

Paul of Tarshish: Isaiah 66.19 and the Spanish Mission of Romans 15.24, 28

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Interpreters of Paul's Letter to the Romans frequently identify preparations for the Spanish mission—mentioned within only two verses at the end of the letter—as the primary reason for writing. Paul's extensive use of Isaiah suggests to some that he viewed Spain as the fulfillment of the reference to 'Tarshish' in Isa 66.19. The Hebrew Bible, however, does not provide any evidence that Tarshish is in Spain rather than in Cilicia. Evidence is lacking in the Hellenistic and Roman eras for a Spanish Tartessos–Tarshish connection. The Spanish mission thesis also overemphasizes the importance of Rom 15.24, 28.

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Robert Jewett's recent *Hermeneia* volume has been heralded as the first major commentary that takes as its starting point Paul's enlistment of Roman support for his anticipated work in Spain (15.28).¹ When Paul requests that the Romans offer Phoebe whatever help she might need in 16.2, he has the Spanish mission in mind. The greetings in ch. 16 serve to recruit support from key individuals. Since Erasmus in the sixteenth century, the letter's apologetic elements have been considered a crucial component of the preparations for

¹ The interpretive starting point for 'each verse and paragraph' is that Paul is seeking support for his mission to Spain in uniting the divided Roman congregations (R. Jewett, *Romans: A Commentary* [Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007] 1, 3). Jewett therefore devoted significant space to describing the history, the cultural and linguistic situation, as well as the ethnic composition of Spain (pp. 74–79). See also R. Jewett, 'Romans as an Ambassadorial Letter', *Int* 36 (1982) 5–20, esp. 14, 17–18; idem, 'Ecumenical Theology for the Sake of Mission: Romans 1:1–17 + 15:14–16:24', *Pauline Theology*. Vol. 3. *Romans* (ed. D. M. Hay and E. E. Johnson; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995) 89–108, esp. 89–92; idem, 'Paul, Phoebe, and the Spanish Mission', *The Social World of Formative Christianity and Judaism: Essays in Tribute to Howard Clark Kee* (ed. J. Neusner, P. Borgen, E. S. Frerichs, and R. Horsley; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988) 142–61, esp. 142–7. Jewett's thesis is not original; see D. Zeller, *Juden und Heiden in der Mission des Paulus: Studien zum Römerbrief* (FB 1; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1973) 38–77; A. J. Dewey, 'ΕΙΣ ΤΗΝ ΣΠΑΝΙΑΝ: The Future and Paul', *Religious Propaganda & Missionary Competition in the New Testament World: Essays Honoring Dieter Georgi* (ed. L. Bormann, K. Del Tredici, and A. Standhartinger; NovTSup 74; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994) 321–49.

Spain.² Opposition at Rome could undermine Paul's credibility and jeopardize the Roman launching point.³ Angelika Reichert affirmed not only an apologetic function for the letter but also an instructional purpose in the case that Paul should be prevented from undertaking the Spanish mission, with the responsibility for that mission then falling to the Romans.⁴ Jewett's recent *magnum opus* has built on previous scholarship in its emphasis on Spain. Nevertheless, one struggles to comprehend why the Spanish mission should be given such a central place in the interpretation of Romans.

Certainly, as Jewett rightly indicated, Spain was a land of genuine 'barbarians' (cf. Rom 1.15), resistant to Greco-Roman culture, and without a significant Jewish presence.⁵ Spain was at the 'end of the earth', the conclusion of the northern circuit of the Mediterranean. The real inspiration for Jewett's thesis, however, was Roger Aus's 1979 article, to which Jewett referred in his discussion of Rom 15.24 and 28.⁶ Aus noted that Paul quotes Isa 52.15 in Rom 15.20–21, just before mention of Spain. Although Paul does not actually cite Isa 66.19, Aus thought that the apostle's fondness for Isaiah in Romans lends credence to the possibility that he viewed his ministry as a fulfillment of Isa 66.19 with its mention of 'Tarshish'.⁷ Biblical commentators have often identified Tarshish with the southern Spanish town known in non-biblical Greek as Ταρτησσός.⁸ Jewett confidently pronounced: 'There is no

2 F. Godet, *Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1883) 53. Adherents of the Spanish mission therefore often emphasize multiple *Reasons for Romans*, to borrow the title of A. J. M. Wedderburn's book (SNTW; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988); so also F. F. Bruce, 'The Romans Debate—Continued', *BJRL* 64 (1981–82) 334–59; repr. in *The Romans Debate* (ed. K. P. Donfried; rev. and enl. ed.; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1991) 175–94.

3 P. Vielhauer, *Geschichte der urchristlichen Literatur: Einleitung in das Neue Testament, die Apokryphen und die Apostolischen Väter* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1975) 181–4; M. Kettunen, *Der Abfassungszweck des Römerbriefes* (Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae: Dissertations Humanarum Litterarum 18; Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1979); J. C. Miller, *The Obedience of Faith, the Eschatological People of God, and the Purpose of Romans* (SBLDS 177; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000) 17; M. Theobald, *Römerbrief*. Vol. 1. *Kapitel 1–11* (3rd ed.; Stuttgarter Kleiner Kommentar 6; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2002) 21–3.

4 A. Reichert, *Der Römerbrief als Gratwanderung: Eine Untersuchung zur Abfassungsproblematik* (FRLANT 194; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001).

5 Jewett, *Romans*, 924.

6 R. D. Aus, 'Paul's Travel Plans to Spain and the "Full Number of the Gentiles" in Rom. XI 25', *NovT* 21 (1979) 232–62.

7 For a similar line of thought, see R. Riesner, *Paul's Early Period: Chronology, Mission Strategy, Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) 245–53. On Isaiah in Romans, see J. R. Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News: Isaiah and Paul in Concert in the Letter to the Romans* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), although Wagner did not treat Aus's argument from Isa 66.19 since Paul does not actually draw upon Isa 66.19 as such.

