

FURTHER NOTES  
ON THE MEGALITHIC MONUMENTS OF NAXOS

As a follow-up to our article concerning the unknown megalithic monuments of Naxos<sup>1</sup>, which aimed to present these important monuments, we already see the need to make a typological and morphological comparison of these monuments with similar and corresponding ones on the islands of West Mediterranean and Europe.

Until only a few years ago, it seemed almost certain that there were no megalithic monuments whatsoever in Greece. The brilliance of antiquity and the rich medieval tradition of the country had absorbed the interests of Greek and foreign archaeologists to the extent that the megalithic monuments of Greece remained unknown, unstudied and, naturally, unpublished. During the last fifteen years, however, especially after the finds in Larissa, archaeologists began turning their attention in this direction. Thus, the menhir statues of Larissa<sup>2</sup> and Midea<sup>3</sup>, the real menhir<sup>4</sup> of Mykonos<sup>5</sup> and the ones of Na-

1. N. C. Moutsopoulos - G. Dimitrokallis, "Μεγαλιθικά μνημεῖα στη Νάξο", [Megalithic Monuments on Naxos], *Anthropos* III/1 (Jan. 1976) 96-104.

2. The menhir statue of Thessaly was found in May 1958 at Soufli-Magula, four km northeast of Larissa and has since been moved to the museum of that city. Hagen Biesantz, "Die Ausgrabung bei der Soufli-Magula", *AA* (1958) 58, fig. 1,2; D. Theoharis, "Ἐκ τῆς προκεραμεικῆς Θεσσαλίας", [From the pre-ceramic Thessaly], *Θεσσαλικά* 1 (1958) 78-9; G. Daux, "Chroniques des Fouilles en 1957", *BCH* LXXXII (1958) 755-6, fig. 10; M. Andronikos, "Ἑλληνικά Ἐπιτάφια Μνημεῖα", [Greek Burial Monuments], *Ἀρχαιολογικὸν Δελτίον* XVII (1961-2) 170, Plates 85a-b.

3. Comparison can also be made with similar Balkan menhir statues. Even if it is somewhat doubtful if the two finds at Midea are truly menhirs, they are labelled as such in the museum at Návplion, where they are now located, and they are thus referred to in archaeological guidebooks. A.W. Person, *The Royal Tombs at Dendra near Midea*, (Lund, 1931) 110ff., Pl. XXIX.

4. The word "menhir" is an established archaeological term formed from the Celtic words "maen" (=stone) and "hir" (=long), G. L. Daniel, *The Megalith Builders of Western Europe*, (Middlesex: Harmondsworth, 1963). The British sometimes use the term "monolith". Sir Banister Fletcher, *A History of Architecture on the Comparative Method* (London, 1916) 2.

5. Concerning the menhir of Mykonos, Prof. D. Konstantinidis, wrote: "I have been informed that on Mykonos, and more specifically in the area of Ano Mera, there is a large stone of granite, with a height of 2.75 m and with base cross section dimensions of 0.77 × 0.31 m". This monument, known to the Mykonians as the "κολώννα" (=column), does indeed have these dimensions, although at the top it tapers to 0.23 × 0.20 m. A description and photograph of the menhir have been published by Aik. Exarchou-Zansonè (March 1975). See D. Konstanti-

xos<sup>6</sup> became known, while greater value has been attached recently to the megalithic monuments of Rhodope in Western Thrace<sup>7</sup>, which are characterized as dolmens<sup>8</sup> (stone tables<sup>9</sup>). The existence of megalithic monuments in Bulgaria<sup>10</sup>, Eastern Thrace (European Turkey)<sup>11</sup>, Palestine<sup>12</sup>, North Africa<sup>13</sup>, and on the islands and shores of the Western Mediterranean, as well as several accidental finds, lead us to the conviction that related monuments existed in Greece as well, and that finding them was simply a matter of research.

In a short paper presented at the First International Congress of Peloponnesian Studies<sup>14</sup>, we spoke about the megalithic monuments of Inner

nidis, *Summary of Preparatory Lessons in the History of Architecture*, (Athens, 1964) 17-9, 20-1 (mimeographed). Aik. Exarchou-Zansonè, "Autumn in Mykonos", from the newspaper *Κυκλαδικόν Φῶς* no. 321 (March 1975) 7-8.

