

“The End of the Earth” (Acts 1:8)*

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I

As has long been recognized, the book of Acts was organized to depict, among other things, the geographical progress of the Christian message from Jerusalem through Judea and Samaria to the lands of Syria, Asia Minor, Greece and Rome.¹ In this respect it presents the expansion of the Christian witness from the center of Judaism to the center of the Roman Empire, from the mission to Palestinian Jews to the mission to Jews and Gentiles of the diaspora.

Luke, the author of Acts and sometime companion and co-worker of Paul,² devotes almost all of the latter part of his work to the Pauline mission. But he pictures Paul’s ministry as arising from his teachings in the synagogue and, consequently, as directed to Jews as well as to Gentiles. Even in the last chapter of Acts Luke represents the Apostle’s

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initial preaching at Rome as primarily devoted to his appeal to the Jews, some of whom “were persuaded... and some disbelieved.”³

The book of Acts, then, does not describe a transition of the Christian mission from the Jews to the Gentiles since Jews are recipients of the message throughout the book. If Acts, like Paul’s letter to the Romans, underscores the rejection of the gospel message by the majority of the Jewish religious leaders and by the nation, it does not omit the continuing positive response of many individual Jews.⁴ This fact is important for a proper interpretation of Acts 1:8:

* The German text of this article appears in *Der Treue Gottes trauen. Beiträge... für Gerhard Schneider...*, eds. C. Bussmann and W. Radl (Freiburg: Herder, 1991).

¹ Acts 1:1-7:60 (Jerusalem); 8:1-11:18 (Judea and Samaria); 11:19-12:25 (Syria); 13:1-16:10 (Cyprus and Asia Minor); 16:11-19:22 (Greece); 27:1-28:31 (Rome). In an earlier usage of Luke (Luke 3:1; 4:44) and in that of Josephus (*War* 3, 53-58) Judea included Caesarea, the capital of the Roman imperial province of Judea. Cf. B. Reicke, *The New Testament Era* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1968) 134, 197-200, 339 (map) = GT: 99f., 146-50, 263 (Tafel III); H. Conzelmann, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1963) (beigelegte Landkarte). But see M. Hengel, “Luke the Historian and the Geography of Palestine,” *Between Jesus and Paul* (London: SCM, 1983) 99 = GT: ZDPV 99 (1983) 151.

² Col 4:14; 2 Tim 4:11; Phm 24. See the careful case for Lukan authorship developed by C. Hemer, *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1989) 308-64. Cf. Hengel (n. 1) 97-128, 121 = GT: ZDPV 99 (1983) 147-83, 175; E. E. Ellis, *The Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987) 40-51. Otherwise: G. Schneider, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, 2 vols. (Freiburg: Herder, 1980), vol. 1, 108-11; E. Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, trans. R. Wilson (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971) 90-116 = GT (1959) 81-103.

³ Acts 28:24; cf. 20:21; Rom 1:16; 1 Cor 1:24, 9:20; 2 Cor 11:24.

⁴ Acts 11:19; 13:43; 14:1f.; 16:1; 17:1-4, 10f.; 18:4; 19:10; 20:21; 28:24. Cf. J. Jervell, *Luke and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1972) 63: “[In Acts 28] the Gentile mission is really only beginning.” Cf. Rom 9-11.

You shall be my witnesses
In Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria
And to the end of the earth (ἕσχατου τῆς γῆς).

The Isaian wording of the concluding phrase may reflect a summary of the risen Jesus’ commission to his disciples in terms of the Servant of the Lord in Isa 49:6 or it may be Luke’s interpretive rendering.⁵ In either case it is a conscious allusion by Luke to the verse in Isaiah where the phrase has a geographical connotation:

I will give you as a light to the Gentiles
That my salvation may reach
To the end of the earth (ἕσχατου τῆς γῆς).⁶

The prophecy in Isaiah is not merely that the Servant’s mission of salvation will include Gentiles but, much more, that in the course of including Gentiles the mission will extend “to the end of the earth.” As it is taken up in Acts 13:47, the prophecy retains the same double motif, Gentile inclusion and earth-wide extension. In Acts 1:8 the abbreviated form, “to the end of the earth,” has only geographical connotations⁷ even if there are secondary implications for the inclu-

