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THE PLACE OF DOLMENS IN THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF TURKEY – A REVIEW

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Abstract
Dolmens and other megalithic monuments are important elements of European prehistory. Similar kinds of monuments have been known to exist in Turkey since the 1930s, and research on these monuments has continued intermittently until the present day. However, megalithic monuments in Turkey remain poorly understood, due in part to a relative lack of research interest in these monuments, and in part to terminological confusion among archaeologists. This article discusses terminological issues related to dolmens, and summarizes the history of research in Turkey of these megalithic monuments. Then the article reviews the approximately 1100 dolmens currently known in Turkey. Almost all of these dolmens are in three different regions (middle Euphrates-Cilicia, Kars, Turkish Thrace) at the edges of the country, and the dolmens in each of these regions have a different architectural character and chronological position.

Keyword: Dolmen, Megalithism, Turkey, Anatolian prehistory

Türkiye Arkeolojisinde Dolmenlerin Yeri – Bir Değerlendirme

Öz
Dolmenler ve diğer megalitik anıtlar, Avrupa tarihöncesinin önemli unsurlarıdır. Türkiye'de de benzer türden anıtların var olduğu, 1930'lardan beri bilinmektedir ve bu anıtlar üzerine yapılan araştırmalar günümüze kadar, aralıklı olarak, devam etmiştir. Bununla birlikte, Türkiye'deki megalitik anıtlar, kısmen bu anıtlara yönelik araştırma

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ilgisinin görece eksikliğinden ve kısmen de arkeologlar arasındaki terminolojik karışıklıktan dolayı tam olarak anlaşılamamıştır. Bu makale, dolmenlerle ilgili terminolojik konuları tartışmakta ve Türkiye'deki bu megalitik anıtların araştırılma tarihini özetlemektedir. Makale daha sonra, şu anda Türkiye'de bilinen yaklaşık 1100 dolmeni değerlendirmektedir. Bu dolmenlerin neredeyse tamamı, ülkenin sınırlarında, üç farklı bölgede (Orta Fırat-Kilikya, Kars, Türkiye Trakyası) bulunmaktadır ve bu bölgelerin her birinde bulunan dolmenler farklı bir mimari karaktere ve kronolojik konuma sahiptir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Dolmen, Megalitizm, Türkiye, Anadolu prehistoryası

INTRODUCTION

The words “megalith”, “megalithic” and “megalithism” have several different meanings in Turkish archaeology. In one usage, these words simply refer to construction with ‘large stones,’ and even a brief internet search shows these terms applied to places as diverse as Neolithic Göbekli Tepe and Roman Baalbek. At least in the latter context, “megalithic” is basically equivalent to “cyclopean.” In a more restricted usage, these terms are applied to implicitly prehistoric structures of large undressed stones. Such structures are typically classified as dolmens, menhirs and cromlechs.

The latter meaning reflects the French-inspired tradition of prehistoric archaeology which Şevket Aziz Kansu initiated in Turkey during the 1930s. Kansu earned a medical degree in Istanbul, and then in 1927 traveled to Paris to study physical anthropology. On his return to Turkey in 1929 he taught anthropology and, in 1935, he helped to establish the Faculty of Language, History and Geography (Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi) in Ankara, where he developed the program of prehistoric archaeology. As part of this program Kansu published *Prehistorya Araştırmalarında Metodlar* (Kansu, 1938), as a textbook for Turkish students. This short work was in fact a translated abridgement of the second edition of *Manuel de recherche préhistorique* (Société Préhistorique Française, 1929), which had appeared shortly before Kansu returned to Turkey. In his book Kansu used the terms menhir (and also the Turkish equivalent *dikilitaş*), stone alignment (*sıra taşları*), cromlech, dolmen and tumulus. He characterized as megalithic these kinds of structures (Kansu, 1938, p.94-98).

Turkish researchers today use these terms in a fairly consistent way. However, terminological problems do emerge with “dolmen” and “tumulus” as classes of funerary monuments. Turkey is at the geographical intersection of continents. The country is also at the intersection of three different intellectual traditions of archaeology. Many researchers follow the western European

tradition of prehistoric archaeology that Kansu introduced to Turkey, and these researchers speak of dolmens, menhirs and so forth. In this tradition, a dolmen is a chamber of large, usually roughly shaped stones. The chamber is built upon the ground surface, and it need not be enclosed by earth or rubble. This intellectual tradition makes an explicit allusion to megalithism, i.e. the incorporation of large stones in prehistoric monuments.

Other researchers follow a tradition of classical archaeology which uses the term 'tumulus' as a catch-all for any kind of mounded covering over a burial chamber of any structural type. In this regard, a relatively small tumulus of stone rubble is equivalent to the Scottish word 'cairn,' a term which is rarely used in Turkey but which is common employed in Near Eastern archaeology as an alternative to tumulus. Some researchers, notably among those working in northeastern Anatolia (e.g. Köroğlu, 2000; Özfırat, 2009), have adopted the term "kurgan," again in reference to any burial below a mound of earth or stone rubble. This usage follows the tradition inherited from Russian/Soviet archaeology in the neighboring Transcaucasian states and the (Turkic) steppes, and indeed the archaeological cultures involved span the modern borders.

In itself a tumulus, a cairn or a kurgan has no necessary relationship to megalithism. Use of the term "dolmen" draws attention to the nature and location of the chamber, i.e. a structure of large stones set upon the ground surface. In contrast, tumulus, kurgan and cairn draw attention to the earth or rubble mound that covers the chamber. The mound might enclose a chamber that is constructed of very large stones. For example the Kurtkale kurgans (on the left bank of the Kura River near the Georgian border) cover chambers roofed by slabs that may exceed 2 x 1 m in size (Köroğlu, 2000); the Talin kurgan no. 10 in Armenia covers a dolmen-like structure set upon the original ground surface (Kalantarian, 2011). But in most kurgans or tumuli, the burial is a simple pit, a timber chamber, a stone cist, or a chamber of dressed stone blocks. Even when the structural character of the chamber is evident, different researchers might identify the same monument as a dolmen, a tumulus or a kurgan. For example Kökten (1944) called a large structure at Akçakale a dolmen, while Köroğlu (2000) termed the same structure a kurgan. The structure may in fact not be prehistoric, but rather an Urartian (Iron Age) burial monument (Yükmen, 2003, p.30).

