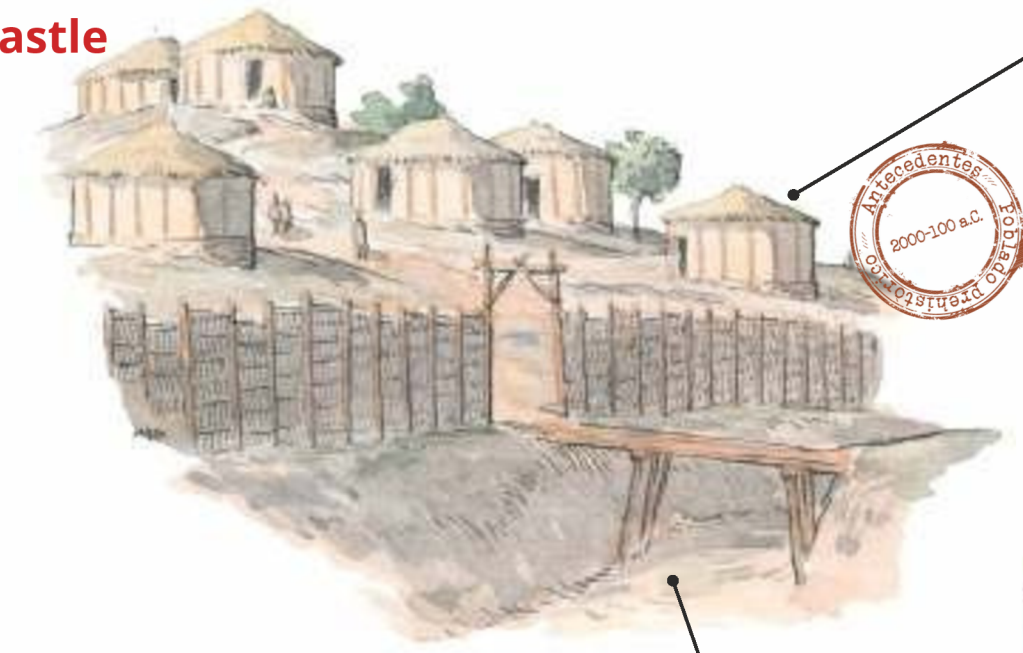




What are we looking at?
The north corner of the castle



What was it like?
The Chalcolithic settlement

The first human occupation of the hill dates back to the Chalcolithic (or Copper Age), in the first half of the second millennium BC. It was a settlement of huts surrounded by a moat.

Chalcolithic huts
The huts were circular in plan with a stone plinth. The walls and roof were made of branches and mud. The floor was partly dug out of the ground and covered with mats and skins to insulate it from damp. The whole family lived together in the same space.

The pantries
The holes carved in the ground, discovered during the excavation of the castle, served as the 'pantries' of the prehistoric settlement. These holes kept foodstuffs at a stable temperature and safe from predators. Once their original function was lost, they were repurposed as improvised rubbish dumps. Consequently, they often

contain a wealth of archaeological information about the diet and utensils used by the people who inhabited the settlement.



An exceptional find
A burial site with a set of bell beakers

The castle moat has also cut through a grave from the Chalcolithic period, within the settlement, where an individual was buried surrounded by several valuable ceramics. These include three 'bell beakers,' named for their bell-like shape. They are characteristically decorated with lime inlay, a design reserved for the lords of the community. Their presence



in the tomb indicates that the person buried there was one of these lords.

What was it like?
The village moat

The castle moat has cut through a pre-existing two-meter deep ditch that was likely the moat of the Chalcolithic settlement. These settlements were typically surrounded by a ditch and a wooden palisade for protection. Other very similar examples have been documented in the Madrid region itself.



What do we know?
From the Chalcolithic to the Iron Age: a multi-phase settlement

The Chalcolithic settlement was abandoned around 1500 BC. However, the site was reoccupied during the Bronze Age and the Iron Age (throughout the first millennium BC), as evidenced by pottery sherds distinct from those of the Chalcolithic period found at the site. Why did different groups of people return to settle here over time? Likely due to its excellent geographical position: situated on the northern slope of the Rejas stream, protected from the wind and facing the sun; overlooking the valley, water sources and the most fertile land; and close to the road leading to the ford of the Jarama and the natural corridor of the Henares Valley

