Crafts And Professions Identified In Tibilis Through Archaeological Sources

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Abstract:

Historically, cities have emerged as epicenters for demographic convergence, epitomizing the nexus of authority and the crucibles for commercial and economic exchanges. They catalyze social transformations through intricate interactions and integrations, harnessing their organizational capacities and robust legal frameworks to meticulously orchestrate life.

The domain of urban development has undergone a remarkable evolution and extensive expansion, positioning urban life as the quintessential manifestation of civilized existence. Within these urban confines, citizens are afforded a myriad of rights and luxuries, continually enhanced and diversified over time to facilitate individual and community well-being. This dynamic serves as a critical metric for evaluating the prosperity and welfare of urban centers. Tibilis, while maintaining a rustic and agrarian demeanor reminiscent of smaller hamlets, boasts 23 documented professions from antiquity, when wood was the primary resource, reflecting its untapped wealth.

These professions, revealed through archaeological inscriptions, range from postal carriers (Viator) and livestock traders (Catervarius) to farmers (Arator) and landowners (Posse(ssor)). The city's significant development has also fostered a flourishing of crafts such as pottery, construction, and carpentry, substantially contributing to its prosperity.

Key Words: Tibilis website, Crafts, Engravings, Social organization, documented professions.

Introduction:

Nestled in eastern Algeria, Tibilis lies southwest of Guelma, approximately 23 kilometers via Mejez Ammar and 18 kilometers directly from the provincial capital of Guelma, situated southeast of the current municipality of Slawa Announa and merely 3 kilometers from the national road connecting Guelma and Constantine. The city is positioned strategically 95 kilometers from Cirta, bordered to the north by the contemporary Hamam Debegh (Aqua Thibilbatanea) and to the south by a pass through "Faj al-Dheeb," delineating Mount Announa and Mount Kriyas, and leading to "Qadioufala," presently known as Ain Mekhlouf.

This route extends eastward to the fortress of Bou Attouf Ain El Arabi, traversing Wadi Charf and running adjacent to Wadi Cheniour for eight kilometers. Historically, these thoroughfares have been pivotal in fostering the city's commercial and economic growth. The city's advantageous and naturally fortified location, surrounded by an ensemble of mountains, has significantly bolstered its prosperity. It sprawls across a plateau or plain ringed by mountains, creating a naturally protected urban landscape conducive to growth and security.

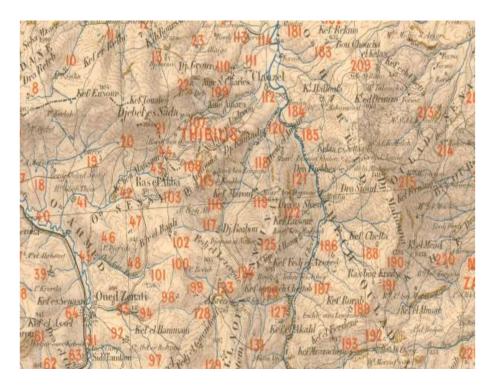
The exploration of architecture serves as a cornerstone in archaeological inquiry. It is apparent that many Roman cities, both within Algeria and globally, such as the archaeological site of Tibilis^{iv} stoday identified as the city of Slawa Announa—exhibit prominent landmarks alongside those yet unearthed.

These tangible artifacts, both movable and immovable, underscore the ingenious human spirit that once inhabited this area, leaving a lasting legacy through both architectural and ideological contributions. Unfortunately, early researchers, in their eagerness, might have exposed extensive evidence but simultaneously destroyed vital stratigraphic layers, obfuscating the genuine reasons for the city's abandonment.

This oversight, coupled with a complete disregard for pottery, the key to deciphering living standards and economic conditions, and a total neglect of numismatics, significantly undermines the rich historical narrative that preceded Roman occupation, as suggested by the city's name and the rituals performed at the nearby Ghar Jebel Taya. A comprehensive consideration of these elements could unveil an alternate historical narrative for the city of Tibilis.