The following review follows the French-inspired vocabulary which Kansu introduced to archaeology in Turkey. Therefore these structures are identified by the character of the chamber rather than the covering over the chamber. Dolmens are known primarily from three distinct zones around the

edges of Turkey, in the northeast (Kars), the south (Euphrates-Cilicia) and the northwest (Thrace).

1. History of Megalithic Research in Turkey

Megalithic monuments in Anatolia were first mentioned when Ernest Chantre reported rumor of dolmens between Muş and Erzurum (Chantre, 1882). At this time, tombs identified as dolmens were well-known in Caucasia, and Jacques de Morgan (1890) excavated a number of these megalithic monuments near Lenkoran in the Talysh region of Azerbaijan. Megalithic research began in Bulgaria with the work of the Şkorpil brothers during the late 19th century, and in 1933 V. Mikov referred to dolmens in Turkish Thrace (Özdoğan & Akman, 1992, p.407). But neither the Francophone nor the Slavophone research had any direct effect on Turkish archaeology. Indeed, megalithic structures were only rarely reported in Turkey before the Second World War, examples being a standing stone in Elbistan (van der Osten, 1930, p.108, fig. 116) and megalithic circles in Malatya (Przyluski, 1937; see also Alvaro & Palumbi, 2014).

Following Kansu's creation of the archaeology program in Ankara, İ. Kılıç Kökten and others began regional surveys in many parts of Turkey during the 1940s and the following decades. These surveys encountered megalithic monuments of different kinds, as summarized in the following table. Typically the structures were reported with minimal detail, and with often unfounded speculation of date. Anecdotal reporting of dolmens continued during the 1980s and later, for example the three dolmens described from the classical town Limyra in Antalya (Borchhardt & Wurster, 1989). But more systematic research programs oriented toward megalithic structures also began during the 1980s. Mehmet Özdoğan's research program in Turkish Thrace included an explicit focus on dolmens (Özdoğan, 1982; Özdoğan, 1983; Özdoğan & Akman, 1992; Akman, 1997). This program led to spin-off projects that addressed standing stones/menhirs in Turkish Thrace (Erdoğu, 2003; Erdoğu, 2005; Erdoğu et al., 2002). Other research project during the 1990s focused on dolmens in Kars, Adıyaman, and Gaziantep (Yükmen, 2003), and in Hatay and Kahramanmaraş (Yükmen 2000; Yükmen, 2001; Yükmen Edens, 2003; Yükmen Edens, 2004; Yükmen Edens, 2012). More recently dolmens have been found in a prehistoric survey in Adana (Yükmen Edens, 2018; Yükmen Edens, 2019).

As this summary suggests, Turkish archaeology has given relatively little attention to megalithic structures. Most known dolmens (and other megalithic structures) appear in three geographical parts of Turkey – in southeastern Anatolia, in the Kars region of northeastern Anatolia, and in Turkish Thrace (Figure 1). Around 1100 dolmens have been reported from Turkey to date. The

great majority of these structures – over 90% – appear in southeastern Anatolia. Of the remainder, most are in Turkish Thrace and only a small number are in northeastern Anatolia. In addition a few dolmen-like structures are reported from Antalya in southwestern Anatolia. These include three structures reported from Limyra (Borchhardt & Wurster, 1989), and four structures at Gökçeören (Yükmen, 2003, p.26-27). These structures incorporated large shaped stones that are better characterized as "cyclopean" rather than "megalithic", and the structures very likely date to the Hellenistic period.

Table: Megaliths reported before 1980

Type	Province	Locality	Reference
"menhir"	Kahramanmaraş	Elbistan	van der Osten 1930
			Kökten 1960
	Ankara	Ilıcaköy	Kökten 1947
	Kastamonu	Eksen	Kökten 1951
,			Bostancı 1952
	Thrace	various	Kansu 1969
"cromlech"	Malatya	Gelinciktepe	Przyluski 1937
	Kars	Akçakale	Kökten1944
	Kahramanmaraş	various	Kökten 1960
"dolmen"	Kars	Akçakale	Kökten 1945
	Kahramanmaraş	Taşoluk	Kökten 1960
	Thrace	various	Kansu 1963
			Kansu 1969
			Kansu 1971
	Kars	Çaycı Köyü	Kansu 1964
	Antalya	near Karain	Kökten 1967

2. Dolmens in Southeastern Anatolia

Dolmens are documented in three geographically distinct sections of southeastern Anatolia (Figure 2): (1) elevated locations near right bank tributaries to the Euphrates River in Adıyaman, Gaziantep and Kahramanmaraş; (2) locations within the catchment of the Orontes River in Hatay; and (3) a coastal setting west of the Amanos Mountains in Adana. Most of the dolmens in all three settings are rectangular box-like structures. In their basic form, these structures are made with three large stone slabs (two side walls and a roof). This basic form is often called a trilithon (see Fraser, 2018). An additional slab may close the

back or both front and back ends of the chamber. In some locations in Hatay, passage graves and other structural types are common. These types include dolmens with walls made from multiple slabs set on edge plus a short entry passage, and chambers constructed of roughly coursed stones. These variations probably have a chronological significance. In the southern Levant, the trilithon form is firmly dated to 4th millennium BC, while other forms of megalithic graves date to the 3rd and early 2nd millennium BC (most recently, Fraser, 2018). We do not know whether the same chronological distinctions apply also to southeastern Anatolia, but it would be prudent to consider these structural types separately.

