

## The Hebrew Bible and the Origin of Tartessian Power

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[Having analyzed the Biblical evidence referring to Tarshish (to the city and the country) we come to the conclusion that Tarshish is equal to Graeco-Roman Tartessus of South Spain. The origin of Tartessian power led to considerable change in the balance of political forces in the West of the Mediterranean and threatened Tyrian colonies. That was reflected in Isaiah's prophecies.]

Phoenician seafaring and Phoenician colonization played a cardinal role in the shaping of a single history of the ancient Mediterranean. As would be expected, some information on the Phoenician colonial expansion could not fail to get recorded in the Bible; hence the great significance of the phrase from "The Prophecy of Isaiah" (XXIII,10): *'ibrī 'aršēk kay'ōr baṭ-taršīš 'èn mēzah 'ōd*, "Overflow thy land as the river, o daughter of Tarshish: there is no girdle any more" (RSV).

This phrase may be studied from different angles and it allows of various interpretations. In the present paper we are primarily interested in the mention of Tarshish and in the general sense of the Biblical author's pronouncement.

The word "Tarshish" (*tršyš*) is not infrequent in the Bible. It is used as the name of a country (or, perhaps, of a city), as the name of a gem, as a type of boats and even as the proper name of a person<sup>1</sup>. Now we shall dwell at length upon the first meaning of this word.

Although in this sense the word "Tarshish" is more than once employed in the Bible texts, nowhere can we find its exact localization, which causes many disputes in modern historical science. The most common viewpoint equates the Biblical Tarshish with the Graeco-Roman Tartessus in South Spain<sup>2</sup>. However other opinions are also voiced<sup>3</sup> and the controversy stimulates a further and more comprehensive study of this problem.

In the Biblical tradition, as far as we can judge, whenever the word "Tarsish" is used to denote a

1. W. Tyloch, "Le problème de Taršīš à la lumière de la philologie et de l'exégèse, in *Actes du deuxième congrès international d'études des cultures de la Méditerranée Occidentale*. Alger 1978, p. 46.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 50; G. Gesenius, *Tesaurus Veteris Testamenti*. Lipsiae 1840, col. 1315; P. Cintas, *Manuel d'archéologie punique*, I. Paris 1970, pp. 274ff.

3. On this opinion see G. Bunnens, *L'expansion phénicienne en Méditerranée*. Bruxelles-Rome 1978, pp. 339-347.

territory of the same name it invariably (with a single exception that we shall discuss later) implies some land in the Mediterranean. In Ezekiel's prophecy ascribed to the first half of the sixth century B.C. there is a list of Tyre's trade agents (Ez. XXVII,12). G. Fohrer examined the text of the prophecy and concluded that the catalogue fairly strictly follows the geographical sequence of the partners from west to east and the first, i.e. western most partner of Tyre appears to be Tarshish<sup>4</sup>. In the "Table of the Nations" (Gen.X,4) Tarshish is cited among the other sons of Javan alongside Elissa, Kettim and Dodanim. Attempts are often made to substitute Rodanim for Dodanim and interpret it as Rhodos. As for Kettim it is no doubt Cyprus. Elissa is probably another (maybe, a more ancient) name of the very same island<sup>5</sup>, although it is not to be excluded that Elissa could denote Carthage so named after her foundress<sup>6</sup>.

Besides the phrase under consideration Isaiah makes another mention of Tarshish (XXIII,6): he gives the Tyrians advice to move there under the threat of their city's imminent perdition. The mass exodus from Tyre overseas is possible only through the Mediterranean sea. As the tale of Jonah' misadventures goes, he, scared by God's demand to reach Nineveh and prophesy there the ruin of the Assyrian capital city, fled to Jaffa and embarked on the ship bound for Tarshish. All this unequivocally renders untenable the localization of Tarshish in the Red Sea or in India, as some scholars of to-day tend to presume<sup>7</sup>.

It is noteworthy that already very ancient sources make a special point of this fact. Protoisaiah belongs to the end or the second half of the eighth century B.C.<sup>8</sup> Thus, already in these ancient texts Tarshish is firmly "fastened" to the Mediterranean Sea.

In this region Tarsus of Cilicia claims to have been Tarshish<sup>9</sup>, but this localization holds no water either. On the Phoenician coins of Persian times the name of the city is spelt *trz*, whereas in the Akkadian inscriptions it is named Tarzi<sup>10</sup>. Calling to mind again the tale of Jonah it must be noted that Jahveh is treated there not as a tribal or national deity but as god of all races and animals, which is not at all surprising in a book written after the sixth century B.C.<sup>11</sup>. Consequently it was possible to escape from his call only to the word's end but not to the neighbouring Cilicia.

