



**TÜRKİYE TABİATINI KORUMA DERNEĞİ**  
**TABIAT VE İNSAN DERGİSİ**  
*JOURNAL OF NATURE AND MAN*  
*2023 2(194)*

## **A CONTRIBUTION TO THE HISTORY AND PALEOBIOLOGY OF HARPUT/TÜRKİYE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS**

İlhami Kızıroğlu 

OSTİM Technical University, Faculty of Engineering Lecturer. Member; Yenimahalle,  
Ostim/Ankara  
ikiziroglu@gmail.com

**Referans:** Kızıroğlu İ (2023) A contribution to the history and paleobiology of Harput/Türkiye and its surroundings. *Tabiat ve İnsan*, 2(194), 50-66

## **A contribution to the history and paleobiology of Harput/Türkiye and its surroundings**

### **Özet**

The brief history of the development of Harput and its surroundings is discussed. Harput, which also controls the Chalcolithic settlement areas, includes settlements comprising both the villages of the Altınova and Baskil regions. The rich mineral resources of the region attracted the attention of many neighbouring countries as early as the Neolithic period. This must have been the reason why Harput and its surroundings were subjected to numerous invasions throughout history. In addition, it was one of the most important centres for agricultural activities in Eastern Anatolia since early times. During this period, Harput was also an important military and commercial centre. In addition, the town is located on the most important road connection of the past era. For these and similar reasons, the city has attracted the attention of various powers in each era and has been the subject of various sieges. In the process, nearly fifty civilisations settled in the region. Surface and deep explorations of the important hills of the region, which are inundated by the Keban and Karakaya reservoirs, are also significant for the history of Harput. By analysing some of the data obtained from these excavations, an attempt has also been made to determine the palaeobiological values of the region. Important findings and opinions are presented with regard to the historical significance of Harput and the relief of Harput, which bears the traces of a lived culture.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Harput, Keban and Karakaya rescue excavations; palaeobiology of the Harput area, Harput relief.

### **Harput/Türkiye ve çevresinin tarihine ve paleobiyolojisine bir katkı**

### **Abstract**

Harput ve çevresinin gelişiminin kısa tarihi ele alınmıştır. Kalkolitik yerleşim alanlarını da kontrol eden Harput, hem Altınova köylerini hem de Baskil bölgelerini kapsayan yerleşimleri içeriyor. Bölgenin zengin maden kaynakları Neolitik dönem gibi erken bir tarihte birçok komşu ülkenin ilgisini çekmiştir. Harput ve çevresinin tarih boyunca sayısız istilaya uğramasının nedeni bu olsa gerek. Ayrıca erken çağlardan beri Dođu Anadolu'daki tarımsal faaliyetlerin en önemli merkezlerinden biri olmuştur. Bu dönemde Harput aynı zamanda önemli bir askeri ve ticari merkezdi. Ayrıca ilçe, geçmiş dönemin en önemli karayolu bağlantısı üzerinde yer almaktadır. Bu ve benzeri sebeplerle şehir her devirde çeşitli güçlerin ilgisini çekmiş ve çeşitli kuşatmalara konu olmuştur. Bu süreçte bölgeye elliye yakın uygarlık yerleşmiştir. Keban ve Karakaya baraj göllerinin suları altında kalan bölgenin önemli tepelerinin yüzey ve derin araştırmaları da Harput'un tarihi açısından önem taşımaktadır. Bu kazılardan elde edilen bazı veriler analiz edilerek bölgenin paleobiyolojik değerleri de belirlenmeye çalışılmıştır. Harput'un tarihsel önemi ve yaşanmış bir kültürün izlerini taşıyan Harput kabartması hakkında önemli tespitler ve görüşler sunulmaktadır.

