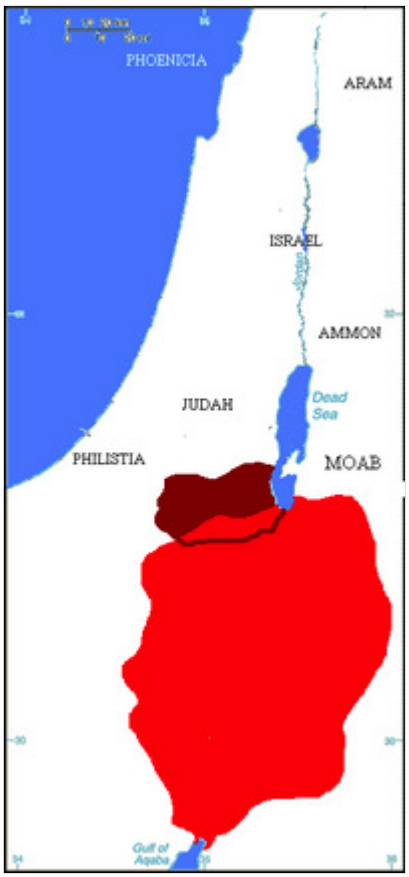
Edom

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Edom or **Idumea** (Hebrew: אֱדוֹם, Modern *Edom* Tiberian *ʾĔḏôm* ; "red"; Assyrian: *Udumi*; Syriac: ܐܕܘܡ; Greek: Ἰδουμαία, *Idoumaía*; Latin: *Idumæa* or *Idumea*) was a historical region of the Southern Levant located south of Judea and the Dead Sea. It is mentioned in biblical records as a 1st millennium BC Iron Age kingdom of Edom,[1] and in classical antiquity the cognate name Idumea was used to refer to a smaller area in the same region. The name Edom means "red" in Hebrew — the region's reddish sandstone may have given rise to its name.

The Bible and The Torah describe the Edomites as descendents of Esau the eldest son of the Jewish patriarch Isaac.



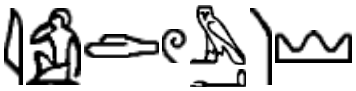
Map showing kingdom of Edom (in red) at its largest extent, c. 600 BC. Areas in dark red show the approximate boundary of classical-age Idumaea.

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History

Archaeological references



The name 'ydwma' ('Aduma') which was translated into "Edom" in hieroglyphs

The Edomites may have been connected with the Shasu and Shutu, nomadic raiders mentioned in Egyptian sources. Indeed, a letter from an Egyptian scribe at a border fortress in the Wadi Tumilat during the reign of Merneptah reports movement of nomadic "shasu-tribes of Edom" to watering holes in Egyptian territory.[2] The earliest Iron Age settlements—possibly copper mining camps—date to the 9th century BC. Settlement intensified by the late 8th century BC and the main sites so far excavated have been dated between the 8th and 6th centuries BC. The last unambiguous reference to Edom is an Assyrian inscription of 667 BC; it has thus been unclear when, how and why Edom ceased to exist as a state, although many scholars point to scriptural references in the Bible, specifically the historical book of Obadiah, to explain this phenomenon.[1]

Edom is mentioned in Assyrian cuneiform inscriptions in the form *"Udumi"* or *"Udumu"*; three of its kings are known from the same source: Ḳaus-malaka at the time of Tiglath-pileser III (c. 745 BC), Malik-rammu at the time of Sennacherib (c. 705 BC), and Ḳaus-gabri at the time of Esarhaddon (c. 680 BC). According to the Egyptian inscriptions, the "Aduma" at times extended their possessions to the borders of Egypt.[3] After the conquest of Judah by the Babylonians, Edomites settled in the region of Hebron. They prospered in this new country, called by the Greeks and Romans "Idumaea" or "Idumea", for more than four centuries.[4] Strabo, writing around the time of Christ, held that the Idumaeans, whom he identified as of Nabataean origin, constituted the majority of the population of Western Judea, where they commingled with the Judaeans and adopted their customs.[5]

