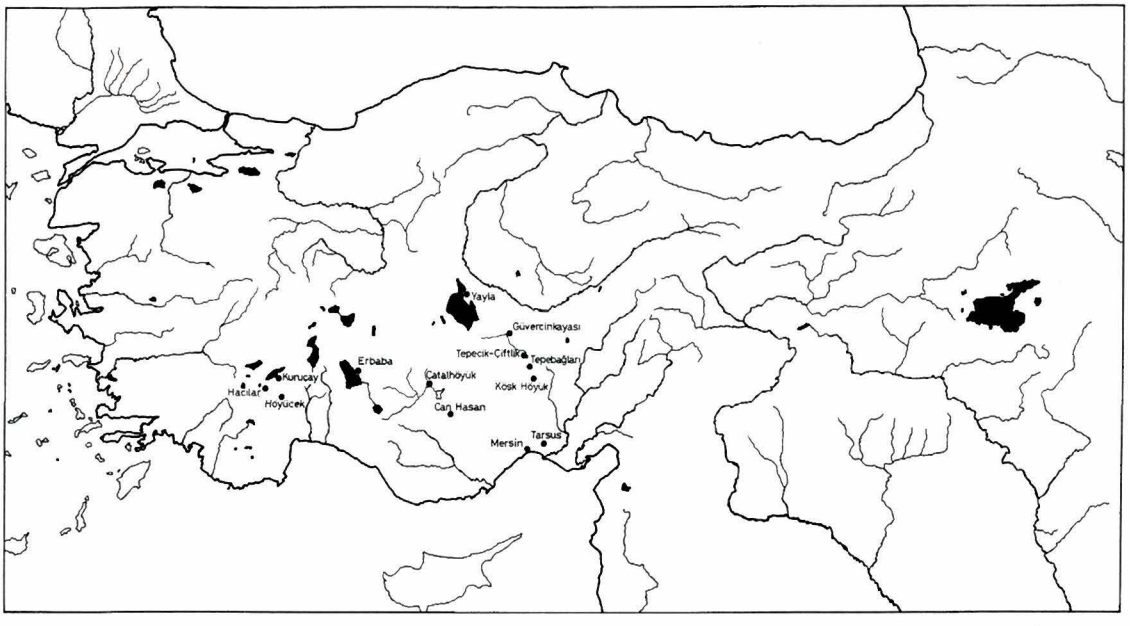
architectura

Zeitschrift für Geschichte der Baukunst
Journal of the History of Architecture
Sonderdruck architectura 2004

Deutscher Kunstverlag München Berlin

Erhan Bıçakçı

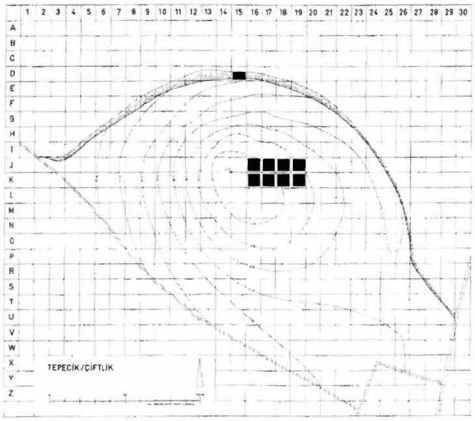
Tepecik-Çiftlik: A new site in central Anatolia (Turkey)



1. Map of central Anatolian settlements in the Neolithic and Chalcolithic periods

Our knowledge of central Anatolia's early prehistory is rather limited due to the small number of research projects in this field. The earliest comprehensive surveys were carried out by James Mellaart in the Lake District of the Konya Plain in southern Anatolia. The results of these investigations gave the impulse for several excavations to follow such as those at Hacılar and Çatal Höyük, which were also undertaken by James Mellaart and those at Can Hasan I and III led by David French. Furthermore projects in the Lake District by Jacques Bordaz, the survey on the central Anatolian plateau by Ian Todd and the project on defining the obsidian sources in the Cappadocian volcanic region by Colin Renfrew in the 1960's should also be mentioned. Until the beginning of the 1990's, there was almost no noteworthy investigations of the southern part of the central Anatolian plateau, apart from the excavations at Köşk Höyük. Several other excavations were undertaken in the region after the beginning of the excavations at the Pre-pottery Neolithic site Aşıklı Höyük in 1989.

Several volcanic massifs are located just along the northern slopes of the Taurus Mountains on the southern edge of the central Anatolian plateau. These massifs, which extend to the southwest and northeast include the Karadağ, Karacadağ, Hasan Dağ-Melendiz and the Erciyas Mountains. The eastern two of these massifs, the Erciyas Dağı and the Hasan Dağı-Melendiz are located in Cappadocia, giving the region the name »The Cappadocian Volcanic Region«. The largest of these massifs Hasan Dağı-Melendiz (over an area of ca. 200 km²) and its surrounding regions are well known for their significant obsidian sources, once extensively used in prehistoric times.