8 E.g., J. Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis* (2nd ed.; ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1930), 198–9; U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis* (2 vols. Jerusalem:

doubt that Tarshish was the city of Tartessos in Spain, near the Pillars of Hercules (i.e. the Straits of Gibraltar) that in antiquity were considered the end(s) of the earth'.⁹ 'Tartessos' was on the mouth of the Guadalquivir River on the Atlantic side of the Straits of Gibraltar. Jewett concluded from the mention of Tarshish in Isa 66.19 that gentile offerings would have to come from Spain. Paul's plans for Spain must therefore be viewed through the lens of Isaianic expectation. The apostle viewed his ministry as fulfilling biblical prophecy.

Several considerations call into question Jewett's contention that Tarshish is in Spain; this, in turn, undermines the thesis that a prophetic rationale served as the driving force behind the Spanish mission in Paul's letter. The Hebrew Bible does not provide evidence for a Tarshish/Spain connection (I). The full range of evidence in the Hebrew Bible points to Cilicia as the location of Tarshish (II). No viable evidence is available that anyone in the Hellenistic or Roman eras identified Spanish Tartessos as Tarshish (III). Finally, proponents of the Spanish mission thesis have overemphasized its importance for the interpretation of Paul's Letter to the Romans (IV).

I. The Dearth of Evidence for a Tarshish/Spain Connection in the Hebrew Bible

'Ships of Tarshish' are characteristic of Tyre's commerce (Isa 23.1, 14; Ezek 27.25) and Phoenicio-Israelite commerce (1 Kings 10.22; 2 Chron 9.21). In one instance 'ships of Tarshish' is used for Judean commerce (1 Kings 22.49). The ships appear capable of traveling across the Mediterranean (1 Kings 10.22; 22.49; 2 Chron 9.21), presumably also to Tarshish. Friedrich Schmidtke thought that a 'Tarshish-ship' must be capable of reaching the distant shores of the Mediterranean, including Spain.¹⁰ On the other hand, 1 Kings 22.49 describes 'ships of Tarshish' sailing the shorter distance from Ezion-geber to Ophir. Their cargos in 1 Kings 10.22 and

Magnes, Hebrew University, 1964) 2.193 (tentatively); B. Treumann-Watkins, 'Phoenicians in Spain', *BA* 55/1 (1992) 28–35; M. Koch, *Tarschisch und Hispanien: Historisch-Geographische und Namenkundliche Untersuchungen zur Phönikischen Kolonisation der Iberischen Halbinsel* (Deutsches Archäologisches Institut: Madrigger Forschungen 14; Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1984).

9 Jewett, *Romans*, 924. He also cited in support M. E. Aubet (*The Phoenicians and the West: Politics, Colonies and Trade* [Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1987] 176–9) on the 'popular' equation of Tarshish with Tartessos in Spain. Aubet (p. 178) actually raised several rather serious problems for such an equation: 'The idea of placing Tarshish in Spain surfaces in post-biblical historiography and above all in the mediaeval lexicons to the Bible. But the Tarshish–Tartessos equation does not gather strength until the seventh century [C.E.]'.

10 F. Schmidtke, *Die Japhetiten der biblischen Völkertafel* (Breslauer Studien zur historischen Theologie 7; Breslau: Müller & Seiffert, 1926) 71.

2 Chron 9.2 are gold, silver, ivory, monkeys, and peacocks from the Red Sea and Indian Ocean. The ships were simply capable of significant sea travel, but not necessarily of travel from the eastern Mediterranean all the way to Spain. William F. Albright raised the question whether Tartessos was even in existence at the time of Solomon and Hiram's 'Tarshish-ship' ventures.¹¹

Albright, for his part, reasoned that since *tarshish* meant 'smelting plant, refinery', many Phoenician settlements must have had the name 'Tarshish', even as there were several 'New Towns' (*Qart-hadasht* = *Carthage*).¹² If so, the biblical 'Tarshish-ships' may have been ships capable of sailing to these settlements. The extensive use of the 'Tarshish-ship' by Hiram of Tyre may explain how 'Tarshish' came to function as a synonym for the city of Tyre in Isa 23.1, 6, 10, 14; cf. Isa 2.16. 'Tarshish' could also be used as a general term signifying the West as in Ezek 38.13; Ps 72.10. The 'kings of Tarshish' and the 'kings of Saba and Sheba' are the kings of the West and East.¹³ Some have therefore doubted whether 'Tarshish' referred to a place, let alone Tartessos.¹⁴

The evidence for a Spanish Tarshish is actually surprisingly tenuous. Andre Lemaire's list of ten competing locations identified by various scholars as Tarshish belies Jewett's conclusion that there is 'no doubt' that the biblical Tarshish was Tartessos.¹⁵ The identification of 'Tarshish' with 'Tartessos' is philologically doubtful. The second *t* in Tartessos would not represent the first š.¹⁶ As Brigitte Treumann-Watkins, an enthusiastic advocate of the Tarshish-Tartessos equation, was forced to concede: 'The linguistic approach to the Tarshish/Tartessos problem has complicated more than it has resolved'.¹⁷ She

11 W. F. Albright, 'New Light on the Early History of Phoenician Colonization', *BASOR* 83 (1941) 14–22, esp. 22; W. F. Albright, 'The Role of the Canaanites in the History of Civilization', *The Bible and the Ancient Near East* (ed. G. E. Wright; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1979) 328–62, esp. 348–9.

