



## ***Sahel region of tunisia from antiquity to the early middle ages***

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The book intitled

***“URBANISATION AND ARCHITECTURE IN THE SOUTHERN SAHEL REGION OF TUNISIA FROM ANTIQUITY TO THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES”*** written by Ameur YOUNES

is the result of more than a decade of field surveys on this region led altogether with historians, archaeologists, geomorphologists, geologists, geochemists, hydrologists, and students.

Thanks to these surveys conducted with a multi disciplinary team, the author could broaden his knowledge in other fields than history and archaeology, and helped him to

better apprehend several aspects of the region history such as the toponomy, the urbanism, the architecture and the passage from Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages.

The book is divided into three parts. In the first one dealing with the natural data, besides the analysis of the topographical and geophysical elements, the meteorological data (winds, temperatures, rainfall) have been studied in Antiquity and compared, as far as possible, to the contemporary period data. Consequently, it was possible to understand, even if partially, the evolution of the natural conditions in a long term period and to think about their impact on the settlement in this region.

The second part, more detailed than the previous one, consists of a catalogue of the 19 urban sites. From the beginning, the author sets up the general criteria to define a town. Such criteria are sometimes difficult to take into account for each site because the available sources failed to provide all the data. The text, rich in information, although more descriptive than analytical, is accompanied by a large general map, together with detailed maps for each site.

The third part is a synthesis based on the data from the first two previous sections. Several themes have been treated such as the history and legal status of the towns,



urbanization and architecture. The author tried to take the most of the available data without over interpreting, especially when the information is lacking regarding the legal status of the towns or their historical evolution from the end of Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages.

In short, the book is a well written and documented monograph.

Several historical and archaeological aspects during Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages of a region little known by searchers have been reviewed and

enhanced by new data, despite sometimes the scarcity of sources, together with the unavailability of tools which prevented the author to lead a deeper analysis of some questions.

Urbanisation and architecture in the southern sahel region of tunisia from antiquity to the early middle ages

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Ameur YOUNES, native of Thapsus at Sidi Bou Said, is a Full Professor of ancient history, archaeology and litology, and director of the Laboratory "Maghreb Studies" at the Faculty of Human and Social Sciences at Tunis, University of Tunis. He obtained his Master's degree and PhD in ancient history at the University Pierre Mendès-France (Grenoble II), his postgraduate diploma (DEA) in ancient history, civilization and language at the University Jean Monnet (Lyon III), and his diploma of "Habilitation à Diriger les Recherches" (HDR) in ancient history and archaeology at the University Lumière (Lyon II).

His attachment to this region known since the Antiquity for its high urbanization rate, its economic resources, and its ability to integrate in its networks both communities and people from elsewhere, led him to pursue his archaeological and historical researches despite the scarcity of available written sources, along with the very few archaeological vestiges above ground.

He published several works on eastern Byzantine region, among which are : Recherches sur la ville portuaire de Thapsus et son territoire en Byzacène dans l'Antiquité, CERES, Tunis, 1999, 2 volumes ; Recherches sur l'urbanisation et l'architecture dans le Sahel méridional tunisien de l'Antiquité au Haut Moyen Âge, PEMIVAT-FIHST, Tunis, 2012 ; « L'installation portuaire à Thapsus: mises au point à partir des textes antiques et de la documentation archéologique », La Méditerranée : l'Homme et la Mer. Les villes-ports en Tunisie, Actes du 1er colloque, Médiéa 27-28 mai 1998, Cahiers du CERES, série géographique n° 21, Tunis, 13 p. ; « Le paysage portuaire de Thapsus de l'Antiquité à nos jours », Séminaires Rencontre Internationale du Patrimoine Architectural Méditerranéen, RIPAM 5, 2013, 5 p. ; « Aqueducs et ports principaux de Thapsus », RIPAM 6, 2015, 16 p. ; « La portuaire antique de Thapsus: mises au point à partir de nouveaux documents archéologiques », Byzacène antique et Sahel médiéval : urbanisme et occupation du sol, PEMIVAT-FIHST, Tunis, 20 p. ; « Conditions hydrographiques et agglomérations urbaines antiques et médiévales dans le Sahel méridional », Ten et peuplement au Maghreb dans l'Antiquité et le Moyen Âge, Actes du IIIème colloque international, Tunis 15-17 novembre 2007, FIHST, Tunis, 44 p. ; « Salaisons, sel en Byzacène orientale à l'époque antique, savoir et savoir faire en Ifriqiya durant l'Antiquité et le Moyen Âge, Actes du IVème colloque international, Kairouan 24-25 avril, PEMIVAT-FIHST, Tunis, 2012, 31 p. ; « Les castella antiques en Byzacène entre Sallactiana et Raspinas », Notes de Service Géologique de l'Office National des Mines, 76, Tunis, 28 p. ; « The ancient underground quarries between Sidi Chaban and Lepidrina », Marbles and other rocks of the Mediterranean antiquity : studies interdisciplinary, Actes du VIIème colloque international de l'Association for the Study of Marble and other stones used in Antiquity (AASMA), Aix-en-Provence 12-18 juin 2006, M.M.S.H., Mazonnens at Larose, Paris, 9 p. and plates ; "A geoarchaeological study of the ancient quarries of sidi Chedmani Island (Monsieur, Tunisia)", Archaeometry, 52, 4, University of Oxford, 19 p. ; « Identification of stone blocks used for the building of the Thapsus amphitheatre in Tunisia », Archaeometry, 54, 2, University of Oxford, 17 p. ; "Urban transition in the Sahel of Tunisia from Antiquity to the Medieval period", WOCMES, Séville, 2018, 15 p. ; « Bâtir in Africa Proconsulaire: un savoir faire antiochéen ou antiochéen », Actes du colloque international, Elra antiochéen, devenir antiochéen : Diffusions, représentations, Tunis, 2021, 16 p.



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