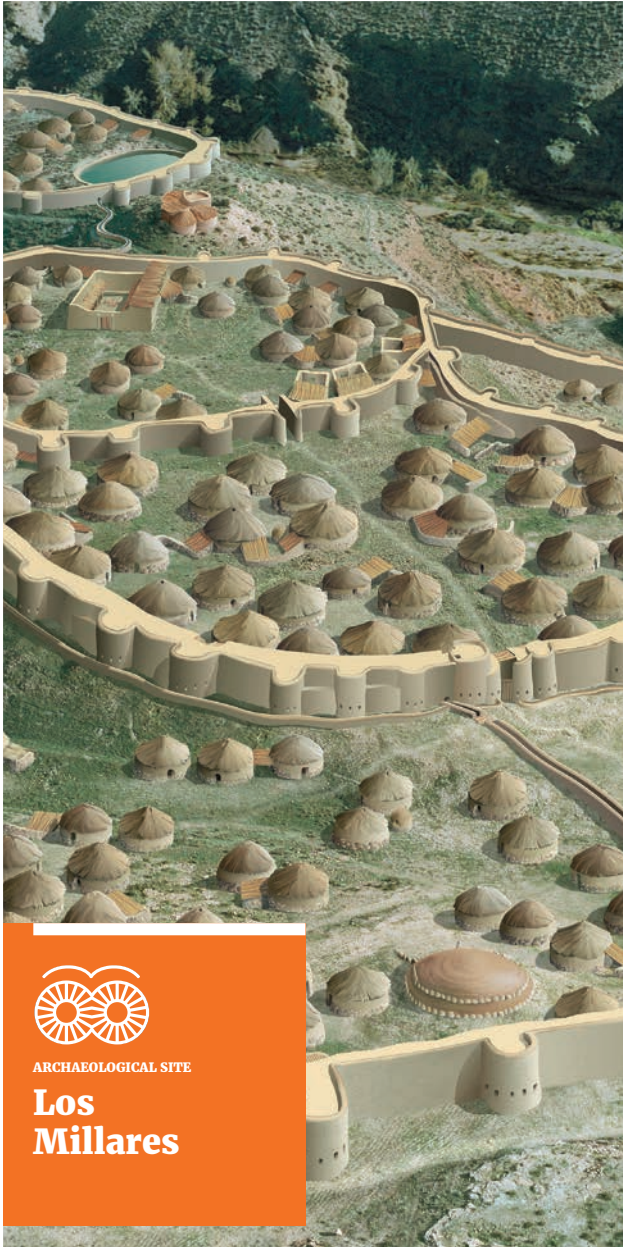


Archaeological and Monumental Sites of Andalusia



ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE
Los Millares

↑ Idealised reconstruction of the Los Millares Settlement.

drawing: M. Salvatierra

HISTORY

The **Los Millares Archaeological Site**, located in the municipality of Santa Fe de Mondújar (Almería), is considered one of the most important Copper Age European settlements, for both its monumentality and its architectonic complexity and extension exceeding 150 acres. The origin of the prehistoric settlement dates back to 3200 B.C. and ends in 2200 B.C.

It is located on a spur-shaped plateau formed by the Andarax River and the Huéchar Ravine where its megalithic necropolis occupies about 13 acres, formed by more than 80 collective burials, and the settlements with four wall lines that close the plateau. The site is completed by 13 forts installed on a nearby mountain range such as the Huéchar Ravine and the Galera Hill.

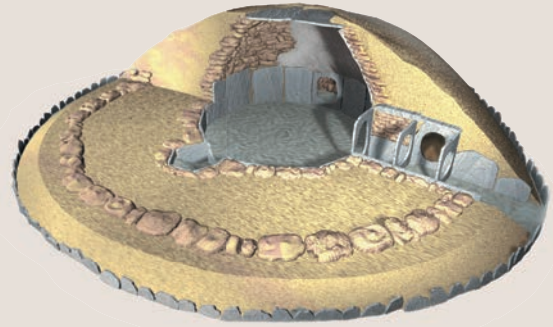


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◀ Idealised reconstruction of the main door or barbican entry to the exterior wall of the settlement.

13 ACRES OF NECROPOLIS



↑ Isometric elevation of one of the tholos of the site.

The necropolis of Los Millares is made up of some 80 tombs, distributed in small groups, of large dimensions and diverse structures of a ceremonial nature.

It involves collective tombs, the majority made up around a circular chamber of about 3 to 6 metres in diameter and covered with a plinth of vertical slate slabs, sometimes decorated with red pigment that is completed, occasionally, with diverse lateral niches. The roof is made either by gradually bringing the rows closer together inwards forming a false vaults, or with a flat horizontal wooden closure supported on a central pillar. The chamber is accessed through a corridor that sometimes has lateral niches. In the exterior entry, in the entrance to the chamber and between each section, it has slate slabs perforated in their centre that function as doors. The site is covered with a dirt mound and rocks.

A maximum of 100 individuals are buried in each tomb and the niches were used for the burial of children. As the chamber and niches were occupied, the corpses were placed along the corridor.

The status of the buried individuals was reflected in the funeral goods. They include objects made with exotic raw materials (ivory or ostrich egg shell), copper tools, ceramic pots with symbolic or bell-shaped decorations and arrowheads and flint daggers.



↑ Grave goods of tomb 15.

ADDRESS AND CONTACT

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FREE ADMISSION

SEE AND UNDERSTAND LOS MILLARES

1 Area of interpretation

The tour begins visiting this area taking the first path on the left, where a part of the necropolis is recreated, the walls of the town with its towers and bastions and various prehistoric cabins, where their belongings and ways of life have been reproduced. Furthermore, a recreation of one of the Peninsula's oldest metalworking workshops is visited.

