



GUIDE

SITES of Archaeological and Ethnological Interest

in EL RASO de CANDELEDA

Castro of El Freíllo
Majada de Braguillas
Peña Escrita
Los Hermanitos de Tejea

[Ávila]

J. Francisco Fabián García



J. Francisco Fabián García, PhD
in Prehistory and Archaeology.

Currently working for the Junta de
Castilla y León. As Chief Archaeologist
in the province of Ávila.

jfranciscofabian@gmail.com

www.jfranciscofabian.com

Translated by Miguel Fabián Salazar



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This book intends to guide you through a journey that you will not easily forget. Also, if you have not yet visited or read about the site, it will let your imagination dive into it. If you carry it along with you, it will be of much help to your understanding of the place, as it is not only important to contemplate the buildings and archaeological findings, but also to know the details and history behind them. When your visit is over, this guide will let you remember and tell other people about it, as we are sure that it will not leave you indifferent. But although we have worked hard to bring you this guide and describe the place, reality beats any description, and we would like to encourage you to visit El Raso with this guide. If you have already visited El Raso, we would like as well to invite you to come back and visit again, as there's always something new, be it because of the companions you are bringing along, knowledge of history and ethnology knowledge you have acquired, or simply because you are visiting during different weather conditions or in another season.

This guide is indebted to the work of many people and contains a dedicatory. First of all, this guide owes much to Fernando Fernández Gómez, director of the archaeological excavations at the fort of El Freillo, as we would not have any of this knowledge without him. Also, to the public administrations that invested in research and enhancement of these sites: the Junta of Castilla y León, the Diputación of Ávila and the Council of Candeleda. To those who inhabited the pen of Braguillas and recounted their memories: Consta, Santos, Gregoria, Gerardo and Dolores (†). And once again, to the Council of Candeleda, which had the will to publish this guide and therefore, to help spread the treasures of this land. On another note, this guide is dedicated to Rufino Galán –warden of the fort El Freillo–, for his outstanding daily work and his friendship of so long.

The sketches were drawn by Ascensión Salazar. The artistic recreations of the sites were made by illustrator José Muñoz Domínguez. The photos are made by the same author of the book unless otherwise stated.



Candeleda [Ávila]





The peaks of Gredos stand tall at 2,592 m (8,504 ft) over sea level, presiding over the whole area of Candeleda.

■ Why visit the site?

There are three general but very important reasons to visit El Raso when you are in this part of Spain.

1 You will be in a region with a pleasant weather. Although administratively it belongs to Castile and León (renowned for its cold and harsh weather most of the year), it is geographically part of Extremadura (of warmer climate). If you are coming from the 1,131 m (3,700 ft) high city of Ávila, the 503 meters (1,650 ft) of El Raso will surely make a pleasant difference when it comes to the weather and it will let you enjoy a great day out in the countryside.



Early autumn landscape near Candeleda.

2 If you like rugged landscapes either to contemplate them or to enjoy them while trekking or climbing, visiting this area is a perfect choice. All this landscape belongs to the foot of the southern side of the Gredos Mountains. The Moro Almanzor mountain peak provides an impressive sight and dominates the massif from 2,592 m over sea level and 2,089 m over El Raso.



Mountain landscape: steep slopes and gorges in springtime.

3 The previous two reasons to visit the sites of this guide are foundations for the main one: to take a walk into Ancient history by visiting places that have been designed so their importance and details can be fully understood. We propose that you visit a fort (usually referred to as “castro” in Spanish) that dates back to the Iron Age and that was fully inhabited when the Roman Empire conquered the tribes of inner Spain. Visiting the prehistoric rock paintings will induce you to reflect on how the ancient peoples of this land used symbolism. The shelters offers you an insight on the life and costumes of the shepherds that inhabited this land in ancient and modern times and whose only source of livelihood were their animals. Furthermore, the walk itself mixes landscape and history creating an unforgettable experience.



Location of El Raso sites that are explained in this guide and available to visit.



El Raso countryside, with the castro halfway up the hill.

■ How to Get to El Raso

• From Madrid:

Two different routes if you are coming from Madrid:

- Via Oropesa (Toledo): Madrid-Oropesa-Candeleda-El Raso. 195 km.
- Via Valle del Tiétar (Ávila): Madrid-Sotillo de la Adrada-La Adrada-Candeleda-El Raso. 191 km.

• From Ávila:

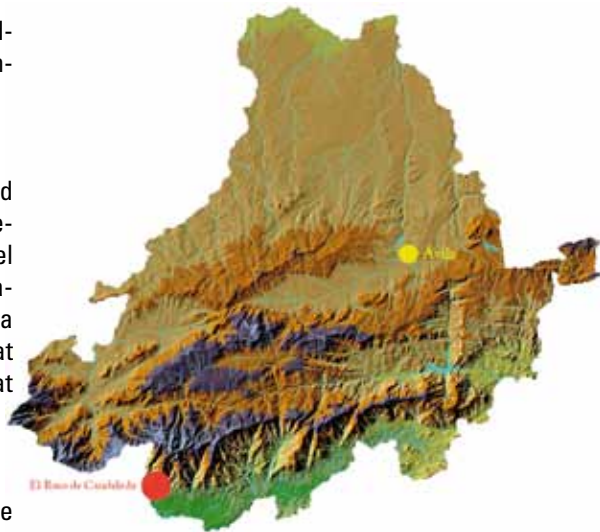
First take Carretera (road) N-110 and then Carretera N-502 (direction Extremadura). Pass through Puerto del Pico-Valle de las Cinco Villas-Ramacastañas until you reach Carretera Comarcal (regional road) CL-501 that goes through Candeleda and ends at El Raso. 110 km.

• From Plasencia (Cáceres):

Take Carretera Ex-203 through Valle de la Vera. 86 km.

• From Toledo:

Roads A-40, E-90, A-5, Ex-384 (passing through Toledo-Talavera de la Reina-Oropesa-Madrigal-El Raso). 152 km.





Mimosa plants cover in yellow the winter landscapes of El Raso.

From the main square of El Raso starts an asphalted road (suitable for all vehicles) that reaches the parking space of the fort after 2.5 km. The parking space is suitable for both cars and buses, and no vehicles are allowed into the site beyond this area.

El Raso through the Year:

- *December and February*: olive trees are ripe for harvest and both the trees and the landscape are full of these fruits. Newly produced olive oil of excellent quality can be bought from late January onwards. Orange trees and their fruits contrast with the pale tones of winter.
- *March*: flowering period of rockroses. The exceptional beauty of the rockrose flower covers the mountainsides. Mimosa plants are flowering as well, forming patches of yellow amid a still wintry landscape.
- *April and May*: spring at its peak. Flowers, seasonal streams and a pleasant countryside scent. Towards the end of April and throughout May, excellent cherries of all varieties hang plentifully and ripe from trees.



Waterfalls are a very common sight in the mountain cliffs.

Cherry trees, offering El Raso's fruit par excellence.



- *From late July until September:* The water and the climate make for exceptionally sweet figs.
- *September to October:* it is time for chestnuts, pomegranates and the first ochre shades in the landscape. First autumn showers create a warm but humid and somewhat foggy atmosphere all over the hillsides. Strolling between oaks and chestnut trees will be a really pleasurable experience.

Olive oil, figs, cherries, paprika, honey, and the greatly renowned local goat cheese can be all bought from local artisans around the place, giving you a deeper of taste of what El Raso area has to offer to its visitors.

Autumn fog covering the area of Los Hermanitos de Tejea.



TEMPERATURE CHART

We offer you this temperature chart to help you to adapt your visit to your preferences.

Climate data for Candeleda (1961-1987)													
Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dic	Year
Daily mean °C (°F)	7.9	9.2	11.8	14.3	18.0	22.9	26.4	25.9	23.5	17.5	11.5	7.9	16.4
Precipitation total mm (inches)	157.7	151.1	75.9	87.9	84.6	37.9	10.4	12.5	41.4	100.2	127.4	169.1	1056.1

Fuente: Ministerio de Agricultura, Alimentación y Medio Ambiente.
Datos de precipitación para el periodo 1967-1987 y de temperatura para el periodo 1961-1987 en Candeleda



View of an excavated area
at El Freillo, from the north.

THE FORT OF (EL CASTRO DE) EL FREILLO

■ When In History?

The Late Iron Age: the Vettones

Starting from roughly 400 BC, the Iberian Peninsula was described by ancient written sources (Greek, Roman and Carthaginian) as a cultural and ethnic mosaic of peoples, which possessed varying degrees of economic and social achievement. Chroniclers used different methods of classifying the inhabitants of the Peninsula, such as by language, political organization and religion. Some of these human groups –those who occupied the western part- were usually classified into the Celtic culture, whose origins could be Central European. In contrast, those who lived in the eastern half were much more influenced by the more advanced Mediterranean cultures. Nonetheless, there existed a third group which could not be easily classified into the Celtic/Mediterranean divide. This group of tribes occupied a small area in the central-western part of the Peninsula, and although they shared some cultural traits with both other cultures, they also used an unrelated language, which could have had an earlier origin. These peoples were the Lusitanians and the neighbouring Vettones, and according to the chronicles they shared alliances and friendly relations in some circumstances.

The Vettones lived in a space bordered in the north by Douro River (Río Duero) and by Tagus River (Río Tago) to the south, which would correspond to present-day provinces of Ávila and Salamanca, as well as parts of Zamora, Cáceres, Toledo and allegedly a fraction of the valley of Côa River in Portugal. The western part of the Central System Mountains divided in two separated halves the land of the Vettones, but they were connect through the mountain passes of the valley of the Jerte River and the corridor of Béjar (province of Salamanca). Later in history, the Roman road between Emerita Augusta and Asturica would pass through the Béjar region, and in our days, it would get the common name of Vía de la Plata (the Silver Route).



Pre-Roman tribes in the Iberian Peninsula.



The most important Vettonian castros.

Given the poor physical characteristics of this territory, animal husbandry was the main economic activity.

The origins of the Vettones peoples is not very well known. It is only known with certainty that they inhabited the same land in which Neolithic, Chalcolithic and Bronze Age peoples had lived before. It was not until 500 to 400 BC that a major population shift occurred: the introduction of iron forging and improvements to agricultural practices provoked a demographic expansion. This expansion produced human settlements – the so-called castros, which can be roughly translated as “forts”- of dimensions never seen before, and were located in certain lands with similar terrain characteristics. These settlements were organized into strongly hierarchized societies.

The Vettones were never a unitary state, that is, what we would call a country nowadays. Instead, they were a set of city-states bound together by a common homeland, language, and a remote past from which they all originated. These traits differentiated them from neighbouring peoples, and this is the reason why Roman chronicles single them out from the others.

One of the most distinctive features of this people were the so-called “zoomorphic sculptures”. These sculptures were made in granite pieces of varying size. They remain mostly exclusive to this region and represent bulls and pigs.



Votive offering representing a soldier. Vettonian castro of La Mesa de Miranda (Chamartín, province of Avila)

These figures were usually placed by the entrances to the castros, roads and pastures, and offered symbolic protection. They were still used in the same places in Roman times, although with a mostly funereal significance. This proves that the Vettonian traditions survived for a long time (at least until the 2nd century AD) and that the Romanization of these tribes was a very slow process.

The Vettonians remained illiterate and lacked an alphabet during all their existence. This circumstance greatly impedes the study of their language, and the few pieces of speech that have been known were reconstructed from very scarce traces that remained in Latin chronicles, after the conquest. Linguists use the name "Lusitanian" to denote the group of languages that Vettonians and Lusitanians spoke. Lusitanian language is believed to have been an Indo-European language, although one that was older and did not belong to the Celtic branch –a branch which was spoken, among many other places in Europe, in the central-western area of the Iberian Peninsula-. Although Lusitanian was certainly influenced by Celtic and Italic languages, it kept its own fundamental characteristics.

Sculpture made in granite representing a bull, in the proximities of the Rosarito Reservoir, Candeleda (Ethnological Museum of Candeleda).



The tribes chose the location of their settlements according to strategic concerns: defence had to be guaranteed by the topography itself, as it is in confluences of rivers, hills or easily-defended mountain slopes such as those of El Freillo fort. As the defence concern was always present, these settlements were also extensively fortified with complex systems of walls, towers, trenches, chevaux de frise... We can also deduce from the existence of all those that war was a common phenomenon.

Primary sources refer to the Vettones as a bellicose people, perhaps because of the remarkable poorness of the lands they inhabited. They were said to have been involved in raiding Roman cities in the valley of Guadalquivir (southern Spain) along with their neighbours the Lusitanians:

"[...]And a peculiar practice exists among the Iberians and particularly among the Lusitanians; for when their young men come to the bloom of their physical strength, those who are the very poorest among them in worldly goods and yet excel in vigour of body and daring equip themselves with no more than valour and arms, gather in the fastness of the mountains, where they form bands of considerable size and then descend upon Iberia and collect wealth from their pillaging. And this brigandage they continually practise in a spirit of complete disdain." (Diodorus of Sicily).



Votive offering representing a warrior. Vettonian castro of La Mesa de Miranda (Chamartín, province of Ávila).

There exist chronicles from as early as 194 BC narrating the raids of the Lusitanians, south of their homelands. We can also associate the Vettones to these raids as they were their closest allies, although they lack the prominence of the Lusitanians, which fascinated the Romans and whose most famous commander was Viriatus. The Romans answered these raids by counter-raiding Vettonian and Lusitanian lands, and although we cannot be certain if the inhabitants of El Freillo suffered them, we can be sure that they could feel growing insecurity and violent political climate. This situation led to the Celtiberian Wars (155 to 133 BC), which finally allowed the Romans to subdue the peoples of the inner Iberian Peninsula. From that moment on, they were under the dominance of the Rome, but they kept living in their castros, as it can be seen at El Freillo. They took part in both of the main Roman civil wars –the Sertorian Wars from 82 to 72 BC and the war between Pompey and Caesar from 49 to 44 BC- on the losing factions, which

determined their expulsion from the castros and destruction of their ramparts by Caesar when the second civil war ended in 44 BC. This is a turning point: the castros would start to deteriorate into the archaeological remains that we study today. The information contained within the castros has remained hidden for centuries until they were excavated.

The Vettones -as many other ancient peoples- had their own *pantheon of gods* to which they entrusted their lives and destinies. They also used them to find explanations to any phenomena they could not understand. Unfortunately, they did not produce their own written chronicles, which has greatly limited our knowledge in this respect. It was only when the Romans conquered the region and imposed on them the Latin language and alphabet, that some names of their divinities were recorded. In the first centuries of Roman domination, their cults were for the most part respected, and this is why we still find sanctuaries devoted to their indigenous religion. Some of these shrines were built when the Romans already exerted full control of the Iberian Peninsula. Names such as Vaelico, Ataecina, Trerabruna, Arentia, Baudua or Baraeco refer to Vettonian gods and goddesses whose cult exceeded the boundaries of their territory and extended into the homelands of neighbouring peoples.

It is very likely that the Vettones –as it is commonplace among Celtic peoples- placed their sanctuaries in very specific locations such as forests, waterfalls, oddly shaped rocks... where they believed that divine power revealed itself. This is the reason why we sometimes find traces of worshipping at remote places far away from their settlements.

Vettonian herbs.



Given their set of beliefs, both human and animal sacrifices are likely to have been commonly practiced. In some places such as the castro of Ulaca (Solosancho, province of Ávila) or Panoias (Vila Real, Portugal) we can still see the carved rocks that they used to perform those rituals. Some sources report that the Vettones of Bletisama (Ledesma, province of Salamanca) still practiced these rituals as late as in 1st century AD, when the area was already deep into the period of Roman dominance.

Their most usual *funereal ritual* was the cremation of corpses. When the deceased had been a warrior killed in action, they left the corpse to the vultures, as they believed war was the most sacred form of death.