2. Topographical plan and excavated areas of Tepecik-Çiftlik, M 1:5000

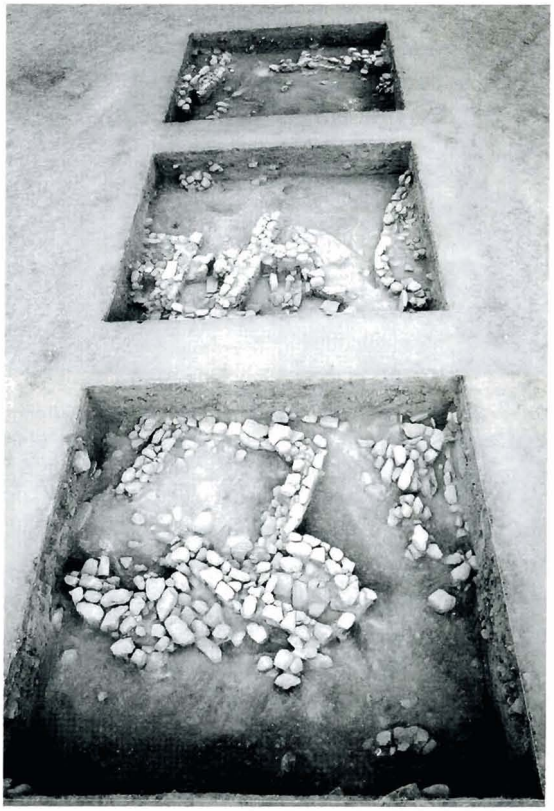
The Tepecik-Çiftlik site is located in the Melendiz plain, which was formerly one of the Melendiz massif (fig. 1)'s a primary volcanoes. The plain is about 1500 m asl and is surrounded by mountains of up to 2150–3250 m. Geomorphological research has shown that the plain's alluvial formations contain volcanic ash dating from the beginning of the Holocene period, where there used to be a lake.

Tepecik-Çiftlik is a mound of about 3.3 ha in size with an elevation over the surrounding plain (fig. 2, 4) of about 10.00 m. An area of about 400 m² was exposed (fig. 3) after three excavation campaigns (2000–2002), supported by the University of Istanbul's Research Fund. One result of this so far is that three excavation layers can be distinguished.

Due to the status of the excavations it is impossible to say much on the details of the architectural remains. The relics of the badly destroyed upper layer consisted of some fragmentary architectural elements such as clay pavements or hearths. The architectural remains of the second layer (fig. 3), which at present appears to have been the main architectural layer and which extends over nearly the whole excavated area, were preserved relatively well in comparison to the other layers. Although the excavated area is not very large, a remarkable variety of architectural elements were found. These architectural elements such as stone walls, pavements, platforms, etc. and household fittings such as hearths, ovens and clay bins give evidence of the diver-

3. Site plan of excavated area, m 1:250

4. General view of the mound



5. General view of the trenches 16–18 K after the excavation campaign 2000

sity of construction activities. Stone was skilfully used by the Tepecik builders in construction. Flat untreated pick stones were preferred and they were easily obtained in the surrounding volcanic formations. The 0.50 m thick stone pedestal walls, of which some were preserved up to 7 courses high, were constructed as double-face walls. The tailing, face and natural bed of stones were placed optimally at the masonry edges and were fitted appropriately into place; the flat faces of the stones were set on the wall faces, making their surfaces rather plane. The gaps between the two edges of the wall rows were filled with smaller stones.

Flat stones were also used extensively for the stone pavements of the closed rooms and probably also for the open spaces. The stones were laid appropriately edge to edge, so that almost no gaps were left in between the stones; existing gaps were filled with smaller flat stones. The stone pavement found in trenches 17/J-K is a good example of an enclosed area. The space of ca. 4.50 × 2.50 m was paved with flat stones as mentioned above and the burnt light brown ashy soil between the stones and flimsy traces of clay plastering indicate that the stone pavement was originally covered with a clay plastering. The *Tandır* (oven with fire pit) in the south-western corner of the room and the western neighbouring room with clay lined *Petek* (bin) and without any floor plastering imply that this room was not roofed. Another example of stone pavement found in trench 16/J covers an area of ca. 2.50 × 2.50 m and is on rather steep sloping ground toward South (fig. 6). This pavement was also constructed using the same technique and it is suggested that this structure was constructed as slope-coating in front of a house and was probably not roofed.