**Keywords:** Harput, Keban ve Karakaya kurtarma kazıları, Harput yöresinin paleobiyolojisi, Harput kabartması.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

One of the oldest settlements in the region of Eastern Anatolia is Harput and its surroundings (Sungurođlu 1958; 1959; 1961; 1968). Settlement in this region has been shown to date back to the Neolithic period (Figure 1 and 2) (Özdoğan 2018; Kizirođlu 2022; 2023). Göbekli Tepe



The Neolithic period is a period roughly between 10 000 and 5 800 BC. It is divided into three periods. The ceramic-free Neolithic period is dated to between 10 000 and 7 000 BC. This period is divided into three sub-phases: A, B and C. Between 7 000 BC and 5 800 BC lies the pottery-free Neolithic (New Stone Age). The Harput/Elazığ, Palu, Bingöl and Malatya plains on the north side of the southeastern Taurus arc and above 800-1000 m are also part of the Neolithic Formation Zone (Figure 1). In other words: Not only plains and mountain slopes, but also high-altitude areas can be included in the Neolithic settlement region. The excavations at Caferhöyük and Çayönü in the Kharpert geography include the first finds of rectangular architecture of the Pottery Neolithic Period-B (7600-7200 BC), as well as the advances in growth, relief and craftsmanship during the transition from the Pottery Neolithic Period-A to the Pottery Neolithic Period-B. Pottery Neolithic - Middle Period (7200-6500 BC) (Alpman 1981; Rollefson 1989; Harmankaya 1997; Atlı, Binder 2007; Özdoğan 2007; Çoksolmaz 2011; Alparslan 2014; Aslantürk 2014; Dietrich et al. 2015; Coşkun 2018; Ağırsoy 2019; Luckert 2019).

Both in Göbekli Tepe and in the surrounding areas, a very complex social construction, a settlement order, is not the beginning of a new development. For in this geography there may have been a long period of development and a way of life with rules and principles. Only 5 per cent of the archaeological site of Göbekli Tepe has been uncovered (oral report by Prof. Schmidt). This site also shows the evolutionary change of the oldest settlement in the world. Human communities living within a radius of 200-300 km came to this great settlement to perform their religious rituals. The people who built and used it must have lived in periods that can be dated much earlier (Schmidt 1998; 2000; 2013; 2016; Çoksolmaz 2011; Dietrich et al. 2015; Luckert 2019).

Sites such as Cafer Höyük (Malatya), Boytepe (Elazığ) and Çınaz III (Elazığ) in the geography of Harput and its surroundings have proven that the view that the Neolithic period was not suitable for hunter-gatherers and the first agricultural communities to live due to harsh winters is not correct (Çoksolmaz 2011). Moreover, it is found that the highest number of settlements in the pottery-free Neolithic period is 38 per cent in the Southeast Anatolia region and 10 per cent in the East Anatolia region, including Harput. In other words, despite the steep geography and harsh climate in Eastern Anatolia, settlements have been found there (Harmankaya 1997; Atlı, Binder 2007; Çoksolmaz 2011). Harput is also a region with similar climatic effects. New systematic, deep archaeological excavations being carried out here may lead to much new information. Cafer Höyük and Çayönü are near Malatya and Çınaz III is in Elazığ. The data obtained at these sites, especially the rock paintings, prove that agriculture and agricultural production were practised in these regions. In particular, the Çınaz III mound can be dated to layer B of the pottery-free Neolithic. This could date the history of Harput to 7600-7200 BC (Özdoğan 1977a; 1977b; 2007; 2018; 2019).

