

# DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE SETTLEMENTS IN ŞANLIURFA REGION WHERE “T” SHAPED PILLARS ARE DISCOVERED

## ŞANLIURFA BÖLGESİNDE “T” ŞEKLİNDE DİKMETAŞ BULUNAN YERLEŞİMLERİN FARKLILIK VE BENZERLİKLERİ

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**Keywords:** Şanlıurfa, Tektek Dağları, Pre-Pottery Neolithic Period, “T” Shaped Pillars, Cult Buildings, Domestic Buildings, Circular Buildings

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Şanlıurfa, Tektek Dağları, Çanak Çömleksiz Neolitik Dönem, “T” Biçimli Dikmetaşlar, Kült Yapıları, Sivil Yapılar, Yuvarlak Planlı Yapılar.

### ABSTRACT

*This article refers to the Neolithic Period settlements discovered during surveys and provincial cultural inventory studies conducted in Şanlıurfa province located in Southeast Turkey. The locations and dimensions of the settlements that contain “T” shaped pillars is one of the main discussion topics of this study. Another matter under discussion is to comprehend the differences between the small-scale settlements that contain cult centers and “T” shaped pillars. The fact that two of the settlements under study contain both the remains of circular domestic buildings and the pillars indicate that such settlements resemble Çayönü and Nevali Çori settlements, which contain cult and domestic buildings. It is contemplated that such settlements are contemporary with Göbekli Tepe layer II and the cult building known from Nevali Çori based on the similarities and differences of the “T” shaped pillars, identified in some of the recently discovered settlements. In the light of the finds unearthed from the settlements in Şanlıurfa region that contain “T” shaped pillars, such settlements should be dated to the end of Late Pre-Pottery Neolithic A (LPPNA) and the Early Pre-Pottery Neolithic B (EPPNB).*

### ÖZET

*Bu yazıda, Türkiye'nin güneydoğusunda bulunan Şanlıurfa'da yapılan yüzey araştırmaları ve il kültür envanteri çalışmaları sırasında keşfedilen Neolitik dönem yerleşimlerinden bahsedilmektedir. İçinde “T” şeklinde dikmetaş barındıran yerleşimlerin konumları ve boyutları bu çalışmanın ana tartışma konularından biridir. Diğer bir tartışma konusu ise kült merkezleri ile “T” şeklinde dikmetaş barındıran küçük ölçekli yerleşimler arasındaki farklılıkları anlamaktır. İncelenen yerleşimlerden ikisinde, hem yuvarlak planlı sivil yapı kalıntılarının olması hem de dikmetaşların bulunuyor olması, bu yerleşimlerin kült ve sivil yapıları içinde barındıran Çayönü ve Nevali Çori benzeri yerleşimler olduğunu göstermektedir. Yeni keşfedilen yerleşimlerin bazılarında tespit edilen “T” şeklinde dikmetaşların benzerliklerinden ve farklılıklarından yola çıkılarak, bu yerleşimlerin Göbekli Tepe'nin II. tabakası ve Nevali Çori'den bilinen kült yapısı ile çağdaş oldukları düşünülmektedir. Şanlıurfa bölgesinde, “T” şeklinde dikmetaş barındıran yerleşimleri ele geçen buluntular ışığında, Çanak Çömleksiz Neolitik Dönem A evresinin sonu (LPPNA) ile B evresinin başları (EPPNB) arasına tarihlendirmek gerekir.*

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## INTRODUCTION

When we look at the precursors of the “T” shaped pillars, we observe that the pillars were constructed from adobe at the center of the circular small buildings at *Qermez Dere* located in Northern Iraq<sup>1</sup>, and then we observe pillars constructed from massive stones again within circular buildings at *Gusir Höyük* located within the Tigris region<sup>2</sup>. The pillars from the Sanliurfa region tradition, on the other hand, not only take the “T” shape, but also various patterns and figures are made on the pillars. The plain pillars in *Gusir Höyük* are located at the center of the large circular buildings. As they stand, the pillars bear a significant resemblance to the circular buildings at Layer III of *Göbekli Tepe* in architectural terms<sup>3</sup>. The circular buildings with pillars at the center located at *Gusir Höyük*<sup>4</sup> seem like they are the prototypes of the buildings at Layer III of *Göbekli Tepe*.

Discovery of settlements such as *Nevali Çori*<sup>5</sup>, *Göbekli Tepe*<sup>6</sup>, *Şanlıurfa-Yeni Mahalle*<sup>7</sup>, *Karahan Tepe*<sup>8</sup>, *Sefer*

*Tepe*<sup>9</sup>, *Hamzan Tepe*<sup>10</sup>, *Taşlı Tepe*<sup>11</sup>, *İnanlı Tepesi*<sup>12</sup>, *Kocanizam Tepesi*<sup>13</sup>, *Başaran Höyük*<sup>14</sup> and *Herzo Tepe*<sup>15</sup>, which reflect pre-pottery phases of the Neolithic period, in Şanlıurfa region particularly around Harran Plain, as a result of the recent surveys demonstrates that the region played a significant role in emergence of the first settlements and cult centers (Fig. 1). In particular, presence of “T” shaped pillars in several of such settlements, which distinguish such settlements from other Neolithic settlements, give indication to more distinct features of such settlements compared to the others.

Today, excavations are either carried out or in progress only at *Göbekli Tepe*, *Nevali Çori* and *Şanlıurfa-Yeni Mahalle* settlements that accommodate “T” shaped pillar or find that might be successors of the pillars. However, the region further contains settlements with identical features, such as *Hamzan Tepe*, *Karahan Tepe*, *Sefer Tepe*, *Taşlı Tepe*, *Kurt Tepesi*, *Harbetsuvan Tepesi* and *Ayanlar Höyük*, not yet excavated and that accommodate, or contemplated to accommodate, “T” shaped pillars