Tarshish is sometimes identified with Sardinia<sup>12</sup>. The argument in favour of this view is furnished by the most ancient Phoenician inscription in the West found on the site of ancient Nora (KAI,46). The inscription is usually dated back to the ninth century B.C., although some epigraphists are apt to lower the date down to the eighth century B.C.<sup>13</sup>. The first line of this inscription *biršš* is interpreted by a number of historians (but not by all scientists) as "to Tarshish" or "from Tarshish"<sup>14</sup>. It should be noted, however, that in the antique tradition Nora is equated with Tartessus in Spain. Pausanias (X,17,5) ascribes the foundation of Nora to the Iberians who were ruled by Norax, the son of Erythia, Geryon's daughter, and Hermes. As we know the Greeks customarily connected Geryon with Tartessus. Already Stesichorus (Strabo III,2,1) testified to this. The same legend is related by Solinus (IV,1) who directly claims that Norax came to Sardinia straight

4. G. Fohrer. *Ezechiel*. Tübingen 1955, p. 158.

5. C. Charles-Picard, "Le carrefour phénicien", in *Sociétés et campagnes de commerce en Orient et dans l'Océan Indien*. Paris 1970, pp. 94-95; W. Tyloch. *op. cit.*, p. 47.

6. This opinion was recently advanced in his report by I.M. Dyakonov; cf. G. Bunnens, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

7. J.M. Blázquez, "Los fenicios en la Península Ibérica (1100-final siglo VI a.C.)", in *Historia de España antigua, I*. Madrid 1980, p. 291.

8. O. Eissfeldt, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*. Tübingen 1956, pp. 375, 388-389.

9. Cf. C. Charles-Picard, *op. cit.*, pp. 93-95.

10. I. Sh. Shifman, *The Origin of the Carthaginian Power*. Moscow-Leningrad 1963, p. 17 (in Russian); K. Galling, "Der Weg der Phöniker nach Tarsis", *ZDPV* 88(1972)7.

11. Cf. O. Eissfeldt, *op. cit.*, pp. 444-445.

12. W.F. Albright, "The Role of the Canaanites in the History of Civilisation", in *The Bible and the Ancient Near East*. London 1961, p. 361.

13. Cf. G. Bunnens, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

14. *Ibid.*, pp. 31-32, 37-39.

"from the very Tartessus of Spain". So, the mention of Tarshish in the initial line of the inscription (if, of course, we accept this reading) speaks rather against than in favour of the localization of Tarshish in Sardinia, including Nora or its vicinity.

As is already stated, Tarshish in the story about Jonah seems to the author the end of the world. The same impression is being enforced upon the reader by Psalm LXXII which was apparently compiled in the mid-seventh century B.C.<sup>15</sup> Here in the Psalm we read that the whole earth will fall down in adoration of the King of Jerusalem: "May he rule also from sea to sea, and from the river into the ends of the earth, may his foes bow before him, and his enemies lick the dust. May the kings of Tarshish and of the coasts render tribute. May the kings of Sheba and Seba offer dues: Yea, may all kings worship him, all nations serve him" (Ps. LXXII,8-11). There may be hardly any doubt that the author of the Psalm cites the extreme ends of his familiar world and on the one end of this land opposite to Arabia and Seba is situated Tarshish. If the psalmist regards Seba as the extreme East then Tarshish must seem to him the far West. To a certain extent the same idea is rendered in the inscription of the Assyrian king Esarhaddon who insisted that "the kings of the middle of the sea from *Ia-da-na-na*, the land of *Ia-man* to the land of *Tar-si-si* kneeled down before" him. Evidently, the two ends of the Mediterranean are meant here – the one is Cyprus (*Ia-da-na-na*), the other – Tarshish, the very west of this sea<sup>16</sup>.

