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# The Defense System in Libya During the I-VI Centuries A.D.

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AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF Ramadan A. Geddeda for the  
Master of Arts in History presented September 1978.

Title: The Defense System in Libya During the I - VI  
Centuries A.D.

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This thesis will examine the significance of the defense system that was a result of the Libyan wars against the Romans, Byzantines, and the Vandals. For economic and strategic reasons these nations were involved in long and bitter wars which lasted over six centuries. The policy of the long distance military expeditions, which was the main instrument of the Romans in subduing the natives in the early Empire, had failed to achieve its goals. Thus, the alternative was to erect a network of roads and forts in strategic spots such as water points, commanding hills, along

the caravan routes and on the edges of fertile wadis.

In fact, neither the roads, which were very well fortified, nor the massive front forts had solved the frontier problems, thus the Romans had no choice other than to leave the frontiers to be guarded by the natives themselves. To this end several civilian settlements (fortified farms) were established on the fertile wadis. While a mixture of people coexisted in these fortified farms, the archaeological remains show that the prevailing culture belonged to the Libyan natives.

THE DEFENSE SYSTEM IN LIBYA  
DURING THE I - VI CENTURIES A.D.

by

Ramadan A. Geddeda

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of


MASTER OF ARTS  
in  
HISTORY

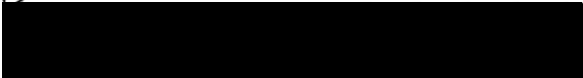
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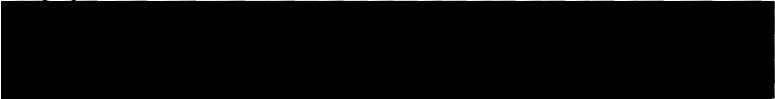
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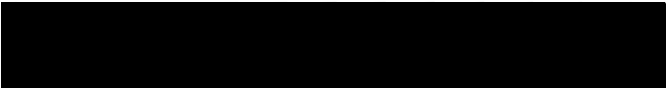
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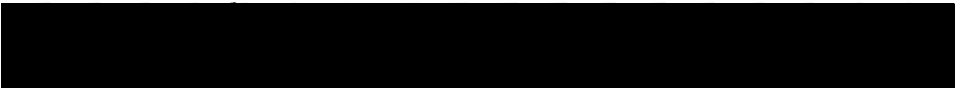
  
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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Fortifications of every kind were built throughout the Roman Empire in the territories where hostility was expected from the natives. The numerous defense arrangements reflect the degree of fear of attack. A study of this system can often reveal the Roman state of mind towards the native population, and this has obvious historical importance.

According to literary sources, forts were used in the country even before the foundation of the Roman and Byzantine defenses, however, the archaeological evidences provide only meager information about their existence.

The relative peace that prevailed in the country during the Phoenician and Greek period did not make such fortifications necessary, since both peoples had established relations based on commerce and friendship with the native population. In contrast, the Romans used their power in every way to subdue the Libyan tribes, the result of which was a state of belligerency and warfare.

For this purpose the Roman emperors in general, and the Severan Dynasty in particular, thought that they could establish peace by erecting a defense system called Limes Tripolitanus. This system resembled in a small scale the famous

Limes Romanus, which was initiated for the first time by the Emperor Tiberius (14 - 37 A.D.) along the Rhine and the Danubian borders. It was erected for defense against the Germanic attackers.

The Romans employed the term Limes for this system, which was originally used for the boundaries of farms. Broadly speaking, this system is composed of two types of arrangements: the temporary defensive situation, which was known as a "marching camp." It was characterized by a single ditch, rampart, fence made of stakes, and tents. This kind of arrangement has not yet been discovered in Libya. The other type is a permanent fortification. It consists of a network of fortified roads, huge legionary buildings (fortresses), auxiliary buildings (forts), and fortified farms (guarded and inhabited by soldier-farmers, the Limitanei).

These fortified farms are often associated with the following buildings: detachment buildings (Centenarum), small buildings guarded by slaves (Burgus), mausolea, cisterns, olive oil presses, and dams.

A comprehensive study of these defensive installations in Libya showed that they were arranged geographically on three distinctive lines, covering a distance extending from the coast to a depth of 200 to 600 kilometers. They were organized in the following order: fortified roads, fortified farms, and front forts. The contents of this thesis are discussed chronologically, rather than according to geographical distribution.

## CHAPTER II

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE LIBYAN-ROMAN WARS

The Roman interest in Libya in the second century B.C., and during the early Christian era, was the same as that of their ancestors in the country in the beginning of this century. This interest, an economic and strategic one, led to the three Punic Wars (264 - 146 B.C.) and later to the Jugurthan Wars (111 - 105 B.C.). These wars were followed by several other clashes between the tribes and the Roman troops.

As a result of the Roman occupation after the destruction of Carthage in 146 B.C., at least sixty well-known wars have been recorded by the available literary sources and inscriptions. The same state of warfare also occurred in the first half of this century, between 1911 and 1943.

The name Libya, which was the location of those wars, is a paradox. In classical times it was used to denote all of Africa;<sup>1</sup> however, during the period under consideration (I - VI centuries A.D.), the term was generally restricted to the part of North Africa that extends from the Pillars of Herakles in the west to the Valley Nile in the east, and from the Mediterranean Sea to the Lake of Chad.<sup>2</sup>

"This land," says Ibn Khaldun, "was inhabited with countless tribes."<sup>3</sup> In his book The Eastern Libyans, O. Bates

discussed in great detail the ethnology and ethnogeography of the Libyan tribes.<sup>4</sup> We need to cite only the tribes that played an important role in the history of the Libyan and Roman wars. Incidentally, these wars were the main cause of the whole fortification system.

Diodorus Siculus, who wrote in the middle of the first century B.C., mentioned four tribes of Libyans that dwelt west of Egypt. He noted that "the parts about Cyrene and the Syrtis as dwelt at the interior of the mainland, these regions are inhabited by four tribes of Libyans; of these the Nasamones, as they are called, dwell in the parts to the south, the Auschisae in those to the west, the Marmaridae occupy the narrow strip between Egypt and Cyrene and come down to the coast, and the Macae, who are more numerous than their fellow Libyans, dwell in the regions about the Syrtis." He also states that some of the Libyan tribes had a settled life and kings. They lived in fertile lands, which "are able to produce abundant crops."<sup>5</sup>

Not all of these tribes had a settled life. One group had no cities, but only towers near the sources of water. It was in these towers that they would bring and store the excess of their booty.<sup>6</sup> By the end of the first century B.C., Strabo, the Roman geographer, in describing the various parts of the country, listed three other tribes -- the Garamantes, the Psyllians and the Gaetulians.<sup>7</sup>

From a cultural and political point of view, the most

important of all the Libyan tribes since the prehistoric period up to the fall of the Roman Empire was the Garamantes tribe. The archaeological sites in the southernmost parts of the country still bear testimony to the glorious history of the Garamantes kingdom. The Garamantes were in a position that enabled them to spread their dominance and culture into the hinterlands of Tripolis and the Pentapolis. In addition, they frequently threatened the Romans in the occupied coastal cities.

Other tribes were mentioned by later Roman historians. For example, the Roman Lucan (November 3, 39 A.D. - April 30, 65 A.D.), adds to these groups two other tribes, the Moors and the Mazaces, which dwelt along the coast.<sup>8</sup>

One of the most organized and powerful tribes that fought the Romans constantly for seven years, was the tribe of Musulami. This was mentioned by Tacitus (c. 56 - 117)<sup>9</sup> and Florus (c. B.C. I - A.D. II).<sup>10</sup> In the middle of the fourth century A.D. and thereafter, several other tribes were mentioned by Roman historians.

During the third century onwards, the two most significant tribes in this paper are the Austuriani,<sup>11</sup> and the Luvathae.<sup>12</sup> Both tribes took over the role played by the Nasamones tribe and fought in the eastern and western parts of the country.

Except for some unknown tribes that had accepted the way of life of the Romans and Greeks in the coastal cities,



most tribes lived in the scattered oases, on mountains near a source of water, and near vital caravan routes. These tribes often supported one another against the new rising power of the Romans. They considered themselves to be the only power that had the right of supremacy in their territories, where they could move freely for grazing, cultivation, or for commercial purposes. Since the Romans had shown interest in the country, and since they had started to expand their borders in these territories, the conflict between the two powers became ultimately necessary and later resulted in a series of clashes.

Agriculture also played an important role in the Roman involvement in Libya. The abundance of Libyan agricultural products, animals, and mineral exports to Europe through the harbors of the long Libyan coast in the first millenium B.C., had attracted the attention of the Romans. This led to their attempt to extend their dominance over the country. Rome depended upon these products even more than Western Europe and the U.S. depend on the Middle Eastern oil today.

According to several ancient historians, Libya was rich in oil, but of a different kind, olive oil. This type of oil was the dynamo of the Roman baths and lights. In addition, it was an important food article. Since the time of Herodotus, olive trees have grown in the regions of Cyrene and around the Cinyps River, now called Wadi Caam, in the area known to Herodotus as "the hill of the Graces." This

area is the modern Tarhuna district.<sup>13</sup> Diodorus Sicilus also noted that "Libya was rich in oil since the time of Hannibal."<sup>14</sup> Concerning Cyrene, he says: "That part of the country has deep soil and bears products of many kinds; for not only does it produce wheat, but it also possesses large vineyards and olive orchards."<sup>15</sup> It was Leptis Magna by itself, that had to pay the annual tribute of three million pounds to Caesar as punishment because of its backing of Juba I during the civil wars.<sup>16</sup>

In both ancient and modern Libya, one of the most important of all fruit products is the date palm. Its role in desert flora is comparable to that of the camel in the animal kingdom. "Date palms," says Herodotus, "grow thickly at Augila and Garama."<sup>17</sup>

The cash crop plant Lasari, of Silphium, was at the top of Libyan exports since the seventh century B.C. up to Pliny's days. It was grown in the region extending from the island of Platae (now Bomba Gulf) to Syrtis Major (Sidra Gulf).<sup>18</sup> Its value is due to its use as an article of food and also for its medicinal virtues. It formed an important element in the commerce of Cyrene, as it was the secret of the great wealth and power of the Botliod monarchy. The Cyrenians placed the image of the silphium plant upon their coins as symbolic of the chief product in the country (Figure 1).<sup>19</sup>

The African continent is also rich in excellent salt and precious stones. Herodotus mentions that the Garamantes

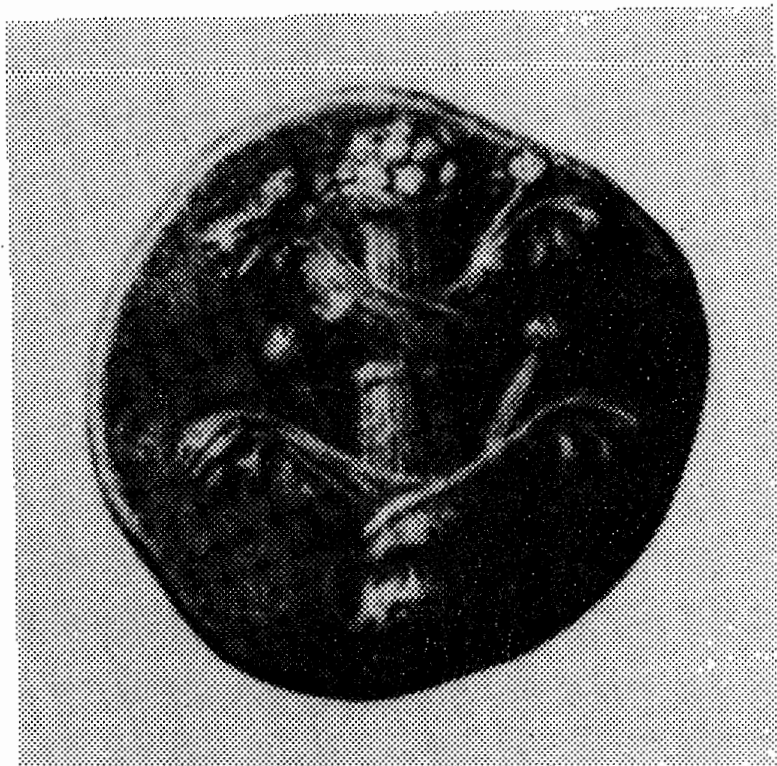


Figure 1. Enlarged silver coin showing the Silphium plant. Cyrene, IV B.C. (Fifth Annual Report)

were traders of salt, which came in different varieties. The most well-known of these was the carbuncle, as it was called by Pliny. He says "the carbuncles were found among the Aethiopians and the Garamantes, and among the hills of the Nasamones."<sup>20</sup> It was also brought to the coast from the lands of the Garamantes and the Gaetulians.<sup>21</sup>

From the above, one can assume that the Libyans must have played an important role in this aspect of Roman foreign policy. For the Romans to secure this abundance of African produce for Rome, they had to occupy all of North Africa. To accomplish this they had to face difficult wars, first with those supported by the Libyan Numidian Kingdom, and later with individual tribes.

For economic and strategic gains, the two ancient superpowers, Carthage and Rome, fought three wars known as the Punic Wars. These were started in 264 B.C. and ended with the destruction of Carthage in 146 B.C.

The third power in the area was the Libyan tribes represented by the Kingdom of Narfis and his successors. The role of the Garamantes Kingdom in these wars is not known and the tribes of the eastern part of the country were not well organized in this period.

In the North and Northwest of Ancient Libya several wars were waged against the Romans, for example, in Spain, and in the area around Carthage. The latter war was conducted against the Romans under the leadership of Gholia Ibn

Narfas, a citizen of Katama, and the founder of the Libyan Kingdom.<sup>22</sup> Massinissa, his immediate successor (238 - 148 B.C.), led his father's army in aiding Carthage in Spain; however, he turned against Carthage in the Second Punic War (218 - 202 B.C.). This change occurred because of a personal dispute,<sup>23</sup> which helped bring about the defeat of Hannibal by Scipio in Zama in 202 B.C.

During the wars, Massinissa took the opportunity to extend the borders of his kingdom east and west to include all of North Africa from the Pillars of Herakles to the area around Arae Phelaenorum bordering in the south with the Garamantes Kingdom.

Rome did not want Massinissa to become another dangerous rival, as was Carthage. On the other hand, she was not able to attack him since she knew most of the Libyan tribes under his command. Thus, they decided to demolish the weakened Carthage in 146 B.C., justifying this action by Carthage's alleged unauthorized use of arms. Two years later, after Massinissa had died, Rome found a chance to encourage wars between his inheritors. By applying this policy, they were able to avoid the frontier trouble, at least during the reign of the three real successors of Massinissa.<sup>24</sup>

After the death of Micepsa, the son of Massinissa, the Romans acted quickly to weaken the kingdom by dividing it into two parts -- Mauritania and Numidia. The former was given to his nephew, Jugurtha, while the latter passed to his sons

Adherbal and Hiempsal. Jugurtha, the future leader of the Libyan tribes, began his reign by murdering Hiempsal, while Adherbal fled to Rome asking for help. This led to Roman intervention directly in the Jugurthine Wars that lasted six years, from 111 B.C. to 105 B.C. After Jugurtha slew "Adherbal, a friend of the Romans," says Strabo, "they filled all of Libya with wars, and then more wars broke out." The war also stretched into the nearby "free cities of Zella and Acholla."<sup>25</sup>

During these wars, Jugurtha was able to restore the ancient Kingdom of Massinissa, but the situation changed when he was betrayed by his father-in-law, Bocchus of Mauritania. Jugurtha was later taken to Rome where he was strangled (104 B.C.)<sup>26</sup> After this act the kingdom was again divided, this time between the successors Guda, Bocchus, and Juba I. During the civil war between Caesar and Pompey the first two sided with Caesar, while Juba I organized his tribesmen and followed the Jugurthan policy of opposing the Romans. He found no choice but to side with one, in order to get rid of the other. Thus, he established peaceful relations with the Pompeians, who were the most powerful faction in Carthage.

In June of 48 B.C. the Pompeians were defeated at Pharsalus, Greece. This was followed by Pompey's assassination at Alexandria. In January, 46 B.C., Caesar persuaded a thousand men from the Gaetulian tribes, the backbone of Juba's army, to fight against Juba and his allies (the Pompeian

troops led by Metellus Scipio and Cato the Younger).<sup>27</sup> With the help of the Gaetulians, Caesar was able to defeat this alliance at Thapsus (south of Monsteer City, in Tunis) in April of the same year.

During the years of anarchy and disturbance that followed the assassination of Caesar in 44 B.C., Arabion, the son of Massinissa II, found an opportunity to restore the kingdom, he was unsuccessful and after two years of war, he was assassinated by the pro-consul of Africa, Cicsius in 42 B.C.<sup>28</sup>

After a lapse of fifteen years, several outbreaks occurred in North Africa.<sup>29</sup> The situation became more dangerous after the transfer of Juba II, a son of Juba I, from Numidia to Mauritania, leaving the first under the direct rule of the Roman legate of the Legio III Augusta, which was already stationed in Lambasae.<sup>30</sup>

In short, the general attitude of the Libyans toward the Romans was full of enmity. "The principle cities on the frontier" wrote E. Gibbon of this period, "were filled with soldiers who considered their countrymen as their most implacable enemies."<sup>31</sup> Roman policy resulted in a series of native revolts, which calmed temporarily during the Severan Dynasty of 193 - 235 A.D. This did not last for a long time, as there were continuous tribal raids up to the Islamic Conquest in 642 A.D.

The geographical conditions made the defense of Libya

a relatively difficult task for the Romans. Although they were occupying the coastal cities, and had secured supplies from the sea, their borders in the south were exposed to tribal invasions.

The Roman policy toward the interior of Libya is summarily recorded in history. Pliny, in the first century A.D., records two wars between the Libyan tribes and the Roman troops. The early activity of the Garamantes against the Romans started in 20 B.C. when Augustus sent a detachment of Legio III Augusta under the leadership of L. Cornelius Balbus, a nephew of Julius Caesar. Pliny's account of Balbus' triumph on his return to Rome, gives a list of thirty captured places and tribes. Three of these were the Cydamus, Garama, and Boin.<sup>32</sup> Cornelius Balbus' campaign was considered a very important event in the history of the Roman army in Libya, because he succeeded for the first time in transferring the place of war from the coast to the heart of the desert. This change required the soldiers to walk for thirty days in an area without water before reaching the capital of the Garamantes.

Pliny's account probably contains some exaggerations. For example, if all of these towns and tribes of the Garamantes had been captured, they would not have been able to fight a few years later. While they challenged the Roman power in the Tripolis, they have been recorded as fighting beside the Marmaridae tribes in the Pentapolis areas in the



years between 20 - 15 B.C. As the Roman historians usually conclude their comments for such wars, Florus, says that Sulpicius Quirinum, the governor of Crete and Cyrene, crushed those tribes and drove them back into the desert.<sup>33</sup>

Because of the Romans' attempt to establish themselves in both sides of the country, they had to face two bitter wars in the first six years of the first century A.D. The Marmaridae tribes, who were then backed by the Nasamones, raided the Pentapolis in 2 A.D. They besieged its frontier and penetrated into Cyrene, where the Augustan troops were garrisoned.<sup>34</sup> They seem to have been deprived of victory. Two Latin inscriptions have been found in Cyrene relating this event. One mentions the end of the war, while the other confers an honor to a Roman citizen for his struggle against the Marmaridae tribes.<sup>35</sup> In the western part of the country, the Gaetulians, probably encouraged by the Garamantes, waged a war against Lentulus Cossus, a leader of a detachment of the Legio III Augusta in 6 A.D.<sup>36</sup>

The Emperor Tiberius, who initiated the construction of both the Ammiarada-Tacapes road and the Leptis Magna-Mesphe road in 17 A.D.,<sup>37</sup> had to face the anger of the independent tribes. The Gaetulians and the Musulami wasted no time in revolting. During the years 17 - 24 A.D. Libya was in revolt, from Mauritania to Syrtis. The Roman troops were constrained into fighting an extremely difficult battle against a very quick and indiscernible enemy.<sup>38</sup>

During this conflict, the Libyan tribes seem to have been united under the leadership of Tacfarinas, who had in the past served as an officer in the Roman army. He later turned against the Romans. Incidentally, this same behavior was repeated by a famous Libyan leader, Ramadan El-Swihli, who won the battle over the Italians in 1915 at El-Gurdabia. It recalls also the attitude of the Algerian leader, Ahmed Ben Bella in World War I. Tacfarinas was able to organize his tribesmen in the Aures Mountains, as well as in the oases of the south, into regular Roman-type formations. His name is found in Punic inscriptions at Ras El-Haddadia, which is eighty kilometers south of Tripoli.<sup>39</sup> The date of this inscription coincides with the time of Tacfarinas' revolt in 17 A.D.

Although Tacfarinas was trained in the Roman army, he often chose tribal tactics. For example, he would have his troops attack and escape rapidly. This guerrilla tactic enabled him to fight for seven years. It is recorded that he was successful in ravaging the Roman settlements, and besieging the scattered camps and forts.<sup>40</sup> In 20 A.D. he defeated the Roman pro-consul of Africa, Comlus in Wadi Bagida, which is north of the Aures Mountains, near Lambasae. "While he was in a strong position," Dabbuz says, "he sent an embassy in 22 A.D. to the Emperor Tiberius asking for a peace settlement, in which the Romans could stay in Africa Vitus (old Africa: the territories around Carthage).<sup>41</sup> The

request was rejected, and Tacfarinas returned to conducting guerrilla wars. Thus, the Emperor was obligated to move the Legio IX Augusta Hispanae from Pannonia to reinforce the Legio III Augusta in Africa.<sup>42</sup> Under such circumstances, Tacfarinas had to retreat to the mountains, hoping to get support from the Garamantes King, who had already promised his aid. Tacitus said that the King sent an embassy to Rome to ask for Tiberius' pardon after the defeat of Tacfarinas.<sup>43</sup>

Two years later, Tacfarinas was able to attack the town of Tubursicu, northwest of Madauros (Mdaourouch), which was in the central occupied Musulamian territories. Just as Jugurtha was trapped by his father-in-law twenty-four years earlier, Tacfarinas was also deceived by Ptolemy, son and successor of Juba II. Tacfarinas was delivered to the Roman troops and killed by the Pro-consul P. Dolabella in 24 A.D.<sup>44</sup> After his death, his followers were able to dominate their land for sixteen years.<sup>45</sup>

Another revolt was stirred up by a free man of Ptolemy, Aedemon, during the reign of Caligula in 40 A.D. After one year of hostility against Suetonius Paulinus, leader of the Roman troops, Aedemon reached an agreement with the Emperor Claudius.<sup>46</sup> This agreement granted Roman citizenship to Aedemon's followers.<sup>47</sup>

By the second half of the first century A.D. the tribal resistance shifted into the middle and eastern parts of the country. In the early 60's, Emperor Vespasian was faced

with internal disorder from both the Libyan tribes and from his legatus and procurator. Although, we do not have sufficient details about his war with the Libyans, we do know that he was honored in the market place of Hadrumentum, because of his triumph against a tribal incursion.<sup>48</sup>

By this time, Pliny speaks of a serious revolt in Oea (Tripoli) and Leptis Magna, led by the Garamantes. Pliny mentions that they used the hiding of water wells as a war tactic against the Romans. "Up to the present," he says, "it has been found impracticable to keep open the road that leads to the country of the Garamantes, as the robber bands of that people have filled up the wells with sand."<sup>49</sup> The siege of Leptis Magna was relieved by Valerius Festus, the Roman Legate of the Legio III Augusta. He then made a demonstration of force by marching into the Fezzan. His route was four days shorter than any previously known route.<sup>50</sup> This expedition recalls that of Cornelius Balbus ninety-nine years earlier.

During the reign of Domitian (81 - 96 A.D.) the Nasa-mones tribes took the responsibility for the leadership of the resistance. These tribes maintained practical autonomy in the Syrtic region, which was the most dreadful area between the Tripolis and the Pentapolis, as described by Lucan in the early years of the first century A.D.<sup>51</sup>

The Emperor Domitian, who had already occupied the Pentapolis, had tried in 86 A.D. to stretch the borders of

the Pentapolis into the Nasamones proper at the Arae Philaenorum.<sup>52</sup> Immediately after Domitian's action, the Nasamones revolted. They were supported in this action by the Macae and the Psylli.<sup>53</sup> Dio Cassius, an historian of the early third century A.D., thinks that this revolt was a result of a heavy burden of taxation. He says:

...they massacred all the tax-collectors and so completely defeated Flaccus, the governor of Numidia, that they even plundered his camp, but having discovered the wine and other provisions there, they gorged themselves and fell asleep. Flaccus, upon discovering this, attacked them and annihilated them...<sup>54</sup>

Domitian reported to the Roman Senate that the Nasamones had ceased to exist. But according to some Roman sources, we know that the Nasamones continued to live after that time.

