

Roman Administrative Policy in the Province of Numidia during the Early Roman Empire (27 BC–AD 284)

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Abstract

This paper examines the Roman administrative policy in the province of Numidia during the Early Imperial period. Following the transformation of the Numidian territory from a local kingdom into a Roman province, the study traces the successive developments that shaped the province's political geography until the newly introduced territorial arrangements became firmly established. In its effort to consolidate control and implement its colonial project, the Roman administration established a well-structured administrative system through various mechanisms designed to facilitate governance. This included the appointment of officials, the creation of new administrative units (cities and municipalities), and the promotion and development of existing ones to regulate both local affairs and the provincial territory. As a result of these measures, Numidia experienced a series of political and administrative changes that varied according to the policies of successive emperors. Consequently, the province did not enjoy a unified administrative organization during the first half of the Early Imperial period. Stability was achieved only after these successive reforms, with no further territorial modifications until the administrative reforms of Diocletian. Accordingly, this paper seeks to highlight the administrative organization implemented under Roman rule in the province of Numidia.

Keywords: Numidian province; Roman administration; administrative procedures; Roman institutions.

1. Introduction

From the moment they first established their presence in North Africa, the Romans recognized the necessity of dismantling the existing regional political entities. This objective was pursued gradually, through military campaigns when necessary, and by exploiting rivalries and conflicts among local rulers in order to undermine their sovereignty and ultimately eliminate their independence. Rome had adopted this strategy since the destruction of Carthage in 146 BC. Recognizing the strategic importance of Numidia, both from a military and security perspective and in terms of its economic potential, the Romans proceeded to establish a comprehensive administrative framework for governing the province.

Accordingly, this study seeks to provide a clear picture of the administrative system implemented by Rome to consolidate its control over the region under investigation. By tracing the evolution of Roman rule in the province of Numidia, it aims to present a comprehensive understanding of Roman methods of domination, encompassing both coercive measures employed to secure submission and the political and administrative mechanisms designed to integrate the province into the imperial system. These included the imposition of Roman laws, the establishment of

administrative institutions, and the implementation of systematic policies of territorial and political integration.

In light of these considerations, the study addresses the following research question: What administrative and organizational measures were implemented in the province of Numidia under Roman rule during the period from 27 BC to AD 284?

2. Origins and Preconditions of the Roman Conquest

Before beginning its penetration into Numidia, Rome sought to create—or rather preserve—the political divisions that had existed in the region since the end of the Second Punic War. This objective was achieved by exploiting its alliance with the Numidian king Masinissa against the Carthaginian state, its principal rival in the Mediterranean. At that time, Numidia posed no significant threat to Roman interests; instead, it served as an important source of military support and valuable resources, particularly grain and wild animals. This may explain why Rome did not initially pursue a policy of direct colonial settlement in Numidia. Even after the defeat of the rebel Jugurtha in 105 BC, the region was not formally annexed to the Roman Republic, despite Rome's ability to do so. Rather¹, Roman authorities appointed local officials who governed under indirect Roman supervision, treating Numidia more as a dependent client state than as an equal ally. Portions of its territory were even granted to Rome's allies, including the Mauretanian king Bocchus I. This policy demonstrates that Numidia occupied a distinctive position within Roman foreign policy.²

This arrangement, however, proved short-lived. Following the Battle of Thapsus (46 BC), Rome openly revealed its expansionist ambitions. After the defeat of Juba I, an ally of Pompey, Julius Caesar annexed the Numidian kingdom to the Roman Republic under the name Africa Nova ("New Africa"). The territory of Cirta, however, was excluded from the new province and entrusted to Publius Sittius. Following Caesar's assassination, Sittius was killed by Arabion, after which the Sittian territory—including Cirta, Rusicade, Chullu, and Milev—was incorporated into Africa Nova in 44 BC, thereby bringing it directly under Roman control.³

Numidia nevertheless did not remain under direct Roman administration for long, as this political arrangement proved to be only a temporary reconstruction. Some time after the Battle of Actium (31 BC), Augustus appointed Juba II, the son of Juba I, to govern Africa Nova in succession to the governor Autronius Paetus. His appointment appears to have been made in the capacity of governor rather than king, although he was subsequently deprived of this position, as will be discussed later. This interpretation is, however, rejected by Gsell, who argues that Juba II could not have ruled his father's former kingdom because he did not return to North Africa until his appointment as king of Mauretania in 25 BC.⁴

¹ Laronde (A), Golvin (J-C) : *l'Afrique Antique* (histoire monument, libye, Tunisie, Algérie, Maroc), et Tallander, Paris, 2001p 76

² Gsell (S) : *Histoire ancienne de l'Afrique du nord*, N8, Paris, 1912, p 204

³ Boissier (G), *de la conquête et de l'administration romaines dans le nord de l'Afrique et particulièrement dans la province de Numidie*, librairie hachette, Paris, 1878, p 258

⁴ Gsell (S) : *op-cit*, p207 .

