
Antequera Dolmens Site (Spain) No 1501

Official name as proposed by the State Party

The Antequera Dolmens Site

Location

Antequera

Province of Malaga

Autonomous Community of Andalusia

Spain

Brief description

The Antequera Dolmens Site is a serial property made up of three megalithic monuments; the Menga Dolmen, the Viera Dolmen and the *Tholos* of El Romeral, and two natural monuments, La Peña de los Enamorados and El Torcal de Antequera. Built during the Neolithic and in the Bronze Age out of large stone blocks that form chambers and spaces with lintelled roofs (Menga and Viera) or false cupolas (El Romeral), and used for rituals and funerary purposes, the Antequera megaliths are widely recognised examples of European Megalithism. The megalithic structures are presented in the guise of the natural landscape (buried beneath earth tumuli) and their orientation is based on two natural monuments: La Peña de los Enamorados and El Torcal. These are two indisputable visual landmarks within the property.

Category of property

In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a serial nomination of five *sites*.

1 Basic data

Included in the Tentative List

27 January 2012

International Assistance from the World Heritage Fund for preparing the Nomination

None

Date received by the World Heritage Centre

28 January 2015

Background

This is a new nomination.

Consultations

ICOMOS has consulted its International Scientific Committee on Archaeological Heritage Management and several independent experts.

Technical Evaluation Mission

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the property from 20 to 24 September 2015.

Additional information received by ICOMOS

An interim report was sent to the State Party on 21 December 2015 requesting further information on development projects, extension of boundaries, protection and Heritage Impact Assessment. The State Party responded to these queries on 23 February 2016. The information is incorporated into the relevant sections of this evaluation report.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report

11 March 2016

2 The property

Description

The Antequera Dolmens Site, located at the heart of Andalusia in southern Spain, covers 2,446.30 hectares and comprises three megalithic monuments and two natural elements. Two megaliths, Menga and Viera Dolmens, are located on a slightly elevated space, overlooking the fertile depression of Antequera. About 1,700 m to the east of Menga is the *Tholos* of El Romeral, from which the foothills of the Sierra de El Torcal rise up, about 8.5 km to the south. Each of the three tombs retain their original tumulus and they are representative of the two great Iberian megalithic architectural traditions: lintelled architecture (Menga and Viera) and the architecture of false cupola ceilings (El Romeral); and they are also representative of a variety of architectonic types: passage tombs (Menga and Viera) and corbel dome tombs (El Romeral).

Approximately 7 km to the north-east of Menga is the impressive mountain of La Peña de los Enamorados, renowned for its anthropomorphic profile that resembles a gigantic recumbent human head looking up to the sky. The two mountainous formations, La Peña de los Enamorados and El Torcal, which functioned as an orientational backdrop when Menga and El Romeral were laid down, are both natural landmarks in the region as well as important archaeological complexes that provide evidence of a significant human presence in the southern Iberian Peninsula between the Neolithic period and the Bronze Age. Altogether, the nominated property with its buffer zone covers an area of 13,234.00 hectares.

The Menga Dolmen

Conceived as a large-scale gallery dolmen, Menga consists of a mound almost 50 m in diameter which covers a megalithic chamber 27.5 m long and up to 6 m wide. With the height of the gallery increasing from 2.7 m at the entrance to 3.5 m in the chamber, Menga represents a type of megalithic architecture which has a chamber and corridor with three great pillars aligned along the longitudinal axis of the chamber. The estimated total combined weight of its 25 orthostats, 5 capstones and three pillars is 835 tonnes. Menga was deliberately

oriented towards the mountain of La Peña de los Enamorados and possesses examples of symbolic prehistoric art that are paralleled at La Peña and other southern Iberian sites.

The Viera Dolmen

Viera is a megalithic monument with a gallery-grave where one can identify three different sections, separated by two doors, with its total length being 21.5 m. Its tumulus has a maximum diameter of some 50 m and reaches a height of 4 m. In terms of megalithic architecture, Viera is laid out as a simple long corridor, roughly rectangular in shape, which at its far end leads into a chamber that has a range of graphic and sculptural elements. Viera has the only surviving example on the Iberian Peninsula of painted and bas-relief engraved decoration in a style documented in some hypogean tombs found in France and Italy.

The *tholos* of El Romeral

El Romeral, with a 26 m long passage that leads to a large corbelled chamber (5.20 m in diameter and almost 4 m high), is the largest *tholos* (i.e. a circular chamber with a vaulted ceiling) on the Iberian Peninsula. In terms of megalithic architecture, El Romeral is a great example of a *tholos* with a corridor and a double chamber whose false cupola ceilings were rendered with an approximation technique using strings and dry stonewalls made from small stones. El Romeral faces towards another unique landmark, El Camorro de las Siete Mesas, the highest point of the El Torcal mountain range.

La Peña de los Enamorados

La Peña is an elevated point of the Baetic mountain range, which rises to a height of 880 m above sea-level and occupies an area of 117 hectares. Historically, the mountain has been a landmark of the utmost importance due to its location and shape, serving as a "terrestrial lighthouse" for travellers moving from east to west (between Seville and Granada) or from north to south (from Malaga to Cordoba). La Peña is visually related to Menga, which faces towards the large cave of Matababras, a sanctuary found with traces of schematic art, which reinforces the binomial of Megalithism and rock art. La Peña's profile against the sky strongly suggests an anthropomorphic figure (it resembles a human face facing the sky) and it has featured prominently in the local traditional narratives (legends, songs and literature).