6. See the description below and the bibliography.

7. D. Triantaphillos, "Μεγαλιθικά μνημεῖα (Dolmens) καὶ βραχογραφίαι εἰς τὴν Δυτικὴν Θράκην", [Megalithic Monuments (Dolmens) and Stone Engravings in Western Thrace], *Athens Annals of Archaeology* VI (1973) 241-52, and the English summary, "Dolmen Graves and Engravings in Western Thrace", 252-55.

8. This is an internationally accepted archaeological term composed of the Celtic words "dol" (= table) and "maen" (= stone).

9. The anthropologist and university professor I. Koumaris has used this term for over fifty years, translating the corresponding Celtic words. D. Konstantinidis also used the same term. I. Koumaris, *Μεγάλη Ἑλληνική Ἐγκυκλοπαίδεια* [Great Greek Encyclopedia] XVI, 811; D. Konstantinidis, *op. cit.*, 17-9.

10. Pre-thracian grave monuments of megalithic form, at one time buried under tumuli, have been found in recent years in Bulgaria, in the north of Rhodope and in Eastern Romylia, which Bulgarian archaeologists consider them dolmens; in Zvezdec (Gaoktepe), where they were discovered in 1944 during excavations for electrical works in the village of Goro Gorov, Селища и насе ление на страиджа, «комплексна науна странжанска експедиция през 1955 година», София 1957, 37-8, fig. 11, as well as near Burgas, and in Strantz. See Ivan Venedikov-Todor Gerasimov, *Trakiskoto Izkustvo* (Sofia, 1973) fig. 1-3.

11. Sevkett Aziz Kansu, "Advance Announcement about the Dolmen of Lalapasa-Büyünlü in Adrianople", *Belleten* XXVII (1963) 491-7 (in Turkish with French summary), and, by the same author, "Dolmens et Menhirs découverts à Edirne. Nouvelles observations", *Belleten* XXXIII (1969) 577-9, Pl. 10.

12. There is a "Megalithgrab" (Dolmen) between Jericho and Gerasa according to H. Gressmann, *Oriental Bilder zum Alten Testament* (1927), Taf. 91, Nr. 212; Th. H. Bossert, *Alt syrien* (Tübingen, 1951) 93; Transjordanien, No. 1208.

13. Maurice Reygasse, *Monuments funéraires préislamiques de l'Afrique du Nord*, (Paris, 1950) 16ff. fig. 14-7, pp. 21-2, fig. 19-24. See also "L'Architecture Algerienne", *Collection Art et Culture*, p. 17: Dolmen de Bou-Nouara.

14. Sparta, 7-14 September 1975. N. C. Moutsopoulos - G. Dimitrokallis, "Τὰ μεγαλιθικά μνημεῖα τῆς Μάνης", [The Megalithic Monuments of Mani], *Πρακτικά Πρώτου Διεθνούς Συνεδρίου Πελοποννησιακῶν Σπουδῶν* [Proceedings of the First International Congress of Peloponnesian Studies] II (1975) (Athens, 1976) 135-69, Plates 20-54.

Mani, and now we publish further notes on the megalithic monuments of Naxos, the largest and most important island of the Cyclades, whose archaeological wealth is literally inexhaustible. These monuments consist of two menhirs and one dolmen:

a) *The Tsikalario Menhir*. This was discovered in 1964 during the excavation of certain ancient tombs, but the archaeologist who discovered it noted with much hesitation: "It is an imposing colossal stone which rises up as a landmark, like a 'menhir'"<sup>15</sup>.

Although a photograph of the monument was published<sup>16</sup>, its plans were not, and for this reason we are presenting here the plans from a recent print of ours (fig. 1) for the use of archaeologists, historians, and scientists. Archaeologists, including Athina Kalogeropoulou<sup>17</sup>, unhesitatingly called the monument a menhir, while it has long been known to the inhabitants of the area, especially of the village of Koutsoherados, by the name *στητή πέτρα* (Standing Stone)<sup>18</sup>. The unusual form of the Koutsoherados menhir provokes a special impression. Its shape is particularly crooked; its horizontal cross section is an oblong rectangle, while its form is mostly flat and massive. To give a better understanding of its shape, we are publishing its complete plans and photographs (Pl. 1-4, fig. 1), since the aforementioned archaeologist published only one photograph of it<sup>19</sup>.

