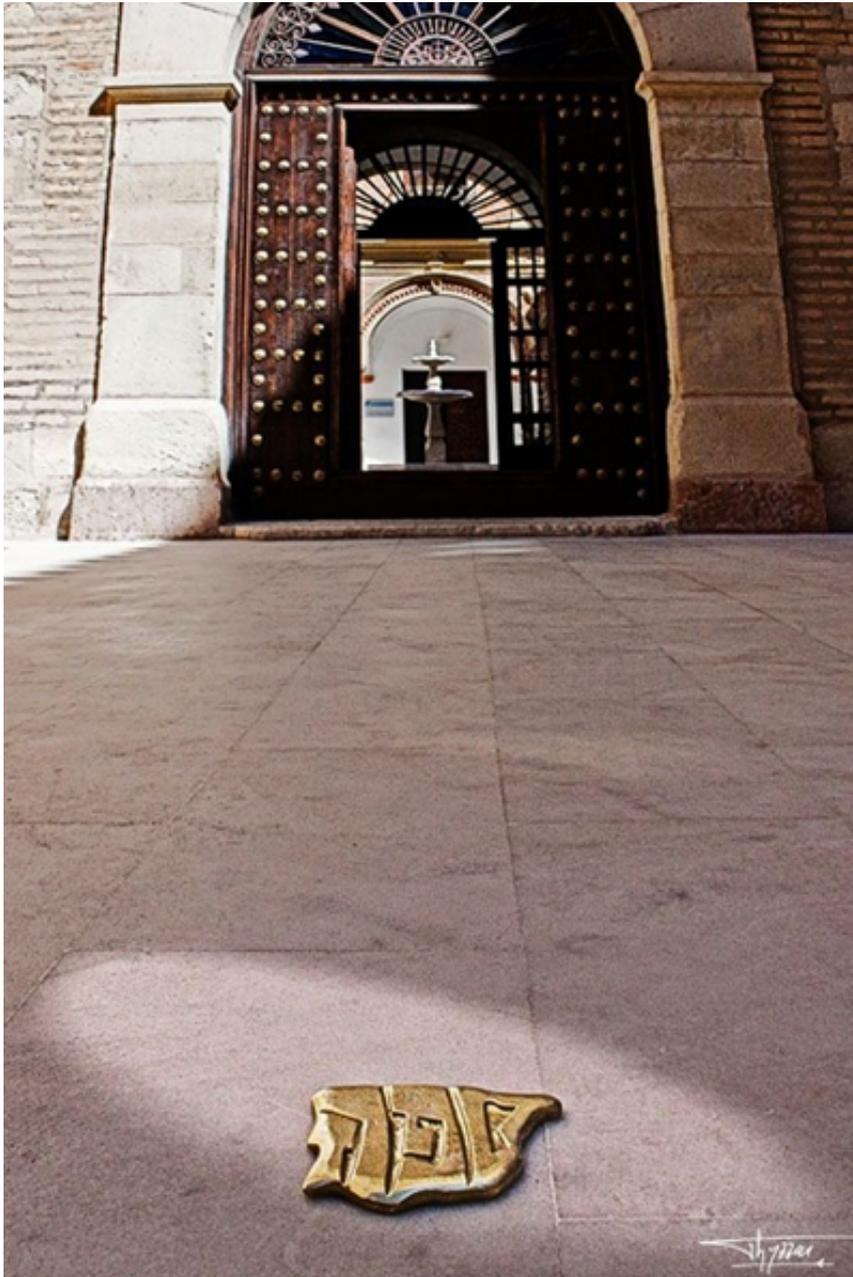


Perla De Sefarad Route



Few Jewish communities established in Al-Andalus, achieved such outstanding fame as Lucena, known as La Perla de Sefarad, and whose cultural splendor can be compared to that reached by the Spanish-Hebrew literary circles of Cordoba and Granada during the Caliphate and the kingdoms of Taifas. All Jewish or Muslim chroniclers before the European Renaissance, describe Lucena as "City of the Jews" during the IX-XII centuries. The first documentary data of Lucena date from the end of the ninth century and it is, from this moment, when we find great documentary abundance about the city of Lucena with information almost exclusively literary and poetic. Lucena hosted within its walls the Academy of Talmudic Studies, meeting point of

great intellectuals, philosophers, poets and doctors of the moment. The famous Jehuda ha Leví and Abraham Ibn Ezra and even Maimonides, among many other poets and rabbis lived there. This city received a large influx of Hebrews fled from the persecutions of Granada and Cordoba throughout the eleventh century, which coincided with the economic and cultural takeoff of the city, giving it the qualification of Perla de Sefarad. These traces of the past have been reinforced by the discovery of a funeral tombstone dedicated to Rabí Amicos, as well as the recent excavation of a large Hebrew necropolis on Cerro Hacho. It is a cemetery of Hebrew ritual composed of more than 350 burials, which makes it the largest in Sepharad. The C-14 tests dates the burials between 1000-1050, confirming itself as the oldest excavated Jewish cemetery in the Peninsula. In this same site the first Jewish tombstone in Andalusia has been discovered. The Necropolis demonstrates the importance of Lucena in this historical period between the Emirate and the end of the Almoravide period. The houses, synagogues and Talmudic school were developed within the walls, delimited by the current Plaza Alta and Baja streets, Las Tiendas street, Canalejas street, Las Torres street and crossed the block of the old convent of Santa Clara in a west-east direction to join and close the defensive fence, again with the Plaza Alta and Baja. Al-Idrisi, in the 12th century after Christ in his comments on the cities they visit refers to the existence of external suburbs of the Muslim population, which had closed the entrance to the interior of the walled enclosure of the medina.

