

# Philippi

From [Philippi](#), an article in Wikipedia.

Philippi was a city in eastern Macedonia, established by the king of Macedonia, Philip II (the father of Alexander the Great) in 356 BC and abandoned in the 14th century after the Ottoman conquest. The present municipality Filippoi is located near the ruins of the ancient city and it is part of the periphery of East Macedonia in Greece.

The objective of founding the town was to take control of the neighboring gold mines and to establish a garrison at a strategic passage: the site controlled the route between Amphipolis and Neapolis, part of the great royal route which crosses Macedonia from the east to the west and which was reconstructed later by the Roman Empire as the Via Egnatia. Philip II endowed the new city with important fortifications, which partially blocked the passage between the swamp and Mt. Orbelos, and sent colonists to occupy it. Philip also had the marsh partially drained, as is attested by the writer Theophrastus. Philippi preserved its autonomy within the kingdom of Macedon and had its own political institutions (the Assembly of the demos). The discovery of new gold mines near the city, at Asyla, contributed to the wealth of the kingdom and Philip established a mint there. The city was finally fully integrated into the kingdom under Philip V.

See Wikipedia also on [The Battle of Philippi](#)

**From W. J. Conybeare and J. S. Howson, *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul*.**

The plain between Haemus and Pangaeus is the plain of Philippi, where the last battle was lost by the republicans of Rome. The whole region around is eloquent of the history of this battle. Among the mountains on the right was the difficult path by which the republican army penetrated into Macedonia; on some part of the very ridge on which we stand were the camps of Brutus and Cassius; s the stream before us is the river which passed in front of them;” below us, ° upon the left hand

of the even field,““ is the marsh by which Antony crossed as he approached his antagonist; directly opposite is the hill of Philippi, where Cassius died; behind us is the narrow strait of the sea, across which Brutus sent his body to the island of Thasos, lest the army should be disheartened before the final struggle. The city of Philippi was itself a monument of the termination of that struggle. It had been founded by the father of Alexander, in a place called, from its numerous streams,“The Place of Fountains,“ to commemorate the addition of a new province to his kingdom, and to protect the frontier against the Thracian mountaineers. For similar reasons the city of Philip was gifted by Augustus with the privileges of a colonia. <sup>1</sup> It thus became at once a border garrison of the province of Macedonia, and a perpetual memorial of his victory over Brutus. And now a Jewish Apostle came to the same place, to win a greater victory than that of Philippi, and to found a more durable empire than that of Augustus. It is a fact of deep significance, that the “first city” at which St. Paul arrived, on his entrance into Europe, should be that “colony,” which was more fit than any other in the empire to be considered the representative of Imperial Rome.

The characteristic of a colonia was, that it was a miniature resemblance of Rome. Philippi is not the first city of this kind to which we have traced the footsteps of St. Paul; Antioch in Pisidia, and Alexandria Troas, both possessed the same character but this is the first place where Scripture calls our attention to the distinction; and the events which befell the Apostle at Philippi were directly connected with the privileges of the place as a Roman colony, and with his own privileges as a Roman citizen. It will be convenient to consider these two subjects together. A glance at some of the differences which subsisted among individuals and communities in the provincial system will enable us to see very clearly the position of the citizen and of the colony.

We have had occasion to speak of the combina-

<sup>1</sup>The full and proper name was *Colonia Augusta Julia Philippensis*.

tion of actual provinces and nominally independent states through which the power of the Roman Emperor was variously diffused; and again (Chapter 5), we have described the division of the provinces by Augustus into those of the Senate, and those of the Emperor. Descending now to examine the component population of any one province, and to inquire into the political condition of individuals and communities, we find here again a complicated system of rules and exceptions.

As regards individuals, the broad distinction we must notice is that between those who were citizens and those who were not citizens. When the Greeks spoke of the inhabitants of the world, they divided them into "Greeks" and "Barbarians," according as the language in which poets and philosophers had written was native to them or foreign. Among the Romans the phrase was different. The classes into which they divided mankind consisted of those who were politically "Romans," and those who had no link (except that of subjection) with the city of Rome. The technical words were *Cives* and *Peregrini* "citizens" and "strangers." The inhabitants of Italy were "citizens;" the inhabitants of all other parts of the Empire (until Caracalla extended to the provinces the same privileges which Julius Caesar had granted to the peninsula) were naturally and essentially "strangers." Italy was the Holy Land of the kingdom of this world.

We may carry the parallel further in order to illustrate the difference which existed among the citizens themselves. Those true born Italians, who were diffused in vast numbers through the provinces, might be called Citizens of the Dispersion; while those strangers who, at various times, and for various reasons, had received the gift of citizenship, were in the condition of political Proselytes. Such were Paul and Silas, in their relation to the empire, among their fellow Romans in the colony of Philippi. Both these classes of citizens, however, were in full possession of the same privileges; the most important of which were exemption from scourging, and freedom from arrest, except in extreme cases; and in all cases the right of appeal from the magistrate to the Emperor.<sup>2</sup>

The remarks which have been made concerning individuals may be extended, in some degree, to communities in the provinces. The City of Rome might be transplanted, as it were, into various parts of the

empire, and reproduced as a colonies; or an alien city might be adopted, under the title of a municipium," into a close political communion with Rome. Leaving out of view all cities of the latter kind (and indeed they were limited entirely to the western provinces), we will confine ourselves to what was called a *colonia*. A Roman colony was very different from anything which we usually intend by the term. It was no mere mercantile factory, such as those which the Phoenicians established in Spain, or on those very shores of Macedonia with which we are now engaged : or such as modern nations have founded in the Hudson's Bay territory or on the coast of India.

