



IN THE
FOOTSTEPS OF
ZEIT ABU ZEIT

"He was a very well-bred and restrained man, humane, fair, tall in body, royal in appearance, with very beautiful eyes, a vulnerable face and full of majesty; he had long hair and wore a silk bonnet on his head, he was always dressed in scarlet and was accompanied by many servants and his children"

Words of Ferdinand III of Castile describing Zeit Abu Zeit



**Ayuntamiento
de Argelita**

C/ Honorato Ros, 9
Tel. 964 61 21 39
Correo electrónico:
info@argelita.es



/ayuntamientodeargelita



@ayuntamientoargelita

www.argelita.es

ARGELITA

The Village and Zeit Abu Zeit

Argelita is located in the Alto Mijares region of the province of Castellón. It was an important centre at the time of the Christian conquest during the 13th century.

Argelita was one of the territories in the hands of one of the most important figures of this period, Zeit Abu Zeit, dethroned as king of Valencia by Zayyan Ibn Mardanix.

Zeit Abu Zeit converted to Christianity, was an ally of King James I and took part in the conquest against his own people. Despite this, most of his domains were inhabited by Muslims, as in the case of the town of Argelita, where Zeit Abu Zeit's main palace was located, and which remained there until his death in 1269.

After his death, his sons received an important inheritance as they were directly related to the Aragonese nobility. Thus, his son Fernando Pérez became the owner of the properties of Argelita.



The remains of the palace-fortress

Today, two towers remain of the original castle-palace (a Site of Cultural Interest) and walled enclosure of the town. The first is rectangular in shape, with four storeys and a crenellated top. It is a masonry tower, with corners reinforced with ashlar. There are rectangular windows with stone lintels and another with a segmental arch. This tower has a round floor plan, also made of masonry. Access to the first floor is through an ashlar doorway with a semicircular arch. It has rectangular windows and a crenellated top. This tower is higher than the previous one and was connected to the palace by a drawbridge at the level of the first floor. It has an Arabic inscription commemorating the year 1252.

The palace was demolished in 1942, for the subsequent use of its timber for the parish church of Sant Pere del Grao de Castelló, demolishing all its walls, leaving these two towers standing, between which we can currently find a garden.

The "Buey Negro" Castle

Within the heritage of the town of Argelita we can find, as Site of Cultural Interest, the Castle of "Buey Negro". This fortress had a clear relationship with the Andalusian centre of Argelita in the Islamic period and throughout the years following the reconquest. The enclosure of this medieval work, delimited by defensive structures, is one of the largest in the province.

It is known to have been mentioned in the will of Zeit Abu Zeit at the end of the 13th century, more precisely in October 1262.



The legacy of Zeit Abu Zeit

The ancient Argelita of Zeit Abu Zeit, has left us the mark of an Andalusian town in the Islamic period, with vestiges such as the structure of its streets, which conserve the urban aspect of the old Muslim streets (narrow, concentric streets and whitewashed walls), as well as the canal systems for the irrigation of crops.





THE "BUEY NEGRO" CASTLE

An impregnable fortress

“When the troops of Jaume I threatened the town, the useful men from all over the region took refuge in Buey Negro. Once the fortress was besieged, attempts at force were useful until, on a dark night, more than a thousand mountain goats were rounded up and stuffed with oakum and resin, forcing them to go in a certain direction. The refugees who saw so many lights climbing up the cuts and verticals believed themselves lost; some sought a heroic death, while others fell through the cuts.”



