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## Trades in Numidia from Latin Epigraphy: The Example of *Cirta*, *Cuicul* and *Thamugadi*.

### Les métiers en Numidie d'après l'épigraphie latine : L'Exemple de *Cirta*, *Cuicul* et *Thamugadi*

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#### Abstract:

Trades were, and still are part of the daily life of any society and in particular reflect its economic aspect. As far as the Roman period is concerned, Algeria, like its neighbors, has seen a great deal of interest in archaeological research, especially in the urban environment. Many discoveries have been made, notably Latin inscriptions of all kinds. Pagan epitaphs beginning with the formula DMS make up the greatest number of these funerary inscriptions, which are invaluable documents that tell us about people's social lives, and bear witness to the diversity of professional activities and the economic dynamics of these urban centers during the Roman era. In this paper, we attempt to provide an insight into the various trades - craft, administrative, agricultural, commercial, domestic and artistic - and the status of the people who practiced them in Numidian towns such as *Cirta*, the administrative capital, *Cuicul*, a medium-sized town, and *Thamugadi*, the model for a Roman colony. This choice is justified by the greater number of inscriptions.

**Key words:** trades, Latin, epigraphy, Numidia

#### Résumé:

Les métiers faisaient et font toujours partie de la vie quotidienne de toute société et reflètent en particulier son aspect économique. Concernant la période romaine, l'Algérie à l'instar des pays voisins a connu un grand intérêt des recherches archéologiques, surtout dans le milieu urbain. En effet beaucoup de découvertes ont été faites, notamment les inscriptions latines en tous genres. Les épitaphes païennes commençant par la formule DMS, constituent le plus grand nombre. Ces inscriptions funéraires sont un document très précieux qui nous renseignent sur la vie sociale des personnes, et témoignent de la diversité des activités professionnelles et des dynamiques économiques de ces centres urbains pendant l'époque romaine. Nous essayons à travers ce papier de faire connaître les différents métiers, artisanaux, administratifs, agricoles, commerciaux, domestiques et artistiques, le statut des personnes qui les exerçaient, dans des villes de la Numidie telles que *Cirta* Capitale administrative, *Cuicul* ville de taille moyenne et *Thamugadi*, modèle d'une colonie romaine. Ce choix est justifié par le nombre d'inscriptions plus élevé.

**Mots-clés :** métiers, épigraphie, latine, Numidie

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**Introduction:**

Trades and crafts have always been an integral part of the daily life of any society, reflecting in particular its economic aspect. During the Roman period, Algeria aroused great interest in archaeological research, particularly in urban areas. Numerous discoveries were made, in particular those relating to Latin inscriptions of various types. These include a large number of pagan epitaphs, characterized by the addition of the *DMS* formula. As well as commemorating the deceased, these inscriptions are also precious documents that tell us about people's social lives.

Although epigraphic documentation is abundant in the African provinces, it is clear that the inscriptions rarely allude to the world of work and those involved in it. Indeed, these documents often take the form of brief funerary texts that perpetuate the memory of the deceased, indicating his name and lineage, but rarely the trade he explicitly practiced. Most occupations are identified through *cognomina*, which sometimes make it difficult to identify them, as it is rare for an epitaph to contain an individual quality.

In this paper, we intend to raise awareness of the various trades that we classify by category<sup>1</sup>, to determine the status of the people who practiced them and to assign a date. We have chosen cities in Numidia that were major urban centers: *Cirta* (Constantine), *Cuicul* (Djemila) and *Thamugadi* (Timgad). We bore in mind the names of trades that we were able to find in the *cognomina*, as inscriptions that clearly mention profession names are rare. However, should they be taken into account, given that the *cognomen* was assigned at birth? Were they allocated on the basis of the trade of a member of the deceased's family, such as his father or grandfather? It is true that not all *cognomina* associated with professions can be considered to truly reflect the profession of the person concerned, so we mention them with great caution.

Most of these inscriptions are simple epitaphs, with very few dedications or votive inscriptions. They are engraved on various monuments, altars, square rectangular stelae with rounded or triangular tops, caissons and bases. Finally, to summarize the data collected for the purposes of this study, we have drawn up tables classified by professional category, with inscription numbers following the order established in the text. Illustrations<sup>2</sup>, showing some of the inscriptions will be included at the end

**1. State of the Question:**

The exploration of professions in the Roman era has always been a significant area of research for historians and archaeologists. Investigations have focused on various aspects, such as the required skills, working conditions, and the position of trades within Roman society. The issues addressed in this field mainly involve general studies on Roman professions (Monteix et Tran, 2011) and specific analyses geared towards specific sectors such as workmanship (Chardon-Picault, 2010; Tran, 2007: 119-141), trade and financial activities (Andreau, 1987). Investigations have also been conducted on guilds and professional corporations to better understand their role in regulating professions (Waltzing, 1968), establishing quality standards and protecting their members' interests.

Regional studies, such as that carried out by E. Frezouls (Frezoules, 1991: 33-72), have compiled the names of trades found in the epigraphy of Gaul and Germania. In addition, further research, such as the one by G. Boulvert (Boulvert, 1970), has provided considerable detail on the

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<sup>1</sup>. We only take into account the trades of imperial slaves and freedmen, private individuals and ordinary citizens.

<sup>2</sup>. We would like to thank Sofiane Boudraa for the photos of Constantine, Said Khacha for those of Djemila and finally Chafik Boughrara for those of Timgad

trades of imperial slaves and freedmen, who formed significant rate of the working population. This also includes public slaves and freedmen (Guiral-Sudi,2013).