The height of the "Standing Stone" is nearly 2.15 m, undisputedly small if we compare it with the "colossal" menhirs of France<sup>20</sup>, England<sup>21</sup> and Ire-

15. F. Papadopoulou, "Ἀρχαιοτήτες καὶ μνημεῖα Κυκλάδων: Νάξος", [Antiquities and Monuments of the Cyclades: Naxos], *Ἀρχαιολογικὸν Δελτίον* XX (1965), Chronicles III, 515, Plate 648a.

16. F. Papadopoulou, *op. cit.*, Plate 648a.

17. A. Kalogeropoulou, "Ἀνακαλύφθηκαν ἰδιότυποι τύμβοι στὴν Τραγέα Νάξου", [Unusual Tombs Discovered at Tragea, Naxos], in the newspaper *Ἐλευθερία* (22 Aug. 1965) and *Ναξιακὸν Μέλλον* issue no. 267 (30 Aug. 1965) 1-2; she published the photograph of the menhir with the comment: "In this very place there is a stone megalithic monument (menhir), a monument unique in its shape throughout all southeastern Europe".

18. It is better known, but mistakenly, as the Menhir of Tsykalario. There exists a "Standing Stone" in Kythnos, near the Panaghia the Stratolatissa [Stratilatissa], which is not a menhir but a "planted stone", i.e. a big upright stone at the fence of a farm. It is worth mentioning that the Greek *στητή πέτρα* (standing stone) has its corresponding term in English, i.e. "standing stone", which lately, and quite often, is being used instead of the words *monolith* or *menhir*. Cf. J. Hawkes, *A Guide to the Prehistoric and Roman Monuments in England and Wales*, (London, 1976), pp. 163, 169, 208, 209, 226, 232, 260, 264, 284.

19. F. Papadopoulou, *op. cit.*, table 648a.

20. The broken menhir at Locmariaquer in Brittany had a height of 65 feet. Another at Kerloas in Finistere has a height of 17 feet. Rene Huyghe, *Prehistoric and Ancient Art*, (London: Larousse) 25, fig. 18.

