

The Route of Paul's First Journey to Pisidian Antioch

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The route of Paul's first journey between Perga and Pisidian Antioch is still disputed. This article examines the three alternatives proposed by scholars. It explores the geographical and historical evidence for each route, looking especially at the extensive road system that existed in Pamphylia, Pisidia, and south Galatia in the first century. Bible atlases routinely depict one route and the reasons for this choice are discussed. Based on a review of the evidence, a fresh hypothesis for the route of the first journey is suggested.

Keywords: Paul's first journey, Perga, Pisidian Antioch, Via Sebaste, Roman roads, Acts 13.14; 14.24

1. Introduction

The routes that the apostle Paul took on his journeys across Asia Minor still remain in dispute. A case in point is the route of Paul's first journey from Perga (Πέργη)¹ to Pisidian Antioch. Scholars have suggested three possible routes with variations for this journey. Two of these routes are routinely depicted in Bible atlases, often with little awareness of the ancient road network or the topography of the area. On a popular level, the recent opening of the St Paul Trail in southern Turkey has also stirred up interest in the route of Paul's first journey. Although the St Paul Trail does not follow the ancient routes exactly, Kate Clow's experience in preparing the new path has provided fresh insights into the region's history and topography.²

1 I will use the Latin spelling found exclusively in English translations of the NT rather than the Greek spelling *Perge* usually found in classical and historical works.

2 Clow, working with a team of volunteers, has waymarked a 311 mile/500 kilometer trail from Perga to Pisidian Antioch (Yalvaç) according to Grande Randonnée standards. She has also published a guidebook to assist hikers: *St Paul Trail* (Derbyshire, UK: Upcountry, 2004). It has an excellent map with a commentary on the ancient routes that intersect the trail.

2. The Route of Paul's First Journey

Acts 13.14 relates that Paul and Barnabas traveled inland from Perga to Pisidian Antioch. Barbara Levick makes a general comment that Paul's 'journeyings took him along well-established routes'.³ However, her vague description does not help much, because as Broughton correctly observes, 'The text of Acts (XIII, 14) gives us no help regarding this stage of Saint Paul's first journey. We can only attempt to decide what was topographically and historically the most probable route'.⁴ The text is vague regarding the route inland through which they passed (διελλθόντες) to Pisidian Antioch. Pisidian Antioch sat at the apex of a triangle that ran from the plain of Pamphylia on the Mediterranean coast across the Taurus Mountains and through the fertile lake region. Within this triangle was the rugged, mountainous region called Pisidia.

The three possible routes for the journey may be classified according to their geographical direction from Perga⁵—eastern, central, and western; see Figure 1.⁶ This article will examine the viability of the suggested routes and their variations through the lens of literary, topographical, archaeological, and epigraphical evidence. It will also look at how Bible atlases have depicted this journey, often charting the route inadequately. After reviewing the evidence, the paper will present a new hypothesis regarding the route.

a. The Eastern Route

The eastern route began at Perga and crossed the Cestrus (Aksu) River before running southeast through the plain of Pamphylia. It passed just south of Sillyum and crossed the Eurymedon River (Köprüçay) at Aspendus.⁷ The main coastal road ran to Side, where the route turned north through the Taurus range

3 Barbara Levick, *Roman Colonies in Southern Asia Minor* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1967) 99.

4 T. R. S. Broughton, 'Three Notes on Saint Paul's Journeys in Asia Minor', *Quantulacumque: Studies Presented to Kirsopp Lake* (ed. Robert P. Casey, Silva Lake, and Agnes K. Lake; London: Christophers, 1937) 131–8, here 131.

5 As David French notes in an email (18/04/2005) about the road system in Pamphylia, 'Perge is the starting point for almost all important routes, cp. the Hittite text of Kurunta'.

6 John McRay, *Paul: His Life and Teaching* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003) 120–1. David French never mentions McRay's eastern route. Instead he discusses only two options—what he calls the eastern (McRay's central one) and western routes; 'Acts and the Roman Roads of Asia Minor', *Greco-Roman Setting* (vol. 2 of *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting*; ed. David W. J. Gill and Conrad Gempf; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994) 50–3.

7 Giray Erceken in his Turkish article, 'Pamphylia Bölgesi ve Çevresi Eski Yol Sistemi', *Türk Tarih Kurumu Belleten* 56/16 (1992) 361–81, here 364, mentions a short-cut running from Aspendus to a junction just north of Etenna (also depicted in Map 1, p. 371). However, McRay does not account for this in his discussion. This junction to Aspendus was observed by the author and USAF Chaplain Glenn Page while traveling through the pass near At İzi, but we followed the track toward Side instead.