Cremated bones were put into urns and buried, sometimes next to a modest monument. Cemeteries were divided by the clans which composed the Vettonian society.

In the ancient world, a certain herb that grew on Vettonian lands reached great popularity. According to Roman historian Pliny, in 2nd century AD it was known as Vettonian herb and was believed to cure a number of evils such as snake, monkey and human bites, as well as chest pains. It was also believed to be a digestibility enhancer and to cure excessive lacrimation, nosebleeds...

Vettonian
herbs.



THE FORT OF (EL CASTRO DE) EL FREILLO

■ How to Get There

From the main square of El Raso a paved track suitable for all kinds of vehicles departs and leads to the parking space of the castro after 2.5 km (1.6 miles). From the parking space to the walls of the fort, 50 m.

■ General Visit Information

The castro is fully adapted for touristic visits, with fenced-off, designated excavation areas annotated and explained by means of boards with text and illustrative drawings. It is free and open all year round (all 365 days).

As a complement to the excavated ruins, two houses have been reconstructed and a viewpoint is also provided.

There are no general difficulties for standard visits, although only the area B can be accessed with wheelchairs. The full tour (including the ramparts, the trench, el Castillejo and the highest excavated point) does not pose any special difficulty.

The castro welcomes annually more than 15,000 visitors. A warden provided by the Junta of Castille and Leon is in charge of its general safekeeping and surveillance.



Visiting an archaeological site

When you are visiting an archaeological site, it is important to know that a long time ago, human life existed there, and what you can see today is a consequence of all the experiences and circumstances that once existed in that place. Mixing what can be seen today with what we know about the ancient inhabitants of the place will result in an historical vision that will let you enjoy this trip back 2,000 years in time. Try to mentally fill what you are seeing with characters, ancient atmosphere and life, and the result will be an exciting experience.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE SITE

The castro of El Freillo can be visited today thanks to a series of archaeological excavations that took place. Although only 5% of its total size has been excavated (7,730 sq m / 83,205 sq ft), what is visible today can let us imagine what the whole settlement was like, as the excavations were strategically distributed in three areas. Archaeologist Fernando Fernández Gómez performed them in the 70 s and 80 s of the 20th century. After that, a number of restoration projects have taken place in order to prepare the site for touristic visits.

It was inhabited from early 3rd century BC to late 1st AD. This means that it went through the Carthaginian presence in the Iberian Peninsula, but most importantly, the Roman conquest and the two Roman civil wars that happened soon after. It had to endure a very agitated period, and this determined its characteristics and what we can see today.





View from the
plains to the
south of the
castro.

The castro of El Freillo was a real city of its time. It occupied up to 150,000 sq m (37 acres) and was fully walled by stone ramparts. Although it is hard to estimate its total population, the most common estimates vary between 2,000 and 2,500 people.

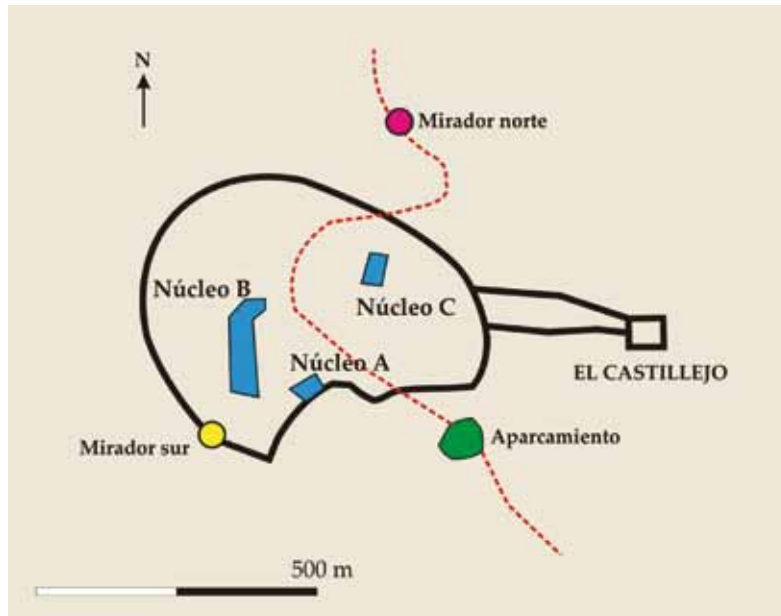
Some time before its conquest by the Romans, its population occupied the area contiguous to the present day urban centre of El Raso, which suggests that they were not facing any serious threats as that location is not very well suited for defence. They lived and buried their dead within a necropolis whose graves have been excavated by a significant amount, and this let us know about their funereal traditions between late 5th to 3rd centuries BC. Perhaps due to the dangers looming when Carthaginians and Romans made their presence felt in the Peninsula, it became necessary to move to a place with better natural defences, and this is why El Freillo was built. Its inhabitants knew and felt, in one way or another, the campaigns of Carthaginian general Hannibal in 220 BC, as well as the Roman conquest between 155 to 133 BC, and finally the two Roman civil wars.

It is listed as Heritage of Cultural Interest from 1994, the highest possible classification awarded by the Spanish Historic Heritage Act.

General Ideas that Become Clear After Visiting El Freillo

- The location of the castro will give you an idea of the atmosphere in centuries 3rd to 1st BC.
- The complexity of the defensive systems used in convoluted times, when the natural defences had to be reinforced.
- The urban and domestic style of the inhabitants of a late Iron Age settlement, immediately before and during the Roman Conquest.
- The supply of economically productive land plots that matched the demands of a sizable population: arable lands to the south, pastures to the north and water sources.

Excavated sites and most important places to visit.



THE EMPLACEMENT

The Vettonian castros are characterized by a strongly marked defensive orientation, both regarding its location and their buildings such as ramparts and trenches. They were carefully designed in order not to be vulnerable, as their life and independence depended in many cases on their defensive strength. It is very important to pay close attention to this aspect when visiting a castro, both from inside and outside the walls.





View of the hill of the castro, from the north-east.

The choice of the location arises from a defensive impulse that emerged in the early 3rd century BC. Before that, the people of this area lived closer to the plains and farther away from the mountains. Moving to a harsher environment far from more productive land plots must be understood as a precautionary measure against immediate and very threatening dangers. These dangers were undoubtedly the presence of Romans and Carthaginians in the Iberian Peninsula and the general climate of uncertainty that followed.



The castro and its location over the gorge of Alardos and the plains to the south.

An area where natural defences played a very important role was chosen, in order to lessen the burden of building increasingly high ramparts. The people of El Freillo took advantage of the slopes in all sides except from the south-eastern side, where reinforcements in form of trenches, bastions and additional ramparts were needed so as to make the town less vulnerable. On the western and northern sides, the slopes leading to the gorge of Alardos and the stream bed of the Lancharillas, respectively, are very well prepared to be defended without any additional reinforcements.

A viewpoint has been built in the south side of the castro to let you see for yourself what prompted the local Vettonians to choose this place, including geographical, defensive and economic elements.



THE DEFENSIVE SYSTEM

When a site is encircled by ramparts, we can deduce that it faced threats and periods of war, as walling a town means huge efforts in cutting, carrying and placing big pieces of rock back in times when technology was much less developed. It also meant prestige and fame for the communities that built these defensive systems in comparison to others who did not. Being in front of a walled town such as the castro of El Freillo should make us realize how a project that demanded the use of so much time and so many people, needed also a great deal of division of labour. Who organised this labour, what forced the population to work,



and what kind of social organization backed these kinds of activities that resulted in increased wellbeing for the community, are all questions that arise from the contemplation of the castro. Undoubtedly, strong forms of political and social organization existed in the castro, along with individuals capable of exerting their power in a way that would result in building works of this magnitude. This all implies the existence of a strongly hierarchized and organized society that could use both force and persuading power to build public works of this size.

From what we currently know, El Freillo is the most important castro in this area, giving it pre-eminence over other castros in the region of La Vera.

Focusing on the details of the strategic and defensive system, acknowledging how each of them was carefully thought to face strong enemy armies, can greatly improve the experience of visiting the castro. Carefully observing the outline of the walls, the gates, the access ways, etc... will be a very didactic and effective way to understand the castro, its inhabitants, and the way of life of these people from more than 2,000 years ago.



Artistic recreation
of the castro of
El Freillo (by José
Muñoz Domínguez).

The ramparts, the squared-shaped towers and the houses in Area A.



The defensive system with three rectangular towers distinguishes el Freillo from other Vettonian castros north of the Gredos mountains. It could be a cultural peculiarity or rather, a consequence of its more recent age.

The fortification of the castro can be organized into five groups:

- The outline of the wall
- The height and execution of the wall
- The trenches
- The strategy of the gates
- El Castillejo

■ The Outline of the Wall

It is very likely that the castro was fully encircled in all of its perimeter, although with varying levels of wall thickness. This is the reason why in some areas the old wall and its thickness can be fully appreciated from the collapsed stones, while in some others it cannot be seen as the wall in those points was much thinner and a thick wall was not needed. In the areas where access was much easier, such as south-eastern, northern and north-eastern areas, the ramparts were much thicker and higher than in the west and north-west sides, where the natural slope creates much greater difficulties to any force trying to penetrate the town from that flank. In this naturally fortified areas, the wall could have been just big enough to keep defenders safe from planned attacks.



The perimeter of wall amounted to about 1,650 m (1 mile). The collapse of the ramparts is visible to the naked eye in about 1,100 of those 1,650 m, and 368 m have been rebuilt and restored. Therefore, we can currently observe 22% of the whole original wall, divided in two parts of 351 m and 17 m, in the south-east and north-east areas respectively. All in all, the visitor can have an approximate idea of the importance of the defensive system. It should be also noted that the ramparts reached, in its points of maximum height, up to three times more than what can be currently seen.

The builders of the wall tried to place it on rocky outcrops that would serve both as support points and as additional defences, thus lessening the burden on human labour. This is especially relevant in the south-west corner and in the western flank.

■ Elevation and style

The current walls are the result of both the original walls and the modern reconstruction intended to bring the visitor closer to the reality of the ancient castro. The original and the reconstructed parts can be distinguished from the hints left by the restorers, such as thin glass fibre fabric between the old and new level, or by small drillings in the rocks of the reconstructed segment. The original part is what remained when Caesar ordered to tear the walls down, after he defeated Pompey –with which the El Freillo Vettonians sided in the Roman civil war-. Considering the extent of the collapse and that many rocks have been reused to build walls and terrace, it can be estimated that the ramparts reached 5 m in height at the tallest points, perhaps with a supplementary wooden fence on top.

The ramparts and a tower attached to them, in the east flank of the castro.



It was built using clay masonry and midsized rough stones. The south-east side of the system was reinforced with rectangular solid towers with sizes varying around 8/9 x 5 m that lean against the wall forming platforms of 60 to 65 sq m. Five of them have been excavated and restored. It is likely that, at least on that flank, there did not exist any other towers than those that are visible today. The space between them is not regular, and tends to decrease in the vicinities of the gate. The heightened level of protection in the area near the gates corresponds to its higher level of vulnerability.

The wall has a width of about 3 m, which grows to 7/8 m when a tower is added. It is also important to consider two aspects of the defence strategy: the concavity and the corners of the outline, which add to the defence capabilities of the two consecutive gates by concentrating attackers in small area, rendering defenders' limited-range weapons much more effective.

There is no evidence in this area of any trenches or chevaux de frise, which served both as complements to the ramparts by slowing advance and withdrawal of enemy forces.

East side of the
castro, with fully
visible ramparts and
area A.



In the southeast corner there exists a double-walled face, in which one wall leans against another and reinforces it. Their total width amounts to the usual 3 m in that part of the system. It could have been a mere reinforcement to prevent collapse, as it is limited to that corner.

The northeast side, which is the tallest of the whole castro, the width of the wall also amounts to about 3 m, and 17 m of it have been reconstructed. There existed a modest gate, in form of a mere interruption of the path of the wall. A great circular bastion stood next to it, although it collapsed and remains covered. Various wall faces lean against the bastion in order to enhance its robustness.

Double wall reinforcements attached to the wall in the south-east flank.



Defences are much reinforced in this side, with two main trenches and a number of smaller ditches between the main ones. The longest trench ran parallel to the wall for at least 500 m on both sides of the north-east gate, and extended itself further to the north in a strategic disposition intended to obstruct enemy troops. It is visible from the north, east and southeast, and thought to have been at least 6 to 8 m in width, and 4 m deep. If we take into account silting from the collapse of the ramparts and from other materials that have flowed in 2,000 years, we can estimate that it was twice as deep as it is today.



Piece of wall in the north-west side.

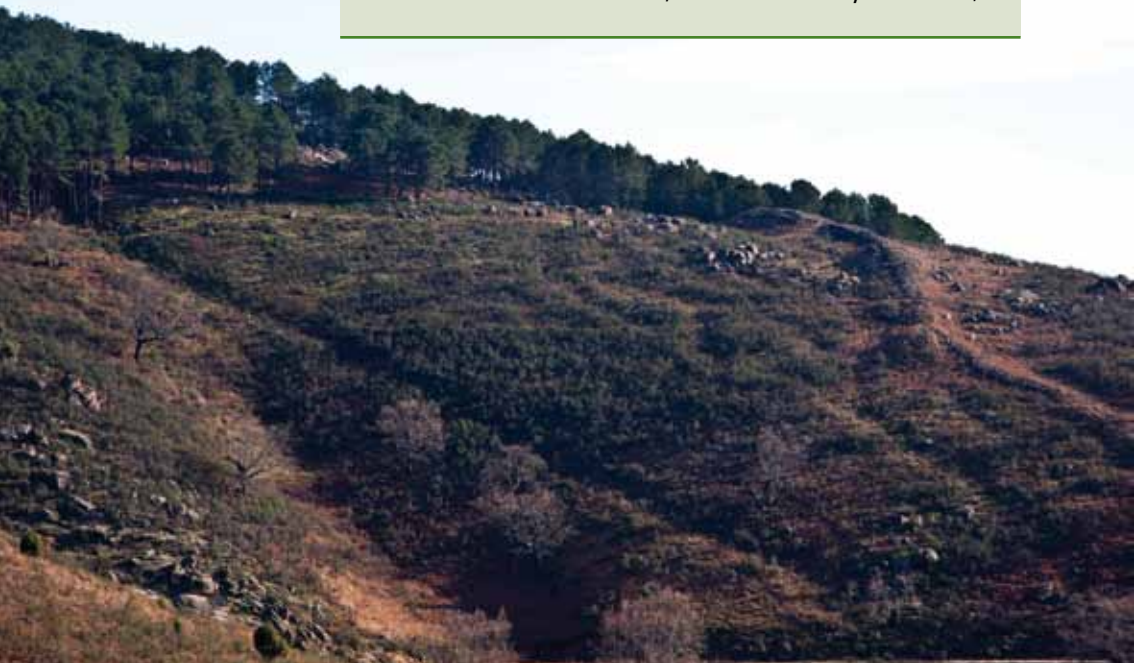


Large ditch part of the north-east moat.



TWO MAIN POINTS WHERE TO SEE THE TRENCHES FROM

- ❑ In the north-east gate, facing the south, we can see a deep hollow.
- ❑ Exiting the castro through the road that runs through it, towards the north and after 1 km and after passing the dip of the Lancharillas stream, two hollows that formed the main trenches can be observed (especially during the winter and autumn seasons, at noon and early afternoon).



View of the trenches from the north (horizontal hollows) and the collapsed wall (right side).

■ The Gates

Gates in the castros were both a necessity and a threat, as inhabitants needed to enter the town but attackers would try to penetrate them. It is currently unknown how many gates existed, as only fractions of the wall have been excavated. There could be one or two for each cardinal point, so as to guarantee access from any direction even though they added to the vulnerability of the town.

In the excavated sector, four gates made in two different styles can be recognized, three in the south-east and one in the north-east:

- ❑ Three large gates with a width of roughly 3 m. It is just an interruption in the outline of the wall, wide enough for horse carts to pass through. One in the north and another one in the south-east.



