

# PHENOMENICAL ORIENTATION OF MEGALITHS

*Constantinos MARITSAS\**

### **Abstract**

The paper examines the assignment of the visual experience in the context of interrelation between human-animal and human civilized. Civilization is defined as “the survival of the weak”. It is stressed that this definition can be applied to man, animal and every living being. In the paper the concept of “orientation” is not applicable to the megaliths. The ones that are next to mountains are not so much oriented to as similar to them. The need to create megaliths appeared in the transition from natural selection to civilization, from human-animal to human civilized. For his own survival man gave up violent battles, replacing them with the dance battle, during which the woman chose the man winner. For the more authentic reproduction of fights they used stones symbolising hunters, animals, mountains, caves, etc. Thus dolmens, cromlechs and menhirs appeared, becoming the stage or decoration of the first theatrical performances, where nature served as a model. The conclusion is, that the issue of a particular orientation of megaliths is eliminated: they were built to face the surrounding mountains, caves, animals inhabiting particular areas (zoomorphic dolmens), etc.

**Keywords:** civilization, natural selection, megaliths, orientation, imitation.

### **Özet**

Bu makale, hayvan-insan ve insan medeniyeti arasındaki ilişki bağlamında, görsel deneyimlerin tayin edilmesini tartışmaktadır. Medeniyet “zayıfın hayatta kalması” olarak tanımlanır. Bu tanım, insana, hayvana ve her canlı varlığa uygula-

\* MA in Philosophy, kmar@abv.bg.

nabilir olarak vurgulanmıştır. Bu makalede, “çevreye uyum” kavramı tarih öncesi taş anıtlar (megalith) için geçerli değildir. Dağların yakınında olanlar, bunlara benzer biçimde çok fazla uyum sağlamamıştır. Megalithlerin yapılmasına dair gereksinim, insan-hayvandan insan uygarlığına, doğal seleksiyondan uygarlığa geçişle ortaya çıktı. İnsanoğlu hayatta kalmak için şiddetli savaşlardan vazgeçti, kadının kazanan erkeği seçtiği zaman zarfında, savaş danslarını tercih etti. Savaşların daha otantik olması için, insanoğlu avcılarının, hayvanların, dağların, mağaraların vs'nin sembolizasyonunda taşları kullandı. Böylece bu lahitler ve daire şeklindeki büyük abideler ve yekpare taştan abideler, model olarak doğayı simgeleyen ilk teatral performansların dekorasyonu ya da sahnesi olarak ortaya çıktı. Sonuç, megalitlerin özel bir uyum sorunu olarak elimine edilmesidir. Megalitler, dağları, mağaraları, belirli alanlarda yaşayan hayvanların vs'nin çevrelerine inşa edildiler.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Uygarlık, doğal seleksiyon, megalitler, çevreye uyum, taklit.

### Introduction

Being the weakest and most defenseless living creature on the planet, man at the same time has the biggest brain. “Biological vulnerability of man appeared as the most important prerequisite for civilization” (Fromm, 48). Likewise, a great number of animals and plants are biologically vulnerable. 99% of living beings disappeared in their own time (Leakey, 1996: 106). And it was man who created civilization and still survived! How did he do it? To explain this phenomenon, I will try to present the millennial history of mankind in a few lines.

Man (referring primarily to male), the weak and helpless against natural forces, was subject to destruction for two reasons: first, he was an easy prey to predators, and, secondly, males died in the inner species battle. Consequently, man (talking about male again) like the vast majority of species was doomed to extinction. The only solution was to end the violent inner species struggle for supremacy and replace it with other selection criteria. The rejection of violent struggle – the main reason for the disappearance of man (male) – was done completely deliberately.

The criteria for selection are as follows: in the field of nature – adaptability, in the area of civilization – sounds, beauty and gifts, in other words – everything that man copied from nature. In nature, the fittest survives, in civilization – the more melodic, more beautiful and richer.

