Numidian Royal Architecture

In 1842 the British consul-general at Tunis, Colonel Sir Thomas Reade, acquired an intriguing bilingual Libyan and Punic inscription (Figure 7.1) from a mausoleum just outside ancient Thugga in the Tunisian Tell. The square-based tower tomb, originally about 21 m high, was still standing to its third storey at the time; Reade had it dismantled for his purpose (Figure 7.2), and had the inscription cut from its stone and then cut in half for easier transportation to England, where the two parts passed to the British Museum.

The tomb itself was reconstructed by French archaeologists between 1908 and 1910, and is striking both for its beauty and its eclecticism (Figure 7.3). Above a six-step stylobate, the first storey has corner pilasters with aeolic capitals (Figure 7.4), an archaic style originating in the Levant and reasonably widespread in Carthage and the surrounding region in the Hellenistic period. The second storey, by contrast, has an engaged ionic colonnade recalling classical Greek architecture. Above this is a cavetto cornice (Figure 7.5), a moulding pioneered in Dynastic Egypt architecture, though long popular in the Levant as well as the Maghreb. The third storey again has aeolic pilasters at its corners; between them relief panels on every side depict two people (the
Figure 7.1 The Libyco-Punic inscription from the Thugga mausoleum (RIL 1): (a) Libyan; (b) Punic.

Figure 7.2 The Thugga mausoleum between 1842 and 1908.
deceased? a god?), riding in a quadriga with a high box, large wheels and a driver (Figure 7.5). The latter image is close in terms of the figures depicted in the chariot to a common scene in Persian iconography and on the coinage of Sidon in the period of the Persian domination of Phoenicia (Figure 7.6a) – but even closer in terms of the form of the wheel and the depiction of the horses to images of Jupiter on a quadriga on Roman coinage of the late third century (Figure 7.6b). Horses with riders stand on pedestals at all four corners.

Figure 7.3 The Thugga mausoleum (from South). For colour version see plate section.

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7 For a full discussion of the ‘chariot scene’ which appears on fourth-century double shekels from Sidon, see Elayi and Elayi 2004: 493–524. Their ‘Groupe III’ coins provide particularly close parallels for the Thugga relief, with the horses depicted at a gallop. More distant parallels from Persia itself include seals of King Darius hunting lion-related beasts (e.g. BM WA 89132), an agate cylinder from Egyptian Thebes labelled ‘Darius, the Great King’ in Old Persian, Elamite, and Babylonian (Boston MFA 21.1193), and one of the Apadana reliefs from Persepolis (BM ANE 118843: top register of east wing of north staircase).

8 RRC 28/3–4 (225–212 BCE); 29/3–4; 30/1; 31/1; 32/1; 33/1; 34/1 (all 225–214 BCE). Cf. also Figure 4.3, this volume.
Figure 7.4  Detail from the Thugga mausoleum: aeolic pilaster.

Figure 7.5  Detail from the Thugga mausoleum: lower cavetto cornice and quadriga relief.
Above another cavetto cornice is a terminal pyramid with sirens carved in the round at its corners. Finally, a small lion – an age-old symbol of royal power in the Near East – was probably perched on top.9

The monument can be plausibly dated to the third/second century BCE, on the basis of the style of the architectural decoration and in particular of the Punic script, which the general consensus would put around the end of the third century.10 We do not know who occupied or built it. The text of the bilingual inscription, originally placed to the right of an access window on the east face of the first storey, names an ‘Atban’, followed by the names of the various artisans, masons and labourers involved in the construction of the monument, which has therefore become known as the Mausoleum of Atban.11 But since the discovery in the notes of the early nineteenth-century visitor Comte Borgia that there was originally a second inscription on the mausoleum12 – already largely effaced in Borgia’s time and presumably of no interest to Reade – there has been debate as to whether the mausoleum was built for or by this Atban; if the latter, the true funerary inscription would be the missing one.13

The Thugga mausoleum is just one of a series of large-scale, Hellenistic-period monuments that still dot the landscape of the Maghreb. These have

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9 The lion was found at the foot of the monument during the restoration, so the placement is not secure: C. Poinssot 1958: 58. Of many Near Eastern parallels perhaps the closest is the probably fourth-century dynastic ‘Lion tomb’ at Knidos where a (larger) lion sat on a base atop the stepped pyramid that is the upper element of the tomb: I. Jenkins 2006: 228–31.

10 RIL p. 2.

11 Poinssot and Salomonson 1959 [1960]: 146.


13 J. Février 1959 and Ferron 1969–70 argue for the latter interpretation. The fact that a son of Atban is listed among the builders of the monument is often cited as a point in favour of this interpretation, though the category into which he falls is disputed, and it need not of course be the same Atban. For doubts about this reading, see Ghaki 1997: 27–8; in addition, the fact that the first line of the inscription, which names Atban, is separated by a considerable space from the list of builders might be thought to argue for him as the honorand. The first characters of both the Punic and Libyan texts, which would clarify this point, are missing.
been studied in detail by Friedrich Rakob, who coined the now-canonical term ‘Numidian Royal Architecture’ for the group (Figure 7.7). As well as another quadrilateral mausoleum over 30 m in height, Es Soumaa at El Khroub in Northern Algeria, there are four tower monuments built in a distinctive hexagonal form with concave sides: the tomb of Beni Rhénane near the ancient city of Siga in western Algeria; Mausolea A and B at the port of Sabratha on the Libyan coast; and a tomb at Henchir Būrgū on the Tunisian island of Jerba. There are also two tumulus tombs: the

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14 Rakob 1979, 1983; for a more recent survey of the turriform monuments, which also discusses the other types, see Prados Martínez 2008.
15 Bonnell 1915 [1916]. Es Soumaa had not been robbed when it was excavated, and the grave goods (pottery, weapons and silver) suggest a date in the mid-late second century BCE: for a report of the finds, see Die Numider 1979: 285–382.
16 Vuillemot 1964; Bouchenaki 1991. This monument, also c. 30 m high, has been dated to c. 200 BCE on the evidence of pottery found nearby as well as style.
17 These are not in fact true mausolea, as there is no evidence for burial chambers. Mausoleum B, almost 24 m high, has been meticulously reconstructed (Di Vita 1976) and has a clear stratigraphy and associated pottery which place its initial construction in the first decades of the second century BCE or possibly a little earlier (Bessi 2003).
18 Weriemmi-Akkari 1985; Ferchiou 2009b. The state of preservation of this monument makes it extremely difficult to reconstruct (the figure that Fentress reproduces in Chapter 6 in this volume (Figure 6.3) is openly speculative), but the architectural style and the pottery found in a foundation deposit suggest a date in the second quarter of the second century BCE (Ferchiou 2009b: 111).
Medracen in the Aurès mountains of Northern Algeria (Figure 7.8);19 and the monument near Tipasa on the Algerian coast known as Kbor er Roumia, or ‘La Tombe de la Chrétienne’, on account of the ‘Macedonian crosses’ carved on its false doors (Figure 7.9).20 Finally, there are the ‘altars’ with striking weapons-friezes at Simitthus and Kbor Klib that Ann Kuttner discusses in Chapter 8 in this volume.21

All of these monuments were built within the area ruled by the mid-second century BCE by Massinissa and his descendants, indigenous kings that we (with the Romans) call Numidian. Nonetheless, Kbor er Roumia is the only one positively identified as royal, described by Pomponius Mela as

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19 Camps 1973, 1994. The Medracen, 58.86 m in diameter by 18.5 m high, is usually put first in the sequence of tombs on the basis of style as well as carbon dating undertaken in the early 1970s, which suggested a date not later than 200 BCE (Camps 1973: 510–12); Camps considers a fourth-century date most likely.

