

# Atlantic Megaliths and Rock Art



Monte Areo XV, Asturias (Spain). Dolmen with portal or vestibule. Made of seven orthostats of quartzite.



Llygwy burial chamber, Wales (UK). This burial chamber dates to the Neolithic period. It consists of eight low uprights supporting a massive capstone. The form of decoration of the pottery indicate that the chamber was in use during the Neolithic and early Bronze Age periods.



Avebury Stone Circles, Wiltshire (UK). Avebury is part of a wider complex of nearby Neolithic and Bronze Age monuments which seemingly formed a huge 'sacred landscape', whose use and purpose is still unknown.



Outeiro de Sombriñas, Galicia (Spain)



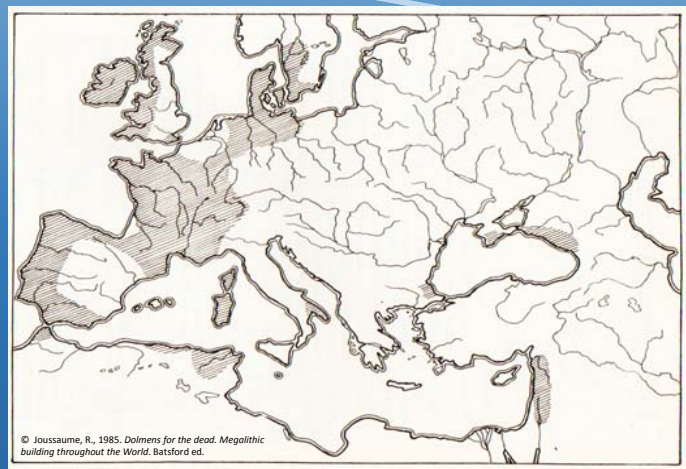
The Rocky Valley, Cornwall (UK)



Pedra do Labirinto, Galicia (Spain).

'Dolmens' or chamber tombs of prehistoric Europe refer to places of burials. They have been divided into two broad classes being, first 'Passage-graves' which have an access-passage to a chamber and secondly, those which just have a chamber for the grave. When the mound over a chamber-tomb is made of stones it is called a cairn. Menhirs and Stone Circles are Megaliths that are believed to be used for rituals rather than burials.

In the Iberian Peninsula, agriculture appears around 5500 BC (around 5000 BC in the north), the first dolmen around 4400 BC and copper around 3400 BC. In south-western France, agriculture appears a little before 5000 BC, the first dolmen around 4600 BC and copper about 2500 BC. In England, agriculture appears about 4300 BC, the first mounds about 3700 BC and copper about 2500 BC. In Denmark, agriculture appears around 4200 BC, and first dolmens about 3600 BC. For comparison, note that the pyramids of Egypt date from the beginning of the 3rd millennium BC and the Tholoi (tombs) of Mycenae from the 2nd millennium BC."



Distribution map of chamber-tombs in Europe after Joussaume, 1985. This map shows a concentration of megalithic monuments known as "chamber tombs" in the Western part of Europe, from Scandinavia to the Southern tip of Iberian peninsula, taking in the British Isles and France.



Barnenez, Brittany (France). This major megalithic monument dates back to the early Neolithic, about 4800 BC and is considered one of the earliest megalithic monuments in Europe. The cairn covers 11 burial chambers.



Sein island, Brittany (France). Pair of menhirs or standing stones dating from the Neolithic or Bronze Age.



Bryn Celly Ddu mound, Wales (UK).



Melon island dolmen Brittany (France).

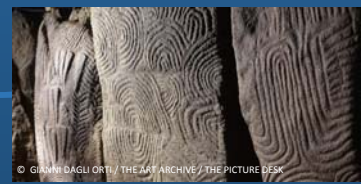
The dolmen of Melon island was originally a megalithic burial covered by a cairn or an earth mound such as the mound of Bryn Celly Ddu

Rock art delivers some of the most interesting evidence for relationships among human groups during Prehistory in Europe. The Atlantic Petroglyphs are schematic engravings on rocky outcrops. These surfaces became a canvas for their graphic language.

The Atlantic Petroglyphs are all generally inscribed onto near horizontal rocky outcrops where they share common characteristics. It is possible to identify similarities among individual drawings while common design conventions appear to be applied to clusters of engravings. Concentric circles with a high number of rings can play a central role in the composition, although these are likely to form the hub of more complex drawings. These often included a surrounding of radial engravings and simpler patterns with fewer rings. A plain external border is invariably left around the periphery of the rocky canvas.



Newgrange, Ireland at the end of the 19th century, before any restoration.



Gavrini's Cairn, Brittany (France).

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