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İçindekiler/Contents

Marcello Spanu <i>Roman Influence in Cilicia through Architecture</i>	1
Suna Güven <i>Evolution of Colonnaded Avenues in the Roman Cityscape: Role of Cilicia</i>	39
Fikret K. Yegül <i>Cilicia at the Crossroads: Transformations of Baths and Bathing Culture in the Roman East</i>	55
Burcu Ceylan <i>Temple-Church in OLBA and the Reuse of Antique Monument in Late Antiquity</i>	73
Ayşe Aydın <i>Der Ambon der Kirche "A" in Tapureli</i>	83
Mark Wilson <i>Was Paul a Cilician, a Native of Tarsus? A Historical Reassessment</i>	93
Turhan Kaçar <i>Cilician Bishops and Fourth-Century Church Politics</i>	109
Paolo Desideri <i>The presence of Cilicia and its towns in the Greek writers of the Roman Empire (I-II Cent. A.D.)</i>	129
Murat Özyıldırım <i>İlkçağ ve Erken Hıristiyanlık Kaynaklarında OLBA Sözcüğünün Değişik Kullanımları</i>	145
Erendiz Özbayoğlu <i>Notes on Natural Resources of Cilicia: A Contribution to Local History</i>	159
Hugh Elton <i>The Economy of Cilicia in Late Antiquity</i>	173
Mustafa Adak <i>Welche Trachäer Bekämpfte Veranius?</i>	183
Murat Arslan <i>Piracy on the Southern Coast of Asia Minor and Mithridates Eupator</i>	195

Nevzat Çevik	
<i>Anadolu'daki Kaya Mimarlığı Örneklerinin Karşılaştırılması ve Kültürlerarası Etkileşim Olgusunun Yeniden İrdelenmesi</i>	213
Ümit Aydınöğlü	
<i>The Settlement Patterns of the Olbian Territory in Rough Cilicia in the Hellenistic Period</i>	251
Giovanni Salmeri	
<i>Processes of Hellenization in Cilicia</i>	265

WAS PAUL A CILICIAN, A NATIVE OF TARSUS? A HISTORICAL REASSESSMENT

Mark WILSON*

ÖZET

St. Paul bir Kilikia'lı mıydı, Tarsus'ta mı Doğmuştu? Tarihsel bir Değerlendirme

R. Wallece ve W. Williams son zamanlarda yayınladıkları "*Tarsus'lu Paulus'un Üç Dünyası*" adlı yapıtlarında Paulus'un Tarsus'lu bir yurttaş olduğunu öne sürmektedirler. Bu çalışma, Kilikia'nın en ünlü evlatlarından birinin üç ayrı dünya yani, Yahudi, Yunan ve Roma ile olan ilişkilerini yeniden belirlemek iddiasını taşımaktadır. Paulus'un yaşamını yeniden kurgulamak konusundaki temel yazılı kaynak İncil'de yer almaktadır. Burada o genellikle "Kilikia'daki Tarsus'lu bir Yahudi" olarak adlandırılmaktadır. Antik çağda kayda değer bir Yahudi nüfusun Kilikia'da yaşamakta olduğunu gösteren veriler vardır. Diaspora'da yaşamakla birlikte, Paulus'un ailesi, Pharisees'in tutucu bir cemaatine aittir. Yahudiler olasılıkla Tarsus vatandaşlık hakkını kentin İ.Ö. 171'de Antiochus tarafından yeniden kuruluşu sırasında almış olması gerekmektedir. Paulus, döneminde Doğu Yunan sakinleri için alışılmış bir durum olmayan Roma yurttaşlığını da talep etmektedir. Octavianus (İ.Ö.42-30) tarafından yazılan mektuplar, Rhosus'lu Seleucus ve ailesinin Roma yurttaşlığının ve kamu haklarının ihsan edilmesi konusundaki bilgileri içerir. Bu bilgiler, Paulus ve ailesinin de benzeri biçimde tahmin yürütmeyi sağlamaktadırlar. Bazı Kilikia'lılara Roma yurttaşlık hakları triumvirler tarafından Roma taraftarı oldukları için verilmiştir. Bu bildiri de sunulan veri, Paulus'un yurdu Kilikia'daki Tarsus ile olan ve sadece çocukluk yıllarında değil, yetişkinlik döneminde de süren yaşamsal ilişkisidir.