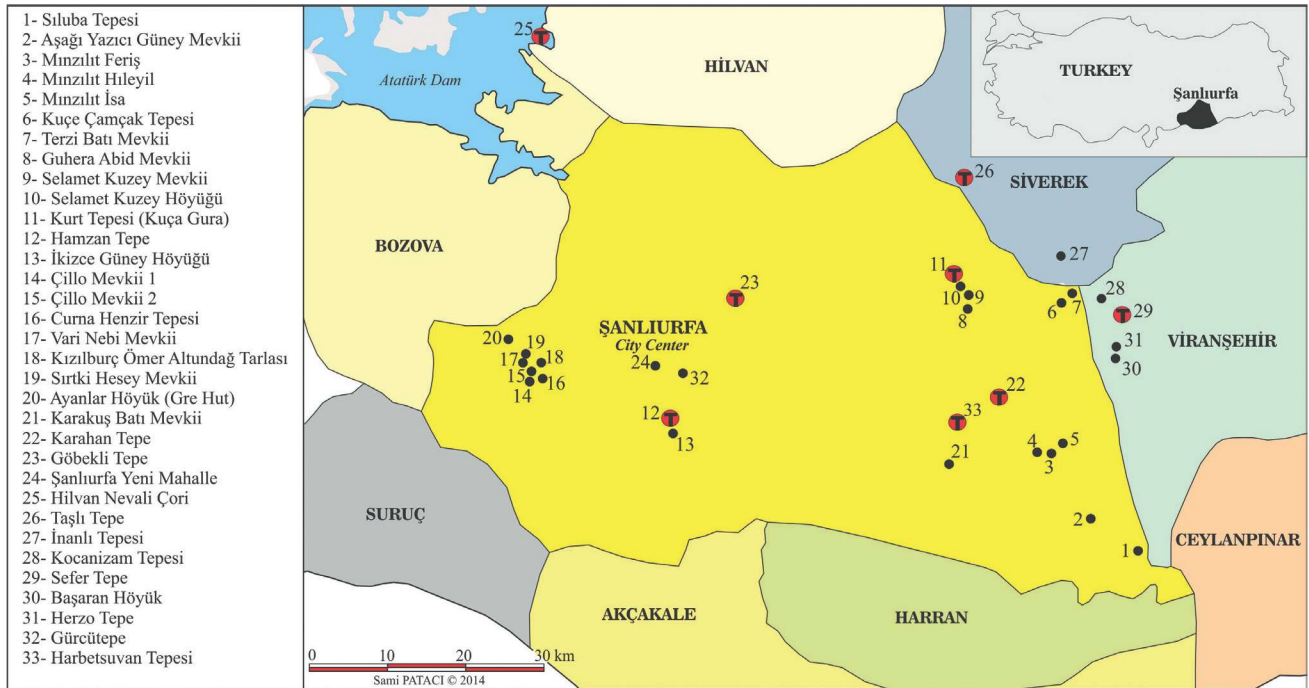


Fig. 1: Neolithic Settlements that are or were Discovered at Urfa Central District / *Urfa Merkez İlçede Tespit Edilen veya Daha Önceden Tespit Edilmiş Neolitik Yerleşimler* (Drawing by S. Pataacı).

<sup>1</sup> Watkins 1990: Figs. 3, 4.

<sup>2</sup> Karul 2011: 2-4, Figs. 4-5, 11.

<sup>3</sup> Schmidt 2010: fig. 2

<sup>4</sup> Karul 2011: Fig.11.

<sup>5</sup> Hauptmann 1993: 37-69; Hauptmann 1999: 66-86.

<sup>6</sup> Beile-Bohn/Gerber/Morsch/Schmidt 1998: 5-78; Schmidt 2001: 45-54; Schmidt 2002: 8-13; Schmidt 2007: 115-129.

<sup>7</sup> Çelik 2000a: 4-6; Çelik 2007: 165-178; Çelik 2011a: 139-164.

<sup>8</sup> Çelik 2000b: 6-8; Çelik 2011b: 241-253.

(Fig. 1). The common characteristic of such settlements is the presence of “T” shaped pillars as is the case for *Göbekli Tepe* and *Nevali Çori*. The finds that are either

<sup>9</sup> Çelik 2006a: 23-25; Güler/Çelik/Güler 2012: 161-169.

<sup>10</sup> Çelik 2004: 3-5; Çelik 2006b: 222-224; Çelik 2010: 257-268.

<sup>11</sup> Çelik/Güler/Güler 2011: 225-236; Güler/Çelik/Güler 2013: 292-293.

<sup>12</sup> Güler/Çelik/Güler 2013: 291-304.

<sup>13</sup> Güler/Çelik/Güler 2012: 160,167-168.

<sup>14</sup> Güler/Çelik/Güler 2012: 158-159, 165-166.

<sup>15</sup> Güler/Çelik/Güler 2012: 159-160,166-167.



Fig. 2: View of Kurt Tepesi Settlement from South / *Kurt Tepesi Yerleşiminin Güneyden Görünümü* (Photo by B. Çelik).

analogous to, or successors of, such pillars were also unearthed at Adıyaman<sup>16</sup> and Gaziantep<sup>17</sup> regions located at west banks of the Euphrates, but such finds cannot be localized precisely.

“T” shaped pillars were unearthed at *Kurt Tepesi* that was recently discovered in 2013 at Şanlıurfa region as a result of the survey studies. The findings unearthed from other recently discovered sites were circular building remains that are rather characterized as domestic architectural buildings resembling the features of the period: stone vessels, grinding stones, pestles, and lithic tools. One of the intriguing sites identified in the same year is the *Ayanlar Höyük* settlement. Several findings unearthed from this settlement that cover a land of 140 decares indicate that this settlement might be one of the settlements that accommodate a “T” shaped pillar. *Harbetsuvan Tepesi*, on the other hand, was discovered during the surveys conducted in 2014. “T” shaped pillars were discovered in this settlement as well. The settlements recently discovered in years 2013 and 2014 are located at the mountain ranges and plateaus located east and west of the Harran plain.

## SETTLEMENTS THAT ACCOMMODATE “T” SHAPED PILLAR

### Kurt Tepesi

Discovered for the first time during the surveys conducted

in 2013, Kurt Tepesi settlement is located 47 km east of Şanlıurfa province and 3 km south of Sumaklı village. (Fig. 1). Its altitude from sea level is 730 m. The settlement is also known as Kuça Gura by the local community.

*Kurt Tepesi* settlement is located on a hill that dominates the *Çoban Creek Pass*, which serves as a passageway between Harran Plain and Viranşehir region (Fig. 2). It is a small mound established on a ridge formed by high calcareous plateaus, which is very poor in terms of soil. The western section of the mound that covers approximately 7-decare area is distorted due to illegal excavations. Moreover, a high voltage transmission line pole is located at the north end of the mound. Small cavern groups and a pool carved to the bedrock are determined at the calcareous rocks surrounding the mound. Furthermore, the quarries contemplated to be the site for extracting the “T” shaped pillars are also located northeast of the hill.

A site where a “T” shaped pillar excavated and removed is identified in an illegal excavation pit at *Kurt Tepesi* from Pre-Pottery Neolithic period with no ceramics (Fig. 3). During the surveys conducted at the villages in the vicinity, two pillars removed from their original site were discovered in Kösecik village located circa 6 km south-east of the hill (Fig. 4)<sup>18</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> Hauptmann 2000: 5-9; 2012: 13-22.

<sup>17</sup> Çelik 2005: 28-29; Bulgan/Çelik 2011: 85-90.

<sup>18</sup> Two “T” shaped pillars were moved from Kurt Tepesi settlement affiliated to Sumaklı Village by Hüseyin Eyyüboğlu and Sinan Eyyüboğlu who reside in Kösecik village. Private interview with Hüseyin Eyyüboğlu, 20.10.2013. The pillars are currently in Şanlıurfa Museum.



