

Epigraphy and Ambitions: Building Inscriptions in the Hinterland of Carthage

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Building inscriptions are not a good proxy for building activity or, by extension, prosperity. In the part of Roman North Africa where they are the most common, the majority of the surviving building inscriptions document the construction of religious buildings by holders of local priesthoods, usually of the imperial cult. The rise of such texts in the second century and their demise in the early third century have no parallel in the epigraphic evidence for other types of construction, and should not be used as evidence for the pace of construction overall. Rather than economic change, these developments reflect changes to the prospects of aspirational local elites, for whom the priesthoods served as springboards to more prestigious positions. These positions were tied to Carthage and the administrative arrangement that made it a metropolis for scores of dependent towns, attracting the ambitions of their elites.

Keywords: Roman North Africa, building inscriptions, elites, advancement, epigraphic habit, religious architecture

The aim of this paper is to examine the habit of erecting building inscriptions in the orbit of Carthage in the second century A.D., and in particular the curiously prominent place of religious architecture within this habit. Building inscriptions – that is, texts that record the erection, extension, or restoration of structures – commonly include information on the building and the person who built it, including their career and family and often also the cost of the project. Moreover, the customary inclusion of wishes for the health of emperors makes many of them securely datable. They are especially common in Tunisia and eastern Algeria, where they have been employed to reconstruct, as it were, the built environment of Roman era towns, tracing their development over time.¹ They have also been used to assess the economic

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¹ e.g. Jouffroy 1986.

vitality of both the region and the Empire as a whole, most famously by Richard Duncan-Jones but also by many others.² These approaches are predicated on the assumption that all public buildings were presented with such inscriptions, and that the corpus of surviving texts corresponds reasonably well to actual construction in the area. This, however, is not the case: in this area, many more inscriptions come from buildings that were considered *opera sacra* (henceforth *sacra*) – that is, shrines and monuments dedicated to emperors and gods – than what is motivated by the proportion of actual sacred buildings to secular ones. Of five hundred and fourteen classifiable building inscriptions from this region,³ texts that refer to *sacra* answer for at least seventy-five per cent.

Not all building types were inscribed in the same ways, therefore, which has ramifications for how surviving building inscriptions can be analysed. It has not gone unnoticed that they require caution; for instance, Edmund Thomas and Christian Witschel have shown that building inscriptions often exaggerate the extent of the work undertaken,⁴ and Paul-Albert Février has pointed out that their survival is highly uneven, making them unsuitable for broadly conceived quantitative approaches.⁵ However, the methodological problems run deeper, touching on what building inscriptions were, and were meant to do. The first part of this paper (I) examines the chronology, geography, and agency of building inscriptions from one part of Roman North Africa, showing that the practices of epigraphic commemoration differed significantly between different building types and categories of builders, and also between different communities. Three aspects stand out: firstly, *sacra* were more regularly inscribed than other buildings. Inscriptions from amenities such as baths are rare at any time, and they differ in key respects from those associated with *sacra*. Secondly, inscriptions from *sacra* account for a larger proportion of the samples in small towns than in the most populous and important cities. These patterns cannot be explained by uneven preservation of inscriptions. Thirdly, inscriptions from *sacra* increase dramatically in the second century and plummet under the early Severans, in ways that have no parallel among texts from secular buildings.

² e.g. Duncan-Jones 1974, 2004.

³ See n. 12 for the composition of the sample.

⁴ Thomas and Witschel 1992.

⁵ Février 1987.

many inscriptions from *sacra* from a socio-political perspective, seeking to identify the roles they played in contemporary society. Importantly, inscriptions are not buildings but records of events, and there are reasons to doubt that the event was, in all cases, the erection of a building. I argue that the reasons to commemorate a building project with an inscription were not exclusively tied to its cost or prestige, but depended on its relation to local political institutions. These not only governed the use of inscriptions in public spaces, but were also intimately linked with the towns' religious architecture to an extent that has not been acknowledged. In particular, local political advancement was associated with building *sacra*, which contributed to making such buildings more visible in the epigraphic record than other structures. To conclude, I argue that the reasons why the study area shows such a remarkable concentration of inscriptions from *sacra* during a few decades can thus be sought in the institutional framework of the region, and the ambitions of its elites. I connect the rise in numbers of such testimonies with intensified peer-to-peer competition generated by the presence and stature of the city of Carthage, and by the openness of this city's political institutions to elites in surrounding towns. Administrative policies adopted by the early Severans directly affected the career prospects of small-town African elites, and in extension the epigraphic commemoration of *sacra*. There is little to indicate that they also affected the commemoration, or indeed construction, of other buildings.



Fig. 1. Map of the study area. It comprises the territory of Carthage and its neighbouring regions, bordered to the west and south by a belt of Flavian roads and towns. Black dots represent major cities, in order of significance (see below for this discussion). Beside its two most important cities, Carthage and Thysdrus, it was home to many prominent colonies such as Hippo Regius, Utica, Sicca Veneria and Hadrumetum. Its most striking characteristic, however, is its great number of smaller townships, represented as grey dots.

I The dominance of *sacra*

The sample of texts that forms the basis of this study come from an area that roughly corresponds to the late Roman provinces Africa Proconsularis and Valeria Byzacena, the first part of Africa to come under Roman occupation and the longest to remain so (fig. 1). The area can be described as the enormous territory of Carthage together with a periphery that had its main lines of communications with this city and its hinterland. Some of these routes and towns had a military past, but after Trajan moved the *Legio III Augusta* to Lambaesis in Numidia the area lacked army presence and none of its towns were fortified. It stood apart from neighbouring regions also in terms of urbanisation: its extreme density of urban settlement had few parallels empire-wide, and none in Africa. This area was very rich in epigraphic production, especially the north-eastern heartland. I have gathered as many as seven hundred and four building inscriptions from the region, dating from the Republic to the reign of Diocletian, although many of them are too fragmentary to provide much information.¹²

Although building inscriptions from this area have received a fair share of attention, it has not been acknowledged that the vast majority of them refer to structures dedicated to gods and emperors (fig. 2b). Most inscriptions are fragmentary, but of the five hundred and fourteen items that are complete enough to disclose what was built, well over two thirds (three-hundred and forty-one) refer to temples, whether built afresh, restored, embellished or augmented. A large share of the rest (forty-seven) refer to arches dedicated to emperors, bringing the proportion of *sacra* up to three fourths of the sample. Furthermore, of a group of inscriptions that deliberately exclude the building (forty-two items) eleven were found *in situ* on arches. All types of secular buildings together make up a meagre sixteen per cent, even at the most inclusive.¹³ Moreover, this record is inflated by the practice of posting multiple

¹² The sample (see appendix) is gathered from the *CIL*, *ILAfr*, *ILAlg*, *ILTun*, the *AE* and *AfrRom*, as well as local dossiers. It comprises dated and undated, complete and fragmentary texts. I have not (as Zuiderhoek 2014) included statue bases and altars. In most respects I have followed the criteria for identifying a building inscription proposed by Ari Saastamoinen (Saastamoinen 2004), rejecting texts with the verb *posuit* as from statue bases. I have, however, included texts described in the original publications as coming from architraves.

¹³ A few texts mention more than one building project, and when these belong in different categories I have counted them in both. This overlap makes the total of all categories of buildings slightly higher than 100 per cent (101). I have endeavoured to include as many texts

inscriptions that commemorate the same building project, known to scholars working on African inscriptions as *gemellae*.¹⁴ For instance, seven inscriptions that refer to markets only represent three discrete construction projects.¹⁵

The numbers are puzzling, for many reasons. The towns manifestly did not consist of temples and arches alone. For one, they had beautifully paved streets, but only (at best) four inscriptions from more than three centuries feature anyone taking credit for them.¹⁶ There are ruins from baths in even the smallest towns but only nine inscriptions from them before the reign of Diocletian.¹⁷ Few other building types are represented in even a handful of texts.¹⁸ More than sixty African amphitheatres have been attested – as many as three in Thysdrus alone – but before A.D. 284 not a single building inscription in this area announces who built one.¹⁹ Meanwhile, there are almost four hundred inscriptions from temples and arches.

from secular buildings as possible; for instance, I have accepted an inscription that consists of the one word *septizodium* (AE 1962.299), even though it is more likely a label than a record of construction, and fragmentary texts that mention porticoes have been treated as secular even though some likely belonged to sanctuaries.

¹⁴ For the term (which is used in the *CIL*) see e.g. Saastamoinen 2010a:45. I use it here also for texts that are not identical in wording.

¹⁵ *CIL* 8.1406, 26482-4, 26530; *IL Afr.* 559; G. Picard, *CRAI* 1974 p. 23.

¹⁶ See below n. 53. Also, AE.1991.1638, paving, *CIL* 8.23880, draining of streets.

¹⁷ *CIL* 8.803, 997, 1295, 10607, 23690, 23880, 24106; *IL Afr.* 506; AE 1958.142.

¹⁸ Forum (10), of which some are restorations: *CIL* 8.12556, 15449, 26524, 26593, 25532-3 (*gemellae*); *IL Afr.* 140, 558; *LAlg.* 1.2120; AE 1951.82, 1978.847. Porticoes (5): *CIL* 8.1285, 10620, 15497; *IL Afr.* 196, 271. Aqueducts (5): *CIL* 8.51, 1480; *ILPBardo* 2.9a-b; AE 1988.1119, 1991.1635. Theatre (4): *CIL* 8.26606-7, 26528 (*gemellae*), *LAlg.* 1.2121. Bridges (4): *CIL* 8.10116, 10117, 10568, AE 1995.1652. Paganica (3): *CIL* 8.16367, 16368, 23326. Curias (3): *CIL* 8.757, 12242, 23829. Plateae (2): *CIL* 8.11529-30 (*gemellae*). Walls (2): *CIL* 8.977, 979. Circus aediculae (2): *CIL* 8.1492, 1486 (*gemellae*). Horrea (2): *CIL* 8. 24654, 25895. Pluteus, several scholae and a horologium (1): *CIL* 8.978. Hospitium (1): *CIL* 8.10525. Balustrade (1): *CIL* 8.26593. Septizodium (1): AE 1962.299.

¹⁹ As Wilkins 1988 and Christol 2011 complain. Two builders are known from statues raised in their honour, but not from building inscriptions; see nn. 34, 106.

Arches are an African phenomenon, attested in the smallest towns and even on imperial estates. They can be regarded as buildings, comparable to shrines dedicated to imperial virtues and victories, but they can also be seen as particularly imposing imperial statues, of which several hundred are attested in the area.²⁰ Arches form one end of a spectrum of sacred buildings with sanctuaries at the other end, including minor structures such as *sacellae* or *aediculae*. That they formed a category is borne out in the language of their inscriptions: while the miscellany of texts from other buildings show little conformity, those from sanctuaries and arches follow easily recognisable conventions. A great many fragmentary inscriptions most likely belonged to this category as well, using more or less the same format. Such inscriptions commonly include imperial dedications, the names, careers, and families of the builders, the cost of the projects, and the dedicatory ceremonies. The below examples illustrate the range, from the fairly succinct to the more detailed:²¹

CIL 8.14851, Tuccabor, arch: Caes(ari) divi Hadriani f. Antonino Aug(usto) Pio p(ontifici) m[ax(imo) trib(unicia) pot(estate) --- co(n)s(uli) --- p(atri) p(atriae)] / Sextilius Dextri fil. Celsus arcum a fundamen[tis opere quadrato?] / cum gradibus et statua s(ua) p(ecunia) f(ecit) id(em)q(ue) ded[icavit]. / D(ecreto) d(ecurionum).

To Caesar Antoninus Augustus Pius, son of the deified Hadrian, pontifex maximus, holder of tribunician power for the (...) time, consul for the (...) time, father of the country, Sextilius Celsus, son of Dexter, made an arch from its foundations, using opus quadratum, with steps and a statue, and he also dedicated it. (Posted/undertaken) by the decree of the decurions.

AE 2012.1882, Uchi Maius, temple: Cae[lesti Aug(ustae) sac(rum)] / pro salute Imp[p(eratorum) Caess(arum) Aurelior(um) Antonini / et Veri, Armeniacor(um), Medicor(um), Part(hicorum) max(imrum)] / res publica U(chitanorum) M(aiorum). [D(ecreto) d(ecurionum) p(ecunia) p(ublica) f(ecit)]. / C. Furnio Fausti[no L. Propertio Rogato magg(istris) pag(i)].

Sacred to Caelestis Augusta. For the health of the Emperors and Caesars the Aurelii Antoninus and Verus, greatest conquerors of the Armenians, the Medes and the Parthians, the *respublica* of Uchi Maius built (the temple) by the decree of the decurions

²⁰ For imperial statues see Højte 2005, for the region, Hellström 2020.

²¹ Translations throughout are my own, with the kind assistance of Justine T. Wolfenden.

and for public funds, in the year when C. Furnius Faustinus and L. Propertius Rogatus were magisters of the *pagus*.

AE 1968.595, Musti, temple: *Plutoni Frugif(ero) / Aug(usto) genio Mustis / sacr(um). Pro salute / Imp(eratoris) T. Aeli Hadrian[i A]ntonini / Aug(usti) Pii M. Corneli[us] M. f. / Cornelia Laetus flamen / perpetu(u)s Iivir sacerdos / Caelestis et Aesculapii / publicus cum pro honore / flamoni perp(etui) HS X (milia nummum) taxas/set et ob honorem Iivir(atus) / HS II (milia nummum) inlatis aerario HS III (milibus nummum) / statuam aeream posuit et in templo Caelestis portic(um) columna/rum IIII ampliata pecu[ni]a fe/cit d(ecreto) d(ecurionum) idem q[uoqu]e [de]dic(avit) ampli/us in eode[m templo] porticum / avitam [v]e[t]u[state conl]absam [co]/lumnis [--- adiecta] pecuni[a] / res[tituit].*

Sacred to Pluto Frugifer Augustus, the *genius* deity of Mustis. For the health of the Emperor T. Aelius Antoninus Augustus Pius, M. Cornelius Laetus, son of Marcus, of the tribe Cornelia, *flamen perpetuus*, duumvir, public priest of Caelestis and Aesculapius, after he had paid 10,000 HS in exchange for the office of *flamen perpetuus* and 2,000 HS for the sake of the office of duumvir, with 3,000 HS paid in to the treasury he raised a bronze statue, and for added money built a portico of four columns in the temple of Caelestis, by the decree of the decurions, and he also dedicated the same. Furthermore, in the same temple he restored the ancestral portico which had collapsed from old age, with columns (...) money (...).

