

# MananTa





The Holy Week of Puente Genil, colloquially known as “la Mananta”, is one of the most important and peculiar expressions of popular religious fervour in Andalusia.

Beyond the commemoration of the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Christ, the Mananta leaves its unique mark on Puente Genil and becomes unforgettable for those who visit it for the first time. It is, without questions a festivity of sensations where everything seems to merge in an apparent and even contradictory disorder. That is where most of its mystery and charm lies.



# To understand the Mananta

The Mananta is the great festival of participation because it is a festivity of the people.

The weight of tradition must also be considered here. The Mananta has been forged over hundreds of years and it is a traditional celebration because its customs have been kept and handed down from one generation to the next.

Under this guise, the reader of this small guide will find the fundamental information needed to approach and understand the outpouring of faith and emotions that the Mananta represent.



# LENT

Foto suai'2002

The prelude of the Holy Week of Puente Genil is the anticipated Lent period, which is stringently adhered to Puente Genil. It starts on Lardy Thursday, previous to Ash Wednesday. Thus, a 40-day period begins, marked by religious celebrations, named after their length, Triduum or Quinaries, organized by "Cofradías" and "Hermandades" in honour of their symbolic crests.

Lent is symbolized by the curious representation of popular imagery. One such image is an old woman holding a codfish in one hand and a basket with herrings and vegetables in the other. This image depicts the lady with seven legs coming out of her skirt. As an authentic calendar of Lent, the old woman represents a particular measurement of time, counting weeks not by days but by Saturdays.

Introduced between the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century by “La Judea” Corporación Bíblica, it is the faithful image of the capacity of adaptation and syncretism of the mananta, because its origins and most influential regions are located in some areas of Catalonia, the Basque Country and the Balearics.

However, the “Sábados de Romanos” (Roman’s Saturdays) are the most peculiar event of our Lent. The “subida a Jesús” (the ascent to Jesus) takes place every Lent Saturday and lasts until Palm Sunday. On that night, to the sound of “pasodobles” played by the Imperio Romano band, the brothers of the corporación head a procession, preceded by flares and dressed in colourful habit. A crowd goes along with them in their parade from the barrio bajo (historical downtown) to the “Explanada del Calvario”, where the “Ntro. Padre Jesús Nazareno” Chapel is located, and where the traditional Miserere is performed.

Along the procession, each of the corporaciones congregate in a specific area and walk slowly to the “Calvario” (Stations of the Cross) talking in a friendly manner, sharing “uvita” (a kind of grape wine) and singing Cuarteleros, those simple and dialogued flamenco verses sung at processions during the Holy Week that reach the hearts of those who listen to them and become prayers for pontanos (the people from Puente Genil).

Back in the Cuartel, a brother pulls up one of the old woman’s legs in a ritual that takes several shapes depending on each corporación, but in all of them this represents the peak of the “sábados de romanos”.

It’s during Lent that it is possible to understand the fervour of these people and their passion for the Holy Week. It is also at this time that visitors tend to feel that there is something inexplicable in all this. Astonishment, shock, admiration, rejection...in any case, nobody regards this festivity with indifference.