Fig. 3: Illegal Excavation Area where "T" Shaped Pillar was Excavated from Kurt Tepesi / Kurt Tepesi'nden "T" Şeklinde Dikmetaşın Çıkarıldığı Kaçak Kazı Alanı (Photo by B. Çelik).

The pillars are approximately 2.5 m long, with width varying in the range of 50 cm to 70 cm and their thickness is 25 cm. One of the "T" shaped pillars contains both a broad groove in the form of a necktie and a single-strip chevron pattern on a scalped area located at the side of the pillar (Fig. 5). The single-strip at the Chevron pattern emerges as a feature not observed at the "T" shaped pillars discovered in *Nevalı Çori*<sup>19</sup> and *Göbekli Tepe*<sup>20</sup>. There is no relief on the other "T" shaped pillar<sup>21</sup>.



Fig. 4: "T" Shaped Pillars from Kurt Tepesi / Kurt Tepesi'nden "T" Şeklinde Dikmetaşlar (Photo by B. Çelik).



Fig. 5: Necktie and Chevron Patterned Pillar from Kurt Tepesi Settlement / Kurt Tepesi Yerleşiminden Kravatlı ve Chevron Motifli Dikmetaş (Photo by B. Çelik).

Studies conducted on *Kurt Tepe* revealed that the flintstone is used intensively as a raw material and that the obsidian is present at very scarce quantities. The findings excavated from this site include Byblos type arrowheads made of flintstone, scrapers, drills, sickle blades and obsidian blades. Moreover, stone beads and pestle parts made from basalt stone are also discovered.

*Kurt Tepesi* is considered to be a settlement of approximately identical scale to the *Sefer Tepe* and *Harbetsuvan Tepesi* settlements due to the similarity of the discovered finds and its size. Dimensions of the pillars unearthed here is similar with the cult building in *Nevalı Çori* and Layer II of *Göbekli Tepe*. Based on such similarity and the small finds unearthed, *Kurt Tepesi* settlement should be dated as late Pre-Pottery Neolithic period A (PPNA) and early Pre-Pottery Neolithic period B (PPNB).

### Harbetsuvan Tepesi

Discovered for the first time in 2014, *Harbetsuvan Tepesi* (Fig. 1) is located 45 km east of Şanlıurfa, between calcareous plateaus known as Tektek Mountains (Fig. 6). Its altitude from sea level is 714 m. The settlement covers an area of circa 6 decares. No ceramics were discovered in the settlement. Therefore, the settlement is contemplated to be inhabited only during the Pre-Pottery Neolithic period. The most significant characteristic of the settlement is the presence of *in situ* "T" shaped pillars. Several "T" shaped pillars unearthed as a result of illegal excavations are destroyed deliberately. One of the broken pillars with no decoration is re-assembled and the pillar is identified to be 160 cm long, 70 cm to 50 cm wide with a thickness of 22 cm (Fig. 7). Another "T" shaped pillar unearthed in the settlement contains necktie and finger reliefs (Fig. 8).

<sup>19</sup> Hauptmann/Schmidt 2007: 80.

<sup>20</sup> Schmidt 2007: Fig. 11.

<sup>21</sup> More comprehensive study for Kurt Tepesi archaeological site is to be published.



Fig. 6: Southern View of Harbetsuvan Tepesi / *Harbetsuvan Tepesi'nin Güneyden Görünümü* (Photo by B. Çelik).



Fig. 7: Pillar with no Relief at Harbetsuvan/*Harbetsuvan'dan Kabartmasız Dikmetaş* (Photo by B. Çelik).



Fig. 8: Necktie and Finger Shaped Relief Pillar from Harbetsuvan Tepesi Settlement/*Harbetsuvan Tepesi'nden Kravatlı ve Parmak Kabartmalı Dikmetaş* (Photo by B. Çelik).

*Harbetsuvan* settlement is located approximately 7 km southwest of *Karahan Tepe* settlement. Traces of a circular foundation with circa 15 m diameter are present at the site where the pillars were discovered. As it stands, the

building resembles circular "*F Enclosure*" discovered at Layer II/III of *Göbekli Tepe*<sup>22</sup>.

<sup>22</sup> Schmidt 2010: Fig. 2.

The studies conducted in the settlement revealed that the raw material intensively used is flintstone, and a small amount of obsidian finds are also present: bipolar cores, made of flintstone, shoulder and sickle blades, Byblos type arrowheads, and obsidian blade pieces, which are unique to Pre-Pottery Neolithic period, were discovered<sup>23</sup>.

The pillars that resemble the pillars with no relief unearthed at *Harbetsuvan* settlement the most were discovered in *Karahan Tepe*<sup>24</sup>. The settlement seems like a satellite settlement due to its proximity to *Karahan Tepe*. *Harbetsuvan Tepesi* is considered to be a settlement of approximately identical scale to the *Sefer Tepe* and *Kurt Tepesi* settlements due to the similarity of the discovered findings.

Dimensions of the pillars unearthed here are similar with the cult building in *Nevalı Çori* and Layer II of *Göbekli Tepe*. Based on such similarity and the small finds unearthed, *Harbetsuvan Tepesi* settlement should be dated as late PPNA and early PPNB.

### Hamzan Tepe

Discovered during the provincial cultural inventory studies conducted in 2004, *Hamzan Tepe* settlement (Fig. 1) is located 2 km north of İközce village, which is located 12 km south of Şanlıurfa province (Fig. 9). Covering an area of circa 17 decares, *Hamzan Tepe* is at 600 m above sea level. It is a settlement founded within the plateaus in West Harran Plain. The settlement was first used as a Paleolithic outdoor station and then as a small sized settlement during the Neolithic period<sup>25</sup>. One *in situ* "T" shaped pillar was discovered at *Hamzan Tepe* settlement (Fig. 10). Moreover, remains of two circular buildings excavated as a result of illegal excavations were discovered at the eastern section of the settlement. The inner section of one of such circular buildings was excavated down to the bedrock and, fortunately, the curb stones were preserved *in situ* (Fig. 11). The remains of the circular building, in its current form, rather appear to be the remains of a domestic building.



Fig. 9: View of Hamzan Tepe Settlement from West / *Hamzan Tepe Yerleşiminin Batıdan Görünümü* (Photo by B. Çelik).



Fig. 10: "T" Shaped *in situ* Pillar Example from Hamzan Tepe / *Hamzan Tepe'den "T" Şeklinde in-situ Dikmetaş Örneği* (Photo by B. Çelik).



Fig. 11: Remains of Circular Building from Hamzan Tepe Settlement / *Hamzan Tepe Yerleşiminden Yuvarlak Planlı Yapı Kalıntıları* (Photo by B. Çelik).

<sup>23</sup> More comprehensive study for Harbetsuvan Tepesi archaeological site is to be published.

<sup>24</sup> Çelik 2011b: Figs. 8, 10.

<sup>25</sup> Çelik 2004: 3-5; Çelik 2006b: 222-224; Çelik 2010: 257-268.

