it becomes more apparent that the resolution of this decades-long mystery will lie in the continued collaborative efforts between scholars of different academic disciplines. For more information on the questions that have yet to be answered about Göbekli Tepe, which will inevitably guide future research, please refer to Chapter 8: What questions are we still asking about Göbekli Tepe?



What Questions are we still asking about Göbekli Tepe?

Written By Ashna Hudani

GIVEN THAT GÖBEKLI TEPE WAS BUILT CENTURIES AGO, it is impossible to know, with certainty, the story and motivation behind its creation. Although countless scholars from different disciplines have used diverse lines of evidence and their own inferences to develop theories, there are still many questions that are driving scholars to continue investigating this mysterious Turkish landmark, in many cases their studies leading to even more questions. This chapter delves into these questions,—including “Who built Göbekli Tepe?” and “What was Göbekli Tepe used for?”—their significance, and some theories which aim to address them.

Who Built Göbekli Tepe?

Göbekli Tepe is located at the northern edge of the Fertile Crescent, in the south of present-day southeastern Anatolia, Turkey (Curry, 2008). Although centuries of intensive farming and settlement have turned it into a relatively featureless landscape, according to Klaus Schmidt, a German archeologist, 11,000 years ago, this landscape would have resembled “paradise” (Curry, 2008). The abundance of natural resources, including wild animals, flowing rivers, fruit and nut trees, and wild barley and wheat varieties, would have attracted hunter-gatherers from across Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean region of Western Asia (Curry, 2008). However, according to Schmidt, the manpower

required to build Göbekli Tepe would not have been satisfied simply by these hunter-gatherers, as carving and erecting the great stone pillars would have required hundreds of workers operating in tandem (Curry, 2008). Thus, it is believed that the complex, coordinated efforts required for the construction of Göbekli Tepe laid the groundwork for the development of complex societies (Curry, 2008). This idea challenges the widely accepted notion in archaeological circles that agriculture is a prerequisite for the development of settled communities, as agriculture developed five centuries following the construction of Göbekli Tepe (Curry, 2008). This is further supported by a study which utilized architectural formal analysis to reconstruct aspects of the architectural design processes (Haklay & Gopher, 2020). The findings of this study suggest that the hierarchical architecture, including the spatial positioning of peripheral pillars around the larger central pillars, reflects the dynamics of the complex hunter-gatherer social system of the time, which was also possibly characterized by growing inequality (Haklay & Gopher, 2020). It is suggested that a powerful individual(s) created and took advantage of the restless state of affairs, due to the inequality, to organize society at a level required for the construction of Göbekli Tepe (Haklay & Gopher, 2020).

The above theory is rejected by Constantinos Ragazas, a scholar who asserts that Göbekli Tepe is actually the site of the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, constructed in 600 BC (Ragazas, 2013). The Gardens of Babylon were said to be built by a Babylonian or Assyrian king to please his homesick wife, who longed for the mountainous meadows of her native land (Ragazas, 2013). This site was intended to provide a secure destination for the queen's outing, close to the royal palace but not inside the capital city (Ragazas, 2013). This would explain why no evidence of settlements and animal domestication were found near Göbekli Tepe, although evidence of feasting and animal sacrifice is present (Ragazas, 2013). According to this theory, Göbekli Tepe was built under this king's command (Ragazas, 2013). The Babylonian and Assyrian Civilizations, at that time, had the human resources and skills to construct a monument of this scale (Ragazas, 2013). This differs from the previous theory, demonstrating the lack of concrete answers about who constructed Göbekli Tepe, and what that process entailed.

What was Göbekli Tepe used for?

Just as there are different theories to explain who built Göbekli Tepe, experts have diverse ideas regarding the historical use of the landmark. Some anthropologists suggest that Göbekli Tepe was the site for a Neolithic skull cult, which refers to the intentional modification and deposition of human skulls in archeological discourse (Gresky et al., 2017). Human skulls have been venerated for many reasons, including ancestral worship, and the belief that protective properties can be transferred from the dead to the living (Gresky et al., 2017). Recently, fragments of three human skulls have been recovered at Göbekli Tepe, each with intentional deep incisions, caused by multiple cuts using lithic tools, which are made of stone, across the forehead (Gresky et al., 2017). This supports other lines of evidence, including the monumental buildings, the T-shaped limestone pillars, the repertoire of sculptures, and the location of the site at a prominent position in the landscape, that suggest that Göbekli Tepe was used as a ritual site, connected either to ancestor veneration or the display of dispatched enemies (Gresky et al., 2017).