Introduction

R. Wallace and W. Williams in their recent volume *The Three Worlds of Paul of Tarsus (Tarsuslu Pavlus'un Üç Dünyası)* assert that Paul as a citizen of Tarsus "need ever have visited the city, much less lived there."

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This, they assert, is based on the fact that ancient civic citizenship passed through descent and not through domicile. Further, Paul's return to Tarsus following his conversion suggests "only that some of the family still lived there, rather than it was Paul's home town." They conclude that attempts to develop a formative Tarsian context for Paul's character and teaching "are built on insecure foundations."¹ This controversial claim runs counter to most biblical and classical scholarship as it relates to the background of the apostle Paul. In fact, as Riesner notes, "It is striking in the larger sense how seldom this bit of Lukan information has been doubted by skeptical scholarship."² If true, it would significantly diminish the historical connection between Paul and Tarsus of Cilicia as one of its most famous native sons. This paper will seek to reassess Paul's connection to Tarsus and Cilicia in light of the comments by Wallace and Williams. In responding to their claims, we will first review the relevant biblical and historical background related to Paul's three worlds.

New Testament Literary Evidence

The book of Acts links Paul with Tarsus on three occasions. Jesus himself, in his instructions to Ananias following Paul's religious conversion near Damascus, is said to identify him as "a man from Tarsus."³ Later, following his arrest in Jerusalem Paul tells a Roman officer in Greek, "I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen (πολίτης) of no ordinary city."⁴ The Greek expression οὐκ ἄσημου πόλεως is an example of Luke's use of litotes in his Gospel and the Acts. Here Luke uses a stock expression for a city one wishes to boast about.⁵

A few verses later in Acts 22:3 Paul addresses the crowd in Aramaic and tells them, "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia but brought up in this city." Wallace and Williams in their earlier commentary on Acts allow that Paul had a connection with Tarsus: "Though he was born in Tarsus, he is

¹ Wallace and Williams 1998, p. 180.

² Riesner 1998, p. 264 n. 8.

³ Acts 9:11.

⁴ Acts 21:39.

⁵ Compare Euripides, *Ion* 8; Strabo 8.6.15; Achilles Tatius, *Clitophon* 8.3.1

not one of those Diaspora Jews who are dangerously tainted with Hellenism.”⁶ Yet Paul clearly puts a “spin” in his response by not mentioning his Tarsian citizenship to the Jewish crowd, which “would not have responded well to a boast about being a citizen of one of the centers of Hellenization in the Empire.”⁷ Rather Paul emphasizes that his pedagogical development was in Jerusalem, not in his hometown. At what age his training began there is unstated.

Later at the trial in Caesarea the governor Felix inquired what province (ἐπαρχεία) the prisoner came from. Paul responded, “From Cilicia.”⁸ Two issues are related to his answer. First, Cilicia was not a province at this time (c. AD 57), but rather a part of the greater province Syria. Cilicia Pedias was attached in 67 BC to the original province Cilicia after Pompey defeated the pirates. Dio Chrysostom states that Tarsus became the capital of the province about 64 BC.⁹ However, the province’s status was diminishing, as evidenced by the fact that Cicero was its last governor of consular rank. Around 39 BC Pedias was added to the province Syria and that affiliation continued into the early principate. It was not until the Flavian period that Vespasian created a separate and enlarged province of Cilicia in AD 72.¹⁰ Horsley has demonstrated through inscriptional evidence that eparcheia “requires a less widespread ‘district’ to be in view.”¹¹ Paul’s response clearly has this broader connotation. His declaration that Cilicia was his home province might even suggest pride in the historical circumstances of his native region.¹²

The second issue, according to Sherwin-White, is “the surprising fact that when he heard that Paul came from an alien province, Cilicia, Felix declared that he would hear the case, where we expect the opposite.”¹³ In

⁶ Wallace and Williams 1993, p. 116.

⁷ Witherington III 1998, p. 663.

⁸ Acts 23:34.

⁹ Or. 34.7-8.

¹⁰ This information was drawn from Syme 1939, pp. 299-300, 304-5, 326-27.

¹¹ Horsley 1982, p. 85.

¹² A reason not likely is that this is a Lukan anachronism suggesting a later date for the composition of Acts.

