

Track 7. CHURCH OF LA SANGRE AND SURROUNDINGS.

We are at the Plaza de la Sangre. Facing the castle, we have the Church of la Sangre to the right. This is the original parish church situated at the feet of the castle. It is medieval, possibly built in the 13th or 14th centuries. An old cistern from the time of the Hispanomuslims was included in the construction and used as a crypt, reinforced by three pointed arches.

Based on the remains conserved, the primitive gothic church corresponds to the churches typical of the Christian Reconquista.

During the 17th century, baroque elements were added, giving it its present form. It consists of one nave, with the presbytery and elevated choir at the end. The side chapels are between buttresses and have barrel vaults, except the first one, where the Gospel is read, which is webbed.

Originally the name of the church was Santa María, but in 1612 the City Council gave the church to the Brotherhood of Christ of la Sangre (blood).

Henceforward the name was changed to “Church of la Sangre”, like its new owners. The main altarpiece dates from 1697.

The chapel of Saint Barbara is the most sumptuous and decorated. It is an original piece, painted on gilded wood. This altarpiece is interestingly decorated with broad fallen

leaves, fruit and heads of cherubs. The work was completed in 1702.

The remaining two altarpieces are less elaborate. One is of Saint Christopher, and the other is dedicated to the Dolorosa (the Mother of Sorrows), dated 1798.

Returning to the plaza where we started, one can say that it was the center, during the Middle Ages, of the three powers: the religious (the church), the civil (the City Hall) and the military (the castle). The remains of the original city hall are in the smallest house. We can also see the *pellieric*, a small hole carved into the rock, at the foot of the castle. It was used to administer justice. Those that had committed minor misdemeanors were left there to suffer public shame. There was also an oven where the women would take their bread to be baked. This is now within a private home, so we do not have access to it.

We can mention that in the summer, cultural events are held in this plaza.

You are invited to stroll through the “Quartijo”, a charming neighborhood that surrounds the church. This was the original nucleus of the town. It is a small neighborhood with closely-knit houses and narrow streets. It is protected by an interior wall, which separates it from the town proper.

This is the end of The Church of la Sangre and surroundings. You may proceed to point 8 QR, the Castle.