In Africa, studies have focused mainly on crafts, following the example of the work of Touatia Amraoui, who wrote a doctoral thesis on crafts in ancient Algeria based on epigraphy, archaeological remains and literature (Amraoui, 2017), which led to an inventory of 42 craftsmen according to epigraphy. In this regard, our recent investigations have enabled us to re-evaluate upward the figure given. In another hand, Lazhar Nebti's study includes all the craftsmen in Roman Africa (Nebti, 2018)<sup>3</sup>. while Mohamed Abid has listed the trades in Africa Proconsular based on epigraphy (Abid, 2015:63-83 ), excluding inscriptions relating to the trades of slaves and freedmen, crafts mentioned in *cognomina* or unique names, and military inscriptions. We would also like to highlight his study on imperial slaves and freedmen in the Proconsular province, that also covers the trades practiced by this important section of ancient society (Abid, 2017 ) and our paper on trades in Algeria during the Roman period, based on epigraphy (Mehentel et Serradj, 2022:915-940 ).

These different research approaches helped us to build a completer and more nuanced picture of occupations in the Roman period, thereby contributing to a better understanding of daily life and the social organization of this historical period.

## 2. Categories of occupation:

### 2.1. Craft professions:

Crafts in Numidia during the Roman period were influenced by local traditions as well as roman techniques and styles. Data collection in this area has enabled us to identify a number of craftsmen, particularly at *Cirta*<sup>4</sup>. As far as this category is concerned, in addition to the craftsmen listed by Amraoui in ancient Algeria through epigraphy (Amraoui,2016:59-80), our research work in this field has revealed new additional mentions relating to new craftsmanship. Such as a *sartor Arenearius*, also not quoted in Pflaum (Pflaum,1978:181), as well as other *pistores* who bear the name *pistoricus* as a second *cognomen*, clearly indicating in our view the trade of miller-baker. Also, the profession of *vestiarius* not mentioned by the two authors: Amraoui and Pflaum

Epigraphy provides us with a list of construction and stonework workers, such as a *signinarius* (tab I,1), who made brick paving according to Pflaum (Pflaum,1978:181) or stone statues? The word would be a hapax (Amraoui, 2016:73). A *pictor*, a painter (Tab I,2), a *samiarius*, a toolmaker, a stone or metal polisher? (Tab I,3). Although the name of this trade remains uncertain in this inscription from Cirta, we do know that polishers specializing in the polishing and finishing of metals, particularly weapons, already existed in this city in Numidian times (Berthier et Charlier, 1955:82). An inscription discovered at Lambèse also indicates the former profession of metal polisher, *polio*, of a native of Cirta (CIL VIII 2618=18096).

Garment making was also present in Numidia, as reported by an inscription mentioning a *vestiarius* at Cirta (tab I,4, fig1), a garment manufacturer who indicates his filiation and his tribe *Quirina*. The exact function of the *vestiarius* is problematic<sup>5</sup>, as the word is thought to derive from *vestifex*. (Frezoules,1991:57note45 )

Epigraphy also shows us a *forum vestiarum* at Timgad (Année épigraphique 1909, 00004), a market specializing in the sale of clothes. Here, the question is whether the inscription indicates an entrance to the building adjoining the *Sertius* market dedicated to the sale of textiles products, built

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<sup>3</sup>. we were unable to consult this thesis

<sup>4</sup>. For this category, we have taken into account craftsmen that epigraphy has provided in the Constantine region, at Ksar Mahjiba, Ain Foua and Beni Ziad.

<sup>5</sup>. The word can also mean clothes seller

during the governorship of P. Caeionius Caecina Albinus, or a periodic market (Amara et Drici, 2012:71)

There is evidence of a real textile industry at Timgad thanks to the 12 *fullonica* workshops used for this activity (Amraoui, 2017:256). Still in Numidian province, more precisely at Cuicul, an inscription indicates a *Basilica vestiaria*, or fabric market (IIAlg,2,3,07878).

Other occupations are involved in the field of textiles, such as a *sartor arenearus* in the city of Cirta (tab1,5), who was a craftsman specialized in the making of theatre costumes and even the boss of his guild. This inscription certifies the existence of professional associations that played a role in regulating the trades and protecting the interests of their members.

This private guild was not only a way out of isolation, but also a way of gaining recognition and establishing an honorable place in the city (Waltzing, 1968:332).

Another *sartor* in Cuicul (tab I, 6), a clothes mender and an epitaph in Cuicul also indicate the trade of *offector*, a garment repairer practiced by a couple (tab I, 7). This may have been a family business run by the husband (Amraoui, 2016:65).

These groups of small trades existed in the Roman Empire, where the whole family took part in order to reduce the costs of their activity, although here the dedicating son does not specify his trade.

There were also craftsmen specializing in foodstuffs, such as *pistor* (tabI,8,9) and *pistoricus* (tabI,10 ,11), and bakers who were responsible for producing bread, which used to be a staple food. The mention of two bakers at Ksar Mahjiba suggests the existence of a bakery or some kind of corporation where these two craftsmen worked. They were probably more like millers who prepared the dough on site in an environment conducive to cereal growing; the same goes for the two *pistorici* at Beni Ziad; or perhaps they were just bread sellers, something also suggested elsewhere (Frezoules, 1991:59).