2.1 Trilithons

Right bank Euphrates drainage

Five groups of trilithons have been found on limestone ridges which bracket right bank tributaries to the Euphrates River. These dolmens sit on south-facing slopes, but not on the crest, of the ridges, 20-30km west of the Euphrates itself (see Figure 2 no. 3-7). In Adıyaman three groups of 2-67 dolmens (Tetirli, Kargalı and Yoldüzü) appear on the Heyikdağı ridge along the north side of the Çakırhöyük plain. In Kahramanmaraş a group of 69 dolmens form two clusters on the Bozdağ ridge near Köklücu and Sarıköy in the Araban plain. In Gaziantep at least 26 dolmens form several clusters over a 1 x 3km area at Küçük Karakuyu on the Karadağ ridge overlooking the Yavuzeli plain (for more detailed presentations, see Yükmen, 2003; Yükmen Edens, 2012).

The trilithons are made of limestone slabs set on edge and covered with a limestone capstone. In most cases the side walls are formed of a single slab. Most chambers have no or only one (surviving) end wall, and fewer than one in ten are closed at both ends. The great majority of chambers have vertical side walls (Figure 3 left). But some chambers in all the groups except Sarıköy are formed by two slabs leaning toward each other to form a triangular space with the capstone balanced over the central ridge-line. When such chambers have end walls, these stones are also triangular in shape. The average chamber at Kargalı and Küçük Karakuyu is 1.6-1.7m long, 0.9-1.0m wide, and 0.9-1.3m high. The chambers at Tetirli tend to be a little smaller than this. Some chambers appear on a rectilinear platform formed by one or more courses of stone blocks. Coverings of rubble and/or earth are evident at many dolmens, including a few of the chambers set on platforms (visible in Figure 3 left). At Sarıköy pairs of dolmens may share a rubble covering. Some of these double chambers share a party wall, others are separate structures.

The dolmen chambers in the Euphrates drainage generally lack decorative elaboration. However, cupmarks (small and shallow 'cupules' up to 8cm across and 5cm deep) appear on the upper face of the capstone of several chambers in Gaziantep, and similar cupmarks appear in a nearby exposure of bedrock. The purpose of these cupules remains speculative.

Orontes drainage (Kızılkaya – Hatay)

Trilithons appear at two locations on limestone ridges on the east edge of the Amuq plain (Figure 2 no. 1). Two hundred ninety two dolmens plus a stone circle have been recorded across a 63 ha area on the Kızılkaya ridge, and an additional six chambers appear on the nearby Sarmaşık hill. Trilithons also occur at Çatalyurt near the Karasu, but these form a continuum with more complex structures which are considered below.

At Kızılkaya and Sarmaşık 278 of the 298 chambers are made by two limestone slabs set on edge to form side walls and covered by a capstone (Figure 3 right). Only 16 of 219 well-preserved chambers have one or both side walls formed by two slabs. The slabs used for walls measure 40-185cm in length and 50-175cm in width, while the capstones are 85-300cm long by 55-200cm wide; all the slabs are 15-60cm thick. The chambers average 1.4m by 85cm in floor area, and they average 65cm in interior height. About 60% of the well-preserved chambers have one end wall, and 20% have two end walls. Generally wall slabs are even in height, but in three cases the side wall stones are much higher at one end than the other, so that the capstone forms a sloping roof (lower at the rear of the chamber than at the entrance). Twenty chambers use a bedrock shelf as one or both sides of a chamber – in these cases the capstone rests upon the bedrock shelf plus one or more wall slabs. Most of the dolmens lack preserved elaborations. Rectangular platforms of stone blocks or of rubble and earth retained by a low wall (the latter occurring on hill slopes) were found in only 14 cases. Covering mounds of rubble and earth, typically surviving 20cm or less in height, appear at only 18 dolmens, a few of which also have a platform (see Yükmen Edens, 2012 for more detail).

Few surface artifacts appear in the dolmen fields of Kızılkaya and Sarmaşık, and these either are Roman pottery or roof tiles, or they are not chronologically diagnostic. The dolmens therefore remain without even the suggestion of a date. Recent illicit digging into one dolmen did leave behind human bone and teeth, confirming that the structures were used.

Adana

In 2016 and 2017 an on-going prehistoric survey in eastern Cilicia found trilithons on a basalt hill next to the Gulf of Iskenderun, where the Botaş port (terminus of the petroleum pipeline from Azerbaijan) is located (Figure 2 no. 8). The dolmens have been published only in preliminary form (Yükmen Edens, 2018; Yükmen Edens, 2019). Here the trilithons form two clusters about 1km apart on the west side of the Botaş basalt hill, overlooking the valley through which flows the Boyalı Dere to the sea. The southern cluster contains a dozen or more structures, and the northern cluster includes 28 dolmens over a 300 x 100m area, plus another 3 dolmens about 300m further north. The trilithons are made of basalt slabs, which are up to 210cm by 160 cm by 50cm in size. Most chambers are open at both ends; some chambers with one end wall, and a few with two end walls, also appear (Figure 4). The chambers are 1.2-1.7m x 0.5-0.7m in floor area, and they stand around 60cm high**.** In some examples in both clusters, a circle of stone blocks surrounds the chamber, but otherwise the dolmens lack elaborations such an entry passage, a platform or a preserved covering mound.

Although an extensive artifact scatter covers the west slope of the hill, these artifacts represent Palaeolithic through medieval periods, and none occurs within or directly near a dolmen. Between the two parts of the north cluster of dolmens are faint remains of agricultural terracing. This terracing is much more eroded than nearby terraces of evident Roman date, and surface artifacts suggest a Late Chalcolithic-Early Bronze date. Boyalı Höyük – the only known prehistoric settlement in the Boyalı Dere valley – sits on the western edge of the Botaş hill, about 1.7km from the agricultural terracing and 1.5km from the south cluster of dolmens. Surface pottery from the mound indicates Late Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age (as well as later) occupation (Steadman, 1994). As a hypothesis for future research, these three elements – village, agricultural terraces and dolmens – belong together, the dolmens serving to mark territory and ownership.

