Tiddis Pottery, A Timeless Imprint and a Source for Writing Its Ancient History

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Abstract

This research paper delves into the enduring mystery of the ancient city of Tiddis and the role its pottery played in illuminating its ancient history. Pottery served as a crucial material source, providing us with data on both the historical aspect, proving the depth of its roots dating back to the dawn of history. Furthermore, this town maintained its local Libyco authenticity despite Phoenician, Greek, and Carthaginian influences. However, the peak of the region's prosperity in the economic aspect occurred during the Roman period, precisely in the 3rd century AD, where its pottery reached numerous areas across the Mediterranean basin and even within the Roman provinces. In this manner, Tiddis persevered, despite the scarcity, if not absence, of written sources

Keywords

Castle ;
Pottery ;
Tiddis ;
Sigillata ;
Romans.

فخار تيديس، بصمة خالدة ومصدر لكتابة تاريخها القديم

ملخص

تطرقنا في هذه الورقة البحثية حول سر خلود مدينة تيديس الأثرية، والدور الذي لعبه فخارها في إلقاء الضوء على تاريخها القديم، إذ كان مصدر مادي مهم في تزويدنا بمعطيات سواء في الجانب التاريخي والتي أثبت أن مدى عمق جذورها و التي تصل إلى فجر التاريخ، كذلك تمسك هذه البلدة بأصالتها اللوبية المحلية رغم التأثيرات الفينيقية والإغريقية وكذا القرطاجية، إلا أن أوجه ازدهار المنطقة في الجانب الاقتصادي كان في الفترة الرومانية، و بالضبط القرن الثالث ميلادي ، أين وصل فخارها العديد من مناطق حوضي البحر المتوسط و حتى داخل المقاطعات الرومانية. وبهذه الشاكلة خلدت تيديس رغم قلة إن لم نقل انعدام المصادر الكتابية.

الكلمات المفتاحية

قلعة؛
الفخار ؛
تيديس ؛
السيجيلي؛
الرومان.

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I- Introduction

The ancient city of Tiddis is indeed considered one of the timeless cities in history, owing much of its allure to its panoramic mountainous setting, which has transformed into a magnificent castle complete with neighborhoods and structures. The addition of red-colored rocks has further enhanced its scenic beauty, complementing its pottery, which serves as an enduring symbol that distinguishes it from other cities.

In contemporary scholarship, ancient pottery holds a significant place as one of the primary sources for documenting the history and heritage of nations. Its intimate connection with the evolutionary trajectory of humanity is undeniable, having accompanied humans from their earliest days and persisting throughout their existence. Pottery serves as tangible evidence for comprehending the development of civilizations across various domains.

From this vantage point, the notion emerged to delve into the lives of ancient Tiddis individuals, exploring their lifestyles craftsmanship trade, and beliefs through their pottery. Discovered in significant quantities and spanning diverse periods deeply entrenched in time, from antiquity to the 6th century AD, this research endeavors to shed light on the city's history and unravel its civilizational evolution through its pottery. Was this artistry a secret among the secrets of its perpetuity?

Yet, delving into such inquiries presents challenges, primarily due to the scarcity of written sources that fail to meet the demands of the subject. Even scientific investigations addressing this aspect remain limited, comprising only a few articles and academic studies. Reports of archaeological excavations specific to the site, compiled by researcher A. Berthier in his book 'Tiddis, Ancient Numidian City,' provide valuable insights. Additionally, studies on pottery, such as those by researcher Roger Guéry on Sigili pottery and stamp marks, and by researcher G. Baradez on orange-red pottery and Mediterranean trade from the 1 st to the 3rd century AD, along with Jean Paul Morel's work on Cuman pottery and its forms, constitute essential references.

To address this topic, we employed the descriptive historical method to discuss the city's sites and pottery. The deductive historical method was utilized to extract results and establish scientific facts about the cultural diversity of this city. Essential to this study was understanding the site and its secret of perpetuity, focusing on the pottery discovered in the area and deducing from it historical, economic, social, and cultural insights about this castle.

