

Map 37 Syrtica

Compiled by D.J. Mattingly, 1996

Introduction

The region of Syrtica is one of the least hospitable coastal stretches anywhere in the Mediterranean basin. With the exception of the immediate hinterland of Macomades (modern Sirte), much of the route round the Syrtis Maior gulf—between Cephalae Promunturium (Cape Misurata) and Berenice (Benghazi)—runs through a barren-looking and poorly watered landscape. Early exploration by Beechey (1828) and Cerrata (1933) was supplemented in dramatic fashion by Goodchild's study (1976, 145-94) undertaken specifically for TIR Lepcis and TIR Cyrene. Many of his identifications in this sector still look secure, though Stucchi (1975) and Purcaro Pagano (1976) in particular have suggested further alternatives.

The Sebkhā Tauorgha, a great salt-flat and seasonal lake into which the pre-desert wadi systems of Sofeggin and Zemzem discharge, dominates the western side of the Syrtis (Map 35). Most of the road stations mentioned by the ancient itineraries in this sector were minor installations, and almost none can be securely identified on the ground (Rebuffat 1973; Mattingly 1994). The south-western sector of the Syrtic coastline is the best watered, and was served in antiquity by a series of good anchorages (Aspis, Macomades, Charax/(I)scina). Some of the larger coastal settlements served as *civitas* centers or attained *municipium* status (Gascou 1972; Lepelley 1979; 1981; Mattingly 1994). In modern times this region has been noted for the quality of its pasture. The typical farmsteads here in the Roman period, extending up to 31 miles into the interior along the wadis, likewise suggest a high level of stock-raising (for recent field survey, see Rebuffat 1988; Reddé 1988; work by Laronde and Longerstay is in progress). There were also numerous small agglomerations of such farmsteads (hamlets or villages) in the pre-desert wadis, clustered around the wells and cisterns. In addition, along the coastal plain itself on either side of Macomades, there were a number of more substantial villas, several with evidence of olive- or wine-presses (Reddé 1988, 77). With the exception of a dense group at Tmed Hassan (Praetorium) and a few elsewhere in the coastal plain, there were few fortified farms (*gsur*) here in comparison with the Tripolitanian pre-desert zone to the west.

The south-eastern coastline becomes increasingly barren after Charax/(I)scina (Medina Sultan). For the most part the main road seems to have kept very close to the coast, making use of a series of wells in a narrow corridor. The short inland diversion to the town of Digdida (Wadi el-Hariga) forms a rare exception. There appear to have been only a handful of anchorages and a series of very minor road stations along this section of the coast, although new fieldwork by Laronde has shown that the wadis inland were more fully exploited than Goodchild had believed. On the eastern side of the gulf, beyond Kozyntion Akron (Marsa Brega), dispersed ancient settlements increase in number, and fortified farms are again strongly represented among rural estate centers. Water resources and pasturage are better here than in the southern sector of the Gulf.

As Goodchild observed (1976, 149; cf. Laronde 1987), comparison between the overland itineraries and the maritime listings (notably StadMM) suggests that some of the major sites were known in the latter sources by their Greek names and in the former by the Latin/Phoenician/Libyan equivalents current in the Roman period (for example, Euphranta/Macomades; Charax/(I)scina). With the exception of the descriptive names of minor way stations (Ad Palmam, Ad Puteum, Ad Turrem, etc.), the majority of the settlement names current in the Roman period were of Libyan or Phoenician derivation (Bisi 1977).

The exact course of the Roman roads around the Syrtic gulf is very uncertain, but it seems probable that for most of the way from Macomades eastwards to the provincial boundary at Arae Philaenorum, ItAnt and TabPeut document an essentially similar path, normally very close to the coast (Tissot 1888; Goodchild 1948; 1971; Purcaro Pagano 1976). Only in the vicinity of the town of Digdida did the roads have significant inland detours. Beyond the foot of the Gulf, the route divided, with one road continuing along the coastal plain and the other diverting inland towards an important road junction at Corniclanum (Agedabia; see Map 38). Although the exact location of most of

the places recorded along these roads is thus also conjectural, I have made tentative suggestions for many. The hollow symbols and question marks used emphasize the need for caution concerning the reliability of the specific attributions, while allowing the general shape of the limited permanent settlement here to be appreciated.

