

An oft-overlooked documentary text, the *Stadiasmus Maris Magni* (*SMM*) may provide clues to ancient economic behavior, particularly how merchants used sailing manuals. The text was written probably around 200 CE (though that is disputed), and is contained in a single 9th-century manuscript.

The main reason why *SMM* has received little attention in the secondary literature is the absence of a good text, translation, and geographical commentary which would aid us in examining ancient trade and trade routes. The most complete Greek text was published by Müller in 1855, who provides a Latin translation. The text, however, is poorly done, as Cuntz remarks, and as the corrections suggested by Cuntz have not been incorporated into another edition there has been no new text in over 150 years. The work has never been fully translated into English: Nordenskiöld presents only the sections on Africa, Cyprus, and Crete, while Ball translates only the Egyptian section. The only serious commentary is by Diller (1952), but though instructive it is also cursory (three paragraphs).

In the prologue, the anonymous author states that he intends to detail the coastline from Alexandria to the Pillars of Hercules, then from Alexandria anti-clockwise to the Hellespont, then westward from there to the Pillars of Hercules again. The text is fragmentary, including most of the North African section and most of Asia Minor. It begins with a description and sailing routes from Alexandria west along the North African coastline to Libya, where there is a lacuna; then picks up on the coast of Palestine (at Tyre), proceeding around Asia Minor to the islands of the Aegean, Cyprus, and Crete before it ends.

This paper explores the differences between the African and Asia Minor sections. The African section provides more detail concerning the environment, resources, and information. For example: "From Pnigeus to Phoenicus is 140 stades, there are the Twin islets; an anchorage is in front of them; it is deep for merchant ships, a cistern in a ravine holds water. From Phoenicus to Hermaea is 90 stades; bring to anchor holding the cape on your right; it has water near the tower. From the Hermaea to Leuce Acte (the white Cape) 20 stades. A small low island lies there, 2 stades from land. There is a sheltered anchorage for merchant ships from the western winds. In the land under the promontory there is a deep anchorage for a great many ships. Here there is a temple to Apollo, with a well-known oracle, and there is water by the temple". The Asia Minor section gives less detail, for example: "From the Cilician Gates to Hieron 120 stades. From there if you go a bit inland is Nicopolis. From Hieron to the city Issus 30 stades. From Issus to Gates of Amanicae in a shallow bay 90 stades."

Questions immediately arise. Why is there a difference? Did the author have personal experience of Africa but not Asia Minor? Was his work a compilation of other works, and if so of what kind? These particular questions are crucial if we wish to understand whether the work was meant to be used by ship captains or was merely for armchair geographers. *SMM* seems to have provided captains with a detailed description of Africa, though the section on Asia Minor is less so. Nevertheless, the text may have been a handy short reference work for captains—especially since the second person is often employed—and may have been intended for use rather than as a rhetorical exercise. If correct, this further strengthens the general hypothesis that ancient mariners did not venture out to sea but rather hugged the coastline. The work also shows how some of the routes in the Aegean Sea were employed.

The paper will end with an update on the status of the text, translation, and commentary currently being prepared and the problems encountered.