

Map 73 Ammon

Compiled by D.J. Mattingly, 1996

Introduction

This map starkly reveals the long coastline and deep desert hinterland of Marmarica and Libya Inferior. In these respects, the region resembles Syrtica (Map 37). The harshness of the rock desert of the Qattara depression and the impermeability of the sand seas further south are self-evident obstacles to settlement and movement alike. Yet equally, another series of deep depressions in the desert plateau, where water is to be found close to the surface, has made a dynamic contribution to the character of desert living, allowing the creation of large oasis-dwelling communities and fostering the development of long-distance movement along desert tracks (Bates 1914; Rebuffat 1970; 1970a; see Giddy 1987 for a more detailed listing of the main routes of the western desert). The most important of these oases, called Ammon (modern Siwa) in honor of the desert god revered there, gives its name to the map. The oracle here was of significance for both the Saharan and Mediterranean worlds, a point confirmed (though not initiated) by Alexander's famous visit to the oasis (Fakhry 1944; 1950; 1973; Abboudy Ibrahim 1992). Early modern travelers' tales convey well the difficulty of desert travel (Sholz 1822; Pacho 1827; St John 1849).

Archaeological research in the region as a whole is very underdeveloped. The impression to be gained from the available evidence, however, is of a sharp division between sedentary settlements in the coastal zone and oases in the desert proper. Pastoral groups, notoriously elusive in the archaeological record, no doubt provided a partial link between the two. There was evidently some greater concentration of sites in western Marmarica. Papyrological evidence attests agricultural settlements (Romanelli 1940; 1943, 122-28; Catani 1985, 150-54), and Laronde (1987, 224) mentions numerous ancient sites in the coastal hinterland, but these have never been systematically recorded. Similarly, better conditions existed in Mareotis towards the eastern limit of the map. More archaeological work is urgently required to examine rural settlement, and to explore the first contacts between Libyans and other Mediterranean Bronze Age peoples and the earliest phases of settlement (Bates 1914; Carter 1963; White 1989; 1994). Archaeological survey work is likely to find important evidence for rural settlement, but probably not approaching the density and sophistication of that, for instance, on the Cyrenaican plateau (Map 38).

The region divides between modern Libya and Egypt just to the west of Catabathmus Maior (Sollum) and Ammon (Siwa). Throughout its history, the coastal zone stretching between Egypt and Libya has been a corridor for frequent military movement between power blocs at either end (and the scars of World War II are still all too evident here). Well before the archaic period, the Egyptians were attempting to exert military and political control over both Marmarica and the oases of the western desert. The process was continued under Greeks and Romans. But we should not conclude too readily that the Libyans of this region were forever the victims of invasion from outside. They were indeed capable of being the aggressors themselves, as both Cyrenaica and Egypt were to find on numerous occasions.

The information on this stretch of coast from maritime sources such as Scylax and StadMM (supplemented by Strabo, Ptolemy, and others) is impressive. Indeed comparison with Maps 35, 37 and 38 will indicate that this area has by far the most detailed listings of promontories, anchorages, reefs and islands. The reasons for this are several. In part it is a reflection of a greater volume of shipping along this littoral (many of the grain ships returning to Alexandria from Rome would cut across open sea until they sighted and followed this coastline), but it is in part also connected with the fact that this was a long coast with very few proper towns and permanent harbors. Thus we have descriptions of numerous summer anchorages, small islands (some little more than reefs), and minor harbors (with or without water) where shipping might take refuge when in difficulty. The numerous toponyms of the littoral thus reflect not a populous countryside, but rather the anxieties of ancient mariners navigating a thinly inhabited and poorly resourced coastline. It should perhaps come as no surprise that the best modern research on the Greek toponyms of the coast was accomplished by Fourtau (1914, 101), drawing on the navigational expertise and local knowledge of inshore waters of an illiterate ex-smuggler turned coast guard chief!

