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# Archaeological Sites

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## Medieval City of Rodos

The medieval city of Rodos, a monument characterized by UNESCO as a monument of world cultural heritage! In the medieval town of Rodos, the city of the Knights of the Order of St John, you feel that time has stopped in another age. The Street of the Knights climbs to the Palace of the Grand Master, strikingly dominant. You'll follow the paved alleys, under gateways and colonnades, through squares and obscure courtyards, next to impregnable walls and Byzantine churches. You feel that you are living in the troubled past of this place, but at the same you discover that this city, still inhabited, with its lively commercial activity, the Archaeological Museum, the Art Gallery, the Museum of Folk Art, and its night life, is very much alive in the present. This fascinating combination of yesterday and today charms visitors and brings home to them the uniqueness of the largest living medieval town in Europe!

*For further details on medieval city please refer to the Museums and Tours sections of this manual.*

## Acropolis of Rodos & Monte Smith

The hill overlooking the modern New Town and Mediaeval Old Town is the site of the ancient Hellenistic town of Rodos and the Acropolis of Rodos. In antiquity the population of the city was many times larger than that of today and extended over the eastern slopes of Agios Stephanos (latterly known as Monte Smith after the English admiral Sir Sidney Smith who established an observation post in 1802 to watch over the movements of the Napoleonic fleet in 1802) right down to the harbour. On the acropolis are the remains of the Temples of Zeus and Athena and the partly-restored Temple of Apollo, then, as now, a landmark for ships at sea. Below is the heavily-restored Stadium which is still used for occasional performances of classical tragedies. Visit at sunset to watch the spectacular sunset. Bus #5

The small reconstructed 800 seat Theatre, more likely Odeon, sits beneath the site of the temple. Only the orchestra and three seats remain from the original structure, which was probably used for events associated with the cult of Apollo and maybe by the Rodian School of Rhetoric. A much larger theatre is thought to have been sited elsewhere on the same hill. On the left is the reconstructed stadium of which again only a few rows, in the middle of the curve, are original. To the east of the stadium lay a Gymnasium but little tangible evidence survives. The Temple of Apollo sits on a platform above the huge retaining wall behind the theatre, approached by a flight of steps, and excavations close by are the remains of a fountain house and possible Nymphaia, for the worship of nymphs. To the north, foundations of a Temple to Zeus and Athena Polias have been revealed. Return down Voriou Ipirou for spectacular views over the town.

## Ialysos & Filerimos

Ialysos is one of the three ancient cities of Rodos with remains of occupation dating back to 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC and also settlements & cemeteries dating from the Mycenaean-Minoan period.

The building remains of ancient Ialysos discovered to date are mainly on the Filerimo hill, which was given this name in Byzantine times. Its earliest known name was Achaia, which is further evidence for the presence of Greeks in this area during the Mycenaean period, Strabo calls the hill Ochyroma ("Fortification"). From very early times the hill was in fact used as a strong point and also as a place of worship.

Late Classical and early Hellenistic remains preserved on the acropolis of Ialysos include a Doric fountain-house and the foundations of the temple of Zeus and Athena Polias.

The Doric fountain is on the steep south side of the hill, on a small plateau in the almost vertical rock-face. It takes the form of a stoa constructed of poros and comprises a closed cistern, a second, open cistern with six pillars, linked by closure slabs, and a facade in the form of a stoa with six Doric columns. Waterspouts in the form of lion's heads, set in the closure slabs, channelled the water onto the floor of the stoa. The third pillar has a late Hellenistic inscription carved on it, listing the penalties to be inflicted on anyone profaning the sanctity of the fountain. The remains of the temple of Zeus and Athena Polias are at the highest point of the Filerimo hill. It is an amphiprostyle tetrastyle Doric temple of poros. The foundations for the cult statue are preserved at the north end of the cella.

Architectural members from the ancient temple were used in the construction of the three-aisled Early Christian basilica constructed on the same site in the 5th or 6th c AD, of which the baptistery is still preserved, in the area of the south aisle. The baptistery is in the shape of a cross, the arms of which have curved ends, and the interior is revetted with marble slabs. The north aisle of the basilica, which is precisely above the ancient temple, was repaired in the Byzantine period and converted into an aisleless church.

