

Religious Life in Roman Numidia

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Abstract

Numidia underwent profound political and territorial transformations during the Roman period as a result of Roman rule, which left a lasting impact on various aspects of local life. This presence fostered a process of cultural interaction that introduced new religious and cultural concepts and symbols, reshaping the social and cultural fabric of indigenous communities. Among the spheres most affected was religion, a fundamental component for understanding the historical development and civilization of ancient societies.

Despite the influence of Roman rule, the indigenous population preserved a significant part of their traditional beliefs and cults, although these gradually adapted to the new environment. This religious coexistence led to the association of several indigenous deities with their Roman counterparts through the process known as *Interpretatio Romana*, thereby ensuring the continuity of local religious practices under Roman administration.

Within this framework, the Roman authorities implemented administrative reforms aimed at regulating religious affairs through the establishment of official institutions and administrative bodies responsible for supervising religious ceremonies and cultic practices in accordance with Roman laws and regulations. These institutions played a central role in the administration of religious life while also contributing to the organization of broader aspects of civic life.

Keywords: Numidia, Religion, *Interpretatio Romana*, Ancient Maghreb.

1. Introduction.

From the earliest periods of its history, the inhabitants of Numidia developed a rich religious life characterized by diverse beliefs, rituals, and cultic practices. Despite successive political and cultural transformations, indigenous religion remained a fundamental component of the region's cultural identity while remaining open to external influences resulting from contact with neighboring peoples. This interaction became even more pronounced following the establishment of Roman rule in Numidia, extending to the economic, social, and religious spheres and giving rise to various forms of mutual influence between indigenous religious traditions and Roman religion.

Against this background, the present study aims to examine religious life in Numidia during the Roman period by analyzing its organizational structure, forms of worship, and religious practices under Roman authority, while exploring the nature of the relationship between indigenous and Roman religious traditions. Accordingly, this study addresses the following research questions: What were the major developments in religious life in Numidia during the Roman period? To what extent did the interaction between indigenous and Roman religions shape religious beliefs and practices? Finally, to what degree was the indigenous religion able to preserve its continuity within the framework of Roman religious syncretism?

2. The Nature of Religious Beliefs before the Roman Period

The inhabitants of Numidia experienced the evolution of religious thought through stages comparable to those observed among other early societies. However, our understanding of these beliefs remains limited due to the scarcity of available sources and the absence of a well-developed mythological tradition in indigenous Numidian religion¹. Unlike other contemporary ancient civilizations, no extensive corpus of mythological texts has survived, making it difficult to reconstruct a comprehensive picture of pre-Roman religious beliefs. Consequently, many interpretations remain hypothetical and often inconclusive.²

Like other ancient peoples, the indigenous populations of Numidia possessed their own sacred places and deities, allowing us to identify the principal religious beliefs and cultic practices that prevailed before the Roman conquest. The religious landscape of Numidia had undergone continuous development, shaped by processes of interaction and cultural exchange with neighboring peoples. Owing to its geographical openness and its contacts with the Mediterranean world, the region witnessed considerable diversity in religious beliefs and cults, which may be classified according to the nature of the deities worshipped and the religious concepts associated with them.³

The evolution of religious thought in Numidia followed a pattern similar to that of many early societies. Indigenous communities believed in the existence of supernatural forces capable of influencing human destiny, while certain religious phenomena reflected a close relationship between magic and religion. Nature itself was perceived as being inhabited by spiritual entities endowed with supernatural powers.⁴

The veneration of natural phenomena by ancient communities can largely be attributed either to their inability to explain such phenomena rationally or to the practical benefits they believed these forces provided. Consequently, any study of religious life in Numidia during the Roman period requires an examination of the pre-Roman pagan beliefs that formed the religious background of the indigenous population. Indeed, the history of a people's religious mentality cannot be understood without considering its inherited belief system, whose influence often persisted long after its initial formation. Among the principal indigenous cults was the worship of Baal Hammon, a major Punic deity whose cult spread widely throughout Carthage and the inland cities of Numidia. Baal Hammon was traditionally associated with both human and animal sacrifices and enjoyed exceptional prestige among local populations.⁵

Archaeological evidence—including stelae, inscriptions, and votive offerings discovered across numerous Numidian sites—attests to the widespread diffusion of this cult. These remains provide valuable insights into the religious mechanisms that shaped local communities before and during Roman rule, while also illustrating the processes of cultural and religious interaction between indigenous traditions and foreign influences. The popularity of Baal Hammon was closely linked to

¹ Mohamed Seghir Ghanem, *The Early Features of Pagan Religious Thought in North Africa* (Algeria: Dar Al-Houda for Printing, Publishing and Distribution, 2005), 80.