12 Albright, 'Role of the Canaanites', 346–7.

13 So G. W. Ahlström, 'The Nora Inscription and Tarshish', *Maarav* 7 (1991) 41–9, esp. 46.

14 Aubet, *Phoenicians and the West*, 177.

15 The locations span from India (with J. M. Blazquez) to Ethiopia (Origen), Carthage (with P.-R. Berger), Asia Minor, to an indeterminate region in the far west or the seas; A. Lemaire, 'Tarshish-Tarsis: Problème de Topographie Historique Biblique et Assyrienne', *Studies in Historical Geography and Biblical Historiography Presented to Zecharia Kallai* (ed. G. Galil and M. Weinfeld; Leiden, Boston, Köln: Brill, 2000) 44–62, esp. 44–7. Most of the locations are arguably less than viable. Jonah's flight from Joppa across the Mediterranean to the concrete location of Tarshish is problematic for an identification with India, Ethiopia, the Red Sea region, or a generic designation. The Esarhaddon inscription (see below) is problematic for Carthage or Sardinia or the Italian Etruscans, since Assyrian rule did not extend that far and the Etruscans were not present in Italy during Assyrian ascendancy; Lemaire, 'Tarshish-Tarsis', 51–3.

16 Ahlström, 'Nora Inscription', 48–9; so also Lemaire, 'Tarshish-Tarsis', 52.

17 Treumann-Watkins, 'Phoenicians in Spain', 33; note the series of conjectures that follow.

nevertheless concluded that ‘a linguistic leap of faith turns *tar-si-si*/Tarshish into Tartessos’.¹⁸

Until the end of the Persian Empire the Hebrew Bible remained preoccupied with the eastern Mediterranean world. The Hebrew Bible does not employ the names for Spain, Malta, Sicily, Sardinia, or Carthage.¹⁹ As Gösta Ahlström put it: ‘From a biblical point of view the west is, as a matter of fact, the eastern part of the Mediterranean world. The biblical psalmist [Ps 72.10] was referring to the world he knew. Spain cannot be introduced in this connection’.²⁰ Although Spain’s Tartessos was geographically 3000 kilometers from Palestine, the distance was 4000 kilometers by the sea routes of the day. Brandenstein dismissed Tartessos as largely unknown in the biblical period: ‘Von Tartessos hätte man in einem Land etwas wissen sollen, dem die Welt des Mittelmeeres so gut wie verschlossen war (s.o.). Tartessos hätte bekannt sein sollen, aber alle mindestens ebenso bedeutenden und unerlässlichen Zwischenstationem, wie Sizilien, Sardinien, Marseille *nicht!*’²¹

II. Tarshish’s Cilician Location in the Assyrian and Persian Periods

The skepticism as to whether ‘Tarshish’ designates a particular place may be unwarranted. Tarshish is the explicit goal of a voyage by boat (2 Chron 9.21; 20.36, 37; Isa 23.6; Jonah 1.3 [from Joppa]; 4.2). In Ps 72.10 Tarshish is a kingdom with rulers and is associated with the ‘isles’. Genesis 10.2–4 lists the descendants of Japheth. The children of Japheth inhabited the northern countries from Medes in the northeast to Javan/Ionia in Asia Minor in the northwest.²² Interpreters have associated Japheth’s son Javan with the Ionians of Asia Minor.²³ Javan’s sons were Elisha, Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim. Elisha has been typically identified with Alashia, on the island of Cyprus.²⁴ Kittim was Kition, also on Cyprus. Dodanim

18 Treumann-Watkins, ‘Phoenicians in Spain’, 33.

19 Lemaire, ‘Tarshish-*Tarsisi*’, 53.

20 Ahlström, ‘The Nora Inscription’, 47.

21 W. Brandenstein, ‘Bemerkungen zur Völkertafel in der Genesis’, *Sprachgeschichte und Wortbedeutung: Festschrift Albert Debrunner gewidmet von Schülern, Freunden und Kollegen* (Bern: Francke, 1954) 57–83, esp. 78.

22 J. Simons, ‘The Table of Nations’ (Gen. X): Its General Structure and Meaning’, *OTS* 10 (1954) 155–84, esp. 177–8; A. van der Kooij, *The Oracle of Tyre: The Septuagint of Isaiah XXIII as Version and Vision* (VTSup 71; Leiden: Brill, 1998) 41.

23 É. Lipinski, ‘Les Japhetites selon Gen 10,2–4 et 1 Chr 1,5–7’, *ZAH* 3 (1990) 40–53, esp. 45.

24 Mentioned in the Amarna tablets; D. Neiman, ‘The Two Genealogies of Japheth’, *Orient and Occident: Essays Presented to Cyrus H. Gordon* (ed. H. A. Hoffner, Jr.; AOAT 22; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1973) 119–26, esp. 121 n. 13. G. J. Wenham (*Genesis 1–15* [WBC 1; Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1987] 218) pointed out that a Mycenaean colony was established on Cyprus in the mid-second millennium BCE, and this could explain Elisha being related as a son of Javan. P.-R. Berger (‘Ellasar, Tarschisch und Javan, Gn 14 und 10’, *WO* 13 [1982] 50–78, esp. 59)

(‘Rodanim’ in 1 Chron 1.7) may have been Rhodes, i.e. the vicinity of Asia Minor and the islands just to the south.²⁵ Elisha, Kittim, and Dodanim were therefore associated with Greek-influenced Asia Minor and the islands just off its coast in the northeastern corner of the Mediterranean.²⁶ Ahlström concluded: ‘For the writer of Genesis 10 Tarshish thus belonged to the Greek world. If this reflects an old tradition it would be impossible to see Tarshish as being located in Spain’.²⁷ Gordon J. Wenham also objected: ‘Nor is it probable that Gen 10 would have regarded the Phoenician colony at Tartessos as a descendant of the Greeks’.²⁸ Tarshish, listed between Elisha and Kittim in Gen 10, must likewise have been in the vicinity of Asia Minor.²⁹