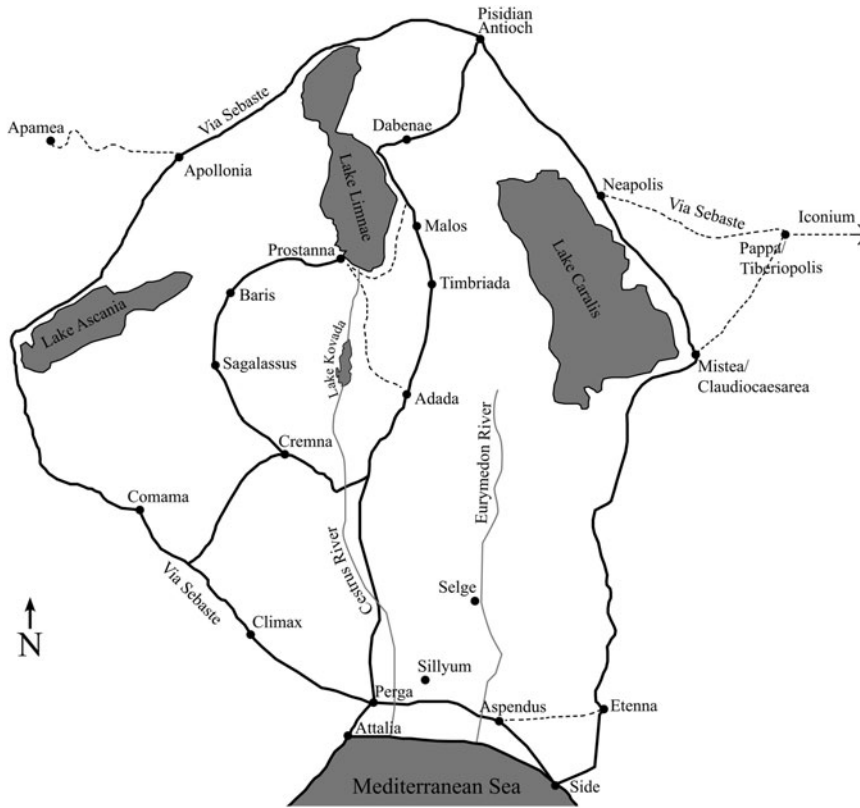


Figure 1. The possible routes between Perga and Pisidian Antioch

to Lake Caralis (Beyşehir Gölü).⁸ It first climbed past Etenna (Sırt Köy) through the foothills of the Taurus and then crossed through the pass at Kesik Beli before descending to Lake Caralis.⁹ Ormerod suggests that this was probably the route

8 Another route struck northeast of Side following the valley of the Melas (Manavgat) River. After passing through modern Akseki, it descended to the basin of Lake Trogitis (Suğla Gölü) near modern Seydeşehir. The modern Turkish highway largely follows this route. Neither W. M. Calder and G. E. Bean in *A Classical Map of Asia Minor* (London: British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara, 1957) nor the *Barrington Atlas of the Greek and Roman World* (ed. Richard J. A. Talbert; Princeton: Princeton University, 2000) shows this track, however. In his article on Etenna J. Nollé includes maps depicting both routes: 'Etenna. Ein Vorbericht', *Epigraphica Anatolica* 3 (1984) 143–56, here 144, 153. H. A. Ormerod traveled it in 1911 in his attempt to trace the route of Servilius; see 'The Campaign of Servilius Isauricus against the Pirates', *Journal of Roman Studies* 12 (1922) 35–56, here 49. The stages of the journey with his discoveries are given in an Appendix, pp. 52–6.

9 Colonel Doughty-Wylie traversed this route in 1907. The stages and distances are given by Ormerod in 'The Campaign of Servilius Isauricus against the Pirates', 49 n. 5. Ercken also provides the stages of the route in 'Pamphylia Bölgesi ve Çevresi Eski Yol Sistemi', 364–5, 371 Map 1.

followed by Servilius Isauricus around 75 BCE when he conquered the inland country of Orondeis.¹⁰ In the Caralis basin the Orondian tribe had two communities—Mistea and Pappa. Mistea, later to be renamed Claudiocaesarea (modern Beyşehir), was located at the southeastern corner of Caralis. Here the road forked, with the north branch proceeding to Pisidian Antioch along the eastern shore of the lake, where it connected with the Via Sebaste at Neapolis.¹¹ (The fork to Iconium struck northeast to Pappa, later renamed Tiberiopolis, where it too connected with the Via Sebaste.) From Neapolis the road left the shores of Caralis and passed in a straight line through rolling hills to Pisidian Antioch.¹² The stages of the eastern route are:¹³