² Ibid.

³ Abdelhamid Amrane, *Romanization and Religion in North Africa* (Algiers: Office des Publications Universitaires, 2011), 15.

⁴ Chafia Charen et al., *Settler Colonialism and the Policy of Romanization* (Algeria: National Center for Studies and Research, National Research Projects Series, 2007), 225.

⁵ Mohamed El Arbi Agoun, *Economy and Society in Ancient North Africa* (Algiers: Office des Publications Universitaires, 2008), 211.

the belief that he ensured agricultural fertility, protected livestock, and promoted their reproduction. Such beliefs explain the broad appeal of his cult among different sectors of the population. For this reason, the French historian Charles-André Julien described Baal Hammon as "the supreme god without rival."⁶

3. Religious Pluralism under Roman Rule.

Ancient Numidian society was characterized by its openness to foreign cultures and religions, which were generally received with tolerance, particularly when they were not imposed by force. Following the Roman conquest, the indigenous population did not merely adopt the language of the newcomers; many also embraced Roman religious beliefs, which constituted an integral component of Roman civilization. At the same time, the Romans did not seek to suppress the worship of indigenous deities, despite their limited familiarity with the traditional religions of North Africa.⁷

In practice, Roman domination did not result in the prohibition of traditional cults. Indigenous communities continued to worship their ancestral deities in local sanctuaries according to inherited ritual practices. In many instances, they also adopted Roman gods by identifying them with their own divinities, giving rise to a process of religious accommodation and syncretism. During the Roman occupation, settlers introduced a variety of cultural elements, including their deities, which were gradually assimilated into the existing religious landscape. As a result, these gods acquired new worshippers among the local population. By the end of the first century CE, nearly every Roman settlement in North Africa possessed a Capitulum dedicated to the principal deities of the Roman state religion.⁸

The diffusion of Roman deities was largely promoted by merchants, administrators, and military personnel. Archaeological evidence, including inscriptions, altars, mosaics, coins, lamps, and references to the priesthood⁹, provides valuable information on the spread of Roman religious practices in Numidia. Among the most significant cults was that of the Capitoline Triad, the official state cult of Rome.¹⁰

The Capitoline Triad consisted of Jupiter, the supreme god of the Roman pantheon; Juno¹¹, the goddess of marriage, childbirth, and fertility; and Minerva, the goddess of wisdom and strategic thought. These deities were worshipped in the Capitulum¹², where they shared the sacred space with local cults. The worship of Roman gods became especially popular among local elites and wealthy notables, who viewed participation in Roman religious life as a means of expressing their affiliation

⁶ Maha Aissaoui, *Libyan Society in Ancient North Africa from Prehistory to the Eve of the Islamic Conquest* (PhD diss., Department of History, Mentouri University, 2010), 227.

⁷ Cadotte (A) *La Romanisation des dieux l'interpretatio romana en afrique du nord sous haut empire*, Boston, USA, 2007, 01.

⁸ Charles-André Julien. *History of North Africa (Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco): From the Beginnings to the Islamic Conquest*. Translated by Mohamed Mzali et al. 2011. 118.

⁹ Goke A. Akmboye : *Religion and the romanization of the indigenous peoples of north Africa*, University of Brodan, p 412.

¹⁰ Abdelhamid Amrane, *Romanization and Religion in North Africa*, 69.

¹¹ Mohamed Bachir Cheniti, *Economic and Social Changes in North Africa during the Roman Occupation* (Algiers, 1980), 258.

