

Mustis was a town located in a fertile agricultural region of Numidian and Roman Africa, not far from ancient Carthage destroyed by Romans in 146 BC. No other research project conducted in Africa, or at least in Tunisia, did not strive for such a comprehensive understanding of a town's neighbourhood using such diverse methods. The resulting complex picture may change our perception on the issues related to colonisation and romanisation of Africa. To this aim the project will employ comprehensive prospections, broad analysis of the environment, spatial imagining of data combined with traditional excavation methods and analysis of finds.

The primary scientific goal of the proposed project is to understand the dynamics of change of one of 200 towns known from the province of *Africa Proconsularis*, in a delicate moment of transition from a Numidian agglomeration to a Roman one, and the development of Mustis as an element of urban system of Africa and Roman Empire between 5th century BC to the mid-3rd century AD.

The team involved in the project will seek to establish the model for the functioning of the town's rural hinterland in different phases of the Numidian and Roman periods based on such factors as climate, landscape evolution, soil types and natural resources, including flora and fauna, land use, rural and urban settlements, epigraphy, communications network, economy, including crop, wine and olive production, as well as animal husbandry.

On a more detailed level, the project will provide an entirely new perspective on how Africa was impacted by such socio-political events as Roman colonisation. The examination of the chronology of the town will help to answer the question whether there existed – and if yes, then for how long – a division into autochthonous and Roman settlements, what was the population structure of the town and in what manner the possible evolution of the agglomeration from an autochthonous settlement into a Roman town influenced the location and transformation of the municipal centre and its periphery.

The project seeks to contribute to the current discussion regarding the colonisation in the Mediterranean world, which investigates the impact of Roman politics on the region. Gaining control over more and more provinces brought about an entire sequence of effects of social, cultural, and religious character, thus creating a state of turmoil, as well as providing the impetus for creation of a new Roman-African world, which supplanted the Punic-African one.