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Provincial Identity in a Roman World: Thugga (Dougga)

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The Roman Empire included vast territories and groups of people, in which unique identities and cultures merged. This phenomenon did not happen in a unidirectional or predictable way, but instead amassed a great deal of regional and intraregional variety. In order to understand the process of change and integration of the indigenous and Roman cultures that occurred during the Roman Empire, it is beneficial to begin with a small scope and progress towards the larger picture. In this paper I will focus on the identity of Roman North Africa, and specifically on one city in that province, Thugga (modern day Dougga), the best-preserved Roman city in Tunisia. The city of Thugga serves not so much as a model for the cultural trend in Roman North Africa in general, but as a case study for analyzing the process and idiosyncrasies of that dynamic in one particular location.

Recent Scholarship on the topic of “Romanization”

Scholars have been studying the spread of Roman culture for many years, but this study has recently begun to shift away from the ethnocentric, unidirectional explanations to more in-depth approaches that focus on cultural exchange rather than a mandatory or predictable, cultural implantation. It is no longer appropriate, for example, to view the Romans as a “civilizing force” that helped areas to progress from their indigenous “backward” ways. The use of the term “Romanization” has even come into question because the term is used to embody both the process and the outcome, making it its own explanation.¹ Indeed, archaeologists have often used a ranking system based on how “Roman” sites are by quantifying their material evidence. However, this approach assumes that there is a pure “Roman” culture to look for, which, given Rome’s diverse mix of influences, never really existed.²

¹ David J. Mattingly, *Imperialism, Power and Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 207.

² Greg Woolf, *Becoming Roman* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 6.

We can no longer study integration as the exclusive process of increasing the Roman Empire's socio-cultural and political homogeneity.³

Given these realizations, scholars are now taking into account the fact that Roman culture and the responses to its spread were diverse and unpredictable.⁴ This approach is more difficult of course, in that we need to know how to study cultural change in the absence of a definition of what each culture includes. Greg Woolf provides a useful model, defining: "the range of objects, beliefs and practices that were characteristic of people who considered themselves to be, and were widely acknowledged as, Roman."⁵ Scholars have used varying strands of this new approach in their studies of Roman provinces, focusing on the interactions between different cultures along with how these interactions occurred,⁶ and studying the tension between the acceptance of Roman ways and the resistance to it.⁷ Although these approaches are all certainly steps in the right direction, none are without flaws.

Scholars now realize that the evidence for provincial societies must focus more on archaeology than text because the lives of the average provincial inhabitant, including how and why they adopted certain Roman cultural traits, were rarely documented.⁸ As this study too will show, finding the identity of the native group in a province can be very difficult when most of the studied remains, including monuments and statues, directly tie to the elite and Roman inhabitants. Some scholars, such as M. Millett, argue that the spread of Roman culture was an elite phenomenon, while remaining indigenous

³ Roman Roth, "Roman culture between homogeneity and integration," *JRA* 66 (2007): 9.

⁴ Roth, "Roman culture between homogeneity and integration," 8. Responses could range from retaliation in multiple ways such as physical riots or cultural resistance, or simply acceptance of the Roman rule. Each area would often have varying degrees of these responses.

⁵ Woolf, 11.

⁶ This practice used to be widely popular with anthropologists, though it is no longer their major focus. The study can include imitation and rejection of different aspects of Roman society. Woolf, 15.

⁷ This form of study also looks at the mixtures of elements from pre-Roman and Roman traditions. Woolf, 19.

⁸ Ramsay MacMullen, *Romanization in the Time of Augustus* (Ann Arbor: Edwards Brothers, 2000), xi.

groups maintained a relatively traditional lifestyle.⁹ Mattingly, expands this scope, arguing that the “search for a discrepant experience directs us to look across the social spectrum, not simply at the imperial elite, and to try and assess the impact of empire from different perspectives.”¹⁰ My study will attempt to utilize this sort of “bottom-up” approach, which, combined with other localized studies, could lead to interconnections with the process of cultural change across the empire.¹¹

Early History of Roman North Africa and Thugga

Long before the conquering power of the Roman Empire swept over the ancient world, the empire of Carthage ruled over North Africa and its neighboring lands with a forceful hand. However, in response to this threat, the Romans fought multiple wars against the Carthaginian Empire, and eventually removed it as one of its most intimidating rivals.¹² Although Rome conquered the Carthaginian territory [figure 1], spreading its culture along with every aspect of Roman society, the Punic culture of the Carthaginians remained in many areas of the Roman North African society such as its economy, political system, religious institutions, language and nomenclature, and the placement of cities and their layout. As long as the Roman rule was not threatened, Roman culture became gradually integrated into the existing cultures of the conquered societies. North Africa is a prime example of this due to its past complexity and influence. Unfortunately for historians, most textual evidence of the Carthaginian Empire and Roman North Africa comes from Greek and Roman sources who hold some obvious biases, which leaves the interpretation of local groups primarily to archaeologists.