**Figure 01: Inscription of vestiarius( Cirta museum)**

**Table I**

n	profession	name	status	dating	location	réf
1	signinarius	C. Iulius Signinarius	citizen	II-III	Cirta	ILAlg-02- 01, 01302 <sup>6</sup>
2	pictor	M. Valerianus Pictor	citizen	II-III	Castellum Phuensium	ILAlg-02- 02, 06307 <sup>7</sup>
3	Samarius	samarius	slave ?	II-III	Cirta	ILAlg-02- 01, 01656 <sup>8</sup>
4	vestiarius	C. Iulius Felix	citizen	II-III	Cirta	ILAlg-02- 01, 00816 <sup>9</sup>
5	sartor arenarius	Valerius Dativus	citizen	II-III	Cirta	ILAlg-02- 01, 00822 <sup>10</sup>
6	Sartor	Primus	slave?	II-III	Cuicul	ILAlg-02- 03, 08024 <sup>11</sup>
7	offectores	T. Flavius Fortunatus et Iulia Victorina	citizens	II-III	Cuicul	ILAlg-02- 03, 08023a <sup>12</sup>
8	pistor	L. Iulius Pistor	citizen	II-III	castellum Fabatianum	ILAlg-02- 02, 04268 <sup>13</sup>
9	pistor	Q. Tongius Pistor	citizen	II-III	castellum Fabatianum	ILAlg-02- 02, 04309 <sup>14</sup>
10	pistoricus	Caecilius Crescens	citizen	II-III	Castellum Elefantum	ILAlg-02- 03, 09702 <sup>15</sup>
11	pistoricus	Caecilius Martialis	citizen	II-III	Castellum Elefantum	ILAlg-02- 03, 09702 <sup>16</sup>

<sup>6</sup>= CIL 08, 07462 = AE 2016, +01828 EDCS-ID: EDCS-12900082

<sup>7</sup> = CIL 08, \*00005 = ILAlg-02-02, 06307 EDCS-ID: EDCS-27801002a

<sup>8</sup>= CIL 08, 07707 = ILAlg-02-01, 01656 = AntAfr-1973-133 = AE 2016, +01828

<sup>9</sup> = AntAfr-1973-133, EDCS-ID: EDCS-08100222

<sup>10</sup> = CIL 08, 07158 (p 965) = CIL 08, 19451 = AntAfr-1973-133 EDCS-ID: EDCS-13200073

<sup>11</sup> = EDCS-ID: EDCS-23600209

<sup>12</sup> = EDCS-ID: EDCS-23600208

<sup>13</sup>= AE 2016, +01828 EDCS-ID: EDCS-12100156

<sup>14</sup>= AE 2016, +01828 EDCS-ID: EDCS-12100196

<sup>15</sup>= CIL 08, 19364 = CIL 08, 19378 = EDCS-ID: EDCS-23700286

<sup>16</sup>= CIL 08, 19364 = CIL 08, 19378 = EDCS-ID: EDCS-23700286

## 2.2. administrative professions:

Numidia was a major administrative center in the Roman Empire in Africa. The inscriptions tell us mainly about subordinate employees who were assigned to the imperial administration, playing an essential role in the running of the cities. In terms of numbers, the city of Cirta provided us with the largest number of these occupations.

In this aspect, we have listed: *tabularii* and *adiutores tabularii* who were part of the *tabularium* at all, including the imperial freedman, *M. Antonius Ianuarius* (tab II, 1), a *tabularius* in the name of Alexander, an imperial freedman (tab II,2), another *tabularius* whose name is not legible due to the deterioration of the engraving (tbII,3). He is most probably a former slave or public freedman from the city of Cirta, insofar as his father, who bears the name *publicius*, was probably a public freedman from that city. One possibility that has already been raised. (Guiral-Sudi,2013 :77)

The *tabularium fusae*, which included the imperial freedmen *Fortunatus*, *Vindex* and *Diotimus* (tabII,4), dedicated an inscription in honor of the procurator, *L.Iulius Victor Modianus*. Pflaum has shown that although the procurator's main task was to collect wheat to supply Rome, he also looked after the various accounts of the emperor's estates, which provided wheat in the same way as public income. (Pflaum,1956:315-318;1960:380-383;David,1977:156)

M. Christol suggests that the *tabularium at fusa* is the mark of an ancient fiscal situation predating the 3rd century. (Christol,1995:332-335) We also have a *tabularium adiutor*, an imperial slave named *Aprilis* (tabII,5) .

These *tabularii* and their assistants bore roman names and not Greek ones, as was customary for slaves and freedmen, although bearing a Greek name for slaves only indicates the legal status of the person bearing it and not his origin. (Lassere,1977:430)

We know the very important role of the *tabularium* and the many tasks assigned to his freedmen agents (Boulvert,1970:115-127,420-433). These were accountants who made a series of entries necessary for the service (France, 2017:204), aided by their assistants; they recorded, validated and archived all operations and deeds relating to finance and taxation, but did not handle funds. (Abid,2017:374-380;France,2000:201 )

There is an imperial slave named *Syrus* of oriental origin an *adiutor a commentaris* (tab II, 6, fig. 2), he kept the ephemeris of the head of the administration.

The *commentarii*, or sometimes-called *commentarienses*, were specialized agents, secretaries or archivists whose main task was the conservation, filing and communication of documents when necessary (Boulvert, 1970:425)

We also have *villici* and *contrascriptores*. The *vilicus* or sometimes *villicus*, as the name suggests, generally referred to the person who managed the running of the lands of a master's villa, encompassing various responsibilities, from looking after the animals to the building maintenance, as well as the general stewardship management, including other servants living on site (Vellebrouk, 2016:45)

Inscriptions from Cuicul and Timgad give us another concept of the word *villicus*, which refers to customs office managers, as agents of the *III publica Africae*, offices linked to fiscal management by subordinate staff.

In addition to confirming the *stationes IIII publica africae*, these inscriptions give us an idea of the structure of African offices and the systematic presence of the *contrascriptor*, an assistant controller of the *vilicus* specific to Africa, and their mention after the *villici* proves their importance in the hierarchy of tax authorities.(Dupuis,2000:289)

A *vilicus* and a *contrascriptor* according to a dedication from a certain *Marcellus*, *contrascriptor* (tabII,10) an imperial freedman assistant of his superior the *vilicus* named *Chresus* (tab II,7), imperial slave head of office of the *IIII publica Africae* at Cuicul(Dupuis,2000:290). Another *vilicus*, also called *Pastor* (tabII,8,fig 3), is associated with his deputy *Audauctus contrascriptor* (tabII,11), both were of servile status mentioned in a beautiful dedication to the Severans dated according to Dupuis in 200 AD (Dupuis,2000:284), the inscription does not indicate the service to which they belonged.