In the seventh century B.C. in the days of Esarhaddon and the author of Psalm LXXII Sardinia could not possibly have seemed the far West of the whole world or even of the Mediterranean, because by that period of time the Phoenicians had long since reached Spain. Diodorus (V,35,3-5) believes that the Phoenician-Spanish contacts had originated long before the Phoenician colonies came into being. The most ancient of the Phoenician colonies in Spain, Gades, as the antique tradition holds, was supposedly founded at the close of the twelfth century B.C. (Strabo III,2,1; Vel. Pat. I,2; Mela III,45). This information on Gades may be checked and verified by the ancient parallels going back to Phoenician sources. Pseudo-Aristotle (*De mirab. ausc.* 134) quotes "Phoenician Histories" to the effect that Utica in Africa had been founded 287 years earlier than Carthage, i.e. at the end of the twelfth century B.C. The same time is also indicated by Pliny (XVI, 216) who says that the Utica temple erected simultaneously with the town itself had been in existence for 1178 years. The reference to the temple implies the local tradition which supplied the Roman encyclopaedist with his knowledge. Whereas Velleius Paterculus (I,2,4) states that Utica was built some time after Gades. Archaeological evidence in favour of this dating is very slight<sup>17</sup> but, in our view, it may not be superfluous to bear in mind the nature of the early Phoenician contacts with Spain when the interested parties entered a "mute" or "silent" barter without considerably influencing each other<sup>18</sup>. From the ninth-eighth centuries B.C. on (and archaeology has already corroborated the fact) on the south coast of the Iberian Peninsula there appeared a whole network of Tyrian colonies<sup>19</sup>. Therefore we presume that in the seventh century B.C., let alone the time of the Book of Jonah, "Tarshish" could mean not the West at large as U. Tackholm and G. Bunnens<sup>20</sup> think, but only the far, extreme West as W. Tyloch rightly maintains<sup>21</sup>, i.e. Spain, beyond which stretches the boundless expanse of the ocean.

15. Cf. K. Galling, *op. cit.*, p. 7; P. Cintas, *op. cit.*, p. 251.

16. K. Galling, (*op. cit.*, p. 7) states that *Ia-man* should be understood as the Greek insular world and this alone makes it advisable to localize *Tar-si-si* still further to the west.

17. J.M. Blázquez, *Tartessos y los orígenes de la colonización fenicia en Occidente*. Salamanca 1975, p. 22-24; P. Cintas, *op. cit.*, pp. 271-274; P. Schauer, "Orient im spätbronze- und früheisenzeitlichen Occident", *JbRömGerMus* 30(1983)179-183.

18. Ju.B. Tsirkin, "Phönizier und Spanier", *Klio* 63/2(1981)412-413.

19. H. Schubart, "Phönizische Niederlassungen an der Iberischen Südküste", in *Phönizier im Westen*. Mainz am Rhein 1982, pp. 207-231.

20. U. Tackholm, "El concepto de Tarschish en el Antiguo Testamento y sus problemas", in *Tartessos y sus problemas*. Barcelona 1969, pp. 88-89; G. Bunnens, *op. cit.*, pp. 347-348.

21. Cf. W. Tyloch, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

The links between Tyre and the Hebrew states were strong and close. They were first established at least by the tenth century B.C. when Hiram I reigned at Tyre and David and Solomon ruled at Jerusalem<sup>22</sup>. The latter made use in his sea adventures of Tyrian ships and Tyrian seafarers and the two kings undertook joint nautical expedition (I Reg. 9,27-28; 10,11; 10,22). Under the circumstances the geography of the Bible could not but reflect Phoenician geography and so what was the land's end for the Phoenicians was the world's end for the Hebrews too. The Phoenicians were also closely connected with Assyria. They operated at Nineveh, in Esarhaddon's reign too<sup>23</sup>. No wonder then that Tarshish – *Tar-si-si* signified the end of the Mediterranean for this king.

In the West we come across a similar toponym and an ethnonym. The word Ταρσηίων is used in the Greek translation of the Second Carthaginian treaty with Rome (Polyb. III,24,2; 4), Ταρσηίων being in this text inseparably linked with the Spanish town Mastia. Describing the measures Hannibal had taken before his campaign in Italy, Polybius (III,33,9), among the Spaniards transferred to Africa, mentions Θερσίται. In South Spain in the second half of the first millennium B.C. lived the tribes of Turdetani and Turduli (Strabo III,1,6), undoubtedly the descendants of the Tartessians<sup>24</sup>. Artemidorus gives another variant of the tribe's name – the Turtytani (Steph.Byz.v. Τουρθητανία). In Cato's time somewhere in this area there was a town of Turta (FHA, III, p. 189). It is this local name that brought into existence the Phoenician-Hebrew word Tarshish, and apparently it was also the root of the Graeco-Roman name of this area and the town and the river – Tartessus. The Hellenes and Semites must have borrowed this place name not from each other but directly from the indigenous source independently of each other and then adapted it according to the familiar pattern.