The tiny aisleless church of Ai-Yorgis Chostos, to the west of the ancient temple, apparently also belongs to the Byzantine period. In the 15th c. its walls were covered with paintings depicting the Passion and the Life of the Virgin Mary, as well as a series of Knights with their patron saints. Although they were basically western in style, these wall-paintings were influenced by the Byzantine painting tradition.

To the west of the square created to accommodate visitors to the site, the *katholikon* of a monastery complex dating from the 10th c. AD has been excavated, it is a three-aisled cross-in-square church with three apses and a dome supported on four columns.

The Byzantine remains include the ruins of the Byzantine fortification of Philerimo. At the eastern end of the flat summit of the hill an entire garrison complex has been restored, which was repaired and used during the period of the Knights of St. John.

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The church built by the Knights, in the 14th c., originally consisted of two hexagonal chapels in the area of the aisleless Byzantine church. It was modified in the late 15th c., though retaining its distinctive double form, since the icon of the Panayia Philerimou was worshipped by both Orthodox and Catholic Christians,

During the period of Italian rule (1912-1945) a "Golgotha" was built: this was a series of shrines with relief scenes of the Passion, which leads from the square to the west edge of the plateau of the Filerimo hill. In the 90s a cross was constructed on the top the plateau.

## Lindos

"Lindos is its rock". This rock, which rises to 116 m. forms the finishing touch to the landscape of Lindos, standing dry and imposing in its bareness and surrounded on all sides by the sea, so that Lindos "may rejoice in the ocean" in the words of a hellenistic epigram.

Lindos does not seem to have been particularly important in the earlier periods, though sporadic finds of the Neolithic period and the Bronze Age have been discovered on the acropolis.

According to legend, the foundation of the sanctuary of Athena Lindia goes back to the Mycenaean period, and Mycenaean finds have been yielded by cemeteries in the broader area of Lindos.

The Archaic period (7th-6th c BC) was a golden age for Lindos, which played a leading role in the Greek colonisation movement, its most important foundation being Gela in Sicily. The 6th c BC was dominated by the figure of a moderate tyrant, Kleoboulos who ruled Lindos for many years, and was included amongst the "seven sages" of the ancient world. During his rule, the Archaic temple of Athena was built on the site of an earlier structure, and the acropolis received its first monumental form.

The Persian advance and later the merger of the three old cities into the new city of Rodos (408 BC) led to a diminution in the importance of Lindos as a political and economic power. It nevertheless continued to be an important centre, focused on the famous sanctuary of Athena, which received its final monumental form in the Hellenistic period and became the leading sanctuary on the island.

The acropolis was used as a fortress in antiquity, as well as in Byzantine times, in the period of the Knights of St. John, and in that of Ottoman rule.

Today, the ascent to the acropolis is still by the same steep road as in antiquity. After the first outer entrance to the medieval fortress, and before beginning to climb the large stairway that leads up to the Administrative Building of the Knights, we encounter two important monuments on our left a semicircular Hellenistic exedra, and, next to it, a depiction of the prow of an ancient ship carved in relief in the rock, which formed the base of a statue of Agesandros son of Milkion, the work of the sculptor Pythokritos in the early 2nd c. BC

The fortification of Lindos by the Knights goes back to the 14th-15<sup>th</sup> c AD. Passing through the ground - floor of the Knights Administrative Build Building, we emerge into a large square, which occupies the lowest level of the acropolis and was full of votive offerings in ancient times. A row of vaulted structures, built in the 1<sup>st</sup> c. BC, stood on either side of a stairway leading up to the level of the large Hellenistic stoa, built ca. 200 BC. The large stairway behind the stoa leads up to the highest level where are to be found the Propylaia and the temple of Athena, which formed the main sacred precinct.

