



Capitol of Dougga (166-167 CE)

Capitol of Dougga



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Patron/Sponsor: Lucius Marcius Simplex and Lucius Marcius Simplex Regillianus

Original Location/Place:

Forum of Dougga

Actual Location (Collection/Museum):

In loco

Original Inscription/Graffito:

CIL VIII, 1871 (= *CIL*, VIII, 15513).



Diplomatic

IOVI OPTIMO MAXIMO [-]VNO[-]I REGIN[A]E MINERVAE AVG SACRVM
 PRO SALVTE IMP CAE[-] M [-]VRELI [--]TONINI AV[-] ET L AV[-]ELI [V]ERI AV ARMENIACOR
 MED PART MAX TO[-----]INA[-] DOMV[-----]
 S[-----]X [-] L MARCIVS SIMPLEX REGILLIANVS SVA P F
 L MARCIVS SIMPLEX ET L MAR
 CIVS SIMPLEX REGILLIANVS S P F

Edition:

Iovi Optimo Maximo [I]uno[n]i Regin[a]e Minervae Aug(ustae) sacrum
 pro salute Imp(eratorum) Cae[s(arum)] M(arci) [A]ureli [An]tonini A[ug(usti)] et L(uci) Au[r]eli [V]eri Au(gusti)
 Armeniacor(um)
 Med(icorum) Part(hicorum) max(imorum) to[tiusque div]ina[e] domu[s L(ucius) Marcius] S[imple]x [et] L(ucius)
 Marcus Simplex Regillianus sua p(ecunia) f(ecerunt)

L(ucius) Marcus Simplex et L(ucius) Mar
 cius Simplex Regillianus s(ua) p(ecunia) f(ecerunt)

Translation:

Holy to Jupiter Optimus Maximus, Juno Regina, and Minerva Augusta, for the well-being of the emperors Caesars
 Marcus Aurelius Antoninus Augustus and Lucius Aurelius Verus Augustus, greatest victors over the Armenians,
 Medians, and Parthians
 Lucius Marcus Simplex and Lucius Marcus Simplex Regillianus made the whole temple (*divina domus*) with their
 own money.

Lucius Marcus Simplex and Lucius Marcus Simplex Regillianus made this with their own money

Date: 166 CE to 167 CE

Material:

Local stone

Building Typology:

Temple

Description:

The Capitol of Dougga was erected during the joint reign of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus, and the construction probably ended in 166-167 CE. The temple was dedicated to the Capitoline triad, Jupiter Optimus Maximus, Juno Regina, and Minerva Augusta. Built using blocks of stone, the Capitol was erected on a high podium. The frontal flight of steps was in fact divided into a lower platform and an upper platform, the former of which consisted of nine steps which created a long and extended front ??? is something missing, or just the full stop? A further higher, steeper, and shorter flight of eleven steps was set upon the lower platform. The temple itself was rectangular, and its length was twice its width. The building was characterised by the use of Corinthian order, which from the rule of Augustus onwards, dominated Roman architecture. The tetrastyle façade of the building was characterized by four free-standing fluted columns, 8 m high, with an inner row of two columns located on the corners in front of the cella. The architrave, divided in two, was characterised by the use of egg-and-dart decoration on its upper part to divide it from the frieze. The latter was decorated with relief carvings of rosettes and acanthus leaves. The building was topped by a triangular pediment. Inside the pediment stood a relief depicting the apotheosis of Antoninus Pius, raised to the skies by an eagle. The main characteristic of the building, which today stands to a height of 10 m, is the use of the local *opus africanum*, or the combined use of hewn stones, often large, which framed a series of smaller stones. The stones were set in layers. While in the main the large stones were set as stretchers, every six or seven courses the large stone were set as bearers, reinforcing the construction. The inner space of the cella was characterized by three niches. While the two niches that stood at the end of the two aisles were rectangular and small, the central, semicircular niche, which stood at the end of the main nave, was much bigger. Inside the main niche stood the colossal statues of the three Capitoline gods. In fact, the head of the statue of Jupiter was found in a crypt underneath the temple. Possibly, it was moved there when the city became Christian (Gros, *L'architecture romaine*, p. 192-193).

Commentary: The urban settlement at Dougga originated in the sixth century BCE. The meaning of the original Numidian name of the city, TBGG, probably refers to the plateau, or raised ground, on which the settlement was erected. The city may have been under Carthaginian domination at least from the end of the fourth century BCE onwards. Thus, the city is possibly mentioned as Tokaï, one of the strongholds conquered by the tyrant Agathocles



of Syracuse, during one of his two expeditions against Carthage, the first between 311 and 308 BCE, and the second between 307 and 306 BCE. In the wake of the Second Punic War the city passed under the rule of Massinissa, King of Numidia who helped Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus against both Syphax, king of the Masaesyli, and against Hannibal, and whose cavalry was crucial for achieving victory in the battle of Zama in 202 BCE. Moreover, the city was still part of the Numidian kingdom when Micipsa succeeded his father Massinissa. Dougga was part of the territory of the kingdom of Numidia annexed to the province of Africa with the name of Africa Nova by Julius Caesar, in the wake of the African War of 46 BCE, when his king, Juba I, sided with the *optimates* against the Roman *dictator*. Augustus reorganized Africa, which by then included the settlement of Dougga, as a senatorial province, garrisoned by the *Legio III Augusta*. The capital of the province of Africa Proconsularis, and, thus, the seat of the governor, stood at Carthage.

