

# JAÉN

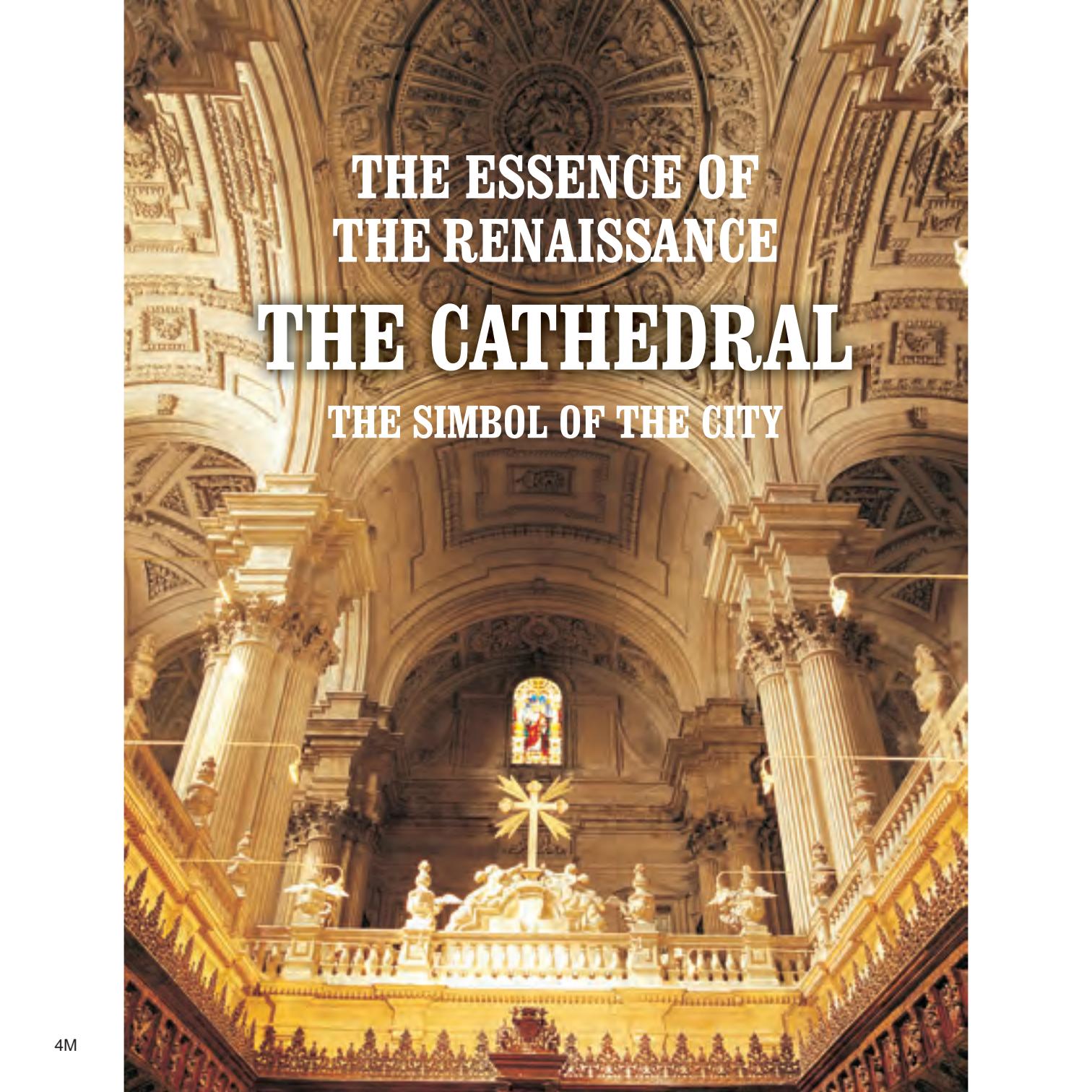
THE CAPITAL OF AN INLAND PARADISE





Facing the valley of the Guadalquivir, the city spreads out over the lower slopes of the hill of Santa Catalina, which is crowned by a medieval castle. The streets and plazas of Jaén delineate traditional areas that date back to the Moorish period and are presided over by churches, stately homes and convents, wherein the Renaissance bequeathed some of the most notable examples of 16th-century Andalusian art. The Arab Baths, located next to an old Judería [Jewish Quarter], which conserves monuments such as the Iglesia de San Andrés [church], hark back to the period of al-Andalus

However, amongst all of the monuments housed in the capital city, special attention should be drawn to the Cathedral, the crowning achievement of the architect Andrés de Vandelvira, that has served as a model for many of the cathedrals of Latin America. The old quarters of Jaén recall its Moorish, Jewish and Christian past, whilst the modern city, spreading out towards the north, houses many buildings of architectural interest and several parks that act as the green lung of contemporary Jaén.