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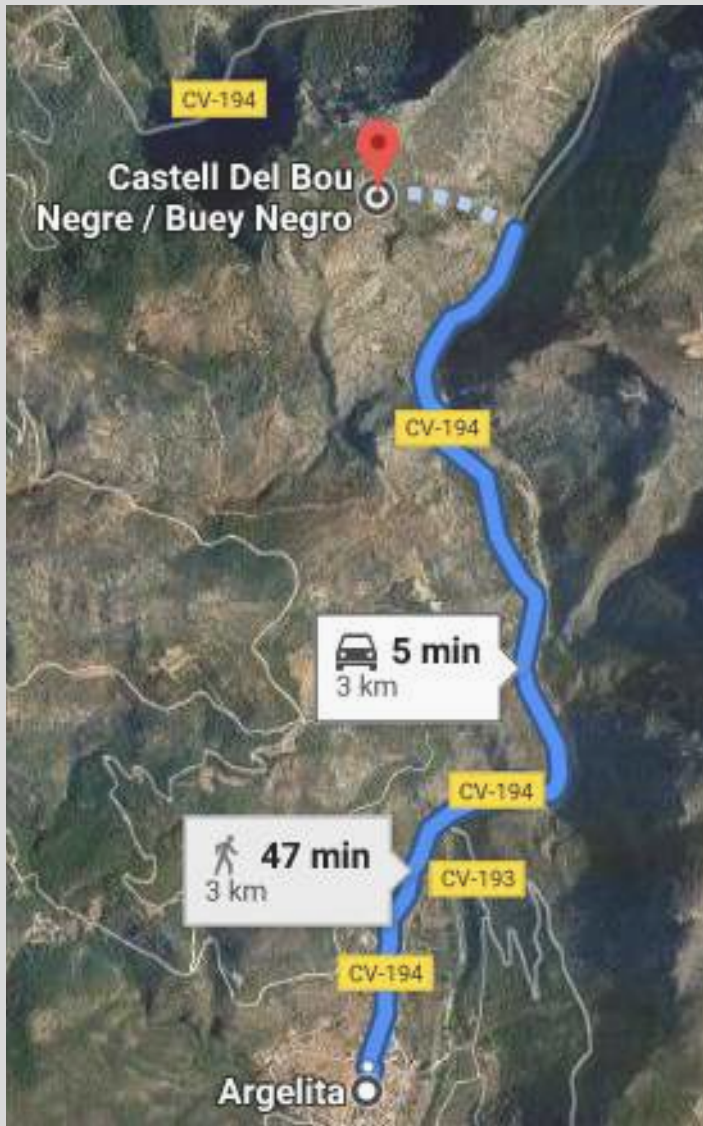


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Location

This fortification is located on a high mountain on the border of the municipalities of Argelita and Ludiente, on the rocky parapet that overhangs the strait formed by the Villahermosa River before reaching the town, at an altitude of 748 metres.



Historical Background

The Buey Negro Castle (Black Ox Castle) was the dominant castle over a large area of territory, which included numerous villages. However, it is not possible to specify the date of its construction, although it is true that there is already mention of its existence in documents from the 12th century.

It had a clear relationship with the andalusian centre of Argelita in the Islamic period, and, throughout the years after the reconquest, the castle of Bounegre appears in documentary references.

However, it soon ceased to be used, with some mention of it at the end of the 13th century, such as that of Zeit Abu Zeit (former Arab governor of Valencia) in his will in October 1262.

In the 19th century, the area was transformed as a result of the reoccupation of the site, with the construction of farmhouses and farmyards, as well as the remodelling of land for agricultural use.

The Castle

Within the heritage of the town of Argelita, we can find, as an Asset of Cultural Interest, the Castle of Buey Negro.

The enclosure of this mediaeval work, enclosed by defensive structures, is one of the largest in the province. Along with these structures, large escarpments made the site an impassable fortress.

Within its construction, we can find a tower in the highest part. This slightly rectangular fortification was built with large stones. The walls, dating from the Muslim period and made of mortar formwork, defended an area of 15 hectares. It can be seen that some of the points that make them up had battlements on their crowns and a series of towers with small, flared arrow slits. Lastly, the fact that there were cisterns and wells inside the enclosure suggests that it was a place with clear strategic value for defending against enemy attacks.