For sites in the coastal sector of modern Libya, once again Purcaro Pagano (1976; cf. also Fantoli 1933; Stucchi 1975, 358-59) provides a summary of the ancient sources and discusses some modern views on toponyms, though without establishing definitive identifications. For sites mentioned in the maritime itineraries, the views of Laronde (1987, 219-32) are generally to be preferred. The road itineraries between Paliouros (Map 38) and Catabathmus Maior are hopelessly corrupt (all fall short of the required mileage). With very few archaeological sites recorded in detail, along road lines that were never given a paved surface and from which no milestones have been recorded, the minor way-stations are for the most part untraceable. Most of these will have been wells on the pre-desert plateau that the routes have tended to cross in preference to following close to the shore. The location of Catabathmus Maior (literally the 'great descent') is self-evident to anyone who has traveled up or down the cliff-like escarpment that meets the coast just west of Sollum. Although less discernible on a map of this scale, the Catabathmus Minor is equally obvious in a similar feature about 63 miles west of el-Alamein.

Beyond Catabathmus Maior, there is again the same difficulty of locating road stations between there and Paraetionium (Marsa Matruh), with the mileage totals seemingly too low for the actual distances to be covered, and few sites locatable with any degree of confidence. In these circumstances we can do no better than Ball (1942, 138-54). Knowledge of the maritime itinerary is most conveniently taken from Ball too, drawing on Fourtau (1914), de Cosson (1935) and White (1996) for a number of controversial sites. The recent rescue excavations at the important site of el-Alamein Marina (almost certainly known as Leukaspis or Antiphrae in antiquity) have occasioned re-evaluation of the potential scale of some of these coastal settlements (Daszewski 1990; 1993; 1995). Leukaspis, however, was at the western edge of the Mareotic area, known in antiquity as today for its greater potential for supporting farming and population. West of el-Alamein, the pre-desert character of Libya becomes more fully established, with the harbor and town at Paraetionium the only major center before Catabathmus Maior (White 1994).

Knowledge of the archaeology of the desert oases rests very much with the remarkable work of Fakhry (1942; 1942a; 1944; 1950; 1973; 1974). It is clear that the largest of these comprised multiple and complex settlements, not single sites. Their occupation is confirmed as being of long duration, where this has been tested by excavation; many of the other known sites, too, may have been inhabited far longer than the dates supported by the presently limited evidence. The oasis known as Ammon in the ancient sources extended well beyond the impressive temples and ruins in the immediate vicinity of modern Siwa town at Aghurmi. There were at least seven separate villages or towns in the Siwa depression, and the numerous cemeteries in other parts suggest that seven is a considerable underestimate for the original number of villages. The same general conclusion emerges from research in Bahariya (Oasis Parva) and Gasr Farafra to its southwest (see inset), where there were a number of other major settlements apart from the capital under el-Bawiti/el-Qasr (Ball 1903; Beadnell 1901; Fakhry 1942; 1974; Gosline 1990). The announcement in 1999 of the discovery of a major Hellenistic/Roman burial ground at Bahariya, perhaps containing as many as 10,000 sarcophagi, shows the importance of these sites as centers of population and relative wealth. In the Libyan oasis group known as Giarabub, research is still in its infancy, but tombs in at least three widely separated locations suggest a similar pattern of settlement around each of the major springs there (Fadel Ali 1995, 152).

Directory

All place names are in Egypt unless otherwise noted

Names

Grid	Name	Period	Modern Name / Location	Reference
C4	<i>Abbiar Gabbus</i>	R		Fakhry 1944, 72
B4	<i>Abbiar Zergum</i>	HR	LBY	Stucchi 1975, 576 (n. 2)
C4	<i>Abul Awlaf</i>	HR		Fakhry 1973, 132-35
C4	<i>Abu Mansur</i>	R		Fakhry 1973, 125
C4	<i>Abu Shuruf</i>	HR		Fakhry 1973, 130-32
D2	<i>Adyrmachidai</i>	ACHR		Desanges 1962, 169-70; EncBerb 2 Adurmakhidae