21. Cf., for example, the three menhirs of Devil's Arrows at Rocliffe, Yorkshire, whose

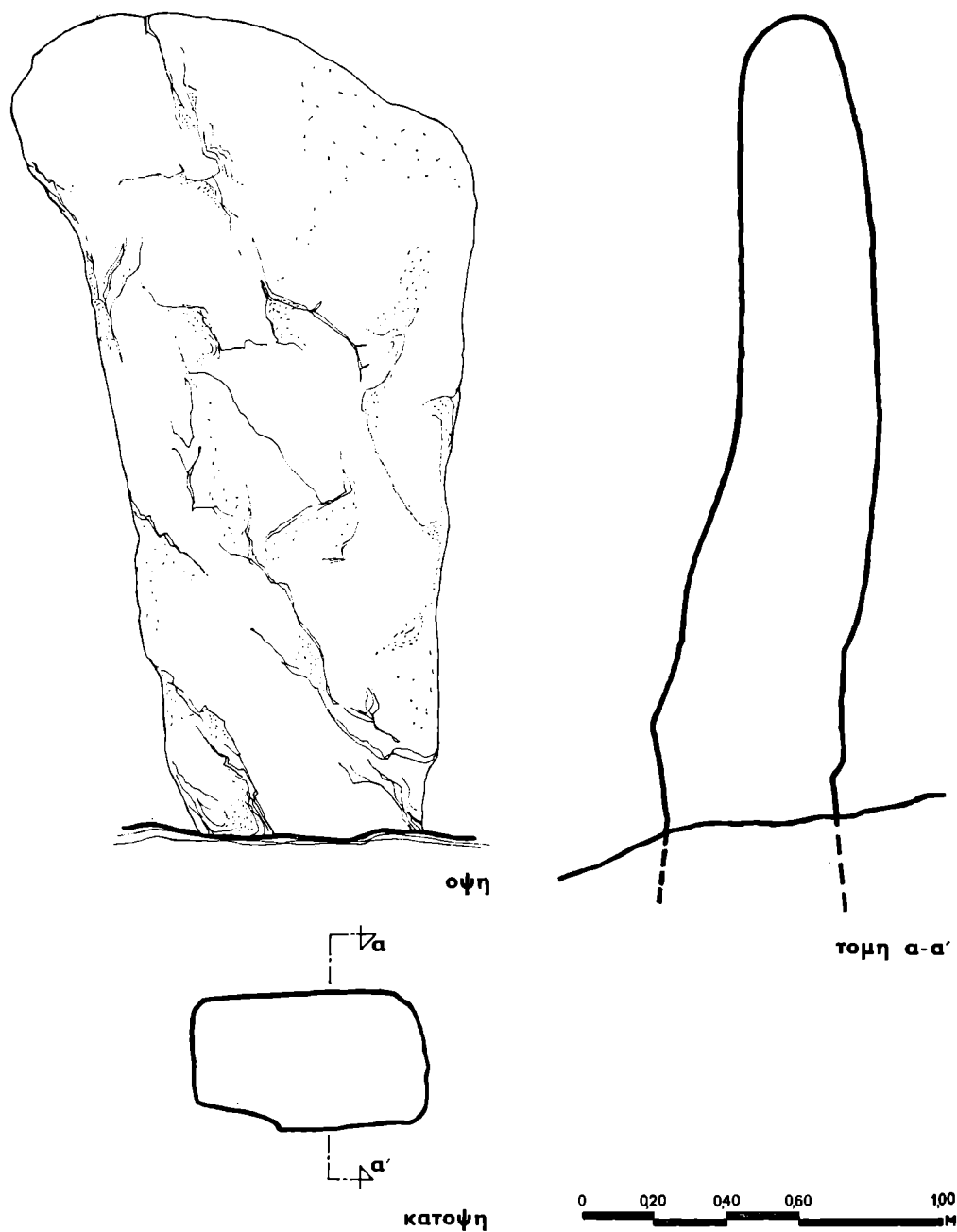


Fig. 1. The Tsikalarío menhir, Naxos.  
(Left: western side view; right: vertical section; bottom: base cross section).

land<sup>22</sup> which are found in encyclopedias. If the comparison is made with the menhirs of Apulia<sup>23</sup>, however, we see that its height is common. Many menhirs of this area<sup>24</sup> are shorter than the "Standing Stone" of Naxos, while several are even shorter than 1.50 m<sup>25</sup>. Dwarf menhirs are also found in France<sup>26</sup> as well as in the rest of Europe<sup>27</sup>.

In regard to its flat form, which appears to have no carving or other work on it, we think that this too is not unusual. Flat menhirs are found everywhere, and we thus find it useful to publish two such menhirs from our archives of photographs: that of "La Pierre Brunehaut" (Pl. 5) and of "La Pierre qui tourne" (Pl. 6), the first in Hollain and the second in Velaine-sur-Sambre in Belgium.

heights are 18 and 22 feet accordingly. Cf. J. Hawkes, *op. cit.* p. 273: "but the tallest standing stone in England is at Rudston, west Brindlington. It is a colossal monolith, rectangular in section and tapering towards the top, twenty-five feet six inches in height", (p. 264).

22. One of the largest Irish menhirs is the Punchestown Long Stone, also known as Gal-laun, found in the county of Kerry, with a height of 23 feet.

23. The menhirs of Apulia is also internationally known as Pietrefitte. For a possible connection of the word "pietrefitte" with the obscure term "λίθους τὰς φυτευτὰς" (planted stones), which appears in a Byzantine manuscript of the 12th century found in Lower Italy, cf. N. C. Moutsopoulos - G. Dimitrokallis, *op. cit.*, p. 160.

24. G. Palumbo, "Inventario delle Pietrefitte Salentine", *Rivista di Scienze Preistoriche* X (1955) 87-90ff.

25. *Ibid.* p. 89, Pietrafitta di Pietragrossa at Novoli (height 1.13 m); p. 120, Pietrafitta di Crocefisso at Muro Leccese (1.40 m); p. 127, Pietrafitta della Pastorizza at Giurdignano (0.90 m); p. 128, Pietrafitta di Monte Tongolo, also at Giurdignano (0.90 m); p. 139, Pietrafitta Presso l'Abitato at Arigliano (1.30 m), etc. The small height of these menhirs at Apulia shows that the second menhir of Naxos which we mentioned, that in the district of the Tower of the Palaiologues, can indeed be a menhir, although only excavations will give a final solution to the problem.