El Torcal

The mountain range of El Torcal is situated some 11 km to the south of the district of Antequera in the Subbaetic ranges, at a height of between 800 and 1,136 metres above sea level. Its main feature is the karstic formations that foster a wide diversity of habitats that are home to many endemic plant species. There are numerous chasms and caves and other underground features, including the cave of El Toro, which houses valuable archaeological sites from the Neolithic period and the Copper Age.

History and development

The Menga dolmen

Archaeological evidence suggests that Menga was built during the 4th millennium cal. BCE, but there is no direct empirical proof of its use during the Bronze Age. Known since the 16th century AD, Menga was declared a National Monument in 1886 and in 1923 received, together with Viera, the highest level of official protection as National Monuments. Menga has been the subject of the largest number of studies, archaeological excavations and conservation and restoration work. After a partial intervention in 1968 (plaster rods were put in place, interior electrics installed), several archaeological surveys took place in 1986, 1988 and 1991, which affected both the tomb and the tumulus. A later restoration and emergency intervention between 2001 and 2002 focused on the treatment of the stone fabric: cleaning, consolidation and restoration.

The Viera dolmen

The currently available radiocarbon-dated chronology suggests that Viera was built in the last third of the 4th millennium BCE, and that it witnessed activity, possibly of a religious or funerary nature, in both the Copper and Bronze Ages. Discovered in 1903 by the brothers Antonio and José Viera, the dolmen was subject to restoration of the tomb and its tumulus, and landscaping of the surroundings, between 1940 and 1941. The latest large restoration intervention at Viera was in 2003 to repair the fractures in capstones 3, 4 and 5, the collapsing of the lateral orthostats D6, D7, D8 and D9, and dampness caused by the poor sealing of previous archaeological surveys.

The *tholos* of El Romeral

The construction period of El Romeral is attributed to the Chalcolithic period (c. 3300-2200 BCE.). Since no scientific study has focused on this *tholos*, the finer details of its chronology and history as a monument are essentially unknown. El Romeral was discovered by the Viera brothers in 1903 and classified as a Monument in 1931. In the 1940s it was the object of an important consolidation intervention in which some of the broken capstones and certain masonry walls were replaced. In 2002, conservation work was undertaken, which affected some of the capstones, the lintel at the entrance, part of the masonry and the floor surface.

La Peña de los Enamorados

Despite being a famous natural monument since the 16th century CE, it was only in 2006 that surface field surveys uncovered the importance of the northern part of La Peña during the Neolithic Period, reflected in the rock-face shelter of Matababras. Based on the morphology of the motifs represented, the provisional chronology proposed for this site is the late 4th and early 3rd millennium BCE. The prehistoric site of La Peña was declared a Property of Cultural Interest classed as an Archaeological Zone in 2011.

Prehistoric occupation of El Torcal

Discovered in 1972, El Toro cave was excavated in 1977, 1980, 1981, 1985 and 1988. The cave is, at the moment, the best documented site in the region of Antequera for research into the first settlement of the area by food-producing communities – which laid the foundations of the society that would go on to erect the ensemble of megaliths of Antequera and set up the political, territorial, socio-economic and symbolic structures that can be seen in the whole area from the first half of the 4th millennium BCE.

3 Justification for inscription, integrity and authenticity

Comparative analysis

The State Party's methodological focus for the comparative analysis is based on the study *The World Heritage List: Filling the Gaps - An Action Plan for the Future* published by ICOMOS in 2005. Accordingly, the nominated property is compared to 23 similar properties inscribed on the World Heritage List and Tentative Lists using a typological framework (archaeological heritage), a regional-chronological framework (Megalithic and Neolithic Periods) and a thematic framework (Monumental sculpture, dolmens).

The State Party states that there is an underrepresentation of Megalithism from the Neolithic Period in the World Heritage List; there are only three megalithic constructions (dolmens) inscribed on it (i.e. the Taxila in Pakistan (1980, criteria (iii) and (vi)), the Heart of Neolithic Orkney in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (1999, criteria (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv)), and the Gochang, Hwasun and Ganghwa Dolmen Sites in South Korea (2000, criterion (iii))); and that there are only four inscribed properties from the period of Neolithic Megalithism and all but one of these are found in the British Isles (the Brú na Bóinne – Archaeological Ensemble of the Bend of Boyne in the Republic of Ireland (1993, criteria (i), (iii) and (iv)); the Heart of Neolithic Orkney in Scotland (1999, criteria (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv)); the ensemble formed by Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (1986, criteria (i), (ii) and (iii)); and the Megalithic Temples of Malta in Malta (1980, 1992, criterion (iv))). The comparative analysis concludes that due to their dimensions, design features and links to the landscape, the three Antequeran megaliths stand out from all of the other megaliths known in European Prehistory.

ICOMOS notes that the comparative analysis of Antequera Dolmens Site is presented in a clear and concise manner with a relevant selection of sites. ICOMOS shares the views of the State Party.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this serial property for the World Heritage List.

