

PAUL'S TRAVELS THROUGH CYPRUS (ACTS 13:4-12)

David W.J. Gill

Summary

The location of an Augustan milestone on the road along the south coast of Cyprus suggests that this is a likely route for Paul and Barnabas on their tour 'through the whole of the island'. This would have allowed them to have visited some of the key cities of the province.

I. Introduction

Paul and Barnabas arrived at Salamis on Cyprus by sea and proceeded 'through the whole island as far as Paphos' (Acts 13:6). On other parts of their travels it seems likely that they took advantage of the network of roads constructed under the authority of Rome. Thus after leaving Cyprus on their way to Pisidian Antioch, Paul used the *via Sebaste* constructed in 6 BC by Augustus.¹ In Macedonia the *via Egnatia* served as the route from Neapolis westwards.² The Cyprus journey would have taken the pair of them from the east coast of Cyprus to the

¹E.g. David French, 'Acts and the Romans roads of Asia Minor', in D.W.J. Gill and C. Gempf (eds.), *The Book of Acts in its Graeco-Roman Setting* (The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting 2; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994) 49-58. See also S. Mitchell, *Anatolia: Land, Men and Gods in Asia Minor* 1: *The Celts and Impact of Roman Rule* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993) 70. For further information on the Anatolian road system: D.H. French, 'The Roman road-system of Asia Minor', *ANRW* II.7.2 (1980) 698-729; *ibid*, *Roman Roads and Milestones of Asia Minor, fasc. 2: An Interim Catalogue of Milestones* (BAR Int. ser. 392; British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara monograph 9; Oxford: BAR, 1988).

²D.W.J. Gill, 'Macedonia', in Gill and Gempf, *The Book of Acts in its Graeco-Roman Setting*, 409-10. Paul's visit to Illyricum (Rom. 15:19) may have used this route (410).

west. This claim may reflect the way that the route used passed through some of the most important cities of the island. However it is first important to understand the development of the province.

The province was acquired in 58 BC,³ although Cyprus had earlier been considered as one of the 'friends and allies of Rome'.⁴ Initially it formed an annex to the Roman province of Cilicia,⁵ and in 48/7 BC the island was returned to the control of Egypt. The death of Cleopatra in 31 BC brought Cyprus back under Roman control. Subsequently, in 22 BC, Augustus made Cyprus one of the senatorial provinces under a proconsul of praetorian status. There were no Roman colonies established on the island.

II. The Roads of Roman Cyprus

The evidence for a road between Salamis and Paphos is twofold; firstly in the form of the Roman itineraries, and secondly in the form of milestones. The 'Peutinger Table' which lists the routes and mileages would suggest two possible routes from Salamis.⁶ The first cut to the north-west to Chytri, over the Kyrenia Ridge to the north coast. It then followed the coast to Soli, Arsinoe (Marion), and then south to Paphos. The second headed for Citium on the south coast, then westwards to Amathus, Curium and then Paphos. These routes are not contemporary, and are likely to have developed over a period of time. The distances can be tabulated as follows:

³E. Badian, 'M. Porcius Cato and the annexation and early administration of Cyprus', *JRS* 55 (1965) 110-21.

⁴The Roman piracy laws of 101 or 100 BC reflect this status for Cyprus. For a translation of the texts, see R.K. Sherk, *Rome and the Greek East to the Death of Augustus* (Cambridge: CUP, 1984) no. 55 (Delphi B, and Knidos).

⁵Cicero was one of the republican governors of the island, but did not apparently land there, controlling it from Cilicia. For a list of governors, see T.B. Mitford, 'Roman Cyprus', *ANRW* II.7.2 (1980) 1292. The first quaestor for the island was not appointed until 49 BC.

⁶For the itineraries: K. Miller, *Itineraria Romana* (Stuttgart, 1916; reprinted Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1964) 827-29.

Salamis to Tremithus	18
Tremithus to Citium	24
Citium to Amathus	24
Amathus to Curium	16
Curium to Palaipaphos	22
Palaipaphos to Paphos	11

This gives a total of 115 miles.⁷ The alternative route via the north coast would have been much longer. 88 miles from Salamis to Soli (or 71 miles via Tremithus), and then another 54 miles to Paphos via Arsinoe, giving a total of 142 miles.⁸ The distances between cities would also be convenient for a day's travel, making this at least a six day journey from one end of the island to the other.⁹

The best way of dating these roads is by the surviving milestones which often bear the name of the emperor (see Appendix).¹⁰ Most of these belong to the fourth century AD, and are likely to represent a period of repair to the road system rather than its expansion. Paul's and Barnabas' journey, at least along the south coast, would have been facilitated by the construction of a Roman road during Augustus' reign. This is attested by a milestone, located eleven (Roman) miles from Paphos towards Curium.¹¹ It reads:

⁷These are Roman miles.