26. C. Portal, *Les mégalithes d'Alban (Tarn)*, (Albi, 1905) 1-3. G. Hubert and J. Hamon, *Le Menhir de la Pierre Ceaucé (Orne)*, (Caen, 1934) 82. The height of the menhir is 1.35 m. But we should not forget that a large number of the menhirs of the rows of Carnak (Kerzerho and Locmariaquer, Kermario) have heights between 0.70 and 1.20 m.

27. Horst Kirchner, *Die Menhire in Mittel Europa und der Menhirgedanke*, [Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, Abhandlungen der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse, Jahrgang 1955, Nr. 9], (Wiesbaden, 1955), Taf. IX; a) Rhaunen, Kr. Bernkastel; Heiden- oder Runenstein (height 1.60 m); b) Wallersheim, Kr. Prüm: Land- oder Lahnstein (height 1.60 m); Taf. X a. Betteldorf, Kr. Daum: Hunnenstein (height 1.50 m); Taf. XI b. Armsheim, Kr. Alzey, Dickerstein (height 1.10 m); Taf. XII b. Nackenheim, Kr. Mainz: Langerstein (height 0.90 m); Taf. XIII a. Hessloch, Kr. Worms: Weisserstein; b. Armsheim, Kr. Alzey: Spitzerstein (height 1.10 m); Taf. XV a. Bürstadt, Kr. Bergstraße: Sackstein (height 1.40 m); b) Bensheim, Kr. Bergstraße: Hinkelstein (height 1.50 m); Taf. XIX b. Großkugel, Saalkreis: Franzosenstein (height 0.98 m); Taf. XXI a) Nohra, Nordhausen: Hünenstein (height 1.40 m).

b) *The Menhir of Agioi Anargyroi*. This entirely unknown menhir is located to the west of the Byzantine church of the Panaghia Orphani, in the district of the Tower of the Palaiologues (Sagri), on a slope covered with bushes and thyme. Its height is 1 m and its width 1.20 m. Although from a distance it gives the impression of a natural rock *in situ*, it is almost certainly a menhir. Naturally, only a small archaeological excavation will give a final answer to this question (Pl. 7, 8).

c) *The Apeiranthos Dolmen*. It is found in the district of the cape Azala to the north of the small community of Moutsouna, the port of Apeiranthos<sup>28</sup>. The monument, which the inhabitants call *θερίδα* (=opening), is found within the property of the same name owned by Dimitrios Karapatis, about 200 m from the sea. Up till now the monument was completely unknown; although M. Bardanis, a professor of mathematics, had published a photograph of it, he neither acknowledged it nor attached any importance to it<sup>29</sup>. Even though the dolmen of Naxos is of rather small size, it is nevertheless larger than a great many of the dolmens of Western Europe, and there is no doubt about its typological classification. The stone of the monument is of "fine-grained marble which is transversed by fine veins of a secondary calc-spar", and its specific gravity was measured at 2.50 gr/cm<sup>3</sup>. With this estimate it was calculated that the horizontal slab that covers the monument weighs 1,400 kg. The dimensions and form of the dolmen, which we are presenting along with its orientation, are shown in the published figures (fig. 2, Pl. 9-11).

The most striking impression of the dolmen of Apeiranthos is that of its small size. This impression is especially intense in our country since Greek archaeologists and intellectuals in general are acquainted with megalithic monuments, especially dolmens (λιθοστρώπεδες) only or mainly from studies of the most general spectrum, or merely from encyclopedias. In these works, which sometimes contain mistakes<sup>30</sup>, it is natural that only the most significant and largest examples are used. Thus, when the dolmens from Ireland, for example, have an

28. A. Katsouros, "Τοπωνύμια της Νάξου", [Place Names of Naxos], *Ναξιακόν Ἀρχεῖον* 1 (1947) 129.

29. M. Bardanis, "Τὰ Σπήλαια της Νάξου", [The Caves of Naxos], *Ναξιακόν Μέλλον* issue no. 243-4 (Apr.-May 1963) 2. Also by the same author, "Οἱ Σπηλιεὺς της Νάξου", [The Caves of Naxos], *Ναξιακόν Μέλλον* issue no. 256 (June 1964) 2. The caption for the photograph that was published, with no relationship to the text, is as follows: "The Greek *Θυρίδα* which is located in Azala (Moutsouna), is composed of four rectangular slabs (flagstones). Each stone is 1.50 m square and 35 cm thick". This description is incorrect; there are only three stones, not four, and the dimensions are erroneous.