20 Bouchenaki 1991. Coarelli and Thébert date this (63 x 32.4 m) tomb to the late second or perhaps early first century BCE on stylistic grounds (1988: 766).

21 A likely third ‘altar’ near Althiburos is signaled at Kallala et al. 2008: 98–100.
'the common tomb of the royal family'.\textsuperscript{22} Even then precisely which royal family is difficult to say; most likely this is one of the later examples in the set, and should in fact be connected with the Mauretanian kings based further to the west.\textsuperscript{23} We do not know who occupied or commissioned any of the other monuments, and I will suggest here that to assume that they are all ‘Royal’, or even ‘Numidian’, elides the local identities and leaders involved. Nonetheless, their locations and approximate dating suggest that this genre of architecture should be associated with the emergence of the Numidian states.\textsuperscript{24} 

Although these monuments have varied forms and functions, they all share the Thugga mausoleum’s grand scale and its cosmopolitan approach to architectural decoration, and in the context of this project they provide a useful opportunity to investigate non-Roman cultures and connections in the ‘Hellenistic West’. On the rare occasions that they have attracted scholarly attention in the past, discussion has usually focused on assigning them to one or another artistic tradition, and in particular on the question of whether they were influenced by ‘Punic’ or ‘Hellenistic’ models. But these attempts to classify the monuments as part of a particular cultural group or tradition under-interpret them, not least because they remove them from their local contexts and builders. After outlining this traditional debate, and those local contexts, I will suggest here that the forms and motifs that the monuments’ architects borrow from elsewhere are not passive markers of external ‘influence’, nor of participation in any single ‘cultural tradition’, but instead invited a multiplicity of possible readings, with deliberate references to a variety of specific places and sources of power, local and further afield, past and present, and were used by their authors to articulate and reinforce their own power within new social and political structures in the region.

Culture wars

The ‘Hellenistic’ interpretation of Numidian Royal Architecture is most associated with Filippo Coarelli and Yvon Thébert, who argued in a classic

\textsuperscript{22} Pomponius Mela 1.31: ‘ultra monumentum commune regiae gentis, deinde Icosium Ruthisia urbes . . .’

\textsuperscript{23} Coarelli and Thébert 1988: 766.

\textsuperscript{24} Attempts to associate the tombs with particular kings are legion. For the suggestion, for instance, that the Thugga mausoleum is the (symbolic) tomb of Massinissa: Ferron 1969–70: 95–7. Coarelli and Thébert suggest that he was actually buried in the Medracen (1988: 805). For scepticism about specifically royal associations: Moore 2007: 77–80.
survey that these monuments borrowed from a solely eastern Mediterranean architectural tradition which exploited artistic elements and techniques from the Greek world.\textsuperscript{25} For them, this tradition started in Persia with the sixth-century tomb of Cyrus at Pasargadae and continued in Asia Minor through the Monument of the Nereids at Xanthos (c. 400) and the fourth-century Mausoleum of Halicarnassus, to the early third-century Mausoleum of Belevi and the articulated tumulus in the Hellenistic Asklepeion at Pergamon. They denied any significant reference to Carthage in the architecture, emphasising instead the evidence for direct contacts between the Numidian kings and the cities and rulers of the eastern Mediterranean, and apparent local familiarity with Hellenistic iconographic ‘codes’, such as the significance of the diadem on royal coin-portraits.\textsuperscript{26} By participating in and reinforcing this ‘Numidian Hellenism’, they suggested, the builders of the tombs (whom they took to be members of the royal dynasty) demonstrated their links with the eastern Mediterranean world, and compared themselves to eastern Mediterranean kings with their notionally absolute power, a message which would be particularly inappropriate in a Carthaginian context since that city was strongly against monarchy in this period.\textsuperscript{27}

There is a great deal to be said for this argument, and one could add further examples of parallels and models in the eastern Mediterranean: in the case of the tumulus tombs, for instance, the early Hellenistic tomb near Pella in Macedon discussed by Kuttner in Chapter 8 of this volume. Other scholars have argued, however, and equally forcefully, that it was in fact the ‘Punic’ or more broadly Phoenician world that provided the inspiration for this African architecture.\textsuperscript{28} Gabriel Camps argued that the ‘Numidian’ monuments refer primarily to Punic and Phoenician traditions, and that this phenomenon illustrates the high levels of acculturation between the Carthaginian and Numidian elites in the Hellenistic period.\textsuperscript{29}

\textsuperscript{25} Coarelli and Thébert 1988: 811.

\textsuperscript{26} Coarelli and Thébert 1988: 812, 815, though cf. 808 where they are prepared to countenance some kind of mediating role for Carthage, and even the possible involvement of Punic architects. For an interesting argument in the opposite direction, that the ‘Hellenistic’ architecture of Sicily and thus Italy and Rome was communicated from the East via Carthage, see Martin 1970.

\textsuperscript{27} Coarelli and Thébert 1988: 811; cf. Rakob 1983: 330, on ‘the self-fashioning of the Numidian kings . . . who considered themselves the equals of the Hellenistic kings.’

\textsuperscript{28} The label ‘Punic’ has traditionally been used to refer to the world of the western Phoenicians, especially from the sixth century onwards. For more on the definition and problems of this word, see the introduction to Quinn and Vella forthcoming.

\textsuperscript{29} Most recently, Camps 1995, strongly supported by Shaw 2005: 125 n. 69. The main vehicle for cultural interchange in Camps’ view was intermarriage with Carthaginian women ‘avec leurs parfums et leurs bijoux’ (1995: 236).
scholars, it is the tower-form monuments in particular that are associated with Punic architecture and influence. For Serge Lancel, for instance, the Thugga Mausoleum is ‘the only great monument of Punic architecture still standing on Tunisian soil’, inheriting the ‘Egypto-Greek’ elements of its decoration via a lost world of monumental Punic architecture. In his opinion, reflections of this architecture have survived for us in the stelai with winged solar disks, aeolic capitals, ionic columns and cavetto cornices found in the tophet at Carthage, Hadrumetum and other western Phoenician colonies in Sicily and Sardinia, as well as an aeolic pilaster depicted on an architectural fragment from Medjez-el-Bab, and the cavetto cornice and aeolic pilasters of a small naïskos found at Thuburbo Maius.

One could add to this list some larger-scale fragments of cavetto cornice and aeolic pilaster capitals found in Carthage, Utica and the wider Maghreb, as well as the aeolic capital found at the Phoenician colony of Motya on Sicily, and the larger-scale ‘Ma’abed’ shrine at the Phoenician colony of Nora on Sardinia with its uraeus and winged sun-disk.

Other evidence offered for the ‘Punic’ origin of the form of the pyramid-topped tower-tombs includes the existence of a series of similar but smaller-scale mausolea found within the fossa regia (traditionally taken to be the dividing line between Numidian and Carthaginian territory in this period), as well as the graffiti representations of tower-tombs in Hellenistic-period, ‘Punic’-style, shaft-tombs in necropoleis on Carthaginian Cap Bon and in the Sahel (Figure 7.10). Further east, potential Phoenician models for the form are found in the Levant, at Amrit in Syria, for instance, and in the Kidron Valley in Jerusalem.