A1	Aedonia Ins.	ACRL	Geziret el-Maracheb, Seal Is. LBY	Laronde 1987, 222-25
F5	<i>el-Aguz</i>	RL		Fakhry 1974, 102
E2	Ainesipp(ei)a/ Nesoi Inss.	HR/ L	near Ras Abu Laho	Ball 1942, 67, 136-37
C2	Ainesisphyra? Akron	HR	Sidi Barrani	Ball 1942, 104-105
C2	Ainesisphyra/ Ennesyphora/ Nesus	HR	Sidi Barrani	Ball 1942, 136, 154
inset	<i>Ain Besai</i>	R		Fakhry 1974, 163
inset	<i>Ain Bishwi</i>	R		Fakhry 1974, 163
inset	<i>Ain el-Hayz</i>	RL		Fakhry 1974, 111-12
inset	<i>Ain el-Wadi</i>	RL		Fakhry 1974, 164
inset	<i>Ain Jallow</i>	RL		Fakhry 1974, 163
inset	<i>Ain Jellaw</i>	R		Fakhry 1974, 163
C4	<i>Ain Koreishat</i>	HR		Fakhry 1973, 129-30
B4	<i>Ain Melfa</i>	HR	LBY	Scarvin 1937, 128
inset	<i>Ain Ris</i>	RL		Fakhry 1974, 112-24
C4	<i>Ain Zeitun</i>	HR		Fakhry 1973, 132
D4	Alexandrou Parembole	HR	Gara, Umm el-Sughaiyar?	Fakhry 1973, 135
A1	<i>Allem Dauhr</i>	CHR?	LBY	Stucchi 1975, 3-4 (n. 6); Laronde 1987, 223
C4	Ammon § Ammoniace Ammonia = Paraetonium	ACHRL RL	Aghurmi, Siwa	Ball 1942, 166; Fakhry 1973, 143-64; EncBerb 4
B4	Ammonioi	ACHR		Desanges 1962, 170; EncBerb 4
A1	Aneiritai?	R	LBY	Desanges 1962, 159-60; EncBerb 5
G3	Antiphrai/ Leukaspis § Antiphro § Antiphras	HRL	Marina el-Alamein, el-Bahrein	de Cosson 1935, 125-26; Ball 1942, 136; Daszewski 1990; 1993
A1	Antipyrgos	HRL	Tobruk LBY	Stucchi 1975, 358-59, 485; Laronde 1987, 221
E2	Apis Ardanis Akron = Kardamis Akron	ACHRL	Zawiet Umm el-Rakham	Ball 1942, 137
D5	<i>el-Areg</i> Artos Akron = Pythis Akron	HRL		Fakhry 1973, 138-42
F5	<i>el-Ayoun</i>	ACHR?		Fakhry 1950, 87-91
D2	<i>Azy</i>	HR?	Marsa el-'Asi?	Ball 1942, 137
D5	<i>Bahrein</i>	HR		Fakhry 1973, 135
B2	Bassachitai?	R	LBY	Desanges 1962, 162; EncBerb 9
E2	<i>Bates' Is.</i>	A	Marsa Matruh	White 1989
A1	Batrachos	A?HRL	Gardaba LBY	Stucchi 1975, 508; Laronde 1987, 223
C4	<i>Bilad er-Rum</i>	R		Fakhry 1973, 126-28
F2	Caportis/ 'Patrico'?	R/ L	el-Daba?	Ball 1942, 140, 154
C2	Catabathmus Maior/ Plynos Limen/ Tetrypyrgia	ACHRL/ CHR/ CR	Sollum	Ball 1942, 30-31, 136-37, 140, 154; Laronde 1987, 220-25
E2	Catabathmus Minor	HR	el-Iqueiba escarpment, near Fuka	Ball 1942, 114-15
D2	Chat(t)anoi	R		Desanges 1962, 171
D2	Chautaion/ Chettaia	HR?/ R	Marsa Gargub	Ball 1942, 136 Ball 1942, 104-105
G3	Ch(e)jimo § Chi Chettaia = Chautaion	HR	el-Bordan	de Cosson 1935, 115-16
F3	'Comaru'	L	Sidi Abd el-Rahman?	Ball 1942, 154
	Delphines Inss. = Phokoussai Inss.			
F3	Derras	HR	Derasiya?	de Cosson 1935, 123-25

