

Sanliurfa, where is located on the historical Silk Road, is one of the oldest cities in the history of civilization. Given the geographical, economic, cultural and historical richness of the city, it will be seen how important the city is in terms of human history. The fact that being such an important center has caused Sanliurfa to be siezed by many different civilizations. Each civilization dominating the city has built its own monuments in order to consolidate its cultural and political outlook, and has made Sanliurfa an important and special place in the World Cultural Heritage.

Sanliurfa, in which has been formed by the Euphrates and Tigris rivers in the region known as the Fertile Crescent, has continiously been a place of settlement since the Paleolithic ages. Thanks to this fact, Sanliurfa has alwasys been a fertile region in terms of having the oldest finds/antiques of Anatolia throughout the settlement history.

As a result of the conducted studies in the region related to the Paleolithic Age B.C. 400,000 to 15,000, Sanliurfa has been described as the first Paleolithic station of Prehistory of Turkey. The Biris Cemetery and Söğüt Tarlasi settlements in the Bozova district are important centers for the Epipalaeolithic Age in which the tool industry has gained a technical dimension, using small size light stone and bone tools called microliths. A number of Neolithic settlements were uncovered in Sanliurfa, which is located in the Fertile Crescent, where the first traces of the Neolithic Period were seen and the “Neolithic culture of southeastern Anatolia” has gained a different perspective with the discovery of Göbeklitepe. In addition to Göbeklitepe, the richness of the structures and finds in Nevali Çori, which is a continuation of the same culture, has proved that the Anatolian peninsula is not only a bridge but also an important habitat of Neolithic life.

Neolithic Settlements

The archaeological excavations that have been carried out for approximately 50 years in the Southeastern Anatolia Region and its environs have revealed many different remains of hunter-gatherers who inhabited after the last Ice Age. The settlements that grouped as the Euphrates Basin and the Tigris Basin show that the culture created in the Aceramic Neolithic Age developed at the very center of this region, also known as the Fertile Crescent region, where wild grain is dense. Göbeklitepe, Nevali Çori, Mezra Teylelat, Akarçay Tepe, Karahan Tepe, Sefer Tepe, Hamzan Tepe, Harbet Suvan etc. in the Euphrates Basin and Çayönü, Kortik Tepe, Hallen Çemi, Hasan Keyf, Gusir Höyük, etc. in the Dicle Basin stand out among these settlements. And still, new settlements have been being revealed and added among those annually.

Among the archaeological excavations in our region; while the most of the stone pots, stone beads and graves were found at the Kortik Hill, the most splendid monumental buildings, relief stones and statues were unearthed in Göbeklitepe.

Sharing the data gathered in recent years at an interdisciplinary congress with experts of the subject will make a great contribution to the understanding of the aforementioned age.

This year has been declared as “Göbeklitepe Year 2019” by Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the President of the Republic of Turkey. For this reason, the name of the mentioned international congress is considered as “International Göbeklitepe and Neolithic Age Settlements”.

Places to Visit

Sanlıurfa has always been the center of interest with its cultural and historical texture. It is an important center not only for the scientists but also for all those who are interested in history and culture in terms of having monuments of almost each period from the Neolithic Age to the present. In particular Gobeklitepe, which is referred the most important Neolithic Age Center, Harran that inholds the world first Islamic University - which was an important science center from 3000 B.C. to the 13th century A.D. - and the settlements called as Sogmatar, Şuayb şehri dating back to the Roman period as well as Bazda caves, which is considered the one of the most beautiful examples of the ancient stone quarry are top-priority places that come to mind. Rock tombs with mosaics and frescoes decoration dating back to the Roman period and Sanlıurfa Castle are also among the important centers of the city. The other must-see locations are Sanlıurfa Archaeological Museum, which has the largest neolithic artifacts section, and Sanlıurfa Mosaic Museum, which has a unique fully depicted copy of the entire life of Achilles alongside of Amazon Mozaic that are exhibited in-situ. In addition to these archaeological centers, the world famous Balıklıgöl where is reletad with legend of the Prophet Abraham and historical bazaars where handicrafts are still alive environs of its, are among the important cultural values of Sanlıurfa.