The excavations at Makaraztepe in the Tepecik village of Elazığ led to the dating of the site to the end of the Old Hittite period and the beginning of the Middle Hittite period (Goetze 1955; Sevinç 2008; Özdoğan 1976b; 2018). Various Hittite finds have also been made in İmikuşığı, Tülintepe (Esin, 1976b; Esin, Arsebük 1974; 1982; Yalçın, Yalçın 2009) and Korucutepe (Ertem 1979) near Aşağı İçme, providing important information about the history of the region (Loon 1971; 1968/70; Griffin 1980; Umurtak 1996; Coşkun 2018). As can be seen in Figure 3, Chalcolithic layers were found during the rescue excavations in the region of the Keban and Karakaya reservoirs. These are Norşuntepe, Tepecik, Pular (Sakyol), Han İbrahim Şah, Kamikli, Gemibaşı Maltepe, Habibuşığı, Körtepe, Üyücektepe, Şentepe, İmikuşığı, Şemsiyetepe, Korucutepe, Değirmentepe and Ađın Kalaycık (Hauptmann 1969/70; 1974; Serdarođlu 1969; 1970; 1971; 1972; Esin 1979a; Ertem 1972; 1982; Koşay 1976; Sevin 1986;

1988a; 1988b; 1998; Konyar 2006; Çoksolmaz 2011). The district of Maden in the geography of Harput is rich in copper mines. Copper was mined as early as 7000 BC (Kunç, Gül 1983).

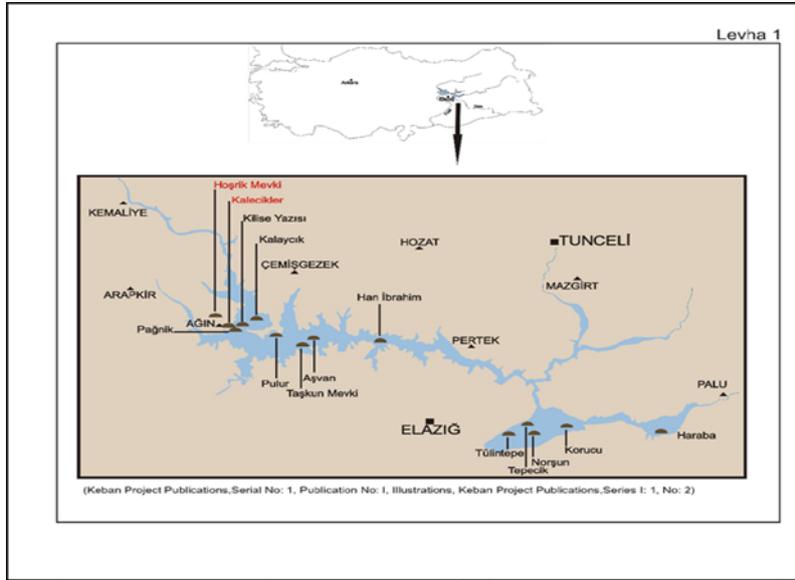


Figure 3. Keban Project excavation locations map from (Coşkun 2018).

The C14 analyses of excavated objects from Çayönü, one of the settlements in the region, show that the natural copper and metal industry dates back to 7250-6750 BC (Yiğit, 1995; 2005; Çoksolmaz 2011). The excavations at Tulintepe, dated to the end of 6000 BC, found copper slag, filings and ingots, as well as furnaces, crucibles and moulds in which they were smelted (Esin 1976b; 1979b; 2000). This proves that metal smelting techniques were known in this region. Information was given about the Karaz culture in and around Harput, as well as about the civilisations that lived in the different eras (Arsebük 1974; 1979; 1986; Ökse 1988; Yalçın, Yalçın 2003; Işıklı 2007; Yalçın 2012; Akçelik 2018; Kiziroğlu 2022; 2023).