It appears that, in the Carthaginian hinterland, structures raised in honour of gods and emperors merited inscribing to an extent that other buildings did not. This is not limited to original construction: every addition to a sanctuary, be it an ornament, a column, or some steps of a staircase, could be broadcast in minute detail.²² This is exceedingly rare for other types of buildings. Inscriptions from multifunctional buildings foreground their religious aspect, such as the four *gemellae* that mention a macellum as part of a shrine to Mercury.²³

²² Minor projects in sanctuaries, from Hadrian to Septimius Severus: two columns (*ILTun* 1281, Vallis); statues and silver donation (*AE* 1968.586, Musti); four steps in a staircase (*AE* 1995.1790, Ammaedara); column with capital (*CIL* 8.23997, Giufi).

²³ In Thugga; see above n. 15. Another (G. Picard, *CRAI* 1974 p. 23, Mactaris) was also attached, but to what is unknown; so also a horreum (*CIL* 8.25895, Zigira), while a basilica

Such precincts were no doubt often used as markets, as Elizabeth Fentress plausibly suggested for the large sanctuary at Vazi Sarra, but it is as *sacra* that they are inscribed.²⁴

As a comparison, a sample of building inscriptions from Asia Minor examined by Arjan Zuiderhoek covers the whole gamut of public buildings in reasonable proportions to the monumental fabric of the towns.²⁵ Although sanctuaries form the largest category (at roughly twenty-five per cent), they do not dominate the epigraphic landscape to even remotely the same extent as here. The hinterland of Carthage is distinct also from the rest of Roman North Africa, which does not show the same extreme imbalance between *sacra* and secular buildings. Using four hundred classifiable texts from the Mauretania, Numidia and Tripolitania in the catalogue of inscriptions assembled by Ari Saastamoinen I calculated the proportion of *sacra* to other buildings (fig. 2a), with very different results in comparison to the study area (2b). Temples and arches together made up less than forty per cent of the total, leaving plenty of room for other buildings.²⁶ The breakdown of buildings documented in African building inscriptions outside the study area is not too dissimilar from Zuiderhoek's.

with horrea (*AE* 1959.172, Mactaris) likely belonged to a sanctuary seeing that the builders were styled *cultores* of Mars.

²⁴ Fentress 2007. Similarly, shrines to Neptune were often fountains, and baths could be dedicated to Aesculapius (e.g. gates to baths at *Aquae Persianae*, *CIL* 8.997).

²⁵ Zuiderhoek 2014: 102. Of 500 items, 6 per cent do not mention the building, while 24 per cent mention sanctuaries, 12 per cent baths and gymnasia, 14 per cent stoas, 10 per cent theatres, 5 per cent agoras, 5 per cent governmental structures, 2 per cent aqueducts, 1 per cent or less odeia, stadia, libraries, macella, nymphaea, and arches respectively, and 12 per cent miscellaneous structures. These include statue groups, towers, gates, a public kitchen, a weighing house, storerooms, street paving, and booths.

²⁶ Among frequent building types are baths (5 per cent), aqueducts and reservoirs (6,5 per cent), streets and *plateae* (6,5 per cent), gates and walls (6 per cent), camps and *praetoria* (4 per cent). A miscellany of urban public buildings from curias to a library make up roughly 10 per cent of the sample, while theatres or amphitheatres make up c. 2 per cent. There are further differences from the study area such as the much greater visibility of imperial builders, including emperors, legates and governors; see below on agency.

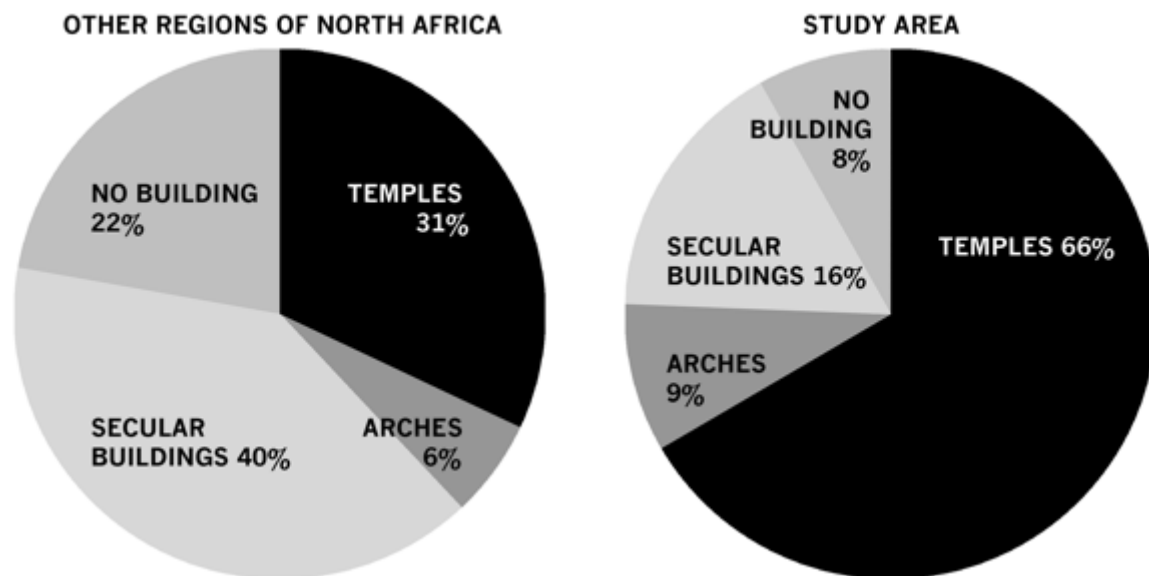


Fig. 2a-b. Proportion of *sacra* to secular buildings in a) the Mauretania, Numidia and Tripolitania (source: Saastamoinen 2010a) and b) in the study area (source: appendix). “No building” indicates that the building is deliberately excluded from the text.

Political borders shifted over the centuries, but the tendency for the epigraphy of the study area to stand apart from other regions stayed the same. Its idiosyncratic character was not the product of internal social or political homogeneity; its towns and sub-regions were diverse both in terms of identity and legal status. The Sahel was home to old and wealthy Libyphoenician ports, while the High Tell had Royal Numidian roots. A military past clung to several western towns, which were also points of contact with Berber tribes. The region housed a wide array of communities, from colonies and municipalities to subordinated towns and estate villages, often connected through complex chains of dependency.²⁷ The vast territory of Carthage incorporated a bewildering range of townships (on which more below), and nested within it were also colonies, more or less integrated with the larger city. Even so, it appears that the communities in the region shared in a particular epigraphic practice which distinguished it from other parts of Africa and the Empire.

Chronology

The study area stands out also with respect to chronology: it is the epigraphy of this region that has contributed the most to the picture of a sharp peak in African building

²⁷ See Dawson 2016: 42-5 for a taxonomy of African townships.

inscriptions in the second century and a dramatic fall in the early third. In Numidia the record slumps less, and in Mauretania it peaks in the mid-third century. Moreover, in the study area these changes only affect *sacra*. These increase steadily through the second century, peak at the turn of the third, and then drop to zero by A.D. 217 at the latest. Numbers recover somewhat under Severus Alexander, Gallienus, and Diocletian, but not to their Antonine heights. In the late third century, stone inscriptions appear to be used mainly for structures celebrating emperors, such as imperial arches, shrines to imperial virtues, or to Sol in the reign of Aurelian, a cult with no previous history in the area.²⁸ After A.D. 305 all building inscriptions disappear, but after a hiatus during Constantine's reign inscriptions from secular buildings re-emerge. By then the public dedication of *sacra* through stone inscriptions was a thing of the past, and fourth-century inscriptions will not be examined here.

Conversely, although inscriptions from secular buildings are few from any period, they are as rare in the first two centuries as in the third or fourth (fig. 3), and there is little to suggest change. They are proportionally more common in the Republic, but this image is produced by the absence, as yet, of inscriptions from shrines. Minor concentrations occur – for instance, theatres appear in the reign of Marcus Aurelius – but apparent increases of secular buildings in his and Alexander Severus' reigns are, by and large, the products of *gemellae*. The largest category of secular buildings – baths – are attested in the Republic and in the reigns of Domitian (probably), Marcus Aurelius, Septimius Severus, Gallienus, and Diocletian. There is a significant concentration of secular buildings in the reign of Diocletian, but this is a time when all types of building inscriptions make a striking, if chronologically limited, comeback. This suggests a (short-lived) change in overall inscribing practices rather

²⁸ From Aurelian to Diocletian: Concord (*ILAlg.* 1.2035); imperial Victories (*ILPBardo* 389); Sol (*CIL* 8.1329, 23924). Under Diocletian: arches (*CIL* 8. 14401, 15258, 15516a-b, 26563, 1992.1763, *CIL* 8.232); imperial shrines (*CIL* 8.1411, AE 2003.2010); edifices to Jupiter and Hercules in tandem (AE 1957.94, *ILAlg.* 1.1228; *CIL* 8.1625, 1627); to Hercules alone (*ILAlg.* 1.2048). Inscriptions from secular buildings dating to Diocletian's reign appear almost exclusively in the periphery. Crawley Quinn and Wilson 2013: 152, 167 note that Capitolia increasingly become assimilated to imperial cult.

than a genuine change in patterns of building activity, and Diocletian's reign is best treated separately.²⁹

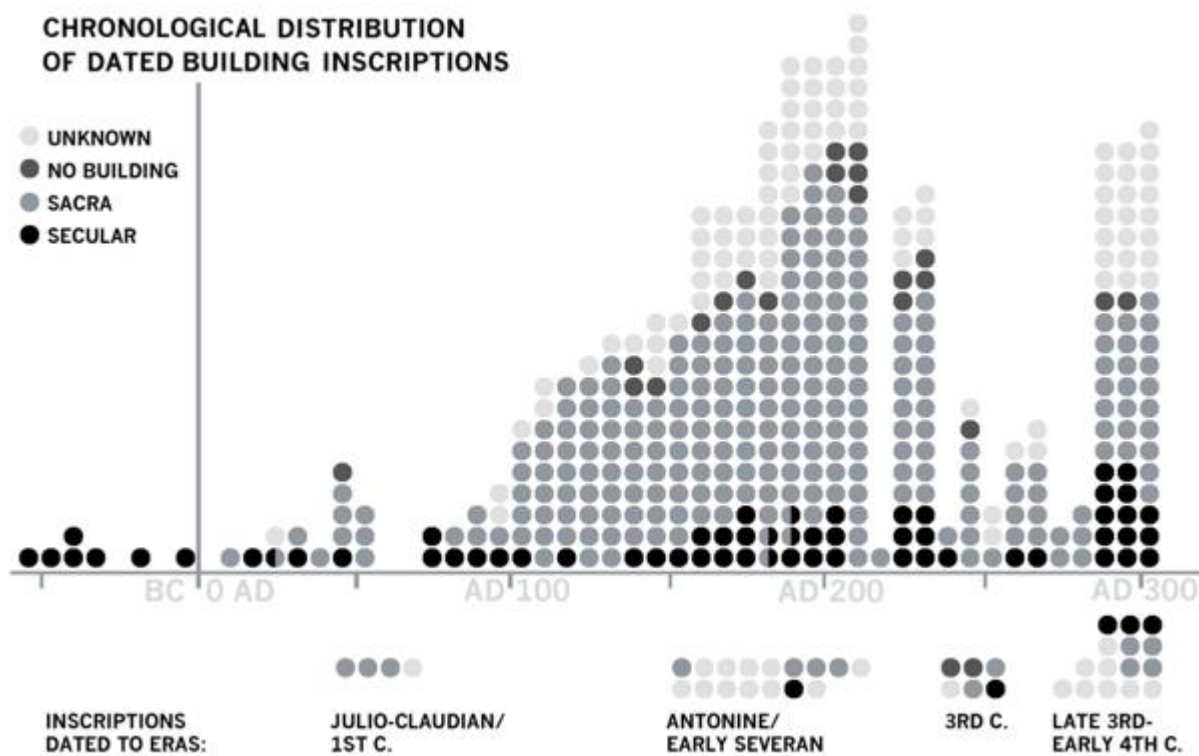


Fig. 3. Distribution of dated building inscriptions, each item represented by a dot. Below, inscriptions dated to within a period. “No building” indicates a text that deliberately excludes the building.

Theories that seek to account for the changing frequencies of building inscriptions over time have generally failed to recognise that these do not involve all types of buildings. It is tempting to see the peak under Diocletian as necessary maintenance of public architecture after a long period of neglect, not least seeing that many of the inscriptions from this period

²⁹ The Diocletianic material presents unique features that will not be treated here (see Hellström 2014: 191-4). After decades of silence the periphery of the study area became very prolific, but some inscriptions record additions to projects initiated by the inscribers' parents, suggesting an ongoing practice. The appearance in the periphery of imperial governors in the role of builders, widely broadcast in stone inscriptions, may have inspired locals to resume the medium. Towns in the north-east only did so a decade later and almost exclusively in relation to imperial monuments and shrines.

Uthina, which was long considered “Severan” until a statue to its builder was discovered that revealed it as Hadrianic.³⁴

This hints at a third reason why few have questioned that the Severan peak in building inscriptions reflects a peak in actual construction, and that it extends to all kinds of buildings: it fits with the common notion that this period was particularly prosperous for Africa, thanks to the early Severan emperors’ personal relation to the region. However, it is possible to push back against the idea that these rulers favoured this particular part of Africa. It had no military installations to attract imperial attention, there are no attested benefactions by Severus or Caracalla in the area (as in Tripolitania), and most historians with an African focus interpret their attitude towards Carthage as hostile.³⁵ Besides suspicion against the growing power of the city’s elites, one may note that Clodius Albinus hailed from Hadrumetum which had strong ties to Carthage, and that Severus often punished cities that had supported his enemies.

There are also reasons to question that the peak in inscriptions from *sacra* fell in their reigns rather than under the late Antonines. Severus and Caracalla are over-represented in the epigraphic record through their long and idiosyncratic imperial titles – in one instance one hundred and fifty-eight words – which makes for more, and more readily identifiable, fragments.³⁶ Conventions have also favoured the Severans, such as making A.D. 235 a *terminus ante quem* for the inclusion of *tribus* in names even though it is still attested under Aurelian, if not later.³⁷ Treating all “Severans” from A.D. 193 to 235 as a bloc obscures how

³⁴ AE 2004.1821. Ben Hassen and Golvin 1998: 117 suggested a late second century date, arguing that this was the town’s apogee. It is the only dated inscription from an amphitheatre before the reign of Diocletian. An undated statue honouring the builder of an amphitheatre (AE 1988.1116, Thuburnica) is often taken as “Severan” based on *tribus* and the general horizon of construction in the area (as inscribed).