*Hamzan Tepe* settlement resembles *Çayönü*<sup>26</sup> and *Nevali Çori*<sup>27</sup> settlements as it accommodates both domestic buildings and a "T" shaped pillar. The settlement sites in Şanlıurfa region that accommodate both cult buildings and domestic buildings are *Hamzan Tepe* and *Şanlıurfa-Yeni Mahalle*.

Although the studies conducted revealed no ceramics presence at the settlement, findings from Lower Paleolithic period<sup>28</sup> made of flintstone and Byblos and Nemrik type arrowheads unique to the Pre-Pottery Neolithic period and very scarce obsidian blades and flakes were discovered<sup>29</sup>. One El-Khiam arrowhead was discovered at the same site during a survey conducted in 2013.

There is no relief mark of any kind on the pillars discovered in *Hamzan Tepe* settlement. The width of the pillars varies in the range of 70 cm to 50 cm, and its thickness is 22 cm. The length could not be measured,

as it is half-buried to the ground. However, its apparent dimensions indicate that it is approximately the same size with the pillars from *Karahan Tepe*, *Sefer Tepe*, *Taşlı Tepe*, *Kurt Tepesi* and *Harbetsuvan Tepesi*. Based on the dimensions of the pillars discovered at *Hamzan Tepe*, the settlement is contemplated to be contemporaneous with Layer II of Göbekli Tepe and the cult building discovered in *Nevali Çori* and *Hamzan Tepe* settlements should be dated as late PPNA and early PPNB.

### Karahan Tepe

Discovered for the first time in 2000 during provincial cultural inventory studies, *Karahan Tepe* (Fig. 1) is located circa 63 km east of Şanlıurfa, between calcareous plateaus known as Tektek Mountains (Fig. 12)<sup>30</sup>. Its altitude from sea level is 690 m. A comprehensive study conducted in 2013 precisely revealed that *Karahan Tepe* settlement covers an area of 110 decares.



Fig. 12: View of Karahan Tepe Settlement from East / *Karahan Tepe Yerleşiminin Doğudan Görünümü* (Photo by B. Çelik).

<sup>26</sup> Erim-Özdoğan 2011: Figs.19, 32, 35-37.

<sup>27</sup> Hauptmann 2007: Fig. 26.

<sup>28</sup> Çelik 2010: Figs. 10-14.

<sup>29</sup> Çelik 2006b: Fig. 7a-b; 2010: Fig. 9.

<sup>30</sup> Çelik 2000b: 6-8; Çelik 2011b: 241-253.

The most significant characteristics of the settlement are that it was inhabited only during the Pre-Pottery Neolithic period and its presence of 266 *in situ* "T" shaped pillars (Fig. 13). Some of the "T" shaped pillars revealed as a result of illegal excavations bear round-headed reliefs while some others bear triangular headed snake<sup>31</sup> reliefs that resemble snake reliefs at *Göbekli Tepe*<sup>32</sup>. One pillar fragment, on the other hand, contains reliefs of some feet of an animal, depicted mutually<sup>33</sup>. Animal figures created using scraping technique are discovered on some pillar fragments<sup>34</sup>. Moreover, fragment of a sculpture depicted with male sexual organ, likes of which are encountered at *Göbekli Tepe*, was also discovered<sup>35</sup>. The quarry identified at *Karahan Tepe* settlement, wherein a 5 m long "T" shaped pillar<sup>36</sup> not carved out is present, is an indication that the settlement bears similar features with *Göbekli Tepe*<sup>37</sup>.



Fig. 13: *In situ* "T" Shaped Pillar from Karahan Tepe Settlement / *Karahan Tepe Yerleşiminden in situ "T" Şeklinde Dikmetaş*. (Photo by B. Çelik).

<sup>31</sup> Çelik 2011b: Figs. 8-11.

<sup>32</sup> Schmidt 2007: Fig. 20.

<sup>33</sup> Çelik 2011b: Figs. 14-15.

<sup>34</sup> Çelik 2011b: Fig. 12a-b.

<sup>35</sup> Çelik 2011c: 91-95.

<sup>36</sup> Çelik 2011b: Fig. 6.

<sup>37</sup> Schmidt 1998: 4.

The studies conducted in the settlement revealed bipolar cores, end scrapers, drills, chisels, sickle blades, Byblos, *Nemrik* and *Aswad* type arrowheads unique to the Pre-Pottery Neolithic period<sup>38</sup>.

The pillars from *Karahan Tepe* settlement are approximately of the same size with the pillars from *Sefer Tepe*, *Hamzan Tepe*, *Taşlı Tepe*, *Kurt Tepesi* and *Harbetsuvan Tepesi*. Based on the dimensions of the pillars discovered at *Karahan Tepe*, the settlement is contemplated to be contemporaneous with Layer II of *Göbekli Tepe* and the cult building discovered in *Nevalı Çori*. The culture layer of *Karahan Tepe* settlement is estimated to be in the range of 7-8 m at minimum as derived from the illegal excavation pit of 10 m radius. *Karahan Tepe* settlement should be dated as late PPNA and early PPNB for now in the light of currently available information.

*Karahan Tepe* settlement, with current dimensions, is a settlement equivalent of *Göbekli Tepe*. Relieved, scraped and neck-tie shaped pillars were discovered at the settlement. However, pillars with arm and finger reliefs known from *Göbekli Tepe* and *Nevalı Çori* are not encountered yet.

### Taşlı Tepe

*Taşlı Tepe* is located circa 1 km north of Basbük village located approximately 65 km northeast of Şanlıurfa, within modern borders of Siverek district (Fig. 1). This settlement site was discovered for the first time in 2011 during provincial cultural inventory studies<sup>39</sup>.

Altitude of *Taşlı Tepe* settlement above sea level is 740 m. The settlement covers an area of circa 12 decares (Fig. 14). The land on which the settlement is founded is currently used for agricultural purposes. The settlement is surrounded with high plateaus from north and east. The southern and western parts rather demonstrate a partially smooth terrain.

When we look at the lithic tools discovered from *Taşlı Tepe* as a whole, typologically toll varieties from Pre-Pottery Neolithic period can be seen, which are Byblos type arrowheads made of Flintstone, lower and upper grinding stones, stone dish, hand axe made of boulder, small chisel, pestles and stone vessels<sup>40</sup>. Moreover, a bead in the form of a bull head made of green boulder stone was also discovered<sup>41</sup>.

<sup>38</sup> Çelik 2011b: Fig. 20-21.

<sup>39</sup> Çelik/Güler/Güler 2011: 226, 229.

<sup>40</sup> Çelik/Güler/Güler 2011: Figs. 2-5.

<sup>41</sup> Çelik/Güler/Güler 2011: Fig. 6.





Fig. 14: View of Taşlı Tepe Settlement from East / *Taşlı Tepe Yerleşiminin Doğudan Görünümü* (Photo by B. Çelik).