## 1.2. Palaeobiological diversity of Harput and its surroundings

The analysis of the remains of prehistoric, Myocene mammals from the Muğla-Yatağan Formation and the animal reliefs depicted on the obelisks at Göbeklitepe, for example, are related to the richness of hunting in the strata of society that were hunters. In this context, all kinds of insects, scorpions, reptiles, birds (goose and crane figures) and predators provide valuable information about the biodiversity of that time (Geraads et al. 2002; Özdoğan 2018). These creatures, very realistically rendered in relief, have survived to this day and give us important clues about the ecosystem of the time. This is an indication that even in prehistoric times people developed a belief system centred on "nature" (Schmidt 2007; 2016; Dietrich et al. 2015; Kiziroğlu 2019; Luckert 2019). In the excavations in Harput and the surrounding area, wheat, millet, lentils, barley and grapes stand out as specific cereal finds from the Chalcolithic period. The excavations in Tepecik (Özdoğan 2018) also yielded records of food culture. Bones of domestic animals such as cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, dogs and donkeys were found during the excavations carried out between 1970 and 1973. In the excavations at Pulur in the Harput region, representations of birds of prey, snakes, deer and turtles, symbols of goddesses and gods, which are rare in Anatolia, were found. Besides bones of domestic animals such as cattle, sheep and goats, bones of wild animals such as deer, wild sheep, wild goats, wild horses, lions and bears were also found. Most of the animal bones found at Körtepe are from domestic

animals and a few from wild animals. However, the remains of wild animals recovered from other mounds of Altinova are more diverse and widespread (Esin 1970; 1976a; 1976b; Boessneck, Driesch 1975; 1976a; 1976b; 1979; Koşay 1976; Bököny 1982; Arslantaş 2014). During the excavations carried out as part of the rescue work at Keban Dam, more remains of wild animals have been found than in other settlements in the region. This fact gives important clues about the biodiversity in this geographical structure. Accordingly, the following vertebrate classes (Vertebrata) were found during the evaluation of the skeletal remains in the region.

#### A-Mammals (Mammalia):

1-Rabbits (Lagomorpha); I-Rabbits (Leporidae): a-Rabbits (*Lepus europaeus*)  
2-Rodentia: I-Squirrel family (Sciuridae): a-Squirrel (*Sciurus anomalus*); II-Beaver family (Castoridae): a-Beaver (*Castor fiber*);  
3-Predators (Carnivora): I-Dogaceae (Canidae): a- Wolf (*Canis lupus*); b- Red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*); III-Sansaraceae (Mustelidae): a- Weasel (*Mustela nivalis*); III-Bearaceae (Ursidae): a-Bear (*Ursus arctos*); IV-Hyenas (Hyaenidae): a- Striped hyena (*Hyaena hyaena*); V-Feline (Felidae): a- Wild cat (*Felis silvestris*); b- Anatolian panther (*Panthera pardus tulliana*);  
4-Dual ungulates (Artodactyla): I-Pigs (Suidae): a- Wild boar (*Sus scrofa*); II-Deer (Cervidae): a- Red deer (*Cervus elaphus*), the most common species; b- Fallow deer (*Dama dama*); c- Roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*); III-Horned deer (Bovidae): a- Wild goat (*Capra aegagrus*); b- Wild sheep (*Ovis gmelini anadolica*); c- Wild cattle (*Bos primigenius*); d- Wild ox (*Bos taurus*); e- Bison (*Bison bonasus*);

#### B- Birds (Aves):

1- Nonpasserine birds (Nonpasseres):  
I-Anseridae; a-Grey Goose (*Anser anser*), b-Green Duck (*Anas platyrhynchos*),  
II-Raptors (Accipitridae): a-Red hawk (*Buteo rufinus*),  
III-Grouse (*Alectoris chukar*), Lark (*Otis tarda*), Coot (*Bubo bubo*); Pigeon (*Streptopelia decaocta*);  
2- Passerine birds (Passeres); I-Crows (Corvidae); a-Elster (*Pica pica*), b-Dwarf crow (*Coleus monedula*); II-Crows (Passeridae); a-Serpent (*Passer domesticus*); III-Terns (Sturnidae); a-Terns (*Sturnus vulgaris*)

#### C- Reptiles (Reptilia);

I- Tortoises (Testudinidae); a- Tortoise (*Testudo graeca*);  
the remains of these species provide important information on the biodiversity of the region.