³⁵ More on this below, cf. n. 140.

³⁶ AE 2003.1986 (Caracalla), temple of Minerva by the *ordo* of Giufi. On the growth of imperial titles, Hurlet 2015: 183, 186. Most fragments for which only a date can be established belong to this period.

³⁷ *Tribus* appears in names under Gallienus, e.g. ...[---]s *Pap(iria) Felix Iulianus*... (CIL 8.26559, A.D. 264-265) and *Honor[i] / A(ulo) Vitellio Pap(iria) Felici Honorato*... (CIL 8.26582). Two members of the Titisenii family are honoured after his reign, [*T*]itisenio

drastic the decrease in numbers is, and that it fell in the middle of this period rather than after it. It is not (just) the product of an unusually thorough *damnatio memoriae* of Heliogabalus: mid-century texts are different in several respects. One might even reframe the reign of Caracalla as the decisive moment for the demise, rather than the peak, of the tendency to inscribe *sacra* in this area.

This poses problems for connecting the building inscriptions with the “third century crisis”: A.D. 217 is not for the most part treated as its onset, and the fairly prolific reign of Gallienus is usually viewed as its nadir. The record for the mid-to-late third century is not lower than the Julio-Claudian or Flavian periods. Nor does the archaeology of the area’s towns – if analysed independently of building inscriptions – suggest that these declined in the third century. According to Anna Leone, signs of deterioration such as lack of maintenance, encroachment on public spaces, or shrinkage of urban areas, are not widely attested until the end of the fourth century at the earliest.³⁸ The sharp oscillations in the epigraphic record at the onset of Late Antiquity suggest changes to epigraphic production rather than the frequency of construction: it seems unlikely that the area was suddenly prosperous in A.D. 284 only to be utterly devastated in A.D. 305, especially seeing that the following decades ushered in the strongest economic development that this part of Roman North Africa ever saw.³⁹

The geography of the inscriptions

Furthermore, a close look at the towns of the region and their separate dossiers of inscriptions reveals that inscriptions from shrines and arches are not evenly distributed over the area. Zuiderhoek’s study indicates that in Asia Minor the part is consistent with the whole,

Papir(ia) Dato / [P]ompeiano... (CIL 8.26581) and [Ti]tisenio Pap(iria) Feli/[ciss]imo Corneliano... (CIL 8.26618), both A.D. 268-284. Even later is likely a dedication to Iulio Q(uinti) fil(io) / Pap(iria) Rusticiano... by his three sons (CIL 8.5367). He may be the same man who features in an inscription dating to A.D. 293-294 (CIL 8.5290).

³⁸ Leone 2007: 49-51, 82-89, 282 and 2013, *passim*.

³⁹ Exports from this area dominated the Mediterranean in Late Antiquity. Mackensen 1993: 479-84 tied this so-called “African wonder” to the Diocletianic “rebirth” of building inscriptions, but adjusted the chronology for the exports to fit the inscriptions (even though the pottery suggests a later date) and did not address their subsequent disappearance.

with about the same proportions of buildings in separate communities as in the region as a whole, but this does not appear to be the case in the study area. *Sacra* make up a larger share of the texts from smaller, inland towns than they do in larger cities on the coast. This and other factors suggest that towns of different status used such texts differently.

To demonstrate this it is necessary to address how building inscriptions are distributed over the area, and what have determined their survival. Their spread (fig. 4) does not correspond to the demography of the area, which can be misleading. For one, later habitation has made for very few texts surviving from the entire littoral, which was densely populated in antiquity and remains so today. For example, the peninsula of Cap Bon and the coastal region to its south known as the *Byzacium* (also known as the Sahel) are almost empty of building inscriptions from any time, but surveys have revealed them to be densely settled.⁴⁰ Survival is thus capricious, and stray finds can reveal otherwise unknown municipalities and even colonies, complete with fully developed honorific practices.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Ben Baaziz 1999: 32-4. The surveys of the *Carte Archéologique* reveal very dense occupation in the Sahel and on Cap Bon. Using the epigraphic record, Paul-Albert Février interpreted the Cap Bon as thinly populated; Février 1982: 325.

⁴¹ e.g. *CIL* 8.5276a-b from Koubba, grandiloquently honouring a duumvir for giving gladiatorial games.

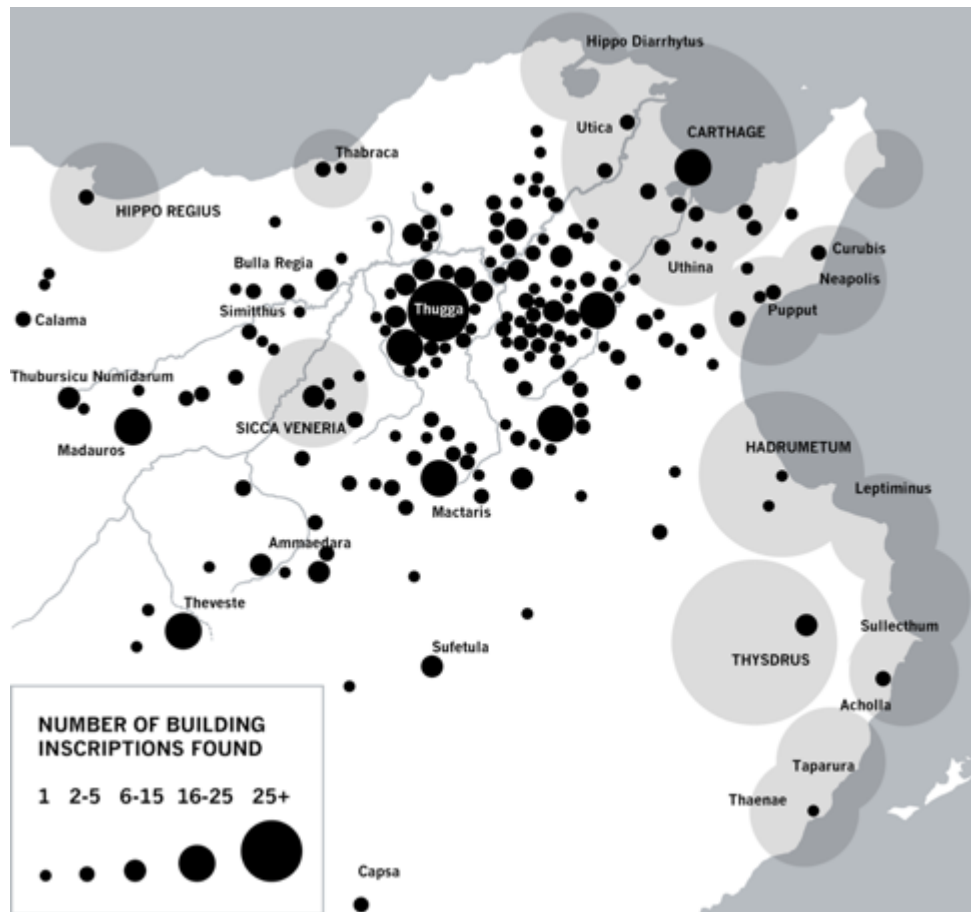


Fig. 4. Findspots for building inscriptions, with the most under-represented areas proportionate to their assumed population marked in grey. From ports: Hippo Regius 3 texts, Thabraca 4, Hippo Diarrhytus 0, Utica 3, Carthage 25, Carpis 2, Clupea 0, Curubis 4, Neapolis 0, Puppit 0, Hadrumentum 1, Leptiminus 0, Sullecthum 0, Acholla 2, Taparura 0, Thaenae 1.

The same problems attach to the major ancient cities of the region. Bar Carthage, not one of the many ports from Hippo Regius to Thaenae (including important cities such as Curubis and Hadrumentum), has produced more than four building inscriptions, and many have produced none. Large inland towns are not much better provided, such as the colonies Utica (three texts), Uthina (two doubtful fragments), Thysdrus (six) and Sicca Veneria (six). Among features qualifying a town as “major” are status of *colonia*, a large urban territory (as recently revealed for Simitthus, with four texts⁴²), and the presence of imperial bureaus (as for instance

⁴² For the territory, see von Rummel 2013.

at Carthage, Hippo Regius (three), Hadrumetum (one) and Thysdrus).⁴³ All the African colonies listed by Pliny the Elder (*NH* 5.22, 24, 29-30) are virtually void of building inscriptions. Another reflection of the significance of African towns is the number of recruits in the African legion that were drawn from them, a method used by the excavators of Uthina to highlight the importance of this city.⁴⁴ By far the most soldiers came from cities that were “silent”: in ascending order Uthina, the colony Maxula (zero building inscriptions), Simitthus, Sicca Veneria, Utica, and, not surprisingly with the largest number of recruits, Carthage.

Carthage is the most critically underrepresented of all cities in the area, and is therefore often neglected in epigraphic studies. It pays to remember that Carthage counted as one of the “big four” cities of the Empire and that its population numbered in the hundreds of thousands.⁴⁵ Its territory covered a significant portion of the study area (including the majority of its minor towns), and its influence stretched far beyond it. Carthage has the largest record of building inscriptions of all major cities (twenty-five), but is easily beaten by its own dependent Thugga, with seventy-four. This is more than the whole littoral has produced from Hippo Diarrhytus in the North to Thaeanae in the South, including Carthage, Thysdrus and all other cities. This leads to the second factor affecting the distribution of building inscriptions in the area: excavation and publication. Turn of the century “total excavations” (of a kind no longer considered sound archaeological practice) generated disproportionately large samples from certain towns, especially Thugga but also, for instance, Musti and Thubursicu Numidarum.⁴⁶ This should not be taken to reflect their size or importance. Even many non-excavated inland villages have larger records than most coastal cities.

Together, later habitation and excavation seriously distort the image of construction in the region: a record that practically excludes the most populous areas and all major cities

⁴³ On centres of the *res privata*, see below n. 61. Very few African towns exceed the 5,000 inhabitants required to be considered ‘major’ in the estimate of Wilson 2011.

⁴⁴ Ben Abdallah *et al.* 1998: 62, after Y. Le Bohec.

⁴⁵ Duncan-Jones 1974: 260-1 nn. 264-5 estimates its population as up to 300,000. This may be optimistic, but no calculation has generated numbers lower than 200,000, and in the West, only Rome was larger.

⁴⁶ e.g. Thugga (74), Madauros (25), Musti (23) and Thuburbo Maius (29). For French colonial excavations, see Johansson de Château 2009: 77-107.

cannot be anywhere near representative. Only twelve items in total have survived from the entire Sahel, and half of them from Thysdrus, which does not suffice for any large-scale generalisations on the fate of its cities. However, there is also a third, and less often acknowledged, factor that affects how building inscriptions may be analysed: they were not produced equally in all places. On the one hand, some rural areas that show up empty on maps charting inscriptions (such as the one above) were home to agricultural estates, of which many had *vici* that could compete with towns in size and monumentality.⁴⁷ This is not adequately reflected in epigraphy, which appears to have been a medium of towns. Notably, the few building inscriptions from estate *vici* imitate those of towns, with *coloni* posing in the same manner as council magistrates.⁴⁸ The emergence of many rural episcopal sees in the fourth century is instructive: these “empty” areas comprised both people and resources, but not the political institutions that generated inscriptions.⁴⁹

On the other hand, and importantly for the present purposes, all towns did not produce them to the same extent. Some of the most notable towns in the area have preserved fewer items than they ought to, considering their state of preservation and excavation. For instance, Hippo Regius has left a well-preserved monumental core, but only three building inscriptions. The colony Uthina is one of the best preserved, examined, and published sites in Tunisia and has seen very little post-Roman habitation, but has produced a mere two fragments, both of which may come from statues.⁵⁰ Curubis has preserved other honorific inscriptions from several centuries, and it seems unlikely that nothing was built there during the entire imperial period. Similarly, plenty of inscriptions survive from Sicca Veneria and Thysdrus, but very few building inscriptions. Again, the most conspicuous case is Carthage. As the many volumes of the *CIL* from the city of Rome show, continuous habitation does not preclude the

⁴⁷ On estates, e.g. Kehoe 1988 and 2006; Demsiri-Laadoua 1995.

⁴⁸ e.g. *ILTun.* 1568, a shrine restored by the *coloni* of Fundus Turrus Rutundae; cf. Fundus Ver... (*CIL* 8.11736-7) and Fundus ...itanus (*CIL* 8.23022).

⁴⁹ Dossey 2010, *passim*.

⁵⁰ This has baffled the excavators; see Ben Abdallah *et al.* 1998: 37. There are few texts also from the stunning sites Bulla Regia and Sufetula. Noël Duval (Duval 1989) thought it likely that all texts from Sufetula that predate 284 actually belonged to statue bases, not buildings.

survival of inscriptions. Carthage returns four times as many inscriptions overall than Thugga in a cursory online database search (8,000+), but only a third as many building inscriptions.⁵¹

Furthermore, when treating the records from major towns on the coast separately, it becomes clear that they are different from those inland both in terms of buildings and chronology. In spite of being smaller the records from the ports are more diverse: their share of inscriptions from secular buildings is much larger than their share of the sample overall. Conversely, they are less dominated by *sacra*. There are certainly shrines on the coast – c. fifty per cent of the coastal texts record *sacra* – but this is significantly lower than inland (where many towns have no other testimonies at all), and no arch has been epigraphically attested in a coastal town. This has been obscured by quantifying the slim record from the littoral together with the mass of inland inscriptions.

Moreover, building inscriptions from the coast show no tendency to accumulate in the late second century but appear to spread evenly over the three centuries concerned. For example, the texts from Hippo Regius record the paving of a forum in the Flavian period, an aedicula dedicated to Hadrian, and a bath restoration under Septimius Severus, while all four texts from Curubis (recording a hospitium, city walls, a horologium, a pluteus, two scholae and a road) date to the first century B.C.⁵² All inscriptions recording roadworks come from ports and neither of them date to the Antonine-Severan period.⁵³ Three of them come from Carthage, where inscriptions from a wide range of buildings have survived, none of which dates to the reigns of Severus or Caracalla. To conclude, it appears that the coastal cities did not participate in the abundant Antonine-Severan commemoration of *sacra*. To understand what generated it one must look to the communities where such inscriptions were actually produced, and consider who were responsible for them.

