Luke Lavan, Provincial Capitals and Urban Status in Late Antiquity: the View from Africa

Provincial Government

What impact did the late antique provincial government have on urban communities in Africa? This is a topic which I treated more generally in my 2001 PhD on *Provincial Capitals in Late Antiquity*.[1] My thesis, inspired by Roueché's *Aphrodisias in Late Antiquity*, reached completion shortly after the publication of Haensch's *Capita Provinciarum* on the location of provincial administration during the first three centuries AD.[2] One could write much about the topic for Late Antiquity, but here a summary must suffice. Following the instability of the mid-3rd c., a new system emerged under the Tetrarchy, in which military and civil responsibilities were separated. Provincial "judges" of various grades retained responsibility for Roman law and tax collection, which was now applied to all cities regardless of ancient distinctions. They also continued their oversight of cities, being given a degree of control over setting budgets and authorising expenditure. Governors were now three times more common in most regions, as provinces were subdivided, being grouped into Dioceses (under vicars) by the time of the Verona List, *ca*. 314, and eventually into territorial praetorian prefectures, established under Constantine's sons. Vicars were absent from dioceses where prefects resided, as shown in the *Notitia Dignitatum*.[3] Governors were now relatively junior figures, but alone had rights of execution and imprisonment over provincials.[4] Their power was counter-balanced until the early 5th c. by the provincial assembly: a gathering of the *honorati* and other worthies of the province who met to honour the emperor with games but could also discuss common matters and send embassies to court.[5]

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[1] Luke Lavan, *Provincial Capitals in Late Antiquity* (PhD, Nottingham, 2001a).

[2] Charlotte Roueché, *Aphrodisias in Late Antiquity* (Journal of Roman Studies Monograph 5) (London, 1989a); Rudolph Haensch, *Capita provinciarum. Statthaltersitze und Provinzialerverwaltung in der römischen Kaiserzeit* (Kölner Forschungen 7) (Mainz, 1997).

[3] Dioceses: Constantin Zuckerman, "Sur la liste de Vérone et la province de Grande Arménie, la division de l'empire et la date de création des diocèces," in *Mélanges Gilbert Dagron*, ed. Vincent Déroche, Denis Feissel, Cécile Morrisson et al. (Travaux et mémoires 14) (Paris, 2002), 617–637; Prefectures: Pierfrancesco Porena, *Le origini della prefettura del pretorio tardoantica*, vol. 1 (Saggi di Storia Antica 20) (Rome, 2003). *Notitia Dignitatum* 1.2–3, 1.19–23, 2.2–3, 2.22–26.

[4] Praetorian prefects, vicars, governors: see Arnold Hugh Martin Jones, *The Later Roman Empire 284–602: A Social, Economic, and Administrative Survey*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1964–1986), 1:373–376, 1:380–383, 1:396–401, 1:481–484, 1:757–778, and Jean-Michel Carrié, ed., *Les gouverneurs de province dans l'Antiquité Tardive* (Antiquité Tardive 6) (Turnhout, 1998).

[5] Provincial assemblies: Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, 1:763–766 and Roueché, *Aphrodisias*, 32–34; Ernst Kornemann, s.v. "Concilium," in *Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, vol. 4.1 (1900), 820–826; Jürgen Deininger, *Die Provinziallandtage der romischen Kaiserzeit* (Munich, 1965), 183–188.

The business of late imperial government was above all about paying for the army and court, whilst ensuring a supply of coin to achieve that. Considerations such as "economy" or "public health" were rarely of concern to emperors. Matters such as infrastructure for the imperial post, were left delegated to cities, who oversaw local regulation and ran public services at a day-to-day level, with some, as education, being semi-private. The governor and his staff represented a tiny number of administrators per head, in modern terms, 100 being common.[6] The habit of appointing governors for a year or less reduced their scope for impact, as many incumbents held this as their one and only imperial office, scooping the prize of senatorial rank, of one grade or another, after their office had been given up. Initially, many were of only equestrian grade, except for a handful of proconsular provinces, though consulars were introduced by Constantine.[7] Without military responsibilities, governors became largely sedentary. Although they could dispense justice on the move, their assize tour came to an end in most places, and their law court tended to be based in major cities where governors now resided, in a *praetorium*, where one might find both record-keeping and legal sessions, perhaps with a prison and *horrea*.[8]

By 325, the system was sufficiently well-established to be recognised as the basis for ecclesiastical administration, with the bishop of the *metropolis* being admitted as being more senior, with certain powers.[9] This network of government and church hierarchies remained relatively stable, although provinces were replanned in places, and Justinian introduced some united civil and military governorships, alongside new groupings of provinces. In ecclesiastical terms, there was considerable regional variation, with Egypt and *Italia Suburbicaria* having no intermediate tier between patriarch and bishop, and Africa designating metropolitan bishops by length of tenure, not by secular urban status. My doctorate observed that regional differences also seemed to exist within the civil system, which had previously appeared more uniform.[10] Civil *metropoleis* seem to be best defined in *Asia Minor*, whereas they may not have existed in

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[6] *Officiales* (numbers etc): Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, 1:592–595 drawing on *Codex Justinianus* 12.57.9 (AD 396), Justinian's Novels. 24 app 1, 25 app 1, 26 app 2, 27, 28 app 3, and 4, 29 app 2, *Codex Justinianus* 1.27.1app22–39 (AD 534), tabulated in Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, 1:590–591.

[7] On all this, see Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, plus Arnold Hugh Martin Jones and John Robert Martindale, *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, 3 vols. (Cambridge, 1971–1990).

[8] Assize tour: Lavan, *Provincial Capitals*. On other matters and *praetoria* see Luke Lavan, "The praetoria of civil governors in Late Antiquity," in *Recent Research in Late Antique Urbanism*, ed. Luke Lavan (JRA Supplementary Series 42) (Portsmouth, Rhode Island, 2001b), 39–56.

[9] *Council of Nicaea*, ed. Jacques Paul Migne (PL 67.39–48) (1848), canons 4–7, esp. 6 (AD 325); *Council of Antioch*, canon 9 (Joannes D. Mansi*, Sacrorum concilium nova et amplissima collection*, vol. 2, 2nd ed. [Graz, 1960], 1313–1314 [ca. AD 326]).

[10] Government and church hierarchies, documentation: Arnold Hugh Martin Jones, *Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1971), 522–552; Africa: Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, 2:880–881, 1366 n. 18, and Robert A. Markus, "Carthage – Prima Justiniana – Ravenna," *Byzantion* 49 (1979): 277–306, here 279–289.

parts of southern Italy. Here, a judicial assize tour of *conventus* may have continued.[11] These variations imply very different relationships between the provincial government and the cities they administered. Ward-Perkins sees provincial capitals growing at the expense of weaker cities, whilst Roueché envisages *metropoleis* developing to reflect local hegemonies developed over hundreds of years. Working out where Africa belongs in such dynamics is important in understanding how the diocese functioned. To do so, we must first consider civic reception of metropolitan status.[12]

Urban Status

The language of urban distinction greatly animated contemporaries, for whom it was a primary way of understanding order in their world. To a certain extent, the empire was simply a collection of cities held together by an army. Public services and local identity came primarily from cities, even if many in the West were built to imitate a Roman colonial model. Under the Early Empire, the status of a city depended in part on the rights given to it by the conquerors: as a *colonia*, *municipium*, or mere *civitas*. The latter had the architectural form of a city, but without any access to Roman citizenship. But the extension of Roman citizenship to all free born inhabitants of the empire, by Caracalla, meant that Roman law now extended across all cities. By the late 3rd c., all cities were taxed equally. One might expect these changes to have eroded civic identity and have created scope for new imperial distinctions, like *metropolis*. At the imperial level, *metropoleis* were defined very clearly in administrative *notitiae* and legal documents. So were *civitates*/*poleis*, although we sometimes find episcopal sees in Church documents without an equivalent secular status.[13] Equally, historic and cultural distinctions or patterns of imperial favour created honorary *metropoleis*, or ecclesiastical *metropoleis* with no civic equivalent, when cities contested these titles.[14] There were also attempts by the Church to catch up with secular changes, by the division of ecclesiastical provinces. Even so, their existing regional hierarchies were left in place in Egypt, southern Italy, and Africa. Thus, for both State and Church, *metropoleis*, were not immutable and might respond to local realities.