30. In the *Μεγάλη Ἑλληνικὴ Ἐγκυκλοπαίδεια* [The Great Greek Encyclopedia] XIV, 196, for example, it is written that the dolmens are Celtic monuments.



*Pl. 1. The Tsikalario menhir, Naxos.*



*Pl. 2. The Tsikalario menhir, Naxos.*





*Pl. 3. The Tsikalario menhir, Naxos.*



*Pl. 4. The Tsikalario menhir, Naxos.*





Pl. 5. "La Pierre Brunehaut" in Hollain (Belgium).



*Pl. 6. "La Pierre qui tourne" (côté est) in Velaine-sur-Sambre (Belgium).*



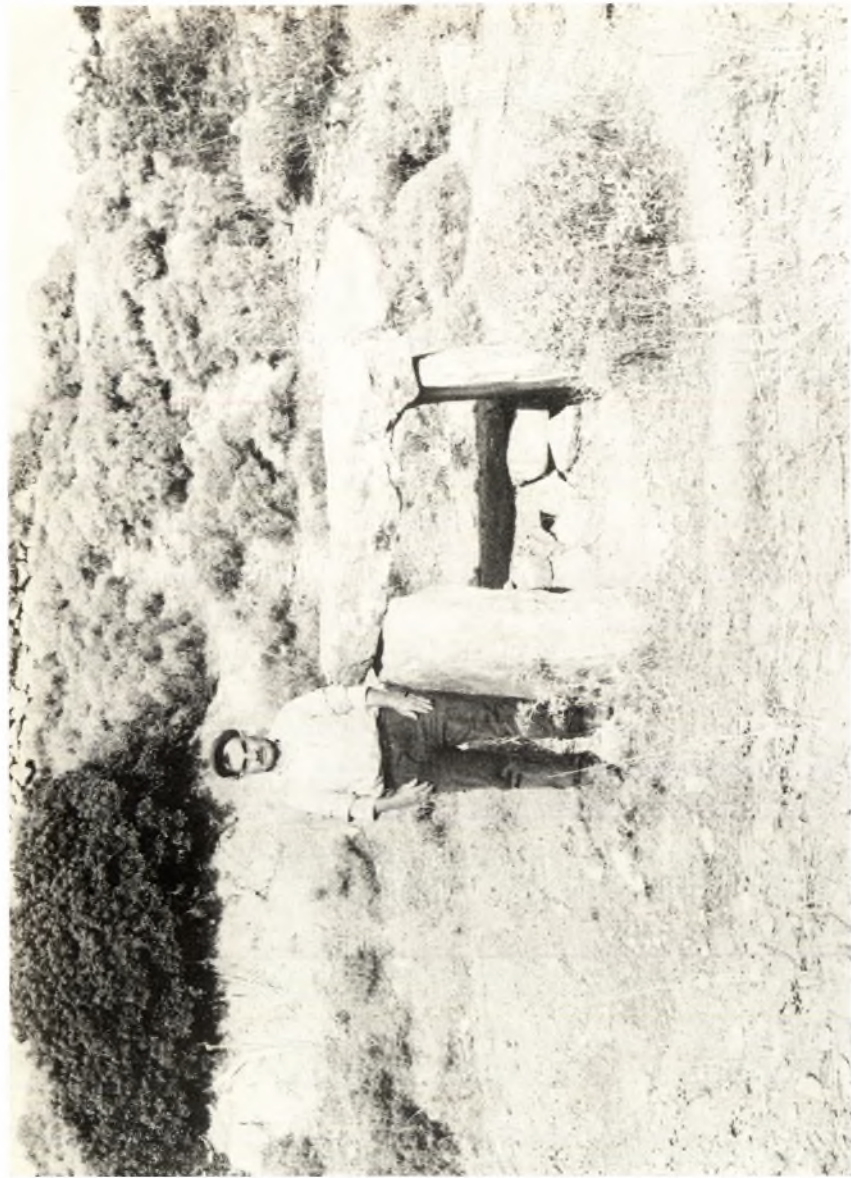


Pl. 7. The menhir of Agioi Anargyroi of the Tower of the Palaiologues, Naxos, (Northwestern view).