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sion of Gentiles. Therefore, it cannot be equated with the risen Jesus’ commission in Matt 28:19 to “go and make disciples of all nations,” that is, to go to the Gentiles.⁸

If the structure of Acts and the force of the idiom, ἕσχατου τῆς γῆς are geographical, what is the location that is in Luke’s mind? Since Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria are specific places, probably the “end of the earth” is also.⁹ For two reasons the reference is understood by some scholars to be Rome.¹⁰ (1) It fits the plan of Acts which ends at Rome, and (2) it accords with the (assumed) meaning of the phrase in Pss Sol 8:15 (16) LXX:

⁵ Luke also refers to Isa 49:6 in Acts 13:47 and, by allusion, in Luke 2:32. Both passages may be traditional, but they show in any case Luke’s interest in retaining the Isaian reference.

⁶ So, C. Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, trans. D. Stalker (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969) 206, 212; B. Duhm, *Das Buch Isaiah* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1968) 370. Already, J. A. Alexander, *Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: Elliot, 1865), vol. 2, 228; somewhat differently, F. Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah*, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1950), vol. 2, 263: Jehovah has set the Servant for a light to the Gentiles “to become his salvation to the end of the earth” (Isa 49:6). But the Servant of the Lord performs this function whether viewed individually or, as in Acts 13:47f., 14:4, corporately manifested in his apostles, Paul and Barnabas.

⁷ Cf. F. F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, Revised Edition (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989) 37f.; H. Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987) 7.

⁸ Pace F. J. Foakes Jackson and K. Lake, eds., *The Beginnings of Christianity*, 5 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1920-33), vol. 4, 9: “This passage is the Lukan form of the Matthean universal commission.”

⁹ Pace H. A. W. Meyer, *The Acts of the Apostles* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1883) 28: “[Acts 1:8] denotes the sphere of the apostles’ work ... up to its most general diffusion.” Meyer appears to interpret the phrase as an “ideal” universal sphere.

¹⁰ E.g., B. Reicke, *The Roots of the Synoptic Gospels* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986) 179f.; F. F. Bruce, *Paul* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977) 447f.; Haenchen (n. 2) 144n = GT: 112n. R. G. Knowling, “The Acts of the Apostles,” *The Expositor’s Greek Testament*, 5 vols., ed. W. R. Nicoll (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), vol. 2, 57; H. J. Holtzmann,

[God] brought someone from the end of the earth ...
He decreed war against Jerusalem.

“The end of the earth” is thought by some writers to refer to Pompey’s coming from Rome to overrun Jerusalem in 63 B.C. But for at least three reasons this suggestion is unacceptable. First, in the context the phrase is probably an allusion to Jer 6:22 where “end of the earth” is used with reference to the Babylonian conquest.¹¹ The Psalms of Solomon, like the Qumran Commentary on Habakkuk, identifies Babylon, as a type, with Rome or with the Romans and does so fully a century before the Apostle Peter and John the prophet make this equation.¹² Second, in its application to Pompey the phrase could refer to Spain since Pompey came to the East in 67 B.C. after a command in Spain (77-71 B.C.).¹³ Third, the phrase “end(s) of the earth” had a

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common and apparently fixed meaning that was used of Spain but could by no means apply to the capital city of the Roman Empire.

II

In classical antiquity the inhabited earth was pictured as a disc surrounded by the “Outer Sea” (ὠκεανός). “The ends of the earth” (τὰ ἔσχατα τῆς γῆς) referred, as W. C. van Unnik has shown,¹⁴ to the most distant points on the rim of the disc, for example, the Arctic on the North, India on the East, Ethiopia on the South and Spain on the West.¹⁵ A computer search that I made of the phrase in *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* fully confirms van Unnik’s findings. The expression has that significance in the Septuagint and in the Patristic writers (often quoting the Septuagint), where the phrase most often appears in Greek literature. It was used in the same way in the classical writers and apparently retained this geographical meaning from the fifth century B.C. to the sixth century A.D. Thus, Herodotus († c. 420 B.C.) speaks of an army going down through

Die Apostelgeschichte (Tübingen: Mohr, 1901) 25. But see W. C. van Unnik, “Der Ausdruck ἜΩΣ ἘΣΧΤΟΥ ΤΗΣ ΓΗΣ (Apostelgeschichte I 8) ...” *Sparsa Collecta*, 3 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1973-83), vol. 1, 386-91.