¹² Gilbert Charles-Picard, *The Civilization of Roman North Africa (Tripolitania, Africa Proconsularis, Numidia, and Mauretania)*, trans. Mohamed El Arbi Agoun, 1st ed. (Algiers : Dar Al-Muthaqaf for Publishing and Distribution, 2020), 111.

with Roman civilization. Consequently, the construction of a Capitolium became a defining feature of urban centers that experienced the process of Romanization.¹³

It was only natural that Roman deities were introduced into the African provinces, as Roman authorities sought to integrate the Libyo-Punic religious tradition into the imperial religious system through a process of Romanization. This policy was reflected in the identification of Punic deities with their Roman counterparts, most notably the assimilation of Baal Hammon to Saturn.¹⁴ Baal Hammon was regarded as the supreme lord of the universe, believed to dwell in the heavens and among the stars, to ensure the growth of crops and the fertility of the land, and to govern the celestial bodies that determined the succession of days, months, and seasons. He was also associated with the cycles of life and death, embodying the concepts of beginning and end, dawn and dusk, birth and mortality. Consequently, his religious and iconographic attributes became closely associated with those of Roman deities, giving rise to a process of religious syncretism.¹⁵

Another prominent example is the goddess Caelestis, whose cult is believed to have originated with the foundation of Carthage before later being identified with Greek and Roman goddesses. She occupied a pre-eminent position within the Punic pantheon and enjoyed a popularity comparable to that of Saturn. As a lunar deity, she was revered as a powerful and eternal divine protector. Her cult was already widespread in Numidia before the Roman conquest, where she was venerated as the Great Mother Goddess, the protector of cities, the guardian of fertility, and the symbol of abundance.¹⁶ This process of religious accommodation is reflected in inscriptions that combine Roman and African divine names, such as Baal Hammon–Jupiter and Tanit Caelestis. Such evidence suggests that Romanization did not simply replace indigenous deities with Roman ones; rather, Roman gods themselves underwent a process of Africanization, adapting to local religious traditions and acquiring indigenous characteristics.¹⁷

The Roman god Aesculapius was likewise identified with the Punic god Eshmun. An inscription discovered at Thuburbo Majus (modern Tunisia) refers to his cult and prescribes ritual regulations for those wishing to enter his sanctuary. Worshippers were required to abstain from sexual relations for three days, refrain from eating pork, avoid combing their hair, and neither enter public baths nor cross the sanctuary threshold wearing shoes. Such prescriptions reflect ritual purity practices consistent with religious traditions inherited from the Greco-Eastern world.¹⁸

Archaeological evidence from Rusguniae on the Algerian coast also attests to the diffusion of Roman cults. Mosaic pavements depict several Roman deities, including Bacchus, Apollo, and Neptune, while oil lamps unearthed at the site bear representations of Minerva and Mercury. In Numidia, Mercury was particularly revered as the patron deity of commerce. In certain local traditions, however, he also acquired specifically African attributes, notably as a protector of vegetation—especially olive cultivation—and was occasionally associated with Saturn, illustrating once again the dynamic process of religious interaction between Roman and indigenous beliefs.¹⁹

¹³ Abdelhamid Amrane, *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Ammar Mahjoubi, *The Province of Africa from the Roman Conquest to the End of the Severan Dynasty (146 BC–AD 235)* (Tunis: Centre de Publication Universitaire, 2001), 144.

¹⁵ Toutain (J) : *Les cules païens dans l'empire romain*, Paris, 1911, p 21.

¹⁶ Gall (J) : *La religion romaine de l'époque de caton l'Ancien au règne de l'empereur commode*, Paris, 1975, 1112-1113

¹⁷ Mohamed Seghir Ghanem, *Early Features...*, op. cit. 113.

¹⁸ Piganiol A., *La religion et les mouvements sociaux dans le Maghreb antique*, dans C.H.M., T.3, 1956-1957, 824-827.

¹⁹ Benabou (M) : *La résistance africaine à la romanisation*, paris, 1973, p 344

The Roman authorities did not initially order the destruction of indigenous temples. Rather, these sanctuaries remained in use from the beginning of the Roman occupation until the end of the first century AD. It was only after the policy of Romanization achieved significant success during the second century AD that its influence extended more profoundly into the religious sphere. Despite the resilience of indigenous religious traditions over a long period, many sanctuaries were gradually transformed in accordance with Roman architectural and religious models.²⁰

These temples were constructed or remodeled according to a variety of architectural plans across numerous sites to accommodate Roman cults. In time, local priests and priestesses also came to serve within these sanctuaries, illustrating the integration of indigenous religious personnel into the new religious order. Consequently, ancient temples gradually acquired Roman architectural characteristics—such as columns and classical layouts—while continuing to preserve noticeable Punic influences. Thus, places of worship clearly reflect the impact of Roman architectural traditions without entirely abandoning earlier local features.²¹