⁸These itineraries do appear to be on the short side when compared to the distances marked by the milestones. For example, there must be more than 32 miles between Paphos and Curium (24 miles marked from Paphos, and 8 miles marked from Curium), and more than 24 miles from Arsinoe to Paphos (15 miles marked from Arsinoe, and 9 from Paphos) on a length that is recorded as 24 miles long.

⁹B. Rapske ('Acts, travel and shipwreck', in Gill and Gempf, *The Book of Acts in its Graeco-Roman Setting*, 6) uses the estimate of 16-23 miles per day. The journey may have been longer if Paul and Barnabas stayed in any one of the cities along the way. Luke's emphasis may imply that it was a straight journey with no stops longer than an evening.

¹⁰Mitford, 'Roman Cyprus', 1333-35, n. 213.

¹¹T.B. Mitford, 'Three milestones of western Cyprus', *AJA* 70 (1966) 98-99 no. 3. The milestone is now in the Kouklia museum.

[imp. ca]ESAR AVG[vstvs]

[divi f.] PONTIF[ex max.]

[trib. potest. - cos. -]

As Augustus is named as *pontifex maximus* the work must have taken place after 12 BC.¹² Although the inscription only allows certainty about the construction of the road between Paphos and Curium, it is possible that it was extended eastwards as far as Salamis. The next significant development was the construction of ‘new roads’ (*[via]s novas*)¹³ throughout the province¹⁴ between July and September 81 during the reign of Titus.¹⁵ A milestone identified a new road heading north-east from Salamis to Agios Theodoros and thence presumably to Carpasia.¹⁶ The other roads which were constructed in the Flavian period were presumably an extension to the Augustan scheme.

¹²Compare the date of 6 BC for the *Via Sebaste* which linked the Roman colonies of southern Anatolia. See French, ‘Roman road-system of Asia Minor’, 707, 708, map 2. The milestones dating to 6 BC may be found in French, *Roman Roads and Milestones*, nos. 267, 292, 293, 298, 391, 395, 498, 636, 663, 664, and 670.

¹³*CIL* III.6732. This was during the governorship of L. Plotius P---- (Mitford, ‘Roman Cyprus’, 1302, no. 29. See also T.B. Mitford, ‘Milestones in western Cyprus’, *JRS* 29 (1939) 188-89.

¹⁴A second milestone (Mitford, ‘Roman Cyprus’, 1335, no. 25) without recorded provenance reads [τῆς ἐπαρχε]ίας.

¹⁵Compare the development of the road system in Anatolia between AD 80 and 82: Mitchell, *Anatolia* 1, 124. The milestones of A. Caesennius Gallus ‘state explicitly that he laid roads in the provinces of Galatia, Cappadocia, Pontus, Pisidia, Paphlagonia, Lycaonia, and Armenia Minor’ (Mitchell, *Anatolia* 1, 124). These are conveniently listed in French, *Roman Roads and Milestones*, 507-8. French (‘Roman road-system of Asia Minor’, 711) takes the words *vias straverunt* (or *stravit*) in Anatolia to imply that these were paved roads replacing earlier tracks.

¹⁶We should note that this coincides with Flavian road building in Cilicia opposite Carpasia: French, ‘Roman road-system of Asia Minor’, 710, map 3, 712, map 4. The key milestone comes from Ura and dates to AD 75-76 (Vespasian): French, *Roman Roads and Milestones*, 163-64, no. 461.

Mitford proposed that the route across the heart of Cyprus from Soli to Salamis was one of these constructions.¹⁷

The next main series of inscriptions comes from the Severan period.¹⁸ As some of these were found along the road heading from Paphos to Curium it is clear that this was in part repair work. However it is from this period that there is the first clear indication of a road from Soli to Arsinoe and then south to Paphos.¹⁹ Given this evidence the simplest solution to the proposed route of Paul and Barnabas was from Salamis along the south coast.

III. The Cities visited by Paul and Barnabas

The only cities on Cyprus mentioned in the Book of Acts are Salamis and Paphos. However if Paul and Barnabas travelled on foot along the Augustan road along the south coast,²⁰ they would have passed through Citium, Amathus, and Curium before reaching Paphos.²¹

Three of the cities had been granted the status of asylum in AD 22 due to the standing of their civic sanctuaries.²² These were Salamis (Olympian Zeus),²³ Amathus (Aphrodite),²⁴ and Paphos

¹⁷Mitford, 'Roman Cyprus', 1336.