*Pl. 8. The menhir of Agioi Anargyroi of the Tower of the Palaiologues, Naxos. (Western view).*





Pl. 9. The Apeiranthos dolmen, Naxos. (Western view).



*Pl. 10. The Apeiranthos dolmen, Naxos. (Northern view).*





*Pl. 11. The Apeiranthos dolmen, Naxos. (Eastern view).*



average weight of 40 tons<sup>31</sup> for the horizontal slab (capstone), while the capstone of the dolmen of Brownhill in the Carlow County weighs over 100 tons<sup>32</sup>, it is natural for one to doubt if the dolmen of Naxos, the capstone of which weighs a mere 1,400 kg<sup>33</sup>, is in fact a dolmen.

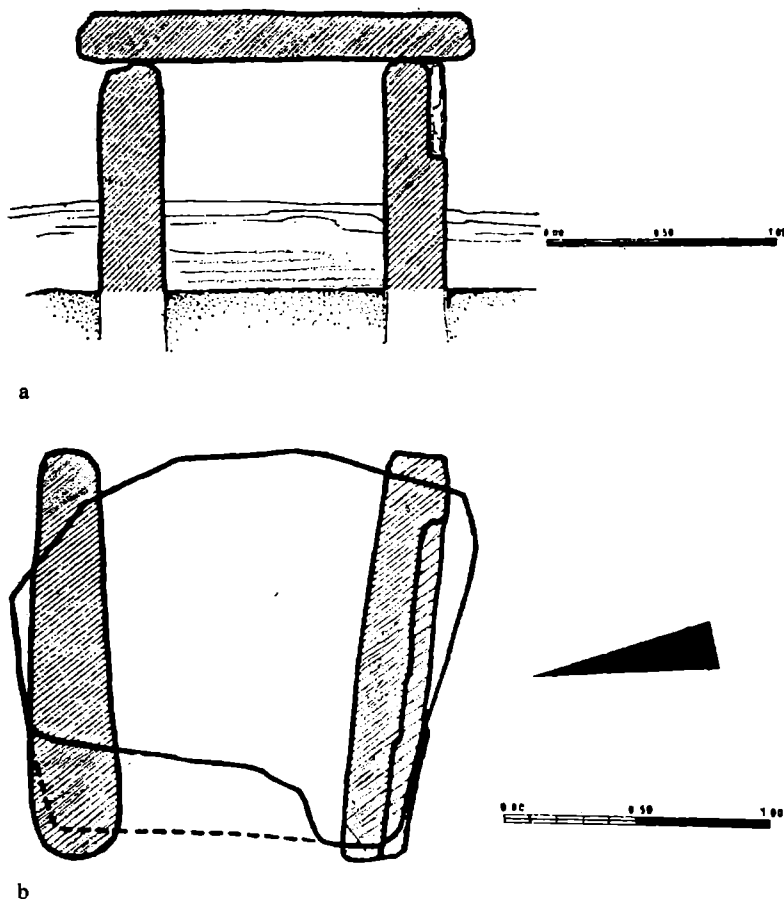


Fig. 2. The Apeiranthos dolmen, Naxos. a) Vertical section. b) Base cross section.

This, however, is misleading. Alongside the gigantic dolmens there are often dwarf dolmens in the same or neighboring districts. In the district of Lu-

31. M. Herity - G. Eogan, *Ireland in Prehistory* (London, 1977) 85.

32. *Ibid.*, pp. 85, 89. G. L. Daniel, *The Megalith Builders of Western Europe*, (Middlesex: Harmondsworth, 1963) 12.