Furthermore, virtually every city possessed sanctuaries dedicated to the Capitoline Triad—**Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva**—as well as temples devoted to **Mars, Venus, Ceres, Apollo, Mercury, Hercules, Bacchus**, and other Roman deities. Temples, statues, and altars were erected in their honor, and sacrificial offerings were presented both to these divinities and to other deities previously mentioned. Nevertheless, the Roman authorities did not systematically impose the official religion of the Empire upon the populations of the African provinces. Rather, Roman religious beliefs spread gradually throughout the Empire, facilitated by the generally polytheistic character of the population and the widespread acceptance of multiple cults.²²

The Maghreb during the Roman period was therefore characterized by the worship of both major and minor Roman deities, each possessing distinct attributes and functions. The multiplicity of gods gave rise to a corresponding diversity of religious cults and practices. This diversity encompassed deities associated with abstract and spiritual concepts—such as peace, victory, war, beneficence, and misfortune—as well as celestial divinities. Such religious plurality reflected the prevailing belief that the greater the number of gods revered and worshipped, the greater the protection afforded against misfortune and evil.

The diffusion of Roman deities in the Maghreb, particularly those identified with indigenous divinities through the process of religious syncretism, demonstrates the extent to which interaction between Romans and the local populations extended into the religious sphere. Rather than producing a complete rupture with pre-existing beliefs, Roman rule generally encouraged the coexistence and gradual assimilation of religious traditions. The Romans, who initially possessed only limited knowledge of indigenous African religions, did not seek from the outset to prohibit the local population from worshipping their traditional deities. This situation illustrates the relative religious tolerance that prevailed during much of the Roman period and the coexistence of diverse religious traditions despite their doctrinal differences.²³

4. The Imperial Cult and the Institutions Responsible for Its Administration

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ammar Mahjoubi, *The Province of Africa from the Roman Conquest to the End of the Severan Period (146 BC–AD 235)*, p. 143.

²² Aymard, André, and Jeannine Auboyer. *History of Civilizations*, Vol. II: Rome and Its Empire. Translated by M. Dagher and J. Abou Rihan. Beirut: Oweidat Publishing and Printing, 2000.

²³ Gilbert Charles Picard, op. cit., 2020, p. 111.

In addition to the worship of the Roman gods and their frequent identification with local deities through the process of *interpretatio Romana*, the worship of the emperor, commonly referred to as the Imperial Cult, spread widely as one of the most significant manifestations of Roman religious and political influence.²⁴ This cult was based on the deification and veneration of emperors, a practice that became firmly established under Augustus, the founder of the Roman imperial system. Following his death, the Roman Senate decreed his deification, and subsequent emperors inherited the honorific title Augustus, denoting their exalted and sacred status. Consequently, special priests were appointed throughout the provinces to represent the emperor and supervise the observance of the imperial cult.²⁵ The essence of the Imperial Cult lay in the glorification of deceased emperors by admitting them into the ranks of the gods. The emperor was regarded as the embodiment of the strength and unity of the Roman Empire and as the guarantor of its stability and continuity. Any offense against the emperor was therefore considered an offense against Rome itself. Accordingly, the office of the Pontifex Maximus (Chief Priest) became inseparably associated with the person of the emperor.²⁶

The rituals of the Imperial Cult were expressed through the organization of public ceremonies and religious festivals dedicated to the emperor. These celebrations included the lighting of sacred fires, the holding of public banquets, communal feasts, and the offering of wine and sacrifices in his honor. Such festivities attracted a considerable number of participants because of their festive character and social significance, and many of these public celebrations continued to be observed well into the Vandal period.²⁷

The principal objective of the Imperial Cult was to strengthen the cohesion of the diverse peoples and territories subject to imperial authority by fostering loyalty and devotion to the emperor as the supreme ruler of the Roman world.²⁸

