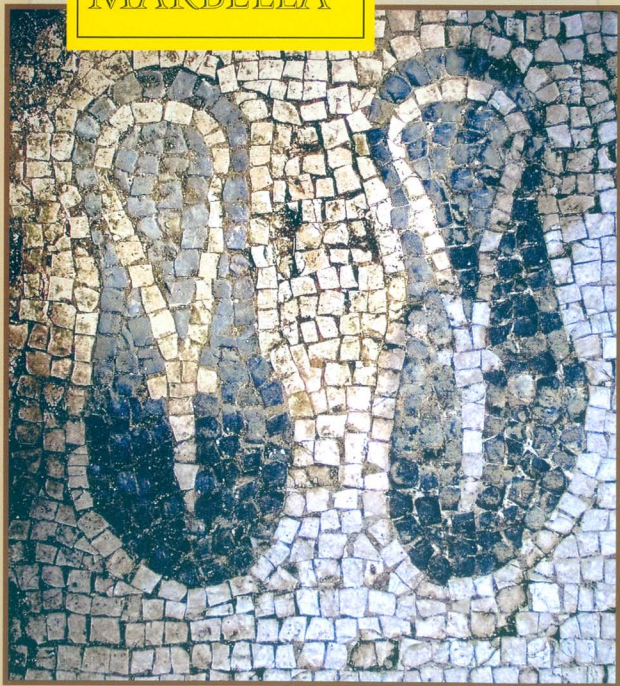


THE
ROMAN
FOOTPRINT
IN
MARBELLA



LAS BÓVEDAS ROMAN BATHS

The thermal baths were fundamental to everyday life in the Roman Empire, an indisputable symbol and factor of Romanisation. They were premises in which as well as bathing, one could read, practice sport, close a business deal, etcetera.

Built in the II Century A.D., a good part of the structure of the building has resisted the passage of time thanks to the solidity of the *opus caementicium* (mortar and concrete), a building technique which uses boulder casing and very good quality mortar. It is a building over two floors, the rooms of which are arranged around a central octagonal patio.

In conclusion, we are in the presence of a building which is complex and monumental in both its architectural conception and its very functionality.

Next to it is the Bóvedas tower, an example of a watchtower which formed part of the coastal defensive system established by the Christian monarchs after the conquest of these lands from the Muslims.



VEGA DEL MAR BASILICA

With the ability to attain more than 1.500 years antiquity it is, undoubtedly, one of the most brilliant archaeological examples of primitive Christianity. After the "Edict of Milan", the Church passed from being clandestine to being another representative of the official Roman world, adopting for its worship a model of civil building: the basilica. With it, architecture adapts to ritual, in other words, the elements that make up the basilica reflect liturgical and symbolic function.

The temple consists of a central body of three naves separated by pillars, with the most dominant characteristic being the existence of two opposing apses, a feature of some North African buildings. Next to one of them is an extremely interesting quadrilobulate baptismal font, for the rite of baptism by immersion, together with another of lesser dimensions.

Associated with the temple there is a necropolis with close to two hundred tombs which was in use between the III and VIII centuries.



ROMAN VILLA OF RÍO VERDE

A Roman villa was an isolated building in the countryside, with two contrasting parts: the residential area, or *pars urbana*, and the *pars rustica*, dedicated in this case to the exploitation of the sea and salting of fish, a lucrative activity which a good part of the coastal Andalusian settlements were dedicated to.

In this villa we find a sector of the *pars urbana*, or noble area, of a villa built in the I-II Century A.D., as indicated by its mosaic paving. This area is arranged around a porticoed and pillared patio, of which the bases are preserved, with perimeter passageways on three sides which gave access to the different rooms. Its uniqueness lies in that it is one of the few examples on the Andalusian coastline with this type of domestic space; although of note is its extremely high quality mosaic, on very diverse themes, which decorates the pseudo-peristyle and the adjacent rooms.

The most original paving is bichromatic, black and white, decorated with diverse culinary instruments and foods which, in the manner of a frieze, make up a panel of unique characteristics. No less spectacular is the so-called Medusa, a polychrome mosaic with a central Gorgoneion surrounded by geometric motifs in black and white.



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