Justification of Outstanding Universal Value

The nominated property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- The colossal scale of megaliths characterised by the use of large stone blocks that form chambers and spaces with lintelled roofs (Menga and Viera) or false cupolas (El Romeral) attest to exceptional architectural planning from those who built them and create unique architectural forms.
- The intimate interaction of the megalithic monuments with nature, seen in the deep well inside Menga and in the orientation of Menga and El Romeral towards presumably sacred mountains (La Peña de los Enamorados and El Torcal), emphasise the uniqueness of this prehistoric burial and ritual landscape.
- The three tombs, with the singular nature of their designs, and technical and formal differences, bring together two great Iberian megalithic architectural traditions and a variety of architectonic types, a rich sample of the extensive variety within European megalithic funeral architecture.

ICOMOS considers that the serial approach is justified as providing three megalithic monuments and two natural elements with which they are closely related and which contribute to their meaning, amounting to a remarkable inter-relationship between funerary monuments and natural landmarks.

ICOMOS considers that despite a certain degree of inadequacy in the use of relevant criteria, the core argument presented in the nomination dossier for the justification of Outstanding Universal Value is appropriate.

Integrity and authenticity

Integrity

The State Party notes that the nominated property has been the object of conservation, consolidation and restoration interventions, but in no way has its integrity been altered, with the wholeness and intactness of each monument preserved. ICOMOS considers that the integrity of the series is challenged by the peri-urban industrial/commercial modern setting in which the three megaliths are located, which have been significantly altered in the past two decades by urban and infrastructure development. The location and scale of the unfinished museum building structure on the site between the burial mounds and Cerro Marimacho has affected the integrity of the setting of both monuments.

Menga is remarkably intact with its entire covering mound in place, and the mound and tomb of Viera is almost intact, missing only the lintel of its portal. Although the monuments have been subject to several excavations and interventions, the records of such interventions are scattered and incomplete. ICOMOS

notes that a dedicated research project is under way to recover as much as possible of those records that do exist and that can be assembled at this time.

The mound and interior of El Romeral is equally well presented but the integrity of the setting is somewhat diminished by virtue of it being separated from the dolmens of Menga and Viera by industrial/commercial warehousing development. ICOMOS notes that there are plans to remediate the impact of this setting.

The natural sites of La Peña de los Enamorados and El Torcal have substantially maintained their natural state of conservation, both in their geomorphological karstic configuration, the uniqueness of their flora and fauna and the richness of their archaeological sites, without having experienced any human intervention. ICOMOS considers that the integrity of the whole series has been justified; and that the integrity of the individual sites that comprise the series has been demonstrated, but it is vulnerable.

Authenticity

ICOMOS considers that, in the case of each of the three tombs, their form and design have remained remarkably unaltered in spite of necessary repairs to the fabric and some protection interventions, together with the installation of lighting (very sensitively achieved) and drainage along the floor of Viera dolmen.

The location of Menga and Viera has been peri-urban for centuries, at the edge of the rising ground on which the city of Antequera developed. Zoning of the land for industrial/commercial warehousing development has led to rapid development in the past two decades and this has had a negative impact on the location and setting of the nominated property.

The sites of Menga, Viera and La Peña each possess prehistoric art, expressing both a tangible and intangible heritage in their own right. La Peña has two particular legends attached to it. The first and most well-known is described in the nomination dossier. The second, La Peña the 'sleeping giant', is seen as a very ancient expression of the male in the landscape, while the almost equally anthropomorphic rock (only as seen from the east/southwest) on which the town of Archidona is located, can be seen as the female. La Peña 'faces' north and Archidona 'faces' south. El Torcal also has its intangible heritage in stories of imagined giants and strange creatures 'caught' in its karstic rock formations or roaming its strange karstic landscape.

ICOMOS considers that all components of the nominated property have a tremendous *genius loci* and sense and spirit of place. The authenticity of each and every one of the component parts in this series is unquestionable.

ICOMOS considers that the authenticity of the whole series has been justified; and that the authenticity of the

individual sites that comprise the series has been demonstrated.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the whole series have been justified; and for individual sites, the conditions of integrity and authenticity have been met.

Criteria under which inscription is proposed

The property is nominated on the basis of criteria (i) and (ii).

Criterion (i): *represent a masterpiece of human creative genius;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the three megalithic monuments of Antequera are some of the most notable and globally recognised examples of megalithic architecture. The most representative example is the Menga dolmen, one of the largest known dolmens; an exceptional example of colossalism and a unique architectural solution, with interior pillars. It is one of the highpoints of lintelled architecture in late European Prehistory, with a truly astonishing internal space that has no parallel in world megalithism.

ICOMOS considers that the number, size, weight and volume of stone blocks transported and assembled in the basin of Antequera, using rudimentary technology, and the architectural characteristics of the monuments formed by these three megaliths, makes the Antequera Dolmens one of the most important engineering and architectural works of European Prehistory and one of the most important and best known examples of European Megalithism. As such, the dolmens of Menga and Viera and the tholos of El Romeral definitely represent a prime example of the creative genius of humanity.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified for the whole series.

Criterion (ii): *exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the position of Antequera as the natural junction of long-distance routes, seas and continents, the point where different traditional cultures converged, led, in late Prehistory, to the birth of a culture that interacted with the landscape and that also produced extraordinary megalithic architectural monuments. Additionally, the Antequera Dolmens Site contributes original and exceptional elements of universal value to the typologies and construction characteristics of its monumental funerary architecture representative of the two great Iberian megalithic traditions: lintelled architecture in the cases of Menga and Viera, and the

architecture of El Romeral's false cupola ceiling. Such notable typological diversity is also due to Antequera's location: an important centre of confluence between the worlds of the Atlantic, the Mediterranean, Africa and Europe.