By the end of and after the reign of Domitian, the Garamantes tribes seem to have reached an economic agreement with the Roman Empire. This could be explained by the well-known four-month expedition in which the King of the Garamantes, accompanied by the Roman leader, Julius Maternus, went into Agysimba.<sup>55</sup>

A recent excavation at Garama revealed some shreds of Roman pottery and pieces of glass of the first century A.D. One of the Roman merchants who became wealthy from this trade was able to build for himself a mausoleum of the temple-tomb type at Garama.<sup>56</sup>

By the reign of the Emperor Trajan (98 - 117 A.D.), Aelius Spartianus, an historian of the late fourth century

A.D., mentions that a revolt occurred at Cyrene. The Marmaridae tribes, who were always concentrated in the eastern part of the country, took the opportunity presented by the Jewish revolt in 115 A.D. to liberate the occupied lands.<sup>57</sup>

In the years between 115 - 193 A.D. several incursions were reported by Julius Capitolinus,<sup>58</sup> and Aelius Spartianus.<sup>59</sup> These incursions occurred in the western part of the country; however, by the first half of the third century, the Roman Empire in general, and Libya and Syria in particular, lived in peace.

During the reign of Septimius Severus who was born in Leptis Magna, and that of his successors (193 - 235 A.D.), there was recorded only one incursion by either the Nasamones or the Garamantes. This conflict occurred in the coastal cities, which is the only African frontier trouble that is recorded. Septimius, probably in person, "freed Tripolis," says Spartianus, "the region of his birth, from fear of attack by crushing sundry war-like tribes."<sup>60</sup>

This peace was probably due to the feeling among the Libyan tribes that the Severans were natives and not Romans. Without the cooperation of the Libyan tribes, the Severan Dynasty could not have built the front forts deep in the desert. Actually most of the public buildings in the coastal cities, and the majority of the fortified buildings and roads, belong to the work of this dynasty. These fortified buildings, especially the fortified farms, were the favorite solution to the problems of the frontier.<sup>61</sup>

The second half of the third century A.D. was marked by tribal incursions on all the frontiers of the Roman Empire.<sup>62</sup> In 238 A.D. Emperor Gordian II waged several wars along the Libyan frontiers in an attempt to subdue the natives who had refused to submit to excessive taxation. Thirty years later the Marmaridae tribes invaded the Pentapolis. A Latin inscription found in Cyrene records the campaign of the Prefect of Egypt, Tenagino Probus, "an expert in desert warfare, sent by the Emperor Claudius II Gothicus.<sup>63</sup> Probus, who in time became emperor, marched from the Pentapolis to Carthage where he suppressed some uprisings.<sup>64</sup>

During the fourth century and later, the role of the resistance shifted to new tribes, the names of which were not recorded by the early Roman or Greek historians. The Ausruriani, Leuathae, Masices, and Arzugus have been recorded as fighters in both the Pentapolis and the Tripolis through archaeological and literary remains.

The position of these tribes beyond the frontiers was strengthened by their use of the camel in their wars against the Romans. Since they were living in very wide ranges, they were able to possess a great number of herds of camels. In addition, they were able to take control of more oases, water points, and caravan tracks. In the area where there was no fort to be used as a shelter for the enemy, the natives used a movable shelter to protect them from the enemies' arrows. Johannes, the Magister Militum of Justinian, who waged a

war against the Hilaguas, and other tribes, wrote of this new tactic. It consisted of encamping within a square or circle of barrack camels, the use of which enabled them to defend themselves from their attackers from between the legs of these living "ramparts." The women and children were placed in the middle of the square or circle.<sup>65</sup> Procopius mentions that these tactics were effective against the cavalry and the infantry. As recent as the last two generations, stories of very similar tactics being used between the tribes have been heard. To protect their camels from getting injured by the enemies' weapons, they put heavy coverings on the side exposed to the enemy. However, Procopius admitted that the camels were not effectively protected.<sup>66</sup>

One of the most powerful tribes in this period was the Austuriani, (also known as Ausuriani), whose original seat lay in the hinterlands of the Syrtic Gulf. Their early activities started in the second half of the fourth century A.D. Synesius, of Greek origin, and the Bishop of Ptolemais, gives an extensive account of these tribes. During his time there were three raids: the first preceding the embassy of Synesius to Constantinople in 395 A.D.; the second from 405 to 409 A.D. while Synesius was at Cyrene; and the third from 410 to 413 A.D. while Synesius was Bishop of Ptolemais.<sup>67</sup>

In a most interesting letter, Synesius tells us that the Austuriani and the Mazics were able to gather five thousand camels, and with their aid, revolted against the



corruption and tyranny of the Dux Strategus Cerealis. They were able to force him unto taking refuge on a ship in the harbor of Ptolemais, while Synesius took his turn in keeping watch on the city's wall.<sup>68</sup> The above-mentioned incident is of slight importance, but it is typical of other raids. These heavy raids made the Romans convert the churches and the open villas into forts.

Under the impact of the conditions created by the wars, the walls of the city of Cyrene were falling into disrepair. Thus, the headquarters of the Pentapolis was shifted to Apollonia (Susa) since it was the least exposed location.<sup>69</sup> Meanwhile, Ammianus Marcellinus (IV century A.D.) mentioned three of their raids against the Romans in the Tripolis during the reign of Jovian and Valentinian (364 - 378 A.D.).<sup>70</sup> Although Leptis Magna and Sabrata did not fall into the hands of the Austuriani, because of their massive walls, the hinterlands came under their control. The Roman citizens in Leptis Magna sent envoys to Count Romanus (Comes Africae) asking his help and support against the Austuriani, who had been besieging them for eight days.<sup>71</sup> Romanus was provided with four thousand camels to relieve the siege, but after forty days of fighting, Romanus was not able to control the Austuriani. Romanus was therefore accused by Ammianus of bribery. This accusation was based on the fact that Romanus had not followed the Austuriani into the deep desert, and that he had the intention of keeping the camels for himself. In reality, the camels and the other supplies were not

sufficient to expel the tribes from their territories; especially, since at this time the tribes appeared to have the backing of one another.

From two Latin inscriptions dating back to the first years of the fifth century A.D., we are informed that the Austuriani tribes had attacked the coastal cities from strategic points in the Tarhuna district. One of these texts was found in Leptis Magna and contains commendations to a Byzantine leader, Ortygius, for the brave resistance of the Austuriani.<sup>72</sup> The other text was found near Tarhuna City, and mentions "the thanksgiving of Christian families for the safety of their sons and estates after a tribal raid. Goodchild, who studied the inscriptions, suggested that the Austuriani who raided the coastal cities in 364 - 367 A.D. came again from their original place in Sirt (ancient Syrtis) by the end of the century."<sup>73</sup>

In the period that extends from the Vandal occupation of Carthage in 437 A.D. to the Islamic Conquest in 642 A.D., the Leuathæ (Luatah) and Ifuraces tribes, backed by others, took the lead in the resistance against the Vandals and the Byzantines. During the reign of the Vandal King Trasamundus (496 - 522 A.D.), the Leuathæ tribes had organized themselves under an expert in war, Cabaon. He arranged a brilliant plan which was detailed by Procopius.<sup>74</sup> Cabaon defeated the Vandals near Tunis and killed their king in 522 A.D. "The Moors," identified in another place by

Leuathae, "never came under the Vandals," according to Procopius. However, the "Vandals suffered a disaster at the hands of the Leuathae,"<sup>75</sup> and they succeeded, after a hard fight, in occupying only the cities on the coast in 455 A.D.

It is recorded that the Vandals destroyed everything they encountered, especially the public buildings and the defensive walls of the cities. As a result of their savage treatment of the people, Prudentius, one of the natives of the Tripolis, revolted with the help of Tattimuth, who was a leader of the Byzantine forces.<sup>76</sup> Although the Vandals were evacuated, this asking of help was actually the replacing of one form of colonialism with another.

Later Prudentius gathered his strength, and turned against the Byzantines. He placed his men outside Leptis Magna and went with eighty chieftains to discuss matters with Sergius, who had already planned to massacre the delegation.

This incident rekindled the flames of rebellion from the Tripolis to the Aures Mountains.<sup>77</sup> By the end of 546 A.D. most of the well-known tribes were united for the first time. The head of this new united effort was Carcasan, the chieftain of the Ifuraces tribes (probably from Yefren city). He was the last Libyan leader to be mentioned before the Islamic Conquest.

Caracasan was killed in battle against the Byzantines in 547 A.D., but his tribesmen continued their guerrilla war-

fare. This weakened both sides; consequently, this facilitated the mission of Amr Ibn el-Ass in the summer of 642 A.D.<sup>78</sup>

This has been a brief history of the Libyan wars against the Romans since the Punic Wars up to the Islamic Conquest. During this period, the natives were always a thorn in the flank of the Romans, who succeeded in occupying the coastal cities for a short time. Even while this was occurring, the tribes had full autonomy of their lands. To understand the effectiveness of the resistance, a brief description of the defensive system of the country will be given.

## CHAPTER III

### THE FORTIFIED ROADS

The fortified roads (Figure 2) played an important role in getting the Romans to establish colonies. The Roman Emperor Tiberius (14 - 37 A.D.) was the first to establish fortified roads in Ancient Libya. His successors continued applying this policy up to the last day of Emperor Maximian (286 - 305 A.D.).

Tiberius had realized the importance of the Gebel (mountain) Nufusa and the upper-Sufiggin region, which would provide excellent barriers between the tribal region and the coastal cities, such as Leptis Magna, Oea, and Sabrata. As a matter of fact, the Leptis Magna-Mesphe (Madinat Duga) road was the first to be established in the country.<sup>1</sup> Successive discoveries in the Gebel region and the upper-Sufiggin (Wadi El-Battum) region revealed at least four fortified roads that were built in the reign of the Emperor Carcalla (211 - 217 A.D.) and later emperors.

Roman emperors had attempted to secure the coastal road for other reasons as well, namely, to protect the arrival of merchandise from other parts of Africa. Wheat and olive oil were handled through the coastal ports on their way to Rome.

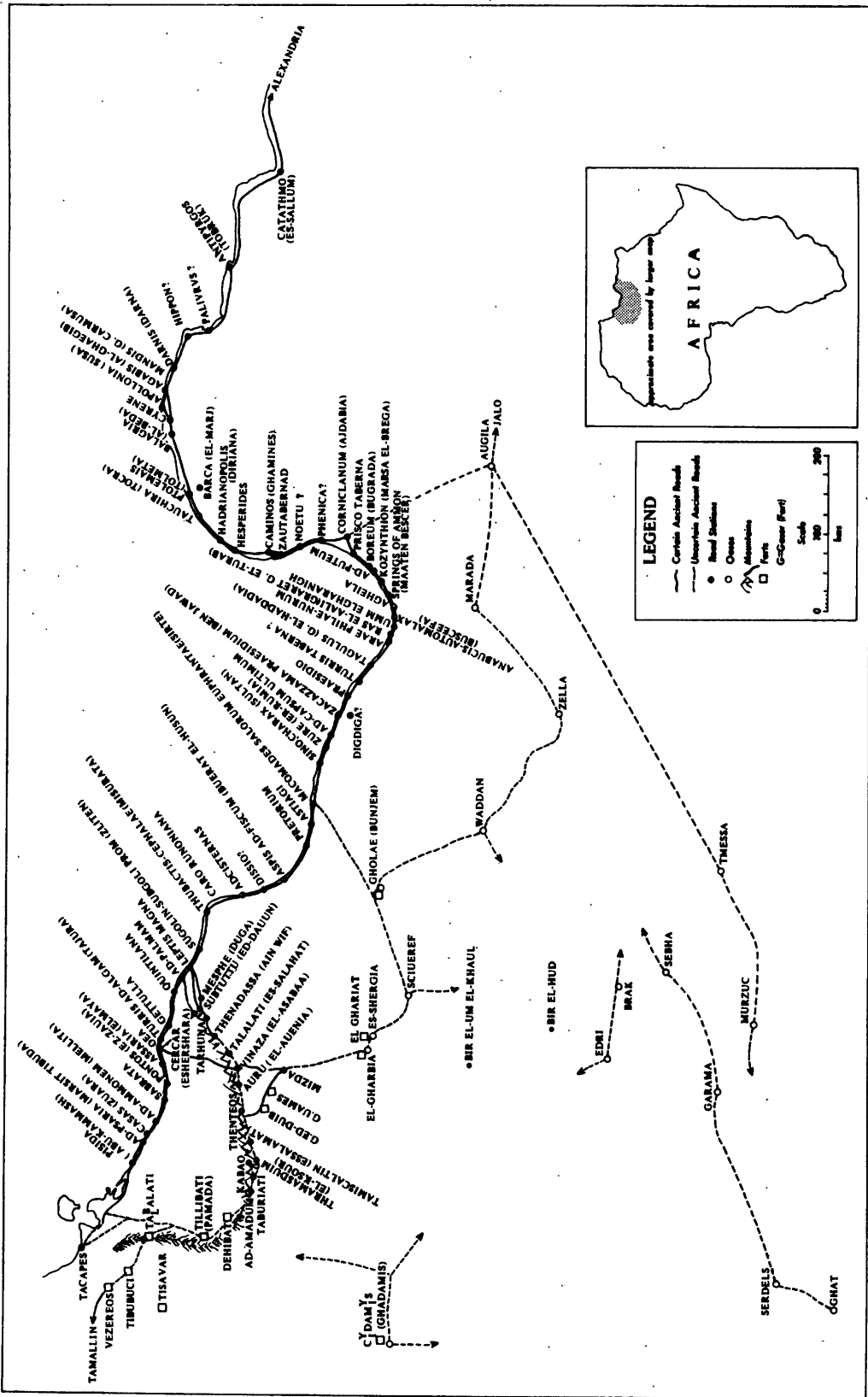


Figure 2. Map showing the fortified roads (I - VI centuries A.D.).

For a better understanding of the subject, a topographical description of the Gebel Road and the upper-Sufiggin region is necessary. The Western Gebel Nufusa is a limestone formation with an elevation of 1000 meters at the highest point. The Gebel extends from the Tunisian frontiers, south of Tacapis (Gabes), and turns slightly southeast toward Dehibat. Further down the Gebel, it turns east to Thenteos (Ezzentan). Finally it turns slightly to the northeast to meet the sea at Funduk El-Naggaza, a point about twenty kilometers west of Leptis Magna. The Gebel is characterized by a deep and sharp escarpment along its northern edge. Even when compared to the Gefara plain, which lies to the north, or with the waterless plateau of El-Hamada El-Hamra, the Gebel is still the most inhabited and prosperous area.

The Wadi-Sufiggin forms a rainfall boundary line. It is the northernmost of the three great Wadis that flow into the southwest angle of the Gulf Sirt. It stretches over three hundred kilometers from the source (forty kilometers south of Ezzentan) to the Tawergha Marches.

The Gebel region and the upper-Sufiggin were the targets of the Roman army throughout its occupation of the country. Having learned a lesson from their troubles with the tribes of the westernmost parts of Ancient Libya (Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco), the Romans tried, perhaps in vain, to avoid similar problems by establishing an extensive system

of fortifications in this area.

Roads, as a part of this system, were constructed to give extra security to the traffic which consisted of soldiers, or soldier-farmers (Limitanei). The numerous military remains in the Gebel region reveal that the Romans thought that if they could control the tribes of the mountains, they would be able to control easily both the tribes of the Sahara and the Gefara Plateau. The Romans started to build roads in order to bring this policy to materialization. The first evidence of this was the construction of the Leptis-Mesphe (Madinat-Duga) road.

The tracing of the Roman roads in these areas is a difficult task, because the Romans never paved their roads outside the cities (at least not in the western part of Ancient Libya. Before settling they followed the caravan tracks; later they were guided by the numerous remains of milestones, and various kinds of buildings, such as tall obelisks, mausolea, watch towers, centenaria, and forts. Most of these monuments have collapsed; the milestones are buried by sand or mud, and others have been taken to European museums. Consequently, this situation has created problems for archaeologists attempting to trace precisely the direction of any road.

Roads and their stations can be identified by the documentary evidence contained in the ancient geographies of Strabo, Ptolemy; the Roman road itineraries (the Antonine



Itinerary), and the Peutinger Map (Figures 3 A and B). The "Mariner's Guide" of antiquity (Stadiasmus Maris Magni), is also a helpful tool in identifying the roads.

The earliest literary evidence of the newly established roads, and their stations is provided by the Antonine Itinerary, which describes the main Gebel road that runs from Leptis Magna to Turris Tamalleni via Tocapis (Gabes) in Tunis. The Itinerary says "Iter quod litem Tripolitanum per Turrem Tamalleni a Tacapis Lepti Magna ducit."<sup>2</sup> This is translated as "The road leads along the Limes (Boundary) of Tripolilania from Leptis Magna via Turris Tamalleni." According to Hammond, the Gebel road connects thirty different road-stations.<sup>3</sup> Only nine of them can be identified inside the actual Libyan territories.

#### (A) LEPTIS MAGNA-THRAMASDUSIM (EL-KSOUR) ROAD

To understand the history of this road we have to divide it into three sectors as follows:

##### I Leptis-Mesphe Sector

In 15 - 17 A.D., during the reign of Emperor Tiberius and under the African Pro-consul L. Aelius Lemia, a military road was established between Leptis Magna and Mesphe.<sup>4</sup> Three inscriptions prove the existence and direction of this road as it appeared in the Antonine Itinerary.

Near its termination at Rass El-Haddagia, the name of the pro-consul appears in a neo-Punic dedicatory inscription

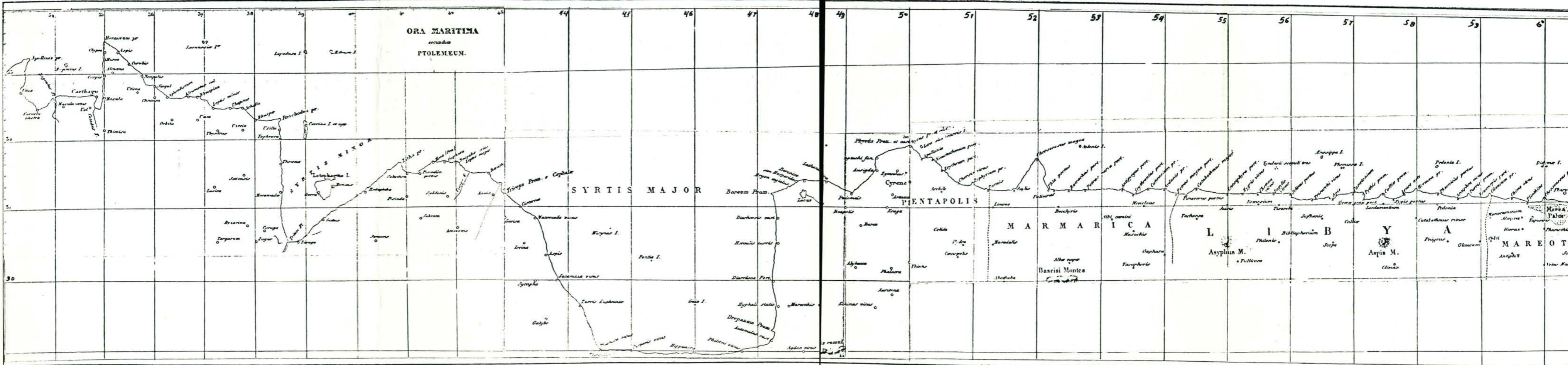


Figure 3 A. An extract from the geographer Ptolemy's map, first century A.D. (Compiled from Karl Muller's *Geographæci Minores*.)

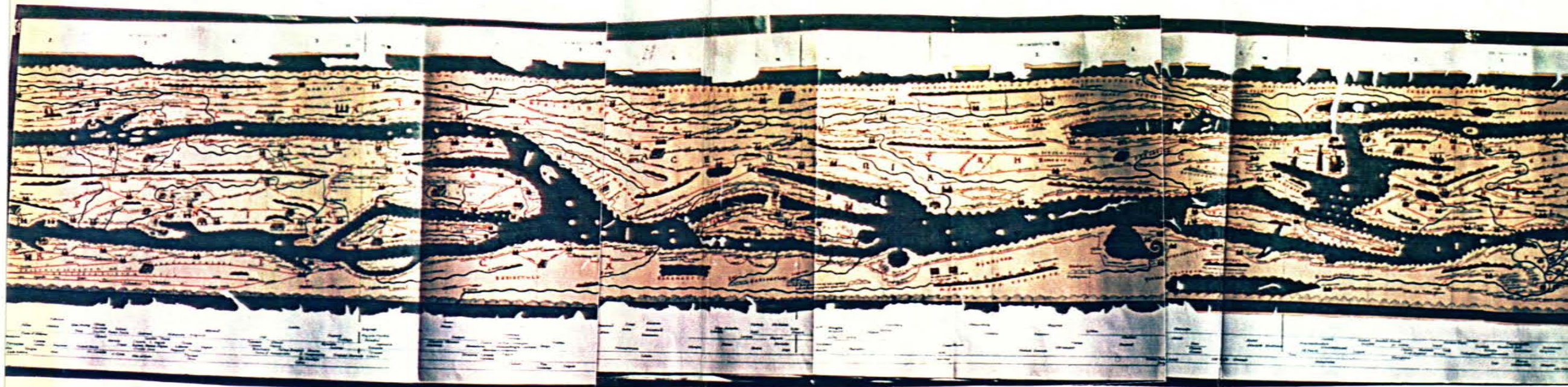


Figure 3 B. An extract from the Peutinger Map, Third Century A.D.

to the God Ammon.<sup>5</sup> The other two inscriptions were on milestones. One is from the first century A.D.; it is a terminal milestone of Emperor Tiberius, which bears both the name of the emperor and his pro-consul.<sup>6</sup> It was found in situ, southwest of the Arch of Septimius Severus. The milestone shows the length of Leptis-Mesphe road as being forty-four Roman miles. It can be described in some detail. This will provide a rough example to the rest of the milestones which will be mentioned later.

The inscription was preserved on a column of grey limestone (Diameter 0.47 X 1.33) within a moulded border with two incised scrolls above (Figure 4).

IMP (ERATORIS) TI (BERI) CAE  
SARIS AUG (USTI)  
IUSSU  
L (UCIUS) AELIUS LAM  
IA PROCO (N) S (UL) AB  
OPPIDO INMED  
TERRANUM DI  
REXST M (ILIA) P (OSSUUM) XLIV

Another milestone was found ten kilometers east of Tarhuna City. Its text bears the name of Emperor Caracalla and the mileage figure XXXVIII.<sup>7</sup>

## II The Mesphe-Thenadassa Sector

We do not have archaeological evidence for the continuation of the Leptis-Thenadassa road during the period that preceded the Emperor Caracalla. However, we do know that this emperor is considered to have been a very famous road builder, not only in his father's birthplace (Leptis



Figure 4. An example of inscribed milestones from Leptis-Mesphe Road.

Magna), but also all over the Empire. His marks were left on most of the milestones, especially those on mountain roads.

Military tiles, and a Severan inscription have been found at Auru (Ain el-Auenia), which is one of the mountain road-stations west of Jefren City.<sup>8</sup> Also military inscriptions of Septimius Severan period have been found at the important ruins of Thenadassa which gives a possibility of the continuation of the Leptis-Mesphe road toward Thenadassa and Auru.

The existence of the road, besides being mentioned in the Antonine Itinerary, was also attested to by four inscribed milestones which were found some three to four kilometers southwest of Abiar Miggi. One of these milestones was set at the distance of fifty-seven miles, in the reign of Gordian III (239 A.D.).<sup>9</sup> The second inscribed milestone was set up at mile LVI in the reign of Emperor Philip (244 - 249 A.D.).<sup>10</sup> The third milestone belongs to Emperor Gallienus,<sup>11</sup> with a mileage figure of LIII. (No date survives on this column, but it was possibly erected by the time of the construction of Oea (Tripoli) Mizda road in 262 A.D.<sup>12</sup> Some believe that it was constructed in 264 A.D., which is the date of the erection of the Leptis Magna-Oea road.<sup>13</sup>) The fourth inscribed milestone bears the number LVIII, and the name of the Emperor Claudius II Gothicus (268 - 270 A.D.)<sup>14</sup>

As shown, there are two milestones found at the same

site which have the same number and belong to different emperors. Also two others have been found in the area, with a distance of only one mile between the milestones 56 and 57. The last figure was duplicated some twenty-seven years later by the Emperor Claudius II Gothicus.

Two factors are responsible for the removal of the milestones from their original places. It is true, as R. Goodchild notes,<sup>15</sup> that weather factors either moved or covered these milestones. It should be remembered that the whole system of fortifications, including the network of roads, was set up to control the tribal raids in the hinterlands. These raids were in fact, partially responsible for the destruction of traces and marks of Roman roads in the area.

Historically speaking, the Leptis-Thenadassa road is very interesting. It was associated with the names of at least six Roman Emperors (Table I), which may explain the importance of the area both strategically and economically. The road runs along the crest and watersheds of the mountains which separate the desert and the hinterlands from the sea. It was the ultimate goal of the Romans to construct a road such as this for their mobile troops, so as to control three geographical areas: the desert, the mountains, and the sea.