The temple was completely isolated from the outside world by a wall with five entrances. In front of and behind it were stoas with rooms. The inner stoa flanked a courtyard in front of the temple, in which there was probably an altar. The temple, which measures about 22x8 m is a Doric, amphiprostyle tetrastyle structure. It was constructed in the 4th c. BC or in the early Hellenistic period on the site of Kleoboulos' temple, which had burned down in 392 BC. It stands at the highest point of the rock and was the culmination of the stepped vista offered by the stoa and the Propylaia to anyone ascending to the acropolis.

From the highest point of the acropolis can be seen the lower city, in which the most important monuments still visible are the theatre, the Tetrastoon and the Archokrateion at Kambana, a monumental tomb of an important Lindian family. The Byzantine church of the Panayia is also in the lower city. It was built in the 15th c. and decorated with wall-paint paintings in the 17th and 18th c. The traditional settlement of Lindos is in a very good state of preservation. A large number of *archontika* (mansions) survive, the most important of them from the 17th c., indicating that Lindos was a flourishing naval power in the early period of Turkish rule, as indeed throughout its entire history.

## Kamiroi

Kamiroi, the smallest of the three ancient cities forming the Rodian state, is in the west part of the island. More isolated and conservative than commercial Lindos and aristocratic Ialysos, it retained its rural character throughout antiquity.

Homer describes it as "arginoeis", a reference to its fertile, argillaceous soil.

The earliest traces of occupation in the broader area of Kamiroi, the Kamiroi, go back to Mycenaean times, as is demonstrated by the cemetery discovered at the village of Kalavarda. Geometric and Archaic Kamiroi are known mainly from cemeteries, located around the ancient city. The cemetery at Makry Langoni has yielded the stele of Kriton and Timarista, a famous piece of Classical sculpture, now on display in the Rodos Museum.

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In the area of the archaeological site that is open to visitors are preserved the ruins of the Hellenistic city of Kamiros, which was rebuilt after a devastating earthquake in 226 BC. There had been a settlement on this same site from as early as the Archaic period.

The city is a characteristic example of Hellenistic urban layout and design, with its division into zones of public and private buildings, its arrangement around the natural slopes of the hill, and its chess-board system of streets, Kamiros was divided into three unequal parts:

- a) the lowest level which formed a kind of agora, with a religious character,
- b) a zone with private dwellings on the side of the hill,
- c) the acropolis on the summit.

At the north-west edge of the Agora Square stand the restored columns of a Doric temple, with two columns *in antis*, which dates from the late 3rd-early 2nd c. BC. It was possibly dedicated to the god Apollo.

To the east of the temple is the so-called Fountain Square, a rectangular open area with a large number of inscribed votive bases. The fountain was on the south side of the square. Its facade consisted of 6 Doric half-columns, now restored, linked by stone closure slabs. Immediately behind this was an open cistern containing water, which gushed from water-spouts. The fountain was built in late Classical times and modified at the beginning of the 3rd c. BC, when a second, smaller square was laid out on the site, with a well at the centre.

Opposite Fountain Square is preserved a Hellenistic sanctuary dedicated to the gods and heroes of Kamiros, with altars within an enclosure. This was probably the *Hierothyteion* of Kamiros, known from inscriptions.

The ruins of the houses of the city are arranged on the slopes of the hill, to right and left of the main street linking the lowest level with the acropolis. There are two outstanding dwellings to the east of this street, with interior peristyle courtyards; behind the sanctuary with the altars are the remains of a bath-house, which was probably a public building.

On the acropolis of Kamiros was the sacred precinct of Athena Kamiras. Parts of the enclosure wall are preserved in the south part of the plateau, as well as the foundations of a temple, probably peripteral, dating from the late 3rd-early 2nd c. BC.

There is a very impressive cistern to the north of the temple, dating from the 6th-5th c. BC. This cistern fell into disuse in the late 3rd-early 2nd c. BC, when a large stoa was erected along the acropolis plateau. The stoa had the shape of the Greek letter Π and was 200 m long. On its facade was a double colonnade in the Doric order, and there were shops in the rear. It formed an imposing backdrop dominating the city and offered the inhabitants of ancient Kamiros, as it does the modern visitor, a panoramic view over the sea and the surrounding agricultural area.