The Contribution of the Kingdom of Numidia to Mediterranean Trade Movement During the Reign of Massinissa (202-148 BC)

Dr. Hafidha Laiadhi
Professor of Ancient History
Departement of History, Faculty of Human and Social Sciences,
University of Mohamed Boudiaf-M'sila, Algeria

Submission Date: 06 Aug 2025 **Approval Date:** 06 Oct 2025 **Release Date:** 06 Nov 2025

Abstract :

The United Kingdom of Numidia, extending from Carthage in the east to the Mulucha River in the west, thrived economically under the reign of King Massinissa. This era was marked by flourishing trade within the Mediterranean basin. The present study aims to delineate the pivotal role that the Kingdom of Numidia played in the commercial sphere and its interactions with surrounding regions during the early half of the 2nd century BC. It underscores the crucial function of trade in fostering economic development and its consequent impact on the political stature of the kingdom within the international arenas of power during this epoch.

Our exploration delves into the antecedents of Numidian trade before Massinissa's reign, his establishment of a dedicated commercial fleet for safeguarding trade routes, the strategic use of ports, and the identification of Numidia's trading partners during his tenure, encompassing regions such as Greece, Italy, the Iberian Peninsula, Gaul, and Egypt. This paper also illuminates Numidia's significant contributions to Mediterranean commerce during this period through the exchange of agricultural and animal products for industrial materials, a subject that continues to captivate archaeological research. This research endeavors to cast further light on these facets, which are often underrepresented in historical narratives.

Key words : Trade, Massinissa, Numidia, The Mediterranean, Exports, Emports

Introduction :

The unified Kingdom of Numidia, spanning from Carthage to the western borders of the Mauri Kingdom at the Mulucha River, experienced remarkable economic prosperity during the reign of King Massinissa from 202 to 148 BC. His governance propelled the Numidian economy to unprecedented heights in agricultural and export-oriented development, with cereals as the primary agricultural output.

This period was characterized by an expansive trade policy with contemporary Mediterranean nations such as Italy, Greece, the Iberian Peninsula, and Gaul. This paper addresses the extent to which the Kingdom of Numidia revitalized Mediterranean trade during Massinissa's rule and explores the principal commodities that were exchanged between Numidia and other Mediterranean regions.

1. The Roots of Trade Before Massinissa:

North Africa's coast has long been a conduit for interaction with Eastern civilizations, despite its challenging terrains and dense woodlands, as evidenced by the simple rural African pottery that vividly recalls early prehistoric ties with regions like Sicily, Malta, Italy, and Sardinia. These initial encounters fostered the introduction of elements from the Eastern Mediterranean civilization well

before the Punic influence along the African coast. While the Punic trading presence is discernible, it was the foundational interactions with Eastern Mediterranean nations that laid the groundwork.

In contrast, the western coast of the Maghreb engaged in external trade relations considerably later, and its history remained enshrouded in myth for many centuries. Archaeological findings at Mogador indicate that Phoenician traders facilitated commerce with Spain by establishing outposts along the Atlantic coast as early as the 7th century BC, and perhaps even earlier with the founding of Lixus in the 11th century BC.

This lag in engagement is attributed to the region's remoteness from the politically sensitive Mediterranean centers until the ascendance of Rome in Spain and Africa, Carthage being the exception, as it dominated the western trade routes during that era (Camps, 2010: 159).

Ancient historians and archaeological digs hint at the early contacts between the eastern coast of the Maghreb and Eastern Mediterranean countries, and suggest a later initiation of these interactions in the western region. Despite the absence of direct evidence of Aegean sailors initiating these early exchanges, the hypothesis that they reached Spain via the shortest maritime route from the Strait of Sicily, skirting the African coast opposite Almeria, persists (Camps, 2010: 155).

This is corroborated by Diodorus Siculus, who preserves the legacy of Aegeo-Cretan sailors, noting that "Meschela, a city of uncertain location whether on the Algerian eastern coast or the coast of Cyrenaica, was founded by Greeks returning from the Trojan War" (Diodore de Sicile, Bibliothèque historique : XX, 57). Earlier, Hecataeus mentioned that "Cubos," situated in a similar region, was established by Ionians (Frag. Hist. Graec, I: 23-55). In this context, it is pertinent to reference Herodotus, who reports that the Maxyes claim descent from settlers of the Trojan War (Herodote, Histoires: IV, 191).

1.1. Texts and Archeological Insights into Early Numidian and Carthaginian Trade :

The historical and archaeological records, while not definitively proving the existence of direct trade relationships between early Numidians and Carthaginians, do establish a foundation of communication that likely precipitated economic interactions prior to the advent of Phoenician traders on the eastern coast of the Maghreb. These texts further elucidate the slower development of trade relationships in the western region of the North African coast, a region where Carthage held a long-standing monopoly.

Herodotus, in the 5th century BC, documents the interactions between the Phoenicians and the inhabitants of the Maghreb coast, indicating a Phoenician presence along the western coast during this period (Herodote, Histoires: IV, 195). Additionally, archaeological excavations at various sites have unearthed documents contemporary with or predating Syphax, primarily located along the coast, and linked as much to the history and civilization of Carthage as to the Numidian kingdoms.

A notable find includes Punic scale weights along the Oran coast, suggesting these locations served as commercial hubs for western Numidia. Artifacts such as those found in the cemetery on the island of Rachgoun opposite the mouth of the Tafna date back to the 6th to 5th centuries BC, demonstrating an early and active engagement in trade.

These historical and archaeological indications challenge the prevailing notion that Carthage was the predominant leader in early Mediterranean trade, particularly along the eastern coast of the Maghreb. While Carthage played a crucial role, it does not solely account for the early trade exchanges of the North African coast (Camps, 2010: 195, 156).

Evidence of Numidian initiative is further underscored during the Second Punic War when Carthaginian colonies on the Numidian coasts fell and became gateways and markets for the unified

Numidian kingdom under Massinissa. He revitalized trade relations with the Mediterranean basin through these coastal cities, enhancing his reputation across the Mediterranean, from Spain—where he was remembered for his youthful military exploits with the Carthaginian army—to the far East, where he forged several alliances (Gsell, 1918: 307). The external trade, previously constrained by Carthaginian monopoly, was thus liberated under his leadership (Gsell, 1927: 80).

Before examining the specifics of these trade exchanges initiated by Massinissa with Mediterranean countries, it is critical to acknowledge the key ports that facilitated the export of Numidian goods, the fleet that safeguarded them, and the Mediterranean imports to Numidia, emphasizing their importance in this commercial resurgence.

2. The Commercial Fleet During the Reign of Massinissa:

The Numidian kingdom under Massinissa was not only defended by a formidable naval force but also engaged in some naval expeditions (Camps, 2010: 232). Massinissa's strategic focus on naval development began around 180 BC, although the full extent of this fleet remains less documented except in select historical (Hareche, 1984: 150) narratives by Cicero and echoed by Maximus Valerius. These sources recount an incident involving the commander of Massinissa's fleet after docking in Malta (Malte). The commander removed substantial elephant tusks from the temple of Juno and presented them to Massinissa. Upon learning of their sacred origin, Massinissa ordered their return to Malta aboard a quinquereme, reinstating them in the temple of Juno with an inscription that declared: "The king received them without knowing their origin; he hastened to return them to the gods" (Valère Maxime, Actions et paroles Mémorable: I, I,).

This episode not only illustrates the capacity of Massinissa’s fleet to dedicate a quinquereme for such a specific task but also highlights the navigational reach of his naval forces, extending their operations toward the Eastern Mediterranean (Camps, 2010: 232).

Historical records in other ancient texts suggest that Massinissa was able to outfit a fleet consisting of 100 ships, based on the substantial volumes of wheat he exported during the years 191 BC and 170 BC (Hareche, 1984 : 150). In 191 BC, royal emissaries promised the Senate to dispatch 800,000 seahs of grain to the lands of the Greeks and an additional 550,000 seahs to Rome (Tite-Live, Histoire romaine: XXXVI, 4, 8).

This commitment necessitated securing another shipment of grain within the same year, a task requiring the mobilization of 75 ships. This period marked the early years of Massinissa’s reign, and it is clear that with all Carthaginian ports and settlements along the coasts from Siga to the Great Sirte — except for those adjacent to Carthage itself — now under Numidian control, Massinissa effectively dismantled the Carthaginian monopoly on trade. This strategic acquisition of ports demonstrates how Numidia, under Massinissa’s leadership, adeptly engaged in Mediterranean commerce (Hareche, 1984: 151).