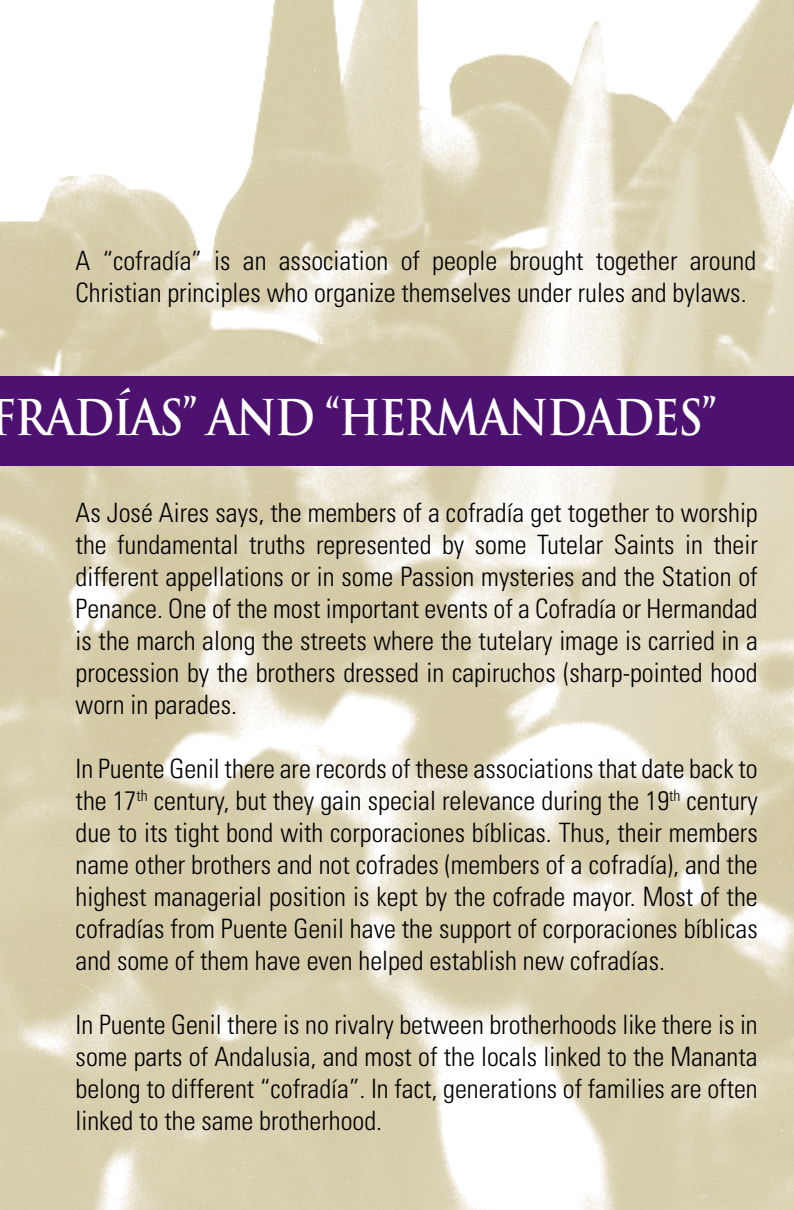




THE “CO





A background image showing a person wearing a white, sharp-pointed hood (capirucho) over their head. The person is wearing a white garment, and the image is partially obscured by a dark purple horizontal band. The overall tone is warm and slightly blurred.

A “cofradía” is an association of people brought together around Christian principles who organize themselves under rules and bylaws.

## FRADÍAS” AND “HERMANDADES”

As José Aires says, the members of a cofradía get together to worship the fundamental truths represented by some Tutelar Saints in their different appellations or in some Passion mysteries and the Station of Penance. One of the most important events of a Cofradía or Hermandad is the march along the streets where the tutelary image is carried in a procession by the brothers dressed in capiruchos (sharp-pointed hood worn in parades).

In Puente Genil there are records of these associations that date back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, but they gain special relevance during the 19<sup>th</sup> century due to its tight bond with corporaciones bíblicas. Thus, their members name other brothers and not cofrades (members of a cofradía), and the highest managerial position is kept by the cofrade mayor. Most of the cofradías from Puente Genil have the support of corporaciones bíblicas and some of them have even helped establish new cofradías.

In Puente Genil there is no rivalry between brotherhoods like there is in some parts of Andalusia, and most of the locals linked to the Mananta belong to different “cofradía”. In fact, generations of families are often linked to the same brotherhood.

# THE “CORPORACIONES” AND

The processional parades in Puente Genil are accompanied by “las figuras”, they represent the characters from the Old and New Testament, and others which symbolize aspects of Christian theology.