Tibilis in the Pottinger Map



Tibilis Through the Archaeological Atlas of GSSELL



General View of the Archaeological Remnants of the City of Tibilis Announa



Aspects of the Monuments and Inscriptions Placed Along the Main Road

Through literary sources, there is ambiguity concerning ancient crafts. These crafts, fulfilling daily needs and contributing to

human comfort, were predominantly practiced by the lower classes, manumitted slaves, or free citizens, as well as foreigners in Roman society.

Craftsmen were generally well-accepted within Roman society due to the indispensable nature of their services. Although they could not ascend socially through property ownership, they often achieved social mobility by trading their products, thereby gaining access to the aristocratic class. A quintessential example is a craftsman from the slave class who initially practiced tailoring and eventually amassed wealth.

However, archaeological research does not provide sufficient information about the world of crafts and the tools used. There is an interpretation that the excessive focus on the funerary aspect of craftsmen might have encouraged the care of their relatives upon death. This is evident from details inscribed on tombstones, which include the craftsman's profession and some of his daily work tools.

In North Africa, specifically Tibilis, the urban renaissance provided craftsmen with numerous job opportunities in various fields such as quarrying, stone extraction, polishing, sculpting, and building. Secondary activities related to construction, such as mosaic decoration, were particularly prevalent in the homes of the wealthy, depicting various mythological scenes featuring gods like Venus and Bacchus, as well as scenes of hunting, fishing, maritime activities, victorious horses, and horse racing arenas.

Craftsmen received support from both municipal authorities and private individuals, which led to market squares in every city being crowded with statues—statues of nobles, emperors, and city dignitaries. Below each statue, a base inscribed with text glorified their deeds and praised their qualities.

Triumphal arches were carved to immortalize emperors, serving both as tributes and imperial propaganda. In Tibilis, specifically, 23 inscriptions reveal the range of professions present in the city. A notable example found in Tibilis was an inscription dedicated to Adontus Antistius:

Adontus Antistius:

Belonging to a prominent and influential family in Tibilis, historically known as Announa during the early Imperial era, the Romans accelerated the Romanization of Tibilis from the latter half of the first century AD^{vi}. The Antistii family emerged as a significant force in the second century AD, though their ethnic

origins remain unclear, other than their possession of Roman citizenship. $^{\mbox{\tiny VII}}$

It is speculated by researcher Berthranday F. VIII that the family might have been local, later becoming entrenched in Roman traditions and significantly contributing to the Empire. Alternatively, they could have originated from Italy or another Mediterranean region.

Numerous Latin inscriptions found in Announa glorify and immortalize members of this influential family. Researcher Bertrand indicated that the family attained senatorial rank as early as the reign of Hadrian and the beginning of Antoninus' rule, as mentioned earlier.

It is possible that the family's first ancestor was granted senatorial leadership around 168 ADix. During excavations in Announa, researchers Poulle and Vars published an article about this archaeological text in the Annual Journal of the Archaeological Society of Constantine (R.S.A.C)x. This text is considered a document of significant importance, indisputable and preserved in the museum in Guelma.

An archaeological text with inventory number 4681 IL.ALG, II2 is displayed in the museum at the Roman Theatre in Guelma.



This document is highly significant as it provides a biographical account (Cucurium-V) of a distinguished figure within the Confederation of Cirta.

Here is the text with its completion:xi

[Q(UINTUS) ANTISTIUS ADVENTUS] Q(UINTI) F(ILIUS) QUIR(INA) XIIPOSTUMIUS A[Q]U[I]LINUS CONSUL SACERDOS FETIALIS LEGATUS AUGUSTI PRO PRAETORE PROVINCIAE