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[11] Assize-tour See n. 25.

[12] Theories: Bryan Ward-Perkins, "The cities," in *The Late Empire, A.D. 337-425*, ed. Averil Cameron and Peter Garnsey (Cambridge Ancient History 13) (Cambridge, 1998), 371–410, here 388 of proof manuscript; Charlotte Roueché, "Floreat Perge," in *Images of Authority*, ed. Charlotte Roueché and Mary M. Mackenzie (Cambridge Philological Society, Suppl. 16) (Cambridge, 1989b), 215–221.

[13] On the *Notitiae*, George of Cyprus, Church council lists: Jones, *Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces*, 522–552.

[14] Honorary *metropoleis*, and ecclesiastical *metropoleis* without civic equivalents: Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, 2:881–883.

This leads us to consider what the status of civil provincial capital meant for local communities. Did they embrace the imperial system, or did they have their own priorities in responding to central power? For the imperial authorities, in laws and some administrative texts, there is a conception, from the late 3rd-early 4th c., that one city per province is a designated *metropolis* or "first city of (province *x*)" where a civil governor and his officials would reside. This is clearest in the legislation of Justinian, in laws creating new provinces, but it was not necessarily an innovation. Comparable 4th c. constitutions were likely weeded from older law collections.[15] A sharp awareness of the location of administration is visible earlier, not just in the canons of the Council of *Nicea* of 325. It can be seen in 5th c. writers such as Priscus, Olympiodorus, and Theodoret, who have precise information about *metropoleis*, even for cities in the West, despite these authors coming from the East.[16] In the last case, we can suspect the use of *notitiae*. These texts, with a clear administrative purpose, are unambiguous about the organisation of the system, with one city per province being designated as *metropolis*, put always top of provincial lists, whilst other cities came in varied positions.[17] The lists may have been created by palatine officials, sending imperial letters or receiving tax returns. Malalas, probably an *officialis* of the vicar for *Oriens*, writing in the later 6th c., gives the most information about the organisation of provincial capitals. But he is not alone in having a precise understanding that a *metropolis* is where the governor of a province and his *officium* are based.

If we move away from documents or people with ties to imperial administration, into the writing of regional elites, we discover that, despite occasional recognition of the imperial system, there is little interest in enumerating its seats. Intellectuals had other ways of describing cities, usually in praise, and other ways of ranking them, which mix *metropoleis* and non-*metropoleis* together, sometimes in lowly rankings. This can be seen in both Ausonius' *Ordo Urbium Nobilium*, and the Antioch-based *Expositio Totius Mundi et Gentium*. For Salvian, describing Carthage, the presence of a governor and his staff came third in the scale of recognition, after the military and educational institutions. This replicates the mentality of Libanius: in his oration on Antioch, the council is the heart of the city, holding governors in check and providing qualified candidates for these posts.[18] Other **e**astern elites also saw the

[15] Justinianic legislation: Justinianus, *Novellae* 16 (535), 66 (538), 95 (539). A comparable late 4th c. law is suggested by Libanius, *Orationes* 19.62 relating to the *metropolis* of the province of Honorias, far from Antioch.
[16] Priscus on Milan (*metropolis* of *Liguria*) and *Aquileia* (*metropolis* of *Venetia*): Priscus Panites, *Frag.* 17 and 66a; Olympiodorus on *Rhegium* in *Calabria*: Frag. 16. Precise administrative awareness: Theodoretus Cyrrhensis, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 1.1, 2.7, 2.20, 2.7, 2.25; 2.26, 5.17, 5.28.
[17] On the relative order of cities see n. 13.
[18] Literary intellectuals praising cities: Ausonius, *Ordo Urbis nobilium* (only Hispalis [11], Narbo [19] described in relation to provincial government), *Expositio totius Mundi et Gentium* 29–31 places Damascus in 4th c. class with ordinary cities; Carthage: Salvian, *De gubernatione dei* 7.67–68; Antioch: Libanius, *Orationes* 11.133–49, 11.187–88.

system of *metropoleis* in terms of local honours. When *Cappadocia* was divided, what caused distress to Basil was the division of *Caesarea's boule* to elevate a fort to city status.[19] Equally, when Antioch lost metropolitan status after the riot in 387, the loss of governors and *officiales* did not trouble Antiochenes. They only appear when the tale was retold by John of Nikiu in the 7th c.: he saw it as equating with the departure of the "officers of the city" to *Laodicea*. Rather, in 387, Chrysostom's flock were concerned that Antioch, as a *metropolis*, used to be named before other cities in proclamations.[20] Governors, *officiales*, and lawyers could be part of a city, but their presence was also a local measure of relative status.

Thus, we seem to have different imperial and local points of view on the importance of the status of provincial capitals. To authorities, the *metropoleis* were a network for governing cities through legal activity, budgetary oversight, and tax collection. For the locals, it could be just one more title which asserted local pre-eminence, just as when *metropolis* implied a "mother city" sending out colonies.[21] One might envisage the imperial view becoming more precise over time, as provincial government became more sedentary. Yet, the evidence suggests that, from the early 4th c., we have rather different perspectives in different writings. This carries on as late as the 6th c. Procopius is often not clear, when he could be, in describing major cities, although sometimes he shows a precise administrative understanding.[22] Furthermore, the title does not always appear in inscriptions inside provincial capitals. *Aphrodisias* uses the title *metropolis* with gusto, but it is not mentioned in inscriptions from Corinth, *Thessalonica*, and *Ptolemais*, and only once at *Apamea*, *Bostra*, *Caesarea Palestinae*, and *Scythopolis*, where late inscriptions are many. Of these cases, two concern a bishop's title; one is uncertain. A building inscription from Gortyn mentions the curator of the *metropolis*. Yet otherwise, as at *Sardis* and *Ephesus*, it is in decrees of governors and emperors that the title is used, not in civic inscriptions. This is in contrast to Early Imperial times, when *Ephesus*,

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[19] Subdivision of *Cappadocia*: Basilius of Caesarea, *Epistulae* 74 esp., 75–76, with also Gregory of Nazianzus, *Epistulae* 47–50, *Orationes* 43.58. Other disputes in *Asia Minor*: Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, 2:881–883.

[20] Antioch in 387: John of Nikiu, *Chronicle* 83 (44); John Chrysostom, *Hom ad pop. Ant.* 17.10–14 (PG 49.1.176).

[21] Petra: Ludwig Koenen, "The carbonized archive from Petra," *JRA* 9 (1996): 177–188, here 187; "Mother city" etc.: David Magie, *Roman Rule in Asia Minor to the End of the Third Century after Christ* (Princeton Legacy Library) (Princeton, N.J., 1950), 636; Deininger, *Die Provinziallandtage*, 143 n. 5; Christopher P. Jones, *The Roman World of Dio Chrysostom* (Loeb Classical Monographs) (Cambridge, 1978), index on *metropolis*. TLL 8.896.