These characters in the parade, with their “rostrillos” (covers for the face) and external symbols that make them recognizable, are called “martirios” (martyrdoms), because many of them symbolize the objects that they were tortured with.

The origin of the biblical figures is recorded in the old books of the Nuestro Padre Jesús Nazareno “Cofradía” around 1664. Some of the figures mentioned are: the Evangelists, the Apostles, the “Jetones”, Allegories of the Faith and Religion which are all part of the common bond of this Brotherhood, the most unique Cofradía because it worships the Patron Saint of the City.

Other towns also had this manifestation of popular religiosity but it was banned by the Decrees of the erudite Bishops of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and it ended up disappearing. This was not the case in Puente Genil, which did not lose this sign of its identity despite the warnings of excommunication on this matter.



# D THEIR "FIGURAS"



In the latter third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century these figure-associations became independent from the mother “Cofradías” and the “corporaciones” were founded as we know them today. They take their names from the characters or biblical verses they represent, and the “cofradías penitenciales” that march do so in an interspersed way.

In essence, “corporaciones” are male associations or societies, who call one another “brothers”. They are governed by sets of bylaws and have a headquarters, known as “cuartel”. Their main objective is to contribute to the splendour of the Holy Week.

From Holy Wednesday on, the biblical figures invade the Puente Genil’s streets accompanying the processions. The Apostles, Moses, Pontius Pilate, Mary Magdalene, Salome, Caifas and Cirineo stage the biblical world as in a great open air set.



# THE “CORP AND T “FIGU



Among all the corporaciones, the “Imperio Romano” stands out. Symbolizing the historical power, this corporación takes its banners through the Puente Genil’s streets, “leading” the processions from Maundy Thursday evening on. They are all dressed in colourful and luxurious costumes with embroidered gems and gold.

This corporación is formed from five squads, each composed of 12 Romans, a flag, a banner, a captain, chiefs and officers. This formation is followed by a music band. Its origins date back to 1871 when “los pajizos” (the straw-coloured ones) and “los coloraos” (the red-coloured ones) merged.

The Roman Empire corporación is the most important among Puente Genil’s corporaciones, and their common element is the cuartel.



## THE CUARTEL

All Corporaciones have their “Cuartel”. This is the lodging of “mananteros” (Holy Week lovers) during the Holy Week and their usual meeting place during the year. Its name has several possible origins: it could stem from hundreds of years ago when such names were given to the different quarters or districts of the cities. Another possible origin is a military one, due do it is only for men.

“Cuarteles” have existed for a long time. According to a document from 1721, their brothers used to have their brotherhood meals, sometimes inside the very temples, something that was banned by the bishops.

At the beginning, “corporaciones” did not have permanent headquarters. During Lent and Holy Week, they used to use mills or cellars as meeting points and changed them from time to time.