D2	Drepanon? Akron Ennesyphora = Ainesisphyra	R	Ras Gargub	Ball 1942, 67
B4	<i>el-Fredgia</i>	HRL?	LBY	Scarin 1937, 128; Fadel Ali 1995, 152
B2	<i>el-Gara</i>	RL	LBY	Stucchi 1975, 509
B2	<i>Gasr el-Abid</i>	RL	LBY	Stucchi 1975, 517 (n. 2)
C4	<i>Gebel el-Dakrur</i>	HR	cemetery and quarry	Fakhry 1973, 124-25
C4	<i>Gebel Mota</i>	ACHRL		Fakhry 1973, 173-206
A1	<i>Geziret el Marakeb</i>	R		Carter 1963, 26-27
C4	<i>Ghargart</i>	HR		Fakhry 1973, 127
B4	<i>Giarabub</i>	HR	LBY	Scarin 1937, 127-31
A1	Giligamai	C	LBY	Desanges 1962, 163; EncBerb 20
G3	Glaukon Akron	HR?	near el-Imayid	Ball 1942, 136
G3	Glaukos	HR	el-Imayid	de Cosson 1935, 117-20; Ball 1942, 136
A1	Gonia	HR	LBY	Purcaro Pagano 1976, 336
G3	Goniatai?	R		Desanges 1962, 177; EncBerb 21 Goniotae
E2	Graias Gonu	HR	Kom Nadoura / Marsa Berek?	Fourtau 1914, 114-15
B4	Hammoniacus Nomos	RL	Siwa Oasis	C-D 1.2, 17
G5	<i>el-Harra</i>	R		Fakhry 1974, 109-10
E2	Hermaia	HR	SSE Ras el-Hilma	Fourtau 1914, 110-11
E2	Hermaia Akron	HR	SE Ras el-Kanais	Ball 1942, 104-105
E2	Kalamaion/ Kallias	HR/ R	Ras Hawala	Ball 1942, 136
E2	Kallias Akron	R	Ras Hawala	Ball 1942, 136
C2	Kardamis/ Ardanis Akron	HR?/ R	Ras el-Melah LBY	Laronde 1987, 225
C2	Kardamis	H?		Laronde 1987, 221, 245
B1	Katanis Akron	HR?	Ras Uenna LBY	Laronde 1987, 223-25
C4	<i>Khamiseh</i>	HR		Fakhry 1973, 126
G3	<i>Khashm el-Eish</i>	H?R?		de Cosson 1935, 120-22
E3	Klimax?	R?	Qattara Pass	Ball 1942, 114
B2	Kyrthanion § Cyrtanium	RL	Marsa el-Afarid? LBY	Laronde 1987, 224
E2	Ladamantia § Leodamantium Leukaspis = Antiphrai	HR	near Ras Abu Hasafa	Ball 1942, 136
E2	Leuke Akte	CHR	Ras el-Abiad	Ball 1942, 136
D2	Libya	RL	coastal and inland region W Nile EGY / LBY	RE; C-D Suppl. 2, 111 (no. 2)
B2	Libya Inferior § Libya Sicca	L	coastal region between Alexandria and Darnis	Ball 1942, 163
C2	Libycum Mare			Burr 51-54
F5	<i>Mandishah</i>	HRL?		Fakhry 1942, 34-35; 1950, 90-92
C4	<i>el-Maraki</i>	H?RL?		Fakhry 1973, 127-28
G3	Mareotes Nomos	HR	Mareotic region	C-D 3, 234
A2	Marmarica	HRL	region SE Cyrenaica, extending towards Catabathmus LBY	Roques 1987
A2	Marmaridai	HRL	LBY	Desanges 1962, 164-65; Laronde 1987, 226-28
B2	<i>Marsa Gabes</i>	R?	LBY	Stucchi 1975, 358 (n. 13)
B2	<i>Marsa Lucch</i>	RL	LBY	Stucchi 1975, 358-59 (n. 13), 508
B2	Menelaos	CHR?	Marsa Ahora? LBY	Laronde 1987, 225
F5	<i>el-Meyserah</i>	HRL		Fakhry 1974, 102-105