By the end of the rule of Augustus, Roman hegemony had deeply transformed North Africa, with a number of cities enjoying the status of *colonia*, *municipium*, or *civitas* and scattered mainly along the coast. Dougga, which was located near the capital of the province, was originally a *civitas*. Probably the city government was still closely moulded on that of other Carthaginian foundations, with two *suffetes*, the two annually elected city magistrates, at the head of the city. In fact the citizens of Dougga had the status of *peregrini*, or foreigners. But the city stood inside the territory, or *pertica*, of the colony of Carthage, and near Dougga a rural settlement of Roman colonists coming from Carthage, or *pagus*, was created. Thus, for the first two centuries, the urban territory was shared by two populations and ruled by two different sets of institutions. First, on the side of Dougga, there was the civic *ordo* of *decuriones*, as well as the city magistrates, including the two *duoviri*, which slowly took the place of the Punic *suffetes*. Second, the Roman citizens of the *pagus* elected a local council. Yet, some members of Dougga's elite were awarded Roman citizenship, and magistrates got it automatically after the citizens of Dougga acquired the *ius latinum* (Latin right) under the rule of Marcus Aurelius, through which they won various rights such as *conubium* (legal marriage), *commercium* (legal recognition of commercial contracts with Roman citizens) and *ius migrationis* (the right to settle in Rome and be registered in a tribe). However, the colonists living in the *pagus* received more autonomy from Carthage, and were given the right to possess a public treasury, as well as the right to appoint individuals as legates. It was only during the reign of Septimius Severus in 205 CE that the *civitas* was definitively transformed into a *municipium*, with the name of *Municipium Septimium Aurelium Liberum Thugga*. The term *liberum* is quite problematic. According to two French scholars, Alfred Merlin and Louis Poinssot, the term referred to *Liber Pater*, one of the most important gods of the *municipium*, who possessed an important shrine. However, an inscription dated to the reign of Severus Alexander clearly demonstrates that the term *liberum* ought to be associated with the idea of *libertas*. Therefore, according to the French scholar Jules Toutain, the term indicates the fact that the local magistrates were "freely" elected. Thus, their appointment did not need the validation of the Roman governor. Yet, Paul Veyne has clearly demonstrated that the term *liberum* had only an honorary meaning (Veyne, "Le Marsyas," p. 86-98). The topic is still a source of discussion between scholars (Christol, *Regards sur l'Afrique romaine*, p. 191; Lepelley, "Thugga au IIIe siècle: la défense de la liberté," p. 105-114; François, *Le privilège de liberté. Politique impériale et autonomie municipale dans les cités de l'Occident romain*, p. 161-244). Finally, under the rule of Gallienus (260-268 CE), the *municipium* was elevated to the status of colony, as *Colonia Licinia Septimia Aurelia Alexandriana Thuggensis*.

Although the Romanisation of the city was a slow process, the granting of Latin right under the reign of Marcus Aurelius ought to be seen as the real watershed. In fact, it was during the Antonine period that a change in the legal status of its citizens corresponded to a change in the physical features of the city. The forum, or the main square of the city, included a market, located in its southeastern corner, a temple dedicated to *Pietas Augusta*, erected during the reign of Hadrian by a local *euergetes*, Caius Pompeius Nahanius, which stood at its northeastern end, and a Temple of Mercurius, which stood nearby. Yet, the most important public building was the Capitulum. As the inscription relates, the Capitulum was dedicated to the Capitoline Triad, with a secondary dedication for the good health and well-being of the emperors Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus (*pro salute Imperatorum Caesarum Marci Aureli Antonini Augusti et Luci Aureli Veri Augusti*) and that the whole temple (*totius divinae domus*) was paid for by two members of the local elite, Lucius Marcus Simplex and Lucius Marcus Simplex Regillianus, whose names were repeated in the secondary inscription found on the lintel of the cella. The *Marcii* are well attested in Dougga, having contributed a number of buildings to the city as part of their municipal *cursus honorum*; a brother of the L. Marcus Simplex attested here build the theatre of Dougga, and both were appointed to the role of *flamen* in recognition of their good works (see Chastagnol, "La Civitas de Thugga," p. 56). Their contribution of the Capitulum was enormously significant in Dougga; excavated from the space in front of the Capitulum were two large and symmetrical engaged pillars (*antae*), which are believed to have supported two colossal statues of the emperors Marcus Aurelius and the *divus* Lucius Verus, who faced the façade of the temple (Saint-Amans, *Topographie religieuse de Thugga*, p. 137). The two worlds – the imperial and the divine – therefore faced each other, with the scene of the apotheosis of Antoninus Pius in the pediment acting as a kind of mediating moment between the two; Marcus Aurelius was surrounded by his divinised brother and father, with the inevitability of his own divinity implied by his placement amongst them, but not overtly stated. The position of the emperor, even



one who was *divus*, was not treated as being equal as that of the gods however; they were not worshipped within the architectural fabric of the building, but rather placed just outside of it in a position of polite subordination to the authority of the Capitoline Triad (Saint-Amans, *Topographie religieuse de Thugga*, p. 137-8). Nonetheless, the cult of the two Antonine rulers was associated here with that of the main divinities of Rome, with the temple serving both as seat of the state cult of the empire as well as the shrine of the imperial cult.

Although the city of Dougga remained small throughout the second century, its Roman identity was clear. The process of Roman integration at Dougga consisted of a series of continuous negotiations between the local elite and the central Roman government. For each action on one of the two sides, a reaction followed on the other. While one side bequeathed a minor form of Roman citizenship, the other side provided the construction of a temple, which sealed the Roman identity of the people dwelling in the city, recognizing the primacy and exclusivity of Roman gods.

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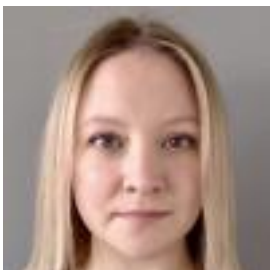
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