EDOM AND THE FALL OF JERUSALEM, 587 B.C.

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Historians of Edom labour under two serious difficulties — the shortage of archaeological evidence, and the absence of Edomite literary or archival remains. The first has been remedied to some extent by the work of Crystal Bennett, by excavations west of the wadi Arabah, and now by the detailed survey (as yet unpublished) of Burton Macdonald. The second difficulty is perhaps more serious. It has led to a somewhat one-sided presentation of the history of Edom — usually in text-books about the history of Israel. This is particularly true of the subject we are about to examine.

It is commonly said, on the basis of such passages as Obad. 11–14, Ps. 137, Ezek. 35. 1–36. 15, and I Esd. 4. 45, that Edom played a part on the Babylonian side in the events of 587 B.C. Interpretations vary. J. M. Myers (1971, 386) cautiously suggests that the Edomites 'may have rendered some assistance, directly or indirectly, to the Babylonian invaders. . . . It can hardly be said, without qualification, that they actually joined the army of Nebuchadnezzar, as some have inferred.' John Bright (1972, 329) speaks of 'Edom finally coming in on the side of the Babylonians'; Mitchell Dahood (1970, 272) says that the Edomites 'helped the Babylonians sack Jerusalem in 587/6 B.C.' Bruce C. Cresson, in a study entitled 'The condemnation of Edom in post-exilic Judaism' (1972, 143) goes further still: 'That the Edomites did participate, and with a fury and a vindictive spirit, in the 587 B.C. destruction of Jerusalem is clearly evident from the biblical references. . . . Historical evidence makes it difficult to explain the intense hatred of the Jews for Edom unless the Edomites did actively participate in the destruction of the Temple in 587 B.C.' This view, which has been commonly held if not often so strongly expressed, seriously overstates the case. Not enough attention has been given either to the nature and precise contents of the biblical texts, or to the general historical background.

A précis of the general historical background should probably start with the earliest references to relationships between Edom and Israel, but for the purposes of this paper I must leave on one side the question of any hostile contact between Edom and Israel in the wilderness period, noting only what I have tried to show elsewhere (1977, 8 f.) that however the tradition recorded in Num. 20. 14 ff. arose its presentation surely owes not a little to Judah's experience of Edom in the monarchic period. We are on more certain ground when we recall the Davidic conquest of Edom; according to the historian, Joab 'cut off every male in Edom' (1 Kings 11. 16), and 'throughout all Edom David put garrisons, and all the Edomites became his servants' (2 Sam. 8. 14). In the days of Joram, son of Jehoshaphat, perhaps c. 845 B.C., 'Edom revolted from the rule of Judah, and set up a king of their own' (2 Kings 8. 20) 'to this day' (verse 22). There is perhaps an allusion to this in Gen. 27. 40:

> By your sword you shall live,
> and you shall serve your brother;
> but when you break loose
> you shall break his yoke from your neck —

and less certainly, but quite possibly (cf. Bartlett 1977, 2–27), in Amos 1. 11,

> because he pursued his brother with the sword
> and cast off all pity.

Azotus•

Beth Shemesh •

Beth hakkerem •

Azekah •

Adullam•

Marisa

T.ed-Duweir •

Bethzur •

Hebron•

Adora •

T. Beit Mirsim •

Engedi •

Ziklag•

Kh. Taiyib

Beth-pelet•

•(Je)kabzeel

•Jeshua

•Moladah?

• T. Arad

•Kh.el·Gharra

Beersheba

Kh.Ghazzeh

(H.'Uza)

T.Meshash
(Masos)

T.el·Milh(Malhata)

T. Aroer•

•Dimonah

▲ Jerusalem

0   5   10 m

0   10 km

A war of independence is often the occasion for the release of pent-up hatred, and memory of Edom's vengeance with the sword on that occasion (to which the text of 2 Kings 8. 21 bears a somewhat confused witness, see Gray (1970, 533), and compare the N.E.B. translation) may well have influenced the account in Num. 20. 18, where Edom threatens 'to come out with the sword' against Israel.

I sketch this early history to make the point that Judah's conquest of Edom (to say nothing of an earlier relationship) and the subsequent rebellion had left a legacy in the Israelite tradition of Edomite bloodthirstiness and vindictiveness, a memory of Edom's readiness with the sword. The picture is inevitably one-sided, and doubtless the Edomites spoke equally, with very good cause, of Judah's brutality and oppression. Their feelings may have been reinforced by Amaziah's raid, his victory in the Valley of Salt, and his capture of Sela, renamed Joktheel, *c.* 800 B.C. (2 Kings 14. 7) — a raid which possibly hints at some Edomite interest in the region of southern Judah, west of the southern end of the Dead Sea.