3. Ports of the Kingdom of Numidia:

The maritime trade infrastructure established by the Phoenicians along the Maghreb coast did not disappear with the decline of Carthaginian control at the end of the Second Punic War (202 BC), nor after its ultimate fall in 146 BC (Picard, 1990 : 78). Trade with the external Mediterranean world continued through Phoenician or Punic stations, now liberated from Carthaginian constraints (Gsell, 1927: 80).

This liberation facilitated significant regional expansion of the Massylian kingdom (Eastern Numidia), allowing it to partly inherit the Carthaginian empire shortly before the end of the Second Punic War and Massinissa’s rise to the unified Numidian throne.

From the Mulucha to the area of Tabarka, former Punic scales transitioned into Numidian ports. Owning territories from the plains of l'Emporium in Lesser Syrtis to the Tripolitanian region ensured complete control over Numidian exports directed toward the Greek world. King Massinissa controlled numerous ports steeped in ancient maritime tradition (Camps, 2010: 231).

Despite some foreign historians like Sallust describing the African coast as "a coast without ports" (Salluste, Guerre de Jugurtha : XVII), and others such as Rougé claiming that the stretch from Gibraltar to Carthage hosts only a few economically valuable ports due to the rocky coast limiting natural harbor formations—a scenario compounded by the internal topographical fragmentation of North Africa and the absence of expansive plains, which limited its potential as a major production area (Rougé, 1966: 144).

Additionally, Gsell highlighted the scarcity of ports on the African coast and noted the prevalence of piracy in the Mediterranean, the absence of roads in certain areas, and security issues which impeded communications between the coast and inland cities (Gsell, 1927: 80). However, these observations overlook the naval capabilities Massinissa developed for defending his maritime trade and his internal efforts to establish peace and security within the Numidian interiors.

Despite these challenges, several ports on the African coast played pivotal roles in exporting Numidian goods and importing merchandise from the Mediterranean world. We can highlight some of the most important ones:

3.1. Ports from Tripoli to the borders of Carthage:

Prominent among these were the three cities of Tripoli (Leptis, Oea, and Sabratha), which enjoyed considerable autonomy during Massinissa's reign after their annexation to Numidia following the Second Punic War. Emerging from the isolation imposed by Carthage, these cities developed vibrant trade relations with Italy and the broader Mediterranean world (Noshi, 1978: 341).

Notably, the port of Leptis, later transformed into a deep-sea port by Emperor Neron (Picard, 1990: 78), alongside Oea and Sabratha, became crucial in exporting oils and animals for Roman games, as well as handling goods like ivory and slaves brought by caravans to Africa (Hareche, 1984: 151).

Near the ports of the Tripolitanian region towards Carthage, the port of Tacape (Gades/Gabès) on the eastern shore of Byzacene served as a primary warehouse for Lesser Syrtis.

This port played a pivotal role in facilitating imports into Numidia and managing the exports of agricultural products from the fertile plains of the Aurès. Beyond Tacape, the ports of Thenae and Leptis Minor, benefited significantly from the olive cultivation boom in the inland regions during the reign of Massinissa and later periods, up to the Roman occupation, primarily exporting oil (Le coq, 1912: 314).

3.2. Port of Hippo Regius (Bône/Annaba):

Hippo Regius (Bône/Annaba), with its strategic location at the exit of a large fertile plain, was an essential agricultural export center (Rougé, 1966: 145) even before the reign of Massinissa, having been selected by the Phoenicians as early as the 12th century BC for their trading activities (Le coq, 1912 : 79).

The natural harbor of Hippo Regius is situated strategically between two mountain ranges, Edough and Cap de Garde, which provide protection from the western and northwestern winds, enhancing its significance. This importance is underscored by its proximity to other active ports in Africa, such as Skikda and Carthage, and in Europe, like those in Sardinia and Sicily (Charen, 2009: 314).

3.3. Port of Rusicade:

Rusicade served as a crucial outlet for inner Numidia, particularly the region of Cirta (Picard, 1990: 79), and was later known as Philippeville during Roman times. It was a pivotal port for African farmers who brought wheat to meet the demands of the Roman annona, from where it was shipped to Rome (Le Coq, 1912: 315). The abundance of customs seals found on the shores of Rusicade during Massinissa's reign suggests that, besides serving the region of Cirta and its high plateaus, it was actively involved in trade exchanges with the East (Rougé, 1966: 144).

3.4. Ports of Igilgili and Collo (Chullu):

The port of Collo (Chullu) functioned as an outlet for the interior of Numidia during the Roman period. Igilgili, in contrast, was known for exporting products that would later become characteristic of Mauretania Sitifensis (Picard, 1990: 316).

3.5. Port of Saldae (Béjaïa):

For the region of Sétif and its vicinity, Saldae played a similar role to that of Rusicade for Cirta. Located on the Gouraya foot along the western coast of a vast bay, Saldae offered a superb and secure harbor usable in all seasons, facilitating extensive maritime activities (Le Coq, 1912: 316).

3.6.Port of Caesarea (Iol / Cherchell):

This port thrived under the reign of Juba II, maintaining its prominence on the western side of the African coast due to its status as the capital, Caesarea, and its natural harbor qualities from before this era (Picard, 1990 : 79). It undoubtedly played a crucial commercial role during the reign of Massinissa as a major center for trade in the western Mediterranean. The Romans later enhanced this natural harbor, transforming it into a significant commercial and military port, where a fleet tasked with securing the African coasts was stationed (Rougé, 1966: 144).

3.7. Port of Tipasa:

Situated in the same region as Caesarea, the port of Tipasa had been active in trade since the Phoenician era and continued to be so during the time of Massinissa, thanks to its excellent location at the foot of the western part of the Mitidja. This port attracted trade from the eastern Chelif valley.

Le Coq noted that Tipasa did not have a landing pier; the coast at this location was elevated, connected to the mainland only by a small ladder carved into the rock. Goods had to be unloaded further west in a bay near the city center (Tipasa), which, despite its functionality, was overshadowed by the neighboring port of Caesarea (Le Coq, 1912 : 317).

3.8. Ports of Port Magnus (Arzew) and Port Divini (The Great Harbor) :

Strabo's historical accounts fail to mention any eastern ports beyond Siga with the exception of Portus Divini (Port of the Divine, now known as the Great Harbor) (Camps, 2010: 195) and Portus Magnus (Arzew) near "Saint Leu." While these harbors possessed substantial strategic locations, they were not as prominent as the port of Caesarea, previously discussed (Rougé, 1966: 144).

Nonetheless, sources such as Pliny the Elder and Ptolemy did reference them, highlighting specific commercial activities originating from Caesarea. This was primarily because inland tribes, benefiting from a populous and agriculturally rich region, brought their merchandise to these ports (Le Coq, 1912: 317).

Additionally, ports like "Gunugu" (Gouraya/Sidi Ibrahim) and Cartennae (Ténès) continued their traditional trade relationships with Spain, alongside Portus Magnus and the Great Harbor (Picard,

1990: 79). The inclusion of these ports into the Kingdom of Numidia under Massinissa's rule played a pivotal role in enhancing the trade dynamics of the region.

4. Trading Partners and Exchange Materials:

The economic upsurge experienced by Numidia during Massinissa's reign—especially in agriculture—propelled the kingdom into extensive trade activities that reached far beyond Rome, encompassing numerous Mediterranean territories. This is evidenced by archaeological discoveries, notably coins, across these regions (Hareche, 1984: 152). Key trading partners of Numidia during Massinissa's era included Italy, Greek territories, the Iberian Peninsula, Gaul (modern-day France), and Egypt.

4.1. Trade exchanges between Numidia and Italy:

Under the leadership of Massinissa, Numidian kings emerged as preeminent traders, engaging more extensively in commerce than even the most significant Greek and Italian negotiators. They strategically leveraged their nation's resources—such as cereals either produced on their estates or collected as taxes, ivory, precious woods, and wild animals commanded from their forests, as well as Numidian marble, which they exclusively owned and exploited (Gsell, 1927 : 84).