Biblical Edom

The Edomites' original country, according to the Tanakh, stretched from the Sinai peninsula as far as Kadesh Barnea. Southward it reached as far as Eilat, which was the seaport of Edom.[6] On the north of Edom was the territory of Moab.[7] The boundary between Moab and Edom was the Wadi Zered.[8] The ancient capital of Edom was Bozrah.[9] According to Genesis, Esau's descendants settled in this land after displacing the Horites. It was also called the land of Seir; Mount Seir appears to have been strongly identified with them and may have been a cultic site. In the time of Amaziah (838 BC), Selah (Petra) was its principal stronghold,[10] Eilat and Ezion-geber its seaports.[11]



The region around 830 BC. Edom is shown in yellow on this map

Genesis 36 lists the kings of Edom:

> These are the kings who ruled in the land of Edom before a king ruled the children of Israel. And Bela ben Beor ruled in Edom, and the name of his city was Dinhabah. And Bela died, and Jobab ben Zerah from Bozrah ruled in his place. And Jobab died, and Husham of the land of Temani ruled in his place. And Husham died, and Hadad ben Bedad, who struck Midian in the field of Moab, ruled in his place, and the name of his city was Avith. And Hadad died, and Samlah of Masrekah ruled in his place. And Samlah died, and Saul of Rehoboth on the river ruled in his place. And Saul died, and Baal-hanan ben Achbor ruled in his place. And Baal-hanan ben Achbor died, and Hadar ruled in his place, and the name of his city was Pau, and his wife's name was Mehetabel bat Matred bat Mezahab. And these are the names of the clans of Esau by their families, by their places, by their names: clan Timnah, clan Alvah, clan Jetheth, clan Aholibamah, clan Elah, clan Pinon, clan Kenaz, clan Teman, clan Mibzar, clan Magdiel, clan Iram.[12]

The Hebrew word translated as "clan" is *aluf*, also translated as "chief", "general", or "duke", and used in this sense only in connection with Edom and Hori.[13] (Since 1948 it has been used for senior ranks in the Israeli Defense Force.)

If the account may be taken at face value, the kingship of Edom was, at least in early times, not hereditary,[14] perhaps elective.[15] First Chronicles mentions both a king and chieftains.[16] When the King of Edom refused to allow the children of Israel[17] to pass through his land on their way to Canaan, they detoured around the country because of his show of force[18] or because God ordered them to do so rather than wage war.[19] The

King of Edom did not attack the Israelites, though he prepared to resist aggression.

Nothing further is recorded of the Edomites in the Tanakh until their defeat by King Saul of Israel in the late 11th century BC. Forty years later King David and his general Joab defeated the Edomites in the "valley of salt", (probably near the Dead Sea).[20] An Edomite prince named Hadad escaped and fled to Egypt, and after David's death returned and tried to start a rebellion, but failed and went to Syria.[21] From that time Edom remained a vassal of Israel. David placed over the Edomites Israelite governors or prefects,[22] and this form of government seems to have continued under Solomon. When Israel divided into two kingdoms Edom became a dependency of the Kingdom of Judah. In the time of Jehoshaphat (c. 914 BC) the Tanakh mentions a king of Edom,[23] who was probably an Israelite appointed by the King of Judah. It also states[24] that the inhabitants of Mount Seir invaded Judea in conjunction with Ammon and Moab, and that the invaders turned against one another and were all destroyed. Edom revolted against Jehoram and elected a king of its own.[25] Amaziah attacked and defeated the Edomites, seizing Selah, but the Israelites never subdued Edom completely.[26]

In the time of Nebuchadnezzar II the Edomites helped plunder Jerusalem and slaughter the Jews.[27] For this reason the Prophets denounced Edom violently.[28]

Although the Idumaeans controlled the lands to the east and south of the Dead Sea, their peoples were held in contempt by the Israelites. Hence the Book of Psalms says "Moab is my washpot: over Edom will I cast out my shoe".[29] According to the Torah,[30] the congregation could not receive descendants of a marriage between an Israelite and an Edomite until the fourth generation. This law was a subject of controversy between Shimon ben Yohai, who said it applied only to male descendants, and other Tannaim, who said female descendants were also excluded.[31]

Rabbinic and Pharasaic writings such as the Mishnah or the Talmud, the Spanish Rabbinic leaders Ramban and Ibn-Ezra, the French Rabbinic scholars Rashi (1040–1105) and Tosphoth, Babylonian Jewish scholars like Sa-adia Gaon and other Jewish exilarchs, the Lithuanian leader Rabbi Elijah of Vilna and Baal-Shem-Tov use "Edomite" to refer to Rome, the Byzantine Empire. In parallel, the Islamic world is referred to as "Ishmael".

