

(second half of the 13th century B.C.) has been found there during Wright's excavations.

#### Suggestions for Further Reading

See especially Albright's *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan* (1968) where most of the documentation for the present article can be found by checking the volume's indices and the footnotes of Chap. 2. Among more recent studies which pertain to this period, see e.g. William G. Dever, "The 'Middle Bronze I' Period in Syria and Palestine," and Paul W. Lapp, "Palestine in the Early Bronze Age," both in J.A. Sanders, ed., *Near Eastern Archaeology in the Twentieth Century: Essays in Honor of Nelson Glueck* (1970); Dever, "The Peoples of Palestine in the Middle Bronze I Period," *Harvard Theological Review* 64 (1971), 197-226; Nelson Glueck, *Rivers in the Desert* (2nd ed.; 1968); Lapp, *The Dahr Mirzbaneh Tombs* (1966); A. Malamat, "Mari," *BA* 34 (1971), 2-22; A. Parrot, *Abraham and His Times* (1968); G. Posener, J. Bottéro, and K. Kenyon, "Syria and Palestine, c. 2160-1780," *Cambridge Ancient History* (3rd ed.; 1971), Chap. XXI; R. de Vaux, *Histoire Ancienne d'Israel des Origines à l'Installation en Canaan* (Paris, 1971).

## Colossus, Colossae, Colossi: Confusio Colossaea

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Athens, Greece

The practice of innovating religious stories, by future generations known and revered as traditions, is intimately associated with the history and spread of the Christian Church. We can distinguish various motives that have led to the fabrication of religious stories. In some instances they are told to increase the glory, power and majesty of God and his saints. In other cases non-theological factors, purely political and economic considerations, have led to the emergence of such stories. The majority of these stories or traditions deal with the objects of God's revelation and consequently center around the lives of the Apostles, saints, martyrs, and confessors of the church as well as their respective writings. We are accustomed to assign the period of their formation either to "the Early Period" or to "the Middle Ages." It should be of interest to the student of Christian history and tradition to learn, therefore, that also in these days of critical scholarship and enlightened biblical studies, New Testament stories are being transmitted which originated in the latter part of the 20th century.

One of those stories which is presently circulated by tourist-guides and in inexpensive and locally published guide-books on the Island of Rhodes pertains to the Apostle Paul's ministry to the inhabitants of the island. The following account is in the process of becoming a local tradition.

"On his last missionary journey St. Paul stopped over in Rhodes where he preached the Gospel with much success so that many islanders accepted the new faith. Prior to his departure, he appointed Prochorus as bishop of the island. Some time later, he addressed a letter to the islanders, namely the Epistle to the Colossians, since the Rhodians were referred to as the Colossians on account of the Colossus of Rhodes. The

church on the island was known as the Colossian church which was later also administered by an archbishop of Colossae.”

According to the Acts of the Apostles St. Paul may have stopped in Rhodes on his return from his third missionary journey (21:1). After his touching farewell message to the elders of Ephesus (20:17-35), the ship continued the journey to Cos and on the following day he passed Cape Triopium and the peninsula of Cnidus before he reached Rhodes.

It is very likely that St. Paul would have seen the remains of the Helios-Colossus, one of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world. Built between 304 and 284 B.C. the colossus had collapsed in 225 B.C. due to an earthquake. Strabo informs us that the colossus was broken at the knees, and because of a certain oracle the people of Rhodes refused to raise it again. Its remains were sold in 656 A.D. by Muawiyah the ‘Umayyad to a Jewish merchant of Emesa in Syria who employed 900 camels to carry away the bronze pieces of the fallen colossus. There is no archaeological certainty as to the former location of the colossus. A recent local Rhodian tradition places the site near the present Gate of St. Paul, while the Knights had consecrated a Church of St. John the Colossus on the site believed to have been occupied by the Helios-Colossus.<sup>1</sup>

With respect to the story of the Apostle’s missionary success on the island, we must place its origin in the 18th or 19th century. A small barrel-vaulted chapel of St. Paul is situated on the beach of the cove of St. Paul in Lindos, where the inhabitants of Lindos celebrate a panegyris on the Feast of SS. Peter and Paul (June 29) in commemoration of the Apostle’s arrival on the island.<sup>2</sup> The Greek Orthodox Synaxarium assigns Prochorus, one of the “seven men of good repute, full of Spirit and of wisdom” (Acts 6:2), to the diocese of Nicomedia.<sup>3</sup>

