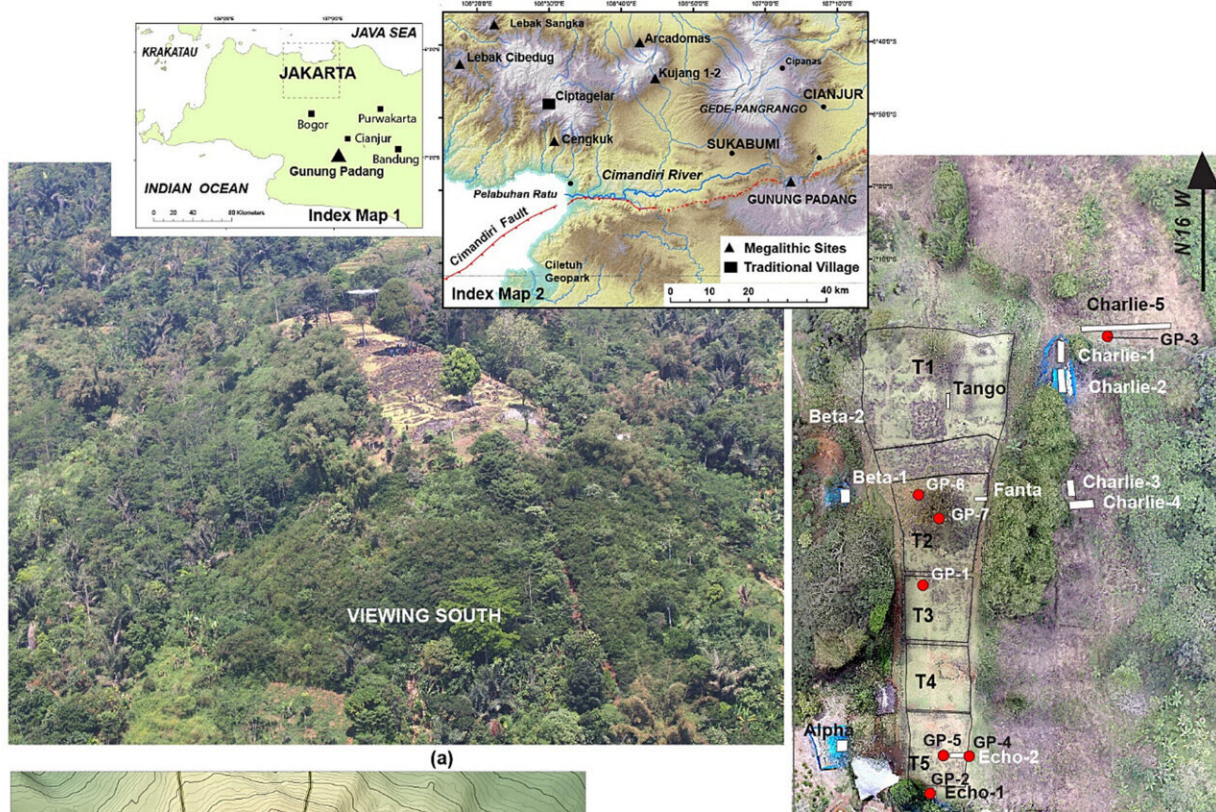


New evidence strongly suggests Indonesia's Gunung Padang is oldest known pyramid

November 6 2023, by Bob Yirka



(a) Aerial view of Gunung Padang taken from a helicopter. (b) Topography and site map generated from a detailed geodetic survey. (c) Geology map of the Gunung Padang region (Sudjatkiko, 1972). (d) Orthophoto map obtained from a drone survey conducted in 2014, indicating the locations of trenching sites (white rectangles) and core-drilling sites (red dots). T1, Terrace 1; T2, Terrace 2; T3,

Terrace 3; T4, Terrace 4; T5, Terrace 5. Credit: *Archaeological Prospection* (2023). DOI: 10.1002/arp.1912

Retraction Note: The research article "[Geo-archaeological prospecting of Gunung Padang buried prehistoric pyramid in West Java, Indonesia](#)," originally published in the *Archaeological Prospection*, has been retracted.

A team of archaeologists, geophysicists, geologists, and paleontologists affiliated with multiple institutions in Indonesia has found evidence showing that Gunung Padang is the oldest known pyramid in the world. In their paper [published](#) in the journal *Archaeological Prospection*, the group describes their multi-year study of the cultural heritage site.

Gunung Padang has for many years been considered a megalithic structure—it sits on top of an extinct volcano in West Java, Indonesia, and is considered by locals to be a sacred site. In 1998, it was declared to be a cultural heritage site. For many years there has been disagreement regarding the nature of the hill. Some have suggested it was made naturally with humans adding some adornments on top, while others have argued that evidence has suggested the hill was all or mostly man-made.

For this new study, the research team conducted a long-term, scientific study of the structure. Over the years 2011 to 2015, they studied the structure using seismic tomography, electrical resistivity tomography and ground-penetrating radar. They also drilled down into the hill and collected [core samples](#) that allowed them to use radiocarbon dating techniques to learn the ages of the layers that make up the hill.

In studying all their data, the research team found what they describe as clear evidence showing that the Gunung Padang was made mostly by [human hands](#). They also found evidence showing that the structure was built in stages, thousands of years apart. And, they found that the older parts of the structure were made sometime between 25,000 and 14,000 years ago, making it the oldest known pyramid in the world today.

More specifically, the researchers found evidence of several efforts that together over time, added up to a completed structure. The first consisted of sculpted lava—where builders had carved shapes onto the top of a small, dead [volcano](#). Then, several thousand years later, sometime between 7900 to 6100 BCE, another group added a layer of bricks and rock columns. Some unknown time later, another group added a dirt layer to part of the hill, covering some of the earlier work. Then sometime between 2000 and 1100 BCE yet another group added more top soil, stone terracing, and other elements.

The research team has also found some evidence suggesting there might be some hollow parts inside the structure, suggesting possible hidden chambers. They plan to drill down to them and then lower a camera to see what might be in these areas.

More information: Danny Hilman Natawidjaja et al, Geo-archaeological prospecting of Gunung Padang buried prehistoric pyramid in West Java, Indonesia, *Archaeological Prospection* (2023). [DOI: 10.1002/arp.1912](https://doi.org/10.1002/arp.1912)

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