

introduction

The Antequera Dolmens Site consists of three cultural monuments: the dolmens of Menga and Viera and the *tholos* of El Romeral; and two natural monuments: the mountainous formations of La Peña de los Enamorados and El Torcal.

The World Heritage Committee, at its fortieth meeting (Istanbul, 2016), decided to add the Site to the World Heritage List under the criteria (i), (iii) and (iv) as a cultural asset in series, adopting the Declaration of Outstanding Universal Value for the following reasons: It is one of the oldest and most original forms of landscape monumentalisation using the integration of megalithic architecture and nature that is known in worldwide Prehistory, a great ritual hub whose origin dates back to the first half of the 4th millennium BC. The megalithic structures look like a natural landscape (buried under mounds of earth) oriented towards two natural monuments: La Peña and El Torcal. The megaliths are characterised by the use of large blocks of stone that form chambers and spaces covered by lintel roofs (Menga and Viera) or corbelled roofs (El Romeral). The three structures conserve all their constitutive elements and their unitary character. They are in a good state of conservation and the original structure is almost intact.

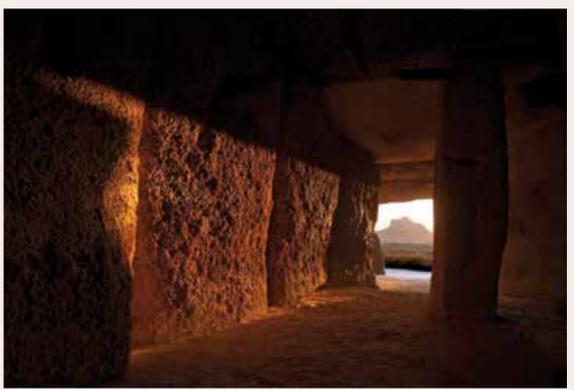
From the point of view of protection, the first recognition given to an element of the Site was to the Menga dolmen, with the Royal Order of 1st June 1886 that declared it a National Monument. Currently, the five assets enjoy the legal consideration of an Asset of Cultural Interest -Archaeological Area-, their guardianship being exercised by the Regional Government of Andalusia, through the Archaeological Ensemble of Antequera Dolmens.

The communities who constructed these megaliths expressed their symbolic link with earthly elements and the cosmos through the different alignments that they established with the axes of their corridors. Thus, the



) Note the same frame of the previous image and how Louisa Tenison was able to see in 1851 the relationship between Menga and La Peña

dolmen of Menga is oriented towards a geographical landmark like La Peña. El Romeral is situated on the trajectory of the axis Viera-Menga-La Peña and its corridor will be oriented towards another geographical accident, El Torcal. Finally, Viera is pointed towards the equinox sunrise. The research recognises these correspondences from Louisa Tenison, who in 1851 visited Menga and perceived its relation with La Peña. Later, in 1905, Manuel Gómez-Moreno described the Menga-Romeral-La Peña axis. Michael Hoskin, whose research on thousands of megaliths in Europe and Africa has highlighted the exceptionality of the three Antequera monuments, was the one who confirmed it in 2002.

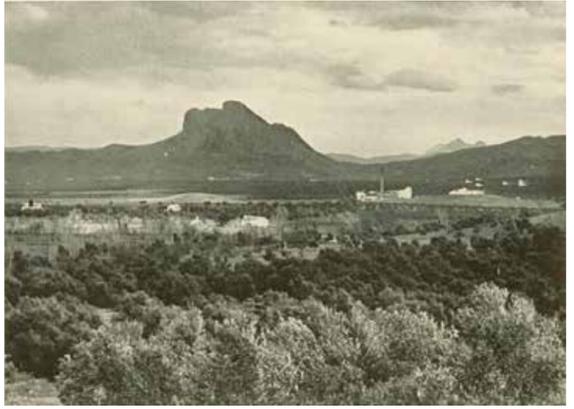


) La Peña de los Enamorados from the back of the Menga dolmen chamber

History of the research

The case of Antequera is very exceptional, since its historiography dates back almost 500 years; the first reference written about Menga appears in a text from 1530.