Some other stone constructions such as the small chambers in north-eastern quarter of trench 16/J (fig. 6), the southern annex-room of the main room in trench 16/K and the platform-like structure at the southern end of trench 17/K will require further investigation.

No *in situ* mud bricks have been found so far, however, the burnt mud brick particles in the debris give evidence of mud brick. On the other hand the use of clay as a building material was found on the floor and wall plastering of the houses, in the hearth floors and walls and in the thin walls of the *Petek* (bins). Plastered floors with fine coating were found in three places, in trenches 16J and 18J, as thresholds in door openings. In trench 18J the floor of one house, of which only its east-

6. Vertical photo of the trench 16 J in the excavation campaign 2002

ern and southern sides were constructed with stone walls, was filled with clay material probably forming a substructure for a floor plastering, but no traces of fine plastering could found on it. Even though only flimsy traces of fine layers of wall and floor plastering were identified, it would not be wrong to assume that clay plastering on both walls and floors was used throughout many of the Tepecik-Çiftlik houses.

Clear building plans and settlement patterns have not yet been distinguished in the limited excavation area.

7. Sherds with relief decoration

The fragmentary remains imply that the housing in the settlement consisted of rectangular-plan rooms, houses or complexes with passages and open areas in between them. It seems that the buildings or building elements were frequently repaired or renewed.

Primary observations of pottery signifies that all pottery ware was hand made; there are three different types: red, buff and black slipped burnished wares. The most remarkable feature of Tepecik-Çiftlik pottery is, undoubtedly, the relief decoration on the red slipped pottery (fig. 7, 8). Animal figures such as cattle, aurochs, deer, dog, etc. and human figures were widely used on this kind of pottery. The arrangement of the animal figures in rows on certain parts of the pots seems to have been used rather frequently. The figures were mostly depicted in moving positions. The human figures on the sherds were also depicted in animated positions and it seems that they were part of a narrative scene (fig. 7). Similar decorations with a rich variety of figures are also known from Köşk Höyük pottery, which is to be found ca. 50 km southeast of Tepecik, on the Bor plain south of the Melendiz massif (fig. 1).[1]

The variety of arrowheads found in Tepecik so far include almost all central Anatolian types (fig. 9). All points were retouched on the blades of local obsidian. Different obsidian sources of Göllüdağ were exploited in order to produce tools. The tool production process deriving from different obsidian sources indicates the existence of various specialized obsidian ateliers in the region. Indeed, some of these ateliers have been discovered around the slopes of the Göllüdağ by Nur Balkan-Atlı and excavations are continuing in one of them, in Kaletepe Obsidian Atelier.[2]

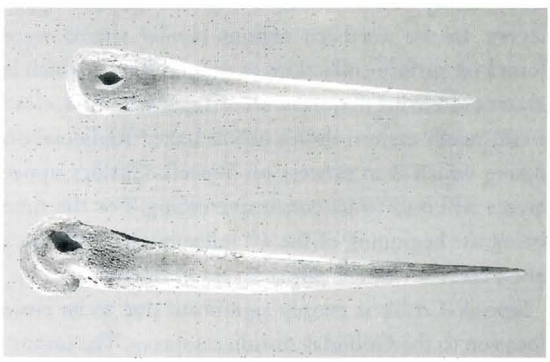
The ground stone industry includes a rich variety and large amount of tools with intensive traces of use.

[1] Uğur Silistireli, in: *Belleten* 53 (1989), S. 361ff.

[2] Nur Balkan-Atlı, Marie-Claire Cauvin in: XIV. *Araştırma Sonuçları Toplantısı* I (1997), S. 293ff.; Nur Balkan-Atlı, Marie-Claire Cauvin in: XV. *Araştırma Sonuçları Toplantısı* II (1998), S. 219ff.; Nur Balkan-Atlı, Didier Binder, Marie-Claire Cauvin, Erol Faydalı, in: XX. *Kazı Sonuçları Toplantısı* I (1999), S. 1ff.; Nur Balkan-Atlı, Didier Binder, Marie-Claire Cauvin, Erol Faydalı, in: XXI. *Kazı Sonuçları Toplantısı* I (2000), S. 41ff.

8. Sherds with relief decoration

9. Obsidian arrowhead



10. Bone awls

Numerous celts of different sizes and shapes, axes, polishing stones, grinding slabs, querns, mortars, handstones, pestles, pounders, perforated stones and chipdiscs were the commonly used tools in Tepecik.

Examinations of bone artefacts have so far shown that the tools were manufactured from long bones, ribs and antlers. Preliminary classifications of bone tools have brought to light that awls were the most common type of artefact (fig. 10); scrapers and other types of artefact were also widely used. The baguettes manufactured from deer antlers might have been modified to produce tools such as haft and chisel-like artefacts.

