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THE LUKAN *PERIPLUS* OF PAUL'S THIRD JOURNEY WITH A TEXTUAL CONUNDRUM IN ACTS 20:15

ABSTRACT

This article discusses a pericope in Acts 20:6–21:8 recounting the sea portion of Paul's third journey. Its genre resembles the periplus, and generic features are discussed as well as parallels with other periploi. Paul's periplus in the Aegean and Mediterranean Seas is presented within a fixed calendar in the Jewish year, and the itinerary's specifics are detailed. A textual conundrum in Acts 20:15 is discussed as it relates to an anchorage opposite Chios. A lexical discussion of ἀντικρυς Χίου is presented, and possible translations are reviewed. The article presents a new hypothesis that the Ionian city of Erythrae was the place of the ship's landing. It closes with a brief history of Erythrae's significance in the Greco-Roman world and why a stop there by Paul's coasting vessel was likely during this part of the journey.

1. INTRODUCTION

This article discusses a pericope in the Acts of the Apostles that recounts the sea portion of Paul's third journey.¹ It first argues that the traditional author Luke² cast the account in a genre well known to his audience – the

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- 1 I wish to thank Dr. Linford Stutzman and Dr. Dan Davis, both scholars who have sailed the Aegean waters described in this article, for their helpful comments on an earlier draft. I take responsibility for any other errors it still contains.
 - 2 Issues related to the historicity of Acts or its lack thereof are beyond the scope of this article. A full discussion can be found in Keener (2012:51–220), whose work Pervo (2016) has described as “ardently for both the literal meaning and the historical accuracy of nearly every detail in Acts. For skeptics and hunters of symbolism he is an especially useful potential corrective. In most important matters he attempts to summarize fairly the various arguments – and attempt is all that anyone can do.” Regarding historicity this article leans toward Keener

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periplus. The generic features of a *periplus* are enumerated, and parallels with other *periploi* are elucidated. A unique feature of Luke's *periplus* is that the journey in the Aegean and Mediterranean Seas progressed using sailing days within a fixed calendar in the Jewish year. The specifics of that itinerary will be detailed. Finally, a textual conundrum related to the historical geography of Acts 20:15 will be discussed. The text records that Paul's ship stopped somewhere opposite Chios. A lexical discussion of the Greek prepositional phrase ἄντικρυς Χίου is then presented, and possible translations are reviewed. This article presents a new hypothesis regarding the place of landing: Erythrae. It discusses the importance of this Greco-Roman city and why a stop at its port was a viable option for the coasting vessel upon which Paul and his companions were traveling.

2. THE PERICOPE OF ACTS 20:6-21:8

2.1 The background of the pericope

Because of its place in the New Testament, the canon of over two billion Christians throughout the world, the Acts of the Apostles is undoubtedly the most widely read work of Greco-Roman historiography today.³ One of the most detailed accounts of a sea journey in ancient literature is recorded in Acts 20:6-21:8.⁴ The context is Paul's third journey that began with his departure from the province of Macedonia to his final destination in Jerusalem.⁵ Luke identifies seven named men travelling with Paul "who present the fruit of Paul's labors in the various areas of his work" (Tannehill 1990:246).⁶ The seven departed from Philippi's port of Neapolis

rather than such German scholars as H. Conzelmann and E. Haenchen, or the American scholar R. Pervo.

- 3 Scholars generally consider the book of Acts a work of ancient history, although a few still think its genre falls under a travel narrative. See Keener (2014:53-54; 90-115) for a discussion of the generic features of Acts.
- 4 An even longer nautical account in Acts 27:2–28:12 chronicles Paul's captivity-shipwreck journey to Rome. Davis (2009:6, 235) notes how this later pericope utilizes rhetorical elements modeled on the shipwreck scenes in Homer's *Odyssey*. Salway (2004:45) likewise cites this pericope as an example of ancient travel literature.
- 5 Responding to Conzelmann's claim that the itinerary described in Acts 20 was constructed by the author of Acts, Georgi (1992:208) responds, "The itinerary in Acts 20–21 is best understood as a historically correct rendering precisely because of its 'incoherence'".
- 6 Tannehill further notes that they "also resemble the companions of Jesus, who journeyed with him to Jerusalem". Tannehill (1990:245) calls this a "farewell journey", but such a designation is anachronistic because its purpose, although unstated in Acts, was to carry the collection from the Gentile believers

(cf. Acts 16:11) and transshipped across the northern Aegean to Alexandria Troas.⁷ Paul, however, remained behind in Philippi to celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread. This section is among the three “we” passages⁸ in Acts where the narrator purports to accompany the apostle. Paul and the narrator then later sailed to Troas, a journey of five days (Acts 20:6). Since his journey in the opposite direction on the second journey only took two days (Acts 16:11), Gloag (1870:2.234) rightly assumes that “they were perhaps hindered by contrary winds or by a calm sea”. This delay caused Paul to miss the weekly gathering of Christians in Troas, so he was forced to stay an additional seven days to meet with them on the following Sunday evening on the first day of the week.⁹

The type of voyage described by Luke is the system of cabotage – small to medium-sized coasting vessels (*oraria navis*)¹⁰ conducting small-scale maritime commerce – that existed in the Aegean and Mediterranean Seas for centuries. As Greaves (2010:84–85) notes, “These ships would pick up and offload goods in many different ports as they traveled by island-hopping and following coastlines”. Salway summarizes well the challenges of sea travel in antiquity:

For the private traveller, finding a passage to the desired destination meant asking around at the port amongst the merchant shipping, and accordingly the timing of departure was not arranged for the convenience of the few fee-paying passengers.

to Jerusalem. Paul does not know it is a farewell journey until the Holy Spirit starts to warn him of the danger ahead in Jerusalem, which probably occurred in Troas (Thompson & Wilson 2016:forthcoming).