A1	Miceris § Michera § Moccheris § Elem	R	Zaviet el-Mrassas LBY	Stucchi 1975, 358-59 (n. 13); Purcaro Pagano 1976, 341
F5	<i>el-Muftella</i>	ACH?		Fakhry 1974, 80-85
F2	Myrmix/ Pedonia Inss. Nesoi Inss. = Ainesipp(ei)a Inss. Nesus = Ainesisphyra <i>Nuweimisa</i>	HR	Samra reef	Ball 1942, 104-105, 136
D5		HR		Fakhry 1973, 135-37
F5	Oasis Parva § Zeszes Oasis Parva = Zeszes	ACHRL A	Bahariya Oasis	Fakhry 1974, 96; Abd el-Ghany 1992
F5 inset	Oasitai Oasites Nomos	R	Bahariya Oasis	Desanges 1962, 178-79 C-D 3, 379
D3	Ogdaimoi?	R		Desanges 1962, 173
E2	Paraetonium/ Ammonia 'Patrico'? = Caportis	ACHRL/ HR	Marsa Matruh	Ball 1942, 62, 136, 140, 154
F2	Pedonia § Pezonia § Pidonia Pedonia Inss. = Myrmix	HR	Marsa Abu Samra	Ball 1942, 136, 140
C2	Petras Megas	HRL	Bardia / Bardia Sliman LBY	Laronde 1987, 225-26
A1	Petras Mikros	HR	Marsa Tarfaia LBY	Stucchi 1975, 508; Laronde 1987, 223
E2	Phoinikon § Phenikountos	HR	Bir el-Genefis?	Fourtau 1914, 109-10
E2	Phokoussai/ Delphines Inss. Plynos Limen = Catabathmus Maior	R/ L	Umm el-Rakham reef	Ball 1942, 104-105; 136-37
E2	Pnigeus	HR	el-Gotta?	Ball 1942, 136
E2	Pnigeus Akroterion	HR	Ras el-Gharqan	Ball 1942, 136
E2	Pythis/ Artos Akron	R/ L	Ras Alam el-Rum	Ball 1942, 104-105, 136
F5 inset	<i>Qasr el-Megysbeh</i>	HRL		Fakhry 1974, 99-101
F5	<i>Qasr Farafra</i>	R?L?		Fakhry 1974, 163
F5	<i>Qasr Mehareb</i>	RL		Fakhry 1974, 106
F3	<i>el Qassabat el-Gharbiya</i>	H?R?		de Cosson 1935, 122-23
G3	<i>el Qassabat el-Shaqiya</i>	HR?		de Cosson 1935, 122
C4	<i>Schiatuh</i>	R?		Pacho 1827
D2	Selenis § Selinus	HR?	SE Marsa el-'Asi	Ball 1942, 136
D5	<i>Sitra</i>	R?		Fakhry 1974, 26-27
C4	Solis Fons	ACHRL	Ain el-Gubah	Fakhry 1973, 124
inset	<i>Tablamum</i> Tetrapyrgia = Catabathmus Maior	RL		Fakhry 1974, 115
F2	Tracheia Akron	HR	Ras Abu Girab	Ball 1942, 136
D2	Tyndareioi Inss.	HR	Ishaila rocks	Ball 1942, 136
C4	<i>Umm Ubaydah</i>	ACHRL		Fakhry 1973, 165-72
A1	<i>Wadi ed-Sedd</i>	H	Ain el-Gazala LBY	Stucchi 1975, 158
C4	<i>el-Wazidi</i>	R?		Fakhry 1973, 127
C4	<i>Zawa</i>	R		Fakhry 1973, 125

C4	<i>el-Zawia</i>	R?		Fakhry 1973, 127
F2	Zephyrion	HR	near Ras el-Daba?	Ball 1942, 136
E2	Zephyrion Akron	HR?	Ras Umm-el-Rakham	Ball 1942, 137
F2	Zephyrion Pr.	HR	SE Ras el-Daba	Ball 1942, 136
F5	Zeszēs/ Oasis Parva	A/ ACHRL		Abd el-Ghany 1992
E2	Zygeis	R		Desanges 1962, 173-74
D2	Zygris	HRL	Marsa Baqqush	Ball 1942, 136
E2	Zygris	HRL	Zawiet el-Chammas?	Ball 1942, 137
D2	Zygritai	R		Desanges 1962, 174