The east-west coastal route is mirrored in part by interior desert routes linking the oases of the northern Sahara (Rebuffat 1970; 1970a), notably from Augila (Map 38 C4), via Marada, Zella (an important oasis lying just beyond the southern margin of the map), and Tagrifet with the oases of the Giofra (Waddan, Hun, Socna) and Fezzan (Sabae, Garama and others; see Map 36). Desert tracks also link these oases with the Syrtic coast at various points; these south-north tracks have traditionally been important transhumance routes for the movement of flocks between the Syrtic pastures and the oases. There was probably always a close interrelationship between the coastal Macae and Nasamones sub-tribes and those of the interior (Bates 1914; Desanges 1978; 1980). In Late Antiquity, the oases (and indeed much of Syrtica) appear to have been dominated by new confederations of tribes, the Austuriani, later known also as the Laguatan or Leuathae (Roques 1987; Mattingly 1994, 173-76).

Directory

All place names are in Libya

Abbreviations

TIR Cyrene
TIR Lepcis

Tabula Imperii Romani, *Cyrene*, Oxford, 1954
Tabula Imperii Romani, *Lepcis Magna*, Oxford, 1954

Names

Grid	Name	Period	Modern Name / Location	Reference
B1	<i>Abd el-Firan</i> Ad Capsum Ultimum = 'Aubereo'	R		Reddé 1988, 40, 43
A1	Ad Ficum	L	near Buerat el-Hsun	ItMiller 893
C2	Ad Palmam	L	Bir Umm el-Ghindel?	Purcaro Pagano 1976, 325
E2	Ad Puteum	L	Bir el-Gin?	Purcaro Pagano 1976, 325
C1	Ad Speluncas	L	mouth of Wadi Hneua	Goodchild 1976, 141-42 (n. 12)
C2	Ad Turrem § Turris Lapideum	L	S or E en-Nofilia	ItMiller 892
E1	Amastor			See Map 38
E2	Ammoniou Pegai	HR	Maaten Bescer?	Goodchild 1976, 156-57
E2	Anabucis	HRL	el-Agheila?	Purcaro Pagano 1976, 326-27
A1	Annesel	R	near Bir el-Wishkah	ItAnt 64.5
E2	Antidrepanon Akroterion		Bu Grada	Purcaro Pagano 1976, 327
D2	Arae Philaenorum	HRL	Graret Gser et-Trab	Goodchild 1976, 156-63; Brouquier Reddé 1992, 28-29
D2	Arae Philaenorum Pr.		Ras el-Aali	Goodchild 1976, 155-72
A1	Aspis	HR	Buerat el-Hsun	Purcaro Pagano 1976, 329
B1	Astiagi/ Dysopon § Stixgi	RL?	Bir Bu Giarada?	ItAnt 64.7; StadMM 89
E2	Astrochonda	HR	near Bir el-Mrer	Purcaro Pagano 1976, 329
C2	'Aubereo'/ Ad Capsum Ultimum	R/ L	Sidi Beheri	Purcaro Pagano 1976, 325, 329
C1	Aulazon	L	near Bir el-Asela	Purcaro Pagano 1976, 329
C3	Austuriani	L		EncBerb 8; Mattingly 1994, 26, 174
E2	Automalax § Automala	HR	Bu Sceefa	Goodchild 1976, 163-66
A1	'Auxiu'	R	near Bir el-Amari	Purcaro Pagano 1976, 330

