
Rhegium

RHEGIUM rē'jē-əm [Gk. *Rhēgion*] (Acts 28:13). A city on the east side of the Sicilian Straits, the modern Reggio di Calabria, where Paul's ship stopped on the way to Rome. Ancient authorities were divided as to whether Rhegium meant "royal [town]" (Lat *regium*) or "rent [town]" (Gk. *rhégnymi*, i.e., where Sicily was rent apart from Italy). Rhegium was about 10 km (6 mi) S of a point opposite Messina (ancient Messana), near the rock Scylla and the whirlpool Charybdis, long known as hazards to ships.

Originally a colony of Chalcidian Greeks (Strabo Geog vi.1.6), Rhegium enjoyed great prosperity under tyrants in the 5th cent. B.C. (Herodotus vii.165) but was captured and destroyed by Dionysius tyrant of Syracuse in 387 B.C. All the surviving inhabitants were sold into slavery (Diodorus xiv.106–108, 111f.). The city never entirely recovered from this blow, although it was partially restored by the younger Dionysius. When the Greek general Pyrrhus invaded Italy, the people of Rhegium made an alliance with Rome (280 B.C.) and received four thousand Campanian troops within their walls. The Campanians turned out to be very unruly guests, for, in imitation of a band of mercenaries across the strait in Messina, they expelled or massacred the men and enslaved the women and children (Polybius i.7; cf. Orosius iv.3). The mercenaries were not punished by the Romans until 270 B.C., when the town was restored to the former inhabitants who had survived. The people of Rhegium were faithful to their alliance with Rome during the Second Punic War (Livy xxiii.30.5–9; xxiv.1; xxvi.12.1–14; xxix.6.3–10). During the Social War (91–87) Rhegium became a Roman municipality (Cicero *In Verrem* v.61 [158–160]; *Pro Archia poeta* iii.5). Some of Augustus's veterans were settled there.

The ship on which Paul sailed from Melita to Puteoli encountered unfavorable winds after leaving Syracuse, and it reached Rhegium by means of tacking. It waited at Rhegium a day for a south wind, which bore it to Puteoli (Acts 28:13), about 290 km (180 mi) away, probably in about twenty-six hours.

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G. H. ALLEN; B. F. HARRIS

¹ Grace Notes: <http://www.gracenotes.info>
Editor: Warren Doud, wdoud@gracenotes.info
