

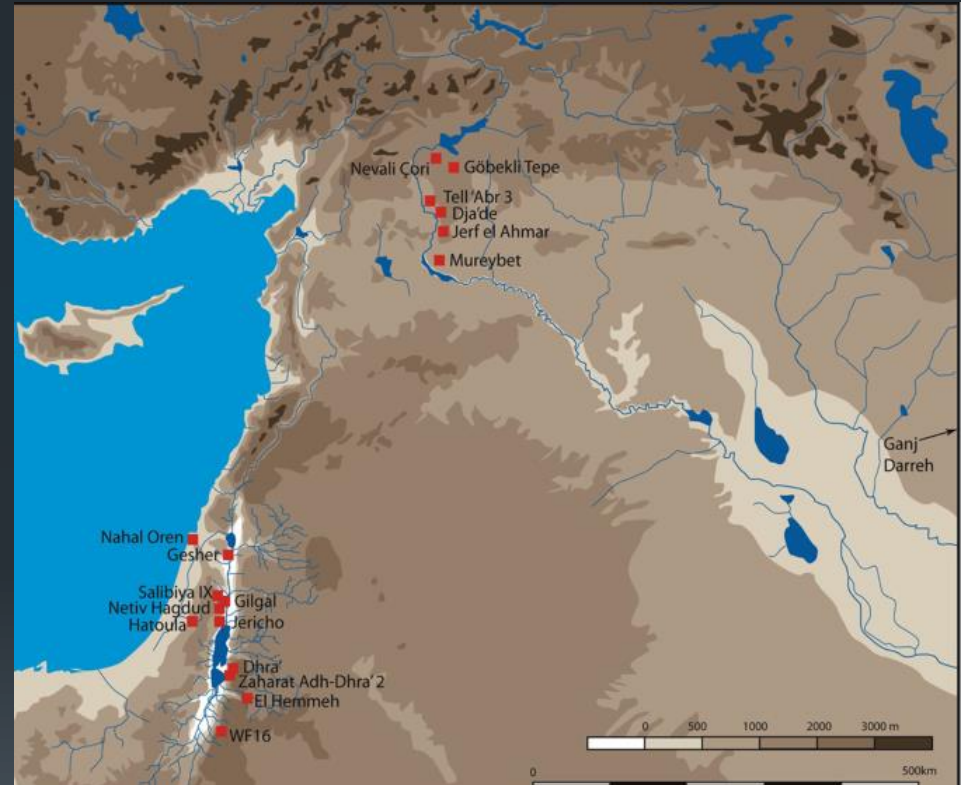
AHAR7003

A wide-angle photograph of an archaeological excavation site in a dry, hilly landscape. The site features several large, rectangular stone structures, some of which are partially buried in the earth. A dirt path leads up a hill in the background, and a small tree stands at the top. The sky is clear and blue. The text "AHAR7003" is overlaid in the top left corner, and "Place & Space: Creating Sacred Spaces in Neolithic Anatolia" is overlaid in the bottom right corner.

Place & Space:
Creating Sacred Spaces in
Neolithic Anatolia

Pre-Pottery Neolithic

- Pre-Pottery Neolithic A (PPNA),
 - c.10,000–8,800 BC
 - Associated with the initial domestication of plants
- Pre-Pottery Neolithic B (PPNB)
 - c.8,800–6,500 BC
 - Associated with domestication of animals



PPN sites in Levant

Creating Religious Spaces

- Exploring early creation of religious spaces
- Transition between hunter-gatherer lifestyles & early farming communities
 - How natural spaces in landscape become significant places of memory
 - Location of communal interaction & ritual performance
 - Monumentalisation of landscapes