The most interesting finds excavated at *Taşlı Tepe* settlement are the “T” shaped pillar fragments located in the courtyard of a house in Başbük village. 4 “T” shaped pillar fragments were revealed at an excavation of approximately 7 m x 8 m to 1 m depth at the southeast hillside of the settlement. All pillars are made of limestone. One of the pillars unearthed in fragmented form was reassembled and identified to be 152 cm long, 93 cm wide at the capital part with a thickness of 22 cm (Fig. 15). Based on the dimensions of the pillars discovered at *Taşlı Tepe*, the settlement is contemplated to be contemporaneous with Layer II of *Göbekli Tepe* and the cult building discovered in *Nevalı Çori*<sup>42</sup>. Moreover, the pillars from *Taşlı Tepe* settlement are approximately of the same size with the pillars from *Karahan Tepe*<sup>43</sup>, *Göbekli Tepe* Layer II<sup>44</sup>, *Sefer Tepe*, *Hamzan Tepe*, *Kurt Tepesi* and *Harbetsuvan Tepesi*. No relief or scraping marks of any kind were encountered on the *Taşlı Tepe* pillars. A fragment of terazzo floor specimen was also discovered at the same site<sup>45</sup>.



Fig. 15: Pillar from Taşlı Tepe Settlement / *Taşlı Tepe'den Dikmetaş Örneği* (Photo by B. Çelik).

<sup>42</sup> Hauptmann 1991/1992: 28, Abb. 21.

<sup>43</sup> Çelik 2000b: 6-7, Fig. 1; 2011b: Figs. 9-10.

<sup>44</sup> See Schmidt 2002:8, Fig.7. The pillars at L10-71, L9-80, L9-55 and L9-56 excavations.

<sup>45</sup> Çelik/Güler/Güler 2011: Fig. 8.

*Taşlı Tepe* settlement should be dated as late PPNA and early PPNB due the similarities with Layer II of *Göbekli Tepe* and the cult building pillars at *Nevalı Çori*.

### Sefer Tepe

*Sefer Tepe* settlement is located approximately 70 km east of Şanlıurfa within borders of Viran Şehir district<sup>46</sup>. The settlement appears as a small and shallow mound founded on a flat land (Fig.16). The settlement is founded at a spot where the plateau ends and the plain starts to extend. The settlement is 700 m above sea level. It covers an area of circa 10 decares<sup>47</sup>. The settlement site is founded on bed rock and is approximately 7 m high. A plain known as Viran Şehir plain extends at the north and east of *Sefer Tepe* settlement. The south is partially flat terrain and the west contains high plateaus known as *Tek Tek Dağları*.



Fig. 16: View of Sefer Tepe Settlement from East / *Sefer Tepe Yerleşiminin Doğudan Görünümü* (Photo by B. Çelik).

There are 16 *in-situ* “T” shaped pillars present at the settlement. The pillars are positioned mutually<sup>48</sup>. With these positions, they resemble the pillars at *Göbekli Tepe* Layer II architecture<sup>49</sup>, *Nevalı Çori* pillars<sup>50</sup> and the *in-situ* pillars at the surface of *Karahan Tepe*<sup>51</sup>. Moreover, they are approximately the same size with the pillars from *Taşlı Tepe*, *Hamzan Tepe*, *Karahan Tepe*, *Kurt Tepesi* and *Harbetsuvan Tepesi* pillars.

An intact “T” shaped pillar of 198 cm long 75 cm to 50 cm wide and 30 cm thick unearthed as a result of illegal excavations at the settlement (Fig. 17) was discovered. Other pillars discovered are all in fragments. Another pil-

lar fragment 70 cm wide and 40 cm thick excavated from the settlement resembles the pillar located at the center of the cult building at *Nevalı Çori*. This pillar fragment should, most probably, be one of the pillars at the center of the cult building contemplated to be present also at *Sefer Tepe*.



Fig. 17: Pillar Example from Sefer Tepe / *Sefer Tepe'den Dikmetaş Örneği* (Photo by B. Çelik).

Byblos type arrowheads made of flintstone, sickle blades, cores, stone vessel fragments and, although in scarce quantities, blade fragments made of obsidian were discovered at the settlement<sup>52</sup>.

*Sefer Tepe* settlement should be dated as late PPNA and early PPNB due the similarities with Layer II of *Göbekli Tepe* and the cult building pillars at *Nevalı Çori*.

<sup>46</sup> Çelik 2006a: 23-25; Güler/Çelik/Güler 2012: 161-162,168-169.

<sup>47</sup> Wrong values were published in the previous version (see Çelik 2006a: 23).

<sup>48</sup> Çelik 2006a: 23.

<sup>49</sup> Schmidt 2002: 8, Figs. 7. L10-71, L9-80, L9-55 and L9-56 excavations.

<sup>50</sup> Hauptmann 1991/1992: 28, Abb. 21.

<sup>51</sup> Çelik 2000b: 6-7.

<sup>52</sup> Çelik 2006a: Fig. 4; Güler/Çelik/Güler 2013: Fig. 22.

## Ayanlar Höyük

Discovered in 2013 for the first time, *Ayanlar Höyük* is located underneath and north of Ayanlar village<sup>53</sup> located circa 30 km west of Şanlıurfa (Fig. 1). The settlement covers an area of circa 140 decares. The height of the mound is approximately 10 m. Its altitude from sea level is 733 m. The village settlement covers the southern and eastern section (Fig.18). There are 5 small hills on the mound. The surface of the mound is completely destroyed due to agricultural activities. Today, the land is covered with pistachio groves. The studies conducted, revealed ceramics from early and middle Byzantium periods as well as finds from Pre-Pottery Neolithic period. Moreover, blade, flake fragments, arrowhead and scraper fragments all made of flintstone, bipolar and mono-polar cores and core renewal pieces, shoulder blades, hammers, and very scarce obsidian flakes and blades were encountered. Stone jars made of limestone, basalt lower and upper grinding stones and pestles, chlorite stone vessel fragments, and stone dish fragments are amongst the finds discovered from the site<sup>54</sup>.



Fig. 18: Ayanlar Höyük, View from North / *Ayanlar Höyüğü, Kuzyeyden Görünüm* (Photo by B. Çelik).

A pedestal piece with hollow center that we know made for “T” shaped pillars<sup>55</sup> was discovered at the village cemetery located on one of the hills at the mound (Fig. 19). Although no “T” shaped pillar was discovered at *Ayanlar Höyüğü*, several finds unearthed here give important hints that this settlement might be a cult center just like *Göbekli Tepe* and *Karahan Tepe*. In particular, a statue fragment considered to be a lion’s head unearthed here points out to the fact that *Ayanlar Höyüğü* accommodated cult buildings<sup>56</sup>.

<sup>53</sup> Former name of Ayanlar village is Hut village. Ayanlar Mound is also called as “Gre Hut” by the local community.

<sup>54</sup> More comprehensive study for Ayanlar Höyük archaeological site is to be published.