Between the sixth-fifth centuries B.C. the Tartessian power disintegrated and was no more. Its remainder may have fallen under Carthagian control, the way the Tyrian colonies did in the South of Spain<sup>25</sup>. As a result of it the direct contacts of the Near East with South Spain if not discontinued altogether, at least were substantially undermined. This disappearance of Tartessus from the political geography of that epoch and the emergence of Cathage in the capacity of a mediator in the Asian-Spanish contacts led to the misinterpretation and misunderstanding of the toponym "Tarshish" by some Oriental authors and translators of the Bible. Thence the only exception of which we have earlier made a casual mention: in the Second Book of the Chronicles we read that king Josaphat built ships on the Red Sea at Ezion-Geber in order to sail for Tarshish (20,36-37). But in the corresponding passage of the First Book of Kings (22,48) the author mentions a projected voyage from Ezion-Geber not to Tarshish but to Ophir where you can indeed get by the Red Sea<sup>26</sup>. That is the reason why so many attempts have been made to use instead of "Tarshish", "Carthage" or "Africa" or just "the sea", as is the case with the Greek "Septuagint", the Latin "Vulgata" or the Syrian "Targum". That is why the strange unknown Tarshish was sometimes localized in Tarsus, Ethiopia or India<sup>27</sup>.

This confusion is also due to the fact that the word "tarshish" is used to denote a type of vessels – *'niyōth taršiš*, *'ni taršiš* ("ships of Tarshish"). A century and a half ago G. Gesenius advanced a supposition to the effect that this word combination meant a boat which went as far as Tarshish and eventually any boat for distant voyages<sup>28</sup>. His opinion is shared by a number of historians of today<sup>29</sup>. As for us, we consider this

22. Cf. G. Bunnens, "Commerce et diplomatie phénicienne en temps de Hiram I de Tyre", *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 19(1976)1-31.

23. E. Lipiński, "Les Phéniciens à Ninive au temps des Sargonides", in *Atti del I Congresso Internazionale di Studi Fenici e Punici*, I. Roma 1983, pp. 125-134.

24. M. Pérez Rojas, "El nombre de Tartessos", in *Tartessos y sus problemas*. Barcelona 1969, p. 370, n. 7.

25. For detail see: Ju.B. Tsirkin, *Phoenician Culture in Spain*. Moscow 1976, pp. 29-34 (in Russian).

26. On the localization of Ophir see: H. von Wissmann, "Ophir und Havila", *RE* 12(1970)976.

27. J.M. Blázquez, *Tartessos...*, pp. 20, 245-246; G. Bunnens, *L'expansion...*, pp. 333-338.

28. Cf. G. Gesenius, *op. cit.*, col. 1316.

29. E.G. I.Sh. Shifman, *op. cit.*, p. 27; W. Tyloch, *op. cit.*, pp. 48-49; G. Bunnens, *L'expansion...*, pp. 346-347.

explanation as the only acceptable and feasible one because it adequately accounts for both the localization of Tarshish in Spain and the virtual navigation of the Tarshish ships on the Red Sea.

To sum up, Tarshish is situated in South Spain and evidently identical with Tartessus. There in the West, including Carthage as well, unlike the Orient this word was still in current use after the sixth century B.C. Isaiah's book here under study is by far more ancient. It is incorporated into the so-called "Protoisaiah" and, consequently, belongs to the second half or the very end of the eighth century B.C.<sup>30</sup>

And the question arises: what does the prophet try to convey in this passage? According to A. Schulten he related the liberation of Tartessus from the Phoenician yoke<sup>31</sup>. I.Sh. Shifman holds that in South Spain there may have existed a domain of Tyrian supremacy with a segment of the Tartessian territory as its component part and then Isaiah's pronouncement must deal with the deliverance of Tartessus from the siege of Tyre<sup>32</sup>. However, the recent finds and researches have proved that prior to the eighth century B.C. neither the whole Tartessus nor any single part of it suffered Phoenician dominance, even the Tyrians' contacts with the aborigines were in those days hardly tangible<sup>33</sup>. No blockade of Tartessus at that time took place either. G. Fohrer supposes that the prophet used the name of Tyre's remotest colony just in order to accentuate the imminence of the wreck of Tyran sea and commercial might and the necessity for the Tyrians to start developing their agriculture<sup>34</sup>. Isaiah's oracle concerns, beyond any doubt, Tyre (the idea is stressed in the very beginning of the chapter) but in this verse the author speaks about "the daughter of Tarshish", i.e. Tarshish but not Tyre proper (we want to emphatically note that Tarshish-Tartessus is not a Tyrian colony).