Another prominent theory about the purpose of the site is that it was used to observe celestial cycles (Magli, 2016). According to this theory, the construction of Göbekli Tepe started in the 10th millennium BC (Magli, 2016). It is possible that astronomy was present at the site at one rectangular building in particular, as it is oriented towards the cardinal points, and may be the first building to ever have had this orientation (Belmonte & Garcia, 2016). Of particular interest is the appearance of the brightest star, Sirius, which coincided with the time of construction, and may have inspired the construction or the purpose of the site in some way (Magli, 2016). This theory is supported by the possible references to the rising of Sirius in the iconography at the site (Magli, 2016). For example, on Pillar 43 of Structure D, there are carvings with what can be interpreted as detailed references to the sky (Magli, 2016). Among these references are altars devoted to the gods of the sky and several constellations (Magli, 2016).

Because there are different interpretations of the site's use, many of which centre around the terms 'special buildings,' 'temples,' and 'sanctuaries,' some

archeologists caution against the tendency to impose ethnocentric distinctions of sacred and profane on prehistory (Dietrich & Notroff, 2015; Banning 2011). This is particularly important as anthropologists have suggested that these spheres are inseparably interwoven in other societies (Dietrich & Notroff, 2015; Banning 2011). There is sufficient evidence that Göbekli Tepe was used as a cultic place, including the burial and deposition of symbolic objects (Dietrich & Notroff, 2015). However, it is important to clearly define the terminology used so that eurocentric ideas of ritual, which are considered separate from everyday life, are not used as the entry point to understanding prehistoric human societies (Dietrich & Notroff, 2015). As such, if the term 'temple' is used to denote specialized cult architecture, rather than defining it as a place where God is present, it may be appropriate to use in descriptions of Göbekli Tepe (Dietrich & Notroff, 2015). It is clear that the challenge in understanding Göbekli Tepe is not limited to finding evidence that certain activities took place, but also understanding what the activities may signify and how they can be communicated without imposing the communicator's cultural and social biases (Dietrich & Notroff, 2015).

Why was Göbekli Tepe Buried?

According to excavators, Göbekli Tepe was deliberately buried, in around 8,000 BCE (Haughton, 2011). There are several proposed reasons for this, but none of them are supported by sufficient evidence. First, it is important to note that some theorists believe that it may have been naturally buried. For theorists who believe that Göbekli Tepe is the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, ancient texts affirm that the Hanging Gardens were destroyed by an earthquake, resulting in soil and stone rubble from above, filling and burying the T-shaped pillars and galleries that comprise Göbekli Tepe (Ragazas, 2013). However, other scholars believe that a natural burial of the site is unlikely, due to its position on a hilltop, which generally tends to be a zone of erosion, rather than deposition (Strom, 2017). Thus, many speculations have been made about why the site might have been abandoned and buried.

Another hypothesis about the burial of Göbekli Tepe is that it was abandoned when the monuments lost their relevance. A few centuries after the

construction of Göbekli Tepe, the practice of agriculture and animal husbandry began in the region, which may have led to a shift in lifestyles and beliefs (Haughton, 2011). If the site was used in connection with religious beliefs and practices, it is also possible that a new religion emerged in the area, and any monuments connected to the previous one would have to be destroyed (Strom, 2017). Alternatively, if the site had religious significance, it is possible that its burial was related to a desanctification process, which needed to be done when it was no longer in use (Strom, 2017). Finally, there is speculation that it may have been buried so that the site was preserved for future generations (Strom, 2017). With only a fraction of the site excavated, it is possible that more clues regarding its burial may emerge as the site is studied more extensively.

How do the Circular Enclosures Relate to Each Other?

There are a total of six known structures to date within the Göbekli Tepe site—structures A, B, C, D, E, and F (Dendrinis, 2016). These enclosures have been studied for their architectural complexity, and significance, both individually and as they relate to each other. One interesting theory suggests three of the circular enclosures (B, C, and D) were deliberately planned to form an equilateral triangle (Hacklay & Gopher, 2014). Using an algorithm based on standard deviation mapping, researchers identified a geometric pattern that they believe informed the design of the structures (Hacklay & Gopher, 2014). Because the enclosures have varying sizes and shapes, the authors believe that the chances that the midpoints would coincidentally form an equilateral triangle are very low (Hacklay & Gopher, 2014). This implies that the creation of these enclosures was undertaken as a single project, rather than three or more separate ones, and accordingly, abstract design rules and organizational patterns were already being used in this period of history (Hacklay & Gopher, 2014).

Another way in which the structures are hypothesized to be related is through their hierarchical organization (Hacklay & Gopher, 2014). Enclosure D is considered to have the higher hierarchical position, due to its larger size, the height of its central pillars, and because its central pillars bear anthropomorphic attributes (Hacklay & Gopher, 2014). This idea of hierarchical

architecture is also supported by the nature of the T-shaped pillars, which may symbolize anthropomorphic beings, such as ancestors (Hacklay & Gopher, 2014). In enclosures B and C, the fox was the main totemic animal illustrated on the pillar. In contrast, in enclosure D, the depictions on the central pillar suggest that ancestors may take a human, rather than non-human, form (Hacklay & Gopher, 2014). Additionally, the peripheral pillars in enclosure D include game animals which were consumed by the occupants, creating a spatial hierarchy within the enclosure itself (Hacklay & Gopher, 2014). These observations serve as evidence that there may be a hierarchical relationship between the different enclosures, which may serve as one complex, rather than three separately conceptualized structures (Hacklay & Gopher, 2014).

