

CAVES OF NORTH KAHRAMANMARAS (SOUTHEASTERN TURKEY)

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ABSTRACT

Previous caving expeditions around the area north of Kahramanmaraş in southeastern Turkey were limited to the BUMAK's exploration of Dongel Cave in 1982 and exploration of some potential areas by Groupe d'Explorations Spéléologiques d'Aquitaine in 2007. MTA Cave Department found and documented six caves around Dongel and Tekir villages during their short reconnaissance trip in 2008. Thus, only a very small part of the huge limestone massif at the north of Kahramanmaraş, which is more than 2,000 km², had been explored by cavers.

Meanwhile, years of archaeological exploration in the area resulted in numerous cave discoveries. Dr. Cevdet Merih Ereğ's survey in 2006 brought to light Tekir Yassı Cave, Püren Geçiti / Günbatını Cave and Kurucaova Cave. Under the leadership of this same academician, excavations at Direkli Cave, which was discovered by Prof. Dr. Kılıç Kökten in 1959, began in 2007. OBRUK Cave Research Group, which began exploring caves in that area in 2009, found and documented more than 25 caves in three years.

Keywords: Turkey, Kahramanmaraş caves, Maras caves.

AREA

The area that has been explored by OBRUK Cave Research Group is 60 km north of Kahramanmaraş, in southeastern Turkey. The southernmost limit is in the vicinity of Dongel Village and the northern limit, the vicinity of Kurucaova village

PREVIOUS RESEARCH IN THE AREA

There was very limited previous speleological research in that area. Caving expeditions around north of Kahramanmaraş region were limited to BUMAK's exploration of Dongel Cave during 1982 and reconnaissance of some potential areas by Groupe d'Explorations Spéléologiques d'Aquitaine in 2007. MTA Cave Department found and documented six caves around Dongel and Tekir villages during their short reconnaissance trip at 2008. Thus, only a very small part of the huge limestone massif north of

Kahramanmaraş had been explored by cavers till now.

Meanwhile, years of archaeological exploration in the area resulted in numerous cave discoveries. Dr. Cevdet Merih Ereğ's survey in 2006 enabled preliminary explorations of Tekir Yassı Cave, Püren Geçiti / Günbatını Cave ve Kurucaova Cave. Under the leadership of same academician, excavations at Direkli Cave, which was initially discovered by Prof. Dr. Kılıç Kökten at 1959, began again in 2007.

OBRUK Cave Research Group, which began exploring caves in the area in 2009, found and documented 25 caves in three years. In addition, two newly found caves are too long or difficult to work simultaneously with the existing Kes Mountain Sinkhole exploration. Those long and difficult ones – e.g. Sogutova Sinkhole- will be explored after Kes Mountain Sinkhole exploration ends.

GEOLOGY

Even if we disregard various melanges, there are several different geological formations in this area; periods ranging from Paleozoic to Cenozoic. Beginning from North;

Cayderesi Formation

Around north of Goksun Village and Kaman Mountain, that thin formation which lies over various other formations mainly consists of recrystallized limestones and marbles, dated Upper Permian.

Salyan Formation

Lies around South Goksun and Kaman Mountain, Salyan Formation covers a limited area. From below to top, its structure is mainly sandstone, marl and limestone at the top. Dated Oligocene – Miocene.

Andirin Limestone

Around the west of the area that has been worked, shelf type Upper Triassic -Lower Mesozoic limestones were surfaced, named as Andirin Limestone Formation. Beginning with pebbled limestones below, it continues with grey and massive limestones. Actually, from south to north, the whole formation on the west of Tekir

Village named as Andırın Formation. Its oolitic, micrithic reefal limestones believed to be at least 3000 meters thick.

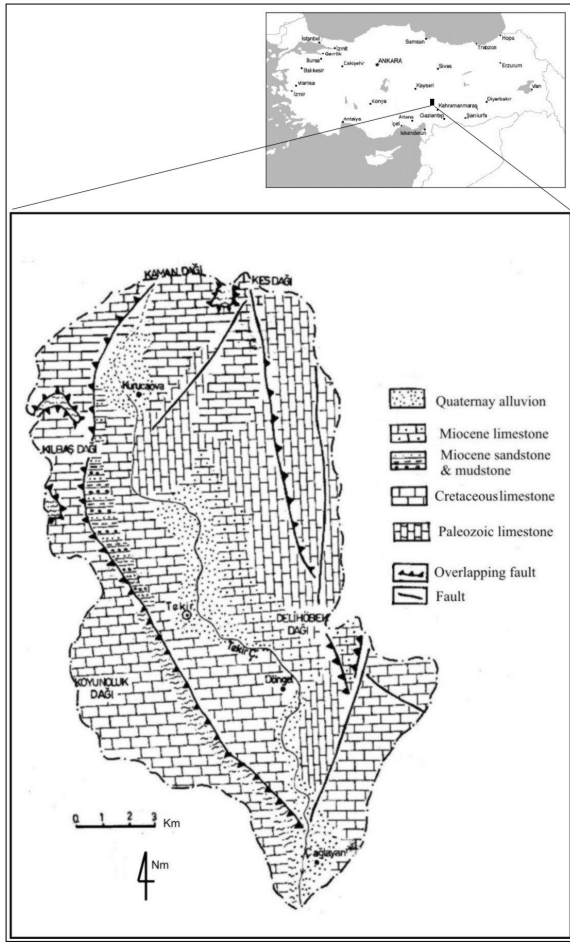


Fig. 1: Simplified geological map of the area (modified from Gül, M., et al, 2005)

Hacıveliler Formation

This geological unity; which covers a large area around the east and southeast of Tekir Village, also Yeşilgoz Doline and Dongel caves, is mostly light colored reefal limestone with corals. There are two different opinions about the period of that formation: Middle or Upper Miocene.

