

The Prominent Military Elites of the Cirta Confederation and Their Role in Serving the Individual and Society: A Study on the Content of Latin Inscriptions

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Abstrac:

This study addresses the prominent military elites of the Cirta Confederation and their role in serving society, with a focus on the content of Latin inscriptions. The research investigates the nature of the relationship between the military elites of the Roman army and the communities under their influence. It aims to answer the main question regarding the significance and status of these elites in Cirta and its colonies, commonly referred to by researchers as the Cirta Confederation or Cirta League. It explores the contributions of these elites across various fields in service to their communities. Through statistical and analytical methods applied to various Latin inscriptions discovered in the studied area, this research uncovered several findings, including the prominent status held by these elites both within and outside the region.

Keywords:

Elites; Cirta Confederation; Army Divisions; Society; Cirta; Mila; Rusicada.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Latin inscriptions provide an essential source of information on various topics concerning the societies of African towns and colonies during the Roman period. Among these topics is the role of the military elites of the Cirta League, with Cirta (now Constantine) as its capital, and their service to society. This study addresses the main question of the significance and status of these military elites, considering their contributions not only in the military domain but also in political, administrative, social, and other fields. The study also answers related secondary questions, such as the nature of the Roman army occupying the Numidian region, its composition, and the principal military ranks within it. To achieve this, the research employs historical, statistical, and analytical methods, analyzing various inscriptions relevant to the study. Consequently, the paper is divided into two sections: the first discusses the military elites within the Cirta Confederation, while the second examines their status and role in serving society.

2. The Military Elites of the Cirta Confederation

Most epigraphic documents, including honorary, dedicatory, and funerary inscriptions discovered in Cirta and its surrounding colonies. The documents related to the Cirta Confederation include numerous names of governors and military leaders in the province of Numidia in general, and particularly in the city of Cirta. These leaders undertook various civilian responsibilities, such as supervising the construction of numerous service facilities with cultural, recreational, and religious aspects¹. The inscriptions also reveal the names of different military units, in which some local citizens held various ranks. I attempted to enumerate most of the military figures who held various military roles at different

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ranks, and compiled this information in Table N 1 at the end of the article as an appendix.

Based on the data presented in Table 1 (a table that includes most names of the military elites in the Cirta Confederation, along with their roles and ranks, prepared by the researcher , I categorized them into two main sections: the first discusses their military roles and ranks, and the second their military units.

2.1. Military Roles and Ranks

Through my study of the inscriptions mentioned in the preceding sections, I identified several names of military elites who held various positions that varied in importance according to their ranks. These include:

The Legion Commander in the Roman army (Legatus), of whom I counted eight (8) individuals. The Chief Commander of a military unit from a legion (Praefectus cohortis), of whom I found two (2).

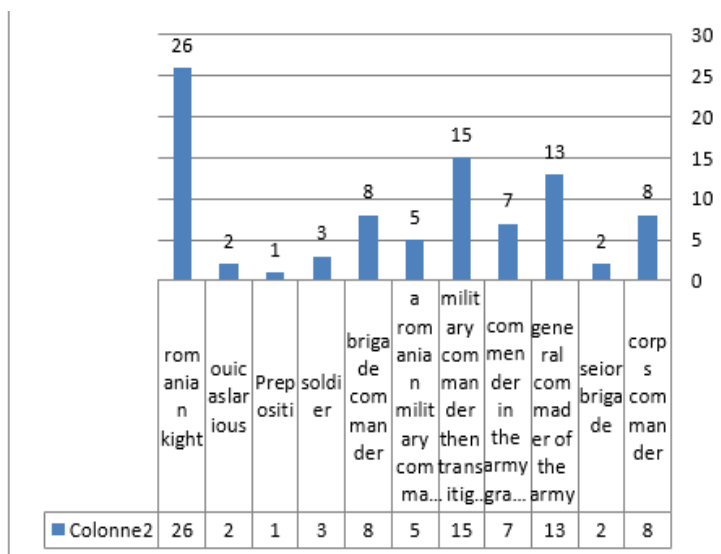
the general commander of the army in the province, who also served as the overall governor of cities and colonies (Praefectus)² , totaling thirteen (13).

End the rank of military commander with advisory responsibility for legal matters (Praefectus Iure dicundo)³, with seven (7) individuals identified in this role. Meanwhile, fifteen (15) people served as military commanders who later transitioned to civil judges (Praetor), five (5) held the position of wing commander in the Roman army (Tribunus cohortis), and eight (8) served as legion commanders (Tribuno Leg.). Three (3) individuals were counted as soldiers with specific ranks under the Roman military structure (Centurio), while one (1) person held the military position of Praepositi and two were Uexilarius. The number of those who achieved the honorary rank of Roman knight reached

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twenty-six (26). To analyze the findings, I incorporated this data into **Fig.2**.