The image shows the interior of a grand cathedral, likely St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. The view is from a low angle looking up towards the massive dome. The architecture is highly detailed, featuring classical columns, arches, and a large central dome with intricate carvings. In the foreground, there is a balcony with a large, ornate cross and several statues. The lighting is warm and golden, highlighting the textures and colors of the stone and marble.

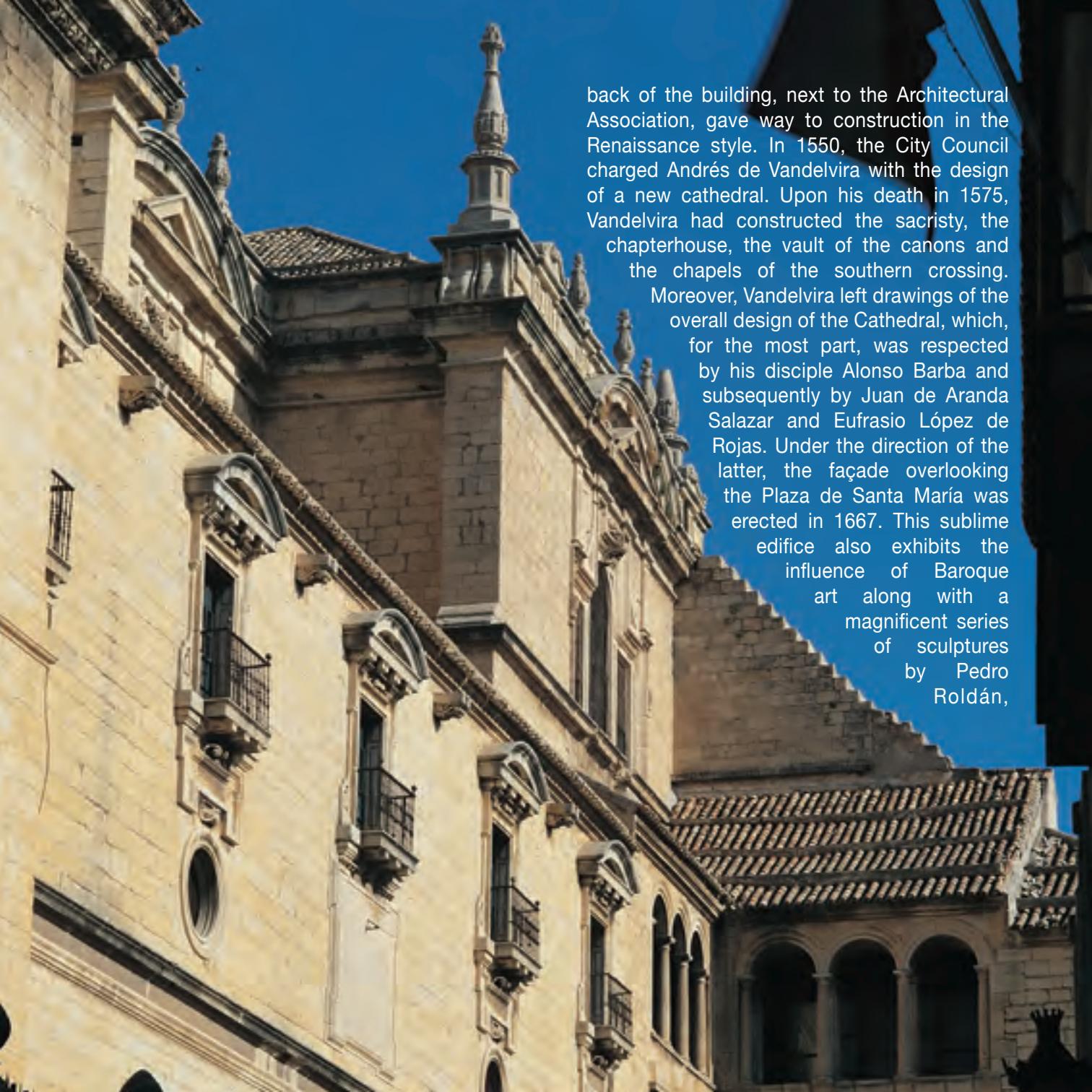
**THE ESSENCE OF  
THE RENAISSANCE  
THE CATHEDRAL  
THE SIMBOL OF THE CITY**

**D**edicated to the Asunción de la Virgen [the Assumption of Our Lady], the Cathedral of Jaén is constructed over a site that was formerly occupied by a Moorish mosque. The Cathedral is the capital's most important monument. Designed by Andrés de Vandelvira, the inscription of this Historical and Artistic Monument on the World Heritage List is currently pending. The Cathedral has served as inspiration for some of the best religious architecture in Latin America.

The two towers and the cupola of the cathedral are visible many kilometres before entering the city, rising amidst the historical quarter of the city in front of the hill of Santa Catalina and framed by the nearby mountains of the Sierra of Jaén. For centuries, the Cathedral has stood in the historical centre of the city, facing the City Hall and the Bishopric and next to the Convent of San Francisco, which currently houses the installations of the Provincial Council of Jaén. Some of the most attractive streets of the capital are found in the area surrounding the Cathedral. Calle Bernabé Soriano, known as La Carrera, provides a beautiful view of one of the belltowers.