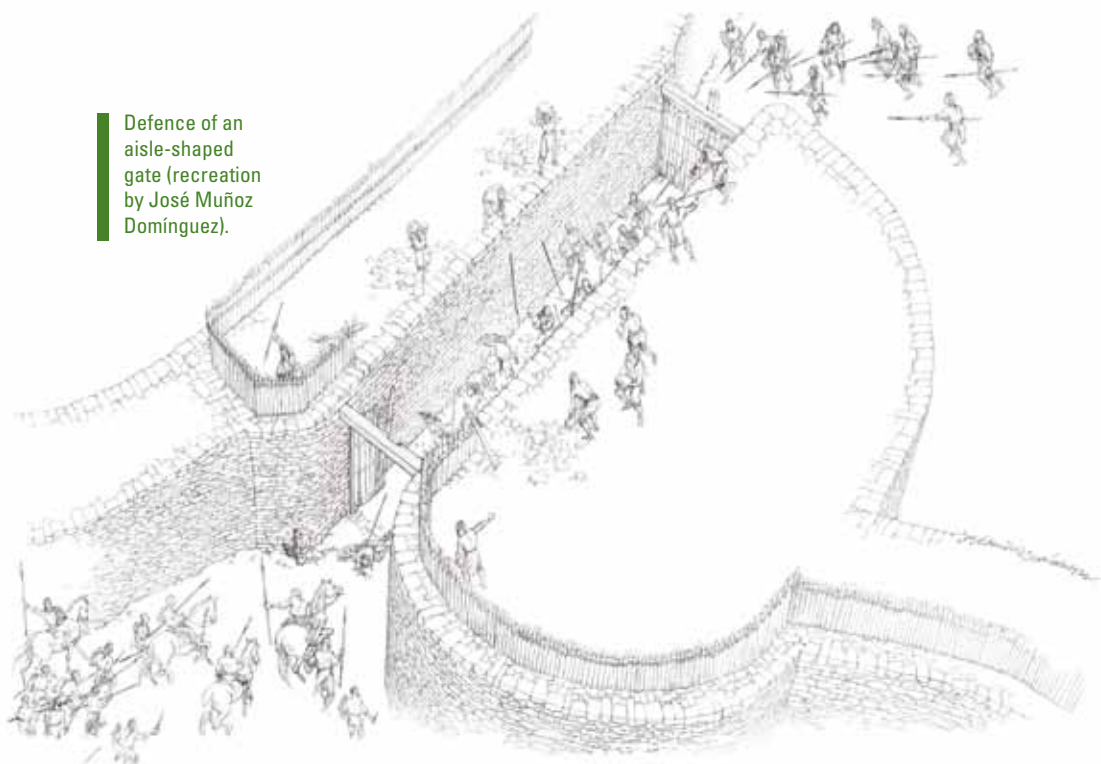
Small opening
in the south-
east wall.

□ Skewed and aisle-shaped gates. Two examples, in the southeast and in the east. The walls take the form of narrow alleyways of 9 and 12 m of length, respectively, which makes defence much easier as attackers become trapped. We should also assume that two large wooden doors would block the way in order to keep attackers inside the passageways for as long as possible.

Skewed and
aisle-shaped
gate in the
south-east
wall.



Defence of an aisle-shaped gate (recreation by José Muñoz Domínguez).



There are two consecutive gates in the south-east gate, each built in a different way: one as a large gate and the other one aisle-shaped. We understand today that the largest gate was the oldest and original one, and that the aisle-shaped one was built later in answer to some new threat, as it improves the defence. It was finally blocked off, probably after the Roman decree of Vettonian walls demolition.

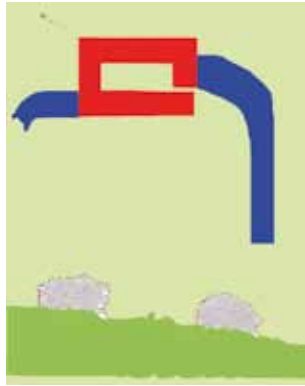
Aisle-shaped door blocked in the last days of the castro, and large gate in the south-east side.



The gates were connected to an access road whose remains are still visible. The most evident is the one that leads to the south-eastern large gate. A small depression in the ground leads to the gate and a sloped fork to the south -built in stones- leads, in parallel to the walls, to a hypothetical gate in the southern area.

■ El Castillojeo

Aside from the wall that encircled the castro, in the eastern side –one of the most vulnerable, there existed a fortified watch-point that was also used as an advanced defence. It consisted of an square tower of small size attached to the castro by two lines of ramparts, in order not to cut direct communication between the soldiers guarding the tower and the main enclosure.



Plant and elevation
of El Castillojeo.

To see El Castillojeo, you should follow the collapsed walls from the east until you reach the floor of the small rectangular building.

THE HOUSING

The dwellers of the Castro understood housing much differently than we do today. It is likely that the inner divisions of the houses had much more to do with storage of food than with comfort of family members, as it is the case in our time. Living conditions that prevailed 2,000 years ago demanded keeping enough resources (wood, dried meat, water, wheat...) to survive any unexpected event such as wars, storms, floods or fires.

A total of 22 buildings have been investigated in this castro, most of them devoted to housing. All of them can provide visitors with insight on the daily life at El Freillo, as well as their urban planning policies.



Although it is reasonable to think that another additional settlement might have existed in the vicinity of El Freillo, as it is usual in other castros (perhaps this smaller and detached settlements were reserved for lower status social groups), as of today only the area within the walls is known.

The space within the city walls certainly had a degree of urban planning, different to those of the Vettonian castros north of Gredos such as Ulaca or Las Cogotas, where houses are not built according to any plan. This might be due to the proximity of El Freillo to more advanced cultures such as those of the Guadalquivir Valley. Its more recent construction could be another factor as well.



Area A
of excavated
houses.

In any case, we cannot compare the urban planning of El Freillo to those of the later Roman era. Nonetheless, the tendency to build houses leaning against each other and to form blocks of houses allowed for the existence of streets, alleys, quarters... It all formed a well-populated inner space that the visitor should mentally recreate with the help of the visible remains and the reconstructed houses, which formed the core of the settlement.



Aerial view of Area B before reconstructing two houses for didactical purposes.

The floor of the houses was either rectangular or square shaped, and covered spaces between 50 sq m to 150 sq m (540 to 1600 sq ft). Some round shaped buildings do exist but are not understood as houses. These circular buildings were of smaller size and lacked space for the door at ground level, so it is thought that they were accessed through elevated openings in the wall. These circular houses were probably used to store supplies, as large clay pots were found inside.



House in Area C. In the foreground, a banco corrido by the front porch.



Only some houses have an elongated shape. These are sometimes attached to wider ones, perhaps revealing some kind of family relationship between neighbours. Some of these elongated houses are detached and much smaller, barely compartmentalised inside. They are called “corridor houses” (“casas pasillo” in Spanish) and one of their two ends was occupied by the main room.

The so-called Area A of the castro “núcleo A” in Spanish- is one of the best locations to examine the structure of the houses. From its highest point we can see their distribution and how some were attached to others -even if built in different styles-, forming a “quarter” next to the south-eastern side of the walls.

Another excellent view of the houses is Area C, from whose height we can very clearly see how the typical castro house was organized, including a front porch and its pillars.

Remains
of houses,
Area B.



The overall most frequent type of house is the squarely shaped one. They are well organized in the inside, with the kitchen as main room from which other rooms are accessed. Kitchens are also sometimes located in the centre of the house and were used as gathering point. The family would usually sleep in them, as the fireplace rendered them warmer than other rooms.



House in Area A. In the foreground, the kitchen and the fireplace in the middle of it.

The fireside was made of hardened blocks of clay that stood higher from the ground, which was also made of clay. Some fire-sides were garnished with two swivels whose use –either symbolic or functional- remains unknown.

Attached to one kitchen wall there was always a continuous bench –usually called *banco corrido* in Spanish- that was an essential element in the lifestyle of these peoples. Diners sat on this bench, according to seniority, and they passed the food to each other. This order indicated the family hierarchy, and it was also extended to society in general, where elders had most of the decision power and whose wisdom and experience were highly valued.

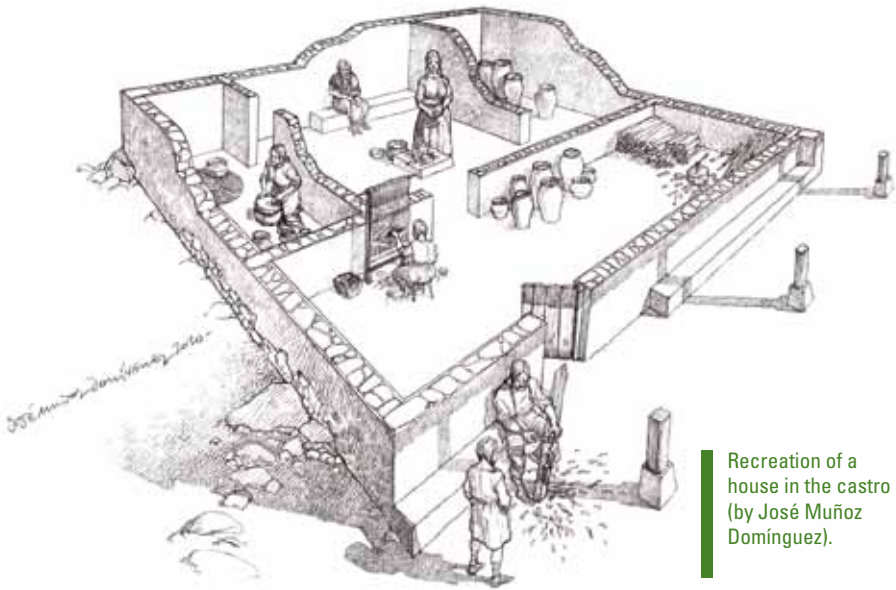




Area C. House with a banco corrido by the porch. In the foreground, circular granite pillars that supported the porch.

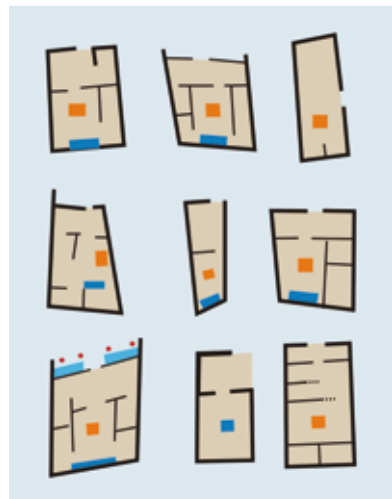
As introduced before, some houses had a front porch made of small roofs, as it can be intuited from the circular pillars that many house have in their entrances. Some of them even include another banco corrido –especially clear in Area C-. It can be easily imagined how the dwellers of the houses worked and rested sitting in this areas, enjoying the pleasant climate of the region. This habit of sitting in front of the houses can still be seen in our days in these regions. Ancient chroniclers who visited the inner Spain tribes reported dancing and singing by the entrances of the houses in the nights of full moon, as tribute to their deities.

The walls of the houses had a stone masonry skirting board/baseboard about one meter high. From that point and up until the roof, walls were made of mud and little stones –all compressed into a robust mix-. Outer walls were about 0.8 m wide, and inner walls were thinner –about 0.5 m wide. The eave was 2 m high or even more, depending on the surface. Roofs were usually pitched and made of brooms and piornos (a mountain bush that grows in the areas). This choice of plants for the roof was intended to let fireside smoke better flow out of the kitchen. Walls were covered in the inside with additional mud and clay to protect from cold temperatures and rain.



Recreation of a house in the castro (by José Muñoz Domínguez).

Doors to the outside usually faced south or west, as coldest air usually came from the mountains –that is, the north.



Different types of houses in the castro (in blue: bancos corridos; in orange: fireplaces).

Two of the houses have been fully reconstructed on its own floors for didactic purposes. Archaeological criteria and research have been taken into account, and thorough calculations have been performed to reconstruct the roofs, all in order to get a reliable picture of what they were like.



Reconstructed
houses in the castro.



Fully reconstructed houses can only be accessed by guided tour groups. The council of El Raso and the warden of the castro must be contacted in advance.



Reconstructed house.



Inside the reconstructed houses.



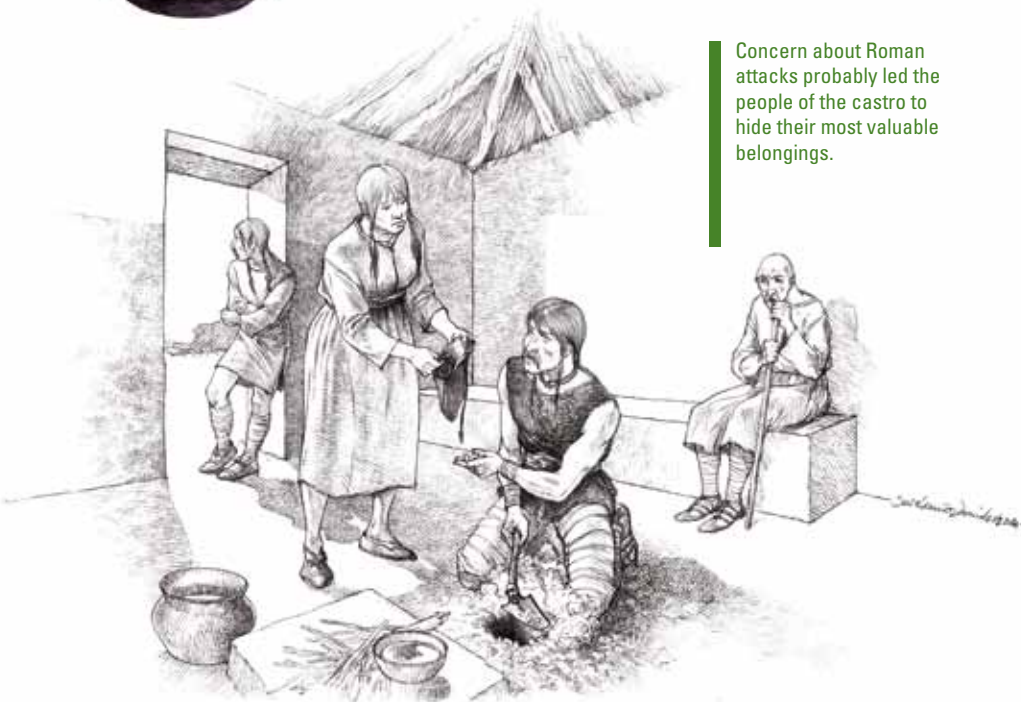
When the castro was apparently abandoned in a pacific way, its inhabitants only left those objects and tools that were no longer in use, such as large clay pots found in some places that contained the most essential supplies. As a result, the ground of the houses was found covered by remains of shattered pots, perhaps broken on purpose. Some acorns and cereals were also found, as well as clay spindle whorls, crucibles with traces of bronze –which are proof of existence of domestic forges- and occasionally weights for looms that were present in every house.

Large pot for supplies found in a house of El Freillo.