Isaiah 66.19 lists Tarshish, Pul, Lud, Tubal, Javan, and the distant isles. Pul occurs only in Isa 66.19. The Septuagint translates the Hebrew Pul as Put (Put and Lud are associated in Jer 46.9; Ezek 27.10; 30.5). 1QIsa^a and 1QIsa^b, however, support the MT with the more difficult reading פול.³⁰ If ‘Pul’ is the correct reading, its location is uncertain. Arie van der Kooij wondered if Παμφυλία, the Greek name for the southern part of Asia Minor, was a variant form of the biblical Pul.³¹ Lud, Tubal, and Javan all referred to locations in the eastern part of the Mediterranean, if not Asia Minor. Isaiah 66.19 (LXX) lists Tharsis, Put, Lud, Mosoch, and Thobel. Put and Lud are identified by Jdt 2.23–24 with Cilicia. The Septuagint and Josephus

identified Elisha with a city in the foothills of Crete (Haghio Kyrko). Wenham preferred Berger’s approach since this approach leaves Kittim as the only name associated with Cyprus. A. H. Sayce disagreed with the identification of Elisha-Cyprus in favor of the Aleian plains in southeastern Cilicia, again, because Kittim is already associated with Cyprus (‘The Tenth Chapter of Genesis’, *JBL* 44 [1925] 193–202, esp. 196).

25 W. Horowitz, ‘The Isles of the Nations: Genesis X and Babylonian Geography’, J. A. Emerton, *Studies in the Pentateuch* (VTSup 41; Leiden: Brill, 1990) 35–43, esp. 38–9; E. A. Speiser, *Genesis* (AB 1; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1964) 66, who noted the graphic similarity of ‘D’ and ‘R’ in the ‘square’ Hebrew script; Brandenstein, ‘Bemerkungen zur Völkertafel’, 70–81; Ahlström, ‘Nora Inscription’, 47; Lemaire, ‘Tarshish-Tarsis’, 48–9. P.-R. Berger (‘Ellasar, Tarschisch und Jawan’, 60–1) and Neiman (‘Two Genealogies of Japheth’, 121) disagreed with this consensus and followed the MT in taking ‘Dodanim’ as the Hebraicized form of the Greek *dodonaioi*, the inhabitants of Dodone in Epirus. Wenham (*Genesis 1–15*, 219) wondered if ‘Dodanim’, as the more difficult reading, should be identified with the Amarna letters’ land of Danuna, just north of Tyre. Inscriptions from Rameses III mention the *Dnn* among the invading sea peoples. Homer refers to Danaeans, who besieged Troy. Certainty is not possible.

26 W. Horowitz thought all the descendants of Japhet, and not just those through his son Javan, were on land masses accessible by sea routes; ‘Isles of the Nations’, 35–43.

27 Ahlström, ‘Nora Inscription’, 47–8.

28 Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 218.

29 Brandenstein, ‘Bemerkungen zur Völkertafel’, 70–6.

30 D. Barthélemy, *Critique Textuelle de L’Ancien Testament* (2 vols. OBO 50; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986) 2.464–5.

31 Kooij, *Oracles of Tyre*, 42 n. 11; also tentatively Lemaire, ‘Tarshish-Tarsis’, 49.

identify Put with Libya (Jer 26.9 [MT Jer 46.9]; Ezek 27.10; 30.5; 38.5; Nah 3.9; *Ant.* 1.132). Josephus identifies Lud (Gen 10.22) as the ancestor of the Lydians in Asia Minor (*Ant.* 1.144).³² Mosoch/Meshech was likely the same as the μόςχοι, identified in Greek sources as central and eastern Anatolia. Herodotus identified the Meschenians as Phrygians (1.14; cf. 7.78). Josephus identifies the Meschenians as the Cappadocians (*Ant.* 1.125). Tubal and Meshech, juxtaposed in Herodotus (3.94; 7.78: Moschoi and Tibarenoi), are both located in eastern Asia Minor in Akkadian texts.³³ Ezekiel 27.12–14 mentions Tarshish along with Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Togarmah. Persian documents associate Javan with the Greeks on the coast of Asia Minor. Late OT sources identify *all* Greeks with Javan (Dan 8.21; 10.20; 11.2; so also Josephus, *Ant.* 1.127). Togarmah's location has been difficult to determine.³⁴ In any case, the Ezekiel 27 names all refer to locations in the eastern Mediterranean and especially Asia Minor. The western Mediterranean and Spain were well beyond the horizon for the authors of the Hebrew Bible.

An inscription of Esarhaddon from the year 671 BCE reads: 'All the kings from (the islands [i.e. the region]) amidst the sea—from the country Iadanna (Cyprus), as far as Tarsisi, bowed to my feet and I received heavy tribute (from them)'.³⁵ The inscription confirms that 'Tarshish' was a particular place. Esarhaddon's Tarshish could not have been in Spain. The inscription mentions Cyprus and Javan with Tarshish. Since Cyprus and Javan were in the region of Asia Minor, so also most likely was Tarshish.³⁶ No ancient evidence exists that would suggest that Esarhaddon's exploits ever reached west of Cilicia.³⁷ Shortly thereafter in the year 669 BCE, Ashurbanipal took the city of Tyre, and, consequently, terror spread to the neighboring territories. Other Assyrian inscriptions record the kings of Arvad, Tabal, and Cilicia (Hilakku) submitting to Ashurbanipal in Ninevah.³⁸ As was the case in 671 BCE, the events of 669 took place in Asia Minor, the westernmost reach of the Assyrian Empire. Maria Aubet commented: 'Asarhaddon's text shows complete ignorance of Mediterranean geography beyond Iadnana (Cyprus). What is more, if we accept that Tarsisi was Tartessos, we should have to allow that the frontiers of the

32 Symmachus has Λύδοις in Isa 66.19. Lud in Gen 10.22 is to be distinguished from the Ludim of Gen 10.13 (usually identified with Libya, although with Persia in Ezek 27.10).