Direct relations were notably robust with the Italian Peninsula and its three islands, with significant ports like Ostia and Pozzuoli on the Italian side and Hippo Regius on the Numidian side bridging the two shores. Primary exports from Numidia to Italy included grain, oil, and marble, while significant imports into Numidia comprised pottery, glassware, and metal goods (Charen, 2009 : 315). This trade dynamic underlines the crucial nature of the bilateral exchanges between Numidia and Italy.

4.1.1. Exports to Italy:

While grains stood as the predominant export, the trade in livestock, timber, oils, and metals also represented vital components of Numidia's commercial activities (Hareche, 1984: 153), as documented in historical texts:

- **Grains:**

Numidian grains, especially wheat and barley, constituted the bulk of exports to Italy from the era of Massinissa, continuing under his successor, Micipsa[1] . Vaga (modern-day Béja) was notably the principal marketplace for these commodities, attracting a significant Italian presence as recorded by Sallust (Salluste, Guerre de Jugurtha: XLVII).

Regarding the volumes of grain exported from Numidia to Italy, Titus Livius recounts the mission of three Roman delegates in 191 BC to Numidia requesting wheat for the Roman army then engaged in Greece against Antiochus. In response, Massinissa dispatched 500,000 measures of wheat and 250,000 of barley to the forces in Greece, and 300,000 measures of wheat and 250,000 of barley to Rome (Tite-Live, Histoire romaine : XXXVI, 4, 8).

While initially, these were presented as gifts, Livius notes that the Roman Senate insisted on paying for the grains, underscoring their policy that the Roman people would only accept such significant aid if they compensated for it (Tite-Live, Histoire romaine : XXXVI, 4, 9). Moreover, in

[1]. Plutarch refers to Numidia supplying Rome with wheat during the time Gaius Gracchus was in Sardinia, where ambassadors from Africa arrived in Rome from King Micipsa to inform the Senate that, out of consideration and respect for "Caius Gracchus," he had sent a convoy of wheat to Sardinia. (Plutarque, les vies des hommes illustres, tome. 4, vie de Caius Gracchus (de l'an 153 à l'an 121 av J.-C). Plutarch also mentions in his discussion on the life of Caesar that after the latter's return from the African War (46 BC), he displayed his victory to the Roman people, stating that the countries he had conquered were so vast that the Roman people could derive from them annually 200,000 medimnes of wheat (Plutarque, vie de César).

170 BC, during the Roman conflicts in Macedonia against King Perseus, Massinissa sent an additional 1,000,000 measures of wheat and 500,000 of barley to support the Roman armies (Tite-Live, Histoire romaine : XLIII, 6, 12).

Despite the historical portrayal by some scholars of the grain shipments as mere tokens of friendship or diplomatic gestures intended to strengthen alliances with Rome—who would emerge as a dominant global power (Le Coq, 1912 : 309)—these were in fact commercial transactions . Titus Livius repeatedly emphasized that "the price must be paid by the Roman people" (Tite-Live: XXXVI, 3, 1. ; Tite –Live : XXVI, 4, 8 ; Tite-Live : XXVI, 4, 9).

This insistence on payment counters other narrative biases in Livius' texts, where he suggests that Massinissa never forgot his indebtedness to Rome for his throne, and hence, the prosperity of his kingdom was also to benefit the Romans. Livius implies that justice required the Romans to receive these goods without having to pay, as they were products of a region they had bestowed upon him (Tite-Live: XLV, 13, 15).

This portrayal skews towards viewing the relationship as one-sidedly beneficial to Rome and does not fully acknowledge the commercial realities.

- **Animals:**

The variety of animals exported from Numidia to Rome during Massinissa's reign was substantial, encompassing elephants and horses for military purposes, as well as exotic animals for entertainment in the Roman games, and livestock for consumption.

- **Elephants:**

In addition to the grain transactions, Titus Livius records Massinissa's commitment to send 20 elephants to Consul M. Acilius during Rome's conflict with Antiochus in 191 BC (Tite-Live: XXXVI, 4, 8). He fulfilled this promise by sending 10 elephants to the forces in Greece (Tite-Live: XXXII, 25, 2) and later promised 12 elephants during the Macedonian war against Perseus in 170 BC (Tite-Live: XLIII, 6, 13).

Apianus also noted that during Fabius Maximus Servilianus' campaign in Spain, he received an additional 10 elephants from Africa to bolster his forces against Viriathe (Appien, Ibérique: 67). While these instances may seem like donations or gifts, their regular inclusion and the structured nature of these deliveries suggest an active and ongoing trade agreement between Numidia and Rome regarding elephants.

- **Horses:**

The shipments of horses to Rome were significant (Gsell, 1927: 84), whether they were meant for Roman military campaigns or other purposes. These transactions, recorded over the years from 194 to 170 BC, included:

- 200 horses in 194 BC (Tite-Live : XXXII, 25, 2)
- 500 horses in 191 BC (Tite-Live : XXXVI, 4, 8)
- 1200 horses in 170 BC (Tite-Live : XLIII, 6, 13)

- **Entertainment Animals:**

The demand in Rome for wild or exotic animals for public games further underscores the extensive trade relations between Numidia and Italy (Gsell, 1927: 84). Notable figures such as Strabo mention the importation of giraffes and elephants from African territories (Strabon, Géographie : XVII, III,

5), while Juvenal and Pliny the Elder discuss the fascination with the Gétulian oryx (Juvénal, Satires, 140) and leopards, respectively,notably, Roman legislation initially prohibited the importation of leopards from Africa until an assembly repealed this law in 84 BC, enabling their use in circus games. This legislative change facilitated the debut of leopards in Roman circuses by Scaurus, followed by Pompey and Caesar (Pline l'Ancien, Histoire naturelle: VIII, 24), highlighting a significant aspect of the active trade between Numidia and Rome involving these exotic creatures (Hareche, 1984: 155).

- **Livestock Trade:**

Livestock played a pivotal role in the trade relationships between Numidia during the reign of Massinissa and subsequent rulers, and Italy. This trade included shipments of cattle, wool, and hides, all of which had significant economic implications (Gsell, 1927:84). Cow hides were sought after in Rome for various manufacturing purposes, while sheep's wool and goat hair were crucial for the textile industry (Hareche, 1984: 155).

The textiles produced from these materials were renowned for their quality and were staples among the active trade goods exported to Rome. Notably, some varieties of Numidian sheep, famous for their distinctive colors, were even used in circus games, as highlighted by Columella in his comprehensive discussions on Roman agriculture and livestock management (Collumelle, De l'agriculture: VII, II, 4).

- **Poultry:**

Poultry, particularly those from Africa, held a place of distinction on Roman aristocratic tables, valued more for their exotic flavors and rarity than their cost (Gsell, 1927: 84). Juvenal's commendation of a Numidian chicken at an elite Roman feast underlines the high regard in which these birds were held (Juvénal, Sattires: XI, le luxe de la table).

Varro's reference to African poultry as "large, varied, and conspicuously beautiful, known as 'meleagridae' (guinea fowls) by the Greeks," further emphasizes their aesthetic and gastronomic appeal. Their rarity and beauty made them highly prized, fetching steep prices in Roman markets (Varron, l'agriculture: III, IX). This prestige likely contributed to their inclusion in the suite of Numidian exports to Rome from the time of Massinissa's rule through to the imperial period.

- **Honey and Oil:**

The reputation of African honey extended far beyond Numidia, heralded since the times of Hecataeus and Herodotus, and reaching its zenith in the era of Pliny the Elder, who declared it the finest variety (Hareche, 1984: 155). Such acclaim suggests that honey was a significant component of Numidia's exports to the wider Mediterranean, particularly to Italy.

The trade in Numidian oil, while less documented during Massinissa's reign, became notably significant later, as evidenced by the large quantities demanded by the Romans. Julius Caesar's comments during his African campaign (46 BC) about the oil requisitions from Leptis underscore its importance, which represented an estimated 300 thousand pounds of oil annually (Cesar, guerre d'Afrique : XCVII).

While Plutarch mentions that Caesar, after his return from the same African war (46 BC), reviewed the results of his victory by saying that the lands he conquered, including Africa, were vast, and that the Roman people could extract 3 million pounds of oil from them annually (Plutarque, vie de César). Historians also talk about the arrival of Rome's imports from overseas during the era of the empire to 260 thousand ampoules of oil from Betica or from Africa annually (Tchernia, 2011: 258).