The denial of violent struggle led to the origin of society. A man needed something with which to replace violent struggle, and he found this substitution in dance, during which the woman chose the man who was the winner, guided by criteria of civilization (sounds, colors, gifts) (Maritsas, 2006; 2007). The first stage of transition was accompanied by the replacement of natural objects with objects-symbols. For the mock battle between man and beast to look real, the dancers were supposed to imitate wild animals. At the same time, their actions had to be understood by the au-

dience – women, choosing the male winners who took the roles of hunters as well as animals. To this end, men put on the skins of wild animals (bears, wolves, deer, etc.) and bellowed, imitating them. In addition, they had to choose a suitable place for the performance: the audience (women) needed to have a good view of the dance; the place had to be protected from wild animals. The most suitable places were found in the fields and meadows far from the mountains, that is flat places with low vegetation (e.g. such as the ones in Fig.1/). Thus, female viewers could watch the skirmishes, without putting themselves at risk of attack by wild animals.



**Fig. 1.** The scene of the first dramatic performances: stone constructions on meadows and glades far from woods.

In reality, these fights did not take place in the fields and meadows but in the mountains and forests. Hence, male dancers in animal skins alone and simulated roar of wild animals were insufficient to plausibly reproduce the fights. They needed “bear dens”, “hunting shelters”, reproduced forests and mountains, etc. This was possible to achieve using stones, replacing the real objects by symbolic ones, so that one stone signified a wild animal, another – a bear’s den, still other – a hunting shelter and the rest – forests and mountains. This was exactly how dolmens, cromlechs, menhirs and various combinations thereof came into existence.

As already noted, the roles of animals and hunters were performed by men, with women as spectators. The use of animal skins in theatrical performances showed men their other functions: protection from adverse weather conditions and the quality to preserve heat (this was how clothes were discovered). Clothing for dance performances was the reason why people lost hair coverage.

### **Megaliths and performances**

Megalithic structures were essentially the first scene of “theatrical” performances, dances-fights during which men symbolically reproduced the processes

of natural selection, demonstrated their strength, agility and skill in order to be elected by women. This is confirmed by the fact that the dolmens, as a rule, are not found in isolation but in different combinations, as noted above, denoting the mountain, cave, forest, hunter, animal, etc/ In India, according to Dr. R. Nagaswami, dolmens are found mostly grouped together (See Fig. 2.)



**Fig. 2.** Combination of dolmens in Tamilnad (South India). From: <http://www.tamilnation.org/>

Most likely, the first theatrical performances did not have a script, a director, rigid rules and a predetermined pre-finale. This is reflected in the *Natyasastra*, an Indian book on theatrical arts, attributed to the semi-legendary sage Bharata, which notes that the playwright, actors and audience are an indivisible whole, which will always be unpredictable and explosive at the same time (Bharata Muni, 2005: 122).

It was only the lot of the winner which was known and invariable: he (the man-animal or man-hunter) was obliged to copulate with women (Fig. 3 and Fig. 4).



**Fig. 3.** Men-animal.



**Fig. 4.** Men-hunters.

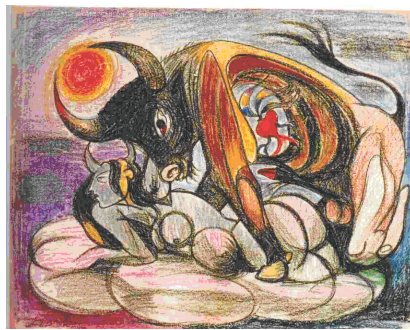
The source of sexual excitement was not the woman as an object of desire, but the fact of the victory over the rival. A woman's sexual desire and her desire to reproduce were not triggered by the appearance and physical qualities of the winner, but by the scene of virtual death and violence witnessed by her. In present-day conditions the dance-battle has evolved into a love game. (Maritsas, 2007). Even today, violence continues to be a source of excitation and accompanies the sexual intercourse. The man wants to see the defeated rival whose role is played by the woman. As noted by D. Morris, a long look in the eyes is observed not only in romantic situations, but also in situations of threat (Morris, 73).