2.2 Passage graves and other forms at Çatalyurt (Hatay)

The Karasu, in the northern edge of the Orontes drainage, flows into the Amuq plain through a landscape of Pleistocene basalt flows. Survey near Hassa in the late 1990s recorded 456 structures along a 5km length of the southern end of the Köroğlu basalt (Figure 2 no. 2); more recent survey has added another dozen structures to this total (Yükmen, 2000; Yükmen, 2001; Yükmen Edens, 2012: Yükmen Edens, 2018). This section of the basalt hosts numerous springs, and the Karasu runs nearby. The recorded structures are typologically diverse.

Some are trilithons, but most are passage graves, masonry chambers or other forms of megalithic tombs.

The structures recorded in the original survey form four unequal clusters along the southern edge of the Köroğlu basalt badlands (*leçe*). From west to east these clusters are;

Çatalyurt-1 – 83 structures near Mazmanlı

Çatalyurt-2 – 39 structures

Çatalyurt-3 – 318 structures near Çatalyurt

Çatalyurt-4 – 14 structures

The more recently recorded structures are just west of Çatalyurt-1 in Mazmanlı, and they belong to the same group.

While many of the structures present relatively inchoate heaps of stone, architectural details are evident in about two-thirds of the structures. These structures fall into three basic formal types.

Orthostat chambers

Basalt slabs set on edge (orthostats) form chambers that are covered by basalt capstones. The chambers are normally rectangular but they occasionally take a trapezoidal, and in one case an oval, plan. The chambers are usually 80-150cm long and 60-100cm wide but they can be up to 3m long and almost 2m wide. The larger chambers are formed by multiple slabs on each side – about 30% of chambers are formed by a single slab for each wall, and the rest have 2-4 slabs for side walls and/or end walls; the wall of the above-mentioned oval chamber is composed of 8 slabs. The typical orthostat is 50-100cm wide, 50-90cm high, and 20-30cm thick, while the capstones are somewhat larger (usually 80-150cm long, 50-100cm wide and 30-35cm thick, but they can be as much as 250 x 150cm in area). An interior pavement was seen in one example.

About one-third of the well-preserved orthostat chambers are closed at both ends; these chambers are all trilithons in type, i.e. they use a single stone for each sidewall. The remaining chambers are open at one end, and the side wall of most of these structures is composed of two or more orthostats. The entrances to the latter chambers are often elaborated with a frame (narrow orthostats set at right angles to the side walls) or a short entry passage (Figure 5). Passaged chambers account for over twenty percent of the well-preserved sample.

Around three-fifths of the chambers are enclosed by an exterior structure. Several types of exterior structures appear. Often a mound of rubble surrounds the chamber, and a low (single course) ring wall sometimes retains the rubble.

In some cases, a coursed retaining wall, composed of up to 7-8 courses of basalt blocks up to 1.5m high, surrounds the chamber, with rubble filling the space between these two architectural elements (Figure 5).

Coursed masonry chambers

These rectilinear or curvilinear chambers are formed of basalt blocks laid in rough courses and covered by capstones. The rectilinear chambers are 1-1.5m long or smaller, while the curvilinear chambers are 2-3m across. Some of the chambers survive up to 1.5m high but most heavily collapsed. The masonry chambers are surrounded by high ring walls that are similar in construction to those described above for orthostat chambers. The ring walls normally enclose a rubble fill against the masonry chamber, but occasionally the two elements abut. Ring walls may be roughly square (4-5m to a side) or rectangular (3.5-5.5 x 2.5-4.5m) in outline, but many are curvilinear (Figure 6). Most of curvilinear ring walls take an oval shape, but some incorporate straight sections that turn a right angle to make a quadrant shape. Most of the curvilinear ring walls enclose an area similar to the rectilinear walls (mostly 3.5-4.5m across) but some are up to 10m across. The generally collapsed state of the upper coursing prevents ascertaining details of the interior of the chambers (e.g. the presence of paved floors, the possibility of corbelling). Built entrances seem to be absent from these structures.

Corbelled chambers

Only two chambers are constructed of basalt blocks laid in a corbelling fashion to form the side walls of a rectilinear chamber open at one end and covered by larger slabs (capstone). The chambers are 150m long wide and 80cm wide at the entrance, narrowing toward the closed rear wall; the chambers are about a meter high. A rubble covering encloses both of the corbelled chambers.

Cluster composition

The four clusters at Çatalyurt contain different proportions of these three structural types. In the Çatalyurt-1 cluster, all of the identifiable structures are orthostat chambers. Three of the chambers found in the original survey and all of the chambers found in 2016 have a ring wall. In the Çatalyurt-2 cluster, all but one of the identifiable structures is an orthostat chamber, and the exception is a masonry chamber. In the Çatalyurt-3 cluster, only 29 of 233 (12%) of identifiable structures are orthostat chambers, of which five have a coursed ring wall. Here the great majority of the structures (203 of 233) are coursed masonry chambers,

and one is a corbelled chamber. Only four of the structures in the Çatalyurt-4 cluster are structurally identifiable – two are orthostat chambers and two are masonry chambers.

This variability suggests a significant degree of cultural, social and/or chronological difference at Çatalyurt. Regarding chronology, however, the only materials seen around the megalithic structures was Roman period pottery. Several mounds with Chalcolithic, Early Bronze and later occupation do appear near Çatalyurt-3 and Çatalyurt-4.

