

PHILIPPI (PLACE) [Gk *Philippoi* Φιλιπποί]. Situated in N Greece at the border of E Macedonia and Thrace, ancient Philippi was the site of Paul’s earliest extensive missionary activity in Europe (Acts 16:11–40; Philippians). The city (41°00’N; 24°16’E) stood about 16 km NNW of the port city Neapolis (modern Kavalla) and originally bore the name Krenides (from the Greek for “spring”) in recognition of the abundance of streams in the area.

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A. Historical Overview

Greek colonists from the nearby island of Thasos founded Krenides in 360–59 B.C.E. under the leadership of the exiled Athenian politician Kallistratos. In 356, King Philip II of Macedon brought the city under Macedonian dominion and renamed it after himself. It is likely that the financial resources which propelled Philip’s hegemonic policies in Greece derived in large part from the precious metals mined at Mt. Pangaion overlooking the plain of Dato in which Philippi was located.

Rome’s successful campaigns against Macedonian dynasts and dynastic pretenders in the 2d century B.C.E. led to the establishment of a Roman province of Macedonia. Over the course of the next century (mid-2d to mid-1st B.C.E.), Philippi served as a provincial outpost on the Via Egnatia, the main overland artery linking Rome to the East. Two battles fought near the city in 42 B.C.E. resulted in the defeat of the “liberators” Cassius and Brutus who had been instrumental in the assassination of Julius Caesar. The victors at Philippi, Octavian (later titled Augustus) and Antony, emerged as the dominant powers of the Roman Mediterranean basin. Following the battles, Philippi became a Roman colony and discharged veterans receiving land allotments settled permanently in the area. Within a few years after Augustus’ defeat of Antony at the battle

of Actium (30 B.C.E.), as many as 500 more Roman soldiers—mostly veterans of Antony’s praetorian guard who had lost their claims to land in Italy—received allotments and accompanying privileges in Philippi. Renamed Colonia Julia Augusta Philippensis, in honor of Augustus’ daughter, the colony of Philippi embraced an area of more than 700 square miles extending from the Pangaion mountain range in the north to the colony’s seaport of Neapolis in the S and from the Nestos river in the E to the Strymon in the W. The city of Philippi was the urban political center of the colony and with its proximity to the Via Egnatia also dominated the colony’s commercial life.

Epigraphic evidence from Philippi indicates that the Egnatia in E Macedonia and Thrace was in a state of disrepair in the early Roman Imperial period. During the reigns of Augustus’ immediate successors (Tiberius, Gaius, and Claudius) the colony may have been dependent largely on its access to the sea via Neapolis for commerce and communication. It was by the sea route—Alexandria Troas in Asia Minor to Neapolis and overland to Philippi—that the apostle Paul traveled to the city in 49 C.E. during the reign of the Emperor Claudius (41–54 C.E.). Trajan’s (97–117 C.E.) and Hadrian’s (117–138 C.E.) activities in the East occasioned the repair and upkeep of the Egnatia, and it is from this period and the time of their successors, Antoninus Pius (138–61 C.E.) and Marcus Aurelius (161–80 C.E.), that most of the Roman buildings now visible at the site originated.

Excavations at Philippi have revealed further building activity in the 3d and 4th centuries C.E. including the construction of one of the earliest known Christian churches in Greece. At least six more churches were built at or near the city during the 5th–7th centuries C.E. attesting to Philippi’s dramatic ascendancy as an episcopal and ecclesiastical center and perhaps also as an important object of Christian pilgrimage. Taking their toll in this period was a series of extremely destructive earthquakes which disrupted construction and repair activity at some of the ecclesiastical sites and may have resulted in the city’s general depopulation. In medieval times, there is evidence of a castle fortification at Philippi (mid-10th century C.E.) and of Christian burials (10th and 11th centuries C.E.), but by the 16th century only a small and scattered settlement occupied the site.