Some scholars have also argued for local elements: for Stéphane Gsell, the articulated circular form of the Medracen went back to the bazina tomb-type, a tumulus with some architectural articulation found all over North Africa in the pre-Islamic period (Figure 7.11), and the Medracen and Kbor

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30 The most recent example is Prados Martínez 2008.
32 Lancel 1995: 305–14; on the Carthage stelai see Quinn 2011b.
34 Whitaker 1921: 281, Fig. 61; Pesce 1952–4.
35 Poinssot and Salomonson 1959 [1960] for an example; Quinn 2003: 20–1 for a brief survey with earlier bibliography; most recently Ferchiou 2008. The relative chronology of these ‘Punic’ tombs and the larger ‘Numidian’ ones is unclear.
36 For misgivings on that score, see Quinn 2004 – although the straightforward equation of Carthaginian political power and ‘Punic’ culture is the greater problem here.
38 Poinssot and Salomonson 1963: 80; Rakob 1983: 332–3; see Fedak 1990: 140–50 for examples and images.
er Roumia were therefore ‘indigenous monuments dressed in a cloak of foreign extraction’, that is to say, ‘a Greco-Oriental or Greek architectural façade’.\(^\text{39}\) Like Gsell, Camps suggests that the Medracen ‘responds to ahistorical indigenous traditions, which owe to the outside world only an architectural *mise-en-page*’, though in his interpretation this *mise-en-page* is Punic rather than Greek: ‘an interweaving of African elements and Phoenician contributions’.\(^\text{40}\) For Coarelli and Thébert, however, these *bazinas* were of an entirely inappropriate scale and level of sophistication to

\(^{39}\) Gsell 1914–28: VI, 262 (my transl.).

serve as models for the ‘Royal Architecture’, which for them signified a positive rupture with earlier African traditions.\footnote{Instead, they followed Thiersch 1910 in positing a glamorous predecessor for the Medracen: the now-lost tomb of Alexander the Great, built by Ptolemy IV Philopater at Alexandria between 221 and 205, and which would then serve as a model for Augustus’ mausoleum in Rome as well: Coarelli and Thébert 1988: 791–3. Ancient references to the physical appearance of Alexander’s mausoleum (Zenobius, *Proverbia* 3.94; Lucan 8.694, 10.19) are extremely vague, but Venit has suggested that it may be identified with the Alabaster tomb, which lay under a tumulus (2002: 7–8 with n. 51).}

However, the various parallels that have been suggested only demonstrate the basic problem with any approach based on a dichotomy between ‘Punic’ and ‘Hellenistic’ cultural traditions. It is certainly possible to distinguish in general between the architectural fashions and emphases of the Greek-speaking and Phoenician-speaking areas of the Mediterranean in the Hellenistic period: just as a ‘Hellenistic’ set of overlapping styles can be identified,\footnote{Surveys include Lauter 1986; Pollitt 1986; Smith 1991.} in some respects the western and eastern Phoenician worlds could be said to constitute a cultural *koine* in the Classical and Hellenistic periods.\footnote{See for instance Quinn 2011b: 394–8 on borrowings and shared trends in small-scale sculpture between Carthage and the Levant. Note however Bondì forthcoming on the differences between different ‘Punicities’ in the Hellenistic period.} Nonetheless, it is not possible to pin down two clear, distinct and bounded traditions, and the eclecticism sometimes seen as distinctively ‘Hellenistic’ is a central element in all Mediterranean architecture in this period. The Levantine tower-tombs, for instance, draw on various regional traditions including those first found in Egypt and Greece, and it is striking that elements that Coarelli and Thébert list as ‘Egyptianising’ on the monument at Simiththus – cavetto cornices, architraves with winged sun-disks, *uraei* and Egyptianising figures and sphinx iconography – are also found at the Hellenistic-period Phoenician temple at Umm el-Amed.\footnote{Coarelli and Thébert 1988: 804–6. On Umm el-Amed see Vella 2001, who also discusses the particularly Phoenician religious significance of the winged sun-disks found in this context (39).} Cavetto cornices and aeolic capitals are also found in Italy.\footnote{Cavetto: Arnold 2003: 46. Interestingly for us, the aeolic capital found in Rome on the fifth-century Columna Minucia (for which see Plin. *HN* 18.15; 34.21), is represented on later second-century coinage (*RRC* 242/1: 135 BCE).} This eclecticism characterises all major Mediterranean cities of the Hellenistic period, from Alexandria and Pergamon to Rome and Carthage itself, whose art and architecture draw heavily on a great variety of models, including features originally associated not only with the Levant (aeolic capitals), and Egypt (cavetto cornices), but also Greece (ionic columns).\footnote{Quinn 2003, 2011b; for another example of this phenomenon, see R. Wilson, Chapter 4 of this volume, on the Sicilian ‘Corinthian’ capital.} ‘Punic’ and
‘Hellenistic’ are not two separate cultural worlds in this period, and there is no evidence that ancients saw them that way.

Nor can a ‘Punic’ tradition be clearly demarcated from a local or ‘Libyan’ world in Africa: graffiti of mausolea similar to those found in supposedly ‘Punic’ shaft-tombs on Cap Bon are also found, for instance, in above-ground ‘Libyan’ rock-cut tombs (haouanet) in northern Tunisia.47 The ‘Punic’ label traditionally assigned to shaft-tombs does not necessarily relate to the people who used them in any case: Libyan script and Libyan names are sometimes found in tombs of this type,48 just as ‘Punic’ decorative motifs (including the so-called ‘sign of Tanit’) are found in the haouanet tombs.49 More generally, as Coarelli and Thébert point out, to single the bazinas out as a peculiarly Libyan or African phenomenon is to create a cultural barrier where one does not exist, since tumulus tombs at all scales are found all over the Mediterranean and neighbouring regions.50

This brings me to the first of three structural problems that can be identified with the traditional approach to these monuments: the insistence on fitting them into one or another ‘tradition’, or even a combination of ‘traditions’, which depends on the dubious notion that there were monolithic and distinct ‘Hellenistic’, ‘Punic’ or indeed ‘Libyan’ cultural traditions.51 This ignores the complexity of material culture in North Africa in the Hellenistic period, and in the Mediterranean as a whole for that matter, and in this sense the terms of the traditional debate are too limited. But in another way they are also too general: interpretations in terms of generalised modern culture-categories mean that the references to more specific places and models that could have been read into and off these monuments are too often ignored or skated over.

The second problem with the traditional debate is that it panders to theoretical frameworks that privilege the study of origins and ‘influence’: the idea implicit in so much scholarship that any human phenomenon can be explained by its antecedents. This is frequently combined (tacitly or openly) with value judgements, with ‘higher’ colonial civilisations such as Carthage and the Hellenistic kingdoms seen as influencing ‘lower’, less

sophisticated or ‘native’ ones. Too often, then, the African builders of the monuments are cast as passive receptacles of cultural influence rather than as active interpreters and manipulators of culture. But the concept of ‘influence’ puts analysis the wrong way round: monuments do not influence other monuments; people choose to quote, adapt or even subvert earlier imagery.\textsuperscript{52} And so I want to look at these monuments instead from the point of view of their builders, not just at the models they are using, but at the messages they are sending; they quote stylistic details from other times and places, I will argue, primarily to say something about their own.

The third problem is that, in its emphasis on the external architectural form and decoration of the monuments, the standard debate ignores other aspects of their appearance, forms of signification that depend less on what they look like than on where they can be seen and from how far away. But there is more to these monuments than what they look like reproduced in the pages of a book.\textsuperscript{53} Seen in their own landscapes, dominating cities and plains, built in the most dramatic settings with suitably spectacular views (Figure 7.12), they are deeply imposing, impossible to miss or ignore; they define these landscapes. A ‘landscape’ approach to North African funerary

\textbf{Figure 7.12} The Medracen in its landscape.