Although the Romans completely destroyed the city of Carthage in 146 BCE, they left many cities and towns previously under the Carthaginian territory intact and expanded the existing urban

⁹ Roth, “Roman culture between homogeneity and integration,” 7. Referencing Millett’s work: *Romanization of Britain: an essay in archaeological interpretation* (1990).

¹⁰ Mattingly, *Imperialism, Power and Identity*, 213. By discrepant he means “exhibiting difference.”

¹¹ Peter van Dommelen and Nicola Terrenato, “Local cultures and the expanding Roman Republic,” *JRA* 63 (2007): 9.

¹² Carthage was destroyed in 146 BCE after fighting three wars against Rome.

systems, including the city of Thugga. Four types of cities dominated Roman North Africa: 1) the old Phoenician towns, almost all of which were located on the coast with a sizeable immigrant population, often forming the most cosmopolitan of cities in the Roman period (Carthage, Leptis Magna); 2) old native settlements (Caesarea, Cirta, Thugga); 3) Roman purpose-built veterans' colonies and towns around them; and 4) the most prevalent type, modest cities of the interior, usually market towns, which grew out of native villages and hamlets.¹³ It is by maintaining sites that were previously occupied, like Thugga, that Romans circumvented the need for major engineering and building projects, in favor of expanding and embellishing these sites when necessary. This is the major reason that Thugga had such a gradual incorporation of Roman ways of life and an ever-present tie to its origins.

The city of Thugga probably began as a small Libyan settlement¹⁴ and was controlled by varying groups for many years. The Carthaginians first controlled the area, but historians believe that, as recorded by Diodorus Siculus, Eumachos, commander of the Syracusan tyrant Agathocles, took over in the late 4th century BCE. Diodorus described it then as a "city of good size."¹⁵ Though there are few remains dated solely to the pre-Roman age, historians believe that Thugga was most likely a Numidian urban center early on. This speculation is based on an early necropolis with dolmens to the north, vestiges of a sanctuary to Ba'al Hammon including neo-Punic steles, and a Punic-Libyan mausoleum (restored by Claude Poinssot).¹⁶ The mausoleum had two inscriptions on it, written in both Punic and Libyan [**figure 2**], which named the likely man who constructed it, Ateban.¹⁷ Many believe that this was

¹³ Susan Raven, *Rome in Africa* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 106. The Roman veteran colonies and towns would have been built much later than 146 BCE. For example, Timgad, a Roman colonial town, was built c. 100 CE under Trajan.

¹⁴ This is also shown in the origins of the name Thugga, which is thought to have derived from the Libyan name TBGG from the word TBG meaning to protect. *Encyclopedie Berbère*, vol. 16, edited by Gabriel Camps (Provence: Edisud, 1995), 2522.

¹⁵ This belief assumes that the city mentioned by Diodorus of Siculus, Takai, is actually Thugga. Diodorus described it as "Τώκας πόλιν εὐμεγέθη" (Diod. 20.57.4). Translation by Devyn Hunter.

¹⁶ Few royal Numidian mausolea remain. The main linking example is the Mausoleum of Bes, located at the site of Sabratha, Libya.

¹⁷ *Encyclopedie Berbère*, 2522.

a tomb dedicated to the Numidian king Massinissa (c. 240-148 BCE). The tomb was built in three levels and capped with a pyramid [figure 3]. The first level had the tomb space, with Aeolic capitals and lotus motifs. The second level was of the Ionic order and the third repeated the Aeolic with a relief of a four-horse chariot. The pyramid contained Sirens holding the sphere of heaven, with a lion symbolizing the sun at its top. This mixture of architectural orders and styles demonstrates the existing cultural exposure to Greek, Egyptian, and Near-Eastern groups,¹⁸ a connection that would affect the city's later characteristics.