- 7 Georgi (1992:124) makes the improbable suggestion that the first group left early from Philippi because they were traveling by land to Troas to wait for Paul there. Unless this sea lane connecting Europe to Asia was impassable because of weather, it is highly unlikely that a longer land journey would be undertaken. Plus the group would still need to cross the Dardanelles Strait at Sestos to Abydos.
- 8 For a discussion of these “we” passages in Acts, see Porter (1994); Campbell (2007), and my review of Campbell’s volume: Wilson (2011).
- 9 Keener (2014:3.2967) argues convincingly that this meeting did not take place on Saturday evening after the Jewish Sabbath ended but on Sunday evening, with Luke following the Roman reckoning of days from dawn to dawn.
- 10 The common use of such vessels for travel is epitomized by the statement of Pliny the Younger (*Ep.* 10.15): “Now I intend to go to my province partly by coasting vessels (*orariis navibus*), partly by land conveyances”.



Figure 1. Coasting vessel on sarcophagus, Sinop

Therefore, as Salway (2004:47) observes, even for a well-heeled traveler like Paul it

meant putting oneself in the hands of another (the ship’s master), which necessarily constrained the individual traveler’s ability to make or influence decisions about timing, direction, or speed of journey.

Yet two incidents in the pericope suggest that Paul was not at the mercy of the captain regarding direction or speed but actually dictated the course. When the coasting vessel left Troas with Paul’s companions to sail around Cape Lectum, Paul for an unexplained reason walked from Troas to Assos.¹¹ At Assos everyone had to wait for Paul to rejoin the ship before it continued to Mitylene, the chief port of Lesbos. Then in Acts 20:16 Luke states: “For Paul had decided (*χερῖχει*) to sail past Ephesus”. Paul’s seeming control of the ship’s itinerary suggested to Alford (1877:226) that the captain and his crew had been hired by Paul specifically for the journey to the Lycian city of Patara. Alford (1877:226) further proposed that the charter began at Neapolis: “The separation of Paul and Luke from the rest at the beginning of the voyage may have been in some way connected

11 Various reasons for this walk are discussed in Thompson & Wilson (2016: forthcoming; cf. Wilson 2014:362). The authors suggest two primary reasons: 1) a bold response to the Spirit’s warnings of prison and hardships, and 2) spiritual preparation for Paul’s arrival in Jerusalem.

with the hiring or outfit of this vessel".¹² Since the crossing to Troas was an established corridor linking Europe to Asia, Paul and his companions most probably utilized the regular passenger service departing from Neapolis (Davis 2009:74–75). Instead the more probable point for arranging this charter was Troas. Perhaps the reason that Paul sent his companions ahead was to hire a vessel to continue the trip. Whether the captain was a Christian or at least favorable to Paul's mission is unknown. However, he would seemingly be more willing to assist if he were associated with the church in Troas. Paul was also carrying a large sum of money collected from the congregations in Achaia and Macedonia (Murphy-O'Connor 1996:343–346),¹³ and he might have used some of this money to pay for the chartered vessel. Plus he must have had some fears about the money's safety and thought it best to travel on a "friendly" vessel where the collection could be guarded better. Thus for a variety of reasons Paul hired a coasting vessel at Troas to carry his party through the Aegean and then east along the Mediterranean coast of Lycia to Patara. There he planned to change vessels for one sailing to Caesarea Maritima. At the very least it was a win-win situation for the captain and his crew: they received their charter fee for carrying Paul and his companions to Patara plus they could conduct business along the way at their nightly ports of call.

2.2 The genre of the Pericope

Scholars have noted that this pericope in Acts 20-21 resembles the genre of *periplus* in ancient literature.¹⁴ *Periploi* employed local geography to describe voyages around a sea following the coastlines. One of the earliest authors to write in this genre was the Greek historian, Hecateus of Miletus (ca. 560-480 B.C.), with his *Periegesis Ges* (Engels 2007:547), while the earliest known example in the Roman tradition is Menippus of Pergamum and his *Periplus Maris Interni* (ca. 30 B.C.) (Salway 2004: 53; cf. Davis 2009:161-174). Given Luke's conscious use of this genre, it is likely that he was acquainted with the *periploi* written by these Asian writers, which are now lost to us. As Marguerat (2002:271) points out, "Luke is familiar with sea travel and

12 Alford believes that the use of the Greek verb *κἐκρίκει* is "too subjectively strong to allow of our supposing that the Apostle merely followed the previously determined course of a ship in which he took a passage." Harrison (1986:327) also suggests that Paul hired a ship.

13 However, the suggestion by Murphy-O'Connor (1996:345–346) that the gold coins were sewn into the garments worn by Paul and his companions seems fanciful.

