



Los Hitos

Arisgotas, Orgaz

ARCHAEOLOGICAL GUIDE

ISABEL M. SÁNCHEZ RAMOS
JORGE MORÍN DE PABLOS

THIS BOOK IS PART OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT 'LANDSCAPES AND ARCHITECTURE OF POWER IN THE TERRITORY OF THE ROYAL CENTRE OF TOLEDO', OF ORGAZ'S CITY HALL AND THE PROVINCIAL COUNCIL OF TOLEDO.

© THE AUTHORS OF THE TEXT OF THIS EDITION

TEXT: ISABEL M^ª SÁNCHEZ RAMOS & JORGE MORÍN DE PABLOS

TRADUCTOR: ADRIANA RODRÍGUEZ

MUNICIPAL COORDINATION: JOSÉ LUIS RUIZ DE LOS PAÑOS ANDRADE

DESIGN AND LAYOUT: ESPERANZA DE COIG-O'DONNELL

COLLABORATIVE TEAM: MIGUEL ÁNGEL DÍAZ MORENO, ÁNGELA CRESPO FRAGUAS, ELENA MARINAS DÍEZ & JOSÉ RAMÓN DE LA CAL

COVER IMAGE: UCO (FACULTY OF AGRONOMIST ENGINEERS, PHOTOGRAMMETRY DEPARTMENT)

3D: ESEIESA ARQUITECTOS

PHOTOGRAMMETRY: GOLBAL MEDIA

GRAPHICS: ALBERT ÁLVAREZ MARSAL

TRANSLATION TO ENGLISH: ADRIANA RODRÍGUEZ PARDO

EDIT:

como
(MODERN CULTURE)

ISBN: 978-84-16450-22-0

LEGAL DEPOSIT: M-42739-2016

THIS BOOK BENEFITTED FROM A EURIAS FELLOWSHIP AT THE PARIS INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCE STUDIES (FRANCE), CO-FUNDED BY MARIE SKŁODOWSKA-CURIE ACTIONS, UNDER THE EUROPEAN UNION'S 7TH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME FOR RESEARCH, AND FROM A FUNDING FROM THE FRENCH STATE MANAGED BY THE AGENCE NATIONALE DE LA RECHERCHE, PROGRAMME 'INVESTISSEMENTS D'AVENIR' (ANR-11-LAB-0027-01 LABEX RFIEA+).

NO PART OF THIS BOOK MAY BE REPRODUCED OR TRANSMITTED IN ANY FORM OR BY ANY MEANS, ELECTRONIC OR MECHANICAL, INCLUDING PHOTOCOPIES, RECORDINGS OR THROUGH ANY TYPE OF INFORMATION STORAGE WITHOUT PREVIOUS WRITTEN CONSENT OF THE AUTHORS.



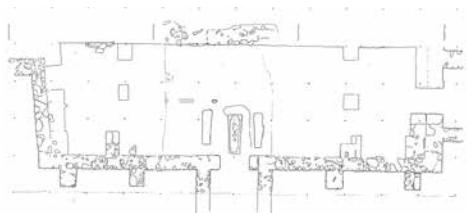
The discovery and the archaeological excavations



A team from the Art Treasure Board visits the site of Los Hitos in 1938. Photograph: F. Gallego Fernández.



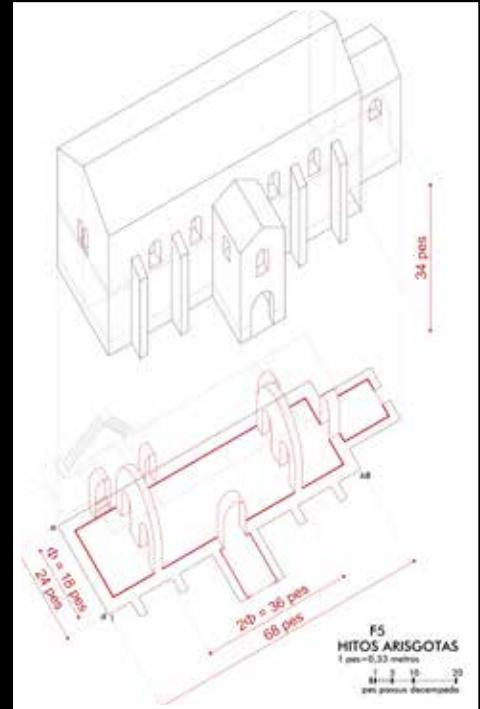
Photography of Luiz Balsameda's work.