(Reports of the Greek Archaeological Service excavations at Philippi are included in the “Chronika” of *Archaiologikon Deltion* [in Greek]. Excavations of the Archaeological Society of Athens were reported in *Ergon*, 1958–69 [in Greek], and in *Pratika Archaiologikes Hetaireias*, 1958–67 [in Greek].)

B. Krenides, Philippi, and the Thracians

Of the Thasian settlement of Krenides little is known. Herodotus reports (7.112) that Thracian tribes were active in the Pangaion area at the time of Xerxes' invasion of Greece and that they held gold and silver mines in the region. According to Diodorus Siculus (16.3.7; 16.8.6–7), Philip II's takeover of Krenides came after the original Thasian settlers requested assistance in curbing Thracian hostilities. The impact of the native Thracians was durable throughout Philippi's early history, especially in local military, political, and religious matters. Thracian military contingents guided both Antony's and Octavian's forces as well as those of Cassius and Brutus before the first battle of Philippi—this, apparently, to insure that Thracian interests would be served whatever the battle's outcome. Inscriptions provide evidence of high civic honors bestowed by the Roman colony on Thracian dynasts who served as Roman client-rulers in the early Imperial period. Thracian royalty occupied the highest civic priesthoods even in the Roman province's capital, Thessalonica. Particularly acute was Thracian influence in Philippi's local religions. Herodotus reports a Thracian oracle of Dionysos at nearby Mt. Pangaion (7.111). The Thracian Bacchus, Bendis (associated with Artemis and Diana), and the rider hero are prominent features of Philippi's religious environment and their influence may explain certain peculiarities in the city's religious history.

C. Hellenistic Philippi

Few archaeological remains of the Hellenistic city have survived. A dedicatory inscription from the late 4th century B.C.E. provides some evidence for a temple of Apollo Komaios and Artemis. Foundations of fortification walls enclosing the acropolis and habitable area below date probably from Philip II's reign. Below the acropolis on the E within the city walls was an early theater of the Hellenistic period which was transformed on at least two occasions in Roman times.

At the SW base of the acropolis was a small Ionic prostyle structure (3d or 2d century B.C.E.) which may have served as a hero's shrine. Philippi's largest Christian basilica was to be built immediately adjacent to the sanctuary, and the church's outermost structures expanded to incorporate it into the ecclesiastical complex. Another heroön dating [Vol. 5, p. 315] from the 2d century B.C.E. has been excavated in the Hellenistic city's center. A monumental temple-like structure was built above an earlier Macedonian tomb containing the remains of a young man thought to be associated with one of the city's or region's cults (as inferred from a religious relief on a pendant worn by the deceased). An inscription identifies the youth as Euephenes son of

Exekestos, a name known from lists of initiates into the Samothracian cult of the “Great Gods.” The earliest known Christian church at Philippi abutted the heroön which was later built over by an ecclesiastical establishment.

D. Early Roman Philippi

In the early 1st century C.E., a marble arch (no longer extant) was located two kilometers W of the city and marked the limit of Philippi’s *pomerium*—an area which, according to Roman convention, was left uninhabited and uncultivated. Dating also from the early Roman colonial settlement are the foundations of a sanctuary of the Egyptian gods, a cult which enjoyed considerable popularity in Roman Macedonia. Judging from the use of expensive imported marble in the sanctuary’s construction, Philippi’s Egyptian cult establishment appears to have enjoyed the support of at least some wealthy adherents. The sanctuary commanded a prominent location on a central ledge at the base of the acropolis overlooking the Hellenistic Ionic prostyle heroön.