3. Dolmens in northeastern Anatolia

Leaving aside the issue of the debatable structures at Akçakale (see above), dolmens appear at Carcı in the valley of the Küçük Dere, which is a stream which issues from the south end of Çıldır Lake in Kars. This area is high mountains – the valley itself has very steep sides formed of basalt, and the dolmens appear at an elevation of around 1850m above sea level. Fifteen dolmens have been recorded here, on both sides of the stream (Yükmen, 2003, p.30-32; see also Kansu, 1964). Seven of these structures are preserved well enough to show architectural details; in their original condition, the other eight structures probably resembled these seven. The structures present two basic elements – chamber plus entry corridor. Chambers are polygonal in plan, and measure 2-3m by 1-3m in floor area and 0.7-1.7m in height. The chamber walls are composed of blocks of basalts laid in rough courses. Surrounding the chamber walls are large blocks that form a kind of revetment around the chamber (Figure 7 right). The combination of chamber wall plus revetment forms a thickness of 2-3m. The corridors are 4-10m long, a little more than 1m wide, and about 50 cm high (Figure 7). Both the chambers and the corridors are covered by basalt slabs which are 1.8-2.2m long, 0.7-1.2m wide and 30-50cm thick. Each structure has 3-5 capstones. In no case is a covering of earth and/or rubble preserved.

The chambers are set within the valley, usually within 20m of the stream and not more than 10m higher than it. This setting suggests that visibility was not a factor in dolmen location. The corridors and chamber entrances show no preferential orientation. Rather, the corridors point downslope toward the stream, suggesting a relationship with water. No pottery or other datable materials was found at or near these structures, leaving their date unclear.

4. Dolmens in Turkish Thrace

Thrace is home to more than 900 surviving dolmens. The majority of these structures are in the Sakar Mountains of Bulgaria, with lesser numbers in the

Rhodopes Mountains of Bulgara and Greece. In addition, perhaps 200 dolmens have been recorded in the Strandja / Istranca Mountains which run along the Turkish-Bulgarian border. About half of these – around 100 – are in Turkish Thrace. These monuments typically appear as isolated structures or in small clusters, but generally they do not form extensive "dolmen fields." They are sometimes placed on ridgelines, but they commonly are on less visible locations on slopes or flat terrain. Although most dolmens are only partially preserved, surviving details afford the following picture (the following description is based on Özdoğan & Akman, 1992; Akman, 1997; see Delev, 1984; Nekhrizov, 2015; Nehrizov & Agre, 2015 for description of similar dolmens in Bulgaria).

Two basic chamber types can be distinguished (Delev, 1984; Akman, 1997): (1) a single chamber plus a narrow entry passage, and (2) a main chamber and a smaller antechamber plus a narrow entry passage. The main chamber can measure up to 2.8m by 2.4m in area, and is often over 2m high. Antechambers are lower and often more narrow than the main chambers, and the entry passage is lower still. Dolmen entrances most often point in a southerly direction and occasionally to east or west, but never to the north. The chamber is normally enclosed by a rubble and earth mound (typically 8-16m in diameter), around which a curbing wall is sometimes evident. Variants of the two chamber types include a pair of dolmens within the same mound, and a dolmen plus cist grave within same mound.

An oval porthole appears in the center of the front wall of some (not all) dolmens. In three-section dolmens with portholes, this aperture appears in the front wall of both the antechamber and the main chamber. These portholes are only 40-50cm wide and 60-70cm high, and some archaeologists identify them as a "soul hole" (Turkish *ruh deliği*, from the German *Seelenloch*; e.g. Özdoğan & Akman, 1992, p.410). Similarly, small cupmarks appear on the upper surface of capstones over the main chamber of some dolmens. These cupmarks are sometimes suggested to be places for libation offerings to the dead (e.g. Özdoğan & Akman 1992, p.411).

The excavated dolmen at Arpalık (Lalapaşa) in Edirne provides a well-documented example of a large three-section dolmen within a mound (Akman, 1997). Although the dolmen content had been heavily disturbed, the excavation recovered human bone from four individuals in the antechamber, and also grave goods that included numerous handled cups of a dark hand-made pottery (so-called *Buckelkeramik*) that date to the Bronze Age-Iron Age transition, examples of a light gray wheel-made pottery that is late Iron Age in date, and a fibula that typologically belongs to the 8th-6th centuries BC. Some Hellenistic sherds

appeared in the main chamber. This range of finds suggests that the Arpalık dolmen was constructed shortly after 1200 BC and continued in use until the middle of the 1st millennium BC if not later. These conclusions cohere with the evidence from Bulgarian research on the other side of the border (Delev, 1984; Nekhizov, 2015, p.132).

5. Discussion

Prehistoric and protohistoric megalithic monuments in Turkey are numerous, but still under-researched despite various research programs over the past 30 years. The relative ignorance can probably be attributed to a relatively low interest in prehistory and the frequent connection of field work with dam salvage projects. As a result, the picture we have today may be wildly incomplete.

Dolmens are by far the best known of the megalithic structures in Turkey. They are concentrated in three areas around the edges of the country. The dolmens in these three areas differ in structural concept, and in two cases they have evident connection with megalithic traditions in neighboring regions. Dating remains problematic, but very likely the dolmens in these three regions were built and used in different periods, by different cultural groups with different socio-economic orientations.

The dolmens of Turkish Thrace are convincingly dated to the Early Iron Age, and they belong to a wider region that includes Bulgaria and northeastern Greece. Turkish Thrace is also rich in standing stone ('menhir') locations which are plausibly but still speculatively dated to the same time. This manifestation of monumentality is often linked to migrant groups from southeastern Europe, and the development of a new social order in which the dead of elite families were placed in these above-ground monumental structures (e.g. Delev, 1984; Nehrizov & Agre, 2015; see also Özdoğan, 1998). But the practice of constructing dolmens in Thrace cannot be traced to any place or culture of origin; most likely the Thracian dolmens were a local and independent development.