Floor plan of Luis Balsameda's work.

The very own name of *Los Hitos* ("the Milestones") appeared due to the constant findings of statues and bricks made by the farmers with their ploughs since the 16th century. This caught the attention of scholars like Román de la Higuera. Some of the remains piled up throughout the years in the Northern area of the land, and others were used for the construction of the parish. The findings of statues piqued the neighbours' interest, as well as the interest of others who were intrigued by "antiquities" and who excavated everywhere in search of treasures. "Uncle Simón" is one of these people. In the 1930s he found a grave made of alabaster. Moreover, he used the two most significant scallop shells to decorate his burial place at the municipal graveyard. The neighbours transported archaeological pieces to the village to decorate the houses; these pieces can still be seen there nowadays. The creation of a small local museum which collected a great number of these remains was possible due to the work of the city hall.

It is because of this that Luis Balsameda Muncharaz decided to carry out a series of archaeological work seasons between 1975 and 1982. Thanks to Balsameda's work, the floor plan of a building was excavated, which shed light on the existence of several construction phases. According to the excavator, this building was a church with a transept that was used as a funerary space, with an alabaster grave in the centre, around which other several graves had been placed. The excavator insists on a hypothesis that should be corroborated with the excavation of the remaining site.



Los Hitos

An aristocratic Visigothic complex

Los Hitos (Arisgotas, Orgaz), two days away from Toledo, is situated in the foothills of the Yébenes' mountain range -an area known for its richness in big game hunting-, next to the road that connects *Toletum* and *Corduba*, two of the most important cities of the Iberian Peninsula at the end of the 7th century, through the port of Marjaliza. This location was perfect for an aristocratic residential complex. Some of the news of the literary sources of that time highlight the growing relevance of Córdoba -which had already been the birthplace of the Gothic royal lineage- as opposed to the decreasing importance of *Emerita*, which used to be a dynamic city. The king Égica found shelter in *Corduba*, when an usurper takes over Toledo (*L.V. IX 1 21 to 702*; cfr. *Cont. Hisp.* 62), and it was in that very same city where Rodrigo, king of the Goths, was elected by king Égica's "senate" (*Cont. Hisp.* 68). Both the complex of Arisgotas and Melque are located in key areas of the territorial organisation of Toledo.

In this regard it is important to point out the change of the toponym of the monastery *Deibense*, which evolved to 'Yébenes'. Julián de Toledo, in his biography of Ildefonso, states that this bishop founded *in Deibensi uillula* a monastery for virgins in a family-owned land. Ildefonso was a Goth of a noble lineage, related to *uir inluster* Fonsa (grandfather of the bishop?), subscriber of the 3rd Council of Toledo, and perhaps also related to the *comes Toleti* Froga, who could have been his father. The term '*uillula*' refers to the centre of a big economic territory, serving as a matter of fact as a synonym of a lordly villa, the same way that happens in other known cases of that time, like *Gérticos* or *Aquis*. In these examples there could not have been small villae, but rather large territories linked to the surroundings of the Visigothic court. Here it is important to highlight that Los Hitos presents a series of characteristics that could be linked to the spheres of power of the kingdom: a possible *palatium* that later acquired a funerary function (Los Hitos) which would be part of a monastery or an aristocratic residential complex. There is no doubt that we can interpret the excavated complex at Los Hitos as an evident proof of the influence of Toledo's elites over such an important part of a territory that held the road that communicated the *regias sedes Toletana* with *Corduba*.