14 For a useful review of some of these scholarly efforts see Porter (1994:546–558).

used to coastal itineraries, delighting in describing the ambience of travel, its departures and arrivals, its trips, its farewell and reunion scenes". The mention of numerous ports related to Paul's earlier journeys in Acts underscores Marguerat's point.¹⁵ The ancient Greek novel has also been proposed as the appropriate genre for the travel narratives in Acts (Pervo 1987). However, Alexander (2005:116), after an in-depth discussion of the interesting generic similarities between the sea journeys in *Acts and those in Chariton's Chaereas and Callirhoe and Xenophon of Ephesus' Ephesiaca*, concludes that

we are left with a level of topographical factuality which recalls the *periplous* literature, with its pragmatic attention to detail, unlike the novels.¹⁶

Marguerat (2002:251) concurs:

Such a concern for documentary precision is clearly closer to the *Periplus* and the narrative of exploration than to the novel. The concern with detail and the credibility of the narrative signal the intention of historiographical documentary.¹⁷

One of the best surviving examples of this genre is Arrian's *Periplus Ponti Euxini* (Liddle 2003), which dates to Hadrian's reign in the 130s A.D.

Porter (2003:262–267) notes several narrational parallels to Hanno's *Periplus* such as the extensive use of the first person plural "we"; similar vocabulary related to arrivals, departures and sailing; and syntactical

15 These include Caesarea and Tarsus (9:30), Seleucia (13:4), Salamis (13:5), Paphos, Perga (13:13), Attalia (14:25), Troas, Samothrace, Neapolis (16:11), Pydna? (17:14), Athens (17:15), Cenchrea (18:18), and Ephesus (18:19).

16 Alexander (2005:116) goes on to add: "And the realism of the topography is enhanced by the noticeable use of redundant names which combine with the we-narration to create an impression of eyewitness participation". See also her helpful chart of the "Toponyms in the Pauline Travel Narrative" (120–122) and Maps 1–8 (123–131) that illustrate her discussion.

17 Although Marguerat is speaking of the journey in Acts 27, his comments would likewise characterize this pericope under consideration. Marguerat (2002:257) also notes that *periploi* as "practical guides written for the traveller leave little space for feelings. Their aim is pragmatic". The Lukan *periplus* deviates from this at least twice: in 20:16 the reader is told that Paul bypasses Ephesus because he was in a hurry to reach Jerusalem, and in 20:37–38 Paul ends his passionate speech to the Ephesian elders with the elders weeping, embracing and kissing him while grieving over his statement that they would never see him again.

emphases in their embarkation language.¹⁸ Another feature of a *periplus* is that it provides distances between places “often defined according to the number of sailing days” (Dueck 2012:6). Topoi described include “sequences of harbours, landings, watering-places, shelters from bad weather, landmarks, or hazards...” (Purcell 1996:1141; cf. Burian 2007). In his *periplus* Luke provides a sequence of twelve harbors (H),¹⁹ one shelter (S),²⁰ and three landmarks (L). The following chart compares the Lukan *periplus* with ports mentioned in two known *periploi* of the Aegean and Mediterranean Sea – that of Pseudo-Scylax and the *Stadiasmus Maris Magni*.



Figure 2. Map of Luke's periplus
(Prepared by Sinan Özşahinler, Tutku Tours)

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- 18 However, Porter's point that the syntactical emphasis falls on the finite verbs of arrival rather than the dependent participles of embarkation or sailing past is exaggerated.
- 19 The source of this information is drawn from the Catalogue of Ancient Ports found in deGrauw (2014, *passim*).
- 20 If the Western reading of Acts 20:15 is accepted as likely (Metzger 1975:478), the ship was forced to stay in Trogyllium because of poor winds (Wilson 2013:3).

Luke's <i>Periplus</i>	Scylax, <i>Periplus</i>	Stadiasmus Maris Magni ⁱ
Troas, Alexandria (H, 20:6, 13)		
Assos (H, 20:13–14)		
Mitylene (Lesbos; H, 20:14–15)	Mitylene	
Chios (L, 20:15)	Chios	
Erythrae ⁱⁱ (H, 20:15)	Erythrae	
Ephesus ⁱⁱⁱ (L, 20:16)	Ephesus	
Samos (Pithagorion; H, 20:15)	Samos	
Trogyllium (S, 20:15)		
Miletus (H, 20:15, 21:1)		Miletus, 293
Kos (H, 21:1)	Kos	Kos, 278
Rhodes (Mandraki; H, 21:1)		Rhodes, 271
Patara (H, 21:1–2)	Patara	Patara, 246
Cyprus (L, 21:3) ^{iv}		Cyprus
Tyre (H, 21:3, 7)	Tyre	
Ptolemais (H, 21: 7–8)		
Caesarea Maritima (H, 21:8)		

i See the useful outline in Salway (2004:62–63).

ii The significance of Erythrae is highlighted in the discussion that follows.

iii Although Paul decided to bypass Ephesus, he would be able to see the inlet for the city's harbor in the distance east of the ship.

iv Paul's ship passed Cyprus on the left (*καταλιπόντες αὐτὴν εὐώνυμον*). The Stadiasmus mentions several points on Cyprus's southern coast that would have been visible: Paphos (297), Palaipaphos (299), Tretous Promontory (300), Kourion (301), and Kourias Promontory (303).