E. Lipiński singles out of the pronouncement on Tyre in chapter 23 of the Book of Isaiah an elegy on the fall of Sidon which he ascribes to the seventies of the seventh century B.C., thus implying that it was not compiled by Isaiah himself. He claims that the prophecy under discussion concerns only and exclusively this elegy, moreover the scholar insists on the necessity to edit the, in his opinion, corrupt text, particularly to replace "the daughter of Tarshish" (*bat-taršiš*) by "to Tarshish" (*b'taršiš*) and offers his translation: "Sail past your land up to Tarshish: the breakwater exists no longer" (quoting Job XII,21, he translates *mēzah* as "breakwater")<sup>35</sup>. We regard it as a matter of principle never to introduce any alterations into the ancient texts unless they are absolutely indispensable. The Tyrian links with Spain are well known; as for the Spanish contacts with Sidon there is no evidence to substantiate them.

All this compels us to seek a different explanation.

The archaeological finds of recent decades show that throughout the eighth or at the turn of the seventh century B.C. some drastic changes took place in South Spain. There was a sharp rise in the economy, especially in mining and metallurgy of bronze and potting. Hand-made pottery persisted but it changed its appearance (the so-called "cerámica reticular bruñida" developed) and its quality improved considerably. The early presses were invented to make olive oil. The settlements of old also changed; new ones mushroomed and became important economic centres. Trading ties covered the area from Armorica (mod. Bretagne) to Sardinia. In the middle part of the Baetis valley clustered stone stelae of a new type –with the engraved pictures of warriors and their armour. About 700 B.C. this region witnessed a great influx of Oriental import and therewith – Oriental influence. Undoubtedly under the influence of the Phoenician colonists (some of whom had previously settled on the Iberian shores) the indigenous populace –the Tartessians– learned to manufacture ceramics on the potter's wheel. The Tartessian script and writing emerged, and even the burial

30. Studying this prophecy of Isaiah G. Bunnens has arrived at the well grounded conclusion that there is no reason whatever to question Isaiah's authorship of these verses and that the historical background depicted here strictly corresponds to that of the close of the eighth century B.C.; G. Bunnens, *L'expansion...*, p. 76.

31. A. Schulten, *Tartessos*. Hamburg 1950, p. 76.

32. Cf. I.Sh. Shifman, *op. cit.*, pp. 21,50,54.

33. Ju.B. Tsirkin, *op. cit.*, pp. 412-413.

34. G. Fohrer, *Das Buch Jesaja*. Stuttgart 1960, pp. 238-241.

35. E. Lipiński, "The elegy on the fall of Sidon in Isaiah 23", *EI* 14(1978)83-86.

customs, as a rule so stubbornly conservative, in some cases did not remain unimpaired. This was the age of transition to what archaeologists term "an orientaling horizon"<sup>36</sup>. All this indubitably testifies to the fact that between the eighth-seventh centuries B.C. in the South of Spain the Tartessian power began to emerge.

The appearance of this power could not but affect the balance of political forces in the far West of the Mediterranean and, perhaps, even in a far more extensive area. Taking into account the intimate links of Tyrian merchants with this region it becomes clear that the Tyrians and their neighbours could ill afford to stay indifferent to these events. The prophet who hated Tyre correlated it with the impending onslaught of the Assyrians (cf. Is. XXIII, 13), and amongst the other disasters threatening Tyre, such as the desolation of the city itself for a spell of a seventy years, he viewed the events at Tarshish (Is. XXIII, 9-15). Perhaps there in the far West there occurred some actual event the echo of which reached the Orient and caused the Bible prophet to relate it to the rise of Assyria and her assault to come. If no new source comes to light (and the hope of it is negligible) we shall never learn anything about the event. Anyhow archaeology provides us so far with no evidence of any discontinuation or interruption at the close of the eighth century B.C. in the life of those Phoenician colonies that had hitherto already existed on the Spanish coasts<sup>37</sup>.

It is of small consequence indeed if an individual event took place in the West or not. What is by far more important is this: the text of chapter 23 of the Book of Isaiah which comprises the oracle on Tyre falls into several logically complete segments. Without seeking a comprehensive analysis of the whole chapter we shall consider the two passages describing the concrete threats to the odious city and the nations capable of materializing these menaces. The first passage includes verses 10-12, the second, verses 13-15. In verse 13 we read about Assyria which will destroy the Tyrians' palaces, in verse 14, about the demolition of the Tarshish ships' shelter, i.e. no doubt Tyre, and finally in verse 15 we learn about the oblivion of Tyre for 70 years.