A dedication to Saturn by another *vilicus* by the name of *Onesimus* (tabII,9), the inscription does not specify where he carry out his duties, nor his status, but he was an agent of the *IIII publica Africae* posted in Cuicul. (Dupuis,2000:285)

Sudi has pointed out the problem of interpreting this inscription (Guiral-Sudi, 2013:58), which dates from the first half of the 3rd century. (Leglay,1966:224,n26). An Epitaph of the companion of *Marcellus*, a deputy *adiutor* of *manceps*, *conductor* (tabII,12), also indicates that he was an agent of the *IIII publica Africae* (Lassere,1973:122-123)

Finally, at Timgad, an epitaph of *Renatus'* companion indicates his profession as *agens*, agent of the *IIII* at Timgad (tabII, 13).

In addition to the staff assigned to the imperial administration, epigraphy indicates private services, such as this *exactor* of Cirta who was a private collector (tab II,14), a citizen bearing the *tria nomina*. Generally speaking, *exactores* were agents, imperial slaves in charge of collecting back taxes and sums that cities were unable to recover.(France,2000 :202)

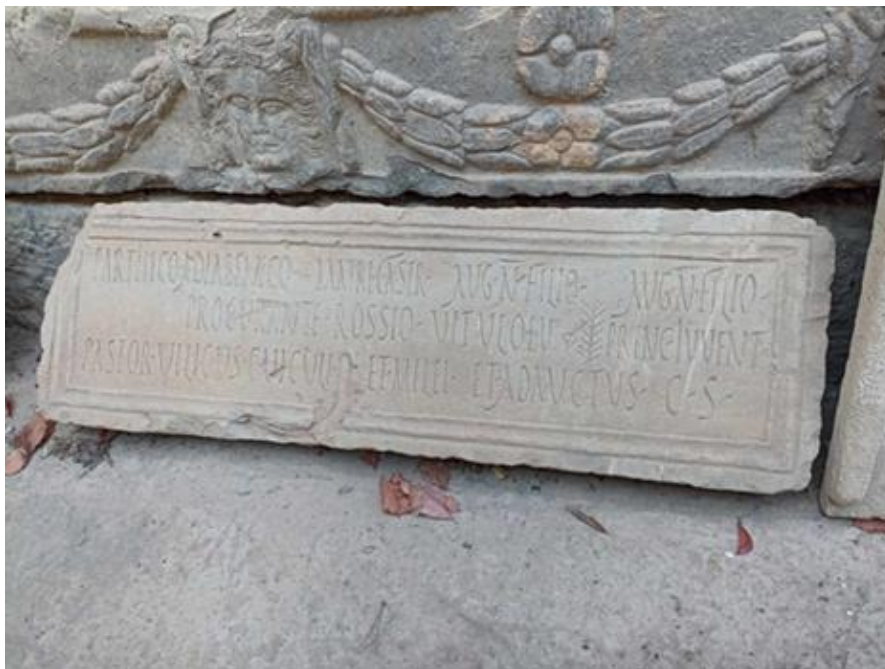
Other private administrative jobs are mentioned: an *actor*, here a manager (tabII, 15), a private slave who managed the property of the *Sertii* perhaps in the city of Timgad .(Année Epigraphique,2010:01819).

*Actores* were administrators or representatives of servile status who often worked in the management of private property, the imperial service, public administration or colleges.(Boulvert,1970:434-435); they could also be freedmen and *ingenues* with a legal role, some of whom had remarkable careers(Guiral-Sudi,2013:65)

We have a *custos*, guardian (tabII,16), indicating a former public slave, and a *vicarius*, the slave's replacement (tabII,17).It should be emphasized that the *vicarius* could also belong to the master, particularly in the administration, where he was the equivalent of an *adiutor*, but for servile staff(Eman,1986:405-406)



**Figure 02: Inscription of imperial slave Syrus(Cirta museum)**



**Figure 03: Inscription of villicus pastor and contrascriptor audactus (Djemila Museum)**



Table II

n	profession	Name	Status	dating	location	réf
1	tabularius	M.Antonius Ianuarius	imperial freedman	III	Cirta	ILALG-02-01, 00783 <sup>17</sup>
2	tabularius	Alexander	imperial freedman	138-161	Cirta	ILALG-02-01 ,665 <sup>18</sup>
3	tabularius	anonymous	slave/public freedman	II-III	Cirta	ILALG-02- 01,00803 <sup>19</sup>
4	adiutores tabularium	Fortunatus , Vindex, Diotimus	imperial freedmen	198-211	Cirta	ILAlg-02-01, 00668 20
5	adiutor tabularium	Aprilis	imperial slave	II-III	Cirta	ILAlg-02- 01,00 784 <sup>21</sup>
6	adiutor a commentaris,	Syrus	imperial slave	II-III	Cirta	ILAlg-02- 01,00792 22
7	vilicus,	Chrestus	imperial slave	?	Cuicul	ILAlg-02- 03,07753 <sup>23</sup>
8	vilicus	Pastor	slave	200	Cuicul	ILAlg-02-03, 07808 <sup>24</sup>
9	vilicus	Onesimus	public slave	1ere moitié du III	Cuicul	ILAlg-02-03, 07728 25
10	contrascriptor	Marcellus	freedman	?	Cuicul	ILAlg-02- 03,07753 <sup>26</sup>
11	contrascriptor	Audauctus	imperial slave	200	Cuicul	ILAlg-02-03, 07808 <sup>27</sup>