Rome nevertheless continued its cautious policy of relying on loyal client kings while avoiding direct administration of the region. According to Boesy, this approach reflected the prudence of Roman policy and represented the height of Roman political wisdom.⁵

Despite several attempts by local rulers—notably Juba I and Arabion—to liberate Numidia from foreign domination and restore the sovereignty of the kingdom, their efforts ultimately failed in the face of Roman military superiority. These defeats marked the end of Numidia's political independence, leading to its incorporation into the expanding Roman Empire. Consequently, the region acquired a distinctive territorial and administrative character throughout its history, particularly during the Roman period, as discussed below.⁶

3. System of Government

Following the unification of Africa Nova and Africa Vetus in 27 BC, a new province, *Provincia Proconsularis* (the Proconsular Province of Africa), was established in accordance with the *Lex Provinciae*. This administrative reorganization fundamentally transformed the former Numidian kingdom, which lost its traditional institutions, magistracies, and judicial structures, all of which were replaced by a new Roman administrative framework designed to maximize the benefits of Roman occupation. The government of the province was entrusted to a former consul holding the rank of proconsul (*proconsul*), who exercised both civil and military authority despite the province's formal subordination to the Roman Senate. Under the Augustan settlement of 27 BC, Numidia was therefore treated as a secondary province through its incorporation into a larger administrative unit.⁷

Nevertheless, the permanent stationing of the *Legio III Augusta* within Numidian territory significantly enhanced the strategic importance of the region. Although administratively incorporated into the Proconsular Province, Numidia increasingly attracted Roman attention because of its military significance. The presence of the legion contributed to greater political stability, improved security, and facilitated Roman expansion into the interior. In this regard, Lacroix observes that Roman military operations were concentrated in the southwestern regions of the former Numidian kingdom, precisely where the *Legio III Augusta* was deployed. As will be shown later, this legion played a decisive role in the emergence of Numidia as a distinct administrative entity, separate from the Proconsular Province.⁸

Before examining this development, however, it is necessary to consider the reasons that prompted the merger of Africa Nova with Africa Vetus, the abolition of the former provincial designation, and the incorporation of its territories into the newly constituted Africa Proconsularis. This reorganization formed part of Augustus' broader settlement governing the administration of the Roman provinces, whereby responsibility for provincial government was divided between the emperor, who retained control over strategically important provinces through military administration, and the Roman Senate, which continued to administer the more peaceful provinces through civilian

⁵ Cheniti, Mohamed Bachir. *Lights on the Ancient History of Algeria* (Studies and Research). Al-Hikma Publishing House, Algiers, 2003, p. 74.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Lacroix (M. L. «Histoire de La Numidie et des Mauritanie, des origines Jusqu 'àL'invasion Vandale.Alger :éd Alger hiver, 2008.p 74.

⁸ Cheniti, Mohamed Bachir. *The Roman Occupation and the Policy of Romanization...*, op. cit., p. 13.

governors. According to Cheniti, this arrangement reflected Rome's broader administrative policy of balancing military necessity with civilian governance.⁹

Despite the unstable conditions prevailing in Numidia, the establishment of the province of Africa Nova by Julius Caesar following his victory at the Battle of Thapsus during the *Bellum Africum* ("African War") clearly reflects the insecurity that characterized the region. Rather than incorporating the conquered territory into the existing province of Africa, Caesar created a separate province for several strategic reasons. Among these were the frontier nature of the region, which made it particularly vulnerable to incursions by nomadic tribes, as well as the persistence of local resistance movements that continued to erupt intermittently. Under such circumstances, the maintenance of a permanent military presence was considered essential to ensure Roman control and frontier security.¹⁰

The circumstances surrounding the subsequent merger of Africa **Nova** and Africa **Vetus** remain the subject of scholarly debate. Nevertheless, the interpretation that has gained the broadest acceptance among historians holds that the two Republican provinces were united in 27 BC, simultaneously with Augustus' division of the Roman Empire into imperial and senatorial provinces.¹¹