The extremely rugged terrain of the Tarhuna area was suitable for hit and run war tactics, making it difficult

TABLE I  
 DATA ABOUT THE INSCRIBED MILESTONES FOUND IN  
 LEPTIS MAGNA-TRAMASDUSIM ROAD

<u>Name of Emperor</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Mileage</u>	<u>Location</u>
Tiberius	15 - 17	XLIV	West side of main street of Leptis Magna, S.W. of Arch of Septimius Severus.
Caracalla	?	XXXVIII	Ten kilometers east of Tarhuna City, 600 meters W.N.W. of Zaviat El-Madina.
Gallienus	?	LIII	Three kilometers S. of Abiar Miggi.
Philip the Arab	244 - 249	LVI	Five kilometers S. of Abiar Miggi at Bu-gharib.
Gordian III	239	LVII	Three kilometers E.S.E. of Hinshir Bu-Drihiba.
Claudius II Gothicus	268 - 270	LVII	Three kilometers E.S.E. of Hinshir Bu-Drihiba



for the long-distance expeditions to control the natives of the area.

The insistence of at least six emperors to restore this road reveals the fact that the area was out of their control several times. The Austuriani had probably united with the Musulami and the Nasamones under the leadership of Tacfarinas, as noted earlier. This is confirmed by the appearance of the name of this leader in a neo-Punic inscription at Ras El-Haddagia. Another inscription found on a small fort at Sidi Samis, twenty kilometers southwest of Abiar Miggi, warns the inhabitants of the Austuriani invasions. (The incident was recorded by Ammianus Marcellinus in 364 - 366 A.D.) Because of this, the road had to be guarded by several strongholds, remains of which can be seen on almost every hilltop in the area.

Economically, the Tarhuna plateau was the natural source of food production for the coastal cities throughout the ages. Neolithic engravings and implements have been found at several sites in the region. The most conspicuous traces of this age can be seen today at Sidi El-Ghrib, which is two kilometers to the southwest of the recreation area at Cercar (Eshershara). This plateau was described by the fifth century B.C. Greek historian, Herodotus, as "thickly covered with trees, though all the rest of Libya is bare..."<sup>16</sup> Then and today, it is considered to have the richest supply of olive trees in the country. The Roman remains of several

collections of olive oil presses have been found there.

### III Thenadassa (Ain Wif)-Thramasdusim (El-Ksour) Sector

A description of this section of the Gebel road appears only in the Antonine Itinerary of the third century A.D. The road connects the following road-stations: Thenadassa (Ain Wif), Talalati (Es-Salahat), Vinaza (El-Asabaa), Auru (El-Auenia), Tentheos also Thenteos (Ezzentàn), Thama-scaltin (Slamat) and Thramasdusim (El-Ksour; south of Kabao City).

The available information does not indicate the existence of such a road. However, the remains of the road stations identified by the Cambridge expedition may shed some light on the direction of this section of Gebel road.

#### (B) LEPTIS-CERCAR (ESHERSHARA)-OEA ROAD

The Leptis Magna-Cercar (Eshershara) road is shown only on the Peutinger Map of the second century A.D. It was attested to by two inscribed milestones, which were erected after this date. The Peutinger Map shows the following stations with distances: Lepti-Magna XXV, Subututtu XV, Cercar XX, Flacci Taberna XVI, and Oea.<sup>17</sup>

The Leptis Magna-Cercar road served a small part of the area between the Gebel road and the coastal roads. Two stations were identified with remains at Wadi-Ed-Dauun and Eshershara. The road runs from Leptis Magna to Mesphe and then to the ancient and modern recreation area of

Eshershara, some three kilometers north of Tarhuna City; and then it turns northwest, probably down the Wadi El-Ramel and Wadi Ed-Dauun. At the latter area two inscribed milestones were found. One bears the mileage figure XXX and shows the name of Emperor Maximinus 237 A.D.<sup>18</sup> The other bears the same figure, and the name of Emperor Gordian III 239 A.D.<sup>19</sup> The road then crosses the Gefara plateau to Oeà (Tripoli). Unfortunately, the third station cannot be identified, making it difficult to draw the precise line of the road.

#### (C) THENTEOS (EZZENTAN) - MIZDA ROAD

The Ezzentan-Mizda road was established under the direction of the Emperor Carcalla in 216 A.D. Until the last days of the Italian occupation in early 1940's, the tribes of this area constituted a great danger and stood as an obstacle against Italian progress towards the south. Ancient historians did not explain the tribal raids in these parts of the country. However, the numerous remains of the Roman military forts may be a result of the state of fear and dangerous life of the area.

Archaeologists have agreed on the existence of this road, despite it not having been mentioned in any ancient source.<sup>20</sup> The remains of a series of forts and milestones between Mizda, the city in the midst of a desert, and Thenteos leave no doubt as to the existence of a Roman road between the two cities.

Eight inscribed milestones bearing Emperor Caracalla's name have been found in different places linking Mizda with Ezzentan.<sup>21</sup> No other emperor's name is associated with the construction work of this road except that of Emperor Maximinus in 237 A.D. And his name appears on an inscribed milestone that was found near Bir Sceghega.<sup>22</sup> (Table II)

The Ezzentan-Mizda road branches off the ancient and modern Oea-Sebha highway heading to the northwest. It passes through the following places: Khasheem Es-Sedra (in the bed of Sufiggin), Uames Fort, Oghlet El-Haferat, finally leading to the Gebel road in the area of Giado or Ezzentan.<sup>23</sup>

The Ezzentan-Mizda road was designed to legitimize the boundary between the land that was already occupied, and the tribal territories in the south. The front forts at El-Ghariat lie to the southeast of Mizda, leaving the whole area to the south and southwest of Mizda-Ezzentan and Giado exposed to a possible invasion. These forts also defended the road and the triangular area that lies between the two ancient roads, the Gebel road, and the Central road. Its security was assured by a series of forts, Centenaria, and fortified farms.

#### (D) OEA-SEBHA ROAD VIA EL-GEBEL (CENTRAL ROAD)

The testimony of ancient literary sources and archaeological remains for the Oea-Sebha road is remarkably clear and consistent. No less than four sources (Herodotus, Pliny,

TABLE II

DATA ABOUT THE INSCRIBED MILESTONES FOUND IN  
THENTEOS - MIZDA ROAD

<u>Name of Emperor</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Mileage</u>	<u>Location</u>
Caracalla	?	XXV	One kilometer of Ag- hlet El-Haferat, and 40 kilometers from Zentan.
		XXXII	One kilometer east of Uames Fort.
			Twelve kilometers east of Uames Fort.
	216	XLIII	Near Esheghega.
Maximinus	237		
Caracalla	216	XLIIII	Near Khshem Esse- dra in the bed of Wadi Sufiggin, 24 kilometers from Uames.
			Thirty-four kilo- meters from Mizda.

Tacitus and Strabo) give indications, direct or indirect, as to the existence of this road. It is also well-attested to by twenty-three inscribed milestones (Table III).

Garamantes of Garama and Phoenician traders must have used this road before Roman occupation for at least 800 years. The Garamantes were known to historians as traders of pure salt, carbuncle, gold, slaves, et cetera.<sup>24</sup> In return, the Phoenicians gave them the goods of the Mediterranean countries, mainly fine pottery, bronze and glass.

When the Romans put their feet on North Africa, the atmosphere of peace that had lasted for several centuries turned into a state of war. As was discussed earlier, at least five Garamantes invasions against the coastal cities occurred. One of these invasions was driven back into the capital of Garama by the Roman Governor of Numidia, Valerius Festus in 69 A.D. Pliny's description of Festus' road was four days shorter than that of L. Cornelius Balbus who led the first Roman invasion deep into the desert ninety years earlier. Pliny describes the road as: "Hoc iter vocatur praeter caput saxi," which is translated into: "The road past the brow of the rock." The road followed the water points that lie between Oea and Mizda. The mileage figure CXIV is the largest figure to have been found near Mizda. In the absence of clear archaeological evidence, the continuation of this road can not be precisely drawn from Mizda to Sheba through El-Gharia Es-Sherghia, Bir um El-Khaul, Bir El-Hod down to Sheba.

TABLE III  
 DATA ABOUT THE INSCRIBED MILESTONES FOUND IN  
 OEA - SEBHA ROAD

<u>Name of Emperor</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Mileage</u>	<u>Location</u>
Caracalla	216	LVII	At KM 85 1/2 in Situ
Caracalla	216	LXXXII	At KM 125 south of Khormate El-Hanishie, in Situ
Gordian III	238	LXXXII	50 KM south of El-Hanishia
Caracalla	216	LXXXIIII	
Caracalla	216	LXXXV	At KM 130 west of Wadi Gan (five bases) in Situ
Maximinus		LXXXV	At KM 130 west of Wadi Gan (five bases) in Situ
Gordian III	238-44	LXXXV	At KM 130 west of Wadi Gan (five bases) in Situ
Gallienus	?	LXXXV	At KM 130 west of Wadi Gan (five bases) in Situ
Caracalla	?	LXXXVI	At KM 132 from Tripoli in Situ, Wad El-Alegh
Caracalla	?	CV	Kaf El-Berber
Caracalla	?	CVI	At KM 161 from Tripoli, Wadi Lella

TABLE III (cont.)

DATA ABOUT THE INSCRIBED MILESTONES FOUND IN  
OEA - SEBHA ROAD

<u>Name of Emperor</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Mileage</u>	<u>Location</u>
Aurilian	271	CVI	At KM 161 from Tripoli, Wadi Lella
Caracalla	?	CVII	At KM 162 1/2 from Tripoli, Wadi Lella
Caracalla	?	CVII	At KM 164 near Tripoli road
Gallienus	262	CVIII	At KM 164 near Tripoli road
Caracalla	216	CX	At KM 167 1/2, 7 KM north of Mizda
Caracalla	?	CVIV	
Caracalla	?	CVIV	At KM 167 1/2. 7 KM north of Mizda
Caracalla	?	CVIV	At KM 167 1/2, 7 KM north of Mizda
Caracalla	?	CVIV	At Km 167 1/2, 7 KM north of Mizda
Caracalla	?	CVIV	At KM 167 1/2, 7 KM north of Mizda



The inscribed milestones that have been found in at least twenty-three spots, were mostly found in situ. The first one to have been found was in Kaf Tubbi, which is a few miles north of Garian City; the last one was found at Mizda as indicated above.<sup>25</sup>

The road served the Roman army in two ways: it controlled the series of waterpoints that lead to the southern waterless areas; and it was the shortest road to one of the three largest front forts ( El-Ghariat) fort. This enabled detachments to move rapidly to defend the southernmost frontier. Several other forts were built in Wadi Lella, and on top of prominent lands along both sides of this road. (Figure 5) Their function was to impose a strict control on traffic passing in and out of the Tripolis region.

#### (E) TACAPES (GABES) TO ALEXANDRIA (COASTAL ROAD)

The Tacapes coastal road was not important from a military standpoint, although it was used by the Phoenicians who founded Carthage, Sabrata and Leptis Magna on the North African coast in about 1000 B.C. Armies on the march to war also used this road. During the summer of 46 B.C. Cato's army used it to go from Cyrene to Tunis.<sup>26</sup> In the previous chapter, mention was made of the military expeditions that traversed the coastal road in several attempts to put down tribal resistance. Thus, the coastal road permitted rapid movement of troops between Tacapes and neighboring areas



Figure 5. A collapsed fort was built on a commanding view.

(which were garrisoned by the Legio III Augusta) to the newly occupied territories to the east.

The security of the Tacapes (Gabes) - Alexandria road in the Leptis Magna sector was assured by the hinterland road-stations and forts of the southern mountains. Throughout the history of the Roman Empire in North Africa, the Roman emperors realized the importance of the coastal road. They made secure its existence through the establishment of road stations, forts, inscribed milestones (Table IV) and fortified harbors.

Many of the coastal road stations have been identified by a number of archaeologists conducting work on these sites.<sup>27</sup> Recording most of the visible remains, they were able to compare them with the locations listed in the ancient itineraries. Despite every effort that is being made to identify the coastal, or hinterland road stations, a great number of them still remains unclassified.

The combined studies of both archaeological remains and literary sources shed some light on the distribution of the coastal road stations in the area under discussion. The information currently available indicates that there are over forty sites that consisted of road stations, forts, fortified harbors, and later fortified churches. These provided defense networks for the coastal roads throughout the history of the area.

The names of the successive coastal sites in both

TABLE IV

DATA ABOUT THE INSCRIBED MILESTONES FOUND IN  
CARTHAGE - ALEXANDRIA ROAD AND IN THE PENTAPOLIS ROADS

<u>Name of Emperor</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Mileage</u>	<u>Location</u>
Caracalla			Bu-Cammash
Caracalla	216		One KM west of KM 60 Tripoli, El- Khoms
Caracalla		VII	Ten KM east of Lep- tis near Zauiat Sidi Ben Ibrahim
Caracalla	216	II	Four KM southwest of Leptis-Magna
Caracalla	216	VII	Gasr Dellasc
Caracalla	216		Near Tripoli
Caracalla	216	III	Ben Gehe Mosque, at El-Khoms
Maximinus	237	I	El-Khoms west of Bank of Wadi Zinad
Maximinus	237		Three KM of Dellasc
Maximinus			Gasr Dellasc
Maximinus		VIII	1 1/2 KM west of Gasr Dellasc
Gallienus	264	XVIII	Near KM 90 Tripoli, El-Khoms
Tacitus	276	V	Three KM North, northwest of Ras El-Marghab

TABLE IV (cont.)

DATA ABOUT THE INSCRIBED MILESTONES FOUND IN  
 CARTHAGE - ALEXANDRIA ROAD AND IN THE PENTAPOLIS ROADS

<u>Name of Emperor</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Mileage</u>	<u>Location</u>
Claudius	45/46	I	1480 meters west of Cyrene
Claudius	41/45	A	1480 meters west of Ptolemais
Claudius	45/46	V	Ten KM southwest of Apollonia Cyrene Apollonia road
Vespasian	71	A=4	Cyrene Apollonia road
Hadrian	117-138		Inside Cyrene walls
Hadrian	117-138	V	Ten KM southwest of Appollonia
Philip the Arab	244-249	A	Between Belagria and Cyrene
Maximian	286-305		East of Apollinia
Maximian	305		East of Apollinia

ancient and modern Libya will make it easier for the reader to follow the subject under discussion. The identified sites starting from the west at Tacapes to the east at Alexandria are as follows: Tacapes (Gabes), Pisida (Abukammash), Ad-Gypsaria (Marset Tibuda), Casas (Zuara), and Ad-Ammonem (Mellita). Sabrata, a well-fortified harbor and city, has maintained the same ancient name. In this part of the country the coastal road built by the Phoenicians was later reconstructed by the Romans. It goes through this city and its pavement is still in very good condition. The Peutinger Map records two road stations west of Oea (Tripoli), Pontos (Ez-Zauia) and Assaria (El-Maya). Oea as a road and commercial station was smaller than Leptis Magna and Sabrata in antiquity. It was surrounded by four strong walls each with an arched gate. Moving east is Turris Ad-Algam (Tagura), which had Roman civilian dwellings, including luxurious villas, baths, and beautiful mosaic pools.

Migradi Getulla (Sidi Bennor area) is a small road station that is located just outside Leptis Magna. As the birthplace of Septimius Severus, the city of Leptis Magna (which still bears the ancient name) had a fortified harbor and circuit wall. Between this city and the famous altar of Philaeni, there are approximately nine road stations. They are as follows: Subgoli (Zliten), Thubactis-Cephalae Prom (Misurata), Aspis Adficium (Buerat El-Husun), Macomades-Euphranta (Sirt), Charax (Sultan)<sup>28</sup>, Zure (Er-Rumia), Zaca-

sama Praesidium (Ben Jawad, which is 620 kilometers from Tripoli), Digdiga (three miles south of Ben Jawad), the Peutinger Map listed this site as Municipium, and the last one of this group, Tugulus. It appears in the Antonine Itinerary and Tagulis as in the Peutinger Map (ten kilometers northwest of "Marble Arch" at Gasr El-Haddadia).

Some forty kilometers to the east of Tugulus lies the renowned Altar of Philaeni, which had disappeared by Strabo's time.<sup>29</sup> He says: "The Altar of Philaeni no longer remains, yet a place has taken the appellation." But the name of the place remained as a memorial to Philaeni throughout the Roman period. It marked the boundary between Carthage and Cyrene. Today, the place is known as Gararet Gasr Et-Turab.

Next to the Philaeni, the road was guarded by a small fort near Umm El-Gharanigh, some 709 kilometers from Tripoli. The fort is situated in a very desolate and barren plain. The Greek frontier outpost of Automolax, and its Roman successor Anabucis (probably a Libyan name as it appears on both the Peutinger Map, and on the Antonine Itinerary), were built in the same place for the same purpose. The exact site is identified as the modern village Bu Sceefa, near Al-Agila. Some four kilometers inland of Um El-Gharanigh at the foot of Begel El-Ala, Goodchild found scattered remains which show that the site had marked the westernmost frontier of Cyrene during the reign of Diocletian (284 - 305 A.D.).<sup>30</sup>

To the east of Al-Aghila there is a group of ancient wells known in antiquity as the Springs of Ammon (Maatan Bescer). The wells were protected by a fort, which crowned a rocky prominence near Marsa El-Brega, which the ancients called Kozyntion. The region near Marsa El-Brega was heavily fortified by the Romans and later by the Byzantines.<sup>31</sup>

Twelve kilometers northeast of Marsa El-Brega lies Boreum, the largest coastal road station in the Syrtic Gulf. It occupies the promontory of Ras Bu Grada, which was protected also by a very well-preserved Byzantine fort known as Gasr El-Atallat, as well as other small outposts. The hills of Boreum are sufficiently high to give good observation for the coastal road and its neighboring areas. The most important place next to Boreum was Corniclanum (Agdabia). Its importance is due to its strategic location as a water point on the caravan route from the coastal plains of Pentapolis to the Oases of Augil and Jalo. An inscription, found in a small fort known as Gasr El-Hania, shows that it was garrisoned by Syrian soldiers early in the first century A.D.<sup>32</sup> Agdabia was still prosperous in the eleventh century A.D. when El-Bekri described it as having a mosque built by the Fatimid Caliph Al-Qaim (934 - 945 A.D.).

Beyond Agdabia, the coastal road was guarded by several forts and fortified farms scattered around the ancient Ghamenos (of the Antonine Itinerary), which still carries the same name Ghemines. It was said that these forts were



built by the Libyans, even before the arrival of the Greeks or the Romans.<sup>33</sup> Beechey, writing in 1821, says that "there are several interesting remains of ancient forts, some of which are altogether on a different plan from the Graeco-Roman ones."<sup>34</sup> The recent investigation made by R. Goodchild reveals some early Roman pottery which was probably used by the Libyans or by the Romans themselves. However, the forts were set up to guard the coastal road, since there was no other reason for the erection of such forts in such a deserted area.

#### (F) THE PENTAPOLIS ROADS

The road then reaches the territories of five ancient principal settlements, the Pentapolis. These are: Brenic-Euherperides (Benghazi), Tuchera (Tukra), Ptolemais (Tolmita), Cyrene (Shaat), and Apollonia (Marsa Susa). Actually these cities were very well fortified, either by wall-circuits or by several forts around the city. Also each city had a fortified harbor which made it possible to use the sea in supplying the incomers, either Greek or Roman.

The road from Cyrene to Darna, and even further to the east along the plateau, has not been confirmed by any road marks. But according to the Peutinger Map, this sector of the coastal road runs in almost a direct line from Cyrene (Shaat) through the following small road stations: Agabis (Al-Ghaegib), Mandis (Gasr Carmusa), Paliurus (unidentified

site which lies near the mouth of the Wadi Tmimi), Antipygo (Tobruk), Cordu (?), Hemeseo (?), and Catathmo (Es-Sallum). The road then continues to Alexandria through a few other stations.

In the Cyrene-Darna sector, three routes were branched to serve two major purposes: to facilitate the movements of the mobile units between the Pentapolis (the five cities), and to provide more security to the traffic on the coastal road.

#### I The Cyrene-Apollonia Route

This route is not to be found in the Peutinger Map, but it is confirmed by four inscribed milestones (see Table IV). These belonged to three Roman Emperors: Claudius (41 - 54 A.D.), Vespasian (69 - 79 A.D.), and Trajan (98 - 117 A.D.).<sup>35</sup> The famous phrase of Provincia Cyrinia, which occurs in the Natural History of Pliny, has been attested to epigraphically on a milestone of Trajan's on the first mile from Cyrene to Apollonia.

#### II Cyrene-Balagria (Al-Beda) Route

This branch was mentioned by the Peutinger Map, as being twelve miles from Cyrene. (This is an accurate figure.) Also, it was attested to by an inscribed milestone of the Emperor Philip the Arab (244 - 249 A.D.), who probably in the same period constructed the Mesphe (Madinat-Duga)-Thenadassa road in the Tarhuna district.<sup>36</sup>

### III Darnis (Darna)-Apollonia (Susa) Route

There is little information about this branch except for an inscribed milestone belonging to the reign of the Tetrarchy (284 - 306 A.D.).

As we have seen, the milestones are rarely found. Some fifty inscribed milestones have been found so far along the coastal road. This distance amounts to approximately 1200 Roman miles inside the Libyan territories. Previous investigations did not uncover any traces of paved roads, at least not on the westernmost sector to the coastal road. However, two modern writers have observed wheel-ruts in the eastern side of Syrtic Major (Sedra Gulf). G.A. Freund, travelling from Benghazi to Tripoli on May of 1881, observed ancient wheel ruts at a place called Saniat El-Oghla, which is situated between the wells of Bescer (Wells of Ammon), and Sebchat El-Mahtaa.<sup>37</sup> As recently as 1951, R. Goodchild has found wheel-ruts on some Pentapolis routes that have branched out of the coastal road. He observed these traces "Wherever the line of a road or track crosses a rocky outcrop...some wheel-ruts give the impression of having been deliberately cut to assist traffic..."<sup>38</sup> Naturally, the Romans must have used the horse-drawn vehicles to guard the coastal road, although no traces of wheel-ruts have so far been found in that road itself.

Accordingly, the fortified roads were vital arteries

of operation that could permit some success in war, and they assured some security for the growing towns on the coast.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE FRONT FORTS

Prior to the reign of the Severan Dynasty, a large group of massive and small forts had been established in the eastern and the western parts of ancient Libya, including Tunis, Algeria, and Morocco. These regional forts have been studied by three French archaeologists: Cagnat, Baradez, and Picard. Their works yield valuable information which is of great use to us here. Although the dates of the forts that lie to the west of the Libyan border were earlier than the Severan forts, their general characteristics resemble one another.

The easternmost front forts were established earlier than the Severan front forts. They were designed to protect the Pentapolis (the five major cities). During the Severan Dynasty four front forts were established on the edge of a barren area that lies between the front fort at Ghilan (Tazifar), which is outside the Libyan-Tunisian borders and a small front fort of Alhanian near Corniclanum (Agdabia). These forts from the west to the east are: Cydamus (Ghadamis), El-Gharia El-Garbia (The Western), and El-Shergia (The Eastern), and finally Gholae (Bu-Njem).

The front forts, shown in Figure 6, as the final

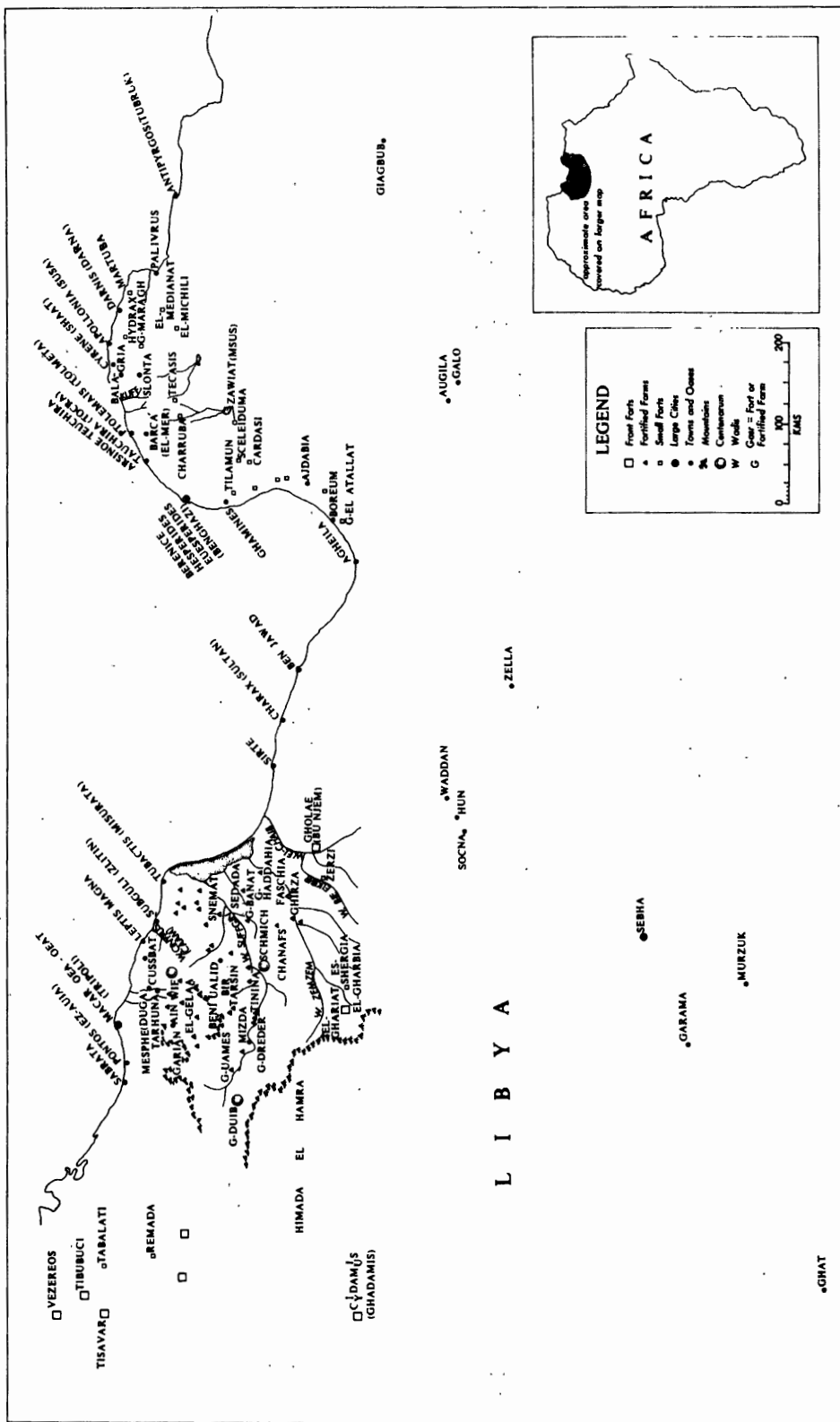


Figure 6. Map showing the location of both the front forts and the fortified farms.

barrier in a frontier zone based on a series of massive forts organized in depth, and situated in a less barren zone, provided mobility and elasticity to defense units. Their position formed a barrier-boundary to the pre-historic occupation in Garama's territories. The forts played a significant role in commanding the oases, which had always been a point of passage for the caravans going to the ports on the coast with merchandise of Central and Southern Africa. Later, during the reign of Alexander Severus, those front forts functioned as a great protector for the growing fortified farms in the fertile Wadis of Zemzem, Sufiggin, Bei-El-Kebir, and other territories which will be discussed in the following chapter.