ICOMOS shares the view that Antequera had a strategic importance, being the region where Mediterranean and Atlantic influences meet in the southern Iberian Peninsula. It also acknowledges the typological diversity of the megalithic architecture of Antequera. However, as acknowledged in the nomination dossier, ICOMOS considers that there is very limited knowledge and data (dating and archaeological evidence) regarding the Neolithic inhabitants of the lands of Antequera who joined forces to construct the megalithic monuments. The nomination dossier has not sufficiently demonstrated the considerable exchange between different populations in southern Spain, during the Neolithic and Chalcolithic periods, which led to the birth of a culture that interacted with the landscape and produced the megalithic monuments. However, ICOMOS considers that in this justification and the nomination dossier in general, the information provided makes a better fit for its justification under other criteria. Hence ICOMOS considers the nomination of Antequera Dolmens also under criteria (iii) and (iv).

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has not been demonstrated.

Criterion (iii): *bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilisation which is living or which has disappeared;*

This criterion was not suggested by the State Party but ICOMOS considers that the nomination dossier provides elements to substantiate that Antequera Dolmens Site provides an exceptional insight into the funerary and ritual practices of a highly organised prehistoric society of the Neolithic and Bronze Age in the Iberian Peninsula. The Dolmens of Antequera materialize an extraordinary conception of the megalithic landscape, being exponents of an original relationship with the natural monuments to which they are intrinsically linked. Differentiating themselves from the canonical orientations towards sunrise, this original relationship shows anomalous orientations of its megalithic monuments: Menga is the only dolmen in continental Europe that faces towards an anthropomorphic mountain such as La Peña de los Enamorados; and the *Tholos* of El Romeral, facing the El Torcal mountain range, is one of the few cases in the entire Iberian Peninsula where the orientation is towards the western half of the sky. This criterion is suggested in the sense that the assembly of the three megalithic monuments together with the two natural monuments represents a very distinctive cultural tradition which has now disappeared.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified for the whole series.

Criterion (iv): *be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;*

This criterion was also not suggested by the State Party but ICOMOS considers that the nomination dossier provides elements to justify this criterion on the grounds that the Antequera Dolmens Site is an outstanding example of a megalithic monumental ensemble, comprised of the three megalithic monuments (the Menga and Viera dolmens and the tholos of El Romeral), that illustrate a significant stage of human history when the first large ceremonial monuments were built in Western Europe. The three different types of megalithic architecture seen in this ensemble of dolmens, which are representative of the two great Iberian megalithic traditions (lintelled architecture in the cases of Menga and Viera and the architecture of El Romeral's false cupola ceiling), and the unique relationship between the dolmens and the surrounding landscape of Antequera (the three megalithic monuments are buried beneath earth tumuli and two megaliths are oriented towards the natural monuments of La Peña de los Enamorados and El Torcal), reinforces the originality of this property, arguably one of the world's most significant expressions of the megalithic phenomenon.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified for the whole series.

ICOMOS considers that the serial approach is justified.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criteria (i), (iii) and (iv) and conditions of authenticity and integrity.

Description of the attributes

The attributes carrying the Outstanding Universal Value of the property are:

- The three megalithic monuments used for rituals and funerary purposes;
- The two natural monuments, La Peña de los Enamorados and El Torcal, which are visual landmarks conceptually connected to Menga and El Romeral, functioned as a 'terrestrial lighthouse' for travellers in prehistoric times as well as the karstic formations that foster a wide diversity of habitats that are home to many endemic plant species;
- Chasms, caves (including El Toro), other underground features and symbolic prehistoric art (in La Peña de los Enamorados and Menga) and other archaeological artefacts (microlithic tools);
- The natural landscape where the megalithic structures are buried beneath earth and the ritual landscape of prehistoric times between megaliths and the natural mountain formations (La Peña de los Enamorados and El Torcal) with an extraordinary geomorphological configuration;

- The intangible heritage (local traditional narratives, legends, songs, literature) associated with La Peña de los Enamorados and El Torcal.

4 Factors affecting the property

Based on the observations of the technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that there are three major development pressures:

- a) Development pressure due to ill-advised industrial/commercial urban development within the view sheds between the component parts (the northernmost area falls directly within the line-of-sight of La Menga to La Peña) and the proposed future extension of this commercial/industrial area (now under review) and commercial/industrial development, as well as the very poor public realm presentation in the immediate surroundings of the site of El Romeral. ICOMOS notes that there is the potential for a review of the current zoning and adoption of important actions that are not contained within the nomination dossier, such as:
 - A plan to minimise the growth of industrial development within the area between La Menga and La Peña;
 - A plan to ameliorate the impact of the existing industrial development around El Romeral;
 - A plan to reduce the expansion of the commercial/industrial development in the area and to re-locate logistic activity to a new area to the northwest of the city, associated with the new high-speed railway line.
- b) Development of a very large and unfinished museum building within the property in which Menga and Viera are located. The museum structure dominates at the site and it impedes the view to La Peña from certain points close to the tombs.
- c) Widening of the long-extant road to the south of the site (the historical main route out of the city eastwards), where the current site entrance to the dolmens of Menga and Viera is located.

