

FOOTSTEPS OF APOSTLE PAUL

Southern Aegean and Crete

Introduction

Supported in local traditions that are being confirmed in New Testament and mainly in Acts with simple and generic reports, we present the passage of Apostle of Nations Paul from Southern Aegean and Crete.

Except from the regions that are reported by the Acts exist clues, which are being supported mainly in the geographic position of those places, that Paul's ship, because of bad weather, made various stops for precaution or even trade. Thus, afterwards his second arrest and on his course to Crete (4th tour), after Asia Minor and the harbour of Knidos (*...and when we had sailed slowly many days, and scarce were come over against Cnidus...Acts 27, 7*) could someone claim that the ship passed from Palli (Nisiros), Tilos, Chalki, Tristomo (Karpathos) Fri (Kasos) and afterwards it sailed to the regions of Crete, known from Acts.

Nevertheless, there are enough people that exist, who support that ap. Paul did not land and preached the Gospel to the above mentioned places, because his residence there, was not long enough.

Beyond all the above, the important thing that remains in the wider region of Southern Aegean and Crete, is the premature diffusion of Christianity, the special devotion and faith of residents of those regions, but also the particular respect in ap. Paul's personality which is confirmed by the local Temples that have been dedicated to him.



A possible course in ap. Paul's fourth apostolic tour

1. Knidos
2. Palli (Nisiros)
3. Tilos
4. Chalki
5. Tristomo (Karpathos)
6. Fri (Kasos)
7. Salmoni cape
8. Kali Limenes
9. Phenice (Phoenix)
10. Gavdos



The course (according to Acts) in ap. Paul's third apostolic tour
 1. Kos, 2. Rhodes (Lindos), 3. Patara

A. Kos

«And it came to pass, that after we were gotten from them, and had launched, we came with a straight course unto Coos...» Acts 21, 1

Kos island is the third bigger in extent island of Dodekanisa in SouthEastern Aegean, south-western Asia Minor. Our ancient ancestors called Kos island as "Makaron island".

Homeland of "father of medicine" Hippocrates, pioneer of medical science and founder of first medical faculty in the world. In 7th BC, Kos island together with the three cities of Rhodes and two M of. Asia, constituted the eminent Dorian Exapolis of south-eastern Aegean.

The report of Kos island in New Testament is connected with the third apostolic course of ap. Paul (52 his or 53-57 AC) and his return in Jerusalem. It was his first rest, after the journey to Militos, in a "hasty" travel, because he wanted to be in Jerusalem on Whit Sunday (Acts 20, 16). Minimal elements could mention someone for the presence of ap. Paul in Kos island, beyond the existence old and modern Temples dedicated in him.

By the tradition in Kos island, it is testified that ap. Paul's ship, stopped in a coastal region near the city of Kos, called "Lampi", and preached the Gospel. Nowadays there is a new Temple, dedicated to ap. Paul.

In the district Zipari of Asfendiou (village near the city of Kos), there was a royal style Cathedral of Apostle Paul, which had been destroyed by the earthquakes in 553-554 AC, later

it came back in daylight after the unique systematic excavation in that region on Italian lordship.



icons from Lambi beach (Kos)

B. Rhodes

«And it came to pass, that after we were gotten from them, and had launched, we came with a straight course unto Rhodes...» Acts 21, 1

The biggest island of Dodekanisa and fourth in Greece lies in the south-eastern side of Aegean, 10 miles opposite from south-western coast of Asia Minor.

In 408 BC, the three Dorian cities Ialysos, Lindos and Kameiros founded the city of Rhodes in north-eastern point of the island, which was built by the architect Ippodamos. In 305-304 BC, after Rhodians' successful resistance in Macedonian king Dimitrios A' of Besieger, they manufactured the eminent cupreous statue, Colossus of Rhodes, of 35 metres height, in the entry of Rhodes harbour, which was considered one of the seven marvels of antiquity.

The more important monuments of Rhodes island are the Old City, one of the more well maintained strengthened medieval cities, which is included in UNESCO's monuments of world cultural heritage, the Venetian walls in the right side of harbour and inside the Old City the Street of Knights and the Palace of Big Magister or "Castello", the statues of Deer and Doe in the entry of Rhodes old harbour ("Madraki").

Christianity propagated in Rhodes at the first AC century and at second half of third AC century is testified an organised church administration. The precocious acme of

Christianity is testified by the big enough number of old churches, and because bishops of Rhodes are reported taking part in Ecumenical Synods.