Thugga Under Roman Rule

Caesar annexed the Numidian territory in 46 BCE, thus adding the city of Thugga to Rome's possession of Africa Nova and making Thugga a "double city," both a *civitas* of native inhabitants and a small *pagus* of Roman settlers. Though Thugga became a Roman city, one does not see any immediate or visible changes in the archaeological record or "built environment". Since the city was built on a hill with winding streets [figures 4 and 5], the Romans could not institute their favored orthogonal street plan,¹⁹ thus leaving the city in its original layout and design.²⁰ Since Thugga had previously been an agricultural city, the inhabitants most likely chose to simply expand and intensify the pre-existing production tactics in order to obtain greater amounts of wheat. Wheat was extremely important to the Romans for feeding their population and their soldiers, as stated by Pliny the Elder, "Tritico nihil est fertilius."²¹ The farming towns like Thugga had to shift from a subsistence to a market economy, but the

¹⁸ Paul MacKendrick, *The North African Stones Speak* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 25.

¹⁹ Though the Romans typically favored the orthogonal street plan, they often left older cities' original streets in tact, such as at Ostia and Pompeii. When they built cities from scratch, such as at Timgad in present day Algeria, they instituted the grid pattern streets. This shows that the Romans did not always enforce a set standard for every city, and were accustomed to adapting to the local environment and foundations.

²⁰ E. Lennox Manton, *Roman North Africa* (Essex: Anchor Brendon Ltd, 1988), 27.

²¹ Pliny, *NH*, XVIII.21. Translation by Devyn Hunter: "Nothing is more fertile than wheat."

Romans often allowed many who had been “fixed” on good agricultural land by the Carthaginians or Numidian kings to keep their small properties.²²

The people of Thugga also maintained a level of autonomy in their political system, though the details of the process are slim. The *civitas* most likely consisted of *suffetes*, the Punic equivalent of Roman consuls, who were chosen by elections of the full citizen body and based largely on birth and wealth.²³ The existence of these magistrates can be assumed based on an inscription mentioning them found in the city, describing the dedication of a sacred space to the divine Augustus and Tiberius.²⁴ Unfortunately, few inscriptions or substantial archaeological material exists during the first few centuries of Roman occupation in Thugga. This “dead zone” in the archaeological record might lead one to assume that few changes took place during this time period. Further excavations should aid in the understanding of this period.

Though there is no evidence of a political mixing of the two groups early on, they appeared to have been more socially integrated as seen through the material record. The most prominent archaeologist who has excavated Thugga, Claude Poinssot, argued for years that the native inhabitants of the *civitas* led entirely separate lives from that of the Roman *pagus* members; however, recent scholarship and excavations have shown that these two groups must have intermixed socially and culturally in the city. Poinssot believed that the two different groups occupied different areas of the city, with Romans building their own new area, separate from the former city.²⁵ After further studies of the site, scholars today point out that there would have been a geographical divide in the public places such as separate living areas and fora, pointing to the fact that both groups must have actually shared the areas. Recent excavations have also shown that Libyo-Punic architecture existed in the “Roman”

²² D. J. Mattingly, *Tripolitania* (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd, 1995), 138.

²³ G.I. Ikurite, “Punic Religious and Political Influences in Roman North Africa,” *The Phrontisterion (the classical association)*, 5, (1967): 42-47.

²⁴ ILS 6797.

²⁵ Claude Poinssot, *Les Ruines De Dougga* (Tunis: Ministere des Affaires Culturelles Institut National d’Archeologie et d’Arts, 1983), 11.

forum at the heart of the city,²⁶ demonstrating the fact that the inhabitants combined the earlier architecture with later, more “Roman” additions. Poinssot’s earlier interpretation largely reflected the ideology that he wanted to impose on the city. Saint-Amans posits that Poinssot was influenced by his own experience of viewing “la ville européenne, moderne, juxtaposée à la vieille medina, sans jamais la recouper”.²⁷ This demonstrates the way that archaeologists and historians can shape their arguments in a personally biased way. This is especially an issue in the previously colonized areas of North Africa. Today, we have only begun to reevaluate past interpretations such as this.