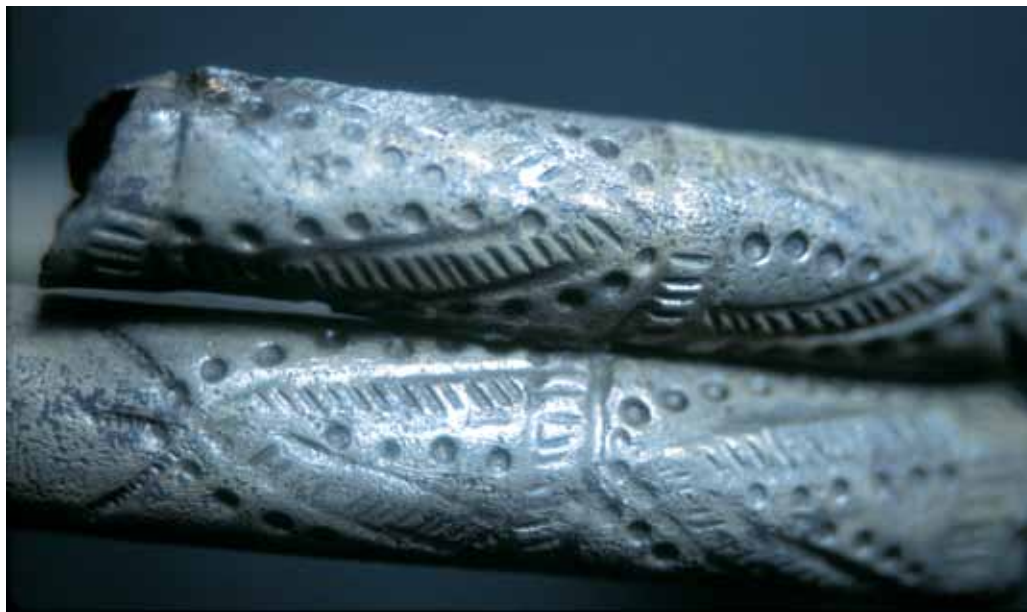
One of the houses in Area B provided us with a finding of outstanding value to recreate the last days of the castro. Under the surface of the hallway before the kitchen -buried in a small hole- someone hid some of his or her most valuable belongings, probably fearing a great and imminent danger. The finding was composed of a necklace, two bracelets, a brooch and two denarii (Roman coins), all objects made of silver. We can deduct that the hole and the placement of the treasure took place after Pompey was defeated, as the denarii were coined during the reign of Caesar. We can speculate that the inhabitants of El Freillo feared retaliation from the victorious army.

Concern about Roman attacks probably led the people of the castro to hide their most valuable belongings.





Small treasury found under the pavement of a house, all in silver.



Ornamental carvings in bracelets that belonged to the small treasury.



Archaeological excavations where certain broken clay pots were found showed that rituals took place in the houses when they were about to be built. This kind of rituals are very old: they have been performed in central Spain plateaus at least since mid-3rd millennium BC, and they are still in use in our days in various forms.

TO KNOW MORE

■ The people of the castro and their lifestyle

The settlers of El Freillo used mainly two materials when they made tools and objects in general: iron and ceramics from a potter's wheel. A degree of sophistication was attained in both techniques, but their successors did not always preserved it. Their work tools did not differ much from those which are still in use nowadays in some places such as axes, hoes, sickles... to the extent that only modern agricultural techniques are now replacing them.

It is important to note that they never came in contact with any form of writing until the Roman conquest in 133 BC. Adoption of writing and monetary system most likely happened from the 1st century BC onwards, when old Vettonian civilization was superseded by that of the Romans. In spite of Roman domination, cultural change did not happen easily or quickly. This general wave of change took a long time to complete, and when it concluded the castro of El Freillo had long been abandoned. It is reasonable to think that the surrender happened around the first years of the Christian era. By that time, locals were still using their original language and Latin alphabet was still not widely used. The inclusion of conquered territories within the core of the Roman Empire -founded by Augustus towards the end of the 1st century BC- accelerated this process. Nevertheless, knowing how to write and read remained out of the reach of most of the population. Both Latin language and alphabet were adopted at the same time, as no inscriptions in Vettonian language have ever been found. Only some traces of that language, incorporated to Latin inscriptions in form of proper nouns and names of deities have been recovered. Thus, when the successors of the Vettones learned how to write and read, they learnt how to do it in Latin, and their original language was lost forever.

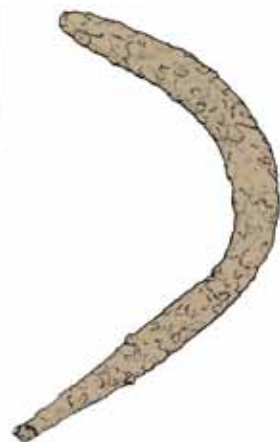
Some lost or hidden coins have been found inside the houses, which is proof that they circulated to some extent among the people, although their use was probably symbolic rather than ordinary.



An iron knife.

Only after the total surrender of the castro –when its inhabitants were already living somewhere else and thus started to assimilate into Roman society at a much faster pace- they started to fully participate into the Roman economy based on metal currency. Barter was probably the usual mean of exchange before the conquest.

We do not know the name dwellers of the castro gave to the settlement. The Romans wrote about a city called “Ebora” (“city of the yew” in old Celtic language) in the vicinities of the Tagus river. Taking into the account that the chronicles were usually vague as they were usually second-hand accounts, we could speculate that Ebora was indeed the castro of El Freillo. Apart from this, the presence of yew trees in the area –a tree considered sacred by many ancient cultures as it does not lose its green colour and possess medicinal uses- and one inscription near El Raso that refers to a man called Eburenus –a word that could be linguistically related to Ebora- leading us to further believe in Ebora as the Vettonian name for El Freillo. In any case, there is no confirmation and until now, it is no more than a promising hypothesis.



Iron sickle found inside a house.

We know some of the Vettonian names that the inhabitants of El Freillo could have had, such as Orundo, Atta and Boutio. All three coexisted with many other usual Roman names such as Caius Ulantius, Vernaculus and Marcia Helene, which also belonged to settlers of El Freillo area. Those examples of Roman names are the first known to have appeared in a time when a more powerful culture was superseding a weaker one. El Freillo people also belonged to family clans organised around claimed descent from common and very remote ancestors. Membership to a given clan was usually mentioned when one person was introduced to others. Examples of clan names are the caraecici, the menetovieci, the pintolanci, the ambatici...



Iron scissors found inside a house.

Close to the junction between the gorge of Alardos and the Tiétar River, in a place called Postoloboso, there existed a pre-Roman shrine which endured well into Roman times, to the extent of finally becoming a Christian temple from 4th century AD onwards when Christianity became the official religion of the Empire. What remains of the long process where newer constructions replace older ones are just some pieces of commemorative altar stones from the Roman period and a marble cymatium in the Visigoth temple that followed –which in turn was converted into a medieval temple and was finally deeply reformed until reaching our time. A widely popular among Vettonians and Lusitanians god called Vaelico was worshipped in that shrine. This fact has been known due to some altar stones in which the worshippers thank a deity for its help by inscribing a Latin text.



Christianity substituted Vaelico for Saint John and then finally for Saint Bernard as object of worship in that temple. The temple lies today on private property and cannot be visited. Vaelico has been identified as god of the netherworld and was perhaps also related to mining. A large number of iron slag pieces found in Postoboloso has led researchers to propose that hypothesis.



Hermitage of Postoboloso. It replaced previous shrines of Roman and pre-Roman times.

There exist a number of remains of possible shrines devoted to the ancient religion of the El Freillo people, in the proximities of the castro:

❑ **El Exprimijo.** Located north of El Freillo and outside the walls of the castro, in the valley of the Lancharillas stream, about 100 m away west of the road. It consists of a large rock in which a large basin has been carved and whose liquid content would overflow through a corner-shaped spout. Over the basin, there is a ledge that could have served as recipient for some unknown liquid. The reduced capacity of the recipients renders them unsuitable for more mundane tasks such as grape squeezing or similar activities. Given that both animal and human sacrifices were commonplace among pre-Roman tribes of inner Spain, this could certainly be the place where those rituals took place.



Valle of the Lancharillas stream where El Exprimijo is located.



El Exprimijo.



❑ In a private estate located near the southeast limits of the castro and close to the wall, there is a rock on which a number of basins have been carved – along with various groups of smaller carved cups. As these carvings lack any kind of evident functionality, it is reasonable to assume that they were related to rituals performed by the people of the castro.

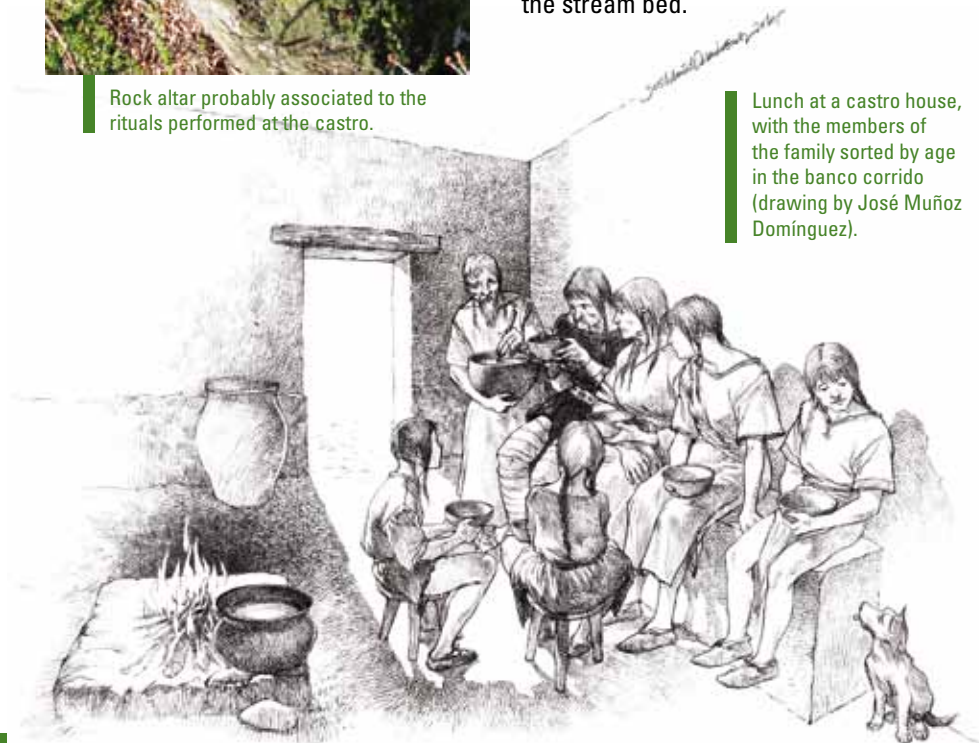


Rock altar probably associated to the rituals performed at the castro.

Aside from these supposed shrines, it is very likely that many other existed in the area. One of those could have been the gorge of Alardos itself, west of the castro, where human-like bronze votive offerings have been found. Votive offerings were usually located in shrines and they served as means of representation the problems that they were trying to solve by presenting it to the chosen deity. It is yet unknown if they were revering water sources and streams with a temple located by the gorge, or the ritual simply consisted of throwing the votive offerings to the stream bed.



Votive offering in bronze found at the gorge of Alardos, probably linked to rituals related to water, in times when the castro was inhabited.



Lunch at a castro house, with the members of the family sorted by age in the banco corrido (drawing by José Muñoz Domínguez).

■ The surrender of the castro

As it has been previously said, the surrender of the castro must have happened after the second Roman civil war (49 to 44 BC) in which Caesar faced and defeated Pompey. The surrender implied a thorough readjustment of the lifestyle of the El Freillo people, as they had to relocate and reorganize their social structures.

From that moment onwards, El Freillo started to become an archaeological site rather than human settlement. Excavations have shown that some of the houses were burnt for unknown reasons. Devoid of rooftops and maintenance, the houses started to fall into disrepair and the mud walls collapsed. Large clay pots where essential supplies were stored in every household were broken into pieces. It is important to note that they did not carry the pots to their new settlements, as they were essential tools in their daily life. Perhaps the act of breaking and leaving them in the place where they were used had a ritual connotation, in line with many other cultures in which household items are left in the places where they were normally used, once they become obsolete.

The inhabitants of the castro were not relocated in the neighbouring plains. Instead, it seems plausible that a new form of urban organization of scattered and smaller villages came into practice. A number of able-bodied Vettonians found a way to prosper by joining the Roman legions, which in turn was detrimental to the local economy as less labour was available to work in agriculture and animal husbandry. The low number of Roman archaeological sites in this area indicates that bigger and more prosperous settlements far from this area attracted a significant share of the original population.

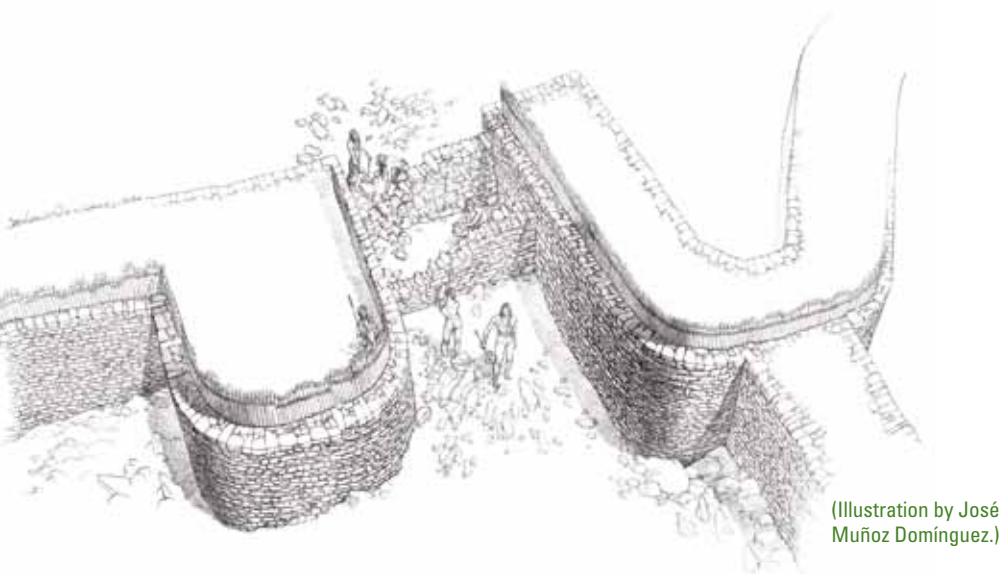
HISTORICAL FACTS ABOUT THE PEOPLE OF EL FREILLO

If we consider that the castro was inhabited for about 200 years, we can chronologically recount the most important events in their history. Their chronology is five phases:

1.- At some point near the end of 3rd century BC, the decision of founding a new and safe settlement was made perhaps because of the campaigns of Carthaginian General Hannibal in 220 BC –when he went across Vettonian lands in search for supplies and troops to wage war against the Romans–, be it due to the presence of the Romans from 218 BC onwards, the local



Vettonians that had been until then living in the more pleasant area of El Raso decided to move to securer lands. A new organization started to be a necessity in order to stand a chance against enemies that were much more powerful than the ones they had known until that moment.



(Illustration by José Muñoz Domínguez.)

2.- From 200 to 155 BC.

The inhabitants of El Freillo went through troubled times. Roman presence in the Iberian Peninsula created great commotion among the different tribes that feared conquest in itself or its indirect effects. Rome had started its domination over the south and east of the Peninsula. This was bad news for the people of El Freillo as they were prompted to invest great amounts of labour and effort in strengthening their security. Some tribes already at war with the Romans hired the Vettonians as mercenaries, as it has been chronicled in the case of the Turdetani in 186 BC. El Freillo soldiers participated in military clashes also in the defence of Toletum, even closer to their lands and interests. On the other hand, the raids of Vettonians and Lusitanians on Roman-controlled cities in the south created outrage and prompted the Romans to perform punishment expeditions that the El Freillo people probably suffered, given their proximity. High poverty levels in El Freillo were the factor that led many young soldiers to join raids on the south.

In this period, El Freillo probably suffered directly some Roman attacks, although the real extent of the conflict depended on the level of participation by the soldiers of El Freillo in alliances with other tribes in direct confrontation with the Romans.

If they were strongly connected to any raiding alliance with other Lusitanian and Vettonian tribes, they most certainly suffered retaliation by the Romans unless they agreed to pay a tax as was the case with some other tribes. Although there is not any sign of war-related destruction given our current knowledge, future excavations will shed more light on this matter.