The work by Rafael Mitjana *Memoria sobre el templo druida* (Memory about the druid temple), from 1847, is one of the first scientific works of the megalith phenomenon, indicating a landmark in the study of the Antequera Dolmens. In 1853, in his book *Castile and Andalusia*, Louisa Tenison identifies the well that Mitjana had found a little earlier, being the first unequivocal written reference of it that exists and whose existence would only be confirmed in the excavations of 2005. In 1903, the brothers Antonio and José Viera Fuentes discovered the dolmen that from then on, carried their surname. Furthermore, in the following year they located a third megalith, the *tholos* of El Romeral. The importance of these discoveries explains why in 1905, they already appeared described in two publications, one by Ricardo Velázquez Bosco and another by Manuel Gómez-Moreno Martínez. The second decade of the 20th century was one of the periods with the highest levels of research activity on the site with the works of Hugo Obermaier, Pierre Paris, Adrian de Mortillet and Cayetano de Mergelina. A few years later, it was Wilfrid James Hemp, Simeón Giménez Reyna and Georg and Vera Leisner who studied it in depth.



) View from Menga with the Cerrillo Blanco (El Romeral tholos) at the foot of La Peña. Around 1930



) Camorro de las Siete Mesas in El Torcal



) Schematic anthropomorphic figure. Peñas de Cabrera (Casabermeja)



) Schematic figure that represents a birth. Peñas de Cabrera (Casabermeja)

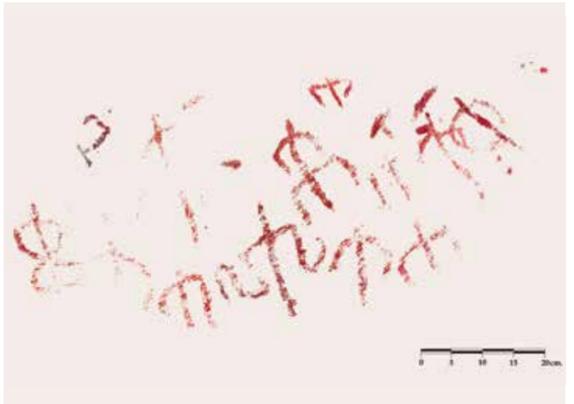
ciated to agriculture, livestock and crafts. These communities in the mountainous areas of Regions of Antequera can be considered as the predecessors of the constructors of megaliths. In the meadow of Antequera, and as a result of the management archaeology, several settlements of the Late Neolithic and the Copper Age were studied, such as Arroyo Saladillo, Huerta del Ciprés, El Sillilo and El Perezón; or Piedras Blancas I, located in La Peña. In front of the hill where Menga and Viera are erected, the hill of Marimacho is situated, inhabited during the Copper Age. From the same period is the Archaeological Site of Peñas de Cabrera (Casabermeja), which has an important collection of schematic

In the last two decades of the 20th century, the research work directed by José Enrique Ferrer Palma and Ignacio Marqués Merelo, from the University of Málaga stands out. Currently, the research comes together in the General Research Project *Sociedades, territorios y paisajes en la Prehistoria de Antequera* (Societies, territories and landscapes in the Prehistory of Antequera), coordinated by Leonardo García Sanjuán, in which the Universities of Seville, Granada, Alcalá de Henares and Southampton participate as well as the Archaeological Ensemble itself.