D2	Banadedari § Arae Philaenorum?	R	Graret Gser et-Trab	Goodchild 1976, 158, 192
A1	Be fl.			See Map 35
B1	<i>Beniet el-Hadid</i>	L		Reddé 1988, 47-49
B2	<i>Bir el-Hubayah</i>	R		Reddé 1988, 40
B1	<i>Bir el-Manfuchia</i>	R		Reddé 1988, 21
B2	<i>Bir en-Nagdiyah</i>	R		Reddé 1988, 40
B1	<i>Bir esc-Sciuref</i>	R		Reddé 1988, 23
C2	<i>Bir Majdubiyah</i>	RL		M. Longerstay
C2	<i>Bir Qarinah</i>	RL		M. Longerstay
C2	<i>Bir Sahbiyah</i>	RL		M. Longerstay
C2	<i>Bir Tuwaysay</i>	RL		M. Longerstay
D2	<i>Bir Umm el-Garanigh</i>	R		Goodchild 1976, 158
A2	<i>Bir Zayden</i>	H?RL		Rebuffat 1988, 34
E2	Boreum	H?RL	Bu Grada	Goodchild 1976, 187-94
C1	<i>Chakchakiya</i>	L?		Reddé 1988, 64
C1	Charax/ (I)Scina § Korax § Pharax	HR/ RL	Medina Sultan, Sort	Goodchild 1976, 133-42
B1	<i>Dafni</i>	R		Reddé 1988, 48
D2	Digdida Selorum § Dicdica	RL	Wadi el-Harriga	Goodchild 1976, 147
E1	Drepanon Dysopon = Astiagi			See Map 38
C1	Eperos § Opiros § Oisporis	RL	Bir en-Naim?	Goodchild 1976, 135
B1	Euphranta/ Macomades § Macomades Maiores § Turris Euphranta	HR/ RL	Sirte, Marsa Zaafran	Purcaro Pagano 1976, 340
B1	<i>el-Faschia</i>	R		Reddé 1988, 28
D2	Fines Africae et Cyrenensium § Arae Philaenorum	CHRL	Graret Gser et-Trab	Goodchild 1976, 156-63
A3	Garamantes?			See Map 36
B1	<i>el-Garrusc</i>	R		Reddé 1988, 64
B1	<i>Gasr ed-Dubban</i>	RL		Reddé 1988, 29-31
E2	<i>Gasr el-Atallat</i>	L		Goodchild 1976, 191
E2	<i>Gasr el-Brega</i>	RL		Stucchi 1975, 358
A1	<i>Gasr Sidi Hassan</i>	L		Faraj 1995
E1	Herakleion Akroterion		Ras Carcura	Stucchi 1975, 579
B1	<i>Henchir Bu Zahia</i>	R		Reddé 1988, 46-48
D2	Hippou Akra	HR	Ras el-Ihudia?	StadMM 85-86; Purcaro Pagano 1976, 336
A3	<i>Hun</i>			See Map 36
	(I)Scina = Charax			
B1	<i>Jabiat Escout</i>	RL		Reddé 1988, 48
C1	<i>el-Kheil</i>	L		Reddé 1988, 64
E2	Kozynthion Akra § Zozynthion	HR	Marsa Brega	Goodchild 1976, 149
E2	Krokodeilos	HR	near Bir es-Smar	Purcaro Pagano 1976, 338-39
C1	<i>Kumm ed-Deba</i>	L		Reddé 1988, 64
A2	Laguatan			See Map 35

