

Heritage of the Ancient Greco-Roman Cities and Harbors in the North West Coast of Egypt

Authors : Wessam Fekry Ibrahim Moussa

Abstract : The northwest coast of Egypt embraces about 500 km of the Mediterranean coastline. The area covered extends from Alexandria on the East to the village of Sallum at Egypt's border with Libya in the west with an average depth of 20-70 km. When one looks at this long strip of land, one is struck by the fact that, from the archaeological point of view, one knows relatively little about this region during ancient times, its history, villages, inhabitants, and heritage. According to classical writers, in antiquity, the area seemed to be more populated and characterized by its rich buildings and inhabitants. They mentioned several Greco-Roman towns and harbors scattered along the coast nearly 2 thousand years ago. Strabo, for instance, in his book 17, confirmed the existence of about 12 several clusters along the coast, which varied between cities, villages, harbors, and small islands. Claudius Ptolemaeus also enumerated many marina sites as well as some small cities and villages. Unfortunately, nowadays, most of them have been lost either due to the extensive development of the north coast, Natural Disasters, or Erosion Factors. However, recent excavations carried out within the area revealed just a little of these settlements. The aim of this study is to reveal the secrets of the hidden heritage of those ancient sites and shed light on the role they played in the past, as some of them used to be stops on the trade route between Libya and Egypt (Strabo 17) or major centers for some of the international imports. The study will explore the archeological evidence using the analytical methodology to analyze each site and identify its features and significances in order to conclude the importance and role it once played during the past. Findings could be used by authorities and policymakers to utilize these heritage resources to improve cultural tourism within the area and enhance the tourist's experience.

Keywords : Greco Roman, heritage, ancient cities, north west coast

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