This reorganization was both politically and administratively justified. The years preceding the creation of the new province were marked by intense struggles for power in Rome between the aristocratic supporters of the Senate and the populares, while the Roman political and military elite remained preoccupied with the transition from the Republic to the Principate. Under these circumstances, the Roman administration appears to have had little incentive to organize Numidia as a separate province, preferring instead to incorporate it into a larger administrative framework until political conditions had stabilized and potential conflicts over its administration had been avoided. In this regard, Aqoun argues that the unification of the two African provinces was intended primarily to satisfy the Roman Senate, from whose authority the province of Africa—being a senatorial province—could not easily be removed. Consequently, in 27 BC Octavian Augustus merged the two provinces into *Provincia Africa Proconsularis*, thereby ensuring greater political stability and security while preserving the Senate's authority through the office of the proconsul.¹²

Once Numidia had been legally placed under senatorial authority, it effectively disappeared as an independent political entity. The proconsul consequently exercised supreme authority over both the civil administration and military command, although the former boundary separating Africa **Vetus** from Africa **Nova** remained in existence. Rather than functioning as a provincial frontier, it became an internal administrative boundary separating the district of Hippo (Hippo) in the west from the district of Carthage in the east. Numidia was thus transformed into an administrative district primarily intended for fiscal organization and tax assessment. The newly organized territory became known as *Numidia Hipponensis*, replacing the former designation *Africa Nova*, and was administered directly by officials acting under the authority of the proconsul. During the reign of Tiberius, Numidia

⁹ Boissière, .op-cit.p 30

¹⁰ Duncan Fishwick : On the origins of Africa procounsularis (the amalgamation of Africa Vetus, p53.

¹¹ Benabou, M : Proconsul et Légat en Afrique, le témoignage de Tacite. In : *Ant.Afr.* 1972 p 129.

¹² Lefebvre, Sabine. *L'administration de L'empire romain.* paris: D'auguste à Dioclétien, Armand colin, 2011, p119.

Hipponensis formally replaced Africa Nova within the Proconsular Province as an administrative dioecesis, governed by officially appointed Roman administrators.¹³

Following Augustus' administrative reforms, which distinguished between senatorial and imperial provinces and deprived governors of senatorial provinces of independent military authority, Numidia nevertheless remained under the supervision of the proconsul. In practice, however, the presence of the Legio III Augusta, permanently stationed in the region from AD 6 onward, meant that the proconsul continued to exercise both civil and military authority. This exceptional concentration of powers appears to have resulted from a special imperial delegation, through which military command was exercised on behalf of the emperor rather than by virtue of the proconsul's ordinary constitutional authority.¹⁴

The military authority exercised by the proconsul should therefore be regarded as an exceptional arrangement. Had the Legio III Augusta been placed under the command of an independent officer, that commander would have borne the title *Legatus Augusti*. This situation stemmed from Augustus' administrative settlement, which distributed provincial authority by assigning peaceful regions to civilian administration while reserving military administration for areas affected by unrest, without formally dividing the province itself. Nevertheless, the military authority of the proconsul became particularly evident during the revolt of Tacfarinas, when he assumed command of all auxiliary units and reinforcements mobilized to suppress the rebellion and issued the corresponding military orders. These forces were commanded by a senior officer (*officier général*) holding the title *Legatus Augusti* (imperial legate), who, despite his rank, remained subordinate to the provincial governor.¹⁵

This administrative arrangement remained in force throughout the reigns of Augustus and his successor Tiberius, until military administration was gradually separated from civilian administration in response to the increasing neglect of military affairs. Moreover, entrusting command of the Legio III Augusta to the proconsul of Africa, a governor appointed by the Senate, represented a departure from the constitutional principle that military command should not be entrusted to officials appointed by the Senate. These apparent contradictions give rise to an important question: was Numidia merely an integral part of the Proconsular Province under the direct authority of the proconsul or one of his delegates, or did it enjoy a distinct constitutional and administrative status?¹⁶

To answer this question, it is first necessary to examine the reasons that justified the permanent stationing of the Legio III Augusta in Numidia despite its formal status as part of a senatorial province, whose governors were normally entrusted only with civil authority, while military command remained an imperial prerogative.¹⁷

As noted above, the general political situation within Africa Proconsularis, and particularly in Numidia, provides the background that explains the subsequent reorganization of military command. Persistent unrest and repeated resistance movements ultimately led Emperor Caligula to deprive the

¹³ Mahjoubi, Ammar. *The Province of Africa from the Roman Conquest to the End of the Severan Period (146 BC–AD 235)*. Centre de Publication Universitaire, Tunis, 2001.

