

A brief history of Souk Ahras

Several civilizations have succeeded in the mandate of Souk Ahras from ancient times to the present day, and it is considered a rich open historical book worthy of perusal and contemplation. History, to the Numidian, Phoenician, Roman, Byzantine, and Vandal period, until the Islamic conquests.

And if we looked a lot at the sprawling ruins here and there in our state, the greatness of each of these civilizations would come to our mind and show us the imprint of each of these eras, which makes our state among the states that are rich in a wonderful cultural heritage and the most archaeological.

The origin of the name Souk Ahras is a combination of two Arabic words, the first is Arabic, "Souk" and the second is Berber, "Ahras," the plural "Ahr," which is "the lion." It was also known by the Roman name Tagaste, which in turn was derived from the Romanian name "Tagost" meaning bag due to its location in the foothills between three mountains. It was also called Al-Sukra, and the African Palace. The first tribes that settled there were called "Terina" and "Babyria" and then the Hanansha and Haraqat tribes inhabited it.

Prehistoric period

Due to the geographical proximity of Tagaste to the largest civilizations, the Ater civilization in Tebessa and Al-Qafsiya in Tunisia, it witnessed traces of human presence during these periods, through the stone inscriptions at the archaeological site Kaf Al-Masawrah, which is considered one of the anecdotes of rock art in North Africa and from

prehistoric evidence also the Libyan drawings of the site of Kaf Rajm in the outskirts Sedrata.

Punic and Numidian periods.

The inhabitants of the Berbers known as the Numidians, who are the original inhabitants of the region, had close relations with the Punic [Carthaginians] that were based mainly on trade and the exchange of goods. Agriculture, construction and reconstruction were also influenced by some of their beliefs and rituals, to represent later a cultural and geographical extension of it, and during this period also appeared two great barbarian kingdoms, Massilia and Mamsilia, which were ruled respectively by the Iglad Masinissa and Sfax, and these two kingdoms existed under the rule of Masinissa after Rome defeated Carthage after and their ally Cephass The historic battle of Zama.

Roman period

Rome extended its influence over a tyrant around the first century AD after its interests clashed with Masinissa's ambition and his desire for Numidia's independence from its tutelage. [Henchir Ksaiba] and Toporcicum Numidarum [Khamisa], the Romans included Taghest within the region of Africa Nova, and its capital was Hippon [Annaba]. And cattle, besides depleting their agricultural resources of wheat, barley and olives, the animals of the region, such as lions and tigers, were used for fencing, while elephants' ivory was used to decorate palaces and luxurious homes.

Vandal period

After the year 430 AD, the Vandals colonized Carthage, the capital of Africa, the mainland and a consulate, and occupied the Roman cities with Taghest.

Byzantine period

About 534 AD, the Byzantines succeeded the Vandals in Taghst, and their goal was to restore the stores of wealth to supply Constantinople. Priestess and Iyabdas led to the dissolution of the Byzantine existence.

Islamic expansions

Uqba ibn Nafi' conquest of Algeria, starting from the east during the seventh century AD, the conquest armies clashed with the rebellious barbarian tribes led by Kasila and Dheina until the waves of Islamic conquest managed among the inhabitants of the region and this is what eventually led them to embrace it, especially after they realized the lofty goals that they came with and their lack of movement A colonial or settlement tendency to plunder the region's goods. Evidence of this period are: pottery tools and glazes with Arab-Islamic decoration. Today, Islam is considered the official religion in Souk Ahras, and the city is not devoid of beautifully designed mosques or the sound of the call to prayer.

Ottoman period

The Ottoman authority included Souk Ahras within the Beylik of Constantine, which was founded in 1537 AD. The residents had no direct relationship with the Ottomans, except that they paid taxes to the store after the sheikhs of the Hananisha and Harakat tribes

collected them. The most famous of them is the Hanansha revolution against Bey Constantine, led by Al-Waznaji. Things continued to deteriorate between them until the withdrawal of the Turks following the French occupation.

French period

The French armies occupied Souk Ahras in 1843 AD, following two military campaigns, the first from Annaba and the second from Constantine, which later witnessed waves of centenarians to settle in the region in various parts of Europe. With the advent of the nineteenth century AD, the resistance took another form, represented in the intellectual and political struggle after the emergence of the Association of Muslim Scholars. It did not find previous ways to expel the French invasion, and this led to the people of the region rallying around the liberation revolution that erupted on November 01, 1954 AD, to become the Ahras market, the scene of many Of the battles and revolutionary operations, it embraced the headquarters of the eastern base, as did the historical events of Sakiet Youssef, and the battle of the Grand Souk Ahras did not extinguish the flames of the glorious liberation revolution in the region until the torch of national independence was lit on July 5, 1962.