These insights are corroborated by historians who note that the oil trade was a continuous and lucrative venture from the Phoenician era through the Roman period, indicating a longstanding tradition of oil trade between Africa and Rome (Gsell, 1928: 105).

- **Timber:**

Timber exports from Numidia to Rome, particularly during the end of the Republic and the onset of the Empire, highlight the significance of this resource. The forests of Numidia were rich with valuable woods such as Thuja (le Thuya) or "Citrus" wood, which was in high demand in Rome for the production of luxury furniture.This demand was particularly pronounced under the reigns of Juba II and his son Ptolemy (Gsell, 1927 : 211), indicating a thriving trade in high-quality timber products that were prized in Roman markets for their durability and aesthetic appeal.

These detailed aspects of the trade relations between Numidia and Rome reveal a complex and mutually beneficial economic relationship that extended beyond simple diplomatic exchanges, encompassing a diverse array of goods that were integral to both economies.

- **Metals and Marbles**:

In the landscape of Numidian exports, metals such as copper played a significant role. Historical accounts, such as those by Strabon (Strabon, Géographie: XVII, III,11), identify copper mines in the land of the Masyssilii (Western Numidia), which were initially exploited by the Phoenicians, underscoring a longstanding tradition of metal extraction and trade. Furthermore, the export of Numidian marble to Rome, as detailed by Pliny the Elder, marks a significant chapter in the architectural and aesthetic enhancements of Roman constructions.

Pliny's recounting of Consul M. Lepidus using Numidian marble thresholds in his home represents the earliest recorded import of this material to Rome—not as finished columns or panels but as raw blocks. This beautiful yellow and pink marble from Chemtou (Simitthu) continued to grace Roman architecture (Pline, Histoire naturelle: XXXVI, VIII), signifying a robust trade connection that persisted well into Roman times.

Additionally, the export of gemstones, agate, and notably, ivory (Gsell, 1927: 212)—described by Ovid as "Numidian ivory" (Ovide, Pontiques: IV, lettre 9 à Graecinus) and celebrated by Juvenal for its use in lavish furniture (Juvénal, Sattires: X, luxe de la table)—highlights the diversity and value of Numidian natural resources in the Mediterranean trade networks. These exports were not merely transactions but were also symbolic gestures that bolstered the diplomatic relationships between Numidia and Rome, combining commerce with strategic alliance-building.

4.1.2. Numidian Imports from Italy:

While the historical records are less vocal about the imports to Numidia from Italy, archaeological discoveries shed light on the nature and extent of these imports. The primary categories of goods imported include pottery, wines, and metal tools, each contributing to the cultural and economic exchanges between Numidia and Italy.

- **Pottery:**

The influx of pottery from Campania and the southern Italian peninsula into Numidia before and after the fall of Carthage is well documented. These items, including Greek-style lamps and small vases with a shiny black glaze, not only served practical purposes but also acted as cultural conduits between the two regions (Gsell, 1928: 106). The discovery of elegantly crafted pottery in various tombs across Numidia such as « collo », « Gouraya » and « Saint-Monique » (Gsell, 1903: 44), attests to the continued trade and appreciation of Italian ceramic arts in Africa (Picard, 1990: 78).

. **Wines:**

Although detailed records are sparse, the presence of wine jars with Latin seals in places like Vaga (Beja) suggests an active importation of Italian wines into Numidia (Gsell, 1927: 82). This trade likely complemented the local cultivation of grapes, with references by authors like Columelle (Collumelle, De l'agriculture: II, II) indicating a thriving viticulture in the African provinces during Roman times.

. **Metal Tools and Coins:**

The importation of metal tools, particularly weapons, and Roman coins highlights the strategic and economic dimensions of Numidian imports. Historical figures such as Appian and Titus Livius (Tite-Live, Histoire romaine: XXX, 17, 13) mention gifts of weapons to Numidian kings from Rome, reflecting both a diplomatic gesture and a trade element. The prevalence of Roman coins in Numidian territories, discovered through archaeological efforts, points to a vibrant economic interaction where Roman currency facilitated trade and commerce in the region (Gsell, 1927: 81).

These imports and exports between Numidia and Italy illustrate a complex web of trade that not only involved the exchange of goods but also the intertwining of cultures, economies, and political ambitions, reinforcing the intricate connections that shaped the ancient Mediterranean world**.**

4.2. Trade Exchanges between Numidia and the Greek Lands:

The trade relations between Numidia and the Greek lands were robust and multifaceted, as evidenced by both archaeological finds and historical records. This trade included the exchange of luxury goods such as wine, ornamental vases, and silverware from Greece, which were traded for Numidian commodities like wheat, timber, and ivory (Charen, 2009: 314). The presence of Numidian coins in Greek territories and vice versa underscores the mutual conomic interactions that thrived beyond mere cultural exchanges (Hareche, 1984: 158).

4.2.1. Massinissa's Policies with the Greek Lands:

The initial interactions between Numidia and the Greek world can be traced back to the Hellenistic period, marked by Greek expansion into North Africa, notably through Carthage. The Greek influence was further solidified during the reign of Massinissa, who played a pivotal role in shaping the course of Numidian-Greek relations (Desange, 2007: 171).

Unlike the Carthaginians, who were more protective of their trading interests and often restricted access to African ports, Massinissa adopted a more open policy. He encouraged Greek traders to engage with Numidia, which he saw as a strategic move to align with the powerful entities of the Eastern Mediterranean.

Massinissa's reign was characterized by efforts to integrate Greek cultural and political norms, which is evident from his interactions with Greek states and his attempts to emulate the Hellenistic rulers of the Eastern Mediterranean. This open-door policy led to an influx of Greek goods into Numidia and facilitated Numidian exports to Greek lands, enhancing Massinissa's prestige and the economic stature of his kingdom.

The encouragement of Greek traders was not an isolated policy but part of a broader strategy to ensure Numidian influence in the Mediterranean trade networks. This approach was instrumental in breaking down ethnic barriers between Greeks, Phoenicians, and other Mediterranean peoples, fostering a more interconnected and dynamic regional economy (Camps, 2010: 232).

Massinissa extensively cultivated relationships with Hellenistic centers, maintaining connections not only with kings but also with ordinary citizens. This affinity for Hellenism, exhibited by Massinissa and his successors, was a cultural choice, adopting a pattern of civilization that was considered the most refined at the time.

However, behind this cultural preference, which was limited to the royal family and court members, there was a political motive. Hellenism served as a means to engage in global relations for contemporary rulers of that era.

Kings who were friends and allies of Rome, such as Nicomedes II and Nicomedes III of Bithynia, deeply embraced Hellenistic culture. Therefore, Massinissa aimed to be recognized by Rome as equal to the monarchs from major dynasties, thus gaining additional influence within the Roman alliance (Aoulad Tahar, 2004: 40).

In his diplomatic endeavors and his commitment to establishing trade relations within the broader Mediterranean context, Massinissa was the first Numidian king to not only adopt Greek customs but also a type of Hellenism in behavior. This was exemplified around 160/150 BC when he hosted Ptolemy VIII—who at that time only ruled Cyrene—at his capital, Cirta, during a festival featuring a competition among Greek musicians.

Moreover, the use of the Greek language, which Massinissa encouraged, was somewhat strengthened by the commercial expansion of the Numidian kingdom. This is evident in the Temple of the Pit next to Cirta, where 20 Greek-style funerary monuments have been found[2]. From the reign of Massinissa onwards, Numidian kings began exporting wheat particularly to the Aegean Sea region, where they became especially known in key trading centers like Rhodes, Delos, and Athens (Désange, 2007 : 173).

A- Massinissa's Relations with the Island of Rhodes:

The intricate trade and diplomatic relations that Massinissa cultivated with Rhodes underscore the strategic acumen with which he governed[3] . Rhodes was not only a major commercial hub in the Mediterranean but also possessed considerable naval and political influence due to its adept fleet and diplomatic engagements (Camps, 2010: 232).

Recognizing this, Massinissa's interactions with Rhodes were carefully orchestrated to enhance both his stature and the political leverage of Numidia within the broader Greek world. The donation of 30 talents of ivory and 50 talents of cedar wood by Massinissa to Rhodes was emblematic of this relationship (Gsell, 1918: 307). These resources, highly valued for their use in crafting divine statues, were not mere commodities traded for profit but were part of a larger diplomatic gesture.