 **Diputació
de Castelló**

**EL PALACIO-
FORTALEZA
DE
ZEIT ABU ZEIT**



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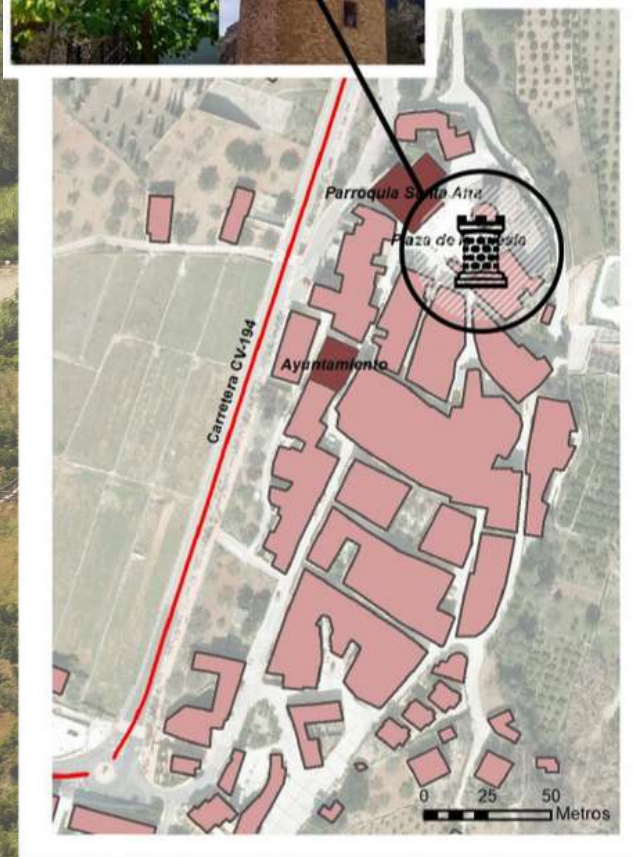
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ARGELITA

SOBRE ESTE SOLAR ESTUVO
EDIFICADO EL PALACIO DEL REY
ZEIT-ABU-ZEIT, REY DE VALENCIA.
LOS HABITANTES DE ARGELITA,
EN RECUERDO A ESTE ILUSTRE VECINO,
CONVERTIDO AL CRISTIANISMO,
LE DEDICAN ESTE PARQUE.
ARGELITA 3-MAYO-1994

Location

The remains of the Zeit Abu Zeit palace are located within the site of the church square, this is the main square of the village of Argelita. In this same place, we can also find the Church of Saint Anne, 17th century building in the Churrigueresque Baroque style.



Historical Background

Argelita is located in the Alto Mijares region of Castellon. It was an important centre at the time of the Christian conquest during the 13th century. The municipality was one of the territories in the hands of one of the most important figures of this period, Zeit Abu Zeit, dethroned as King of Valencia by Zayyan Ibn Mardanix.

Therefore, the palace fortress is a defensive building of medieval origin where Zeit Abu Zeit remained until his death in 1269. After his death, his children received an important inheritance, as they were related to the Aragonese nobility. Thus, his son Fernando Pérez, became the owner of the Argelita properties.

The palace was demolished in 1942 to use its timber for the parish church of Saint Peter of Grau of Castellon, demolishing all its walls. The two towers remain standing, between which there is now a garden.



The palace fortress

Nowadays, the two towers remain of the original castle-palace (Asset of Cultural Interest) and walled enclosure of the town. The first one has a rectangular ground plan with four stories and a crenellated top. It is a masonry tower with corners reinforced with ashlar. There are two rectangular windows, one with stone lintels and another with a segmental arch. This tower was refurbished in 1881. The other tower has a round floor plan and is also made of masonry. Access to the first floor is through an ashlar doorway with a semicircular arch. It has rectangular windows and a crenellated top. This tower is higher than the previous one and was connected to the palace by a drawbridge at the height of the first floor. It has an Arabic inscription commemorating the year 1252.