¹⁴ Paul petit : *la paix romaine*, ed 1, presses universitaire de France, 1967, p 103.

¹⁵ Aqoun, Mohamed El Arbi. *The Cirtan Confederation: A Study of the History, Archaeology, and Institutions of Ancient Cirta*. Numidia Antiqua, Algeria, 2019, p. 80.

¹⁶ Ibid, p232.

¹⁷ Lefebvre Sabine *l'administration de l'empire romain...* p 119.

proconsul of military authority after the transfer of the legion's headquarters farther west within Numidia during his reign (AD 37–41). At the same time, Caligula appears to have intended to reorganize the province in a manner that reflected its strategic importance and historical distinctiveness. Accordingly, he removed military administration from the authority of the proconsul and entrusted it to a *Legatus Augusti*, a measure that anticipated the eventual termination of Numidia's dependence upon the Proconsular Province. Administrative responsibility for the region was thus transferred to a military governor, thereby resolving the overlap between civil and military authority by separating command of the army from the office of the proconsul.¹⁸

This reform was primarily dictated by security considerations. As a frontier region, Numidia was particularly vulnerable to incursions by nomadic tribes and was repeatedly affected by revolts, including those of the Gaetulians and the populations of the southern Aures from the first century AD onward, culminating in the rebellion of Tacfarinas, who waged a prolonged war against Roman authority in Africa. The precise date of this administrative reform remains a matter of scholarly debate. According to Tacitus, the transfer of military authority occurred at the beginning of Caligula's reign in AD 37, whereas Cassius Dio places the measure in AD 39. In view of these conflicting accounts, it is preferable to refer more generally to the reform as having taken place during the reign of Caligula.¹⁹

This reform placed Numidia under the authority of the commander of the Legio III Augusta²⁰, while preserving a nominal degree of subordination to the proconsul. In practice, however, the military commander's authority over the western part of the province was extensive, reflecting both the broad powers entrusted to him and the diverse responsibilities of the army, which extended beyond military operations to include administrative and judicial functions. In this regard, P. Flaum observes that the powers of the military commander (*legatus*) were comprehensive and that his decisions derived directly from imperial authority. Consequently, the *Legatus Augusti* effectively exercised exclusive control over the western region of Africa Proconsularis, albeit only in a formal administrative sense. As Bohec notes, however, Numidia was not, strictly speaking, an independent imperial province; under the administrative organization established by Caligula, it continued to form part of Africa Proconsularis. Throughout this period, and until the beginning of the third century AD—particularly until AD 202—the coexistence of civil and military authority remained a source of considerable ambiguity and scholarly debate.²¹

Numidia thus retained its essentially military character until its formal establishment as a separate province during the reign of Septimius Severus (AD 193–211). During this period, the Numidian territory was definitively detached from Africa Proconsularis and officially constituted as a distinct province under the administration of Anicius Faustus²². The provincial governor thereafter assumed the title *Legatus Augusti pro praetore*, replacing the earlier office of *legatus* with that of an imperial propraetorian governor.²³

¹⁸ Bénabou (M), La résistance africaine à la romanisation, Op.cit, p 132.

¹⁹ Mahjoubi, Ammar. The Province of Africa from the Roman Conquest to the End of the Severan Period, Op.cit, p 108.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Pflaum (H. G), A proopos de date, Créations de la province de Numidie, Libya, TV, 1er, sen, 1975, p 75

²² Christol (M) : L'empire romain du III^e siècle, Histoire politique 192-325 apr J-C, Paris, édition creane 1997, p 25.

²³ Pflaum (H. G), A proopos de date, Créations de la province de Numidie, p76.

The official creation of the province of Numidia under Septimius Severus, with Anicius Faustus as its first governor, followed the emperor's renewed policy of frontier expansion beyond the *limes* established under Trajan. This development resulted in the administrative separation of the Numidian territory from Africa Proconsularis and its recognition as an autonomous imperial province comprising the lands previously administered by the *legatus*. The latter was granted the full rank and authority of a provincial governor, and Numidia became an imperial military province governed by a *Legatus Augusti pro praetore*. This process coincided with the permanent establishment of the Legio III Augusta at Lambaesis, a measure that progressively detached Numidia from the remainder of Africa Proconsularis. The province thereafter enjoyed complete administrative autonomy, with Cirta serving as its capital.²⁴