<sup>55</sup> Schmidt 2010: Fig. 21.

<sup>56</sup> Ercan/Çelik 2013: Figs. 1a-d, 2a-d, 3a-d.

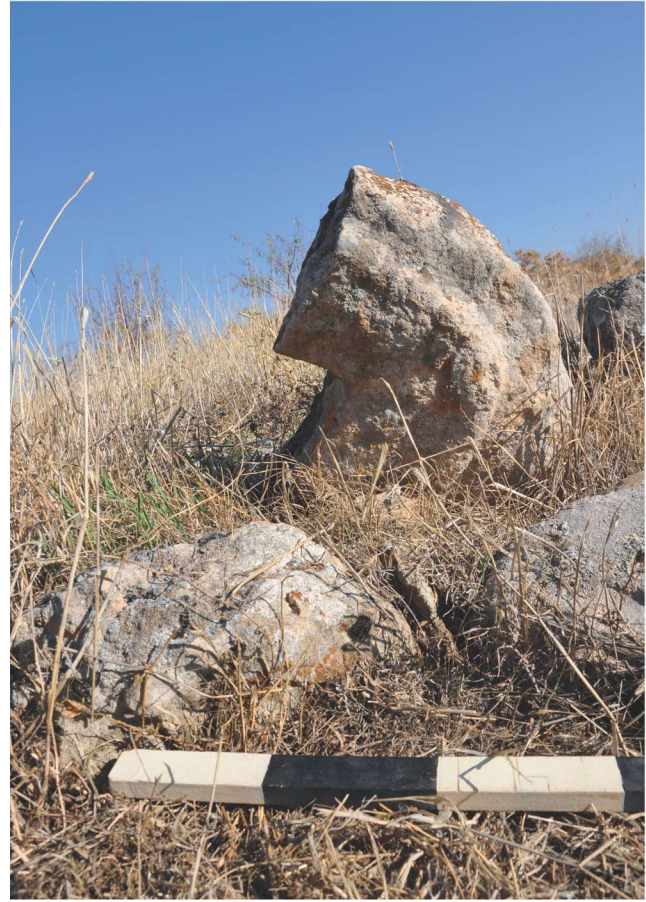


Fig. 19: Ayanlar Höyük, Pedestal Fragment with Hollow Center/*Ayanlar Höyüğü’nden Ortası Oyuk Kaide Parçası* (Photo by B. Çelik).

*Ayanlar Höyük* settlement should be dated as late PPNA and early PPNB due the similarities with Layer II of *Göbekli Tepe* and the cult building pillars at *Nevalı Çori*.

## Şanlıurfa-Yeni Mahalle

*Şanlıurfa-Yeni Mahalle* is a settlement located at Şanlıurfa downtown area within the ancient ramparts of Şanlıurfa. The settlement is underneath Yeni Mahalle district, which accommodates Balıklıgöl sacred area. In 1997 an excavation was carried out at the ground section of 15 m on Yeniyol Avenue in Yeni Mahalle district<sup>57</sup>.

The excavation carried out revealed two terrazzo floors of circular buildings. The circular wall of one of the floors were unearthed and revealed as intact, although partially. The small findings discovered from the section are Byblos and Aswad type arrowheads made of flintstone, sickle blades, shoulder blades, cores and very scarce obsidian flakes, and arrowhead fragments. The C14 analyses performed on the carbonated plant remains revealed that the settlement is dated back to cal. 8600 BC<sup>58</sup>.

<sup>57</sup> Çelik 2000a: 4-6; 2007: Metin.165-178, Levha.134-146; Çelik 2011a: 139-164.

<sup>58</sup> Çelik 2014: 101-103: Tab. 1.

A statue with exact human size standing 1.93 m tall was discovered in 1993 during an excavation work carried out for landscaping works at the same area (Fig. 20). Moreover, fragment of the body of a “T” shaped pillar was discovered within wall texture at the entrance section of a cave during the ground survey conducted in Yeni Mahalle district (Fig. 21). A necktie shaped broad groove is located at the lateral surface of this body fragment. Necktie shaped broad groove is a feature typically encountered at the pillars discovered in *Göbekli Tepe*, *Nevali Çori*, *Kurt Tepesi*, *Karahan Tepe* and *Harbetsuvan Tepesi*.

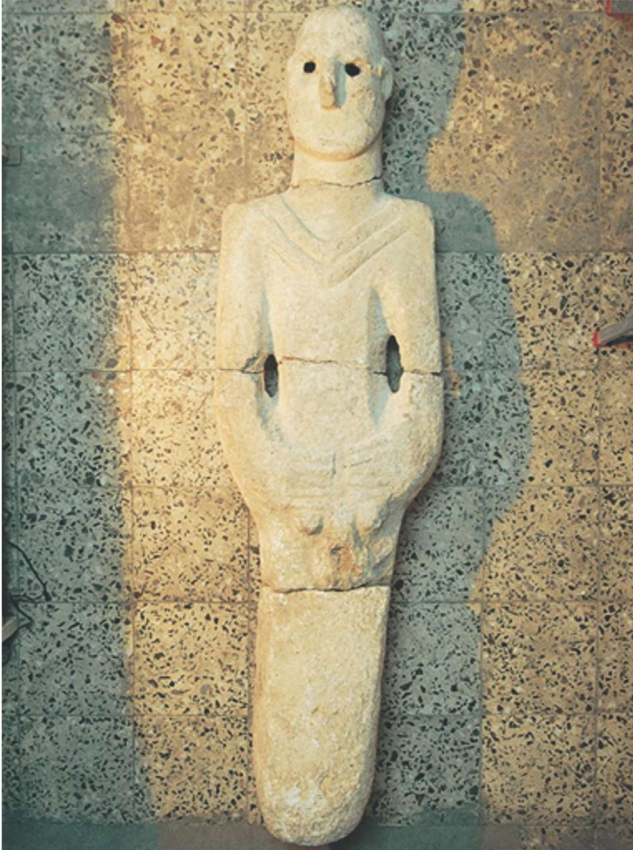


Fig. 20: Şanlıurfa-Yeni Mahalle, Urfa Statue / Şanlıurfa-Yeni Mahalle'den Urfa Heykeli (Photo by G. Tan).



Fig. 21: A Necktie Shape Patterned Pillar Fragment from Yeni Mahalle District / Yeni Mahalle Semtinden Kravatlı Bir Dikmetaş Parçası (Photo by B. Çelik).

A pillar fragment containing necktie shaped groove discovered during the studies conducted in *Yeni Mahalle* district resembles Layer II of *Göbekli Tepe* and the cult building pillars at *Nevali Çori* due to its dimensions. *Şanlıurfa-Yeni Mahalle* settlement should be dated as late PPNA and early PPNB in the light of currently available information.

