

Map 96 Hyrcania

Compiled by E.J. Keall and M. Roaf, 1997

Introduction

Portions of four natural regions dominate the map: the Caspian Sea (for its level, see the Introduction to Map 90); the flat plains east of it; the Alburz mountains; and the central desert of Iran.

The region is not well-known archaeologically. The Gurgan plain has been surveyed by Kiani (1982), and the region round [Damghan] by Trinkhaus (1989); but very little research has been carried out elsewhere. Because the coastal plains south of the Caspian receive abundant rainfall, they are intensely farmed today, and were no doubt densely settled in antiquity too, as was the Gurgan plain. Otherwise, human settlement was only possible where water was available. Today, many settlements south of the Alburz mountains are dependent on the tapping of the groundwater by means of underground canals known as *qanats*. It is uncertain how early this technology was exploited in the region. The lower slopes of the Alburz support extensive forests and may well have contained permanent settlements, but the more elevated regions would only have been used by herders in the summer months. The lack of rainfall to the north of the Gurgan plain, as well as south of the Alburz, means that few permanent settlements existed there.

The “Alexander Wall” or “Red Snake,” running for approximately 95 miles, formed the border of Hyrcania, and served as a barrier against the tribes to the north (Kiani 1982). It was probably erected in the Parthian period, but remained in use in the Sasanian period (when some of the forts along it may have been built). The location of the pre-Islamic city of G(o)urgan is uncertain. It may have been in the neighborhood of the Islamic city of [Jurjan], but remains of earlier date have not been found. The possibility that the name might have moved is highlighted by the fact that the name Gurgan is now attached to the city known until the early twentieth century as Asterabad, and situated some 50 miles west-south-west of Jurjan.

The location of tribal groups is difficult to establish, so that the proposed locations for the few marked may well be inaccurate. Many tribes moved with the seasons to exploit the pastures available for their flocks. Tribes also moved into new areas, either voluntarily like the (A)Parni in the third century B.C., or under pressure from the ruling powers, like the Mardi (not marked) who were moved to guard the region round the Caspiae Portae (Map 92 H1), west of Cho(a)rene.

Directory

All place names are in Iran unless otherwise noted

Names

Grid	Name	Period	Modern Name / Location	Reference
C1	[Abaskun]? = <i>Gumush tepe</i> [Akhur]/ [Dihistan]? Apameia (Rhagiane)? = [Khuvar]	L?	N R. Atrek TKM	Barthold 1984, 118
D1	(A)Parni			See Map 97
C2	<i>Atrekl</i> Sideris?/ Sarnios? fl.		IRN / TKM	Strabo 11.8.1; RE <i>Σάρν(ε)ῖος</i> ; RE Sideris

Grid	Name	Period	Modern Name / Location	Reference
A3	<i>Baboll</i> Chindrum?/ Erindes?/ Charinda(s)? fl.	HR		RE Charinda; RE Chindrum flumen
C2	<i>Bibi Shervan</i>	RL		Kiani 1982
D3	[Bistam]	R?L	Bastam	Trinkhaus 1984
A1	Caspium/ Hyrcaunium Mare Charinda(s)? fl. = <i>Babol</i> R. Chindrum? fl. = <i>Babol</i> R. Choara = [Khuvar]			See Map 90
A4	Cho(a)rene			EncIran Choara and Choarene
D2	Dahae = Daoi <i>Daland Qal'eh</i>	HRL		Kiani 1982
C3	[Damghan]/ [(Medinat) Qumis]	L?		Le Strange 1905; Trinkhaus 1989
C1	Daoi/ Dahae		TKM	See Map 97
D2	<i>Dasht Qal'eh</i>	C?HRL		Kiani 1982
C1	Dihistan [Dihistan]? = [Akhur]		TKM	Le Strange 1905, 414-15
	Erindes? fl. = <i>Babol</i> R.			
D2	<i>Gabri Qal'eh</i> G(o)urgan? = [Jurjan]	HRL		Kiani 1982
C2	<i>Gumush tepel</i> [Abaskun]?/ Sokanda?	H?RL?	on an island at times engulfed by sea (Le Strange 1905)	Barthold 1984, 117; EncIs Abaskun
D2	<i>Gurganl</i> Maziris?/ Maxeras? fl. Gurgan = Varkana Gurgan? = [Jurjan]			Pliny, <i>NH</i> 6.46; Ptol. 6.9.2; RE Hyrkania, col. 464; RE <i>Μαξίρηαι</i> ; RE Sideris
C4	Harborz M. = Padishkhar(gar)? M. Hecatopylos?/ Komish/ [(Shahr-i) Qumis] Hyrcaunium Mare = Caspium Mare Hyrkania = Varkana	CHRL/ RL	Shahr-i Qumis	Hansman 1968
D2	Jar-i Kulbad [Jurjan]/ G(o)urgan?	RL		See Walls Kiani 1984; Gyselen 1989, 84-85
C3	<i>Kabudan tepel</i> Varoshag?	R?L	near Aliabad	Kiani 1984; Gyselen 1989, 4, 26, 50
C3	<i>Kharabshahr</i> [Tamis]?/ [Tammisha]? Khosro-shad-Peroz = <i>Tureng tepe</i>	R?L		Bivar 1966
A4	[Khuvar]/ Choara/ Apameia (Rhagiane)?	L?/ HRL/ HR?	near Aradan	EncIran Choara