Although these theories create the notion of relationality between the enclosures of Göbekli Tepe, there is still uncertainty associated with these inferences. In particular, one relevant question is the role of the other three enclosures. If geometric design was used, then what is the role of these other structures in the architecture? If the geometric design was intentional, one would expect that the pattern would be repeated with other structures. However, there is no evidence that that is the case. Perhaps, with continual excavation and more research, there will be more clues about the relationality, or lack of, for the different enclosures that comprise Göbekli Tepe.

What do the Carvings Symbolize?

One remarkable and mysterious aspect of Göbekli Tepe is the rich repertoire of animal and non-figurative depictions carved onto large stone pillars and sculptures, creating striking imagery (Boric, 2013). Because of the broad range of engravings, and the differing modes of analysis and cultural entry points that can be used to understand their symbolism, this question continues to be important in trying to understand Göbekli Tepe. For the purpose of this section, some common themes present in engravings will be discussed. However, it should be noted that this only scratches the surface of answering this question, as there are many different interpretations beyond what is discussed below and many carvings still have yet to be excavated.

One recurring theme seen in these engravings is the presence of animals. Among noteworthy observations is the presence of details that make some animals look dangerous and strong (Boric, 2013). Many of these animals, including foxes, wild boars, and hyenas, were engraved with bared teeth, raised front legs, and threatening body language (Boric, 2013). Although it may be expected that certain animals, such as lions, bears and wolves, are portrayed in such a manner, it is important to consider that even animals that aren't considered inherently dangerous, like foxes, were presented in this manner (Boric, 2013). This removes any ambiguity about the nature of these animals (Boric, 2013). Presenting predatory and more ambiguously positioned animals as dangerous may reveal a human desire to harness the power that particular animals possess (Boric, 2013). This is supported by the somewhat humanistic portrayal of some of these animals, especially wolves, who are illustrated as bipedal (Boric, 2013). In addition, this could serve to emphasize the underlying humanity of the depicted animals, portraying the multiplicity and complexity of existing natural and social relations (Boric, 2013).

In addition to this theory about the depiction and significance of animals, some experts believe that the T-shaped pillars were created and symbolically engraved to symbolize God (Seyfzadeh & Schoch, 2019). According to the authors, it is possible that when Luwian script was invented, it adopted some Anatolian icons which predate the language's inception, between the years 2000 and 1400 BCE (Seyfzadeh & Schoch, 2019). In particular, there is a potential link between the T-shaped pillars and the H-symbols seen in Göbekli Tepe, and the words God and gate in the Luwian script (Seyfzadeh & Schoch, 2019). According to this analysis, the central pillars in each enclosure symbolize God, associated with bulls, and the H-symbols were meant to explicitly mark them as spiritual beings presiding over the path from life to death in the form of a symbolic gateway (Seyfzadeh & Schoch, 2019). This suggests that Göbekli Tepe may have been used as a temple, perhaps involving rites specifically to do with the decapitation of the deceased and resurrection from the realm of the dead (Seyfzadeh & Schoch, 2019). As the excavation of the site continues, additional evidence supporting or challenging this idea may be uncovered.

Conclusion

Göbekli Tepe is one of the most mysterious and remarkable landmarks known to humans. Its initial discovery and ongoing excavation has led to many questions about its construction, design, purpose, and significance. Although excavations have uncovered many details about the structure, theories about their meanings range significantly among researchers. It is dubious whether we will ever have clear answers to these questions, given the temporal and cultural distance of the researchers to the creators of Göbekli Tepe. However, as it is integral to human nature to make sense of perplexing information, researchers will continue to seek evidence and create theories to understand Göbekli Tepe, and its place in prehistoric society.



How has Göbekli Tepe been Preserved for Centuries?

Written By Pareesa Ali

Introduction to the Preservation of Göbekli Tepe

Göbekli Tepe in Southeastern Turkey is one of the most important ancient archaeological sites in the world (Schmidt, 2007). Given its early creation approximately 12,000 years ago, it is one of humanity's oldest surviving archaeological sites (Schmidt, 2007). It is a man-made monument consisting of several enclosures and pillars (Schmidt, 2007). For additional details regarding the physical description and location of Göbekli Tepe, refer to Chapter 1: What is Göbekli Tepe? Moreover, the majority of interest from both the public and from archaeologists revolve around the historical impact of the discovery of Göbekli Tepe, as well as its purpose and role as a sanctuary. These aspects have been discussed in Chapter 3: What has the impact of the discovery of Göbekli Tepe been? and Chapter 4: Why is Göbekli Tepe important? However, many individuals overlook the significance of how Göbekli Tepe has been preserved for thousands of years and how the monument has miraculously survived until the present day (Schmidt, 2007). Considering that Göbekli Tepe has been preserved for over 12,000 years, it is clear that its physical environment and surroundings must have played a major role in protecting the monument from the effects of erosion and from natural disasters. Its location and surrounding environment are responsible for maintaining Göbekli Tepe in its original condition, and details regarding these