¹³ Sherwin-White 1963, p. 55.

the early principate, however, the Roman legal custom of *forum domicilii* was only optional; an accused person need not be sent back to the jurisdiction of his home province. Since both Judea and Cilicia were under the ultimate jurisdiction of the legate of Syria, Felix probably deemed it advisable to handle this minor case and not bother the legate. Further complicating Felix's involvement was the fact that Tarsus was a free city and its citizens normally exempt from provincial jurisdiction.¹⁴ On only one occasion in his own letters does Paul link himself to Cilicia. After his conversion and first visit to Jerusalem, Paul states, "I went to Syria and Cilicia."¹⁵ I have argued elsewhere that Paul, at this juncture of his life, spent five or more years in Cilicia. During this period he established the first churches in Anatolia at Tarsus, Adana, Mopsuestia, and perhaps Hierapolis Castabala.¹⁶ Evidence for this is found in Acts 15:41; at the outset of his second ministry journey Paul passed through Cilicia to strengthen the churches there. The Cilician churches likewise were visited at the beginning of his third journey to Ephesus.¹⁷ During this extended stay in the region Paul would certainly have strengthened his ties to Tarsus and Cilicia.

Paul's Jewish World

Various evidence exists for the presence of Jews in Cilicia. Acts 6:9 points to a sizable group of Jews from Cilicia who, with other Diaspora Jews, formed a Synagogue of the Freedmen in Jerusalem. Agrippa I confirms the presence of Jews in Cilicia in his letter to Caligula.¹⁸ A lead coffin in the Adana Museum, dating from late Antiquity and reportedly from Elaiussa Sebaste (Ayaş) in Tracheia, is decorated with four menoroth in relief.¹⁹ Building remains found in Mopsuestia (Misis) that contain a mosaic depicting Samson and Noah's Ark have been positively identified by Hachlili as a synagogue.²⁰ Although this evidence dates later than the

¹⁴ Pliny, N. H. 5.92; cf. Strabo, 14.5.14.

¹⁵ Galatians 1:21.

¹⁶ Wilson 2000, pp. 11–12.

¹⁷ Acts 18:23.

¹⁸ Philo, Leg. 281.

¹⁹ Hachlili 1998, p. 291; this coffin is now displayed outside the Adana Museum.

²⁰ Hachlili 1998, pp. 213–16; cf. Hachlili 1994, vol. 6, p. 261. Other scholars have identified it as a church; see Hill 1996, p. 236.

biblical period, it appears to point to a long-established Jewish community.²¹ Epigraphical evidence for Jews in Tarsus and Cilicia Pedias is sparse because of the inability to excavate its modern population centers. However, the significant amount of Jewish or Judaizing epigraphic evidence from Cilicia Tracheia suggests to Hengel and Schwemer that “the Jewish population of Tarsus and other Cilician cities must have been considerable.”²² What that population was can only be conjectured. The Jewish population of Anatolia in the first century has been estimated at one million.²³ If Broughton’s population estimates for Roman Asia Minor are accepted, Cilicia’s population during the Flavian period was 900,000 out of a total of 13 million residents.²⁴ Calculating by percentages, a Jewish population in Cilicia would number approximately 70,000. This number is probably too low since the Jewish communities were typically located in urbanized areas like Cilicia.

In Philippians 3:5 Paul asserts that he is “a Hebrew born of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee.” The apostle’s apologetic rhetoric here is designed to show that his Jewish credentials equaled those of his Palestinian opponents. However, two questions related to Paul’s Tarsian connection are found in this statement. First, the word *Hebraios* in the first century was more a linguistic than an ethnic designation. For example, an early dispute in the Jerusalem church pitted Greek-speaking Jews against Aramaic/Hebrew-speaking Jews.²⁵ Yet here in the Diaspora, far from Palestine, Paul claims that his family has retained Aramaic and Hebrew as the primary languages in his home. This is particularly notable if we accept that his Tarsian citizenship was a Seleucid one dating to 171 BC. His family would have retained its linguistic heritage for nearly two centuries, an evidence of its strong cultural and religious ties to Judaism. Difficulty with this extended time span has prompted some scholars to adopt Jerome’s

21 The third-century synagogue at Sardis likewise represented a long-standing Jewish community that was present in the first century (Josephus, *Ant.* 12.149).

