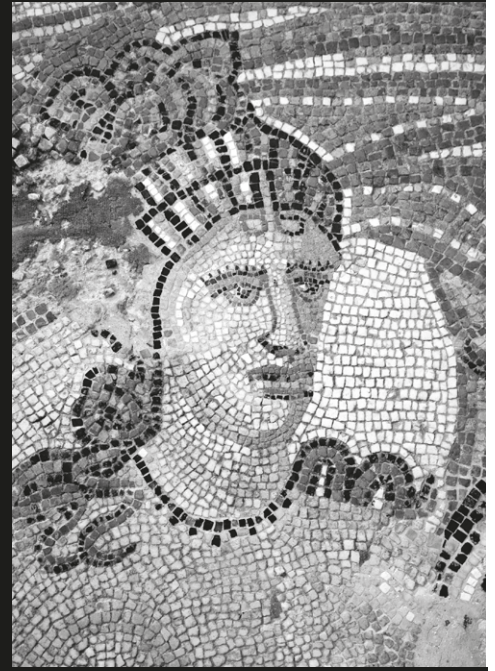


VRLT



ASSET OF CULTURAL INTEREST



Diputación
DE PALENCIA

VRLT Villa Romana
LA TEJADA

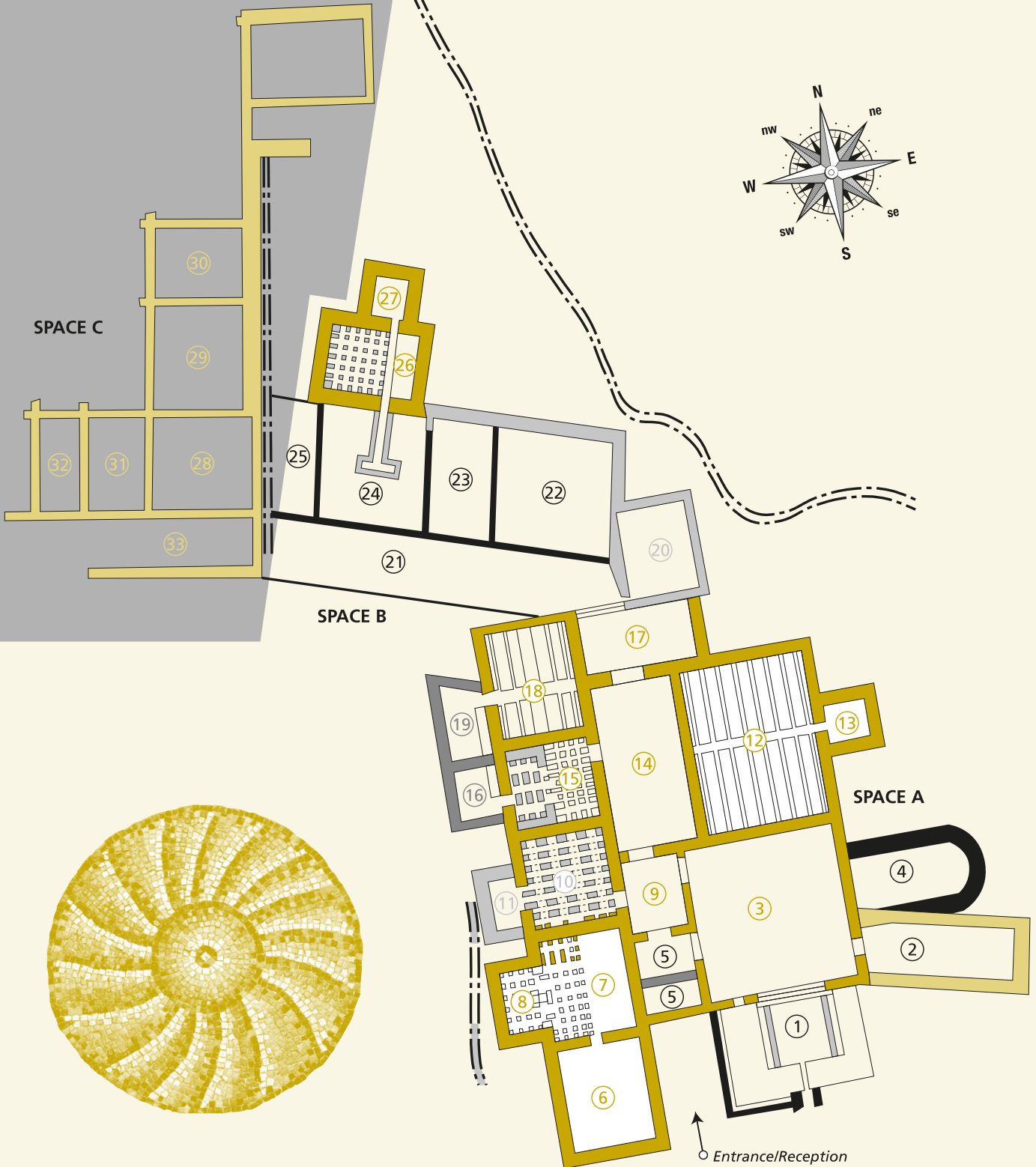
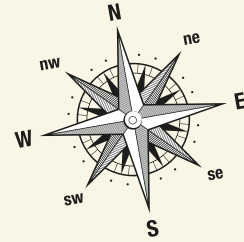
Quintanilla de la Cueva · PALENCIA (Spain)