\textsuperscript{52} On the problem of ‘influence’, see Baxandall 1985: 58–62; Stewart and Korres 2004: 97–8. I am grateful to Andrew Stewart for the point, and the references.

\textsuperscript{53} A point made by Rakob 1983: 326.
architecture and practices has recently been suggested by David Stone and Lea Stirling,\(^5^4\) and Stone has used it in two important recent articles: one on the *haouanet*, which emphasises the importance of resistance to encroaching external power in the conceptualisation and combination of their architectural form and decoration, and the other comparing mausolea, tumuli and *haouanet* tombs and dealing explicitly with the limitations of their traditional classification into ‘cultures’.\(^5^5\) Although I take a somewhat different route here in my interpretation of the monumental architecture, my approach owes much to Stone’s work, and I hope that my conclusions are complementary. Like him, I want to start from the local political, cultural and visual contexts.

**Local contexts**

The literary and epigraphic evidence from Herodotus onwards suggests a segmentary, pyramidal model of social organisation in North Africa, with the population organised in nested groups, including families, kin groups, clans and tribes, alongside the Phoenician and Greek colonies established on the coast in the first half of the millennium.\(^5^6\) The Hellenistic period was a time of particular social and imperial upheaval: Roman hegemony grew from the third century onwards, and the Punic Wars that led to the destruction of Carthage in 146 coincided with the emergence of large confederations of indigenous chiefdoms in the region, partly in the face of Carthaginian aggression, but also in order to take advantage of the opportunities for mercenary service on both sides. In the aftermath of the Hannibalic War (218–202), the two largest confederations coalesced under the rule of the Massylian king and Roman ally Massinissa, who conquered almost all of the area previously subject to the rival Masaesylians and ruled over it until his death in 148.

Under Massinissa the kingdom known to the Greeks and Romans as ‘Numidia’ underwent a process of true state development. The king now extracted surplus from his subjects rather than redistributing the profits of war to them, and new social and economic hierarchies emerged alongside the new political order. Military force was no longer dependent on tribal structures; instead, the kings had regular standing armies, and the famous

\(^{5^4}\) Stone and Stirling 2007: 23.  
Numidian cavalry in particular was brought under state control. Massinissa’s descendants, including Micipsa, Jugurtha and Juba I, continued to rule in the same vein until Juba’s defeat by Caesar in 46 when large parts of the Numidian kingdom became the Roman province of Africa Nova.

It is well known, however, that the hallmarks of pre-industrial states are scarcity and poor communications, both in terms of transport and of information. These conditions meant that the new kings had only weak control over their nominal subjects, and that they had to devolve much power to local agents. This gave the latter the opportunity to maintain their own wealth and power bases, and to present a constant challenge to the rulers’ position and to the nascent state itself. At the same time, the kings were themselves subjects, of Carthage or Rome.

They counterbalanced this weak vertical authority by building strong horizontal links – diplomatic, economic and cultural – with other Mediterranean elites. Syphax and Massinissa were both at times allies of Carthage as well as Rome, both adopted Punic as their official language, and married the same Carthaginian noblewoman, Sophonisba. After the Hannibalic War, Massinissa cultivated friendships with ‘Hellenistic’ kings, as well as participating in the rituals and practices of the eastern Mediterranean by sending offerings to the fashionable Greek sanctuary of Delos. His son Mastanabal took part in chariot-racing at the Panathenaic games alongside Ptolemies, and another, Micipsa, summoned Greeks to his court. These associations continued in the West as well, as a fragmentary inscription from Syracuse in honour of Masteabar, a Massylian...
ruler of the early first century, attests. The royal coinage demonstrates the
eccentricism with which these links were presented for internal consumption:
second-century Numidian kings depict themselves with diadems in the style
of eastern Mediterranean kings alongside Ammon, a favourite deity of
Ptolemy III’s coinage, and the ‘sign of Tanit’ popular in the western
Phoenician colonies, over legends written in Punic (Figure 7.13).

A striking counterpart to the emergence of the Numidian kingdoms was
the new level of urbanism in the region, both on the coast, including the
expansion of Sabratha and Lepcis Magna, and inland, where cities like
Thugga, Vaga, Bulla and Cirta date back at least to the early Hellenistic
period and in several cases underwent significant second-century system-
atisation and expansion. Urban growth may well have been connected with
the assertion of royal power in the region at the expense of Carthage. Four
cities in any case (Bulla, Hippo, Thimida, Zama) had the epithet regius in
the Roman period, and the citizens of Thugga itself erected a temple to
Massinissa in 138. Nonetheless, ‘Numidian’ cities seem to have been
canonical independent polities. Thugga provides a particularly good example
of a city looking in multiple directions: despite the temple to Massinissa, it
chose its own local magistracies and, unlike the Numidian kings, used
Libyan as well as Punic in its public inscriptions and funerary epigraphy.

Returning to the monuments themselves, I want to argue that their
location, form and decoration are best understood in relation to these
changes in social and political structures across the region, both referring
to and reinforcing them. I will look first at the local associations they exploit,
and then at their wider references.

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67 Polyb. 31.21; Livy 40.17.1–6; 42.23; Per. 47–8; App. Pun. 67–8. 68 RIL 2.
69 Encyclopédie Berbère s.v. ‘Douga’ (http://encyclopedieberbere.revues.org/2210), with RIL 2.
Local messages

The new ‘Royal Architecture’ marked new sources of power in a variety of ways, not least by drawing attention to the institutions, centres and resources of the developing Numidian kingdoms. Most obviously, as noted above, Kbor er Roumia is positively identified as a royal tomb, and perhaps some of the others commemorated kings as well. Certainly several of the monuments are found in the vicinity of major cities with royal connections. As well as the mausoleum right outside Thugga, the mausoleum at Beni Rhénane is just across the river from Siga, the capital of King Syphax’s Masaesylian confederation in the late third century; Es Soumaa is about 15 km from Massinissa’s second-century capital of Cirta (which is visible from the monument); Kbor Klib is 20 km from the ‘royal city’ of Zama Regia; and the ‘altar’ at Simitthus is a similar distance from Bulla Regia. The Medracen, by contrast, was a long way from cities with known royal connections, but in Roman times a neighbouring lake was called the lacus regius.70

As David Stone has emphasised, the monuments probably also operated as territorial or boundary markers, and this is an especially attractive argument in the context of the territorial aggression of the Numidian kings.71

The region of the Medracen, in particular, was disputed between the Massyli and Masaesyli in the third century, and the mausolea at Sabratha and Thugga as well as the ‘altar’ at Simitthus are found in areas taken at least temporarily from Carthaginian hegemony by Massinissa in the first half of the second century. If the monuments are in part thought of as territory markers, it is particularly interesting that two of them were already in ruins by the late Hellenistic period. The mausoleum at Beni Rhénane was deliberately and systematically destroyed by the middle of the second century, after the fall of King Syphax’s Masaesylian state,72 and Mausoleum B at Sabratha was allowed to fall into disrepair before being pillaged for materials in a replanning of the area in the early first century; this could be related to the Massylian kings’ loss of control of the region.73

70 Camps 1973: 516. It may also have a connection with Ichoukane, a large but unidentified and unexcavated indigenous site of the Hellenistic period about 30 km away, with a vast cemetery and a double wall: Brett and Fentress 1996: 32.