Agency

⁵¹ Using the Clauss-Slaby database, www.manfredclauss.de. This, *nota bene*, is not how the sample of building inscriptions used for the study was compiled; see n. 12.

⁵² See the appendix. The texts from Thabraca are too fragmentary to disclose the object.

⁵³ Curubis: *CIL* 8.978 (Augustus), a *via* bunched with other projects; Carthage: *AE* 2011.1703 (late first century B.C.); *CIL* 8.24652; *ILTun.* 1091 (both undated). See also *plateae* at Ammaedara (*CIL* 8.11529-30, Marcus) and Thala (*CIL* 8.23291, Diocletian).

It comes as no surprise that the same division is notable also for the agents who raised the buildings: the records from smaller towns are dominated by two well-defined, and closely related, categories of builders, while major cities (and especially the ports) see a greater variety. To classify the patrons presents challenges; not only are many texts damaged, which (as for buildings) excludes about a third of the sample, but the varied phraseology of inscriptions from the area (as explored by Ari Saastamoinen) makes for very different depths of detail. Some towns favoured long texts, in others nothing about the builders was disclosed beyond their names. In yet others, only construction by town councils was recorded, which should not be taken to indicate that no individual ever built there.⁵⁴ In many cases it has not been possible to establish the status of a builder or their relation to the community in which the project was undertaken. Nonetheless, the picture is clear: the vast majority were produced by the leading office-holders of the towns, either individually, which is the most common, or collectively as town councils. The inscriptions quoted above are typical examples, but there are many variants.

About a third of all agents attested in the sample (insofar as the texts allow us to tell) are town councils, and two thirds individuals, of whom about seventy per cent (of identifiable cases) are local office-holders.⁵⁵ Of these, more than ninety per cent (one-hundred and fifty-five instances) hold priestly office, and most of them an imperial priesthood, for the most part the flamine. The exact position is unclear for several of the remaining ten per cent, and they may well have been *flamines* or *flaminicae*, too. There is little resemblance to Zuiderhoek's sample from Asia Minor, in which the two most impactful agents were private benefactors and, especially, *dēmoi*.⁵⁶ As Ari Saastamoinen observes, the *populus* had no role in posting building inscriptions in Roman North Africa,⁵⁷ nor is the community addressed as a

⁵⁴ e.g. Althiburos and Sustris.

⁵⁵ Excepting texts that are too fragmentary to disclose agents or make clear that none were mentioned (c. 30 per cent). Furthermore, c. ¼ of all texts by individual builders are too fragmentary to establish their status.

⁵⁶ Zuiderhoek 2014: 104-108. His question (p. 108) whether this had parallels in the West would have to be answered with a resounding no as far as this region is concerned.

⁵⁷ Saastamoinen 2010b: 51-2. An exception is a temple restored by the *classis tertia ex curia augusta* at Musti, AE 1968.593.

beneficiary. Moreover, while Zuiderhoek's private benefactors and *dēmoi* were responsible for all types of buildings, almost all office-holders built shrines and arches, and of the councils very nearly all.

We cannot thus argue that the councils filled the gaps left by the office-holders. Town councils did build secular buildings but this should not be overstated: there are eight examples in a sample of one hundred and three, while all remaining texts that mention the building came from *sacra*, and most that exclude it are known to belong to arches.⁵⁸ Furthermore, texts that exclude the patron were plausibly posted by town councils, and these inscriptions almost exclusively commemorate *sacra*.⁵⁹ Both categories are mainly attested inland, and only one project by a council is attested on the coast.⁶⁰ The first priests appear in the Julio-Claudian period and the councils under the Flavians, but their numbers remain small until the mid-second century when they begin rising sharply, only to decrease as sharply in accordance with the drop in numbers of the sample as a whole. The councils continue to appear as builders throughout the third century, if in lower numbers, while the *flamines* drop away more noticeably.

It is, quite clearly, the inscriptions by honorary priests and town councils that create the distinct shape of the epigraphic record from the area. Other types of builders appear more rarely, and many only once. They do not favour *sacra*, nor accumulate in the late Antonine-early Severan period, and a significant share are retrieved from locations otherwise lacking in building inscriptions. In other parts of Roman North Africa, emperors, governors and legates are frequently attested in the role of builder, but in this area such texts are very few. The latest work of an emperor to be inscribed (before Diocletian) is by Trajan, and such works are limited to aqueducts in major cities (Carthage and Thysdrus) or bridges in towns associated with the military and/or the *res privata* (Vaga, Ammaedara, and Simitthus).⁶¹ The area may

⁵⁸ All texts that omit the building are civic, and when found *in situ* come from arches.

Saastamoinen 2010a: 51-2, 57.

⁵⁹ Except a unique septizodium, see n. 13.

⁶⁰ Carthaginian aqueduct on permission of Pius (*ILPBardo* 2.9a-b); also at Carthage a joint civic/private shrine (*IL Afr.* 400, Gallienus).

⁶¹ *AE* 1951.71 (Carthage, Augustus); *AE* 1991.1635 (Thysdrus, Vespasian); *CIL* 8.10568 (Vaga, Tiberius); *AE* 1995.1652 (Ammaedara, Hadrian); *CIL* 8.10117 (Simitthus, Trajan). For

have become of less concern when it became civil, and few emperors ever visited. Only one project is known by a legate of the *III Augusta*, an unknown object at Theveste under Domitian (when the legion was moved there).⁶² An aqueduct at Ammaedara by the proconsular legate in the reign of Marcus is also unique.⁶³ Surprisingly, only three projects by proconsuls are attested before Diocletian (at Carthage under Claudius, Hippo Regius under Vespasian and Thuburbo Maius under Commodus), even though part of their duties was to monitor construction in the towns under their rule.⁶⁴ In contrast to locations such as Lepcis Magna in Tripolitania or Lambaesis in Numidia (to where the legion was moved), imperial influence over urban architecture in the study area was exerted mainly through regulations and permissions, as far as epigraphy is a guide. The few building inscriptions by lower imperial functionaries do not change this picture.⁶⁵

Beside the priests, inscriptions posted by members of the local elite are few and non-homogenous. Aediles are attested in six texts, featuring mainly secular works and dating to the reigns of Augustus, Alexander Severus and Diocletian.⁶⁶ This is a remarkably low count

centres of the *res privata*, Christol 2008. There is notably little correspondence between this grid and the frequency of building inscriptions. A Diocletianic theatre restoration may be tied to Maximian's African campaign (Ammaedara, *ILTun.* 461).

⁶² *CIL* 8.1851.

⁶³ *AE* 1988.1119.

⁶⁴ *AE* 1951.82; *CIL* 8.24585a, *IL Afr.* 265. Proconsuls preside over the dedication ceremonies of works raised by others according to a small number of predominantly Antonine texts. For the appearance of governors as builders under Diocletian, see n. 29.

⁶⁵ *Libertus tabularius* (Hippo Regius, *IL Alg.* 1.399, Hadrian); procurator of imperial marbles (Simitthus, *AE* 1994.1885, Marcus); adiutor (Theveste, *IL Alg.* 1.2997, likely first century. A.D.); procurators in the *res privata* (Musti, *CIL* 8.1578, Alexander Severus; Madauros, *IL Alg.* 1.2035, Aurelian). The procurators also hold local honorific positions, and build as private men. *Curatores rei privatae* are common as builders under Diocletian but are attested only twice before this (Thugga, *CIL* 8.10620, arch, Gallienus; Capsa, *CIL* 8.100, shrine, Probus).

⁶⁶ Augustus: *AE* 2011.1703 (street, Carthage); *CIL* 8.978 (pluteus, scholas, horologium, and road, Curubis); Severus Alexander: *CIL* 8.1492, 1486 (circus, Thugga); *CIL* 8.23991

considering the tasks associated with this office. Also surprisingly few are inscriptions attributable to the higher African elite, or the “African oligarchy”, as Mireille Corbier styled it in a seminal article.⁶⁷ It consisted of a small group of very wealthy families who dominated this part of Roman North Africa socially, economically, and politically. Their influence and networks spanned the region, including properties and patron-ships in several of its towns. Although some families may have originated from these, their main abodes were on the coast, and particularly at Carthage where they held offices and priesthoods.⁶⁸ Apuleius hailed them in flowery phrases, and Tertullian mocked them for their blissful wealth and elegance.⁶⁹ Even so, members of this regional elite are rarely attested in building inscriptions, and when they are it is usually in association with secular buildings.⁷⁰

Six inscriptions by patrons have been attested at Thugga but the latest dates to the reign of Hadrian, while the pair of African *liberti* responsible for three texts in the same town were active in the Julio-Claudian period.⁷¹ Few other social categories of builders are attested more than twice, and many are known from only a single text, such as a senator raising a bath at Carpis.⁷² Most of these are found on the coast and especially in Carthage, including an imperial freedman who restored quays and banks,⁷³ a leatherworker who raised a public

(fountain announced with a shrine to Mercury, Giufi); under Diocletian: *CIL* 8.23291 (platea, Thala).

⁶⁷ Corbier 1982; for the term p. 692.

⁶⁸ Corbier 1982 provides a list of *gentes*; see Hugoniot 2006 for their connection to Carthage. The Memmii likely arose from Gigthis but received honours and offices at Uchi Maius, Thuburbo Maius, Bulla Regia, Thignica, Numluli, and Carthage, and had properties by Sidi Amor.

⁶⁹ e.g. Apuleius, *Florida* 16 and 18, Tertullian, *De pallio* 1.1.

⁷⁰ e.g. baths by a senator (*CIL* 8.24106); forum and macellum by Carthaginian patrons (*IL Afr.* 588, 559); shrine plus macellum by a Carthaginian augur (*CIL* 8.26482-4, 264830 and statue *CIL* 8.26485); portico, theatre, and forum portico by equestrian families (*IL Afr.* 271, *IL Alg.* 1.2121, *CIL* 8.26524).

⁷¹ See the appendix for the inscriptions. The freedmen held flaminates and raised shrines, representing an early instance of this connection.

⁷² *CIL* 8.24106, under Julius Caesar.

⁷³ *CIL* 8.24652.

horreum,⁷⁴ and the enigmatic *Deborosi* (variously interpreted as an ethnic label, a group of legionaries, or a confraternity) responsible for a roadside wall.⁷⁵ Granted, Carthage has produced the largest coastal record, but a similar image emerges from the comparatively good record from Hippo Regius where none of the builders were priests, imperial or otherwise.

The image produced in the previous sections is thus repeated for agency: testimonies of one kind dominate the record of minor inland towns, while the ports show more diversity. The building inscriptions associated with the miscellany of builders other than priests or councils are too few to have an impact on the corpus overall, but when they are examined separately three things become clear. Firstly, they do not become more plentiful in the second century. Secondly, most of them – at either end of the social spectrum – are attested in cities and areas with low counts of building inscriptions. Thirdly, the buildings involved are for the most part secular; in fact, together they answer for the majority of secular buildings in the whole sample. The pace of their activities should not be assessed based on the chronology of *sacra*, raised by priests and councils in minor towns in Carthage's hinterland.

It is, in short, their texts that present the anomaly, and which require explaining. We may perhaps receive a more accurate image of construction in the area if we removed shrines and arches from our sample altogether. As few as they are, secular buildings correspond better with the area's actual urban hierarchy, and their more even timeline (excluding Diocletian's reign) suggests that maintenance of the cities may not, after all, have changed so much over time. There are several subsamples that merit attention, including the involvement (or its opposite) by emperors, but also that of the aediles who were no doubt responsible for a larger share of the areas urban architecture than their few inscriptions suggest. The same is arguably the case for the regional African elite, for reasons that will be discussed below.

II Socio-political context

The last factor to be analysed is how the building inscriptions relate to the towns and their socio-political structures. They can be said to represent a spectrum, from projects conceived in close relation to the town councils to those that at least appear to be independent of them. It

⁷⁴ *CIL* 8.24654.

⁷⁵ *CIL* 8.24654; *ILTun.* 1091. For the *Deborosi*, see Beschtaouch 1985: 462-4.

should be recognised that the activities of the priests and the local councils are attributable to the same social stratum, and were closely intermingled: the projects of the priests were tied to positions granted by the councils, and were, in a sense, partly funded by them, while councils' decisions were influenced by the priests who were their most prominent members. This close interconnection explains the similarity of their building activity, and contributed to rendering it epigraphically visible.

I use “council” or “senate” as terms denoting administrative bodies equivalent to an *ordo*, but far from all towns in the area had legal rights. Many towns were dependent on others, and this is especially the case in the territory of Carthage. Known to historians working on Roman North Africa as the *pertica*, this administrative territory comprised scores of towns of which most were *civitates*, which in this region denotes a subordinate, native town rather than a *municipium*.⁷⁶ Their status is hard to define, not least because many of them had developed political institutions that approximated those of independent towns, as observed by Jacques Gascou who called them ‘proto-municipalities’ or ‘municipia-to-be’.⁷⁷ Alongside them were enclaves of Carthaginian citizens known as *pagi* and which formed part of the Carthaginian *pertica*, with Carthage as their *patria*.⁷⁸ The *pagi* were not spatial but administrative units; an outlying *pagus* could co-habit with a dependent *civitas*, forming

⁷⁶ On the *pertica*, Poinssot 1962; Aounallah 2010; for spatial extent Aounallah and Maurin 2008. Sicca Veneria also had a *pertica*, with *pagi* of Siccan citizens dwelling among dependent *kastella*; see n. 129.

⁷⁷ Gascou 1972: 167.

⁷⁸ On the different uses of the term *pagus*, Picard 1969-1970; Aounallah 2010: 1615-24. For the details of their social organisation – still very unclear – see Dondin-Payre 2002. Drawing on grammar and local inscriptions she argues convincingly that the *patria* referred to in a text from Numluli (*CIL* 8.26121) is Carthage, not the local town as is commonly argued (e.g. Aounallah 2010: 112). That *pagus*, *patria* and *civitas* were distinct entities is shown by a statue base at Carthage (*AE* 1989.779) which hails a man of the *Arnensis* (that is, Carthaginian) tribe, recounting how he was member of several *pagi*, had completed all honours in his *civitas*, and shown generosity to his *patria*. Cf. *CIL* 8.26524 (Thugga), for a portico donated to the *pagus* of the *patria*.