LA TEJADA

- BRICK
- RIVER STONE
- STONE
- BRICK AND LIMESTONE MASONRY
- LIMESTONE MASONRY
- RAMMED EARTH WALL
- DRAIN PIPE

NO ENTRY AREA



SPACE C

SPACE B

SPACE A

Entrance/Reception



Villa Romana

LA TEJADA

La Tejada Roman villa is an archaeological site located in Quintanilla de la Cueva, Cervatos de la Cueva borough (Province of Palencia, Spain) and is situated next to a hill, in a plot known as "La Tejada", northwestern of the village, about 500 meters from the right bank of the river Cueva which joins the river Carrion near Villoldo.

It is another good example that testifies the rural way of life of high class owners (*potentiores*) in agricultural landholdings in the Castilian meseta during de Late Roman Empire.

It seems clear that there had been a settlement since the 2nd century a. D., that reached its peak at the end of the 3rd century and during the 4th century a. D., and finally in the 5th century the villa collapsed. It's about a country state or "*fundi*" of the late roman world that lived an splendid time until it was progressively abandoned.

Since its discovery in 1970, successive excavation campaigns have been done, which have exposed some ranges of hypocausts or underfloor heating system that may reveal the evidence of a Bath complex connected with the mansion of a roman villa which has not been excavated so far, very similar to those existing in the castilian meseta in the Late Roman Empire Era.

From 1970 up to now, the Provincial Council of Palencia has been responsible for the excavations and consolidation of the mosaics "in situ" and has built a coverage building for the visitors.

Excavations were carried out from 1971 to 1974, resuming again in 1976 and ending in 1978, the year when consolidation works of mosaics began, led by D. Miguel Ángel García Guinea, director of the Museum of Prehistory and Archeology of Santander.

STRUCTURE OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE

The excavated area shows a Bath complex or *Balnea* of a large Roman mansion that was erected only a few meters away, only a part of the total extension would occupy the villa, which apparently was extended northwest of the known constructions. It is divided into three different blocks with more than 32 rooms.

- **Rooms:** Thirteen rooms arranged on a north-south axis, with walls of limestone and lime mortar, mixing with row of bricks. In this area there is a swimming pool, which apparently descends from room 3, through a few steps. Covered with reddish mortar, it is likely to be the *Frigidarium* -cold bath area-. It still preserves a water drain out of lead. Almost all the rooms of this set had mosaics. The room 4 lies below the floor of the rest and is closed with segmental arch.
- **Corridor:** The second block of structures is arranged along a wide corridor (No. 21), oriented from east to west, in whose northern area six rooms are paved with mosaic.
- **Other dependencies:** The third block is a set of rooms, maybe warehouses, with a perfect square-shaped design and with an approximate north-south orientation. (Numbers 28 to 33).

In general, foundation walls were made with a boulder seat of rounded stones on the floor which supported the masonry wall. On it, there was an adobe mud wall. The dividing walls were formed by a base of rounded stones and adobe wall. In some rooms, usually those destined to furnaces, the masonry wall was mixed with bricks, or this one with a mortar of stones and tiles.