71 Stone 2007b: 140–1, pointing to J. Février 1957 for the Numidian inscription found near Jebel Massouge which uses a tomb (possibly the Thugga mausoleum) as an approximate marker of distance in a territorial context. Cf. Rakob 1979: 120 on how the Simitthus monument is a ‘monument and landmark’ of royal power after the area was taken from Carthage in 152.


73 Bessi 2003: 401.
suggested that the effacement of the second inscription on the Thugga mausoleum (discussed earlier) could have been a political, rather than environmental, act.\textsuperscript{74}

Moving to the realm of architectural decoration, and to that of visual language rather than simply statement, some of these monuments participate in the construction of a highly militaristic identity for a new and militaristic state. This is clearest on the ‘altars’, with their dramatic friezes of shields and armour (Kuttner, Chapter 8, this volume). Weapons friezes are of course not uncommon on Hellenistic-period monuments, but the African tower-tombs and sanctuaries also have a variety of specific references to cavalry, including the cavalry shields at Simitthus, Kbor Klib, and Es Soumaa, and the horsemen at Thugga whom I have already discussed.\textsuperscript{75} The ideological importance of this theme is also emphasised on the state coinage, which very frequently features a rearing or racing horse (Figure 7.13). As noted above, cavalry fighting, the basis of the kingdoms’ international status and success, was something that the Numidians did as a whole, and as a state, and under royal supervision.

As well as making references to the kingdoms, their conquests and their armies, fragments of large statues found at Es Soumaa\textsuperscript{76} and Jerba\textsuperscript{77} illustrate how the monuments draw attention more generally to the distinction of new elites and the development of hierarchies in the region, royal or otherwise. In the cases of the Medracen and Beni Rhénane, oversize monuments sit in the middle of cemeteries of smaller tombs, emphasising the power of the occupant relative to the others buried around him, and the sheer amount of labour that must have been required to build these tombs makes a similar point. The tomb at Beni Rhénane demonstrates the new organisation of power in a different way, with multiple separate but interconnected underground burial chambers, suggesting that it was supposed to be dynastic (Figure 7.14).\textsuperscript{78} It is possible that the monument at Thugga, which has three accessible chambers inside, may also have been used or intended for dynastic burial.\textsuperscript{79}

\textsuperscript{74} J. Février 1959: 57, though Ferron 1969–70: 94 reports petrological analyses showing that the stone used in the monument, while all from the same quarry, is of varying durability.
\textsuperscript{75} The round cavalry shields (discussed in greater detail by Kuttner, Chapter 8 in this volume) were the standard African cavalry armour for centuries, and representations of them are found from Morocco to Libya (Laporte 1992: 393). They are of course found elsewhere in Mediterranean architecture, including the Lion Tomb at Knidos, and are frequent in Roman painting.
\textsuperscript{76} Es Soumaa: Rakob 1983: 335. \textsuperscript{77} Jerba: Ferchiou 2009b. \textsuperscript{78} Rakob 1983: 334.
\textsuperscript{79} Poinssot and Salomonson 1959 [1960]: 143–7 for this suggestion and for the internal dispositions of the monument, known only from the papers of Comte Borgia.
The monuments also define new economic centres and important economic axes in the region: just as the Simitthus ‘altar’ marks the crossroads of the major land routes from Carthage to Hippo Regius and from Sicca Veneria to Thabraca,80 and marks the location of the royal marble quarries, the Medracen is on the main route south from Cirta into the Aurès,81 the Thugga mausoleum dominates the road and river routes from the coastal port of Carthage into the heart of the grain-producing Tell, and Kbor er Roumia is clearly visible to those sailing the coastal trade-route.82

Figure 7.14 Plan of the Beni Rhénane Mausoleum (Siga, Algeria).

82 Cf. Horden and Purcell 2000: 126: ‘... the identity of a powerful Mediterranean figure depends on how his identity is perceived from its maritime approaches.’
The monuments tie in with the phenomenon of urbanisation too. Several of the tower-tombs were built beside growing cities, including those just outside the walls at Thugga and Sabratha and the mausoleum of Beni Rhénane, which overlooks Siga from just a little further away.\(^{83}\) Perhaps the most striking link between the world of the city and that of the king can be seen between the Libyphoenician coastal town of Tipasa and the royal tomb of Kbor er Roumia, about eight kilometres away, which dominates the horizon looking inland from the city’s forum (Figure 7.15).\(^{84}\) Unless these monuments were all built by the new royal families or their representatives, they point to the growth of urban elites, and claims to power independent of the new kingdoms.

These civic claims need not have been oppositional; indeed, they could have worked with and reinforced the symbolism of the royal power which seems to have been the precondition for the new success of the cities and their elites. If the Thugga mausoleum was erected for a local leader, Atban or someone else, the horsemen could represent the personal cavalry of the defunct, guarding his tomb, which would reinforce the overall message of personal and individual power that the monument conveys. At the same time, however, the cavalry imagery would provide a connection between the royal and civic symbolic realms. If, on the other hand, it was built by or for a representative of the Massylian royal family, it could be seen as balancing the power of the city itself (Figure 7.16). Whatever the precise status of the defunct, his power and the growth of the city both depended in some sense on the emergence of the new kingdoms.

\(^{83}\) Fentress has noted that these are in the ‘classic position of a heroon’ (2006: 8).

\(^{84}\) Thanks to Emanuele Papi for literally pointing this out to me.
There is a temptation here to recall Gellner’s classic description of agrarian societies, where elites seek to distinguish themselves in horizontal strata above local farming communities, doing their best to differentiate themselves from each other and in particular from the ‘petty’ local communities.85 One can imagine these towers and hill-top monuments talking to each other across the landscape, high above the local cemeteries and settlements they grace with their physical presence — and, as I shall discuss shortly, reaching further to connect with the monuments of international elites. But these monuments do not just sit on top of pre-existing communities and traditions in the region, they are also engaged with them, participating in a range of local practices and significations.

As noted above, the Medracen and the tomb at Beni Rhénane are built in existing cemeteries, and so although they are distinguished vertically from the surrounding bazina tombs, they are also horizontally identified with them. In the case of the Medracen at least, this visual identification would have been encouraged by the replication in the larger monument of the circular form of the bazina and other round tombs, whether or not this was the only or primary referent of that form. At the same time the reproduction on the bigger scale ‘trumps’ the smaller, older tombs; the connection creates a hierarchy.

Design elements also suggest that these monuments were not simply imposed on landscapes but closely tied to existing local cult and funerary practices. Like many of the bazina tombs, as well as the tombs found in the Garamantian centres of the Fazzan, the entrances and corridors of the two monumental tumuli are oriented east, and they have external structures – platforms, altars or bases – also projecting east.86 The internal corridor at

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85 Gellner 1983: 10; see further Brett and Fentress 1996: 333.
86 Camps 1973: 479–83 for the parallels between the access routes into the Medracen and the bazina tombs à degrés, as well as for details reported in the nineteenth century of the 14 x 25 m structure attached to the eastern side of the Medracen, whose traces have since been obliterated by a local cemetery, and for the note that a similar eastern-oriented ‘aire cultuelle’ is found at Kbor er Roumia, as well as at the late antique djedars; Rakob has suggested the structure beside the Medracen carried an altar, a cult building or an incubation chamber (1983: 330). For the Garamantian tombs, Mattingly 2007: 147, 160.
Kbor er Roumia, which runs from the entrance all the way around the monument, turning in towards the burial chamber shortly before completing the full circle, recalls the internal arrangements of some of the more elaborate bazinas and, like some ‘Libyan’ haouanet and ‘Punic’ shaft-tombs in the region, this deambulatory at Kbor er Roumia and the upper-level burial chambers of the Thugga mausoleum (to which access is also from the east) have niches in the walls. Traces of red paint found on the cult building at the Medracen may well link to the African practice of using red ochre to mark bodies and tombs, also found locally in cemeteries from the Sahel to the Sahara.