2.3 The journey described in the Pericope

A tension exists in the text regarding the duration of the *periplus*. As stated earlier, it is framed by two Jewish holidays – Unleavened Bread (Passover) and Pentecost. Paul remained in Philippi a minimum of seven days to

celebrate Passover that in A.D. 57 fell on Thursday, 7 April.²¹ The Feast of Pentecost, fifty days later, fell on Friday, 27 May. The *periplus* can be divided into two sections: the portion from Alexandria Troas to Patara (20:13-21:2) and that from Cyprus to Caesarea Maritima (21:3-8). In the first Paul seems impatient and in a hurry to reach Jerusalem by the day of Pentecost (Acts 20:16), for he has lost a week in Troas due to the slow crossing from Neapolis. Hemer (1980:10) identifies Paul's concern: "It was early in the season and the timing of the voyage was uncertain".

Because the coasting vessel's voyage would conclude at Patara, Paul was also uncertain how soon passage could be secured on another vessel. Soon such a ship was found going to Phoenicia, which was able to utilize the prevailing north-westerly winds to make a quick passage below Cyprus to Tyre (21:3). Paul then could relax, knowing he would reach Jerusalem by Pentecost. Thus the party was able to spend a number of days in the ports of Tyre, Ptolemais, and Caesarea Maritima (21:3-10). The following chart presents a chronology of the journey adapted from Ramsay and other scholars with my own adjustments based on more realistic travel times in some cases.²²

Itinerary	Travel Days	Chronology
Feast of Unleavened Bread	7 (implied)	Thurs-Thurs 7-14 April ^v
Philippi (20:6)	1 (implied) ^{vi}	Fri 15 April
Crossing (20:6)	4	Sat-Tues 16-19 April
Troas (20:6)	6	Weds-Mon 20-25 April ^{vii}
Assos walk (20:13)	2 (implied) ^{viii}	Tues 26 April
Mitylene (20:14)	1	Weds 27 April
Opposite Chios (20:15)	1	Thurs 28 April
Samos (20:15)	1	Fri 29 April

21 For a discussion of how this date was calculated, see Hemer (1990:169) and Keener (2014:2960-2961).

22 Coneybeare-Howson (1856:543); Ramsay (2001:221-224); Hemer (1980:9-12); Hemer (1990:169). However, Ogg (1968:145) questions this calendar method calling it "much over-rated" with "inherent weaknesses" that "cannot of itself lead to a reliable conclusion". Nevertheless, many scholars like myself have found the development of such a calendar of heuristic value to understand better the chronology of the *periplus*

Itinerary	Travel Days	Chronology
Miletus (20:15)	1 ^{ix}	Sat 30 April
Miletus (20:17-38)	4 (implied) ^x	Sun-Weds 1-4 May
Cos (21:1)	1	Thurs 5 May
Rhodes (21:1)	1	Fri 6 May
Patara (21:1) ^{xi}	1	Sat 7 May
	Stage 1: 31 days	
Below Cyprus to Phoenicia (21:2-3)	3 ^{xii}	Sun-Tues 8-10 May
Tyre (21:3-6)	6	Weds-Mon 11-16 May
Ptolemais (21:7)	1	Tues 17 May
Caesarea (21:8)	1	Weds 18 May
	Stage 2: 11 days	
Caesarea (21:10)	Many days (5)	Thurs-Mon 19-23 May
Jerusalem (21:15)	3 (implied) ^{xiii}	Tues-Thurs 24-26 May
Day of Pentecost	50 days after Passover	Fri 27 May ^{xiv}

- v The Jewish day ran from sunset to sunset while the Roman day ran from sunrise to sunrise. Luke followed the Roman system in his discussion of days (cf. Acts 3:1; 4:3; 10:3, 9, 23; 23:11-12, 23, 31-32). The Feast in A.D. 57 began at sunset on Thursday, 7 April.
- vi Philippi was 16 kilometers following the Egnatian Way to its port Neapolis where Paul boarded the ship to cross to Alexandria Troas (Acts 16:11-12). This half day plus time waiting for the ship is included in the five days mentioned in 20:6.
- vii Barrett (1998:2.951) argues for a slightly different calculation: “[I]f he left on a Monday he must have arrived on a Tuesday; Tuesday to Monday, counting inclusively, is seven days”. Nevertheless, he is correct that time in antiquity was reckoned inclusively. For our calculation the “seven days” (*ἡμέρας ἑπτὰ*; 20:6) ran from Wednesday to the following Tuesday.
- viii Most commentators, e.g., Yamauchi (1980:22), underestimate the distance between Troas and Assos suggesting 20 miles/32 kilometers as the crow flies. However, the route initially followed the Sacred Way that connected Troas to the temple of Apollo Smintheus before turning southeast to Assos, a total distance of 61 kilometers or a two-day walk. See the map in Özgünel (2013:13); for the distance see Thompson & Wilson (2016:forthcoming).