¹¹ So, H. E. Ryle and M. R. James, eds., *The Psalms of Solomon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1891) 80: “The phrase is used not so much with... the idea of the remoteness of Italy from Palestine as of reproducing the language of the prophets, in predicting the coming of the Babylonians....”

¹² 1QpHab 2:10-6:12; cf. 1 Pet 5:13; Rev 17:5-10; F. F. Bruce, *New Testament History* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1972) 11f.

¹³ Cf. H. A. Ormond and M. Cary, “Rome and the East,” *Cambridge Ancient History*, 12 vols., ed. S. A. Cook *et al.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1925-39), vol. 9, 321-25, 374-83. Van Unnik (n. 10, I, 399) points out that the author of the Psalms of Solomon was well informed about Pompey, at least about his later life. Cf. G. B. Gray, “The Psalms of Solomon,” *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, 2 vols., ed. R. H. Charles (Oxford: Clarendon, 1964), vol. 2, 629f.; R. B. Wright, “Psalms of Solomon,” *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2 vols., ed. J. H. Charlesworth (Garden City: Doubleday, 1985), vol. 2, 641.

¹⁴ Van Unnik (n. 10, I, 386-401) gives the most thorough and perceptive analysis of the phrase, with special attention to the Septuagint (395-399). My computer check of the phrase was from a compact disk produced at the University of California.

¹⁵ Strabo, *Geography* 1, 1, 6; 1, 2, 31; 2, 3, 5; 2, 4, 2. Cf. Philostratus, *vita Apol.* 6, 1, 1; Philo, *de cher.* 99; idem, *de som.* 1, 134; idem, *de migr.* 181.

Ethiopia to “the ends of the earth” (τὰ ἔσχατα γῆς),¹⁶ and a millennium later Procopius († c. A.D. 560) speaks of Roman soldiers on the eastern frontier of Persia and India as being “at the ends of the inhabited world” (ταῖς τῆς οἰκουμένης ἔσχαταις).¹⁷ Writing near the turn of the first century, the geographer Strabo († c. A.D. 21) makes this understanding of the phrase very clear:

[The] inhabited world is an island. For wherever it has been possible for man to reach the ends of the earth (τὰ ἔσχατα τῆς γῆς), sea has been found. And this sea we call “Oceanus.”¹⁸

Citing Homer, he writes thus of the southern bounds of the earth:

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[The] Ethiopians live at the ends of the earth on the banks of Oceanus (ἐπι τῷ ὠκεανῷ ἔσχατοι).¹⁹

Concerning the “end of the earth” westward Strabo is even more specific:

Gades is “situated at the end of the earth” (ἔσχατη τῆς γῆς).²⁰

Gades was a prestigious city and the commercial hub of the western reaches of the Roman Empire. It was located west of Gibraltar near the modern Cadiz, Spain, in the area that Strabo had earlier identified with equivalent terminology:

[The] promontory of Iberia which they call the Sacred Cape is the most westerly point of the inhabited world (δυσμικώτατον τῆς οἰκουμένης).²¹

Diodorus Siculus († c. 20 B.C.) described Gades in similar terms:

The city of Gadeira [Gades] is situated at the end of the inhabited world (τὰ ἔσχατα τῆς οἰκουμένης).²²

Pausanias († c. A.D. 180) makes a more general allusion to the exile of the Messenians, who returned to Greece after “fate scattered them to the ends of the earth” (γῆς τὰ ἔσχατα), that is, to Italy, Sicily and eastern lands (εὐσπερίτας).²³ The “western lands” also probably refer to Spain.

¹⁶ Herodotus, *History*, 3, 25. Cf. the play of Aeschylus († 456 B.C.), *Prometheus Bound* 665: lo, put out of home and country, to be a wanderer “at the ends of the earth” (γῆς ἐπ’ ἔσχατοις).

¹⁷ Procopius, *History of the Wars* 2, 3, 52; cf. 6, 30, 9; 2, 22, 7, on the spread of a plague “right out to the ends of the inhabited world” (τάς τῆς οἰκουμένης ἔσχαταις).