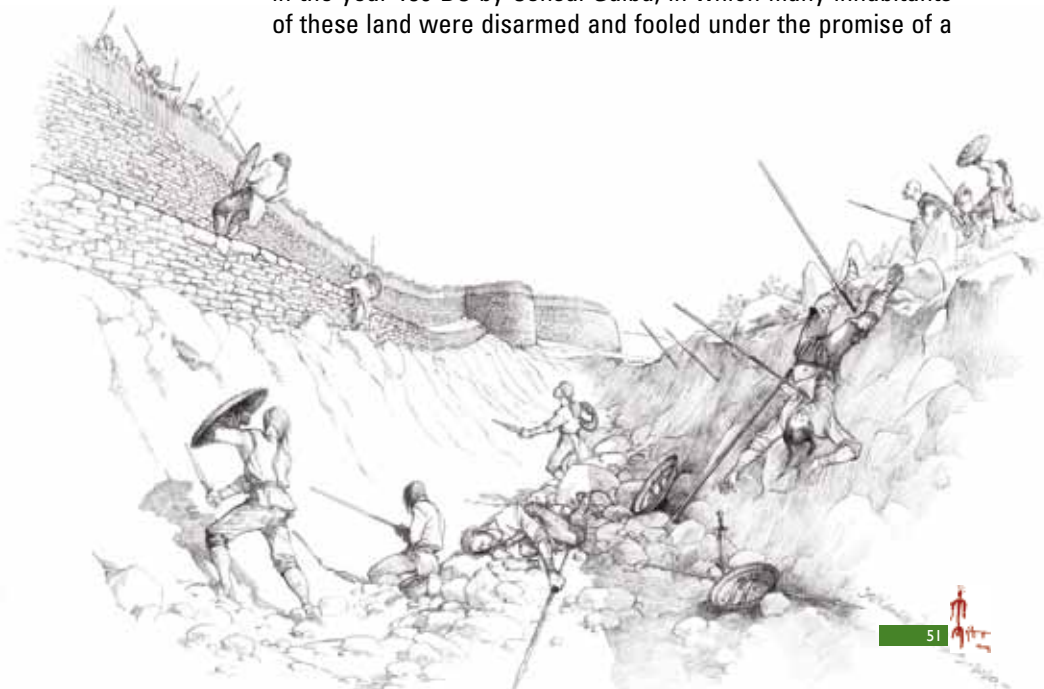
3.- From 155 to 133 BC.

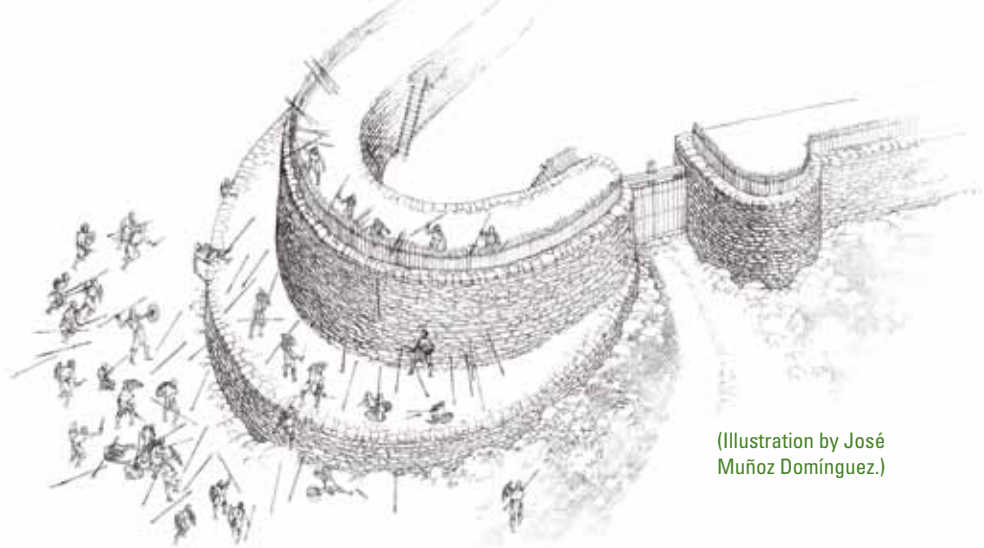
The war that ended El Castrillo independence.

This period was among the worst in El Freillo history. The peoples of the inner Peninsula were involved in a long confrontation against the Romans, who started a war of direct conquest in order to avoid the problems of the previous period. Vettonians and Lusitanians had strong ties from their common heritage and were close allies in this war. The castro of El Freillo most certainly played an important role in the conflict because of its size and significance to the Vettonians. This war, as wars in any period do, caused great trouble for the economy and society in general, as young people were removed from productive labour and both Vettonian army and population dramatically decreased their numbers.

Lusitanians and Vettonians waged war against the Romans using their own particular methods and sometimes achieved great victories. We can safely speculate that the warriors of El Freillo fought all through the war as their independence was at stake in this conflict. They were probably part of an army led by Lusitanian general Punicus that defeated the Roman army commanded by Calpurnius Piso and inflicted no less than 6,000 casualties. On the other hand, people from El Freillo were probably among the massacre of 30,000 Lusitanians and Vettonians in the year 150 BC by Consul Galba, in which many inhabitants of these land were disarmed and fooled under the promise of a

(Illustration by José
Muñoz Domínguez.)





(Illustration by José Muñoz Domínguez.)

land distribution negotiation. This massacre sparked the appearance of the legendary Lusitanian commander Viriathus who led a victorious army against the Romans, until his assassination in the year 139 BC.

There is not any explicit record of it, but by the importance of El Castriello we can safely assume that Viriathus spent some time at El Castriello during his campaigns.

War in all its crudity, death and uncertainty must have prevailed in the daily life of El Freillo in these years. When war ended in 133 BC with the fall of Numantia, the people of the castro were not independent anymore. By that time they were already subjects of Rome: they paid taxes, sent their youth to the Roman army and accepted the conditions of the conquerors. We can imagine the feeling of humiliation and depression that must have existed in those days.

4.- From 133 to 44 BC. The consequences of losing a war.

From 133 BC onwards, the situation started to change quickly in the castro. Although the end of the war must have given a certain relief when compared to the previous situations of constant fear and instability, depending on the Romans proved to be a problem as well. Perhaps the local chieftains struck some form of agreement with the Romans to keep their governance over mundane affairs, but always under the supervision of the Roman. A period of calm lasted for about 40 years, although Roman control implied that the economic surpluses of the castro would be reaped in form of tributes.

Between years 82 to 72 BC, war reappeared as the so-called Sertorian Wars. They consisted of a series of civil wars among the Roman people, with Marius and Sulla as main contenders. The peoples under occupation took sides depending on what they were offered in return for their support in case their faction won the war. Vettonians allied with Sertorius, a general of Marius' army. Once again, the men of El Raso became warriors in active duty, with all the implied damage

to the local economy. Quintus Caecilius Metellus –a general in Sulla’s army- established military bases not far from El Freillo, which probably caused great distress to its people and forced them to strengthen even more their defensive means. Finally, the side supported by El Freillo people –and by the Lusitanians and Vettonians in general- lost the war, and in addition to loss of potential revenues, casualties and expected privileges they had to endure raids by the winning armies. Harsh times returned to their fullest extent: scarcity of resources and dissatisfaction. Groups of Lusitanians and Vettonians went back to banditry, as the youth of places such as El Freillo were devoid of any means of subsistence.

Between years 49 to 44 BC, another civil war between Romans occurred, this time with Caesar and Pompey as rivals. Vettonians sided for Pompey, who promised them much better conditions even though as subdued people. Men of El Freillo filled once again the ranks of Roman armies, thus causing again labour scarcity and diminished production. War ended with Pompey and their Vettonian allies’ defeat. Caesar’s retaliation stood out for its cruelty. He enslaved entire populations and forced them to tear down the walls of their original settlements and then relocated them away from those settlements. Fear of retaliation induced the people living in one of the house in Area A to hide their belongings in a hole beneath the pavement. The fact that they did not come back to rescue the treasure gives an idea of the level of retaliation that Caesar put into practice.

5.- 45 BC onwards: the exodus.

Two centuries after its foundation, the people of El Freillo were forced to surrender their city, as Caesar commanded. They had to tear down the walls as well, and we do not know where and under what conditions they were forced to live thereafter, although we can imagine that life became from that point on even harder than it had been. The old houses were abandoned and demolished; the large clay pots were broken. Some of the people were probably enslaved and sold to Romans that had received lands as payment after the conquest. Some others probably remained free but subject to high taxes. Many young men preferred to take the chance of joining the Roman armies in hope for a better life, instead of being slaves or subjects in extremely precarious conditions. Some others migrated to the new cities founded in the new era of Augustus, which would prove to be a much more peaceful one.

The old place where the El Freillo people lived and fought remained until our days in the mountainside, becoming with the years a testimony of tough times, the traditions, pride and heroic deeds of the ancestors, but also a symbol of defeat. And then on to oblivion until our days.

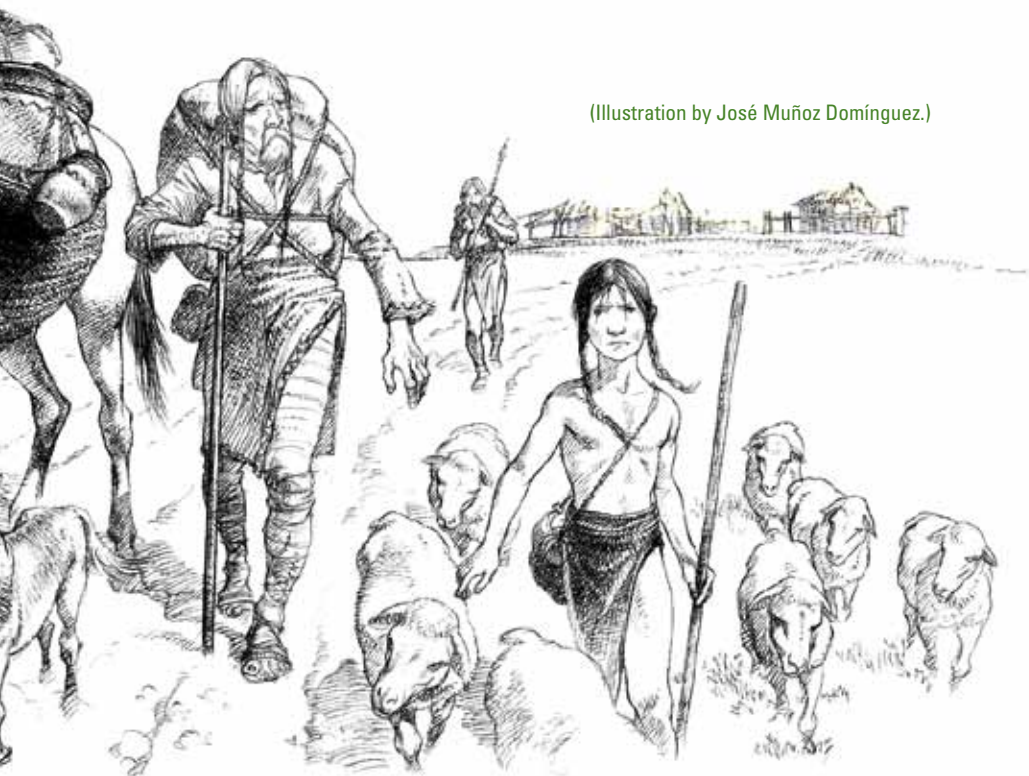




TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE VETTONES AND THE CASTRO OF EL FREILLO.

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- Varios autores. *Celtas y Vettones*. Volumen conmemorativo de la exposición realizada en Ávila. Ávila. 2001.



(Illustration by José Muñoz Domínguez.)

Towards the end of the urban centre of El Raso, at the beginning of the road to the castro, there is a store where souvenirs and books about the sites can be bought, as well as typical products from the region.





THE PEN OF (LA MAJADA DE) BRAGUILLAS

The Shepherds' Harsh Mountain Life



Visiting the majada (Spanish for pen) of Braguillas is an excellent complement if you previously visited the El Freillo castro, or the neighbouring cave paintings of Peña Escrita. All three places combine themselves into a journey to the past set in a mountain landscape of great beauty.

If you have not yet visited El Freillo, we recommend that you schedule your visit there first, and then continue onto the majada of Braguillas and the cave paintings. If you have seen it already but still have never been to the majada, we suggest you to leave your vehicle at the parking space in the castro and then reach the majada by walking through Area C.

Visiting the majada of Braguillas is a way to dive into an atmosphere of daily life in the 60's of the 20th century, despite appearing to date back to the pre-Historic era.



SHEPHERDS PENS SOUTH OF THE GREDOS MOUNTAIN RANGE

Goats are the main presence at the mountainous landscapes south of Gredos.



The people of the southern foothills of the Gredos Mountains were usually farmers and shepherds. Their crops were potatoes, tobacco plant, legumes, and olive and fruit trees. On the other hand, the life of the shepherds was harsher and based on goat farming and cheese production. Goats were the prevailing animals in the mountains as they were better adapted to the rough climate. Goat cheese from this region continues to enjoy great fame even in our days. Farmers lived in their own farms. Shepherds, in contrast, occupied pens scattered around the mountains and paid rent to the councils. They lived permanently in those places in very modest and rough, if somewhat dignified, conditions.

Of all the pens that existed only ruins remain, as this way of living disappeared completely in the 70's of the 20th century. We know about the existence of more than two hundreds abandoned houses in the outskirts of the mountain area, all over the valley of la Vera to which El Raso belongs.





THE PEN OF (LA MAJADA DE) BRAGUILLAS

It was one more of the many that existed in the sloped mountain-sides of southern Gredos, but stands out because it has been reconstructed to better illustrate the way of life of the shepherds.

The majada of Braguillas, reconstructed as it was when the Garro-Chinarro family occupied it.

General Visit Information

- ❑ Opening hours: available in the website of the council of Candedeleda (www.ayuntamientocandedeleda.es)
- ❑ Accessibility: we recommend you to stroll to the site and take some time enjoying the views. On the way to the pen, the castro of El Freillo can be seen from above, showing its excellent strategic conditions. There are two ways of accessing the pen:
 - Short route: leave your vehicle in the parking space and go through the castro to the Area C and exit the walls through the gate. A marked trail ascends the mountains through the mountainside until the pen is reached. It is about 1.5 km (0.9 miles) in the midst of a very pleasant landscape. Difficulty is medium to low, depending on physical condition. It takes about 45 minutes to complete the route. Comfortable footwear is recommended.
 - Long route: leave the car in the parking space and continue walking along dirt track for 4.2 (2.6 miles). At that point, a similar track forks to the right. 1.4 km (0.8 miles) separate that point from the majada.

The total length of the route is about 5.6 km (3.5 miles), with gentle slopes. It is the recommend option for visitors without time constraints that want to enjoy some physical exercise and the little details of the journey. All while being surrounded by a beautiful landscape. This route allows for observation of the northern walls and trenches.

Visiting the majada with vehicles is an option limited to off-road cars, although it is not recommended as the journey will be much more enjoyable if done by walking to the sites.



The majada of Braguillas from the castro.



THE SITE

The majada stands on a narrow strip of land that starts in the mountainside and extends itself horizontally to the west, forming a platform from where all the area can be seen. The presence of nearby water streams and springs was also a decisive factor as it is fundamental to the production of cheese. It is 860 m high over sea level and 430 from the plain of the Tietar Valley to the south. The slope from El Raso amounts to 14%, adding to the difficult life in the majada. Distance to El Raso from existing trails was more than 3 km (almost 2 miles) in a very steep slope, and 15 km to Candeleda (about 10 miles).

Location of the majada in the outline of the slope.



THE INHABITANTS OF THE MAJADA

This pen was built around the 40's of the 20th century. Earlier before that date, another smaller construction stood in the same place, but it was never permanently occupied.