Fig.2. Representing the number and proportions of military elites by their various functions and roles - elaborated by the researcher-



The significant number of individuals who held high-ranking positions in the Roman army and various subordinate units, such as Praefectus, Legatus, and Tribuno, indicates that Cirta had a notable military elite with influence both within and outside the city.

Most prominent military figures in the Cirta Confederation served primarily outside its capital, Cirta, in cities under its jurisdiction, such as Collo, Skikda, and Milah. This includes Quintus, son of the tribe Quirina (Q. F. QVIR⁴-who, besides holding many important administrative positions, served as a

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military commander responsible for legal matters in the cities of Rusicada and Chullu (PRAEF. [IV]RI D. COLONIAR RVSICADENSIS ET CHVLLV⁵.. as well as Quintus Sittius Faustus (Q. SITTIVS Q. FIL. QVIR. FAVSTVS).

Additionally, some individuals also held positions outside ancient Maghreb as a whole. For example, Publius Julius Junianus Martialianus (P. IVLIVS IVNIANVS MARTIALIANVS) served as a proconsul in Macedonia⁶ (PRO COS PROVIN[CIA]E MACEDONIAE). The sequence of administrative and military positions held by prominent individuals demonstrates. That reaching the highest rank was tied to the social class that candidates belonged to, as observed by the prominent military figures who mostly belonged to the senatorial and equestrian classes, such as Senator Quintus Aurelius Pactomaius Frontoni⁷ and Gaius Arrivius Antonius (C. ARRIVS ANTONIVS⁸, both belonging to these classes.

2.2. Military Divisions

The inscriptions in Table 1 mention several military units in which prominent individuals of the studied region served, including the Fourth Augustan Legion (LEG. IIII SCYNTHICAE), commanded by Gaius Arrivius Antonius (C. ARRIVS ANTONIVS). The Twelfth Augustan Legion in Cappadocia (LEG. XII FVLMINATAE IN KAPPADOCIA) was led by Gaius Ovidius Maximus who also commanded the Fourth Bracari Legion (IIII BRACARVM IN)^{9 10} [v]. The Second and Sixth Augustan Legions (LEG. [AVG. LEG. VI FERRATAE] ET LEG. II [ADIVTRI-CIS] [LEGATVS] AVGV[S](TI) were under the command of Adventus Postumius Aquilinus¹¹.

The inscription of Publius Julius Geminus Marcianus (P. IVLIVS P. FIL. QVIR. [GE]MINIVS MARCIANVS) mentions

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three military divisions where he held various military positions: the Macedonian Legion, the Cappadocian Legion, the Tenth Gemina Legion, the Tenth Fretensis Legion, and the Fourth Scythic Legion (MACEDONIAE LEG.LEG. AVG. SV[PER] VEXILLATIONES IN CAPPADO[CIA] LEG. AVG. LAG. X GEMINAE [LEG.] LEG. X [FR]ETENSIS ET LEG. IIII SCY[NTH]ICAE)¹²..

The Fourteenth Gemina Legion (LEG. LEG(IONIS) XIII G(EMINAE) M(ATRIAE)) was commanded by Titus Caesernius Statius Quintus Statianus Memmius Macrinus (T. CAESERNIVS [T.] F. PALAT (INA TRIBV) STATIVS QVINTIVS STAT[IA]NVS MEMMIVS MACRINVS)¹³ , while the Fourth Flavian Legion is mentioned in the inscription of Commander Quintus Basilius Lucus¹⁴.

From my study of various military units in which Cirta Confederation elites held high military positions, I noted that most of these elites belonged to the senatorial class. This observation underscores the significance of their roles, as they completed all honorary positions in the Roman military and administrative hierarchy, highlighting the influence these elites held both domestically and internationally.

3. The Status of Military Elites and Their Role in Serving Society

Based on the Latin inscriptions in Table 1, which provide important data on the administrative roles held by the Cirta Confederation elites alongside their military duties—within the capital Cirta, its colonies, the province, and even beyond North Africa—and some indications of their contributions in religious and economic spheres. These elites played a significant role in the

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advancement of the cities they served by constructing and establishing public facilities that benefited both individuals and society. On this basis, I found it essential to discuss in Section One the main administrative roles and in Section Two the major achievements of these elites in serving their communities.

3.1. The Crucial Administrative Positions

In this section, I addressed the most important administrative positions held by these elites, both in the municipal judiciary and in the religious authority.