[22] Understandings more precise: Haensch, *Capita provinciarum*, 18–27. *Hadrumetum*, not described as *metropolis* despite opportunities: Procopius of Caesarea, *The Vandalic war* 1.17 (with *Leptis*), 2.23, 2.27. Inconsistent titling: Procopius of Caesarea, *De aedificiis* 4.1.17–27–1.4.25; Procopius of Caesarea, *Anecdota* 18.38–42. Clarity: Procopius of Caesarea, *The Gothic war* 2.23.6; Procopius of Caesarea, *The Vandalic war* 2.20.30, 2.20.31.

Sardis, *Tarsus*, and *Anazarbus* happily used the designation on honorific inscriptions and milestones.[23]

Western cities show even less little enthusiasm for the title of *metropolis* or other aspects of Roman provincial government in their inscriptions. The holding of diocesan games, and in one case provincial games, is something that is well-attested in this region, but pride in the status of provincial capital seems somewhat absent.[24] In inscriptions where one might expect it to be present, local identities and priorities seem to eclipse the development of provincial government. In *Italia Suburbicaria*, where ecclesiastical provinces were entirely absent, it is very difficult to see any consciousness of the status of *metropolis*. It is almost as if provincial capitals did not really exist in this region, with evidence for peripatetic judicial activity outside of designated *metropoleis*, and no epigraphic evidence of governors active in many of them.[25] This is not necessarily without consequences for the nature of provincial administration. We see from the writings of Libanius in *Oriens* and from inscriptions in Greece that governors were very closely involved in supervising city councils in a way that does not seem to be visible in Italy or Africa, where more initiative seems to have lain with the city council.[26]

Provincial Government in Late Antique Africa

The provinces of the diocese of Africa were largely set in early 4th c., by the time of Verona List of 314, with *Mauretania* falling into three rather than two provinces (*Tingitana* as before, *Caesariensis*, and *Sitifensis* split off the latter), one of which the first was set into the

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[233] *Metropolis* in inscriptions, the East: *Apamea*: Jean-Charles Balty, "Le groupe épiscopal d'Apamée dit 'Cathédrale de l'est'. Premières recherches," in *Apamée de Syrie. Bilan des recherches archéologiques 1969-71*, ed. J. Balty (Brussels, 1972), 187–195, here 192–193; Bostra: IGLS 13.9128–9137, 13.9442; *Scythopolis*: Gideon Mazor, "The Bet Shean Project: The city center of ancient Bet Shean," *Excavations and Surveys in Israel* 6 (1987–1988): 10–23, here 22; *Caesarea*: GLICM 60; Gortyn: Margherita Guarducci, "Le inscrizioni del pretorio di Gortina," *Rivista del Reale Instituto Archeologia e Storia dell' Arte* 1 (1929): 143–189, here no. 16 and 19; *Ephesus*: *Die Inschriften von Ephesos*, 4:1340; 4:1352, *Sardis*: CIG 3467; *Aphrodisias*: "splendid metropolis of the Aphrodisians / Stauropolitans" (ALA 43, 42), or the "most splendid" (62) or "splendid and well-known metropolis of the Aphrodisians" (65), "splendid metropolis" (17), "the metropolis" (20, 23, 28, 62). Earlier uses: IvAnazarbos 6 (AD 222–235), 11 (217–218), 18 (204/205–249).

[24] Diocesan games in the West: Arles: Law of AD 418 to PP, *Ep*. 8, envisages attendance of provincial governors. This assembly is known up to AD 469: Sidonius Apollinaris, *Epistulae* 1.3.3, 1.7.4, 2.1.3; Spain: CIL VI 1729 (AD 364); Africa: *Codex Theodosianus* 12.1.176 (AD 413), 16.10.20 (AD 415); André Chastagnol, "Sur les 'sacerdotales' africains à la veille de l'invasion vandal," in *Atti del V convegno di studio, Sassari, 11-13 dicembre 1987*, ed. Attilio Mastino (L'Africa Romana 5) (Sassari, 1988), 101–110.

[25] Continuity of assize tour in Samnium suggested by three *secretaria* outside *metropolis* of Beneventum: CIL IX 2957; Marcello Gaggiotti, *Athenaeum* (Pavia, 1978), 159, 163 no. 60; alongside a tribunal at *Saepinum* (twice) CIL IX 2448; AE (1930) no. 120.

[26] Governors and city councils, Oriens: John H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, *Antioch: City and Imperial Administration in the Later Roman Empire* (Oxford Scholarly Classics) (Oxford, 1972), 130–134, 143, 154, 167, 191; Greece: Ariel Lewin, "Urban public building from Constantine to Julian: the epigraphic evidence," in *Recent Research in Late Antique Urbanism*, ed. Luke Lavan (JRA Supplementary Series 42) (Portsmouth, Rhode Island, 2000), 27–38, here 31–36.

diocese of Spain. *Numidia* was split into two, of which *Militiana* did not last beyond the second or third decade of the 4th c., *Tripolitania* and *Byzacena* were separated off from *Africa Proconsularis*, now largely confined to the densely populated area around Carthage, where a proconsul resided, forcing the vicar to seek another base. Where is not entirely clear.[27] There were no fixed ecclesiastical capitals, although the see of Carthage was pre-eminent across the whole civil diocese. The Vandals retained proconsuls in Carthage, but of other governors there is no trace. The reconquest regime restored the African provinces in 534, along with a praetorian prefect. There is only a single *Mauretania* in Justinian's regulation, which lists 7 provinces, without the province of *Mauretania Prima*, occupied only in 539. Procopius describes it then as based on Sitifis but it may never have been reactivated. The provinces of 534 were *Numidia*, Carthage, *Byzacium*, *Tripolis*, plus *Sardinia* and *Tingis*. This remnant of *Tingitana* was brought under the prefecture, with one garrison being posted at *Septem* (Ceuta), the only surviving city. Some reorganisation took place by the time of George of Cyprus, later in the 6th c., whose lists show that part of *Mauretania Sitifensis* was transferred to *Caesariensis* and *Numidia*, whilst the Balearic Islands and Spain were grouped with *Tingis*.[28] According to Justinian's regulation, the prefect's capital was in Carthage, displacing the proconsul, whose province was now run by a consular governor. However, military governors were more prominent initially, with an Exarch existing from the time of Maurice, with authority over both military and civil matters.[29]

The identifications of *metropoleis* are not based on any direct lists, as in many other parts of the empire, but on a variety of sources. The capitals of *Mauretania Caesariensis*, *Mauretania Sitifensis*, and *Numidia Cirtensis* were likely the cities after which the provinces were named, something that Procopius confirms. Furthermore, under the reconquest reorganisation, Justinian describes the *duces limitis* of *Mauretania* and *Numidia* as being initially based in Caesarea and Cirta respectively; this probably indicates that Cirta too was reinstated as a capital.[30] Carthage had long been the seat of the proconsul of Africa. The capital of *Tripolitania* was probably *Leptis*, given the huge concentration of statues to emperors, civil

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[27] Provinces of Africa: *Laterculus Veronensis* 12. Carthage with Proconsul: Salvian, *De gubernatione dei* 7.67–68. Vicar elsewhere: at *Leptis Magna* (*Tripolitania*), vicars' statues to emperors twice and received dedications to themselves four times: Claude Lepelley, ed., *Les cités de l'Afrique romaine au bas-empire: Notices d'histoire municipale*, 2 vols. (Études augustiniennes) (Paris, 1979–1981), 2:343–346; LSA–2151 and LSA–2155, LSA–2171–74.

[28] Restoration of African provinces*: Codex Justinianus* 1.27.1.12 (AD 534). For proconsuls under the Vandals: Jones and Martindale, *The Prosopography*, vol. 2; Septem: *Codex Justinianus* 1.27.2.2. George of Cyprus 33–35/638–683a.