Through these scientific findings, we ascertain that pottery stands as one of the foremost material sources for documenting the city's history. Within its contours lies the narrative of the city, originating from humanity's earliest settlement attempts. It bore witness to its economic prosperity and embodied its local Libyan religious and cultural ethos, resilient against the prevailing cultural influences of its time.

1.Tiddis and the Secret of its Perpetuity Throughout History:

This city is considered one of the most significant archaeological sites in history, and perhaps its distinction stems from the many secrets it harbors. These secrets are intertwined with its mythical geographical location and its archaeological significance, surpassing the conventional norms of Roman cities. To delve into uncovering these mysteries, it was imperative to address

1.1.The geographical and natural location of the city:

This town stood out from others due to its unique geographical framework, characterized by its varying elevation and steep slopes. It is located on a plateau with an altitude of about 574.90 meters, known as Caf Am Hadidane, overlooking the right bank of the Oued- El- Rummel, where time carved alongside it a cliff known as Al Khanq[1].

This location, about 23 kilometers northwest of the city of Constantine, was surrounded by barriers and slopes from various directions, except for the eastern side, which allowed access into the interior in an ascending manner[2].

Thus, the town was established on a strategic site, resembling a fortress, which provided it with security and tranquility thanks to its natural fortifications. Humans chose it as a settlement location after the emergence of the first human settlements. This location is considered one of the secrets to its endurance throughout history.

The city belongs to the Upper Plains of Constantine, which boast diverse terrain and include two mountain ranges. The first is formed of limestone rocks composed of ancient clay deposits dating back hundreds of thousands of years, with remnants of fossilized animals and seashells left by the sea when it receded from the continent[3].

The second mountain range consists of sandstone rocks formed of quartz and clay. Due to the presence of iron oxide replacing the calcium content, the rocks took on a red color, which gave the site a beautiful and enchanting natural view. This, in itself, is one of the secrets to its endurance. Moreover, the finest types of clay used in pottery were extracted from these rocks, which is the subject of our research[4].

The geographical and natural location of the city made it vulnerable to drought, as its high elevation and steep slopes prevented it from being supplied with water from other areas via channels. Therefore, its inhabitants ingeniously utilized every drop of water that fell on its lands. Thus, they created new water sources, initially relying on rainwater. They constructed various water channels, some carved into rocks and others dug into the ground, distributing them throughout the city, from the heights of the plateau to the lower areas. They focused these channels, especially on the edges of the main and secondary streets, which converged into reservoirs scattered across the city. These reservoirs varied in size, ranging from small to large wells or square basins, some carved into rocks or into the ground[5].

However, the inhabitants of this city had utilized, besides rainfall, the waters of the Oued el-Kébir from the southern lowlands of the plateau, where the banks of the valley meet the levels of the adjacent lands. It is known that this valley passes through the region coming from Constantine, passing by Hamma Bouziane, northwest[6].

However, these water resources were insufficient, especially with the increase in the city's population during the Roman period, and their reliance on pottery-making, which consumed a large amount of water, as evidenced by the abundance and enormity of the reservoirs in the Potter's Quarter. This prompted them to construct another large reservoir, with a capacity of about 350 meters, equivalent to 350,000 liters, around 250 AD[7].

After this brief overview of the site and its most important features, we will delve into the journey that took place to bring the city to reality in the subsequent section.

1.2.Tiddis Emerges from Beneath the Ruins:

Before embarking on the search for this enduring town, researchers relied on several indicators that hinted at its existence. They were convinced that the selection of that site was not coincidental, as it was likely planted within the heart of a mountain to protect the capital city of Cirta from the northwest. Thus, they expected it to be one of the fortified cities protecting it.

