

Plaza de la Hora ('Hour Square')

“The next morning, when the traveler reached the Plaza de la Hora and entered,... the first impression he had was that of finding himself in a medieval city, in a great medieval city. The Plaza de la Hora is a large, clear, square plaza with lots of air.” Camilo José Cela tells us this in his book *Journey to the Alcarria*.

It was designed within a palatial complex as a parade ground by the architect Alonso de Covarrubias in 1541, at the request of Ana de la Cerda, the grandmother of the Princess of Éboli. When her son-in-law, Ruy Gómez de Silva, took possession of the town, he ordered the construction of stone colonnades on two opposite sides, thus transforming it into a market square.

Later, the square was a place for public shows and even for bullfights in the 17th century. Nowadays it is the focal point of the village and owes its name to a curious story:

The Princess of Éboli was imprisoned in her palace for years by order of Felipe II. Legend has it that for the last two years of her life she was confined to her bedroom and was only allowed to go out onto her balcony for one hour a day to breathe fresh air.