The Cathedral is built over the site occupied by the main mosque of Moorish Jaén up until the 13th century. The first foundations of the temple were laid in one of the corners formed by the walls that surrounded the city in the medieval period. This preliminary construction in the Gothic style, of which traces remain in the form of crests and gargoyles located at the



The image shows a detailed view of a historic stone building, likely a cathedral or church, under a clear blue sky. The building features a tiled roof, a prominent spire, and several windows with decorative elements. The text on the right side of the image provides historical context for the building's construction and design.

back of the building, next to the Architectural Association, gave way to construction in the Renaissance style. In 1550, the City Council charged Andrés de Vandelvira with the design of a new cathedral. Upon his death in 1575, Vandelvira had constructed the sacristy, the chapterhouse, the vault of the canons and the chapels of the southern crossing. Moreover, Vandelvira left drawings of the overall design of the Cathedral, which, for the most part, was respected by his disciple Alonso Barba and subsequently by Juan de Aranda Salazar and Eufrasio López de Rojas. Under the direction of the latter, the façade overlooking the Plaza de Santa María was erected in 1667. This sublime edifice also exhibits the influence of Baroque art along with a magnificent series of sculptures by Pedro Roldán,



which, in addition to representing the Fathers of the Church, the Evangelists, Saint Peter and Saint Paul, place San Fernando, Santa Catalina and the Santo Rostro in an exalted position.

Later, in the middle of the 18th century, Ventura Rodríguez erected the Side Chapel, which stands on one side of the Calle Campanas. The entrance leads on to a wide, open-air cloister that runs along one of the sides of the Cathedral. Within the neo-classical interior, special attention should be drawn to the ovaliform cupola.

