

CONTRIBUTION TO THE STUDY OF A DOLMEN SITE
IN THE SERRANIA DE RONDA

The site is easily found by following the main road from RONDA towards SEVILLA to the point where the minor road towards GRAZALEMA leads off to SOUTHWARDS, i. e. on the Left Hand Side. Only a few hundred metres along this minor road, passing through scattered trees and gaining height, the Dolmen is visible some five hundred metres distant, on lower ground, in the rough direction of RONDA.

Seen from some distance away, the arrangement appears haphazard and the stones strewn about as if by chance. A closer inspection, however, reveals that the site is arranged to run along a low mound (this mound being roughly one metre above the surrounding terrain) and orientated approximately SW - NE. A number of stones now lying on the ground may well have been standing upright at one time; and several may even have been placed horizontally atop others to act as cover slabs in each case. The Dolmen as it now exists may be likened to a bridge astride the general line of the mound and the contiguous stone construction.

As James L. Swauger has pointed out (1) "measuring Dolmens is NOT a precise operation because of the irregularity of the stones and the slopes on which they stand, and because one does NOT always find all a Dolmen's members".

Indeed excavation seems highly desirable here. Some may already have been attempted, since the ground immediately beneath the cover slab itself is a type of platform of a lower level than that adjacent to it on either side.

The photograph here reproduced is most unfortunate, although it is the only one readily available, since the standing stone in the right foreground appears larger than the actual Dolmen. Such is NOT the case, the respective heights being in the order of 80 cm and 1.40 m, this latter measured from that part of the supporting standing stone visible above ground level to its extremity, where this touches the cover slab.

In spite of the irregular shape of the stones, reasonably successful measurements have, it is felt, been taken. Apart from those given in the *rough* site plan which follows (seen from above), the dimensions of the cover

slab are 3.50 m long and one metre wide at the centre, measured horizontally.

The ensemble can be described as being rectangular and the corner closest to the minor road is so regular in its interior dimensions that one wonders whether some later “development” can have taken place, such, for instance, as a shelter from the wind built (or excavated) by later shepherds. (2)

I am indebted to my friend the Hon. Alastair Boyd, a resident of RONDA for some eleven years, for stating his belief in the possible existence of one local name for the site, this being the “Stone of the Woman”. Which, naturally enough, by European standards of reasoning, seems to indicate the probable existence of another site, the “Stone of the Man”.

But maybe this is too logical a supposition in a land where tradition and legend have become inseparable bedfellows.

The area is just beginning to feel the effects of tourism; the question thus, surely, is likely to develop into a race between the archaeologists who may, if God is willing, carry out excavations, and the locals, ever anxious to ensure that the tourist returns home with pockets considerably lightened.

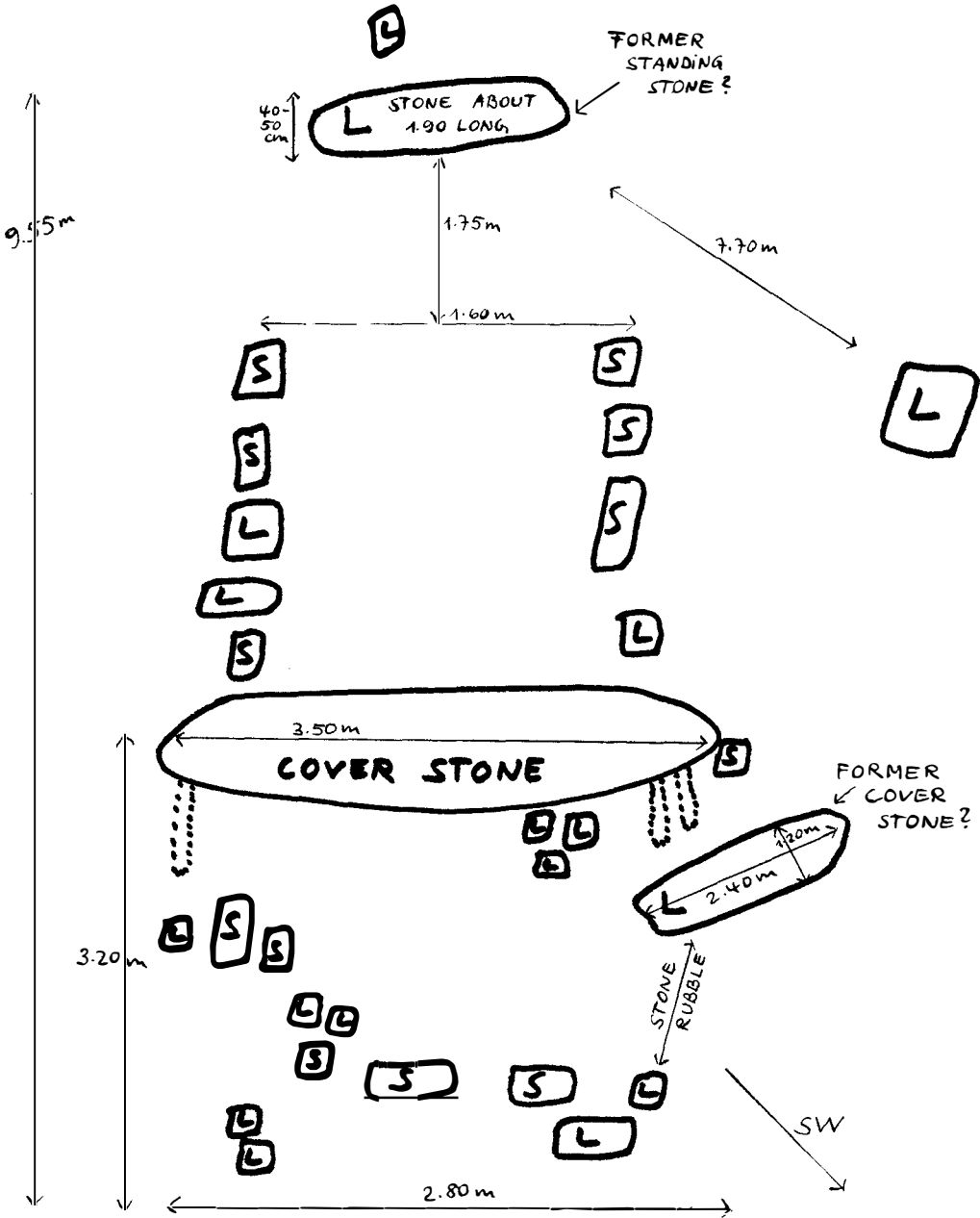
The environs of RONDA are notoriously rich in Roman and Moslem remains, Ronda la Vieja, the Arab Baths and Casa de Mondragón (with its arab patio) being but a few. Legend, as ever, is more popular than fact; thus information on these archaeological treasures is negligible.

How long will it be before the Dolmen ceases to be a Prehistoric Monument and becomes, instead, the site of an ice-cream and postcard stall, with adjoining coach park? The whole enclave will probably be renamed the Tomb of the Moorish Queen: or the Shrine of the Virgin of the Menestra.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- (1) SWAUGER, James L.: Three Dolmen Sites in Jordan. (Almogaren II, page 239)
- (2) BOYD, Hon. Alastair. The Road from RONDA. (Collins, 1969)

DOLMEN SITE



L = LYING STONE
 S = STANDING STONE

[DRAWING
 NOT TO SCALE]