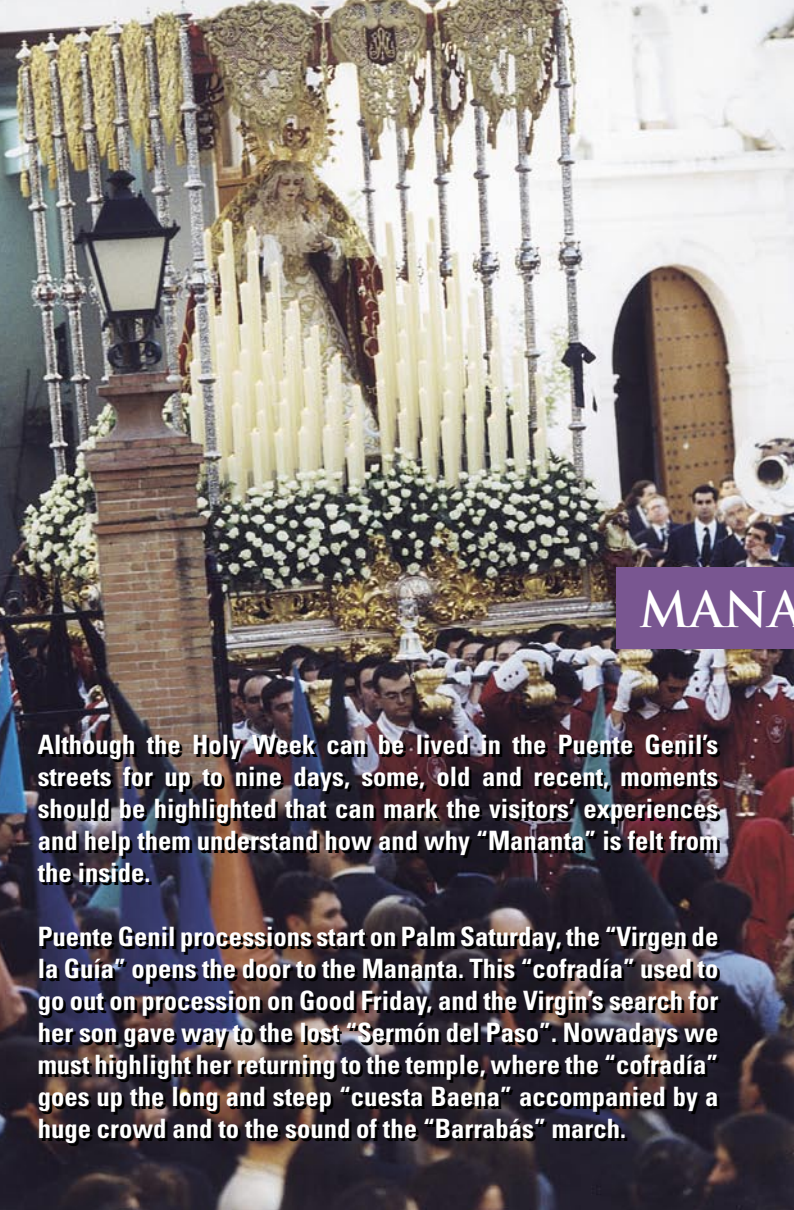


All “Cuarteles”, no matter whether they were new construction buildings or renovated houses, have a common structure, with some essential rooms: a wide hall or reception room, a big dining-room for meetings and meals, kitchen, larder, bathrooms and, if it possible, an interior courtyard.

It is in the big dining-room where life develops inside the cuartel. There is a long table with the same number of chairs as brothers in the “Corporación”. The walls are decorated with many graphical objects, the true “manantero” records of those present and absent, the “Vieja Cuaresmera”, poems, brother’s caricatures, etc.

As the true heritage of Puente Genil, the Cuartel represents the central axis of the “Mananta”, its driving force and spirit. When examining the “Cuartel” from an anthropological, religious or cultural point of view, we find the greater part of the special nature of the Holy Week.





MANA

Although the Holy Week can be lived in the Puente Genil's streets for up to nine days, some, old and recent, moments should be highlighted that can mark the visitors' experiences and help them understand how and why "Mananta" is felt from the inside.

Puente Genil processions start on Palm Saturday, the "Virgen de la Guía" opens the door to the Mananta. This "cofradía" used to go out on procession on Good Friday, and the Virgin's search for her son gave way to the lost "Sermón del Paso". Nowadays we must highlight her returning to the temple, where the "cofradía" goes up the long and steep "cuesta Baena" accompanied by a huge crowd and to the sound of the "Barrabás" march.

However, if visitors want to learn about the religious historical, cultural or artistic aspects, they should attend the pregón (opening speech) that takes place on Palm Sunday. It is here that they will be able to find answers to some of the questions set out by the Holy Week of Puente Genil.



## TA MOMENTS

Beginning on Monday, leavings and returnings from and to the Temple mark the life of the city. They are all special but we cannot miss the leaving, on Holy Monday, of the “Sagrada Cena de Jesús” y “La Cofradía María Santísima del Amor” and how it walks through Adriana Morales Street, this one, together with Santos Street, star in the processions of the “Cofradía del Calvario” on Holy Tuesday.