[29] Praetorian prefect's capital at Carthage: *Codex Justinianus* 1.27.1.10–11. Praetorian prefects and Exarchs: Denys Pringle, *The Defence of Byzantine Africa from Justinian to the Arab Conquest*, vol. 1 (BAR International Series) (Oxford, 1981), 41–42 and 51–52. On *Mauretania* I: n. 30.

[30] Sitifis as *metropolis* of *Mauretania Prima*: Procopius of Caesarea, *The Vandalic war* 2.20.30. *Mauretania Caesarea* is 'first city' of other province: Ibid. 2.20.31. Duces: *Codex Justinianus* 1.27.2.1a.

governors, and military officials found here. *Leptis* was also initially the residence of the Justinianic *dux limitis Tripolitaniae*. *Lambeisis* or nearby *Thamugadi*, was probably the original capital of tetrarchic *Numidia*, as it had been the camp of the Legio III Augusta, which the governor of the single 3rd c. province of *Numidia* controlled.[31] *Thamugadi* perhaps continued as capital when the short-lived province of *Numidia Militiana* was created. This province was the counterpart to the new *Numidia Cirtensis*, naturally headed by *Cirta* from 305–306 or a little earlier, before the city was refounded as *Constantina* between 312 and 320.[32] The *metropolis* of *Byzacena* is given as *Hadrumetum* by Procopius. It was renamed *Justinianopolis* after the reconquest, whereas other renamed African cities only received imperial suffixes. Earlier, a statue to a governor by the *ordo* and people of *Hadrumetum* was erected at his hometown of *Capua* (330–395). However, within the province, it hosts none of the two dedications to governors, coming from near *Thysdrus* and from *Sufetula*. The latter was by the council and *ordo* of *Sergemes*, not *Sufetula*, which might suggest an earlier capital here.[33] Indeed, the greatest concentration of late building inscriptions comes from *Sufetula* (5 out of 10) not unexcavated *Hadrumetum* (0).[34]

Table 1: Provinces and their Capitals

Province name	**Attestation in *PLRE***	**Capital, known or presumed**
Africa Proconsularis / Zeugitana	whole period until 565/78	Carthage (known)
Byzacena	293/305 to 383/408	*Hadrumetum*?
Tripolitania	c. 303 to 399	*Leptis Magna*?
Numidia	268–269 to 303	*Thamugadi*?
Numidia Cirtensis	305–306	*Cirta*

[31] *Lambeisis* as a likely capital: Yvette Duval, *Lambèse chrétienne: la gloire et l'oubli. De la Numidie romaine à l'Ifrîqiya* (Paris, 1995), esp. 99–100. *Lepcis* is the only city listed in *Tripolitania* in Orosius 1.2.90 (thanks I. Tantillo).

[32] *Cirta Constantina* refoundation: Lepelley, *Les cités*, 2:388–391; André Berthier, "Constantina: le changement de nom, de Domitius Alexander à Constantin," *Recueil de Constantine* 72 (1969–1971): 79–88. Trial at *Cirta* before the governor in AD 320: Yvette Duval, "Le gouverneur de Numidie en sa capitale. Le lieu et les acteurs du procès de l'évêque de Cirta en 320," *Antiquité Tardive* 6 (1998): 193–207.

[33] *Hadrumetum* as *metropolis* of *Byzacena*: Procopius of Caesarea, *De aedificiis* 6.6.1; *Capua* statue: LSA–1935; *Capua* (*Campania*) CIL X 3846 (AD 330–395); *Thysdrus*: AE (1966) 518 = LSA–2310 (AD 373–374); *Sufetula* statue: LSA–2308 (AD 280–400).

[34] *Hadrumetum* as *Justinianopolis*: Council of Constantinople 553, listed in absentees: Jean Louis Maier, *L'épiscopat de l'Afrique romaine, vandale, et byzantine* (Bibliotheca Helvetica Romana 11) (Rome, 1973), 78, 151; Corippus, *Iohannis* 4.8–11, 64, 75; Names of all cities: Pringle, *The Defence*, 171–313.

Numidia	313 to 367/374	*Cirta*?
Numidia Constantina	367/375 to 388/392	*Cirta Constantina*
Numidia	409/423	*Cirta*?
Numidia Militiana	303	*Lambeisis / Thamugadi*?
Mauretania Caesariensis	263	*Iol Caesarea*
Mauretania Sitifiensis	315 to 388/392	*Sitifis*
Mauretania Tingitana	277–280 mid-late 4th c.	*Tingis*

Most information on African political life is from 284–430, after which inscriptions stop, around the time of the Vandal conquest. These inscriptions are more abundant than anywhere else in the empire, and attest to much civic activity, in which civic titles were remembered, magistrates' titles celebrated, and far less visibility was accorded to governors, who appear in building inscriptions as little more than a dating formula, the work on the ground being credited to local actors, whether acting from private benefaction or carrying out the wishes of cities using civic revenues. Nonetheless, some governors are visible in terms of modest actions, that seem to go beyond the action of city: one building a *basilica vestiaria*, at both *Cuicul* and *Thamugadi*, and restoring a *mithraeum*, another establishing measuring tables in two cities. These small acts seem like personal initiatives, though without private finance.[35] The use of titles derived from provincial government is rare, confined to the description of governors, with occasional use of the year of the province. The greatest enthusiasm for provincial government is shown at *Leptis Magna*, but even here the title of *metropolis* is not used. Nonetheless, it is clear from the provincial Church Council of *Milev* in 402 that the system of civil capitals was understood: one copy of the minutes had to be sent to the seat of the ecclesiastical primate, the other to the archive of *Numidia* in the *metropolis* of *Constantina*.[36] Furthermore, some traces of central imperial investment can be seen in some of the provincial capitals, in the form of large-scale secular public building projects, perhaps designed to better establish them as regional political hubs.

[35] Governors in action, *basilica vestiaria*, *Cuicul*: CIL VIII 20156 = ILS 5536 = ILAlg 2.3.7878 = LBIRNA 733 = AE (1888) 30; Timgad *consularis* of *Numidia*, Jones and Martindale, *The Prosopography*, 1:34–35 Publilius Caeonius Caecina Albinus 8, dated AD 364–367 built a *forum vestiarium adiutricianum*: Stéphane Gsell, "Notes d'archéologie algérienne," *Bulletin du Comité des travaux historiques* 1 (1901): 308–323, no. 10; AE (1909) 4 = AE (1998) 1583; Luke Lavan, *Public Space in the Late Antique City*, vol. 2 (Late Antique Archaeology, Supplementary Series 5) (Leiden, 2021) on both; measuring tables: *Thamugadi* and *Cuicul* by Jones and Martindale, *The Prosopography*, 1:326 Flavius Herodes 4, governed 394–395, for wine, barley, and corn; Lepelley, *Les* cités, 2:447; AE (1954) no. 155 = Henriette Doisy, "Inscriptions latines de Timgad," *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome, Antiquité* 65 (1953): 99–137, here 133–136 no. 25; Lepelley, *Les* cités, 2:408 n. 28; AE (1921) no. 46. Mithraeum, *Cirta* (restoration): ILAlg. 2.541 (364–367 AD).

[36] Acts to *metropolis*: *Concilium Milevitanum*, canon 86.