The Palace

From residential pavilion to funerary pantheon

Thanks to several excavation seasons carried out between the years 1975 and 1982 and lead by Luis Balsameda, the remains of a building were discovered. This structure was built using masonry and bricks with buttresses. The building was divided into three areas, the biggest one being the central sector. Beneath a floor made of *opus signinum* there was a grave made of alabaster, surrounded by other graves with stone slabs. Thanks to the excavations of 2016, it is now known that the palace was the first structure to be built, most likely as a space of representation. It could have been a prestigious pavilion of some member of Toledo's high nobility that, just like in Naranco or what could have probably been found in Lena as well, may have had a religious centre, either a monastery or its own church. This would explain the presence of metrical inscriptions and the addition of a pagan altar kept in the parish of Arisgotas as a Font for holy water; the presence of *loculus* suggests its reuse as a side statue of a Christian altar.

The addition of buttresses to increase the parietal height of the building in order to construct a vault and an upper floor is significant, partly because of the parallels found in the architecture of palaces in Oviedo between the 6th and 9th centuries A.D. Finally, in the case of Los Hitos it has been possible to confirm the transformation of the primitive noble pavilion to a distinct and privileged pantheon, like the interior graves show. We can therefore establish a link between this unique building with the one in Melque, which is also a funerary structure with a distinct grave.





The Church

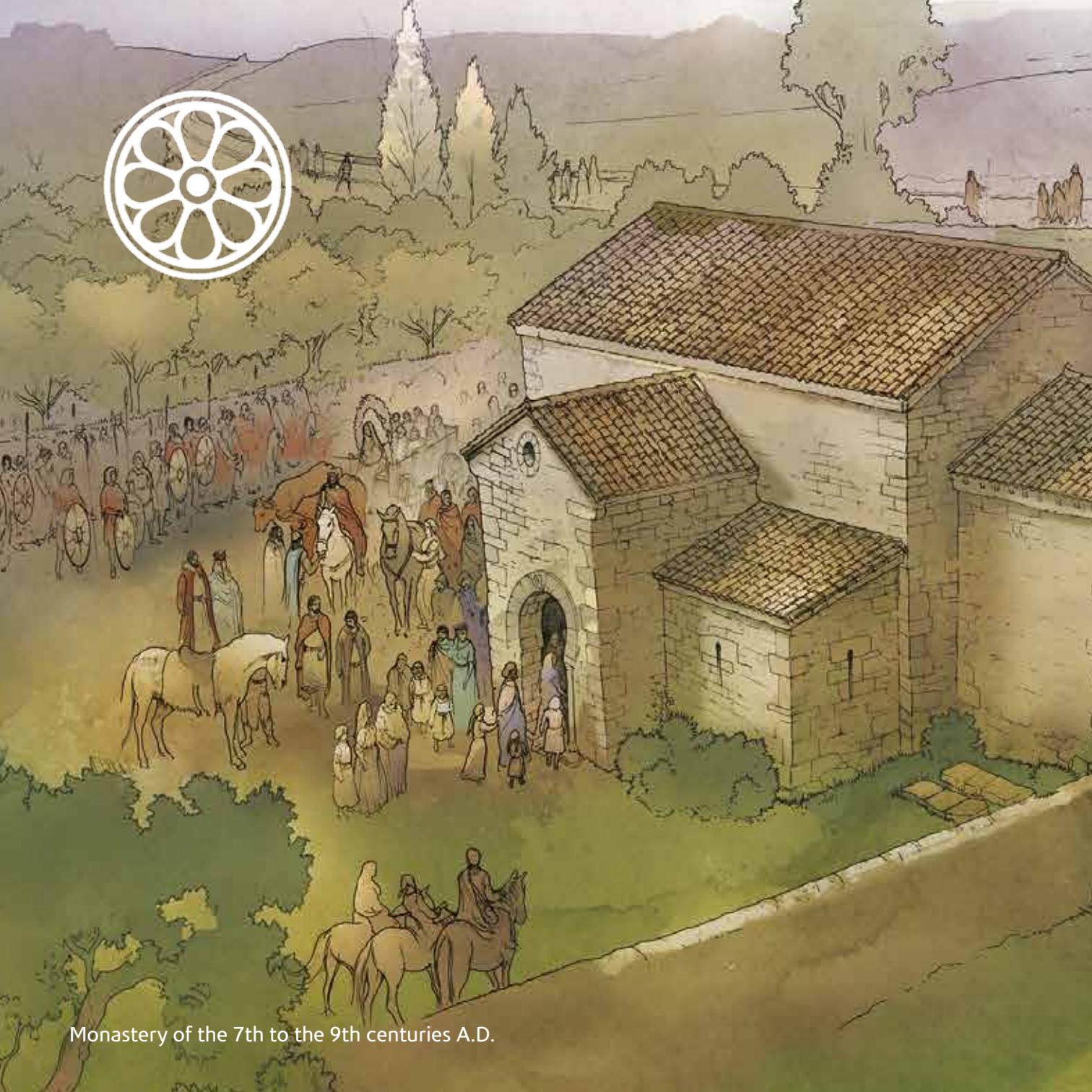
Monastic temple or a church on its own?