- ix That this short distance took a day's sail resulted from an unexpected layover at Trogyllium, an anchorage at the tip of the Mycale peninsula (Dilek Yarımadası); see Wilson (2013:3).
- x Paul's stay in Miletus is typically understated because of a low estimate of the time required to travel to and from Ephesus. See Wilson (2013:6) where I suggest a minimum of five days for Paul's stopover in Miletus. To save time, the vessel might have dropped off Paul's messenger on the northern side of the Gulf of Latmus.
- xi The Western reading adds "and Myra" at 21:1. However, it more likely that Paul terminated this portion of the *periplus* in Patara rather than in Andriake, the port of Myra. Nevertheless, Ramsay (2001:226), asserts that it "may be safely assumed that Myra was visited by Paul's ship", suggesting that Luke omits its mention because "for some reason the visit to Myra did not interest him". However, the gloss regarding Myra was probably inserted under the influence of Acts 27:5 or the *Acts of Paul and Thecla* rather than recording an actual stop on this journey (Metzger 1975:482). Williams (1990:359) observes that "the prevailing winds made Patara the most suitable port of embarkation for the journey eastward and Myra the regular terminal on the westward run". Both ports, however, served as transit points for ships traveling in either direction as the construction of a granary (*horreum*) in each city by Hadrian in the second century A.D. attests. Unfortunately, Paul never saw the impressive lighthouses erected at the harbor entrance by Nero in A.D. 64/65; see İşik (2011:67–73).
- xii With the etesian winds behind the ship could make good sailing time. Pliny the Elder (*Nat.* 19.3-4) notes that the new governor of Egypt sailed from the Straits of Messina to Egypt in five days. Surely Paul's ship could have made this shorter distance in three days. For a diagram of the Etesians see Davis (2009:260 fig. 2.10).
- xiii The distance from Caesarea Maritima to Jerusalem was 106 kilometers through Antipatris (cf. Acts 23:23-33), thus requiring a long three-day journey by foot. Paul's plan to arrive in Jerusalem immediately before Pentecost seems intentional. Both Witherington (1998:632) and Keener (2014:3103) list reasons why the timing of Paul's arrival would be significant.
- xiv Ramsay (2001:224) states that Pentecost was on 28 May, but this is 51, not 50 days, from Passover on 7 April. Riesner (1998:316) identifies as 29 May as the date of Pentecost.

3. A TEXTUAL CONUNDRUM WITHIN THE PERIPLUS

3.1 The lexical conundrum

Paul's ship, after sailing from the northern harbor of Mitylene the main city of Lesbos (Acheilara 1999:6), arrived ἀντικρυς Χίου (Acts 20:15). Haenchen (1971:588) notes the reason for this anchorage: "[T]he stretch from Mitylene to Samos is much too long for a day's voyage (here people evidently do not sail by night)". The word ἀντικρυς is a *hapax legomenon* in the New Testament. Even in the Greek Septuagint (LXX), it is used only once in 3 Maccabees 5:16: "to recline opposite him" (ἀντικρυς ἀνακλῖναι αὐτοῦ). Generally an adverb, ἀντικρυς in 3 Maccabees functions as a preposition with an object in the genitive case.²³ Classical writers used the cognate forms ἀντικρυ and καταντικρυ with a genitive, but these usages likewise had a limited lexical scope. In Homer's *Iliad* (8.301)

23 Danker (2000:89) provides other examples of ἀντικρυς with a genitive including Josephus (*A.J.* 15.410) and Philo (*Opif.* 79).

Teucer shot a second arrow “straight against Hector” (Ἐκτορος ἀντικρῦ). And Thucydides (*Hist.* 7.26.2) noted that Demosthenes and the Athenians landed “opposite Cythera” (καταντικρῦ Κυθήρων). Their landing was thus on the southern shore of Laconia near Cape Malea and opposite the island. In Chariton’s *Chaereas and Callirhoe* (1.11.4) the ship carrying Callirhoe anchored “opposite Attica” (καταντικρῦ τῆς Ἀττικῆς). The purpose of anchoring at a small harbor on the southern shore of the Saronic Gulf was to take Callirhoe ashore, not to stay aboard the ship.

The translation of the preposition as “arrived off” in the New International Version indicates that some offshore position is to be understood. Barrett (1998:958) suggests that “Luke probably means that they sailed between the island of Chios and the mainland” interpreting ἀντικρῦς as meaning “right through”. This view is reflected in the New Living Translation: “sailed past”. Conybeare and Howson (1856:262) suggest an entirely different interpretation: “From the mode of expression employed by St. Luke it is probable that they were becalmed”. However, there is nothing in the text to commend such an interpretation. The translation “opposite”, found in most major English translations is preferred.²⁴ And as seen in the usages in Thucydides and Chariton, ships that came opposite some site actually landed at a specific place rather than just anchoring outside its harbor.

3.2 The geographical conundrum

So what does “opposite Chios” (ἀντικρῦς Χίου) mean geographically? The Greek island of Chios (Sakız Adası) is separated from Turkey by a strait 6.5 kilometers wide at its narrowest point, Cape Argennum (Beyaz Burun or Cape Bianco²⁵). The island’s main port, Chios or Chora, lies 15 kilometers northwest of the Turkish resort town of Çeşme, ancient Kysos.²⁶ Occupied during the classical period, Kysos does not seem to

24 For example, the English Standard Version, the New King James Version, and the New Revised Standard Version. According to Liddell & Scott (1968:157), the prepositional use in Acts 20:15 is best translated as “opposite”.

25 This fact is well illustrated on the map at: <http://www.haritatr.com/harita/Beyaz-Burun/21455> [Retrieved 2016, 16 April]. *Mediterranean Pilot* (U.S. Secretary of Navy 1916:313, 335) calls this Cape Bianco and provides a full description of the headland. Because this edition of the Pilot was published before the population exchange in 1923, its authors uses the Greek names of many of the places mentioned.