<sup>17</sup> = CIL 08, 07075 = = AntAfr-1973-133EDCS-ID: EDCS-13002103

<sup>18</sup> = CIL 08, 07039 (p 1848) = = D 01437 = Getules 00010 = ZPE-158-240 = AE 2006, 01807

<sup>19</sup> = CIL 08, 07077 (p 965) = CIL 08, 19429 = ILAlg-02-01, 00803 = AntAfr-1973-133

<sup>20</sup> = CIL 08, 07053 (p 965, 1848) = D 01438 = = AE 1942/43, +00105 = AE 1949, +00108 = AE 1957, +00255

<sup>21</sup> = CIL 08, 07076 (p 1848) = = AntAfr-1973-133EDCS-ID: EDCS-13002104

<sup>22</sup> = AE 1900, 00193 = AntAfr-1973-133 EDCS-ID: EDCS-08100214

<sup>23</sup> = Kritzinger 00029 = AE 1925, 00073 = AE 2000, +01796 = EDCS-ID: EDCS-16200974

<sup>24</sup> = Kritzinger 00030 = AE 2000, 01797

<sup>25</sup> = Saturne-02, p 224 = EDCS-ID: EDCS-23600533

<sup>26</sup> = Kritzinger 00029 = AE 1925, 00073 = AE 2000, +01796 = EDCS-ID: EDCS-16200974

<sup>27</sup> = Kritzinger 00030 = AE 2000, 01797 = EDCS-ID: EDCS-23600009

12	adiutor mancipis III publicorum Africae	Marcellus	imperial slave	II	Cuicul	ILAlg-02-03, 07921 28
13	agens,III publica Africae	Renatus	imperial slave	III	Timgad	A.E 2000 1773 29
14	exactor , ?	Q. Sittius Exactor	citizen ? freedman ?	I-II	Cirta	ILAlg-02- 01,1701 <sup>30</sup>
15	actor	Primitus	Slave	III	Timgad	BCTH 1901,311 <sup>31</sup>
16	custos	Publicius	old public slave	II-III	Cirta	ILAlg-02-01, 1606 <sup>32</sup>
17	vicaria ?	Iulia Vicaria	freedwoman ?	II-III	Cirta	ILAlg-02- 01,1394 <sup>33</sup>

### 2.3. Agricultural occupations:

Agriculture was the main economic activity in ancient Africa. Numidia had fertile farmland, ideal for the production of cereals. Inscriptions reveal the presence of names of agricultural occupations<sup>34</sup>, such as *aratores*, ploughmen (ILAlg-02-01, 01519, 01655), *messores*, harvesters (ILAlg-02-03, 07733 ILAlg-02-01, 01948), which tend to be *cognomina*, frequently found in the simple epitaphs of Romanized Africans. We have, however, recorded a *conductor*, a farmer who worked on small and medium-sized farms (tabIII,1). We can also add to this category a *saltuarius* not mentioned by Pflaum, but cited by M. Abid (Abid,2015:79). This was a guardian of private estates (tab III,2), according to a votive inscription of a citizen bearing the *tria nomina*, his profession is clearly indicated, and his cognomen *Eutyces* of Greek origin, borne mainly by people of servile status, leads us to think that he was perhaps a former slave, freed later. The examples relating to this profession concern imperial slaves in Carthage and Calama (CILVIII, n24697, ILAlg, I, n324).

<sup>28</sup> = AE 1911, 00113 = AE 2000, +01798 = EDCS-ID: EDCS-23600114

<sup>29</sup> = CLEAfrrique 00108 = PCV 00015 = CLEAfr-01, p 88 = CLEAfr-01, p 122 = AE 2000, 01773 = EDCS-21000650

<sup>30</sup> = AntAfr-1973-133EDCS-ID: EDCS-08100487

<sup>31</sup> = Hygiae p 162 = AE 2010, 01819 = EDCS-ID: EDCS-43600077

<sup>32</sup> = CIL 08, 19620 = AntAfr-1973-133 EDCS-ID: EDCS-13003385

<sup>33</sup> = CIL 08, 07529 = AntAfr-1973-133 EDCS-ID: EDCS-129001

<sup>34</sup>. Most of the inscriptions indicating agricultural occupations were discovered in the castella of the Cirtean region: Castellum Celtianum, Fabatianum, and Elefantum

Table III

n	profession	name	Status	dating	location	ref
1	conductor	conductor	Slave	II-III	Cirta	ILALG-02-01, 01063 <sup>35</sup>
2	saltuarius	Q. Seius Eutices	Freedman?		Cirta	ILALg-02-01, 02049 <sup>36</sup>

#### 2.4. Commercial trades:

Numidia was a vital trading center in the Mediterranean region. Inscriptions highlight the importance of merchants to the province's economy. The names of merchants, tradesmen and shopkeepers are often mentioned, underlining the crucial role of trade in daily life. We mention them here with caution because they may also be *cognomina*.

We have a *negociator*, a businessman (tabIV,1) *Negotiatores* are attested in Africa before the Roman era, notably in the Numidian capital *Cirta*.(Salluste,Guerre deJugurtha,1941:XXVI,9XXI,2)

During the Republican period, this profession was exercised by any Italian or Roman who accomplished something *Negotium* as opposed to doing nothing, *Otium* (Tran, 2014:112;Mehentel et Serradj,2022:920-921). The *negociator* was in contact with all sectors of the provinces' economic life, dealing with tenant farmers *Colonii*, peasant farmers *Aratores*, *Agricolae*, and livestock farmers *Pecuarii* (Feuerverier-Privotat, 1981:367-405). He also had to deal with the administrative and military institutions of the provinces, which gave him a dual economic and political role and a higher social and economic level than the *Mercator* (Andreau, 2001:101-106), indicated by an epitaph in Timgad (tabIV,2). *Mercatores* are called *Sordidi* because they acquired products in order to sell them using shenanigans to increase their profits (Feuerverier-Privotat, 1981:393). They bought and sold a variety of goods by travelling and braving the dangers of the sea and piracy, and were often at the mercy of corrupt governors. They were also in direct contact with other players, such as farmers, breeders and sailors (Feuerverier-Privotat,1981:388)

For the financial sector, we have an *argentarius* , here a banker (tabIV,3fig4), although his epitaph is composed of 13 verses, but no details are given on his trade, the ambiguity is noted concerning the term *argentarius* , banker or goldsmith ?