During reconstruction works, archaeological studies confirmed that the place was already in use in prehistoric times. Its favourable location was a determining factor to choose the place throughout history.



Deogracias
Garro and his
wife María
Chinarro.

The family that lived permanently in the majada was composed of Deogracias Garro Fraile, María Chinarro Blázquez and their five children, all very young when the family left the place: Santos, Constancio, Dolores (†) and Gregoria –who still could not walk by herself at that time.

They occupied the majada for more than ten years, in extremely hard conditions and without any of the amenities that we enjoy today. Still, these were the usual conditions among the shepherds of this region.



The children
that lived in the
majada, 70 years
after at the front
door of their
former house.



After over ten years, the family decided to go back to lower lands near El Raso, when the father received his father's inheritance. From then on, the majada was only sporadically occupied, from late spring to early autumn and with the purpose of exploiting the pastures.

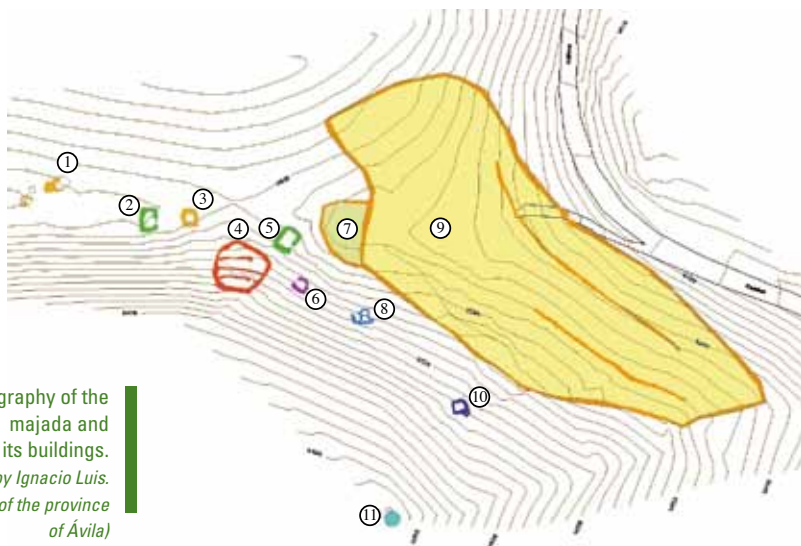
The majada in wintertime.



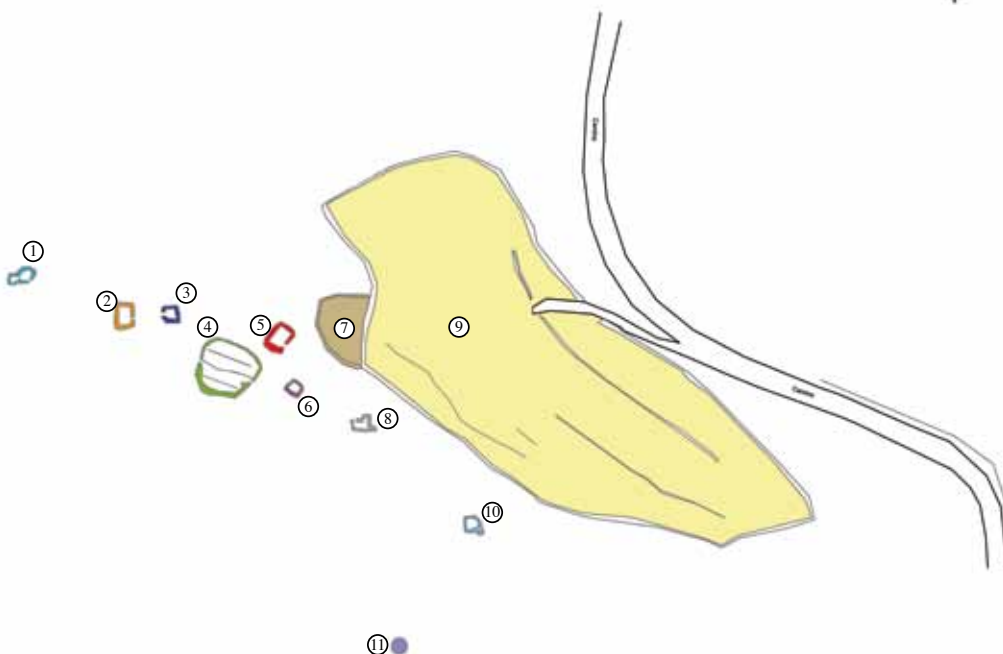
BUILDINGS THAT SHAPED DAILY LIFE

Living in the majada implied owning all the elements needed to lead a self-sufficient life. Relatives and the older son collaborated in its construction, although the child was not even 10 years old.

We can distinguish two parts in the majada: the houses and animal farming sector, and the agricultural production area.



Topography of the
majada and
its buildings.
(Map by Ignacio Luis.
Diputación of the province
of Ávila)



The majada consisted of the following buildings: 1.- Zahúrda de la Cerda Madre (Pigsty of the Mother Pig). 2.- Casilla/Warehouse. 3.- Hut of the Pork Slaughter. 4.- Majada de las Cabras (Pen of the Goats). 5.- House. 6.- Chozo Burrero. 7.- Field for threshing. 8.- The Henhouse. 9.- Orchard. 10.- Fattening up pigsty. (Map by Ignacio Luis. Diputación of the province of Ávila).

■ **The house.** It was built in drywall and filled with mortar in the inside to protect from the cold. Dimensions: 4x3 m / 7 sq m (about 13x10 feet or 75 square feet) in a single room without compartments and a door facing east. This same space was used both as kitchen and bedroom. The fireplace consisted in two stones leaning against the wall and two other stones that protruded from the wall and prevented the flames from reaching the ceiling. There was not any form of chimney. Rooftop was made of wooden planks covered with brooms and rinds from trees to avoid water leaks. There were no windows either. Household utensils hanged from nails in the wall and were kept in a single recess. The family gathered around the hearth to diner and sometimes listen the father playing the bandurria (a Spanish variety of mandolin). They slept on straw mattresses on the ground. These mattresses were filled with corn leaves, given the great consistency of this material. They stood over an oak planks structure fixed to the ground with gallows.

House in the
forefront.



■ **La Casilla.** Dimensions: 4x3 m (7 m²) comprised in a single room. It was the first house of the family, and it had been built by a previous shepherd that occupied it intermittently. The extremely rough conditions in this hut prompted them to build a newer and better adapted one. La Casilla was then used to store tools, cured pork meat and the harvest.



La Casilla in the background.

■ **Chozo de la matanza** (Spanish for Hut of the Pork Slaughter). This hut was used to store the slaughtering products in the first months after the pigs were sacrificed.



Hut of the Pork Slaughter.



■ **Chozo Burrero.** It was used to shelter two donkeys that were used as traction animals in farming and cheese delivery from the majada to El Raso.

Chozo burrero



■ **Majada de las cabras (Spanish for Pen of the Goats).** Circularly-shaped enclosure covered with a vegetal roof, of which the central area was left open. The roof had a large gable in the cover to prevent the goats from jumping outside. The roof was built with ferns and

rockroses over a mounting of oak wood. It served as nighttime shelter for about 150 goats. The shelter faces south to protect from the extremely cold northern winds. Its disposition as terraces in the mountainside arises from the need to contain landslides.



Outside of the majada of the goats.

Inside view of the majada.



■ **Zahúrda de la cerda madre (Spanish for Pigsty of the Mother Pig).** This hut was reserved for the mother pig and its offspring.

■ **Zahúrda de los cerdos para la matanza (Spanish for Pigsty of the Pigs Slaughtering).** This hut served as the place where to fatten up the pigs with food leftovers, byproducts of wheat milling and acorns. Children were used to collect these items.

Pigsty of the mother pig.



■ **The Henhouse.** Used to shelter hens during the night.



■ **The cheese-making hut.** It had to be located in an area with a high level of humidity and a stream of water, as the cheese must remain humid. The cheese pieces were placed on top of a layer of wet sand.

An additional cheese-making hut existed in the north side of the majada but it is not currently visible.



The cheese-making hut standing on top of a stream.

The majada and the orchard in the forefront.

There also existed a terraced orchard with a total size of 10,000 sq m (2.47 acres) where potatoes, legumes and wheat were grown thanks to a dedicated water tank that captured the mountain streams.



ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

The main productivity activity of the majada was cheese production from goat milk. It was made in the cheese huts and was delivered with donkeys to El Raso once a week and where a merchant would pick up the merchandise. The revenue would be used to buy essential goods such as bread and rice, tools, clothing and rent to the council of Candeleda, which owned the lands where the majada stands. The family would sometimes sell baby goats and potatoes when a surplus occurred. Older goats were sold as well but much less frequently.

The production of the orchard, along with the produce of pork slaughtering was the main source of food for the seven family members. The orchard produced wheat, potatoes, carillas (a bean variety), chickpeas, tomatoes and peppers. Every part of the pig was used after slaughtering the animal, but the hams were sold to obtain cash.



The pig slaughtering day was also an opportunity to meet the dwellers of the neighbouring majadas, forming stronger ties among the members of the community and letting them enjoy a feast day. It was usually said that, if at the end of the slaughtering day no dancing was done, the chorizos (the main produce of the slaughtering, which can be roughly described as cured and spiced pork sausages) would spoil.

In addition to all the previously mentioned products, goat milk, cheese and chickens eggs were usually present in their diet.

Rabbit hunting was also common among the people of the majadas. It was performed with the help of dogs and/or hunting snares. Occasionally, wild honey was found in trees. A syrup with which to cure throat pains was made from it.

The Production of Cheese in the Majadas

Immediately after milking the cows -once in the morning and once in the evening- the cheese was made in order to capture the properties of the fresh milk. Milk was poured into a large cauldron and then mixed with rennet from the stomach of a lactating goatling, after which it was left to partially curdle for two hours. The resulting mix was stirred by hand, to then remove the whey, which floated from the mix as result of a layer of fern leaves being pressed against the mix. The whey was used to feed the swine, and the mix was now much more solid without it. The exprimijo is an elongated wooden table with a cavity in the interior and slightly protruding borders. When liquid was poured onto it, and then tilted, it flowed to some sort of a faucet. The cinchos were esparto strips whose size could be regulated so as to be put in the exprimijo and filled with cheese that had already become solid. The remaining whey would flow to the faucet, giving additional consistency to the cheese. In the final stage of the process, the cheese was kept in humid conditions until sold. To do so, the cheeses were placed on top of a layer of wet sand. Doing this was fundamental to prevent them from drying before they were sold in El Raso.



Exprimijo.



Cinchos.

DAILY LIFE AT THE MAJADA

Running water and electricity were never present at the majada. Extremely cold mountain temperatures, rain and snow made life even more difficult. As a result, these conditions rendered the inhabitants of the majadas into extraordinarily hardened and resilient people.

Their life conditions were also determined by the time in which they were living. The father was the shepherd, so he would spend all day in the mountains with his herd. The mother stayed at home making the cheese, cooking meals, mending clothes and tending the orchard. The children never attended any school until the whole family left the majada: the father would teach them how to read and write in his spare time. They would help in all the chores and play under the supervision of the older brother.

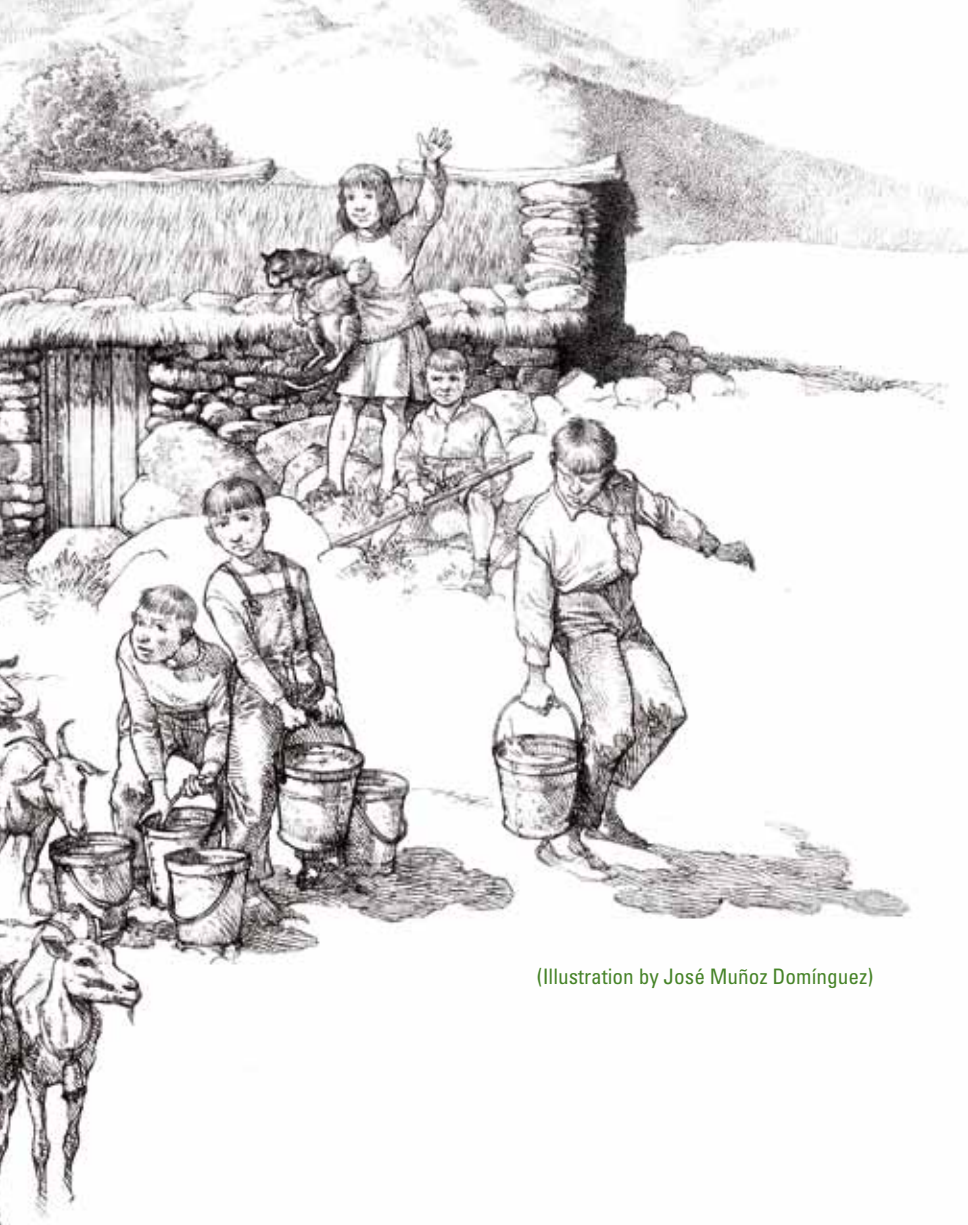
The mountainside of Braguillas from the east.





Lunch was cooked over the fireplace with a clay pot in which they boiled potatoes, legumes or sometimes, a rabbit. Ajocano was the usual breakfast and consisted of milk, fried bread and paprika. Chestnuts, cheese, cured pork meat and wild fruits complemented their diet.

When it came to health care, only traditional remedies were available for both human and animals. There was not any form of public health care, and as a result medical help was sought only in exceptional cases. Remedies consisting in herb and honey syrups and ointments were the usual treatment for minor diseases and scorpion or snake bites.



