

Photo: Héctor Fuente

The Geology of things

GEOPARQUE
LAS LORAS



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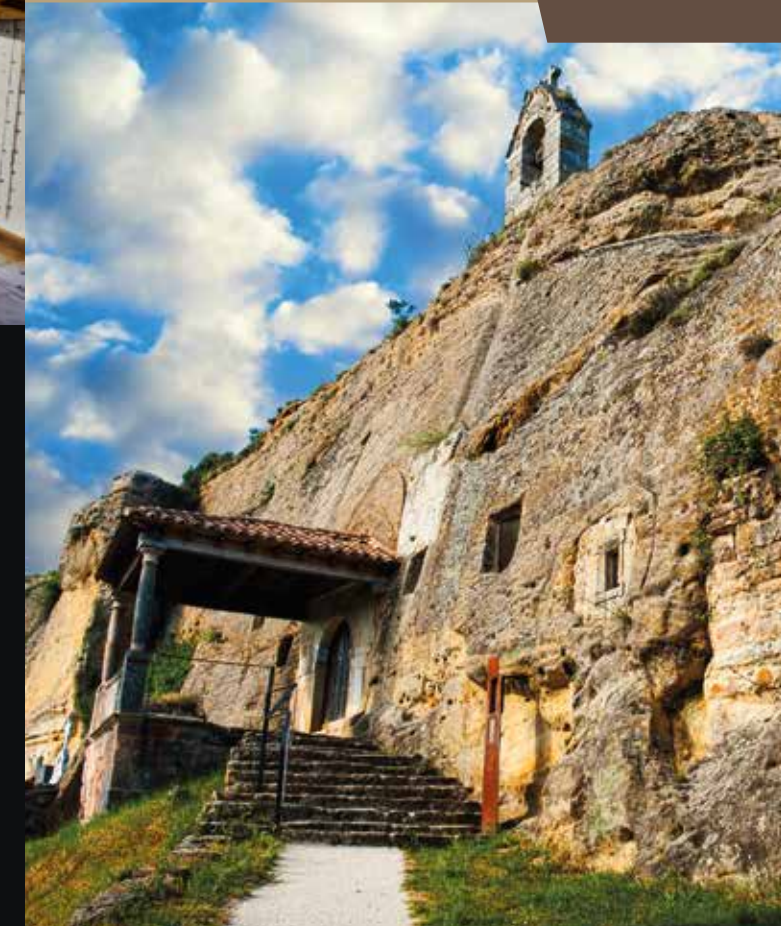


Visitors are usually surprised by the fact that this church was carved out of the sandstone. It is impressive to imagine the effort made by those who undertook this peculiar work. Nevertheless, taking the most out of the possibilities offered by nature to carve the building was faster and cheaper than building it stone by stone.

We access the building through a plain portal. The church has two naves with four sections and their corresponding apses, besides the vestry, funeral and baptismal chapels and the typical wooden choir screen. It is very difficult to date each of the parts and to fix the site evolutionary process. Although there are several theories, the present vestry is most probably the oldest part of the building and may have served as a small church at the beginning, possibly between the 9th and 12th centuries. Olleros inhabitants decided to widen their church in the midst of the Romanesque period, 12th century, lead by the building euphoria of that moment. Lacking the necessary resources to build it in the usual way, they decided to carve it following the line of Romanesque style, excavating a church with two naves and their barrel vaults, semi-domes at the apses, typical transverse arches standing on pillars or, sometimes,

on double columns with their respective plain capitals, all presenting decorative purposes rather than any structural function. Next to the apse at the back, a funeral chapel with only one tomb was opened for a high-rank person, undoubtedly. Some of the remains still give evidence of the walls being painted or, at least, whitewashed, as it was usually done, to hide the extreme simplicity of the rock, more than to prevent pests. It remained unaltered until modern centuries, when some cues were already provided. In the 16th century the floor tombs were drawn up and the Renaissance altarpiece was made by then. The gallery of the altar was built in the 17th century and during the 18th century several works were carried out. Such was the case of the replacement of the original pillars by columns (1711), the cutting of the front altar so that the service could be seen from the other nave (1711) and the installation of Nuestra Señora del Rosario altarpiece, nowadays removed, and the carving of its niche in the rock, as well as a new portal and a portico (between 1744 and 1753) and the opening of a baptistery (1794). At the end of the 19th century the outside staircase was renewed and the medieval funeral chapel was discovered in 1930 - it had been walled up in 1746 because of the intense stench, since it was used as burial site for poor children. Finally in 1955 the covering of the walls was taken out in an attempt of giving back to the church its "original appearance", which only existed in the imagination of those undertaking the removal.