Detail of Göbekli Tepe

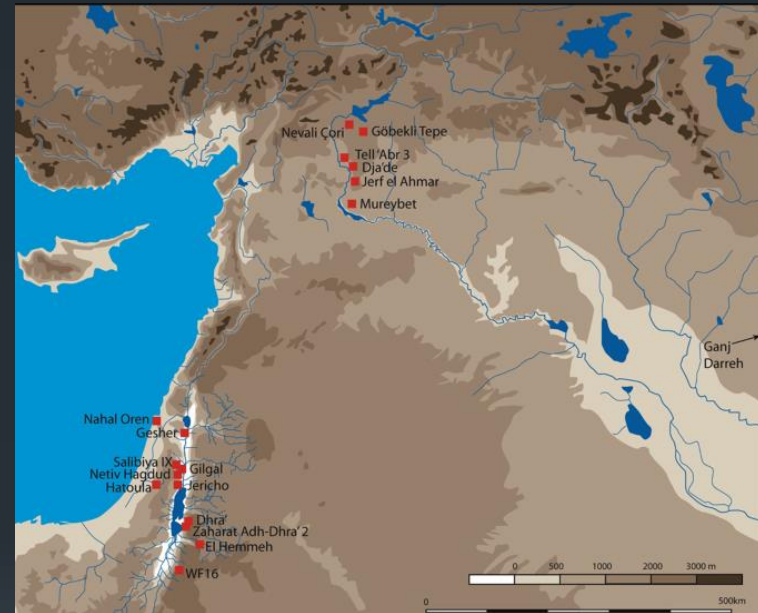
Monumentality



- Organisation & co-ordination: ability to mobilise labour force
- Strong symbolic connotations of monumental architecture:
 - Collective interaction
 - Social memory
 - Communication & reification of group identity
- Typically viewed as evidence for hierarchical structures of society, elites & political control
- Monumentality in the Neolithic:
 - Creating places in the landscape for communal (inter)action & performance

Göbekli Tepe

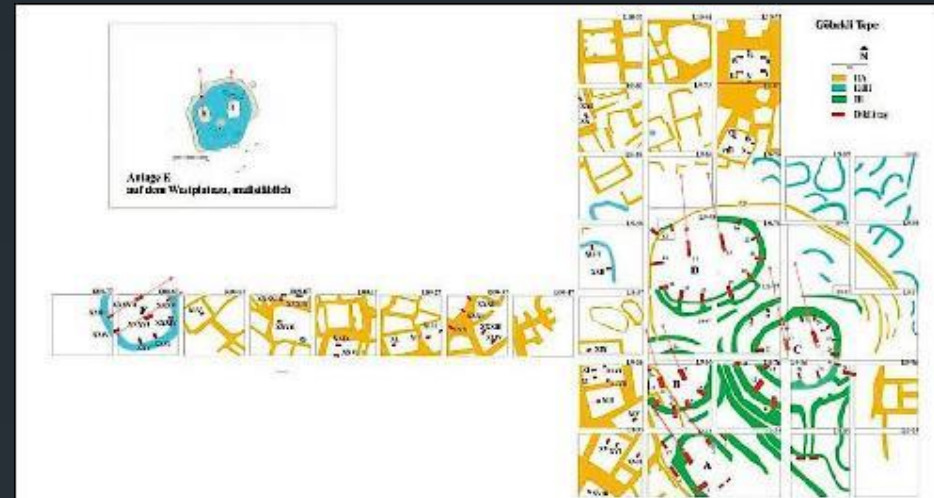
- Pre-Pottery Neolithic :
 - Hunter-gatherers
 - High degree of mobility throughout landscape
- Location: highest point of Geramuş Mountains
- Open forest-steppe (pistachio & almond trees)
- Not suited for farming settlement
- Why does the site become a significant point in the landscape?



Location of Göbekli Tepe

Göbekli Tepe

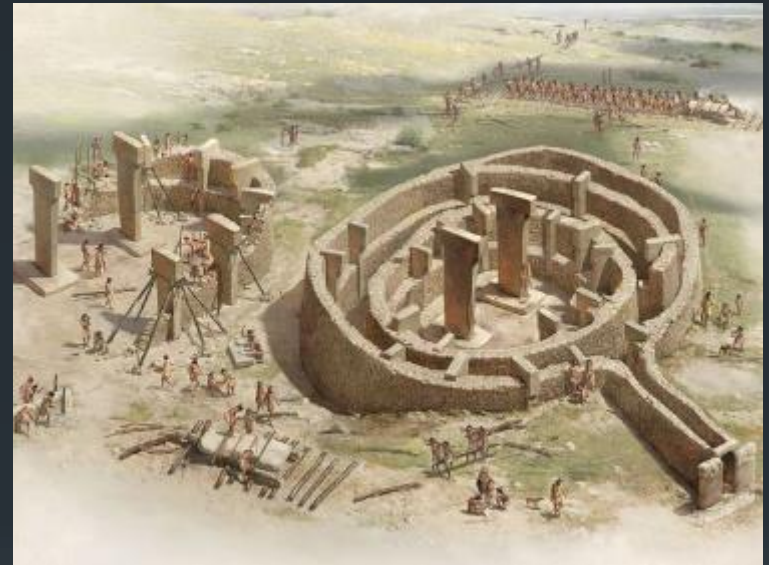
- Three phases:
 - III: PPNA (10th millennium BC); monumentalisation of place
 - II: PPNB (9th millennium BC); Small structures – continuity of activity at reduced scale
 - I: abandonment & site intentionally backfilled (creating mound) / killed or closed?