Rather, it refers to a banker, as suggested by Andreau. (Andreau, 1978:108-109), The banker, a centenarian from Cirta, was a well-known money-handler in his city and the region. (Griffe, Lassere et Soubiran,1997:15)

Other merchants included an *emptor*, a buyer (TabIV,4), who was responsible for buying various goods and all kinds of merchandise. *Emptores* also managed the sale or any problems between the seller and the buyer, as well as the producer (Feuerverier-Privotat,1981:394)

A *nundinarius*, an itinerant merchant (tabIV,5), the *nundinarii* were linked to the periodic markets.

<sup>35</sup>=AntAfr-1973-133 EDCS-ID: EDCS-08100304

<sup>36</sup> = CIL 08, 06976 = EDCS-ID: EDCS-1300200

There were also small merchants, such as a *Tabernarius*, a shopkeeper (tabIV,6) according to an undetermined votive inscription, and a *catervarius*, a cattle merchant (tabIV,7). The term *catervarius* can also mean a troop warrior, a kind of gladiator which is also a trade; and a *coronaria*, a flower seller (tabIV,8). Other seasonal trades, such as *ceparius*, onion merchant (tabIV,9), *fabarius*, broad bean merchant (tabIV,10) and *fabaria*, a female broad bean merchant (tabIV,11).



**Figure 04: Inscription of Praecilius, on part of the lid of the sarcophagus (Cirta museum)**

**Table IV**

n	profession	name	status	dating	location	réf
1	negociator ?	P. Caecilius Negociator	citizen	I-II	Cirta	ILAlg-02-01,977 <sup>37</sup>
2	Mercator?	L.Fulcinus Mercator	citizen	II-III	Timgad	BCTH-1946/49-238 <sup>38</sup>
3	argentarius	L. Praecilius Fortunatus	citizen	III	Cirta	ILAlg-02-01,820 <sup>39</sup>
4	emptor?	anonyme	citizen?	I-II	Cirta	ILAlg-02-01,968 <sup>40</sup>
5	nundinarius	M.Crepereius Honaratus	citizen	II?	Cuicul	ILAlg-02-3, 08082 <sup>41</sup>
6	tabernarius?	S. Asicius Tabernarius	citizen	?	Cirta	ILAlg-02-01,542 <sup>42</sup>
7	catervarius?	C. Irius	citizen	I-II	Cirta	ILAlg-02-

<sup>37</sup> = CIL 08, 07149 = AntAfr-1973-133 EDCS-ID: EDCS-1300217

<sup>38</sup> = EDCS-ID: EDCS-47200363

<sup>39</sup> = CIL 08,07156

<sup>40</sup> = AntAfr-1973-133 EDCS-ID: EDCS-0810027

<sup>41</sup> = EDCS-ID: EDCS-23600268

<sup>42</sup> = EDCS-ID: EDCS-08100169

		catervarius				01, 01236 <sup>43</sup>
8	ceparius?	Valerius Ceparius	freedman ?	II-III	Cirta	ILAlg-02- 01, 01810 <sup>44</sup>
9	fabarius ?	L. Sittius Fabarius	citizen	I-II	Cirta	ILAlg-02- 01, 01703 <sup>45</sup>
10	fabaria ?	Aemilia Fabaria	freedwoman ?	II-III ?	Cirta	ILAlg-02- 01,00870 <sup>46</sup>
11	coronaria ?	Flavia coronaria	freedwoman ?		Cuicul	ILAlg-02- 03, 08102 <sup>47</sup>

## 2.5. Domestic occupations:

In Roman times, society was organized hierarchically, and domestic occupations played an essential role in daily life. Slaves and freedmen were often used to carry out a variety of domestic tasks, especially women.

One of these jobs was that of *ornatrix*, chambermaid or hairdresser (tabV, 1, fig 5), first mentioned for the first time in the African provinces at Cuicul, according to a cippus containing four funerary inscriptions dedicated to freedwomen.(Mehentel et Khacha,2020:57-64).We are reluctant to classify this profession as domestic one, as it is closer to a craft<sup>48</sup>, since the person concerned had to be qualified and require manual dexterity to style the hair of her demanding mistress and the clients who paid for her services. Roman women in fact spent a great deal of time styling their hair, as can be seen, for example, in a passage from the epigrams of the Roman satirical poet *Martialis*(Martialis,Epigrammes:II.66)<sup>49</sup>. Epigraphy also mentions the work of a hairdresser's assistant in Cherchell, which implies that the *ornatrix* took pride of place.

