WHAT HAPPENS WHEN DROUGHT REVEALS ANCIENT BUILDINGS BENEATH THE WATER?

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Falling water levels in Turkish lakes and reservoirs are revealing buildings and landscapes that have been hidden for years. At Lake ?znik, the remains of a large basilica have emerged from the water. Some archaeologists think it may be connected with the Council of Nicaea, an important Christian meeting held in AD 325. Other drying lakes have revealed an Iron Age settlement, medieval castle remains, Ottoman wooden structures and prehistoric rock art. The discoveries are exciting, but the dry conditions can also damage them. Wooden buildings and other materials survived underwater because they were protected from oxygen and sunlight. Once exposed, they can crack, rot or become easier for looters to reach. The changes are linked to drought, falling water levels and climate change. Researchers are recording and protecting the remains before the water rises again or the sites deteriorate.

WHY IS THIS INTERESTING?

The story connects ancient history with a problem happening today. Climate change is not only changing landscapes and water supplies. It is also uncovering some parts of the past while putting them at risk. It shows that historical evidence can be lost through natural change just as easily as through war, building work or looting.

THINK LIKE A HISTORIAN

“Why did some ancient buildings survive underwater but face danger when exposed?”

Source: National Geographic

https://www.nationalgeographic.com/history/article/turkey-lakes-drought-archaeology-basilica-saint-neophytos