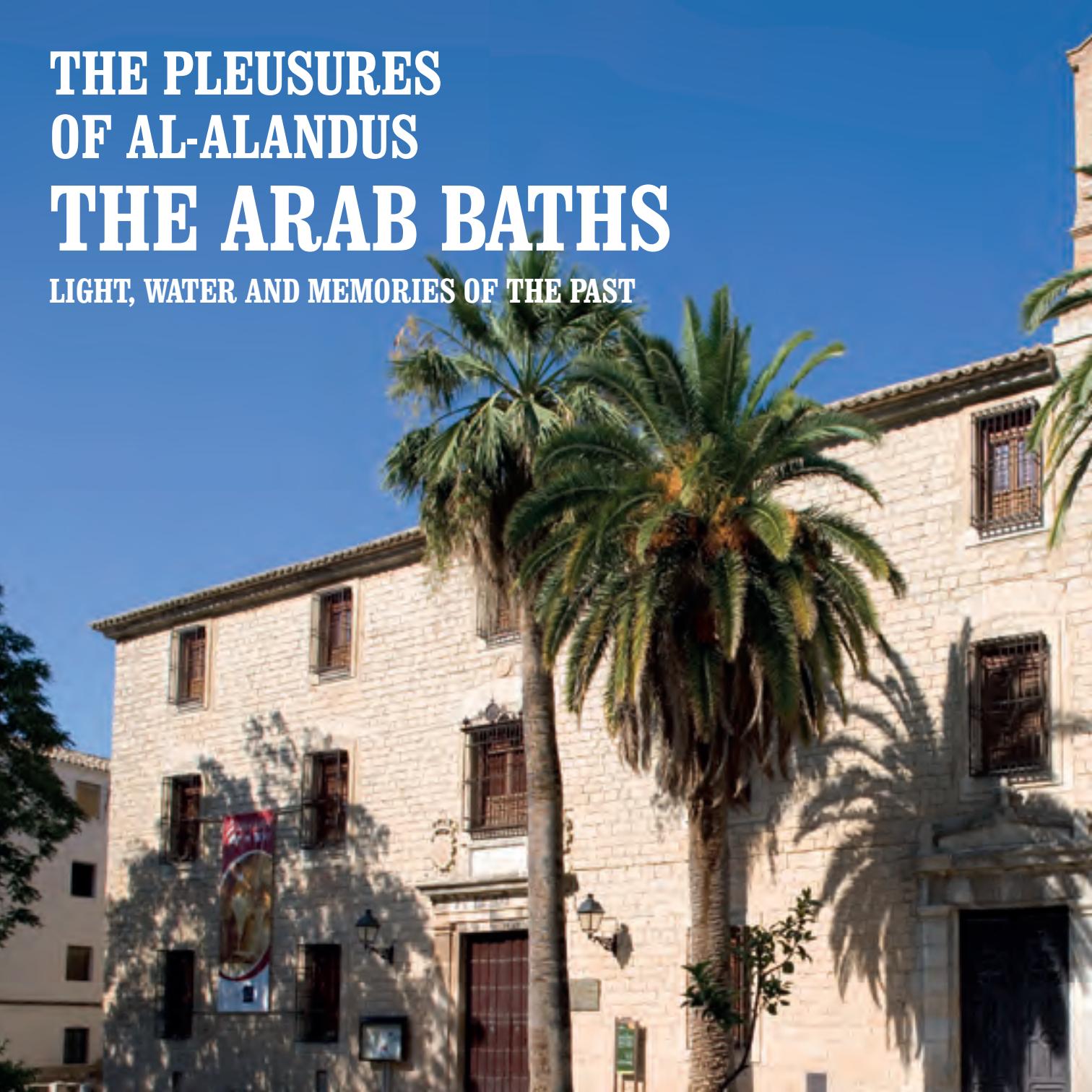
On the inside, the non-cruciform floor plan of the Cathedral is divided into three naves by cross-shaped Corinthian pillars that support a ceiling of pendentive arches, typical of the style of Vandelvira. A single choir, designed by José Gallego, a disciple of Churriguera, interrupts the passage and perspective along the central nave. The interior of the temple is surrounded by seventeen chapels. The sanctuary contains the chapel of San Fernando, dedicated to

Nuestro Padre Jesús Nazareno, affectionately known by the inhabitants of Jaén as “El Abuelo” [the Old Man] and the object of one of the strongest religious devotions in Andalusia. The central chapel houses the Santo Rostro, which is exhibited on Friday mornings. According to the legend, this cloth, fabricated in Gothic style, is one of the three veils that Veronica used to clean the sweat and blood of Jesus during the ascent to Calvary. Other versions state that the Santo Rostro was brought by Saint Eufrasio, to whom Saint Peter had charged the task of evangelising Spain.

The Sacristy and the Chapterhouse number amongst the most magnificent edifications of Renaissance Spain. Beneath these constructions visitors will find the Vault of the Canons, which currently houses the Cathedral Museum. The architectural characteristics of the stairway provide another example of Vandelvira’s genius. The museum exhibits a noteworthy collection of paintings, sculpture and gold and silver articles.