A remarkable group of worked bones is formed by the worked phalanges of equids, which were probably modified as figurines. Phalanges were modified with abrasion without changing their natural forms. It could be suggested that these objects might have been used as part of cult activities.

Preliminary examinations on faunal remains reveal a high percentage of wild mammals. The main hunted species are equids, deer and hare. Other identified animal remains are (wild and/or domestic) sheep, goat, cattle, aurochs, as well as wild species of horse, ass and onager. It is suggested that the faunal material indicates a rich economic and environmental pattern at the end of 6th millennium BC. The results of examinations on the floral remains by scientists from the University of Groningen, The Netherlands, will supply more knowledge on the region's environmental pattern.

The first attempts at dating the Tepecik-Çiftlik were carried out by Ian Todd.[3] On the basis of the analysis of survey material he presumed that the earliest occu-

[3] Ian Todd, The Prehistory of Central Anatolia I: The Neolithic Period, in: *Studies in Mediterranean Archaeology* LX (1980) 23, S. 106–107.

pation of the mound can be dated to the Pre-pottery Neolithic and the latest to the early or middle Chalcolithic periods. Subsequent examinations of the surface material by several other researchers have lead to similar conclusions.[4]

Too few settlements in the region have been investigated in order to compare the Tepecik-Çiftlik finds. The Köşk Höyük settlement, which is ca. 50 km southeast of Tepecik-Çiftlik, is the only excavated site in the region dating from Neolithic-Chalcolithic periods.[5] The pottery found in Köşk Höyük's lower layers, which can be dated back to the early Chalcolithic period, closely resemble that of Tepecik-Çiftlik's upper layers. In the northern regions similar sherds were found on surface collections at mound Yayla, which is about 110 km north northwest of Tepecik-Çiftlik, close to the north-eastern shores of Salt Lake.[6] Radiocarbon dating which is in process on Tepecik-Çiftlik's upper layers will lead to its conclusive dating. For the time being the beginning of the 6th millennium would be a good estimate for the upper layers of the site.

Tepecik-Çiftlik is mainly significant due to its close location to the Göllüdağ obsidian sources. The important obsidian sources and ateliers are all only within between 5 (Sırçaderesi, Ilbiz) and 15 km (Kayırlı, Kömürcü-Kaletepe) of Tepecik-Çiftlik. Relations between Tepecik-Çiftlik and these sources and ateliers are still unknown. It could be suggested that complex socio-economic structures in the region for employment policies, control mechanisms, trade networks, etc. may have been constituted for obsidian production. Research on the obsidian ateliers are continuing and will give a better underatanding of these structures or patterns. These will mainly deliver knowledge on technological practices. It is also essential to excavate settlements such as Tepecik-Çiftlik to understand the techno-cultural and socio-economic aspects of this period.

The three excavation campaigns at Tepecik-Çiftlik indicate that a prolific culture existed in the Cappadocian volcanic region around the obsidian sources around the 7th-6th millennium BC. The analysis of both hunted and domesticated animals, pollen from Acıgöl and Akgöl and the results of geomorphological research indicate a rich environmental pattern for this period. For the time being Tepecik-Çiftlik is one of the few known sites belonging to this culture. Tepecik-Çiftik's culture which may have had close contact to obsidian sources is distinctive for its decorated relief pottery, variety of chipped stone points, large amount of ground stone, bone and horn artefacts. It seems that further research at Tepecik-Çiftlik and in the region would give remarkable contributions to central Anatolian prehistory.

[4] Nur Balkan-Atlı, Marie-Claire Cauvin in: XV. *Araştırma Sonuçları Toplantısı* II (1998), S. 219–231, hier: S. 223; Geoffrey D. Summers, in: P. Georgiev (ed.), The Fourth Millenium B.C. (Proceedings of the International Symposium Nesseburg) (1993), S. 31–32; Sachihiro Omura, 1990 Yılı Orta Anadolu da Yürütülan Yüzey Araştirmalan, in: IX. *Araştırma Sonuçları Toplantısı* (1992), S. 543–544.

[5] Uğur Silistireli, La Cappadoce Meriolionale jusqu'à la fin de l'Epoque Romaine. État de Recherches (1991), S. 5–7.

[6] Sachihiro Omura, 1991 Yılı Orta Anadolu da Yürütülan Yüzey Araştirmalan, in: X. *Araştırma Sonuçları Toplantısı* (1993), S. 365–386, hier: S. 372f.

Photocredit:

All photos are from Tepecik-Giftlik-Archive.