3.1.1 The Crucial Administrative Positions

The Municipal Judiciary

This serves as the executive body of the Decurions Council, which was responsible for appointing its various members. Thus, Roman law granted its members (the Duumvirs, Aediles, Quaestors, and Curators) executive power according to the tasks assigned to each ¹⁵. This is mentioned in the inscriptions of the following individuals: Quintus Quadratus Quintulus (Q. QVADRATIVS [...FIL.] QVIR. QVINTVLVS), Quadratus Baebianus (...QVA]DRATVS BAEBIANVS), Quintus Voluvius Faustus (Q. FVLVIVS Q. FIL. QVI[RIN]A F[AVS]TVS), Marcus Caecilius Natalis (M. CAECILIVS Q. F. QVIR. NATALIS), and Marcus Aurelius Cominus Cassianus (M. AVRELI[VS COMINVS CASSIANVS), who held positions as Aediles, Duumvirs, Triumvirs, Quaestors, and Curators. ¹⁶

3.1.2 The Religious Authority

This includes a set of religious functions through which priests ascend to higher ranks and can also attain senior positions in civil administration ¹⁷. They directly influence the decision-making processes within local municipal councils, possessing both administrative and judicial powers ¹⁸. Among the most important

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religious positions are the permanent priests, provincial priesthods, augurs, and pontiffs, as indicated in Table 1.

It is noted that among these are: the augur Caius Arius Antonius ([C. ARRIVS ANTONIVS]), the pontiff Caius Julius Crescens Didius Crescentianus (C. IVLIVS CRESCENS Q. FIL. Q. DIDIVS), the African provincial priest Caecilius Cromatius Edicus Triumphal (CAECILIVS CROMATIVS EDI[CIVS] TRIOMPH[ALIS]), and the perpetual priest Caius Julius Felix ¹⁹. It is known that some individuals progressed through various religious functions to reach the highest ranks, such as Marcus Fabius Fronto (M. FABIUS L. FIL. Q(VIRINA) FRONTONIVS), who held the position of augur and priest of the augurs (MAGISTRO A]VGVRVM VII [SACERD(OTI) SA]C[R(AE)]) and Caius Julius Felix (C. [IV]L[I]VS C. F. QVIR. FELIX), who also held the position of perpetual priest and pontiff (PONTIFEX [FLAM.] PERPET).²⁰

3.2. The Major Achievements of the Military Elites and Their Role in Serving the Community

The status and role of military elites in serving the community are also highlighted through an examination of their significant achievements while carrying out various administrative and military tasks. The inscription of Mr. Claudius Avitianus mentions that he constructed a basilica known as the Basilica Constantina, a square building with arches and four entrances ²¹. Meanwhile, a citizen of the city of Serta, Flavius Faustus, financed the construction of the triumphal arch that adorned the northern entrance of the forum (public square) when he held the position of Aedile ²². Additionally, Caius Avidius Maximus built another triumphal arch with his own funds and also contributed a

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considerable sum for the construction of niches for statues near the theater.²³

Regarding religious establishments, the military elites of the capital of the Sirtian Confederation also contributed to the construction of some religious landmarks, such as the temple of Bacchus, which was financed by the leader Quadratus Quintulus with his own funds²⁴.

The inscriptions dated to the year 210 AD indicate that Mr. Caecilius Natalis spent on the construction of a triumphal arch adorned with columns and statues dedicated to Emperor Caracalla. He also made honorary donations to the city treasury and distributed supplies and money, as well as covering the costs of games during the same year²⁵.

Furthermore, a citizen of Serta, Mr. Umbonius Iuvas (VMBONIVS IVVAS), contributed to the construction of a facility funded by the city treasury²⁶. Another inscription by Mr. Caecilius Cromatius Edicus Triumphal states that he paid expenses for preparing a water conduit.²⁷

4. CONCLUSION

After studying the various functions and military ranks of the elites in the cirtian Confederation through the collection and analysis of what is recorded in the inscriptions discovered in the studied area, I reached a series of conclusions:

- The variety of military functions and ranks, as well as the names of the military units studied, indicate that the Roman army was organized and structured. As evidenced by the progression of some important figures through the hierarchy of military positions from the lowest to the highest.
- The fact that most elites held both civil (administrative) and military functions indicates that the Roman army was not separate

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from civilian life but played a significant role in enhancing social life in cities and provinces.

- The repeated mention of various military functions and ranks in the inscriptions discovered in the city of Serta is also evidence of the presence of an important military elite, particularly concerning active individuals in society. Who, in addition to their military duties, held important administrative roles that enabled them to contribute to their community through various achievements in different life areas.