Back to the subject of ancient theatrical performances, it should be noted that spectators gradually began to identify the actors with their roles. Animals acquired the language and characteristics of men, and vice versa, the qualities of men were identified with the characteristics of animals. Even today people say: as fast as a hare, as strong as an ox, as fat as a boar, etc. The next generations, unaware of the origins of this phenomenon, extended the identification to the family, relations, and so up to the state.

The origins of such rituals connected with the victory of man-animal over man-hunter can be traced in theatrical action. The audience felt that women had to copulate with an animal, not with a man. Initially, this was perceived literally, but the next generations turned it into a ritual. The famous Lion of Babylon was traditionally regarded as a symbol of the power of this ancient kingdom (Fig. 5.). In my opinion, the story of this sculptured image is identical to the well-known Greek myth of Pasiphae's copulation with the bull (Fig. 6.).



**Fig. 5.** The Lion of Babylon From: <http://img.allposters.com>



**Fig. 6.** Pablo Picasso "Suite vollard". From: <http://lebaiser.free.fr/PicassoPasiphae.jpg>

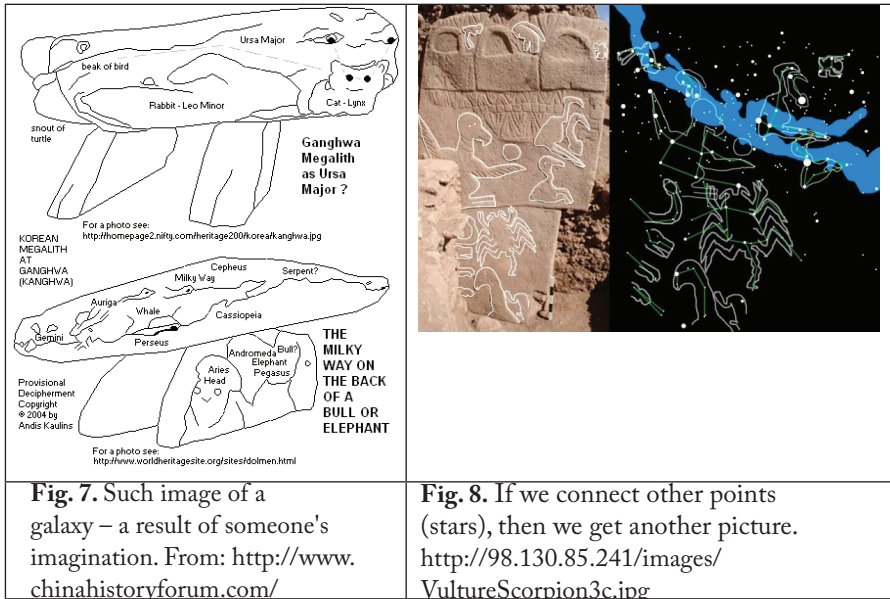
A woman and a lion, Pasiphae and the bull – in fact, these are traditional couples, formed as a result of ancient theatrical performances.



### Astronomical structures

This hypothesis, particularly popular in recent decades, pronounces dolmens ancient observatories. It is based on a number of interesting observations: the situation of stars and planets, taken into account while building dolmens, the orientation of megaliths to the astronomically significant directions (sunrise and sunset at the time of winter and summer solstices, vernal and autumnal equinoxes, north and south (north magnetic line); the prevalence of solar signs among dolmens.

Some of researchers “saw” the image of the galaxy on the Korean dolmens (Fig. 7.), and on the stone structures at Gobekli Tepe – a reflection of well-known constellations (Fig. 8.).