Text: Jaime Nuño - Santa María La Real Foundation



THE CHURCH OF SAINTS JUSTO AND PASTOR IN OLLEROS DE PISUERGA



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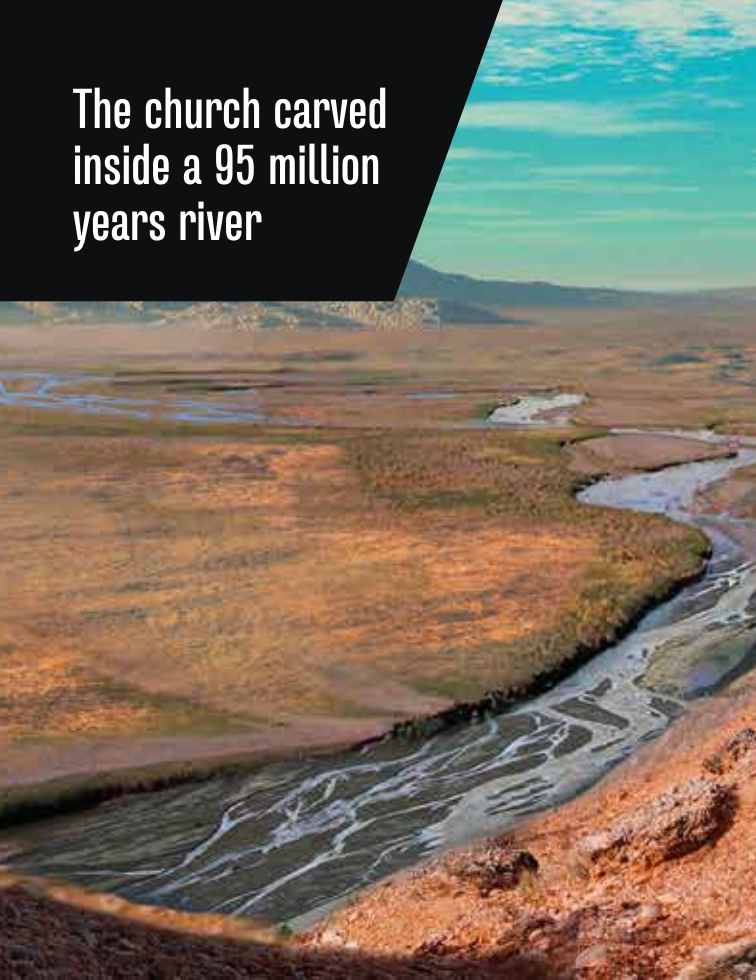
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entretantos

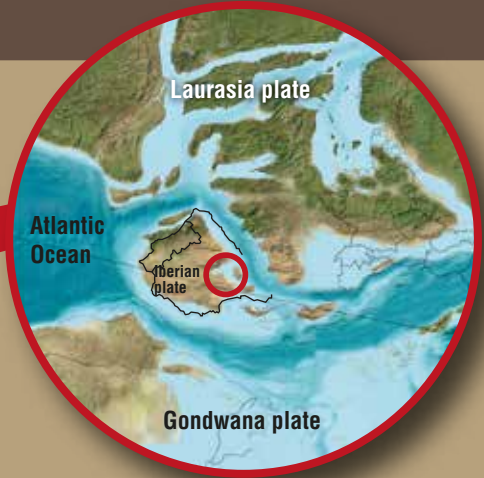
The church carved inside a 95 million years river



Olleros de Pisuerga 95 million years ago (mya) (Mid Cretaceous)

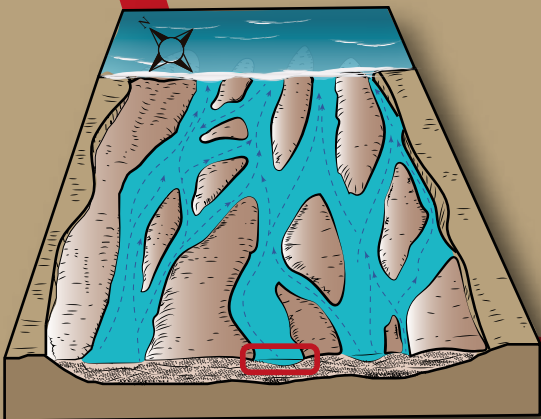
The key to understand the origins of the rock in which this picturesque church is carved is to be found in the internal structures presented by this sandstone, which can be watched inside and outside the church.

Everything began 95 mya. During that period of the Earth history, the Geopark was part of a coastal plain in which braided rivers flow towards a sea located NE.

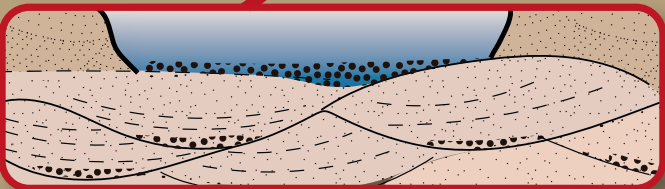


Do you understand now?
You are looking at the sediments which filled the channels of a braided river flowing across this territory 95 mya. Some of these channels were up to 30 m wide and 10 m deep.

Do you know what these two pictures have in common?
You don't? So, keep looking, but first take a good look at **the marks** in this sandstone rock outside the church.



Braided river scheme



Several river channels filled with sediments

All the sedimentary structures, produced by the stream of those rivers, can also be observed, even 3D, inside the church. The studies tell us that the river was flowing to the northeast towards a really very close ocean, which would soon submerge the river sediments, flooding not only this territory but also most of the Iberia Island. But that is another story.