Uniqueness of the Site

In the mountains of El Torcal and de Molina, a series of caves are located that were used by the first Neolithic groups that occupied these regions. Among them, the El Toro one in El Torcal stands out, where the work carried out in the last 40 years by a team coordinated by Dimas Martín Socas and María Dolores Camalich Massieu from the University of La Laguna, in the framework of the project *El Neolítico en la Comarca de Antequera* (The Neolithic in the District of Antequera), indicate an initial occupation of the Old Neolithic (5400-4700 BC). After an abandonment of approximately 500 years, it was again occupied intensely during the final period of the Neolithic (4300-3800 BC), when it witnessed a strong increase in economic activity, asso-

ciated to agriculture, livestock and crafts. These communities in the mountainous areas of Regions of Antequera can be considered as the predecessors of the constructors of megaliths. In the meadow of Antequera, and as a result of the management archaeology, several settlements of the Late Neolithic and the Copper Age were studied, such as Arroyo Saladillo, Huerta del Ciprés, El Sillilo and El Perezón; or Piedras Blancas I, located in La Peña. In front of the hill where Menga and Viera are erected, the hill of Marimacho is situated, inhabited during the Copper Age. From the same period is the Archaeological Site of Peñas de Cabrera (Casabermeja), which has an important collection of schematic



) Dance scene. Peñas de Cabrera (Casabermeja)

itinerary

After visiting the Reception Centre, we arrive at the Michael Hoskin Solar Centre, thus named in recognition of the archaeoastronomer from the University of Cambridge. The cylindrical wall incorporates the profile of the horizon of the Antequera meadow, with the silhouette of La Peña and the indication of the places where the sun rises (sunrise) in the solstices and equinoxes. In the pavement it can be observed the orientations of the main megaliths of the Iberian Peninsula.

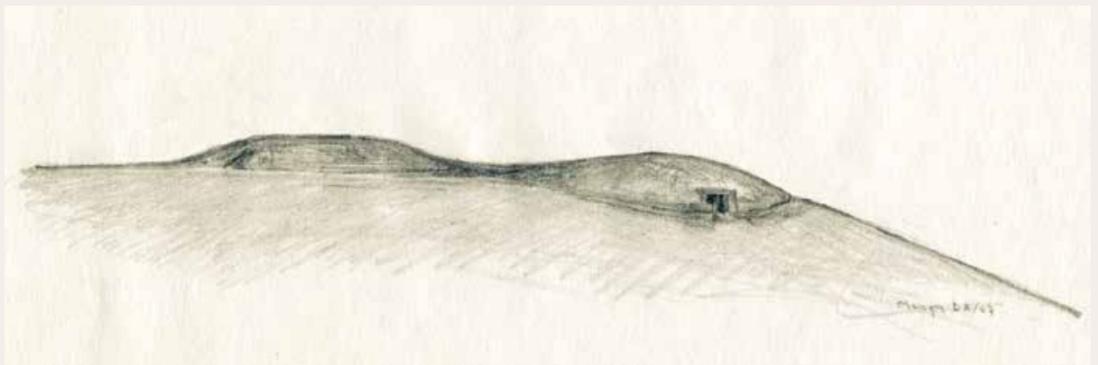
On the West side of the square, is the Dolmens Memorial. It is the centenary olive tree that was in the Menga atrium for years. A series of monoliths, forming a timeless cromlech, remembers all those people who contributed to the protection and valuing of the Antequera Dolmens.

Following the path, we arrive at the Field of the Tumuli of Menga and Viera, from which point we can observe the Antequera meadow, the Marimacho hill, the *tholos* of El Romeral and La Peña.

The visit continues with the *tholos* of El Romeral, 4km away.



) Michael Hoskin Solar Centre



) Menga and Viera Tumuli

Site plan 1



1. Reception centre
2. El Caminante Observatory
3. Michael Hoskin Solar Centre
4. Dolmen of Viera
5. Dolmen of Menga

Site plan 2



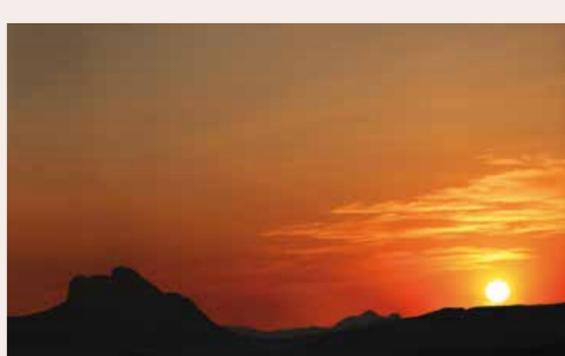
1. Visitors reception centre
2. Tholos of El Romeral