Most visitors of Rhodes lead to Lindos (47 kilometres from the city of Rhodes), a little town which is built on the ruins of homonym ancient Dorian city of Lindos. At the medieval period Lindos was the second more important city of island, afterwards the city of Rhodes. It was then, that the ancient Citadel of Lindos, was shaped into a castle. By the tradition, Apostle Paul when he visited Rhodes, landed in Lindos in a small harbour in the side of village. That harbour took ap. Paul's name and there is also a homonym little church.

According to the local tradition, when ap. Paul came in Rhodes, to distribute Christianity, he was accompanied by ap. Silas. While ap. Paul worked in order to organise the administration of infant Church in Lindos, Silas toured in the various villages of island in order to initiate the new religion.

In distance of four kilometres from the village Soroni, there is a small chapel dedicated in Saint Sila (locally Soylas). Above the entrance exists an embossed cross dated 1836. It is however considered certain that the chapel was established at the first christian centuries, likely at 100-150 AC. Inside of it and opposite the entrance in northern side, there is a source of holy water in an artificial cavern, that is considered therapeutical for various dermal diseases, like scabies.

The above tradition that Christianity was imported in Rhodes in apostolic time, is confirmed also by Acts of Apostles (Acts 21, 1) In this point, it maintains that ap. Paul didn't stay long in Rhodes, «for Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost», (Acts 20, 16) he was in a hurry to reach in Jerusalem on Whit Sunday.



C. Patara

«And it came to pass, that after we were gotten from them, and had launched, we came with a straight course... unto Patara» Acts 21, 1

One of ancient cities of Lycia(region of Asia Minor). According Strabonas(Historic of hellinistic time), the name was received from Pataros, son of Apollo and Lycias and was one from the 6 bigger cities of Lycia. Mother country of Saint Nikolaos, Bishop of Myra, hold in history up to the season of Justinianos.

Apostle Paul at his third apostolic course coming from Rhodes, in the port of Patara changed ship to Jerusalem.



icons from Patara

1.The port that Paul's ship docked, 2. and 3. Saint Nikolaos old Church, 4. Patara's Amphitheatre

D. Crete

a. Salmoni (Sideros cape)

«And when we had sailed slowly many days, and scarce were come over against Cnidus, the wind not suffering us, we sailed under Crete, over against Salmone...» (Acts 27, 7)

Salmoni is a cape, the easternmost point of Crete, in the prefecture of Lasithi. The current name of the cape is Sideros or Cape Sidero. It is near to the archaeological place of ancient Itanos. Other ancient names of it, are Salmonion, Samonion, Salmonis utmost. Nowadays it's a military zone.

During transportation of ap. Paul to Rome, the boat passed near from Cape Sidero. This course for sure was not planned in advance from the skipper. This is because there was a shorter course from Knidos of Asia Minor via southern Aegean to Italy. However, the opposite north-western winds drifted the ship to south-western (Acts 27, 7) and thus was forced to pass near from the cape, and then sailing at length of the southern coast of Crete to reach the harbour of Kali Limenes (Acts 27, 8).



Sideros cape

b. Kali Limenes

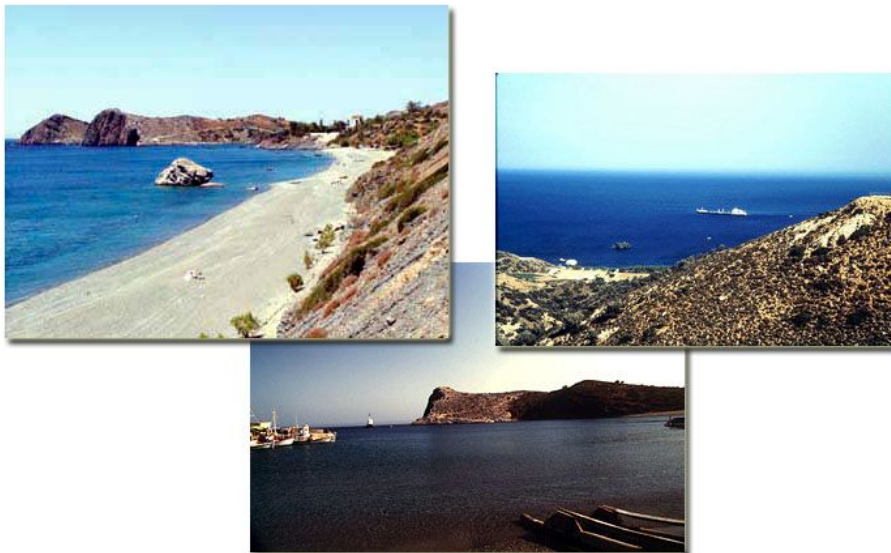
«...and, hardly passing it, came unto a place which is called The fair havens; nigh whereunto was the city of Lasea.» (Acts 27, 8)

Cove of Lybikon Sea, in the southern coasts of Heraklion prefecture between the capes Lithino and Kefalas, near Gortyna, the ancient capital of Crete. In the cove are the islands, Papadoplaka, Megalonisi with the lighthouse, Mikronisi(ap. Paul) and Trafos. In the beach are the settlements of Kali Limenes and Platia Peramata and close by the ancient city Lasaia. In the history it is also reported as Kali Limniones and was anchorage for the boats, particularly for commercial ones who made long travels.

