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The Royal Monastery of San Victorián

Sobrarbe



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In the shelter of the mighty Peña Montañesa stands one of the most important monuments in the history of Aragon: The Royal Monastery of San Victorián.

Declared a Site of Cultural Interest and located in the municipality of El Pueyo de Araguás in the Sobrarbe region (Huesca), this monastery was for centuries the political, economic, cultural and spiritual centre of a vast territory protected by the kings and popes of the time.

It is a fortified complex made up of buildings from different periods: archaeological studies have brought to light remains of a possible early Christian origin and other pre-Romanesque ones that today can be visited together with the restored part of the complex (16th and 18th centuries): cemetery, church, sacristy, chapter house, archive, cloister, tower, fountains and squares.



Altarpieces (El Pueyo de Araguás)



The Choir stalls of the Monastery (Boltaña)



Legendary Origins...

The origins of a primitive monastery date at least as far back as the Visigoth age, as recently published documents from the 6th century confirm, placing its location within the Sobrarbe area. Supported by the Visigoth monarchy, it acted as a training centre for the various bishops of the then Tarraconencis Province. According to the hagiographical record of Saint Victorián or Beterián, he arrived in France as a young man, where he founded monasteries, shying away from the fame of holiness that he had acquired in his native Italy. He then crossed the Pyrenees fleeing from the harassment of Santa Maura and established his home in Espelunga, a rocky shelter on the slopes of the Peña Montañesa. There he lived until he was summoned as an abbot by the monks of the Monastery at Saint Martin of Asan.

While this holy life is documented to varying extents, there is absolute certainty of the intense economic, political, administrative, documentary, religious and cultural activity that, during medieval and modern times, was overseen by the Benedictine Monastery of San Victorián. For centuries it governed the affairs of a large territory and wielded great power and influence. In the midst of the Reconquest, the Aragonese monarchs had an ark with the Saint's relics carried out to the battlefield to ensure victory over their enemies.

Until the 20th century, this same ark was the centre piece of the pilgrimage to Fuensanta and of a rain summoning ritual in times of drought.



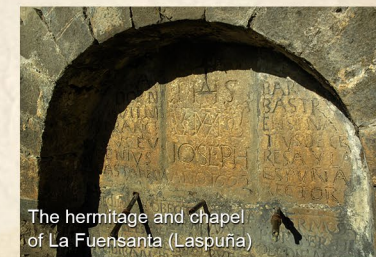
Following in the footsteps of Saint Victorian

Sobrarbe has many places that are related to the Monastery. Following in the footsteps of San Victorián we discover magnificent corners of the area full of history and charm:

- The Hermitage and Chapel of La Fuensanta (Laspuña)
- The Stone of San Victorián (Fosado), on the road to La Espelunga
- The rock-face hermitage of La Espelunga (Fosado)
- The Choir stalls of the Monastery (in the church of San Pedro, in Boltaña)
- The Hermitage and pilgrimage of San Victorián (Abizanda)
- Altarpieces from the side chapels of the Monastery (in the churches and hermitages of Oncins, Torrelisa, El Pueyo de Araguás, Araguás, Los Molinos, Latorrecilla and Guaso)



The rock-face hermitage of La Espelunga (Fosado)



The hermitage and chapel of La Fuensanta (Laspuña)



The hermitage and pilgrimage of San Victorián (Abizanda)