

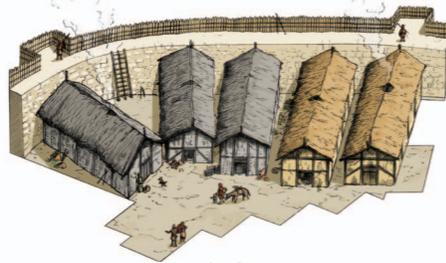
## URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Las Eretas site is in fact a series of superimposed villages, that is, built on the ruins of previous ones. The houses of the first settlement were erected after the stone rampart and the cobbled street (Phase 1, 7<sup>th</sup> century BC). They had a rectangular floor plan and a hearth in the centre. The frame of the houses was very fragile and made of small ash posts aligned and anchored in the ground, and a framework of sticks covered in mud. It is believed that they had pitched roofs because there was a space between the houses, which would provide access to the rampart. We know that this original settlement was burnt down, but whether it was intentionally or not remains unknown.

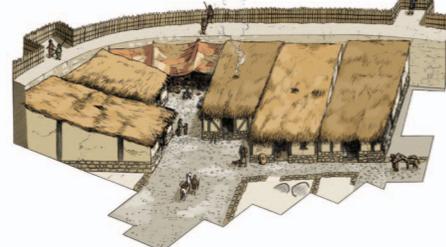
The original peasants built a second village (Phase 2) on the ashes of the former. The design of the houses was more compact and sturdy. They shared a dividing load bearing wall with a stone base. They had adobe or rammed earth walls. The roof was made of wood, straw and soil; it was single pitched and sloped from the rampart towards the street. It was divided into three sections by two sleepers that rested on the load bearing walls and a couple of central posts. These posts have left distinctive marks on the floor. Life in this second settlement remained unaltered throughout the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries BC. The western sector of the village was redesigned (Phase 3), possibly as a result of a partial fire. The layout of the houses was rearranged creating a, probably communal, bakery by the rampart. Two furnaces and a hearth have been found, along with rows of shelving for grinding the cereals and preparing the bread.

Research shows that between the 4<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries BC the village outgrew the rampart, which was demolished to allow the westward expansion of the village. The streets paved with stone slabs belong to the third village (Phase 3). The layout of the streets is unknown because the remains of the upper archaeological levels were badly preserved.

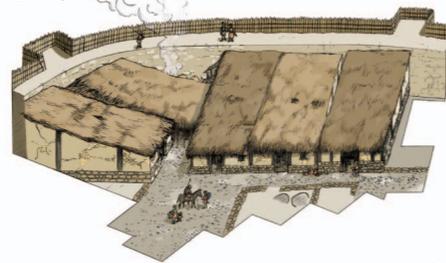
### PHASE 1



### PHASE 2



### PHASE 3



### LAS ERETAS BECOMES ROMANIZED

This settlement remained inhabited until the 1st century BC. We know this because a level of destruction discovered can be traced back to the beginning of that century, as it might be related to the so-called Sertorian wars. Not long after that conflict, a new village or "vicus" was built in Berbinzana. It was located a little further north from the first settlement. Abundant archaeological evidence has been found there. One of the most significant ones is from the reign of the Emperor Constantine (4<sup>th</sup> century AD): a mile marker or milepost from the Roman road that goes, through the Arga valley, from the town of Gracurris (Alfaro) to Andelo (Andi n, Mendigorri a) and Pompelo (Pamplona).



1 Visit to the museum. 2 View of the main room. 3 Model of the houses of the village El Castillar de Mendavia. 4 Ceramic vessel with carbon dust. 5 Recreation of the fortification. 6 Site excavation. 7 School visit. 8 Kamishibai performance for a group of schoolchildren.



# LAS ERETAS

## MUSEUM AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE



# LAS ERETAS MUSEUM AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE

## THE IRON AGE

At the end of the Bronze Age (1000 BC) and particularly during the Iron Age (from 750 BC), a new model of social organization was established in the Ebro valley. It came from Central Europe and was known as the Urnfield culture. Its main cultural contributions were three: the establishment of human communities in villages with grouped houses, the introduction of a cereal-based economy, and the adoption of cremation as a funeral rite. In the early stages, there were small autonomous villages, but with the emergence of aristocracy the territory was organized into city-states. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC, the city-states minted its own currency bearing its name and even signed hospitality pacts.



## A FORTIFIED LANDSCAPE: SETTLEMENTS AND HILL FORTS

The new model of settlement and its associated necropolis was first established in the southern area of Navarre known as La Ribera. It soon spread to the rest of Navarre except for the Pyrenees area, which was inhabited by nomadic shepherds who exploited the upland pastures. The settlements on the plains and the hill fort settlements (located in hills, crags, summits, and rocky overhangs) share a common feature: they are protected by strong structures such as ramparts, bastions, towers and moats.



The nuclear family represented the social basis of these communities which were ruled by a patriarch or chief. It is believed that initially they had collective production systems. Those systems were abandoned over time due to the emergence of an aristocratic warrior class who built their wealth by taking control of the productive resources and the trade. The vast majority of the population farmed the land and produced grain. Their staple foods consisted of bread and beer made of wheat and barley, supplemented with legumes and vegetables. Another major sector of the economy was beef and dairy farming, especially in the hill forts of the mountain areas. Pottery was the main artisanal activity, and in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC the pottery

The rampart was the most important feature of the fortification. In addition to its defensive and coercive function, it provided protection from the winds and it had a symbolic and identity nature serving as an expression of the political and territorial power. Inside the walls, the hamlet was well-planned following a geometric street plan with neighbourhoods of semi-detached dwellings. The houses had an elongated rectangular shape. They consisted of a hall, a central room which included the hearth, and a larder at the back. They had a stone foundation; the walls were made of painted adobe or rammed earth; and the roof was covered with branches and soil.