The *ornatrixes* of Cuicul had a close relationship with their mistresses, as the epigraphic text shows; here, this profession is inherited from mother to daughter according to the incomplete stemma of these freedwomen. (Mehentel et Khacha,2020:63 fig11)

Another profession of *nutrix*, or wet-nurse, also occupied a special place being considered as a pillar of the household (Benseddik,2009:106 ).Epigraphy reveals this profession in the Constantine region for the first time (tabV,2), in the form of a freedwoman from the *Rupilli* family, which is little known in the region.(Mehentel et Filah,2020:507-508)

A citizen of Thigilava, a *pagus* of Cuicul, was an *obsetrix*, a midwife (tabV,3), a female profession known in Africa mainly thanks to epigraphy (Medjani,2023:337-362)

<sup>43</sup> = CIL 08, 07414 = D 05176a = AntAfr-1973-133 EDCS-ID: EDCS-12900035

<sup>44</sup> = CIL 08, 07817 = AntAfr-1973-133= EDCS-ID: EDCS-12900434

<sup>45</sup> = CIL 08, 07746 = AntAfr-1973-133= EDCS-ID: EDCS-12900364

<sup>46</sup> = EDCS-ID: EDCS-08100232

<sup>47</sup>= EDCS-ID: EDCS-23600286

<sup>48</sup>. The Greeks and Romans made no distinction between art and craft ,see J.P.Waltzing, 1968 , p52

<sup>49</sup>. “ One curl, just one, was at fault in the whole crown of hair: a loose pin had failed to hold. Lalage punished him for this crime with the mirror that had revealed it to him, and Plecusa collapsed under the blow, immolated by this terrible hair”.

We also have *focarii*, cooks or assistant cooks who were responsible for preparing meals for the family, because in Roman times cooking was a valued skill, and many slaves were trained to become talented cooks (Leguenec, 2019:108-295)

We have the epitaph of a *Papinius*, whose cognomen *focarius* may indicate his profession as a cook in Cirta (tabV,4), as this nickname is rarely used as such. We also have a slave cook in Timgad (tabV,5).

Finally, there was a *cellaria*, a wine merchant (tabV,6) in charge of the cellar and wine service. The *cellari* were also considered to be guards assigned to night surveillance, and had to sleep above the stocks of merchandise (Vellebrouk, 2016:45)



**Figure 05 : The 4 sides of the Ornatrices funeral cippus (Djemila site)**

**Table V**

n	profession	name	status	dating	location	réf
1	ornatrices,	Hilara et Honorata	freedwomen	II-III	Cuicul	Ikosim,2020,p57 <sup>50</sup>
2	nutrix,	Rupilia, Margaris	freedwomen	I-II ?	Cirta (Chaabat errsas)	Epigrafia e Anthicita,45, 2020,p 503 <sup>51</sup>
3	obsetrix,	Staberia Quarta	citizen	II-III	Thigilava cuicul)	ILAlg,2,3,7618 <sup>52</sup>

<sup>50</sup> = AE 2020, 01622 = EDCS-ID: EDCS-82500172

<sup>51</sup> = AE 2020, 01619 = EDCS-ID: EDCS-82500173

<sup>52</sup> = AE 2015, +01736 EDCS-ID: EDCS-23600619



4	focarius, ?	L. Papinius Focarius, ?	citizen	II-III	Cirta	ILAlg-02-01, 1545 <sup>53</sup>
5	focaria,	Focaria	slave	II ?	Timgad	AE 1934, 00036 <sup>54</sup>
6	cellaria,	Iulia Cellaria	freedwoman	I-II	Cirta	ILAlg-02- 01,1327 <sup>55</sup>

## 2.6. Arts and entertainment professions:

Artists such as actors, musicians, gladiators and athletes were entertainment professions, and few actors' names have come down to us. Among them is the famous Timgad pantomime, *Vincentius* (tabVI, 1, fig.6) who is recognized thanks to a metrical epitaph from the Severan period, displaying the name of the deceased in acrostic? It is the eulogy of an artist able to satisfy the tastes of a demanding and passionate public; he captivated the whole theatre until nightfall. A man who exercised a profession that was usually despised is glorified less for his stage skill than for his moral virtues (Bayet1955:103-121; lassere, 2007:439)

Three *scaenici*, actors whom Pflaum also forgot to mention in his list, are the only known examples of this category in Africa. These are a *scaenicus*, a comedian (tabVI,2), a *scaenicus viarum*, an itinerant comedian (tabVI,3), and finally a *scaenicus stupidus* (tabVI,4 fig 7), a mindless actor in the four colonies.

The *stupidus* was a kind of simple-minded person, an idiot with short hair whose role consisted of receiving blows and responding to nonsense, always next to the main actor: he was his comic double and made people laugh by copying his gestures and speaking (Daremberge et Saglio, 1877-1919) . Mimes were generally slaves (Garelli, 2001:285-203)

It is not surprising to see actors in Cirta, as scenic performances were an integral part of its daily routine<sup>56</sup>, just like Timgad, Cuicul and all the major African cities (Pichot, 2021:69-76)

<sup>53</sup> = AntAfr-1973-133= EDCS-ID: EDCS-0810044

<sup>54</sup> = EDCS-ID: EDCS-16000565

<sup>55</sup> = CIL 08, 07478 = AntAfr-1973-133= EDCS-ID: EDCS-12900098

<sup>56</sup>. Recalling here the famous inscription by Natalis, a notable from Cirta who offered scenic games in the IIII colonies of the confederation for 7 days (ILAlg-02-01, 00675)



**Figure 06: metrical Inscription of the pantomime Vincentius(Theatre on Timgad site)**



**Figure 07: Inscription de Ursus, stupid comedian (Cirta museum)**

**TableVI**

n	profession	Name	status	dating	location	réf
1	pantomimus	Vincentius	slave ?	II-III	Timgad	AE, 1956,00122 <sup>57</sup>
2	scaenicus,	Murinus	slave	II-III	Cirta	ILAlg-02-01, 00818 <sup>58</sup>

<sup>57</sup> = Zarker 00020 = PCV 00014 = CLEAfr-02, 00114 = AE 1956, 00122 = EDCS-ID: EDCS-13600415

<sup>58</sup>. CIL 08, 07153 = AntAfr-1973-133= EDCS-ID: EDCS-13200068



3	scaenicus viarum	Libela	slave	II-III	Cirta	ILAlg-02-01, 00817 <sup>59</sup>
4	scaenicus stupidus	Ursus	slave	II-III	Cirta	ILAlg-02-01, 00819 <sup>60</sup>

Other occupations that do not fit into our categories include a *stabularia* , innkeeper , groom?(ILAlg-02-01, 1782), a unique example in Africa.