33 D. W. Baker, 'Tubal', *ABD* 6.670; Lipinski, 'Les Japhétites', 45–7; Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 217: the cuneiform texts place *Mushki* and *Tabal* in central and eastern Anatolia. The *Mushki* capital was at Mazaca, modern Kayseri. Tabal was the region north of Cilicia. The remains of these two groups were eventually incorporated into the nineteenth satrapy of Persia in northeast Anatolia.

34 Neiman, 'Two Genealogies of Japheth', 121.

35 *ANET*, 290.

36 On Javan as Ionia in Asia Minor, see also C. Westermann, *Genesis 1–11: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984) 505; Ahlström, 'Nora Inscription', 48.

37 Lemaire, 'Tarshish-Tarsisi', 52.

38 Kooij, *Oracle of Tyre*, 43.

Assyrian Empire extended to the Iberian peninsula, which would be ridiculous'.³⁹ Spain was far beyond Esarhaddon's reach and concern. A Tarshish–Tarsus identification would explain the association of Tarshish with Cyprus and Ionia in the biblical texts and in the Esarhaddon inscription: 'L'identification avec Tarse semblerait donc tout à fait convenir!'⁴⁰ When scholars identify Tarshish with Spain on the sole basis of its ancient silver mines (cf. Ezek 27.12; 28.13; Jer 10.9), they ignore the more likely source of silver in the legendary Taurus Mountain range with its port at Tarsus.⁴¹ The Greeks and Assyrians jockeyed fiercely for control of Tarsus and the Cilician region.⁴² Tarsus' historic strategic value and commercial activity matches remarkably Tarshish's prominence in biblical texts.

In the late ninth-century BCE Nora stele, 'Tarshish' parallels 'Sardinia' as a place name.⁴³ The stele is fragmented and the first two lines are missing. 'Tarshish' has been severed from its full context. Frank Moore Cross presumed that 'at Tarshish' is possibly the location of a battle described in the ensuing lines of the stele. Cross located 'Tarshish' in Sardinia on the basis of the Semitic root of 'Tarshish' as 'to smelt' but believed, following Albright, that it was also a common name for several locations.⁴⁴ André Lemaire objected that 'at Tarshish' is only one

39 Aubet, *Phoenicians and the West*, 178; contra J. B. Tsirkin, 'The Hebrew Bible and the Origin of Tartessian Power', *AuOr* 4 (1986) 179–85, who simply assumed that the Esarhaddon text must be proffering an east–west description reaching from Cyprus (Iadnana) to the very west of the Mediterranean (Tarshish).

40 Lemaire, 'Tarshish-Tarsisi', 53.

41 P. Bordreuil, F. Israel, and D. Pardee ('King's Command and Widow's Plea: Two New Hebrew Ostraca of the Biblical Period', *Near Eastern Archaeology* 61/1 [1998] 2–5, 7, 9–13, esp. 5) favored Tarshish = Spain citing as the sole rationale several classical sources that refer to the high quality of silver production in Spain. On large-scale economic relations between the Anatolian and Phoenician regions, see Y. Ikeda, 'Solomon's Trade in Horses and Chariots in Its International Setting', *Studies in the Period of David and Solomon and Other Essays: Papers Read at the International Symposium for Biblical Studies, Tokyo, 5–7 December, 1979* (ed. T. Oshida; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1992) 215–38; G. M. A. Hanfmann, 'The Iron Age of Pottery of Tarsus', *Excavations at Gözli Kule, Tarsus*. Vol. 3. *The Iron Age* (ed. H. Goldman; Princeton: Princeton University, 1963) 154–60; J. Garstang, *Prehistoric Mersin: Yümük Tepe in Southern Turkey* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1953) 253–5; K. A. Yener, 'Taurus Mountains', *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East*, vol. 5 (ed. E. M. Meyers; New York: Oxford, 1997) 155–6.

42 On the history of Assyrian attempts to exert control over Tarsus and Cilicia, see Lemaire, 'Tarshish-Tarsisi', 54–62; Kooij, *Oracles of Tyre*, 43–6; J. D. Bing, 'Tarsus: A Forgotten Colony of Lindos', *JNES* 30 (1971) 99–110; L. W. King, 'Sennacherib and the Ionians', *JHS* 30 (1910) 327–5; A. Goetze, 'Cuneiform Inscriptions from Tarsus', *JAOS* 59 (1939) 1–16; P. Desideri and A. M. Jasink, *Cilicia: Dall'età di Kizzuwatna alla conquista macedone* (Università Degli Studi di Torino Fondo di Studi Parini-Chirio 1; [Firenze]: Casa Editrice Le Lettere, 1990) 113–63.