22 Hengel and Schwemer 1997, p. 161; see their review of the evidence on pages 161-67.

23 Van der Horst 1990, p. 126.

24 Broughton 1938, vol. 4, p. 815.

25 Acts 6:1. The majority of scholars believe that Aramaic was the popular spoken language of first century Palestine, while Hebrew was its religious language. This was due to the historical circumstances of the Babylonian exile following the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BC; for example, see Witherington 1998, pp. 240-42.

explanation for the coming of Paul's family to Tarsus. Jerome recounts a story that Paul's parents were captured by the Romans in Gischala of Judea sometime in the first century B.C. and moved to Tarsus.²⁶ Although the details of Jerome's account has no basis in Paul's letters or in Acts and contradict themselves on key points, Murphy-O'Connor opts that the "simplest hypothesis is that Paul's ancestors had emigrated from Palestine within living memory."²⁷ That "memory" would be the latter half of the first century B.C. The difficulty with such a late date is how to explain Paul's Tarsian citizenship, unless one regards it as a Lukan fabrication.

A second concern is Paul's claim to be a Pharisee. The Pharisees were a pietistic sect centered in Jerusalem that arose during the Maccabean period (c. 160s BC). Ritual purity, particularly in diet, was a hallmark of their practices. It was difficult for Pharisees to live outside the Holy Land and maintain the required purity, hence there is no evidence for Pharisaic schools in the Diaspora. For this reason Murphy-O'Connor concludes that Luke's claim in Acts 23:6 that Paul was a son of a Pharisee "must be dismissed as a rhetorical flourish without historical value."²⁸ However, Hengel is not as pessimistic: "ways had to be found of being able to live as a Pharisee abroad" so Paul's parents raised their son in Gentile Tarsus but "sent him to Jerusalem relatively soon."²⁹

If we accept an early Tarsian citizenship for Paul's family, the family's conversion to Pharisaism would have come later. As Jews they would have participated in the regular pilgrimages to Jerusalem for the three required festivals of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles.³⁰ During these visits they were undoubtedly exposed to the teachings of the Pharisees and eventually joined the sect. Accommodating their lifestyle to residence in a Gentile city like Tarsus must have proved difficult, but one the family was able to manage. However, it seems Paul's family did use its wealth to maintain a second residence in Jerusalem where Paul was taken later for rabbinical training under Gamaliel.³¹

²⁶ Comm. on Ep. ad Philem. vv. 23-24; De Vir. Ill. 5.

²⁷ Murphy O'Connor 1996, p. 37.

²⁸ Murphy O'Connor 1996, p. 58.

²⁹ Hengel 1991, p. 122 n. 173.

³⁰ Deuteronomy 16:16.

³¹ Acts 23:16; cf. 6:9; 22:3.

Paul's Greek World

Wallace and Williams acknowledge problems with Paul's claim to citizenship, but conclude that "nothing precluded an individual like Paul having citizenship of his native city."³² An epitaph found in Jaffa mentions a Jew named Judas, who is a son of Joses and also a citizen of Tarsus (Ταρσεύς).³³ Inscriptions found at the synagogue in Sardis mention Jews who are citizens (*Sardianoi*) and "no less than nine may use the privileged title *bouletes*, 'member of the city council'."³⁴ Although these inscriptions are late, they again represent long-standing Jewish communities.³⁵ But what such citizenship actually meant has been hotly debated. Tajra argues that πολίτης in Acts 21:39 "most likely refers to Paul's membership in the resident Jewish community at Tarsus rather than to any citizenship in the Greek πόλις" and "is a statement of domicile and not a proclamation of citizenship."³⁶ Rapske, however, rightly rejects Tajra's interpretation of πολίτης as meaning domicile only, asserting that "the text is in fact recording Paul's claim to a legally valid Tarsian citizenship."³⁷ Tarn and Griffith claim that the Seleucids gave the Jews only isopolity (ἰσοπολιτεία) –potential citizenship– and that a Jew could become a citizen "provided of course that he apostatized by worshipping the city gods."³⁸ Nock effectively refutes this notion of isopolity, stating that it is an unnecessary modern theoretical construct. He further demonstrates through inscriptions that there was only one condition to activating "potential" citizenship-residence.³⁹

Ehrenberg observes that Jewish communities "existed in many places, mostly in the form of a *Politeuma*."⁴⁰ But as Sherwin-White cogently notes, "πολίτευμα is not πόλις or πολιτεία: it is community not

³² Wallace and Williams 1998, p. 142.

³³ CIJ II, no. 925; cf. Hengel and Schwemer 1997, pp. 160, 415-16 n. 821.

³⁴ Seager and Kraabel 1983, p. 184; for *S#ardiano,@j boule#uth,j* see Robert 1964, No. 14; cf. Nos. 13, 16, 17.