Perga	Aspendus	19 miles
Aspendus	Etenna via Side	34 miles
Etenna	Mistea/Claudiocaesarea	42 miles
Mistea	Neapolis	24 miles
Neapolis	Pisidian Antioch	<u>30 miles</u>
Perga to Pisidian Antioch	Total	149 miles

b. *The Central Route*

The central route ran north from Perga along the valley of the Cestrus (Aksu) River. F. W. Farrar suggested over a century ago that ‘the Apostles made their way up the valley of the Cestrus, passed along the eastern shore of the large and beautiful lake Eyerdir [*sic*]’.¹⁴ North of Perga there was an ancient crossing point near Çatallar where the track switched to the east bank of the Cestrus.¹⁵ The road followed a pleasant valley through the Pamphylian plain that narrowed in the north. At Karacaören, where the present dam sits, the gorge becomes very deep.¹⁶

10 Ormerod, ‘The Campaign of Servilius Isauricus against the Pirates’, 49. Magie, however, believes such a route was improbable ‘for it would have led Servilius far to the northwest of Isauria’. Instead he opts for the route east of Side to Silistat and Isaura Vetus through the steep Susam Beli (*Roman Rule in Asia Minor*, vol. 2 [Princeton: Princeton University, 1950] 1171).

11 Neapolis was formerly located at modern Şarkikaraağaç, but now is placed further south near the village of Kiyakdede. See Getzel M. Cohen, *The Hellenistic Settlements in Europe, the Islands, and Asia Minor* (Berkeley: University of California, 1995) 348–9.

12 For photographs of sections of the eastern route, see Takeko Harada and Fatih Cimok, *Roads of Ancient Anatolia* (2 vols.; Istanbul: A Turizm Yayınları, 2008) 1.170–9.

13 The distances given in statute miles were measured using a Brunton Digital Map Measurer on the *Barrington Atlas*. The distances are over 95% accurate. Higher accuracies are difficult because of the page creases and the way the maps overlap in the atlas.

14 F. W. Farrar, *The Life and Work of St. Paul* (New York: Dutton, 1896) 204. The Roman historian Ronald Syme was more equivocal, suggesting that Paul ‘might have passed this way’ (*Anatolica: Studies in Strabo* [Oxford: Oxford University, 1995] 205).

15 Ercenk, ‘Pamphylian Bölgesi ve Çevresi Eski Yol Sistemi’, 366, 371 Map 1, describes a spur that ran from the crossing westward to the Climax Pass.

16 The reservoir now in the area has dramatically changed the local landscape, but its physical features can still be discerned.

De Mesmay rightly points out that though this route may seem simple, it too involves crossing the Taurus!¹⁷ Nearby a spur ran northwest to Cremna, while another branch proceeded to the northeast following the course of the upper Cestrus.¹⁸ The route now begins to climb through steep valleys along a stretch called the King's Road (Kral Yolu). Along this section there are three inscriptions from the early Roman period engraved on the wall of a canyon just above the track. One is a Traveler's poem of Epictetus, who was born in nearby Phrygia. Today this area near Çandır is a national park called the Yazılı Kanyon ('Canyon with Writing') Milli Park. The road climbs out of the canyon southwest of Sütçüler, and sections of the Roman road can still be seen around this village.

The road proceeded north toward the only major city along the route—Adada (near Sağrak). Like the other Pisidian cities of Cremna and Sagalassus, Adada was perched on a high vantage point overlooking the valley below.¹⁹ The dizzying ascent to the city is one of the best-preserved sections of Roman road in Turkey today. The roadbed is an engineering wonder as it twists along the edge of a precipitous cliff.²⁰ Adada for Paul, according to de Mesmay, was an *étape incontournable*—an inescapable stopping place.²¹ Likewise, Clow writes, 'Although much of Adada was built after Paul's travel, it must have been a welcome and comfortable halting place on a tough and dangerous journey'.²² In Ramsay's day Adada bore the name of Kara Bavlo. He writes that 'it is highly probable that the name Bavlo has arisen from the fact that Paul was the patron saint of the city, and the great church of the city was dedicated to him'.²³ He concludes that 'the church dedicated to Paul probably originated in the belief that the

17 Étienne de Mesmay, *Sur les Routes de L'Apôtre Paul en Turquie* (Paris: Parole et Silence, 2005) 39. Ben Witherington III must be speaking of the central route when he writes, 'Paul and Barnabas set out on an arduous journey over the Taurus Mountains to Antioch near Pisidia' (*Acts* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998] 404; see map 875).

18 Stephen Mitchell *et al.*, *Cremna in Pisidia* (London: Duckworth, 1995) 6, mentions that his team was able to trace sections of this road; however, the route does not appear in the volume's maps on pages 7 and 42. The road is depicted on a map in another of his works; see G. H. R. Horsley and S. Mitchell, *The Inscriptions of Central Pisidia* (IK 57; Bonn: Rudolf Habelt, 2000) 179.