GERMANIAE INFERIORIS. **LEGATUS AUGUSTI** AΤ PRAETENTURA ITALIAE ET ALPIUM, EXPEDITIONE GERMANICA **CURATOR OPERUM LOCORUMQUE PUBLICORUM, LEGATUS** AUGUSTI PRO PRAETORE PROVINCIAE ARABIAE, LEGATUS AUGUSTI LEGIONIS VI FERRATAE ET SECUNDAE ADIUTRICIS, TRANSLATUS IN EAM EXPEDITIONE PARTHICA QUO DONATUS EST DONIS MILITARIBUS CORONIS MURALI, VALLARI, AUREA, HASTIS PURIS, TRIBUS VEXILLIS, DUOBUS PRAETORI, LEGATO PRO PRAETORE PROVINCIAE AFRICAE, TRIBUNO PLEBIS, SEVIRO EQUITUM ROMANORUM, QUAESTORI PRO PRAETORE PROVINCIAE MACEDONIAE, TRIBUNO MILITUM LEGIONIS I **MINERVAE** PIAE FIDELIS, **TRIUMVIRO** VIARUM **CURANDARUM, SEX(TUS) MARCIUS MAXIMUS OB INSIGNEM** EIUS IN SE BENEVOLENTIAM SUA PECUNIA POSUIT DEDICAVIT.

The inscription details the professional trajectory of Adontus Antistius, listing his roles in reverse chronological order from the most recent appointment back to his earliest roles. Here are the roles in sequence:

A. Consul: During the era of the emperors, the position of consul became largely honorary, bestowed upon prestigious individuals. Although Adontus Antistius served as a symbolic consul, specialists in this field have not found his name in the consular lists in Africa. XIIII

B. Fetial Priest: A role with significant religious duties, the fetial priest was responsible for lending credibility to treaties made with foreign rulers, ensuring these agreements were respected and not violated. In the Republican era, this role was appointed for life and was typically held by a member of the nobility. The Senate would send these priests to declare war on enemies, testifying to their integrity and dedication to averting conflict. These priests would don a sacred crown with a white band when setting out towards an enemy.

C. Legatus Augusti Pro Praetore in Lower Germany: xivThis region extended from the Moselle River to the sea and was the most fortified frontier in Gaul.

D. Legatus Augusti during the Germanic Campaign: Tasked with public and defensive works and the organization of fortifications.

E. Legatus Augusti Pro Praetore in the Arabian Province: This area, inhabited by the Nabataeans, was seized by Cornelius Palma, a general under Trajan, and saw significant construction work, including the digging of water channels.

F. Legatus Augusti for the Sixth Legion "Ferrata": Called to lead during the Parthian campaign, he received military honors for his competence, including:

- Mural crown^{xv}
- Golden crown^{xvi}
- Spear decoration^{xvii}
- Two banners^{xviii}
- H. General Commander: The text does not specify the area of command.
- I. Legatus Propraetor: For the province of Africa, indicating a governor who had not yet become a Legatus Augusti. Latin inscriptions from Africa reveal a significant number of proconsuls appointed in this capacity.
- J. Tribune of the People.
- K. Squadron Commander: This role was one of six squadrons within the Empire. $^{\rm xix}$
- L. Propraetor of the Province of Macedonia: Operating under the authority of the Legatus Propraetor, who in turn was under the jurisdiction of the Legatus Augusti or the provincial governor.
- M. Military Tribune: For the First Legion (Minervia pia fidelis), military tribunes were senior officers within a legion, six in number, who shared command under the authority of the Legatus Augusti.**
- N. One of the Four (Quatuorvir) tasked in Rome with overseeing public roadworks.

This inscription of Adontus Antistius dates back to the 2nd century AD and outlines the career of this prominent figure from the city of Tibilis (formerly known as Announa). Notably, this individual held 14 high-ranking positions throughout his life, a testament to his competence and dedication to the Roman state.