The excavations at the settlement of Ergani Çayönü, which has similar characteristics to the geography of Harput and is considered an example of the transition to the first production activities, have revealed that the bones of red deer (*Cervus elaphus*), which were found in large numbers in four of the five layers, date to around 7400-6600 BC. This indicates that the settlement in question was forested at that time (Boessneck, Driesch 1976a). Although these archaeozoological and palynological results seem to contradict each other, the faunal data obtained from the salvage excavations in Altinova, which will be flooded by the Keban Dam, were evaluated in accordance with the surface formation and climate of that time (Boessneck, Driesch 1979). The results of the faunal data from the rescue excavations of the settlements that will be flooded under the waters of the Keban Dam are in complete and accurate agreement

with the surface formations and climate of the region in question (Boessneck, Driesch 1976a; 1976b). The small number of partridges (*Otis tarda*) indicates the existence of steppe areas in Altinova since the Chalcolithic period and also today. The area where the Chalcolithic partridge bones were found is a sparse and degraded oak lowland forest, which has preserved its similar structure until today. The ecosystems inhabited by wild sheep and wild goats in the Chalcolithic and today were found to be similar, and these two species preferred to live in mountainous and steep areas outside forested areas, then as now. The number of bones of wild goats (*Capra aegagrus*) and wild sheep (*Ovis ammon*) found in the excavations is similar. Anatolian wild sheep, living mainly in steppe areas, preferred to graze on the dry steppe strips in the region. The wet areas in the lower parts of the valleys indicate the presence of coastal forests suitable for red deer and wild boar. A gazelle bone found in the Early Bronze Age layers of Norşuntepe, one of the hills of Altinova, suggests that this steppe animal species may have been introduced to Altinova instead of the forested areas, unless it was brought from other region (Bökönyi 1982). In the Late Chalcolithic, the red deer frequently found in the EBA layers of Korucutepe also indicates that forested areas existed here. While the Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age settlement of Tulintepe has the lowest proportion of faunal finds and wildlife data, the faunal remains from Habusu Körtepe, one of the burial mounds of Altinova, show that wild animals were much more diverse and widespread in the Chalcolithic than domestic animals. 95 per cent of the animal bones from Tulintepe (Esin 1976b; 1979a; 1979b; 2000; Esin Arsebük 1974; 1982) belong to domestic animals. Among them, cattle (*Bos taurus*) take the first place. Sheep (*Ovis aries*) and goat (*Capra hircus*) are in second place with 50 percent. The wild animal maral (*Cervus elaphus maral*) accounts for more than half of the wild animal bones. The ancestors of domestic animals such as wild sheep (*Ovis ammon*), Bezoar goat (*Capra aegagrus*) and wild boar (*Sus scrofa*) were rarely found. A single roe deer bone (*Capreolus capreolus*) might have been brought to Tulintepe from outside, or it might have lived in Altinova, considering the specimens from Tepecik and Norşuntepe. Predators include brown bear (*Ursus arctos*), red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*), hare (*Lepus eurapaeus*) and beaver (*Castor fiber*). Apart from the goose (*Casarca cerniginza*, *Anas platyrhynchos*), which winters only in Altinova, all the native birds are white vulture (*Neophron parnopterus*), crested lark (*Otis tarda*) and hooded crow (*Corvus corone cornix*). It is known that at the time of the settlement of Altinova in the Chalcolithic period, the Heringet stream, which irrigated the plain, flowed more slowly than it does today, and mussels, water turtles and ducks lived on its banks. Besides the water turtle (*Clemmys caspica caspica*), the land turtle (*Testudo graeca iberica*) is also common in the region (Boessneck, Driesch 1975).