Furthermore, the site was abundant with many scattered pottery pieces, another sign of the existence of an archaeological area. Despite the ruggedness of the site, shepherds used to traverse a path directly to the summit of the plateau. Researchers believed this could be an ancient passage.[8]

Based on this premise, the thought of searching for the enduring city and the possibility of extracting it from beneath the rubble, which reached several meters in height, began to take shape. This was not an easy task but required effort and time. The initial research focused on copying and publishing many of the Latin inscriptions discovered in the area in the archaeological journal of the Constantine province[9], It was in one of these inscriptions that its real name was first inscribed, as "Castellum Tidditanorum" during the reign of Emperor “Alexander Severus[10]."After this discovery, researchers repeatedly visited the site to ascertain its features, such as the visits by St. Gsell, G. Mercier, and Ch. Vars. They were particularly interested in the dolmens and rock drawings found on the edges of its plateau[11]. However, the site was forgotten for about forty years due to the city's isolation and the lack of roads leading to it due to the difficult terrain, as mentioned earlier.

The aerial photograph taken of the archaeological site in 1935 revealed the city walls and some protrusions on the entire eastern part of the plateau, suggesting the presence of buried structures, further fueling the researchers' dreams of extracting these landmarks. This hope was realized in 1940 when the governor of Constantine city, Mr. Max Bonnafous, contacted Mr. A. Berthier to propose a project to excavate the area around the city of Constantine. Berthier was the director of the city museum and the archaeological department. Thus, the dream began to materialize, and by the end of that year, a camp named "Camp Max Bonnafous" was established near the Al Khanq. On January 7, 1941, the first excavation was initiated halfway up the[12] .

Despite World War II, excavations at the castle site did not cease, and visits to it increased after a road was opened allowing for car access. One of the most important neighborhoods of the city, the Potter's Quarter, was excavated, revealing its secrets each time, until the researcher A. Berthier left for France in 1973, after uncovering the most important

cemetery on the eastern side of the city. Then, the third scene was filmed twenty years after hard work, showing a magnificent view of a mountainous area transformed into a city with its neighborhoods and structures. Accessible only by climbing steep slopes to reach the highest peak, known as the sacred place[13] .

The excavations have also revealed evidence of a variety of archaeological artifacts used by the Tiddis community in their daily lives, alongside the urban landmarks. These artifacts primarily consist of pottery remains and tools for their manufacture, preserved in the halls of the National Museum of Cirta. Among this collection, the pottery remains are of particular interest, as they are crucial for understanding the region's history (see diagram).

III. Tiddis as a source for writing its history:

Pottery vessels, known as containers for storing food resources and liquids or for cooking and drinking, were also used for burying the dead or containing the ashes of cremated bodies, often for specific religious rituals or to provide the deceased with necessities for the afterlife and ensure their continuity in the eternal life, according to the beliefs of ancient peoples. They mainly consist of plates, large and small jars, pitchers, cups, entertainment tools, and others. Similarly, the pottery of this site, discovered in large quantities throughout its areas, can be considered a source for writing its history. We should take a closer look at it.

1.Tiddis Reveals Its Pottery :

Based on what the castle left behind in terms of landmarks and archaeological remains, it was noted that pottery dominated significantly. The reason may lie in its role in individual life, which logically explains its widespread presence. However, it was found in large numbers in certain areas more than others, such as the Bazinat tombs located in the eastern district leading to the entrance, and in the potter's quarter, which occupies several sectors, such as the northern side of the Dodgemannos road, the wall, and the temple of the god Vesta. Additionally, it was found in the mosaic villa and the eastern cemetery[14].

As for the pottery discovered in this city, it was diverse and varied between locally made and imported, dating back to around the 4th century BCE and not exceeding the 6th century CE. Due to the abundance of archaeological finds, it was deemed necessary to categorize them into:

-**Local Pottery**: A diverse array of pottery vessels, ranging in size from large to small, was discovered in the Bazinat tombs, totaling 48 different pieces. These vessels included bowls, plates, cups, and pitchers[15] , However, the most intriguing discovery was made by the researcher Jean Baissière during his excavations in the eastern cemetery. He unearthed a vessel with a horizontal strainer, a rare type in the world of pottery, as well as a vessel supported by three bases shaped like human heads[16].(See images number 1 and 2 in the appendix)

This type of pottery, known as handmade molded pottery, was characterized by its red color derived from its clay, which contained abundant iron oxide. Most pieces featured various decorations ranging from geometric to animal and human motifs, yielding numerous religious insights. According to studies, it is believed to date back to the 4th century BCE, although carbon-14 dating suggests it dates to the mid-3rd century BCE[17].