2 Necropolis

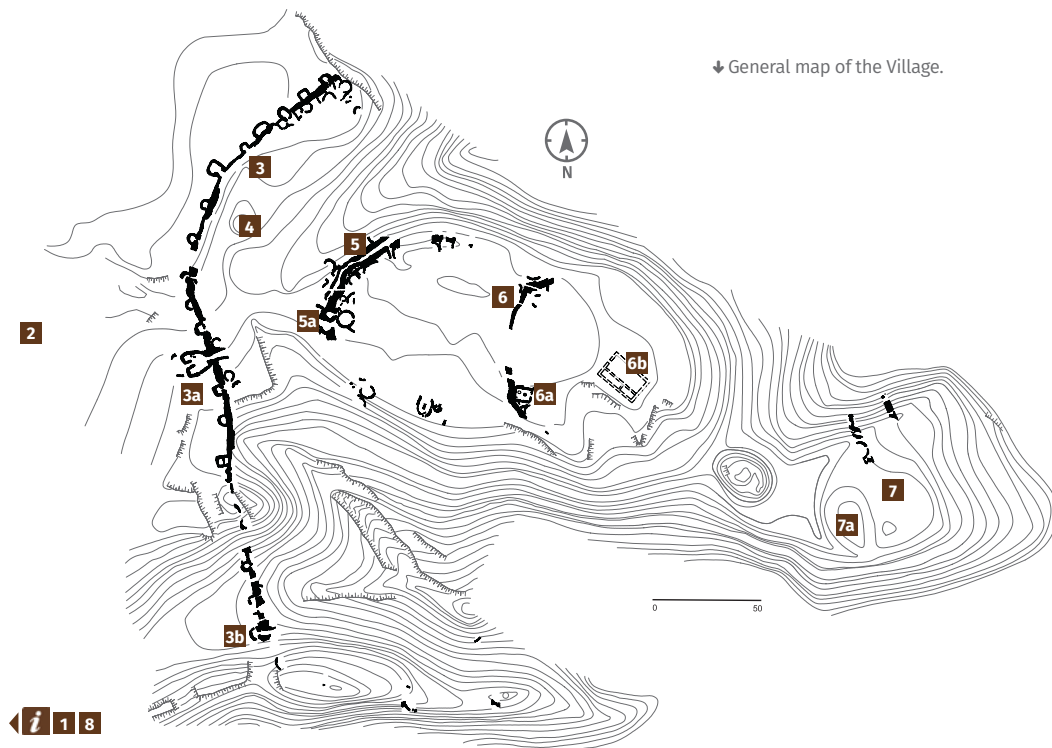
Returning to the starting point a path appears that leads through the necropolis, with the possibility of visiting various groups of tombs. In these collective tombs family members are buried with their funeral goods (symbolic and bell-shaped pottery, stone axes, knives, flint arrowheads and exotic elements such as ostrich eggs, ivory, idols made of ivory or bone). The majority correspond to *tholoi* type tombs made up by a circular central chamber and an entrance corridor, compartmentalised by perforated rings and oriented towards the sunrise. Said chamber is covered by a false dome roof constructed by a false vault. Its interior is coated with slabs of rocks (*schicht*s) in the form of a socket, with some red pigment appearing. These tombs are covered with dirt, forming a small tumulus surrounded by numerous concentric stone rings.

3 Wall I

It corresponds to the Copper Age (3000 B.C.) coinciding with the settlement's greatest expansion. On it is an alternating system of towers and bastions, flanked by a moat dug in the rock, over 400 m long and in which two doors open: the **main door 3a** or Barbican and the **South door 3b**. The information boards also offer the possibility of observing a virtual reconstruction of said wall by downloading the application *Millares Virtual*.



↑ Main door of Wall I.



↓ General map of the Village.



4 Tomb I

Following the route the tomb reconstructed by Professor Arribas in the 1950s can be seen. Continuing the route towards the north, an excavated area belonging to the interior of the settlement and one of the most emblematic landscapes of the place appear, from where you can see the Andarax River.

5 Wall II

From here we continue towards Wall II, formed by a very wide wall and diverse reinforcements that close a more internal perimeter of the plateau. It has an access in the central part, formed by a corridor protected by two towers on the sides **5a**. Inside the walled area are large cabins, homes defined by mud rings and other circular structures interpreted as ovens.



↑ Circular chamber of Tomb I.

6 Wall III

The plateau is closed forming a space on which is located one of the most outstanding places such as the **metalworking workshop 6a** with a square floor with a furnace dug in the ground with mud rings and a grave where elements of smelting slag appeared and an area paved with drops of copper mineral. On the highest area appears a building with a square floor, interpreted as a palace-store room or a temple **6b**.



↑ Metalworking workshop.

7 Citadel

The most interior walled area corresponds to the citadel, during its excavation new overlapping homes appeared, with a very long occupation period, from beginning to end. It is a largely unstudied area, although the data available confirm the presence of a peripheral wall around the whole area by way of the citadel that houses large circular cabins and the remains of a large cistern **7a** dug in the foundation that is seen at first glance.

8 Forts



↑ Aerial view of Fort I.

The Site is surrounded by 13 forts located in the nearby mountains, each one with a unique structure. The Fort 1 has a complex structure with a two lines of circular walls around which 6 towers and bastions open to the exterior, as well as double concentric line of moats that surround said walls. This is interpreted as a place with strategic or military functions, or for visually inspecting the nearby natural passages. In its interior it houses an area of mills and storage pots and a small cistern between both lines of the wall. Furthermore the presence of an arrowhead carving workshop and numerous anthropomorphic bone and stone idols, poses the hypothesis that it involves a site related to learning and symbolic activities and rituals from different members of the settlement.