It seems that the performance of these elites in their assigned tasks earned them a prominent status within the capital of the Cirtian Confederation and beyond, as they held numerous high-level administrative positions, such as governing provinces or serving as consuls in regions under the Roman Empire outside of ancient Maghreb.

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6. Appendices

Table 1 That includes most names of the military elites in the Cirta Confederation, along with their roles and ranks, prepared by the researcher

names of the military elites	Military Roles and Ranks	The other Ranks	The date
C. ARIVS ANTONIVS	The Legion Commander in the Roman army (Legatus The Chief Commander of a military unit from a legion (Praefectus cohortis),	Decurions Council Aediles, Quaestors the augur Protector of the four colonies.	188- 180

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	Roman knight		
C. IVLIVS CRESCENS Q. FIL. Q. DIDIUS CRESCENTIANVS	commander in the Roman army (Tribunus cohortis) commanded the Fourth Bracari Legion (III BRACARVM IN) Roman knight	the honorary rank the pontiff Decurions Council perpetual priest and pontiff	169-150
M. SEIVS CN. FIL. QVIR. MAXIMVS	Roman knight	the pontiff Triumvirs	212
C. AVFIDIUS C. FIL. MAXIMVS	Roman knight commander in the Roman army (Tribunus cohortis), and as legion commanders (Tribuno Leg.). The Twelfth Augustan Legion in Cappadocia	the pontiff	88
CAECILIVS CROMATIVS EDI[CIVS] TRIOMPH[ALIS]	Roman knight	the African provincial priest	392-383

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Q. F. QVIR. ALL	military commander responsible for legal matters in the cities of Rusicada and Chullu (PRAEF. [IV]RI D. COLONIAR RVSICADENSIS ET CHVLLV	Aediles, Triumvirs	
P. PAC]ONIVS P. F. QVI[R. C]ERIALIS	Roman knight Quaestors	Aediles, Triumvirs	
P. IVLI VRBANI [FIL.] QVIR. VRBANVS	the overall governor of cities and colonies (Praefectus)	Aediles, Triumvirs	
L. SCANTIVS L. FIL. QVIR IVLIANVS	Roman knight	Triumvirs	
M. AVRELI[VS COMINVS CASSIANVS	Quaestors, and Curators Hispania QVAEST. PROVINC. [HIS(PANIAE)]	Quaestors, and Curators	244-238
P. PORCIVS RVFVS	the Legion Commander in the Roman army (Legatus)	Quaestors, and Curators	
P. IVLIVS P. F. QVIR. NORICVS	Roman knight	Aediles	
L. FABIVS	Roman knight	Aediles,	

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FELICIVS	the honorary rank	Triumvirs	
M. FLAVIVS T. FIL. QVIR. POSTVMIVS	Roman knight the honorary rank military commander responsible for legal matters in the Cirta Confederation	the perpetual priest Aediles, Triumvirs	
M. FLAVIVS T. FIL. QVIR. POSTVMIVS	Roman knight the honorary rank military the Legion Commander in the Roman army (Legatus the Macedonian Legion, Legatus of. The Second and Sixth Augustan Leg M. FLAVIVS T. FIL. QVIR. POSTVMIVS	the perpetual priest Triumvirs	168-164
M. FLAVIVS T. FIL. QVIR. POSTVMIVS	Roman knight the Commander in the Roman army (Legatus Legatus LEG. LEG. VI FERRATAE	the general commander of the army in the province, who also served as the overall governor of cities and	211-217

	PRAETORI ADLECTO INTER TRIBVNICIOS AB IMP. ANTONINO AVG. CVRATORI COLONIAE ARDEATINORVM	colonies (Praefectus CVRATORI COLONIAE ARDEATINORVM QVAEST. Protector of the four colonies.	
M.COCVLNINVS SEX. FIL. QVIR. QVINTILLIANVS	Roman knight the honorary rank completed all honorary positions	Quaestors	
L. MAECILIVS P. F. Q. NEPOS	Roman knight the honorary rank completed all honorary positions of the four colonies.	the perpetual priest	211- 193
L. CORNELIVS L. FIL. FRONTO PROBIANVS	Roman knight	Senator of the four colonies. (DEC. IIII COL). the perpetual priest FL. PP. DIVI MAGNI ANTONINI	218- 222
M. ROCCIVS M. FIL. QVIR. FELIX	Roman knight	the perpetual priest, the African provincial priest	180- 192
IVLIVS IVVENALIS	Roman knight		313