Antequera Dolmens Archaeological Ensemble
 - Institutional headquarters, reception centre and dolmens of Menga and Viera
 Carretera de Málaga, 5 - 29200 Antequera (Málaga)
 Tel. (+34) 952 71 22 06 and 07 - (+34) 670 94 54 53
 - Reception centre and tholos of El Romeral
 Carretera A-7283 (direction Córdoba) Tel. (+34) 670 94 54 52
 visitasdolmenesdeantequera.ccul@juntadeandalucia.es
 www.museosdeandalucia.es



La Peña de los Enamorados



) Los Enamorados and the Sun

One of the most revealing elements of the Site is its landscape dimension, within which its relationship with a natural formation of great prominence and cultural meaning in the region of Antequera stands out: the mountain known as La Peña, which with its silhouette, resembles the face of a sleeping person.

In the North section of this mountain, where the axis of symmetry of Menga points, there is a space of special symbolic and religious meaning in the Neolithic. This area includes the shelter of Matababras, with schematic cave painting, that was probably a sanctuary, as well as Piedras Blancas I. The visual and scenic relationships between Menga and La Peña are possibly unique in European Prehistory.

Dolmen of Menga

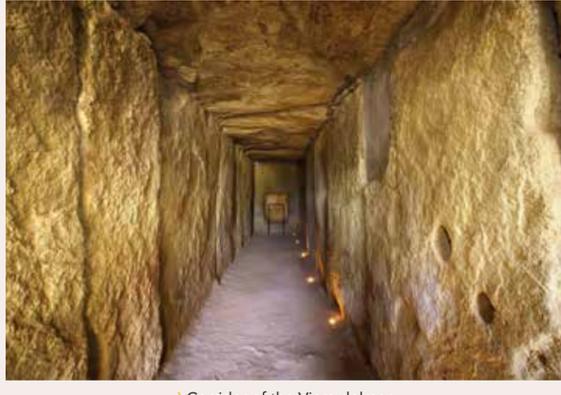
Built with the orthostatic technique, Menga is a gallery dolmen in which an open atrium gives way to a second rectangularly-shaped section that, acting as a corridor, leads to the oval-shaped chamber. The length is 27.50m, including the initial atrium section. The height increases from the entrance, with 2.70m, towards the back, where it extends to 3.50m. The maximum width of 6m reaches the final third of the chamber, where the latest excavations have uncovered a well excavated in the sandstone, 1.50 in diameter by 19.55 in depth, aligned with the three pillars that fit with the connection of the capstones. Each of the sides is made up of 12 orthostates, whilst the back consists of just one. Five slabs make up the roof. The tomb is covered with a tumulus of 50m in diameter and faces North East (azimuth of 45°), that is, to the north of the sunrise in the summer solstice, a completely exceptional orientation in Iberian megalithic architecture. It is not known exactly when Menga was built, although there is data that suggests that it could have been constructed in an early phase of the Late Neolithic, between 3800 and 3400 BC. Subsequently, it was used continuously as a holy space or funeral place until the Medieval. In the present, the cemetery of the city of Antequera is located barely a few metres away, which shows the continued existence of the value and cultural significance throughout almost six millenniums uninterrupted with the funerary use of the space.



) Menga dolmen

Dolmen of Viera

It is a corridor tomb, made up of a long corridor separated into two sections, at the end of which there is a cubic chamber which can be accessed by a square entrance hollowed out of large slab of stone. Built like Menga with the orthostatic technique, it has a length of a little over 22m. Its interior average width ranges between 1.30m in its initial section and 1.60m in the chamber. Each side of the tomb must have been made up of 16 orthostates, of which 14 have been conserved on the left side and 15 on the right, whilst the head is composed of one single slab. Five entire roof tiles have been conserved from the



) Corridor of the Viera dolmen

roof and fragments of another two, and the existence of four more tiles can be supposed, currently disappeared. The average interior height is a little more than 2m. The tomb is covered with a tumulus of 50m in diameter, being oriented slightly towards the South East (an azimuth of 96°), therefore with this aspect, it follows the conventional rule of Iberian megalithism. The date of construction is unknown, although it was probably erected during an advanced phase of the Late Neolithic, later than Menga, being later used as a place of worship and burial during the Copper Age, the Bronze Age and Antiquity.

