

Discovering Göbekli Tepe

哥贝克力石阵：发现 · Göbekli Tepe, part 1



Where is it?

- On a hilltop in **south-east Turkey**, near the city of Şanlıurfa.
- The name is Turkish for “**Potbelly Hill**”: the hill is round, like a big belly.
- Under the hill are rings of giant carved stones.



Göbekli Tepe is in the south-east of Turkey, close to Syria.

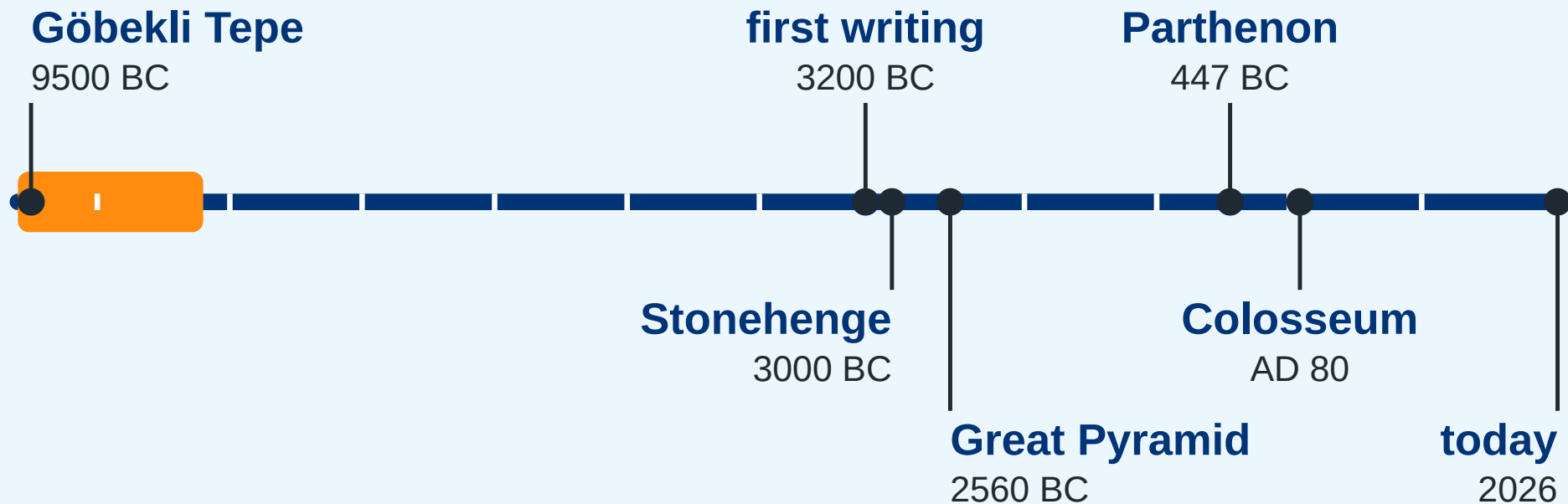


Speaker notes

Say it: *guh-bek-LEE TEH-peh*. Ask: what do we usually expect to find under a hill? (Rocks, soil. Sometimes, an old town.)



How old is it?



Drawn to scale. Each white tick is 1,000 years.

Göbekli Tepe was built about **11,500 years ago**, around 9500 BC. It is the oldest big stone monument we know.



Speaker notes

The orange bar is the time Göbekli Tepe was in use: about 1,500 years. Point out the Parthenon (Unit 1) and the Colosseum (Unit 2): they are closer in time to us than to Göbekli Tepe. Göbekli Tepe is more than 6,000 years older than Stonehenge, and older than writing.



Found twice

- **1963:** a survey team saw broken stones on the hill. They thought it was an old graveyard.
- **1994:** the archaeologist Klaus Schmidt looked again. He saw the stones were the tops of giant pillars.
- **1995 to today:** German and Turkish teams run the excavation. They have dug up only about **one tenth** of the hill.

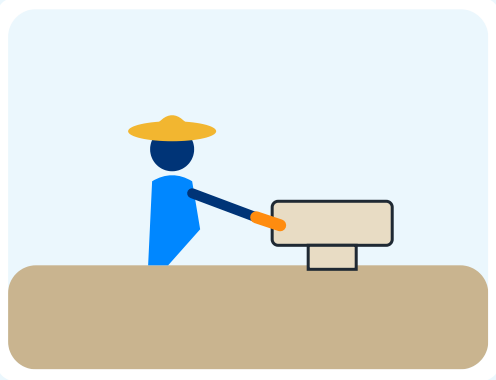


Speaker notes

Lesson: an expert can look at the same thing and see something new. We'll see archaeologists change their minds again in part 2.