“double towns” such as Thugga or Uchi Maius.⁷⁹ All these civic entities had their respective institutions, and dependent towns could style themselves *respublicae* (as Uchi Maius does in the inscription above) and raise Capitolia as though they held legal rights.⁸⁰

One trait these townships had in common regardless of legal status is that they raised *sacra* posing as councils and that they appointed *flamines* or *sacerdotes* who did the same. These versatile priesthoods provided a unifying element to the wide array of urban communities. They could be held by both men and women, and were appointed locally by the (variants of) councils in place without apparent restrictions or compulsions from above. They appear in several varieties from the local annual or perpetual flamine (the version featured in most building inscriptions) to the provincial priesthood.⁸¹ It is doubtful that these formed an internal hierarchy; as James Rives points out, the flamines should be viewed in relation to the local *cursus honorum*, held after its completion.⁸² They may even have been void of functions, serving only as marks of distinction.⁸³

What is clear is that they represented the pinnacle of local society. The inscriptions might give the impression that the councils and the priests who had passed through their ranks were the only agents to affect the public sphere, but there were many others beside them. Christopher Dawson has convincingly shown that the *populus* had important roles, such as initiating honours, collecting money to fund them and putting pressure on the senates through

⁷⁹ Rejecting the idea that the *pagi* were spatially distinct from the *civitates*, Khanoussi 1994; Khanoussi and Strocka 2002; Ritter 2006.

⁸⁰ Crawley Quinn and Wilson 2013 observe that Capitolia were not exclusive to independent towns. Their claim (p. 156) that such sanctuaries came late to the area is less convincing, however, seeing how few inscriptions overall that date to the first century. Inscriptions from Capitolia follow the same chronology as other temples.

⁸¹ Rejected by Dawson 2016: 158-60; Rives 1995: 93-5, who underscores that individual towns were at liberty to shape these offices and that there was no formal framework that connected them.

⁸² For African flamines see Arnaldi 2010; Rives 1995; Ladjimi Sebaï 1990; Pflaum 1976; Bassignano 1974.

⁸³ So Hugoniot 2000: 137.

curiae.⁸⁴ These associations had their own fees, ceremonies and magistrates, testifying to the many layers of local civic life. However, in the types of building inscriptions that characterise this region only the topmost of these layers is visible.

In fact, and crucially for the real character of these texts, the priests' building inscriptions seem to mark the precise moment of achieving priestly office. This is clear from the fact that most this class of inscriptions describe their building projects as undertaken 'for the sake of office', *ob honorem* (or versions thereof), a practice that is characteristic of African epigraphy. The inscription from Musti above is but one of many such texts, which typically recount earlier offices held, the fee paid to the local treasury for the current office (the priesthood) together with the cost of the building project, and various close relations who are often promoted to office as well. The practice is attested in about half of all (reasonably legible) African building inscriptions,⁸⁵ but many fragments show the characteristic elements, and the proportion is certainly higher in the hinterland of Carthage.⁸⁶ The practice of building *ob honorem* is attested in the case of both temples and arches, and accounts for almost all imperial statues raised by individuals, in sharp contrast to other provinces.⁸⁷

Whether the fee or *summa honoraria* helped fund the building project is a much-debated issue.⁸⁸ I am inclined to think that it often did. This is at times explicit, as in the case of works undertaken *ex summa honoris*, 'out of the fee for office'.⁸⁹ An undated text states that '...the temple which C. Clodius Saturninus promised to build and complete for twice the

⁸⁴ On African *curiae*, Dawson 2016: 177ff.

⁸⁵ cf. Wesch-Klein 1990: 41.

⁸⁶ Le Glay 1990 associates almost all *sacra* with the pursuit of office.

⁸⁷ Højte 2005, e.g. p. 53, 141, 172-3, 186. He observes that inscribing the cost for imperial statues and for individuals to raise them are both almost unique to Africa, and notes that the two are interrelated.

⁸⁸ For a summary, Saastamoinen 2010a: 326-47. He treats them as celebratory, against Duncan-Jones (e.g. 1974: 82-8, 147-9, followed by Wesch-Klein, Hugoniot, Jacques, and many others) who viewed them as in part paid through the fees, and erected in pursuit rather than receipt of office. Højte (see n. 92) argues that it was mandatory to use the fee in this way.

⁸⁹ e.g. *CIL* 8.98 and 1482. Another (*CIL* 8.1505, *IL Afr.* 553) was undertaken *ob summam honoris flaminatus*, 'for the sake of the payment of the office of flamen'.

fee for his and his brother Clodius Celer's decurionates, his niece Clodia Macrina, daughter of Caius, raised from the ground out of 12,000 HS, having added, beyond the 6,400 fee required for her office, 5,600 more out of her own generosity...'.⁹⁰ To fund dedication festivities for someone else's building could also serve the same purpose. For example, a private man paid *ex summa flamoni perpetui* for the dedication of a civic project occasioned by the colonial deduction of Thugga, not his own progression.⁹¹ The texts often foreground the fees by giving the cost of the whole project in multiples of it, or simply as 'more'. Payment details do not generally come with the most costly projects, as Jacob Munk Højte observes, and should not be seen as boasting.⁹² The hypothesis that *ob honorem* originally represented "pure" benefactions, but in time came to represent taxes, is attractive but hard to prove seeing that the formalisation of the process is what motivated the texts.⁹³ The buildings received little, and sometimes no mention.

In either case, there was a strong expectation that the recipient of high office should build *sacra*. Only four inscriptions from secular buildings were raised *ob honorem*, and all but one outside the "peak" decades.⁹⁴ The exception is an Antonine theatre at Thugga, which was

⁹⁰ CIL 8.12058, Muzuc: ...| *aedem quam C. Clodius Satur/ninus duplicata summa hono/raria decurionatus sui et Clo/di Celeris fratris sui a solo / struendam et perficiendam / promiserat Clodia Macri/na C. f. neptis eius super SS VI mil(ia) et / CCCC n(ummum) e[ius sum]mae honorariae / adiectis am[plius li]beralitate sua / SS V mil(ibus) et sesc[entis n(ummum)] ex SS X[II] / mil(ibus) n(ummum) a solo [er]exit.*

⁹¹ CIL 8.10620; c.f. a statue of Septimius Severus raised by the town Uchi Maius (CIL 8.26255). The dedicator used the *summa honoraria* owed for his priesthood to provide an ornamental base and a banquet, which allowed him to headline the inscription of the monument.

⁹² Højte 2005: 53 n. 127, noting that standardised amounts recur (often 4,000 or 5,000 HS) which he relates to the similarity in the type of funding. Dawson 2016: 77 comes to similar conclusions, noting that references to fees for office coincide with such recurring sums. The pattern is the same for buildings and statues

⁹³ Related, if not necessarily endorsed, by Hugoniot 2000: 247. If so, no texts represent the earlier stage.

⁹⁴ Fountain dedicated as a shrine to Neptune (AE 2006.1762, Gallienus); platea (CIL 8.23291, Diocletianand forum refurbishment (CIL 8.25532-3, undated). A theatre inscription (ILAlg.

likely raised for a flamine in Carthage.⁹⁵ The same pattern emerges from the rest of Roman North Africa, where only two instances of *ob honorem* construction (of more than one-hundred and fifty) involve secular buildings, and both date to the late fourth century. Where the study area differs is in scale: there are more of them, and the office in question is more often the flamine while elsewhere the duumvirate is usually the end point. Only four *duumviri* are attested as builders in the study area, and three of them also hold priesthoods which is likely the office commemorated. More minor projects such as statues of gods and emperors could be raised for duumvirates, aedilitates, and decurionates (which sometimes appears to have been a systematic arrangement), but shrines and arches were reserved for the highest local positions: in this area, the honorary priesthoods.⁹⁶

It is thus not by virtue of specific religious responsibilities that the priests built, but simply in their generic capacity as holders of high office. The priesthoods rarely correspond to the sanctuaries built, and there appears to have been no expectation that a *flamen* should raise an imperial shrine. Their inscriptions contain very few phrases of devotion such as *ex voto* or *ex iussu divinitatis*,⁹⁷ and these invariably appear in exceptional contexts.⁹⁸ The texts

1.2121, Madauros, 3rd c.) was emended to include *ob honorem* by Gsell (who stressed that this was hypothetical), and a macellum with portico was raised as part of *sacra* (*AE* 2004.1674, Marcus; *CIL* 8.26482-4, 26530, Commodus). Also potentially representing secular buildings: *IL Afr.* 220 (third century); *CIL* 8.25895 (Diocletian or A.D. 305-306); *CIL* 8.1323 (undated).

⁹⁵ *CIL* 8.26482-3, for a flamine in the *patria*. The only priesthood mentioned is his present one at Carthage, which ought to be his *patria*; see above and n. 78. This also accords with the exceptional grandeur of the project.

⁹⁶ Notably at Madauros, e.g. *CIL* 8.16873; *IL Alg.* 1.2087, 2088, 2089, 2092, 2095. See also *AE* 2005.19876 (Bulla Regia); *AE* 1957.77 (Cillium); *CIL* 8.1576 (Musti); *AE* 1995.1657 (Pagus Mercurialis); *CIL* 8.14755 (Sicilibba); *ILTun.* 714, 718 (Thuburbo Maius). A statue to Minerva at Thubursicu Numidarum (*IL Alg.* 1.1236) appears to have represented payment for several positions.

⁹⁷ Noted also by Wesch-Klein 1990: 42, and Le Glay 1990, who reject that piety was their main motivation.

⁹⁸ e.g. a shrine to the genius of an estate by its procurator, *oraculo admonitus* (*AE* 2007.1712). Shrines built *ex voto*, *ex visu* etc. appear in peripheral locations and are usually raised by

are taken up with money, careers and families, often painstakingly itemising every contribution made across generations. This does not betray a lack of piety on the part of the builders – building inscriptions were not the medium of choice for expressing religious sentiments – but is tied to the purpose of the texts: to document local progression through an intimate connection between the political hierarchies of the towns and their religious monumental framework. As a result, *sacra* made these hierarchies visible – literally enshrined – in the public spaces of the towns.

Most secular buildings in the sample were generated through other processes, and their texts also differ from those of civic and priestly ones. Inscriptions dating to the first three centuries were generally sparing of technical detail which has often excluded them from discussions of construction in the area, seeing that they are hard to date. Several projects by members of the *Arnensis* tribe of Carthage state only their names.⁹⁹ One of few datable texts is an inscription from an unknown building at Uchi Maius:

*Sex. Pullaienus Florus Caeci[lianus s(ua) p(ecunia) fecit?] | et Uchitanis
Maioribus dono [dedit]*

Sextus Pullaienus Florus Caecilianus raised (it) out of his own money and gave it as a gift to the people of Uchi Maius.¹⁰⁰

Florus came from a well-established African elite family with properties and patronships in multiple towns, and held high positions in Carthage under Hadrian.¹⁰¹ This is not conveyed by

slaves, ex-slaves or Berber natives, and not for office: *AE* 1904.57, 1995.1790, 2003.2010; *CIL* 8.1318, 4636, 14690, 23282, 23859, 23867, 24077, 27704; *ILAlg.* 1.2069, 2997, 2997; *ILTun.* 261, 652, 868, 1281. Some are likely statues or altars.

⁹⁹ e.g. *CIL* 8.14392 (Vaga); *IL Afr.* 558 (Thugga); *CIL* 8.26177a (Thibaris); see also works at Thuburbo Maius by *L. Numisius L. f. Arnensi Vitalis*: *AE* 1961.71; *CIL* 8.842; *ILPBardo* 325. Wesch-Klein 1990: 23 notes the absence of cost from large buildings. Højte 2005: 120-3 connects such information to the public sphere.

¹⁰⁰ *CIL* 8.26267a.

¹⁰¹ Construction at Pagus Suttuensis (*CIL* 8.26419); patronate at Thugga (*CIL* 8.26615). On his career, Gasco 1987: 103-4. The family owned properties in Thugga and Uchi Maius, and became senatorial in the 3rd c.

his inscription, however, but by a statue base found in a different town. What the text does convey is the unusual circumstance that the building was a gift to the people of Uchi Maius; whatever it was, it was presented as a benefaction to the community, not a step in Florus' career. The lack of a dedicatory formula makes it unlikely that it was a shrine or an arch.

A similar reticence obtains for statues to outsiders, as observed by Christopher Dawson: local honorands were celebrated with minute details on their families and careers, but honours to high-status external ones occasioned few words.¹⁰² He suggested that a statue to a local dignitary required more justification (hence more details), and in the case of buildings by outsiders that these used fewer words because they were less emotionally engaged.¹⁰³ However, the building inscriptions by locals are not usually emotive; brief as it is, Florus' text expresses more sentiment than most of them. A more convincing explanation to a similar tendency in Italy was proposed by Werner Eck, arguing that reticence made the individual come across as more distinguished.¹⁰⁴ I would go further and suggest that these details were irrelevant for the context. Inscriptions by locals documented transactions within locally defined honours systems, channelled through local political bodies. When only Florus' name is given, this is not because he or the townsfolk did not care about his gifts, but because his career had long since progressed beyond his local *cursus honorum* (which was likely not performed in *Uchi Maius* in any case).

The same division in terms of activity and presentation can be seen in yet another sphere: inscriptions on statue bases that mention construction as part of the honorands' achievements. These fall neatly into two categories, one that mentions construction undertaken in the past and listed with the honorand's *cursus honorum*, another that presents a construction project as the direct occasion for the statue honour. The first group conforms well to the texts by local magistrates: the works are almost exclusively *sacra*, and as far as they can be dated they belong in the reigns of Commodus and Septimius Severus.¹⁰⁵ Statues

¹⁰² Dawson 2016: 85.

¹⁰³ Dawson 2016: 311, 314.

¹⁰⁴ Eck 2010: 166, using the example of M. Gavius Maximus. Of six statues in different towns none provide his career, and five only mention his present position (*praef(ecto) praet(orio)*).

¹⁰⁵ *AE* 1997.1643, 2000.1730. 2004.1820; *CIL* 8.12039, 12253, 12569, 23993 (all shrines), 14372 (septizodium); *ILTun.* 460 (very minor additions to a theatre for 5,000 HS).

raised in gratitude for a building, by contrast, honour individuals of higher than local standing, including a Carthaginian, three senators, two high equestrians, and at least four civic patrons.¹⁰⁶ Their projects read like an inventory of structures “missing” from the record of building inscriptions: three amphitheatres, two theatres, two baths, one aqueduct, one hydraulic structure (bath, aqueduct or fountain), one portico, and one reconstruction of the entire forum area, including a curia and a Capitolium (which is the only sanctuary in the sample).¹⁰⁷ They are spread fairly evenly from the reign of Hadrian to the late third century, and some appear in locations (Uthina, Curubis, Puppūt) which have few building inscriptions.