-**Imported Pottery**: A type of pottery significant to the region's history was discovered within a vast cemetery extending along the road leading to the archaeological site. These are pieces of Cuman pottery, classified as Type A, according to a study conducted by researcher J.P. Morel. This type is traced back to Italian craftsmanship, specifically from the city of Naples, known for its distinctive reddish-brown and coarse-textured clay, yet possessing a durable and glossy finish. The same researcher also revealed the presence of pieces made from grayish clay with a blackish luster, belonging to Cuman pottery Type C. This indicates the beginning of trade in this type, prevalent across the Western Mediterranean basin since the 2nd and 1st centuries BCE, centered around Italy, Sardinia, Spain, and North Africa[18].(refer to images number 3 through 5).

In Tiddis, several handles with Rhodesian seals were discovered, including the mark IPΠΙΟΚΡΛΤΣ, dating roughly to the end of the 3rd century and the beginning of the 2nd century BCE, along with Greek amphora handles. It is noteworthy that these findings will help us understand the town's trade relations[19].

The pottery of the punic culture was represented by a number of pieces, including large-necked jars characterized by their short stature and width, which feature circular openings, as well as cups, tear bottles, and vessels with handles. According to the study conducted by researcher A. Bertier, it was found that these pieces resembled others discovered in punic tombs in the city of Constantine, as well as samples found at the residence of Sidi M'Sid dating back to the 2nd century BCE[20].

Based on the archaeological findings, it became evident that the town faced a significant influx of Italian Sigillata pottery from the 1st century BCE onwards. Approximately 274 pottery pieces were discovered, bearing commercial marks, of which about 207 marks were deciphered, leaving 67 marks unidentified. According to archaeological research, most of this pottery can be traced back to the Arezzo type. Dozens of Augustan marks from the Republican era were found, along with others from Gaulish centers and from Granfenque. The discovered Italian pottery belonged to workshops in southern Gaul[21] , Consequently, the castle began importing this fine pottery after the 1st century CE, especially the so-called Sigillata Forma A, which was widely distributed in the region. It was represented by pieces such as plates with decorated rims featuring motifs resembling water leaf patterns, as well as large vessels. These were made from a fine clay with a grayish or reddish color and possessed a shiny light orange finish[22].

-<u>Local production of Sigillata pottery, Type D, in Tiddis</u>: The vast quantity of this type of pottery found scattered throughout the castle and neighboring towns, extending even beyond the Roman province, suggests its local production. Additionally, many tools were discovered distributed among the kilns and workshops in the potter's quarter. Around 250 pieces were collected, including knives, stamps, scrapers, ladles, funnels, grinders, stacking pots, shelves, molds, and rings, some of which bore commercial marks[23].(refer to images number 10)

The production of this type of pottery lasted for a long period. According to a study conducted by the researcher “G. Baradez” concerning the large dishes discovered in the city of Tipaza, which were referred to as African orange pottery, it dates back to between the late 4th and late 6th centuries AD. This pottery is distinguished from others by the smoothness of the clay, with its grayish-blue color coated in a red-orange hue. These items were molded into jars, vases, plates, bowls, and large dishes[24] (refer to images number 6 and 7).

To make our study more comprehensive, we have cataloged the decorations adorning the aforementioned pieces, which consisted of a variety of geometric elements, including squares, cylinders, central circles, stars, arrows, triangles, as well as vegetal motifs such as leaves, flowers, and palm fronds. Additionally, there were animal motifs, predominantly birds like doves and swans, and fish like dolphins and moonfish[25] .

As for the rare pottery pieces, they are those large circular or rectangular dishes adorned with prominent relief decorations. Four such pieces were discovered, featuring mythological motifs related either to Pegasus or scenes reflecting the life of the hero Achilles[26].(refer to images number 8 and 9).

According to archaeological research, it has been found that this type of dish, similar to those found in the cities of Tipaza and Djemila, is believed to date back to the 4th century AD. Researcher “Y. Allais” suggests that they were made in this town, rather than in Egypt as previously believed, especially since the quality of the pottery was coarser than that of Egyptian dishes[27].