Other features of the monuments imply on-going local activity at the sites, perhaps hero- or ruler-cult. As well as the altars or cult buildings associated with the round tombs, Kbor Klib has an altar to the west of the monument that is contemporary with the original construction, and although there are no archaeological traces of cult buildings in the vicinity of the tower-tombs, the graffiti representations of them on the walls of contemporary rock-cut tombs in northern Tunisia associate them with flaming altars. In a little-noticed passage in Suetonius’ biography, Augustus, spending the last days of his life at Capri, observes that the tumulus of Masgaba, one of his favourites who had died the year before, ‘was visited by a large crowd with many torches’ (98.4). Masgaba must be an African name, and the dead man was presumably an itinerant Numidian nobleman.

There may have been activity inside the tombs as well: Herodotus and Pomponius Mela both tell us, for instance, that some Libyans practised incubation and dream-divination in their tombs. The entrances of the round tombs could be opened for re-entry after the deposition of the body, as could that of the Thugga mausoleum, and the niches at Kbor er

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87 Rakob 1983: 334, where he also compares the circular disposition of the underground funerary chambers at Beni Rhéne, and the deambulatories of the late antique djedars.
88 Ferron notes this, along with the local funerary custom of burying the dead person above ground, and the way in which the double funerary chamber within the second storey of the Thugga monument ‘correspond au plan de nombreuses haouânet’ (1969–70: 89 n.17).
90 Coarelli and Thébert discuss the association of colonnades with heroism going back to Asia Minor (1988: 799).
91 The Simithus monument also has an altar (to its east) in its reincarnation as a Roman temple, but no pre-Roman phase or version has been found.
92 Lacerenza 2002; thanks to Lisa Fentress for the reference.
93 Mattingly 2007: 157, with 144 for pyramid tombs.
94 Hdt. 4.172; Pomponius Mela 1.8.45 (both discussing the Nasamones/Augilae). For a summary of the evidence for the African practice of worshipping at tombs, see Stone and Stirling 2007: 22–3.
Roumia and Thugga may have held lights. The location of the monument at Simithus is particularly interesting in this respect, on top of a hill covered in carvings of ‘Libyan’ gods and shrines, and so capitalising on pre-existing sacred associations. Overall, it is clear that these monuments were not just for looking at, but provided new venues for existing activities, and therefore useful local legitimacy for the new rulers and elites.

Social permeability is also a feature of the cavalry imagery in the monuments and on the royal coinage discussed above, which presents another challenge to Gellner’s thesis of horizontal differentiation, blurring the distinctions between elite and local sources of power by co-opting much lower levels of representation. Small-scale sculptures of riders are common in Numidia in the Hellenistic period; as well as the ‘Chemtou horseman’ from Simithus (Figure 7.17), there are a series of around a dozen ‘chieftain stelai’ found in an area of Grand Kabylie, all about a metre high and now dated on

Figure 7.17 The ‘Chemtou horseman’.

See Camps 1973: 496 and 502 for the closing and locking mechanisms at the Medracen, ‘well known in the tombs and hypogea of the eastern tradition’, which in his view ‘permitted the later introduction of cremated remains’.
stylistic grounds to the third or second centuries (Figure 7.18). They feature local gods or leaders, almost always on horseback, brandishing javelins and the typical African cavalry shield. In some cases their name is recorded in Libyan on the stele. Much is unclear about these stelai, including whether they are funerary or votive, whether the main figure is a man or a god, and the meaning of the small secondary figure. The relative chronology of these small-scale representations of riders and the monumental architecture is very obscure, but older stelai from the region of Constantine feature the same shield device, which suggests that the builders of the ‘Numidian’ monuments did have a repertoire of relevant local images to build upon. The graffiti representations of the tower-tombs in smaller rock-cut tombs elsewhere in Tunisia (Figure 7.10) suggest that this incorporation of imagery between different social strata can work from the bottom up as well as the top down, and reach across political borders: the smaller tower mausolea within the fossa regia may be another example of this phenomenon. It may even be that these small stelai were intended in part as a sign of difference from the new social order embodied in at least some of the larger

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96 Laporte 1992; Camps et al. 1996.
monuments – the use of Libyan rather than the Punic of the royal coinage and epigraphy might point in that direction. But what I want to note here is the way that the essentials of this local image, the rider and his shield, are incorporated into the signs of that new order, the royal coinage and the elite monuments, just as the Numidian state had incorporated the cavalry strength of the smaller tribes and clans.

**Global references**

Extending the perspective beyond the Numidian kingdoms, how and why did the builders of these monuments draw on external models and associations? Not, I think, by aligning their monuments with one or another ‘cultural tradition’, but by pointing to a variety of places and ideas that reinforced the local power, status and authority of the builders of the tombs. These builders had a huge range of models to draw upon in constructing these tombs, as did their viewers in interpreting them; no doubt the overlap between these perspectives was never perfect: not all possible references and referents were intended by the builders or recognised by every, even any, viewer. But it does seem to me that many of these different references point in similar directions, invoking particular associations of antiquity and of ancient power: useful associations for new leaders facing the growing threat of Rome.

In order to make this case in the space available, I will return to the Thugga mausoleum and attempt to delineate some of the content in that tomb’s obvious ‘connectivity’. I am building here on the work of Coarelli and Thébert, and in particular on their claim that the use of foreign models showcased the Numidian kings’ links with the eastern Mediterranean world, and equivalence to the kings there, though I will extend the scope of this approach to encompass the western Mediterranean, on the principle that the same reference can have multiple referents.

As I noted in the introduction, the monument at Thugga has a set of Egyptian references. Even if these associations are not as striking at Thugga as at some of the other monuments in the series, such as Mausoleum B at Sabratha, they can provide a useful starting point for an investigation of the complex possibilities of the symbolic logic at work. As well as the cavetto cornice already mentioned, the aeolic capitals incorporate lotus flowers, and the form of a square tomb topped with a pyramid is first found in second-millennium BCE Egypt, and also features in graffiti in other Egyptian tombs (Figure 7.19). Whether or not that was known to our
builder, the terminal pyramid pointed to the famous Egyptian royal tombs at Giza and Saqqara, which were becoming at this time a focus of Mediterranean tourism.\textsuperscript{97}

But do these associations mean that the builders were making a specific connection with the contemporary Ptolemaic kingdom in Egypt, and its capital of Alexandria?\textsuperscript{98} The contacts between King Massinissa and Ptolemy

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure7.19}
\caption{Graffiti in Egyptian tombs.}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{97} Baines and Riggs 2001.  \textsuperscript{98} As suggested at Coarelli and Thébert 1988: 809.
VIII, who in 163 was imposed by Rome as king at Cyrene before succeeding to the main Ptolemaic throne at Alexandria after Massinissa’s death, are well known. However, there is not much positive evidence for specifically Alexandrian references in the architecture. Little of that city’s monumental architecture survives, and despite intriguing literary references to Cleopatra’s multi-storey above-ground tomb,99 there are few parallels with the ‘Numidian’ monuments to be found in the elite underground tombs that have been excavated there.100 In addition, the Thugga mausoleum, like the other African tombs, fails to exploit the distinguishing features of Alexandrian architecture such as Alexandrian capitals and screen walls.101