Although Roman era ruins date from the beginning of the reign of Tiberius (14-37 CE) continuing to be built until around the Severan age (3rd century CE), the traces of life in the city of Thugga leave behind a picture of a group with a unique and syncretized identity. A patron of the *pagus*, L. Postumius Chius, donated one of the first major urban expansion projects. It included the paving of the forum, the erection of an altar to Augustus, a shrine of Saturn, and an arch, as testified by an inscription.²⁸ These initial choices of dedications demonstrate the patron’s acceptance of Augustus as his leader, while paying homage to Saturn, the god that most mirrors the city’s original religious beliefs. During the reign of Claudius (41-54 CE), patrons donated multiple building projects including a market, a sacred space to Ceres, and temples to Fortune, Venus, and Concord.²⁹ Two of the people who named themselves in the Claudian inscriptions as the patrons refer to themselves as patrons of both the *civitas* and *pagus*,

²⁶ Sophie Saint-Amans, *Topographie Religieuse de Thugga (Dougga): ville romaine d’Afrique proconsulaire (Tunisie)* (Bordeaux: Ausonius, 2004), 60. Unfortunately, the descriptions of the Libyo-Punic architecture in the archeological articles on the site are slim. Thus, I would assume that this characterization would include an earlier time of construction than the Roman occupation, and possibly building techniques used across pre-Roman North Africa.

²⁷ Saint-Amans, 59.

²⁸ AE 1914.172. “*Imp(eratori) Ti(berio) Caesari divi Aug(usti) f(ilio) Aug(usto) pontif(ici) maximo tribunic(ia) potest(ate) XXXVIII co(n)s(uli) V / L(ucius) Manilius L(uci) f(ilius) Arn(ensi) Bucco Ilvir dedicavit / L(ucius) Postumius C(ai) f(ilius) Arn(ensi) Chius patron(us) pag(i) nomine suo et Firmi et Rufi filiorum / forum et aream ante templum Caesaris stravit aram Aug(usti) aedem Saturn(i) arcum d(e) s(ua) p(ecunia) f(aciendum) c(uravit).*”

²⁹ Discussed by Mustapha Khanoussi, “Thugga (Dougga) sous le Haut-empire: une ville double?” *L’Africa Romana*, Atti del X Convegno di Studio Oristano (1992): 599, Inscriptions: AE 1922.109, *CIL* 8.26464, and *CIL* 8.26603.

*“patronus pagi et civitatis Thugg(ensis) [p]ago dedit itemque dedicavit.”*³⁰ The fact that citizens considered themselves a patron of both groups demonstrates that there must have been some sort of shared identity, and that both groups would have benefited from the spaces and monuments that they donated. Although these building projects appear as solely Roman constructs, they were built surrounded by the previously existing Numidian/Punic buildings and forum, and Khanoussi points out that it was not until the time of Antoninus Pius that a citizen of the family of the Gabinii donated porticoes to the Forum with columns and decorations.³¹ This shows that the inhabitants did not rush to dramatically alter the existing spaces to make them more acceptably “Roman.” Instead, they gradually incorporated varying characteristics and both groups, along with their traditions and architectural styles, coexisted for long periods of time. This coexistence, although it hints at both a process of acculturation and perhaps resistance, allows us to see the development of the city in a much more dynamic way over time.

Throughout the years of Thugga’s status as both a *pagus* and *civitas*, patrons continued to donate and build various monuments, especially religious spaces, yet the Roman identity never fully dominated or destroyed the former culture of the Thugganese residents; instead a unique mixture of cultural attributes arose organically. The religious traditions of the Carthaginian Empire survived and easily became integrated into the Roman practices due to the Punic religion’s previous influences from the Phoenicians, Greeks, and neighboring cults. The early inhabitants of Thugga most likely worshipped the two major Punic gods of Ba’al Hammon and Tanit, amongst many other more minor gods.³² Their religious traditions included submission to the gods and the necessity to appease them throughout their

³⁰ *AE* 1922.109 and *CIL* 8.26603. Both have the same exact phrase within the larger inscription.

³¹ Mustapha Khanoussi, “L’évolution urbaine de Thugga (Dougga) en Afrique proconsulaire : de l’agglomération numide à la ville africo-romaine,” *Comptes-rendus des séances de l’Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 147 (2002): 147, <http://www.persee.fr/web/> (accessed October 15, 2011).