Another type of pottery has also been found dating back to a later period, known as the "ordinary" type. It did not resemble the Sigillata Class D type, but it was also widely distributed. We note the loss of the secret technique of making orange-red pottery, even though the clay used was of good quality, with a pinkish-brown or purple-red color. However, they extensively used white and light pink paint, leaving spots on the vessel's surface. This paint was somewhat thick. It is also noteworthy that some vessels were excessively fired, showing signs of burning. They lack finishing touches, as we observe a lack of attention to details such as handle placement, and some of them do not have bases, relying on numerous small grooves. Their decoration often repeated the same elements[28] (refer to images number 10 and 11)

From the above, we can conclude that the potters in this late stage of the industry were imitating the models or marks in front of them, perhaps due to the loss of the technique of making orange-red pottery. Their reliance on imitation suggests a departure from the craftsmanship of their ancestors for a long time. However, some may have strived to achieve the perfect piece in Sigillata, yet the result remains unsatisfactory.

Additionally, amidst the vast amount of discovered pottery, we noticed that the potters of this city had a contribution to the manufacturing of water channels used in the city of "Cirta". In the latter, channels were discovered running beneath the ground, originating from water reservoirs in the Coudia Ati region. These channels were cylindrical in shape, made of thick pottery, bearing a prominent stamp within a rectangular frame containing the names of the craftsmen known from their original homeland. Names such as "Tid (ditani) - Tidisi and Milevani, Uzelitani, Auzurenses, and Camellenses" were found[29](refer to images number 12)

2-Pottery Statues:

Among the secrets of Tiddis pottery is the revelation of another type represented by a group of handcrafted statues found in the potters' district. These statues consist of grotesque human heads, with the distinctive feature being the head of a woman whose cheeks are adorned with tattoos in the form of dots arranged in a crosshatch pattern that includes the chin and extends towards the neck. However, the significant collection is related to small horses. Forty pieces of them were found inside a hall carved into the rock near the top of the stairs, or in the potters' district. It is possible that they were made for votive purposes[30].(refer to images number 13)

As for the unique pieces extracted from beneath the rubble, those showing signs of gnawing have piqued the interest of researchers. For example, a plate found in the southeast of the temple of the god Vesta within the remains of a house bears a complex series of scenes depicting animalistic figures, particularly striking. Not far from the temple of Vesta, an extremely intriguing vessel was discovered. It takes the form of a cylindrical shape adorned with numerous decorations, leading scholars to believe it to be an incense burner for the god Saturn[31].Additionally, there is a vessel decorated with five humanoid heads on its abdomen. It is presumed that this type of pottery was made by local craftsmen[32] (refer to images number 15).

III. Tiddis Pottery Illustrates Its Ancient History:

The pottery of this city is considered one of the most important sources for writing its ancient history, especially as its emergence is closely related to the needs and requirements of the Tiddisian people in their primitive lives. Additionally, pottery pieces serve as tangible evidence spanning long periods, witnessing most of the civilization stages in this region. They allow researchers to derive numerous insights across various fields to depict the daily life of this society.

However, researchers can only extract such data by studying the pieces in terms of their shapes, classification methods, and their locations within their historical contexts, while supplementing with other information. Through this, they can attempt to understand the economic conditions, cultural characteristics, prevailing social situations, and relationships with neighboring peoples. Moreover, pottery plays a crucial role in understanding the historical periods the city has gone through. Therefore, it is essential to shed light on the data that can be inferred from this archaeological document.

1-Tiddis Pottery and Its Historical Significance:

Based on archaeological studies, it appears that pottery in general, and that which has been found in the area specifically, harbors numerous scientific data within its folds. It somewhat resembles a vessel, containing a wealth of information about its industrial and technical characteristics, sizes, shapes, types of clay used, as well as the diversity of its decorations and the seals contained within the vessels[33].

It is noteworthy that historians can deduce from this data the chronological periods to which these pieces belong, as well as their geographical location, relying on a methodological approach and scientific dating techniques. From this perspective, a vessel becomes a container for historical events that the city has experienced.

