

Although we can not affirm that the medieval wall that we observe today is prior to the 12th century, all the Arabic chronicles and sources speak of the repopulation and strong fortifications carried out in the border territory, south of the Tormes in the vicinity of the Central System, at end of the s. X and early XI.

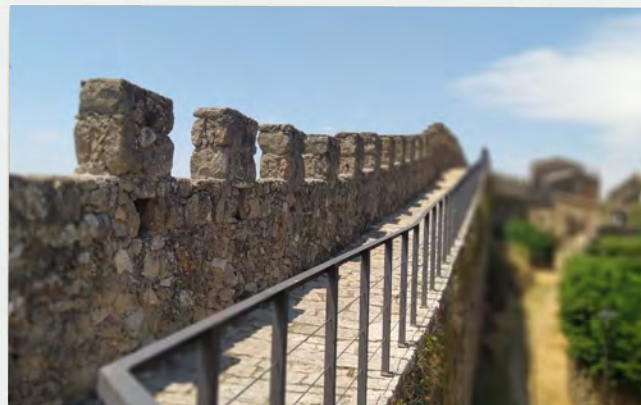
Béjar, located on that border line, should not be an exception and it is probable that Alfonso VIII, at the end of the 12th century, reinforced an existing fortification and expanded it. Located in the first defensive line after the loss of Trujillo and Plasencia, after the battle of Alarcos in 1195, and also being a border with the kingdom of León when it separated from Castile.

To this we can add that the current Palace of the Dukes was built on an old citadel and that the legend of the Men of Moss already speaks of a wall. Its function was not only defensive, but also delimited the town from the villages.

A large part of the first walled system is preserved, which goes from the Plaza Mayor to Calle Ronda de Viriato, beyond the San Pedro gate. Of which we can walk, along the walkway, about 500 m from the Parque de la Antigua, since the section that arrives from the Ducal Palace, where the Puerta del Aire is located, is currently not passable.

Today you can also access the Puerta del Pico, the Puerta de San Antón and the Puerta de San Pedro.

WALL OF BÉJAR



Wall of Béjar

This simple route of about 500 meters, with an approximate duration of 45 minutes, offers spectacular views of our medieval, natural and industrial environment.

Level: low, with several flights of stairs.

The Legend of the Moss Men is an oral tradition dating back to the 12th century.

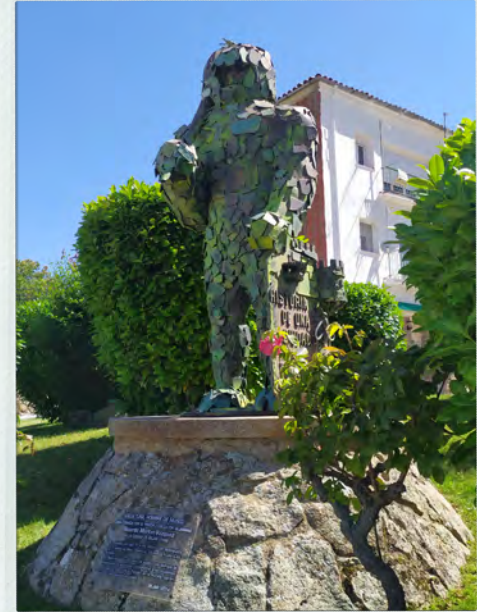
"Legend has it that Béjar was dominated by Muslim troops. A group of Bejaranos, being exiled from the place, decide to hide in the El Castañar mountain, specifically, on the day of the Santa Marina festival, June 17 .

After celebrating a mass in the place of Centena, they decided to dress in moss and branches, to go unnoticed by the enemy.

Before dawn, they approached the city. Helped by the first rays of sun and camouflaged between the rocks and the vegetation, when the gates of the wall opened, they entered the interior through the now defunct Gate of Treason, since the Muslims, realizing what had just happened, they exclaimed 'Treason, treason!'"

Every year this celebration is commemorated in the Corpus Christi procession, declared a Festival of International Tourist Interest in 2019.

MOSS MEN



Legend

Since the end of the 19th century, as was the case in the rest of the towns where the industrial complexes were located, the need for housing became a common social problem, where the different countries and governments had to intervene.

Béjar was no exception, and once the houses in the historic center and the vertical housing measure that emerged on Calle Libertad were overcome by the unreliability of the materials, the solutions were cheap houses and working-class neighborhoods.

An exceptional example, which was studied for years by architectural schools, was the group of 350 dwellings in Nuestra Señora del Castañar or 'Barrio Los Praos', beyond the New Bridge, begun in 1942 by the Santander architect Francisco de Asís Cabrero Torres- Quevedo. A year later, continuing with hygienist theories, he built 100 new workers' homes, Santa María de las Huertas or 'Barrio de La Antigua'.

WORKING-CLASS NEIGHBOURHOOD



Working-class neighbourhood

Béjar, a woolen textile city par excellence, has among its merits having been one of the most important cases of productive specialization in Castile.

For centuries, the Bejarana textile activity was the main economic resource of the city.

From the wall, the factory complexes that we can see next to the Río Cuerpo de Hombre are two of the most important factories in the textile sector, García y Cascón, S.A. and TRANSA, owned by the same businessmen. This group of companies came to employ some 1,600 people.

From here we can contemplate different heritage elements, such as: the chimneys and the long naves covered with sawtooth-shaped roofs.