A1	Macaë			See Map 35
	Macomades = Euphranta			
B1	<i>el-Magedubia</i>	R		Reddé 1988, 32-39
B2	<i>Magen Ali Lubaz</i>	R		Reddé 1988, 43-45
B1	<i>Magen el-Kanshiya</i>	R		Reddé 1988, 17
E2	Maia Ins.		Legarah reef	Purcaro Pagano 1976, 298-99
	§ Gaea Ins.			
E2	Makatoutai	R		Desanges 1962, 151-52
E2	Maketai?	L		Desanges 1962, 152
E3	<i>Marada</i>	HRL?		Scarín 1937, 13-44
E2	Mendrión	HR	Marsa Brega gulf	Purcaro Pagano 1976, 341
E2	Misynos/ Skopelites Ins.		Tre Scogli	Purcaro Pagano 1976, 298-99, 341
B1	'Muducivvi'	R		Mattingly 1994, 27, 32
D2	Nasamones			See Map 38
E2	Pontia Ins.		Tre Scogli	Purcaro Pagano 1976, 298-99, 345
A1	Praetorium	RL	Tmed Hassan	Purcaro Pagano 1976, 345
C2	Psylli	CH		Mattingly 1994, 28, 33
B1	Putea Nigrorum	RL?	Qbeba	Reddé 1988, 22-23
B1	<i>Quarrush</i>	R		Reddé 1988, 64
B1	<i>er-Rumia</i>	R		Reddé 1988, 54-63
	Scina = Charax			
C1	Seli	R		Mattingly 1994, 28, 32-33
B1	<i>es-Semat</i>	R		Reddé 1988, 29
	Skopelites Ins. = Misynos Ins.			
B1	<i>es-Snemat</i>	RL?		Reddé 1988, 49-54
A3	<i>Socna</i>			See Map 36
B2	Syrtica	HRL		Roques 1987 Syrte
C1	Syrtis Maior			See Map 35
C3	<i>Tagrifet</i>	R		Rebuffat 1970, 181
C2	Tautamei?	L		Mattingly 1994, 28, 33
E2	Tincausari	R	Sueia?	Purcaro Pagano 1976, 348
E2	Tiniodiri	R	near Gasr Brega	Purcaro Pagano 1976, 348
C1	Tramaricio	R	Bir Bu Saada?	Purcaro Pagano 1976, 348-49
D2	Tritonis? L.		Mugtaa el-Chebrit	Peyras 1988, 161, 167-68
D2	Tugulus	RL?	Gasr el-Haddadia	Goodchild 1976, 157-58
	§ Tagulis			
D2	Turris et Taberna	L	Matratin?	Purcaro Pagano 1976, 349
B2	<i>Umm el-Gbur</i>	R		Reddé 1988, 45
B3	<i>Waddan</i>			See Map 36
D2	Zacazama	RL	Ras Ben Gauuad	Goodchild 1976, 147, 166
	§ Zagazaena			
	§ Sacazama			
B1	Zamucii	R		Desanges 1962, 142; Mattingly 1994, 28, 32
B1	Zure	RL	Magen er-Rumia	Reddé 1988, 63-4

Roads

Itinerary	Period	Reference
E to W coast road	HRL	Tissot 1888; Cerrata 1933; Goodchild 1971; 1976; Rebuffat 1973; Purcaro Pagano 1976, 285-310; Mattingly 1994, 61-63
Bir Zayden → Praetorium	RL	Rebuffat 1982
Waddan → Macomades	R	Laronde 1987, 351
Waddan → N, E, W and SE	RL	Rebuffat 1970; 1970a
Socna → N and SW	RL	Rebuffat 1970; 1970a
Tagrifet → E, W and S	R	Rebuffat 1970; 1970a
Marada → E, SW and W	R	Rebuffat 1970; 1970a
Marada → N	R	Scarin 1937; Rebuffat 1970

Villas

Grid	Location	Period	Reference
E2	Boreum region (8)	RL	D.J. Mattingly

Unlocated Toponyms

Name	Period	Probable Location	Reference
Chosol	L		ItMiller 894
Greisa	R		Ptol. 4.3.11
Musula	L	S side of Sebkhā Tauorgha	ItMiller 893
Ouddita	R		Ptol. 4.3.11
Ursiliani/ Urceliana Manus	L	Syrtica	Mattingly 1994, 28

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