The dates of the front forts usually coincide with the dates of the tribal revolts in each region. In the western parts of the country, the Gaetulians led a serious revolt immediately after the Romans had started to occupy the area. This revolt sparked a series of revolts that caused the early Roman emperors to erect forts wherever they occurred.

From the writings of Cagnat and Baradez, we learn that the western parts of the country were very well fortified and garrisoned by the Legio III Augusta, which was stationed for the first time at Ammaedara (Haidra) in 6 A.D.<sup>1</sup> For reasons that are not clear, the headquarters of the legion moved to the west toward Theveste in 75 A.D. Thereafter, the legion's headquarters kept moving to the south and south-

east, following the areas where the possibility for dangerous revolts existed. Finally, the legion settle at Lambasae, where they built the largest fortress in North Africa during the reign of Emperor Hadrian in 128 A.D. Subsequently, we hear of only one small fort being erected at Tazivar (Ghilan), by the time of Emperor Commodus (180 - 192 A.D.).<sup>2</sup>

Once this region was sufficiently fortified, the tribal resistance moved toward the east where there were wide open frontiers. The flourishing cities on the coast were exposed to every possible attack from the south. Even Gebel Nufusa, which was considered one day as a natural barrier between the tribes and the coastal cities, was no longer a shelter. Also, the Tiberius road from Leptis to Mesphe, which was erected at the eastern end of the Nufusa mountain, seemed to have failed to accomplish its goals, to protect Leptis Magna from the Nasamones and Garamantes incursions.

The second phase of the Roman policy was to establish a group of advance forts that would exist behind the fertile wadis in the heart of the country. From these, they could insure the tranquility of the coastal cities and the road stations, by bringing the center of the resistance to the front. In addition, this action insured the security of communications in the region of the oases, which are scattered along the frontiers.



This policy was brought into effect on 24 January of 201 A.D., the date of the arrival of the two command consuls, L. Annius Tabianus and M. Nonius Mucianus, at Gholae-Ghola, the original name of the oasis of Bu Njem.<sup>3</sup> The above-mentioned date is the earliest we have for the erection of the Severan defensive works in the country.

Emperor Septimius Severus, who already before his arrival to power, had noticed the four strategic points where he could establish the massive forts, realized this aspect of Roman policy. Septimius, as a native from Leptis Magna, must have had good knowledge and experience about the southern parts of the country -- its itineraries and the territories of the most powerful tribes. To choose four strategic points, separated by distances ranging from 150 kilometers to 500 kilometers was possible only for a leader who was familiar with such a vast area and its local conditions.

From literary sources, we know that Septimius Severus fought the Garamantes, or the Nasamones, and drove them back into their territories. Whether Septimius or his successors carried out this plan, the front forts appear to have been adequate to fulfill their purposes. Spartianus was amazed by the defensive system initiated by Septimius Severus. He said "This prince established the complete security of Tripoli, where he was born by the defeat of numerous warlike tribes."<sup>4</sup> This was probably true since we do not hear of any incursions after the establishment of defences during the Severan Dynasty.

The four auxiliary front forts that were established by the Severan Dynasty had similar characteristics as those of legionary fortresses elsewhere in the Roman Empire, although they were designed on a smaller scale. The auxiliary forts are greatly different in size, but they share almost the same quality of workmanship and the same basic plan.

The general features of an auxiliary fort consist of a large courtyard surrounded by four massive walls, penetrated by four gates, each one being flanked by two towers. The prominent parts inside the fort are as follows: the rampart; the headquarters (Principia), the house of the commander (Praetorium), barrack blocks which occupy the greater part of the fort; the hospital (Valetudinarium), the granaries (Horrea), the baths, cisterns, temples, theater, and cemeteries. The last three elements were usually found outside the front forts. Actually, in Libya, no traces of theaters have been found.

In order to understand the form and the function of most of these features, we will describe the important public buildings of the Gholae fort. These buildings have been partially excavated by René Rebuffa and others during the last ten years.<sup>5</sup> [Despite the fact that I visited the site during my field work days, I am mostly indebted to them for the information about this fort.]

## AUXILIARY FORT OF GHOLAE - GHOL (BU-NJEM)

The fort was visited and described by several European explorers and archaeological amateurs. The best description and drawing was made by G. Lyon in 1826 (Figure 7A). This fort lies in an oasis which is known today as Bu-Njem. It is situated 110 kilometers south of the coast, and 200 kilometers south of the Cephalae promontorium (Misurata). The oasis occupies the head of Wadi Bei El-Kaib, a tributary of the Wadi Bei El-Kabir. It was considered as the main staging point between the oases of El-Gofra, a region that includes Hun, Socna, Waddan and the inhabited areas near the coastal road. It was also commanding a route that connected those places with Garama and Central Africa. There is no clear evidence for an existing route connecting this fort with the western front forts. However, remains of small forts such as the Zerzi fort (30 kilometers west of Gholae), suggest the existence of a military route connecting Gholae with El-Ghariat, and it possibly continues as far as Cydamis-Cidamus (Ghadamis).<sup>6</sup>

Throughout the ages, the indigenous populations as well as the newcomers realized the importance of the fort site. It was inhabited by a paleolithic tribe who left their stone implements in the area.<sup>7</sup> Traces of a fortified city around this military fort were found by R. Rebuffa during his excavation of Bu-Njem.<sup>8</sup>

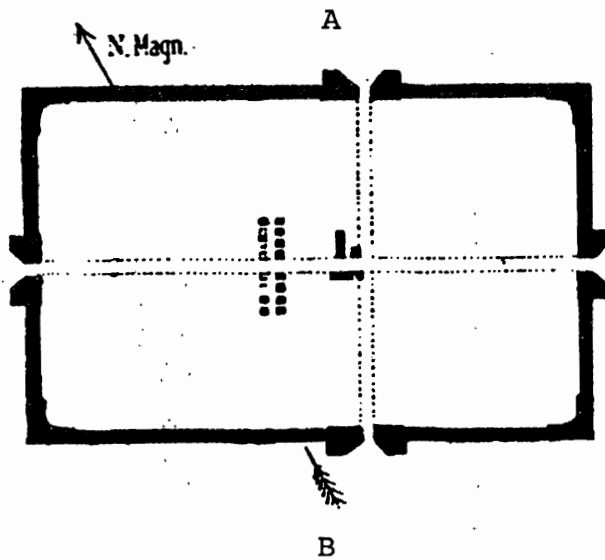
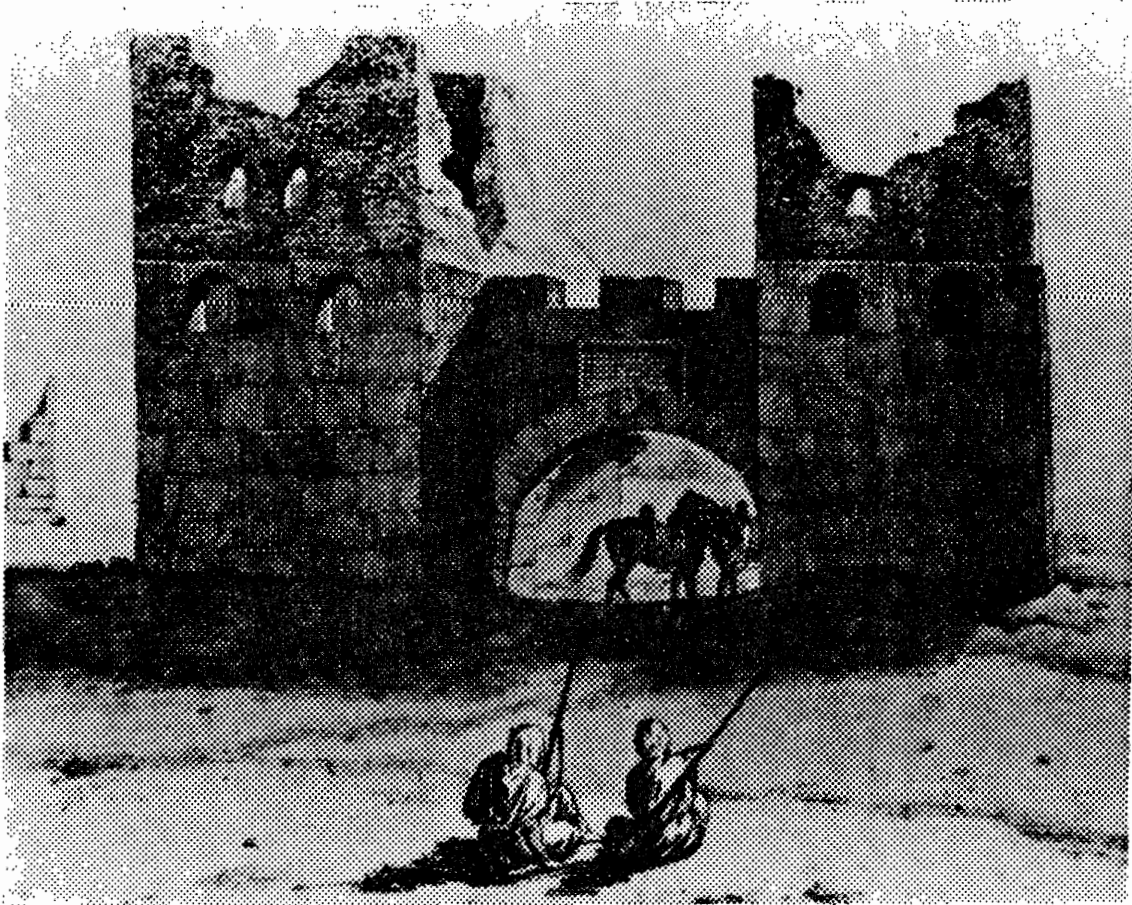


Figure 7 A and B. A. Gholae as drawn by Lyon in 1826. B. Plan of Gholae, as an example for auxiliary forts.

Lucan, an historian of the first century A.D., cited a very detailed description of the Syrtic region by Cato. He described the wind that "travels freely and wreaks the fury of 'Aealia' all over the desert."<sup>9</sup> Another historian of the same century, Pliny, gives 'Boin' as a name for the same region.<sup>10</sup> This name is the closest name to the modern Bu-Njem. But a geographer of the first half of the second century A.D. records "Ouanias" as a name of the region.<sup>11</sup>

The recent discoveries in the fort reveal two inscriptions. One was found in the Temple of Hammon, and the other was found written on ostraca in the praetorium. The inscriptions include the names Gholae, Golas and Ghol, which sounds like Aealia (the name that was already mentioned by Lucan).

The dedication of the auxiliary fort to the spirit of the region was a famous tradition among the auxiliaries in North Africa and throughout the Roman Empire. Less than one decade before the fort was established, the Legio III Augusta dedicated their work of Ghilan's fort to the spirit of the region (Tazivar).<sup>12</sup> The same tradition was later applied to the fort of Cydamis.

The names Aealia, Gholae, Ghol, Golas sound very much like the Arabic word for Ghol ( غول ) 'M' or Ghola ( غولة ) 'F'. "Ghol" in Arabic means a "dreadful and "desert demon." This coincides with the functions of the fort which was built to spread fear among the insurrectionist neighboring tribes. The Arabic name probably was given to the site either by the

Phoenicians, who came to the area as traders; or by the ancestors of Ghola (the father of Narfas), who was the founder of the ancient Libyan-Numidian Kingdom.

The fort of Gholae is relatively small compared to the typical auxiliary or legionary forts of the Empire. Its dimensions from the outside are 139 X 95.50 meters. It was built on an inclined plain from the south-southwest to the north-northwest. The difference between the levels of the land where the highest and the lowest walls were built is four meters. As is usual in such auxiliary forts, the gates in the two longer sides are set east of center (Figure 7 B). The gates (Figure 8) were built of large cut stones as high as one meter. The approximate width of each gate is three meters, with a passage measuring 3.60 meters. Because the area is lacking timber, all the gates of the front forts were arched and vaulted. The keystone on each gate carries a dedicatory inscription of the same text and the same date. In addition, on the top of the keystone, they sculptured an eagle figure with its wings spread -- the tradition that all the Roman legionary or auxiliary forts had to follow.

Except for the western gate, which is completely demolished and buried by sand, the traces of two towers flanking each gate are extant. All eight towers were built of the smaller masonry, and all have the same design. The estimated height of each tower is ten meters, and each has two doors. One door leads to the passage of the gate, and

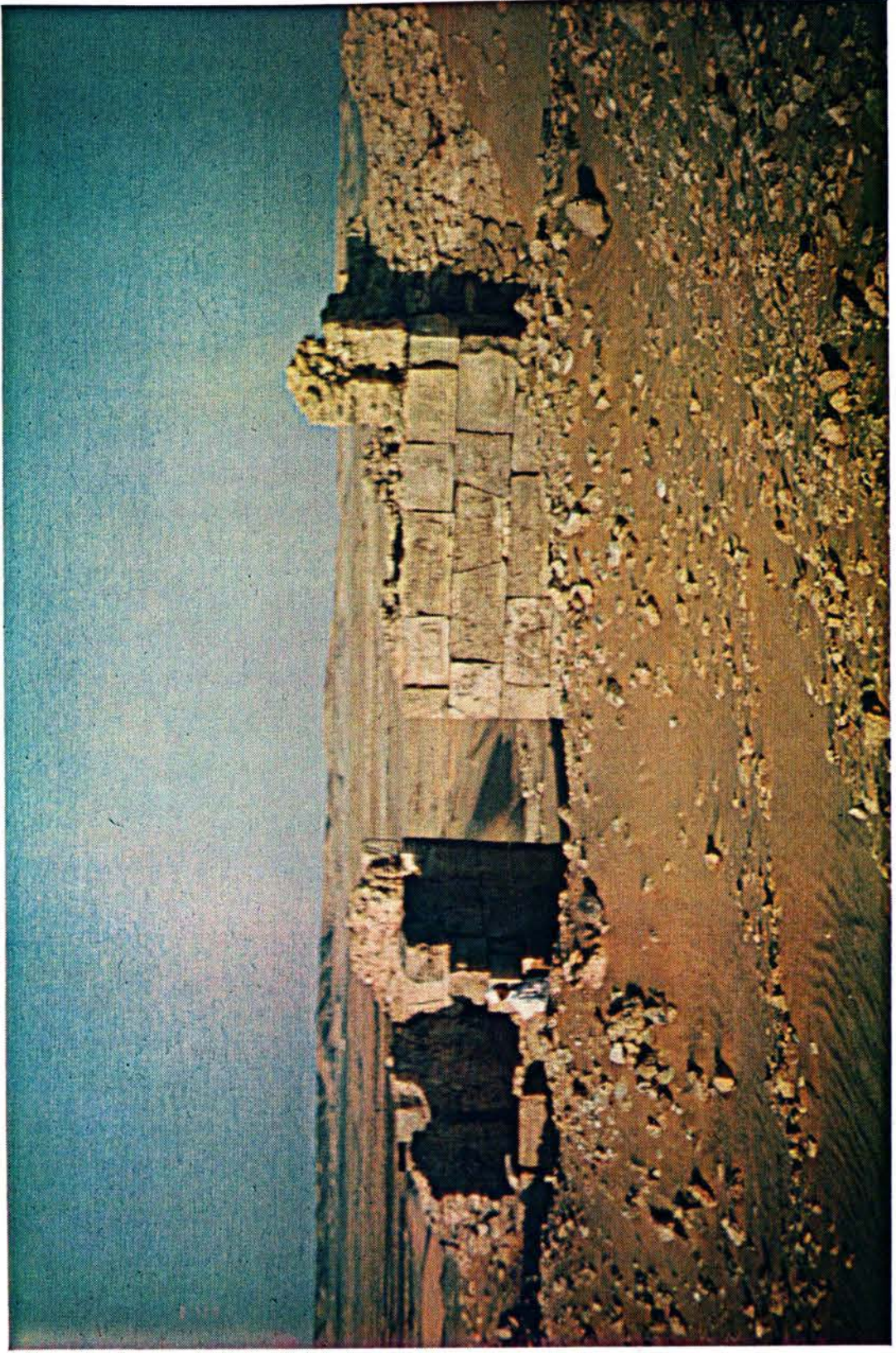


Figure 3. Cholae: North Gate.

the other leads to the main courtyard.

The inside of the fort was divided into four sections by two roads that formed right angles, similar to those in all forts and fortresses. The plan and the location of the administrative center (Principia), the officers' house (Praetorium) situated on the right side of the northwest gate, and their characteristics, agree with what we would expect in other similar buildings. The following paragraphs will discuss in some detail the Principia and Praetorium.

The basic features of the Principia that appear in most auxiliary forts consist of an external colonnade and a massive control gate that faces the Praetoria. Behind it there are a series of storerooms, and the headquarter's staff offices. At one end of the cross hall stood a platform on which the commander would stand to address the troops. This does not exist on the Gholae because the size of the hall is too small to allow such activity, which required a large parade ground.

The house of the Commanders (Praetorium) is as large as the Principia. It is designed to reflect the social position of the Commander, who was usually a descendant of a wealthy family.<sup>13</sup> Basically, the auxiliary house has one or more open courts to provide natural light. This was necessary because of the absence of large windows.

The Praetorium of Gholae has one open court with one entrance on the eastern side, and is surrounded by ten rooms.



Their dimensions are from three to seven meters, by three to three and a half meters. Some of these rooms were a private suite for the Commander, including a dining room, bathroom, kitchen, servants' residence, and rooms for visitors and other officers.

The Roman baths, both in the frontier forts and in the cities, were totally different from ours in both shape and function. The regular Roman bath consisted of a series of rooms of varying temperatures and humidity. The shape and method of bathing survives in a very modified form in the Turkish baths in Tripoli today. But in the desert area, as in the case of Gholae, it was a difficult task to construct hot and cold baths on a site where the supply of water was scarce and required a great amount of labor. The source of water that supplied the auxiliaries and their baths is still uncertain. However, Lyon and Duveyrier had observed a well near the south gate, but it is no longer visible.<sup>14</sup>

The recent excavation by R. Rebuffa and his team in the baths area provides us with information as to the shape of the baths of Gholae. His excavation revealed two large halls, containing the hot baths (Calidarium) and the cold baths (Frigidarium). Both halls measure twelve by six meters and each hall has its own swimming pool. Both halls were reached by a narrow, vaulted passage (six by one point twenty meters), which was built with palm tree trunks and roof tiles. The walls were embellished with fine stucco and color draw-

ings. The only surviving figures are of a horse and a lion, giving a clear indication that such animals existed in the area in the first decade of the third century A.D.

The function of the baths varied. Some found pleasure by swimming in warm or cold water, usually followed by a massage of oil rubbed into the body. Others used the baths as a social club -- a shelter from the burning heat, and a place for practicing a ritual observance.<sup>15</sup> Wind and burning heat rendered the waters of the hot baths very useful, but such severe conditions can not be tolerated by the auxiliaries to stay in the nude during the midday heat. Obviously, the shelter of the baths was much desired in this garrison.

The ritual function of the baths can be discerned by two dedicatory inscriptions. One was dedicated to the Goddess Salus, the Goddess of peace and a safe return; while the other was dedicated the Frigidarium to the Goddess Fortuna, who was usually associated with health and sickness.

The dedicatory inscriptions that have been found in Gholae help us determine the date of the erection of the baths. According to a dedication to Jupiter Hammon, it was during the winter of 201 A.D. that the troops of Septimius Severus arrived in Gholae.<sup>16</sup> During the spring of that year, the Roman troops confronted for the first time, the terrible heat of the Sahara. They also experienced the inconvenient wind storms of the winter. According to Rebuffa, the dedicatory inscriptions to the Goddess Salus, found in the

Calidarium, record the burning heat and sand storms. This explains the construction of the hot baths, which were begun in the autumn and finished in 202 A.D. They were probably in the initial plans, but the Centurion Q. Avidius Quintianus spoke as though they were a result of his personal initiative.<sup>17</sup>

The fort of Gholae (Bu-Njem) is very rich in documentation. In addition to over twelve Latin inscriptions, ostraca, coins and pottery have been found in different places inside and around the fort. These items provide valuable information about its historical background. In fact, there are not many Roman forts that offer as much documentation on the installation of the army in such remote areas. Four inscriptions were found on the gates,<sup>18</sup> three in the baths intact and dated 201 and 202 A.D.,<sup>19</sup> and two in the temple of Jupiter Hammon on the hill, one kilometer north of the fort.<sup>20</sup>

In the Praetorium there have been found three inscriptions: one is written on a shard (ostrakon) and was dedicated by an officer to the spirit of Golas. The other two show insignificant names, numbers and drawings. A dedicatory inscription by the Emperor Septimius Severus was found in the temple of Mars Canavae, "the God of war."

Since 1814 it has been known that the fort of Gholae was built during the ninth year of Septimius Severus' holding of the tribunician power.<sup>21</sup> The discovery in 1928, of a

group of three inscriptions in the baths proves that by the tribunician power of Septimius Severus, the detachment of the Legion III Augusta had already built the hot baths (Calidarium).<sup>22</sup> This in turn proves that the main part of the fort was finished. The main part probably was beside the baths, the rampart, the Principia, and the quarters for the officers and the soldiers. The recent successive discoveries of inscriptions on the western, eastern and southern gates give no precise chronology. They were more or less repetitions of the inscriptions on the northern gate. However, an inscription was found in the temple of Jupiter Hammon, which confirms the date given by the inscription on the gates.

Another inscription found in the same site states:

VEXILLATIO LEG III AUG. PUS  
 QUAE AT CASTRA GHOL AEDIFIC VENIT  
 MUCIANO ET FABIANO COS VIII KAL FEBR ET  
 REURSA EST ANTONINO II ET GETA CAES AUGG  
 COS VII KAL IAN

According to the interpretation given by Rebuffa, the inscription records the precise date of the arrival of the Common Consuls of Legio III Augusta at Ghol on the 24th of January of 201 A.D.

Among other documents that have been found were silver and bronze coins, belonging to the Emperors Septimius Severus and his sons; others belonging to the Emperors Diocletian, Gordian III, and Constantius. This proves that the fort

was used continually by the Roman emperors, and that they were not able to control the frontiers without relying on such front forts. The importance of this fort was not only realized by the Romans, but also by the Muslims, Turks, and Italians.

Pottery of Terra Sigillata and later types has been found in the site. In addition, many others have been found in the cemetery area outside the fort.<sup>23</sup> Their dates coincide with the period of the inscriptions and coins.

The cult that was worshipped by the auxiliary forces in the front forts can be attested to only by the remains and inscriptions of the temples that have been found in the fort of Gholae (Bu-Njem). Although literary sources have not provided precise information about the cults in the forts, they still are helpful in revealing the names of the deities that prevailed in the region.

Freedom of worship was permitted in the auxiliary forts all over the Roman Empire. Accordingly, in the Libyan forts there was no unified religious outlook, but rather a diversity of religious beliefs. Dedications survive to an enormous number of unofficial deities. However, the Christian religion was never prominent in the military forts during the first three centuries.

Cults found in Gholae have imparted the Libyan deities' character and the prevailing local culture upon the daily life of the auxiliary forces. As the Germans have added the

name of their god "Thincsus" to the war God Mars, while they were garrisoned in Holland,<sup>24</sup> the Libyans also added the name of the unknown god "Canavae" to the war God Mars, as it is recorded in a dedicatory inscription to Mars Canavae. Apparently, the name Canavae, was added by the Emperor Septimius Severus since he dedicated the temple in 201 A.D.