factors will be discussed further in this chapter. To begin, this chapter will cover the physical description of the monument and encompassing area and how it contributed to preserving the overall structure for over 12 centuries. Next, I will discuss the role of the environment at the time the monument was built and how it facilitated the preservation of the sanctuary. Following this, I will go over the impact of the underground location of Göbekli Tepe and how it prevented the destruction of the mound. Finally, I will delve into the significance of the long-term preservation of Göbekli Tepe and what it represents for other historically preserved landmarks.

The Surrounding Area of Göbekli Tepe

Göbekli Tepe can be found in the Southeastern Anatolia region in Turkey, where it was discovered by early explorers (Schmidt, 2007). It was first discovered by American archaeologist Peter Benedict in 1963 (Schmidt, 2007). Later in 1994, German archaeologist Klaus Schmidt reexamined the location and led the excavations in the area (Schmidt, 2007). The historical site consists of several sanctuaries built as round or oval megalithic enclosures (Schmidt, 2007). These enclosures are surrounded by T-shaped limestone pillars, which are connected by stone walls (Schmidt, 2007). The massive stone pillars, which are still intact to this day, were made from a thick clay mortar for the bedding of the stones which formed these large pillars (Köksal-Schmidt, 2011). The limestone plateaus which surround these walls are hypothesized by researchers to have previously served as a quarry in the Neolithic era (Schmidt, 2007). These stone walls separate the inner space of the enclosure from the outer surrounding areas, thus, it can be assumed that the inner space is the most sacred space of the sanctuary (Schmidt, 2007). According to archaeologists, they made this assumption based on the fact that the inner areas were more well-protected than the other areas (Schmidt, 2007). As of 2010, four monumental enclosures had been discovered, consisting of 51 pillars in total (Schmidt, 2007). Twelve of these pillars are interconnected with walls and benches made of stone, and they are arranged in round or oval structures (Schmidt, 2007). After its discovery, techniques such as a geo-magnetic survey and ground penetrating radar were used to determine that there are a number of similar structures within the mound (Schmidt, 2007). These techniques

were discussed in further detail in Chapter 7: What is the science involved in studying Göbekli Tepe? At least 20 structures, along with 200 pillars, were found at the time (Schmidt, 2007). This led archaeologists to conclude that the creation of Göbekli Tepe was a major undertaking, and that it must have required a major amount of work over the space of several decades (Schmidt, 2007). Specifically, archaeologists believe that hunter gatherers from over 12,000 years ago built this incredibly elaborate structure (Ragazas, 2013). This era where hunter-gatherers were common, prior to the agricultural revolution, has been discussed in more detail in Chapter 3: What has the impact of the discovery of Göbekli Tepe been? Göbekli Tepe stands at 800 meters above sea level, forming the highest elevation on the Germus range in Turkey (Schmidt, 2007). It is surrounded by the Harran Plain, which expands to the south and into the Germus Mountains. There is no available access to water within the site itself. Furthermore, no other prehistoric site from this time period has been found in this region (Schmidt, 2007). The Göbekli Tepe site consists of three layers, which differ in both the architecture and material they are made up of (Schmidt, 2007). Layer 1 is made up of mixed deposits of layer 2 and 3, due to erosion processes, layer 2 and 3 are made up of artifacts such as arrowheads, scrapers, and various tools (Schmidt, 2007). During the Neolithic era, for reasons which are not currently understood, settlement refuse, consisting of flints and animal bones, was dumped onto Göbekli Tepe's structure (Schmidt, 2007). These items can still be found littering the site. The Neolithic era was discussed further in Chapter 1: What is the background behind Göbekli Tepe? Moreover, the settlement refuse used as backfilling was the main reason for how the sanctuary was preserved for thousands of years (Schmidt, 2007). Backfilling involves refilling an excavated hole with the material dug out of it. This created a seal over the monument, keeping it protected from the elements until it was discovered in the mid-1990s (Schmidt, 2007). Thus, the mound was created as a result of this process, and an earthly cover formed over the sanctuary (Schmidt, 2007). This cover was responsible for ensuring the survival of Göbekli Tepe for over 12,000 years by protecting the settlement from harmful environmental factors (Schmidt, 2007). Next, I will discuss the environment surrounding Göbekli Tepe, and how it contributed to preserving the sanctuary for such a long period of time.