Still less was it like those incoherent aggregates of human beings which we have thrown, without care or system, on distant islands and continents. It did not even go forth, as a, young Greek republic left its parent state, carrying with it, indeed, the respect of a daughter for a mother, but entering upon a new and independent existence.

The Roman colonies were primarily intended as military safeguards of the frontiers, and as checks upon insurgent provincials. Like the military roads, they were part of the great system of fortification by which the Empire was made safe. They served also as convenient possessions for rewarding veterans who had served in the wars, and for establishing freedmen and other Italians whom it was desirable to remove to a distance.

The colonists went out with all the pride of Roman citizens, to represent and reproduce the City in the midst of an alien population. They proceeded to their destination like an army with its standards; and the limits of the new city were marked out by the plough. Their names were still enrolled in one of the Roman tribes. Every traveler who passed through a *colonia* saw there the insignia of Rome. He heard the Latin language, and was amenable, in the strictest sense, to the Roman law. The coinage of the city, even if it were in a Greek province, had Latin inscriptions.

Cyprian tells us that in his own episcopal city, which once had been Rome's greatest enemy, the Laws of the XII. Tables were inscribed on brazen tablets in the market place, "Though the colonists, in addition to the poll tax, which they paid as citizens, were compelled to pay a ground tax (for the land on which their city stood was provincial land,

<sup>2</sup>Two of these privileges will come more particularly before us, when we reach the narrative of St. Paul's arrest at Jerusalem. It appears that Paul and Silas were treated with a cruelty which was only justifiable in the case of a slave, and was not usually allowed in the case of any freeman. 'It would seem, that an accused citizen could only be imprisoned before trial for a very heinous offence,' or when evidently guilty. Bail was generally allowed, or retention in a magistrate's house was held sufficient.

and therefore tributary, unless it were assimilated to Italy by a special exemption); s yet they were entirely free from any intrusion by the governor of the province. Their affairs were regulated by their own magistrates. These officers were named Duumviri ; and they took a pride in calling themselves by the Roman title of Praetors.”

The primary settlers in the colony were, as we have seen, real Italians; but a state of things seems to have taken place, in many instances, very similar to what happened in the early history of Rome itself. A number of the native provincials grew up in the same city with the governing body; and thus two (or sometimes three) co ordinate communities were formed, which ultimately coalesced into one, like the Patricians and Plebeians. Instances of this state of things might be given from Corinth and Carthage, and from the colonies of Spain and Gaul; and we have no reason to suppose that Philippi was different from the rest.

Whatever the relative proportion of Greeks and Romans at Philippi may have been, the number of Jews was small. This is sufficiently accounted for, when we remember that it was a military, and not a mercantile, city. There was no synagogue in Philippi, but only one of those buildings called Proseuchae, which were distinguished from the regular places of Jewish worship by being of a more alight and temporary structure, and frequently open to the sky.”<sup>3</sup> For the sake of greater quietness, and freedom from interruption, this place of prayer was “ outside the gate;” and, in consequence of the ablutions, which were connected with the worship, it was” by the river side,” on the bank of the Gaggitas, the fountains of which gave the name to the city before the time of Philip of Macedon, and which, in the great battle of the Romans, had been polluted by the footsteps and blood of the contending armies.

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<sup>3</sup>Extracts to this effect might be quoted from Epiphanyes. A Proseucha may be considered as a place of prayer, as opposed to a synagogue, or a house of prayer. It appears, however, that the words were more or less convertible, and some consider them nearly equivalent. Josephus (Life, 54) describes a Proseucha as •a urge building, capable of holding a considerable crowd:’ and Philo mentions, under the same denomination, buildings at Alexandria, which were so strong that it was difficult to destroy them. Probably, it was the usual name of the meeting place of Jewish congregations in Greek cities. Other passages in ancient writers, which bear upon the subject, are alluded to in the following extract from Biscoe: “The seashore was esteemed by the Jews a place most pure, and therefore proper to offer up their prayers and thanksgiving to Almighty God. Philo tells us that the Jews of Alexandria, when Flaccus the governor of Egypt, who had been their great enemy, was arrested by order of the Emperor Gaius, not being able to assemble at their synagogues, which had been taken from them, crowded out at the gates of the city early in the morning, went to the neighboring shores, and standing in a most pure place with one accord lifted up their voices in praising God. Tertullian says, that the Jews in his time, when they kept their great fast, left their synagogues, and on every shore sent forth their prayers to heaven : and in another place, among the ceremonies used by the Jews, mentions *orationes littoral*, the prayers they made upon the shores. And long before Tertullian’s time there was a decree made at Halicarnassus in favor of the Jews, which, among other privileges, allows them to say their prayers near the shore, according to the custom of their country. (Joseph. Ant. xiv. 16, 23 It is hence abundantly evident, that it was common with the Jews to choose the shore as a place highly fitting to offer up their prayers.-P.251. He adds that the words in Acts 16:13 ‘may signify nothing more than that the Jews of Philippi were wont to go and offer up their prayers at a certain place by the river side, as other Jews who lived near the sea were accustomed to do upon the sea-shore.’ See Acts 21:5.