# THE PLEASURES OF AL-ALANDUS THE ARAB BATHS

LIGHT, WATER AND MEMORIES OF THE PAST





The Arab Baths of Jaén were constructed in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. The baths are located in the basement of the Palacio de Villardompardo, which stands between the old quarters of San Juan and La Magdalena. The baths are organised around the cold-water, warm-water and hot-water rooms, in keeping with the Roman *thermae* model

As a monument, the Arab Baths of Jaén are unique in Spain as a result of their artistic value, their architectural layout and their extraordinary state of preservation. The first written record of the Baths appears in the book *Nobleza de Andalucía* [The Nobility of Andalusia], written by Gonzalo Argote de Molina during the reign of Phillip II. Two hundred years later, at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Dean José Martínez de Mazas drew attention to the existence of the Baths. In 1913, Enrique Romero de Torres located the Baths beneath the women's hospice and took sufficient readings to be able to sketch an outline of the first floor. In 1931, the baths were declared a Historical and Artistic Monument.

A few years later, in 1936, the architects Leopoldo Torres Balbás and Luis Berges Martínez began the tasks of removing the rubble and cleaning the site, although their efforts were interrupted by the outbreak of the Civil War. The restoration work was completed by the architect Luis Berges Roldán. In 1984, restoration work concluded. The restoration revealed the most magnificent and best preserved hammans in Spain. In the same year the baths were conferred the Europa Nostra Award, the most prestigious international award for restoration work in a historic building.

The Arab Baths of Jaén are a historical monument. Form many centuries they fell into disuse. The baths were constructed in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, in the transitional period between the fall of the caliphate of Cordoba and its division into various separate kingdoms [taifas]. Don Fernando de Torres y Portugal, Viceroy of Peru, constructed his palace over the hamman at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Part of the baths thereby became the cellar of the palace, whilst the remaining section gradually fell into a state of ruin. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the palace was converted into a women's hospice. In 1901 the building was extended with the construction of a chapel.

The architectural layout of the Arab Baths of Jaén corresponds to the common model of the *thermae* bequeathed by the Romans. The entrance leads into the cold-water room. The warm-water room, the largest of the chambers, has a square floor plan and the central area is covered by a hemispherical cupola supported by eight horseshoe arches. During the restoration work, nearly all the original capitals were recovered and once again rest on the solid columns of the hall. The original floor of the hamman was paved with marble and is now restored to its original glory. The hot-water room, accessed from the warm-water room via a lintelled opening that is a metre wide, is covered by an elongated barrel vault. As is the case in the other rooms, light enters via star-shaped openings in the ceiling that contribute to the unique atmosphere of these baths.

**THE PROVINCIAL  
MUSEUM OF JAÉN**

# **IBERIAN ART**

**PRINCES OF THE ANCIENT ERA**



The Provincial Museum of Jaén houses the largest collection of Iberian sculpture in Spain. The collections of Cerrillo Blanco in Porcuna and El Pajarillo in Huelma form two of the most important representations of the ancient history of Jaén, illustrating centuries of culture in the south of the Iberian Peninsula prior to Roman domination. These exhibits are one of the biggest attractions of the “Journey Back to the Era of the Iberians” tourist initiative. Indeed, the importance of these collections is evidenced by the fact that they will be exhibited in the International Museum of Iberian Art, set to be opened on the site formerly occupied by the Old Prison.

The collection of Sculptures at Cerrillo Blanco, discovered in 1975 in the outskirts of Porcuna, depict the mythical exploits of a noble family. The collection dates back to the 6<sup>th</sup> century before Christ. The sculptures, wherein special attention should be drawn to the Guerrero de la armadura doble [warrior clad in armour], have been grouped according to subject matter: animal metaphor, ancestors, heroic battles and warriors. In addition to these sculptures, the collection also includes an exhibit that bears no relation to the pieces discovered at the Cerrillo Blanco archaeological site: The Bull of Porcuna, dating back to the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. and was apparently created by a different group of



artists. The sculptures of El Pajarillo in Huelma were discovered in an archaeological campaign that took place over the course of the 1990's. The heroic sanctuary of the hill of El Pajarillo, erected in honour of a prince in the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C. narrates the tale of a battle between a hero and a wolf, overseen by two griffins. The collection is housed in the central patio of the Museum, in front of the façade of the old Church of San Miguel, which is attributed to the architect Andrés de Vandelvira. The pieces are displayed at different heights, in keeping with their original layout. Along the ramp, visitors can view the lions, which represent hierarchical power. Amongst the sculptures, special attention should be drawn to the expressiveness of the figure of the wolf, which the hero attempts to slay in order to inscribe his name in the annals of history. Puente Tablas, located no more than ten kilometres from the capital, is the location of another noteworthy archaeological site containing Iberian art.