Plan of Göbekli Tepe

PPNA: Creating Places

- Groups of circles of monolithic T-shaped pillars surrounding central pair of larger pillars
 - Walls & benches creating enclosures
- Interpreted as special places in the landscapes for specific actions
 - Early temples/sanctuaries
 - Special buildings for focus of ritual action
- Radical transformation of the landscape



Reconstruction of Göbekli Tepe
(National Geographic)

Göbekli Tepe

- Covers extensive area, some 300m sq
- Elaboration of architecture:
 - Dry-stone rings, 10-30m in diameter
 - T-shaped limestone pillars inset into the walls at regular intervals
 - Pair free-standing in the centre
 - Entered via a walled passageway



Göbekli Tepe

Phenomenology

- Constructed landscape unique in human experience (Heidegger's *dasein*)
- Imposing conveying specific messages(of power/the cosmos)?
- Manipulation of experience:
 - Controlling access to internal spaces
 - How these internal and external spaces are viewed, felt, experienced
 - Esoteric/revealed knowledge?



Aerial view of Göbekli Tepe

Internal Furnishings

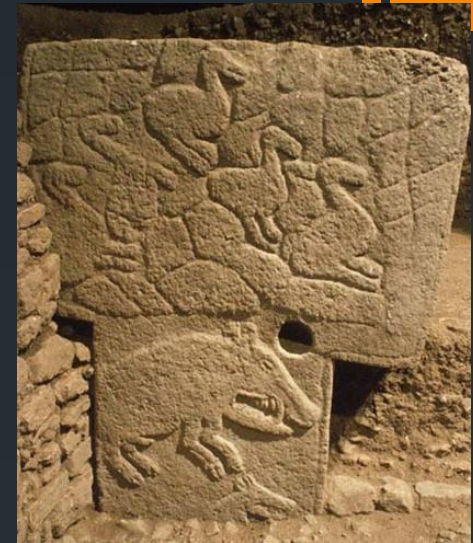
- Ring of limestone pillars stand up to 4m high
- Carefully shaped
- Carved with images of animals & insects:
 - Snakes, foxes, boars, scorpions & gazelles



Carved pillars

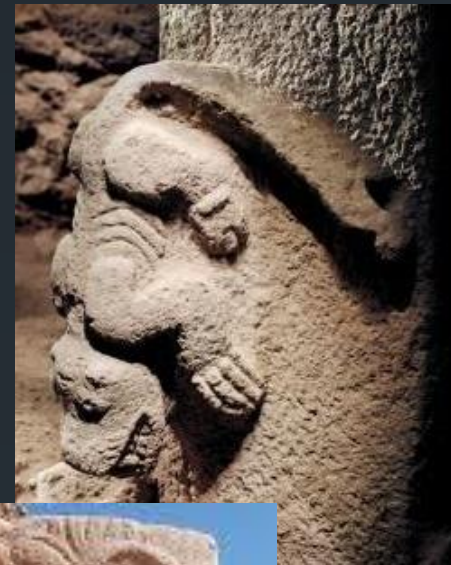
Sculptures

- Preference for different species in different enclosures:
 - A: snakes
 - B: foxes
 - C: boars
 - D: more varied – birds
- Emphasis on dangerous animals
- Sometimes with prey



Sculptures

- Atmosphere of death (& fear?) in imagery:
 - Headless man & vultures
 - Animals with ribs sticking out
- Symbolism of life & death: boundary zone between this world & next?
- Symbolism: communication & shared ideology of social groups using Göbekli Tepe



Central Pillar Statues

- Larger than surrounding pillars (up to 5.5/6m high)
- Anthropomorphic aspect:
 - Arms carved down sides with hands folded over “abdomen”
 - “Ceremonial”(?) clothing – elaborate belt & loin cloth
 - Male clothing? Analogy with clay figurines from contemporary Nevalı Çori



Male Iconography

- Emphasis on masculinity
 - If indicated animals are male
 - Ithyphallic male sculptures
- No female representations
- Interpreted by excavators as a place for male hunters
 - Deliberate engendering of past



