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Preface

In 169/168 BC, Marcus Claudius Marcellus, then sole praetor of Hispania, founded the Latin colony of Corduba, which would later be called *Colonia Patricia*—i.e., “Colony of the Fathers” or “Colony of the State”—when it received the last contingent of Roman citizens under Augustus. This brought to an end the pre-Roman period during which Turdetan Cordoba had served as the main economic, urban, cultural, and territorial nucleus of the middle Guadalquivir Valley. Situated in the heart of Tartessos, at the exact point where the two Tartessian domains of the Guadalquivir and Guadiana valleys meet in the Sierra Morena mountain range, Cordoba embarked upon a long historical process with Rome that would continue from antiquity to the Middle Ages until the al-Andalus period. An intermediate time links these two realities, late antiquity and the Visigoth period, which were of enormous importance for the future of the city.

Due to its privileged location on the banks of the Guadalquivir River, as well as its important land and river connections, rich metalliferous deposits in the heart of the sierra, fertile countryside, and strategic position, Cordoba had been a distinguished and much desired city since the Tartessian period during the final stage of the Bronze Age. With the foundation of Corduba, the Romans ensured their military control and defence of the riches and waterways between the plateau and the sea in the southernmost part of the Iberian Peninsula. Roman Corduba, next to the old Tartessian city, undoubtedly provided a stronghold for the Romanization of a Baetica that, possessing a literary tradition of more than 6,000 years according to Strabo, quickly and easily embraced Latin to the point of almost forgetting the ancestral linguistic origins of its inhabitants within a very short time.

The Romanization of Baetica was possible thanks to the mutual interest and benefit gained by both the Hispanic and Roman nobility: some prospered and promoted themselves, while others negotiated and gained power from their land holdings and the multiple resources they offered. This social phenomenon was similar to what Cordoba would experience eight and a half centuries later when the Arabs settled in the city and adapted its name as Qurṭuba. The coexistence of the Visigoth nobility with the incoming Umayyad rulers initiated a new historical process in which the Romanization of Hispania and its incorporation into the lands of the Roman Empire, deeply marked by the Germanic invasions in the 5th century, would continue in part in the Umayyad al-Andalus, although now with a different model of production in which the process of Arabization, led by the recently established state, would open a new chapter in the city's history.