One kilometer to the north of the fort lies the important temple of Hammon. Although it is now in a very ruinous shape, the dedications that were found beneath the rubble have preserved its dignity. The inscription mentioned below affirms the military character of the site, and it records the name Tullius Romulus, the Praepositus of the Centurio.

IOUI HAMMON (I)  
 RED (UCI) AUG (USTI) SACR (UM)  
 TULLIUS RO  
 MULUS C (ENTURIO) EX MA  
 (I) ORIARIO PRAE  
 (POSIT) US UE  
 EXILLATION....

The God Hammon was worshipped widely, but there is some confusion between the name Hammon, which was worshipped here and the name of Ammon, which was worshipped elsewhere in the country. For example, Ammon was worshipped in the oasis of Siwah during Herodotus' days.<sup>25</sup> Later it was said that Alexander the Great consulted the temple in Siwah in order to gain the loyalty of the Libyans.<sup>26</sup> In Cyrene the Greeks added the name Ammon to their God "Zeus." Temples for the God

Hammon were found near Beshar (northwest of Gholae), and at Ras El-Haddagia (near Tarhuna City).

According to Lucan, Cato observed the oracle of Ammon while he was marching to Carthage through the Syrtic Major in the land of Garamantes. Apparently, Cato came with his army "to the temple in the land of Garamantes. Jupiter has an oracular seat there, but Ammon does not wield the thunderbolt, nor is he like our Jupiter, but he has curving horns."<sup>27</sup>

It may be concluded that in Libya, both names, Hammon and Ammon, refer to the same Libyan God, despite differences in spelling.

Two other deities were worshipped at the fort, the Goddesses Salus and Fortuna. Salus' name appeared in an inscription found in the hot baths (Calidarium), which included a poem dedicated to this Goddess. This dedicatory inscription may help us to understand the sentiments of the troops. Both goddesses are very seldom found in the Libyan antiquities on the coast. Their existence here refers to the religious freedom that the auxiliary forces had enjoyed.

#### AUXILIARY FORT OF CYDAMIS - CIDAMUS (GHADAMIS)

Of the four large forts that form the first line of the Severan defence that fort of the oasis of Ghadames was called "the pearl of the desert." It is the most famous and the

most interesting oasis in the country, and is situated 584 kilometers southwest of Tripoli. It lies between  $30^{\circ} 9'$  north latitude, and  $9^{\circ} 18'$  east longitude. The oasis is favored with an adequate water supply. It lies on an ancient and important line of communication between the Garamantes Kingdom in the southeast and the coastal harbors in the north. Also, it commands a third route that leads to Telmin or Gabes via Bir Sultan. Duveyrier, who visited the site in 1861, noticed that Cydamis connected the greatest legionary fortress at Lambaesis with Sabrata and Oea.<sup>28</sup> The strategic position of the oasis had been realized by the Garamantes, who had spread their influence in the region as early as the prehistoric period. Here, Dr. H. Duveyrier also found sculptured bas-relief in the foundations of Borj-Tasco in the oasis, which shows a scene of two women wearing Libyan feminine attire,<sup>29</sup> including ostrich-plumes. The latter were popular characteristics of the Libyan warriors that appear on Egyptian monuments.<sup>30</sup>

The oasis was also well-known to the ancient historian, Pliny, who recorded the names Cydamus and Cidamus. The inscriptions found on the site also record the same name. Thus, the oasis had been inhabited already during Pliny's days. He cited the people of Cydamus (Cydamus) for having resisted the new, rising power of the Romans.<sup>31</sup> According to him, the Cydamusians were involved in a war between the Libyan tribes and the Roman forces which were led by L. Cornelius Balbus in 19 B.C.



From the research of both Baradez and Cagnat, a chronological run-down is helpful about the establishment of the important forts and camps that lie near the Cydamus (Ghadamis) fort. The table (Table V) on the following page shows the development of the Roman military work. It also shows the indirect way in which tribal resistance had been directed against those areas of military installations up to the reign of Commodus.

Because these areas had adequate fortifications, the central tribal resistance shifted toward the east, where the Libyan tribes were able to attack new Roman settlements in Sabrata, Oea and Leptis Magna. According to these new circumstances, the Legio III Augusta, which had been headquartered for almost two centuries in these forts and camps, had to shift its activities in the eastern direction.

The crucial question was whether or not the establishment of the Cydamus (Ghadamis) fort had become the next step in the Roman plan for the fortification of Libya; or, was the priority given to Bu-Njem because of its dangerous situation. We know that Septimius Severus led a military mission against one of the Libyan tribes, probably the Garamantes, who had continued to attack his birth place (Leptis Magna), and the neighboring cities on the coast. This action probably gave Severus an excuse to demonstrate his power in this region. Unfortunately, because no scientific excavation has been made in Cydamus fort, we cannot determine which of the forts had first priority. With the information we do

TABLE V

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF ROMAN MILITARY WORK IN ANCIENT LIBYA

<u>Name of Fort</u>	<u>Date</u>
Ammaedara	
Capsa-Tacapes Road	Tiberius 14 A.D.
Theveste	Vespasian 75 A.D.
Ammiadara	Vespasian 75 A.D.
Admajores	Trájan 104 A.D.
Lambaesis	Hadrian 128 A.D.
Gemellae	Hadrian 128 A.D.
Gilan (Tisivar)	Commodus 183 - 192 A.D.
Gholae	Severus 201 A.D.
Cydamus	Caracalla 211 - 222 A.D.
El-Ghariat	Alexander 227 - 235 A.D.

have, we can safely say that Gholae was the first front fort to be erected during the Severan Dynasty.

The auxiliary fort of Cydamus (Ghadamis) is in ruins, and the inscriptions found around the site are the only evidence we have for its military characteristics. The inscription of Roman Tripolitania (IRT) collected five inscriptions that were scattered around the oasis.<sup>32</sup> Only three of them are significant. The inscription below shows that the site was occupied by a detachment of the Legio III Augusta, which was led by M. Valerius Senecia, Legatus in Numidia under the Emperor Caracalla.

The inscription reads as follows:

[[PRAE]] TENDENT [(ES)]  
 [[(CY)] DAMIS UOTU [(M SOL (UERUNT) )]  
 [[(LI)] B (ENTES) SUB VAL [(ERIO)]  
 [[(SENE)] CIONE (LEG(ATO) AUG (USTI)]  
 [[(PR(O))] PR (AETORE) (CLARISSIMO) [(U(I RO))]

Caracalla seems to have been unable to complete the fort. This was probably due to the continuing tribal raids, or to the fact that the resistance had shifted to the east. However, the inscription that has been found by Dr. Duveyrier in the foundation of an ancient building two hundred meters to the north of the ruins, known as El-Esnam, shows the name of the Emperor Alexander Severus as being associated with the Legio III Augusta.<sup>34</sup> We may infer from this inscription that Alexander had tried to fortify the region by completing the work that was started by his brother Caracalla. The Alexander text says the following:

...To the Emperor Caesar Marcus Aurelius Severus, and Julia Mamaea, mother of Augustus and of the Legion, a cohort of the III Augusta Legio, commanded by its Centurion, erected this monument.<sup>35</sup>

#### AUXILIARY FORTS AT EL-GHARIAT

There are two factors that determine the importance of both forts of El-Gharia ("The Western"), and Esh-Shergia ("The Eastern"), namely, the strategic position and the potential degree of hostility to be expected from the natives. Both forts were carefully selected to hold a position of strategic importance. They were commanding a staging point on the central caravan between Garama, the capital of the Garamantes, and the flourishing cities on the coast. This route was mentioned by Pliny the Elder as being the shortest to "Fezzania." "Hoc iter vocatur praeter caput saxi."<sup>36</sup>

#### Fort of El-Gharia El-Gharbia

Unfortunately, the original name of the fort was erased from an inscription that was found in the fort by Barth. This fort lies three hundred kilometers southeast of Tripoli and one hundred eighty kilometers west of Gholae. It is near the head of Wadi Zemzem, which is fifty to sixty kilometers southeast of Wadi Sufiggin. Both wadis and their tributaries are suitable for cultivation. One of the functions of the fort was to command both wadis and their ravine. The two forts of El-Ghariat mark the extreme southern fringe of the area in which numerous "Limitanei" settlements are

known to have existed. The waterless desert of El-Hamada El-Hamra constitutes a natural boundary, protecting the west side of El-Gharia El-Garbia. But its southern side is exposed to the possible incursion from the Garamantes or the Trarza MOORS.<sup>38</sup>

The importance of El-Gharia El-Garbia is seen not only by its strategic position, but also by its large size compared to the other front forts. In plan, the fort of El-Gharia El-Garbia closely resembles Bu-Njem, but it is twice as large (183 X 132 meters). Barth, who visited the fort in 1849, precisely described it with a design and sketches.<sup>39</sup> It appears that the main northeast gate is all that exists (Figure 9), consisting of three arches in the center. This gate is flanked on the left and right by towers with low front walls, similar to those that guarded the eastern gate of the Lambaesis' camp at the southern frontiers of Tunis.<sup>40</sup> The central arch is higher than the other two arches and held a crown. There, according to Barth and the IRT, the following inscription was found:<sup>41</sup>

PRO  
AFR  
ILL

The above are abbreviations for "Provincia Africa Illustris," "The remarkable province of Africa." The placement of the three words on the gate resembles the same position of another three words "Leg.III Aug." which crowned the Lambaesis' camp.<sup>42</sup>

Barth had also observed a curious relief over the key-stone of the left hand side of the main gate. He thought that the relief carried "a scene of a chariot and a person

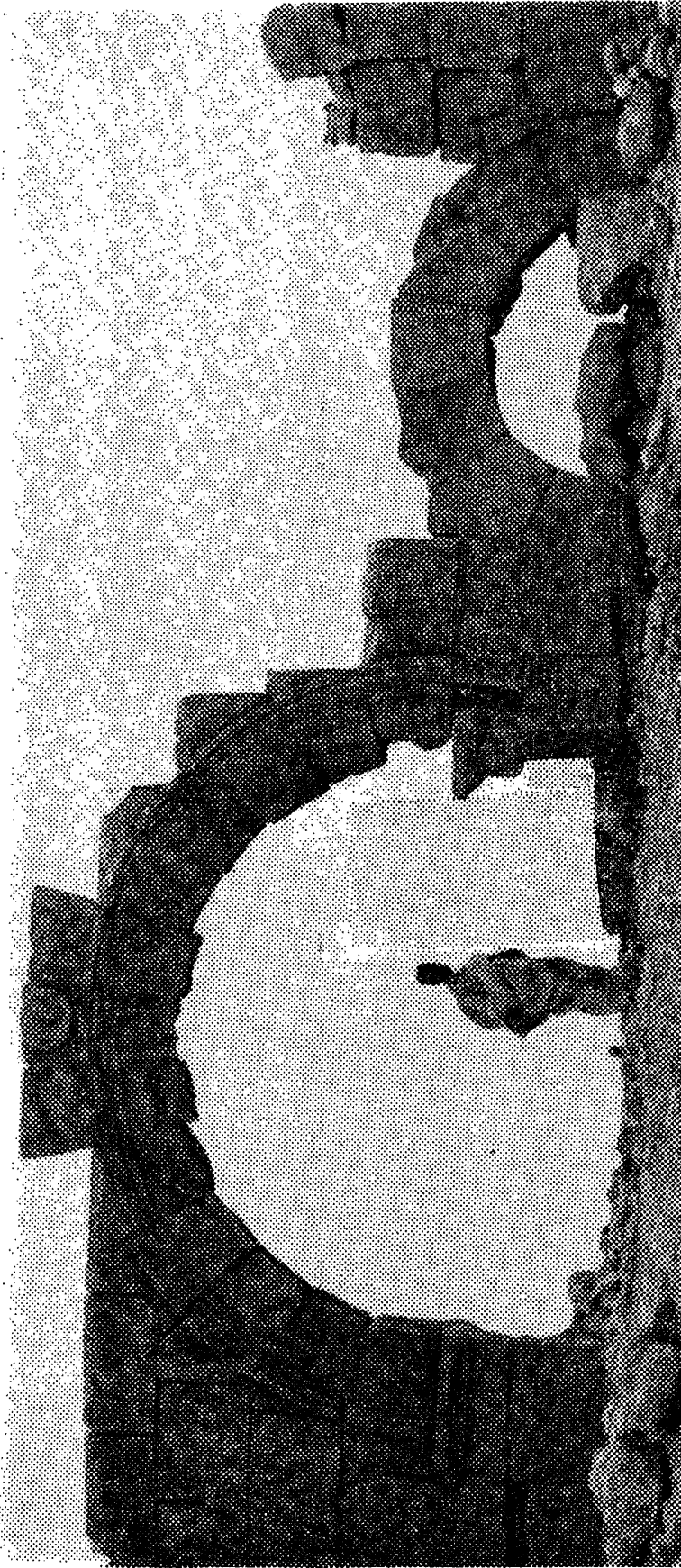


Figure 9. Northeast gate of El-Gharbia El-Gharbia.

in curious attire following it."<sup>43</sup> But his description was a creative inspiration. The relief represents a pair of victories flanking a pair of eagles and a flaming altar with a tripod base in the bottom right hand corner. This scene usually appears in the Severan monuments, especially the Goddess of Victory (Nica), which accompanies the Severan public buildings at Leptis Magna and Sabrata.

No serious scientific excavations were made in this fort, and all of our information is extracted from four inscriptions that were found in different places. However, they were not in situ.

One of these inscriptions shows that the fort was garrisoned by a detachment of the Legio III Augusta during the reign of the Emperor Alexander Severus (222 - 235 A.D.).<sup>44</sup> Barth found another inscription that confirmed the previous date. He recorded only the following translation:

...To the Emperor Caesar M. Aurelius Severus, the district, the Senate, the Camp, and the free town of ...dedicated this---P. Nero Decursion of Moors, caused by the station of the Severan regiment(horse) of the 21st Legion Victorious, Severan to be established; and be instituted by his own art in the same regiment  
...<sup>45</sup>

The date given in the text cannot be taken for granted, since no excavation was made at the site.

The tribal incursions must have been frequent during the erection of the fort, because the Romans could not finish the shape they desired. Barth thinks that the fort was never finished, because the shape of the interior stones

seems to prove that the gate did not receive all the ornaments that should have been sculptured there.<sup>46</sup>

A third inscription was mentioned only by Barth, which gives a few Libyan names (probably the names of the Moors who appear in the previous inscription associated with the name of the Emperor Alexander Severus).<sup>47</sup> These Moorish tribes must have been responsible for the destruction of El-Ghariat El-Gharbia fort.

#### The Small Fort at El-Gharia Es-Shergia

At approximately twenty kilometers to the east of El-Gharia El-Garbia lies a small fort in ruins at an oasis that bears the same name. The main walls of the fort are preserved on three sides and form a rectangle of thirty-eight by twenty-five meters. Its internal features were removed by the Italian army during World War II, who adapted the site for the same purpose as the Romans had centuries earlier.

The fort is distinguished by its round corners (Figure 10), a feature that occurs in other structures. Namely, it is noticed in the Ghilan (Tazivar) fort, which is linked with the westernmost fort at Cydamus,<sup>48</sup> and in the well-preserved fortified buildings of Gasr El-Banat in Wadi Nfed. Round corners are also featured in a ruined building at El-Faschia in Wadi Zemzem.

The fort El-Gharia Es-Shergia has not yet yielded any documents such as those that appeared in the other front



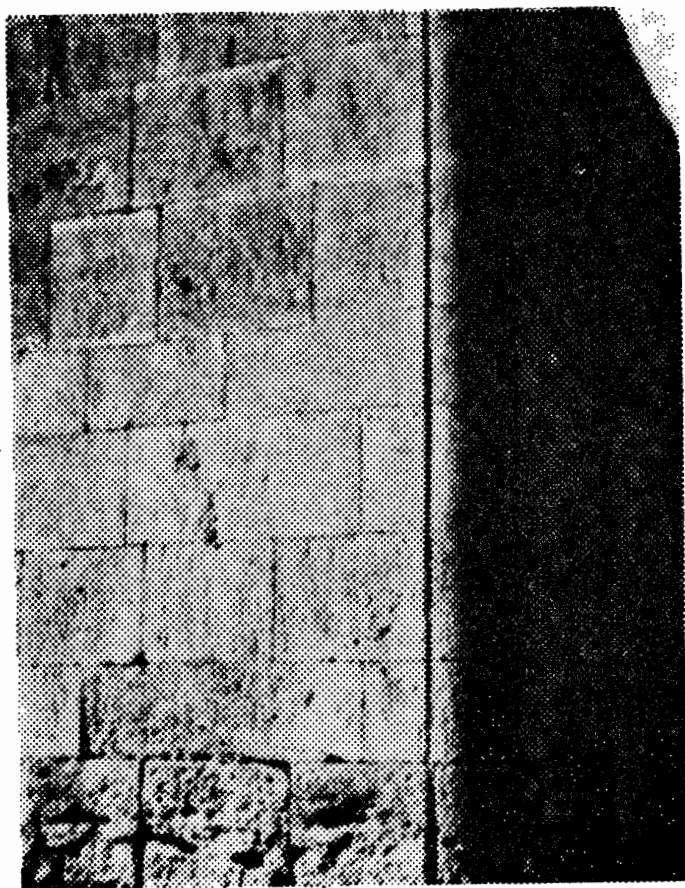


Figure 10. Feature of round corner: El-Gharia Esh-Shergia.

forts. According to Cagnat, the Ghilan fort, which has the same recessed corners, was dated back to the reign of Emperor Commodus (180 - 192 A.D.). But since the fort lies within the range of the front forts completed by Alexander Severus (222 - 235 A.D.), the erection of the fort of El-Gharia Esh-Shergia cannot be later or earlier than this date.

#### THE PENTAPOLIS FRONT FORTS

As a result of the Marmaritic war in the early part of the first century A.D., the Roman and Greek soldiers occupied the ancient Libyan strongholds in the hinterlands of the Pentapolis.

A study of the forts in this area shows that they are different in historical background and in architectural features from the forts in the Tripolis region. The front forts of the Pentapolis consist of five groups of forts. Each group has its role in defending an important area in Gebel Al-Akhdar ("The green mountain"), and in the plains.

The plateau of Gebel Al-Akhdar, which contains these forts, ends on a line close to the twenty-ninth parallel of latitude. A series of oases lie at the foot of the Gebel, offering a possibility of inland communication between the Nile Valley in the east and the Syrtic region in the west. Unlike the role of the Tripolis front forts, which demonstrate Roman power deep in the desert, the Pentapolis forts are

located close to the coast. Their primary purposes were to provide security for the Pentapolis itself, and to facilitate traffic movement which ran in an east-west direction.

Historically, the front forts of the Pentapolis are also different from those of the Tripolis. In the western part of the country the the Romans had to face two strong powers, the Carthaginians, and the Libyans. Therefore, the Romans, who had fought for centuries, had to be able to materialize its occupation. In the Pentapolis the situation was different. From the beginning the Romans had ruled the five cities directly. Consequently, because of this policy, the wars between the natives and the Romans started as early as 2 A.D.<sup>49</sup> This early occupation has been confirmed by an inscription that was found at the Msus fort, which records the existence of Roman and Greek soldiers in the area in the first century A.D.<sup>50</sup> Another small fort, Gasr El-Hania was garrisoned by Syrian soldiers in the same period.<sup>51</sup>

From literary sources we know that in the last days of the Emperor Trajan the incursions of the Marmaridae tribes increased, probably caused by the opportunity presented by the Jewish revolts at Cyrene and elsewhere in 115 - 116 A.D. Tacitus tells us also that the Emperor Trajan reinforced the Roman army at Cyrene with three thousand legionaries, which were drawn from the Legio XV Apollina.<sup>52</sup>

Structurally, the Pentapolis forts represent only a minor Roman modification. Although the relative excellence

of their masonry suggests the Roman touch, the other features gave the nineteenth century travellers and writers strong reason to believe that they were built by the natives as early as the ninth or eighth century B.C., "the great era of polygonal masonry."<sup>54</sup> G. Rohlfs visited the area in 1868 and thought that the fort of El-Hania was of Libyan origin, not of Greek or Roman construction.<sup>55</sup> These conjectures are confirmed by Diodorus Siculus, who visited the area in the middle of the first century B.C., and said that "the ancient Libyans had no cities, but only fortified strongholds situated at water points." He added that because they had lived in a period of relative peace before the Roman invasion "they used these strongholds as storage points for surplus crops."<sup>56</sup>

Although no excavations have been made in these collapsed front forts of the Pentapolis, we can infer from the general descriptions of R. Goodchild that most of the forts were square in shape, not exceeding thirty-nine meters on each side. Examples are the forts of Tialamun, Esh-Sheldima and Msus, which are the farthest forts in the Pentapolis. Such small sizes cannot be compared with the features of the auxiliary forts in the western parts of the country. Except for the barracks block, these forts do not display any other characteristics of the auxiliary forts. However, despite their small sizes, these forts could accommodate mounted detachments, and could in a time of emergency, resist siege.

In the area of Ghamenis (ancient Camenos) lies the first group of the Pentapolis forts. From their location and their features, we can infer that they were intended to provide some security for the southwest side of the growing city of Euhesperides-Berenice (modern Benghazi).

The plans of the forts of Al-Ataresh, El-Chel, and Bu-Msceilli, which are considered to be the best preserved forts in the area, have been provided to us by Goodchild. According to him, these forts have square plans. Some have rounded angles. Others are surrounded by ditches, and have projecting towers in the center of each of the walls. In 1821 Beechey and his brothers surveyed the ancient cities of the Pentapolis, and described the Ghamenis forts in the following manner:

...interesting remains of ancient forts, some of which are altogether on a different plan from the other Pentapolis and Syrtic gulf forts. They are built with large, unequal-sized stones, put together without cement, and made to fit into one another in the manner which has been called Cyclopean. Their form is a square with the angles rounded off, and some of them are filled with earth, well beaten down, to within six or eight feet of the top; the upper part of the wall being left as a parapet to the terrace which is formed by the earth heaped within it...<sup>58</sup>

The farthest forts to the south of the Pentapolis are the Tialamun, Esh-Sheleidema, and Msus. They lie in the southwestern Limes zone of the Pentapolis, which served as a protector against any possible invasion from the Syrtic Gulf. The Msus fort is the most interesting and well-preserved structure in the area. Even though it is only sixty

miles from the coast, it was the farthest fort in the Pentapolis area. Its importance is not due to its size (seven and a half by six meters), but to its Roman and Greek inscriptions. According to Goodchild, these inscriptions indicate names of Roman and Greek soldiers. In addition, they show the continuity of Greek influences upon the Roman and native cultures, at least up to the first century A.D. This date is determined by comparing this inscription with that of the first century fort of Agdabia.

The third group lies at the edge of El-Marj (ancient Barca) plains, and on the neighboring hills. The forts of El-Gebala, Sich El-Chadri, Zaviat El-Gsur are small, like watch towers that date back to the late Roman Empire.

The fourth group of Pentapolis forts had the function of protecting the eastern borders of the reaches plateau of Cyrene. We know of eight forts that secured the plateau. In the northeast lies the well-known fort of Ain Mara (ancient Hydrax), which was a place of dispute in the time of Synesius, between the Bishop of Erythrum (El-Atrun) and Darnis (Darna). This ditched, square fort, (thirty-four meters on each side), together with other small military buildings such as Siret El-Mediatnat, and Gasr El-Michili occupied the high ground around Martuba, and formed the eastern end of the Pentapolis approaches. Gasr El-Machili commands a water point and track center.

The area between Cyrene and the Gulf of Bomba was

guarded by the forts of Bu-Hassan and Uertig. The southern approaches of Cyrene was protected by Gasr El-Maragh and Gasr El-Remthiat. The last one has the characteristics of both Gasr El-Hania (near Agdabia), and Gasr Ein Mara (Hydrax), both of the first century A.D. In contrast to the previous fort, Gasr El-Maragh is a small watch tower fifteen meters square. Its features conform more to the pattern of the small Byzantine forts.

Two other small tower-like structures are situated near the wells of Buerat Gerrari and Sira. Their locations were intended to provide security for both the western side of the Cyrene Plateau and the eastern borders of Wadi El-Kuf.

Between Cyrene and El-Marj (Barca) lies the fifth group of Pentapolis forts. This area, which is known as Wadi El-Kuf is obstructed by a complex series of deep ravines, whose tributaries are covered with underbrush and dense forest. Throughout the history of the country the Libyan fighters took advantage of this broken area as a natural refuge during war. The area was very well fortified during the reign of the Roman Emperors. This was especially so during the reign of the Emperor Justinian, as he had to face rebellions from the Austuriani tribes. Most of the same forts were reconstructed by the Italians in the 1930's and 1940's, to be used against the famous Libyan leader Omar El-Mukhtar.

Three forts of Wadi El-Kuf were described in detail by the nineteenth century explorers R. Smith and E. Porcher. One of these forts is Gasr Bene Gdem which is an oblong ditched structure (forty-four by twenty three meters) of two stories, with projecting towers in the center of each of the two longer sides. Although no valuable documents have been located in this massive fort, its masonry is analogous to that of the forts of the late Roman Empire (fifth century A.D.).<sup>60</sup>

Eight kilometers southeast of Bene Gdem lies another fort known as Gasr Shahden. It occupies a hill-top in the heavily wooded country and it consists of two stories. It was intended to control the countryside from the highest point.