19 The only available book on Adada is a guide in Turkish with site plans and photographs written by its excavator Mustafa Büyükkolancı—*Adadā Pisidia'da Antik Bir Kent* (Göлтаş Kültür Dizisi: Ankara, 1998). For a popular account of the city with color photographs, see Ersin Demirel, 'Adada', *Skylife* (April 2007) 98–106. Online: <http://www.thy.com/en-INT/corporate/skylife/article.aspx?mkl=355> (accessed 23 February 2009).

20 Unfortunately the road at the upper end of the approach to the city is greatly debilitated due to erosion by water and probably also by earthquakes. For a photograph of this and other sections of the central route, see Harada and Cimok, *Roads of Ancient Anatolia*, 1.159–69.

21 De Mesmay, *Sur les Routes de L'Apôtre Paul en Turquie*, 40.

22 Clow, *St. Paul Trail*, 75.

23 Broughton, 'Saint Paul's Journeys in Asia Minor', 131, objects to this interpretation stating that 'a Turkish corruption of Saint Paul's name is more likely to become Ayo Bavlo than Kara Bavlo'. Unfortunately both the church and the name have disappeared from the local area today.

Apostle had visited Adada on his way to Antioch'.²⁴ The main route from Adada continued northeast through the hill country to Timbriada (near Aksu).

Another track went northwest from Adada along the marshy shores of Lake Kovada to Prostanna. This Roman colony was situated above the southern end of Lake Limnae (Eğirdir Gölü) at a distance of 31 miles/50 kilometers from Adada. The map of Pisidia at the end of Levick's volume does not show a track from Adada to Lake Kovada that would connect with the Cremna-Prostanna road.²⁵ Nevertheless, she writes, 'From Adada easy routes could be followed along branches which led north to Prostanna and south to Perge'.²⁶

From Timbriada the central route proceeded through the hills above Lake Limnae to Malos (Sarıidris). North of modern Mahmatlar the road descended to the eastern side of the lake where it connected with a track running along the shoreline from Prostanna. It continued along the lake to the mouth of the Anthios River (Yalvaç Çay) near Yeşilköy.²⁷ At Dabenaе (Galanda?; modern Gelendost) the road entered the territory of Pisidian Antioch.²⁸ From Dabenaе the road followed the Anthios northeast through the open fields near Höyükü before arriving at Pisidian Antioch.²⁹ The stages of the central route are:

Perga	Adada	50 miles
Adada	Timbriada	17 miles
Timbriada	Malos	13 miles
Malos	Dabenaе	18 miles
Dabenaе	Pisidian Antioch	<u>16 miles</u>
Perga to Pisidian Antioch	Total	114 miles

c. *The Western Route*

The western route probably began to be used during the Persian and Hellenistic periods. The first portion may have been Alexander's route in 334 BCE

24 W. M. Ramsay, *The Church in the Roman Empire before A.D. 170* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1897) 20, 21. The closest village today is Sağrak on the paved road.

25 On which side of the lake this spur passed is open to question. Levick, *Roman Colonies*, end map, shows the road going along the west side of Lake Kovada and up the Aksu River to Prostanna. Clow instead takes her trail from Adada through the foothills east of Kovada to Sipahiler, before descending to Serpil at the north end of the lake. She thinks that the Romans would have avoided such a marshy shoreline as that found along Lake Kovada (*St Paul Trail*, 40).

26 Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 15. Levick's map does show a road running south from Adada along the upper Cestrus before descending to Perga.

27 This must be the area about which Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 14, writes: 'there is a break in the second eastern range just south of Antioch, which enables the road from Antioch to reach Eğirdir [*sic*] Göl and, by hugging the cliffs, Prostanna'. She is postulating another track that followed the lake's shoreline rather than going inland.

28 Stephen Mitchell and Marc Waelkens, *Pisidian Antioch: The Site and its Monuments* (London: Duckworth/Classical Press of Wales, 1998) 3.

29 Locally the road near Pisidian Antioch is called the Göçer Yolu (Nomads' Road).

when he marched from Pamphylia to Sagalassus in Pisidia. Along this route in 25 BCE Augustus founded Roman colonies at Comama, Apollonia, and Pisidian Antioch using Roman army veterans.³⁰ The road encircled Pisidia on a broken axis—basically south to north past Lake Ascania (Burdur Gölü) to Apollonia, then west to east from Apollonia to Iconium.³¹ These colonies were strategically situated to guarantee the safety of the populace outside the Pisidian triangle. Inside the triangle was a hostile tribe called the Homanadenses. The Via Sebaste was built in 6 BCE by the legate Cornutus Arruntius Aquila.³² Once the road was constructed, Augustus tasked Publius Sulpicius Quirinius to make war against the Homanadenses. After two to three years of conflict, Quirinius was victorious, taking some four thousand male prisoners. Remaining sections of road show that it was a wide, paved highway intended for wheeled traffic, not just a narrow stone track intended only for crossing by pedestrians and pack animals. It began at Perga and climbed out of the Cestrus River valley before heading northwest across the plain of Pamphylia.³³

