



▲ Tools of the
Cueva del Cochino



▲ Silex tool found at
the *Cueva Grande
de la Huesa Tacaña*



▲ Vessel with cardium
decoration at the
sandy area El Arenal
de la Virgen



▲ Grave goods found
at the rock called
Peñón de la Zorra
2.200 B.C.

50.000 YEARS AGO

The most ancient archaeological remains registered in Villena, belong to the MID-PALAEOLITHIC PERIOD. Such remains include spikes, scrapers, scratchers, chisels, punches, denticulate tools, etc. all of them engraved in silex. They were the typical working tools of the mousterian nomads living at the cave known as *Cueva del Cochino* and date from 50.000 years ago.

10.000 YEARS AGO

Later on, during the Upper-Palaeolithic Period, the size of these elements is reduced due to a better exploitation of raw materials and more specialised work; as observed at the cave *Cueva Grande de la Huesa Tacaña*.

V MILLENNIUM B.C.

There were developed the first agricultural and cattle ranching communities at the Valencian Area, starting thus the NEOLITHIC period and its pottery works. At the beginning, caves are chosen as the common habitat -*Cueva del Lagrimal*- but they would coexist in more advanced periods, with flat settlements such as the sandy area of *Arenal de la Virgen*, the *Macolla* or the *Casa de Lara*.

DURING THE III MILLENNIUM B.C.

Coinciding with the ENEOLITHIC OR CHALCOLITHIC PERIOD there arise the first metallurgic societies. There exist enough evidence in Villena to prove that the multiple burial phenomenon at caves happened at this inner zone as well; as proved by the human remains found at the cave *Cueva de las Lechuzas* or the *Cuevas del Alto*.



The building housing the ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM OF VILLENA, has a vast history. It was built sometime around the year 1520 to become the Abbey House of the Santiago Church. It is one of the most remarkable and fascinating Renaissance palaces at the Valencian Community. Its wonderful front part, decorated with sculptures and embossed decorations, was probably created by the Italian artist Giacomo Florentino. In 1576, the Town Council bought this building and ever since, it has housed the Town Hall. The Museum opened in 1957 and its main purpose was to exhibit the archaeological collections and Treasures of Villena, discovered by José María Soler. As time went by and thanks to the support provided by modern research, findings have increased up to form the current complete material sample, which clearly evidences the vast and rich local settlement that there existed.

FIND US

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OPENING TIMES

Open: Tuesday to Sunday from 10 a.m. to 14 p.m.
(except public holidays)

Closed: All Mondays (except the day before public holidays)
1st and 6th of January and 25th of December

VISITING CONDITIONS

- Standard tickets 2€ / reduced (see prices)
- Guided tours for groups must book.
- Access for people with reduced mobility.
- Information in Spanish, Valencian, English, French, German, Russian, Chinese and Dutch.

Our activities are announced in advance. If you are interested, please give your details to the staff of the museum or sign in at our news bulletin available at the webpage.



M.A. AYUNTAMIENTO DE
VILLENA
CONCEJALÍA DE
JUVENTUD

VILLENA
FORTALEZA MEDITERRANEA



JOSÉ M. SOLER ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM OF VILLENA

DISCOVER ALL THE TREASURES

VILLENA

TURISMO



▲ Ivory comb

BRONZE AGE

There is an intensification of the settlement, as revealed by the high number of archaeological sites found –more than twenty-, which belong to uneven chronologies of the II millennium B.C. During this period, there arises in Villena a powerful cultural movement focused in the exceptional archaeological site of the *Cabezo Redondo*, which pottery is associated to forms of the *El Argar* Culture (at the peninsular southeast). The mills, sickle teeth, axes and adzes, etc. prove that the agriculture, the ranching and the hunting had a remarkable effect upon economy. The metallurgic activity witnessed the emergence of foundry moulds, crucibles, anvils and a great number of objects made of copper, bronze, gold and silver.

LITTLE TREASURE OF “TESORILLO DEL CABEZO REDONDO”

In April 1963, a group of stonemasons found at the *Cabezo Redondo* area a pack of 35 little golden pieces that they donated to the Museum. It is the so-called *Tesorillo del Cabezo Redondo*, dated from the year 1.000 B.C. and made of a headband, hairsprings, rings, earrings or pendants, ribbons, beads and an ingot.

▼ Tesorillo del Cabezo Redondo



▲ Treasure of Villena

THE TREASURE OF VILLENA

In December of the very same year, a gold bracelet of half a kilo was found at a sandy area of Villena, where some works were held. Once J.M. Soler heard the news, he carried out some excavations in the *Rambla del Panadero*, the area where the previous findings appeared, and found a vessel buried in a hole containing in its inside the wonderful TREASURE OF VILLENA, made up of sixty gold pieces -including bowls, bracelets, bottles and several pieces decorating a sceptre-, three silver bottles, an iron bracelet and two mixt ones, a crowning iron part with gold ornaments and a gold and amber button. A collection of more than nine kilos of gold pieces hidden more than 3.000 years ago.

THE IBERIAN CULTURE

THE IBERIAN CULTURE is magnificently represented at the Museum. At the glass cabinets of the museum there can be admired the materials found at the settlement and necropolis of *El Puntal de Salinas*, which is probably one of the most important archaeological sites of the Alto Vinalopó region. The Iberian sculpture, which also represents a unique discovery, encompasses the ladies *Dama de Caudete* and the *Cabeza de Leona* of *El Zaricejo*, both belonging to the IV century B.C.

THE ROMAN CULTURE

The Roman materials were found at superficial discoveries and they account for an intense process of Romanization. The known villas provide an important sample of terra *sigillata*, fine pottery, common pottery, amphorae, coins and building elements -columns-.



▲ Roman coin made of Maguencio bronze, IV century.



▲ Islamic Pottery of Salvatierra

MIDDLE AGE

The MEDIEVAL AGE attains great resonance in Villena, as suggested by the written texts of this period and the preserved archaeological remains of the SALVATIERRA CASTLE, from the XI to the XIV centuries, which has engraved stone structures along with some others of medieval masonry. The performed excavations have successfully found several elements such as: Islamic pottery of all type and decorations -dry partial and total cords, sgraffito, painted, etc...-, glass and metals-, along with a few remains of the Christian period (XIII and XIV centuries). Towards the close of the XII, during the Almohad period, the ATALAYA CASTLE was thought to be built; another emblematic fortress of the town, which became the grand townhouse of the Marquisate of Villena from the mid XIII century onwards. The exposed pieces belong to the Islamic period -stamped, glazed and sgraffito pottery- and to the Christian age -manganese green, golden crockery, etc.-.

THE MODERN TOWN

The progressive development of the MODERN CITY is observable through the daily-life objects that have appeared all throughout the different urban works. Oil lamps, jars, bowls, glasses and coins round off the historical visit, offering guests the finishing touch of the Archaeological Museum of Villena.



▲ Clock of the “Orejón” type