The identifiable tree species found in Korucu Tepe are helpful for the Chalcolithic vegetation in the Altinova region. The charred samples found in the quarries, which were used for both construction and burning purposes, show that the tree species in the forest on the humid ground of the plain are mainly poplar (*Populus* sp.), ash (*Fraxinus* sp.) and elm (*Ulmus* sp.). In the forest belt in the mountains around the plain, oak (*Quercus* sp.) is the predominant species. Oak is followed by eucalyptus, pistachio (*Pistachia* sp.), maple (*Acer* sp.) and juniper (*Juniperus* sp.) in much smaller and insignificant numbers. For poplar, ash and elm one does not have to go far, while for oak one has to go to the surrounding mountains (Zeist, Bakker-Heeres 1975; Kiziroğlu 2015). Besides cultivated plants, marsh and wasteland plants form the plant remains that help explain the vegetation of the area. These plants were found in the Korucutepe strata between 4500 and 3500 BC. They are marsh and wetland plants such as *Carex* spp., *Cyperus* spp. (buckthorn); *Eleocharis* spp. (dwarf sedge), *Potentilla* spp. (cinquefoil), *Ranunachis* spp., *Cucumis* spp. (melon); *Amaranthus* spp., *Adonis dentata*, (partridge eye); *Fumaria* spp. (hawthorn) (Zeist, Bakker-Heeres 1975).

Looking at the results of the pollen analysis of Lake Van in comparison with the results of the excavations, we find that the palynological results indicate a cold and dry climate ten thousand years ago, while woody vegetation prevailed in the Diyarbakır/Ergani region at the same time. The results from Lake Van indicate that in the 5th millennium BC, i.e. in the Chalcolithic period, the amount of moisture and precipitation sufficient for the spread of trees was reached, while in the Keban region at the same time an expansion of forested areas and a diversification of tree species can be observed. However, in the years 7000 and 6000, steppes and sparse trees on the slopes are also observed in the Keban region (Özbaşaran 1992).

### 1.3. Harput-Relief

The most interesting thing about the excavations in Göbekli Tepe is that the animal reliefs, which provide information about the biodiversity (Hauptmann, Schmidt 2000; Schmidt 2007; 2016; Dietrich et al. 2015; Kızıroğlu 2019) of the region at that time, have been preserved until today, as if they were made only yesterday. The Anatolian population of that time lived by hunting and gathering and used the area as a place of worship. In the course of development after this time, people in and around the region settled down and began to engage in writing and administration, the production of art objects and trade. In 2006, the oldest human figure in the world was found here (Zick 2008). The first settled hunters of prehistory/prehistoric times lived in Nevalı Çori. The inhabitants of Göbekli Tepe depicted various creatures on obelisks as divine analyses; however, plants and fish were not found on these stones. The relief at Harput, on the other hand, depicts people travelling in boats on the river, and it can be seen that water systems were used (Schmidt 2016). It is possible that the inhabitants of the Harput/Elazığ region were engaged in fishing and river transport during the Neolithic period (Figure 4). Finds from the excavations in the Keban and Karakaya reservoirs show that agriculture was highly developed in this region during the ancient Bronze Age. Grain wells are located next to the houses; grain processing tools such as dibek and grinding stone mortars have been found (Esin 1970; Koşay 1976; Hauptmann 1982).



Figure 4. The horse at the entrance gate of the city, holding the entrance gate of the city, indicates the importance attributed to the horse (taken from Demir et al. 2016; Dönmez 2017). The Harput Relief is 2.72 metres high and 2.25 metres wide and is divided into five parts. It is in Elazığ Archaeological and Ethnographic Museum. The Harput Relief and the epic narrative with elements of imagery; the resistance and capture of the attackers who used a tower that could move with wheels to overcome the city walls and capture the city (Demir et al. 2016; Dönmez 2017).