Roads

Itinerary	Period	Reference
Map 38 → Miceris → Paraetionium → Pedonia → Map 74 (2 routes)	ACHRL	Fourtau 1914; Ball 1942; Purcaro Pagano 1976; Laronde 1987, 219-28
Giarabub → Ammon (2 routes)	CHR	Pacho 1827, 261-62; Bates 1914, 8-11; Luni 1979
Giarabub → Antipyrgos	CHR	Pacho 1827, 48-49; Bates 1914; Luni 1979
Giarabub → Catabathmus Maior around Oasis Parva	CHR	Pacho 1827, 39-40; Bates 1914; Luni 1979
Ammon → Klimax? → E	ACHRL	Fakhry 1973; Giddy 1987, 15-16
Ammon → Oasis Parva	ACHR	Giddy 1987, 17-18
Ammon → Paraetionium (2 routes)	ACHRL	Bates 1914, 8-11; Fakhry 1973; 1974; Giddy 1987, 18
into Gasr Farafra	CHRL	Luni 1979; Giddy 1987, 17
	ACHRL	Fakhry 1973; Giddy 1987, 13-15

Unlocated Toponyms

Name	Period	Probable Location	Reference
Aizaroi		SE Marmarica?	EncBerb 2 Aezari
Anagombroi		near Ammon?	EncBerb 5 Anagombri
Apotimatai		desert interior?	EncBerb 6 Apotomitae
Aratu	L	between Paraetionium and Catabathmus	ItMiller 873
Aristeu	R	between Paraetionium and Catabathmus	ItMiller 873
Ausul/ Ausufal	R	between Paliouros (Map 38) and Catabathmus Maior LBY	Purcaro Pagano 1976, 329
Azikis	R		Ptol. 4.5.14
Badrin	R	between Paliouros (Map 38) and Catabathmus	Purcaro Pagano 1976, 330
Bassachis regio	R	W Catabathmus Maior (or on Map 38) LBY	Catani 1985, 154
Bibliaphorion Bouzeis	R	interior S Zygritai?	Ptol. 4.5.14 EncBerb 10
Cardu	R	between Catabathmus Maior and Antipyrgos LBY	Purcaro Pagano 1976, 332
Eureia	H	LBY	Purcaro Pagano 1976, 335
Eut(h)icu	R	between Paraetionium and Pedonia	ItMiller 873
Gareathis regio	R	W Catabathmus Maior (or on Map 38) LBY	Catani 1985, 154
Geras	R	between Paraetionium and Catabathmus	ItMiller 873
Gereatis	R	between Miceris and Catabathmus Maior LBY	Purcaro Pagano 1976, 336

Name	Period	Probable Location	Reference
Iobakchoi Iucundiu	R	S or SE Ammon? between Miceris and Catabathmus Maior LBY	Desanges 1962, 171 Purcaro Pagano 1976, 337
Marmarike Monokaminon/ Monogami	L R/ L	el-Qasaba el-Garbiya?	HierSyn 787i Ptol. 4.5.15 ItMiller 872
Nemeseo/ Hemeseo Nemesion	R	between Catabathmus Maior and Antipyrgos LBY	Purcaro Pagano 1976, 342-3 Ptol. 4.5.14
Oibillai		SE Marmarica?	Desanges 1962, 165-6
Papi	R	between Paliouros (Map 38) and Darnis LBY	Purcaro Pagano 1976, 343
Pednopon Philiscu Philonos	R L R	between Paraetionium and Caportis	Ptol. 4.5.14 ItMiller 873 Ptol. 4.5.14
Rouaditai		E Qattara Depression	Desanges 1962, 173
Scope Sentetes Septimiake regio	R R	S Marmarica? W Catabathmus Maior (or on Map 38) LBY	Ptol. 4.5.14 Desanges 1962, 166 Catani 1985, 154
Siropon Sophanous	R R		Ptol. 4.5.14 Ptol. 4.5.14
Tachorsa Tapanitai Thabrastra	R R	S Marmarica? between Paraetionium and Catabathmus	Ptol. 4.5.14 Desanges 1962, 166 ItMiller 873
Thanouthis Tisarchou Toukkitora	R R R		Ptol. 4.5.14 Ptol. 4.5.14 Ptol. 4.5.14
Zagilis	RL?	W Sidi Barrani?	ItMiller 873

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