¹⁸ Strabo, *Geography* 1, 1, 8; cf. 1, 2, 31; 1, 4, 6.

¹⁹ Idem, 1, 1, 6; cf. 1, 2, 24.

²⁰ Idem, 3, 1, 8. Cf. 1, 2, 31 (end); 1, 1, 5: “The Islands of the Blest [Canary Islands] are west of the westward limit (τῆς ἐσχάτης πρὸς δύσιν) of Marousia” [Morocco].

²¹ Idem, 2, 5, 14; cf. 3, 1, 4.

²² Diodorus Siculus, *History* 25, 10, 1.

²³ Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 4, 29, 13; 4, 26, 5.

In conclusion, the use of the phrase, “end(s) of the earth,” in Greek literature confirms the initial exegetical impression stated above that the phrase in Acts 1:8 must have a geographical significance. In its westward extent “the end of the earth” refers generally to Spain and specifically to the region around Gades, west of Gibraltar. This usage rules out the view that the phrase in Acts alludes to Rome.

A reference to Rome at Acts 1:8 is also excluded by two further considerations. First, Rome does not mark the extent or the completion of the Christian mission in Acts, but only a new base from which the gospel will be continued further “without hindrance” (Acts 28:31, ἀκωλύτως).²⁴ Second, if Rome might possibly have been termed the “end of the earth” by a parochial Psalmist in Jerusalem, it could never have been called that by Luke, who had been in the capital and who wrote in the diaspora to Theophilus (Acts 1:1), a cosmopolitan patron who may have resided at Rome and who, in any case, would have

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thought it absurd to give such a designation to the ruling center of the Empire.

III

If “the end of the earth” in Acts 1:8 refers to a specific place on the rim of the world, only two locations come into serious consideration, Ethiopia on the South and Spain on the West. The former place has been suggested on the basis of the episode of the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8:26-40.²⁵ It is supported by Luke’s explicit statement that the eunuch was “returning” (8:28) to his land, and that after his conversion and baptism he “was going on his way” (8:39, ἐπορεύετο τὴν ὁδόν).

However, against identifying Ethiopia as the place in mind at Acts 1:8 are the following considerations: (1) At most, Luke portrays only a prospective evangelization of Ethiopia by an otherwise insignificant representative figure. (2) He places the episode in the midst of the Christian missionary enterprise “in Judea and Samaria” and (3) gives no further attention to the movement of Christianity southward.²⁶ (4) On the whole he structures the latter half of his work around the mission of Paul and that means, geographically, the movement of Christianity westward. Is there evidence that may support the view that in Acts 1:8 Luke has in mind the western “end of the earth,” that is, Spain?

It is the Apostle himself who first refers to Spain as the western goal of his mission. Writing to the Christians in Rome, he says:

When I go to Spain
I hope to see you in passing.²⁷

²⁴ Rightly, Schneider (n. 2), I, 203n.

²⁵ So, T. C. G. Thornton, “To the End of the Earth,” *ET* 89 (1977-78) 374f.

²⁶ The mentions of Cyrenians (Acts 6:9; 11:20; 13:1) and Alexandrians (6:9; 18:24) are not really exceptions to this.

²⁷ Rom 15:24, 28.

Clement of Rome, a younger contemporary of Paul, who wrote a letter to Paul’s church at Corinth a few years (c. A.D. 70)²⁸ or a few decades (c. A.D. 95)²⁹ after the Apostle’s martyrdom in Rome (c. A.D. 67),

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is the earliest and best evidence that Paul did in fact fulfil his intention to undertake a mission to Spain. He summarizes the Apostle’s achievements in part as follows:

Having become a preacher in the East and in the West (τῆ δύσει)
[Paul] received the noble (γενναῖον) renown of his faith
Having taught righteousness in the whole world
Having reached the limits of the West (τὸ τέρμα τῆς δύσεως)
And having witnessed before the governing authorities
Thus he departed from the world
And was received up into the holy place....³⁰

In writings of the classical period the phrase, τὸ τέρμα τῆς γῆς, was an idiom equivalent to ἔσχατα τῆς γῆς.³¹ Like the latter phrase such terminology referred in its westward reference most often to Spain (and sometimes to Gaul or Britain) but, for the reasons mentioned above, never to Rome.³² The following examples may suffice to illustrate this usage:

[Ephorus] imagined that the Iberians, who dwell in such a large part of the western world (ἔσπεριου γῆς), were a single city.³³

The distance from East to West (δύσιν) [is] greater ... From India to Iberia is less than 200,000 stadia...³⁴

The first part of Europe is the Western (ἔσπεριον), namely, Iberia³⁵

[The Greeks] say that the Western section [of the world] is from the Gulf of Issus [east of Tarsus] to the capes of Iberia, which are the most westerly parts (δυσμικώτατα).³⁶

²⁸ So, J. A. T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1976) 327-35; G. Edmundson, *The Church in Rome in the First Century* (London: Longmans, 1913) 187-202.

²⁹ So, J. B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 3 vols. in 5 (London: Macmillan, 1890), vol. 1, i, 346-58; A. Harnack, *Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur bis Eusebius II: Die Chronologie*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1958), vol. 1, 255; L. W. Barnard, *The Apostolic Fathers and their Background*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1966) 12. L. L. Welborn (“On the Date of First Clement,” *Biblical Research* 29 (1984) 35-54, 37, raises significant objections to the Domitianic date, but he is less persuasive when he limits the “calamities and reverses” (I Clem 1:1) to internal church quarrels and disconnects the date of the letter (A.D. 80-140) from external persecutions and problems.

³⁰ I Clem 5:6f. On the date A.D. 67 cf. Edmundson (n. 28), 147-63.

³¹ The specific phrase, τὸ τέρμα τῆς δύσεως, is rare if not unique. But cf. the similar τερμάτων γῆς (Philo, *Deu immut.* 79; cf. idem, *vita Mos.* 1, 2) and οἰκουμένης τέρματα (Eusebius, *vita Const.* 1, 8, 3f.).

³² Also, for a writer in Rome “the West” ordinarily meant Gaul or Spain, but certainly not Rome.

³³ Josephus, c. *Apion.* 1, 67. Cf. Tacitus, *History*, 4, 3.

³⁴ Strabo, *Geography* 1, 4, 6; cf. 1, 2, 31; 2, 1, 1.

³⁵ Idem, 3, 1, 2.

³⁶ Idem, 2, 4, 3.

The regions to the West (δύσιν) of Europe as far as Gades...³⁷

The temple of Hercules in Gades [is said to be] ... the end of both earth and sea (γῆς καὶ θαλάττης τὸ τέρας).³⁸

The city of Gades is located at the limits of Europe (τὸ τῆς Ευρώπης τέρμα).³⁹

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You have come from the Pillars of Hercules [= the straits of Gibraltar]⁴⁰
From the Ocean and
From the uttermost limits of the earth (*terminisque ultimis terrarum*).⁴¹

The last four examples show, I believe, that in its specific reference τὸ τέρμα τῆς δύσεως in I Clem 5:7, like the westward reference of ἐσχάτα τῆς γῆς in Acts 1:8, refers to the region around Gades, west of Gibraltar.⁴²

IV

In view of the meaning of “end of the earth” in the Greco-Roman literature, the phrase in Acts 1:8 almost certainly alludes to the extension of the Gospel to Spain and, more specifically, to the city of Gades. The command is, of course, addressed to the apostles as a whole and not to Paul, and one might argue that it refers to “the ends of the earth,” that is, to the extent of their missions generally, with the singular ἐσχάτου employed as an allusion to Isa 49:6. However, in Acts 13:47 Luke explicitly applies to the Pauline mission the commission to the “end of the earth” and thereby specifies the apostle who will be the one to fulfil the command in his contribution to the church’s expanding mission. Furthermore, he does not hesitate to alter the Old Testament text elsewhere, for example in Acts 2:17-21, to highlight his interpretation or application of it. If he had wished to indicate the spread of the gospel to the bounds of the earth universally, he could easily have utilized the plural ἐσχάτων or ἐσχάτους without foreclosing the allusion to Isaiah, especially at Acts 13:47. In the light of these factors, of the total plan of Acts and of the equivalent idiom in I Clem 5:7, Luke very probably used the singular intentionally and with contemporary geographical usage in mind, that is, “the end of the earth” as it was applied to Gades and to the adjacent region at the extreme limits of the West.