About 22 miles/35 kilometers northwest of Attalia (Antalya) a natural pass called the Climax (Doşeme Boğazı) cuts through the Taurus range.³⁴ Today this pass is largely undisturbed and in a remarkable state of preservation because the modern highway follows the route of the Seljuks five miles west at the Çubuk Boğazı.³⁵ At the lower end of Doşeme Boğazı several Byzantine buildings still stand, showing that the road continued in use until at least the sixth century CE. Original sections of pavement can still be found along the ascent from the Pamphylian plain. After walking for approximately two hours, another group of buildings comes into view along with several sarcophagi *in situ*. At the summit of the pass there is a gate complex containing a milestone also *in situ* that marked a distance of 139 (CXXXVIII) Roman miles³⁶ from Pisidian Antioch,

30 Stephen Mitchell, *Anatolia: Land, Men, and Gods in Asia Minor*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University, 1993) 90.

31 D. H. French, 'Roads in Pisidia' *Forschungen in Pisidien* (ed. Elmar Schwertheim; AMS 6; Bonn: Rudolf Habelt, 1992) 167–75, here 170.

32 Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 38. She notes that while the name Via Sebaste is documented for only certain stretches of the road, 'it is convenient to describe here the whole Roman road system in Pisidia, but how much was built in 6 B.C. remains uncertain' (39 n. 1).

33 For a discussion of this section of the route, see Burak Takmer and Nihal Tüner Öner, 'Surveys of the Route-Network in West Pamphylia: A New Portion of the Via Sebaste Extending Between Perge and Klimax', *Adalya* 11 (2008) 109–32.

34 This pass is marked 'Klimax' in Talbert, *Barrington Atlas of the Greek and Roman World*, Section 65, E3.

35 For photographs of sections of the Via Sebaste from Perga to Pisidian Antioch including the Climax Pass, see Harada and Cimok, *Roads of Ancient Anatolia*, 1.124–35.

36 The Roman mile was approximately 8% shorter than the statute mile, running 1618 ½ yards, 4856 feet, or 1480 meters. However, measured distances between mileposts suggest a length closer to 5000 feet or 1520 meters. See *OCD*, 943.

the *caput viae* (head of the road). The road then descended into a picturesque valley before continuing to the Anatolian plateau along a gentle ascent.³⁷

The first city of importance on the Sebaste route was Comama, which sat in the middle of a flat plain at the junction of two roads.³⁸ It covered about thirty-five acres with no evidence of city walls. It 'was founded primarily as a centre of Roman culture, to spread it along the routes on which it stood and to influence the development of the superficially hellenized neighbouring cities'.³⁹ This colony resembles Lystra in situation. The population of the city and its territory is estimated at between 6300 and 9450 people.⁴⁰ A milestone (*CIL* III. 6974) found here indicated it was 122 (CXXII) Roman miles from Pisidian Antioch.

The road continued northwest through pine-covered hills passing several smaller villages as it progressed across the plain of Lake Ascania. This saltwater lake dominated this part of the journey, and the road skirted the western shore of the lake. At the northwest corner of the lake the road left the shoreline and moved northeastward up a gentle pass to a junction of the Via Sebaste and the great Southern Highway that ran west to Apamea. On his subsequent journeys westward Paul would take this route to the province of Asia and to Ephesus. Near this junction a pillar was found atop a ridge that marked the boundary between the provinces of Asia and Galatia.⁴¹ The road next descended into a valley that widens before reaching Apollonia.⁴² The road then proceeds northeast along the base of Mount Gelincik. Paul passed beneath Gelincik's shadow on all three of his inland journeys, and would have been able to view snow on its north face well into early summer. The valley opened onto another plain along the northern shore of Lake Limnae. This freshwater lake still presents a dramatic setting in the mountains of Pisidia. In the vicinity of Gençali eight Roman milestones have been found.

37 The Climax Pass at Doşeme Boğazı with its monuments and inscriptions is described by Horsley and Mitchell in *Inscriptions of Central Pisidia*, 168–74. It is also discussed by David H. French in 'A Road Problem: Roman or Byzantine?' *Istanbul Mitteilungen* 43 (1993) 445–55, here 447–50.

38 There might possibly have been a branch of the road here that ran northeast to the Roman colony of Cremna; see French, 'Acts and the Roman Roads of Asia Minor', 52. It is interesting that Ercenk, 'Pamphylia Bölgesi ve Çevresi Eski Yol Sistemi', 368–9, 371 Map 1, shows this spur but ignores the more important Via Sebaste.

39 Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 51.

40 Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 94 n. 4.

41 Although this boundary stone dates to the reign of Hadrian, some sort of provincial boundary marker must have existed before this time. See W. M. Calder, *Monuments from Eastern Phrygia* [MAMA] 7 (Manchester: Manchester University, 1956) ix.

