

CASTILBLANCO

HERMITAGE OF SAN MATÍAS (LOS RANCHOS) – RURAL AREA 1 KM FROM THE URBAN CENTER – 06680 CASTILBLANCO (BADAJOZ)

DESCRIPTION

15th-century building located in the Ejido area of Castilblanco. It is considered a masterpiece of Extremaduran popular religious architecture. The hermitage has a rectangular floor plan, rubble masonry construction and consists of a single nave. It is historically linked to the celebration popularly known as “Los Ranchos”.

HISTORY

The Hermitage of San Matías dates back to the 15th century. Originally, only the apse area was intended for worship, while the rest of the building served as lodging and shelter for shepherds and pilgrims travelling to Guadalupe.

The hermitage is the centre of a celebration of Neolithic origin intended to pray for the fertility of the fields. Nowadays this pilgrimage is popularly known as “Los Ranchos” and is celebrated during the weekend of the May holiday period. In the past, the date varied depending on the lack or abundance of water.

The oldest references to the Brotherhood of San Matías appear in the Historical-Geographical Relations of Philip II, dated 9 April 1576.

HISTORICAL AND ARTISTIC DESCRIPTION

The building has a rectangular floor plan and rubble masonry construction. Eight buttresses of unequal size support the structure on each side, bearing the horizontal load of the interior arches. The eastern façade features a portico supported by brick pillars, covered by the same roof slope as the nave. The entrance door to the temple is finished in brick with a semicircular arch.

The interior of the hermitage is characterised by its simplicity and robustness. The nave is divided into four sections of different sizes with a gabled wooden roof.

The apse features two semicircular arches on each side and is covered with a lunette vault. At the centre stands the sculpture of San Matías and to its left an image of the Virgen del Rosario.

FIGURES AND ENTITIES RELATED TO THE POI

The hermitage is historically linked to the Brotherhood of San Matías, documented in the Historical-Geographical Relations of Philip II from 1576. It is also connected to the pilgrims and shepherds who used the building as a refuge on their way to Guadalupe.

MOVABLE HERITAGE

Inside the temple, the sculpture of San Matías and an image of the Virgen del Rosario are preserved. The building also retains its gabled wooden roof and the interior architectural elements associated with the temple's original space.

INTANGIBLE HERITAGE

The hermitage constitutes the centre of the celebration popularly known as “Los Ranchos”, a pilgrimage of Neolithic origin intended to pray for the fertility of the fields. It is currently celebrated during the weekend of the May holiday period, although in the past the date varied depending on the lack or abundance of water.

GRAPHIC DOCUMENTATION



Exterior view of the hermitage.



Buttresses on one side of the hermitage.



Portico supported by brick pillars.



Interior of the Hermitage of San Matías.



Sculpture of San Matías and image of the Virgen del Rosario.