# CHRONICLE OF A BORDERLAND

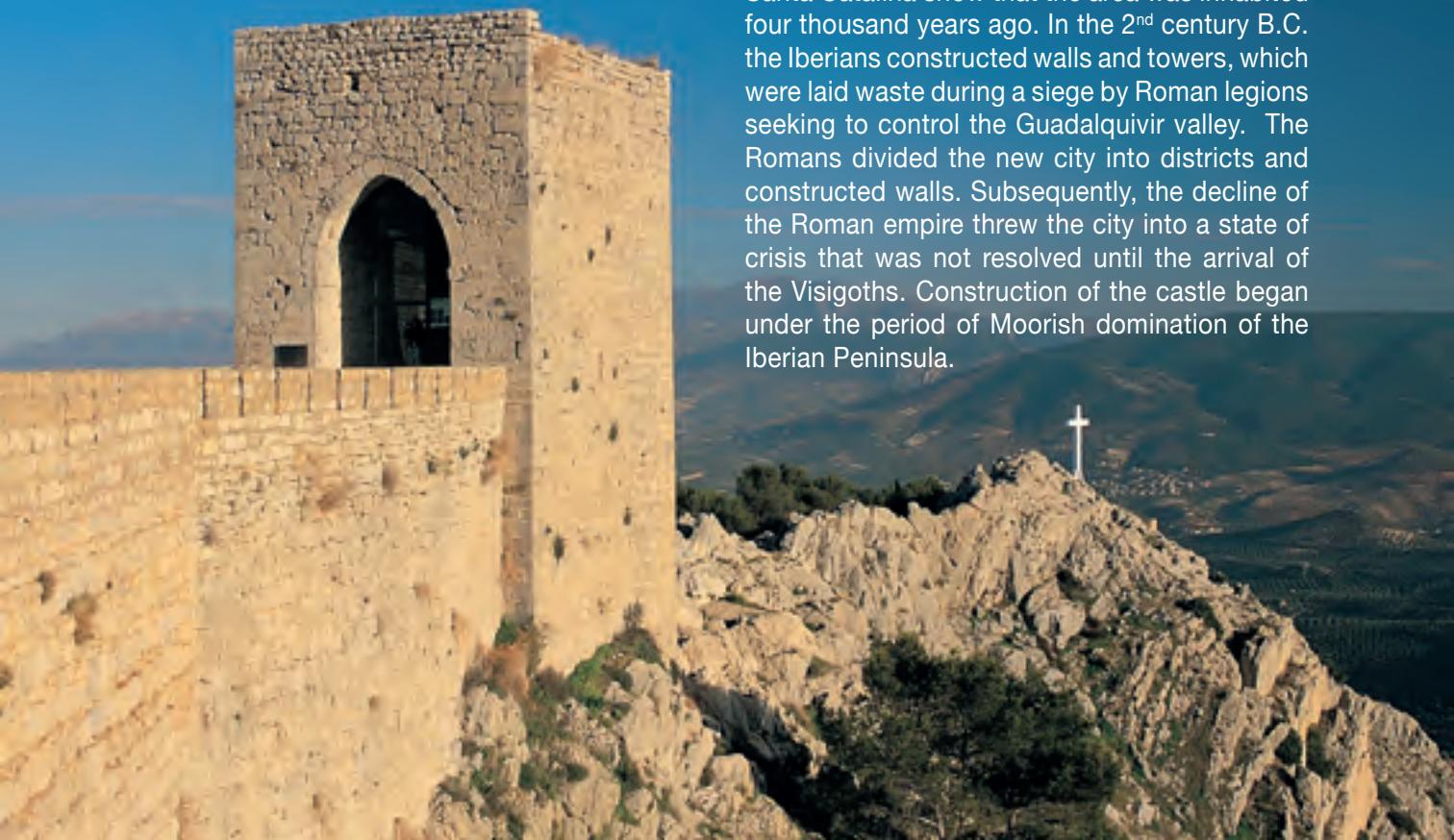
# THE CASTLE OF SANTA CATALINA

## TRACES OF THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD

**T**he Castle is of Moorish origin; however it was strengthened and restructured at the behest of Ferdinand III, subsequent to the Christian conquest of the city in the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The Torre