³² Ikkurite, 42.

rituals including sacrifice (mostly of animals, but occasionally of infants, as well).³³ Since the Thugga residents already had a history of polytheism, sacrifices, and rituals, those who wished merely had to adapt their system to appear a bit more “Roman,” by embracing practices such as a shift in names and architectural design. Tanit became widely identified with Juno-Caelestis and Ba’al with Saturn.³⁴ The preoccupation with these two gods, amongst many others that related to Punic gods, can be observed throughout the North African province.

Thugga is no exception; yet, it contained more varied cults and religious buildings than anywhere else in Roman Tunisia, displaying the city’s unique religious and cultural makeup. Several buildings were dedicated to deities that the inhabitants would have directly linked to their previously worshipped gods, such as the temple to Liber Pater (linking to the wine god Shadrach) and the temple of Caelestis (linking to the goddess Tanit).³⁵ Many of the temples represented various traditional Roman gods that might not have had a direct Punic link. During Hadrian’s reign a Roman citizen constructed temples to Fortuna, Concord, Mercury, and Venus,³⁶ while two other Romans worked on building projects nearby creating temples to Concord, Neptune, Frugifer, and Liber Pater.³⁷ Behind the sanctuary for the latter four temples, the patrons created a small theater that was most likely used for the initiations and celebrations of the mystery cult of Liber Pater.³⁸ One of the most well-known and best preserved buildings at Thugga, the Capitolium [**figure 6**], was built in 166 or 167 CE and dedicated to the gods Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva.³⁹ It sat at the heart of the city, beside the forum and surrounded by other public buildings and temples, facing out over the views of the town and countryside.

³³ Ikurite, 43.

³⁴ Raven, 153. Examples of the worship of the cult of Saturn can be seen at sites such as Ain Tounga, Lambaesis, and more.

³⁵ MacKendrick, 67.

³⁶ *CIL* 8.26471.

³⁷ *CIL* 8.26467.

³⁸ Poinssot, 54.

³⁹ *CIL* 8.15513.

Around the same time as the construction of the Capitolium, P. Marcius Quadratus dedicated a large theater [figure 7].⁴⁰ It sat at the top of the city slope, allowing for an easier building process by using the natural terrain, a practice used often by the Greeks. The theater had a wonderful aerial view of the landscape and city and observed Roman characteristics of the stage.⁴¹ It had a semi-circular *cavea* with five stairways reaching the top of the seating area and a *frons scaenae* with many columns and decorations.⁴² The theater seated about 3500 citizens, a low number compared to the 5000 estimated inhabitants around that time. This discrepancy in space and numbers at the theater versus a vast number of temples might signal an unbalanced emphasis on religion rather than on entertainment, reflecting the dour Punic religious origins.⁴³

Thugga continued to develop after it gained the status of a *municipium*⁴⁴ with several building projects, the Temple of Saturn serving as a prime example of Thugga's enduring and adapted Punic identity. Sometime between 193-211 CE, a new Temple of Saturn was built [figure 8]⁴⁵ on a high place over top of the Punic sanctuary dedicated to Ba'al Hammon.⁴⁶ The placement and god of this temple alone advertise a connection to Thugga's Punic origins. The original sanctuary to Ba'al had a *tophet* used for sacrificial offerings and images of animals sacrificed on the altar. When the later inhabitants reconstructed it, they used the same layout with three cells, and merely expanded it⁴⁷. The use of the three vaulted apsidal *cellae*, with geometric mosaic floors and a horizontal arrangement, reflected the

⁴⁰ *CIL* 8.26528.

⁴¹ MacKendrick, 68. The stage area was long and narrow.

⁴² Poinssot, 27-31.

⁴³ Manton, 114-115. The Carthaginians had practiced many rituals before the Roman occupation, but they did not appear to have had as many sources of entertainment as the Romans such as theaters or circuses.

⁴⁴ Probably during Septimius Severus' visit to the province in 202/3 CE. First mentioned on inscription in 205 CE: *CIL* 8.26539.

⁴⁵ *CIL* 8.26498. The inscription mentions that the *pagus* and *civitas* together dedicated the temple, showing their growing cohesion.

⁴⁶ Poinssot, 65.