The 2016 excavations have unearthed a one-nave temple with a straight, frontal sector. This building is attached and connected to the original structure. The church would have most likely been vaulted with a barrel vault. It would have also had two porticos, one which has already been excavated, at the north, and a second one at the south, still to be uncovered, making it a latin cross plan.

The altar would be at the frontal sector and attached to the inner wall of the front, but it has been plundered as it is made of marble. The triumphal arch was decorated with marble cymatia with trefoils, and some curtains would have probably separated the priest from the rest of the clergy, located in the choir area. This sector was isolated from the nave with marble rood screens. The bars from the stair rail have remained. There are several privileged graves in sarcophagi made of alabaster and granite.

It is difficult to state the type of church until the excavation work is finalised and the entire site is uncovered. It could be a monastic church because it does not have an entrance at the back, and the proximity of San Pedro de la Mata, which served as a parish, supports this hypothesis. However, the transformation of a palace into a funerary pantheon leads us to believe that this is strictly speaking a church, of the aristocratic family that built the complex.



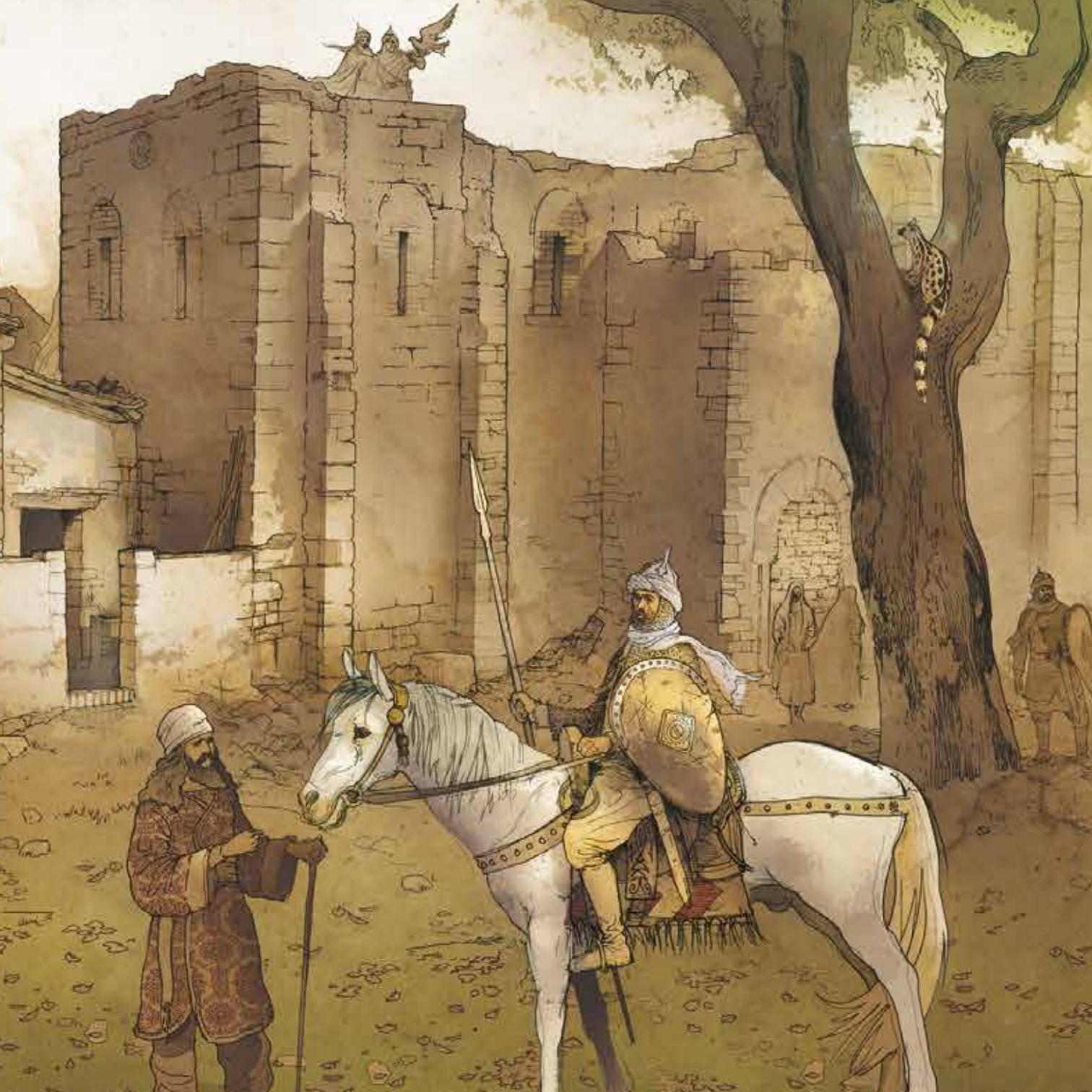


Monastery of the 7th to the 9th centuries A.D.