This act of generosity was designed to honor the gods of Rhodes—a move that also strategically positioned Massinissa as a pious and munificent king in the eyes of the Greek world. Such gestures were significant, as they transcended commercial transactions, blending political alliance-building with religious reverence, thereby cementing Numidia’s image as a key regional ally.

Furthermore, the erection of a statue in Delos by a Rhodian trader in honor of Massinissa serves as a testament to the profound respect and recognition he garnered (Aoulad tahar, 2004: 32. 31). This statue, coupled with the discovery of an inscription in an old Byzantine church in Rhodes, further solidifies the enduring legacy of Massinissa’s diplomacy.

The inscription not only celebrates the contributions of Himpsal II but also retrospectively honors Massinissa, suggesting a sustained period of alliance and mutual respect between Numidia and Rhodes that extended beyond Massinissa's reign.

---

[2]. In the funerary monument "The Mausoleum" (El-Somaa) located 4 km northeast of El Khroub and built in a Greco-Punic style by Greek and Carthaginian workers for Massinissa and his son Micipsa, a medallion depicting the god Neptune sitting with a lion's skin on his knees was found (Bonnell, 1915: 177).

[3] . On the island of Delos, a statue of Massinissa erected by the Rhodian "Charmylos" and dedicated to the god "Apollo" was found (Monceaux, 1884: 352).

The archaeological finds of Rhodian amphorae in Numidia, which bear the seals of Rhodian traders, attest to the vibrant trade exchanges that took place. These amphorae, typically used for transporting wine and other commodities, indicate a dynamic import activity from Rhodes, reflecting a robust demand for Rhodian goods in Numidian markets (Kontorinis, 1975: 90-98).

This is a clear indicator of the broad and multifaceted trade relations that were maintained between Numidia and Rhodes, facilitated not only through direct interactions but also via intermediary trade relations with entities like Delos.

In sum, the strategic and diplomatic engagements of Massinissa with Rhodes reveal a nuanced approach to governance that blended economic, religious, and political elements. This multifaceted diplomacy not only ensured Numidia's prosperity but also enhanced its political stature among the major powers of the Mediterra

B- Massinissa's Relations with the Island of Delos:

The Island of Delos, a major religious and cultural center in the Greek world, was significantly influenced by Massinissa through both direct and indirect interactions. This influence was notably marked by the actions and commemorations of individuals from various backgrounds who recognized Massinissa's contributions and stature.

A prominent Rhodian trader, engaged in substantial trade with Numidia, honored Massinissa by erecting a statue in Delos (Gsell, 1918: 307). This act of reverence highlighted the strong ties between Numidia and the influential mercantile community of Rhodes, further solidifying Massinissa's reputation across the Greek world.

Additionally, an Athenian trader, who declared himself a friend of Massinissa, chose to immortalize this friendship and political alliance through the dedication of a white marble inscription base in Delos. This dedication not only celebrated their personal connection but also served to cement Massinissa's legacy within the elite circles of Athens, showcasing the depth of his diplomatic reach (Forgère, 1887: 255 ; Monceaux, 1884 : 352).

Further amplifying Massinissa's impact on Delos, Nicomedes of Bithynia, who had a tumultuous rise to power in 149 BC (Aoulad tahar, 2004 : 30), erected a statue with an inscription acknowledging the Numidian king's crucial support during his political struggles. This statue served as a public testament to the political and military alliances that Massinissa skillfully cultivated, which extended beyond mere trade (Hatzfeld, 1909: 486-487).

In a demonstration of his benevolence and strategic diplomacy, Massinissa also significantly contributed to the island's prosperity by sending a large shipment of wheat in 179 BC (Gsell, 1918: 307). This donation, totaling around 145,000 hectoliters (equivalent to about 11,600 quintals), it was sold for ten thousand drachmas to benefit the Temple of Apollon (Camps, 2010 : 235), not only provided substantial economic relief but also reinforced his image as a benefactor of Greek cities, enhancing his stature as a pious and generous leader.

C- Massinissa's Relations with Athens:

The relationship between Massinissa and Athens was marked by a dynamic exchange of goods and cultural honors, which played a crucial role in maintaining the stability and prosperity of his kingdom. Through numismatic evidence, it is clear that Massinissa and subsequent Numidian rulers maintained continuous and beneficial trade relations with Athens, engaging in extensive exchanges of wheat, barley, and other essential commodities (Monceaux, 1884: 352).

Athens, with its significant cultural and political influence, was a vital trade partner. The ongoing exchanges were not only lucrative but also facilitated cultural and political connections, evidenced

by the statues and inscriptions erected in Massinissa's honor across key Greek locations (Camps, 2010: 233). These monuments in Delos, Rhodes, and Athens served as enduring symbols of the respect and admiration that Greek cities held for Massinissa, reflecting his successful integration into the Hellenistic world.

4.2.2. Numidian Exports to the Greek Lands during the Reign of Massinissa:

- **Grain:**

If grain trade was the main activity in the relationships between Massinissa, the Numidian Kingdom, and the Greek world, particularly linked to the key islands such as Rhodes, Delos, and Athens, which retained memory of these connections, it predominantly involved the export of wheat—a staple the Greeks perpetually needed. This trade made wheat a primary source of income for Numidia, with the Greeks and Romans as the main customers for Massinissa (Camps, 2010: 237).

Evidence of this includes Massinissa's deals from 179 BC, where he sent 11,600 qintars of wheat (approximately 145,000 hectoliters), following an earlier provision of 500,000 sa' of wheat (430,770 liters) and 300,000 sa' of barley (26,262 hectoliters) to the Greek lands (Hareche, 1984: 159).

- **Timber and ivory:**

Regarding natural resources, among the notable ones exploited during the reign of Massinissa and subsequent Numidian kings was the tree the Romans called "Citrus," identified as Thuya, which provided the wood necessary for making cabinets. This resource has been noted since the 3rd century BC (Gsell, 1927: 211), with Massinissa supplying the Rhodians with ivory and Thuya wood for the creation of divine statues, which the Rhodians voted to manufacture (Camps, 2010: 233).

Some historians have queried the source of Thuya and ivory in Numidia, finding references in Pliny the Elder about their abundance in the Moroccan Atlas Mountains, and various testimonies suggest that during ancient times, the elephant was present in North Africa, used by Numidians and Carthaginians in their wars. It is evident that Numidians had access to significant quantities of Thuya and ivory for export (Aoulad Tahar, 2004: 30).

4.2.3. Numidian Imports from the Greek Lands:

- **Wines:**

In Cirta, Rhodian amphorae have been found in a cremation cemetery, evidencing the entry of Greek goods into the heart of Numidia. The seals preserved on most of the amphorae handles have allowed them to be dated to the early 2nd century BC, with the most recent ones discovered in the Carob tomb. Gsell noted that their importers were from the upper echelons of society, as foreign wines were considered a luxury by the citizens, and most Numidians generally drank only water (Gsell, 1927: 82).

In this context, modern researchers, after studying and analyzing the amphorae found by A. Berthier (Berthier, 1943: 27. 32), observed that the seals on these amphorae provided the following dates: 195, 182, 171, 166, 145-142 BC. Three amphorae arrived in Cirta during the reign of Massinissa (202-148 BC), and another during the reign of his son Micipsa (148-118 BC). It has been argued that the presence of a few amphorae does not necessarily indicate organized trade between Numidia and Rhodes during the reigns of Massinissa and his son; perhaps these amphorae were purchased from Rhodian traders and sold in Numidia.

Since amphorae sometimes contained wine used in funerary rituals, as evidenced by their presence in the graves of other kings, it is likely that the wine in the Cirta amphorae was used for funerary rites, and not necessarily as part of regular trade (Aoulad tahar, 2004: 33).

However, even if these were precious items purchased for royal funerary rituals, it still represents a commercial deal between Numidia and Rhodes, either brought directly from Rhodes or by Rhodian traders, indicating the importation of this product, albeit in limited quantities and for a specific class.

- **Lamps and Pottery:**

In addition to wine, there was also a notable importation of Greek-style lamps and pottery, particularly evident in the archaeological finds at the Bella Regia cemetery. These artifacts, including circular lamps without handles and polished black Greek pottery (Dr. Carton, 1890: 219), reflect the cultural influences permeating Numidian society from the Greek world.

