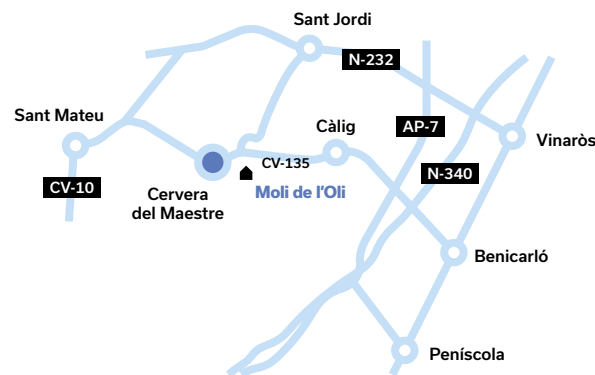
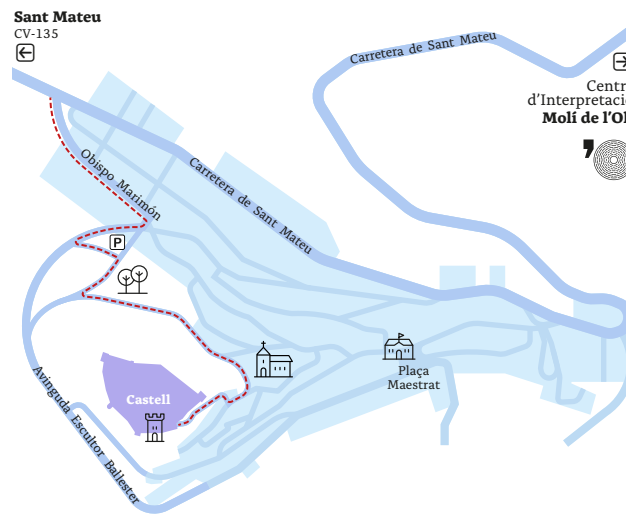


CENTURY

X	XII	XIII	XIV-XV	XVI-XVIII
Caliphal period	Almohad period	Order of Saint John of Jerusalem	Order of Montesa	Wars of the Modern Period

Modern era. The decadence

The decline begins in mid-16th century when a serious state of abandonment is documented. The loss of functionality and the consequences of different wars such as the Revolt of the Brotherhoods and the Reapers' War will be the cause of the progressive degradation of the castle structures. However, the definitive collapse will happen in the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714) because the castle and the village of Cervera supported Archduke Charles, the Austrian candidate. As a consequence of a hard repression of Bourbon Philip V, the victor, the fortress collapsed and the village was ruined. The castle will be occupied again during the Carlist War, with the placement of some artillery pieces to control the access to the village, although it will be a short and occasional occupation conditioned to the war.



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Ajuntament de
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THE CASTLE OF CERVERA DEL MAESTRE



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Ajuntament de Cervera del Maestre

Ancient era. The origin of the settlement

The fortress is located on top of the mountain that dominates a huge territory and controls the watercourse of Cervera that has been used from time immemorial as a communication route between the coast and the inland of Maestrat. Because of this exceptional strategic point that it represents, different civilizations have settled here along the centuries. Occupation remains from the Iron Age (2nd half of 7th century BC) and the Iberian period (2nd half of 6th century and beginning of 5th century BC) have been found in the different archaeological excavations. For this reason, the settlement begins in the protohistoric period, although it cannot be associated to any clearly defined structure.

Islamic period. The sense of the fortress

After a long period of abandon (because there are not remains from the Roman Age), the place is inhabited again in the beginning of the Middle Age, in the 10th century AC, during the invasion of the Islamic troops. It will be in this moment when the structures of the primitive fortress will be built. They will match with one of the "Hûsun" of the Caliphal era inside the system of castles of "Sharq Al-Andalus". However, most of the current walls are built in the 12th century during the Almohad period, when a great development of the military architecture happened in the fortified place. The construction of big defensive structures, such as the impressive North tower, the North wall and the barbican, show the need for fortification because of the imminent feudal conquest. During the conflict, Cervera joined the defensive line formed by the castles of Peñíscola, Xivert, Cervera and Morella, with an important reinforcement of the defensive structures due to the unstoppable advance of the Christian troops and increased by the fall of Tortosa in 1148. It



is in this moment when the first written references appeared, on year 1157, when earl Ramon Berenguer IV yielded the castle and its belongings to the Order of Knights of the Hospital of Saint John of Jerusalem to help him to conquer the castle. In this writing the castle is named "Frontier Cervera".

Christian military orders. The castle in his fullness

With the fall of Burriana and Peñíscola, the Muslims of Cervera surrender pacifically and the Order of Saint John takes possession of the fortress in 1233. It will be in this period when Cervera and its castle will live their maximum splendour, achieving the category of commendation and priory. The villages of Sant Mateu,

Xert, la Jana, Canet, Traiguera, Mas dels Estellers (current Sant Jordi), Càlig and Rossell were under control of the castle. Regarding to the fortress, the South wall, internal spaces and the accesses will suffer significant remodelling works. The castle and its possessions will pass to the Order of Montesa in 1319 and they will become the Bailiwick of Cervera, main centre of the Order in the Maestrat. In this place it will be placed the archive and residence of the Master and, from now on, during the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries, it will remain as the power headquarters of Montesa fulfilling the main political and administrative functions.