Having originally fallen under the authority of the Roman Senate, Numidia subsequently became an imperial province directly subject to the emperor, a status it retained throughout the Severan dynasty. The *Legatus Augusti pro praetore* continued to exercise both civil and military authority until the reign of Aurelian (AD 270–275), when civil administration was entrusted to the *praeses*, an office created to preserve the prestige of the military command. The imperial government consequently appointed a senior official of consular rank to serve as the province's civil governor while exercising overall authority over the military commanders stationed there. This arrangement helped avoid rivalry among officers of equivalent rank and reflected the Roman administrative principle that appointment to the highest provincial offices depended upon proven experience, merit, and the confidence of both the emperor and the Roman state.²⁵

Once the administrative framework of the province had been established and its chief official appointed, the provincial governor became responsible for administering the territories incorporated into the Roman Empire. Acting as the representative of the central government and the sole embodiment of Roman sovereignty within the province, he exercised comprehensive civil, judicial, financial, and administrative powers by delegation from the emperor.²⁶

The imperial legate exercised extensive powers. Like the governors of other Roman provinces, he performed important administrative and judicial functions while also commanding the emperor's military forces stationed within the province. The emperor alone, however, possessed the authority to extend a governor's term of office. The governor also enjoyed a degree of discretion in adapting imperial decisions to local circumstances, while his administrative competence constituted an important factor in determining subsequent promotion within the imperial hierarchy. Upon assuming office, administrative necessity required the governor to appoint an experienced staff composed of officials residing within the province. This provincial *officium* included secretaries, accountants, record keepers, prison guards, public officials, couriers responsible for delivering summonses, attendants charged with religious duties—including priests and diviners—and *speculatores*, who carried out intelligence, security, and communications duties. From the foregoing, it may be concluded that the diversity of the governor's responsibilities required a broad range of skills acquired through previous administrative experience. Although entrusted with extensive authority, the

²⁴ Corbier (M) et Griesnher (M) : l'Afrique romaine 146 av j-c, Paris, Ellipres ed, 2005, p 60.

²⁵ Graham Alexandre, Roman Africa: an outline of the history of the Roman occupation of North Africa ; based chiefly upon inscriptions and monumental remains in that country London, 1902, p 645.

²⁶ Boissier (G) : op-cit, p 124.

governor relied upon specialized officials to ensure the efficient functioning of provincial administration and to avoid concentrating multiple responsibilities in the hands of a single individual. This administrative specialization explains the division of official duties within the governor's staff and the establishment of a well-defined bureaucratic organization.²⁷

According to Lefebvre, in military provinces the governor's office included soldiers detached from the units permanently stationed within the province. In Numidia, members of the Legio III Augusta continued to serve within the governor's *officium* even after the legion's transfer from Lambaesis. These officers and soldiers carried out not only military duties but also administrative and judicial functions, illustrating the close relationship between military organization and provincial administration.²⁸

In conclusion, Numidia was an imperial province governed by an official of praetorian rank (*praetor* or *Legatus Augusti pro praetore*), assisted by a financial officer responsible for fiscal administration, while the military establishment remained under the governor's authority through the command of a single legion. Roman authority ultimately derived from the emperor, whose position became the principal source of supreme power following the gradual decline of the Senate's political influence. At the local level, however, the Empire generally followed a policy of administrative decentralization, linking municipal institutions directly to local communities through provincial governors and municipal administrations. Consequently, many aspects of local government and administration were managed autonomously within the cities themselves.

4, Administrative Units

Following the formal establishment of the province of Numidia during the late second and early third centuries AD under Septimius Severus, the Roman administration proceeded to reorganize the province through the creation and promotion of urban communities possessing different legal statuses. This policy formed an integral part of Rome's broader strategy of integrating the indigenous population into Roman civilization.

According to Gasco²⁹, when the Romans occupied North Africa they encountered a society that had already attained a considerable degree of urbanization, although levels of urban development varied significantly from one region to another. For centuries, Punic administrative institutions had provided the principal framework of local government. Epigraphic evidence further indicates that municipal organization in the Numidian cities remained deeply influenced by Carthaginian traditions while continuing to preserve important elements of tribal government and collective decision-making. Numidian cities likewise enjoyed a measure of administrative and economic autonomy under the authority of the Numidian people, their kings, and the leading tribal elites. Roman rule, however, introduced profound administrative reforms that transformed the urban organization of North Africa, particularly during the Early Empire as Roman territorial expansion accelerated. Although Numidian society had already undergone significant political and social development prior to the conquest, the

²⁷ Charn, Chafia, et al. *Settler Colonialism and the Policy of Romanization*. National Research Projects Series. National Center for Studies and Research of the National Government, Algeria, 2007, p158.