These three points were raised in the ICOMOS letter sent to the State Party on 21 December 2015 and the State Party has provided satisfactory additional information. The State Party has presented the summary of the preliminary study of the criteria for the development of the Special Protection Plan of Antequera Dolmens Site, which will set out guidelines for the different zones that have an impact on integrity of the nominated property. The drafting of the Special Plan that is already underway is scheduled to be completed within 30 months. Additionally, a plan is presented for the declassification of over 113 hectares of urban developed land (including Industrial Manchilla, Widening Romeral, Tertiary Villa) and its new classification as Land Not for Residential Development of Special Protection. This will

require modification of the General Urban Land Use and Zoning Plan for the Municipality of Antequera (2010), which is scheduled to take at least 36 months to its completion.

Additionally, the impact of the unfinished museum building will be mitigated through the reduction of the built-up volume (in 35.90%) through the elimination of the entire first floor, simplification of existing volumes and reduction in number of exterior finishes. To improve the integration of the Museum into the surrounding landscape, the project will include the design of a green roof, subtle alterations to the topography around the perimeter of the building and cultivation of plant species that are native to the area. This is all part of the phase two of the Landscape Management Project of the Premises 1 of the Archaeological Ensemble, completed in December 2015.

The nomination dossier includes a detailed analysis of current visitor numbers and their origins. With less than 100,000 visitors to the monuments annually, the sites of Menga and Viera are well able to cope. El Torcal attracts visitors in similar numbers (86,846 visitors in 2013) and the sharp increase experienced in the number of visitors over the last three years could cause problems for the environment in the future. A limited number visit the *Tholos* of El Romeral. The main threats and impacts to the Nature Reserve of El Torcal therefore derive from excessive public use and, in particular, the practice of certain sporting activities, such as climbing. There is no public access to La Peña de los Enamorados.

ICOMOS considers that the main threats to the property are development and tourism pressures.

5 Protection, conservation and management

Boundaries of the nominated property and buffer zone

ICOMOS notes that in all cases the boundaries of the nominated properties are clearly delineated by the roads surrounding them, as indicated on the overall map of the series and the land-use planning maps. The protection and controls in place at each and every location are sufficient to ensure that potential inappropriate developments are mediated.

The boundary around the dolmens of Menga and Viera is dictated by the roads that surround them and is appropriate. The proposed boundary around El Romeral was very confined and ICOMOS was of the view that the boundaries should be extended in order to enhance the integrity of the nominated component. In the supplementary information provided to ICOMOS in February 2016 the State Party indicates that the boundary around El Romeral has been extended from 0.60 hectares to 3.90 hectares.

ICOMOS further notes that the boundaries of La Peña and El Torcal have been defined for natural and environmental reasons but these components also encompass the archaeological sites that are also protected. The proposed boundaries are understandable and supportable on the ground.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the boundaries of the nominated property and of its buffer zone are adequate.

Ownership

The megalithic tombs in Menga, Viera and El Romeral belong to the Autonomous Government of Andalusia. With regard to the natural components, La Peña de los Enamorados is privately owned (although some plots are under municipal ownership) as is most of the El Torcal Nature Reserve in Antequera.

Protection

The various levels of legal protection for each component part are very well set out in the nomination dossier. All three burial monuments have been protected as National Monuments since 1923. In 1985 all three tombs were declared Assets (Monuments) of national Cultural Interest (BIC) under the new legislation entitled the Spanish Historic Heritage Law (16/1985). La Peña does not have national protection but, since 1985, is protected in the same manner as the tombs. El Torcal has a national protective designation as a Nature Reserve (Royal Decree 1978) and a number of local designations.

ICOMOS considers that the main issues in the buffer zone are mainly related to the deterioration of the setting of the burial monuments. The legal protective provision, however, provides mechanisms and an 'environment' within which the protection of designated areas and commercial and building development are mediated.

Two issues deserve special attention:

- Proposed new building and commercial warehousing development within the lands designated commercial/industrial.
- The poor quality of the public realm (i.e. unsightly access route into the site) around El Romeral.

ICOMOS considers that these points have been addressed by the State Party in their outline of the zones under consideration for the Special Plan submitted as part of the additional information requested by ICOMOS in February 2016.

ICOMOS considers that the legal protection in place is adequate. ICOMOS considers that the protective measures for the property, its buffer and landscape zones are adequate but could be improved.

Conservation

ICOMOS notes that the component parts of the nominated property are now all very well conserved, to a high

standard conceptually and technically. All three burial monuments are remarkably well-preserved, stable and well-conserved. The natural component parts, which remain almost wild, are also very well preserved and are being actively managed. As yet, no conservation interventions have occurred on the painted rock art, but studies are in progress to monitor change and especially to identify any changes incurred by increased visitor numbers. The cave of El Toro is remarkably stable at present but plans to open the cave to visitors are being actively developed. If it is opened, changes to its microenvironment will have to be carefully monitored.

ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation of the nominated property is satisfactory. All component parts are very well preserved. Conservation has been conducted in a manner that has preserved the essential attributes and values of the monuments.

Management

Management structures and processes, including traditional management processes

A Steering Committee was set up in 2010 for the Antequera Dolmens Site, which is made up of representatives for administrations and owners of the different properties included in the World Heritage proposal, with CADA (Archaeological Ensemble of the Antequera Dolmens) being the agency solely responsible for representing and monitoring the management of the Site

ICOMOS notes that, on the ground, it all works very well at this stage. The Visitor Centre and the offices located on the site in which the dolmens of Menga and Viera are located form the communications hub and practical base from which that site (the full landholding) and the site in which El Romeral is located are managed and maintained on a day-to-day basis.