Classical antiquity

During the revolt of the Maccabees against the Seleucid kingdom (early 2nd century BC), II Maccabees refers to a Seleucid general named Gorgias as "Governor of Idumaea"; whether he was a Greek or a Hellenized Edomite is unknown. Some scholars maintain that the reference to Idumaea in that passage is an error altogether. Judas Maccabeus conquered their territory for a time in around 163 BC.[32] They were again subdued by John Hyrcanus (c. 125 BC), who forcibly converted them to Judaism[33] and incorporated them into the Jewish nation,[15] despite the opposition of the pharisees. Antipater the Idumaean, the progenitor of the Herodian Dynasty that ruled Judea after the Roman conquest, was of Edomite origin. Under Herod the Great Idumaea was ruled for him by a series of governors, among whom were his brother Joseph ben Antipater and his brother-in-law Costobarus. Immediately before the siege of Jerusalem by Titus, 20,000 Idumaeans, under the leadership of John, Simeon, Phinehas, and Jacob, appeared before Jerusalem to fight on behalf of the Zealots who were besieged in the Temple.[34] See Zealot Temple Siege for more information. After the Jewish Wars the Idumaean people are no longer mentioned in history, though the geographical region of "Idumea" is still referred to at the time of St. Jerome.[15]

Religion

Further information: Canaanite religion

The nature of Edomite religion before their conversion to Judaism is largely unknown. As close relatives of other Levantine Semites, they may have worshiped such gods as El, Baal, Kaus and Asherah. The oldest biblical traditions place Yahweh as the deity of southern Edom, and may have originated in Edom/Seir/Teman/Sinai before being adopted in Israel and Judah.[35]

In Antiquities of the Jews, Book 15, chapter 7, section 9, Josephus notes that Costobarus, appointed by Herod to be governor of Idumea and Gaza, was descended from the priests of "the Koze, whom the Idumeans had formerly served as a God."

For an archaeological text that may well be Edomite, reflecting on the language, literature, and religion of Edom, see Victor Sasson, "An Edomite Joban Text, with a Biblical Joban Parallel", *Zeitschrift fur die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 117 (Berlin 2006), 601–615.

Economy

The Kingdom of Edom drew much of its livelihood from the caravan trade between Egypt, the Levant, Mesopotamia, and southern Arabia, along the Incense Route. Astride the King's Highway, the Edomites were one of several states in the region for whom trade was vital due to the scarcity of arable land. It is also said that sea routes traded as far away as India, with ships leaving from the port of Ezion-Geber. Edom's location on the southern highlands left it with only a small strip of land that received sufficient rain for farming.[*citation needed*] Edom probably exported salt and balsam (used for perfume and temple incense in the ancient world) from the Dead Sea region.[*citation needed*]

Khirbat en-Nahas is a large-scale copper-mining site excavated by archaeologist Thomas Levy in what is now southern Jordan. The scale of tenth-century mining on the site is regarded as evidence of a strong, centralized 10th century BC Edomite kingdom.[36]