Role of the Environment in Preservation

As discussed above, Göbekli Tepe is a Neolithic sanctuary erected at the top of a mountain ridge in Turkey (Ragazas, 2013). Archaeologists believe it was created in the 10th millennium BCE, and has been undergoing excavation since 1994 by both German and Turkish archaeologists (Ragazas, 2013). Given its estimated origins over 12,000 years ago, it is truly miraculous that it has been preserved and has survived until this day and age (Ragazas, 2013). The origin of Göbekli Tepe dates back to a time period prior to the development of agriculture, and even 7,000 years earlier than the Great Pyramids or Stonehenge (Ragazas, 2013). Thus, its long-term preservation is truly an incredible discovery. These sites are composed of environmental deposits which have accumulated for decades (Knitter et al., 2019). These prehistoric sites consist of three layers, which differ in both the architecture and material they are made up of (Schmidt, 2007). Layer 1 is made up of mixed deposits of layer 2 and 3, due to erosion processes, layer 2 and 3 are made up of artifacts such as arrowheads, scrapers, and various tools (Schmidt, 2007). Göbekli Tepe is located about 12 km northeast of Şanlıurfa (Knitter et al., 2019). The Urfa region is characterized by its limestone formation which forms the Urfa plateau (Knitter et al., 2019). This region is known for its limestone and marl formations, which are types of sedimentary rock (Knitter et al., 2019). These limestone plateaus were covered by loose material, made up of debris, bedrock and soil (Knitter et al., 2019). This kept the underlying settlement safe from the effects of weather and erosion (Knitter et al., 2019). Additionally, the filling and burial of the monument, which is the main reason behind the long-term preservation of Göbekli Tepe, led to the formation of the artificial mound which is seen today (Notroff et al., 2016). This filled in enclosure consists of both limestone rubble and flint (Notroff et al., 2016). Additionally, limestone is also used for deacidifying; thus, it was able to neutralize acids in the soil which would have otherwise destroyed parts of Göbekli Tepe. The preservation of these materials is significant because it allowed archaeologists to develop an understanding of the tools and materials which were used in this time period (Notroff et al., 2016). Thus, the preservation of not only a historical monument itself, but also the materials and processes from that time period are incredibly significant for learning about older societies and how they functioned.

The role of the environment in this preservation process is essential, as it can truly impact the long-term sustenance of sites for thousands of years to come. Following this, I will discuss the impact the underground location of Göbekli Tepe had in its preservation, and the significance of its preservation in the overall field of archaeology.

The Impact of Göbekli Tepe's Location

As previously discussed, the environment and area surrounding Göbekli Tepe have been integral in maintaining its original structure for over twelve thousand years. The overall structure of Göbekli Tepe consists of several circular enclosures formed by T-shaped pillars, which are connected by massive dry stone walls (Ragazas, 2013). The centre of each of these enclosures has two larger versions of these T-shaped pillars (Ragazas, 2013). The pillars were made from limestone slabs, which were carried from bedrock pits located approximately 100 meters away from the top of the hill where Göbekli Tepe is located (Ragazas, 2013). The entire sanctuary was deliberately filled and covered with massive amounts of debris and soil, approximately after 8000 BCE (Ragazas, 2013). This debris and soil is believed to have been brought in from nearby quarries, according to archaeologists (Ragazas, 2013). (Ragazas, 2013). This soil was discovered to be fertile and offered agricultural value for the area for many years (Ragazas, 2013). Each of the enclosures in the sanctuary were buried under as much as 300 to 500 cubic meters of debris (Ragazas, 2013). This burial of the sanctuary under soil and debris was the most significant factor in the continued preservation of Göbekli Tepe (Ragazas, 2013). While the underground location of Göbekli Tepe led to its long lasting preservation for several centuries, the exact purpose of its burial is still not understood by archaeologists. Several theories on the topic postulate that humans have an impulse to destroy, so perhaps Göbekli Tepe was destroyed on purpose (Ragazas, 2013). On the other hand, others argue that this was not a deliberate move, and instead, they believe that the sanctuary was hit by an earthquake, causing the roof to collapse and cave in (Ragazas, 2013). This would result in all the soil and stone rubble and debris above the site to fill and bury the pillars below (Ragazas, 2013). Regardless of the reasoning behind the filling and covering of the site with debris, its underground location has served a

major purpose by allowing for the preservation of Göbekli Tepe. Next, I will be discussing the significance of this continued preservation, and what it means for other historical landmarks that may still be awaiting discovery.