The trilithon dolmens of the southeastern Anatolia are identical in concept to trilithons of the southern and central Levant, construction of which is now firmly dated to the Early Bronze I period (see Fraser, 2018, p.50-64 for a recent review of this evidence), i.e. the mid-late 4th millennium BC. This period roughly corresponds to the Late Chalcolithic of the Anatolian chronology. Although the formal analogy is clear, the structural concept of a trilithon is a simple one, and independent invention remains a real possibility. So until dating evidence is found in Turkey, appeal to the analogy remains a weak chronological foundation

(thus Fraser, 2018, p.89). Even so, the formal analogy opens the possibility of ideational links during the 4th millennium between Hatay and the southern Levant.

The passage tombs and masonry chambers of Çatalyurt probably have a later date, although this conclusion again rests on analogies, in this case formal parallels with burial structures in the southern Levant (recently reviewed in Fraser 2018), and perhaps also with the above-ground elite tombs of Early Bronze northern Mesopotamian towns (reviewed in Yılmaz, 2006; Peltenburg, 2008; Peltenburg, 2013, p.243-245).

Archaeologists of the southern Levant commonly associate dolmens, regardless of type, with mobile pastoralists (e.g. Epstein, 1985; Zohar. 1992; Prag, 1995). More recently Fraser (2018) has proposed that Early Bronze I trilithons belonged to agricultural communities newly settled in Trans-Jordanian upland valleys where geological condition inhibited creation of rock-cut tombs. This proposal is compatible with the position of trilithons in southeastern Anatolia, on ridges overlooking fertile arable land (see the discussion in Yükmen Edens, 2012). But the Çatalyurt dolmens sit on a very rough expanse of basalt, at the edge of the Karasu where agricultural land is much more limited. Here the pastoralist interpretation remains possible.

The Kars dolmens are much more problematic. In the complete absence of associated small finds, they cannot be dated by local evidence. Structurally analogous dolmens have not been reported from surrounding regions. The geographically nearest dolmen tradition is in Abkhazia, where the structures are dated to the late 4th millennium through 2nd millennium BC. These dolmens typically are constructed of dressed stones, sometimes with decorative patterns in relief, many have porthole entrances, and some front on paved and enclosed courtyards (for an overview, see Trifonov, 2013). The structures at Carcı share none of these characteristics. They also show no relationship with kurgan traditions of Transcaucasia, with de Morgan's dolmens of coastal Azerbaijan, or with dolmens of southeastern Anatolia. The Kars structures thus remain enigmatic, and even a funerary function for these structures is uncertain.

New research programs are needed in Turkey, to find and record undocumented megalithic structures, to document further the known megalithic structures in their landscape context, and to investigate the contents of well-preserved structures, in order better to understand the chronology and social function of these monuments in different parts of Turkey. However, time is running out. Commercial quarrying, expansion of farming fields, creation of large industrial complexes and enlargement of villages are all forces that destroy

prehistoric and historic landscapes. Çatalyurt in Hatay offers an example of this problem. Survey here found new examples of well-preserved dolmens in summer 2016, but by summer 2017 they had been destroyed by bulldozing of the basalt surface in preparation for olive plantings. The accelerating loss of cultural heritage is a problem common to all periods of human history. But to be preserved, or at least recorded, prehistoric dolmens and other megalithic structures must be recognized more widely as important parts of Turkey's cultural heritage.

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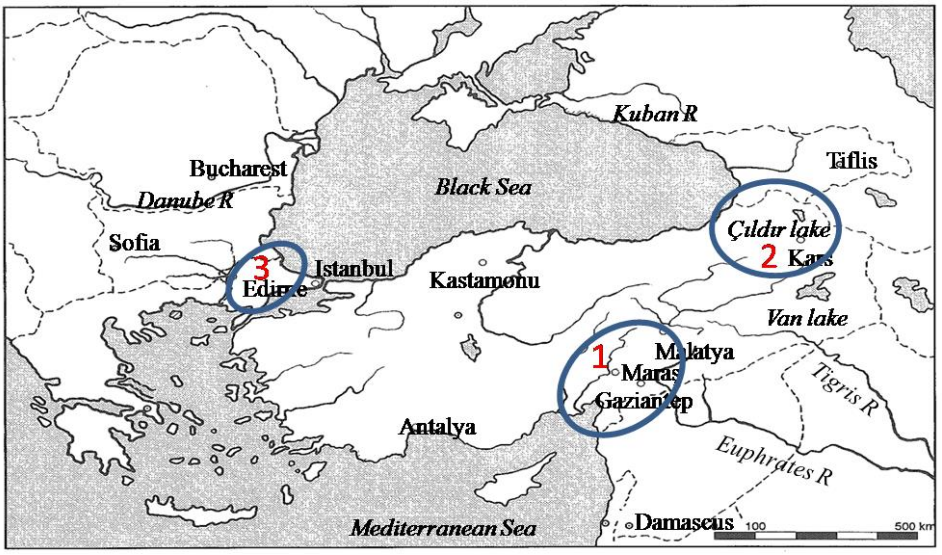


Figure 1: Locations of major concentrations of dolmens in Turkey (1-the Euphrates-Hatay-Adana region; 2-Kars; 3-Turkish Thrace).

