



to Las Navezuelas, and the Cuerpo de Hombre, visible from the viewpoint there is above the “Roman Bridge”, going out of the village and taking the road of Béjar. Other streams and fountains are flowing their waters into the river, facilitating the practice of sports such as canoeing from El Soto to El Melero.

THE URBAN COMPLEX

Although we know of its former settlements, Sotoserrano entered into the history, definitely, after the medieval repopulation and the donation that Alfonso IX of León made the Archbishop of Compostela, in 1192, of church, lands, belongings and rivers of Soto de Francia.

The Order of Santiago and one of the branches of the Camino de Santiago, which linked the Vía de la Plata and the Sanctuary of the Peña de Francia, helped Sotoserrano to shape its urban complex in line with the traditional artquitectura “serrana”, of stone and half-timbered adobe and wood houses, many with arcades, some emblazoned, some with balconies -corredores-. The streets, deliciously intricated, teaches several stone houses, whose lintels, as some people, show the origin of converted Jews, because of their Christians signs. These engraved signs still give more charm to the houses of Sotoserrano, no doubt!

El Soto had prison, granary, hospital of pilgrims, as many villages in the Sierra, what is usual in areas under the influence of the Order of Santiago; also it seems to have had an Inquisi3n house. The truth is that the names of Barrio del Castillo and de la Iglesia and its passages, the remains of their mills, fulling mills and foundries, its bridges and fountains, collect signals that help to reconstruct the history, despite loss of documents.

The number of inhabitants decreased with the terrible emigration of the 60s, since it happened in the whole rural Spanish area. Then, it had more than 1,200 inhabitants. Today it has 690 and is a place with great economic dynamism, thanks to its olive trees, vines and fruit trees, as well as its ham factory.

THE HERITAGE

Besides having a valuable natural heritage, Sotoserrano adds an important artistic legacy. in the upper area of the old area, the Neighborhood of the Church, that is crowned by the temple of the Assumption, built between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries, with three naves, Mudéajr coffered ceiling, wall paintings, a beautiful bell tower, built its upper part in mid-nine-