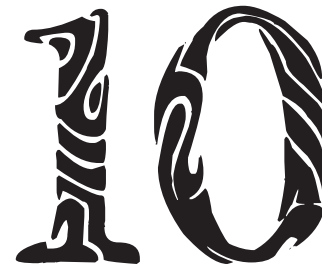
Significance of its Preservation

The preservation of Göbekli Tepe is a marvel in the historical and archaeological fields; it is also a major breakthrough in the field of social sciences. The significance of its preservation extends far beyond simply studying the monument itself, but instead, it also sheds light on the potential for discovering other historically preserved landmarks. Göbekli Tepe was buried underground in specific conditions, which has taught archaeologists that they should look for historical artifacts in similar conditions in the future. Moreover, the excavation of Göbekli Tepe was dismissed at first since it was underground; therefore, archaeologists have now learned to take a closer look at other sites which were dismissed for similar reasons in the past. The potential for finding other settlement sites or monuments from ancient time periods would contribute a lot to our understanding of how societies functioned and lived in the distant past. Additionally, the discovery and preservation of Göbekli Tepe has allowed us to realize the significance of preserving historical landmarks, so that they can be discovered and studied by future generations as a way of understanding our society. Most importantly, it has taught us an effective way to ensure that our sites are preserved in the future: by burying them. On this note, Chapter 6: What is the status of Göbekli Tepe in the world today? discusses the process of conservation for Göbekli Tepe, as well as the efforts being made in preserving it. Additionally, it discusses the management plan that is being implemented to ensure the preservation of historical landmarks for years to come. The investigation of how ancient societies used to live is of major interest. Similarly, the study of Göbekli Tepe as a settlement site provides a lot of information regarding the pre-agricultural period, including the way they organized their societies. Overall, the significance of preserving a historically significant monument such as Göbekli Tepe has taught us a lot about using a historical site as a landmark for understanding previous human societies and their way of living. Its preservation has specifically taught us that the survival of a monument depends on both the human efforts made to

preserve it, along with the environment surrounding the monument.

Conclusion and Next Steps

Throughout this book, it has been made apparent that Göbekli Tepe is an incredibly fascinating monument. It has provided an opportunity for archaeologists to study the early Neolithic era, as well as an opportunity to investigate and understand the pre-agricultural period of hunter-gatherer societies. It has also demonstrated how humans over 12,000 years ago were just as, if not more, capable as humans today in terms of architecture and the creation and preservation of a massive sanctuary. In particular, this chapter has discussed the specifics of preserving Göbekli Tepe. The geographical area surrounding Göbekli Tepe contributed to its long-term preservation by protecting it from the effects of erosion and weather. The structure of Göbekli Tepe was also optimized for its preservation, as the large stone pillars and layout of the sanctuary kept it protected from the outer world. Following this, I discussed how human actions, such as the burial of Göbekli Tepe played a major role in keeping it preserved for several centuries, especially prior to its rediscovery. Finally, this chapter uncovered the significance of the long-term preservation of Göbekli Tepe and what it may potentially mean for the discovery of other historical landmarks. All in all, the preservation of Göbekli Tepe was a miraculous feat, as well as being a major discovery in the field of archaeology and history. Given that only a fraction of Göbekli Tepe has been excavated to date, future work at the site is needed to further develop our understanding of how it was preserved, as well as an understanding of human societies at the time of its creation. The teachings and lessons we will learn and understand from these discoveries will inspire us for years to come. The upcoming chapter will discuss the representation of Göbekli Tepe in popular media, from its coverage in fiction and non-fiction books as well as in a popular Netflix show.



How is Göbekli Tepe Represented in Popular Media?

Written By Shea McMartin

Introduction

Göbekli Tepe has been a subject of great interest by archeologists and historians as they try to solve the mysteries surrounding the site, such as who built it and for what purpose. There have been many documentaries, video series on youtube, fictional books, and much more surrounding the idea of Göbekli Tepe in popular culture. As researchers learn more about the site, theories abound about the archaeological site that has created much controversy and conversation as to what took place twelve thousand years ago (Curry, 2008). This chapter dives into the popular culture media representation of the Göbekli Tepe being carried out today. Being that the site has only been discovered and known to the public since 1963, and with the archaeological digs only beginning in 1995, there is still so much that needs to be uncovered (Curry, 2008). As historians and archeologists make efforts to come to these conclusions, the general public continues to make further claims about its purpose, leading an array of conspiracy theories, documentaries, fiction and nonfiction books. With its popularity rising, It has become a historic tourist attraction and awoke people's curious minds all around the globe. To continue, the chapter will focus on the Göbekli Tepe's representation on youtube, its feature in a popular Netflix series "The Gift," the focus of the site

from astrologists point of view, the comparison of the site to Stonehenge, the Sanliurfa museum and finally the archeologist Klaus Schmidt.

Youtube

A popular source of media representation within the 21st century has been brought to the public by youtube, an easily accessible video streaming platform. As far as documentation of the Göbekli Tepe, this is no different. As it is difficult for many people to visit the site themselves physically, access to youtube has expanded the popularity and education of the site by its free informative videos. Along with access to helpful coverage come conspiracy videos.