In my view, the merit of this theory lies in its good scientific name, but again not in its explanation. There are millions of stars in the sky, and depending on which of them we focus on in accordance with the images in our minds, such figures we get as a result.

Since in most cases these are anthropomorphic or zoomorphic images, then naturally individual dolmens, or their combinations are quite comparable with them. As we remember, it was namely people, animals, mountains, etc. that the stones in the ancient theater symbolized.

Scientists, who do not support this hypothesis, note the absence of a canonical, unified location (the studies of the dolmens of West Caucasus showed that in

333 out of 644 dolmens the portal faced South, in 93 – Southeast, in 21 – South-West, in 152 – East , in 20 – West, in 7 – North, in 13 – North-East and in 5 – North-West) (Марковин, 1978).

Data for the different groups of dolmens in Bulgaria also show a great diversity in their orientation (Fig. 9 and Fig. 10.). Thus, the majority of dolmens in Sakar and Strandzha face south and south-west. Dolmens in the eastern Rhodopes have a more uniform distribution of orientation: roughly the same number face all directions.

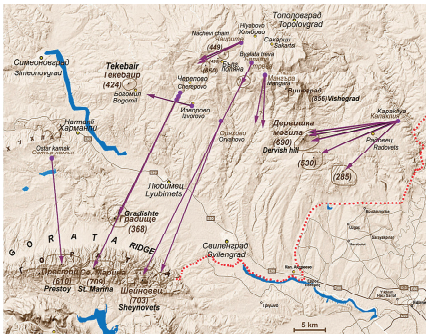


Fig. 9. The orientation of Sakar dolmens.

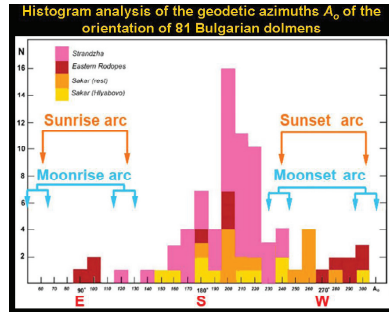


Fig. 10. The histogram of dolmens’ orientation.

The Fig. 10 shows the orientation of the majority of dolmens on the tops of nearby mountains (Марицас, Цонев, 2009: 72–74).

### Megaliths – imitation of environment

In my opinion, the concept of “orientation” is not applicable to the megaliths. The ones that are next to mountains are not so much oriented to as similar to them. This leads us to believe that it is the mountains that served as examples for the construction of dolmen structures. This is what prominent British art historian and critic Waldemar Januszczak stressed upon in his film “The Sculpture Diaries, 2008”. Fragments of the film (Fig. 11a, b, c.) and one of the views of Machu Picchu.

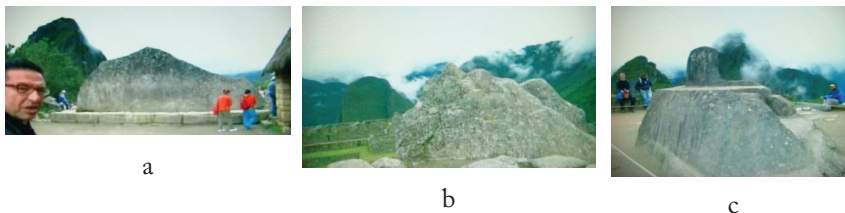


Fig. 11. Machu Picchu. The shots from the film. Waldemar Januszczak, «Sculptural diaries» (2008).

Korean mounds (bulk structures of stone or earth) are similar to the nearby mountains (Fig. 12.).



**Fig. 12.** Korean mounds. From: <http://home.tiscali.nl/>

So, I come to the conclusion that the issue of a particular orientation of megaliths is eliminated: they were built to face the surrounding mountains, caves, animals inhabiting particular areas (zoomorphic dolmens), etc. We should bear in mind that different combinations of megaliths used in theatrical performances, contained stones marking people, animals, mountains, caves, etc.