Tholos of El Romeral

It is a tholos-type tomb with two circular chambers. It has a corridor of masonry walls with a trapezoidal section and a lintel roof that preserves 11 slabs, with a maximum length of 26.30m, an average width of 1.50m and an average height of 1.95m. The chamber, with a domed roof due to the alignment of the rows, is made with stonework that ends in a large horizontal slab; it is in a circular shape with a diameter of 5.20m and a height of 3.75m. At the back of this space, there is an opening that gives way to a small corridor that ends in a small room, reproducing, on a smaller scale, the morphology and the constructive technique indicated above. Only the access doors to the chambers are built with the orthostatic technique. The total conserved length exceeds 34m and is covered with a mound of 85m in diameter. Facing an azimuth of 199°, that is, in the S-SW octant of the horizon, it is one of the exceptional examples of alignment to the Western half of the sky in the whole of the Iberian Peninsula. Its axis points exactly to the highest elevation of El Torcal, the Camorro de las Siete Mesas. Due to its workmanship, El Romeral must correspond to the Copper Age (ca. 3200-2200 BC), but given that this monument has not been excavated scientifically, it is difficult to pin point more precisely the date of its construction.



) Vault consisting of rows of the Tholos of El Romeral

welcome

For years, the Ministry of Culture of the Regional Government of Andalusia has endeavoured to modernise the Andalusian museums in order to make them centres capable of tackling new cultural and social challenges, with the aim of achieving the best and maximum access of citizens to the collections.

The museums of Andalusia managed by the Ministry of Culture form a network composed of 24 institutions, very different to each other. The Museum of Almería, Monumental Ensemble of the Alcazaba of Almería, Museum of Cádiz, Archaeological Ensemble of Baelo Claudia, Archaeological Museum of Córdoba, Fine Arts Museum of Córdoba, Madinat al-Zahra Archaeological Ensemble, Archaeological and Ethnological Museum of Granada, Casa de los Tiros Museum, Fine Arts Museum of Granada, Museum of Huelva,

Museum of Jaén, Archaeological Museum of Úbeda, Museum of Arts and Popular Traditions of High Guadalquivir, Archaeological Ensemble of Cástulo, Iberian Museum, Museum of Málaga, Archaeological Ensemble of Antequera Dolmens, Archaeological Museum of Seville, Museum of Arts and Popular Traditions of Seville, Fine Arts Museum of Seville, Andalusian Centre of Contemporary Art, Archaeological Ensemble of Carmona and Archaeological Ensemble of Itálica.

At these museums, anyone is welcome who wishes to learn more about our region and our heritage with their resources and the activities that are carried out there. This artistic, archaeological and ethnographic heritage reflects what we were like and how we have come to be what we are now. The institutions, through their exhibitions and activities, show what we long to be in the future.

We want to welcome you to this museum, hoping that you enjoy your visit. We encourage you to visit all the museums in Andalusia and we thank you for the tie that you have created, from now on permanently, with Andalusian heritage.

Ministry of Culture

visit us

How to get there?

Public transport

Line 1 of the Antequera bus service stops in front of the bus entrance to Antequera Hospital, the last stop on its route and the one closest to enclosure 2.

Private transport

Tholos of El Romeral
 Road A-7283 (direction Córdoba)

For information about opening hours, group tours and Madinat, visit www.museosdeandalucia.es

Remember

For the proper use of these facilities and for the enjoyment of all, it is necessary to comply with the rules established by the centre and to adhere to the instructions of the security staff.

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archaeological ANTEQUERA DOLMENS ensemble

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