Many videos are elaborating on theories people have come up with and explain in their videos. Some allude to the idea of aliens being involved in the site's production; others theorize that it is for religious purposes, and some believe there is a connection to Atlantis.

Regardless of the variety of videos from a range of sources, a top-rated Youtube channel discusses a wide variety of historical topics called "Kurzgesagt—In a Nutshell." He discusses the claim of Göbekli Tepe to be the "first temple of humanity, dedicated to long-forgotten gods." He asks the question as to how the people during the time of building the site knew and had the technology to make it. Before discovering Göbekli Tepe, historians assumed that no archaeological techniques of that magnitude had yet to be found for thousands of years. The videos continue to elaborate on the idea that this technology is a turning point for humanity, as life, as we know it in the present day, began after this construction project. Scientist Cesare Emiliani suggested that we use a new form of a calendar, the Holocene Calendar. This new calendar would add ten thousand years to the current calendar we have today. This theory would create a new form of recording history that would be considered the "Human Era" and include all progression humans have made, rather than simply recording history primarily after Christ.

As many videos on this site do over compelling and educational videos, it

remains a free video site that has the possibility for anybody, anywhere, to upload. Many of the videos that get posted are simple theories made by individuals ranging from all sorts of historically educated backgrounds to none at all. There are hundreds of videos that have been released over the past few years, racking in hundreds of thousands of views, the opinions, and theories that concern the purpose of Göbekli Tepe have grown by extraordinary measures.

The Gift

There is a Turkish Netflix original series, called initially "Atiye" but in the English version called "The Gift," which features the Göbekli Tepe as a prominent setting. The show is a series that lasts eight episodes in its first season and follows the life of a young female painter named Atiye. She sells her paintings quite successfully; her art featuring a constant theme of strange symbols and an ancient cave that she is inspired by based on dreams she's had. At this point in the show, Göbekli Tepe has yet to be discovered. When this archaeological phenomenon is brought to the public eye, and pictures of it arise, Atiye is astonished. This discovery, Göbekli Tepe, is what she has been dreaming of and is left trying to figure out her connection to it (The Mysteries of Göbekli Tepe, an on-Set Death, and Netflix: A Review of Atiye / The Gift – T-VINE, 2020). Since the show is fictional, there is no educational information concerning the historical background regarding Göbekli Tepe that can be considered for factual reference. However, as it became one of the most popular series on Turkish Netflix in 2019, they made two more seasons. The popularity of the show became increasingly relevant in the western world as well and "was recommended by BBC Culture in December as one of the ten best television shows to watch" (The Mysteries of Göbekli Tepe, an on-Set Death, and Netflix: A Review of Atiye / The Gift – T-VINE, 2020). This series opened up the eyes to an even larger audience to wonder and educate themselves on the mystery that is Göbekli Tepe.

The Gift received so much attention it even went on to win a multitude of awards. During the International Izmir Film Festival in 2020, the show received awards for Best Digital TV series, Best actress (digital TV series), Best Actor (Digital TV Series), and Best Director (Digital TV Series). Due

to the story's popularity, it was filmed in Turkish but translated to English, Kurdish, and Aramaic. The filming also took place in Turkey, at the Göbekli Tepe site, and in Sanliurfa. This gave the show an authentic feel and spread an educational aspect to the fictional show (IMDb, 2019).

Fiction and NonFiction Books

Göbekli Tepe: Genesis of the Gods: The temple of the watchers and the Discovery of Eden By Andrew Collins:

There has been a wide variety of books released in regards to Göbekli Tepe. A combination of fiction and nonfiction novels and short stories. One nonfiction example is *Göbekli Tepe: Genesis of the Gods: The temple of the watchers and the Discovery of Eden* By Andrew Collins. This book contains a detailed report and analysis of the Göbekli Tepe and a study of cultural evolution (Collins & Hancock, 2014). The book proceeds to discuss yet another popular theory surrounding the site that is not scientifically proven. This theory is that the site is the earthly garden of Eden. This theory tends to be thought of by those looking for a more "entertaining" version of the site's purpose. With no evidence relating to there even being a Garden of Eden, to begin with, this theory is not being studied so much as it just provides an entertaining idea (Notroff, 2017). Collins ties together a factual story concerning the layout, architecture, and carvings left at the site. He ventured off into more topics concerning the theory of astrology and the site connection to being an observatory for constellations and finally explaining the garden of Eden and humanities connection to the geographical location (Collins & Hancock, 2014).