Among the other forts that were described by Goodchild was Gasr Ushish, which is located to the southwest of Slonta on the fringes of the Kuf area. Both the forts of Shahden and Ushish have vaulted chambers despite the availability of timber in the area. This shape marks the characteristics of the very late Roman military architecture not only in Gebel Al-Akhdar, but also in the western Gebel, as it appears in Gasr Ainer at Ruhiabat.

From these brief descriptions of the Roman front forts in the Pentapolis, we can determine that the Roman defensive system here did not differ greatly between the first and sixth centuries A.D. Unlike the Tripolian



frontier, which was left to the natives during the Byzantine period, the Pentapolis frontier, as well as the cities, remained under the control of the Byzantines until the Islamic Conquest in 642 A.D.

## CHAPTER V

### FORTIFIED FARMS

The Severan Dynasty and the succeeding Roman emperors created a zone of fortified farms behind the front forts in the area already inhabited by those of Libyan-Punic ancestry. It is unnecessary to count all the fortified farms of the hinterlands that played the role of a second defensive line, but most of the conspicuous remains can be located in an area covered by the basins of Wadi Sufiggin, Zemzem, and Wadi Bei El-Kabir and their tributaries. Also, several examples of fortified farms have been found in the fertile plains of Gebel Al-Akhdar and Western Gebel.

Early investigators believed that these farm houses were inhabited by a class of people called the Limitanei, soldier-farmers, a system that was followed all over the Roman Empire.<sup>1</sup>

However, closer investigation has shown that some of the Limitanei zones, which until a few years ago were mere deserts, had been settled substantially before the Severan front forts by a Libyan-speaking, agricultural population.

Historically, we know that Massinissa, a Libyan chieftain, attempted to unite the whole of Libya from Morocco to the Nile Valley shortly before the destruction of

Carthage in 146 B.C. To achieve this "he transformed," says Strabo, "nomads into citizens and farmers, and taught them to be soldiers instead of brigands and welded them into a state."<sup>2</sup> This is revealed by the existence of Libyan and Punic cultures in the extensive farms and temples of ancient Libya. In addition, as early as the second century A.D., auxiliary units on the frontiers were being supplemented predominantly by recruitment from the regional natives.<sup>3</sup>

Generally speaking, the character of the Limitanei is known to us through the Code of the Emperor Theodosius II (408 - 450 A.D.) of the mid-fifth century A.D. (438), who dedicated an entire document to "Terrae Limitanae."<sup>4</sup> The earlier name for this system was known as Reparienses, and was used to describe the natives who were settled as farmers in the frontier zones along the banks of rivers. These farmers, besides being free from taxes, had free land and were paid their "annona" in twelve installments.<sup>5</sup> Consequently, they were encouraged to believe that it was their own farms and houses that they guarded.

A brief look at the map (Figure 7) will allow one to see that the fortified farms were the backbone of the front forts in the early Empire. However, the front forts later merged with the fortified farms, and the garrison was no longer a unit, but a "para-military community."<sup>6</sup> This is especially true after the new marriage policy issued by Emperor Severus. That policy allowed soldiers to live with

their wives and the families to gather wholly within the protecting ring of the fort walls. As a result of this policy, the size of the civilian settlements increased in the third and fourth centuries A.D. This new society included retired veterans and their families, traders, and possibly administrators. From the available studies of the Greek, Latin and Punic inscriptions, it is concluded that the intermarriage between the elements of those different nations had stabilized the frontiers.

There are several inscriptions from the area under consideration that record mixed names of these nationalities. In the eastern regions of the country the Greeks had been settled for seven centuries before the Roman period. There are several mixed Greek-Roman names on the walls of the front forts known today as Zaiut Msus. At the Roman-Libyan Necropolis in Bir Dreder (forty-five kilometers to the southeast of Mizda), there are over forty Libyan and Roman names written in the Libyan language, but in Latin characters. For example, a Roman name like Julius is followed by a Libyan name, Nasif, his father, who was described as a tribune. This rank is generally applied to the leaders of the irregular detachments incorporated in the army in the late Roman Empire. A third example can be detected from an inscribed tombstone at El-Gelaah, in the vicinity of Jefren City. It records the Roman name M. Ulpius and his Libyan father Chinitii, a Libyan leader in the western mountains

during the reign of the Emperor Trajan at the end of the first century A.D.<sup>8</sup>

The above mentioned discussion allows us to develop an exact idea of the way the soldier-farmer lived and functioned.

Vegetius, the famous writer of military history in the first century B.C., describes those soldier-farmers as "ignorant of baths, careless of luxuries, simple in mind, and content with little."<sup>9</sup> This evaluation comes close to the truth, as no traces of baths, pools, and other luxurious facilities have been found in the fortified farms.

The territorial army consisted of soldiers, because they fought and lived with arms, but they were a special kind of soldier. For example, the settlers of those remote areas seem to have spent most of their time on little estates; they seldom drilled and were not subject to any regular discipline. In essence, they fought as amateurs. Some historians called them "colonists,"<sup>10</sup> a description that could not have been applied to the Limitanei. For example, Procopius in the sixth century A.D., describes the function of the Limitanei. He states that the "Roman emperors in earlier times stationed a very great multitude of soldiers at all points of the Empire's frontiers in order to guard the boundaries of the Roman domain."<sup>11</sup>

The history of the Limitanei had its roots in the general Severan policy; It sprung from the extraordinary

sympathy of Septimius Severus and his successors toward his birth place in North Africa, and toward the birth place of his wife, Julia Domna, in Syria. It is known that the Severan Dynasty opened its doors widely to the natives of its favorable provinces, Africa and Syria, to participate in the rule of the Empire. Until Septimius' reign, the praetorian guards had always been recruited among the people of Rome, or from completely Romanized provinces. Septimius changed this by making the praetorian guard open to any good soldier. He also increased their numbers and pay to the point where they became the elite of Roman military power. However, they were not Roman in their manners, thinking, or loyalties.<sup>12</sup>

It would seem logical that what applied to the praetorians and the emperor's staff would also apply to the Limitanei. For example, Caracalla, Geta, Elagabalus, and Alexander were to carry out their father's (Septimius) wishes to their logical conclusions. This is why Caracalla extended the privilege of Roman citizenship to every free man in the Empire.

Under such a policy, the settlements flourished; consequently, the organization of the Limitanei gave birth simultaneously to new possibilities and a new spirit. For example, the regular troops and their auxiliaries were freed of the burden of closely defending against their enemies. In addition, the progress of Severan policy of establishing and

rooting the natives to the soil could only accentuate itself. Gradually, soldier-peasants became peasant-soldiers, more as peasants and less as soldiers.

The result of the above was that the Limitanei became the landlords of the territories that they were called upon to defend. Alexander Severus (222 - 235 A.D.) understood that they would serve the Empire more faithfully if they defended their own property. This property existed only under the formal conditions that the detainer defend the "Limes." It could be handed down to the children only under the same condition, and they could not give up their rights to strangers unless they were to become defenders. The land of the "Limes" had no other obligation; they did not have taxes levied on them, and they were not burdened with duties.<sup>13</sup>

One must conclude that the majority of the settled frontier troops were not an army. On the contrary, they were an armed population who during peace, cultivated the land, and during a threat of war took to their weapons.

Although the Limitanei had the same function, they were grouped into three classes according to the land that they occupied and to their social position. The peasant-soldiers, who were stationed on the territory of Castra, were called the "Casteriani," but if they were near a "Castellum" they would have the name "Castellanei."<sup>14</sup> The third class was not soldiers, but public slaves, who were known as "Burgarii." They were enlisted to guard the "Burgus,"<sup>15</sup>

which was a small watch tower usually located on a roadside hilltop, fords, and on the crossing of important routes.

The term "Burgarii" is usually confused with the function of the "Centurion," which was a small detachment from the legion. The "Centurion" had the responsibility of commanding the auxiliary troops. This was separate from the Severan defensive system that appeared in the late phase of Alexander Severus, and during the reign of Emperor Philip the Arab.<sup>16</sup> By this period, the area of the Limitanei was divided into self-contained defense regions, each one under its own local commander, or Praepositus Limitis, which was the equivalent of a static and territorial force of Centurion.<sup>17</sup>

Within the Limitanei zone there were three Centenarea. One is the well-known Gasr Ed-Duib, a small official building that lies forty kilometers southeast of Zintan. Its character and plan resemble the buildings of the fortified farms, though it is smaller in size (Figure 11). According to the inscription found in the building, it was a Centenarium that was built in the reign of Philip the Arab (244 - 249 A.D.). It was constructed to guard the region of Tentheos.<sup>18</sup> The remains of another official building lie on Wadi Scemech, a tributary of Wadi Sufiggin, which is dated to the fourth century A.D.<sup>19</sup> The third Centenarium lies on the northern limits of the fortified farms, at the prosperous zone of Tarhuna. It is located exactly near a modern tomb of Ali



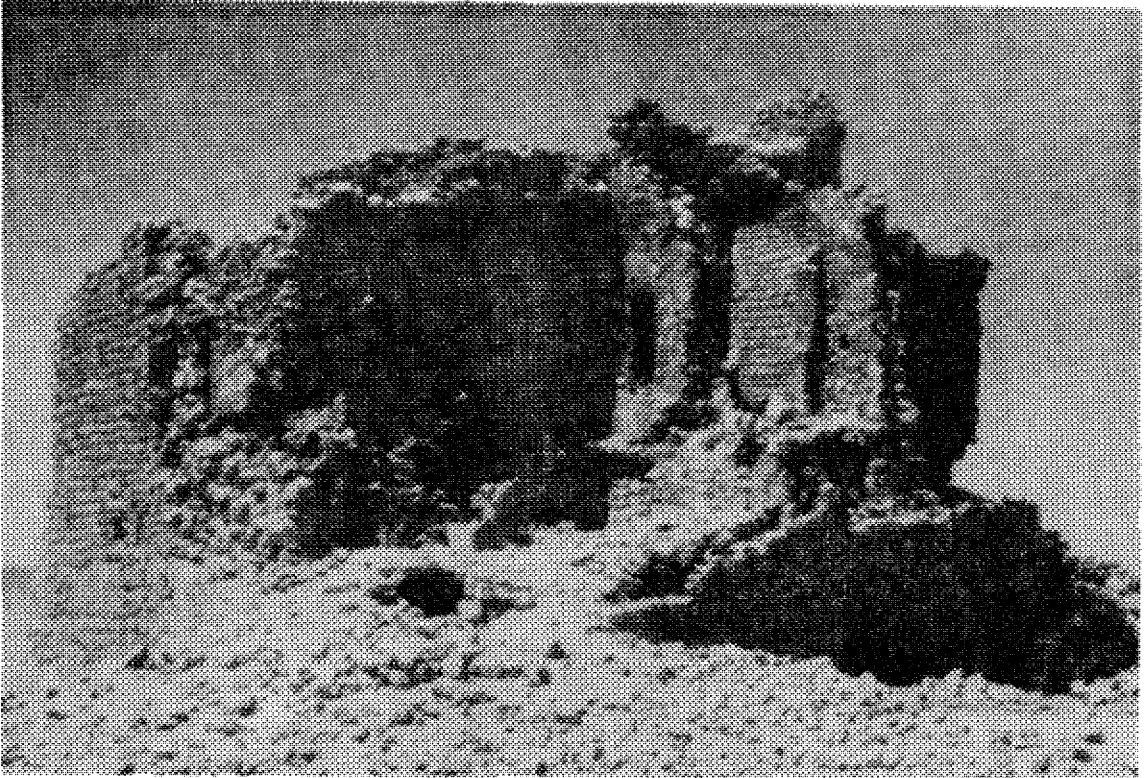


Figure 11. An example of Centenarea: G. Ed. Duib.

Ben Zaid, southeast of Tarhuna-Gusbat road.

Behind the zone of the Centenarium buildings, on the scarpment of the Gebel, especially in Gebel Nufusa (the western mountain), lie a great number of small, naturally ditched forts. They have the function of commanding the deep and dangerous Wadis of the Gebel and the approaches of Gefara plains (Figure 12). The quality of their masonry suggests that they were constructed in the period that followed the Severan Dynasty. Also, the existence of gypsum plaster, Islamic pottery and vaulted chambers gives an indication that they were occasionally occupied during the early Islamic period.

Regardless of the details of the initial organization of the fortified farms, they seem to be a logical response to a problem set by the geography of the region. They were built on high ground above the cultivated wadi beds, beyond the danger from spates, and they commanded wide views over the surrounding country. In the Gebel area they normally occupy the higher ground in the zone of olive plantations.

Most of the fortified farms that have been so far discovered have much the same character and function (Figures 13 A and B). However, they are completely different from the auxiliary forts. The standard structure of the farm houses is approximately twenty-five by twenty-one meters, and can be characterized by its rectangular plan with an open courtyard surrounded by several dwelling rooms. Most

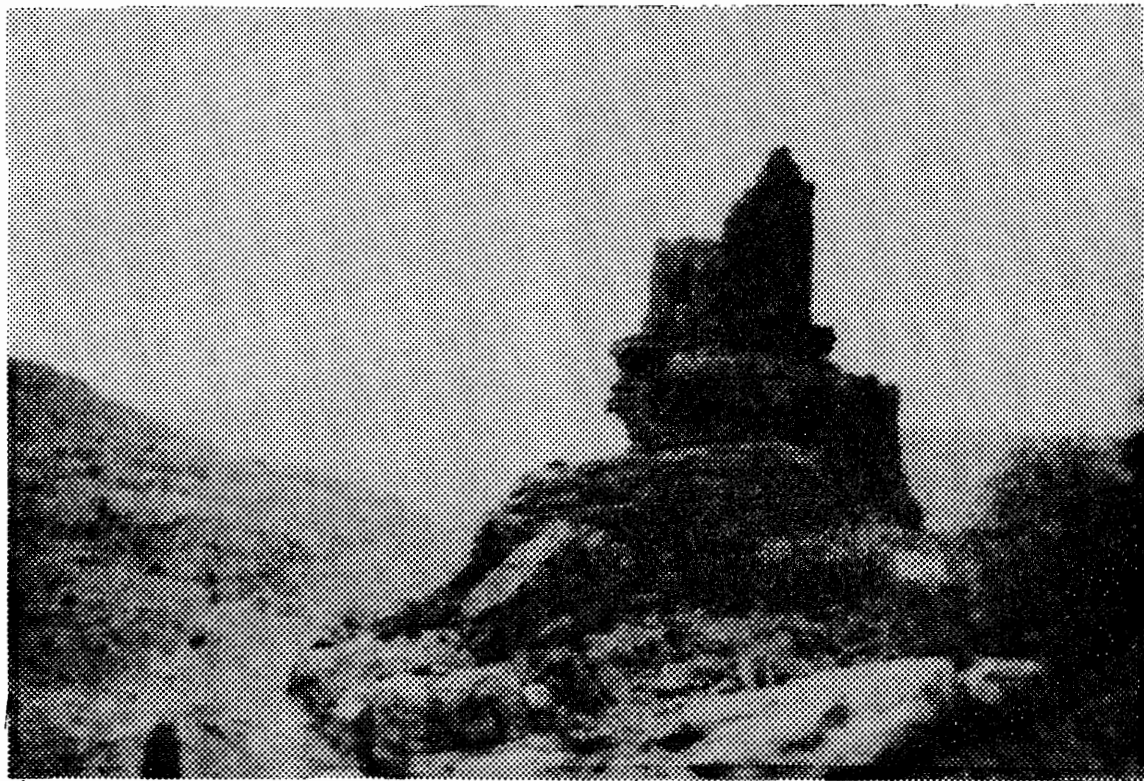


Figure 12. An example of small, naturally ditched forts:  
G. El-Gattar, El-Ruhiabat.



Figure 13 A.

Figure 13 A and B.

A. Typical fortified farm:  
Bir Escedeua.

B. Plan of a fortified farm.

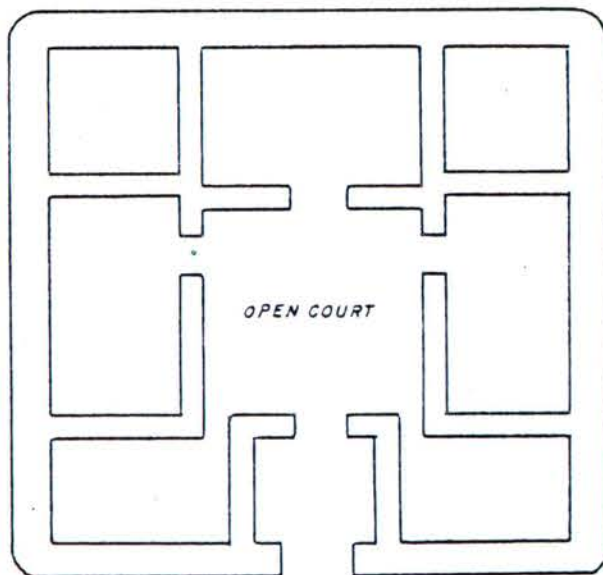


Figure 13 B.

of them have tower-like structures of superior height, originally two or three stories high with internal or projecting towers.

These buildings must have resembled the signal towers shown on the Trajan column, and were often described in the frontier regions of Britain and Germany. The walls of most of the buildings are usually faced with squared and dressed stones. Some of the later ones are cemented with mud, and have a rubble and mud core. The external angles of the early second and third century A.D. buildings are usually well-cut and rounded (see above Figures 10 and 13 A). Although the roofs and upper floors have collapsed, their remains give indications that they were either constructed with timber, or vaulted by small cemented stones. Most of the fortified farms have a single arched doorway in the long side facing the wadi and leading to an open courtyard. These features have existed in the Libyan houses up to the last decade.

Each fortified farm was in itself a small community with retainers and flocks to be housed. Herds and flocks form the second source of the Limitanei economic life, coming after agriculture. According to Tacitus, the Limitanei zone of the Roman Empire used "a certain part of the field where the flocks and herds of the soldiers were sometimes driven."<sup>21</sup> The sculptured scenes that come from those remote mausolea show different kinds of animals such as, horses,

camels, and oxen. For example, a Latin inscription that was found in one of the tombs at Gherza records that fifty-one bulls, and thirty goats were killed by a wealthy trader, or prominent person for funerary sacrifices.<sup>22</sup> Such a great number gives us an indication that the pasture conditions were better during that period than today.

Because of the scarcity of water in the pre-desert area, especially in the driest summers, huge cisterns were constructed either inside or outside the fortified farms. The best preserved one is twenty-five kilometers southwest of Abain Miggi, and it measured sixteen by five by four meters (Figure 14). These cisterns were used by the Limitanei as well as by the mobile troops who had the role of patrolling the roads. It is obvious that the cisterns were made to store rainwater from the roofs of the buildings, or from the slopes of the hills. Also, the settlers took further steps to obtain the maximum advantage from the flow of flood-water down the wadi by means of stone dikes, barricades, and dams that are laid at right angles to the wadi bed. Their functions were to contain the soil, and to hold the water back long enough for it to soak into the ground. This technique is applied today in various wadis and ravines in Libya.

Across from Wadi Ed-Dauun, to the east of Tarhuna City, one can observe one of the best preserved ancient dams associated with the fortified farms (Figure 15 A). This

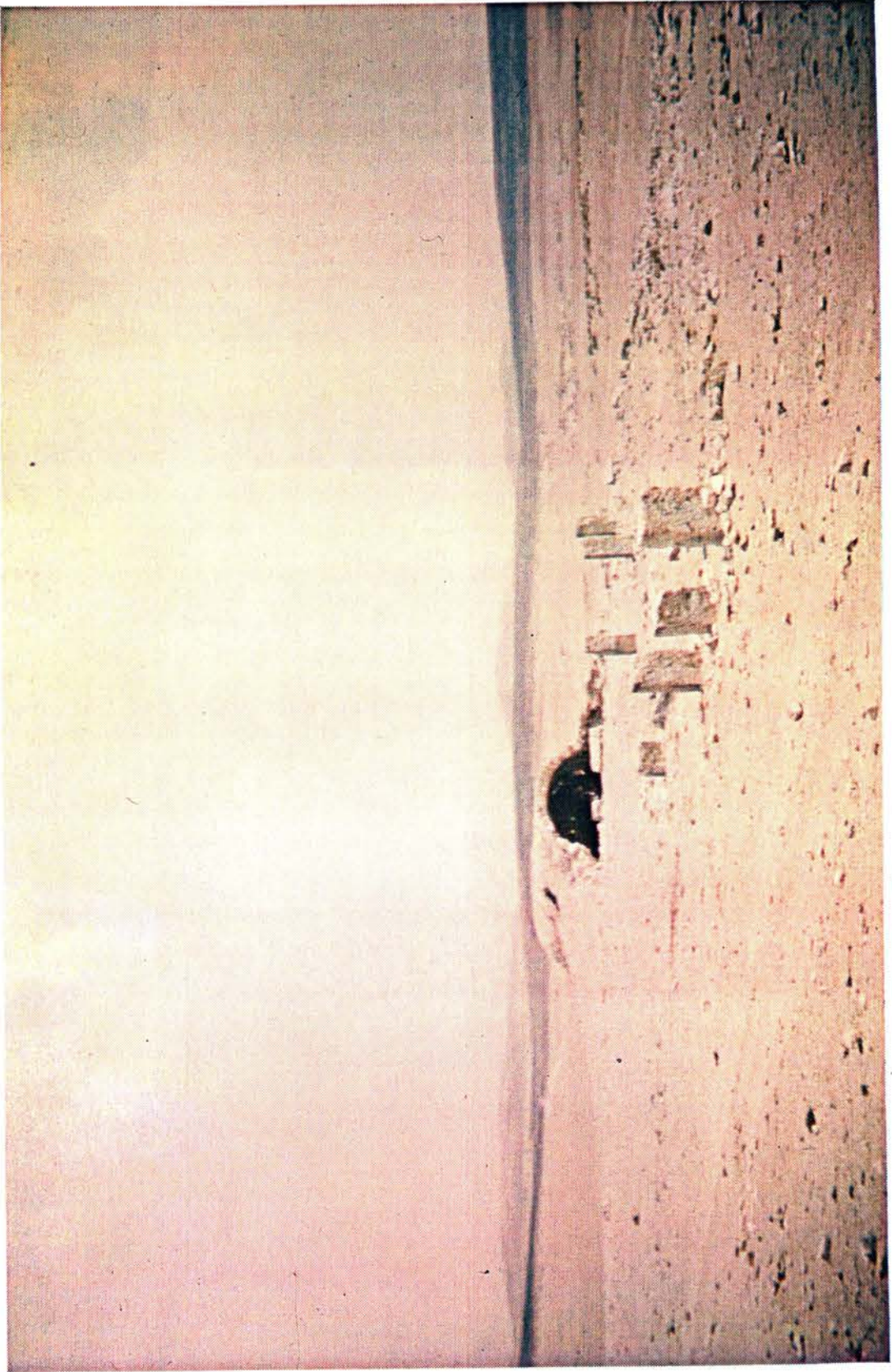
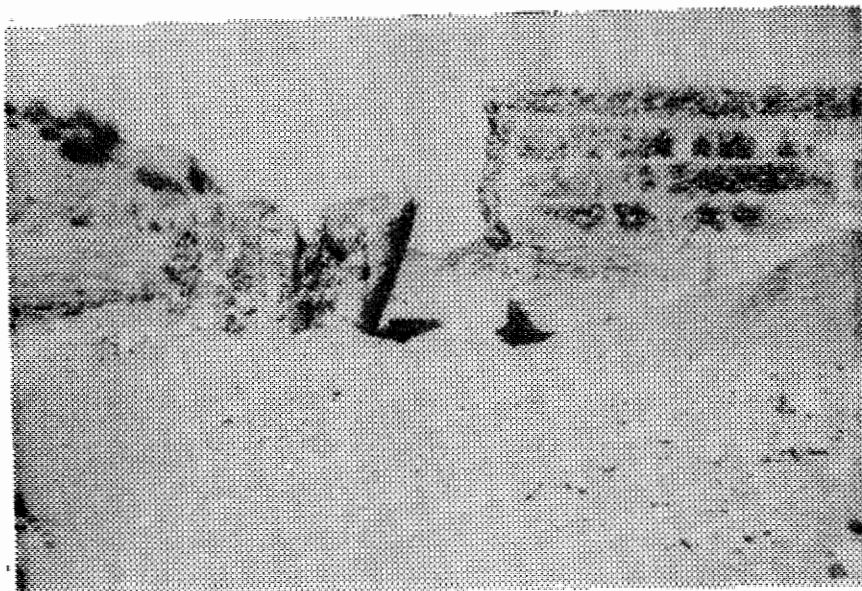


Figure 14. Cistern of Mashbak El-Khannag.



A



B

Figure 15 A and B. A. Ancient dam: Subutattu (Ed-Dauun). B. Ancient dam: Cinypus (W. Caam).



dam was built no later than the third century A.D. It was the main water source for a road station, Subututtu (Ed-Dauun), known from the Peutinger Map of that date. However, similar dams were constructed before the Roman period. For instance, the remains of Wadi Caam dam (the ancient ~~Cinypus~~ Cinypus Figure 15.B), was mentioned by Strabo (he referred to the Phoenicians).<sup>23</sup> Also, at Wadi Gherze, on which the Libyan Limitanei had built their settlement, there are at least twenty-three dikes. They were placed at long intervals fifty to seventy meters apart.