### **Illustration of the conception “imitation”**

So let us consider the pictures provided in tables and grouped, in my view, in accordance with the images represented by the different stone structures. In addition, I have shown some correspondences of megaliths and those phenomena that have occurred from them.

### **Zoomorphic megaliths**

The bear (Table 1) was one of the main characters of ancient theatrical performances.

Compare the pictures of a bear and stone structures.



Bear





Kilclooney Dolmen (Ireland)  
From: <http://static.panoramio.com>



An example of a Korean dolmen.  
From: <http://knol.google.com>

**Table 1.** Dolmens resembling a bear.

Bull/Bison (Table 2) is yet another character of ancient theatrical performances.

Compare photos of animals and objects made of stone.



Bison



Herd of bison



Dolmens in Gochang (South Korea)



Hwasun Dolmen (South Korea)

It reminds herd of bison.

**Table 2.** Dolmens resembling a bull.

### **Anthropomorphic megaliths and megaliths imitating caves and hunters' shelters**

Some megaliths reproduce a human figure, as well as those structures (caves, shelters), which man created first in real life, and then in the dance-battle in order to achieve greater authenticity (Table 3).

### Hunters' shelters and caves



Dolmen in Spain



Corsican dolmen (France)

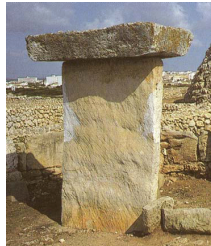


Sa Caveccada Dolmen in Sardinia  
(Spain)

From: <http://static.panoramio.com>



Dolmen in Ireland



Taula, Menorca (Spain). A man.



Menhirs in Gobekli-Tepe. Hunters.

**Table 3.** Anthropomorphic megaliths and megaliths imitating caves and hunters' shelters.

### **Mountains**

We should therefore separately identify those megaliths, which reproduce natural objects near the places where ancient theatrical performances took place. In most cases these are mountains (Table 4.).



*Dolmen in England*



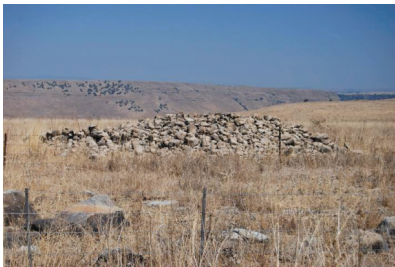
*Kyongju Dolmen (South Korea)*



*Cairn in Colorado (USA)*



*Zhukrimri Dolmen (South Korea)*



*Tumulus (Golan, Israel)*



*Dolmen near Douarnenez (France)*

**Table 5.** Mountains.

### **Combinations of different types of megaliths**

The most interesting and spectacular are the combinations of megaliths, bringing together people, animals, mountains, caves and other facilities necessary when performing theatrical actions (Table 6.).





Kilclooney Dolmen (Ireland).



Dolmen da Orca (Portugal).

Dolmens in the Golan Heights  
(Israel)

Poul nabrone dolmens (Burren, Ireland).

**Table 7.** Combinations of different types of megaliths.

### Conclusion

In my concept, I proceed from the fact that there is no fundamental difference between man and animals. Man, due to the peculiarities of his brain, moved first from nature to civilization, replacing the criteria of natural selection by civilizational criteria. This prompted him to create a new visual reality, imitating nature for women with the purpose of reproduction. Many animals and birds also followed the same line.

Megaliths, being the first creation of civilized man, were already being created at the dawn of civilization (more than a hundred thousand years ago). The need to create megaliths appeared in the transition from human-animal to civilized man. For his own survival man gave up violent battles, replacing them with the dance battle, during which the woman chose the man winner. For the more authentic reproduction of fights they used stones symbolising hunters, animals, mountains, caves, etc. Thus dolmens, cromlechs and menhirs appeared, becoming the stage or decoration of the first theatrical performances, where nature served as a model.

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