

THE CASTLE

1.- CASTLE OF BAENA. MILITARY FORTRESS SITE

Baena is located on the site of a former *hisn* (Arabic castle) named *Bayyana*, which already existed in the 9th century. *Bayyana* is associated to the *muladi* rebellion lead by *Umar ibn Hafsun*, who eventually conquered *Bayyana* in 890 AD. In that same year, Emir *Abd Allah* defeated *Umar ibn Hafsun* in *Bulayy* (Aguilar de la Frontera), established the cavalry corps in the *qasbah* of Baena, made the town a *madina* and moved the capital of the *cora* from Cabra to Baena.

Few details are known about Baena during the Caliphate period; we only know it thrived and some of its citizens became famous. When the Caliphate period came to an end, Baena was plundered by Berbers which halted its development.

It is known that a battle took place between the Almohad and Almoravid at the source of river Marbella, by the watering hole in river Luque in 1165. Archaeology research between 2007 and 2010 has discovered traces of a building phase that may be associated to that period, or even earlier.

Baena barely posed resistance to the Christians in August 1241, and hence *Bayyana* became Christian Baena. It was the property of the king during all of the 13th century and most part of the 14th. The successive Trastámara monarchs tried to make it a lordship between 1386 and 1448, which is when the Baena inhabitants acknowledged their dependence. At this time, the fortress started to be rebuilt in order to provide security in a period that was still full of conflict.

2.- DUKES' PALACE (16th century)

Diego Fernández de Córdoba, 3rd Count of Cabra, moved into the castle at the beginning of the 16th century, and started to give the castle a more palatial feel. The Lordship of Baena and County of Cabra were joined by marriage to the Dukedom of Sessa in 1520. By royal decree in 1566, Felipe II declared the estate of Baena, the Dukedom of Baena, hence the Lord of Baena became the Duke of Sessa and Baena. From this time onwards the structure of the fortress site started to change, to adapt it as a place for dwelling, leaving aside the military aspects of the site. The most remarkable changes were the opening of gates and windows in the up to then impenetrable city walls, together with the new layout of spaces generated by the construction of new sections both for the Dukes and their service, such as roofed houses, patios with arcades, and so on. All this was described very well by Valverde and Perales (1902) and Ramírez de Arellano (1904).

3.- ABANDONMENT, THEFT AND WATER DEPOSITS (20th century)

The grounds were used as a palace up to 1897, when the Duke auctioned the building and the estate passed into private ownership. The Duke had abandoned the palace a few years before the auction and the administrators had moved in. They only used the section of the building where the Dukes used to live, while the rest of the castle fell into ruins. It was at this time that the usage of the grounds changed once more. From the original military building which was turned into a palace, it went into decline and the monument was used as a stone quarry to build new houses to extend Baena. Also, between 1927 and 1959, a water deposit was built inside the fortified patio. The works were complex and destroyed all historic structures inside the site, and the ones that survived fell into ruins. This is how we find it today.

4.- ARCHAEOLOGY SITE (2007-2010)

Archaeological work is the first step that the Town Council of Baena has taken in order to regain its most remarkable monument. The project has been split into different periods. The first stage is focused on unburying all the structures that were buried when the water deposits were built and after several structures collapsed at the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th. The second stage is more scientific and has two aims: the analysis of the different layers in the outer walls and archaeological spot probing. Both methods have greatly helped us to identify the different historic periods we describe today.

5.- BAENA CASTLE RESTORATION

The restoration of the Alcazaba in Baena started in 2005 after a phase of studies and archaeological diggings which have enabled us to understand the size of the fortress and the changes it has experienced throughout history.

The aim of the restoration is to integrate the heritage, which considers not only the restoration itself, but also the value of the existing structures and the possibility of cultural usages for the monument. The existing structures have been respected in their present state by accepting the changes implemented throughout history and incorporating other elements which permit the usage and enjoyment of the castle.

A solution was drawn up which allowed for a correct interpretation of the walls profiles and improves the remains that still exist, reintegrating part of the profiles that may have disappeared and unveiling evidence of the different stages of building which took place. The project which is currently in progress involves the monument as a whole. These are the actions in progress:

1. Consolidating and restoring the historic building works and pavements that have been unveiled during diggings.
2. Reusing old water deposits inside the fortified patio of the castle for museum and culture usage.
3. Partially reintegrating towers and walls by rebuilding them with stone and metallic structures so that the new constructions are presented in a contemporary style, easily distinguished from the original structures.
4. Creating areas to incorporate new usages. The regaining of the gate of Puerta del

Campo, located beside the tower known as Torre de los Cascabeles, where an urban lookout point will be situated with a view to the interior of the castle and the town of Baena.

5. The restoration of the former tower known as Torre de las Arqueras; of which there is only written and graphic evidence of its existence. This tower will host the Visitor Center for the Castle-Alcazaba of Baena. The tower roof will be accessible and will offer a view to the whole town and the landscape around it.