It is, thus, not the case that the priests were the only individuals who built, or even that their *sacra* stood the highest in local favour. The different types of mediation associated with different projects and elite registers have less to do with emotional engagement than with the relation of the projects to local political institutions. The social mechanisms that they embody are different: the inscriptions of the priests detail transactions between councils and their leading members, while those of the higher elites reflect a more vertical exchange between benefactor and community. They also elicited different responses: there are no statues raised in honour of the *flamines* in gratitude for their temples, while building inscriptions are less common for the projects of the higher elite.¹⁰⁸ It is not impossible that these were broadcast through non-permanent media such as bronze, but if so, these texts have not survived.¹⁰⁹

This lack of epigraphic documentation should not be interpreted as lack of activity. The meagre record of building inscriptions by members of the regional elite has been taken to

¹⁰⁶ *AE* 2004.1821 (Hadrian), *CIL* 8.805 (Pius), *CIL* 8.5365-6, *ILAfr.* 320 (Marcus), *ILAfr.* 454 (Septimius Severus), *CIL* 8.26280 (A.D. 250-299), *AE* 1975.880 (late third century). *CIL* 8.24095 (Probus), *AE* 1975.880, *AE* 1988.1116, *CIL* 8.1828, 12317, 12353 (undated).

¹⁰⁷ These were the most prestigious sanctuaries, usually raised by councils; see Crawley Quinn & Wilson 2013.

¹⁰⁸ The one exception (*CIL* 8.1496, Thugga) honoured a *flamen* who was also a patron, which seems to be the capacity in which he is celebrated. The sanctuary is described as a gift, not as raised in conjunction with office.

¹⁰⁹ *Quodvultdeus, Liber de promissionibus et praedictionibus Dei* 3.44 refers to an African bronze inscription dating to the reign of Marcus. However, it comes from a temple, not a secular amenity.

indicate that they had little interest in these small towns and concentrated their efforts on Carthage. This would accord with the situation observed by Zuiderhoek in Asia Minor, where the higher elites appear to have had a limited role in sustaining (local) urban life. But if one considers how few the African texts for secular buildings are overall, their record is cast in a different light. Moreover, their projects tend to be very costly, far beyond the level of their local counterparts. The fact that statue bases that commemorate construction are few should not be taken to indicate that such projects were rare; as Claude Lepelley observes, most statue base inscriptions simply state the reason for the honour as ‘generosity’, and several of these may have been occasioned by construction.¹¹⁰ They also become less specific with time, providing less information by which to assess such contributions.

In any case, we cannot exclude the possibility that the regional elite was responsible for a substantial share of the amenities in local towns, especially seeing the lack of other claimants to them. The same is the case for the aediles, whose inscriptions are closer to those by high-status benefactors than those by the priests: they make no references to fees, careers, or families, at least one was posted on demand by the *populus*, and the projects are presented as undertaken in the course of office, not to obtain it.¹¹¹ The glimpse that the statue bases provide of benefactions warns against using inscriptions from *sacra* to assess their rates more generally: *ob honorem* constructions were not the only, or even the most important, channel through which evergetism was practiced.¹¹²

Explaining the rise and fall: peer-to-peer competition and the impact of Carthage

¹¹⁰ Lepelley 1997: 341, noting that the more than 70 late antique patrons attested may also have built.

¹¹¹ With the exception of an aedile under Diocletian (*CIL* 8.23291), also unique in undertaking his project singly rather than in tandem with a colleague; see n. 66. The only local official to receive statue honours for a building is an aedile (*AE* 1988.1116).

¹¹² Expenses beyond the *summa honoraria* in inscriptions from *sacra* are often viewed as “true” benefactions, but these only become visible to us insofar as they are mentioned in *ob honorem* inscriptions, and by default replicate their chronology, geography, and social context.

Caution is thus needed when analysing building inscriptions from this area, which are less well suited to some common methods applied to them than they appear on first sight. For one, the corpus is too skewed to allow us to chart architectural development – this must be the task of archaeology, independent of epigraphy. Perhaps the most misleading aspect of the inscriptions is their abundance, which makes them appear representative of construction in the area even though they only cover certain sectors of activity. The missing pieces are important ones, involving the largest and most expensive buildings, the most populous and prominent cities and regions, and the highest status builders. Importantly, we must not fill these gaps with more of what we have: this would mean reconstructing the situation in the larger cities from the smaller, and assimilating the chronology of all types of buildings and builders to that of *sacra*. What we do have, and in abundance, are structures dedicated to an emperor or god, by leading small-town elites in the Carthaginian hinterland in association with obtaining the most prestigious local positions. These testimonies accumulate in the second century and plummet suddenly in the early third century, never to regain the same intensity. There is little to suggest that this pattern is relevant for projects that involve other buildings or builders.

This leads to the more difficult question of what caused this pattern. Something did change, but it is unlikely to have been prosperity. Large cities were not affected, nor were amenities. This has ramifications also for arguments based on the communities' needs:¹¹³ the structures that appear and disappear in the record neither represent utility, nor entertainment. Theories that concern changing modes of self-representation fit better with the data,¹¹⁴ but have failed to recognise the specific projects involved, and such arguments do not sufficiently account for the slow rise and sudden fall in numbers of inscriptions, or their precise timing. Why should such changes affect the activities of local priests but not, as it seems, those of independent benefactors? Why in dependent inland towns, and not the larger colonies? Closer to the mark is Christophe Hugoniot, who argues that peer-to-peer competition escalated to the point of harming the communities, and was duly curbed from above.¹¹⁵ However, he does not note that the changing frequencies do not extend to secular buildings, which arguably had the strongest impact on the welfare of the towns. His theory also leaves the question of geography unanswered.

¹¹³ Notably by Hélène Jouffroy; see nn. 9, 30.

¹¹⁴ As proposed by Borg and Witschel 2001; see n. 10.

¹¹⁵ Hugoniot 2000: 247, Hugoniot and Briand-Ponsart 2006: 115.

The most fruitful line of inquiry lies in the centrality of *sacra* to African political life. The question arises whether changes in epigraphic commemoration were caused by changes to religious practice. This makes sense for the dearth of building inscriptions under Constantine, when raising and broadcasting shrines may have become less appealing. There are plentiful donations to churches, but these were not channelled through civic institutions in comparable ways, and thus did not generate stone inscriptions. This does not mean that these institutions were in decline, and *flamines* were still appointed in the Vandal period, but these individuals no longer inscribed *sacra* on advancement.¹¹⁶ Religious changes fit less well with the decrease of texts in the early third century. To, as James Rives, tie it to the gradual erosion of traditional public cults in the imperial period raises the question of why testimonies are so few under the first century and a half of imperial occupation, but rise to a peak when they should, on this model, be petering out.¹¹⁷ The eventual fall in numbers is also too sudden to be explained by long-term cultural developments. However, if we shift the focus from the buildings to the processes that generated them, this allows us to reframe the questions: why were honorary priesthoods so sought after in this time and place, and why did they cease to be so?

Using religious architecture for social positioning is not unique to Africa. The inscriptions in the temple at Baalbek come to mind, or the competition for neokorates in the Greek East, even to the point of petitioning the emperor to reject the bids of rivals.¹¹⁸ The African inscriptions warn us against treating this as an “Eastern” phenomenon. Shrines were raised competitively, and not just Capitolia (as observed by Josephine Crawley Quinn and Andrew Wilson) but also high-profile dedications to the *genius* deities of the towns, as well as Saturn and Caelestis.¹¹⁹ Arches served to emphasise townhood by solemnifying urban nodes and making the urban territory manifest as gates in imaginary city walls. Like statues of emperors they were necessary urban trappings, and this is also the case for imperial

¹¹⁶ Merrills and Miles 2009: 212-3 n. 40, with references to André Chastagnol and Noël Duval.

¹¹⁷ Rives 1995: 12-14.

¹¹⁸ Granted by Nerva to Beroia, likely in competition with Thessaloniki; Burrell 2004: 279-303, 355-7.

¹¹⁹ Crawley Quinn and Wilson 2013.

priesthoods: the greater the town, the more *flamines* it appointed. A city as grand as Carthage could sport specific flaminates to a range of *divi*, while small towns only had generic ones, *nudi dicti*.¹²⁰

Where Africa differs is in the way *ob honorem* procedures allowed individuals and families to exploit this shared monumental framework for their own progression. It was up to the councils to decide how many of their members to appoint to flaminates (and whether to accept their *sacra* as covering the fees for these), no doubt based on the availability of candidates and their interest in pursuing the position. For a few decades this interest appears to have been high: spouses, siblings, and children often received the office at the same time, and eventually every member of an ambitious family would have been a *flamen* for life. This begs the question why this was so much more common in the study area than in the rest of Africa, and in the smaller towns rather than the larger. The positions were expensive, and not mandatory for completing a *cursus honorum*.

The answer may lie in their further aims: a priesthood represented the top of the local pyramid but also the starting point for another, regionally defined competition against peers in neighbouring towns. Three factors contributed to raising the stakes for such competition in this area. The first is the interconnectivity of its towns, which allowed a career to begin in one town and continue in another. Several overlapping hierarchies furthered cross-regional social mobility, including the imperial *res privata* and the systems of dependency that integrated subordinated towns vertically with the metropolis and horizontally with each other. The second factor is the extreme density of urban settlement, which made for an abundance of rivals as well as narrower windows of advancement, and prompted those ambitious to seek further distinction. The third factor is the presence of goals that made such efforts worthwhile. Unique to this area is the proximity of the mega-city of Carthage, and particularly the realistic prospect for the uppermost stratum of local elites of a career there. This prospect (as we will see) is a good fit with the chronology, geography, and focus of the inscriptions from *sacra*.

The statue record reveals several prospects open to Africans, including adlection to the senate, equestrian posts abroad, procuratorships and the provincial priesthood. However, these

¹²⁰ Arnaldi 2010. Only the richest towns appointed flaminates to *divi*. See n. 133 for the Carthaginian flaminates of Augustus and Vespasian held by the Marcii brothers.

are not attested in locations where building inscriptions accumulate under the Antonines but mostly in places that have produced few such texts, such as Sicca Veneria, where a procurator instituted a foundation for boys and girls,¹²¹ or Thysdrus where a citizen became *flamen* of Augustus after a splendid imperial career.¹²² African senators were drawn from the leading stratum of colonies such as Utica, Carthage or (particularly) Bulla Regia and its neighbours in the northwest, and not from the class dominating the building inscriptions.¹²³ The same is the case for functionaries in the *res privatae*, such as T. Flavius Macer who, after capping his *cursus* with a flamine in Ammaedara, continued to procuratorial posts and was honoured at Calama and Hippo Regius by both citizens and underlings in the *res privata*.¹²⁴ Municipal and imperial hierarchies were closely intertwined and a career could span considerable distances; for instance, a scion of the Iulii Sabini from Madauros served as procurator in Leptiminus in the Sahel,¹²⁵ and another procurator of *regio Leptiminensis* received honours in Theveste by the Tripolitanian towns Oea and Sabratha.¹²⁶ Higher ranking still were the *sacerdotes Africae* who received honours in their home towns that proudly emphasised that they had completed their *cursus* there,¹²⁷ but the locations (such as Bulla Regia or Simitthus, whose *sacerdos* had advanced through the *res privata*¹²⁸) invariably lay outside the Carthaginian territory.

Moreover, these prospects are not exclusive to this part of Africa, and cannot explain its idiosyncratic behaviour. What truly did set it apart was Carthage, which was home to the wealthiest elites and the most prestigious civic institutions in Africa, as well as all levels of the imperial administration. For the social class captured in the building inscriptions, Carthage was the model to be emulated and the goal to be pursued, in ways felt far beyond its territory. Lesser colonies could also inspire honorific practices; for instance, the small town Thubba

¹²¹ *CIL* 8.1641.

¹²² *CIL* 8.10500. The specific flamine is characteristic of large towns; see n. 120.

¹²³ On African senators, Thébert 1973.

¹²⁴ *ILAlg.* 1.3992 (Hippo Regius); *CIL* 8.5351 (Calama) styling him *municipis*, indicating multiple citizenships as surely he was also citizen of Ammaedara. Similarly, Pheradi Maius honoured a citizen as procurator of *Tractus Karthaginis* (*AE* 2003.1933).

¹²⁵ *ILAlg.* 1.2035.

¹²⁶ *CIL* 8.16542a-b.

¹²⁷ *AE* 1955.50 (Mactaris); *CIL* 8.12039 (Limisa).

¹²⁸ *ILAfr.* 458 (Bulla Regia); *CIL* 8.14611 (Simitthus).

raised honours to an *eques* at Utica, and the decurions of Sicca Veneria made dedications in the city's *pagi*.¹²⁹ However, Carthage operated at a different level, and the influence of the city and its elites was felt across the region. For instance, the town Segermes on the High Tell honoured a Carthaginian at Capsa far to the south, and a colony as important as Ammaedara set up honours in Carthage, even though it lay at a considerable distance from this city and had never been dependent on it.¹³⁰ Carthaginians are frequent among the benefactors in the area, attested both in building inscriptions and as recipients of statue honours.

This tendency is strongest within Carthage's own territory, where the presence of the city significantly broadened the social and political prospects of local elites. The metropolis' wealthiest families formed a superstratum above the class visible in the building inscriptions, and its institutions had more nuances. Not only the highly esteemed priesthood of Ceres (once held by Sextus Pullaienus Florus), but even a mere decurionate in Carthage ranked far above a flamine in a smaller town, and was prohibitively expensive for most Africans.¹³¹ However, for the one per cent Carthage's political hierarchy was permeable, and membership brought not only prestige but power: the Carthaginian *ordo* was the highest decision-making body in Africa (beside the proconsul) and controlled a vast, populous, and very wealthy area – precisely the area where elite locals posted inscriptions that showed them to be eligible. Christophe Hugoniot gives examples of members of small-town elites who succeeded to positions in Carthage, and underscores the prestige that this brought them and their families. This required completing a local *cursus* first with all its attendant costs, and few could have contemplated such a “double career”. The process was thus self-selective, extracting the richest Africans from across the region. The Pullaieni may once have gained their regional foothold in this manner, while the Marcii were more recent arrivals. Candidates are known from as far as Cuicul in Numidia, but the majority are attested within the *pertica* of Carthage.