26 The Fitzwilliam Museum shows a group of bronze votive animals from Kysos that date from 600–550 B.C. on its web site: <http://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/dept/ant/greeceandrome/browsegallery/area2/object.html?ClassicalGreekWorldCase5Sec1&69105> (Retrieved 2016, 8 March).

have been an active port in the Roman period.²⁷ Part of the interpretive issue here is whether Chios means the island or its eponymous main city.²⁸ Strabo (*Geogr.* 14.1.35) notes that Chios city had a good port and a naval station that could handle eighty ships. Therefore Schnabel concludes that Paul's ship sailed to the island "presumably putting into the chief town on the eastern coast also called Chios".²⁹ Bock (2007:621) makes the peculiar comment that Paul sailed to "the island of Chios, which is opposite Smyrna".³⁰ But as noted, it is Chios and not Smyrna that is the object of the preposition ἀντικρυς.

If Chios city is not the correct interpretation, it is then possible that Paul's ship spent the night opposite Chios Island near Cape Argennum, the view of Ramsay (2001:223).³¹



Figure 3. View of Chios from Cape Argennum

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- 27 Hence the *Barrington atlas* (2000:57) does not show Kysos but rather identifies a nearby inland site as Boutheia. The Pleiades web site lists Boutheia's occupation dates as 550–330 B.C. (<http://pleiades.stoa.org/places/550488> [Retrieved 2014, 9 September]).
- 28 Barrett (1998:958) reiterates this, saying "it may be the town rather than the island that is in mind".
- 29 Schnabel (2012: 837). Meinardus (1972: 99) mentions that the apostle traveled via Chios; Konstas (2003) likewise argues that Paul's ship anchored in the harbor opposite Chios city.
- 30 The map of Paul's journey on the PBS television web site Frontline is laughable because it places Chios on the Çeşme peninsula: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/maps/paul.html> [Retrieved 2016, 9 May].
- 31 Bruce (1990:428) follows Ramsay in this opinion. The comment by Walbank (1940:122) that Philip V of Macedon was threatened by a fleet "lying opposite Chios, in the bay between the promontories of Argennum and Mesate" lends some credence to this suggestion.

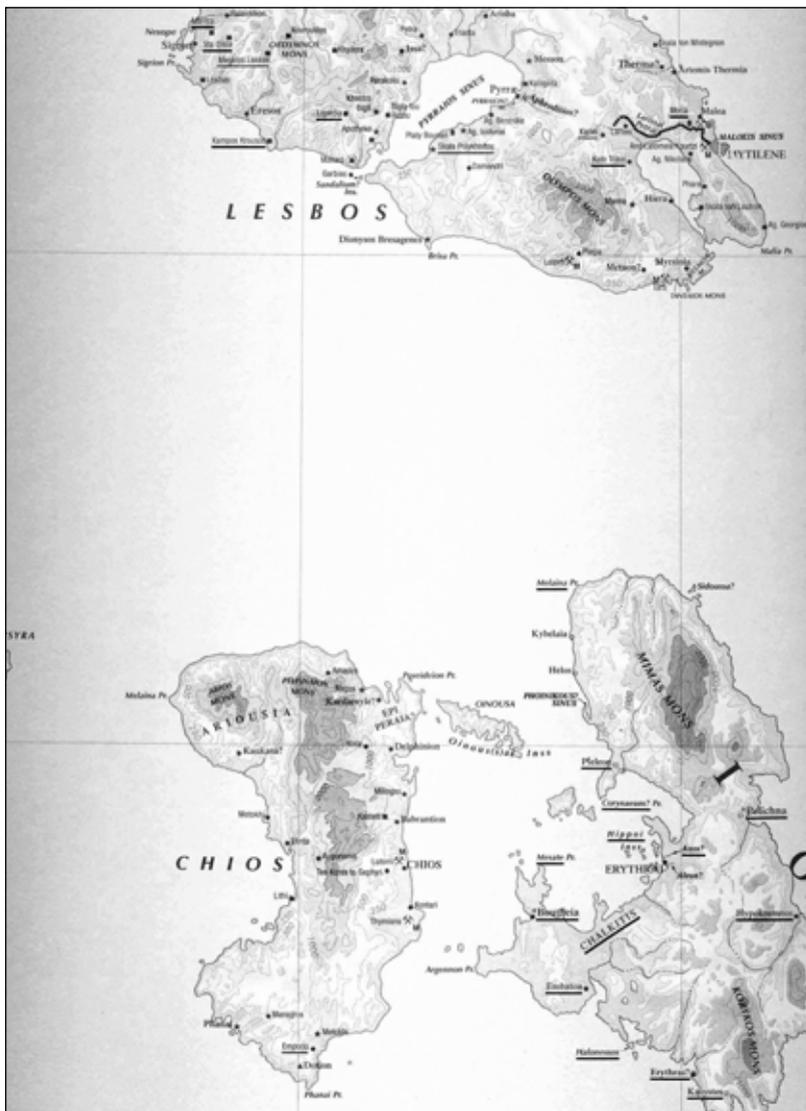


Figure 4. Barrington atlas map of Aegean coast

However, as Morton (2001:27n.53) notes, this is one of three places in the Chian strait particularly notable for offshore rocks or shallow reefs.³² Since the captain of Paul's ship would undoubtedly know this, he would have avoided the cape as an anchorage for the night. How do major Bible atlases present Paul's route here?