### 3. Status:

Determining status is not an easy task in many cases, and for this we have based our research on certain studies, in particular that of J.M. Lassere (Lassere, 1977:427 and F. Jacques (Jacques,2010:209-289). In the first category, we find African craftsmen of modest status, ordinary citizens for the most part, generally bearing the *tria nomina*, with a *cognomen* reflecting their trade. Only one craftsman had a unique name (tab 1, 3) whose status we were unable to determine: was he a slave or a citizen? As it is not possible to attribute systematically slave status to the bearer of a unique name (Beraud,Mathieu et Remy,2017:80).

In cities, many craftsmen were part of the *plebs urbana* made up of tradesmen (Amraoui, 2016:65)

In terms of the administrative professions, the identification of agents assigned to the imperial administration is not a problem because they were designated by precise terms; *liberti augusti* for imperial freedmen and *servi augusti* , *verna augusti* for imperial slaves, (tab 1) although the status was not designated for certain agents of the imperial administration.

Freedmen and imperial slaves, who were richer than private citizens, flaunted a tangible disparity, especially when it came to choosing the location of their final resting place. When a freedman or slave was able to erect a monument, it was a sign that he had acquired financial ease because of his privileged position in society. The construction of a grave entailed considerable costs, particularly for preparing the ornaments. Like the imperial slave *Syrus* (Fig2), whose epitaph was finely engraved on an altar decorated with garlands on each side, with a pediment adorned with a rose window in the center of a semi-circle, and each corner embellished with a scrolling acroter.

In the agricultural and commercial sectors, most of the epitaphs belong to Romanized Africans, who generally bore the *tria nomina*. As far as freedwomen and private slaves are concerned, we have precise indications for the *ornatrices* women of Cuicul, clearly designated as freedwomen by the use of the term '*liberta*'. This is a notable example of freedwomen living within the *Gargiliae Praetorianae* family, famous in Cuicul and elsewhere (Dorbane 2020:509-520). They had an affinity with their mistresses and lived easily, as demonstrated by the magnificent cippus containing a fine engraving of their epitaphs (fig 6).

<sup>59</sup> = CIL 08, 07151 = D 05223 = AntAfr-1973-133= EDCS-ID: EDCS-1320006

<sup>60</sup>= AE 1951, 00221 = AntAfr-1973-133= EDCS-ID: EDCS-08100223

We also have the example of *Margaris*, nursemaid to the *Rupilli*, who bears their name. Other freedwomen have imperial names such as *Flavia*, *Iulia* and *Aemilia*, while some slaves bore a single name that simultaneously revealed their trade, such as *cellaria*, *focaria* and *stabularia*.

Others had a name followed by a cognomen that clearly indicated their trade, as was the case with the actors of Cirta.

#### **4. Chronology:**

As regards chronological distribution, the remarkable work of J.M. Lassere(Lassere,1973:5-151;2007:39-59,230-241) has been of great use to us, as have regional studies such as those of *Ammaedara* (Benzina-Benabdellah,Ibba etNaddari,2013),and *Dougga*. (Khanouss et Maurin,2002)

The epitaphs containing the consecration to the Manes gods are dated between the 2nd and 3rd centuries, while those without date between the 1st and 2nd centuries. However, we would be probably bold to believe that certain simple inscriptions from the Cirta region, without the *DMS* formula, could date back to the end of the 1st century BC. As Latinity was already a dime a dozen at the time of the last Numidian king Juba 1, as shown by the stelae from el Hofra, which reveal Latin names. The inscription on the *samiarius* at Cirta could date from the end of the first century BC.

Some dedications are clearly dated according to the year of reign of the provincial governors and the titles of the emperors.

#### **5. Genre and occupations:**

Men, carried out the majority of trades with only a few professions identified for women, mainly associated with domestic tasks such as chambermaid, nursemaid, midwife, and wine merchant. There were also a few craftswomen, such as the dyer from Cuicul, and other women engaged in commercial activities, such as the bean seller, the innkeeper and the florist.

#### **Conclusion:**

Latin epigraphy opens us a fascinating window onto the trades and economic activities that animated daily life in these great cities during the Roman era. , it reveals a complex and well-structured society with the presence of craftsmen, some of whom had already existed since Numidian times, such as the polisher of Cirta. It should be pointed that Roman influences were frequently amalgamated with local traditions, resulting in a singular fusion of Numidian craftsmanship during the Roman era. The trades reflect not only local needs, but also the Roman influence on the organization of work and institutions.

Epigraphy also helps us to better understand the diversity and complexity of these flourishing cities, and to recognize the crucial role played by different professional groups in their development and prosperity.

In one hand, we have administrative occupations include those linked to the imperial administration, as well as local occupations relating more specifically to taxation; inscriptions relating to agriculture reveal a flourishing economy, although we remain cautious about this category, as the nicknames *arator* and *messor* are common and do not necessarily indicate occupations. Cities were also important commercial centers,+ housing financiers, traders and a variety of merchants.

In another hand, the presence of actors and artists testifies to the cultural richness of these towns. The domestic trades indicate the existence of a noble class, with slaves and freedmen in its service. The local elites, through their role in the administration and their patronage of the arts, made a major contribution to the development of these activities, while craftsmen, farmers, merchants and service professionals were the economic driving forces behind everyday life. Finally, epigraphy illustrates the interdependence between the different social groups and the diversity of trades, bearing witness to urban vitality and local adaptation to an imperial framework. This wealth of trades makes these cities outstanding examples of the economic fabric of Roman Numidia.

These inscriptions also remind us of the rich and varied heritage left by their inhabitants, giving witness to the vitality of these ancient cities.

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