About 400 meters S of the Egnatia, a small structure was identified beneath a later Roman bath complex. Five inscriptions recovered in the bath’s excavation suggest that the building was an early Roman Imperial period sanctuary of Bacchus and other gods and goddesses associated with him at Philippi. Three of the inscriptions are dedicated to Liber, Libera, and Hercules, and the other two to Liber Pater, the Roman religious analogue of the Greek Dionysos. A predominance of female dedicants in the inscriptions is striking. Dedicating a water system at the sanctuary to Liber, Libera, and Hercules was a thiasus of maenads, a cultic association of women distinctive to Dionysos religion. Three of the other inscriptions record devotional activity by individual women: one involved an offering to Liber Pater of a sestertia (1,000 denarii); another apparently the dedication of a statue directed to Liber, Libera, and Hercules. The fifth inscription was dedicated by a husband and wife to the divine triad. In addition to attesting to the financial well-being and independence of the female dedicants, the inscriptions reflect the participation of women in cultic activity involving Hercules. Such participation was unusual in Greek and Roman environments. At Thasos and Rome, for example, women could not take part in sacrificial activity for Hercules. Since Dionysos and Hercules were patron deities of Thasos, the origin of the site’s original settlers, it is possible that the cult of Liber, Libera, and Hercules at Philippi stems from early Thasian devotions. In view of the cult’s peculiarities (involvement of women and the additional attention to Libera), the influence of Thracian attachment to Bacchus, Bendis, and the rider hero also may have had an impact on the cult of Liber (in association with Libera and Hercules) at Philippi.

At the time of Paul's visit, the population of the colony would have included a relatively privileged core of Roman veterans and their descendants; Greeks descended from the inhabitants of the earlier Hellenistic cities (Krenides and Philippi) and from other Greek settlements in the area (e.g., Amphipolis, Maroneia, and Neapolis); Greeks involved in commerce who had migrated from Asia Minor (exemplified by the figure of Lydia of Thyatira mentioned in Acts 16:14); and native Thracians. Most of the colony's inhabitants probably lived in agrarian rural settlements, including those Roman veterans who established agricultural estates with slave work forces in the countryside. Although there is little archaeological evidence of such estates from the colony of Philippi, an excellent example of such villas from the later Roman period has been excavated at the site of Tsoukalario on nearby Thasos. The presence of villages in the colony is attested by burial sites, inscriptions from which designate the deceased person as "villager" (*vicanus*). Epigraphic data indicate that Romans dominated the city's and colony's administration which was typically Roman (duumviri, aediles, and quaestors are in evidence). While Latin predominates in the inscriptions from the period, traces of the continued use of Greek and Thracian are apparent especially in cultic contexts. Half of the inscriptions pertaining to the Egyptian cult, for example, are in Greek—a number out of all proportion to the preponderance of Latin inscriptions in Philippi's epigraphic record. The Greek-speaking Paul was understood sufficiently well to have undertaken an extended stay at the city.

E. Later Roman Philippi

With the repair of the Egnatia during Trajan's reign (97–117 C.E.) and the increasingly eastward-oriented policies of his successors, Hadrian (117–138 C.E.) and Antoninus Pius (138–61 C.E.), Philippi enjoyed a period of extensive building activity. In the south-central part of the city, excavations have revealed a palaestra dating from the Antonine period. It included an exercise field, a compact amphitheater, a cavernous underground latrine complex, and various rooms for users of the facility. About 200 meters S of the palaestra were ornate public baths with richly decorated mosaic floors (no longer extant). Dating from the 2d century C.E., the baths were built over the earlier structure associated with dedications to Liber, Libera, and Hercules.

The palaestra's northern entrance issued onto a large street running parallel to the Via Egnatia which intersected the city as the decumanus maximus some forty meters to the N. Lying just off the large street immediately east of the palaestra was a market complex with a facade of Corinthian columns. A row of shops lined the other (N) side of the street across from the palaestra and market. Abutting the rear of the shops was the S wall of the forum.

Most of the remains of the forum presently visible date to the period of Marcus Aurelius'

reign (161–80 C.E.). The forum is a clearly defined rectangle which encloses a marble-paved court measuring 100 meters from E to W and 50 meters N to S. Its N side is parallel and immediately adjacent to the Via Egnatia and features an imposing speaker's rostrum in the center, flanked by two shrine-like structures and two large fountains on either side.