The following atlases depict Paul stopping at Chios Island: *Zondervan atlas of the Bible revised* (Rasmussen 2010:231) and *Carta's New Century handbook and atlas of the Bible* (Rainey & Notley 2007:246), while the *HarperCollins atlas of Bible history* (Pritchard 2008:167) and the *new Moody atlas of the Bible* (Beitzel 2009:261 map 112) show the stop at Chios city. Only the *Oxford Bible Atlas* (Curtis 2009:169) fails to show Paul landing at Chios Island or city but instead shows a route coming close to the coast of Asia Minor.³³ The *Crossway ESV Bible atlas* (Currid & Barrett 2010:247) and the *IVP atlas of Bible history* (2006:161) are representative of those atlases that simply show the route passing through the channel without touching any land.

3.3 "Opposite Chios" as the Port of Erythrae

The lack of consensus among scholars and atlases about the textual and geographical conundrum in Acts 20:15 suggests that a fresh hypothesis is in order. There is only one other major city near Chios with a suitable harbor – Erythrae. The suggestion by McNeile (1920:90) that Paul's boat arrived at "a point on the mainland opposite the island of Chios" argues for this attempt to localize it on the coast of Turkey.³⁴

The captain of Paul's vessel would have sailed south from the north harbor of Mitylene and, after sighting the Karaburun peninsula, followed its western coastline to Erythrae, a distance of 100 kilometers. The crew of the coasting vessel, despite being under Paul's direction, undoubtedly used their opportunities to conduct trading business in the various ports. Since coasting vessels usually overnighted in these ports as well, Erythrae would be a natural place for Paul and his companions to arrange for food and lodging.

32 On his web site related to Paul's journeys, Koester (N.D.) states that "Paul's ship left the mainland opposite Chios and traveled southward". Where that stop on the mainland occurred is unspecified.

33 This depiction, however, is probably by accident since the cartographer seems to have little knowledge either of the biblical text or the geography of the eastern Aegean Sea.

34 Williams (1990:351) likewise suggests that the ship "either anchored off shore or actually at a point on the mainland".

Ancient writers describe the close relationship between Chios and Erythrae. Herodotus (*Hist.* 1.142 Loeb) highlights both their geographical proximity and their similar Greek dialect:

There are yet three Ionian cities, two of them situated on the islands of Samos and Chios, and one, Erythrae, on the mainland; the Chians and Erythraeans speak alike.

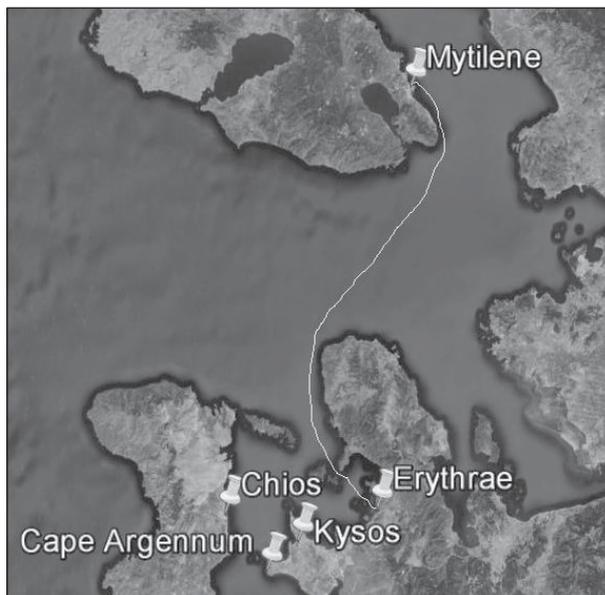


Figure 5. Google Earth view

Livy (*Hist. Rom.* 44.28.8–11 Loeb) describes a local sea battle between the Attalid king Eumenes and the Macedonians:

When Antenor received a signal that these ships were at sea, he started for Sabota and met them in the narrowest part of the channel between the headland of Erythrae and Chios. The last thing that Eumenes's officers expected was the appearance of a Macedonian fleet cruising in those waters ...The clumsy nature of their ships and the difficulty of keeping the Gauls quiet, destroyed all hope of resistance. Some of those who were nearer to the mainland swam to Erythrae; others crowded on all sail and ran their ships aground in Chios, and, abandoning the horses, fled in wild disorder towards the city.

This description well illustrates the proximate geographical relationship between Chios and Erythrae separated by only 30 kilometers of sea.



Figure 6. Chios in background from theater at Erythrae

This close relationship between the two cities is underscored by the entries on Erythrae in two modern classical dictionaries. The *New Century classical handbook* begins its entry for Erythrae (Avery 1962:452): “In ancient geography, an Ionian city in Asia Minor, situated opposite the island of Chios”. The article in the revised *Oxford classical dictionary* likewise states that Erythrae is “one of the twelve cities of the Ionian League on the coast opposite the island of Chios” (Bean, Roueché & Spawforth 1996:557). It is striking that both dictionaries describe Erythrae using the same language as Luke: “opposite Chios”. The city was situated 22 kilometers northeast of Kysos (Çeşme) on the northern side of the Erythrae, or Mimas (modern Çeşme), peninsula.³⁵ Greaves (2010:98) notes that Erythrae

has perhaps the most perfect location of any town in Ionia. Situated on a peninsula jutting out into the bay, its high-sided and dominant acropolis can be seen from far away;

35 I thank my friend Levent Oral for his suggestion to check into this identification. Levent spent his boyhood summers at Boyalık Beach on the north side of the peninsula facing Erythrae and its bay.

its harbor “was ideal for navigation, looking west toward Chios”. A small group of islands at Oinoussai separated Chios from the Erythrai peninsula and served as stepping stones between the two (Greaves 2010:54). Strabo (*Geogr.* 14.644) notes that four other islands sitting in the gulf before Erythrae were called Hippoi (“Horses”). According to Bean (1966:125), these “admirably protected” Erythrae. Its importance as a port city is shown by its contribution of eight ships to the Battle of Lade in 494 B.C. However, the contribution of 100 ships by Chios, the largest of any Ionian city, suggests that Chios was a greater naval power (Herodotus *Hist.* 6.8).

