

TRACK 8. THE CASTLE.

We are at the Castle, which is situated on top of a hill that forms part of the Sierra de les Conteses, 390 meters above sea level.

We can say that the first news of the existence of Vilafamés was related to the reconquista by Jaime I, “The Conqueror”, in 1233. However, documented reference to “Vilahameç” found in the Chronicles of Jaime I indicate the existence of an “andalusí” town, and archeological remains found nearby and in the castle itself retract the occupation of the site to the time of the Iberians, and even back to the neolithic period, (third millennium before our time). In the *Abric del Castell* (castel refuge) there is an interesting group of simple, abstract rock paintings that relate the refuge with a cultural place.

The remains that we can now observe of the castle are from the Middle Ages, possibly the 14th century, when the town was annexed to the Order of Santa María de Montesa. This is when a great castle-palace was built, and squared blocks of slate (rodeno) used for the base of the construction. However, with time and different uses the castle had to undergo, there has been a series of considerable changes that have partially disguised the original structure. In the 19th century it was the stage of the Carlist Wars, during which it was adapted for the new techniques of waging war. It was then that the circular central tower was constructed, being one of the few examples of Carlist architecture in The

Valencian Community. Many of the walls still existing correspond to this period as well.

This is the end of the Castle. You can proceed to point 9 QR, the chapel of San Ramón Nonato.