43 Ahlström, 'Nora Inscription', 41–2.

44 J. G. Scheur, 'Searching for the Phoenicians in Sardinia', *BAR* 16/1 (1990) 52–60, esp. 58–60; W. F. Albright, 'New Light', 17–22, esp. 21.

among several possible translations. The location of Tarshish in the stele is difficult to determine. Tarshish may have been the origin of the boat with Sardinia as a stopping point or destination.⁴⁵ In the inscription, Milkaton experienced conflict in Tarshish and moved on to Sardinia where he and his crew enjoyed peace. The ninth century was the period of Assyria's emergence as a power in the eastern Mediterranean region. During that period Shalmaneser III put Jehu on the throne of Israel and required tribute from him as well as from Balimazzer of Tyre and Sidon. Gösta Ahlström thought that the Phoenicians paid Shalmaneser III tribute in raw materials, including gold and silver, from Anatolia. Ahlström concluded from the Nora inscription's mention of turmoil that this Tarshish was most likely east of Sardinia and should not be identified with Tartessos in Spain.⁴⁶

The book of Jonah refers to the prophet's flight to a destination west of Israel. Aus surmised that Jonah was fleeing as far away from God and Ninevah as possible (Jonah 1.3). He therefore sought a ship departing for Tarshish.⁴⁷ Tsirkin argued that since Yahweh was viewed after the sixth century BCE as God of all peoples and races, Jonah could only have escaped by going to the ends of the earth. Neighboring Cilicia would not qualify.⁴⁸ Tsirkin, for his part, did not provide any evidence for a dawning knowledge of the western Mediterranean region in the sixth century on the part of Jewish authors.⁴⁹ The end of the earth for the author of Jonah would likely have been Asia Minor. Jonah (1.3) simply wanted to leave the land of Israel and thereby escape Yahweh's presence.⁵⁰ 'All we can be sure of is that he was going west, and that he thought he would be leaving his God behind'.⁵¹ The book of Jonah never expresses the idea that Jonah was trying to flee as far away from Israel or Ninevah as possible. Jonah's rationale for his Tarshish destination remains unstated, but the most likely reason was that it was a regular, Mediterranean trade partner. Jonah could be confident of escape from the land of Israel by means of one of the many ships bound for Tarshish. Similarly, Tyre's inhabitants were urged in Isa 23.6 to 'cross over to Tarshish'. Tarsus was within a

45 Lemaire, 'Tarshish-Tarsisi', 50–2.

46 Ahlström, 'Nora Inscription', 44–5.

47 Aus, 'Paul's Travel Plans', 245.

48 Tsirkin, 'Origin of Tartessian Power', 180.

49 Phoenician activity in Spain does not automatically translate into Israelite knowledge of that region of the world; contra Tsirkin, 'Origin of Tartessian Power', 181. Such knowledge may only be demonstrated from those authors themselves. Solomon's Tyrian ships are never described as traveling that far west (cf. 1 Kings 9.27–28; 10.11, 22: the cargo suggests travel in the Red Sea and to Ophir).

50 Reed Lessing, 'Just Where Was Jonah Going? The Location of Tarshish in the Old Testament', *Concordia Journal* 28 (2002) 291–3, esp. 293.

51 D. W. Baker, 'Tarshish', *ABD* 6.331–3, esp. 333.

reasonable distance for travel in escape. A Spanish location would have been a different matter.⁵²

Although Tarsus was spelled in different ways in antiquity, that variation is not an objection to the Tarsus–Tarshish identification.⁵³ Coins from the second half of the fifth century with the Aramaic legend TRZ correspond to three attestations of the village of Tarsus in neo-Assyrian texts: *Tarzu/i*. Simo Parpola demonstrated that KUR *Tarsisi* is a variant of URU *Tarzu/i*.⁵⁴ Lemaire qualified Parpola’s data with the crucial observation that the word ‘village’ modifies *Tarzu/i* in the ancient sources whereas ‘country’ modifies *Tarsisi*.⁵⁵ Lemaire concluded that Tarshish/*Tarsisi* designated the country while Tarsus/*Tarzu/i* designated the capital of that geographical region.⁵⁶ *Tarzu/i* could therefore function as a variant of *Tarsisi*, and TRZ a variant of *Tarsis/TRSS*. The two sets of terms are geographically related but also distinct.

III. The Lack of Evidence for a Spanish Tarshish in the Time of Paul

During the Hellenistic period the names of several countries were applied to regions further to the west.⁵⁷ Javan, which had previously referred to Ionia in Asia Minor, began to be used for Greece (note the LXX’s use of Ἑλλάς for Javan in Isa 66.19). Kittim, formerly Cyprus, began to refer to Greece and Italy.⁵⁸ Tubal, which had referred to Asia Minor (Assyrian sources), eventually came to refer to Iberia.⁵⁹ Tarshish, originally Tarsus, widened its geographical referent as well and began to refer to ‘the sea’ (Dan 10.6; Jerome; Origen) or Africa/Carthage (LXX Isa 23.1, 6, 10, 14; Ezek 27.12, 25; 38.13). This widening of geographical referents raises the question whether a first-century author such as Paul would have understood by Tarshish a location in Spain.

The identification of Tarshish with Spain in the Hellenistic and Roman eras depends upon the work of Michael Koch and Édouard Lipinski. They linked Tarshish with Μαστία Ταρσήμιον or θερσῖται. Polybius (3.24.2, 4) relates the Second Carthaginian treaty with Rome and employs the word Ταρσήμιον in connection with the Spanish town of Mastia. Polybius also refers to θερσῖται in con-

52 Lessing, ‘Just Where Was Jonah Going?’, 293. Isaiah 23.10’s prophecy that ‘Tarshish will no longer have a harbor’ was fulfilled with the capture of their main trading partner, Tyre.

53 Contra K. Galling, ‘Tarsis’, *Biblisches Reallexikon* (ed. K. Galling; 2d ed.; Handbuch zum Alten Testament 1/1; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1977) 332–3, esp. 332.