Next to these constructions runs the simple 'Ruta de las Fábricas Textiles', along which we can admire the magnitude of these industrial mills, which for centuries were the livelihood and economic, social and cultural engine of Béjar.

TEXTILE FACTORIES



García y Cascón Factory

The best known of the mountains that we observe from here corresponds to the Natural Park of Batuecas - Sierra de Francia, located about 40 km to the southwest.

Like Béjar, it offers a wide variety of tourist, natural, cultural, gastronomic and sports alternatives.

Nearby Extremadura, which can be seen from here, would be another option.

Anecdotal is that the name of France comes from the defense carried out by the Franks, at the beginning of the 12th century, when Raymond of Burgundy entrusted them with their defense in the central line, after consolidating their position in the capital north of the Tormes river. Gallegos to the west and Vascones, Navarrese and Asturians to the east are the other two positions that he ordered to defend.

Examples of the above are toponyms, such as Sierra de Francia, Peña de Francia, Gallegos de Argañán, San Felices de los Gallegos, and family surnames such as Gascón, Francés, Francia, Stúñiga..

SIERRAS



Sierra de Francia

According to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, it is a tree located on the La Francesa farm, which owes its name to the wife of 'Monsieur Papau', the French engineer in charge of the railway works in the municipality.

This tree belongs to the Atlas cedar family, native to the mountainous systems of Morocco and Algeria. The species was introduced to Europe in 1842 for ornamental purposes. This specimen, which stands out above the rest of the trees, has witnessed the history of this municipality in Salamanca in the heart of the Vía de la Plata for more than 150 years. Its trunk has a perimeter of almost nine meters -that is, it would take up to eight adults to surround it- and it is more than 20 meters tall, some specimens reaching 40 meters. and can live up to 1000 years.

Such is the importance of this tree for the municipality of Béjar that there is even a hiking trail that allows you to discover the surroundings and the characteristics of this exemplary centenary. In fact, the French cedar is one of the most spectacular trees in the region and has become another tourist attraction for the town.

CENTENNIAL CEDAR



Atlas Cedar

PEÑA DE LA CRUZ

Granite rock area located 6 km from Béjar. It can be accessed on foot along a path that starts from Llano Alto and skirts Mount Peladillo, known as the Camino de los Registros, or by car along the highway.

It receives this name due to the great masonry cross, about 10 meters high, which rises from one of the most spectacular viewpoints in Béjar. For centuries, a pilgrimage organized by the Brotherhood of Santa Vera Cruz has been celebrated, which commemorates the reconquest of the city. This religious festival takes place on Pentecost Tuesday.



Peña de la Cruz

Despite the late arrival of the railway, at the end of the 19th century, this was a very important event for the textile sector. Means of transport essential to move large amounts of merchandise, heavy machinery and large volume, as well as the fuel necessary for the operation of factories.

The train station has completely changed its activity, and today it is a tourist accommodation.

The old train track, in 2019 became a Greenway that connects the provinces of Cáceres and Salamanca. Ideal for exploring on foot or by bicycle.

Nearby, a picnic area has been set up with tables and fountains, and a parking and overnight area for motorhomes.

ANCIENT TRAIN STATION



Train station and Greenway

Ideal rest area to spend a day surrounded by nature. It has picnic areas, fountains and barbecues.

This natural site has a legend that gives a special meaning to its name and one of its sources.

"Legend tells that a chickadee rested every day next to a source of cold and crystal clear water, when one fine day, he heard a noise and a wolf emerged from the undergrowth. The wolf stared at him, drank water and continued on his way.

For several days, this situation was repeated, until it became a habit. The good man told his wife and every time they talked about it, they referred to 'La Fuente del Lobo'.

With the arrival of winter, wild animals increasingly assaulted chicken coops and pens, so the town hall authorized a hunt in the forest.

At sunset, in the Plaza Mayor, four wolves, three foxes and two wild cats were deposited. The chickadee, approaching, discovered with great pain that one of these animals was the beautiful wolf of the fountain."

FUENTE DEL LOBO



Natural Area Fuente del Lobo

2 km from Béjar and at an altitude of 1080 meters, is El Castañar, a beautiful mountain populated by chestnut trees. Its access can be on foot or by vehicle.

Along the way we find an ideal picnic area to enjoy nature, the Regajo, the monument to the Sacred Heart and the Fuente del Lobo where you can take a break along the way.

In the area of El Castañar are the Sanctuary of Nuestra Señora del Castañar and the Plaza de Toros de Béjar B.I.C.

The Sanctuary houses the patron saint of Béjar, the Virgen del Castañar, who according to legend was found under a chestnut tree in 1446 by two shepherds from the neighboring town of La Garganta.

"La Ancianita" is considered the oldest bullring in Spain, dating from 1711. In its beginnings it was a square bullring, as can be seen in the painting by Ventura Lirios 'Vista de Béjar'. Of which only a piece is preserved in the corner of the north line.

EL CASTAÑAR



Béjar Bullring

SIERRA DE BÉJAR

The Sierra de Béjar y Candelario, belonging to the Central System and in the province of Salamanca, has its maximum level in the Canchal de La Ceja with an altitude of 2428 m.

Biosphere Reserve and the first Mycological Park in Castilla y León, offers countless alternatives to enjoy this natural environment, hiking, trekking, climbing or skiing at the Sierra de Béjar - La Covatilla resort, opened in 2001, is one of our main tourist resources.



Sierra de Béjar - La Covatilla