## ASSESSMENT AND CONCLUSION

The cult buildings we know from *Göbekli Tepe* and *Nevali Çori* are structures that accommodate “T” shaped relieved or non-relieved pillars and statues. We hold significant amount of information on such type of cult buildings by virtue of the excavations carried out in *Göbekli Tepe*. In particular, Layer II of *Göbekli Tepe* dated to early PPNB and Layer III dated to PPNA offered us new information on cult buildings<sup>59</sup>.

No center from PPNA period, in particular, contemporaneous with Layer III of *Göbekli Tepe* was encountered in Şanlıurfa region during the studies conducted so far. *Karahan Tepe* and *Ayanlar Höyük* are settlements that cover more than 100 decares. With the surface area of 100 decares, *Göbekli Tepe* is approximately of the same size with both settlements. Such settlements are not excavated yet; thus it is very difficult to mention anything definite. However, the lower layers of *Karahan Tepe* and *Ayanlar Höyük* might contain circular buildings that accommodate pillars, which we know from Layer III of *Göbekli Tepe*, because both her settlements contain a cultural layer of approximately 7-8 meters, just like the case in *Göbekli Tepe*.

The centers in Şanlıurfa region that accommodate both “T” shaped pillars and circular domestic buildings are only *Hamzan Tepe* and *Yeni Mahalle* settlements. Such circular domestic building varieties are rather encountered at the Neolithic settlements in Tigris region. The circular buildings in Tigris region are usually from PPNA phase of Neolithic period and are structures that vary also in terms of material used. The circular buildings discovered in Şanlıurfa region, on the other hand, rather represent late PPNA and early PPNB when considered in terms of small finds. C14 analysis made at Yeni Mahalle further supports this fact<sup>60</sup>.

As a result of the excavations carried out in *Nevali Çori* and *Çayönü*, it is understood that the cult buildings dated particularly to early and middle periods of PPNB in both settlements are located at one corner of the settlement. A similar case might be valid also for *Yeni Mahalle* and *Hamzan Tepe* cases. However, we currently lack any data

<sup>59</sup> Schmidt 2010: 239-256.

<sup>60</sup> Çelik 2014: Tab. 1 Çelik 2014: Tab. 1.

that might support our notion as no comprehensive excavation is made either at *Hamzan Tepe* or at *Yeni Mahalle* for now.

Until this day, no findings similar to large buildings with “T” shaped pillars located at Layer III of *Göbekli Tepe* was discovered at the recently discovered Neolithic settlements in in Şanlıurfa region. The traces of the wall that we contemplate to be from a circular structure of approximately 15 m radius unearthed in *Harbetsuvan Tepesi* and the pillars located within such walls should probably be contemporaneous with “F Enclosure” revealed at *Göbekli Tepe*<sup>61</sup>. “F Enclosure” is a building dated between Layers II and III of *Göbekli Tepe* and the size of the pillars it contains is rather similar to the Layer II pillars.

*Sefer Tepe*, *Hamzan Tepe*, *Taşlı Tepe*, *Kurt Tepesi*, and *Harbetsuvan Tepesi* resemble each other in terms of surface area. These settlements are not large scale settlements like *Göbekli Tepe*, *Karahan Tepe*, and *Ayanlar Höyük* settlements. However, all cover an area that varies in the range of 6 to 20 decars. At the same time, the “T” shaped pillars discovered at these settlements have same dimensions. In particular, the pillars at these settlements are approximately of the same size with the pillars from *Göbekli Tepe* “F Enclosure” and Layer II pillars and *Nevali Çori* cult building pillars.

When we consider the settlements in terms of distance between them and their locations; the fact that there are settlements located around *Sefer Tepe* settlement at distances in the range of 3 to 5 km, some of which containing circular domestics buildings, suggests that *Sefer Tepe* is a locality that acts somehow as a small sized cult center<sup>62</sup>. Likewise, three Neolithic settlements were discovered at the southern section of *Harbetsuvan Tepesi* during the studies conducted in 2014. Such settlements are also Neolithic settlements with fully domestic features. A similar case is also valid around *Ayanlar Höyük*, which covers an area of approximately 140 decars. Discovery of six Neolithic settlements during the studies conducted only at the southern part of *Ayanlar Höyük* further supports this fact. Therefore, it would not be wrong to recite already that domestic settlements are scattered around each center that act like either large or small scale cult center during the Neolithic period at Şanlıurfa region. This feature points out to a settlement scheme that we never encountered before at the Neolithic settlements in the region.

When we look at the distances between the Neolithic settlements that accommodate pillars in Şanlıurfa region,

we can easily mention that these settlements are founded at distances in the range of 7 to 37 km. The air distance between *Ayanlar Höyük* settlement located west of Harran Plain and *Karahan Tepe* settlement located east of Harran Plain is approximately 66 km. The distance between *Göbekli Tepe* and *Karahan Tepe* and *Ayanlar Höyük* settlements, however, varies in the range of 32 to 37 km. That is to say, the distances between *Göbekli Tepe* located north of Harran Plain and *Ayanlar Höyük* located west of Harran Plain and *Karahan Tepe* located east of Harran Plain, all three of which presenting similar sizes, are almost identical (Fig. 22).

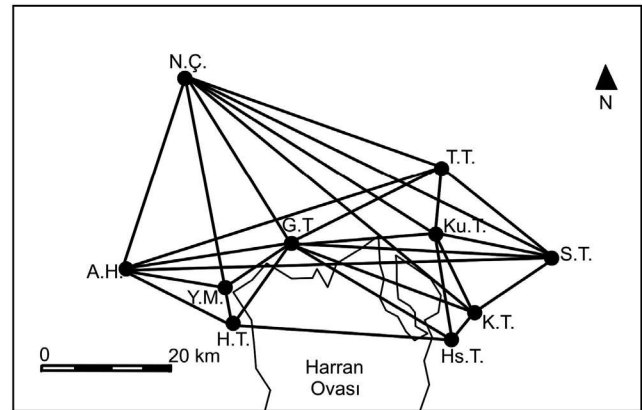


Fig. 22: Probable Routes between Settlements with Pillars at Urfa Region / *Urfa Bölgesinde Dikmetaşlı Yerleşimlerin Arasındaki Olası Rotalar* (Drawing by B. Çelik).

*Kurt Tepesi* settlement is a site that accommodates “T” shaped pillars. What is interesting here is that this settlement is at almost same distance to *Karahan Tepe* and *Taşlı Tepe*. *Karahan Tepe*, *Taşlı Tepe*, and *Kurt Tepesi* settlements are positioned in north-south alignment with approximately 15 km distances in-between. The common trait of these settlements not yet excavated is that all three settlements contain sites that served for cult purposes.

The distance between *Karahan Tepe* and *Harbetsuvan Tepesi* is 7 km, which is the shortest distance between discovered settlements that contain pillars. Both settlements present the features of a cult center. *Harbetsuvan Tepesi* covers an area of 6 decars while *Karahan Tepe* covers an area of 110 decars. The surface of both settlements contains “T” shaped pillars with identical size. This fact clearly indicates that both settlements existed at the same periods and were in relation with each other.