Dr. Carton's excavations at Bella Regia provide valuable insights into these funeral furnishings, further attested by discoveries in other regions (Dr. Carton, 1892: 219) such as Hippo Regius, Calama, Gouraya (Gsell, 1903: 44), Beja, and Khemissa.

The presence of a Rhodian lamp amidst bones in one of the burial rooms indicates a broader pattern of Greek cultural artifacts being integrated into Numidian burial practices, symbolizing a fusion of Punic and Hellenistic traditions.

- **Metal Tools (Vessels, Statues, Coins):**

The Khroub tomb, another significant archaeological site, yielded Greek silver vessels and potentially marble and bronze statues (Hareche, 1984: 159), pointing to a diverse importation of crafted items that went beyond mere utility to include aesthetic and ceremonial uses. Moreover, the widespread discovery of Greek coins throughout Numidia, from coastal cities like Cherchell to Bône, highlights the extensive monetary interactions between Numidia and the Greek lands. The Algiers museum's collection of these coins, exhibiting styles common in ancient trade, underscores the economic connections fostered through commerce (Monceaux, 1884: 344).

Additionally, a noteworthy find in Cirta was a Greek medallion stamped with the first three letters of Athens in Greek (Picon, 1857: 4. 5), and another medallion from the Cherub mound depicting the god Neptune with a lion's skin (Bonnell, 1916: 177), illustrating the rich cultural exchange and the appreciation of Greek artistry in Numidia. These items not only served practical functions but were also symbols of status and wealth, reflecting the social and economic strata within Numidian society and their interactions with the broader Mediterranean world.

4.3. Relations with the Iberian Peninsula:

The Kingdom of Numidia had significant trade relations with the Iberian Peninsula in ancient times, notably in exporting oil and horses in exchange for lead and tin through its ports, with Hippo Regius being one of the most important (Charen, 2009: 314). The relationships of North Africa with the Iberian Peninsula go back to very ancient times and expanded in the period between 203-46 BC, as inferred from texts and remnants of inscriptions and artifacts (Hareche, 1984: 160).

Sallust mentions this exchange (Salluste, Guerre de Jugurtha: XVII), and Strabon specifies, "Malacca (Malaga) and l'Emporium prefer dealing with the Numidians on the opposite coast" (Strabon, Géograhie, XVII. 3. 6). Malaga was among the markets most connected to the Africans, just as Cherchell had active relations with the Iberian Peninsula before the Roman occupation of North Africa (Gsell, 1927: 81). Additionally, the city of Siga, capital of Syphax, was linked with Malaga (Hareche, 1984: 160).

4.3.1. Early Relations Between the North African Coast and the Iberian Peninsula:

Relations occurred during the Neolithic across the Strait of Gibraltar and the Alboran Sea, as indicated by Camps, evident through three sites in the far north of Morocco: Achakar near Tangier,

Ghar Kahal near Ceuta, and Cave under the rock near Tetouan. The layer beneath the level where bell-shaped pottery was found is Neolithic and includes pieces in the Iberian style. Pottery made in the style known around Granada (Mesa et Asta) was found in one of these sites (Ghar Kahal) and in Sicily (Serraferlicchio).

Starting from the Bronze Age, relations between the sides continued: Moroccan and Iberian coasts yielded bell-shaped pottery (campaniforme) from archaeological sites on both the Mediterranean and Atlantic sides dating back to the second half of the third millennium BC, as well as from a Portuguese set. These contributions are thus Neolithic (Cardial pottery) and Chalcolithic (bell-shaped pottery), at least from the coast which at the same time received ivory and ostrich eggs from the Maghrebi side (Camps, 2010: 157).

4.3.2. Relations between the Maghreb and the Iberian Peninsula Through Coinage:

Archaeological findings of Numidian and Mauritanian coins in Spain demonstrate the active trade between the Numidian kingdoms and regions beyond the sea (Gsell, 1927: 80). Numidian coins have been specifically discovered in the south of the Iberian Peninsula, while Iberian coins have been found in Numidian cities. Among 237 silver pieces found in Cirta, 75 were Spanish (Hareche, 1984: 161).

According to Monceaux, the Algiers museum once housed a rich collection of Greco-Spanish coins, particularly from the Balearic Islands, which supplied Africa with wine and oil and received slaves in return (Monceaux,1884: 356). Monceaux uses these coins as evidence of the special trade relations that the Numidians and Maurs had with Spain, highlighted by the striking similarity between the Spanish coins and those from Africa, which closely imitated Greek coins.

Both Betica and Numidia, like Mauritania, show that their independent currencies were imitations of Macedonian or Greek coins with a local, authentic touch, featuring inscriptions in the native language.

In this context, Muller categorized a series of coins for the kings Adherbal and Hiempsal, attributing to Massinissa bronze coins found only in Sicily and Spain, which illustrates the trade connections between Numidia and the Iberian Peninsula (Charrier, 1886: 10).

4.3.3. Types of Exports and Imports between Numidia and the Iberian Peninsula:

In addition to coins, there are collections of inscriptions that indicate the presence of Africans in Spain and Iberians in Africa. Most of these Africans mentioned in the inscriptions came from grain-producing regions such as Cirta, Sicca Veneria, and Madauros. This is believed by historians to reflect the exportation of grain to the Iberian Peninsula, as evidenced by the presence of Spaniards in Cirta and Russucad (Hareche, 1984: 161).

Other export materials included ivory and ostrich eggshells, but according to Camps, it remains unclear whether only the raw materials were exported or if the finished products discovered in Spain were manufactured in Africa. It's likely that the ivory was crafted in the major Punic cities, particularly Carthage, and even in Gades, as the shapes of the teeth and handles of combs appear distinctly Eastern.

The intricately made items from ostrich eggshells suggest that they might have originated from Gunnugo (modern-day Gouraya/Sidi Ibrahim). Many of these intricately decorated ostrich eggshell vessels, with their predominantly Punic Eastern motifs and other geometric designs, akin to Numidian decorations still evident today, were likely exported as fully decorated items. However, later on, the Ibero-Phoenician cities preferred to receive them unadorned to decorate according to local tastes (Camps, 2010: 201).

In addition to these materials exported from Numidia, ancient sources like Columelle discussed the export of selected breeding animals such as rams (Collumelle, De l'agriculture : VII. II. 4), highlighting the superiority of African livestock. This suggests an active trade of these animals and their products, such as wool and leather, from the Maghreb to the Iberian Peninsula (Hareche, 1984: 161).

As for the imports from the Iberian lands into North Africa, it's important to note the metal goods found from the Bronze Age, including isolated findings of bronze and copper weapons, particularly in coastal areas of western North Africa like Lixus. Camps also mentions the glossy red pottery, particularly of the Iberian style that came from Spain during the historical period, which replaced the Campanian-styled vessels from the Metal Age (Camps, 2010: 200).

4.4. Trade Activity Between Numidia and Gaul:

The trade relations between Numidia and Gaul were minimally significant due to the silence over these interactions during Massinissa's reign, despite the frequent visits of the Gauls to the region and vice versa after Numidia fell and became a Roman province. Aside from some Numidian coins found in various parts of present-day France and some Gallic pieces in Algeria hinting at some trade activity, it was not extensive.

According to Monceaux, Gaul, like the Iberian Peninsula, likely received African products like oil, figs, and marble in exchange for tin and some garments, evidenced by Gallic coins (Gauloises) found in Africa. Among these coin collections are those from Nemausus and Marseille, with Marseille's drachmae being the international currency circulated in southwestern Gaul and the Spanish coasts, naturally reaching as far as Africa, especially since Marseille enjoyed a unique privilege in Narbonnaise. Monceaux concludes that the Marseille coins found in Africa are a definite indication of relations between the Roman province in Gaul and the province in Africa, particularly during the Roman occupation (Monceaux, 1884: 358).

According to Cagnat, numerous inscriptions evidence the relationships between Africa and Gaul, especially during the Roman period. This is corroborated by funerary inscriptions excavated in Africa, indicating the presence of Gauls. Cagnat also lists inscriptions found in Gaul that reference Africans, identifying civilians, craftsmen, and artisans. Thus, it appears that Africa engaged in trade relationships with Gaul, bearing the costs at least during the Roman occupation, sending craftsmen or traders to Gaul without receiving them in return.