(Illustration by José Muñoz Domínguez)

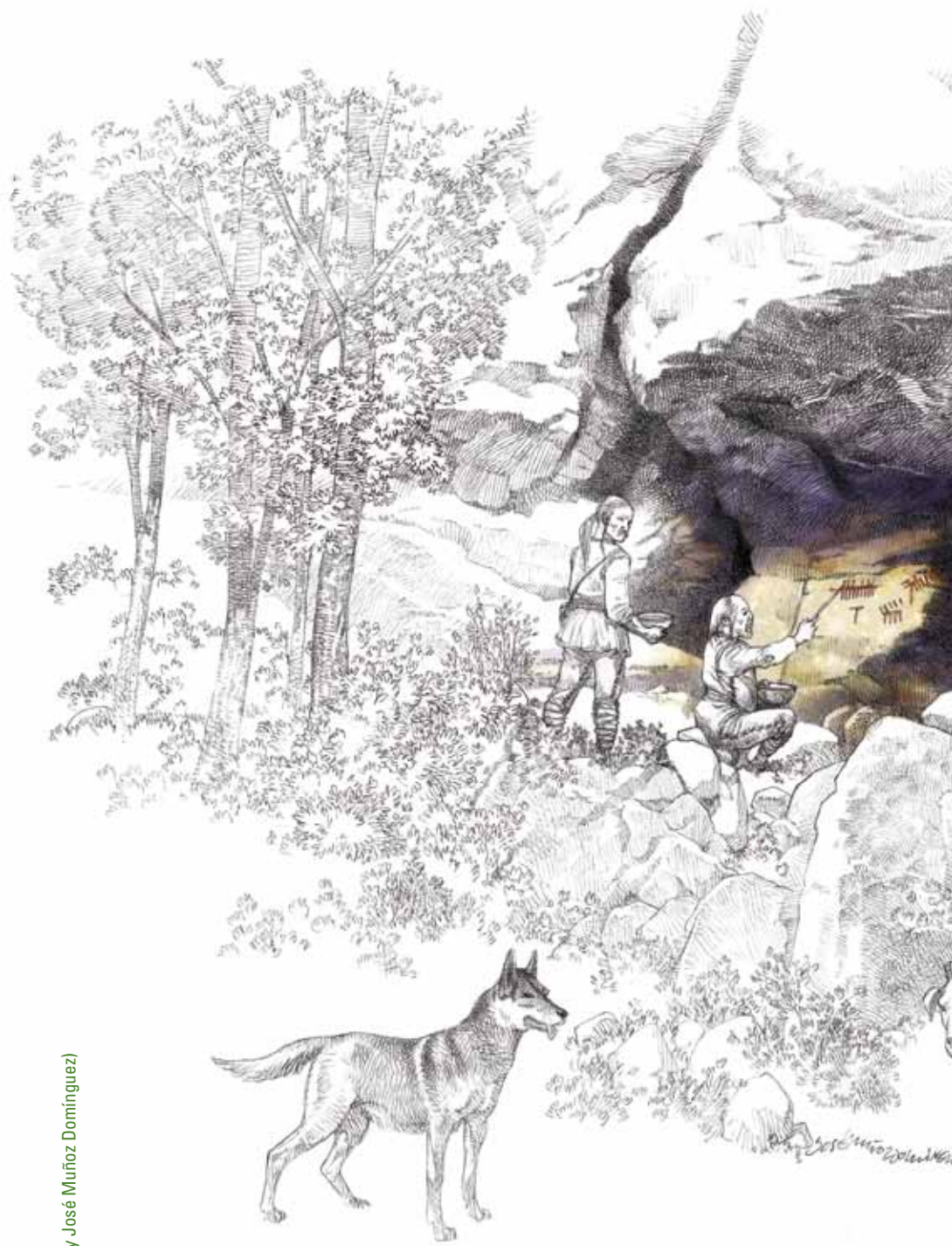
Many of these practices were also influenced by superstitious beliefs.

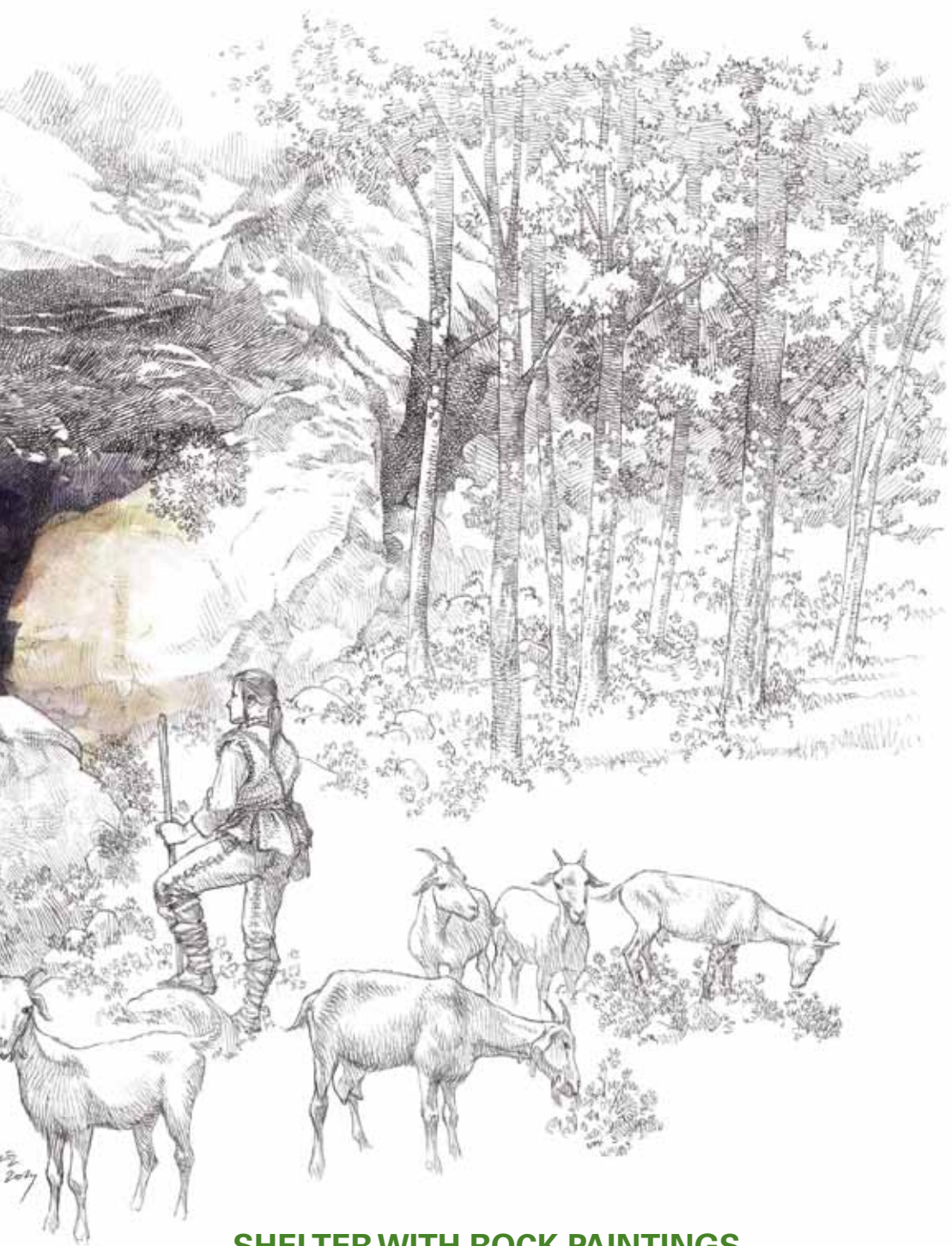
The family only attended mass in the festivities of Santiago, Christmas and the Virgin of Chilla –a highly revered saint in the area–. Nevertheless, Christian traditions were present in everyday life in form of prayers before eating and sleeping.

The youth of the majadas usually gathered to dance to the music of the bandurrias, yerros and castanets. The call to the gathering consisted of blowing the horn of a wild goat three times, creating a sound that was heard all around the neighbouring mountains.



(Illustration by José Muñoz Domínguez)





SHELTER WITH ROCK PAINTINGS OF PEÑA ESCRITA/LAS ZORRERAS

Symbolism and Messages before the Invention of Writing

Human beings have always needed to express their ideas throughout history, in multiple forms. This need was much more easily fulfilled with the invention of writing as a way to capture ideas. Before writing, certain symbols that could be understood by different communities were used. Prehistoric cave paintings configured a message to a determined recipient by choosing certain places with various connotations. Messages greatly differed and could be modified depending on what the authors wanted to communicate. As a result, additive paintings were done in some

places for many centuries, with large temporal gaps between a painting and another and with very different mind sets and messages among authors. The meaning of the paintings is very difficult to know, as they consisted of ideograms conceived by cultures with values very much divergent to ours.

It is important to note that similar symbols and figures appear throughout the Iberian Peninsula, which is proof of the existence of a shared code.





Granitic outcrop where the shelter of Peña Escrita/Las Zorreras is located.

Peña Escrita/Las Zorreras is located 380 m far from the majada of Braguillas, following the trail to the south-east, on the left side and on top of a rocky promontory that borders the road.

The paintings are protected by bars. A metal platform has been built to let visitors contemplate them at eye level. They are explained by a board attached to the platform, including those paintings that are not visible but have been investigated by means of special studies. Visits are allowed all year round.

They have been declared Heritage of Cultural Interest within Archaeological Site, the highest possible consideration awarded to such an archaeological finding. Any damage or alteration to the cave represents a criminal offence of the gravest level.

■ The shelter

It is located in a steep hillside towards the south, getting high amounts of sunlight and standing on top of a rocky outcrop formed after larger rocks collapsed. These rocky formations form a shelter big enough for groups of people. The Tietar Valle and the Gorge of Alardos can be seen from the shelter offering a spectacular view to the visitors. It is not linked to any settlement, which leads researchers to believe that its use was isolated and closely related to the place itself and the symbolic value that it contained. Perhaps the prehistoric peoples that inhabited the plateau that would later become the majada of Braguillas were somehow related to these paintings.



Shelter of Peña Escrita/Las Zorreras



Detailed view of the paintings.

■ The Paintings

The Peña Escrita/Las Zorreras paintings belong to the so-called Iberian Schematic Art (Arte Esquemático Ibérico) in which figures are drawn with rough and unrefined strokes, giving pre-eminence to ideas over aesthetics. All of them were made in red or maroon colours extracted from ochre powder –which in turn, comes from iron ore and water, among other elements-. Strokes are linear and lack any volume or perspective. Some are static while others have a certain degree of movement. Figures representing concrete objects share the space with imprecise forms, perhaps belonging to the symbolic and ritual heritage of this ancient peoples.

Not all of them are visible to the naked eye. Those that cannot be seen have been discovered with infrared and contrast technologies: the original colour has either faded into the rocks or has been covered by white salts deposited by water. The paintings shown in this guide are those which have been discovered by researchers. A full account of the detected paintings can be seen in the board next to the paintings themselves.

They were made some time between the end of the Neolithic era and the beginning of the Bronze Age (3,500 to 2,000 BC). People of this area were farmers and shepherds in the lands between mountains and plains –modern day region of La Vera–. Copper metallurgy came to the area in that period as well.

Detailed view of
the paintings.



Interpreting this sort of paintings is not an easy task, given that what we see today as a whole, is the result of the actions of many different peoples over a long period of time, all of them with very different ideas and intentions. Nonetheless, we can be sure that they wanted to somehow transmit a message, and their only available means were symbols that could be understood by everybody.

It is also essential to understand that this place must have had a special meaning for them, as we can be certain that it was not the place where they lived. It must have been related to rites, social codes... that formed their ideological heritage and that were similar to those of human groups located in places far



away. These representations formed a system of symbols that could be understood by many even without knowing any written language.

On one hand we can distinguish elements related to daily life in spite of its schematization such as animals (goats) and humans. On the other, symbols whose meaning cannot be easily identified as they do not resemble any object or evident concept. These undetermined figures are probably abstractions that correspond to their own mental approach to ideas that were relevant to them.

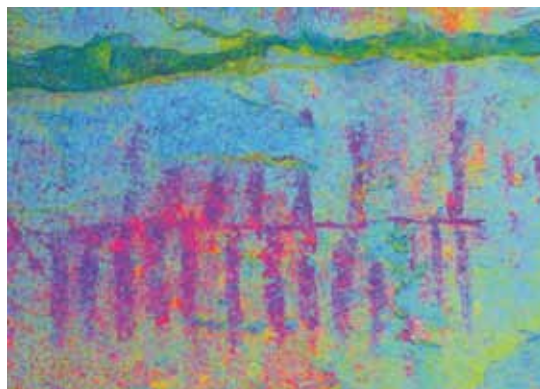
■ Sector 1

Situated in the right side and contiguous to Sector 2, separated only by a crevice. It has been partially covered by white salts deposited by waters. Only the upper right corner can be clearly seen. Meanings of the drawings are not as clear as in Board 2, but they are in line with other sites in the Iberian Peninsula.

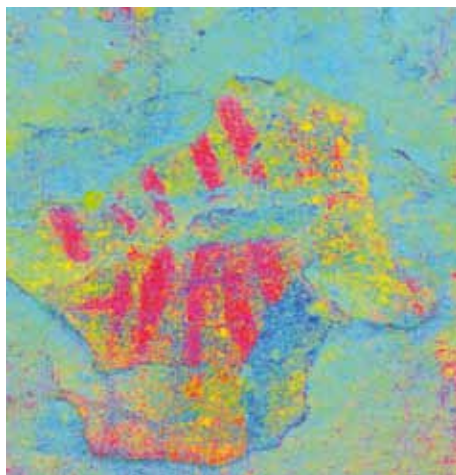


(J. Latova)

Figure 1 corresponds to a very common type of schematic drawing consisting of a horizontal line that crosses through several vertical lines. The meaning of this symbol remains unknown to this moment. Figure 2, very deteriorated by rock decomposition, could have been similar to figure 1. Figure 3 is the schematization of a tree from which a number of curly tree branches hang, and next to it a figure that somewhat resembles a centipede. Next to all of them, remains of paint indicate that painting over previous drawings was a common practice.