See also

- List of rulers of Edom
- Edomite language
- Esau
- Habiru

Notes

1. ^ ***a*** ***b*** Piotr Bienkowski, "New Evidence on Edom in the Neo-Babylonian and Persian Periods", in John Andrew Dearman, Matt Patrick Graham, (eds), "The land that I will show you: essays on the history and archaeology of the Ancient Near East in honour of J. Maxwell Miller" (Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), pp.2198ff (http://books.google.com.au/books?id=YzQe_4Waz34C&printsec=frontcover&dq=The+Land+That+I+Will+Show+You:+Essays+in+History+and+Archaeology+of+the+Ancient+Near+East&source=bl&ots=Jjp2Y0h3Sz&sig=jauEX7cJJ8_AIVgGe9KfjDjYQzg&hl=en&ei=IQbxS-OzIpCTkAXp59HWBg&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CBgQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q&f=false)
2. ^ Redford, *Egypt, Canaan and Israel in Ancient Times*, Princeton Univ. Press, 1992. p.228, 318.
3. ^ Müller, *Asien und Europa,* p. 135.
4. ^ Ptolemy, "Geography," v. 16
5. ^ Strabo, *Geography* Bk.16.2.34
6. ^ Deuteronomy 1:2 (http://bibref.hebtools.com/?book=%20Deuteronomy&verse=1:2&src=!) ; Deuteronomy 2:1–8 (http://bibref.hebtools.com

/?book=%20Deuteronomy&verse=2:1–8&src=!)
7. ^ Judges 11:17–18 (http://bibref.hebtools.com /?book=%20Judges&verse=11:17–18&src=!) ; II Kings 3:8-9 (http://bibref.hebtools.com /?book=II%20Kings&verse=3:8-9&src=!)
8. ^ Deuteronomy 2:13–18 (http://bibref.hebtools.com /?book=%20Deuteronomy&verse=2:13–18&src=!)
9. ^ Genesis 36:33 (http://bibref.hebtools.com /?book=%20Genesis&verse=36:33&src=!) ; Isaiah 34:6 (http://bibref.hebtools.com/?book=%20Isaiah&verse=34:6&src=!) , Isaiah 63:1 (http://bibref.hebtools.com/?book=%20Isaiah&verse=63:1&src=!) , et al.
10. ^ II Kings 14:7 (http://bibref.hebtools.com /?book=II%20Kings&verse=14:7&src=!)
11. ^ I Kings 9:26 (http://bibref.hebtools.com /?book=I%20Kings&verse=9:26&src=!)
12. ^ Genesis 36:31–43 (http://bibref.hebtools.com /?book=%20Genesis&verse=36:31–43&src=!)
13. ^ Hebrew word #441 (http://www.biblestudytools.net /Lexicons/Hebrew/heb.cgi?number=441&version=kjv) in Strong's
14. ^ Gordon, Bruce R.. "Edom (Idumaea)" (http://ellone-loire.net/obsidian/Holyland.html#Edom) . *Regnal Chronologies*. http://ellone-loire.net /obsidian/Holyland.html#Edom. Retrieved 2006-08-04.
15. ^ ***a b c*** Richard Gottheil, Max Seligsohn (1901-19-06). "Edom, Idumaea" (http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com /view_page.jsp?artid=45&letter=E&pid=1) . *The Jewish Encyclopedia*. **3**. Funk and Wagnalls. pp. 40–41. LCCN:16014703. http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com /view_page.jsp?artid=45&letter=E&pid=1. Retrieved 2005-07-25.
16. ^ I Chronicles 1:43–54 (http://bibref.hebtools.com /?book=I%20Chronicles&verse=1:43–54&src=!)
17. ^ Numbers 20:19 (http://bibref.hebtools.com /?book=%20Numbers&verse=20:19&src=KJV) , King James Version 1611
18. ^ Numbers 20:14–21 (http://bibref.hebtools.com /?book=%20Numbers&verse=20:14–21&src=!)
19. ^ Deuteronomy 2:4–6 (http://bibref.hebtools.com /?book=%20Deuteronomy&verse=2:4–6&src=!)
20. ^ II Samuel 8:13-14 (http://bibref.hebtools.com /?book=II%20Samuel&verse=8:13-14&src=!) ; I Kings 9:15-16 (http://bibref.hebtools.com /?book=I%20Kings&verse=9:15-16&src=!)
21. ^ II Samuel 9:14-22 (http://bibref.hebtools.com /?book=II%20Samuel&verse=9:14-22&src=!) ; Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* viii. 7, S 6