If the author of Acts is Luke, he doubtless knew of Paul’s plans for a Spanish mission. If he wrote before the mission was undertaken, say A.D. 62-63,⁴³ or when it was in progress, the open-ended conclusion of

³⁷ Idem, 2, 4, 4.

³⁸ Idem, 3, 5, 5.

³⁹ Philostratus, *vita Apol.* 5, 4; cf. 4, 47; Pliny, *Natural History* 3, 1, 3-7.

⁴⁰ Cf. L. Schmitz, “Heracles,” *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology*, 3 vols., ed. W. Smith, Boston: Little, Brown, 1859, II, 393-401, 397.

⁴¹ Livy, *History* 21, 43, 13; cf. 23, 5, 11.

⁴² So, already, Lightfoot (n. 29), I, ii, 30f.

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Acts would, to some extent, be clarified. In that case Luke did not mention the mission to Gades because, as he finished his volume, it was still outstanding. If he wrote after Paul’s mission to Spain but during the Neronian persecution (A.D. 65-68), he may well have had other reasons for ending his book without explicitly mentioning either Paul’s release or a subsequent Spanish mission.⁴⁴ If he wrote after A.D. 68; however, it is more difficult to perceive why he would create or record a preview of the gospel going to Gades and then say nothing more about it.

As both J. B. Lightfoot⁴⁵ and Adolf Harnack⁴⁶ recognized, Paul’s release from his first Roman imprisonment is a basic historical fact from which critical reconstructions of early Christian history should proceed. That his release was followed by a journey to Spain is well attested in I Clem 5:7⁴⁷ and is entirely in accord with Paul’s earlier mission strategy known from the book of Acts and from his letters.

Paul established churches in hub-cities that were centers of trade and transport or were on well-traveled arteries of the Roman road system—Philippi, Thessalonica, Corinth, Ephesus. Thereby, he was able to evangelize not only the local populace but also merchants, travelers and visitors passing through. In his concern to evangelize

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⁴³ So, Hemer (n. 2) 365-410, 408 (A.D. 62); Reicke (n. 10) 174-80, 178 (c. A.D. 62); A. Harnack, *The Date of Acts and of the Synoptic Gospels* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1911) 99 (before the end of Paul’s trial). Also advocating an A.D. 64 or earlier date for Acts, according to Hemer’s list (367f.), are the following twentieth-century scholars: P. S. Bihel, E. M. Blaiklock, F. Blass, G. Edmundson, F. V. Filson, J. Finegan, E. R. Goodenough, D. Guthrie, E. F. Harrison, R. N. Longenecker, A. J. Matill, J. Munck, P. Parker, R. B. Rackham, A. T. Robertson, J. A. T. Robinson, C. C. Torrey, V. E. Vine.

⁴⁴ Acts 26:32 reflects an optimism that Paul would be (or had been) acquitted but, as I have suggested elsewhere, Luke may have wished not to call attention to Paul’s release in order to protect Paul or to protect the Roman magistrate who released him. Cf. E. E. Ellis, *Pauline Theology: Ministry and Society* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989) 107-11.

⁴⁵ Lightfoot (n. 29), 1, ii, 30 (on I Clem 5:7): “This journey of Paul westward [to the pillars of Hercules] supposes that Paul was liberated after the Roman captivity related in the Acts....” Harnack (n. 29, 1, 239) also considered Paul’s mission to Spain to be probable as did T. Zahn and A. Deissmann. Otherwise: Bruce (n. 10) and A. Schlatter. Cf. A. Deissmann, *Paul*, trans. W. Wilson (New York: Harper & Row, 1957) 248; A. Schlatter, *The Church in the New Testament Period* (London: SPCK, 1955) 220, 236; T. Zahn, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1963), vol. 2, 60-67.