At *Sitifis*, an amphitheatre was built in AD 303–305, specifically its *cavea*, perhaps suggesting a rebuild. Although the inscription is damaged, it seems to have been dedicated by the Province of *Mauretania Sitifensis*, so by the provincial assembly, which could meet here.[37] This bombastic text was dedicated for the *adventus* of the Augustus Maximian in the city. It seems likely that this building, of which other parts might have been funded by an imperial gift, was specifically commissioned as part of the establishment of the provincial capital, as perhaps was its circus, an exceptional investment, that has been dated archaeologically to the 4th c. This put the city on a par with a very small number of other cities in Africa that had circuses, of which 4 out of 6 were provincial capitals in Late Antiquity: *Iol Caesarea*, *Dougga*, *Thysdrus*, *Carthage*, *Hadrumetum*, and *Leptis Magna*.[38] *Sitifis* was also one of the very few cities to be given a fortification before the Vandal conquest, a privilege extended only to 11 cities, of which 5 were late provincial capitals.[39] The expansion of the urban area of the city is also confirmed by archaeology, in a new quarter on its NW side, of the mid-4th c., when a new orthogonal street grid was laid out.[40] We also hear of the portico of a *praetorium* being restored, likely at the personal expenditure of a governor (without mention of the city). This confirms that *Sitifis* had been provided with a set of buildings appropriate for a provincial capital.[41] Here, the impact of the new status on the city seems both clear and substantial.

At *Cirta Constantina*, a site which is less-known archaeologically, we also have evidence of imperial favour, after it was renamed to honour Constantine, who seems to have restored the city after it was ruined in a siege under Maxentius in 310, an event which suggests that this city too had fortifications at this date.[42] What exactly was restored must remain unclear, but it was the only city in the province that received such treatment. The lone work on secular public monuments which we hear about comes from an inscription of 362/363 which records work evidently begun under Constantius II, for a *basilica Constantiana*, plus tetrapylon and porticoes, erected by the vicar of Africa, without reference to a city, so perhaps as an imperial

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[37] *Sitifis*, amphitheatre: AE (1992) no. 1908 = AE (1949) no. 258 = AE (1928) no. 39.

[38] Circus: Paul-Albert Fevrier and A. Gaspary, "L'hippodrome de Sétif," *Archeologia* 8 (1966): 28–31. Other circuses in Africa: John H. Humphrey, *Roman Circuses: Arenas for Chariot Racing* (Los Angeles, 1986), 295–336.

[39] LR or earlier urban fortifications: see n. 48 (Carthage) and Pringle, *The Defence*, 119 (list), 171 (Carthage), 187–188 (*Iol Caesarea*), 188–191 (*Calama*), 195–195 (*Cirta*) walled during Vandal invasion in Salvian, *De gubernatione dei* 6.69, 199–200 (*Hadrumetum*) where Procopius of Caesarea, *De aedificiis* 4.23.13–16 says Vandals destroyed it, 200–201 (*Hippo Regius*), 208–212 (*Leptis*), 223–225 (*Sabratha*) *De aedificiis* 6.4.13 says Vandals destroyed it, 238–242 (*Theveste*), 243–244 (*Thubusriscu Bure*), 255–256 (*Choba*).

[40] New quarter: Paul-Albert Février, *Fouilles de Sétif: les basiliques chrétiennes du quartier nord-ouest* (Paris, 1965).

[41] *Praetorium* portico restored by praeses, without city mention: LBIRNA 805 = AE (1930) 46 (AD 300–399).

[42] *Cirta*, siege of: Zosimos, *Historia nova* 2:12 and 2:14; Aurelius Victor, *Liber de Caesaribus* 40.17–19 and *Epitome de Caesaribus* 40.2 and 40.6

gift.[43] The inscription has been interpreted as referring to a Christian basilica, but this is unlikely.[44] It is inscribed on a cross-hall tetrapylon, in three copies, and does not have any Christian references. Furthermore, it is paralleled by a fragmentary inscription found at Tunis (Medjez el Bab) which records works carried out on a *Consta]ntianam(?) basilicam*, this time through a curator, Frolius Caecilianus. It sounds like a new building (*fecit*).[45] This text was found in a field around Tunis but surely came from nearby Carthage. The name of the basilica implies that it was named after Constantius I or one of the sons of Constantine, when they were Augusti, so either AD 305–306 or 337–361. Given that the two inscriptions are exceptional in mentioning a *basilica Constantia*, it seems likely that we have civil basilicas, to hold the law courts, provided for two provincial capitals by imperial initiative, under Constantius II. Elsewhere in *Cirta*, the base of a bronze statue from the forum of the city, set up by the *ordo* of *Milev* to honour a governor in 340–350, shows that the city was regarded as having a special role in the province: it was the correct place to honour a governor. There were perhaps once many more such statues here.[46]

If we move onto Carthage, we have rather clearer information on the operation of provincial government. We know a little about the *praetorium* of the proconsul, which seems likely to have taken the same location, on/adjacent to the forum on the *Byrsa*, as we know that the Vandal palace did, where Belisarius and subsequent imperial generals took up residence.[47] The city was one of the few places in Africa with a city wall, which had been built around 425, the gift of Theodosius II.[48] It also shows some slight expansion in its urban area, on the fringes of the city, in the late 4th-early 5th c.[49] This was the seat of the diocesan games, as imperial

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[43] Tetrapylon, *basilica Constantiana* in 362/363: ILAlg. 2.624 A–B = CIL VIII 7037 = LBIRNA 724–725. Jones and Martindale, *The Prosopography*, 1:126–127 Claudius Avitianus 2.

[44] Christian basilica: Noel Lenski, *Constantine and the Cities: Imperial Authority and Civic Politics. Empire and After* (Philadelphia, 2016), 143.

[45] Tunis, Basilica Constantiana: CIL VIII 9997 (between AD 305 and 361) = LBIRNA 721; Lepelley, *Les* cités, 258.

[46] Statue for governor of *Numidia* by the *ordo* of *Milev*, set up in forum of *Constantina*: CIL VIII 7013 = ILAlg. 2.590 = ILS 1235 = Lepelley, *Les cités*, 439 = LSA–2327 (AD 343).

[47] Carthage, *praetorium* with tribunal: Pontius of Carthage, *Vita Cypriani* 12.3. Tribunal on forum in raised area: Augustinus, *Confessiones* 6.9. Vandal and later palace, with location on a hill, fitting the *Byrsa* forum: Victor of Vita 3.32 (5.7). Chapel to the Theotokos in the Palace: Procopius of Caesarea, *De aedificiis* 6.5.9; Procopius of Caesarea, *The Vandalic War* 2.14.37.

[48] Carthage, city wall: dated to AD 425, by both the *Gallic Chronicle of 452* 98 (AD 425) and by British excavations to the first quarter of the 5th c., and a bit later in the Italian excavations, a contextual date from coins and pottery: Andrea Carandini et al., "Gli scavi italiani a Cartagine: rapporto preliminare delle campagne 1973-1977," *Quaderni di archeologia della Libia* 13 (1983): 7–61, here 45 and 55–57; Henry R. Hurst and Stephen. P. Roskams, "Interpretation and chronology," in *Excavations at Carthage: the British Mission*, vol. 1.1, ed. Henry R. Hurst and Stephen P. Roskams (Sheffield, 1984), 13–27, here 16.