⁴⁷ Patrizio Pensabene, "Il tempio di Saturno a Dougga e tradizioni architettoniche d'origine punica." *L'Africa romana* (1989): 255.

most prevalent characteristics of religious buildings in North Africa [figure 9].⁴⁸ Throughout North Africa, thirteen temples with three cells and a large central court area, like that of the Temple of Saturn, have been found⁴⁹. This Romano-African style also existed in other temples at Thugga including the Temple of Tellus, Mercury, and Concordia.⁵⁰ Excavations of the temple have also uncovered indentations of footprints on the ground of the entrance, indicating a spot for removing shoes or praying, a Punic tradition.⁵¹ The Temple of Caelestis, the goddess whom the Thugganese viewed as their goddess Tanit, was also built during the early 3rd century CE,⁵² demonstrating the continuous link to Thugga's past. By mixing traditional Punic architectural forms and religious sentiments with Roman elements the temples both displayed and influenced the unique identity of the people of Thugga.

Most of the wealthy homes that archaeologists have excavated have been dated to sometime in the third century, revealing that it took many years for such large, "Roman" style homes to emerge, yet they still contained aspects that connected them to their pre-Roman history. The success and significance of the wheat harvest at Thugga brought wealth to the city that allowed for some very wealthy residents.⁵³ Poinssot recorded that most houses sat along the street with only a small door facing out and were built in the oldest Mediterranean style, still used in some Islamic areas today.⁵⁴ The major homes that are best known for their well intact mosaics often had many attributes of homes that one might see in Pompeii or Rome. The "House of Dionysus and Ulysses" contained multiple mosaics [figure 10] of mythological and epic scenes that may allude to the religious cults in which the owners participated,⁵⁵ the stories that they valued, or simply the image of themselves that they wanted to

⁴⁸ Pensabene, "Il tempio di Saturno," 253. Many originally Roman temples throughout the Roman world had a triple cella, such as the Capitolium in Rome (6/4th century BCE), however the North African ones had the characteristic of the vaulted apsidal *cellae*, setting them apart from the Roman format.

⁴⁹ Pensabene, "Il tempio di Saturno," 263.

⁵⁰ Saint-Amans, 222.

⁵¹ Pensabene, "Il tempio di Saturno," 262.

⁵² *CIL* 8.26460.

⁵³ Manton, 115.

⁵⁴ Poinssot, "Il tempio di Saturno," 19.

⁵⁵ Poinssot, "Il tempio di Saturno," 46-47.

project to others.⁵⁶ The Baths of the Cyclops, also constructed in the early 3rd century CE had a mosaic of three Cyclops forging the bolts of Jupiter in the cave of Vulcan on the floor of the frigidarium.⁵⁷ Although these scenes certainly mirror those of mosaics in many Roman homes, the inhabitants of Thugga probably knew these myths for years before the Roman occupation due to their exposure to the Phoenicians and the Greeks, thus showing the combination of a new art style with familiar subjects. Recent excavations have also shown that some of the wealthier homes with elaborate mosaics had origins from the Numidian age, including the House of Dionysus and Ulysses and the House of the *trifolium*.⁵⁸ This evidence once again affirms that the Roman occupants and the newer Roman constructions, such as the additions on these homes, did not take place separately from the original areas of the city.

Finally, the *necropoleis* surrounding the city demonstrate how varied and yet united the identities of the inhabitants remained throughout the period. Archaeologists have excavated five major tomb areas around the city, including the Northeast, Northwest, West, South, and Southeast sites (in order of usage date).⁵⁹ Though the burial types greatly varied, the main styles consisted of steles and *cippi*, along with ten *mausolea*.⁶⁰ By reading the inscriptions on the tombs, archaeologists can try to decipher whether the person chose to identify him or herself as a native or a Roman.⁶¹ The majority appears to be local citizens, though scholars are unsure of the exact number of Romans who originally came to Thugga.⁶² The names inscribed on the tombs are the best indicator of the person's identity by

⁵⁶ This practice can be seen at the House of the Faun at Pompeii in which the *dominus* had the mosaic of Alexander the Great in his *tablinum* to display his power and knowledge to his guests. These scenes were more than just decoration; they allowed for the viewers to engage in them and influenced their view of the people living in the home.

⁵⁷ Poinssot, 56.

⁵⁸ Khanoussi, "L'évolution urbain de Thugga (Dougga)", 142.

⁵⁹ Mustapha Khanoussi, Louis Maurin, et al. *Mourir à Dougga. Recueil des inscriptions funéraires* (Bordeaux, France: Ausonius, 2002), 48.

⁶⁰ Khanoussi and Maurin, 49.

⁶¹ By the term "Roman" I mean a colonial Roman, emigrant, of Roman ancestry, or simply culturally Roman.