This also demonstrates that the people of Africa had a significant influence on Roman governance and civilization, and that Romanization policies propelled African emperors to the Roman imperial throne.^{xxi}

Table of Professions in Tibilis*xii

Num ber	Arab ic	Reference	Occupati on
03	معاون مساعد	. IL .Alg, II2.5333.5334.5336	Assistant (Auitor)
03	مزارع	. IL .Alg, II2.5748.5753.5850	Farmer (Arator)
07	تاجر مواش ی	IL Alg, II2.5066.5067.5068.5223.5523 .5617.5993	Livestock Trader (Catervari us)
01	فلاح قروي	. IL .Alg, II2.5342	Rural Farmer (Colonus)
01	مزارع	IL .Alg, II2.4749	Farm Manager (Conduct or)
01	مساح الأرا ضي	. IL .Alg, II2.5844	Land Surveyor (Mesor)
03	بائع جو ال	. IL .Alg, II2.5383.5580.5686	Traveling Salesman (Nundinar ius)
02	راعي	. IL .Alg, II2.5028.5125	Shepherd (Pastor)
01	صاح ب ملکیة	. IL .Alg, II2.5545	Property Owner (Posse(ss or))
01	حامل البريد	IL .Alg, II2.5120	Postal Carrier (Viator)

In the ancient city of Announa, the archaeological inscriptions reveal a tally of 23 distinct professions, highlighting the city's rural, agrarian character akin to other small villages. xxiii In

ancient times, wood was the sole resource because other riches were not exploited as they are today^{xxiv}.

The city served as a center for population gatherings since ancient times, acting as a hub of power and a focal point for trade and economic activities, crafts, and professions. It was also a place of social transformations, xxv driven by interaction and mixing, as well as its ability to organize socially and incorporate a set of laws and rules that helped structure life in a defined and organized manner.

However, the phenomenon of urban development underwent an astonishing evolution and widespread proliferation, where city life became the true and sole form of civilized life. In the city, citizens could access all rights and enjoy all city facilities, which were varied and abundant, thus facilitating the individual and community living and becoming a standard by which the welfare and prosperity of cities are measured.

Through these professions, which numbered 23, we observe that the city of Tibilis had a rural, village-like agrarian character similar to other small villages. In ancient times, wood was the only resource as other riches were unexploited like today.

In the city of Announa Tibilis, the professions found in archaeological inscriptions included the postal carrier (Viator), livestock trader (Catervarius), assistant (Adivtor), farmer (Arator), rural farmer (Colonus), farm manager (Conductor), land surveyor (Mesor), traveling salesman (Nundinarius), shepherd (Pastor), and property owner (Possessor).**

The archaeological inscriptions recorded and documented many professions, estimated at 23. However, there were many other crafts and professions such as pottery, construction, or carpentry because the city experienced amazing development thanks to the proliferation of professions that thrived there.

Assistant (ADIVTOR) Profession: Found only in three inscriptions in the city of Slawa Announa Tibilis, the inscriptions show individuals of varying ages; the first two lived to be 40 years old, and the third reached 51 years old.

1. Inscription Number 5333^{xxvii} – Assistant Profession:

Shape: Circular at the top

_ Dimensions: Height 105 cm, Width 38 cm

_ Inscription:

C. IVLIVS

ADIVTOR

V. A. LXXV

H. S. E

- 2. Inscription Number 5334 Assistant Profession:xxviii
- Shape: Semi-circular at the top
- Location: Found on the western wall of Tibilis
- _ Dimensions: Height 158 cm
- _ Inscription:

C. IVLIVS .L. F. Q

VIR . ADIVTOR.

V. A. XX.

H. S. E

- 3. Inscription Number 5336 Assistant Profession: xxix
- o Shape: Circular at the top
- o Dimensions: Height 95 cm
- o Inscription consists of 4 lines:

Q. IVLIVS. Q. F

ADIVTOR

V A LI

IC S E

Farmer (ARATOR) Profession:

- 4. Inscription Number 5748 Farmer Profession:xxx
- _ Shape: Semi-circular at the top
- _ Dimensions: Height 106 cm
- _ Inscription consists of 5 lines:

//POMPO

ni VS.PF

q ARAT

o RVA

// // HSE

5. Inscription Number 5753 – Farmer Profession: xxxi

- Location: Found in the southeast of the city, on the slope leading to the Roman road to Calama or Guelma
- Shape: Semi-circular at the top
- _ Dimensions: Height 84 cm
- _ Inscription consists of 5 lines:

.po MPONIVS

ge MNIVS

ARATOR

VALXX

HSE

6. Inscription Number 5850 – Farmer Profession: xxxiii

- Location: Found near the southern church, broken on both the right and left sides
- o Dimensions: Height 58 cm
- o Inscription consists of 5 lines:

SITTIVS .M

. QVIR. ARA

RIOLVS. c

Н

Livestock Trader (CATERVARIUS) Profession:

- 7. Inscription Number 5066 Livestock Trader:xxxiii
- Location: Found on the eastern wall of the city, broken at the top
- _ Inscription:

IVS	LIA
CATER	DOMI
VARIVS	TIA
A LIXV	// XAV
H // //	

8. Inscription Number 5067 – Livestock Trader:xxxiv

_ Source: Unknown

The inscription consists of three registers; the first two are empty, and the third contains the following:

cate RVA

RIVS V

A XLA

H . S. E

- 9. Inscription Number 5068 Livestock Trader: xxxv
- Location: Found on the eastern wall of the city, broken at the top
- _ Inscription:

.....

...fil

CATERVA

RIVS.HSE

V A XXXV

Inscription Number 5223 - Livestock Traderxxxvi

- Found on the western city wall.
- Consists of two registers:

o First register: 8 lines

o Second register: 7 lines

o Inscription

D M S DMS

SILIA VR T FLAVIV

B / VA S TTI FIV

VIX CI Q CATE

ANNIS RVARIVS

XXXV VX AN IS

H S E XII

HSE

Inscription Number 5523 - Livestock Traderxxxviii

- Marble inscription, semi-circular at the top.
- Contains 7 lines, spaced with laurel leaves.
- o Inscription:

D. M.S

SEX. IVVEN

TIUS SEX. F

Q. CATER

VARIVS

V. A. XXV

H. S.E

Inscription Number 5617 - Livestock Traderxxxviii

- Rectangular shape, divided into two parts:
- Left section discovered in 2017 south of the colonnaded temple.
- Right section discovered on the eastern wall.
- o Dimensions: Height 40 cm, Width 19 cm
- Inscription:

DM

R. MARIVS

R FQVIR

CATERVRIUS

V A LXXX

 $\mathsf{H}\,\mathsf{S}$

Inscription Number 5993 - Livestock Traderxxxix

- Found on the eastern city road leading to Guelma.
- Circular shape, two registers:

o First register: 6 lines

o Second register: 7 lines

o Dimensions: Height 75 cm, Width 48 cm

o Inscription:

DMS DMS

Q VETTI CARVI

V S CA LASPI

TERVA CAANN

RIV SA ISVIXIT

NNIS VI LXX VHE

XIT LXXXX

Inscription Number 5342 - Rural Farmer^{xl}

- Found in a room used for teaching Arabic in the village dedicated to the locals.
- o Inscription:

C. IVLIVS C F

QVIRCOLONVS

V A LXXV

H. S . E

Inscription Number 4749 - Farmer^{xli}

- Double-registered inscription found on the western wall.
- Dimensions: Height 56 cm, Width 52 cm
- o Inscription:

D MS DMS

L. AEMI IVLA

LIVS. L. LIBOSA

FIL. QVR. L. FILIA

CONDV QIRIN

CTOR. FAOSA

SEViva

• • • • • •

Inscription Number 5844 - Land Surveyorxlii

- Small inscription found on the western wall, broken at the bottom.
- o Inscription:

D M S

SILICIV

S. MESO

R. V. A.///

Inscription Number 5383 - Traveling Salesman^{xliii}

- Marble altar on the left side, engraved with two inscriptions:
- o First inscription: 5 lines
- Second inscription: 8 lines
- o Height: 1.17 m
- o Inscription:

DMS DMS

QIVLIVS POPILI

Q FIL A C FIL

QVIR NV QVIR VI

NDINA CTORIA

RIVS

V.A.L.V.