42 Little in modern Uluborlu indicates that it was once a Roman colony. Yet the ancient acropolis still preserves traces of ancient Apollonia. Cut stones appear in buildings, and inscriptions have been used in well houses. Although the castle was rebuilt in Seljuk times, it was Augustus who initially fortified the position when he established the colony. An aqueduct that supplied the city's water bridges a steep ravine to the south.

One was used as the headstone of a Muslim sage (Polatdede Türbesi) and records the distance to Pisidian Antioch as 23 (XXIII) Roman miles. At the old graveyard nearby a second milestone records the distance from Pisidian Antioch as 28 (XXIIX) Roman miles and to Apollonia as 19 (Iθ) Roman miles.⁴³ After skirting the shoreline for a dozen or so miles, the road climbed into the foothills leading to Pisidian Antioch. This Roman colony was also established by Augustus and was the initial terminus of the Via Sebaste. Pisidian Antioch as the *caput viae* sits at a dominant position near the apex of the Pisidian triangle.⁴⁴ From Pisidian Antioch the Via Sebaste was later extended to Iconium and Lystra.

Broughton proposed a variation of the western route, suggesting that above Climax Pass, Paul took a branch that ran through Cremna, Sagalassus, Baris, and Prostanna, before connecting with the route on the eastern shore of Lake Limnae. He preferred this route because (1) it is unclear whether 'there was a frequented highway beyond Adada through the rough country and the culturally backward communities about the sources of the Eurymedon' and (2) '[it] is not so circuitous as the Via Sebaste'.⁴⁵ The stages of the western route following the Via Sebaste⁴⁶ are:

Perga	Climax Pass	23 miles
Climax Pass ⁴⁷	Comama	19 miles
Comama	Apollonia	71 miles
Apollonia	Pisidian Antioch	<u>43 miles</u>
Perga to Pisidian Antioch	Total	156 miles

43 These are numbers 395 and 397 in David French, *Roman Roads and Milestones of Asia Minor, Fasc. 2: An Interim Catalogue of Milestones, Part 1* (Oxford: B.A.R., 1988) 151, 152. The location of these milestones can be found on Map 8 in *Part 2*, p. 541. For photographs of these milestones, see Harada and Cimok, *Roads of Ancient Anatolia*, 1.133, 134.

44 Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 14.

45 Broughton, 'Saint Paul's Journeys in Asia Minor', 131-3; W. J. Conybeare and J. S. Howson, *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul* (London: Longmans, Green, 1901) 134, suggest a route 'passing somewhere near Selge and Sagalassus' and approaching the margin of the 'beautiful lake Eyerdir' [*sic*]. Conybeare and Howson's hybrid itinerary, a blend of variations of the western and central routes, has no basis in geographical possibility. Yet the map of Paul's journeys at the end of the volume shows a direct passage up the Cestrus valley following the central route.

46 See Levick, *Roman Colonies*, 39nn., for the various milestones found along the route.

47 Using the Brunton map marker I measured a distance of 133 miles from Climax Pass to Pisidian Antioch. The distance of 139 Roman miles indicated on the milepost, when converted, is 128 miles, an error of approximately 4%. It was 46 Roman miles from Apollonia to Pisidian Antioch, 42 miles when converted; I measured 44 miles. See n. 36 for the difficulty related to calculating Roman miles. If the longer distance of 5000 feet to the Roman mile is used, the results would be much closer—131.6 miles and 43.6 miles.

For Broughton's alternate route the total first along the Via Sebaste, then through Sagalassus and Parlais would be 152 miles. His route saves only 4 miles from the 'circuitous' Via Sebaste.⁴⁸

d. *The Route According to Bible Atlases*

Before drawing a conclusion as to the viability of each of the three proposed routes, it is useful to look at which route is preferred in the depictions of the first journey in various Bible atlases. Upon examining these atlases, it is easy to concur with David French's criticism that the route on most maps is 'indicated imprecisely' and shows an 'imperfect knowledge of the terrain which lies between Perge and Antiochia'.⁴⁹ In some atlases it is difficult to determine which route is being suggested.

Regarding the eastern route, there are no atlases that depict it. Instead most atlases show the central route.⁵⁰ *The InterVarsity Atlas of Bible History* inexplicably depicts the route passing northeast to the valley of the Eurymedon River. A road to Selge did exist but stopped there because of the rugged terrain to the north. This atlas therefore shows a route that never existed in antiquity.⁵¹ In *The Sacred Bridge: Carta's Atlas of the Biblical World* the text accompanying the map reads, 'Travel from Perga followed inland along the Cestrus River to the *Via Sebaste* built in 6 BCE by Caesar Augustus through Colonia Comama to Colonia

