

Turkey's Neolithic Heritage reflects the dawn of civilization

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Photo: Dokumental TSA

The Republic of Turkey's Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Turkey Tourism Promotion and Development Agency (TGA) have recently unveiled Tas Tepeler, a new archaeological discovery from the Neolithic period. Turkey's vital excavation project involves researchers and academics from eight universities and institutes, originating in five different countries. The Sanliurfa region is the main location for archaeologists to work fully, until 2024.

The excavation project is being carried out by the scientific committee and the Sanliurfa Museum Directorate under the Directorate General of Cultural Assets and Museums of the Ministry of Culture and Turkish Tourism. The project covers seven areas throughout Turkey: Gobeklitepe, Karahantepe, Gurcotepe, Soyburc, Akmaktepe, Befertepe and Yeni Mahalle hills.

Announced publicly at a symposium, "Reflections of the Neolithic in the World" in Sanliurfa on twenty-third September 2021, the excavation and discovery of Tas Tepeler is considered a valuable contribution to science, mainly about humanity and prehistoric civilization. This discovery reveals new facts for humankind, at time when human history was profoundly transformed, evolving from a hunting and gathering era to agricultural settlement, also known as the Green Revolution.

Researchers and archaeologists consider Tas Tepeler a place where shelters became permanent dwellings, beginning some 12,000 years ago. Fields and political territories were emerging, stratified society was formed and simplified trade began. The monumental megalithic structures in the area are concluded to be communal spaces where people gathered.

Tourists and travelers coming to Turkey can now visit Tas Tepeler, es-

pecially the Karahantepe excavation site. The finds are displayed at the Archaeological Museum of Sanliurfa in several exhibitions. "Karahantepe and Neolithic Human Exhibition." Karahantepe will be the center of the excavation, with more than 250 visually stunning T-shaped megalith blocks. As Karahantepe, Turkey previously registered Gobeklitepe in the UNESCO list of protected world heritage.

Turkey's Minister of Culture and Tourism, Mehmet Nuri Ersoy, who attended the Karahantepe excavation site, noted that the excavations reveal the significant contribution of Anatolia to the history of humankind. He also said, "Besides Karahantepe, excavation will also begin in residential mounds of Ayanlar, Yoganbur, Harbeturvan, Kurtepesi, and Tasitepe, as a part of the first phase of the Sanliurfa Neolithic Research Project, which will last from 2021 to 2024," as quoted by various local media.

The Tas Tepeler excavation is



Tourism Minister HE Mehmet Nuri Ersoy at the Launch Event.

temporarily open for visitors and researchers, with strict safety protocols enforced. There is no quaran-

tine upon arrival needed in Turkey. However, to visit Turkey, completing a Travel Entry Form before departure

and bringing a negative PCR test result taken within 72 hours are compulsory.



Tourism Minister visiting the site with the Excavation Director.



Karahantepe Archeological Site.