Even if direct Alexandrian references are infrequent, however, Sandro Stucchi has shown that many of the forms and architectural features of the monuments can be found in Cyrenaican funerary architecture, most or all of which seem to date from the time of Ptolemaic hegemony there.102 These include the only surviving large-scale Cyrenaican tower-tomb, Mausoleum 2 at Ptolemais, which is dated by Stucchi on stylistic grounds to the late third or first half of the second century (Figure 7.20). In his book on Hellenistic Cyrenaica, André Laronde describes this mausoleum, orginally at least 30 m high, as unique in terms of its architecture and its dimensions.103 But in fact (and while bearing in mind the speculative nature of Stucchi’s reconstruction) it has clear similarities of scale and form to the Thugga tomb (the square plan, stepped base and multiple stories below a terminal pyramid, albeit stepped in this case rather than smooth); these and the deployment of the Doric order and cavalry shields also link the Cyrenaican tomb to Es Soumaa. It is debatable, however, whether such visual associations with Cyrenaica would have amounted to a claim to a connection with the Ptolemies: the Cyrenaican tombs studied by Stucchi have little in common with specifically Ptolemaic architecture, and in any case Ptolemaic hegemony in Cyrenaica was by no means comprehensive.104 The similarities might be seen instead as a reference to pre-existing communities, such as the independent cities of Cyrenaica, facing the encroaching imperial power of the Ptolemies.

One clear link that does exist between ‘Numidian’ and Ptolemaic architectural strategies is their shared fascination with Pharaonic Egypt. Recent underwater excavations have revealed the many Pharaonic-period sphinxes,

99 Plut. Ant. 77–9, with Dio Cass. 51.10.9.
100 On the elite tombs at Alexandria, Adriani 1966; Venit 2002.
101 My thanks to Judith McKenzie for a useful conversation on this point.
102 Stucchi 1987.
103 Laronde 1987: 444 (following Stucchi).
104 Laronde suggests that it is the tomb of a minor Ptolemy (1987: 444).
obelisks and palmette columns transplanted to Alexandria, particularly from Heliopolis. This Ptolemaic ‘Egyptianising’ is also to some extent apparent in surviving funerary architecture at Alexandria, although the Ptolemaic temples to Egyptian gods elsewhere in Egypt, such as the temples of Amun at Karnak, Isis at Philae and Horus at Edfu, provide more impressive demonstrations of construction in the Pharaonic tradition. Nonetheless, the builders of the ‘Numidian’ monuments adapt the art and architecture of Pharaonic Egypt in a rather different way from the Ptolemies; they do not simply reproduce or quote Ptolemaic culture.

Firstly, Ptolemaic architecture tends to be either distinctively Egyptian, or distinctively Greek – there are certainly juxtapositions such as the sphinxes

Figure 7.20 Mausoleum 2 at Ptolemais: reconstruction.

in the Moustapha Pasha I Tomb, the Egyptian-style statues of both dynastic and Ptolemaic date alongside classical ones in the Serapeum enclosure, and the obelisk in the Arsinoeion, but the real mixture of Egyptian and Greek forms, orders and details in the same visual field, such as are found at Thugga, comes only in first-century or later Alexandria.

Secondly, Ptolemaic builders use and emphasise different aspects of Pharaonic art from those we find in the ‘Numidian’ architecture, and they use them in different ways. Cavetto cornices appear only on the temples to the Egyptian gods outside Alexandria, not in the city or on Ptolemaic tombs, and it seems that pyramids were not used in Ptolemaic architecture at all: it was perhaps easier for those kings to memorialise the Egyptian gods than their imperial predecessors, whereas for Numidian elites it was the connection and comparison with foreign rulers rather than their gods that mattered.

So it is easier to see our builders as reinterpreting and reusing Pharaonic Egypt in parallel with the Ptolemies, rather than as simply copying the Ptolemaic version. This endeavour could in itself, of course, be a way of claiming association or even equality with the Ptolemies, and in the context of increasing Roman hegemony, the Ptolemaic monarchy could have provided a useful model for semi-independence in the face of and in co-operation with Roman power. But the references to the Pharaonic world send messages of their own too: as well as evoking the mystery and exoticism of Pharaonic Egypt, they suggest an identification with the pre-Roman and pre-Greek indigenous power of the Pharaohs.

The Thugga tomb’s Egyptian associations are just some among many, of course, and similar strategies could inform the references Coarelli and Thébert find there to the form and decoration of the monuments of the pre-Hellenistic kings of the Near East. Mausolus for instance, builder of probably the best known and most expensive tomb in the Mediterranean at Halicarnassus, would have provided a good example of an independent power in the orbit of the Persian empire. It is, in fact, striking how little these monuments quote directly from contemporary ‘Hellenistic’ kingdoms

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107 The tomb itself is early to mid-third-century (Venit 2002: 51, dated by pottery and painting), but the sphinxes’ pedestals are freestanding and so could have been added later.


110 For a rare exception, see the second-century Ezbet el-Makhlouf Tomb M (Venit 2002: 193). McKenzie (2007: ch. 3–4) has a full discussion of the development of Ptolemaic architecture, and various possible (and subtle) interplays of Greek and Egyptian elements within it.

111 The Ptolemies are of course presented in Pharaonic terms in some contexts, but this practice seems to relate to Pharaonic rule as a living and incorporated institution rather than in terms of the memorialisation of individual celebrity.
as opposed to powers that went before or alongside them: the Numidians are interpreting the past for their own purposes, and in the process demonstrating their cultural parity with contemporary Mediterranean monarchs. These references to the powers of the past are reinforced by the archaising style of the monuments, particularly noticeable at Thugga in the stiffness and spare style of the chariot relief, with the horses’ limbs presented in strict series (Figure 7.5).112

Similar conclusions can again be drawn from a closer examination of the ‘Phoenicianising’ aspects of the tomb. Aeolic capitals and cavetto cornices (though not pyramids) had long been popular in the cities of the Levant, which had faced and to some extent faced down powers including Persia, while the echo of the famous chariot scene from Sidonian coinage also evokes the much greater power of the Great King himself whose iconography underlines the Sidonian image. In the West the parallels with the art and architecture of Carthage, another famous hold-out against Greco-Roman power, could hardly be missed. Carthage was of course a political enemy of the Numidian kings in the second century, and such associations perhaps again marked not allegiance, alliance, or ‘acculturation’ so much as comparability. Alternatively, if the Thugga mausoleum should be seen as the monument of an individual or city in competition to a degree with the new royal power in Numidia, an association with Carthage would make a different kind of sense. Such associations can be found in other contexts in Thugga, where a sanctuary was established around this time that looks very much like a tophet (though the sacrifices are of animals rather than children), and which appears to have adopted Carthaginian-style political magistracies at some point in the later Hellenistic period; these all point to the exploitation and harnessing of the rhetorical power of Carthage, especially once it was no longer a present danger.113

Other possible references could of course be suggested. Nonetheless, I hope that it is now clear that the Thugga mausoleum does not simply refer to one ‘tradition’ to convey its message of personal power in the context of a new kingdom, but calls on multiple sources of power and authority from the East and West, sought in the past as much as or even more than in the present, and highlighting indigenous alternatives to the external powers of Greece, Carthage and Rome in the service of promoting

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112 Cf. for instance, the relief supposed to be from the Sikyonian treasury of c. 560 at Delphi, depicting Kastor, Polydeukes, Idas and Lynkeus stealing a herd of cattle with very similar legs. On similarly archaising aspects of the Medracen, Coarelli and Thébert 1988: 776.

the authority of the region’s elites in the face of internal and external incursion. While the references may encompass the Mediterranean and even more, the audience is local, and so are the messages that these references send.