Whilst in private property, the protection of La Peña is managed by its designation as an archaeological site (a Property of Cultural Interest / BIC) land use planning law. Access to this area for archaeological research is managed through permits and licences.

A wide range of protective provisions govern the management of El Torcal nature reserve property, and its archaeological sites are designated in their own right as Property of Cultural Interest / BIC.

ICOMOS notes that the nominated property has an adequate overall management framework for all components of the nominated property.

Policy framework: management plans and arrangements, including visitor management and presentation

The Archaeological Ensemble of the Antequera Dolmens (CADA) is the specialist body in charge of implementing a

concerted management programme, including the drafting of the Strategic Master Plan for the Dolmens of Antequera Archaeological Ensemble (completed in 2011).

The Dolmens of Antequera have been the focus of intense research for a very long time. At this juncture, the monuments and their relationship with the landscape (La Peña and El Torcal) are very well understood. What is not clearly understood is the nature of ancillary activity in the immediate environs of the monuments. A greater care must be taken with regards to archaeological context, specially during the proposed construction work on the museum.

ICOMOS considers that it would be desirable that the State Party consider the integration of an Heritage Impact Assessment approach into the management system, so as to ensure that any programme or project regarding the property be assessed in relation to its impacts on the Outstanding Universal Value and its supporting attributes. Additional information provided by the State Party in response to the ICOMOS December 2015 letter indicates that according to the legislation (Law 7/2007 of 9 July, on the Integrated Management of Environmental Quality) a Heritage Impact Assessment will be required in the process of developing the Special Plan and revising the General Plan for Urban Zoning.

ICOMOS further encourages the State Party, through CADA and the Steering Committee of Antequera Dolmens Site, to ensure the coordination of the various planning instruments (particularly the Special Plan and the General Urban Plan) regarding the management of each of the component parts of the nominated property in order to enhance the management of the property.

The current visitor centre at the dolmens of Menga and Viera provides ample space for small groups and has an attractive audio-visual presentation of the serial property. In addition, there are dedicated guides to take groups up to the tombs. The proposed plans for the development of the museum (finance approved) will support the visitor experience at both dolmen sites, providing a full display on the nominated property in detail as well as a regional archaeological and cultural context for the property. El Torcal has a discrete and sensitively designed visitor centre and dedicated routes that provide sufficient capacity for its growing visitor numbers.

Involvement of the local communities

ICOMOS notes that the local business and tourism management communities within the city have enthusiastically embraced the branding exercise promoted by the local authority, but they were not involved in the preparation of the nomination and are not involved in any meaningful way in the management of the property. This means that there is likely to be a quite limited understanding of the site (in its cultural and archaeological sense) locally. The environment around the site and its recent development demonstrates this lack of awareness.

The establishment of CADA in 2010, in particular, provided a management structure for interdisciplinary work and facilitated the preparation of the nomination dossier. A range of highly qualified architects, planners, archaeologists, technical scientists, administrators, and conservators have been involved with – and continue to be involved with – research work at all the sites (component parts) and practical day-to-day management at four of these. There are at least three dedicated guides at the Menga and Viera Dolmens, together with two administrators and several maintenance personnel. The nominated property is very well staffed at present.

The reserve of El Torcal has a staff of rangers and the centre has a number of dedicated staff who operate it on a day-to-day basis. This component is also a very well managed site.

ICOMOS considers that the management system for the serial and individual elements of the property is adequate.

6 Monitoring

A thematic area classification of indicators related to the asset's conservation is presented in the nomination dossier, grouped under conservation of the archaeological ensemble and its environment, citizen and institutional participation, and management and cultural involvement. Whilst ICOMOS considers that the indicators presented under each category are adequate to monitor the state of conservation of the property, the State Party should also include further indicators related to the impact of tourism, and potential impact from development, mainly for the dolmen sites.

ICOMOS considers that the monitoring and indicators are adequate but that these should be augmented by additional indicators related to the impacts of tourism and development on the attributes of the nominated property.

7 Conclusions

ICOMOS recognises the Outstanding Universal Value of the Antequera Dolmens Site which meets criteria (i), (iii) and (iv). ICOMOS also considers that despite the integrity of the three megalithic monuments being challenged by the peri-urban industrial/commercial modern setting in which the three megaliths are located, which have been significantly altered in the past two decades by urban and infrastructure development, the required conditions of integrity and authenticity of the whole series and individual sites have been met and necessary mitigation measures to address the existing threats are in place.

8 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the Antequera Dolmens Site, Spain, be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of **criteria (i), (iii) and (iv)**.

Recommended Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

Brief synthesis

The Antequera Dolmens Site is a serial property made up of three megalithic monuments: the Menga Dolmen, the Viera Dolmen and the Tholos of El Romeral, and two natural monuments, La Peña de los Enamorados and El Torcal de Antequera. Built during the Neolithic and the Bronze Age out of large stone blocks that form chambers and spaces with lintelled roofs (Menga and Viera) or false cupolas (El Romeral), and used for rituals and funerary purposes, the Antequera megaliths are widely recognised examples of European Megalithism. The megalithic structures are presented in the guise of the natural landscape (buried beneath earth tumuli) and their orientation is based on two natural monuments: La Peña de los Enamorados and El Torcal. These are two indisputable visual landmarks within the property.