[49] Urban expansions: Carandini et al., "Gli scavi italiani a Cartagine," 14 with 52–56, with 54; Colin M. Wells and Edith M. Wightman, "Canadian Excavations at Carthage, 1976 and 1978: the Theodosian Wall, Northern Sector," *Journal of Field Archaeology* 7.1 (1980a): 43–63, here 57 and Colin M. Wells and Edith M. Wightman, "Carthage,

constitutions make clear. They were perhaps held in the amphitheatre, where, in the late empire, one *sacerdotalis provinciae Africae* had his seat amongst *principales* of Carthage and other *honorati*.[50] Numerous textual references note the presence of the proconsul and the visible role he played in civic public rituals in the city: whether in the forum, street, or in the theatre.[51] The post remained a crowning achievement for the Roman subjects of Vandal Africa in the years that followed the conquest. The absence of all but 1 gubernatorial statue base from Carthage, alongside only 6 emperors, 1 curator, and a few others, might suggest that a systematic clearance was ordered at some point. However, an anecdote of Quodvultdeus also records an alternative tradition of honouring proconsuls: the incumbent raised up ivory tablets in the forum with the names of his predecessors, to the cheers or boos of the crowd.[52]

The most-extensively excavated "capital" from Africa is *Leptis Magna*, notable for its 4th c. fortifications, alongside a good number of repairs to secular public buildings.[53] We are also blessed by numerous inscriptions, many of which relate to the workings of the provincial administration, especially those found on the Severan Forum. Here, the epigraphic landscape is well-preserved, with statue monuments of the 4th to early 5th c. surviving in meaningful display positions. This is despite the forum having been silted in the 5th c., and a fortress having been established within its walls after the reconquest.[54] We find dedications to serving or former civil governors (6), vicars (3), proconsuls (1), military governors (3), and provincial priests (4) honoured in organised manner, frequently as patrons. These personalities were given statues. They were all set in or against the eastern portico, as if there was a special centre of meaning here to memorialise governors, whilst other parts of the forum were reserved for statues of emperors, or deifications of abstract concepts. What is so surprising is that, despite this activity taking place, there is no mention of the provincial assembly. Rather these men are honoured by the *ordo*, the *ordo* and *populus*, or the *Leptimagnenses*.[55] This applies even to a *flamen*

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northern section: the Theodosian Wall, 1979 excavations," *Echos du Monde Classique / Classical News and Views* 24.1 (1980b): 11–18, here 11, 17; dating in Lavan, *Public Space*, vol. 2, appendix B7.

[50] Carthage, diocesan games: see n. 24 above; Christophe Hugoniot, "Les noms d'aristocrates et de notables gravés sur les gradins de l'amphithéâtre de Carthage au Bas-Empire," *Antiquités Africaines* 40.1 (2004): 205–258, here 228–229.

[51] Proconsul / legates at Carthage, in forum, streets, theatre: Quodvultdeus, *Gloria Sanctorum* 13.15; Victor of Vita 3.32 (5.7); Augustinus, *Confessiones* 4.3.5.

[52] Acclamations on tablets: Quodvultdeus, *Gloria Sanctorum* 13.15.

[53] *Leptis*, City wall: see n. 48. Civic building inscriptions: Lepelley, *Les* cités, 2:337–341.

[54] Epigraphic landscape: Ignazio Tantillo and Francesca Bigi, eds., *Leptis Magna. Una città e le sue iscrizioni in epoca tardoromana* (Cassino, 2010), 176–178 (for Severan Forum) and table 1 (map). See also Lavan, *Public Space*, map E7c, with vol. 2 appendix K9.

[55] *Leptis* honours by city on Severan Forum, a selection: LSA–2206, 2183, 2188, 2184, 2179, 2200, 2202, 2172, 2178, 2177, 2186, 2176, 2189, with further references. L. Aemilius Quintus flamen perpetuus, by the *ordo* and *populus* of *Sabratha*, on the decree of the whole province: LSA–2880; at *Leptis Magna*, by the *ordo*: LSA–2206; at *Gigthis*, by *ordo*: LSA–2332 [all AD 383–388]. One of the *sacerdotales* is entitled as *sacerdos provinciae* by *ordo* and *populus* of *Leptis*: LSA–2202. Dated to AD 303–350.

perpetuus who successfully directed an embassy for the province and had statues erected here, at *Gigthis* and at *Sabratha*, in 383–388. At Sabratha, we hear he was rewarded following a decree of the whole province [the assembly] but this detail is omitted at *Leptis*. Did the inhabitants of *Leptis* really want to be a provincial capital? Perhaps the rank of provincial capital was a minor ornament when cities were already great. Indeed, Carthage was to Salvian "a city with proconsular dignity", not a proconsul's city.[56]

Monument Concentrations

We can now consider the overall distribution of civic public building between ordinary cities and *metropoleis*. Laws of the 4th c. imply that civic resources were sometimes transferred from lesser cities to the provincial capital by a governor, creating a centralisation of amenities.[57] This can be addressed from an empire-wide gazetteer of late civic building work, which I have assembled over the last 6 years.[58] From this, we can note concentrations of building work in and outside of provincial capitals, and place Africa within a broader picture of regional variation. Certain types of structure seem strongly associated with imperial or provincial capitals, whilst others are widely spread without a bias towards one type of city.

The most concentrated monument is the tetrapylon, with 17 out of 24 examples being found in imperial capitals, 3 in provincial capitals, and 4 in ordinary cities. Africa provides one example, from the *metropolis* of *Cirta* and none from elsewhere. Honorific columns in urban public space were also greatly concentrated in imperial capitals, with 23 out of 34 examples, with 7 in provincial capitals, and 4 in other cities/*bourgades*, with a bias towards *Asia Minor* in the latter two categories. Africa had none. Similarly, fora/agorai, were built anew or comprehensively rebuilt some 22 times in imperial capitals, as against 3 in provincial capitals, and 5 in ordinary cities. The only new fora in Africa come from Carthage, in each case likely linked to royal and imperial statements. Other monuments, equally part of civic representation, were visibly concentrated in provincial capitals, with new-built colonnaded streets [not part of new urban quarters], built in 79 out of 107 cases in provincial capitals, and 15 in imperial capitals, with 13 in ordinary cities/*bourgades*, notably Athens (2), *Sagalassos* (3), and *Abu Mina* (3). In Africa, 2 out of 3 came from cities which were provincial capitals or suspected of being so: *Cirta* and *Thamugadi*, the latter being in 290–293, when the city could have been the seat of *Numidia Militiana*. Finally, the repair of monumental fountains is greatly concentrated

[56] Carthage "proconsular dignity": Salvian, *De gubernatione dei* 7.67–68.
[57] Transferred to *metropoleis*: statues, marble, columns (*Codex Theodosianus* 15.1.14, AD 365); spectacles (15.5.1 AD 372); chariot horses or charioteers (ibid. 15.5.3, AD 409).
[58] Lavan, *Public Space*, vol. 2.

in provincial capitals, with only 10 out of 24 examples found outside of them. This is especially true in the East. Yet, in Africa, the 4 examples known do not come from provincial capitals. Similar patterns also exist for new monumental fountains, where 10 out of 28 come from provincial capitals, although the 5 examples for Africa are all from ordinary cities. Finally, entertainment buildings seem to have been repaired more often in *metropoleis*: my information is not complete for the whole empire, but in Africa 6 out of 18 examples of building work were concentrated in provincial capitals.

This information suggests that it was important in provincial capitals to put on a show to visitors, perhaps to visiting dignitaries as well as host games. However, it is also necessary to consider those monuments which show no such clustering. Of monumental arches, 15 out of 53 examples are from imperial capitals, whilst only 8 occur in provincial capitals, and 30 in ordinary cities. The 18 examples from Africa are all found in ordinary cities. The commemoration of imperial victory or the safety of the emperors, through these monuments, seems not to have been a priority in cities under a governor's watch. Comprehensive restorations of *fora*/*agorai* are also found in ordinary cities in Africa in 9 out of 10 cases, with *Iol Caesarea* being the only capital to feature. This forms a contrast to the East, where provincial capitals predominate for restorations, with 7 in ordinary cities, 14 in provincial capitals, and 11 in Constantinople. Of city council chambers, no provincial capital in the West has a *curia*/*bouleuterion* restored, all come from ordinary cities, excepting work in Rome; whether in Britain (2), or Italy (1), or Africa (7), all examples are from ordinary cities. In the East, 7 out of 9 cases are from ordinary cities, excepting work in Constantinople.