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M. AVRELIVS MAXIMIANVS	Roman knight		
C. [IV]L[I]VS C. F. QVIR. FELIX	the rank of military commander with advisory responsibility for legal matters Praefectus Iure dicundo in Milev, Rusicade (PRAEF. I. D. MILEV, RVSICADE	Pontiff, the perpetual priest Triumvirs	177- 176
C. SITTIVS Q. FIL. QVIRINA FLAVIANVS	the general commander of the army in the province	Triumvirs Aediles	203
[P. I]VLIVS P. FIL. QVIR. [GE]MINIVS MARCIVS	proconsul in Macedonia, legatus of the Macedonian Legion, the Cappadocian Legion, the Tenth Gemina Legion, the Tenth Fretensis Legion, and the Fourth Scythic Legion	PRO PR. [PR]OVINCIAE ARABIAE	

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T. CAESERNIVS [T.] F . PALAT(INA TRIBV) STATIVS QVINTIVS STAT[IA]NVS MEMMIVS MACRINVS	proconsul legatus of The Fourteenth Gemina Legion	Protector of the four provincial African	138 - 161
[M. FABIVS L.] FIL. Q(VIRINA) FRONTONIVS	commander with advisory responsibility for legal matters Praefectus Iure dicundo in Milev, Rusicade (PRAEF. I. D. MILEV, RVSCADE	Triumvirs augur and priest of the augurs MAGISTRO AVGVVRVM VII SACERDOTI SACRAE	After 225
VERATIAE FRON/TONILLAE IVLIVS T[HE]ODORVS /	LEGIONARIO / HONESTA MISSIO/NE MISSVS MARITVS / D(ECVRIONVM) D(ECRETO)	FLAMINI/CAE IIII the perpetual priest of the African provincial	
M. MOTILIVS ? VALENS	the general commander of the army in the province PR(AETOR)	Protector	
P. IVLIVS	C V		

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[.FIL.]QVIR. PROCVLVS CELSINVS	[COS] DESIG. PR(AETORI) [TRIB(VNO)] PLEB(IS) QVA[EST(ORI)] KANDID[ATVS]		
L(VCIO) FLAVIO T(ITI) FIL(IO) / QVIR(INA) CRESCENT	commander with advisory responsibility for legal matters Praefectus Iure dicundo in Milev, Rusicade	Triumvirs Aediles	
ANTONINI FIL(II) DIVI SE]VERI NEPOTIS أنطونيوس	AVGVST]AE SACRVM / [PRO SALVTE IMP(ERATORIS) CAES(ARIS) M(ARCI) AVR(ELI) ANTONI]NI PII FELICIS AVG(VSTI) DIVI / [MAGNI TRIB(VNICIA) POT(ESTATE) / [3 CO(N)S(VLIS) PRO]CO(N)S(VLIS	TRIB(VNICIA) POT(ESTATE) / [3 CO(N)S(VLIS) PRO]CO(N)S(VLIS) P(ATRIS) P(ATRIAE) E]XORNATVS FLAMEN P(ER)P(ETVVS)	

	) P(ATRIS) P(ATRIAE) / [3 EQVO PVBLICO		
P. GAVI[VS .. FIL. PALA ?)TINA	Roman knight the Legion Commander in the Roman army (Legatus	Aediles	

¹Lepolley, (1981), The Cities of Roman Africa in the Late Empire, Vol. 2, Paris, pp. 383–388.

²The Latin term Praefectus is pluralized as Praefecti and refers to an official appointed by the higher authority to head a particular administrative province. See: Gaffiot, F., Dictionnaire abrégé Latin-Français illustré, Librairie Hachette, Paris, p.

³This refers to the governor authorized by the Decurion Council of the Cirta Confederation to head one of its colonies, sometimes overseeing two or three colonies. See: Mohamed Al-Arabi Aqoun, The Cirta Confederation from the Seizure of Cirta by Sittius in 46 B.C. to Events of the Fourth Century A.D., Vol. 1, unpublished Ph.D. thesis in Ancient History, Department of History, Mentouri University, Constantine, Algeria, 2003–2004, p. 135.

⁴ Poulle, M.A ,(1869), Inscriptions of Constantine and the Province, R.S.A.C., p.681.

⁵ Gsell, S., (1957) Latin Inscriptions of Algeria, Vol. II (ILAlg., II), Librairie Ancienne Honoré Champion, Paris, p. 3610.

⁶ Gsell, S., (1957), Ibid, 3610.

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- ²⁴ Gustavvs, Willmannns, Ibid,10867, Gsell, Op-cite, p 487.
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- ²⁶ Gsell, Op-cite , p 653.
- ²⁷ Gsell, ,Ibid, p 620.