

# HISPANIA UNDER THE ROMANS

## TEXT 1

### Why did the Romans occupy the Iberian Peninsula?

The wars between Rome and Carthage in the western Mediterranean (the Punic Wars) led to the Roman occupation of the Iberian Peninsula.

At the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC, Carthage was a sea power and controlled the western Mediterranean. Rome was beginning to expand and the two cities competed for control of the lands around the sea.

The confrontation took place on the Iberian Peninsula, which was then taken over by the winning faction, the Romans.

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC, two Roman armies landed in Emporion (Empúries, Girona) to face the Carthaginians. This marked the beginning of the Roman conquest of the Iberian Peninsula.

Under Rome, the Peninsula, known as Hispania, was divided into provinces and its peoples adopted a Roman way of life. The Romans exploited large agricultural properties and mines and built large cities.

The Romans ruled the Peninsula until the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD, when Germanic tribes started to invade Hispania. One of them, the Visigoths, formed a kingdom and remained in power for more than 200 years.



## TEXT 2

### The Romanisation of Hispania

Over time, the people of Hispania adopted the language, laws, beliefs and customs of the Romans. The Hispanians became an integral part of the Roman world. This process is known as Romanisation, the complete integration of a territory into Roman culture.

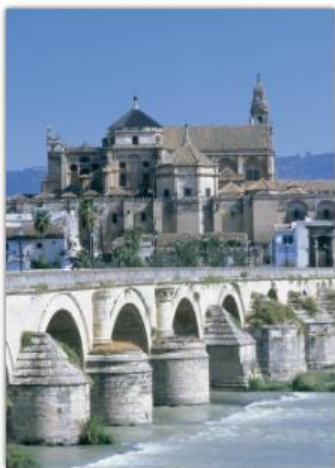
The Romans occupied the Iberian Peninsula for over seven centuries and many examples of art and culture from this period still remain.

Despite the passage of time, the Romanisation of the Peninsula forms an important part of Spain's artistic heritage.

The remains of cities and villas, roads, monuments, theatres, baths, amphitheatres, bridges and aqueducts all tell us about the customs and beliefs of the Hispano-Romans and how they lived.


The most spectacular Roman remains are their large public buildings. These include **circuses** (Mérida and Tarragona), **theatres** (Mérida and Sagunto), **amphitheatres** (Mérida and Tarragona), **baths** (Barcelona and Mérida), **walls** (Lugo), **aqueducts** (Segovia and Tarragona) and **bridges** (Alcántara and Mérida).

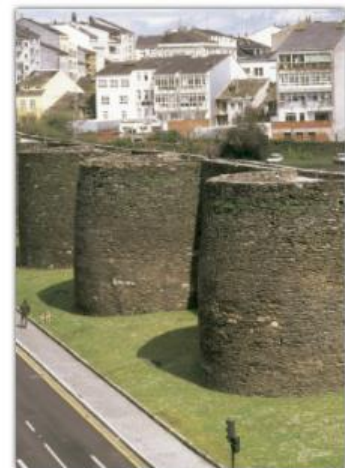
There were also commemorative constructions, such as **triumphal arches** (Bará in Tarragona, and Medinaceli, in Soria), **temples** (Mérida) and **funerary monuments** (Zaragoza and Tarragona).



 Roman bridge over the Guadalquivir at Corduba (Córdoba).



 Roman amphitheatre at Tarraco (Tarragona).



 The Roman walls of Lucus Augusti (Lugo).