⁶² Khanoussi and Maurin, 77.

offering a valuable sign of linguistic loyalty⁶³. There were three accepted ways in which most Africans changed their names under the Roman occupation: taking a completely new and unrelated Latin name, adapting an original name to a similar sounding Latin one, or translating the original name directly into Latin⁶⁴. Romans also offered an intermediate stage of name change. Roman names had a *praenomen*, *gentilicium*, and a *cognomen*, so they allowed newly enfranchised citizens to keep their old *cognomen* while accepting new *praenomen* and *gentilicium*.⁶⁵ Most natives from Thugga only had one name, a common trait of all areas in pre-Roman Africa. Some might add a name such as their father's to distinguish themselves as well [figure 11].⁶⁶ Many of the later tombs have two names, adding a more Roman name to their native one, demonstrating the syncretization of the inhabitants identities.⁶⁷ Despite these variations, members of the *civitas* and *pagus* were buried together for the entirety of the city's occupation, demonstrating that the inhabitants did not think it necessary to distinguish themselves not only in life, but also for eternity. These cultural marks of "Africanness," "Romanness," or "sameness" in the names and tomb styles shows the cultural complexity of the area and the personal choice in identity that the Thugganese developed.⁶⁸

Conclusion

⁶³ Ramsay MacMullen, "Provincial Languages in the Roman Empire." *The American Journal of Philology*, 87, No. 1 (1966): 9, <http://0-www.jstor.org.library.lausys.georgetown.edu/stable/292973> (accessed October 14, 2009).

⁶⁴ Zsuzsanna Varhelyi, "What is the evidence for the survival of Punic culture in Roman North Africa?" *Acta antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 38, 4 (1998):395.

⁶⁵ Anthony R. Birley, "Names at Lepcis Magna." *Libyan Studies; annual report of the Society of Libyan Studies*, 19, (1988): 1-2.

⁶⁶ Khanoussi and Maurin, 79. Examples of one name: Calcarica (n°168) and Berenecae (n° 137). Examples with names with added description: "Amplia Tulusi" Amplia, daughter of Tulusus (n° 62) and "Adzutor Regilli", Adzutor, son of Regilus (n° 17).

⁶⁷ Khanoussi and Maurin, 81. Examples of two names: Bassa Dativa (n°131) and Celsus Solutor (n°219).

⁶⁸ See: Karen B. Stern, "Keeping the Dead in Their Place: Mortuary Practices and Jewish Cultural Identity in Roman North Africa," in *Cultural Identity in the Ancient Mediterranean*. Ed. Erich Gruen. (Los Angeles: Getty Museum Publications, 2011), 307-35. This chapter demonstrates the complexity of a burial site in North Africa, focusing on the Jewish identity and how it contained aspects from the local region as well.

Although the city of Thugga certainly developed and changed throughout the Roman era, it did so in a way that used characteristics from both the Roman culture and the indigenous culture to create a unique identity for the inhabitants. This process is neither linear nor does it advance outward from solely one direction. The members of both the *pagus* and *civitas* lived together as one community, with the views of both groups merging gradually over time. By examining the dates and construction of the major monuments in Thugga, one can infer that the city largely remained as it existed before the Roman occupation for many years. Though the inhabitants constructed many buildings in the city throughout the empire that outwardly appear “Roman” (especially in the second and third centuries CE), many of these buildings contain traces of the original Thuggan traditions. By studying these ruins we can begin to observe the “discrepant experience” that permeated all ranks of society. The Roman occupation did not only affect the elites of the city. Instead, I argue that the occupation affected the lives of all the inhabitants, including the Roman residents themselves. The Africans and Romans living in Thugga did not need to differentiate between their identities; Roman Africans and African Romans became primarily synonymous. Those that lived in Thugga during the Roman occupation lived their lives through a mixture of Roman and Libyo-Punic traditions that they actively asserted, embedding them into their society. The two groups lived as one across the city, even in death. More data is needed in order to better construct what these discrepant experiences would have contained, but I believe that this is a good starting point. By using an example like the city of Thugga, one can begin to understand the complex process of changing cultures and identities that occurred in the province of North Africa, and in the wider Roman world.