The course of the boat with ap. Paul to Kali Limenes was not in the plans of the skipper, however he was obliged to do it due to the north-western winds, that steered them off course from the original journey and so they set anchors at Kali Limenes.

Ap. Paul proposed to remain there for the winter, because it was dangerous to travel, however that did not become acceptable from the centurion and the crew (Acts 27, 9-12). Perhaps because even if it was considered one of the better natural harbor in the southern Crete, it did not provide protection from winds and storms of south-eastern directions and particularly in winter.

In Kali Limenes port, ap. Paul remained "time capable" as it is testified by Acts (Acts 27, 3), declared Christianity, already known in the island from the time of Pentecost (Acts 2, 11) and took care the organisation of infant established christian community. He left in Crete ap. Titos, his chosen student "to Titus, mine own son after the common faith" (Tit. 1, 4), with command to "set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city" (Tit. 1, 5). The action of Titos in Crete was not sufficiently known, because there're not saved ancient official and confirmed informations for the first period of Cretan Church. Many years later was created in Crete a wide tradition for the first bishop of local Church. According to this tradition, Titos had his filiation from Crete, in particular from the fabulous King Minoa.



icons from Kali Limenes bay

c) Phenice (Phoenix)

«...and because the haven was not commodious to winter in, the more part advised to depart thence also, if by any means they might attain to Phenice, and there to winter.»(Acts 27, 12)

Phenice was an ancient harbor and city in the cape of Phoenix, in the southern side of Crete. It was the last part of land of Anopolis (Aradinos). It was inhabited even from minoan time. Today, it's coincided with Loutro or Livaniana.

It is the harbour that tried to sail the boat, which transported ap. Paul, coming from kali Limenes. The decision in order to sail to Phoenix harbour was made by the centurion

with the positive opinion of the skipper and the crew, as it was the most properly place for winter. Ap. Paul didn't agree with that and finally he was confirmed because the boat did not accomplish to approach Phoenix, as they faced a stormy wind, called Eyroklydon (Acts 27, 14), which drifted them to Adriatic sea.

It should be marked that, all the people on that boat, skipper, crew, owner, ap. Paul, were well informed for the harbors of Crete. That shows the "strategic" place of island in long travels at that time.



icons from Phenice

1. Phoenix bay, 2. Loutro, 3 and 4. Turkish castles

d. Clauda(Gavdos)

«And running under a certain island which is called Clauda, we had much work to come by the boat»
(Acts 27, 16)

Gavdos is a small island in the southly-western coast of Crete. It constitutes the more southern point of Greece and all Europe. Other names are Kavdos, Gavdi, Kavnos and Gavdonisi. Homer reports the island many times. It is said that in the cape of Trypiti, the more southern point of Europe, Odysseus was found captive of Kalypsos.

The history of Gavdos begins from neolithic years. Archaeological researches have shown that it is lived from 3.000 B.C. In British Museum there is a marble statue of 500-300 century B.C. from Gavdos. Important discovery also constitutes a sign engraved in porolithos,

that reveals the Treaty between Gortynians and Kavdians in the 3rd century B.C. The text is written in the Dorian Cretan dialect and reports that the Gortynians allow the residents of Gavdos to live in their island free and autonomous, with their own courts and laws and with the arrangement that the Gortynians determined.

When the boat that transported ap. Paul began from the harbour of Kali Limenes with good weather, in order to winter in the harbour of Phoenix (it was considered secure during the winter period), but the situation changed suddenly. Sailing obligatorily southerly, they reached in the harbour of Gavdos, and remained there a few days. Due to bad weather they threw out the content of the boat in the sea. The next day they also threw out even the utensils in order not to fall on Sirti, region of north Africa (Acts 27, 17).

The captain decided to keep down the sails, in order to decelerate the boat, leaving it's course in the "chance", and that was nothing else but the providence of God, something that is also testified by the text of Acts (Acts 27, 21-26), after ap. Paul himself appeases the crew, certifying them for their sure salvation, according to a vision that he had.



icons from Gavdos bay