54 S. Parpola, *Neo-Assyrian Toponyms* (AOAT 6; Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker, 1970) 349.

55 Lemaire, ‘Tarshish-*Tarsisi*’, 49–50.

56 Lemaire, ‘Tarshish-*Tarsisi*’, 49–54.

57 E.g., *Jub.* 8–9; *Jos., Ant.* 1.122–47.

58 First Maccabees 1.1 and 8.5 therefore apply Kittim to Macedonian Greeks.

59 Kooij, *Oracle of Tyre*, 46.

nection with Spaniards transferred to Africa (3.33.9–10).⁶⁰ The critical flaw with Koch and Lipinski's reasoning is that no one has provided direct evidence that *Μαστία Ταρσήιον* or *θερσίται* should be identified with biblical 'Tarshish'.⁶¹ A Greek list from the late Roman period offers more direct evidence with its mention of *Θαρσεῖς ἢ Βατικὴ*. Kooij contended that the addition of *ἡ Βατικὴ distinguished* the Spanish Tharsis from the original Tharsis in Asia Minor. Kooij was blunt in his estimation of the evidence: 'There is no textual evidence for the identification of Tarshish with Tartessos in Southern Spain. Nor the earlier tradition, neither the later application of the name Tharsis to more remote areas provides evidence for this identification'.⁶² Josephus explained that Tarshish was the city of *θάρσος*, which he added was spelled in his day *Ταρσός* (*Ant.* 1.127 on Gen 10.4). When Jonah fled to Tarshish, Josephus explicitly identifies the city as the Cilician Tarsus (*εἰς Ταρσὸν τῆς Κιλικίας*, *Ant.* 9.208).

The lack of direct evidence for a Tarshish–Tartessos connection has forced its proponents to rely on other lines of reasoning. In Ps 72 [LXX 71].8–11, the psalmist prays with respect to the king:

May he have dominion from sea to sea,
and from the River to the ends of the earth.
May his foes bow down before him,
and his enemies lick the dust.
May the kings of Tarshish and of the isles
render him tribute,
may the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts.
May all kings fall down before him,
all nations give him service.

Since the 'river' of v. 8 was the Euphrates in the east, Aus concluded that Tarshish must have been 'the farthest point in the west, the "ends of the earth"'.⁶³ Tsirkin reasoned similarly that since Seba and Arabia were at the eastern edge of the world, Tarshish must have been in the far West.⁶⁴ Jewett, following Aus, reasoned that since Pompey had come to Judea from Spain, the 'end of the earth' in *Ps. Sol.* 8.16, and since elsewhere the end of the earth is identified as Tarshish (*Ps* 72 [LXX Ps 71].8, 10), then Tarshish and Spain must be the same.⁶⁵ On the other hand, while

60 Koch, *Tarschisch und Hispanien*, 109–26; E. Lipinski, 'Carthage et Tarshish', *BO* 45 (1988) 60–81, esp. 62; Tsirkin, 'Origin of Tartessian Power', 182.

61 Kooij, *Oracle of Tyre*, 46; contra Tsirkin and Koch.

62 Kooij, *Oracle of Tyre*, 46.

63 Aus, 'Paul's Travel Plans', 245.

64 Tsirkin, 'Origin of Tartessian Power', 181.

65 Pompey had been active in Spain from 77–72 BCE before his campaign in Jerusalem. *Pss. Sol.* 8.16–17 reads: 'He [God] brought someone from the end of the earth, one who attacks in strength; he declared war against Jerusalem, and her land' (trans. R. B. Wright, *OTP* 2.659). In this text, the end of the earth is Spain; Aus, 'Paul's Travel Plans', 244. Note, however, that

the biblical Psalmist does mention the ‘ends of the earth’, he never specifies the River, Sheba, Seba, or Tarshish as located *at* the ‘ends of the earth’. Sheba, Seba, and Tarshish were likely well *within* the imagined boundaries of the earth’s edge. Although Spain was conceived as at the ‘ends of the earth’ by the time of *Ps. Sol.* 8.16, Spain represents only one point along the more distant Greco-Roman boundary. Jewett and Aus’ reasoning is therefore flawed.

Jewett and Aus both pointed to Isa 66.19 as the inspiration for Paul’s missionary itinerary. Isaiah 66.19 includes several of the sons of Japheth: Tarshish, Tubal, and Javan. Some scholars, such as J. M. Scott and R. Riesner, have contended that Paul’s ministry has been among the sons of Japheth.⁶⁶ Isaiah 66.19, however, includes descendants of Shem and Ham as well, who were not associated with Asia Minor or Europe. Put, for instance, was most likely Libya and not Cilicia.⁶⁷ The scope of Isa 66.19 is therefore broader than Paul’s itinerary in Rom 15, an itinerary which appears limited to the Japhethites.⁶⁸ Isaiah 66.19 does not mention Jerusalem and Spain, the explicit geographical limits of Paul’s mission in Romans 15.⁶⁹ The assumption that Paul’s travel to Spain was intended to fulfill the prophecy of Isa 66.19 therefore raises an unnecessary new set of problems. Although Riesner’s analysis otherwise paralleled the conclusions of Aus, Riesner, for his part, identified Tarshish with Tarsus in Cilicia.⁷⁰ Riesner reasoned that since Tarshish is the *first* nation listed in Isa 66.19, Tarshish could not be the *last* destination on Paul’s missionary itinerary if Paul were attempting to fulfill the Isaianic prophecy.⁷¹

Psalms of Solomon is a Hellenistic era text! The end of the earth is not *explicitly* identified with Spain in Second Temple Jewish literature.

66 On the possibility of Paul’s tracing the migration of the Japhethites and the Scriptural traditions of the Japhethites, see J. M. Scott, *Paul and the Nations: The Old Testament and Jewish Background of Paul’s Mission to the Nations with Special Reference to the Destination of Galatians* (WUNT 84; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1995) 44–7. Scott (pp. 5–8; also pp. 9–56) explained that Israel viewed itself as at the center of the earth and its nations. The family of Ham settled in Canaan and to its south and west in Egypt and North Africa. Shem’s descendants settled to the east in Mesopotamia and Arabia. The sons of Japheth settled to the north and northwest of Israel in Asia Minor and Europe.

67 Although Rainer Riesner preferred to associate the various names of Isa 66.19 with Asia Minor or its immediate environs, the evidence he cited points strongly to North Africa for some of the names (see the discussion of Isa 66.19 above).