Located along the forum's N axis in its E and W corners are two small temples very similar in size and ground plan. [Vol. 5, p. 316] The two buildings frame the N forum complex and are aligned with stoas to the S which run along the forum's E and W sides. The structure in the W corner consisted of a pronaos *in antis* and a rectangular room within which a bench lined the side and back walls. A dedicatory architrave inscription suggests that the building may have been the scene of banquets held in honor of the divine Antoninus Pius ([... *ex*] *voluntate sua a divo [A]ntonino ex epulis ...*). The corresponding temple on the E side of the forum had a pronaos with two Corinthian columns *in antis* with a naos characteristic of a temple cella and not furnished with benches. Although there is an architrave inscription which appears to be quite similar to that of the W building, the central block presumably bearing the honored deity's name has not been recovered. An inscription on a small statue base recovered inside the cella refers in dedicatory style to Faustina Augusta, probably Marcus Aurelius' wife Faustina the Younger whose tenure as "Augusta" spanned the years 147 to 175 C.E. The presence of the statue of an emperor's wife suggests that the temple was the site of honors for the Roman imperial house as was its twin temple on the forum's E side. That the emperor's wife received divine honors at the colony is affirmed by inscriptions mentioning a priesthood of the divine Augusta recovered at Philippi and Neapolis.

Behind the stoa defining the forum's E side are a row of rooms some of which were occupied by the city's library. 2 Timothy 4:13 reflects the importance of popular literary culture in the period: Paul is portrayed as requesting the return of a cloak together with his books and parchments. Government buildings appear to have dominated the W side of the stoa in the center of which stood the curia chamber. Along the forum's S side was a large double-aisled stoa probably for the general use of the city's inhabitants and visitors.

F. Sanctuaries and Rock Reliefs

North of the Via Egnatia along the base of the acropolis were a number of sanctuaries situated in a quarry which had been used in the Hellenistic period. A well-executed inscription in Latin records devotees of Silvanus, a Roman god of woods and forests. The quarried-out rock face on which the inscription was carved served apparently as the back wall of a sanctuary otherwise constructed of semipermanent materials. Shrines dedicated to Magna Mater and

Diana also are in evidence and if enclosed at all, would have been made of wood and other less durable materials. Though extremely difficult to date, the sanctuaries probably originated in the 1st or 2d centuries C.E.

The acropolis at Philippi bears 187 rock-cut reliefs. While a variety of deities are associated with the carvings (the Thracian rider, Magna Mater, Jupiter, Minerva, Isis), the vast majority of them represent a hunting goddess Diana, related to the Greek Artemis and Thracian Bendis. Some of the reliefs depicting Diana are in proximity to carvings of what appear to be human women accompanied, in some instances, with typically domestic paraphernalia. Interpreters of the reliefs have suggested that the women may have been worshippers of the goddess, as clearly was the case in certain ex votos with female dedicants and representations of a deity. It also is possible that human women depicted in the carvings were understood as being associated through funerary iconography with the protective powers of the goddess. Although the cemetery conventionally was located outside the city, the reliefs may have been religious memorials celebrating the deceased's assumption of immortal status. An analogous phenomenon occurs in mortuary iconography depicting deceased males as the Thracian rider hero.

Another set of reliefs depicting women and/or goddesses in a fairly remote area above the theater reflects perhaps the devotions and memorial activity of a group of women cult officials (priestesses of the Augustae) or associated adherents of Libera or Bacchus. However one understands the reliefs on the Philippian acropolis, it is unwise to attribute them to a single underlying religious motivation. They appear to be monuments to a rich variety of religious and honorific perspectives which were expressed in very different styles over a period of two or three centuries.

