

Archaeological and Monumental Sites of Andalusia



MONUMENTAL SITE

San Isidoro del Campo

↑ View of the Monastery from the apses of the twin churches.

HISTORY

Founded by Alonso Pérez de Gúzman and María Alonso Coronel in 1301 upon the land where San Isidoro's remains were found prior to being taken to Leon, according to tradition, the **San Isidoro del Campo Monumental Site** houses in its interior a rich heritage, a testament to its more than 700 year long history. Its stonework attests to the monumentality of the same. Following the Ecclesiastical Confiscation of Mendizábal in 1835 and the expulsion of the Hieronymite community that lived there, a sad period of neglect and degradation began that led to the ruin of a significant part of the site. The exceptional heritage value of San Isidoro del Campo motivated the dedicated commitment by the Regional Ministry of Culture to rehabilitate it, and following an intense period of renovations, it was possible to recover the medieval centre.

Since its founding, the monastery has been under the spiritual and temporary administration of different religious orders, successively Cistercians (1301-1431), of Observant Hieronymites (1431-1568) and by the Order of San Jerome (1568-1835 and 1956-1978). It had numerous properties, including the village of Santiponce, originally on the banks of the Guadalquivir River until it was devastated by a flood in 1603, which led them to move to the ruins of Itálica, its current location. Its greatest period of expansion was reached in the 18th century, coming to have five cloisters, showing a diverse appearance due to the length of its construction. The part that's open to visitors, which corresponds to the medieval centre, presents a style of architecture in which the Mudejar tradition merges with the Gothic; in it we can visit the main monastic areas and contemplate their evolution over time.



Agencia Andaluza de Instituciones Culturales
CONSEJERÍA DE CULTURA Y PATRIMONIO HISTÓRICO



↑ Altarpiece by Martínez Montañés in the first church.

JUAN MARTÍNEZ MONTAÑÉS IN SAN ISIDORO

The San Isidoro del Campo monastery houses one of the most complete examples of the sculptor Martínez Montañés. He actively participated in the reforms done at the beginning of the 17th century, making the orans figures of the founders, the main altarpieces of the two churches and the side altarpiece dedicated to Saint Anne. He also supervised the altar dedicated to Baby Jesus and created a design for the choir stalls.

The main altarpiece of the first church is one of the masterpieces of Spanish altarpieces. Montañés, the creator of the charts, architecture and sculpture, is a prodigy of balance and proportion that had a strong influence on the subsequent evolution of the altarpiece. Distributed on three sections in order to be adapted to the front wall, the first body presides over the exceptional figure of Saint Jerome penitent in the desert. Kneeling and nude from the waist up, with a crucifix that he is looking at, pleading, his anatomy, his face, his hair or his beard is a sample of Montañés' art in full.

The sepulchers on sides of the presbytery have the orans figures of Alonso Pérez de Guzmán and María Alfonso Coronel, who are represented kneeling on cushions in front of a small hanger. They are the only non-religious representations made by Montañés, except for a model of the bust of Felipe IV.

In the **Chapel of the Resurrection** is the old altarpiece of Saint Anne, made by Martínez Montañés for the church and that was brought to this place, enlarged and polychrome painted from 1636. It shelters the excellent sculptures of the Virgin and Child, Saint Anne and San Joaquin also works by Montañés, that by their location allow us to appreciate their careful completion and the richness of its polychromy.

ADDRESS AND CONTACT

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FREE ADMISSION

SEE AND UNDERSTAND SAN ISIDORO DEL CAMPO

1 Orange Tree Courtyard

It functioned in the form of courtyard and connected the procurator, apothecary and hospice areas with the church. Originally it was the cemetery of the Cistercian community and, from the 17th century to the 19th century, the Santiponce cemetery. From it we can appreciate the fortified appearance of the façade profiled with merlons, the huge column, taken from Itálica in 1802, crowned with a cross to consecrate the place or the door access to the site, one of the most beautiful examples of the Sevillian Mudéjar style.