48 For photographs of sections of this route, see Harada and Cimok, *Roads of Ancient Anatolia*, 1.152, 156-7.

49 French, 'Acts and the Roman Roads of Asia Minor', 51.

50 *Atlas of Ancient History: 1700 BC to 565 AD* (ed. Michael Grant; New York: Dorset, 1984) 63; *The Kregel Bible Atlas* (ed. Tim Dowley; Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2004), 82; Marsha A. Ellis Smith, *The Holman Book of Biblical Charts, Maps, and Reconstructions* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994) 128; Yohanan Aharoni and Michael Avi-Yonah, *The Macmillan Bible Atlas* (New York: Macmillan, 1977) 154; *Zondervan NIV Atlas of the Bible* (ed. Carl Rasmussen; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989), 181; *The Harper Atlas of the Bible* (ed. James Pritchard; New York: Harper & Row, rev. ed. 1989) 173; *Atlas of the Bible and Christianity* (ed. Tim Dowley; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997) 68; E. M. Blaiklock, *The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Atlas* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1969) 332; Herbert G. May, *Oxford Bible Atlas* (New York: Oxford University, 2nd ed. 1984) 91; Barry J. Beitzel, *The Moody Atlas of Bible Lands* (Chicago: Moody, 1985), 179; *Hammond's Atlas of the Bible Lands* (ed. Harry T. Frank; Maplewood, NJ: Hammond, 1977) B-32 [This same map is found in *Baker's Bible Atlas* (ed. Charles F. Pfeiffer; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1965) 126, and in *The Wycliffe Historical Geography of Bible Lands* (ed. Charles F. Pfeiffer and Howard F. Vos; Chicago: Moody, 1967), in Maps section 15]; *Reader's Digest Atlas of the Bible* (ed. Joseph L. Gardner; Pleasantville, NY: Reader's Digest, 1981) 193; *Atlas of the Christian Church* (ed. Henry Chadwick and G. R. Evans; New York: Facts on File, 1987) 7 [This same map is found in *The Atlas of the Bible* (ed. John Rogerson; New York: Facts on File, 1985) 41].; James Harpur and Marcus Braybrooke, *The Collegeville Atlas of the Bible/The Essential Bible Atlas* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1998; London: SPCK, 1999) 120.

51 Paul Lawrence, *The InterVarsity Atlas of Bible History* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006) 152.

Antiochia'. It is unclear whether this postulates a route following the Via Sebaste westward through Comama or a route up the Cestrus meeting the Via Sebaste at Pisidian Antioch. The accompanying map clearly portrays the latter, central route.⁵² Regarding the western route following the Via Sebaste, only the *Holman Bible Atlas* definitely shows it.⁵³ Yet its author later concedes, 'It is also possible that Paul detoured eastward to take advantage of better roads to reach Antioch'.⁵⁴ The preponderance of atlases that prefer the central route seems to have little to do with a topographical or historical examination of the evidence. Rather it is simply the most direct route between Perga and Pisidian Antioch for cartographers and illustrators to draw.

3. Paul's Route

Of the three possible routes, John McRay favors the eastern one: 'This would be a steep climb across high mountains for about eighty miles and take approximately a week, but it would probably be faster than the western route. All things considered, this seems to be the best choice of the available options'.⁵⁵ Likewise, Jack Finegan rejects the western route because 'it swung quite far to the west', and he also claims the eastern route as 'most likely'.⁵⁶ Such a conclusion is difficult to sustain, however, since this route is the most rugged and covers 149 miles, only 7 miles fewer than the western route.⁵⁷ Stephen Mitchell in his monumental two-volume study *Anatolia* notes that Iconium, not Pisidian Antioch, was the natural terminus of the eastern route.⁵⁸ Indeed a modern highway follows this route today, and its traffic is usually destined for Konya (ancient Iconium), not Yalvaç (ancient Pisidian Antioch). If Paul were going directly to Iconium, this would be his route of choice.

52 *The Sacred Bridge: Carta's Atlas of the Biblical World* (ed. Anson F. Rainey and Steven R. Notley; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006) 373.

53 Thomas V. Brisco, *Holman Bible Atlas* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1998) 119. The text states that the Pisidian highlands beyond the western edge of the Taurus Mountains 'presented considerable challenges to travelers; peaks and valleys harbored brigands, while the rough terrain required careful attention to the pathways', a description not fitting for the Via Sebaste.

54 Brisco, *Holman Bible Atlas*, 244.

55 John McRay, *Paul: His Life and Teaching* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003) 120–1. McRay does not differentiate between the two eastern routes but mentions only the route through Side, then northward to Lake Caralis. However, the map of the first journey that illustrates the text (114 Map 5.1) shows Paul traversing the central route, not the eastern route!

56 Jack Finegan, *The Archaeology of the New Testament: The Mediterranean World of the Early Christian Apostles* (Boulder: Westview, 1981) 90.