HSE

Inscription Number 5028 - Traveling Salesman^{xliv}

- Found in the Capitol.
- o Inscription:

C. CAELIVS

PASTOR

V A XXXV

HSE

Inscription Number 5125 - Shepherdxiv

- Semi-circular at the top, located on the eastern city wall.
- Dimensions: Height 68 cm, Width 40 cm.
- Inscription:

CORNELIA

FORMOSA

PAsTORIS.F

V.A. XXXVIII

H.S. E

Inscription Number 5545 - Property Ownerxlvi

- Made of marble, found broken on all sides in the doublearched structure of the southern church.
- Height: 38 cm.
- Inscription:

LICI IVILIA

nIVS Q FILIA

fil QVR IVLI

VISI SARPIL

VIXI Q. LICINIVS.POSSssor

v//XIII PARENTIBVS POS uit

Inscription Number 5120 - Postal Carrier XIVIII

- Features two registers of text.
- Dimensions: Height 105 cm, Width 75 cm.
- Inscription:

DMS DMS

Q COR ANTIS

NELIVS TIA Q

CORNE FIL VIC

LI FIL Q TORIA

VIATOR V A LII

V.A.XXV HSE

H. S. E

Conclusion:

In the city of Announa Tibilis, a sweeping urban, social, and economic renaissance unfolded, paralleling the robust growth in agriculture and industry, alongside the burgeoning popularity of local products such as oils, pottery, and architectural feats

like gates and triumphal arches.

The meticulous paving of streets, advancements in infrastructure, and enhancements in water storage capabilities, coupled with the presence of magnificent places of worship, including two grand churches strategically positioned in the north and south, underscore this comprehensive development. Moreover, the pervasive use of language among the populace, vividly reflected in over 1400 funeral inscriptions of diverse forms, illustrates a dynamic and engaged community.

In this verdant rural district, aptly nicknamed the 'basket of goods,' a variety of professions have been documented, while others, though not explicitly mentioned, are inferred from archaeological findings. Notable among these are farmers and traders specializing in livestock, which highlight the city's pronounced agricultural and mercantile ethos.

Land surveyors also emerge as pivotal figures, instrumental in mediating disputes. Furthermore, the presence of itinerant salesmen, likely purveyors of essential goods including perfumes and combs for women, points to a nuanced service economy catering to the needs of Announa's inhabitants.

The area's agrarian and pastoral leanings are evident, with professions such as shepherds overseeing livestock management, and postal carriers ensuring connectivity with other ancient urban centers, thus facilitating a vibrant exchange of ideas and goods among the citizenry.

The discovery of seven inscriptions pertaining to livestock traders suggests a region affluent in animal resources, underscoring a thriving trade in livestock. The continuation of archaeological endeavors in the city of Slawa Announa Tibilis promises to unearth even more inscriptions, offering deeper insights into the rich historical tapestry of the region upon the completion of ongoing excavations.

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Footnotes:

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ivPoulle, RSCA XVIII, 1876, p. 488.

viBertrandy (F.), "A Great Family," p. 8.

viiGsell, S. A.A.A.F. 18. No. 12 P. 10.

ixBertrandy (F.), "A Great Family," p. 8.

^{*}R.S.A.C., 1892, pp. 250-316.

xiiILALG., II, 2, 04681; ILS, 08977; AE, 1893, 88.

xiv"Legatus appointed along with three others to explain the

laws judges must apply."

xv"Legatus for the same emperor, responsible for accounting in the Syrian cities."

xvi"Legatus for the same emperor in Caligula."

xvii"Legatus under Rosianus Geminus, his son-in-law when he was proconsul in Africa."

xviii"Protector of the four Cirta colonies," R.S.A.C. I, 1853, p. 41; C.I.L.VIII 7059.

xix"The mural crown, awarded to the soldier first to scale the enemy wall during a city assault or to a commander whose troops breach a besieged city."

xx"The golden crown, adorned with palisades, awarded to the commander whose troops penetrate the enemy's camp."

xxi"The spear medal, a spear in the form of a sceptre, awarded to the commander whose units play a key role in battle."

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