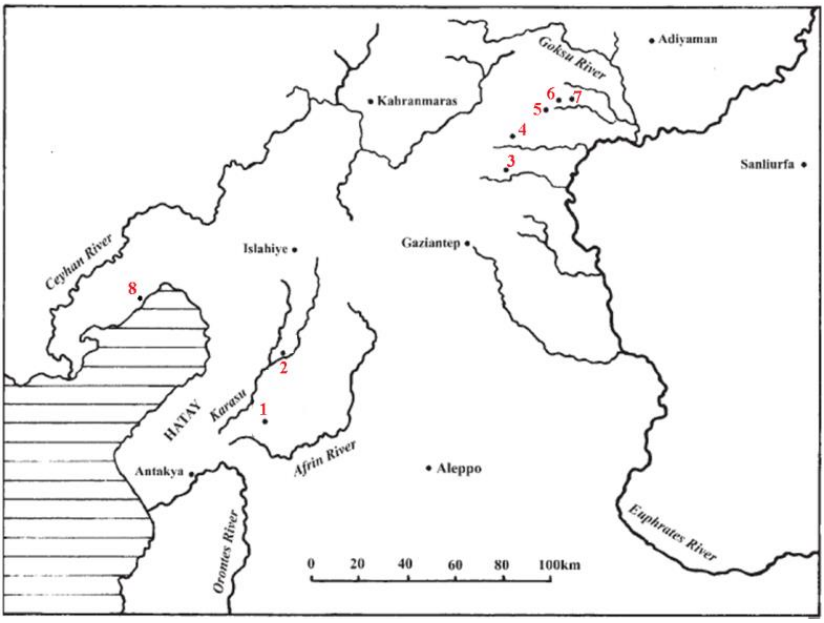


Figure 2: Location of dolmens in southern Anatolia (1-Kızılkaya, Hatay: 2-Çatalyurt, Hatay; 3-Küçük Karakuyu, Gaziantep; 4-Sarıköy, Kahramannaraş; 5-Tetirli, Adıyaman; 6-Kargalı, Adıyaman; 7-Yoldüzü, Adıyaman; 8-Botaş, Adana)



Figure 3: Trilithons in Kargalı, Adıyaman (left) and Kızılkaya, Hatay (right).

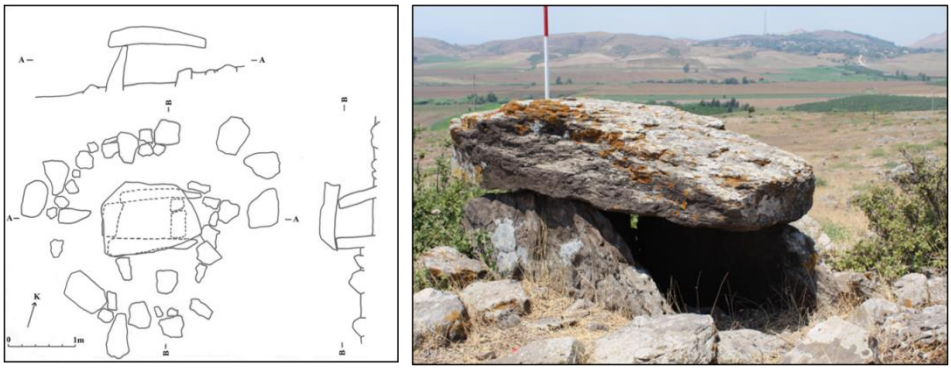


Figure 4: Plan and section drawing (left) and photograph (right) of a trilithon at Botaş, Adana.

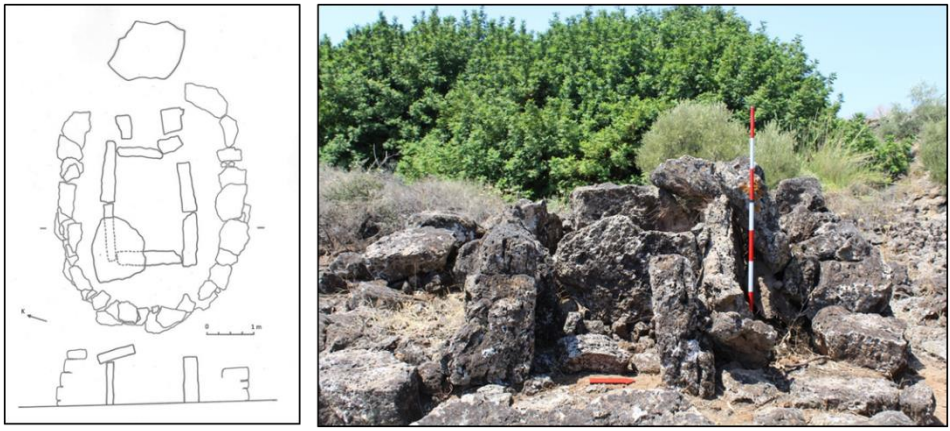


Figure 5: Plan and section (left) and photograph (right) of a passaged dolmen with a partially preserved surrounding wall at Çatalyurt-1, Hatay



Figure 6: General view (left) and detail of the capstone over a coursed masonry chamber at Çatalyurt-3, Hatay.

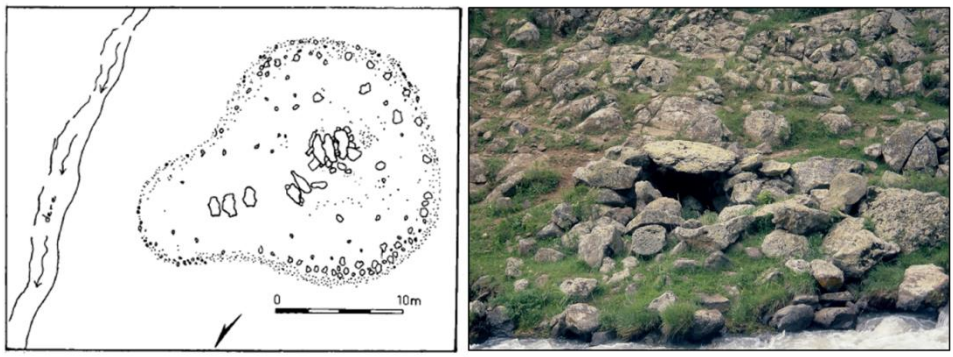


Figure 7: Plan (left) and photograph (right) of a dolmen with entry passage at Carcı, Kars; the location of the Küçük Dere is shown at the left side of the plan.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The concept of megalithic monuments was introduced from France into Turkish archaeology by Şevket Kansu during the 1930s. The concept refers to the use of large undressed stones in prehistoric structures of various kinds, among them dolmens (above-ground burial chambers), menhirs (elongated standing stones) and cromlechs (circles of large stones). In the case of dolmens, the chamber is often encased by a covering of earth or stones. A certain degree of terminological confusion among archaeologists arises from using terms such as tumulus, cairn and kurgan in reference to similar coverings over burial chambers of different types. These terms stem from other academic traditions – tumulus is prevalent in classical archaeology, kurgan in Russian archaeology, and cairn in many English-speaking traditions – and they draw attention to the covering rather than to the chamber beneath the covering. In order to clarify the place of dolmens in the archaeology of Turkey, this review examines prehistoric monuments in the country that conform to the early 20th century meaning of the dolmen in Western Europe.