¹²⁹ Thubba in Utica, *CIL* 8.25385. For the *pertica* of Sicca Veneria, known from dedications at Ucubi (*CIL* 8.15669) and an unknown *pagus* (*CIL* 8.16258), see Aounallah and Maurin 2008: 232, 247.

¹³⁰ On the Byrsa in Carthage, *CIL* 8.12545; for Capsa, *AE* 1905.129.

¹³¹ For the exorbitant cost of Carthaginian offices, see Duncan-Jones 1974 chs. 3-4; Hugoniot 2006: 398-400, and 394-7; Bel Kahia Karoui 2010: 1573.

The geography of ambition is thus divided, with progression to Carthage attested within its territory, and other aims without. It is possible that *pertica* towns had institutional links that facilitated advancement to Carthage. Conversely, their elites may have been constrained to climb through the metropolitan ranks. Much remains to be known about the social organisation of *pertica* towns, but it is in any case clear that Carthage informed it. As Monique Dondin-Payre has remarked, of the many variants of citizenship involved – including local, Roman, and Carthaginian – the Carthaginian was likely the most prestigious from the local point of view.¹³² Locals who took office in Carthage transferred into the *Arnensis* tribe of Carthage; for instance, the Marcii brothers held flaminates at Carthage and were members of the *Arnensis*, but their father remained in the local *Quirina*.¹³³ At Segermes, a man transferred to the *Arnensis* from the *Papiria*,¹³⁴ and in Thugga a couple belonging to the *Quirina* made much of their son who became *flamen* in Carthage and joined the *Arnensis*.¹³⁵ This suggests that these men were not fully Carthaginian before. Mandatory or not, their new *Arnensis* affiliation clearly announced their elevated status, which may be a reason why the use of *tribus* lingered so long in this area.

Such aspirational elites would have been acutely aware of Carthage and its leading families. They would also have been well placed to find patrons to support their enrolment into Carthaginian *pagi* and *curiae*, and if successful were no doubt approached for this purpose themselves. The pool of candidates corresponds exactly to the class who posted so many building inscriptions in the late second century, which testified to the completion of all requirements, with public confirmation and some extra besides to recommend them. Their honorary priesthoods in themselves testify to aspirations, and the desirability, attainability, yet

¹³² Not least because *pagus* membership entailed immunity; Dondin-Payre 2002: 233. Over the years many inhabitants of such towns received Roman citizenship, but it is not clear that they also became members of a Carthaginian *pagus*, or that the status of a *pagus* member was on a par with the inhabitants of the metropolis.

¹³³ All brothers were *flamines* at Carthage (*CIL* 8.26609, of *Divus Augustus*; *CIL* 8.26604, of *Divus Vespasianus*; see also *CIL* 8.1494); for their father, *CIL* 8.22605.

¹³⁴ *CIL* 8.23069.

¹³⁵ *AE* 1997.1663a-b; *CIL* 8.1493, 1496 (statue to), 26468, 26470; *ILTun.* 1511-3; *IL Afr.* 568-9. The Gabinii family continued to advance, one descendant holding the prestigious curatorship of Carthage; *CIL* 8.1165.

exclusivity of Carthage's political institutions spurred them to seek them. Nothing less would suffice: the number of available positions was limited, but the competitors plentiful in the many well-to-do African towns.

Moreover, the flamine could promote whole families, as amply attested. This makes little sense for elites angling for imperial positions. For instance, women – young and old – are frequent among the builders in the role of *flaminicae*, but they could not hold procuratorships (*vel sim*). However, elite women had central roles in kin networks. The end goal of the broad promotion of families observable in the building inscriptions was surely to establish them within the higher regional elite. Henrik Mouritsen observes with reference to the Italian regional elite that it was under constant renegotiation.¹³⁶ The dynasties were unstable, which made for continuous competition for inclusion. Key to gaining a foothold were formal positions in the metropolis, which for the *domi nobiles* was Rome, but for elites in this area was Carthage. Although their power was also based on kin networks, *amicitia* and patronage, Carthaginian offices were a *sine qua non*, and served as entry points.

Ambitions inspired by Carthage fit both the geography and social context of the building inscriptions, as well as their double focus on formal progression and kin. The density of towns in the area ensured a steady flow of applicants, their integration under the canopy of Carthage placed them in competition with each other, and the monumental visibility of those successful provided further impetus. For these aspirations, *sacra* served as both a vehicle and a stage. The absence of such testimonies in the largest and wealthiest cities reflects the higher standing of their leading families, who were long-standing members of the regional elite. Other “silent” towns may have lacked the institutional links to Carthage that guided (and aided?) the aims of elites in the *pertica*. Exceptions exist, such as the colony Musti which was dominated by Carthage and behaves epigraphically much like its dependent neighbours, but on balance this pattern holds up well. It remains a hypothesis, but it does accord with the data.

The end of the affair

It also offers an explanation to the end of such aspirations. Sometime in the early third century, the *ordo* of Carthage demonstrably ceased to admit outsiders. By the time of the

¹³⁶ Mouritsen 2015: 237.

reign of Gallienus it had become far more exclusive, as Christophe Hugoniot observes.¹³⁷ There can be multiple explanations for this. The Carthaginian elite may have closed ranks, or the applicants disappeared. It may also plausibly be connected to the administrative changes to Carthage's territory effected by Septimius Severus and Caracalla, which – for good or bad – had deep consequences for the townships in the area. Apart from the Flavian towns along the West and South, emperors rarely intervened directly in the urban hierarchy of the area. The “creations” of the Antonines are isolated instances, reflecting the pace of petitions for municipal rights rather than any deliberate policy on their part, and all of them lay outside the Carthaginian territory.¹³⁸ The situation under Severus and Caracalla was strikingly different: scores of *civitates* received municipal rights in sweeping fashion, fusing with *pagi* to form their own *patria*e. Moreover, all attested foundations lay within the Carthaginian *pertica*, which was effectively dissolved. No further *pagi* are known, and no *pagus* is known to have been emancipated before the Severans. Jaques Gascou called the measure ‘*assez brutale*’, and did not doubt that it was deliberate.¹³⁹

Most Africanists view this measure as aimed at curbing the growing power of Carthage and its illustrious elites.¹⁴⁰ Less has been said about how it affected communities previously dependent on Carthage. These suddenly became discrete urban units that were legally on a par with other municipalities, locally and globally, while their links to Carthage were severed. The intimate interplay between dependent towns, *pagi*, and the metropolis ended with these links, and so did the paths through which local elites, by choice or constraint, had sought distinction for themselves and their families. There is no reason to assume that this meant the end of either means or ambitions. We begin to see evidence in former *pagi* for other aims, such as *res privata* positions, and cross-regional alignments emerge; even Thugga, previously so dominated by Carthage, suddenly shows ties to Utica and Uthina.¹⁴¹ As the former *pagi*

¹³⁷ Hugoniot 2006: 392, observable in both council memberships and priesthoods.

¹³⁸ Gascou 1972: *passim*, esp. 144-6, 151-172, 189, 222-232.

¹³⁹ Gascou 1972: 168, 171-2, 227.

¹⁴⁰ So Hugoniot 2006: 398; Hugoniot and Briand-Ponsart 2006: 72, 96-7; Poinssot 1962: 72; Gascou 1972: *passim*; Birley 1989: 147 who observed that Carthage was ‘cut down to size’.

¹⁴¹ *CIL* 8.26581 (Thugga, dated 268-84), decurions of all three (by then) colonies honouring an equestrian. For *res privata* posts, e.g. *AE* 2012.1885 (Uchi Maius) honouring a local man

became towns in their own right, their elites saw more benefit in acting collectively as a council than as individuals and families, and the many epigraphic testimonies to their personal progression came to an end. Rather than a “fall”, this might be described as normalisation.

This drastic transformation took place only just before the (equally drastic) drop in testimonies to the area’s most pivotal positions. The towns often raised monuments to celebrate their change of status, but after this the commemoration of *sacra* abates. This does not necessarily mean that fewer *sacra* were built. The religious framework of the towns may have been exploited less often for *ob honorem* purposes (and progression may have been less meticulously broadcast), but it does not follow that it was no longer maintained. In any case, other types of buildings were not affected. It is not, thus, the case that the towns built, or inscribed, more buildings after they were emancipated, a connection that has been rejected also on archaeological grounds by Gerda Kleinwächter.¹⁴² The same is the case for Capitolia, of which many were raised generations before emancipation.¹⁴³

In fact, emancipation came remarkably late to towns in the region.¹⁴⁴ Carthage may have asserted its hegemony, but it may also be the case that the class observable in the building inscriptions had little to gain from petitioning for legal rights. This meant exchanging their Carthaginian citizenship (or their prospects for obtaining it) for a less glamorous local variety, and with it their access to the region’s most influential positions. While other prospects opened that may have compensated for this, emancipation likely also meant the loss of immunity which certainly was not welcome, and there are testimonies to towns scrambling to regain it.¹⁴⁵ Their leading elites may have been better served by the manner of mid-way status observable under the Antonines, with some privileges gained, but none lost. In any case, their ambitions would have had to be redirected.

and scion of the Marcii who served as *procurator sexagenarius* of Puteoli and *procurator centenarius tractus Karthaginis*.

¹⁴² Kleinwächter 2001: 10-18. She blames the misconception on overreliance on Severan epigraphy.

¹⁴³ Crawley Quinn and Wilson 2013: 150, 156, 162.

¹⁴⁴ Dondin-Payre 1990: 338; Kehoe 1988: 11-12.

¹⁴⁵ Hugoniot 2000: 128-9; see AE 1975.872, statue to a *laudatissimus vir* for protecting the immunity of *Abbir Maius*, similarly AE 1963.94, for negotiating the immunity of the *pertica*.

To conclude, the towns in the area were not discrete cells: their wealthy inhabitants pursued aims outside the community, and outsiders contributed substantially to their material welfare. Nor is it clear that Rome was their model, as is often assumed: in this area it was arguably Carthage and its elites that set the agenda. Many questions remain, not least concerning the balance between obligation and opportunity – in the case of the emancipation of towns as well as the pursuit of a metropolitan career or the erection of *sacra* on advancement – but it seems clear that Carthage was an epicentre in its own right, generating tools for social distinction and intensifying peer-to-peer competition. It is this competition that has left so many traces in the epigraphic record of construction in this area, and which makes for its distinct chronology. One theme, then, to which the building inscriptions bear ample witness is the attraction of a larger city on elites in the smaller.

Furthermore, different procedures tied to construction were mediated differently, at different paces, and in different places. This lack of uniformity is not in itself surprising, but it affects the ways in which building inscriptions may be analysed. Firstly, a regional focus is to be preferred over an empire-wide or even province-wide view, which can distort more than it reveals. Secondly, when seeking to define the epigraphic habit(s) in a region it pays to consider what socio-political mechanisms they bear witness to. The tendency for the higher elite to generate shorter, and, as it seems, fewer inscriptions has parallels in Italy, and potentially elsewhere. This has no doubt contributed to the thin stone trail for amenities, and based on building inscriptions we cannot claim that such benefactions petered out in the third century. The loudest voices come from patrons somewhat lower on the social scale, whose building projects are privileged in the epigraphic record by the strong link between *sacra* and civic institutions. Finally, to build and to document a building project in an inscription are two distinct actions. The proliferation of building inscriptions in the late Antonine and early Severan period cannot be taken to reflect the construction rates, or the economic vitality, of the towns in which they were posted, nor should the disappearance of such inscriptions in subsequent years be interpreted as evidence for decline.

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ABBREVIATIONS

- AE* *L'Année épigraphique. Revue des publications épigraphiques relatives à l'antiquité romaine*, 1888-.
- AfrRom* *L'Africa Romana. Atti del convegno* 1983-, Sassari.
- BCTH* *Bulletin archéologique du Comité des travaux historiques et archéologiques*.
- CIL* *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, 1863-.
- CRAI* *Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, 1857-.
- Dougga 1* Khanoussi, M., and L. Maurin (eds) 2000. *Dougga, fragments d'histoire. Choix d'inscriptions latines éditées, traduites et commentées*, Bordeaux; Tunis.
- ILAfr.* Cagnat, R., A. Merlin and L. Chatelain (eds) 1923. *Inscriptiones latines d'Afrique*, Paris.
- ILAlg.* Gsell, S. 1922. *Inscriptiones latines de l'Algerie*, Paris.
- ILPBardo* Ben Abdallah, Z. B. (ed) 1986. *Catalogue des inscriptions latines païennes du musée du Bardo*, CEFR 92, Rome.
- ILTun.* Merlin, A. (ed) 1944. *Inscriptiones latines de la Tunisie*, Paris.
- ZPE* *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, 1967-.