These dams, barricades and dikes played an important role in the agricultural development of the area, which were the keystones of economic life of the Limitanei.

From a series of reliefs from the Gherza tombs, the daily life of the Limitanei is revealed. Scenes of harvesting (Figure 16), gathering dates, hunting, horses, camels, and oxen ploughing, decorate the walls of obelisks and mausolea of Gherza. Similar scenes occur on the ruined mausoleum of Hinscur El-Ausaf near Tigi<sup>24</sup> (Figure 17 A). Those scenes resemble in fact, the activities of some people in the hinterlands during the 1960's (Figure 17 B).

Some of the reliefs were illustrated with pomegranate and grape, which represent fertility. Also, barley and bearded wheat have been cultivated in these wadi beds but not during every year. This is because of the changing climate. However, fruit trees, including olive trees, palms, figs and almonds could survive a rainless year.

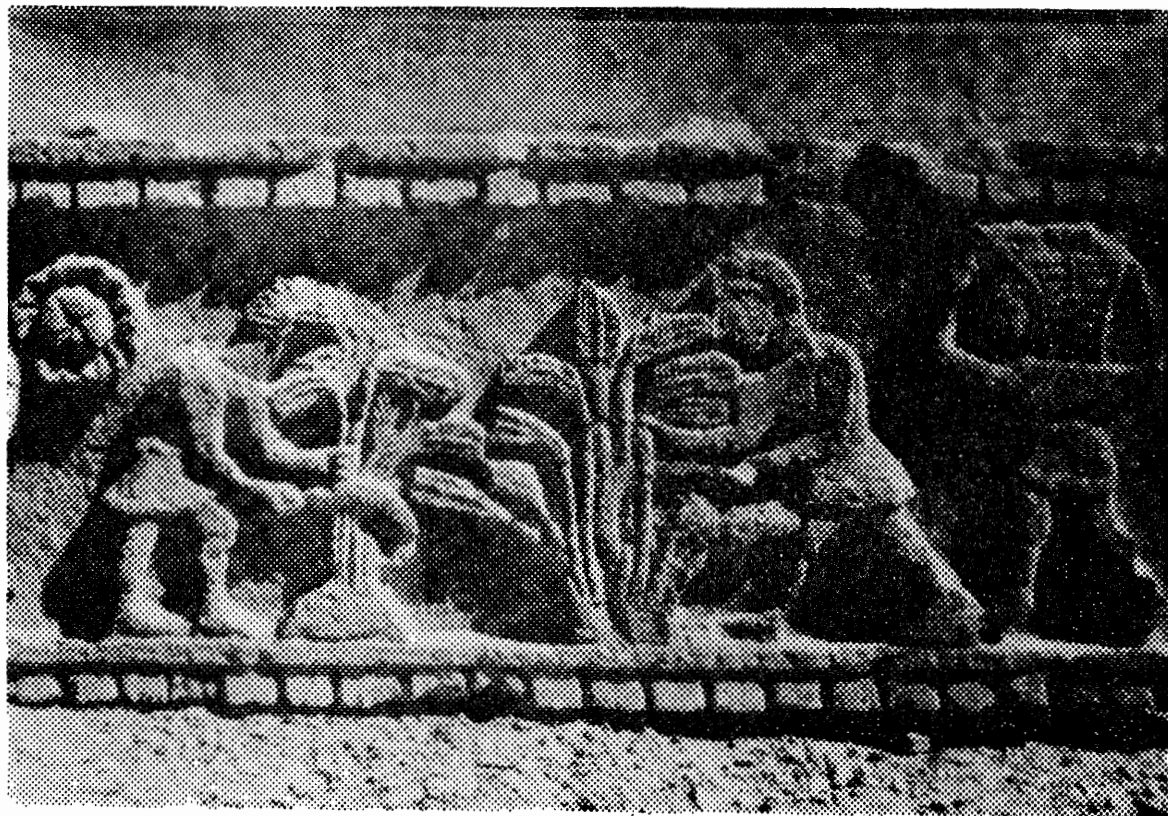
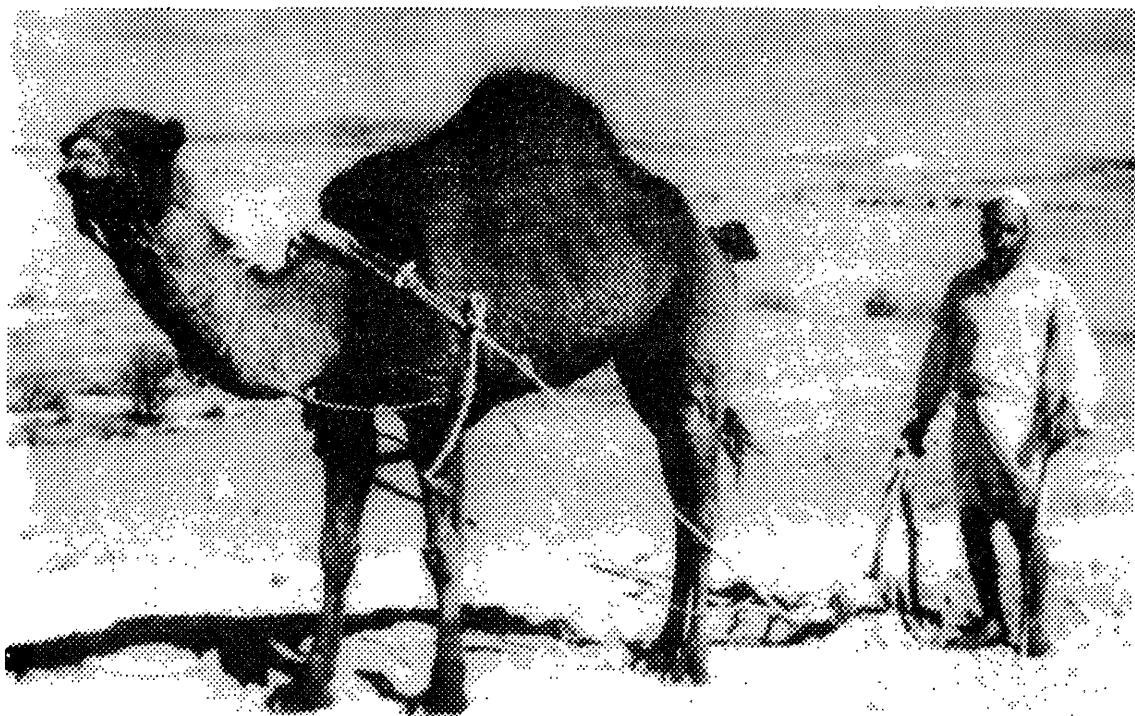


Figure 16. Harvesting scene: Gherza.



A



B

Figure 17 A and B. A. Ploughing scene in fourth century A.D.: Tigi. B. Ploughing scene during the 1960's.

Inside one of the buildings of the Gherza settlement there are remains of olive oil presses which is a clear indication that olive oil trees were once grown in these remote areas. A great number of ancient, but well-preserved olive oil presses lie outside the limits of the modern olive tree farming regions, but the very same technique of these presses is still used in rural areas, especially in the Western Mountains (Figure 18).

Overall, the Limitanei give the modern historian an excellent insight into the life in early Libya.

The most likely tribe that might have settled in the Limitanei zone was a branch of the famous Kingdom of the Garamantes, though we still cannot exclude the existence of other tribes mentioned in the first part of this paper. This tribe was recorded by most of the ancient and late Roman literary sources as a tribe that occupied the scattered oases of Fezzan, which are practically situated on the fringes of the Limitanei. On the other hand, the archaeological evidence shows that at least one of the frontier settlements, namely Gherza, (Figure 19), was inhabited by elements from Germa. There are two documentary facts that prove the existence of this tribe in Gherza. The first is the existence of offering tables that represent the ritual life of the Garamantes. This cult was spread to the north as far as Madinat Duga (ancient Mesphe), 180 kilometers northwest of Gherza (Figure 20). The second piece of evidence is the

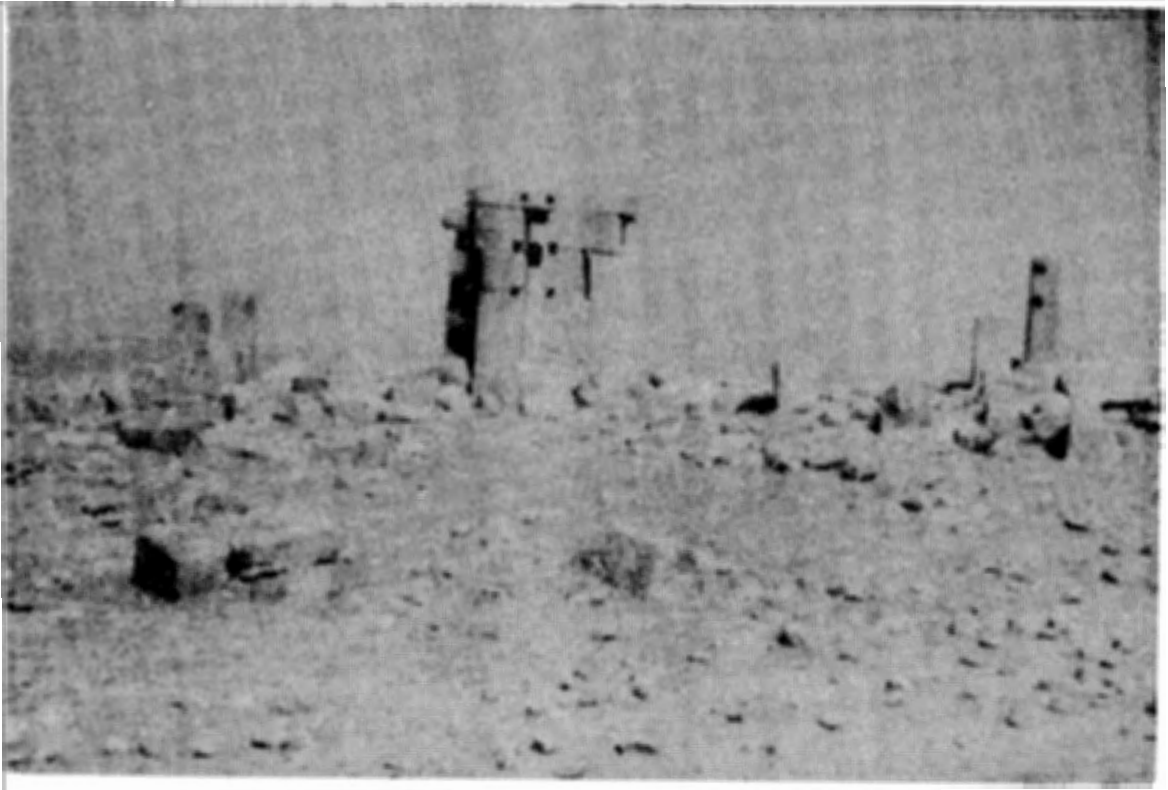


Figure 18. Olive press near Ed-Dauun.

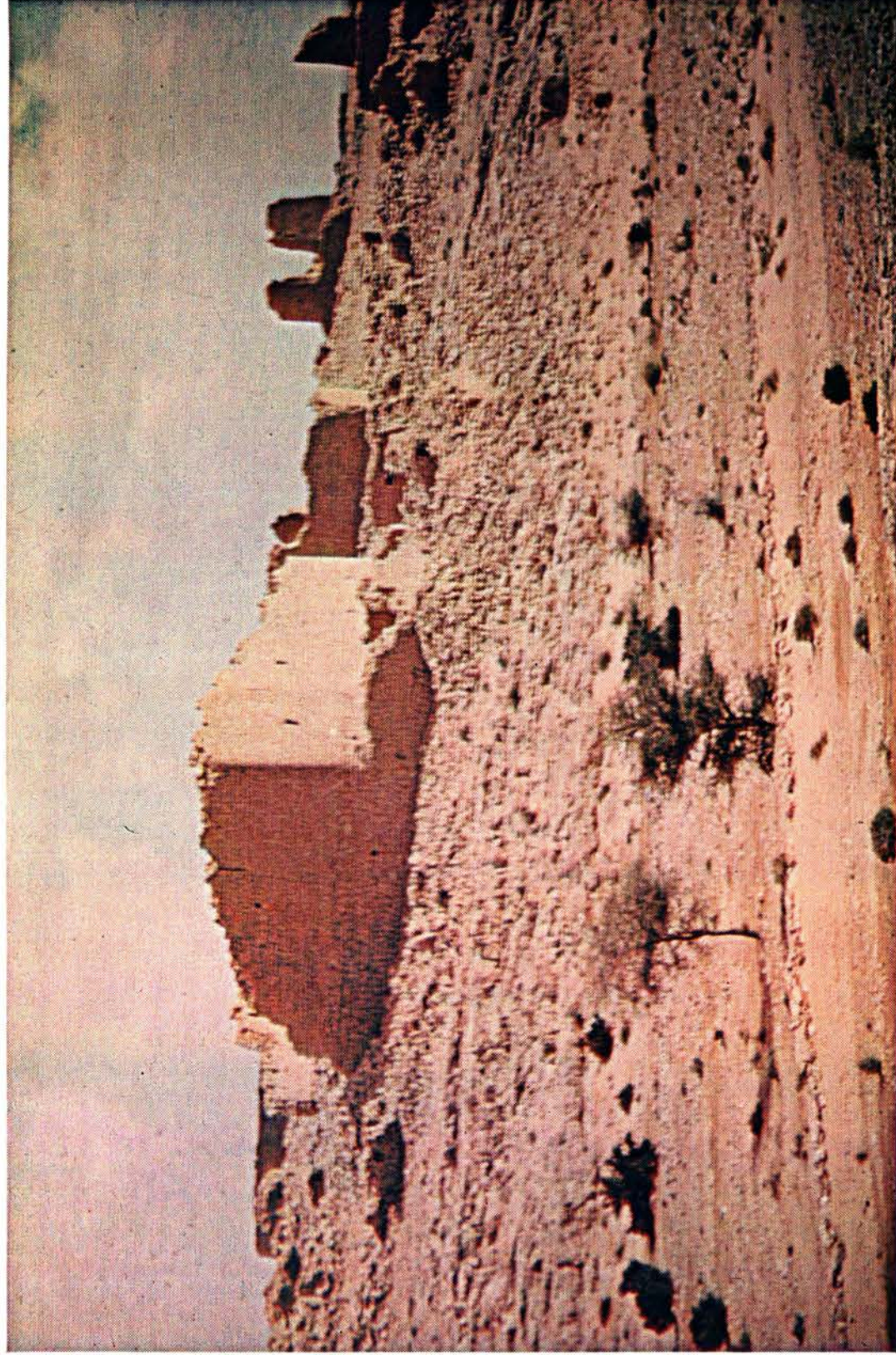


Figure 19. Settlement of Gherza, from the southwest.



Figure 20. Offering table of the Garamantes type.

existence of Libyan scripts that still can be seen on the walls of the Gherza monuments (Figure 21). The scripts are usually attributed to the Garamantes in particular, and to the ancient Libyans in general.

The origin of the Libyan scripts of the Tifinagh type is something of a paradox. Its traces have been found from the Egyptian oases in the East to the Atlas in the west, and from the Mediterranean Sea in the north, to the Lake of Chad. O. Bates, who treated this subject in great detail, thought that, the Libyan alphabets of Gherza type could be dated back as early as the dawn of history.<sup>25</sup> This could not be an exaggeration since the Garamantes had already established a great civilization in the south that was contemporary with that of the ancient Egyptians. J.B. Chabot was able to collect 1,123 Libyan inscriptions from the western parts of Ancient Libya. The earliest date of his collection goes back to 139 B.C.<sup>26</sup>

Interestingly enough, Libyan scripts were also found in North America. In the 1970's, B. Fell was able to study very similar Libyan inscriptions found on the rocks in Quebec, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Oklahoma, Mississippi, Arkansas, and on the Rio Grande rock shelters in Texas. Also, similar alphabets of Gherza type have been found in Sweden.<sup>27</sup>

The archaeological remains show that the settled tribes had a great influence on the inter-cultural relations existing in the area. Besides creating their own alphabets, they



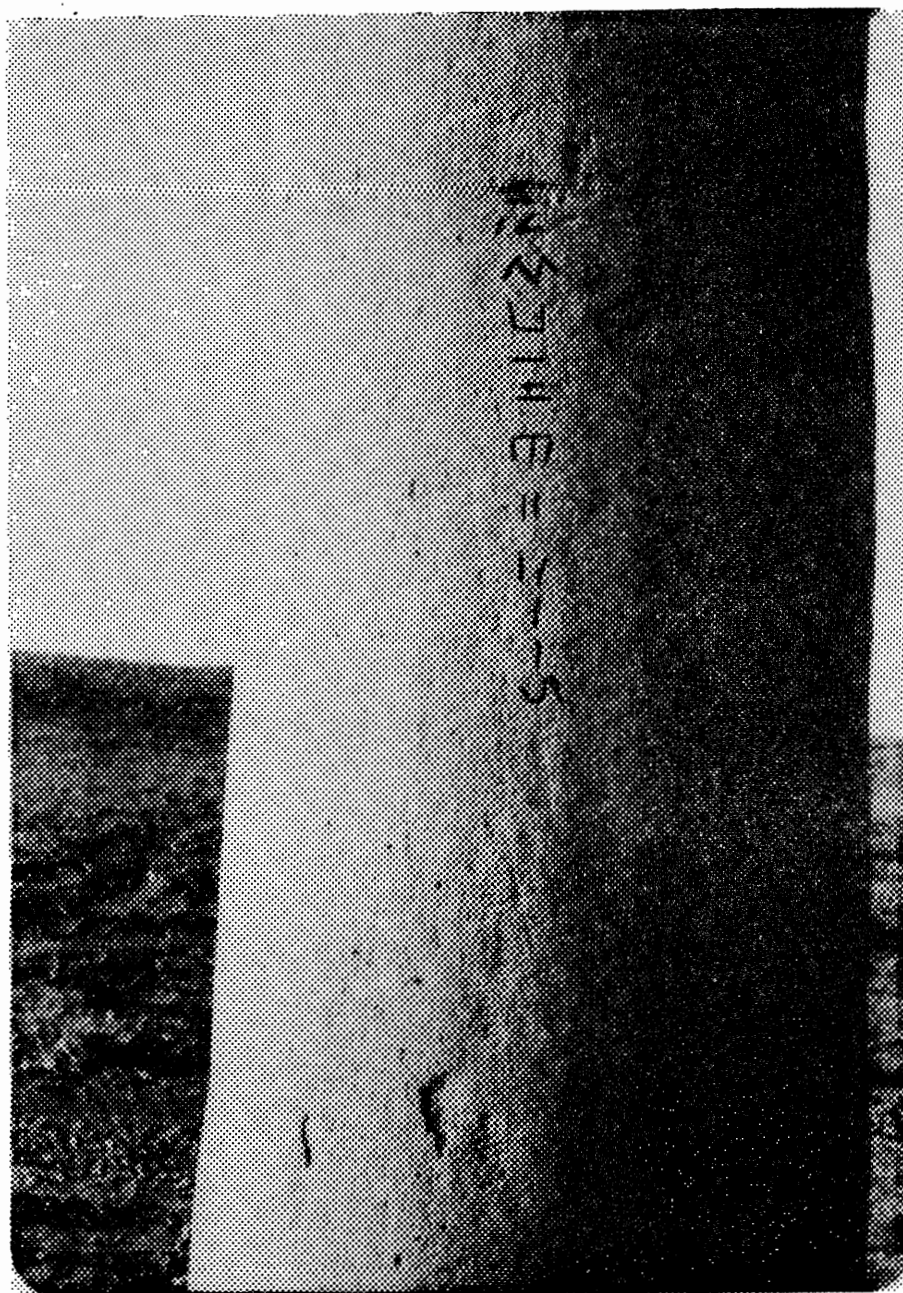


Figure 21. Libyan scripts on a column of the northern tomb at Gherza.

also communicated with the prevailing alphabets and languages such as Greek, Punic, and Latin. They left their names inscribed in these languages in the Limitanei area (Table VI).

The characters of the common Libyan inscriptions were written in twenty-three signs and resemble simple geometric forms like circles, dates, crosses, and triangles. Although most of the ancient Libyans had used similar characters, some tribes had different reading and writing techniques. For example, some tribes wrote and read vertically, as in the Gherza style from top to bottom or vice versa. Others wrote horizontally, either from right to left as an imitation of the Punic style, or vice versa as in Latin. Others even wrote in circles.

This flexible technique of writing and reading must have been intended to fool their enemies. This style probably served the same role as that of the Morsecode used by modern armies. Whatever was the purpose of this technique, the descendents of the Garamantes, generation after generation, kept secret the key to this technique.

Most of the Libyan scripts associated with the history of the fortified farms, have been found inscribed on the stonework of mausolea, altars, necropolises, and buildings in the settlement of Gherza. Other inscriptions have been found in the Wadi Mimun tributary of Wadi Sufiggin and in the Oasis of Marada, 300 kilometers south of the Syrtic

TABLE VI

LIST OF ANCIENT LIBYAN PERSONAL NAMES FROM  
THE FIRST TO THE FIFTH CENTURY A.D.

<u>Libyan Personal Name</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Date</u>
Shasidwasat or Shasidwasan	Ras El-Haddagia, Tarhuna	Early 1st cent. A.D.
Tamrar, or Namrar	"	"
Misinkaw	"	"
Tacfarinas	"	"
Taksaph	"	"
Chinitii	El-Ghelaa, of Jefren City	Late 1st cent. A.D.
Mior Nazmuri	Gasr El-Banat, Wadi Nfed	" 1st half of 3rd cent A.D.
Chullam	Gherza	"
Uarnychsin	"	"
Marchi	"	3rd/4th cent. A.D.
Nimmire	"	"
Maccurasa	"	"
Nasif	Gherza (tombs area)	late 3rd/4th cent. A.D.
Mathlich	"	"
Nimir	"	"
Afiffdel	"	"
M. Fydel	"	"
Metusanis	Bir El-Uaar Aulad Breik on the south. road from Garian to Tarhuna	3rd cent. A.D.
Isiguar		
Stidin	Wadi Ureia, Wish- tata 2-5 KM east of Tarhuna and Beni Ualid road	1st half of 1st century A.D.

TABLE VI (cont.)

LIST OF ANCIENT LIBYAN PERSONAL NAME FROM  
THE FIRST TO THE FIFTH CENTURY A.D.

<u>Libyan Personal Name</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Date</u>
Stiddin	Between Tarhuna and Ras El-Hadda- gia	Late 4th or 5th cent. A.D.
Muthunilim	Duga	
Masinthan	Mizda	4th cent. A.D.
Dasamau (Benim = the son of)	Bir Scemech	"
Macrine	Bir Dreder (45 KM, southeast of Mizda	"
Machrus	"	"
Masthalul (Byn = the son of)	"	"
Churdi	"	"
Macarcum	"	"
Masigama (byn)	"	"
Isachu	"	"
...ibitua	"	"
Machrus	"	"
Nasif	"	"
Masinthan	"	"
Imnus Nimira (Bun)	Bir Dreder	4th cent. A.D.
Mirath...Bun (son of) Iedo...		
Uasara Barbartimsi ...yriraban byn (the son of) isiguar.		
Macrine	El-Msufin	"

Gulf (Gulf of Sedra).<sup>28</sup> Twenty-three Libyan inscriptions of Gherza were mentioned by J. Reynolds and O. Brogan in 1958.<sup>29</sup>

Of these inscriptions, only one inscription can be read, and it would be useful to compare it with the Libyan inscriptions in the United States, and with others that have been collected by Rodd and O. Bates (Table VII).<sup>30</sup> It was slightly incised on the northwest column of the North Mausoleum, which carries a Latin inscription dedicating the monument of Chullam and Varnychsin, by their sons Nimmire and Maccursan (Figure 22).<sup>31</sup> The Libyan inscription itself is very short, as are the rest of the others, and it is no longer than one phrase. The reading can be started from top to bottom, and it can be pronounced as the equivalent of English sounds such as: (W), I (S), M, Z, W, R, WW, and NN. The phrase actually consists of two words: IMSWR, which can be interpreted by the languages of Tuareg,<sup>32</sup> and other Libyan dialects<sup>33</sup> as prince, chief, leader, or ancestor; and WNN(E), which is in the possessive case and can be read as our leader, or our ancestor.

The name Nimmire occurs in the Libyan-Latin inscriptions (Libyan language in Latin characters) at Bir Dreder Necropolis, some forty kilometers west of Gherza.<sup>34</sup> He ranked as tribunos, which is the lowest rank in the Roman auxiliary forces. But in the third and fourth centuries when the veterans emerged in the farmer-soldier system, this

TABLE VII

LIBYAN ALPHABETS OF THE NORTH MAUSOLEUM AT  
GHERZA, COMPARABLE TO SIMILAR LIBYAN ALPHABETS

Gherza, Mausoleum Inscription	Equivalent Sound in Tufinagh	English Sound (U.S.A.)	English Sound of Ancient Libyan Alphabet
H Σ J I H E = = -- -- S		i, w	L
		s, z	
	yem	m	M
	yen	z, s	N
	yel	w, i	L
	yeb	r	B
	yaw, yel	w	U
	" "	w	U
	yen	n	N, A
	yen	n	N, A
	s		



Figure 22. Latin inscription bears Libyan names from the northern tomb at Gherza.

rank became only a title of honor which was given to anyone who served in the Limitanei zone. This is clear from the numerous names of the tribune rank that are found in the Necropolis of Bir Dreder.