Visitors just can find here in these two streets the procession’s “pasos” closer than ever and they will truly feel that Puente Genil’s Holy Week is a “planned mess”.

We also strongly recommend Holy Wednesday’s evening and night, with the traditional shouts of “viva” to the “Humilde” or the canticles to the María Santísima de la Amargura Virgin. “Cuarteles” take the streets and add colour to processions and the first “figuras” show up. That day the Holy Week traditionally starts for many “Mananteros”.



It is a Holy Week celebration that moves its vital centre to the “barrio bajo” (historical downtown), when the “Corporación Imperio Romano” goes out for the first time in Don Gonzalo Street, conquering the Puente Genil’s streets from that point on. Up until dawn, the “Cofradías” of “El Preso”, “la Columna”, “Vera Cruz” and “María Santísima de la Esperanza” march along streets and squares and mark the transition towards the awaited Diana (a musical composition).



This Diana is one of the most anticipated moments of the Holy Week. When Good Friday is dawning, a crowd gathers in the “Plaza del Calvario” waiting for the leaving of the Temple of Jesus of Nazareth. Once on the open area, the “Corporación Imperio Romano” that has marched through the streets to the sound of “pasodobles”, bursts in among the crowd and pays tribute to Jesus, interpreting the Diana. This musical

composition was played for the first time on March, 26<sup>th</sup> 1869 and is the example of the relevance that music has at the Holy Week of Puente Genil. This peculiar music composed by local musicians provides our city with a first-class musical heritage.

“Antonio Aguilar y Cano”, a local historian, described in the latter third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the beginning of Good Friday:

*“This station is considered the best and most luxurious of the Holy Week due to the devotion everyone has to Jesus, considered the Patron Saint of the city. His leaving from the Temple is highly expected from the first hours of the night. Around three in the morning many devotees of Jesus start gathering around the Chapel and they provide this special location with a singular aspect and character.[...] Just when the black of night gives way to dawn, the sound of music and a drum roll is heard in the city...banners and flags show up in Amargura Street, as well as the “cofradías’s” bell, the parish cross, the clergy and lastly, the very luxurious “romanos” appear preceded by the music and accompanied by flares and they go up the hill in a colourful formation until they reach the very door of the Chapel”.*

After that, the procession will go forth and arrive to Santa Catalina Street where “reverencias” will take place.



"Reverencias" makes reference to the "figuras" custom of presenting, in front Jesus, the martyrdom or attribute they hold in their hands, raising them in a three-motion move given that the kneeling down was lost. This originally just took place in Santa Catalina Street, where in the morning, all these figures arrived and stood in front of Jesus of Nazareth. Nowadays, this takes place not only in Santa Catalina, but also in the portico of "el Calvario" Chapel before the entrance of Jesus of Nazareth.



After the entrance of the Patron Saint, visitors, having not yet rested, must walk quickly to witness Good Friday's night procession. The "cofradías" of "Cristo en su Buena Muerte", "Santa Cruz", "María Santísima de las Angustias", "San Juan" and la "Soledad" march through the historical downtown, while the "Corporación Imperio Romano" black feathers and the sounds of "Gloria al Muerto" (Glory to the Dead One) take over the night.





This is the night of Apostles because the members of this “Corporación”, accompanied by Evil and Death, dressed in scruffy black habits and high “picuruchos” (sharp-pointed hoods worn in procession), play roaring drums and singing “saetas cuarteleras” that raise as prayers of the disciples to the Master.

“Mananta” has some rest time on Saturday, which is represented by the calmness brought on by “El Sepulcro”, one of the oldest “cofradías” of Puente Genil. They have an extremely serious procession and many people attend; this is undoubtedly the prelude to the perfect end of the Holy Week represented by Easter Sunday.



Marching along with the “Señor Resucitado Cofradía”, all Corporaciones, including the Imperio Romano, parade through the long and wide Matallana Avenue, thus proving that Mananta is still alive.