

Timgad's Plan

Timgad lies on the northern slopes of the Aurès mountains and was created ex nihilo, which literally means 'out of nothing'. It was a military colony by the Emperor Trajan in AD 100. Unlike the ancient Roman towns that were on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, ancient ruins in Timgad are far from any modern city, and around 170 km from the coast. The function of the city was to control one of the main passes through the Aures Mountains to the Sahara Desert.

The city's plan was designed as a perfect square, bisected by two main streets that were perpendicular to each other. The street that ran from north to south is known as the *Cardo*, whereas the east-west oriented street is known as the *Decumanus*. However the *Cardo* does not run the whole length of the city, only to its center, where the forum was once located.

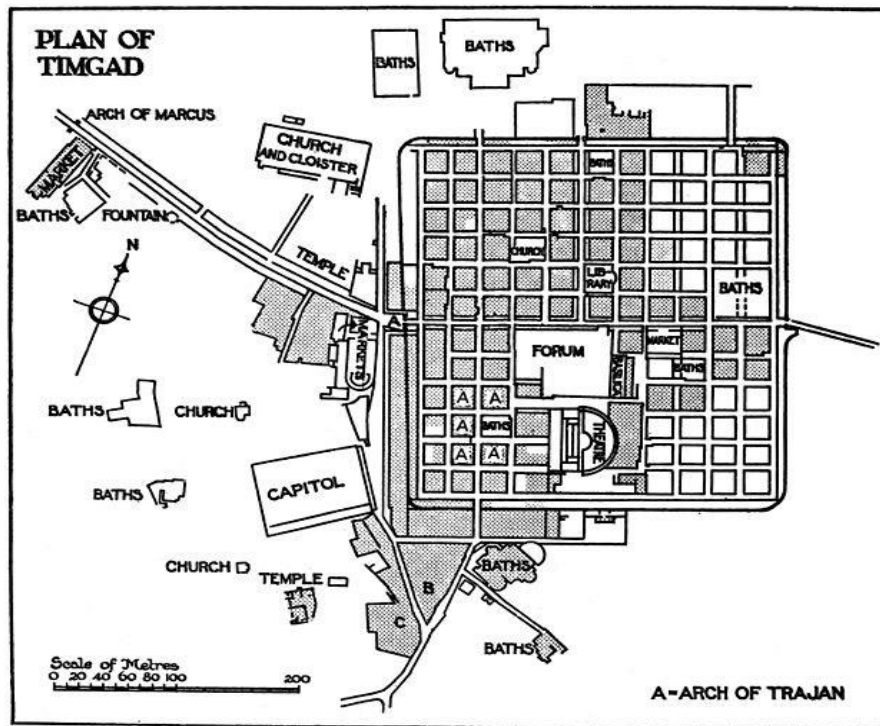
Timgad was a walled settlement, and was accessed from one of its four gates, one for each cardinal direction. On the western side of the old city, the gate was replaced by a triumphal arch, Trajan's Arch, when the urban area spread beyond its original limits. Trajan's Arch stands at the end of the *Decumanus* connecting the old and new areas, and is often regarded as one of the city's most impressive structural remains. The road leading from the arch to the new area of Timgad is decorated with columns, and its central section was designed specifically for the use of chariots, whilst pedestrians walked on either side of it.

Timgad also possessed the various structures that characterized a Roman settlement. For instance, at the center of Timgad is the forum, which was a public square whose primary purpose was as a place for the selling of goods. Additionally, the forum was used as a place for various social gatherings.

To the south of Timgad's forum was the city's theater, which was the place where public performances were held like summer parties and other festivities. . The theater was built during the 160s, and was formed by cutting into a side of a hill. Although Timgad's theater is comparatively smaller than most others in the Roman Empire, about 3500 people could still be seated in it at any given time.

Yet another feature of Roman urban planning is its baths. At Timgad, the remains of as many as 14 baths have survived. One of these is located on the northern end of the city's *Cardo*. These baths were on the left side of the *Cardo* as one entered the city's gates, and would have been used by weary travelers entering the city from that direction.

The other key buildings include four thermals, basilica and the Capitoline Temple which is dedicated to Jupiter and is of approximately the same size as the Pantheon in Rome. Nearby the capitol, there is a square church with a circular apse dating from the 7th century. In the Southeast of the city, there is a large Byzantine citadel built in the later days of the city. In addition to a library which is also one of the best examples of the logistics of Roman town planning. The discovery of the library give an impression of the grandeur of this place. It is historically important as it shows the presence of a fully developed library system in this Roman city, indicating a high standard of learning and culture.



Activities

1- Answer the following question :

- a) For what reason Timgad was built far from the coast?
- b) In what shape Timgad was built ?
- c) How many gates does the city have?
- d) What's the road from Trajan's Arch designed for?
- e) What are the main characteristics of the Roman cities ?
- f) What are the main things should take in consideration while planning for a city ?

2- True and False :

- a) Timgad is an open city.
- b) Cardo and Decumanus are two central forums.
- c) One the city's gate directed to the Cardo.
- d) The significant role of the forum is the public performances.
- e) The Roman settlements are totally a military that they are not interested in art and knowledge.

3- Fill the gaps with the following words :

square - ruins - sites - planning - engineers - military - grid

Ancient ruins in Timgad, Algeria is one of the most beautiful Roman in existence. Established on a perfect..... grid, it's a prime example of Roman urban town No wonder why the in Timgad gained the title of the Pompeii of Africa. Timgad is recognized for being an example of a remarkable system. It is a great example of the permanence of the old plan of the earlier encampment. It is an example of the inventiveness of the ancient Roman military