We may conclude that Minnire and some of his relatives whose names also appear at Bir Dreder, must have served in the mobile troops who were stationed at Bir Dreder near Wadi Suffigin. In addition, they must have moved east toward Wadi Zemzem where they were able to construct tombs for their parents at a date not earlier than the period of the Emperor Diocletian (284 - 305 A.D.), and not later than the reign of the Emperor Constantine II (340 - 350 A.D.). Also there is another Latin inscription that dedicates a neighboring mausoleum of the same family. Both record the cost of the buildings in terms of "Follis,"<sup>35</sup> a currency that consisted of silver-bronze coins that were issued for the first time by Emperor Diocletian. This currency was not used after the reign of Emperor Constantine II.<sup>36</sup>

From the previous discussion of Libyan alphabets one can infer that the language of the common people in the fortified farms was Libyan; however, some elements, probably the upper classes, knew other languages. For example, the wealthy families of Nimmire, Fiffidel, Fydel and others dedicated memories of their parents in both Latin and Libyan. Also Punic was used as noted above.

It must also be remembered that Septimius Severus, who



was a native of Leptis Magna, spoke "broken Latin with an African accent." It was said that his sister could not make herself understood in the royal palace, or in the streets of Rome. Apparently, his new praetorians had the same problem.<sup>37</sup>

Since most of this defensive system was initiated by the Severan Dynasty, one can expect to find that the Libyan language was emphasized in the Limitanei zone more than in the other parts of the country. The language was written in Libyan language with Latin characters. At least ten Latin-Libyan inscriptions have been found scattered over the Limitanei zone of the Tripolis, but no similar inscriptions have been found on the Limitanei zone of the Pentapolis. During the preceding Roman period, the local language was a Libyan-Punic mixture. For example, the documents of this period record both Libyan and Punic names and phrases.<sup>38</sup> This was confirmed by Strabo in the first century A.D. He described the land that he traversed as "the land of the Libo-Phoenicians."<sup>39</sup>

Finally, we have several examples of Punic scripts associated with the fortified farms. They cover almost the same area as that of the Libyan-Latin texts. Inscriptions of this category have usually been found inscribed on the walls of the early mausolea of Wad El-Amud,<sup>40</sup> Bir Gebera, Wadi El-Mardum, Um El-Agrem and Ras El-Haddagia.<sup>41</sup>

Mention has already been made of the ritual customs of the front forts. The inscriptions of Gholae were dedicated by Roman officers to Libyan Gods and deities, the Gods Mars Canavae and Ammon. The latter God was also worshipped in the Limitanei; in addition to being worshipped in the coastal area. However, no trace of this cult has yet been found in the Garama region.

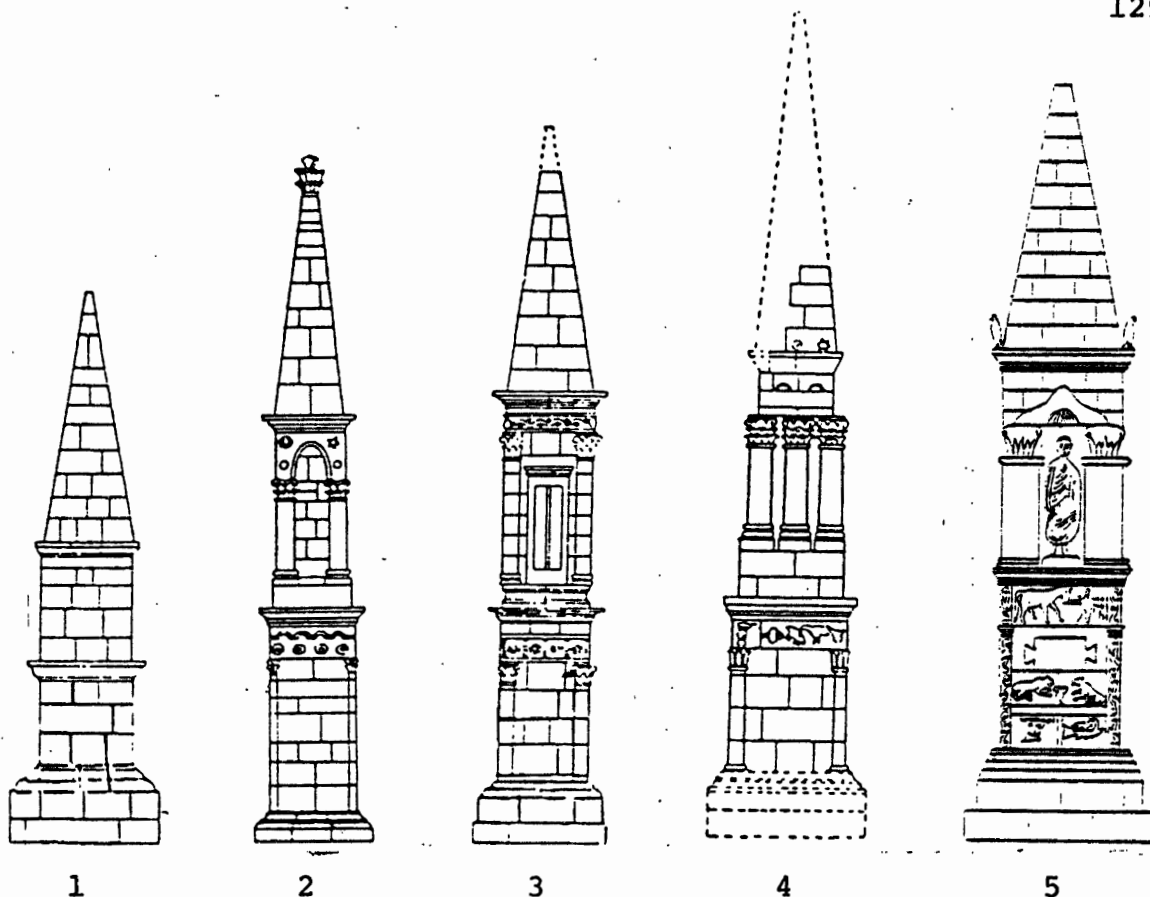
An interesting point concerning the Limitanei cult is that no trace of Roman deities has been found in the area. This is a clear indication that the Roman influence upon the native religion had not extended beyond the limits of the coastal cities. However, the only possible exception is the existence of a simple form of a temple tomb, the well-known Mausoleum of Garama. It was said that it was built by a Roman trader in 100 A.D.<sup>42</sup>

There are several remains of temples associated with the fortified farms. The best preserved one is a temple of the Punic deity, Melquart at Gasr El-Gezera, which lies on the bank of Wadi El-Matmure, four kilometers north of kilometer stone 160 on the Jefren-Gado road.<sup>43</sup> Another type of shrine with an unknown name is at Tininai, about nineteen kilometers northwest of the Junction of Wadi Sufiggin with Wadi Tininai. Both buildings were dated in the early third century A.D.<sup>44</sup> The third temple carries a sign of the Punic Goddess Tanit near the confluence of Wadi Marsit with Wadi El-Amud, twenty-five kilometers from Mizda El-Ghariat road.

According to an inscription that was found in the temple, it was built earlier than the third century A.D.<sup>45</sup> The official temple built in 15 - 17 A.D., was dedicated by the Libyan noble Taksaf of Tarhuna.

The magnificent temple-like tombs and the elaborate obelisk tombs are the features of the Limitanei zone. Historically, both types were known as "Mausolea," which was a memorial structure named after Mausolus, the King of Caria at Halicarnassus (377 - 357 B.C.).<sup>46</sup> The custom of monumental tombs was common to the Roman provinces, but in North Africa it was influenced by the traditional Libyan cult of the dead. Several examples of both types, as shown in the reconstruction in Figure 23 A and B, have been discovered in the past few decades. Following will be a brief description of the general features of both types of mausolea found in the vicinity of the fortified farms (Figure 24).

Mausolea of temple tomb types like those of Gherza (Figure 25) are built on a rectangular base of two or more steps. The structure consists of a large, well-cut masonry of two or more stories. In most of the buildings, the cella or tomb chamber, is surrounded on all four sides by columns in which their numbers vary according to the size of the tomb. The columns were usually of the Doric or Corinthian type. In the second storey there is the symbol of the entrance to the spirit world, the sculptured shape of a false door. Under the base of the structure there is a narrow



A

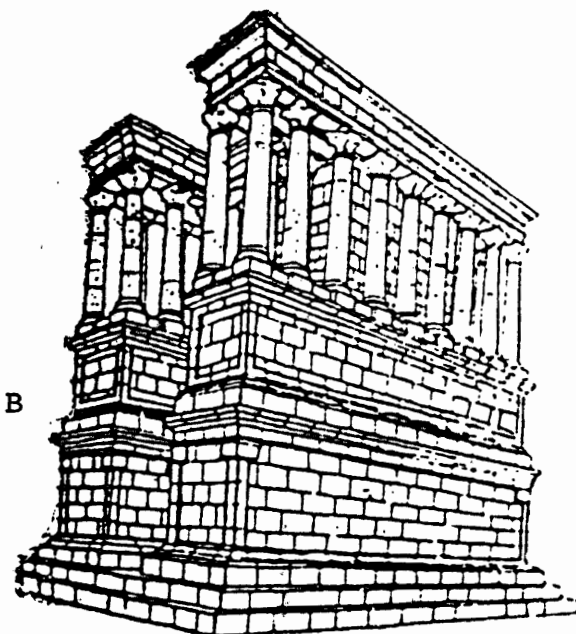
Figure 23 A and B. (1-4, B after Hynes, 1965)

## A Obelisk types

- 1) At W. El-Mardum
- 2) At Gherza
- 3) At W. Nfed
- 4) At W. Misuigi
- 5) At Mashbak El-Khannag

## B Temple-like tomb type

At Gasr Duga



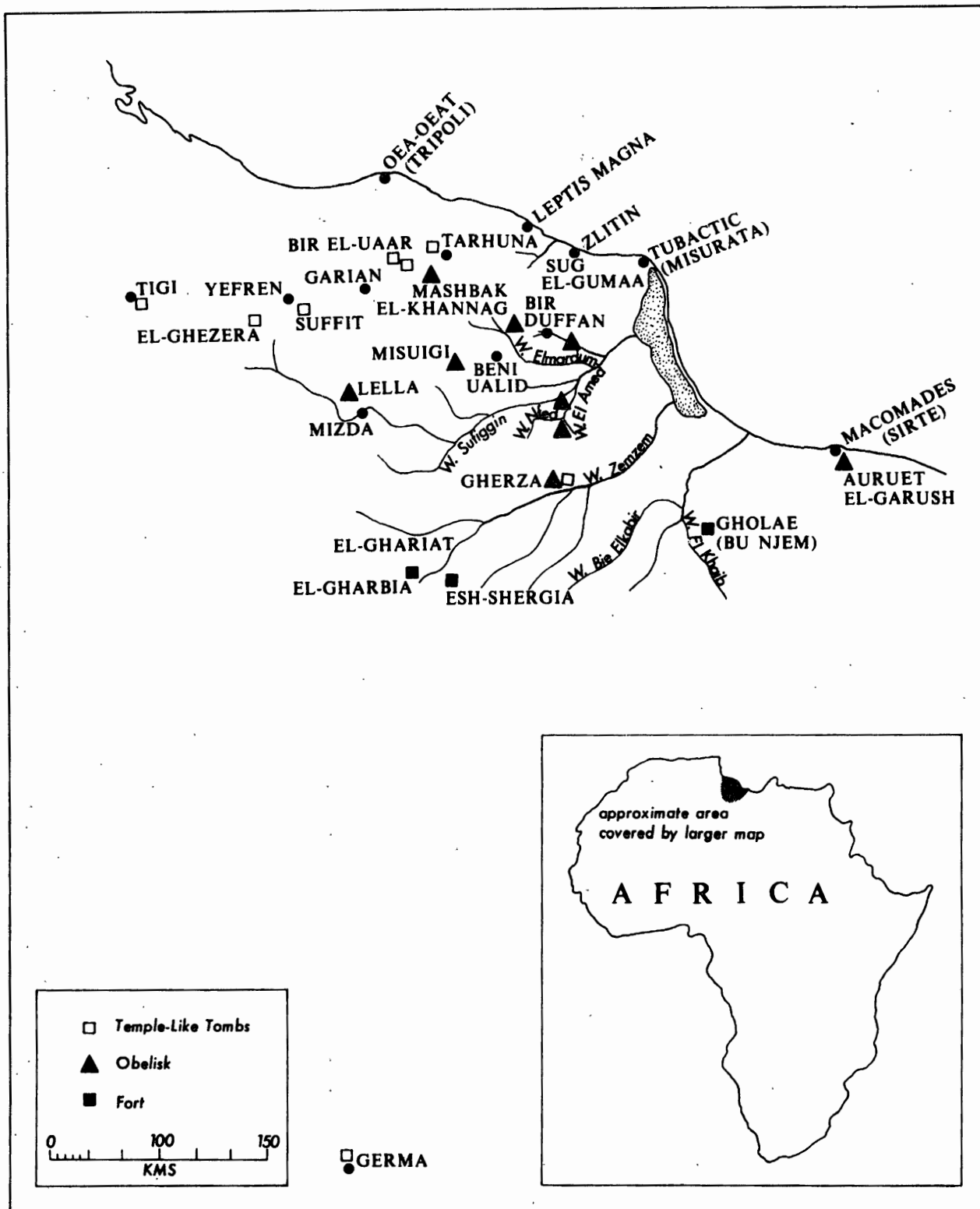


Figure 24. Map showing the distribution of Libyan mausolea.

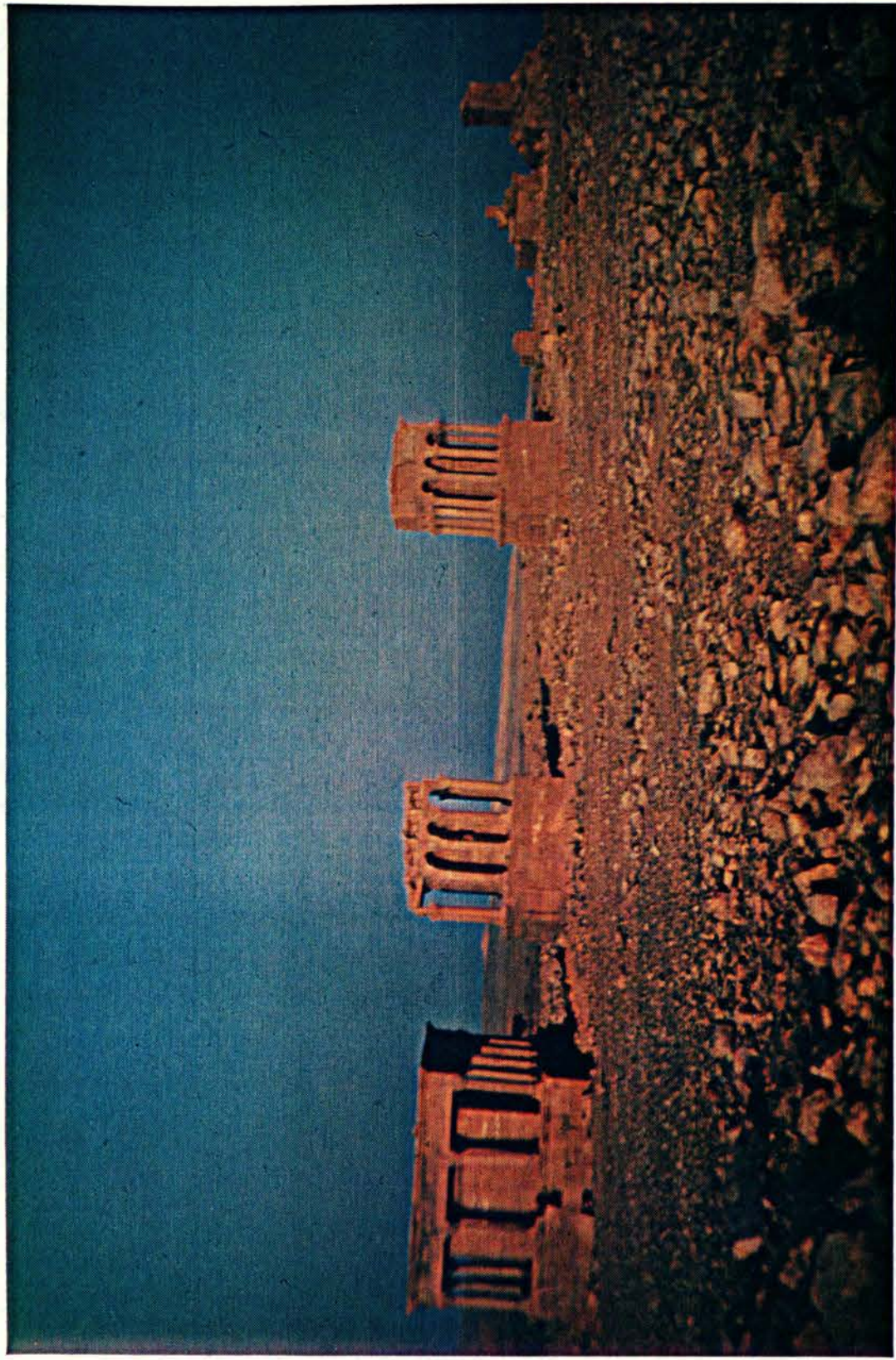
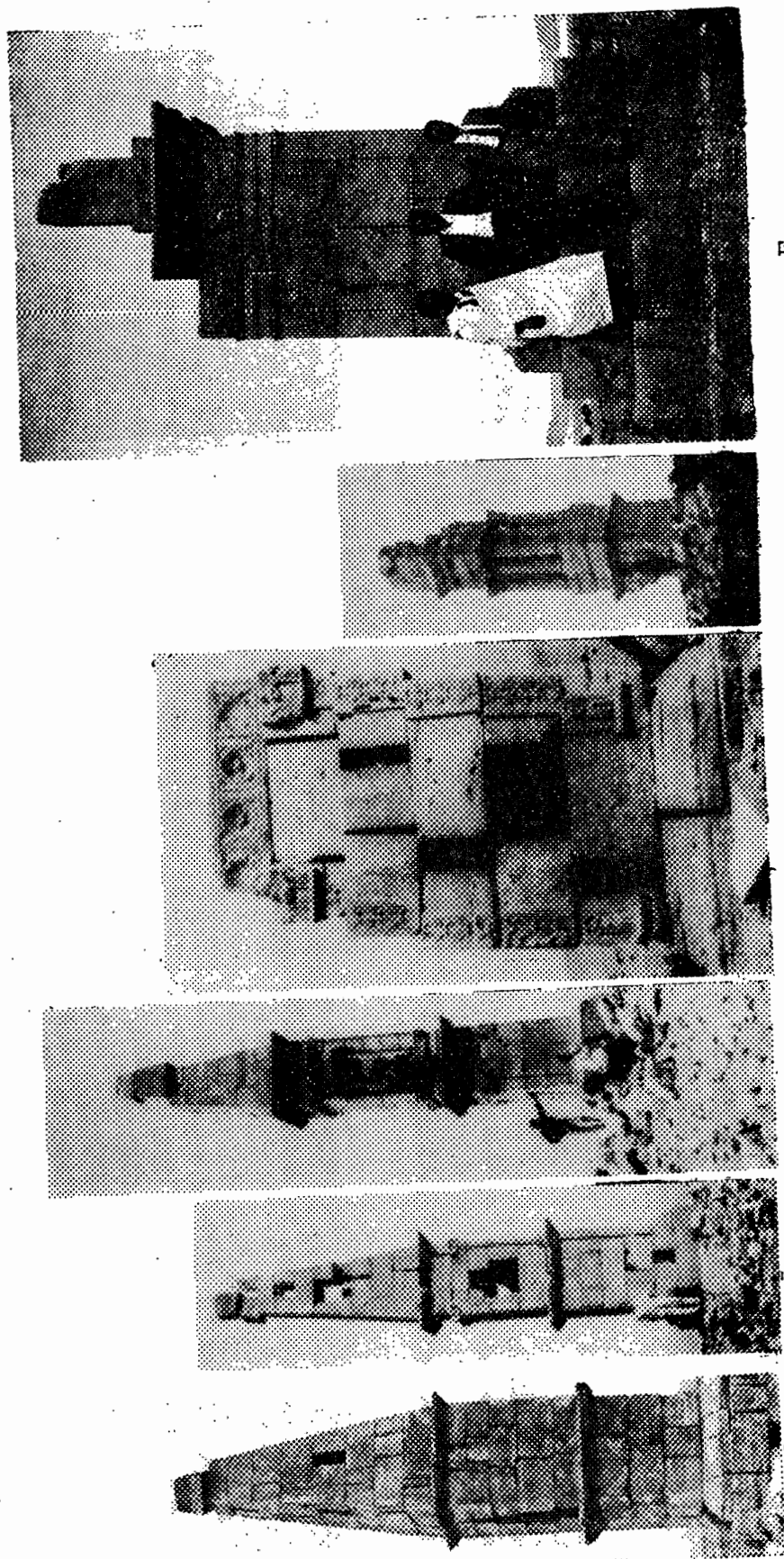


Figure 25. Mausolea of temple-like tombs: Gherza.

door facing south or southeast. This may be interpreted in two ways: the people who communicate with these tombs lived in these directions, or it might be intended to face the strong wind of El-Gibli to blow away the sand off the entrance. However, this door does lead to a vaulted or flat burial chamber. Because of the excellent quality of the masonry used in these tombs and by the early Roman pottery found in the vicinity, the Mausolea were assigned to the third and fourth century A.D.

The other type of Mausolea is an obelisk tomb, six of which are to be found in the Limitanei zone and all of which are still in fair shape (Figure 26). The obelisk usually was built of the same quality of masonry that was used in the temple tombs, but it is a taller structure. The approximate height was between ten and sixteen meters. Also the base of the structure is often square (2.00 to 3.50 meters). All the existing obelisks have three stories, the highest having the form of a tall slender pyramid, with most of them having corner-pilasters on the lower storey and three-quarter columns at the corners of the second storey.

Like the temple tombs, these obelisks also have false doors in the second storey and burial chambers beneath the base of the structure, with an entrance facing south or southeast. Most the Punic inscriptions have been found in this type of monument. It is also noted that some of these obelisks have the lavish Severan decorative sculpture



A B C D E F  
 Figure 26. Mausolea of obelisk tomb types: A, B at W. El-Mardum; C, D at W. Nfed; E at W. Misuigi; F at W. Lella.



like that of the ruined obelisk of Wadi Nfed. The sculpture art used here can be seen at the Severan Basilica in Leptis Magna.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

The preceding chapters give evidence that the tribal resistance against the Roman troops was the prime cause of the establishment of the defensive organization. Obviously, if there were no resistance, there would have been no need for such a complicated defensive system.

The Romans had depended on mobile troops and long distance military expeditions for over four and a half centuries (264 B.C. - 201 A.D.). The fortified roads played an important part in the occupation process; however, they were not enough to put an end to the tribal revolts.

According to characteristics of the tribal incursions, the Lepeitani Emperors (193 - 235 A.D.) modified that policy by establishing front forts in the southernmost frontier of the Roman Empire. In fact, neither the fortified roads, nor the massive front forts, seem to have achieved their goals. The final and logical solution was the establishment of fortified farms. Although the function of the elements of this system is similar, the associated tombs and the extensive agricultural installations that this thesis reveals, is not merely dealing with a series of military outposts, but with a widespread and uniform structure of society.

In this period, the indigenous elements seem to have accepted this policy. They were encouraged by the Severan Dynasty to develop their own culture. The villages developed one by one to the rank of municipality. In fact by this time the Libyans were playing a great part in the rising tide of civilization.

The peace and tranquility that the Roman Empire enjoyed during the first half of the third century vanished forever. After the reign of the Severan Dynasty, this system had no military effect. The Legio III Augusta in Africa, which kept overthrowing the emperors one after another was disbanded by Emperor Gordian III. Consequently, the retired soldiers had no choice other than to seek shelter in the new, growing settlements. But they were not able to keep their status and prestige.

As was shown, the tribes returned to violence in the years following the collapse of the Severan Dynasty. By this time they were excluded from the armies, and from social activities. Synesius (Epistle, 94) gave the reasons for such a change. He spoke of the Limitanei as a useless type of local troops, "Busy with harvest, and also with their trade instead of guarding the frontier."

With the Vandal occupation of the coastal cities in 445 A.D., this defensive organization became totally useless from the Roman point of view. This is because they were no longer able to defend themselves against two strong

enemies; one from the south, the tribes; and the other from a new power already established in the Mediterranean Sea. At any rate, neither the Vandals nor the Byzantines were able to penetrate the fortified farms or the front forts.

The Moslems did leave clear marks on several buildings of these fortifications to establish their claim of penetration. These forts served the Moslems after 643 A.D., and they were used as strategic bases by the Turks and Italians of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

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