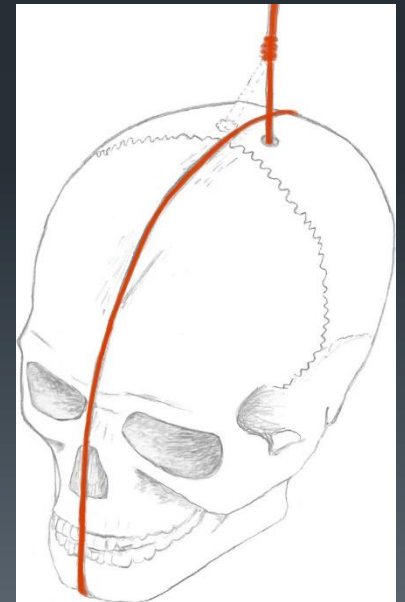
Male figure

Skulls

- No complete burials but some fragmented bones:
 - 3 skulls with cut marks
 - Deep incisions and one perforation (suspension of skull)
 - Also evidence of defleshing
 - Application of ochre
- Interpretations
 - Ancestor veneration?
 - Display of dispatched enemies: active “branding” of individuals & or functional modification of skull?



Macroscopic details of artificial skull modifications (*Science Advances* 2017)



Reconstruction

Praxis at Göbekli Tepe

- Is this domestic settlement (Banning) or a special site?
- Does not look domestic:
 - Distinct from house architecture in earliest settled communities
 - Lack of domestic portable objects: figurines, awls, bone points
 - No hearths/fire pits
- Investment in architecture: scale & symbolism
- Abundant attention focusing devices



Enclosure

Praxis at Göbekli Tepe

- Conspicuous public display or hidden exclusive mysteries?
- Benches suggest communal gatherings:
 - Who would be admitted to the interior of these structures?
 - Specialist knowledge for elders?
- Place for wider gathering of tribes/clans within focal point in the landscape?



Göbekli Tepe

Contemporary Parallels

- Nevalı Çori = appears largely domestic
- Also some special purpose / cult buildings
 - Benches for communal gathering
 - T-shaped pillars, clay figurines & stone sculptures
- Similar practices & monumentalisation of cult widespread

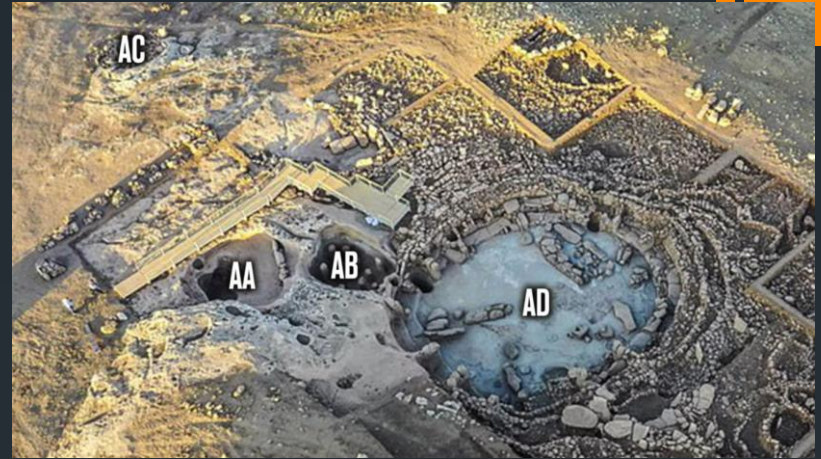
Stone sculpture



Nevalı Çori

Karahan Tepe

- PPNA site (back-filled in PPNB), carved into side of slope
- Sunken structure AB: 11 limestone monoliths and a bearded head carved into wall
- Structure AA: bench with relief snake carved into backrest



Karahan Tepe



Structure AB



Karahan Tepe

- Some suggestion that water flow, or collecting water was important



Community Interaction

- Ethnographies of hunter-gatherer communities & large-scale monumentality:
- Göbekli Tepe served as nodal point for community interaction within a wider landscape: perhaps chosen for its significance in social memories
 - Individual smaller groupings estimated at between 25-50 people
 - Shared common identity of 10-20 such bands resulted in community of around 250-1000 people
- Monumentalisation of Göbekli Tepe achieved through cooperation between these groups: mobilised through feasting

Community Interaction

- Feasting (commensality, hospitality, gifting)
- There is material evidence for this at Göbekli Tepe:
 - Ground stone tools (grinding grain for bread & beer?)
 - Animal bones: cattle & gazelle (hunting ideology supporting community feasting)
- Göbekli Tepe provided focal point for communal interaction, bring wider community together at a special place in the landscape:
 - Exchanges
 - Exogamic relations
 - Reiterating shared ideologies & identities

Summary

- Neolithic Near East: example of how space becomes imbued with symbolic meaning & the focus for ritualised actions
- Shared cultural practices over a wide area
- Earliest attested transformation/modification of the natural landscape
 - A sense of space
 - Communal action, social memory & shared identity/ideologies
 - Monumentality