It seems that in Africa, the organs of civic government, focused on the forum and the curia, were little affected. These essential political buildings guarded the independence of cities and were invested heavily during the late 3rd to early 5th c. Ordinary cities were also free to honour the emperors with arches, without this being thought inappropriate. I have left aside the location of the *praetoria* of governors here, which elsewhere I have shown to be strongly concentrated in *metropoleis*, of which Africa was no exception. There were undoubtedly other offices and stores that have escaped our attention, which we can assume were part of the apparatus of government in such centres. However, the monumental impact of the law court does seem to be visible in Africa. For new civil basilicas, attested by archaeology and epigraphy, only 2 out of 8 across the empire were located in provincial capitals, but these cases (above) came from *Cirta* and Carthage. Of restorations, only 7 out of 30 in the West were in *metropoleis*, against 11 out of 19 in the East, mostly in *Ephesus* and *Aphrodisias*. Again, Africa bucks the trend, with *Iol Caesarea* and *Leptis Magna* providing 2 examples out of 5 of those

repaired. Although many cities clearly valued their civil basilicas as market buildings, as my wider study on *Public Space* demonstrates, it is possible that in Africa the setting of the law court inside the basilicas in the provincial capitals led to more investment.

Statue Dedications

The habit of dedicating honorific statues is well-attested across most of the empire, being especially a feature of the late 3rd to early 5th c., as has been demonstrated by the Oxford *Last Statues of Antiquity*. The potential of their open access database, which has replaced my own, is very great.[59] It allows a comparison, by diocese, of the places (metropolitan or not), in which statues of different kinds were dedicated. This is best done in terms of percentages, as the statue habit varies in intensity, with the quantity of inscriptions from Africa being almost overwhelming in number. I will look only at the two most common types, those of emperors (commonly dedicated by cities or by governors) and those of governors (nearly always dedicated by cities). Not all regions have these statues (Britain, *Viennensis*, and *Pontus*). Rome and Constantinople are also excluded. The figures give impressions not hard facts, given that they sometimes rely on very few bases.

Of imperial statues, we find that eastern dioceses have a very high percentage of dedications in provincial capitals, 65% in Egypt, 71% in *Oriens*, and 57% in *Asia Minor*. *Macedonia*, which includes Greece, had rather less, at 25%, as did *Dacia* at 29%. The Balkans figures are comparable to western dioceses of *Italia Annonaria* at 20%, Gaul at 38%, and Africa at 21%. Otherwise, *Pannonia* and *Hispania* reached higher figures with 55% and 57% respectively. At the bottom end, *Italian Suburbicaria*, around Rome, managed just 3%, with 67 out of 69 imperial statues being found outside *metropoleis*, just as Thrace had managed 0% of its 2 statues, in the neighbourhood of Constantinople. Of governors' statues, the picture is even more exaggerated for the East, although numbers are lower, 100% of those in Egypt being in *metropoleis*, 80% in *Oriens*, 69% in *Asia Minor*, 44% in *Macedonia*, and 100% in *Dacia*. The first and last of these figures should not be given much weight as they are based on single dedications, but elsewhere in the East the numbers are respectable. In the West, where we have figures, the concentrations of governors' statues are also more than emperors: *Italia*

[59] See http://laststatues.classics.ox.ac.uk/, consulted 26th April 2021. Previous African analyses: Lavan, *Provincial Capitals*, and Gabriel de Bruyn and Carlos Machado, "North Africa," in *The Last Statues of Antiquity*, ed. Roland Ralph Redfern Smith and Bryan Ward-Perkins (Oxford, 2016), 56–68. Also Ignazio Tantillo, "La trasformazione del paesaggio epigrafico nelle città dell'Africa romana, con particolare riferimento al caso di Leptis Magna (Tripolitana)," in *The Epigraphic Culture(s) of Late Antiquity*, ed. Christian Witschel and Carlos Machado (Stuttgart, 2017), 213–272 which the author kindly showed me, and which recognises the prominence of late provincial capitals (220–224).

Suburbicaria has 22% in *metropoleis*, whilst Africa is at 51%, and *Hispania* at 75%, though the last is based on only 4 entries. This all suggests that *metropoleis* in the East were having a stronger pull on political culture than in the West, and the imperial capitals could lead to a flattening of hierarchy in their surrounding territory. But even in *Italia Suburbicaria*, the habit of honouring governors in their capitals can be seen around such centres as *Capua* in *Campania* and *Beneventum* in *Samnium*.

Africa would appear at first to be a mid-range western diocese, in terms of its statue distribution. But inspection of the data at a provincial level reveals severe local variations. There are exceptional numbers in *Proconsularis*, and a dearth in *Byzacena's Hadrumetum*, where no statue inscriptions are known in the *metropolis* (0/20). We know this is caused by lack of excavation in *Hadrumetum*, as building inscriptions are also unknown. However, Carthage holds 11% (11/100) for *Proconsularis* which matches its 10% of late building inscriptions. In this province, the local political culture was exceptionally robust, and not quick to engage with higher structures. Local cities survived as a focus of honours. Elsewhere, a concentration of dedications in capitals is clear: in *MSitifensis* 67% (4/6), *Numidia* 17% (12/72), with none from *MCaesariensis*. In *Tripolitania*, the great city of *Leptis* holds 84% (46/55) in the form of 19 emperors and 15 governors. Yet *Tripolitania* reflects the historic dominance of one city, looking comparable to the East. *Numidia* and *MSitifensis* have a more balanced concentration in provincial capitals, comparable to Spain and Gaul.

Table 2: Statue dedications in *metropoleis* / outside, by Diocese (LSA database).

	Emperors	**Imp Family**	**Governors**		**%**	**Emperors**	**Imp Family**	**Governors**
01HIS	18/33	3/4	3/4			55		75
02BRI								
03GAL	6/16					38		0
04VIE								
05ITA	10/49		0			20		0
06ITS	2/69	0/4	13/59			3		22
06ROM								
07AFR	42/202	1/1	18/35			21		51

08PAN	8/14	1/1	0/1			57		
09DAC	2/7	1/1	1/1			29		100
10MAC	17/67	1/2	17/39			25		44
11THR	0/2							
12CPLE								
13ASI	63/110	2/5	41/59			57		69
14PON								
15ORI	24/34	3/3	4/5			71		80
16AEG	11/17		1/1			65		100

Civic Building Overall

Rather than compare absolute numbers of building work, either in total or by type, we can try to measure how the relative concentration of such construction changed across cities between the Principate and Late Antiquity. This seems difficult for Africa, as capitals are not all well-known archaeologically, except *Leptis*, whilst *Cuicul*, *Sufetula*, *Dougga*, and *Thamugadi* stand out as ordinary cities with much going on, where their earlier history is known. But what matters more is that within cities the relative levels of building are noted for each period, especially new building rather than repair. This obviously survives less well for the Early Imperial period than it does for Late Antiquity, after which many sites were abandoned. This is more of a problem, however, for archaeology, rather than for epigraphy, and it is epigraphy that I will use here, focusing on the West, leaning especially, but not exclusively, on the work of Jouffroy.[60] In a few years I do hope to have an archaeological catalogue of all civic building across the late antique world based on archaeology, texts, and inscriptions, but for now what I have is limited in its thematic scope, whereas scholars have created corpuses of civic building inscriptions and texts in the West at least from both the Early Imperial period and Late Antiquity, from which some comparison can be made. Furthermore, COVID-19 has made access to archaeological reports in libraries difficult, whereas epigraphic catalogues are