Farmhouse of the 9th century A.D.



Dwelling

The excavations of 2016 at Los Hitos have uncovered three dwelling phases:

PALACE OF THE 6TH CENTURY A.D.

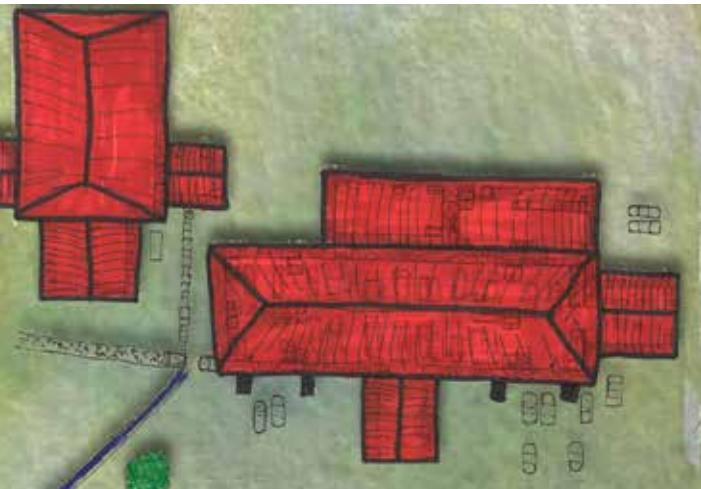
The oldest phase is an isolated, vaulted building with two floors and two porticos, one in the north and another one in the east. It has been dated to the end of the sixth century. It is a new type of structure, with a representation space located high up. This type of constructions continue until the Early Middle Ages, like Santa María del Naranco en Oviedo.

MONASTERY OF THE 7TH TO THE 9TH CENTURIES A.D.

The space of the palace is transformed into a monastic complex in the 7th century. A fence is added, as well as a one-nave church with a straight, vaulted frontal sector. The lower floor of the palace is turned into a funerary crypt with a distinctive burial place located in the central space. The laterals which served as chapels, had two altars. Altogether there are more fifty graves. This is the religious area of a Visigothic monastery which is linked to the court of the *Sedes Regia*.

FARMHOUSE OF THE 9TH CENTURY A.D.

The last dwelling phase belongs to the Muslim period, around the 9th century A.D. The space is changed and it is divided and oriented to the West. To do so, the old monastic areas are closed. The alley between the church and the palace is turned into several houses. The upper floor of the palace is used as a living space, and the lower one as a stable.