The history of the city has been ably recounted by Akurgal (1993:231–233) and Bean (1966:122–127), so there is no need to review it here. Nevertheless, it is significant to highlight the city’s claim to fame in antiquity. As Akurgal (1976:317) notes,

Herophile, the prophetic sibyl of Erythrai, enjoyed a great reputation in the ancient world, second only to the sibyl of Kyme in Italy. A building claimed to be her sanctuary was discovered at Ildiri, a structure resembling a nymphaion with a number of inscriptions, one of which records the Erythraian origin of Herophile.³⁶

Archaeological excavations at the site were carried out by Akurgal from 1964 to 1982. After a hiatus of two decades survey work began in 2003–2004 by Coşkun Özgünel and Kutalmış Görkay of Ankara University with excavations resuming in 2007 under the direction of A. G. A. Orbay, also of Ankara University.³⁷ Remains from the Hellenistic period account for the majority of the finds on the acropolis as well as in the agora west of its summit. An archaic ruin on the acropolis is the temple of Athena Polias dating initially to the eighth century B.C. with reconstruction in the sixth century.³⁸ The villas with mosaic floors found at Cennettepe account for the significant remains from the Roman period. These villas overlook the harbor to the southeast but also look westward toward Chios. The ancient natural harbor of Erythrae, where Paul’s ship would have landed, still functions as the modern fishing harbor for the village of Ildiri.

36 The memory of the Erythraean Sybil has been preserved through her portraits by Michelangelo in the Sistine Chapel and by Antonio Federighi in the mosaic floor of the Siena Cathedral.

37 For a summary in English of the history and excavation results of Erythrae, see [http://www.tayproject.org/TAYages.fm\\$Retrieve?CagNo=10732&html=ages_detail_e.html&layout=web](http://www.tayproject.org/TAYages.fm$Retrieve?CagNo=10732&html=ages_detail_e.html&layout=web). [Retrieved 2016, 26 April].

38 This temple was constructed on a foundation of polygonal masonry with an approach ramp built in the same style. Rock-cut niches have been found with images of Cybele/Athena, which reinforces the suggestion that the cult of Athena developed out of the worship of Cybele.



Figure 7. Harbor at Erythrae

4. CONCLUSION

This article has proposed that Luke's account of Paul's third journey on the Aegean and Mediterranean Seas falls under the ancient genre of *periplus*. What is remarkable about this extended itinerary is that a timetable for its execution can also be suggested. In considering the textual conundrum in Acts 20:15, one question might well be asked: Why doesn't Luke provide the name of Erythrae in the text? This omission should not pose an obstacle because in other places in Acts the name of the port is omitted. Paul's landing at Seleucia Pieria (14:26; cf. 13:4) and departure from Neapolis (20:6; cf. 16:11) are unmentioned; the ports of Samos (Pythagorion) and Rhodes where Paul landed are unspecified (20:15; 21:1); Andriake is not mentioned as Myra's port (27:5), and the port in Malta from which Paul's grain ship sailed is unnamed (28:11). Besides the grammatical and geographical arguments for identifying Erythrae as the port of landing "opposite Chios", a final consideration relates to local tradition. It is remarkable that, unlike most other cities along the itinerary, there are no traditions related to Paul's visit

to Chios or churches dedicated to him on the island.³⁹ For this reason Fant and Reddish (2003:80–83; 116–125) do not include Chios in their guidebook of Greece’s biblical sites; however, they do include Mitylene and Samos, the ports immediately before and after Paul’s stop “opposite Chios”.

Localizing the port at Erythrae, while perhaps a seemingly minor detail in the Lukan *periplus*, provides several significant insights. First, it provides further understanding regarding the sailing patterns of coastal vessels in antiquity. Second, it shows the interrelationship of coastal Greco-Roman cities in the commercial trading network that extended beyond the Aegean as far as the port of Patara on the Mediterranean Sea (Acts 21:1).



Figure 8. Harbor at Patara with *horrea* in background

39 For example, see the Chios Travel Guide to important churches on the island: <http://www.chios.gr/en/things-to-see/sightseeing/churches>. [Retrieved 2016, 10 May]. Contrarily, facing the north harbor at Mytilene on Lesbos there is a chapel commemorating Paul’s stop on the island while on Samos at the Zoodochos Pigi Monastery there is a monument and chapel dedicated to Paul’s visit.

This trading network through ports became critical for the spread of Christianity and led Stark (2006:76) to advance the hypothesis: "Port cities tended to be Christianized (that is, to have Christian congregations) sooner than inland cities." Finally, it locates another site in Turkey related to Paul's journeys with its potential benefits for faith tourism. However, whether Erythrae finds a place on future maps of Paul's journeys remains to be seen.⁴⁰

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40 In the next edition of my guide *Biblical Turkey*, Erythrae will be added to the sites in the Aegean region.

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