Historic archaeological sites:

The area of the state is diverse with historical archaeological sites, which are testimonies to the various civilizations that have succeeded in the region since the ages. It is enough for it to be proud, as it is the cradle in which the Algerian thinker St. Augustine grew up, where the state has several archaeological landmarks, including:

First, the teacher of St. Augustine

The world-renowned Saint Augustine olive, which is still lofty and green until now in the outskirts of the tempest, as a witness to the ancient past of this region of the country. The ancient Roman city of Tagaste, next to Zaytuna, there is a tower in which the family tree of St. Augustine and his priests friends were written inside. Next to Zaytuna, a museum was built displaying copper plates that were executed in an exquisite manner, translating the life path of St. Augustine and his spiritual and philosophical journey.

The city of Souk Ahras is proud of the fact that it dates back to the era in which the great thinker and world philosopher St. Augustine grew up, the barbarian who was born on November 13, 354 AD in the ancient Taghst of a Christian mother called "Santa Monica", and a pagan father who did not convert to Christianity until his late life and was called "Patricius". His journey began from Madur School, Cartagena, and he toured Italy, and thanks to his scientific competence, he was able to obtain the greatest academic degrees, as he studied at the University of Rome and Maidan in Italy, and left it back to Algeria in 388 AD, taking in his country the citizenship of a monastery for worship and teaching, and his center became science, philosophy and religion, and in the year 391 AD. He appointed Bishop of Bahiboun [present-day Annaba], where he declared war against extremists and rebels against the Christian faith, Donna Test.

Bhibon died during the Vandal occupation of Algeria on August 28, 430 AD, leaving behind the greatest philosophy he lived and died for, "to love and be loved."

Second: Archaeological Maduro (Maduros)

Madur is considered the capital of the first university in Africa and home to the ancient Berber and Roman culture. In Madur, scholars and thinkers of great importance such as

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Maximus and Apuleius, the first novelist in humanity, wrote the world-renowned "Golden Donkey" with it.

It is an archaeological area dating back to the Roman era, and it occupies an area of 109 hectares, 46 km from the state.

The discovery of Libyan writings and tombs carved in stone in the form of shops confirms that the city of Mador is of ancient origin. Its history dates back to the Phoenician era between the 4th and 5th centuries BC, when it was a commercial center through which goods were exchanged with the city of Carthage. The city knew the height of its economy during the era of the Numidian kingdoms. And it was overwhelmed by residents belonging to the Musulami tribe that lived under the shadow of the Kingdom of Masinissa, and in that time period, i.e. the 3rd century AD, it was considered the center of Rome's supply with wheat and olive oil. They were built for the Roman city "Maduros" on the ruins of the Numidian city in the year 75 AD, granted the rule of Emperor "Vespasian" and then elevated to the rank of municipality during the "Narva" era in the year 95 AD. Specific to the Roman city, as evidenced by the monuments of the Froome building, the "public square", the basilica of the "court", the cody of the "municipality", baths, theatre, temples, olive presses, schools, a two-tiered shrine ... etc.

On the edges of the corridor there are houses, as well as contemporary houses and waterways, and from afar there is a huge building, the Byzantine castle. Random, which makes us see parts of the Latin letters or inverted drawings or others out of place, and the main door of the castle allows us to enter the theater and enjoy panoramic views of the neighboring plains, and the Mador Theater is one of the smallest and most expensive theaters in the Roman world, but it is exquisitely designed with a semi-circular amphitheatre. It consists of two types of seats, one of them is for the public and the other for distinguished personalities. The theater was completed with money donated by one of the city's wealthy "Marcus Gabinos". From the theater we take the "Dokimanos"

corridor to reach the bathrooms. It was built with small, dense stones in the Numidian style classified into two types, summer and winter. Mador mausoleum consists of two floors, the lower floor is the burial room, and the upper floor is very similar to the design of the temples, as in various places the images of "Markis" god were engraved. Trade among the Romans, and this is what suggests the economic and social prosperity witnessed by the tide

Third: Khmissa:

Its founding dates back to the beginning of the second century during the reign of Emperor "Trajan". The ancient city is located towards the upper peaks of the mountains and close to the three valleys abstract, Kabrit, Al-Danam, which are in the form of a triangle.

Khemisa is considered one of the most important archaeological cities in Algeria, where the city is located at the top of a triangular hill whose base is directed towards the south, and this plateau is very steep. Its name is attributed to the perennial tribe, and there are discussions dedicated to the gods "Tanit" to evidence the presence of the city in the era of the Punic, and when the Romans colonized North Africa, the Roman city was built during the reign of Trajan on the ruins of the Numidian city "Tabursuk", so the Romans called it "Tabursuk Numidian", because it is in Numidia, but the difficulty of its terrain made the topography of the site negatively reflected on the city's planning and distribution of its features.

It differs slightly from the typical scheme followed in the construction of Roman cities, especially at the level of the two main streets, "the Cardo" and "the Decmanos," which only deal in its infancy. This made the old square not accommodate all its residents, so the new square was built after the city was elevated to a municipality. Among its

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monuments, we find an increase in the two public squares, a capitol, temples, basilica, baths, a triumphal arch with two columns, a water tank, Tivas Gate, a theater, which is the largest of the Roman theaters. In Algeria, with a capacity of 7000 people, houses, a market, the Grand Palace.