## A SOCIETY OF PEASANTS, SHEPHERDS AND ARTISANS



wheel started to be used for mass-producing pottery. Other important trades were iron and bronze metallurgy, woodworking and the textile industry.

## FUNERARY RITES AND CULTS

The Iron Age communities cremated the dead on funeral pyres. The ashes and grave goods were placed in urns accompanied by symbolic food offerings. In the necropolis around the settlements, the urns were buried beneath burial mounds. However, stillborns and young children (with baby teeth) were generally buried beneath the houses close to the warmth of the home. Fallen warriors received a special treatment: their bodies were exposed to open air and devoured by vultures. Vultures were considered sacred animals that transported the soul of the deceased to the afterlife. Additionally, the shepherds of the Pyrenees built stone circles called cromlech to bury the ashes of the dead. Little is known about the religious beliefs of the Iron Age because ideas have not left any archaeological evidence. It is known,



however, that the Celtic society, and particularly the Celtiberian one, showed profound religious feelings. Their places of worship were located far from the human settlements in mountains, woods, rivers, caves, etc.



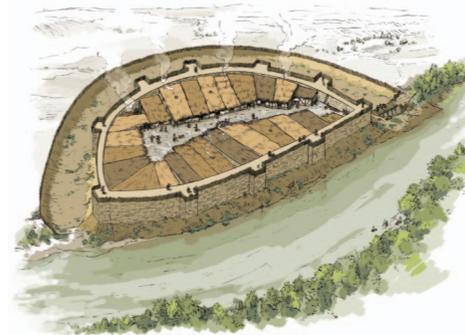
## THE ARRIVAL OF ROME

This area of the Ebro valley underwent an early process of Romanization (2<sup>nd</sup> century BC). Nevertheless, it must be said that up to the middle of the 1st century BC the indigenous population structure remained largely unchanged. The written records show that the present-day Navarre was occupied by the following ethnic groups who never constituted a political or state entity: Celtiberians, Berones, Varduli and Vascones. Based on the linguistic analysis of several inscriptions, we can infer that the languages spoken or known in that era were: Celtiberian (Celtic language), Iberian and Proto-Basque (both non-Indo-European languages of unknown origin), and Latin (after the contact with Rome). Celtiberian and Iberian used and adapted Iberian scripts to represent the spoken language. In the case of Proto-Basque, the use of Iberian scripts is questioned, but the names of people and gods show its existence.

## LAS ERETAS, A SETTLEMENT ON THE BANKS

### A FORTIFICATION BY THE ARGA RIVER

In the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC a group of peasants chose this location by the Arga River to establish their settlement and colonize the surrounding productive fields. They took advantage of the slope of the ground facing the river. The settlement was fortified with a strong rampart with turrets built in ashlar and dry rubble masonry. A moat was excavated around it. The stones must have been extracted from sandstone quarries located 1km away. We can conclude that the settlement was carefully planned and that the construction involved community work and an effective management.

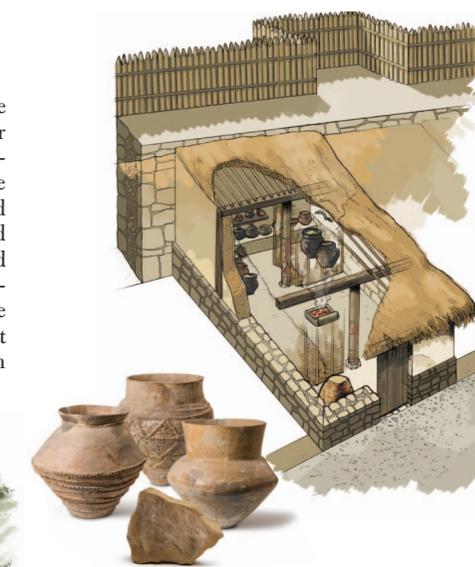


## URBAN PLANNING

The footprint of the settlement is unknown because, so far, only a small part has been excavated. According to similar archaeological sites, it is believed that it had a semicircular arrangement. The straight stretch would follow the section of the slope of land that descends towards the river. The gate of the citadel has not been discovered. The urban planning was organized around a central street and a small square paved with cobblestones and slabs.

## HOUSES AND HOUSEHOLD ITEMS

The houses follow the design of Celtic rectangular houses. They appear to be of similar size and wealth, which would indicate that there were no social disparities among the families. They have rammed earth floors and usually the following rooms: a hall that contained the oven, a main room with the hearth in the centre, and a pantry at the back of the house. The pantry has rammed earth benches by the walls painted in red and black, just as the plastered walls. The roof was made of tree trunks, branches, straw and soil. The two main roof beams were held up with a couple of posts affixed to the ground. Storage jars, pots, glasses and bowls made of ceramic were essential household items in every home



at that time. Other household items found include spindle whorls and knitting needles, bronze casting moulds, hand mills, personal ornaments, and food remains (cereals, oysters, and bones of domestic and wild animals).

## CHILD BURIALS AT HOME

The exact position of the necropolis, located outside the rampart, has not been discovered yet. Nevertheless, a total of six child burials were uncovered beneath the houses. They belong to unborn babies and newborns and it was a long established funeral rite during that time, before the establishment of Christianity. One of the most significant graves belongs to a baby of around three months of age. It is covered by a stone slab and it features a small ceramic glass with a food offering.