In addition to these inscriptions, which are post-Massinissa, evidence also suggests that direct relations between Gaul and Africa were rare. Among the pottery found in France with an African touch, Cagnat only mentions a seal from a vase imported from Hadrumetum (modern-day Sousse), and African museums hold very few examples of such pottery made in Gaul around the start of the Christian era, which spread throughout a significant part of the Roman world (Cagnat, 1906 : 86).

4.5. Relations with Egypt and the Near East:

While direct evidence of trade relationships between the Kingdom of Numidia and Ptolemaic Egypt remains undocumented, circumstantial evidence suggests a potential parallel in the nature of interactions that might have existed, akin to those between Carthage and Alexandria. This speculation is grounded in the aftermath of Numidia's annexation of the plains of the Emporium during the Second Punic War, a strategic move that likely positioned Massinissa's kingdom to inherit and perhaps even expand upon the extensive Mediterranean trade networks previously dominated by Carthage (Camps, 2010: 237).

Numidia's subsequent interactions with Eastern Mediterranean regions likely benefited from the commercial infrastructure and diplomatic contacts that had enriched Carthage. This inference is

supported by the presence of Asian traders who were notably active in establishing colonies across North Africa and the Western Mediterranean.

These traders played a crucial role in facilitating the flow of goods and cultural exchanges, as evidenced by the numerous epitaphs found in significant ports like Lepcis, where dedications in Greek to Egyptian settlers underscore the multicultural fabric of these trading hubs.

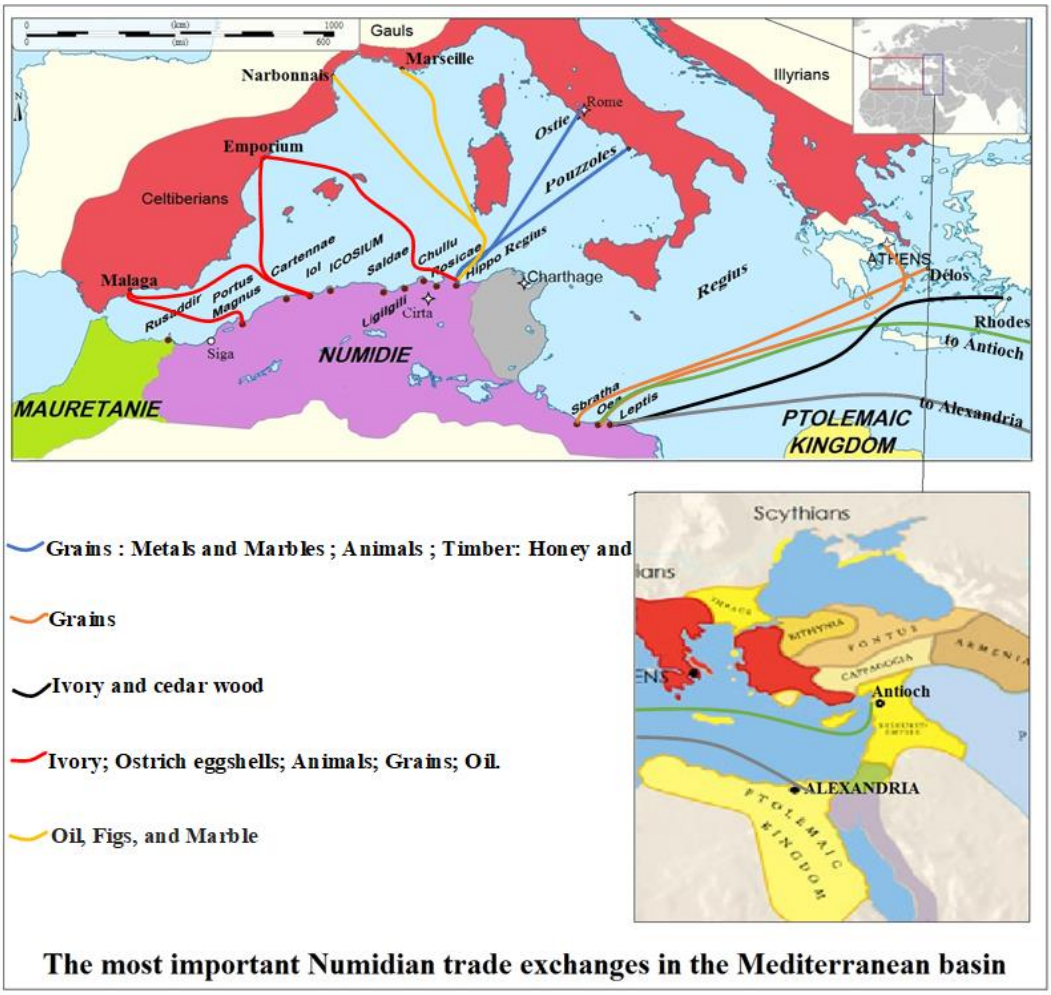
Moreover, the Utica cemetery hosts a funerary inscription in Greek that tells the life story of an individual from Abonotique in Paphlagonia. Similarly, in Rusicada, the burial sites of two Naucleroi from Aegoe and Korykios in Cilician Rough, alongside a Cyrenean named Philippe, highlight the diversity of Eastern settlers and traders who integrated into North African societies (Picard, 1990: 80).

The Algiers museum, as noted by Monceaux, contains a significant collection of Seleucid and Greek coins from Ptolemaic Egypt, further attesting to the extensive trade networks that linked these regions. Alexandria, a pivotal commercial hub since the 3rd century BC, continued to exert its influence throughout the Roman period. The presence of coins from Parthian, Arsacid, and Sassanid kings up to the Atlas Mountains reveals the broad scope of Hellenism as the lingua franca of trade and diplomacy during this era.

Massinissa's adoption of Greek as the official language and his engagement with Hellenistic culture, as evidenced by the numismatic record, suggest that Numidia did not merely participate in these networks but possibly played a proactive role in fostering them (Monceaux, 1884: 355. 356).

The integration of Hellenistic practices into Numidian governance and trade likely facilitated interactions with Eastern states, indicating that, while direct evidence is lacking, the geopolitical and economic landscape of the time provided ample opportunity for Numidia under Massinissa to engage with Ptolemaic Egypt and other Eastern powers through shared cultural and economic ties.

Map n°1 : Numidian exports during the Massinissa era (202-148 B.C)

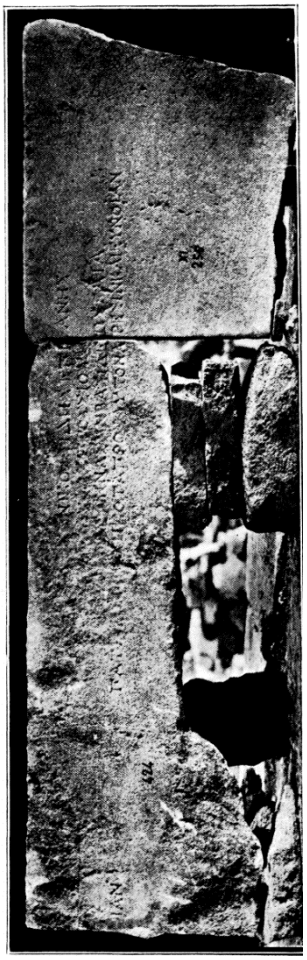


The most important Numidian trade exchanges in the Mediterranean basin

Inscription n° 1 : dedication of the Rhodians in honor of the king of Numidia Hiempsal II

The source : Kontorinis. Vassa, N. 1975 : 97

Inscription n° 2 : dedication of King Nikomedes to King Massinissa



The source : Hatzfeld, J ; Roussel, P. 1909 : 485

Image n° 1 : Massinssa ‘s coin (Bronse)

The source : odysseus-numismatique.com

Conclusion :

From the discourse on the trade relationships of the Kingdom of Numidia under Massinissa with Mediterranean countries both to the east and west, we can conclude the following: Despite the challenge in cataloging all exports and imports and the elusiveness of many materials to archaeological research primarily based on European excavations from the last century, the limited documents available still affirm Numidia's active engagement in Mediterranean trade during that era. The kingdom was a significant contributor, supplying plant and animal products and receiving industrial materials in return.