The most remarkable part of the “Rhodes tradition” is the transference of the recipients of the Epistle to the Colossians from Colossae in Phrygia to the Dodecanese Island. Without going into the thorny issue of the authorship of the Epistle to the Colossians, there is nevertheless general unanimity about its destination, namely the Christians of the town of Colossae on the southern bank of the Lycus River, 15 km. due east of Laodicea. By the 8th century, the Phrygian Colossae was supplanted by Khonai (Honaz), 5 km. south and 300 m. up the slope of Mt. Kadmos. A local tradition states that St. Michael had saved the people of the Lycus Valley from inundation by clearing the gorge outside Colossae.<sup>4</sup>

1. S.G. Zervos, *Rhodes: Capitale du Dodecanèse* (1920), p. 234.

2. Cecil Torr, *Rhodes in Ancient Times* (1885), p. 92.

3. S. Eustratiados, *Hagiologion of the Orthodox Church* (n.d.), p. 406 (in Greek).

4. Cf. W.H. Buckler and W.M. Calder, *Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua* (1939), Vol. VI.



Over the whole site the scarcity of ancient remains testifies to its having been used as a quarry for at least a thousand years.

At the same time, it is true that during the Middle Ages the name "Colossus" was sometimes given to the island of Rhodes. We are told that the reason for this association was to conserve the memory of the Helios-Colossus.<sup>5</sup> Thus, for example, Denis Possot and Charles Philippe (1532) wrote: "In ancient times it was the home of the golden fleece; and there too, stood the statue of the sun-god which was named the Colossus, from which the Rhodians were called Colossenses."<sup>6</sup>

Moreover, during the time of the occupation of the island by the Knights of the Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem from 1309-1522, the Latin archbishop was indeed called "Archiepiscopus Colossensis" to distinguish him from the Greek Orthodox metropolitan who was called "Rhodiensis." In 1328, the Latin archdiocese of Colossi on Rhodes was established; and the most important Latin prelate bearing the name of "Archiepiscopus Colossensis" was Andreas Chrysoberges who signed for the See of Rome the Decree of Union at the Council of Florence in 1439.

The confusion is increased by the mistaken assumption that the Latin archbishops of Rhodes were known "Colossensis" on account of the ancient Helios-Colossus. In fact, it seems much more logical to suggest that the Latin archbishops, who in the first half of the 14th century arrived in Rhodes, acquired their title "Colossensis" from the state of Colossi in Cyprus. Soon after the Latin occupation of Cyprus, the Hospitallers or Knights of St. John of Jerusalem came to the island; and in 1210 they were given the state of Colossi west of Limassol by King Hugh I. In 1291, after the fall of Acre, Cyprus became the headquarter of the Order; and they, together with the Templars, were placed by Henry II of Cyprus in joint occupation of Limassol.<sup>7</sup> When the Hospitallers moved to Rhodes, they named their prelate after the Grand Com-manderie of the Order which was at Colossi on the south coast of Cyprus.

There is little doubt that non-theological factors have led to the emergence of the above mentioned story, especially as it is not transmitted by the members of the clergy but by the agents of the tourist industry. The Greek Orthodox Church on Rhodes considers St. Silas as her patron, just as the Greek Orthodox Church in Crete venerates St. Titus, that in Cyprus St. Barnabas, and that in Athens St. Dionysius Areopagites. Since many Western tourists are largely ignorant about St. Silas, the stories of

5. Michael G. Mavrides, *Rhodes* (1967), p. 11.

6. D. Possot and Ch. Philippe, *Le Voyage de la Terre Sainte* (1890), p. 190.

7. Seven miles west of Limassol stands the 15th century square tower of Colossi built by the Hospitallers. Cf. Rupert Gunnis, *Historic Cyprus* (1936), pp. 276-80.

St. Paul fill a vacuum, which, if related with conviction, are readily accepted by the biblically uninformed.

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