Keşdağı Formation

Within the north east of the previous formation lies Keş Mountain Formation. It covers the whole area from Keş Mountain towards Kaman Mountain, with mostly dark gray or gray, recrystallized and sometimes dolomitized limestones dated as Permian.

GEOLOGICAL EVOLUTION OF THE AREA

The area is a part of Tauride Block and it's a relic of Neotethys Ocean. During the Paleozoic, Arabian Platform was separated from the Tauride Block by Neotethys. Upper Jurassic - Lower Cretaceous closure of the Neotethys Ocean and subduction of Arabian Platform beneath the Tauride Block created a pop-up uplift by the overlying Tauride Block.

So, it can be said that, the active tectonic movement of the region is completely related to the detachment of the subducting oceanic lithosphere at the northern end of the Arabian Plate and it continues to uplift the Tauride Block.

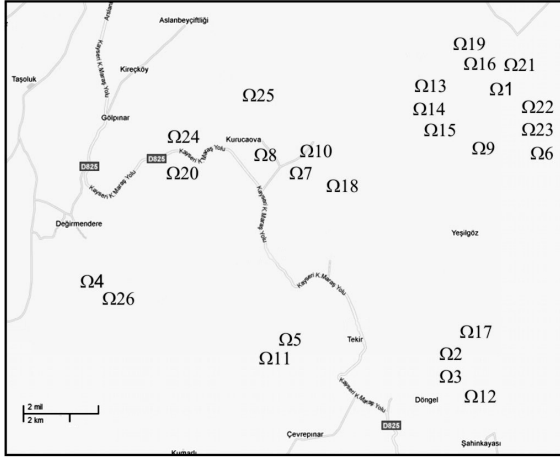
In addition to Assyrian Suture, strike-slip fault systems and long active thrust faults of Kahramanmaraş region are the existing results of this subduction.¹

EXPLORED CAVES

CAVE	LENGTH	DEPTH
KEŞ DAĞI SINKHOLE	1120 m	-650 m
YUKARI DÖNGEL CAVE	489 m	
ASAGI DÖNGEL CAVE	319 m	
SOĞUTOVA TRAVERS CAVE	272 m	
ARDIÇSUYU 2 CAVE	177 m	
EMİRLİYAS CAVE	167 m	
KAR SINKHOLE		-87 m
GOGDAS CAVE	86 m	
CİNCİN SINKHOLE	70 m	-51 m
PÜREN AGZI SINKHOLE	63 m	-22 m
KALE TEPE SINKHOLE	50 m	-32 m
ARDIÇSUYU 3 CAVE	46 m	
YAĞLAK CAVE	41 m	
DELİKKAYA SINKHOLE	-37 m	
KURTİNE CAVE	24 m	
YAGINI CAVE	22 m	
ORULU CAVES	22 m	
TOPRAK SINKHOLE	22 m	
HEVREN CAVE	17 m	

¹ Önalın, M. 1988, pgs.5-6, Gül, M., et al, 2005. pgs. 193-195

AGASUYU CAVE	15 m
PUREN DELIGI CAVE	15 m
KES SMALL SINKHOLE	-12m
TOPAKLAR SINKHOLE	-12 m
ISIMSIZ CAVE	11m
YOL KENARI CAVE	10 m
KEFENLI CAVE	?
SOGUTOVA SINKHOLE	?



- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 KEŞ DAĞI SINKHOLE | 14 ISIMSIZ CAVE |
| 2 YUKARI DÖNGEL CAVE | 15 KURTINI CAVE |
| 3 ASAGI DÖNGEL CAVE | 16 YAGINI CAVE |
| 4 SOGUTOVA TRAVERS CAVE | 17 ORULU CAVES |
| 5 ARDIÇSUYU 2 CAVE | 18 HEVREN CAVE |
| 6 KAR SINKHOLE | 19 AGASUYU CAVE |
| 7 CİNCİN SINKHOLE | 20 PUREN DELIGI CAVE |
| 8 PUREN AGZI SINKHOLE | 21 KES SMALL SINKHOLE |
| 9 GOGDAS CAVE | 22 TOPAKLAR SINKHOLE |
| 10 KALE TEPEŞİ CAVE | 23 TOPRAK SINKHOLE |
| 11 ARDIÇSUYU 3 CAVE | 24 YOL KENARI CAVE |
| 12 YAĞLAK CAVE | 25 KEFENLİ CAVE |
| 13 DELİKKAYA SINKHOLE | 26 SOGUTOVA SINKHOLE |

Fig 2. Explored caves of North Kahramanmaraş (southeastern Turkey)

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