When the city was occupied by the Byzantines in 534 AD, new monuments were built, which are: the church, the castle, and the towers. And from the vast surface there are giant columns found in the courtyard and the money house, and there are also traces of houses, shops and the market. The Khamisa Theater is considered one of the most beautiful and largest Roman theaters in North Africa. Orchestras honor podiums and loudspeakers, and the city of Khemisa is famous for being the center of one of the largest battles in 24 AD that the original Berbers fought under the leadership of "Takfarinas" against the Roman armies of Hubon.

Fourth: Tifash

The Numidian cities are usually built on the tops of the mountains, so that their inhabitants can supervise the neighboring plains to repel the attack. The rock confirms that the city traces its origins back to the Punic period between the 4th and 5th centuries BC. The Numidian city of Tipasa preserved its Phoenician name, which means the place of stopping. At the beginning of the 11th century AD, the Roman city was built during the reign of Trajan on the ruins of the Numidian city, and it rose to the rank of municipality in the year 173 AD. The city occupied an important strategic position with a developed economy. The evidence for this is the traces of the many roads that connected it to the neighboring cities, including the road leading to [present-day Tawra] Tifst [Tepssa] Hipporegios [present-day Annaba], Tughest [Ahras market], though traces of olive presses. For conclusive evidence that the area was agricultural producing oil that was exported overseas.

The Byzantines occupied the city in the year 534 AD, where they built the fortress, which is considered as a strategic defensive line against the attack. Then the Zirid state in the 8th century AD, and the origin of its current name Tifashi in relation to the geologist "Ahmed Shihab al-Din al-Tifashi" [1253], one of the famous in the region. Several arts. He wrote a book on minerals and precious stones, in addition to that, he was a writer and poet. Among his books, we mention Al-Durra Al-Fatiqa fi Mahasin Africans, Rivers in the Age of Stones, the Pleasure of Listening in the World of Listening. from time .

Fifthly: Taoura

The archaeological site of the city of Tawra is located south of the state capital, 26 km away, and its area is estimated at 36 hectares. The date of the founding of the city dates back to the 2nd century AD. It was administratively elevated to the ranks of municipalities in the Roman era. It was famous for its Catholic bishop, especially for the Byzantine castle, which is the second line of defense for the hill. Except for some walls and two towers, and next to them are some archaeological monuments. On the edge of the road, we find traces of the church wall and around it some Latin inscriptions of a funerary nature, in addition to many Roman ruins.

Sixth: Henshir Al-Qusaiba

The archaeological area of Henshir Al-Qasabiah "Civitas Poptanis" is located northeast of the city of Souk Ahras at a distance of 53 km at the exit of the municipality of El Khadra towards the municipality of Ouled Mo'men. It extends over an area of 30 hectares. On the ruins of the Phoenician Numidian city, characterized by an important strategic location in which the economic life witnessed a remarkable boom in that period. The Roman city is located in the west of Hanshir, and the most prominent of them are the ruins of the great baths on the edge of the road and some large funerary sculptures, and

when the Byzantines invaded, they built a fortress in it that was considered as a defensive line To repel the invaders' attacks, only the outer walls and some watchtowers were left from this fortress.

Seventh: Kaff lamsaoura :

An archaeological landmark dating back to prehistory, represented by giant inscriptions that were studied for the first year of 1892 "Burnel", and dating back to 7000 BC / AD, and many studies followed them by researchers in archeology and history, and in 1928 AD it was classified by "Soliqui" as being One of the most wonderful prehistoric photographers in the North African site, relying on the study of the nature of deep lines and the largeness and enormity of the inscriptions.

Drawings and engravings in a mountain rock, which is a huge panel of 2.93 m² in height and 15 m in length, and it represents a scene of hunting lions dealing with prey represented by a pig, next to drawings of a fox waiting for the droppings of prey left by the lion.

Eighth: kaff r'jam:

This site is located in the areas of Sedrata in Jabal al-Maida, which rises 1250 m. It includes stone drawings dating back to the Numidian period. The drawings take shapes of broken and circular lines that are likely to be Berber symbols. On the other side of the rock there are inscriptions of the symbol of the cross near a waterway dating back to the beginning of the emergence of Christianity in the past.

Ninth: Taghast :

The ancient city of Taqast, of Berber origins, was located on three hills: Sidi Messaoud hill, the hospital hill, and the municipal hill inhabited by a Berber tribe known as Babria. Many writings in Souk Ahras, in addition to the Libyan writings, Punic sculptures, bronze lamps and many roads linking the city with its surrounding urban centers, were also found on mosaic panels and marble statues, traces of small bathrooms and many marble niches. In an archaeological collection, it was classified in the year 1967 AD within the preserved national heritage.