Grid	Name	Period	Modern Name / Location	Reference
B4	Komisene/ Komish Komish = Hecatompylos? Maxeras? fl. = <i>Gurgan R.</i> Maziris? fl. = <i>Gurgan R.</i> [(Medinat) Qumis] = [Damghan]		Shahr-i Qumis	RE Comisene; Gyselen 1989
B3	<i>Nekal</i> Ridagnus? fl.	CH		RE Ridagnus; RE <i>Στιβοίτης</i>
A4	Padishkhar(gar)?/ Pressouar?/ Harborz M. Parni = (A)Parni Pressouar? M. = Padishkhar(gar)? M.	CHR		EncIran Alborz; Herzfeld 1968; Gyselen 1989, 80-81
D2	<i>Qal'eh Gawmishli</i>	HR		Kiani 1982
D2	<i>Qal'eh Gug</i>	HR		Kiani 1982
D2	<i>Qal'eh Kanizak</i>	HR		Kiani 1982
C3	<i>Qal'eh Khandan/</i> <i>Zadrakarta?</i>	C?HRL	in Astarabad (Gurgan)	RE <i>Ζαδράκαρτα</i> ; Kiani 1982; 1984, 14
C2	<i>Qal'eh Kharabeh</i>	HRL		Kiani 1982
D2	<i>Qal'eh Paras</i>	HR		Kiani 1982
C2	<i>Qal'eh Qarniareq</i>	HRL		Kiani 1982
D2	<i>Qal'eh Sultan Ali</i>	C?HRL		Kiani 1982
C2	<i>Qal'eh Tokhmaq</i>	C?HRL		Kiani 1982
C3	<i>Qal'eh Yasaqi</i>	HRL		Kiani 1982
D2	<i>Qara Shikh tepe</i> Qizil Alan = Sadd-i Eskandar	HR		Kiani 1982
C2	<i>Qizil Qal'eh</i> [Qumis] = [Damghan] [Qumis] = Hecatompylos? Ridagnus? fl. = <i>Neka R.</i> Sadd-i Eskandar/ Sadd-i Anushirvan/ Qizil Alan Sarnios? fl. = <i>Atrek R.</i> Sideris? fl. = <i>Atrek R.</i>	C?HRL		Kiani 1982 See Walls
B3	[Sari(ya)]/ Zadrakarta?	L?/ HRL	Sari	RE <i>Ζαδράκαρτα</i> ; Engels 1978, 84
B4	[Semnan]/ Semina [(Shahr-i) Qumis] = Hecatompylos? Sokanda? = <i>Gumush tepe</i> [Tamis]? = <i>Kharabshahr</i> [Tammisha]? = <i>Kharabshahr</i>	L?/ RL		RE 2; Hansman 1970
A3	Tapouroi			See Map 90

Grid	Name	Period	Modern Name / Location	Reference
C3	<i>Tepe Hissar</i>	R?L		Trinkhaus 1989
C3	<i>Tepe Nareshan</i>	C?HRL		Trinkhaus 1989
C2	<i>Tureng tepe/ Khosro-shad-Peroz</i>	ACHRL/ L		Boucharlat 1987; Gyselen 1989, 4, 26, 50
C2	Varkana/ Hyrcania/ Gurgan Varoshag? = <i>Kabudan tepe</i> Zadrakarta? = [Sari(ya)] Zadrakarta? = <i>Qal'eh Khandan</i>		IRN / TKM	Kiani 1984; Gyselen 1989

Walls

Grid	Name / Location	Period	Reference
B3	Jar-i Kulbad	R?L	Bivar 1966
C2	Sadd-i Eskandar/ Sadd-i Anushirvan/ Qizil Alan	HRL	Huff 1981; Kiani 1982; Charlesworth 1987
C3	near Kharabshahr	R?L	Bivar 1966, 40

Unlocated Toponyms

Name	Period	Probable Location	Reference
Amard(h)a	CHRL	Amol?	EncIran Amol
Bikni/ Bitnik	C	Binah Kuh?	Herzfeld 1968, 194
Callope Catippa/ Casape	RL	Gorgan?	CHI 3(2), 768
Dribykes			RE
Pratitae/ Pantitae/ Pantimathoi	CHR		RE 2
Tabouria/ Taburistan Tagai	CHRL	Taq?	CHI 3(2), 766 RE Komisene

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