68 Scott, *Paul and the Nations*, 146–7.

69 Scott, *Paul and the Nations*, 147.

70 Riesner, *Paul’s Early Period*, 245 n. 55.

71 Scott, *Paul and the Nations*, 147. Aus (‘Paul’s Travel Plans’, 240) speculated that since Tarshish was mentioned first, it must be the most distant. The argument from Tarshish as the first location in Isa 66.19 can just as easily be interpreted otherwise. Riesner (*Paul’s Early Period*, 265), who identified Tarshish with Tarsus in Cilicia, wrote: ‘We cannot preclude the possibility that Paul ascribed special significance to the fact that his own place of birth (Acts 22.3) was mentioned in this prophetic oracle’ [Isa 66.19].

IV. Implications for the Spanish Mission as the Primary Rationale for Paul's Letter

Paul refers to his plans for Spain very briefly in two verses within a single paragraph of Romans, and he does not in any way link the content of the letter with his future missionary endeavors.⁷² Whatever Paul's reasons for writing, the Spanish mission does not appear to be his *primary* rationale for writing. These two verses cannot bear the weight that has been placed on them. The concrete issues that he tackles rather directly in Rom 14.1–15.13 far exceed what one would expect for a letter of self-recommendation or a letter of recommendation for Phoebe.⁷³ Paul never claims that he was trying to unify the Roman church in order to create a unified base of operations for the Spanish mission. Such intentions are incapable of proof.⁷⁴ J. Paul Sampley has questioned whether Roman divisiveness would waste resources or prevent Paul from securing the contacts he would need for the Spanish mission.⁷⁵ The mention of Spain, like the mention of the upcoming Jerusalem collection trip, would enhance Paul's apostolic authority with the Romans. The support Paul had received for the collection in his impressive journeys throughout the East, his impending visit to the very birthplace of Christianity in Jerusalem, as well as his ambitious upcoming trip to the furthest reaches of the West in Spain—Greece, Asia Minor, Jerusalem, Spain—offer a breathtaking view of his apostolic labors and ministry.⁷⁶ Since his apostolic ministry would span all the way from the east to the west, how much more should the Romans, who have yet to meet Paul, hearken to the content of his letter.⁷⁷ Mark Seifrid also explained that the mention of Spain responds to a potential objection to his failure to visit: 'It should be remembered too, that Paul's depiction of his visit to Rome as a "passing through on the way to Spain", was necessary to his appearing consistent to his audience. If for years he had failed to come to Rome because of unevangelized

72 Cf. Reichert, *Der Römerbrief*, 26.

73 On the concrete issues at Rome, see A. A. Das, *Solving the Romans Debate* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007).

74 The circularity that Heike Omerzu noted in Reichert's work plagues Jewett's thesis as well; H. Omerzu, review of A. Reichert, *Der Römerbrief als Gratwanderung: Eine Untersuchung zur Abfassungsproblematik*, *JBL* 123 (2004) 767–71, esp. 771.

75 J. P. Sampley, 'Romans in a Different Light: A Response to Robert Jewett', *Romans* (D. M. Hay and E. E. Johnson, ed.), 109–29, esp. 112. Sampley added: 'Jewett's conception of Paul's mission focuses too much beyond Rome; it does not do justice to Paul's mission *in Rome*' (p. 112, emphasis his). Sampley argued that, if anything, Jerusalem is more prominent than Spain.

76 J. A. D. Weima, 'Preaching the Gospel in Rome: A Study of the Epistolary Framework of Romans', *Gospel in Paul: Studies on Corinthians, Galatians and Romans for Richard N. Longenecker* (ed. L. A. Jervis and P. Richardson; JSNTSup 108; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1994) 337–66, esp. 357.

77 Weima, 'Preaching the Gospel', 337–66; L. A. Jervis, *The Purpose of Romans: A Comparative Letter Structure Investigation* (JSNTSup 55; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1991).

areas in the East, how could he ignore pioneering work in the West?⁷⁸ Paul's subsequent request for welcome in Rome (15.30–33) is not subordinated or connected in any way to his plans for travel to Spain.⁷⁹ 'The [Spanish] mission is not mentioned directly until the conclusion of the letter, and then in a minor key'.⁸⁰

Paul's failure to draw a connection between biblical Tarshish and his plans for Spain undermine Jewett's reasoning from Isa 66.19. No one would have identified Tarshish with southern Spain in Isaiah's or Paul's day. 'The old theory that Tarshish was located in Spain must be given up'.⁸¹ Paul was not traveling *to* Tarshish. Tarshish is the *first* city that Isaiah mentions in his itinerary of gentiles streaming to Zion, not the last. The gentile gathering must *begin* in Tarshish. How appropriate, then, if the apostle to the gentiles should hail from none other than Tarshish (Acts 22.3).⁸²

78 M. A. Seifrid, *Justification by Faith: The Origin and Development of a Central Pauline Theme* (NovTSup 68; Leiden: Brill, 1992) 194.

79 Seifrid, *Justification By Faith*, 194.

80 Seifrid, *Justification By Faith*, 194.

81 Ahlström, 'Nora Inscription', 49. Sayce ('Tenth Chapter of Genesis', 196) confidently declared already in 1925: 'Tarshish is Tarsus, not Tartessos which was at the other end of the Mediterranean'.

82 In favor of Acts 22.3's historicity, Luke emphasizes Paul's ties to Jerusalem. He received his education there, was operating from there prior to his conversion, and regularly returns there after his conversion. Luke would likely have preferred that Paul hail from Jerusalem; see J. Knox, *Chapters in a Life of Paul* (rev. ed.; Macon, Ga.: Mercer University, 1987) 20–1.