The colossal scale of megaliths characterised by the use of large stone blocks that form chambers and spaces with lintelled roofs (Menga and Viera) or false cupolas (El Romeral) attest to exceptional architectural planning from those who built them and create unique architectural forms. The intimate interaction of the megalithic monuments with nature, seen in the deep well inside Menga and in the orientation of Menga and El Romeral towards presumably sacred mountains (La Peña de los Enamorados and El Torcal), emphasise the uniqueness of this prehistoric burial and ritual landscape. The three tombs, with the singular nature of their designs, and technical and formal differences, bring together two great Iberian megalithic architectural traditions and a variety of architectonic types, a rich sample of the extensive variety within European megalithic funeral architecture.

Criterion (i): The number, size, weight and volume of stone blocks transported and assembled in the basin of Antequera, using rudimentary technology, and the architectural characteristics of the monuments formed by these three megaliths, makes the Antequera Dolmens one of the most important engineering and architectural works of European Prehistory and one of the most important and best known examples of European Megalithism. As such, the dolmens of Menga and Viera and the tholos of El Romeral definitely represent a prime example of the creative genius of humanity.

Criterion (iii): Antequera Dolmens Site provides an exceptional insight into the funerary and ritual practices of a highly organised prehistoric society of the Neolithic and Bronze Age in the Iberian Peninsula. The Dolmens

of Antequera materialize an extraordinary conception of the megalithic landscape, being exponents of an original relationship with the natural monuments to which they are intrinsically linked. Differentiating themselves from the canonical orientations towards sunrise, the megalithic monuments shows anomalous orientations: Menga is the only dolmen in continental Europe that faces towards an anthropomorphic mountain such as La Peña de los Enamorados; and the Tholos of El Romeral, facing the El Torcal mountain range, is one of the few cases in the entire Iberian Peninsula where the orientation is towards the western half of the sky. This assembly of the three megalithic monuments together with the two natural monuments represents a very distinctive cultural tradition which has now disappeared.

Criterion (iv): Antequera Dolmens Site is an outstanding example of a megalithic monumental ensemble, comprised of the three megalithic monuments (the Menga and Viera dolmens and the tholos of El Romeral), that illustrate a significant stage of human history when the first large ceremonial monuments were built in Western Europe. The three different types of megalithic architecture seen in this ensemble of dolmens, which are representative of the two great Iberian megalithic traditions (lintelled architecture in the cases of Menga and Viera and the architecture of El Romeral's false cupola ceiling), and the unique relationship between the dolmens and the surrounding landscape of Antequera (the three megalithic monuments are buried beneath earth tumuli and two megaliths are oriented towards the natural monuments of La Peña de los Enamorados and El Torcal), reinforces the originality of this property.

Integrity

The three Antequera megaliths conserve all their constitutive elements and still conserve their unitary character. Therefore they are of adequate size to express their universal value as outstanding examples of megalithic architecture. The three monuments are in good condition and their original structures are almost entirely intact, both the interior rocky structure as well as the tumuli that cover them. Over time, a number of conservation, consolidation and restoration interventions have been carried out that are recognisable and have been preceded by, or have coincided with, archaeological research phases and qualified technical analyses. However, the peri-urban industrial/commercial modern setting in which the three megaliths are located, which have been altered in the past two decades by urban and infrastructure development challenges the integrity of the series. With regard to the natural sites, they have largely maintained this condition in terms of geomorphological configuration and singularity of flora and fauna, without experiencing any considerable anthropic transformations.

Authenticity

The series of investigations that have been carried out are conclusive and unanimous with regard to ascribing

the monuments to the said era, the authenticity of the chambers' stone materials and the area where the tumuli are found. The form and design of each of the three tombs have remained remarkably unaltered in spite of necessary repairs to the fabric and some protection interventions. All components of the nominated property have a tremendous genius loci and sense and spirit of place. The authenticity of each and every one of the component parts in this series is unquestionable. Also, the coexistence in Antequera of the two great megalithic traditions on the Iberian Peninsula and Western Europe has been certified: the Neolithic tradition of lintelled structures and the Chalcolithic tradition of false cupola chambers.

Protection and Management requirements

Both the megalithic monuments as well as the natural spaces have been listed and preserved with the relevant protection, heritage or environmental laws, whether these are national, regional or local, which provides them with the required institutional conservation measures. The dolmens of Menga and Viera, and the tholos of El Romeral have individually been declared as Monuments and are also an Archaeological Area that has been declared an Asset of Cultural Interest (BIC). La Peña de Los Enamorados, considered a BIC by the Ministry of Law due to the rock paintings that it contains, is also declared an Archaeological Area BIC. Meanwhile, the El Toro cave (in El Torcal) is currently in the process of gaining status as an Archaeological Area BIC. Due to its natural values, La Peña de los Enamorados is also classified as an Outstanding Site, whilst El Torcal has been declared a Natural Reserve (one of the highest levels of protection provided for by regional environmental law) and a Special Protection Area, and is thus included in the Natura 2000 Network of nature areas within Europe. This is a mainly publicly owned space managed by the Environment and Water Agency, which reports to the Autonomous Government of Andalusia. As a Natural Reserve included in the Andalusian Network of Protected Natural Areas (RENPA), it has its own Natural Resources Management Plan (PORN).