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APPENDIX: BUILDING INSCRIPTIONS

I The North-East with the *pertica* of Carthage

Carthage: AE 1901.4, 1917/18.102, 1949.27, 1951.71, 2011.1695, 2011.1703; *BCTH* 1928/29.143; *CIL* 8.1141, 1166, 12515, 12523, 12540, 12556, 12568, 24518, 24585a, 24652, 24654; *IL Afr.* 353, 384, 400; *ILPBardo* 2.9a-b, 2.27; *ILTun.* 1091; **Abitinae:** AE 1976.703; *CIL* 8.25844, 25842, 25843; **Abbir Cellae:** *CIL* 8.816, 818, 12343; *IL Afr.* 222; **Abbir Germaniciana:** AE 1982.932; **Agbia:** AE 1999.1784; *CIL* 8.252a; 1546, 1548, 1550; **Aïn Golea:** *CIL* 8.25955; **Alma:** AE 1974.690; **Apisa Maius:** *CIL* 8.776, **Apisa Minus:** AE 1982.931; **Aptucca:** *CIL* 8.15497; **Aquae Persianae:** *CIL* 8.997, 998; *IL Afr.* 345, **Aquae Traianae ?/Hammam Siala:** *CIL* 8.14457; **Aradi:** AE 1904.57; *CIL* 8.12244, 23861, 23862, 23867; **Aunobari:** *CIL* 8.15562, 27395, 27396, 27397; **Avedda:** AE 1973.601, 1973.604; *CIL* 8.14369; **Avioccala:** *CIL* 8.23827, 23829; **Avita Bibba:** AE 1997.1640; *CIL* 8.799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 12278; **Belalis Maior:** AE 1978.847, 1978.855, 1981.868; **Biracsaccar:** *CIL* 8.12286, 23859;

Bisica Lucana: *CIL* 8.12294, 12295, 23880; **Bled Djedida:** *CIL* 8.954; **Cap Bon:** *BCTH* 1951/52.214; **Carpis:** *CIL* 8.993, 24106; **Chidibbia:** AE 2003.2005; *CIL* 8.1329, 1330, 1332, 1334, 1336, 1338, 1339, 1340, 1342, 1344; **Chul:** AE 1992.1805, 1992.1806; *ZPE* 164 p. 251; **Cincari:** *IL Afr.* 484; **Cresima ?/Aïn Guerchba:** AE 1973.621; **Curubis:** *CIL* 8.977, 978, 979, 10525; **Fundus...(1):** AE 1980.917; **Fundus Turris Rutundae:** *ILTun.* 1568; **Furnos Maius:** *CIL* 8.752, 12931; **Furnos Minus:** AE 1991.1672; *CIL* 8.10610, 25808; **Gales:** AE 1977.855; *CIL* 8.757, 23833; **Gens Bacchuiana:** *CIL* 8.2331, 12332, 12333, 23924, *ILTun.* 652; **Gillium:** *CIL* 8.26223; **Giufi:** AE 2003.1986, 2003.1987; *CIL* 8.23991, 23997; **Hr Belda:** *CIL* 8.27432; **Hr Ben Glaya:** *CIL* 8.14377, 14378; **Hr Ben Mansoura:** *CIL* 8.10619; **Hr Bir el Afu:** *CIL* 8.14447; **Hr Brik:** *CIL* 8.12315; **Hr el Houaria:** AE 1997.1642; **Hr el-Oust:** *CIL* 8.16416; **Hr Mezouar:** *CIL* 8.14429; **Hr Sidi-abd-el-Basset:** AE 1990.1036a; **Hr Sidi-ben-Nour:** *CIL* 8.12413; **Hr Smala:** *CIL* 8.10116; **Ksar Hellal:** AE 1996.1712;

Matera: *CIL* 8.25430; **Maxula:** *CIL* 8.24328; *ILTun.* 868; **Membressa:** *CIL* 8.1295; *ILPBardo* 389; **Pagus Mercurialis:** AE 2003.2002; **M'Heimes:** *CIL* 8.12314; **Municipium Aurelium Commodianum:** *CIL* 8.821, 12350, 23964, 23965; **Musti:** AE 1968.586, 1968.587, 1968.590, 1968.591, 1968.593, 1968.594, 1968.595, 1968.596, 1968.597, 1968.599, 1968.603, 2009.1758; *CIL* 8.1574, 1577, 1578, 1581, 1582, 1586,

1587, 15578, 16417, 27437; *ILTun.* 1538a; *Nepheris*: *CIL* 8.24032; *Numluli*: *AE* 2006.1755; *CIL* 8.15381, 15385, 15386, 15387, 15390a-b, 26121, 26127; *Sabzia*: *CIL* 8.23123; *Seressi*: *AE* 2011.1675; *CIL* 8.937; *Siagu*: *CIL* 8.24090; *Sicilibba*: *CIL* 8.14754; *Sidi Ahmed Djedidi*: *CIL* 8.24077; *Sidi Médine el Alaa*: *CIL* 8.12433, 12434; *Sidi Naoui*: *CIL* 8.754; *Salah el Balti*: *CIL* 8.25490a-b; *Siminga*: *AE* 1955.54; *Sua*: *AE* 1990.1038, 1991.1670; *CIL* 8.1309, 1310, 1311, 1312, 1313, 1314, 14813; *Sucubi*: *AE* 1963.124; *CIL* 8.794, 12242, 12243; *Sululos*: *AE* 2006.1679; *CIL* 8.23941; *Sustri*: *CIL* 8.25935; *IL Afr.* 495; *Sutunurca*: *IL Afr.* 304; *Tapphugabe(n)sis*: *AE* 1995.1663; *ILTun.* 628; *Thabbora*: *IL Afr.* 219, 220; *Thac(...)*: *CIL* 8.27416; *Thaca*: *CIL* 8.11193, 11194; *Thacia*: *CIL* 8.27460; *Thibaris*: *AE* 2003.2010; *CIL* 8.26177a, 26178, 26182, 26183, 26184c. *Thibicaae*: *CIL* 8.12228; *Thignica*: *AE* 1962.299, 1992.1817, 2006.1760, 2006.1762; *CIL* 8.1399, 1402, 1403, 1404, 1406, 1411, 1413; *Thinissut*: *AE* 2005.1678; *IL Afr.* 309; *Thisiduo*: *CIL* 8.1268; *Thuburbo Maius*: *AE* 1961.71, 1996.1710, 1999.1821, 1999.1825; *BCTH* 1930/31.363a, 1930/31.363b; *CIL* 8.842, 845, 849, 850, 856, 12366; *IL Afr.* 228, 231, 238, 242, 255, 257, 265, 266, 267, 268, 271, 284, 286; *ILPBardo* 325; *ILTun.* 699, 717, 732; *Thubursicu Bure*: *CIL* 8.1426, 1429, 1441, 1443, 1444, 1463, 10618, 15258, 15268, 15271, 25995; *IL Afr.* 506; *Thugga*: *AE* 1912.160, 1969/70.650, 1997.1663, 1997.1663b; *BCTH* 1901.392; *CIL* 8.1472, 1473, 1476, 1478, 1480, 1481, 1482, 1483, 1484, 1485, 1486, 1488, 1489, 1491, 1492, 1493, 1505, 10620, 15513, 15514, 15516a-b, 15519, 16540, 26457, 26458, 26459, 26460, 26461, 26462, 26464, 26468, 26470, 26471, 26472, 26482, 26483, 26484, 26500, 26518, 26524, 26527, 26528, 26530, 26535, 26539, 26541, 26547, 26548, 26563, 26564, 26565, 26566, 26567, 26573, 26593, 26602, 26602a, 26603, 26606, 26607, 26643; *Dougga* 1 p. 125; *IL Afr.* 538, 545, 546, 551, 552, 553, 555, 558, 559; *Thuraria Chaouat*: *CIL* 8.25370, 25371; *Tichilla*: *CIL* 8.1356, 1361, 1362; *Tuccabor*: *CIL* 8.1318, 1323, 14851, 25852; *Tunes*: *CIL* 8.1126; *Uccula*: *AE* 1973.613, 1973.614; *CIL* 8.14361; *Uchi Maius*: *AE* 1997.1677, 1999.1848, 2006.1690, 2012.1881, 2012.1882; *CIL* 8.15446, 15449, 25484, 26245, 26241, 26246, 26262, 26263, 26264, 26267, 26400; *Uchi Minus*: *AE* 2002.1681; *Ucubi*: *CIL* 8.15663; *Uthina*: *AE* 2000.1699, 2011.1679; *Utica*: *AE* 1951.39; *CIL* 8.1183; *IL Afr.* 424; *Uzali Sar*: *CIL* 8.10557; *Vaga*: *AE* 1981.876; *CIL* 8.1217, 1218, 1220, 10566, 10568, 10569, 14392, 14397, 14401; *Vallis*: *AE* 1983.951; *CIL* 8.1273, 1281, 1285, 25828; *ILTun.* 1281; *Vazari*: *AE* 2003.1999; *Vicus Annaeus*: *AE* 1957.57; *Zigira*: *CIL* 8.25895; *Ziqua*: *CIL* 8.10524.

II Numidia Proconsularis: the Western periphery

Ad Aquas Caesearis: *ILAlg.* 1.2943; *Aïn Char*: *CIL* 8.23326; *Althiburos*: *CIL* 8.1822, 1823, 1824, 1825, 27770; *Ammaedara*: *AE* 1988.1119, 1995.1652, 1995.1790, 1999.1790, 1999.1781, 2000.1690; *CIL* 8.302, 306, 309, 11529, 11530, 11531a, 11531b, 11535e; *ILTun.* 461; *Assuras*: *CIL* 8.1798; *Aubuzza*: *CIL* 8.16367, 16368; **Bir Laafou**: *AE* 1994.1887; **Bordj Hellal**: *CIL* 8.14546; **Bulla Regia**: *CIL* 8.2553, 25512, 25513, 25515, 25516, 25520, 25532, 25533; **Calama**: *CIL* 8.5290, 5297, 5329, 5333a-d, 5377; **Castellum Ma...rensiu**m: *CIL* 8.17327; **Djeradou**: *CIL* 8.27550; **Gastal**: *CIL* 8.28016; **Hippo Regius**: *AE* 1951.82, 1958.142; *ILAlg.* 1.399; **Hr el Gonai/...rdensiu**m: *ILAlg.* 1.1096, 1097; **Lalla Dahlia**: *CIL* 8.27704; **Lares**: *CIL* 8.1780, 16322; **Madauros**: *AE* 1933.60, 1936.136; *BCTH* 1925.287; *CIL* 8.4679, 16874; *ILAlg.* 1.2035, 2041, 2048, 2052a, 2055, 2056, 2069, 2079a, 2082, 2086, 2097, 2120, 2121, 2129, 2130, 2131, 2132, 2133, 2134, 2136; **Magifa**: *ILAlg.* 1.2977; **Naraggara**: *CIL* 8.4636; *ILAlg.* 1.1187; **Saia Maior**: *CIL* 8.25500; **Sicca Veneria**: *CIL* 8.1625, 1627, 1638, 15851, 15862, 15886; **Sidi Amar/Saburiana**e: *AE* 1975.886; **Sidi Amor**: *CIL* 8.27551; **Sidi Mohammed-el-Azreg**: *CIL* 8.25805; **Simitthus**: *AE* 1994.1885; *CIL* 8.10117, 25631; *ILPBardo* 215; **Souk et Tleta**: *CIL* 8.14465; **Pagus Suttuensis**: *CIL* 8.15477, 26419; **Thabarbusis** *CIL* 8.17511; **Thabraca** *CIL* 8.17329, 17330; *IL Afr.* 600, 601; **Thagura**: *ILAlg.* 1.1026, 1028, 1029, 1032; **Theveste**: *AE* 1933.233, 1995.1771; *CIL* 8.1650, 1851, 1854, 1855, 1858, 1867, 1870, 1871, 1893, 1894, 1896, 16538; *ILAlg.* 1.2997, 3038, 3039, 3051; **Thuburnica**: *CIL* 8.10607, 14690; **Thubursicu Numidarum**: *AE* 1940.17; *ILAlg.* 1.1230, 1231, 1232, 1235, 1237, 1241, 1255, 1256, 1282, 1284, 1292, 1299; **Thusuros**: *CIL* 8.92; **Tipasa**: *ILAlg.* 1.1984; **Tituli**: *CIL* 8.27769, 27827, 27828, 27831, 27832; **Zarouria**: *CIL* 8.16857.

III Byzacena, including the Byzacium/Sahel

Civitas A...: *CIL* 8.23653, 23656, 23657, 23658; **Abthungi**: *CIL* 8.929; *IL Afr.* 72; **Acholla**: *AE* 1973.610; *CIL* 8.915; **Agger**: *AE* 1991.1638; *CIL* 8.709, 710, 711, 712, 12142; **Biia**: *CIL* 8.23073; **Capsa**: *CIL* 8.98, 100, 104, 106, 120; **Chusira**: *AE* 1946.47; *CIL* 8.703, 12126; *ILTun.* 585; **Cillium**: *CIL* 8.210; **Cit...**: *CIL* 8.27816; **Cululis/Chul**: *ZPE* 164 p. 251; **Cuttilula**: *AE* 2003.1977; **Ellès**: *CIL* 8.1795, 16457, 16459; **Fundus**

...itanus: CIL 8.23022; *Fundus Ver...*: CIL 8.11735, 11736; *Hadrumetum*: CIL 8.22910; *Hr er-Rayada/Hr Ghäiada*: CIL 8.23712; *Kairouan/Iubaltianensis (?)*: CIL 8.11217, 11218; *Limisa*: AE 1992.1780, 1992.1781, 2004.1673, 2004.1674, 2004.1678, 2004.1682, 2004.1683, 2004.1684, 2004.1689, 2004.1690, 2004.1699; 2004.1698; CIL 8.12026, 12027, 12028, 12029, 12032, 12037; *Civitas M...*: CIL 8.23689, 23690; *Mactaris*: AE 1959.172, 1960.114, 1960.115, 1966.514; *BCTH* 1946/49.683, 1954.120; CIL 8.621, 623, 624, 625, 633, 11799, 23399, 23402, 23403, 23408, 23413; G. Picard, *CRAI* 1974 p. 223; *Karthago* 1957.151; *Maracitana*: AE 1949.109; *Maragui Sarai*: *ILTun.* 611, 612; *Masclianae*: AE 2007.1712; *Mididi*: AE 2000.1661, 2000.1688; CIL 8.608, 609, 11774; *Muzuc*: CIL 8.12058, 12067, 12094; *Pheradi Maius*: *ILTun.* 246; *Saltus Massipiani*: CIL 8.587, 11731; *IL Afr.* 90; *Civitas Se...*: AE 1993.1715; *Segermes*: CIL 8.906; *ILTun.* 261; *Civitas Sivalitana*: AE 1992.1706, 2004.1792; *Sufes*: AE 1992.1763; *Sufetula*: AE 1989.791, 1989.797; CIL 8.228, 232, 243, 11330; *IL Afr.* 125, 126, 140; *Sbeitla* 35; *Thaenae*: *IL Afr.* 38.25; *Thala*: AE 2009.1673; CIL 8.501, 11677, 23280, 23282, 23283, 23291, 23292, 23923; *IL Afr.* 195, 196; *Thicilila*: AE 2001.2077; *Thiges/Civitas Thigensium*: CIL 8.22796; *Thugga Terebenthina*: AE 2000.1641; CIL 8.11768; *Thysdrus*: AE 1987.1028, 1991.1635; CIL 8.49, 51, 53, 1126; *Urusi*: CIL 8.12014; *Uzaae*: *ILTun.* 148; *Uzappa*: CIL 8.11924, 11928, 11929, 23696; *Vazi Sarra*: CIL 8.11999, 12002, 12006, 12007, 23749; *Zama Maior*: CIL 8.16439, 16441; *Zucchari*: CIL 8.921, 922, 923, 926, 23082.