22. ^ II Samuel 8:14 (http://bibref.hebtools.com /?book=II%20Samuel&verse=8:14&src=!)
23. ^ II Kings 3:9-26 (http://bibref.hebtools.com /?book=I%20Kings&verse=3:9-26&src=!)
24. ^ II Chronicles 20:10-23 (http://bibref.hebtools.com /?book=II%20Chronicles&verse=20:10-23&src=!)
25. ^ II Kings 8:20-22 (http://bibref.hebtools.com /?book=II%20Kings&verse=8:20-22&src=!) ; II Chronicles 21:8 (http://bibref.hebtools.com /?book=II%20Chronicles&verse=21:8&src=!)
26. ^ II Kings 14:7 (http://bibref.hebtools.com /?book=II%20Kings&verse=14:7&src=!) ; II Chronicles 25:11-12 (http://bibref.hebtools.com /?book=II%20Chronicles&verse=25:11-12&src=!)
27. ^ Psalms 137:7 (http://bibref.hebtools.com /?book=%20Psalms&verse=137:7&src=!) ; Obadiah 1:11-14 (http://bibref.hebtools.com /?book=%20Obadiah&verse=1:11-14&src=!)
28. ^ Isaiah 34:5-8 (http://bibref.hebtools.com /?book=%20Isaiah&verse=34:5-8&src=!) ; Jeremiah 49:7-22 (http://bibref.hebtools.com /?book=%20Jeremiah&verse=49:7-22&src=!) ; Obadiah *passim*; for a possible treaty violation, see Jason C. Dykehouse, "An Historical Reconstruction of Edomite Treaty Betrayal in the Sixth Century B.C.E. Based on Biblical, Epigraphic, and Archaeological Data" (Ph.D. diss., Baylor University, 2008).
29. ^ Psalms 60:8 (http://bibref.hebtools.com /?book=%20Psalms&verse=60:8&src=!) & Psalms 108:9 (http://bibref.hebtools.com /?book=%20Psalms&verse=108:9&src=!)
30. ^ Deuteronomy 23:8-9 (http://bibref.hebtools.com /?book=%20Deuteronomy&verse=23:8-9&src=!)
31. ^ Yevamot 76b
32. ^ Josephus, "Ant." xii. 8, §§ 1, 6
33. ^ ib. xiii. 9, § 1; xiv. 4, § 4
34. ^ Josephus, *Jewish Wars* iv. 4, § 5
35. ^ Mark S. Smith, "The origins of biblical monotheism", (Oxford University Press, 2001) pp.140–145 (http://books.google.com.au /books?id=S1tQ5Larst0C&pg=PA145&lpg=PA145&dq=Edom+Yahweh&source=bl&ots=JfnfBfJiyH&sig=151ch84BGnsR_o5DNGNRaqPN2iw&hl=en&ei=nHpLTLXOA9P0cJTsyN0M&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=4&ved=0CCgQ6AEwAw#v=onepage&q=Edom%20Yahweh&f=false)
36. ^ [1] (http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2010/12 /david-and-solomon/draper-text/1) Robert Draper, Kings of Controversy, National Geographic, December 2010.

References

- Gottheil, Richard and M. Seligsohn. "Edom, Idumea." (http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=45&letter=E&search=Edom) *Jewish Encyclopedia*. Funk and Wagnalls, 1901–1906; which cites:
- *This article incorporates text from the 1901–1906 Jewish Encyclopedia, a publication now in the public domain.*

External links

- Edom on Bruce Gordon's Regnal Chronologies (http://ellone-loire.net/obsidian/Holyland.html#Edom)
- UCSD article on age of Edom (http://ucsdnews.ucsd.edu/newsrel/soc/EDOM.asp)
- Article on age of Edom from the *Jerusalem Post* (http://fr.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?pagename=JPost/JPArticle/ShowFull&cid=1108956311513)
- *Mail & Guardian* Article on Edom's age, includes Dever's reaction (http://www.mg.co.za/articlePage.aspx?articleid=196964&area=/insight/insight__international/)
- Edom on Ancientroute.com (http://www.ancientroute.com/empire/edom.htm)

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Categories: Edom | Ancient peoples | Hebrew Bible nations | Torah places | Semitic peoples | Descendants of Eber | Groups who converted to Judaism | Southern Levant

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