The noblest dependences had, generally, stuccos with mural paintings of geometric decorations, vegetables or imitating marbles. Hypocausts and mosaic floors stand out of the remains found for their abundance and variety.

HIPOCAUSTUM

A remarkable peculiarity of this villa is the significant abundance of rooms whose floor is raised on pillars of diverse organization, tended to maintain the floor in *suspensurae*, to warm the pavement with hot air. It is the precedent of the classic Castilian glories or underfloor heating systems, the so called *hipocaustum* in the Roman villas.

The furnace, built with masonry walls and layers of adobe separated by layers of lime and sand, is usually placed on the outer wall of the room, leaving a hole for the channel of hot air which is generated by burning wood or straw. In some cases it supplies two rooms.

The variety of these hypocausts and their conservation is quite exceptional, and it is of special interest in La Tejada. In a little space of construction we have different types of air conduction and different types of construction and placement of bricks and channels to take the heat to the different rooms with mosaic floors.

Mosaics and floors

Mosaics are one of the most significant archaeological and artistic richness of La Tejada, although many of them have disappeared, probably due to the looting of bricks of the hypocausts, and others were found partly damaged on its surface.

The most outstanding mosaics are those of "four petal flowers", "The Four Seasons", "octagons and ovals", "Solomon's knots", "swastikas", "Mosaic of the Fishes", "Neptune" and "Leda and the Swan".

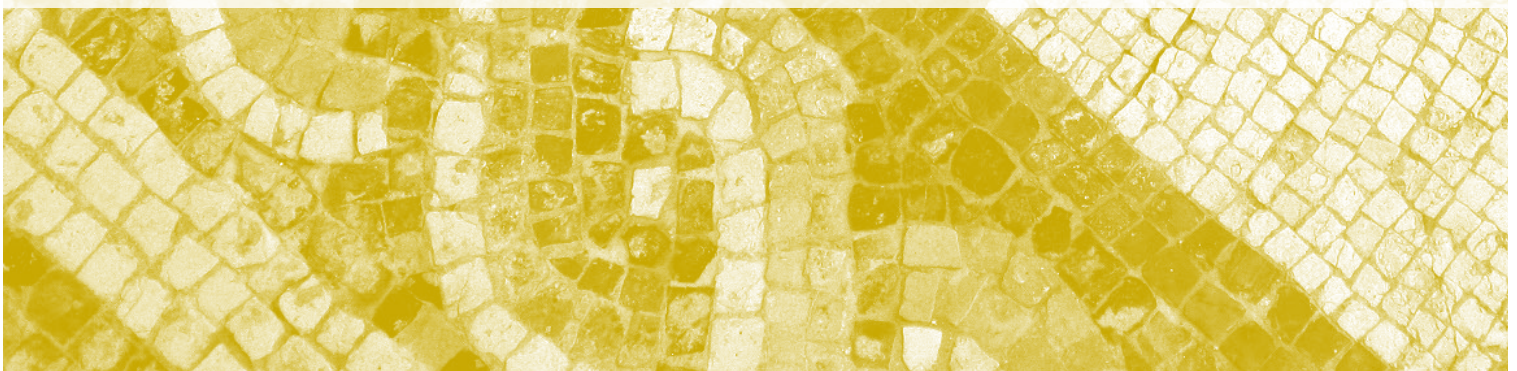
Figurative scenes include aquatic animals and dolphins, or different sea animals, shells and crustaceans, or the large head of Ocean goodness whose beard is preserved. Also, there are some human busts connected with the allegory of the four seasons, still well preserved the Autumn and almost complete the Winter.

Other mosaics have geometric designs that complete figurative scenes or even they are represented in several rooms, such as swastikas, diamonds and Solomon's knots, scattered with scales, petals, scrolls or roses of the winds.

The work of Opus Tessellatum in La Tejada have a wide range of colours from beige to ocher, blue, green and yellow, together with black and white that gives an exceptional decorative atmosphere, both in design and in topic focussed on the sea motives.

Archaeological collection

The excavations have provided fine tableware, terra sigillata of the third and fourth centuries a.D. and several coins minted between the first and fourth centuries a.D.



Villa Romana
LA TEJADA



 **LOCATION**

Quintanilla de la Cueva / Cervatos de la Cueva / Palencia
N-120 KM 214

 **GEOLOCATION**

Latitude: 42.302205

Length: -4.8077494

INFORMATION

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