The memorials established by the Rhodians and others in honor of Massinissa, and later Hampsal II (80-60 BC), mirror the substantial trade interactions during his rule, signifying the persistent commercial exchanges with Greek territories from his time until the end of the Numidian kingdom. This is corroborated by the coins of Alexander and Macedonian princes found from that period.

Under the open trade policies executed by Massinissa during his reign (202-148 BC), the Kingdom of Numidia emerged as a pivotal player in the Mediterranean markets. The trade dynamics involved the exchange of essential raw materials like grains, wood, and ivory for manufactured goods, including pottery, metal works, and wines.

These exchanges were most dynamic with the Italian market, significantly vibrant and influential with the Greek market and its Hellenistic extensions in the East, and comparatively less substantial with the markets in the Western Mediterranean, such as Iberia and Gaul.

Bibliography:

Sources :

Appien. (1808). *Histoire romaine*. Tome. II. Livre VI l'Ibérique. Imprimerie des frères mame. Paris.

César. (1865). *Guerre d'Afrique*. publié sous la direction de M. Nisard. Didot. Paris.

Collumelle. (1844). *De l'agriculture. L'économie rurale.* livre III. tome premier trad. Nouvelle par M. Louis du Bois. C. L. F. Panckoucke. Paris.

Collumelle. (1846). *De l'agriculture. L'économie rurale*. livre VII. Tome 3. traduit par M. Louis du Bois. C. L. F. Panckoucke Editeur. Paris.

Hérodote. (1850). *Histoires*. livre IV. trad. du grec par larcheur. éd. Charpentier. Paris.

Juvénal. (1846). *Satires*. traduit en vers français par M. Jules Lacrois. libraire de Firmin Didot frères. Paris.

Maxime Vallère. (1935). *Actions et paroles mémorables*. livre I. éd. Garnier. Paris.

Ovide. (1838). *les Pontiques*. J.-J. Dubochet et compagnée. Editeurs. Paris.

Pline l'Ancien. (1867). *Histoire naturelle*. livre VIII. Traduction nouvelle par Amédée Tardieu. tome premier. libraire de L. Hachette et Cie. Paris.

Plutarque. (1853). *Les vies des hommes illustres, Tome 3 ; vies de Caius Julius César*. traduction française : Alexis Pierron. Charpentier Libraire-Editeur. Paris.

Plutarque. (1853). *Les vies des hommes illustres, Tome 4 ; vies de Caius Gracchus (de l'an 153 à l'an 121 av J. C*. traduction française : Alexis Pierron. Charpentier Libraire-Editeur. Paris.

Salluste. (1933). *Guerre de Jugurtha*. XVII édition de François Richard. Paris.

Strabon. (1867). *Géographie*. livre XVII. traduction nouvelle par Amédée Tardieu. Tome premier. libraire de L. Hachette et Cie. Paris.

Tite-Live. (1864). *Histoire romaine*. collection des Auteurs latins sous la direction de M. Nisard. ouevres de Tite-Live. Tome II. Firmin Didot. Paris.

Varron. (1878). *De l'agriculture*. livre III. chez Firmin Didot et Cie. Libraires. Paris.

Studies (books and articles) :

Arabic studies :

-Hāresh. Muḥamed ālhadi. (1984). *āltaṭaūr ālsiīasi ū āliqtisādī fī nūmīdiyā mundhu iʿtilāʾ māsīnīsā kālʿarsh ila wafat yūbā alawal (203-46 B.C)*, dār hūma, āljazāʾr.
kāmps. Ghābriyāl. (2010). *Fī ʾūṣūl bilād ālbarbar, māsīnīsā aw bidāyāt āltārī.* Tarjamat wa taḥqīq muḥamad ālʿarbī ʿaqūn. Manshūrāt ālmajlis ālʾaʿlā lilughat ālʿarabiyat. āljazāʾr.

Nuṣḥī, Ibrāim. (1978). *Tārīkhe ālrūmān mundhu ʾaqdam ālʿuṣūr ḥatā ʿām 133 q.m*. j1. ṭ1.

shāren shāfiya. (2009). "āldawr āliqtisādī lil ālmawāniʾ āljazaʾiriya ʿabra ālʿusūr ʿanāba ālmīnāʾ wa ālmadīna". *Ālmawāniʾ āljazaʾiriya ʿabra ālʿusūr silmā wa harbā*. Makhbar ālbināʾ ālhaḍārī lilmaghrib ālawsaṭ. Koliyat ālʿulūm ālinsāniya wa ālijtim āʿiya. Jāmiʿat āljazāʾr 02. dār hūma, āljazāʾr

French studies :

Aoulad Tahar, M. (2004). L'Hellénisme dans le royaume numide au IIème siècle av. j-c. *Antiquités Africaines*.

Bertier, A. (1943). Déouverte à Constantine de deux sépultures contenant des amphores grecques. *Revue africaine*. Au siège de la sosciété historique algérienne. Alger.

Bonnell, M. (1916). Monuments gréco-puniques de la Souma. *Recueil des Notices et Mémoird de la Société Archéologique du département de Constantine*. 6ème volume de la cinquième série. 49ème volume. 1915. Jourdan. Libraire-Editeur. Alger.

Cagnat, R. (1906). Gaulois en Afrique et Africains en Gaule. *Bulletin Archéologique du Comité des Travaux Historiques et Scientifiques.* Ernest Leroux. Editeur. Paris.

Dr. Carton. (1890). La nécropole de Bulla Regia, rapport de M. Le dr Carton sur des fouilles opérées en 1889. *Bulletin Archéologique du Comité des Travaux Historiques et Scientifiques*. Ernest Leroux. Editeur. Paris.

Dr. Carton. (1892). Rapport sur les fouilles faites à Bulla Regia en 1890. *Bulletin Archéologique du Comité des Travaux Historiques et Scientifiques*. Ernest Leroux. Editeur. Paris.

Charrier, P. (1886). *Description des monnaies de la Numidie et de la Maurétanie*. Typographie Alexandre Carle. Bone.

Desange, J. (2007). Aspects de l'hellénisme dans l'Afrique du Nord antique. *Actes du 17ème colloque de la villa Kérylos à Beaulier-sur- Mer les 20 et 21 octobre 2006*. Publications de l'Académie des inscriptions et Belles-Lettres. Paris.

Fougère, G. (1887). Fouilles de Délos (avril-aout 1886) : Dédicaces greques et latines. *Bulletin de Correspondance Héllénique*.

Gsell, S. (1903). *Fouilles de Gouraya. Sépultures puniques de la cote algérienne*. Ernest Leroux. Edition. Paris.

Gsell, S. (1918).*Histoire ancienne de l'Afrique du nord*, Tome. III, libraire Hachette. Paris.

Gsell, S. (1927). *Histoire ancienne de l'Afrique du nord*. Tome V et Tome. VI. libraire Hachette. Paris.

Gsell, (1928). *Histoire ancienne de l'Afrique du nord*. Tome VII. libraire Hachette. Paris.

Hatzfeld, J ; Roussel, P. (1909). Fouilles de Delos, dédicace du roi Nikomaédès au roi Massinnissa. *Bulletin de Correspondance Héllinique*.

Kontorinis. Vassa, N. (1975). Le roi Hiempsal II de Numidie et Rhodes. *L'Antiquité Classique.*

Le Coq, A. (1912). le commerce de l'Afrique romaine, *Bulletin de la société de géographie et de l'archéologie d'Oran, 35e année, Tome XXXII*, L. Fouque. Edition, Oran.

Monceaux, P. (1884). Grecs et Maures d'après les monnaies grecques du musée d'Alger. *Bulletin de correspondance africaine : Antiquités libyques, puniques, grecques et romains*. *3ème année. Fascicule II*. Imprimerie de l'association ouvrière P. Fontana et Cie. Alger.

Picard, G-Ch. (1990). *la civilisation de l'Afrique romaine*. 2ème édition. Etudes augustiennes. Paris.

Picon, M. (1857). Chroniques. *Revue Africaine*. Tome 2. A. Jourdan. Libraire-Editeur. Alger.

Rougé, J. (1966). *recherche sur l'organisation du commerce maritime en Méditerranée sous l'empire romain*. Ecole pratique de Hautes Etudes-VIème section. centre de recherches historiques (Ports. Routes. Trafics XXI). éd. S. E. V. P. E. N. Paris.

Tchernia, A. (2011). *Les romains et le commerce*. Centre Camille Julien. Naples.