Megalithic monuments in Turkey only occasionally received notice before the Second World War. The first generation of Turkish prehistorians engaged in extended field investigations during the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s; during this time scholars such as İ.K. Kökten, Ş.A. Kansu, and E. Bostancı recorded the existence of dolmens and other megalithic monuments in many parts of the country. But these records of megalithic structures were largely anecdotal. More systematic research did not begin until the 1980s, initially in Turkish Thrace, and then in

Kars and in southeast Anatolia. Although these efforts continue today, the scholarly interest in these monuments remains generally limited. At present, around 1100 dolmens have been reported from various parts of Turkey. Of these monuments, around 90% are in southeastern Anatolia, and most of the remainder are in Turkish Thrace. In addition, a small number are in northeastern Anatolia (Kars).

Most of the dolmens in southeastern Anatolia may be described as trilithons, i.e. a rectangular chamber formed by two upright stone slabs as the two side walls covered by a single capstone. Such chambers may be open at both ends, or may be blocked by an additional stone at one or both ends. Structures of this type have been recorded in three very different contexts in southeastern Anatolia.

Just west of the Euphrates River groups of 2-69 trilithons have been recorded in five places on limestone ridges overlooking the Çakırhöyük plain in Adıyaman, the Araban plain in Kahramanmaraş, and the Yavuzeli plain in Gaziantep. These structures are made of limestone slabs, sometimes set upon a rough stone platform and often partially enclosed by a covering of earth and/or rubble. The wall slabs of some of the chambers lean against each other to form an inverted 'V', with the capstone balanced over the point of the 'V'. This formal variation has not been recorded elsewhere in Turkey.

In Hatay a large (n=292) group of trilithons covers the north half of the Kızılkaya limestone ridge, at the eastern edge of the Amuq plain. These dolmens are also made of limestone slabs, and most have one or both ends closed by additional slabs. Some structures use a shelf of bedrock as one of its walls. A covering mantle of earth and rubble is preserved at only 18 of the trilithons, and only 14 trilithons sit upon platforms. Recent illegal digging into one of these dolmens exposed human bone and teeth, which helps to confirm the funerary nature of these structures.

In Adana, two groups of trilithons have been recorded on the west side of the Botaş basalt hill, adjacent to the Gulf of Iskenderun. Here the trilithons are constructed of basalt slabs. Some of the structures stand within a ring of stone, but otherwise they resemble the Kızılkaya structures. One group of trilithons at Botaş is spatially associated with heavily eroded agricultural terracing. This coincidence raises the possibility that these dolmens marked lineage ownership of productive land.

The date of trilithons in southeastern Anatolia remains uncertain, because none has been found with intact contents. However, they are structurally very similar to dolmens in the southern Levant which are dated to the second half of the 4th

millennium, i.e. the Late Chalcolithic in Anatolian terms. At least hypothetically the same date applies to these structures in Turkey

Other dolmen types appear at Çatalyurt, near Hassa in Hatay. Here more than 450 structures are arranged in four groups along the southern edge of the Köroğlu basalt badlands (*leçe*), overlooking the Karasu floodplain. Some of these structures are simple trilithons. Others are formed by multiple basalt slab set on edge (orthostats), sometimes with additional slabs framing the entrance or creating a short entry passage. Many of these orthostat chambers are enclosed by mounded rubble, or surrounded by a circular wall which retains a rubble packing against the chamber. However, the majority of the Çatalyurt structures are chambers formed by roughly coursed basalt blocks and covered by a capstone. These structures are also enclosed by a surrounding wall which can be curvilinear or rectilinear in plan. The variability of structural form at Çatalyurt suggests a significant degree of cultural, social and/or chronological difference among the dolmens here. Potentially, the coursed wall chambers belong to the 3rd millennium BC, based on analogy with above-ground tombs found in some North Mesopotamian towns. But in the absence of excavated *in situ* materials, the chronological and social significance of the formal variation at Çatalyurt remains impossible to understand.

In Kars, fifteen dolmens have been recorded at Carcı, south of Çıldır. The chambers of these structures are roughly coursed basalt blocks, roofed by larger basalt slabs. A revetment of boulders surrounds the chamber, and a long covered passage leads to the entrance of the chamber. These structures are markedly unlike dolmens in other parts of Turkey or in surrounding regions.

Around 100 dolmens have been recorded in Turkish Thrace. These dolmens typically appear as single structures or form small clusters. Structurally they can be a single chamber plus an entry passage, or a main chamber plus antechamber plus entry passage. The entrances to chambers were blocked with stone slabs; in some cases, these entry slabs featured a small porthole. Although today often missing, it seems that earth and rubble mounds covered all these dolmens. Unusual for dolmens in Turkey, excavation in a dolmen at Arpalık (Lalapaşa) in Edirne recovered human bone from four individuals, confirming that these structures served collective burials. The associated small finds indicate that the dolmen was built shortly after 1200 BC and continued in use until the mid-1st millennium if not later.

The dolmens in these three regions of Turkey differ in structural concept, and in two cases they have evident connection with megalithic traditions in neighboring regions. Dating remains problematic, but very likely the dolmens in these three

regions were built and used in different periods, by different cultural groups with different socio-economic orientations. New research programs are needed, to find and record undocumented megalithic structures, to document further the known megalithic structures in their landscape context, and to investigate the contents of well-preserved structures, in order better to understand the chronology and social function of these monuments in different parts of Turkey.