

1 Introduction

1.1 The site

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Göbekli Tepe is located about 15 km to the northeast of Şanlıurfa, a provincial capital in south-eastern Türkiye⁵. The site's name means as much as ›belly mountain‹, which quite aptly evokes its shape seen from afar. Whilst exhibiting an approximately central depression, the site rises high in an exposed position and dominates a drawn-out limestone plateau on the Germuş crest. Göbekli Tepe is a red-brown projection of about 300 m diameter. It clearly distinguishes from the surrounding limestone tables. The site consists of both the tertiary limestone plateau extending

into all directions and the elevation made up of anthropogenic accumulations (figs. 1. 2)⁶. The mound's height is about 15 m above the terrain of the surrounding plateau⁷; it mainly consists of architectural remnants and their fill debris. The plateau's lateral outcrops had once served as the quarries for the site's megalithic structures⁸.

Göbekli Tepe was first recognized as an archaeological site in 1963 during a joint project by the University of Chicago and the Istanbul University under the direction of Robert Braidwood and Halet Çambel.

⁵ For a general overview, see the monographs of the excavator in German Schmidt 2008a and English Schmidt 2012d (pagination corresponds, all references made to Schmidt 2008a in the following can be found on the same page in Schmidt 2012d). For the building history the monograph by Kurapkat 2015, with additions by Piesker 2014 for building C. Preliminary reports and overviews have been published in large numbers. The most important, also regarding the pillar reliefs are: Schmidt 1997; Beile-Bohn et al. 1998; Hauptmann 1999; Schmidt 1998a; Schmidt 1998b; Schmidt 1998c; Schmidt 1999; Schmidt 2000; Schmidt 2001; Schmidt 2002; Schmidt 2003a; Schmidt 2003b; Peters – Schmidt 2004; Peters et al. 2005b; Schmidt 2005a; Schmidt 2005b; Schmidt 2006a; Schmidt 2006b; Hauptmann – Schmidt 2007; Köksal-Schmidt – Schmidt 2007; Schmidt 2007a; Schmidt 2007b; Schmidt 2008b; Schmidt 2008c; Schmidt 2008d; Schmidt 2008e; Schmidt 2008f; Morenz – Schmidt 2009; Schmidt 2009a; Schmidt 2009b; Schmidt 2009c; Köksal-Schmidt – Schmidt 2010a; Köksal-Schmidt – Schmidt 2010b; Schmidt 2010a; Schmidt 2010b;

Schmidt 2010c; Köksal-Schmidt – Schmidt 2011; Schmidt 2011a; Schmidt 2011b; Schmidt 2011c; Schmidt 2011d; Becker et al. 2012; Dietrich et al. 2012; Herrmann – Schmidt 2012; Schmidt 2012a; Schmidt 2012b; Schmidt 2012c; Dietrich et al. 2013b; Schmidt 2013a; Schmidt 2013b; Schmidt 2013c; Schmidt 2013d; Dietrich et al. 2014; Morenz 2014; Notroff et al. 2014; Schmidt 2014; Schmidt – Köksal-Schmidt 2014; Clare et al. 2015; Dietrich – Notroff 2015; Dietrich et al. 2015; Dietrich et al. 2016; Notroff et al. 2016; Dietrich et al. 2017; Clare et al. 2018; Clare et al. 2019; Dietrich – Dietrich 2019; Dietrich et al. 2019a; Dietrich et al. 2019b; Clare 2020; Kinzel – Clare 2020; Dietrich – Wagner 2023; Dietrich 2024. For cereal processing/grinding stones the monograph by L. Dietrich 2021.

⁶ A detailed topographical map of the site at the time of discovery was published by Beile-Bohn et al. 1998, Suppl. 2.

⁷ Though it is still uncertain if this corresponds to the depth of the site's actual archaeological deposits (see Kinzel et al. 2021).

⁸ Schmidt 2009b, 23–33.