Appendix: Figures

Figure Sources

Figure 1: "Tunisia: Africa Proconsularis" <http://boisestate.edu/courses/westciv/punicwar/>

Figure 2: "Libyan and Punic inscription from the mausoleum in Dougga" now in the British Museum, by Inconnu

http://lookaboo.com/o/pictures/picture/1565448/Libyan_and_Punic_inscription_from_the_ma

Figure 3: Libyo-Punic Mausoleum, taken by Devyn Hunter

Figure 4: Winding streets at Thugga, taken by Devyn Hunter

Figure 5: Scenic view of Thugga, taken by Devyn Hunter

Figure 6: View of the Capitolium, taken by Devyn Hunter

Figure 7: Theater at Thugga, taken by Devyn Hunter

Figure 8: Temple of Saturn, by Pradigue, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Temple_saturne_dougga_.jpg

Figure 9: "Plan du temple de Saturne," from *Les Ruines de Dougga*, page 64.

Figure 10: "Ulysses and the Sirens," by Habib M'henni, Bardo Museum, 2nd c CE,

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Mosaïque_d%27Ulysse_et_les_sirènes.jpg

Figure 11: Stele of Adzuctor, from *Mourir a Dougga*, #17 page 3 of "planches"

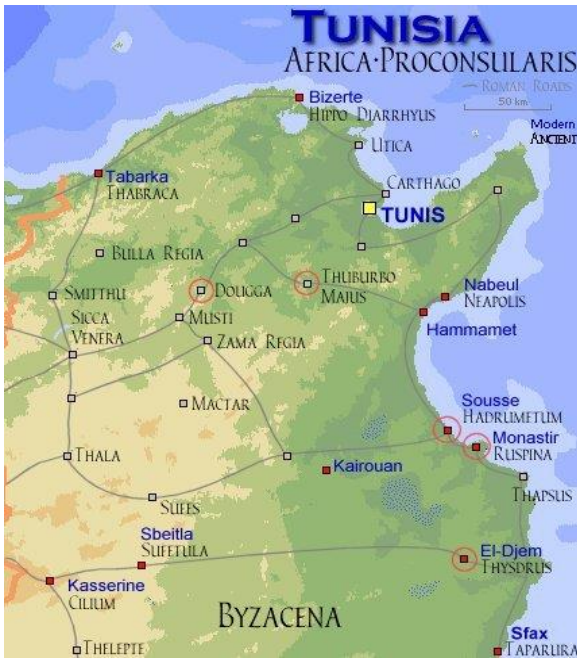


Figure 1: Map of Africa Proconsularis (Dougga=Thugga).

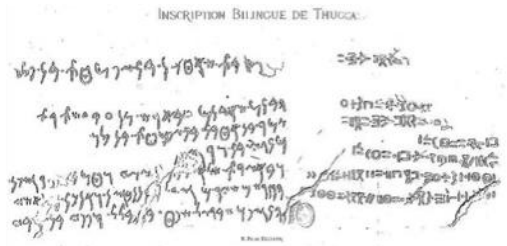


Figure 2: Bilingual Mausoleum inscription.



Figure 3: Libyo-Punic Mausoleum.



Figure 4: Original winding streets.



Figure 5: Scenic view of city, demonstrating the slope on which it was built.



Figure 6: Capitolium on hillside of city.



Figure 7: Main theater with me standing.



Figure 8: Ruins of Temple of Saturn.



Figure 10: Mosaic of Odysseus and the Sirens.

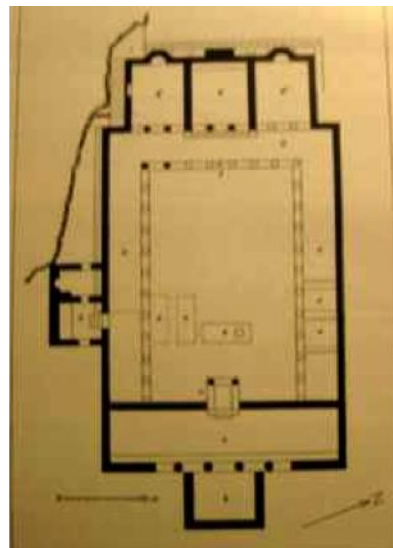


Figure 9: Plan of Temple of Saturn (note the form of the three cellae)



Figure 11: Stele of Adzutor's burial: "D(is) M(anibus) Adzutor Regil<I> p(ius) v(ixit) a(nnis) XXIII h(ic) s(itus) e(st)" CIL 8.26683 #17.

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