The relatively easy acceptance of the Imperial Cult among sections of the indigenous population can be explained by the fact that many North African communities had previously practiced the veneration of deceased kings, heroic ancestors, and prominent tribal leaders. Consequently, the transfer of such forms of reverence to the Roman emperor, who occupied the highest political and military position in the Empire, did not represent a complete rupture with earlier religious traditions. The essential difference, however, was that the Roman emperors were geographically distant from their provincial subjects, and their deification generally occurred only after their deaths. To institutionalize the Imperial Cult in Roman North Africa, a formal provincial organization was established. At its head stood the Provincial Council (*Concilium Provinciae*), which met in the provincial capital under the presidency of the Provincial Priest (*Sacerdos Provinciae*). This official was directly responsible to the emperor for ensuring the proper administration of the Imperial Cult and the regular performance of its ceremonies.²⁹

As an expression of the official character of the cult, the Provincial Council supervised the offering of sacrifices to the emperor, while the remains of sacrificial banquets were distributed among the poor in public squares and throughout the city. These communal feasts, organized in honor of the emperors,

²⁴ Goke. A. A Kimboye : op-cit-p 413.

²⁵ Firas al-Sawah, *Encyclopedia of the History of Religions: Greece and Rome, Pre-Christian Europe*, 1st ed., Dar al-Alaa Publications, Damascus, Syria, 2005, 247.

²⁶ Le Glay (M) : *Les religions de l'Afrique Antique, Civilisation d'hier et d'aujourd'hui*, Paris, 1954, 312.

²⁷ Ghania Boughra, "Religious Beliefs in Thidis during the Roman Period," *Dirāsāt Journal*, no. 5 (December 2016): 194.

²⁸ Goke A. Akimboye : op-cit, p 414.

²⁹ Mohamed Bachir Chenniti, *Social and Economic Changes...*, op. cit, 263.

transformed urban centers into places of public celebration. The council also organized the annual religious festivals, which included elaborate rituals, public games, and ceremonial processions.

The *Sacerdos Provinciae* was likewise responsible for administering the provincial treasury (*Arca*), from which the expenses of the Imperial Cult were financed. These revenues derived from compulsory provincial contributions as well as from inherited or donated endowments specifically dedicated to religious purposes. The Provincial Council convened annually to oversee these financial and religious responsibilities.³⁰

One of the principal functions of this institution was to strengthen the relationship between the provinces and the emperor by organizing ceremonies honoring him throughout the Empire. In this context, priests and other religious officials played a central role, particularly the *Flamen*, who served as the priest specifically responsible for the worship of the emperor and the imperial family.³¹

According to the historian Al Arabi Agoune, although the Provincial Council possessed a predominantly religious character, its functions extended beyond the religious sphere into the political domain. In the Roman world, religion and politics were closely intertwined, and even when the council confined itself to religious matters, its activities ultimately served imperial political interests. This explains why the Imperial Cult remained concentrated primarily in urban centers, especially among Roman colonists, military commanders, government officials, and those indigenous elites closely associated with the Roman administration. Consequently, religious activity remained largely under the supervision and control of the Roman authorities.³²

The priests also exercised both religious and political influence within municipal councils by overseeing ceremonies dedicated to the emperor during official festivals, erecting statues portraying the emperors, and dedicating honorific inscriptions in their names. Despite the official status of the Imperial Cult, however, the indigenous population generally remained faithful to their traditional deities, even when these were formally identified with Roman gods through the process of religious syncretism.

The Roman authorities' attempt to impose the Imperial Cult upon the indigenous populations of ancient North Africa appears to have achieved only limited success. While it gained acceptance among Roman settlers and certain Romanized members of the local elite whose interests were closely connected to imperial rule, the majority of the indigenous population continued to preserve their ancestral religious traditions.

The local inhabitants remained devoted to their traditional cults, continuing to offer sacrifices and votive offerings to their ancestral deities, particularly in rural areas and among the lower social classes. Their attachment to indigenous religious beliefs thus constituted a form of symbolic resistance to Roman occupation and represented an effort to preserve the distinctive cultural identity

³⁰ The provinces possessed an institution comparable to a small parliament, known as the Provincial Council (*Concilium Provinciae*), as evidenced by the bronze inscription discovered by archaeologists at Narona in present-day France, commonly referred to as the Bronze Plaque of Narbonne (*Plaque de bronze de Narbonne*). This council convened at least once a year in the provincial capital, where the governor (*legatus* or governor) resided. Its annual sessions were attended by delegates representing all the municipalities of the province. See: al- 'Arabī 'Aqqūn, *The Cirta Confederation: A Study of the History, Archaeology, and Institutions of Ancient Cirta* (Algiers: Numidia Publications, 2009), p. 76.