This is evident in the cultural sequence, where the city's site served as a habitat for primitive humans since the dawn of history. They sought refuge in its rock-carved caves and made them their dwellings, living in simplicity and crafting primitive pottery devoid of decorations. They also buried their dead in dolmens and barrows, which continued to be used until around the 4th century BCE. Their decorated and molded pottery also serves as an indication[34].

Furthermore, the region was not far from the Phoenician-Greek cultural influences that reached ancient Morocco through traders, sailors, and craftsmen since ancient times, dating back to as early as the 6th century BCE. However, these influences became more apparent during the 3rd century BCE[35].

During the Numidian period, the city played a defensive role, forming, along with a group of fortresses, a protective barrier for Cirta. We deduce this from the city's landmarks as well as the pottery pieces. It also contained numerous coins from the kings of Numidia, as well as other pieces bearing the marks of cities such as Cirta, Russicada, and Iol[36].

The city, like other ancient cities, resisted Roman occupation since the time of Emperor Augustus (27 BCE - 14 CE). This information is considered one of the key elements in its history, as evidenced by the inventory of inscriptions dating back to the period or the coins. Approximately 96 inscriptions dating back to the 1st century BCE were extracted from beneath the rubble of the Numidian walls, along with a mixed group of 45 pieces dating to the 2nd century CE, and 19 inscriptions dating to the 3rd century CE. Additionally, about 74 coins bearing the image of Emperor Augustus were extracted, along with 20 pieces for Emperor Hadrian(117-138 CE), and 33 pieces for “Emperor Antoninus”(96-180 CE),” Emperor Marcus Aurelius”(121-180CE) was represented by 16 coins[37].

It's clear that the hypothesis of the fortress being occupied from the 1st century BCE is also supported by the policy of the emperor aiming to occupy the region. This policy wasn't just focused on major cities but also reached small villages, which were considered intermediaries between the Roman colonies and the local population, contributing to the spread of Romanization. Additionally, the fortress continued its defensive role as one of the fortresses protecting the capital at the beginning of the formation of the Cirtian Confederation. [38].

As a result of legal reforms in the form of administrative organization for this city, it obtained a municipal council known as the Decorions, during the reign of Emperor Hadrian.

Hadrian was keen on promoting legal Romanization rather than authoritarianism. Therefore, he worked on elevating many villages to municipalities and many municipalities to colonies. Building on the idea of spreading human justice and equality among urban and rural populations, which Emperor Septimius Severus (193-211 CE) advocated, he promoted it, like other municipalities, to a "Respublica" (republic). Thus, it acquired a public budget and was managed by a council known as "Ordo" and bore the name "Respublica Castullum Tidditnorum"[39].

As a result, Roman cultural manifestations in the region became prominent from the 3rd century CE. The era of the Severan dynasty witnessed clear prosperity, both in urban development, with a proliferation of such structures, and in the diversity of pottery products. These indicate a considerable level of prosperity experienced by the city[40].

The Byzantine period in the city was characterized by its urban landmarks and pottery, especially those from the later period, which saw a significant proliferation.

2. Tiddis Pottery and Its Economic Impact:

The vast quantity of pottery pieces discovered in the city, diverse in both local and imported production, suggests an economic prosperity within the town. From the outset, it was evident that the city served as a pottery workshop due to its abundance of suitable clay. Additionally, it possessed numerous workshops for pottery production. Furthermore, it has been established that it had commercial relations since the 3rd century BCE with Phoenician, Carthaginian, and Greek traders. [41]

In addition, it has been revealed that the city also imported pottery from workshops in Italy, located south of Gaul, including Sigillata pottery of the light red color, Type A, as well as large-sized jars and amphorae. This trade began at the onset of Roman occupation[42].

The identification of centers for these imported pottery industries was achieved through the stamped industrial marks found on the handles or bases of jars dating between 40-80 CE. Among these seals found on the vessels, we find the symbol (S.M.F.), which reads as "SEXTIVS MURIVS FISTVS". Additionally, another Italian Sigillata seal was discovered in the Potter's Quarter in the form of (L.R.P.), which was interpreted as "(LVCVS RASINIVS PTSANIVS)" [43].