G. Early Christian Philippi

The earliest Christian building identified at Philippi is a small rectangular structure in the area just E of the Roman forum. Dedicated to Paul, the church was built in the second quarter of the 4th century C.E. (a floor inscription records donations by a bishop at Philippi who from independent testimony is known to have attended the Council of Serdica in 342 C.E.). While the church was immediately adjacent to the heroön built over the Macedonian tomb, there is no indication of a cultic relationship between the two establishments. It is noteworthy, however, that the earliest large basilica at Philippi (5th century C.E.) was constructed in immediate proximity to the heroön just above the Egnatia. This church complex, known as Basilica A, spread over an area almost as large as the Roman forum. The two-storied basilica with its apse oriented typically to the E, featured elegant frescoes in its various chambers, a long, broad nave, and an expansive

narthex and exonarthex to the W. Excavations have revealed another basilica N of the Egnatia, to the W of and below Basilica A, which was carefully built and richly appointed with fine marble materials.

An even more grandiose church building (the so-called “Direkler Basilica” or Basilica B) was begun S of the forum adjacent to the palaestra. It was to have been crowned by an enormous free-standing dome which collapsed prior to completion of the church. A church of more modest dimensions later was built at the site.

East of the forum and incorporating the earlier church dedicated to Paul was an ecclesiastical complex designated by excavators as an “episkopeion” (installations associated with a bishop’s residence). A monumental entryway to the complex consisted of a double-colonnaded stoa leading S from the Egnatia. Through the stoa, one gained access to a large octagonal chapel with a stepped apse to the E. Before reaching the octagon, one would have passed a number of rooms off the stoa’s E edge: a pyramidal-shaped fountain (Phiale), a room of uncertain identity just above the heroön, a Diakonikon with a table or bench on its E wall, and a Prothesis which communicates with the chapel. Suggestions that an early Christian saint’s cult involving water rituals continued the earlier cult at the heroön cannot be confirmed. Over 1,500 coins have been [Vol. 5, p. 317] recovered in the area above the heroön, but these date only from the 4th to 6th centuries C.E. and not before. There are no architectural or other archaeological grounds for presuming cultic continuity between the two establishments.

North of the Phiale is an ensemble of elegantly executed rooms clustered around a baptistery which probably was covered with a dome, decorated on its walls and ceilings with mosaics. Hot water for the baptistery came from an adjacent thermae (bath) complex complete with caldarium, tepidarium, frigidarium, swimming pool, toilets, and perhaps a shower. The intimate proximity of such an extensive bath complex communicating with the ecclesiastical installation is a distinctive feature of the episcopal establishment at Philippi. Extensive storage areas which served the complex have been excavated as has a small burial site for infants located N and E of the octagon’s apse.

Outside the city walls in the modern village of Krenides is another basilica from the early Christian period (the “Extra-muros Basilica”). Originally constructed in the 5th century C.E. in an area containing tombs, the “Extra-muros Basilica” was the site of later Christian burials some of whose epitaphs may include sectarian distinctions applied to the deceased. A series of earthquakes in the 6th and 7th centuries C.E. damaged the church, apparently beyond repair since a small Byzantine chapel was built on the site using remains from the earlier basilica. In the 10th and 11th centuries C.E., the area around the chapel served as a Christian cemetery.

In the immediate vicinity of the “Extra-muros Basilica” excavations have uncovered the apse of a much larger basilica dating from the 4th century C.E. At the site, a large funerary mosaic of the 6th century C.E. has come to light which indicates the titles of the deceased and the names of the bishops who had served during his lifetime. The mosaic is an important source in the reconstruction of Philippi’s officialdom in the early Byzantine period. A possible explanation for the large number of imposing churches at Philippi is that in addition to its episcopal importance, the city enjoyed a special status as the site of early Christian pilgrimages focusing on Paul or other unknown saints. To establish whether or not this evolved out of regional attraction to Philippi’s hero and/or healing cults of an earlier period will require further investigation.

Recovered near the “Neapolis Gate” SE of the theater were fragments of an inscription containing a version of the apocryphal correspondence between Abgar of Edessa and Jesus. The inscription has been dated from the mid-4th to mid-5th centuries and probably served as a device intended to protect the city.

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