Both segments are opened with the mention of the adversary – Tarshish (*bat-taršiš*, the daughter of Tarshish). And further the text runs as follows: God outstretches his hand to the sea and devastates kingdoms and razes the shelters of Canaan (verse 11) and orders the daughter of Sidon (again Tyre is meant here<sup>38</sup>) to rise and go to Kettim (i.e., as has been stated in the opening lines of the present paper, to Cyprus). Canaan is the general name of Phoenicia and it may be applied to the western Phoenicians as well<sup>39</sup>. Thus, in our view, this passage tells not so much of the city proper as of the overseas portion of the Tyrian power whose enemy in this region is Tarshish.

It is probable that the shelters of Canaan in Isaiah's text are but Phoenician colonies (or at least some of them). In this connection we can recall the name of the most ancient and significant of Tyre's colonies in Spain – Gadir, i.e. "Fortress"<sup>40</sup>. And then we can accept I.Sh. Shifman's translation of the word *mēzahī* as

36. M. Pellicer, "Las primitivas cerámicas a torno pintadas hispanas", *AERq* 41(1968)62-68, 88; id., "Problemática general de los inicios de la iberización en Andalucía Occidental", *Ampurias* 8-40(1976-1978)11-21; id., "Siedlungsplätze in der orientalisierenden Epoche am unteren Guadalquivir", *Hamburger Beiträge zur Archäologie* 8(1981)40-54; J.M. Blázquez, "Poblados y necrópolis de influencia semítica", in *Historia de España antigua*, I. Madrid 1980, pp. 325-364; F. Presedo, "Tartessos", *ibid.*, pp. 130-141; H. Schubart, *Die Kultur der Bronzezeit im Südwesten der Iberischen Halbinsel*. Berlin 1975, p. 88, 136-149; M.E. Aubet, "Zur Problematik des orientalisierenden Horizontes auf der Iberischen Halbinsel", in *Phönizier im Westen*. Mainz am Rhein 1982, pp. 309-332; G. López Monteagudo, "Panorama actual de la colonización semita en la Península Ibérica", *RSF* 5/2(1977)197-204; V. Pingel, "Bemerkungen zu den ritzverzierten Stelen und zur beginnenden Eisenzeit im Südwest der Iberischen Halbinsel", *Hamburger Beiträge zur Archäologie* 4(1974)1-15 and others.

37. Cf. H. Schubart, *Phönizische Niederlassungen...*, pp. 216-224.

38. Cf. I.Sh. Shifman, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

39. D. Harden, *The Phoenicians*. Harmondsworth 1980, pp. 18-19; O. Meltzer, *Geschichte der Karthager*, I. Berlin 1879, pp. 7-8. Even in the fourth-fifth centuries A.D. the descendants of the Phoenicians in North Africa still called themselves Canaanites; cf. I. Shifman, "Gegenseitige Beeinflussungen der punischen und der römischen Kulturen in Nordafrika zur Zeit der römischen Herrschaft", *Klio* 63/2(1981)424.

40. J.M. Sola-Solé, "Toponimia fenicio-púnica", in *Enciclopedia Lingüística Hispánica*, I. Madrid 1960, p. 498.

“girdle” meaning a peculiar ring of Phoenician colonies around Tarshish-Tartessus<sup>41</sup>. However, an important reservation is worth making. The oracle deals not with the actual elimination of the “girdle” of colonies but with a foreseen, foreknown and prophesied one.

The pronouncement of Isaiah never came true either in the East (Tyre was not destroyed by Assyria) or in the West. Even in the seventh century B.C. Tyre still continued to found her colonies on the Spanish shores. Moreover it was after the year 700 B.C. that these colonies enjoyed their economic heyday and the Tartessian civilisation adopted an Orientalizing character<sup>42</sup>. What we should like to emphasize here is this: the emergence of Tartessian power and, maybe, some steps undertaken by the young state evoked a certain response in the East and gave the Biblical prophet the opportunity to correlate the threat of Tarshish with that of Assyria.

Summing up, we believe that Isaiah's oracle reflected exactly those changes in the political climate in the South of the Iberian Peninsula that brought about Tartessian power.

(Traslated from the Russian by L. Chistonogova).

41. Cf. I.Sh. Shifman, *The Origin...*, pp. 50, 54.

42. Cf. M.E. Aubet, *op. cit.*, *passim*.