

Remarks on the Stone Pillars of Göbeklitepe

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Göbeklitepe is one of the most intriguing Neolithic sites. It's an artificial mound located about 15 km north-east of Şanlıurfa, Turkey. Göbeklitepe is unique with its location on top of a huge hill and it overlooks the surrounding plains. The site has been excavated since 1995 by the German Archaeological Institute. The mound consists of several layers and the earliest one is dated to 10th millennium calBC. Göbeklitepe has led to a new way of thinking about the process of sedentism and the agriculture. What makes the site special is that residential buildings are not available around it, but it consists of monumental stone structures with high reliefs carved on them. T-shaped pillars are made from limestone. Their length varies from 4m to 7m and each weighs several tons. The pillars are anthropomorphic and reliefs on them mostly depict animal representations. Construction process of stone pillars demands a great of labor source and organizational skills. In this respect, Göbeklitepe has challenged the previous views about the Neolithic way of life. The site with its monumental structures is thought to represent symbolic world of Neolithic people. There has been wide range of views over the function of the site. While some archaeologists consider the site as a Neolithic temple, others oppose this view and claim that the structures belong to houses. The interpretations of the stone monuments and main discussions over the function of the site form the backbone of this study.