³⁵ For example, the Jews of Sardis date from the Babylonian exile in 586 B.C.; see Obadiah 20.

³⁶ Tajra 1989, p. 80.

³⁷ Rapske 1994b, p. 76.

³⁸ Tarn and Griffith 1952, p. 222.

³⁹ Nock 1972, vol. 2, p. 961.

⁴⁰ Ehrenberg 1969, p. 153.

citizenship.”⁴¹ So were the Jews given citizenship as a group in their own tribe? Ramsay argues so: “There can never have been a single and solitary Jewish citizen of a Greek city. If there was one Jewish citizen, there must have been a group of Jews forming a tribe, holding together in virtue of their common Jewish religion.” He acknowledges that in many Greek cities they did not possess any rights as citizens; however, “the Jews of Tarsus were, as a body, citizens with full rights.”⁴²

When was that citizenship acquired in Tarsus? Seleucus Nicator granted Jews the citizenship in the cities that he founded.⁴³ Because of Judaism’s particular religious conventions, the Seleucids often awarded citizenship en masse to a body of Jewish settlers who were then given their own constitution. A probable period for such enfranchisement was the city’s refoundation around 171 BC by Antiochus IV Epiphanes. It is likely that Paul’s ancestors received their Tarsian citizenship at this time.⁴⁴ Thus his family’s citizenship was long-standing and certainly preceded Roman citizenship, which was probably granted in the late Republican period. Paul’s mother was likely a citizen too since “[c]itizen descent on both sides was normally required.”⁴⁵ Citizenship and other privileges guaranteed by the Seleucids were maintained by the Romans. Both Lentulus (49 BC)⁴⁶ and Dolabella (43 BC)⁴⁷ issued decrees affirming these rights. Apollonius of Tyana infers that Jews were citizens of Tarsus during Titus’ reign.⁴⁸

The primary requirement for citizenship in a Greek city was a property one. Dio Chrysostom states that the enrollment cost for citizens in Tarsus was 500 drachmas.⁴⁹ Jones calls this one of the less well-known features of Greek city life, “the restriction of full citizenship to those of at least moderate wealth.” He goes on to say that this “must have excluded an

⁴¹ Sherwin-White 1963, p. 185.

⁴² Ramsay 1907, p. 180.

⁴³ Josephus, *Ant.* 12.3.1.119.

⁴⁴ For the classic treatment of the subject, see Ramsay 1907, pp. 169-86.

⁴⁵ Jones 1940, p. 160.

⁴⁶ Josephus, *Ant.* 14.10.13.228-30

⁴⁷ Josephus, *Ant.* 10.25.263-64.

⁴⁸ Philostratus, *Vita Ap.* Ty. 6.34.

⁴⁹ *Or.* 34.23.

ordinary artisan from citizenship, for a legionary in the same period earned roughly half this sum a year.”⁵⁰ Thus Paul’s family as tentmakers or leather workers (σκηνοποιοί)⁵¹ was not among the ordinary guild workers, but of the economically elite of the city. Paul’s affluence is evidenced in his later ministry as well. Speaking of Paul’s trial before the Roman governor Felix, Ramsay writes, “Paul, therefore, wore the outward appearance of a man of means, like one in a position to bribe a Roman procurator...we must regard Paul as a man of some wealth during these years.”⁵² Within the Roman system of justice one’s social status within the citizenship was important. “Ulpian advised that the *persona* of the accused, measured in terms of honour, great wealth (*amplissimae facultates*), dignity, and integrity, was to be scrutinized before custody was set.”⁵³ To the Roman procurator Felix Paul clearly bore the signs of privilege, a privilege derived not in Jerusalem but in Tarsus.⁵⁴

Wallace and Williams assert that for most Greeks “the primary method of self-identification would have been as citizens of one of a large number of *poleis*.”⁵⁵ Paul’s spontaneous response in Acts 22:39 to the Roman officer in Jerusalem suggests that his Tarsian citizenship was his foremost patriotic affiliation. To the modern reader the assertion of Roman citizenship at that dangerous moment would appear to be the more prudent action. But as Ramsay writes, “To the ancient Greek citizen his city absorbed all his patriotism. His city, not his country as a whole was his ‘fatherland’.”⁵⁶ Paul’s candid comment on this occasion demonstrates the apostle’s Greek mind-set as it pertains to civic affiliation.⁵⁷

⁵⁰ Jones 1979, p. 81.