Conclusions

I have argued here that ‘Numidian Royal Architecture’ was built by and for people connected with, and invested in, a variety of aspects of the new social and political order in Numidia, and that it was built at least in part to stabilise and reinforce that order. The builders bolstered their prestige by co-opting global references, and their legitimacy by co-opting local ones. Through their architecture these local elites (royal or otherwise) constructed themselves as on a par with those of larger Mediterranean states and created networks of political and cultural association that reached down the local social scale and across the Mediterranean world in different directions in space as well as time. The particular connections suggested with earlier imperial powers mean that these are networks not only of association but also of memory. Or more accurately, of false memory – of associations that did not exist in a time before the coming of Rome.

None of this seems to be about exclusive cultural or ethnic identity, but rather about the exploitation of real and symbolic sources of power. These cultural connections cut across lines of conventionally understood political, ethnic or cultural identities: the builders are interested in what they share with other agents, cities and states, not in what makes them different.

Moreover, these networks of association were constructed in collaboration with Rome. Roman generals went along with the Numidian kings’ self-invention as on a par with greater Mediterranean powers, for instance giving Syphax and Massinissa the same honours as Ptolemy IV during the Hannibalic War. Roman art, too, may witness this collaborative construction of power, if Ann Kuttner is right in Chapter 8 in this volume to interpret the painting in the Casa di Giuseppe II at Pompeii as a

114 Livy 27.4.8 (Syphax receives a purple toga and tunic, a golden *patera*, and a curule chair in 210); 27.4.10 (Ptolemy IV receives a purple toga and tunic and a curule chair from the same ambassadors in 210); 30.15.11 (Massinissa receives an embroidered toga, a golden wreath, a golden *patera*, a curule chair and an ivory sceptre in 203; cf. App. *Pun.* 32 for the same event with a slightly different list of gifts); Livy 31.11.12 (Massinissa receives a purple toga, a tunic decorated with palms, an ivory sceptre and a curule chair in 200; this may be a doublet). For doubts about the reliability of the 210 embassy to Syphax and Ptolemy, see Holleaux 1921: 66–8.
representation of Sophonisba committing suicide in Massinissa’s arms: the
couple depicted both wear diadems, a recognition or reiteration in a Roman
context of their equivalence to the rulers of the Successor kingdoms. Similarly, the local celebration of the Numidian cavalry, who fought as a
separate contingent in the Roman army, is paralleled in Roman art and
literature. This architecture forms part of a cultural negotiation between
Rome and Numidia that parallels their political negotiation.

Coda

Two final monuments take us earlier and further west and then later and
much further east: conscious emulation or recognition is less likely in
these cases, but they provide interesting parallels for the approach to
architecture in the Numidian tombs, in interestingly similar contexts. One
is the mausoleum of c. 500 BCE found in a cemetery at Pozo Moro, near
Albacete, and now in Madrid: a tower-tomb built on a stepped base with a
cavetto cornice separating two storeys, and sculptures of lions built into the
structure of the monument at the base of each of those storeys (Figure 7.21). It may well have had a pyramid on top, but even without it the resemblance to the tower-tombs is clear. It was destroyed in the
mid-fourth century, when a necropolis of tumulus tombs had already begun
to grow up around it.

The Pozo Moro monument is only the most famous of a set of more than
thirty Iberian funerary towers dating from the archaic to Hellenistic periods,
and displaying a series of distinctive features including cavetto cornices,
relief friezes and animals sculpted out of square blocks. As with the
Numidian monuments, these make a studied combination of references to
local and foreign traditions, and in a Numidian re-reading, or re-writing,
these Iberian references could constitute yet another appeal to memories of
past indigenous power, and perhaps evoke a more general (and more
contemporary) Iberian resistance to Carthage and Rome.

The phenomenon of cosmopolitan eclecticism alongside local connectivity
helping to negotiate power in multiple horizontal, vertical and chronological
directions was not, however, simply a western phenomenon, nor indeed a
Mediterranean one. In the mid-first century, Antiochus I of Kommagene built
a sanctuary at Nemrud Dagh in eastern Turkey (Figure 7.22) which provides

an interesting counterpart and comparison to the Numidian architecture.\textsuperscript{120} Like the Numidian kings, Antiochus was an indigenous ruler operating a fair distance from the major powers of the Mediterranean, ruling a theoretically independent state which was in effect a Roman client-kingdom. Antiochus used the Roman connection to consolidate his local power, but maintained an unstable relationship with his hegemon, and intermittently worked with and for the Parthians to the east instead.

The sanctuary consists of a burial mound – an enormous mountain-top tomb, 150 x 49 m – between, among other things, two terraces of gigantic sculptures depicting Antiochus himself and a selection of other state gods seated on thrones. As with the ‘Numidian’ architecture, the sculpture is an artificial mixture of artistic motifs and techniques, in this case looking both west to the Hellenistic kingdoms and to regions further east, with the odd

\textsuperscript{120} Sanders 1996.
local touch such as Antiochus’ Armenian tiara.\footnote{Smith 1986: 104 describes the style as ‘an artificial combination of Oriental-looking bodies with neo-classical heads which wear Oriental hats’.} Antiochus’ helpful inscription makes it clear that the mixture is deliberate. In it he claims descent from Darius and the Achaemenid kings through the satrapal dynasty of Armenia, and from the Seleucids and Alexander the Great through a marriage alliance, and he explains that he had the images made ‘according to the ancient logos of the Persians and the Hellenes, most blessed roots of my family’.\footnote{OGIS 383.} As in Numidia, sources of past power are brought in as reinforcements for a new one.

Bert Smith is unimpressed:

We could wish to have this sort of evidence for almost any other time and place in the Hellenistic world, rather than Kommagene. The king and his monuments belong … in a time of swift change and in a political and cultural backwater. Almost no aspects can safely be taken as typical. The monuments existed in the first place due to the megalomania of a minor potentate and survive because he ruled high in the Taurus mountain range and built them on top of hills out of limestone which few subsequently thought it was worth their while to remove. The
quantities of sculpture and documentation stand in about inverse proportion to their broader historical significance.\textsuperscript{123}

This may not be entirely fair on this king and his monuments: juxtaposing the architecture of Kommagene with that of Numidia can help us make more of both, and see a sense in which both are ‘typical’ of wider practices outside the major Successor kingdoms. I do not want to posit here a direct connection between these regions, or conscious imitation of ‘Numidian’ architecture by Antiochus, nor to evoke some notion of globalised resistance to Roman imperialism. Instead, I suggest simply that the two architectural sets show interesting structural similarities at a conceptual level. In both cases the builders negotiate elite power and identity in relation to bigger states, to each other and to their local populations in non-Successor kingdoms, sandwiched vertically between different levels of imperial power and

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{map.png}
\caption{Map of sites mentioned in the text, with the exception of El Khroub and Kbour er Roumia further to the east.}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{123} Smith 1986: 102–3, reacting to Rostovtzeff’s claims that Kommagene was typical of Seleucid ruler cult.
horizontally as well as chronologically between different imperial spaces and types of state. Like the African architecture, the sanctuaries of Kommagene such as Nemrud Dagh combine global and local references with a local function – here explicitly ruler cult – to reinforce the message about the extent of their builder’s power and importance. And as with ‘Numidian Royal Architecture’, they might be thought to somewhat overstate the case.