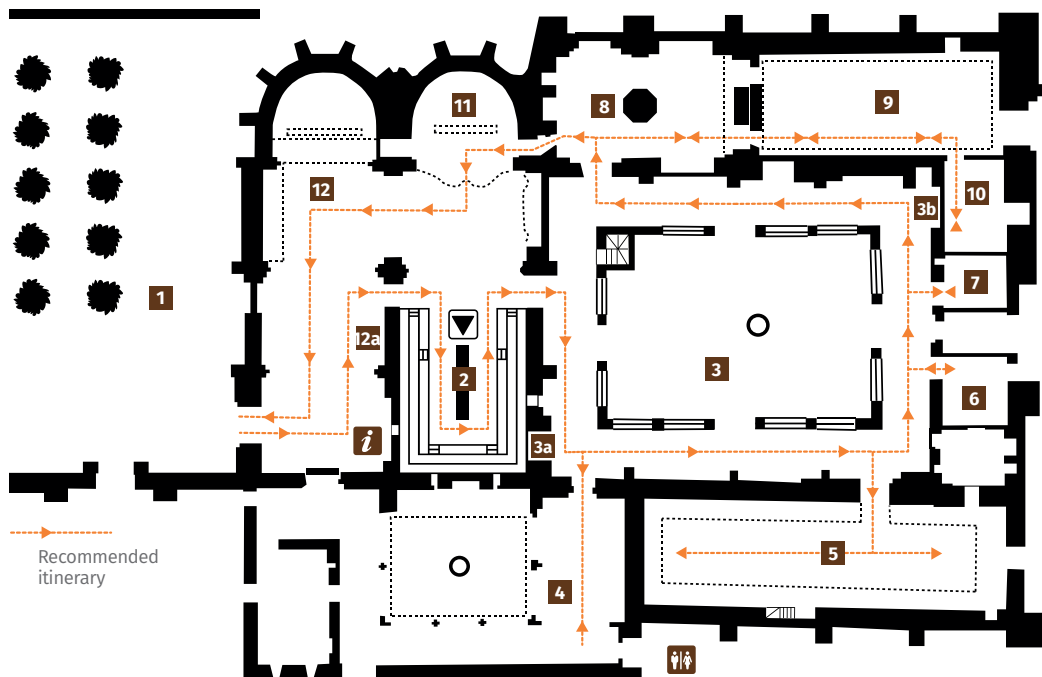
2 Choir

It occupies the majority of the monastic church's nave, this being a place of worship. Its furniture is related to the role it played, highlighting the classicist choir stalls of the 17th century and the lectern, crowned by the Immaculate, as a great stand for choral books. Those presented here are a small sample of the immense bibliographical heritage treasured by the monastery. The tintinnabula and the organ from the 18th century would come to strengthen the liturgy. Its walls are decorated with paintings of *The Asuncion* and *Coronation of the Virgin*, *Saint Christopher*, *San Isodoro in the taking of Baeza* and *the Triumph of Death*.

3 Cloister of the Dead

In it the Hieronymite monks are buried and hence its name. With a strong Mudéjar mark, it highlights the polychromatic wall paintings made after the expulsion of the Cistercians in 1431. They were covered with tiles in the 16th century in the northern gallery. In the corners we find diverse altars such as that of **Christ of Torrijos** ^{3a} or that of **Saint Jerome** ^{Bb}.

↓ Cloister of the Dead and belfry of the Monastery.



4 Cloister of the Evangelists

Located at the feet of the early church, it connected different areas of the monastery. The most notable feature is its fresco wall decoration, consisting of a wainscot in which tiles with Mudéjar motifs alternate with heraldic emblems, such as the cauldrons of the Guzmanes and two squids that made up the personal emblem of the second Count of Niebla, along with religious figures who accompany the scene of *Saint Jerome dictating to the monks*.

5 Refectory

This ample space with four tranches and quadripartite rib vaults supported by corbels was the community's dining room. At the end of the 15th century it received the decorative and iconographic programme in which the monumental representation of the *Last supper* is highlighted. In this area, furniture that were decontextualized, such as the *Virgin and Child*, attributed to Mercadante de Bretagne, a *Baby Jesus*, by Francisco de Ocampo, an ivory crucifixion, a portable altar from the late 15th century, the *Reliquary of Saint Eutiquious* from the 17th century, a series of paintings from the mid-17th century that narrate the *Life of San Isidoro* and other pieces of goldsmith and reliquaries that were part of the liturgical furnishings of the monastery have been musealised.

6 Exclaustration-Itálica Room

The relationship of Itálica and San Isidoro del Campo has been maintained for centuries and a sample from them are this capital and head that was embedded in the belfry of the cloister. The 1835 confiscation led to a period of degradation throughout the site.

7 Cell of the Prior

The vicissitudes suffered by the monastery practically made its bibliographical heritage disappear. In this room we find a small sample that includes a facsimile copy of the *Bear Bible*, the first translation of the bible into Spanish by Casiodoro de Reina, a monk who fled from San Isidoro after embracing the doctrines of Luther with a large part of the community.

8 Sacristy

It is the place where the priests get dressed and where items related to worship are kept. *Our Lady of Antiquity* presides over the main altarpiece which is accompanied by altarpieces with drawers with canvases of *Christ tied to the column* and *The Burial of Christ*.

9 Chapterhouse

This space is dedicated to the government and community assembly. In the 15th century it was completely decorated, highlighting the wainscot with scenes from St. Jerome's life that were hidden in the 17th century behind a false vault and a new classicist decoration. The deterioration of the room made it possible that, after the restoration, the overlapping decorations be shown, from the 15th and 17th centuries.

10 Chamber of the Reservation

It owes its name to the fact that in it the Most Holy was reserved on Maundy Thursday. Starting in 1636 it received a decoration with Marian motifs. In the altarpiece we find the *Virgen and Child*, *Saint Joachim and Saint Anne*, works by Martínez Montañés, and in the vault litanies symbols, the Holy Spirit and cherubs. We can also admire the series of paintings of the *Life of the Virgin Mary*.

↓ Altarpiece of the Chamber of the Reservation



11 Presbytery of the church by Alonso Pérez de Guzmán

From its founding the monastery served as a pantheon of the founders and their descendants. Its current configuration corresponds to the period of renovations done in the 17th century in which Martínez Montañés transformed the presbytery by relocating the sepulchers of Guzmán el Bueno and María Coronel to the sides, substituting them for orans sculptures and erecting the main altarpiece.

12 Second church

Raised by Juan Alonso Pérez de Guzmán in the first half of the 14th century, it is well known for being juxtaposed to the first church that his father, Guzmán el Bueno, built. It has one floor with single nave and three sections with a polygonal front wall. A gothic crucifix is preserved from the time of its founding ^{12a}. For centuries it was the parish church of Santiponce and also had a double liturgical and burial function, given that it served as a pantheon for its patrons, Juan Alonso Pérez de Guzmán and Urraca Osorio and other descendants, such as the Álvarez de Toledo. The temple presides over a baroque altarpiece from the 18th century dedicated to the Holy Christ.