⁵¹ Acts 18:3. Rapske 1994a, p. 7, well makes the point that weaving tentcloth from goats’ hair or linen would have required bulky tools and equipment, whereas a maker or repairer of tents and other leather products required only a bag of knives, awls, etc. Given Paul’s highly mobile nature, the latter explanation for his occupation seems more in keeping with the New Testament picture, although this does not preclude Paul having the ability to do both.

⁵² Ramsay 2001, pp. 235, 237.

⁵³ Rapske 1994b, p. 57.

⁵⁴ Acts 24:26.

⁵⁵ Wallace and Williams 1998, p. 136.

⁵⁶ Ramsay 1907, p. 90.

⁵⁷ It also demonstrates the veracity of Luke’s account, which has been frequently attacked in modern scholarship.

Paul's Roman World

Both in Philippi and in Jerusalem Paul declared to the authorities that he was a Roman citizen.⁵⁸ Implicit also in the account in Acts 13:6-12 of the conversion of the proconsul of Cyprus, Sergius Paulus, is Paul's Roman status. For here in the Acts narrative Saul is now called Paul. Rapske explains that Luke's change of names "is making an important rather than a trivial observation; i.e., that Sergius Paulus and the apostle had the same official 'family name'."⁵⁹ This shared *cognomen* was the third of the three official names that all Roman citizens possessed. But how could a devout Jewish family like Paul's hold Roman citizenship? Tajra answers, "There was no incompatibility in a practicing Jew's accepting a grant of Roman citizenship as Jewish Roman citizens were exempt from those state duties which might conflict with their monotheistic faith."⁶⁰ Inscriptions from sites such as Acmonia mention Jews like P(ublius) Tyrronius Klados who are not only heads of the synagogue but also, as their triple name suggests, Roman citizens.⁶¹

Wallace and Williams suggest two routes to attain citizenship: military service, highly improbable for Jews, and slavery. The scenario they favor is that Paul's father or grandfather was taken prisoner of war, sent as a slave to Italy where he learned the craft of a leather worker, and eventually migrated back to the East and settled in Tarsus, a center of skilled crafts. Murphy-O'Connor concurs, "The simplest possibility...is that Paul's father had been a slave who was set free by a Roman citizen of Tarsus, and who thereby acquired a degree of Roman citizenship which improved with each succeeding generation."⁶²

If Paul's family were settled in Tarsus by Antiochus IV as free citizens of the city, it is problematic to speculate that they later became Roman slaves. A better solution is that citizenship was granted by the Romans

⁵⁸ Acts 17:37; 22:25-28.

⁵⁹ Rapske 1994b, 86.

⁶⁰ Tajra 1989, 77.

⁶¹ For a review of this and other Acmonian inscriptions see Sheppard 1979, pp. 169-80 and Trebilco 1991, pp. 58-64

⁶² Murphy-O'Connor 1997, p. 41; this opinion is shared by Wallace and Williams 1998, pp. 140-42.

sometime after the middle of the first century BC. The competition for support after 49 BC elicited generous offers of individual freedom in Cilicia from Pompey, Caesar, and Antony, all of whom had personal relations with Tarsus. Thus citizenship was granted in return for services rendered to the Roman cause. An example of such a grant is found in the letters of Octavian concerning Seleucus of Rhosus. Dating between 42-30 BC, they are written to the city of Rhosus, with copies to be sent to Tarsus and Antioch for their archives. Octavian granted Roman citizenship to Seleucus, his parents, children, wife, and descendants, along with a series of immunities ranging from taxation to military service. Octavian's largesse stemmed from the naval aid Rome had received from Seleucus, who had experienced great hardship and danger in his endeavors. Octavian cites the *Lex Munatia et Aemilia* passed in 42 BC as the legal basis for giving citizenship to Seleucus. This law granted the triumvirs the right to bestow Roman citizenship upon certain groups of individuals.⁶³ Paul's family probably received its citizenship similarly, perhaps after supplying the Romans with tents or related leather products.

Paul unique status as a dual citizen is affirmed by the final letter in the Rhosus inscription. Dated to 30 BC, Octavian in this letter of recommendation refers to Seleucus both as a citizen of Rhosus and as a Roman citizen. The separate mention of Roman citizenship and of various privileges in the Rhosus documents suggests this significance to Sherk: "It shows that the grant of citizenship to a provincial did not excuse him from the duties and responsibilities he owed to his native city."⁶⁴ Luke's portrayal of Paul as a Roman citizen with strong allegiance to Tarsus is therefore compatible with the historical evidence found in the Rhosus inscription.