33. N. C. Moutsopoulos - G. Dimitrokallis, *Anthropos*, III/1 (Jan. 1976) 103.

res in the province of Gallura in northern Sardinia, for example, the dolmens, which the inhabitants call *stazzone*, are of exceptionally small size<sup>34</sup>. These dolmens, which are typologically and morphologically different from the others of Sardinia, are related in type and form, as well as in size, to the dolmens of neighboring Corsica<sup>35</sup>. But aside of the *stazzone*, the other dolmens of Sardinia are not, comparatively, of a very significant size. The dolmen of Sa Perda e S'Alta.e at Birori, for example, has a capstone with the dimensions of  $1.50 \times 2.30$  m<sup>36</sup>, that is, barely larger than the corresponding stone of the Naxos dolmen, which is  $1.70 \times 2.00$  m<sup>37</sup>.

Furthermore, the dolmens of Otranto (Byzantine *Hydrous*) of Apulia have exceptionally small dimensions. Let us note that the group of dolmens of Otranto<sup>38</sup> differs significantly in size<sup>39</sup> and in shape<sup>40</sup>, as well as in orientation<sup>41</sup>, from the other dolmens of Apulia, which are found in the districts of Taranta and Bari, while, on the other hand, they show a close relationship to the dolmens of Malta<sup>42</sup>. We note four of the other dolmens of Otranto which have smaller capstones than the one in Naxos: 1) the *Dell' Accettulla* dolmen ( $1.80 \times 1.60$  m)<sup>43</sup>, 2) the Cauda of Giurdignano ( $1.70 \times 1.30$  m)<sup>44</sup>, 3) the Peschio of Giurdignano ( $2.5 \times 1.60$  m)<sup>45</sup>, and 4) the no longer existent Gravasce dolmen, also in Giurdignano ( $1.60 \times 1.50$  m)<sup>46</sup>. Additional research could add other dolmens to the list of those smaller than that of Apeiranthos on Naxos, but we consider this purposeless. The only thing that we need add is that on the matter of height, the dolmen of Naxos, with a height from 0.85 to 1.20 m, is higher than the dolmens of Otranto, which are less than one meter high<sup>47</sup> and indeed, in one

34. M. Guido, *Sardinia* (London, 1963) p. 81.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 81.

36. *Ibid.* p. 85.

37. N. C. Moutsopoulos - G. Dimitrokallis, *op. cit.* p. 99.

38. David Trump mentions that the group consists of sixteen dolmens (see *Central and Southern Italy before Rome*, (London, 1966) 87), and Michele Gervasio writes of seventeen (see *I dolmen e la civiltà del bronzo nelle Puglie* (Bari, 1913) 310), while the latest and most correct count is eighteen, by Giuseppe Palumbo (see "Inventario dei dolmen di terra d'Otranto", *Rivista di Scienze Preistoriche* XI (1956) 84-108).

39. M. Gervasio, *op. cit.* p. 69. D. Trump, *op. cit.* p. 87-8.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 69. D. Trump, *op. cit.* p. 88.

41. M. Gervasio, *op. cit.* p. 320.

42. D. Trump, *op. cit.* p. 88.

43. G. Palumbo, *op. cit.* p. 89.

44. *Ibid.*, p. 97.

45. *Ibid.*, p. 98.

46. *Ibid.*, p. 100.

47. M. Gervasio, *op. cit.* p. 69.

case, the dolmen of Ciuncuse of Giurdignano, only 0.50 m<sup>48</sup>.

In our study in the periodical *Anthropos* (vol. 3, no. 1), we wrote that: "The prehistoric world of Naxos, despite studies and publications up til now, many written by amateurs, has not yet been studied. The megalithic monuments which we present and which we believe to date from ca. 2000 B.C., together with new future finds, will help to open new roads and will lead to the revision of many theories about the prehistory of the Cyclades and the Aegean".

In conclusion, the Apeiranthos of Naxos dolmen, indisputably a dwarf dolmen, must be classified with the small dolmens of Otranto and of Malta; it is perhaps among the remains of one megalithic civilization which disappeared (or is still unknown), or else it is proof, especially if we consider its proximity to the sea, that sailors of the Western Mediterranean at one time reached as far as the Aegean<sup>49</sup>.

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48. G. Palumbo, *op. cit.* p. 98.

49. As for the indications and evidence that we have concerning the probability of communication between the Aegean and the Western Mediterranean, and ultimately with the British Isles, see N. C. Moutsopoulos - G. Dimitrokallis, "Τὰ Μεγαλιθικά μνημεῖα τῆς Μάνης", [Megalithic Monuments of Mani], *op. cit.* p. 166-68.