³¹ Mohamed al-Arab Aqoune, *The Cirta Confederation: A Study of the History, Archaeology, and Institutions of Ancient Cirta*, p. 76.

³² Ibid.

of the North African peoples against complete assimilation into the Roman religious and cultural system.

Although the Provincial Council was essentially a religious institution, the nature of its activities endowed it with important political functions. It served as a valuable intermediary between the emperor and the provincial administration, facilitating communication between provincial officials and the imperial government. Through this institution, provincial grievances could be presented while simultaneously reinforcing imperial authority. The Imperial Cult therefore became the official religion of the Roman state in political terms, as it ensured the loyalty of both the provincial population and local governors, whereas the original function of these provincial councils had been primarily to disseminate and promote the Imperial Cult throughout the provinces.³³

3. The Position of the Authorities toward the Christian Religion

Although Rome displayed a degree of tolerance toward the peoples under its rule regarding urban ways of life, allowing them either to adopt the Roman model or to preserve the traditions inherited from their ancestors, it was far less accommodating in religious matters, particularly within the cities. Municipal authorities undertook measures to restrict indigenous religious institutions and imposed severe penalties on those that persisted in practicing spiritual activities deemed hostile to Roman authority. Among the sanctions that most profoundly affected the fate of these institutions was the demolition of their temples and their replacement with Roman sanctuaries. Furthermore, the use of any language other than Latin in religious ceremonies was prohibited. In addition, Roman priests and religious officials, drawn from the aristocratic class and committed to the political interests of their respective municipalities, were appointed to serve in these temples. Consequently, the sacerdotes replaced the Kohanim in the newly established temples belonging to the territories of cities organized under the Roman municipal administrative system in the African provinces.³⁴

Following the emergence of Christianity and its spread among the most socially disadvantaged segments of the population, many of the indigenous inhabitants of North Africa embraced the new faith with hope and conviction. They believed that Christianity, through its divine teachings, would alleviate the injustices they endured and offer relief from their suffering.³⁵

However, the Roman authorities soon recognized the growing influence of Christianity and gradually incorporated it into the imperial system. Beginning with the reign of Constantine I, Christianity was adopted as the official religion of the Roman Empire. Consequently, the Christian faith became a new cohesive element within the social order supervised by the municipal administrations. Responsibility for religious affairs came to constitute one of the principal functions of the municipal council, while the leading notables of each city increasingly competed for ecclesiastical offices in order to reinforce their social standing among their fellow citizens and to gain the favor of the emperor, regarded as the protector of Christianity and the sovereign of the civilized Roman world.³⁶

Thus, in the African provinces, Roman religion constituted a carefully regulated system of rites, obligations, rituals, and ceremonial practices whose widespread observance served to disseminate imperial ideology and reinforce the unity of the Empire. In this context, the conflict and incompatibility between the indigenous African and Roman religious beliefs can be attributed to the

³³ Mohamed Bachir Chenniti, op. cit., pp. 264–265.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Mohamed Bachir Chenniti, *The Roman Empire and the Maghreb...*, op. cit., p. 56.

³⁶ Ammar Mahjoubi, op. cit., p. 143.

cultural and social dimensions of each tradition, both of which were founded upon fundamentally divergent political ideologies.

Conclusion

The foregoing discussion clearly illustrates the religious landscape shaped by the Roman authorities during the Roman period.

It reveals the emergence of a process of religious syncretism or, more precisely, accommodation, between indigenous deities and their Roman counterparts.

At the same time, the local populations remained attached to their traditional religious beliefs, while modifying only the external appearance (physiognomy) of their deities. These divinities continued to be worshipped without losing their essential identity, a phenomenon that may be regarded as a form of cultural and religious resistance among the peoples of North Africa under Romanization.

Although Roman religion possessed an official character, clearly reflected in its religious institutions and organizational structures, this did not prevent a number of indigenous deities and beliefs from enduring.

Consequently, the Maghreb became a dynamic arena of cultural, political, and religious interaction, where reciprocal processes of influence and adaptation continuously shaped its historical development.

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