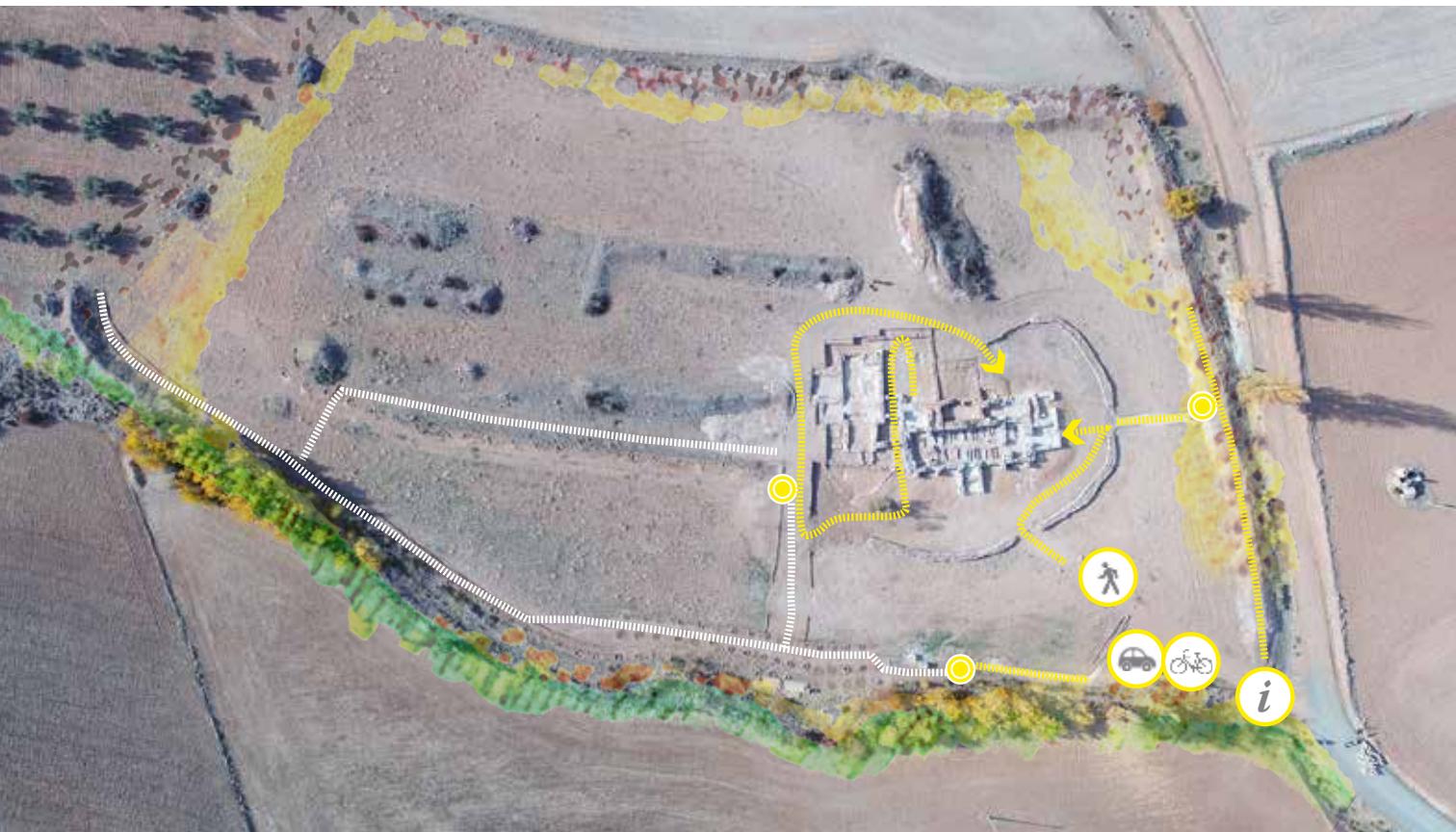


The visit

The visit to the site is free and it is marked with milestones that indicate the itinerary. It surrounds the main façade of the palace, entering the lower floor through the northern portico. The tour continues through the three, most likely vaulted rooms of the lower floor, and exits the building through an original backdoor. The alley, found between the church and the palace and with a drain system for the rain, can be walked over. We then end the visit surrounding the church to take a look at the face of the complex and the palace's façade with the buttresses.

Please, help us preserve the site by respecting the following rules during the visit:

-  Respect the signage
-  Follow the itineraries
-  Do not climb the walls
-  Do not throw litter





INSTITUT D'ÉTUDES
AVANCÉES DE PARIS