¹⁸Milestones of this period also dominate in the archaeological record of Anatolia: French, 'Roman road-system of Asia Minor', diagram 7 (opp. p. 720), where 68 examples are noted. For a list: French, *Roman Roads and Milestones*, 438-42.

¹⁹I reject Mitford's suggestion that 'the circuit of Cyprus...was surely devised as a single operation' ('Roman Cyprus', 1335, n. 216). Compare the development of the road system in Asia Minor, which emphasises the administrative centres: French, 'Roman road-system of Asia Minor', 706, map 1, 707. I am grateful to Prof. Stephen Mitchell for drawing my attention to the weakness of Mitford's argument.

²⁰Land, rather than sea, travel is implied by 'through the whole of the island'.

²¹Tremithus is a further possibility depending on the route from Salamis to Citium. For the cities of Cyprus, see A.H.M. Jones, *The Cities of the Eastern Roman Empire* (2nd ed.; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971) 363-73.

²²For the asylum decree: Tacitus *Ann.* 3.62.

²³T.B. Mitford, 'The cults of Roman Cyprus', *ANRW* II.18.3 (1990) 2189-90.

²⁴Mitford, 'Cults of Roman Cyprus', 2185. For Amathus: Mitford, 'Roman Cyprus', 1317-18.

(Paphian Aphrodite). It should be noted that although these deities may sound like anthropomorphic Olympian gods, in fact some had a more regional feel. Paphian Aphrodite was in fact represented by a sacred rock or *baetyl* rather than the cult statue of a goddess.²⁵ A similar cult of sacred rocks is recorded near Amathus. An inscription found at Agios Tychon near Amathus records a cult of ‘Cyprian Aphrodite’ and the sanctuary of ‘the Seven within the Stelai’.²⁶ The dedication was made by the Roman governor of Cyprus, L. Bruttius Maximus (79/80). This was presumably a sanctuary with a central *baetyl* with other sacred rocks around it. The worship of sacred rocks is not uncommon in the east. In particular the famous *baetyl* of Emesa was to be taken to Rome by Elagabalus²⁷ or the cult of Artemis at Perge.²⁸ The sanctuary of Paphian Aphrodite also came to be linked to the imperial cult. The imperial cult was linked to the sanctuary of Aphrodite at Palaipaphos. For example Livia was identified as the new Aphrodite,²⁹ and Augustus’ daughter Julia as Augusta.³⁰ Other inscriptions relating to the imperial cult include an honorific inscription for Amyntor son of Lysias, ‘high priest for life for the well-being of the imperial household’.³¹

Both Salamis and Paphos were the two most important cities on the island. Paphos was the seat of the provincial administration,³² and it was here that Paul met the governor of the island, Sergius

²⁵A representation of the *baetyl* within the sanctuary can be found on the coinage of Paphos: K. Butcher, *Roman Provincial Coins: an Introduction to the ‘Greek Imperials’* (London: Seaby, 1988) 59, pl. 5, nos. 53 and 54.

²⁶Mitford, ‘Roman Cyprus’, 1302, no. 28. T.B. Mitford, ‘Religious documents from Roman Cyprus’, *JHS* 66 (1946) 40-42, no. 16. The inscription can be dated to 1 July–22 September 80.

²⁷For a convenient discussion of the cult see F. Millar, *The Roman Near East 31 BC –AD 337* (Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard University Press, 1993) 304-8. See also Butcher, *Roman Provincial Coins*, 56, fig. 5.68.

²⁸Butcher, *Roman Provincial Coins*, 90, fig. 6.114.

²⁹E.A. Gardner, D.G. Hogarth, and M.R. James, ‘Inscriptions of Kuklia and Amargetti’, *JHS* 9 (1888) 242 no. 61.

³⁰IGR III.940.

³¹Mitford, ‘Cults of Roman Cyprus’, 2197.

³²Mitford, ‘Roman Cyprus’, 1309-15.

Paulus.³³ It had been founded around 312 BC, to replace Palaipaphos. During the second century BC it seems to have become the leading city of the island, taking the prominence away from Salamis.³⁴ The city had been wrecked by an earthquake in 15 BC and Augustus had subsequently conferred on the city the title *Augusta*.³⁵ Further honours were given to the city, perhaps under Nero, when it received the extra title of Claudia.³⁶ Paphos' centrality in the Roman scheme of affairs is also emphasised by the milestones that mark distances from it.