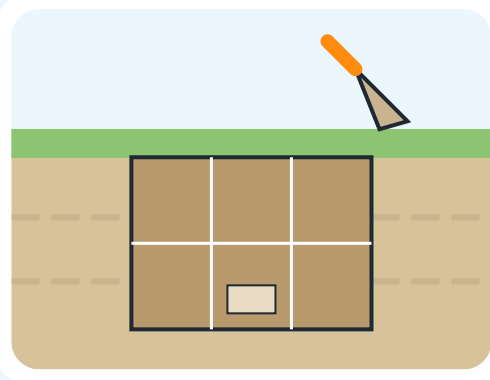


Digging into the past



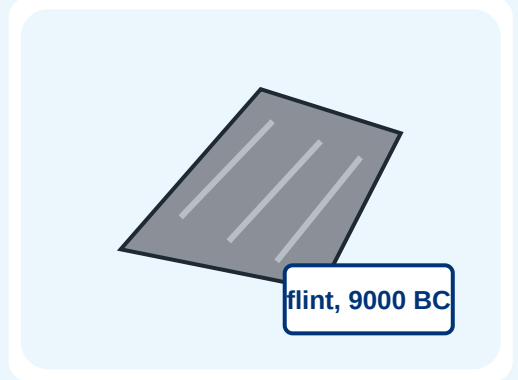
archaeologist 考古学家

A scientist who learns about the past from things people left behind.



excavation 发掘

Careful digging to find and study things from the past.



artifact 文物

An object that people made or used long ago.



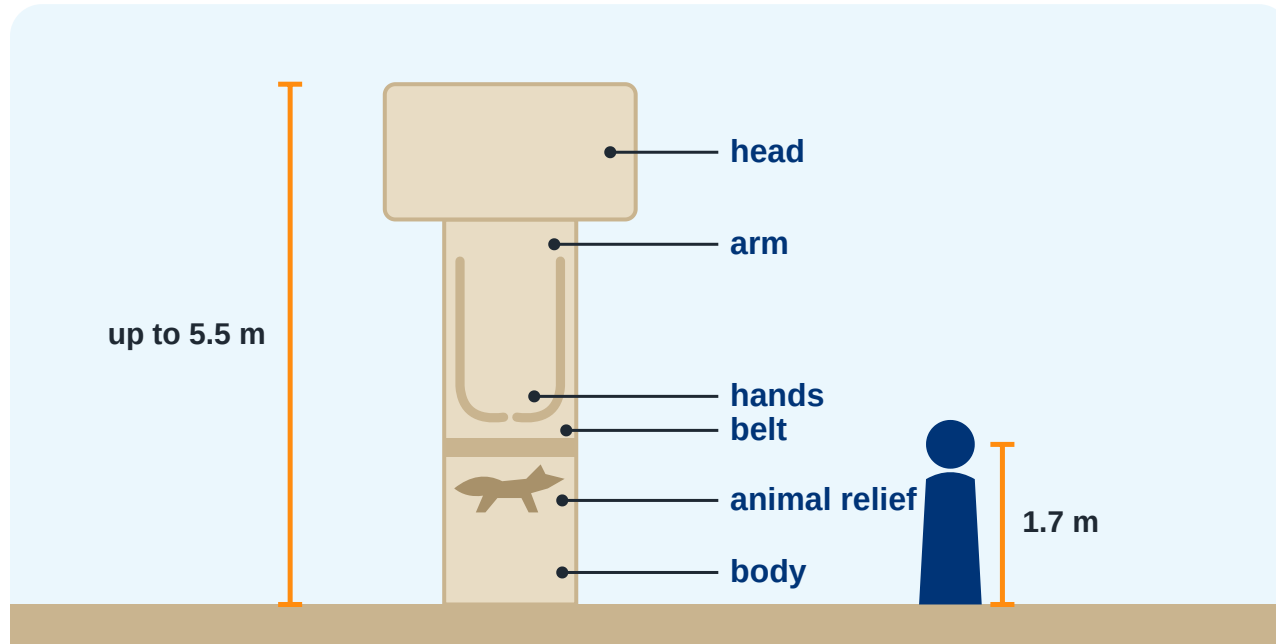
The enclosures

- Each enclosure is a round stone building, 10 to 30 m across.
- A ring of pillars stands in the wall, with a stone bench.
- Two **giant pillars** stand in the middle.
- Four have been dug up. Scans show many more under the hill.



Enclosure D, under a modern roof. The wooden frames keep the pillars safe.

T-pillars are people



A T-pillar is a megalith: the biggest are **5.5 m tall** and weigh about **10 tonnes**, as much as six or seven cars.



Speaker notes

The top of the T is a head seen from the side; the long part is the body. On some pillars you can see arms down the sides, hands that meet in front, and a belt. So each pillar is a giant stone person without a face. Who could they be? Ancestors? Spirits? Nobody knows for sure.



Look closely



- Find the **arm**: a long line down the side of the pillar.
- Find the **animal**: a fox, ready to jump.
- The carvings are reliefs: the stone around them was cut away.

The wood and wires hold the pillar up while archaeologists work.



A zoo in stone

The carvings show **wild animals**, many of them dangerous:

- foxes, wild boars and snakes
- vultures, cranes and ducks
- wild cattle (aurochs), scorpions and spiders

There are **no farm animals**: no sheep, goats or cows.



Animals carved on a pillar in Enclosure C.

Speaker notes

The fact cards printable has six of these animals. Ask: why carve dangerous animals and not food animals? Take ideas; there is no single right answer. Researchers still debate it.



True or false?

Guess first, then click to see each answer.

Göbekli Tepe is older than the Egyptian pyramids.

True

The pillars were carved with metal tools.

False: stone tools

Most carvings show farm animals like sheep and cows.

False: wild animals

Archaeologists have dug up the whole hill.

False: about 1/10



Speaker notes

No metal tools existed yet: the carvers used flint, a hard stone that breaks with sharp edges. Metal tools came thousands of years later.



Exit ticket

About how old is Göbekli Tepe?



About 2,000 years



About 4,500 years



About 11,500 years

0 votes

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