With the expansion of economic activity, especially after the development of the city's pottery industry, which reached a level of quality that made its products occupy an important position in the field of exports, to the extent that they flooded the markets of the Mediterranean Sea[44].

The external trade exchanges of the town in its early days were conducted through the capital "Cirta" and relied on the Italian port of Ostia. Ostia was among the Mediterranean ports overlooking the Mediterranean Sea basin. Goods were shipped through African maritime transport agents present there, and these goods would transit from the ports of Russicada and Collo, which served as the main Cirtian regional ports for the colony of "Cirta" and its environs[45].

The goods were transported to ports and internal markets by mules and horse-drawn carts, traversing the road linking Cirta, Tiddis, Mila, Russicada, and Collo.

As for the internal marketing of pottery goods, including perfume bottles adorned with human heads, clay toys for children, horse-shaped statues, assorted lamps, plows, dishes, and other tools, they were sold in the town's market. This market was situated to the left of the Cardo road, approximately 80 meters away from the city's main gate, separated by a thick wall. It operated twice a month and was established around 248 AD according to archaeological research[46].

This market was considered one of the important hubs for selling local pottery, some of which imitated Sigillata pottery imported from Italy and Gaul. Additionally, commercial exchanges occurred in cities, villages, and surrounding areas such as Arscal, Oujdlal, Masterns, and others[47].

3.Tiddis Pottery, A Social and Cultural Vessel:

Archaeological studies indicate that pottery provides insights into the social dynamics of archaeological sites, such as the pottery found in Tiddis revealing the presence of diverse human elements within the city. Notably, there was an Italian community that favored rural living, particularly in Numidia. According to archaeological texts, the city was inhabited by a significant number of political, military, and administrative figures such as Sittius Urbanus and Sittius Fourstus[48]. The workshops flourished with craftsmen from various regions, as evidenced by marks and seals, some originating from Mila, Uzelis, a nearby village, and groups like the Gemellenses and Calamenses[49].

The city also housed a class of enslaved individuals who practiced pottery manufacturing, as indicated by industrial marks found on the base of a plow bearing the inscription "Maximus the slave."[50]

Regarding religious aspects, pottery artifacts indicate that inhabitants of this fortress engaged in various funerary rituals since settling in the area. They practiced communal burial rituals in circular structures known as Bazinat tombs, placing decorated vessels containing human bones. Additionally, they performed rituals, undocumented in caves, which were natural hollows devoid of texts or names of deities.

Despite Phoenician influence, pottery artifacts affirm that inhabitants continued their local worship practices beyond the mid-1st century BCE. They adopted funeral rites including cremation and worshiped deities like Baal Hammon and Tanit during the Numidian period, as evidenced in the Summit Temple[51]. The worship of Saturn during the Roman period, along with other deities in caves such as the cult of "Ceres," the agricultural goddess adopted by Carthage[52], and the presence of gods like Asclepius and Vesta Let us not forget the Eastern worship of the Persian god Mithra, which likely reached the region with ancient warriors and soldiers who served in the military[53]. Subsequently, Christianity also spread[54].

Urban landmarks revealed an absence of entertainment facilities, likely due to the town's small size and lack of importance compared to larger cities. Additionally, the challenging nature of its location discouraged the establishment of such facilities, as they would require significant investment costs that the city could not afford. This was exemplified by the construction of water reservoirs, a project in which the area's residents contributed. Despite this, residents innovated new forms of entertainment. It is also worth noting that the natural landscape of the area, devoid of entertainment landmarks, led residents to adopt games such as backgammon. Five bone and ivory dice, measuring between 0.6 to 1 mm, were discovered. Chess was also popular, with 45 glass discs of various sizes found, although larger sizes were favored for this game

The community was also known for puppetry, evidenced by the discovery of pottery dolls with vertically perforated heads, allowing the passage of the mixture used by children for play. Traces also indicated the existence of roaming theatrical groups, inferred from numerous pottery masks and fragments of amphorae adorned with theatrical scenes depicting dances, drumming, and scenes reminiscent of Roman arena spectacles[55].