57 Finegan (*Archaeology of the New Testament*, 90) greatly underestimates this distance—80 miles (130 km) from Perga, 'a journey of perhaps six days' duration'.

58 Mitchell, *Anatolia*, 1.70. Mitchell likewise mentions the three routes that McRay identifies.

One other matter suggests ruling out this option. The Pamphylian rivers were apparently navigable in the first century (Strabo 14.4.2) so Paul perhaps sailed up the Cestrus (Aksu) River to Perga's port, several miles east of the city.⁵⁹ If Paul had planned to take the eastern route, Sergius Paulus would have no doubt engaged a vessel for the apostles that would sail up the Eurymedon River to Aspendus. This would have saved the apostles the walk from Perga. Regarding its viability for Paul's first journey, the eastern route is rejected.

Étienne de Mesmay in his new book on Paul's routes in Turkey favors the central route for his roundtrip.⁶⁰ Likewise, Giray Ercenk, the Turkish authority on the ancient roads of this region, calls the central route 'Aziz Paulos Yolu' (St Paul's Road).⁶¹ As we have seen, this is the preferred route of the Bible atlases because it was the most direct at 114 miles.

David French, the foremost authority on Roman roads in Asia Minor, opts for the western route. While 37% longer than the central route, it was much easier because it avoided the deep valleys and difficult terrain of the Taurus Mountains. Stephen Mitchell, a leading scholar on Asia Minor, believes that Sergius Paulus himself influenced Paul's choice of roads: 'It is an elementary inference that he advised or encouraged Paul to make the trip up-country into Asia Minor, following the *via Sebaste*'.⁶² Broughton's alternative route has little to commend it. It is nearly as long, and leaves the main route for a secondary road through the rugged Pisidian terrain.

Although it was not the shortest route, by far the easiest and probably the safest route for Paul and Barnabas to travel to Pisidian Antioch was the western route along the Via Sebaste—a conclusion supported by such experts on Anatolia as French and Mitchell. I agree with them that Paul would have taken the western route to Pisidian Antioch along the Via Sebaste. However, for the return another option must be considered. At the end of the first journey Acts 14.21 relates that Paul and Barnabas revisited the newly formed south Galatian churches instead of taking the direct route back to Tarsus and Antioch on the Orontes via the Cilician and Syrian Gates. At Pisidian Antioch the apostles were faced with the choice of whether to return on the longer route along the Via Sebaste or to take the shorter route via Adada down the Cestrus valley. From Pisidian Antioch Paul could see the two mountains that

59 This is Ramsay's view in *St. Paul: The Traveler and Roman Citizen* (ed. Mark Wilson; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, rev. ed. 2001) 110; also in *Church in the Roman Empire* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1904) 16 and sustained by Mitchell, *Pisidian Antioch*, 12, and Douglas A. Campbell, 'Paul in Pamphylia (Acts 13.13-14a; 14:24b-26): A Critical Note', *NTS* 46 (2000): 597-8. Some scholars suggest instead that the landfall was at Attalia, the port of Pamphylia; see John B. Polhill, *Paul and his Letters* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999) 87.

60 de Mesmay, *Sur les Routes de L'Apôtre Paul en Turquie*, 38-42.

61 Ercenk, 'Pamphylia Bölgesi ve Çevresi Eski Yol Sistemi', 366-67, 371 map 1.

62 Mitchell and Waelkens, *Pisidian Antioch*, 12.

framed that choice—Gelincik Dağı (9181 ft/2799 m) at the northwest corner of Lake Limnae and Ouiaros (Davraz Dağı; 8643 ft/2635 m) at its southwest corner. French believes that Paul would have taken a paved road in both directions if one had been available.⁶³ This, however, is just speculation, and at the time Paul had more important concerns on his mind than just the best-paved road. He had been traveling for some two years so was undoubtedly anxious to return home to Antioch. Paul seems to have opted for the most direct route because Acts 14.24 expressly states that he and Barnabas now passed through Pisidia (διελθόντες τὴν Πισιδίαν).⁶⁴ Neither the eastern nor western routes passed through Pisidia; only the central route did. I thus conclude that Paul chose the western route for his inbound journey to Pisidian Antioch and the central route for the return to Perga.

63 French, 'Acts and the Roman Roads of Asia Minor', 52. G. Walter Hansen, 'Galatia', *Graeco-Roman Setting* (ed. David W. J. Gill and Conrad Gempf; BAFCS; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 2.385, following French, prefers the route of the Via Sebaste and writes regarding Paul, 'No doubt he used the same roads on his return trip to Perge'.

64 This is unlike Acts 13.14, which vaguely reads 'after passing through' (διελθόντες), omitting an object. Traveling through this region, one is reminded of Paul's recollections in 2 Cor 11.26 where he describes the dangers of ancient travel, particularly rivers and bandits. As they passed through Pisidia, Paul and Barnabas would certainly have been vulnerable to both.