*Taşlı Tepe* settlement is also characterized as a center that accommodates “T” shaped pillars. The settlements most contemporaneous to this settlement are *Sefer Tepe* settlement located 28 km southeast air distance, *Karahan Tepe* settlement located 10 km southeast, and *Göbekli Tepe* settlement located 35 km west, all from Pre-Pottery Neolithic period. The fact that *Taşlı Tepe* is at almost same distance to *Sefer Tepe*, *Karahan Tepe* and *Göbekli*

<sup>61</sup> Schmidt 2010: Fig. 2.

<sup>62</sup> Güler/Çelik/Güler 2013: Map 1.

*Tepe* indicates that the distance between the settlements that contain “T” shaped pillars follows certain logic. *Kurt Tepesi* settlement located 15 km southwest of *Taşlı Tepe* however, violates such generalization. Nevertheless, the fact that *Kurt Tepesi* is founded on a hill that dominates a pass suggests that it might be a settlement founded for another reason. Such settlements contemplated to be founded in terms of hunting strategies are generally located on high plateaus<sup>63</sup>.

Settlements from Pre-Pottery Neolithic period are generally founded on or in the vicinity of high plateaus in the region. Likewise, *Başaran Höyük*, *Herzo Tepesi* and *Kocanizam Tepesi* settlements are settlements founded on high plateaus and on the bedrock. Such settlement tradition is also known from *Sefer Tepe*, *Taşlı Tepe*, *Karahan Tepe*, *Göbekli Tepe*, *Şanlıurfa-Yeni Mahalle* and *Hamzan Tepe* Pre-Pottery Neolithic settlements.

Presence of circular buildings constructed for domestic purposes that we encounter at *Herzo Tepesi* and *Hamzan Tepe* is an important fact as it demonstrates use of two distinct architectural traditions in the region during Pre-Pottery Neolithic period<sup>64</sup>. Presence of settlements such as *Göbekli Tepe*, *Karahan Tepe*, *Taşlı Tepe* and *Sefer Tepe* that present cult center features as revealed during the studies conducted so far suggests that domestic settlements should also be present at the region.

Amongst the settlements under study in the region, both “T” shaped pillar and remains of circular building are encountered only at *Hamzan Tepe* settlement<sup>65</sup>. A similar case is also known from *Şanlıurfa-Yeni Mahalle* settlement<sup>66</sup>. Buildings constructed to an architectural tradition similar to the remains of circular buildings are encountered at *Herzo Tepe*<sup>67</sup>, *İnanlı Tepe*<sup>68</sup> and *Hamzan Tepe*’de<sup>69</sup> during the recent surveys conducted at *Şanlıurfa* region in the last years.

Such buildings are probably examples of domestic architecture and should be structures from early Pre-Pottery Neolithic period. Similar buildings are also encountered at several other settlements such as *Çayönü*<sup>70</sup>, *Hallan Çemi*<sup>71</sup>, *Gusir Höyük*<sup>72</sup>, *Hasankeyf Höyük*<sup>73</sup> and *Körtik Tepe*<sup>74</sup> in the region.

During the studies conducted in 2013, pillars similar to “T” shaped pillars were discovered at *Kurt Tepesi*. One of the pillars unearthed from *Kurt Tepesi* contain a groove in the form of neck-tie, which we recognize from *Göbekli Tepe*<sup>75</sup> and *Nevali Çori*<sup>76</sup> and chevron pattern relief. The chevron pattern on the “T” shaped at *Kurt Tepesi* was made to as single rather than dual just like the patterns at *Nevali Çori* and *Göbekli Tepe*.

*Harbetsuvan* *Tepesi* settlement, which accommodates “T” shaped pillars, is a settlement discovered for the first time during the studies conducted in 2014. No reliefs were encountered on numerous fragmented pillars discovered at this settlement. However, the body of one pillar bears necktie and finger reliefs.

Studies were conducted at a zone located circa 25 km west of *Şanlıurfa* downtown area in order to identify where the two artifacts from Neolithic period brought to *Şanlıurfa* Museum<sup>77</sup> in 2013. During such studies, *Ayanlar Höyüğü* that covers an area of approximately 140 decares was discovered. The fact that stone vessels are discovered during the studies conducted here and that this settlement was inhabited during Pre-Pottery Neolithic period consolidated our opinion.

The era of the “T” shaped pillars unearthed from *Karahan Tepe*, *Hamzan Tepe*, *Sefer Tepe*, *Taşlı Tepe*, *Kurt Tepesi* and *Harbetsuvan Tepesi* settlements present features similar especially to “F Enclosure” and Layer II of *Göbekli Tepe* and the cult building at *Nevali Çori*. It is possible for us to say that there was a breakdown period experienced after Layer III of *Göbekli Tepe*, and thereafter the number of settlements contemporaneous with *Göbekli Tepe* Layer II increased amongst the Neolithic settlements in *Urfa* region and become widespread all around the region<sup>78</sup>.

In conclusion, *Şanlıurfa-Yeni Mahalle*, *Karahan Tepe*, *Hamzan Tepe*, *Sefer Tepe* and *Taşlı Tepe* settlements discovered in the last years and recently discovered *Ayanlar Höyük*, *Kurt Tepesi* and *Harbetsuvan Tepesi* settlements should be dated as late PPNA (9100-8800 BC) and early PPNB (8800-8400 BC) in the light of recent discoveries<sup>79</sup>.

<sup>63</sup> Özdoğan 2011:229.

<sup>64</sup> Güler/Çelik/Güler 2013: Figs. 8, 14.

<sup>65</sup> Çelik 2004: Fig. 4; 2006: Fig. 5; 2010: Figs. 2, 4.

<sup>66</sup> Çelik 2000a: Fig. 3; Çelik 2007: 162, Fig.16; Çelik 2011a: 142, Figs. 14-16.

<sup>67</sup> Güler/Çelik/Güler 2012:Fig. 4.

<sup>68</sup> Güler/Çelik/Güler 2013: Fig. 8.

<sup>69</sup> Çelik 2010: Fig. 4.

<sup>70</sup> Erim-Özdoğan 2011: 191-193, Figs. 6, 9.

<sup>71</sup> Rosenberg 2011: 61-63, Figs. 2-6.

<sup>72</sup> Karul 2011: 2-4, Fig. 4-5, 11.

<sup>73</sup> Miyake/Maeda/Tanno/Hongo/Gündem 2012: Fig. 3.

<sup>74</sup> Özkaya/Coşkun 2011: 90-93, Figs. 2-5.

<sup>75</sup> Schmidt 2007: 118, Fig.11.

<sup>76</sup> Hauptmann 1993: 51-53, Abb.16.

<sup>77</sup> Ercan/Çelik 2013: 25-27.

<sup>78</sup> Schmidt 2005: 13-19, Fig. 1.

<sup>79</sup> Çelik 2014: Tab 1.

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