[60] Main catalogues: Lavan, *Public Space*; Hélène Jouffroy, *La construction publique en Italie et dans l'Afrique romaine* (Études et Travaux 2) (Strasbourg, 1986); Lepelley, *Les cités*, vol. 2; Bryan Ward-Perkins, *From Classical Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages. Urban Public Building in Northern and Central Italy AD 300-850* (Oxford Historical Monographs) (Oxford, 1984); *Inscripciones Latinas de la España romana*, ed. José Vives (Universidad de Barcelona. Departmento de Filología Latina: Publicaciones) (Barcelona, 1971–1972); Douglas Underwood, *(Re)using Ruins: Public Building in the Cities of the Late Antique West, A.D. 300-600* (Late Antique Archaeology Supplementary Series 3) (Leiden, 2019).

increasingly available online. My comments mainly concern Italy and Africa, where the documentation is plentiful, as the inscriptions of Gaul and Britain are few and often poorly dated. The situation in Spain is comparable to these last regions, though it still has only a handful of texts so far. Rome is excluded from all calculations.

For the Early Imperial period, (0 to AD 284), we have many epigraphic texts, running into a few hundred, and some literary records of building, for both Africa and Italy, with Northern Italy (later *Annonaria*) also having a significant number of Republican inscriptions, which are unknown for Southern Italy (*Suburbicaria*) and Africa. This allows us to see the relative concentration of inscriptions in cities that became provincial capitals in Late Antiquity, alongside those cities (Carthage and *Iol Caesarea*) which had been earlier. Superficially, it is striking how little changes over time, in contrast to the picture one might build up from the eastern evidence, notably for *Oriens*. In *Italia Suburbicaria*, the republic saw 12% civic building works were carried out in cities that became later antique *metropoleis*, then 2% of for the Principate and 8% for the Late Empire. In *Italia Annonaria* the urban hierarchy was more stable with 27% in the Republic to 30 % in the Principate 27% in the Late Empire. In Africa, with no Republican inscriptions, the figure is 13% in Principate and 19% in the Late Empire. Thus, we seem to have an already centralised hierarchy in northern Italy, little affected by change, whilst the south of Italy and Africa trend towards a metropolitan concentration, although the former is extremely decentralised. Spain in contrast has 75% (3 out of just 4) late civic building inscriptions coming from provincial capitals, in comparison to 5% (3 out of 61) from all Early Imperial and undated inscriptions.[61]

However, if we go down to a provincial level in Africa, we again see strong contrasts between *Proconsularis* and *Byzacena* against *MSitifensis* and *Tripolitania*. In the latter two provinces there was a noticeable concentration of works, reaching 80% in the late 3rd-5th c. This grew more concentrated over time in the whole diocesis except, in the province of *Caesarea*. Here the capital faded in Late Antiquity. This relative decline can be explained as a former royal capital which had an afterglow under the Principate, as did *Pergamon*, *Samaria* under the early Caesars. The patronage of governors was no match for that of kings.

Table 3: Civic building work in inscriptions and literary texts, distribution over time between late *metropoleis*/other cities. (LR Civil Dioceses, Rome excluded).

Time Period	*Italia*	*Italia Suburbicaria*	Africa

[61] By archaeology, the Spanish concentration is more pronounced with 10/14 cases, as it is for MSitifensis 3/3.

	Annonaria		
>0 BC	6/22	21/180	0/0
%	27	12	0
0–283 AD	16/53	7/294	59/442
%	30	2	13
284–435 AD	8/30	6/75	38/203
%	27	8	19

Table 4: Civil building work, distribution in late *metropoleis*/other cities, for Africa. (*Thamugadi* excluded, 4 examples not located for 0–283)

	AfricaP	*Byzacena*	*Numidia*	*MauretaniaS*	*MauretaniaC*	*Tripolitania*
0 to 283	7/177	0/38	12/137	0/14	4/21	36/51
%	4	0	9	0	19	71
284–435	7/105	0/14	7/48	8/10	1/8	8/10
%	7	0	15	80	13	80
Change %	+3	0	+6	+80	–6	+9

Conclusions

Africa did have a strong network of sedentary provincial capitals, with resident governors and provincial assemblies. Furthermore, cities that became capitals in the diocese received some distinctive new buildings, such as praetoria, and perhaps improvements in civil basilicas and entertainment facilities, a few showy street monuments, and large numbers of statues of governors. These might be dedicated in places reserved for this purpose. The Album of Timgad shows in its album and *ordo salutationis*, not just *sacerdotales*, placed ahead of all municipal magistrates.[62] There must have been many more in the capitals, alongside lawyers. The wider impact in patterns of civic public building is uneven, visible in some provinces, but only slight in *Proconsularis*. We can see work concentrating in provincial capitals but the nerve centres of political life, fora and curia buildings, were maintained in ordinary cities, across the diocese.

[62] *Sacerdotales*/*Coronati* in *album* and *ordo salutationis* of Timgad: André Chastagnol, *L'album municipal de Timgad* (Bonn, 1978).

Urban areas grew at *Sitifis* and Carthage (slightly) but comparanda are few. Indeed, some larger cities, like *Cuicul*, remained prosperous without the status of provincial capital. Furthermore, within epigraphic language, the absence of interest metropolitan status or provincial government is striking. We also have no recorded disputes over the status of *metropolis*. Finally, we see no examples in Africa of the use of provinces as descriptive names of individuals. In the East, we have John the Lydian, John the Cappadocian, and Michael the Syrian to set alongside names such as Anthemius of Tralleis, Isidorus of Miletus, and John of Gaza. But in Africa such provincial names are unknown.[63]

How can we explain the African situation, of a stable provincial network, with limited engagement by local cities in its honours? Could it be that the proximity of Rome to both *Italia Suburbicaria* and Africa sapped the energy from civic rivalries, by providing central patronage and an escape for the ambitious, removing the need for intermediate centres, just as the *Urbs* inhibited metropolitan bishoprics in the former region? Yet the pull of Rome did not prevent the development of *Capua* as a meaningful provincial capital. Such political exhaustion seems appropriate only to some parts of southern Italy. For Africa, the capitals are clearer, and links with Rome not as direct. Alternatively, one could blame Carthage, given that we know some *curiales* from northern Tunisia "graduated" to the curia of the city on completing their local cursus of magistracies.[64] Indeed, once the Vandals took the diocese, civil provincial capitals faded without trace, except at Carthage, matching the hierarchy recognised by the Church. But the lively communities of *Proconsularis* were not extinguished by it. Perhaps we should look for a fundamentally different civic culture to that found in the East, which limited the development of *metropoleis*. Amongst the Greeks, competition was an ethnic trait and relationships of cities to imperial or royal power had been worked out differently, centuries earlier. In Africa, perhaps cities did not really compete with each other. Rather, it was the internal life of these communities that mattered most, as Lepelley's work suggests.[65]

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[63] Names: see Roueché, "Floreat," 220.

[64] *Curiales* 'graduating' to curia of Carthage: Tadeusz Kotula, "Principales almae Karthaginis," *Antiquités Africaines* 14 (1979): 237–245.

[65] Lepelley on civic dynamism: Lepelley, *Les cités*, vol. 1; Claude Lepelley, "The survival and fall of the classical city in Late Roman Africa," in *The City in Late Antiquity*, ed. John Rich (Leicester-Nottingham Studies in Ancient Society) (London, 1992), 50–76.

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