Göbekli Tepe by Klaus Schmidt

Other popular novels and research papers were written by the famous German archaeologist Klaus Schmidt. Unlike other novelists for the Göbekli Tepe, Schmidt has played a significant role in the discovery process of what we know of the site today. He studied pre and protohistory at the University of Erlangen and Heidelberg. Schmidt later was in charge of leading the expeditions at Göbekli Tepe from 1996-2014. He became utterly indulged in the

project and even purchased a house in Urfa that he used as his home base. He wrote the book "Göbekli Tepe," which was published in 2006. A nonfiction novel covers his archaeological finds. Schmidt is a keen believer in the idea that the site was made for religious or ceremonial purposes. He famously spoke on his beliefs by saying, "first came the temple, then the city." This line leads future historians and theorists to look into the idea of religion being a core factor amongst society long before we even believed that could be organized religious practices amongst human populations. Thousands of years before archaeological landscapes were considered to be a part of society, this group of people had managed to develop the technology and create such an extravagant meaningful series of structures, all to carry out religious beliefs.

Göbekli Tepe vs Stonehenge

A popular theory amongst people today is connecting Göbekli Tepe to another ancient archaeological site called Stonehenge. Both sites were created thousands of years BC E. However, these theorists fail to realize that there are also thousands of years, as well as thousands of kilometers between the two of them. Stonehenge is located in Wiltshire, England, built around 2500 BC E. This means there's approximately a 7000 year age gap and a 3000 kilometers distance (A Video Tour of Stonehenge—Astronomy Magazine—Interactive Star Charts, Planets, Meteors, Comets, Telescopes, 2013). These facts deem it is unlikely that two correlate. However, it does not stop the wonder of why these two archeological phenomena were built and for what purpose. The physical evidence of the two resembles a circular array of monolithic stones with a similar cut. The rocks are relatively the same size as well. It took an abundance of manpower to build both sites, as well as a long period spent on each. Another point these theorists try to make is that the neolithic expansion did originate in the southeast region of Asia and moved towards the European continent in a relatively similar time scheme to the creation of Stonehenge.

However, as firmly as some would like to believe that there is a relationship between the two, it remains improbable. Many arguments being the thousands of years, thousands of kilometers, many other rock-like structures have

been created throughout Europe as well. And Lastly, there appears to be a vast difference in the artifacts found at each site, such as Göbekli Tepe has sculptures while Stonehenge does not.

Astrological Beliefs

Yet another theory that remains popular in the media today is the belief that Göbekli Tepe was a site for astrological purposes. As the mystery for the site's objective continues to be an ongoing question, theorists and historians have found reason to believe Göbekli Tepe is the world's oldest Observatory (Göbekli Tepe: The World's First Astronomical Observatory?, 2020). Some think that the site is aligned with the night sky, such as the star Sirius. Thousands of years later, Sirius is a star worshiped by local people in locations surrounding the site (Göbekli Tepe: The World's First Astronomical Observatory?, 2020). People also contemplate the idea that the site was used to record a comet impact that hit the earth to end the ice age. Further claims were made as to how the site is oriented towards an observatory. Four of the pillars are facing the setting point of the Star of Deneb (Göbekli Tepe: The World's First Astronomical Observatory?, 2020). Furthermore, the article continues with more insight on the astronomical observatory by Dietrich:

"We have also identified, for the first time, the possible astronomical alignments of two other enclosures at Göbekli Tepe, i.e. enclosures F and A. In particular, the first one seems to be oriented towards the rising point of the Sun on the day of the Harvest Festival, a day approximately halfway between the summer solstice and the autumn equinox. Instead, the second one shows an orientation towards the rising point of the Moon at its minor standstill. The positions of both celestial bodies have been obtained by extrapolating their declination to the date of the presumed construction reported by Dietrich (2011)" (Göbekli Tepe: The World's First Astronomical Observatory?, 2020).

On the other hand, scientists believe these claims to also be unlikely due to the well-kept preservation of the site and potential roofing efforts. By this assumption, an observatory seems far less likely as to why there would be any coverage to the night sky.

Sanliurfa Museum

The Sanliurfa museum is located in no other than Sanliurfa itself, only a short distance from Göbekli Tepe. The Museum carries a wide variety of carved stone sculptures excavated from the Göbekli Tepe and surrounding area. The Museum holds the "Urfa Man," the world's oldest full-size stone sculpture (Frugal Travellers, 2020). This Museum is a popular tourist destination that allows visitors to get as close to the whole experience of the actual site as possible. Since 1995, a co-operation field team has been working on the site between Sanliurfa Museum and the Istanbul Department of the DAI. The German Research Foundation has taken on a long-term funding project since 2009 (Staff et al., 2019). The Museum continues to fund and provide further information on Göbekli Tepe so the public can continue to educate themselves with a physical experience.

Conclusion

When it comes to popular culture in the modern-day media regarding a historical landscape, there are now so many forms of media that can be taken... Books, documentaries, youtube videos, museum access, and more. It is straightforward in today's society for anyone to create an opinion and share it online. This easy feat has led to an abundance of conspiracy theories and the potential for false information. On the other hand, the efficiency of this technology has led to broader access to information that can be educational and reach more significant audiences. As the Göbekli Tepe theories continue to expand through the media, it only gains more popularity each year, reaching more significant audiences.

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