Of the other cities Citium managed to retain elements of its earlier Phoenician past.³⁷ The earlier Phoenician cult of Eshmun became that of Asclepius which was active under Augustus.³⁸ One of the first century BC or Augustan high-priests and benefactors of the cult carried a name, Asclepiodorus son of Asclepiodorus, which reveals his links with Asclepius.³⁹ Elsewhere in the city a stoa was dedicated in 41 BC to Zeus Keraunios, to the Divine Julius and to Aphrodite.⁴⁰ Amathus also had an important cult site of Hera, which was certainly active in the Claudian period.⁴¹ An altar dedicated to Augustus was found on the acropolis.⁴² The sanctuary of Apollo

³³For the most recent discussion, see A. Nobbs, 'Cyprus', in Gill and Gempf, *Book of Acts in its Graeco-Roman Setting*, 282-89.

³⁴For details of Salamis: Mitford, 'Roman Cyprus', 1321-23. The temple of Zeus Olympius adjoined the main *agora* of the city. Augustus was honoured by the provincial high-priest Hyllos son of Hyllos in 12/11 BC (Mitford, 'Cults of Roman Cyprus', 2196).

³⁵Mitford, 'Roman Cyprus', 1310, with details of the proper title.

³⁶*Ibid*, 1310. This may have been linked to the establishment of games at Paphos in Nero's honour.

³⁷*Ibid*, 1318-20.

³⁸*Ibid*, 1319.

³⁹The inscription honours Pnytarion; see T.B. Mitford, 'Further contributions to the Epigraphy of Cyprus', *AJA* 65 (1961) 113-16 no. 15. Asclepiodorus, her husband, was second founder and high priest of the cult of Asclepius and Hygieia.

⁴⁰*CIG* 2641. Mitford, 'Cults of Roman Cyprus', 2195.

⁴¹*IGR* III.974. The inscription is dated to AD 50, see Mitford, 'Cults of Roman Cyprus', 2185. For details of Amathus, see Mitford, 'Roman Cyprus', 1315-17.

⁴²*IGR* III.973.

Hylates, which lay just to the west of the city, may have been developed at the same time.

In conclusion, the route followed by Paul and Barnabas through Cyprus would have brought them to several of the key cities of the island, including the three which had been granted the special status of asylum. The itinerary suggests that this would have taken at least a week. The road would have brought them into contact with some of the main cult centres such as the sanctuary of Aphrodite at Palaipaphos. It also led them to the heart of the Roman administration of the island at Paphos.

Appendix: The Dated Milestones of Cyprus

The datable milestones can be listed in rough chronological order as follows. This does not comprise a list of all milestones from the island.

<i>Period</i>	<i>Mitford</i>	<i>Location</i>
Augustan (12 BC–AD 14)	no. 13	XI east of Paphos
Titus (1 July–13 Sept, 81)	no. 24	XVIII north-east of Carpasia
Titus (1 July–13 Sept, 81)	no. 25	not known
Severan (198)	no. 1	III west of Soli
Severan (?)	no. 7	XVIII west (?) of Soli
Severan	no. 8	III south of Arsinoe
Severan	no. 10	XV north of Paphos
Severan (?)	no. 11	V (?) north of Paphos
Severan (198)	no. 14	XII east of Paphos
Severan (198)	no. 15	XIII east of Paphos
Severan (198)	no. 16	XV east of Paphos
Severan (198 ?)	no. 19	XXV east of Paphos
Macrinus (217-218)	no. 2	IV west of Soli
Decius (249-251)	no. 17	XV from Paphos

Aurelian (271)	no. 12	V (?) north of Paphos
Aurelian (271-272)	no. 17	XV east of Paphos
Aurelian (?)	no. 19	XXV east of Paphos
Aurelian (273-274)	no. 21	VII west of Curium
Aurelian (?) (273-274 ?)	no. 26	V (?) east of Ceryneia
Late 3rd cent (?)	no. 20	XXV east of Paphos
Late 3rd cent (?)	no. 21	VII west of Curium
First Tertarchy (293-294)	no. 12	V (?) north of Paphos
First Tetrarchy (293-294)	no. 21	VII west of Curium
Tetrarchic (?)	no. 19	XXV east of Paphos
defaced (earlier than 337-40)	no. 4	V west of Soli
Constantine (324-333)	no. 19	XXV east of Paphos
Constantine (324-333)	no. 23	west of Citium
Constantine (333-337)	no. 7	XVIII west (?) of Soli
Constantine (333-337)	no. 8	III south of Arsinoe
Constantine (333-337)	no. 9	VI south of Arsinoe
Constantinian (337-340)	no. 1	III west of Soli
Constantinian (337-340)	no. 3	V west of Soli
Constantinian (as no. 3?)	no. 4	V west of Soli
Constantinian	no. 5	VI west of Soli
Constantine II (337-340)	no. 24	XVIII north-east of Carpasia
Constantius (355-360)	no. 1	III west of Soli
Jovian (363-364)	no. 20	XXV east of Paphos
Jovian (363-364)	no. 21	VII west of Curium