⁴⁶ Harnack (n. 29), I, 239f.: “I hold the release of Paul from his first imprisonment [in Rome] to be a certain fact of history” (*gesicherte Tatsache*, 240n.); “on chronological grounds no objections can be raised against the report that Paul went to the τέρμα τῆς δύσεως, that is, to Spain” (239). He gives, among other reasons, the following: I Clem 5:7 and the five years or more between the end of Paul’s two-year work in Rome (Acts 28:30) and his execution. So also, H. W. Tajra, *The Trial of St. Paul* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1989) 196; Hemer (n. 2) 390-404; C. Spicq, *Le Épîtres Pastorales*, 2 vols. (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1969), vol. 1, 126-46; W. Rordorf, “Nochmals: Paulusakten und Pastoralbriefe,” *Tradition and Interpretation in the New Testament*, ed. G. F. Hawthorne with Otto Betz (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987) 322. In addition, Paul’s journey to Rome reflected in the Pastoral epistles and in the Acts of Paul (c. A.D. 190) is quite different from that in Acts 20-28. Cf. J. Weiss, *The History of Primitive Christianity*, 2 vols. (New York: Wilson- Erickson, 1937), vol. 1, 389-92; Rordorf, 324.

⁴⁷ Paul’s journey to Spain also appears in Acts of Peter (with Simon) 1, 1 (A.D. 160-190) and in the Muratorian Canon.

Spain he would, following his earlier practice, have considered Gades the prime location for his purposes.

Settled by Phoenicians, Gades in Paul’s day was an allied Roman municipium that Strabo rated in the density of its populace, in wealth and in prestige as the second city of the Roman world.⁴⁸ It was a major commercial center connected to other Spanish cities by “a splendid road system” (Albertini) and with fishing and merchant ships plying their trade along the western coasts of Europe and Africa and as far north as Britain.⁴⁹ It maintained a flourishing sea-traffic with Rome, which in good weather was only a seven-day voyage,⁵⁰ and it may have exported fish as far east as Palestine.⁵¹

There is little evidence for Jewish settlements in Spain in the first century. Josephus states in one place that Antipas was exiled there in A.D. 39,⁵² and a later rabbinic tradition says that a temple-weaver migrated there after the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.⁵³ The best evidence for a Jewish presence in Spain is Paul’s stated intention in Rom 15:24, 28 to go there since he customarily preached first to Jews and God-fearers in the synagogue. This is also sufficient answer to the objection that Paul would not have been fluent in the language(s) used at Gades.

With the phrase, “the end of the earth,” in Acts 1:8 Luke signals his knowledge of a (prospective) Pauline mission to Spain and his intention to make it a part of his narrative. For reasons that are not altogether clear, he concludes his book without mentioning the Spanish mission. If he wrote before A.D. 68, the omission can be explained. It is less easy to do so if he wrote after that date. To the various reasons advanced by numerous scholars for an early date for Acts, Acts 1:8 now adds one more. All of the arguments together lead me, after some consideration, to revise my dating of Luke-Acts from an earlier judgment of “about A.D. 70” to a date in the mid-sixties.⁵⁴

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⁴⁸ Strabo, *Geography* 3, 5, 3. Cf. A. N. Sherwin White, *The Roman Citizenship* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1980) 185, 188f., 301-4, 340-43; F. Oertel, “The Economic Unification of the Mediterranean Region,” in Cook (n. 13), X, 407f. 415.

⁴⁹ Strabo, *Geography* 3, 2, 1; 3, 4, 3. Cf. E. Albertini, “The Latin West,” in Cook (n. 13), vol. 11, 499f.; T. Mommsen, *The Provinces of the Roman Empire*, 2 vols. (Chicago: Ares, 1974), vol. 1, 74f.; M. P. Charlesworth, *Trade-Routes and Commerce of the Roman Empire* (Chicago: Ares, 1974) 141f., 152-57, 163, 208, 235.

⁵⁰ Charlesworth (n. 48) 155.

⁵¹ M. Shabbat 22:2; M. Makshirim 6:3; cf. S. Applebaum, “Economic Life in Palestine,” *Compendia Rerum Judaicarum ad Novum Testamentum*, ed. S. Safrai et al., Assen 1974-, 1, 2 (1976) 670.

⁵² Josephus, *War* 2, 183; but see idem, *Antiquities* 18, 252.

⁵³ S. Applebaum, “...Jewish Communities in the Diaspora,” in Safrai (n. 51), 1, 1 (1974) 482. Cf. M. Baba Batra 3:2.

⁵⁴ Ellis (n. 2) 55-60; idem, “Dating the New Testament,” *NTS* 26 (1980) 488, 500.