The Harput relief, which was accidentally caught in the excavator during the reforestation of Kurey Tepe in Harput, is of great importance for illuminating the history of Harput and the

region: "With the Harput relief it will be possible to date Harput to an even earlier period than the previously known and assumed history of Harput, e.g. to a period of 2700 BC, perhaps to 7600-7200 BC, i.e. to even earlier years, see Çınaz III, Cafer Höyük, Boytepe and Çayönü. The historical events depicted on the relief take place around the city walls that border the city. The depiction in Figure 5 shows a horse standing guard at the entrance gate of the city wall. In other words, the horse was assigned the most important role in the defence of the fortress. The palaeozoological significance of this horse is very great. In this context, the evolutionary history of the wild horse goes back to 50 million years ago. The wild horse, which lives in forested areas, is 20 cm tall and has many fingers. It eats mainly plant leaves. Its fingers are sharp. Over the next 40 million years, the size of the horse increases and the time begins when it feeds on meadow plants. With the increase of steppes and the decrease of forested areas about ten million years ago, the horse's feet gradually acquired a hoof structure and resembled today's horse. It spread mainly in the grasslands of North America and reached a size of 120 cm. The precursors of today's horse can be traced to Eurasia only 1.5 million years ago (Kiziroğlu, 2010). The horse has been man's closest friend for thousands of years. It is an indispensable helper, making his life easier and assisting him at every stage. According to some DNA analyses, the horse was domesticated 5500 years ago in Central Asia, Asia Minor, Kazakhstan, the Caucasus steppes, Ukraine, Egypt and Romania (a thousand years earlier than the date assumed before these studies). About 12 000 years ago, i.e. during the last Ice Age, the colour of the horse was brown and black, but with the intervention of man, different horse colours emerged (Ludwig et al. 2009; Outram et al. 2009).



Figure 5. Alalu sitting on his throne with his scepter in his hand and Anu, one of the gods, offering him booty

The fact that no horse reliefs were carved on the T-shaped, 5 m high and 12-15 ton stone blocks at Göbekli Tepe, considered the sacred site of the oldest civilisation in Mesopotamia, shows that the horse was still unknown there (Schmidt 2016; Kiziroğlu 2019). Until two thousand years BC, the fate of wars was determined by heavily equipped infantry; from two thousand years BC, however, the horse was harnessed in front of chariots in Asia Minor and Egypt and played a role in changing the fortunes of war. The first use of the horse was not in Mesopotamia, but in the remote mountainous regions and the steppes beyond. For this reason, the Sumerians called the horse "mountain donkey". The horse, which became involved in the social life of Mesopotamia around 3500 BC, was a very rare and precious animal that was only ridden on the chariots of royal officials (Usta 2018). The horse breed at the gate (Figure 2), which resembles today's horse and is one of the most important figures in the events depicted

on the Harput relief because of its importance, could be a steppe horse breed best suited for cold conditions, war, carrying loads and other purposes. It is believed that this breed gained prominence when tribes from Central Asia, South Asia, Mesopotamia and the Northeast came to Harput and settled here. This steppe horse breed, which has an upright shoulder and a straight neck, can gallop without tiring and is very successful over long distances. Another characteristic of this breed is that it is good-natured and hardy and can easily adapt to difficult climatic conditions; it tolerates drought and is very frugal when it comes to food(tierfreunde). For this reason, the steppe horse that waits in front of the gate of the city wall in the relief of Harput is the most important element of the relief. The tame horse was first used by the Hurri (a tribe said to have originated in the North Caucasus) to pull two-wheeled carts. This horse breed is probably the "steppe horse breed", as it resembles the one depicted on the relief. The same study states that the Hurrians are also called "warrior tribes with chariots" for this reason. The diverse excavations to be carried out in the region of the Harput relief will provide a far more satisfactory archaeological interpretation.