It is noteworthy that from the outset, the town exhibited a distinct local culture, evidenced by the use of Libyco-berber script in inscriptions and the enduring popularity of locally adorned pottery in Algerian rural areas, underscoring its enduring local relevance.

IV. Conclusion:

Based on the foregoing, it becomes evident that the pottery of Tiddis indeed left a lasting legacy, as evidenced by its presence in Algerian and foreign museums, immortalizing it in history. Due to its abundance and diversity, we derived numerous pieces of information from it that were not found in written sources. It also testified that the town has historical roots dating back to the dawn of history when settlement began. Humans chose it as their headquarters, and its existence persisted as a fortified citadel protecting the capital Cirta throughout its historical periods. The city flourished, especially during the 3rd century AD, after its development of Sigillata pottery, Type D, which flooded both domestic and foreign markets. This does not negate its trade relations with the Phoenicians, Carthaginians, and even the Greeks since the 6th century BCE.

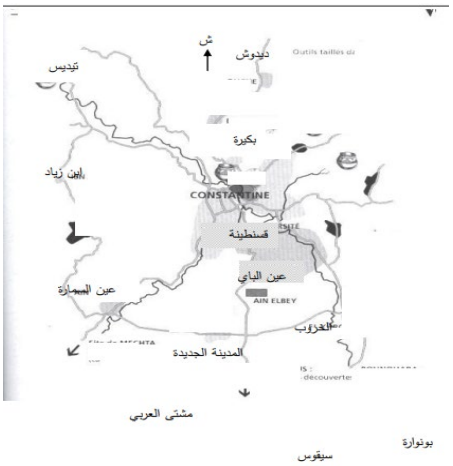
These remnants also indicate that the citadel had a local Libyan culture that continued to preserve despite external influences, as seen in the Libyan script adopted on monuments or molded pottery with decorations, continuing to the present day. It also had a simple recreational life based on games like backgammon and chess, as well as watching traveling theater performances, due to the absence of dedicated facilities for such activities because of the difficult location.

It is noteworthy that written sources were scarce, if not non-existent, so such physical artifacts are beneficial for researchers in writing history, especially local history. Therefore, I encourage topics like these to ensure the confirmation of foreign studies, especially French ones, on one hand, and to ascertain historical facts about local history, which relied on rural artifacts as its source, on the other hand.

V. Appendices:



"The diagram represents landmarks of Tiddis distributed on a topographic map."



Map depicting the location of Tiddis based

Diagram Key:

1.Bazina Tombs, 2. Great Bazina, 3. North Gate, 4. Church, 5. Mithraeum Temple, 6. Christian Baptismal House, 7. Victory Arches, 8. Forums, 9. Potter's Quarter, 10. Temple, 11. Rock-Cut Houses, 12. Rock Temple Entrance, 13. Mountain Baths, 14. Large Water Reservoir, 15. Second Mithraeum Temple, 16. Rock Temple, 17. Temple, 18. Seras Cave, 19. Watchtower, 20. Vestal Goddess Complex, 21. Cave, 22. Vestal Cave, 23. Decumanus, 24. Roman Villa, 25. Libyan-Bonian Wall, 26. Oil Press Mill, 27. Potter's Kilns, 28. Gate, 29. Temple, 30. Potter's Basins, 31. Great Baths, 32. Cave, 33. Summit Temple, 34. Temple, 35. Temple.



N°2



N°1



N°5



N°4

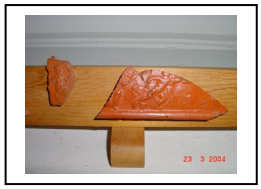


N°3

"Imported pottery fragments found in the tombs of the Numidian kingdom and preserved in the National Public Museum of Cirta."



N°9



N°8



N°7



N°6



N°12



N°11



N°10



N°15



N°14



N°13

Pictures of pottery fragments found in Tiddis, preserved in the National Public Museum of Cirta.

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