²⁸ Lefebvre Sabine *l'administration de l'empire romain...* p 124.

²⁹ Gasco, la cite à l'époque romaine, int. B.T 13, 1994, p 199.

Roman occupation interrupted this process and profoundly reshaped the political, administrative, economic, and cultural structures of the region.³⁰

The diverse reactions of local communities to Roman rule likewise influenced their legal status. Communities that resisted Roman conquest were subjected to severe punishment, including the destruction of their cities, the confiscation of their property, and the incorporation of their territories into the Roman domain. Their inhabitants were either killed or sold into slavery. By contrast, the relatively small number of communities that supported Rome were granted the privileged status of *civitates liberae et immunes*³¹, enjoying freedom from certain fiscal and administrative obligations. Other cities adopted a position of neutrality but nevertheless remained subject to the payment of tribute.³²

Roman domination of Numidia was also accompanied by the promotion of selected cities to the rank of *coloniae* or to other legally recognized municipal categories according to Roman law. Gsell, however, argued that the Numidians themselves had not developed true urban centers but had established only villages while maintaining a predominantly pastoral way of life, with stockbreeding remaining the principal economic activity despite the existence of agriculture.³³

The criteria governing the classification of these urban communities varied. Some were based upon military considerations, others upon the legal status conferred by the Roman authorities, while still others reflected the degree of urban development attained by individual settlements. Regardless of these differences, the underlying objective remained the same: to integrate the conquered territories into the Roman civic system (*civitas*), making the city the fundamental unit of provincial administration.³⁴

Accordingly, this study seeks to reconstruct the administrative policy pursued by Rome in the province of Numidia through an examination of urban development, since the city constituted the principal vehicle of Romanization and the focal point of social, economic, cultural, and political interaction³⁵. To achieve this objective, the Roman administration relied upon a range of legal mechanisms intended to confer a Roman character upon urban communities. Urban development was therefore based upon a gradual policy of integration, whereby local communities were incorporated into the Roman political system through successive legal statuses. By combining Roman and Latin legal traditions with existing local institutions and progressively promoting cities to increasingly prestigious legal ranks, Rome sought to achieve the comprehensive integration of the indigenous population into Roman civic society³⁶.

5. Conclusion

The Roman perception of the province of Numidia following its incorporation into the Roman Empire was far from ordinary. Rather, the region occupied a central place in Roman imperial policy

³⁰ Charn, Chafia, et al. *Settler Colonialism and the Policy of Romanization*, Op.cit, p158.

³¹ Gsell (st): HA.A.N.T.V, p 63.

³² Gascou, la cite à l'époque romaine, int. B.T 13, 1994, p 200.

³³ Gsell (st): HA.A.N.T.V, p 63.

³⁴ Lefebvre Sabine, L'administration de l'empire romain, Op.cit, p 157.

³⁵ Filali, Abdel Salam. *Algeria during the Roman Period: The Genius of Place and Manifestations of Power*. 1st ed. El Aqqad Publishing and Media, Algiers, 2022, p. 170.

³⁶ Cheniti, Mohamed Bachir. *Imperial Rome and the Maghreb: A Military Frontier and Cultural Interaction*. Mofem Publishing, Algiers, 2019, p. 272.

because of its strategic military, political, and economic importance. Consequently, it was brought under the direct authority of the emperor, who devoted considerable efforts to consolidating Roman control and strengthening imperial influence throughout the province.

The Roman presence in Numidia profoundly transformed the existing political and administrative landscape through a series of legal and institutional reforms. Throughout the Early Imperial period, the province underwent several stages of administrative reorganization. Initially incorporated into Africa Proconsularis, Numidia later emerged as a distinct administrative entity, independent of the proconsular framework. Each of these transformations reflected the administrative reforms introduced by successive Roman emperors in response to changing political and military circumstances.

Following the administrative restructuring of the province, the Roman authorities reorganized its urban network by assigning different legal statuses to its cities and municipalities. This policy formed part of a broader program of Romanization aimed at integrating local communities into the institutional, legal, and cultural framework of the Roman Empire while reshaping them according to Roman administrative principles.

Overall, the Roman administration established a highly structured model of provincial government in Numidia, characterized by administrative flexibility and adaptation to local conditions. At the same time, this system served imperial interests by consolidating Roman authority, facilitating the exploitation of provincial resources, and reinforcing social and legal distinctions that underpinned Roman rule.

6. References

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