Legal protection is also guaranteed for the buffer zone, given that measures derived from heritage laws themselves have been added to urban planning conditions with a view to protecting the area. The Management Plan for the property includes interventions concerning the conservation and enhancement of the megalithic monuments and their surroundings, which are included in the Master Plan for the Archaeological Ensemble of the Dolmens of Antequera, together with the measures included in the aforementioned PORN for El Torcal. The heritage management process is restricted to three areas: the Archaeological Ensemble, La Peña de los Enamorados and the area of El Torcal. All of them are publicly owned, with the exception of La Peña, which is privately owned; however, under the legal system for Archaeological Zones declared as Properties of Cultural Interest, actions and public management

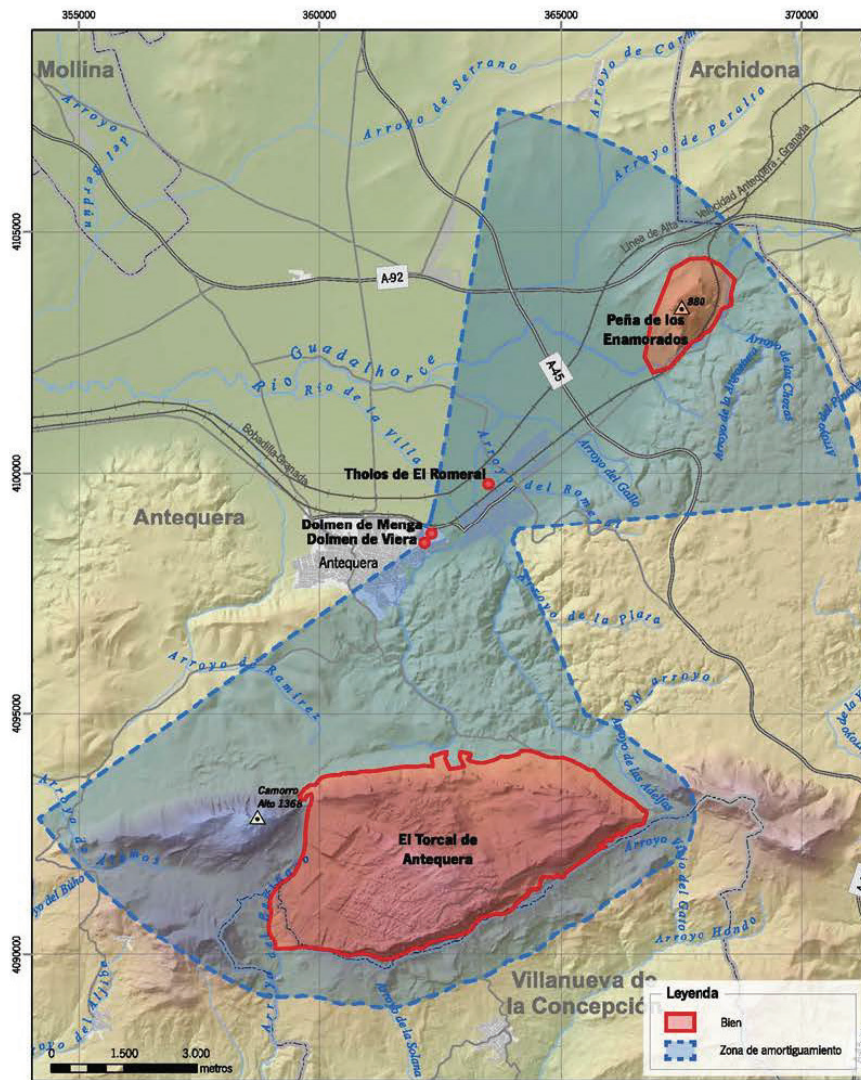
measures may be implemented to maintain and enhance the site. A Special Protection Plan of Antequera Dolmens Site is under preparation and will set out guidelines for the different zones that have an impact on integrity of the property.

A Coordination Council has been set up for the Antequera Dolmens Site, which is made up of representatives of the administrators and owners of the different component sites, with CADA (Archaeological Ensemble of the Antequera Dolmens) being the agency solely responsible for representing and monitoring the management of the Site.

Additional recommendations

ICOMOS recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

- Finalising the Special Protection Plan of Antequera Dolmens Site and revising the General Plan for Urban Zoning in order to address the major development pressures that affect the property;
- Developing monitoring indicators to assess the impact of development and tourism on the attributes of the serial property;
- Ensuring the coordination of the various bodies and planning instruments involved in the management of each of the elements that comprise the property in order to enhance its management;
- Integrating an Heritage Impact Assessment approach into the management system, so as to ensure that any programme or project be assessed in their impacts over the Outstanding Universal Value of the property;
- Submitting to the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS by 1 December 2019, a report on the implementation of the above-mentioned recommendations.



Sitio de los Dólmenes de Antequera
 Propuesta de inscripción de bienes en la Lista del Patrimonio Mundial y su zona de amortiguamiento

Plano 1. Plano general

Superficie del bien: 2.446,30 ha + 10.787,70 ha (Zona de amortiguamiento)
 Agencia responsable: Consejería de Cultura, Junta de Andalucía.

Cartografía base:
 Datos Espaciales de Referencia de Andalucía.
 Instituto de Estadística y Cartografía de Andalucía.
 2013.

Sistema de referencia espacial:
 European Terrestrial Reference System 1989,
 Huso 30 N
 Proyección UTM

Revised map showing the boundaries of the nominated properties



El Torcal in Antequera



Outside the Menga dolmen



Right side of the Menga dolmen chamber towards the interior



Perforated door in the Viera dolmen corridor



Autumn equinox the Viera dolmen



Access door to the chamber in the tholos of El Romeral