⁶³ The inscription is IGLS III 1.718 and located at the Antioch Museum. This summary is drawn from Sherk 1969, pp. 299-301. Sherk suggests that Seleucia Pieria also received a copy. However, Andrea Raggi, a symposium participant and doctoral student at the University of Pisa who is currently working on the Rhosus inscription, disagrees. He believes that Seleucia is a restoration, and probably not the right one since its ethnic name on inscriptions always includes the additional designation *tēs Pierias*. He concludes, "Other authors think of Ephesus, but it is too short to fill the gap. I think it is better if one says that the copy was sent to a third city, but we do not know the name of it" (email correspondence).

⁶⁴ Sherk 1969, p. 304.

Conclusion

Returning to Wallace and Williams's claim that Paul need not have ever lived in Tarsus, their failure to cite any sources documenting this suggestion significantly weakens their case. A statement by Jones would appear to sustain their contention: "In all Greek cities citizenship was of course determined in principle by birth and not by residence."⁶⁵ Yet the evidence presented in this paper, though circumstantial, shows that Paul's relationship to Tarsus in Cilicia was more than in principle only; it was a vital one that began in childhood and continued throughout his years of adult ministry. In summation we agree with Rapske who observes, "If Paul had been born in Cilicia only to move away and never return, his Tarsian origin might not have been worth noting. This is, however, how he is often identified in his adult life."⁶⁶

In closing, I would like to present a useful historical analogy for discussing Paul's connection with Tarsus by examining another of Anatolia's famous native sons, Strabo of Amasia. I was reading Daniela Dueck's life of Strabo and was struck by the remarkable parallels between these two men. Strabo-born between 64-50 BC and dying after AD 23-was a contemporary of Paul, who was born around AD 1-10 and died in the Neronian persecution around 66. Strabo's civic background can provide insights about Paul's. The following chart highlights the parallels:

⁶⁵ Jones 1940, p. 160.

⁶⁶ Rapske 1994b, p. 75; he adds further, "Paul's connections with Tarsus and Cilicia...are neither tenuous nor expressions of an antiquarian interest; they possess a current social, missiological, and legal significance for him."

	Strabo	Paul
Home	Amasia	Tarsus
Family	Pontic aristocracy	Pharisaic Jews
Roman Citizenship	Born or Acquired ⁶⁷	Born
Name	Roman cognomen only	Roman cognomen only
Education	Carian Nysa, Rome	Jerusalem, Tarsus
Teachers	Aristodemus of Nysa Zenarchus of Cilician Seleucia Tyrannion of Amisus	Gamaliel of Jerusalem Unknown in Tarsus
Travels	Egypt to Rome	Arabia to Rome
Writings	History, 17 book Geography	13 New Testament letters
Manuscripts	2-3 rd century fragments 10-15 th century AD texts	2-3 rd century fragments 4 th century AD texts

Strabo was from Amasia and, in his discussions of the city, he calls it his home town (πατρίς, 12.3.15), his country (χώρα, 12.3.38), and his city (πόλις, 12.3.39). These are the only texts in his writings that give that information, yet few would doubt his connection with the city. As we have seen, there are even more texts linking Paul to Tarsus and Cilicia. Paul was indeed from Tarsus, a Cilician who was proud not only of his citizenship but of his ongoing relationship with the city.

⁶⁷ His biographer Daniela Dueck (2000, pp. 7-8) suggests three ways that Strabo's family might have received the Roman citizenship. First, Aelius Gallus, patron and governor of Egypt, gave Strabo the family name of his adopted son Seianus, whose biological father was Seius Strabo. Second, Servilius Isauricus, with family connections to the name Strabo, lived around Nysa when Strabo was studying there. Perhaps the two met there and their relationship resulted in a lifetime friendship, which included the bestowal of Roman citizenship. Third, Pompey's father was Pompeius Strabo, and Pompey's dealings with Strabo's family during the Mithradatic Wars resulted in citizenship. Whichever scenario is correct, we do not know. Neither is Strabo's nomen known, whether Aelius, Servilius, or Pompeius. Dueck concludes her discussion of Strabo's Roman citizenship stating, "The circumstances of this event remain vague."

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