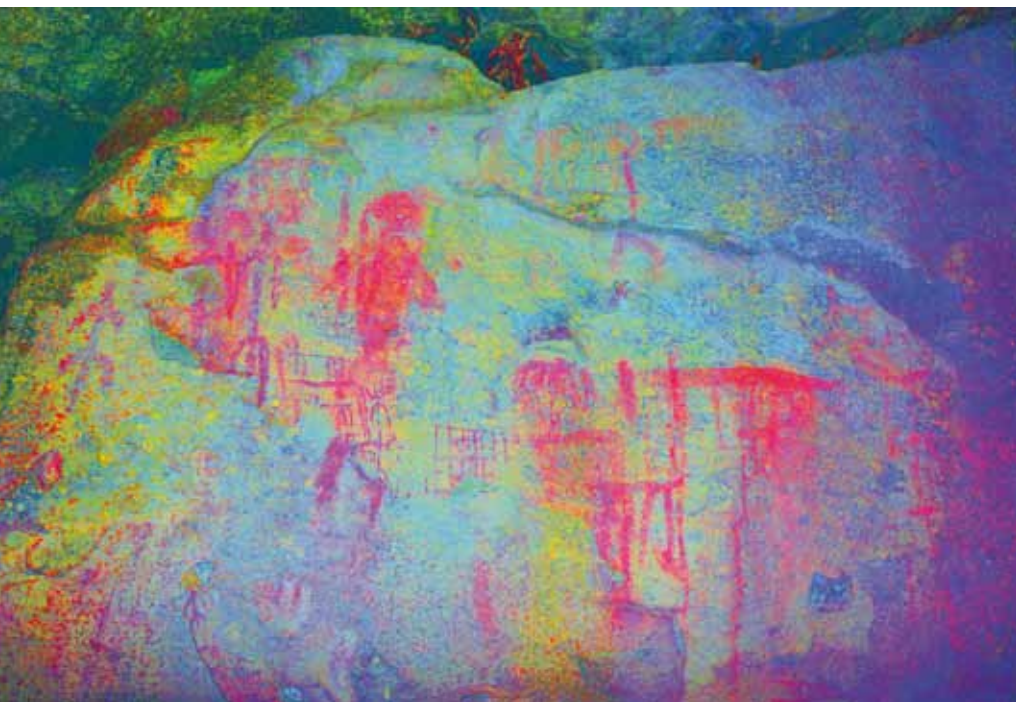
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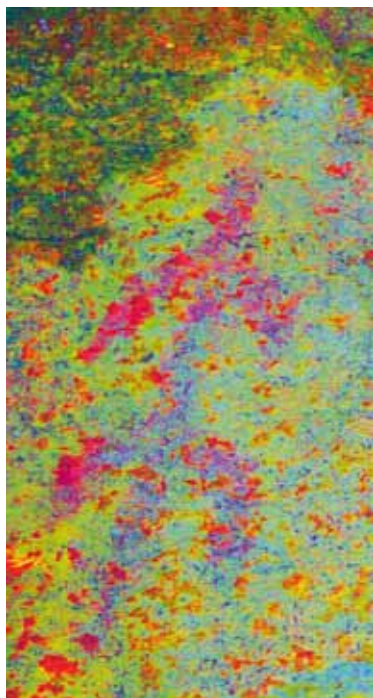


(J. Latova)

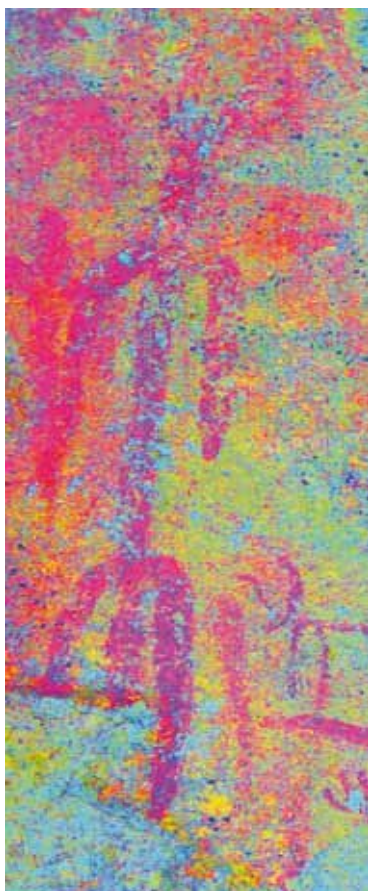
Various figures and symbols can be seen in this sector, including some partial remains. Different hypotheses exist trying to explain what they represented. Some figures in this sector override others. This latter circumstance indicates that the authors did not care much about outdated information, giving the paintings a functional rather than an artistic use.

Sector 2: Left Side

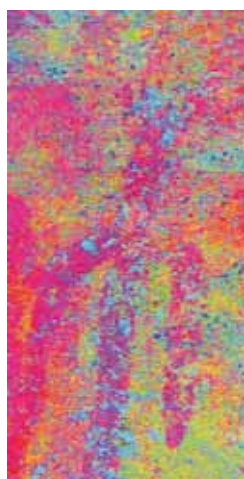
Possibly an animal (4) represented in aerial way, with a tail much longer than its legs. To its right, an anthropomorphic naked figure (5a) with a number of feathers on its head (5b) –or perhaps a way to represent hair (close attention must be paid to effectively appreciate these details as the painting is partially damaged). On top of its head, to the left, a schematized sun (6).



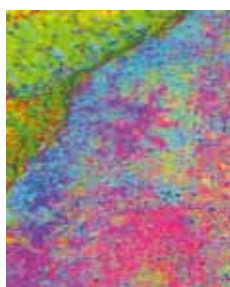
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5a



5b

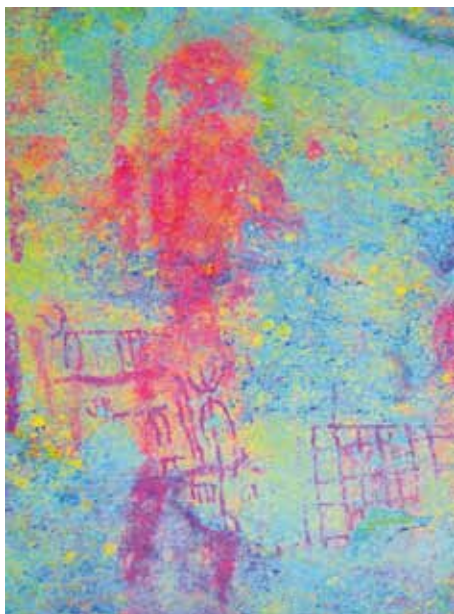


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Central Area of Sector 2

Confusing scenes and figures mix in this area. There is one barely visible big anthropomorphic figure, notably bigger than any of the others (7). Overriding it, a number of more recent shapes. Some are simply vertical and parallel strokes while another group in the lower area appears to belong to a common group, judging by its technique and proportions. At least two animals, probably goats, can be recognised as well as a very schematized human figure (8) with a feather headdress or similar. This figure appears to be scenically related to the goats, perhaps representing the shepherd with his herd. To its right, a figure composed of horizontal strokes that cut through some vertical ones (9), which is known in archaeology as ‘tectiform’ and is commonplace in prehistoric art. Some have interpreted these as blocks of houses. To the left of all the previously referred figures, as it has already been explained, a large anthropomorphic figure stands, leading some to speculate that the scene could be representing the shepherd with his herd and house.



7



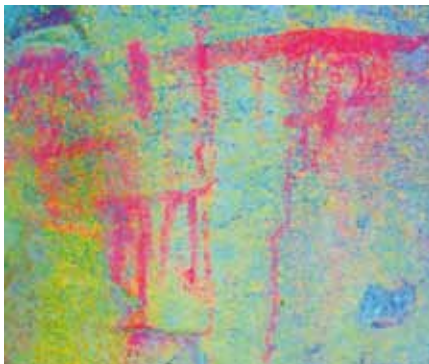
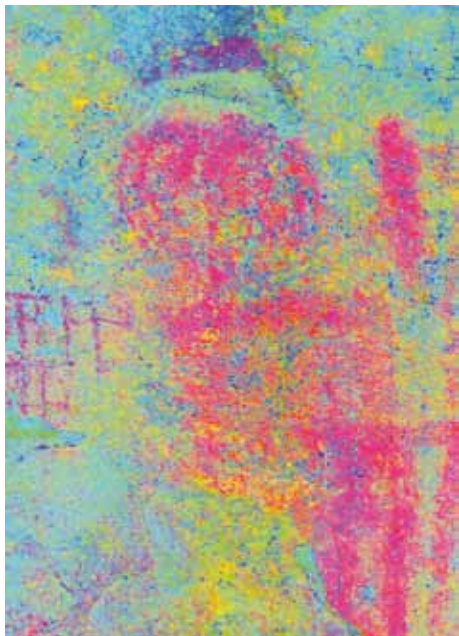
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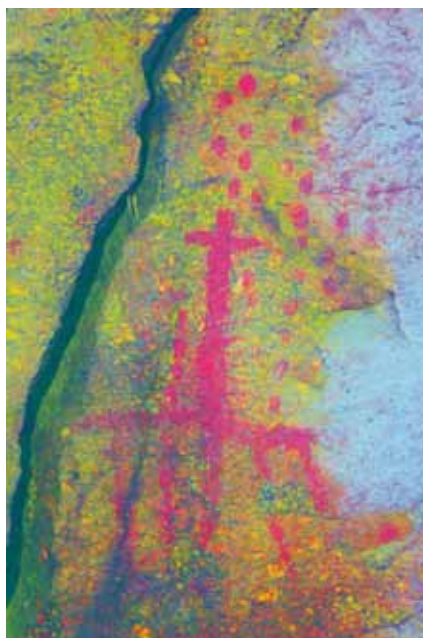
Sector 2: Right Side

Difficult-to-identify drawings. Only the one to the far left could be recognized, similar to previously known figures, as a man-like scheme, whose upper body is covered with some sort of a composite dress.



■ Intersection between Boards 1 and 2

Composed of two elements: on one side, an anthropomorphic figure with short arms near its head and a skirt; on the other, several dots made by fingers are spread around it, it can be speculated that they formed one single scene.



(J. Latova)





Representation of the paintings at Peña Escrita/Las Zorreras.



Artistic recreation of Peña Escrita/Las Zorreras (Drawing by José Muñoz Domínguez)



LOS HERMANITOS DE TEJEA/EL PRAO DE LA CARRERA

Shepherds' Refuge
and Symbolic Place in the Heart of the Mountains



A visit to the Hermanitos of Tejea can be an excursion by itself in its own right, planned as a full day trip in order to better appreciate it. Lush and wild forest, impressive granite mountains landscapes and remains of ancient human presence induce one to reflect on how our ancestors organised their lives in such remote environments.

Visit conditions

Vehicles can be parked at the entrance of the castro. From there, about 4 km (2.5 miles) of track until it finishes. After that point, a well signalled trail leads to the gorge of Alardos (600 m / 0.4 miles). Once one bridge has been crossed, another one -less well signalled- leads to the Hermanitos de Tejea by bordering the mountainside for about 3.3 km (2 miles), all of them uphill. It is convenient to bring someone along that knows the way, as it is not unusual to get lost. A perfect excursion for spring and summertime, although in the hottest months it is advisable to depart at dawn. It is advisable to bring water, food and appropriate footwear.

WHAT CAN BE SEEN

Stunningly beautiful landscapes in all directions and sights all year round –although even more during springtime-, presence of torrents, waterfalls and springs, the smell of natural oregano, thyme and rockroses are additional reasons to do this excursion. All of it, in addition to history, creates a perfect mix. Do not forget to leave the need to hurry behind.

Los Hermanitos de Tejea in the winter, halfway up the mountain.

The Hermanitos de Tejea are two huge rocky outcrops that climb along the abrupt mountainside and become the visual reference from any direction.



Its prominence in the landscape has certainly been a very important to the peoples of this area throughout history, from antiquity to our days. Preceding the two main outcrops, there exist two horizontal platforms. One of them, called Prao de la Carrera –the southernmost one- has served as basecamp for shepherds of all times. A stone enclosure of 30,000 sq m (7.4 acres) –although already collapsed- is testimony to it. This enclosure seems to have originated in prehistoric times. It does not constitute a set of ramparts but instead, a wall high enough to shelter the herds and keep them safe from wolves and bears, which not that long ago were part of the local fauna. The presence of abundant water assures and replenishes life during the hot seasons.

From prehistory until some decades ago, this place was one of the many points used every year by shepherds that moved their herds from south to north and vice versa in search for seasonal pastures and to avoid the parasites that are common in lower lands.

HOW SHEPHERDS USED THE REFUGE IN PREHISTORIC TIMES

Although it is not currently known when shepherds started to use the Prao de la Carrera/Los Hermanitos de Tejea, it is known that there was human presence at least as far back as sometime from 2,200 to 1,700 BC. In the first centuries of that period, the planet suffered a grave climatic crisis in which draught and aridity reached extreme levels. This fact is known from studies of pollen –a material that does not degrade for thousands of years- found in archaeological sites all over the world. Dramatic increases of aridity shifted many from farming to animal husbandry as a more efficient source of livelihood. Settlements located next to the farming fields were abandoned as the Bronze Age started. This economic shift influenced many cultural and social changes as well.

Animal husbandry was by far the new predominant activity. Finding pastures to feed the herds became a goal of every human community. As a result, higher places with colder climate and more abundant sources of water were increasingly populated. Rocky outcrops were places of great symbolic importance for reasons that still remain unknown to researchers. Los Hermanitos de Tejea are examples of this phenomenon. There exist several more similar examples in the province of Ávila, north of the Gredos Mountains.



Cone-shaped
promontory of
Los Hermanitos
de Tejea further
to the south.

Travelers visiting Los Hermanitos de Tejea should keep in mind that they will not find any archaeological remains, but only some hints of what it represented in ancient times. It will be an exercise of both imagination and learning, as reading on the subject beforehand will greatly improve the visit.



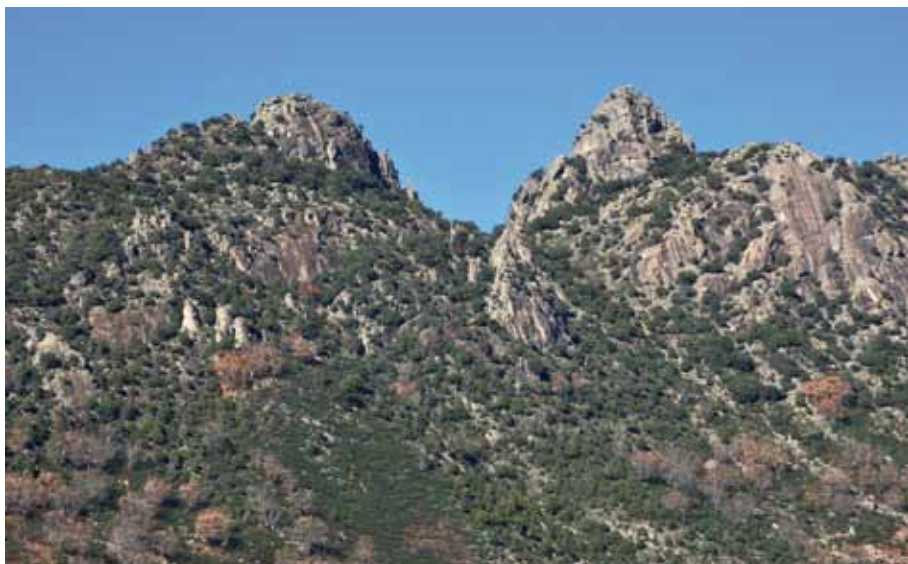
Archaeological research performed at El Prao de la Carrera suggests that the density of population in the area was higher than it may seem at first sight, as not only shepherding activities were carried out, but also agricultural ones, such as grain growing. This findings also indicate that resource were very scarce, and all possible means of subsistence had to be exploited in order to secure survival.

El Prao de la Carrera on the west slope of Los Hermanitos de Tejea.



THE REFUGE IN MODERN TIMES

Only a few decades ago, local shepherds were still occupying Los Hermanitos de Tejea during the hot months of the year, to come back to lower lands in early autumn, when new pastures started to appear. They lived in rudimentary huts, practicing a lifestyle that did not differ much from that of their prehistoric ancestors. From recent times, some traces of activity can still be found such as the cobbled roads that they used, along with their families and animals.



A view of Los Hermanitos de Tejea from the east.

Hopefully, you will be able to spot an ibex in your trip to Gredos. Binoculars and cameras should absolutely be brought along.



Ibexes in the proximities of Los Hermanitos de Tejea.



MORE THINGS TO DO

Some complementary activities that can be done in the area can greatly improve your visit. In the El Raso area you can also find:

- ❑ Bars and restaurants where local cuisine may be sampled.
- ❑ An ample selection of lodging of all styles in order to fully experience this land by staying longer than single day.
- ❑ Museums such as the Tin Toy Museum, the Ethnological Museum –containing also archaeological remains- and the House-Museum of the Bees in the outskirts of Candeleda (village of Poyales del Hoyo), excellent to know more about this insects. Also, interpretation centers such as the Pimentón (a renowned, local kind of paprika).
- ❑ A golf course, if this is one of your favourite sports.
- ❑ Equestrian centres, from where one may organize excursions on horseback.
- ❑ If you are coming in summertime, natural swimming pools with fresh and extremely clean water from the gorges of Gredos.
- ❑ An extensive network of mountain roads and trails, with varying levels of difficulty.
Great paragliding opportunities.
- ❑ Candeleda is an attractive place on its own merits. Its houses and atmosphere are worth a visit, as well as its church, declared Heritage of Cultural Interest.

Further updated information is available at the Council of Candeleda website:

www.ayuntamientocandeleda.es

























Notes