del Homenaje [keep] and five smaller towers enclose an open-plan courtyard that now houses the visitors centre of the fortress and the city. Visitors can stay in the Parador de Turismo de Santa Catalina [a state-owned hotel].

The last archaeological digs on the hill of Santa Catalina show that the area was inhabited four thousand years ago. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C. the Iberians constructed walls and towers, which were laid waste during a siege by Roman legions seeking to control the Guadalquivir valley. The Romans divided the new city into districts and constructed walls. Subsequently, the decline of the Roman empire threw the city into a state of crisis that was not resolved until the arrival of the Visigoths. Construction of the castle began under the period of Moorish domination of the Iberian Peninsula.



Under the emirate of Abd ar-Rahman II, Jaén became the most important city within a large cora [territorial divisions in al-Andalus]. The governors of the city established their seat in the alcázar viejo [old fortress], the oldest part of the castle, occupied by the parador de turismo [state-owned hotel in a historic building] since the middle of the last century.

Following the victory of the Christian troops in the Battle of Navas de Tolosa, capturing Jaén became an objective of the kings of Castile. Ferdinand III, the Saint, laid siege to the city and in 1246 al-Hamar, the Moorish king of Arjona, declared himself a vassal of the Christian king and handed over Jaén in exchange for permission to found the Nasrid kingdom in Granada.

According to the legend, Santa Catalina de Alejandría [Saint Catherine of Alexandria], one of the patron saints of the cavalry and particularly venerated by the Mozarabs of Jaén, appeared to King Ferdinand in his dreams when he was about to abandon his attempts to seize Jaén. Santa Catalina urged Ferdinand to continue in his endeavour and a few days later he entered the city and placed his coat of arms on the highest tower of the alcázar viejo [old fortress]. The first order issued by the King of Castile involved the construction of a new alcázar [fortress] in the area next to the rocky crest of the hill. The new alcázar [fortress] is what we now refer to as the Castle of Jaén, which now houses a visitors centre that provides information on the history and unique features of the stronghold and other monuments of the capital.





Visitors are initially surprised by the castle's location, which affords stunning views of the surrounding landscape. Few fortresses in Spain offer such a magnificent panorama. The ovaliform floor plan of the castle is flanked by five towers and the imposing Torre del Homenaje [keep], which, within its sturdy stonework walls, houses the reception and conference hall on the ground floor. The castle also houses an audiovisual room which, every half hour, screens a film on a three-dimensional screen wherein the Lagarto de Jaén [Wyrm of Jaén], the most famous of the capital's legends, is the protagonist. The Torre de las Damas [tower] houses an archaeological exhibition and dioramas, whilst the Torre de Santa Catalina [tower] is home to a statue of the patron saint of the city. The Torre Albarrana [tower], connected to the main walls via an arch, contains information panels and touchscreen displays that inform visitors of Jaén's various alluring features and attractions. The Torre de la Vela, or Torre de la Guardia [tower], was constructed in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Following Christian conquest of the stronghold, this tower was incorporated into a pentagonal stonework tower with two storeys. In the past, the battlements of this tower were used to send smoke signals and communicate via fire with other towers in the surrounding area. Inside the tower, visitors are provided with information on the Napoleonic invasion, one of the most dramatic episodes in Spanish history. The French troops, who sacked a large portion of the capital, abandoned Jaén on the 17<sup>th</sup> of September of 1812, but not before bombarding the castle. The period of French occupation also forms a feature of the dungeon of the castle, which contains a figure of Pedro de Alcalde, the leader of a group of rebels who fought against Napoleonic rule.

A stone path leads to the Cross, which stands on the hill's most prominent rocky protrusion.