The relief in Harput is said to be 4000 years old (Figure 3-4) (Demir et al. 2016). The Hittite and Assyrian representations of war and especially the depiction of the use of the wheel tower as a war material are extremely significant and important. The goddess with a serpentine body from the waist down and an eagle's claw as a symbol of power stands over two naked enemy soldiers above the entrance gate of the city wall, lifting an enemy soldier whom she has defeated. The figure of the goddess with the serpentine body from the waist down is also found in the Old Babylonian period and is actually considered to be an underground goddess with Egyptian artistic features (Dönmez 2017). It is believed that the goddess, who is the main iconographic element of the relief, played an important role in winning the war. She is also associated with the powers of the underworld and is said to bring wealth and prosperity. The snake, which has been assigned this role, has been symbolised since prehistoric times (Demir et al. 2016; Dönmez 2017; 2019a; 2019b). The relief found by chance on Kurey Hill, named the Harput Relief, gives us important clues about Harput and its surroundings. The information and documents obtained from the systematic and palaeozoological studies to be carried out in this region will perhaps trace the history of Harput much further back. In the temples of the air god Tessup Arrapka (Kirkuk) and Haleb (Aleppo), chariots drawn by two bulls called Seris and Huris, representing the gods of day and night, also refer to the concept of time. Chepat, the sun god, and Kumarbi, the father of the gods, are also depicted. In the clay tablet inscriptions at Boğazköy, the capital of the Hittites, around 1600 BC, Kumarbi, the time god of the Hurrians, appears in the myths as Alalu, the god of the king of heaven. Alalu sits on his throne and Anu, the first of the gods, stands before him. Later Anu started a war against Alalu, defeated him, chased him deep into the black earth and sat on the throne. Anu was provided with water and food by the mighty Kumarbi; after nine years Anu served as god of the sky; then he went to war against Kumarbi, the chief god of the Hurrians and Hittites, but could not prevail against Kumarbi and flew into the sky as a bird. Probably one of these bulls points to the gods called Night (Huris) and the other to Day (Seris). We can say that the representation of these two bulls is important to express the Hurri or Hittite god Tessup/Tesup, who is responsible for weather events and the concept of time. The same god is also known to be depicted in the temples of Kirkuk and Aleppo. In the cuneiform and clay tablets of the Hittite capital Hattusa (Boğazköy), Kumarbi, the god of time from the myths of the Hurrians, expresses the god of heaven in early Anatolian times (Güterbock 1946; Otten 1950; 1961; Lüdge 2008; Macqueen 2009).

The bulls, considered by the Hurrians to be the gods of day and night, were used to pull the chariot. The free depiction of these two bulls on the Harput relief can be seen as a small contribution to the presence of the Hurrians here.

The upper part of the Harput relief shows snapshots of war and booty. The Hurrians, perhaps the first tribe in Kharpert, not only fight but also depict the settlement of the people, as can be seen in the lower part of the relief. It is clear that agriculture as well as water management and animal husbandry were practised here. The relief of Harput shows the traces of the settlement of Catalhöyük, which represents the first agricultural and hunting society of Anatolia and dates from the time when the sedentary order was introduced, possibly even covering a history of at least 8,000-9,000 years. Due to the extensive and systematic archaeological investigations being carried out on the Kurey mound of Harput, it will be possible to date Harput to a much earlier period.

## **2. RESULTS**

An attempt has been made to provide some historical information on the chronology of the civilisations that ruled Harput and the Elazığ region based on the source data. The importance of Harput and its surroundings in the historical process has been highlighted. In addition, summary information on the settlement and archaeological history of Harput and its immediate surroundings from thousands of years ago to the present is presented in this study.

Especially before the formation of the Keban and Karakaya reservoirs, very rich information about the history of Harput and its surroundings was collected through rescue excavations in the neighbouring regions in the immediate vicinity of Harput. These excavations have brought to light much that is unknown about the history of the region. However, it is to be noted that much more important information and documents can be obtained if systematic and regular excavations are carried out in the region.

In this study, it was found that the history of Harput can be traced back to the Pottery-free Neolithic Period. The faunal and floristic biodiversity of Harput and its surrounding ecosystem was also determined through the analysis of bone and plant remains of the animals that lived in the Pottery-free Neolithic Period.

Some information on the representation of the relief of Harput is also given and suggestions are made.

### **Declaration of Competing Interests**

The authors declare no competing interests.

### 3. KAYNAKÇA

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