It is now clear, from excavations in Edom and from the Old Testament and Assyrian references to Edom, that the Assyrian period was the period of Edom's greatest prosperity, a time of economic expansion. In 734/3 B.C. Edom (if the reading Edom for Aram be allowed in 2 Kings 16. 6) seized Elath on the Gulf of Aqabah; according to 2 Chron. 28. 17, the Edomites 'had again invaded and defeated Judah and carried away captives'. Edom's interest in southern Judah may be further evidenced by the fragmentary ostracon No. 40 from Arad, Level VIII (whose destruction Aharoni dates to 701 B.C.). This ostracon appears to refer to some diplomatic activity between Edom and Judah (cf. Aharoni 1970, 28 f., 32). Among a second group of ostraca from Arad, ostracon 24, dated by Aharoni to 598/7 B.C., contains an order that troops be sent from Arad and Qinah to Ramath-negeb 'lest anything should happen to the city', and 'lest Edom should come there'. Qinah is perhaps Khirbet Ghazzeh at the head of wadi el-Qeini SSE of Arad, or Kh. eṭ-Ṭaiyib NNE of Arad; Ramath-negeb is perhaps Kh. Ghazzeh (if Qinah is not) or Kh. el-Gharrah (Tell 'Ira) a few miles further west.[1] Clearly, Edom's military presence was feared. But Edom's presence in the region was apparently not purely military. Ostracon 12 from Arad, a letter relating to the supply of grain, mentions a man probably called [Qo]s'anal, an Edomite name attested at Tell el-Kheleifeh Period IV (seventh-sixth century B.C.) (Lemaire 1977, 171 f., cf. Glueck 1971, 237–40, Pl. 11). There is no suggestion that Qos'anal is an enemy, and Edomite names were perhaps not uncommon in the area at this time, for an Aramaic ostracon (as yet unpublished) said to be a list of names comparable with those known from Tell el-Kheleifeh was found at Tell Malḥata, twelve miles west of Arad.[2] According to its excavator, 30% of Malḥata's late Iron Age pottery is 'Edomite' ware, comparable with material from Tell el-Kheleifeh, Tawilan and Umm el-Biyarah (Kochavi 1977, 774; 1967, 272–73). Similar pottery has been discovered in the upper stratum of ruins outside the walls of the late pre-exilic city at Tell Aroer, whence also comes a seal bearing what seems to be an Edomite name, Qosa' (see Biran and Cohen 1976, 139; 1978, 20–23). All this suggests that by the end of the Assyrian period a number of Edomites, or people with Edomite affinities, were settled among the population of the region roughly south of a line drawn from Arad to Beersheba. It has often been suggested that the Edomites migrated westwards under pressure from Arabs invading from the east, but this is an exaggerated and oversimplified picture; the changeover within Edom from an Edomite to a Nabataean country was a slow, unspectacular affair, on the whole (see Bartlett 1979, 53–66), and the settlement of Edomites west of the Wadi Arabah was probably also a process extending over several centuries. The Edomites probably had enough in common with tribes of the border country of southern Judah — Kenites, Jerahmeelites, Kenizzites — to make movement and intermarriage easy; certainly the editor of Gen. 36 could draw on names from this region when compiling his lists of 'Edomite' clans.[3]

Individual Edomites, their horizons widened by the political and economic developments of the Assyrian period, perhaps found the prospect of settlement on the southern fringes of Judah more attractive than the future of farming in the higher, wilder mountains of Edom. Just how sharply the boundary line was drawn between land that was distinctively Judahite and land that was distinctively Edomite is not very clear. There was probably no sharply defined border line, but rather a border zone in which the population might be mixed — and in which Edomite troops might be expected to operate.

This, then, was the situation to the south of Judah as the Assyrian empire gave way to the Babylonian, and as Judah tried to resist Nebuchadnezzar's rule. How did Edom behave in this situation? A passage which has raised much speculation is 2 Kings 24. 2: 'The Lord sent against him [Jehoiakim] bands of the Chaldaeans, and bands of the Syrians, and bands of the Moabites, and bands of the Ammonites, and sent them against Judah to destroy it.' This attack follows Jehoiakim's rebellion after three years of vassaldom, and is usually dated to 599 or 598 B.C. and seen as a preliminary to the investing of Jerusalem (see Herrmann 1975, 278, and Gray 1970, 756 f.). Many scholars have followed the Peshitta and Arabic versions and read 'Edomites' for 'Syrians'; Burney (1903, 365), for example, comments that Edom rather than Aram is to be expected in connexion with Moab and Ammon. Accepting this, some scholars have yielded further to temptation and connected this alleged reference to Edom's activity with the fear expressed in the Arad ostracon that Edomite forces might come. There is a danger of circular argument here, for the ostracon's reference to Edom and the possibility of a link with 2 Kings 24. 2 have been used to support the dating of the ostraca, and the destruction of Arad, to 598/97 rather than 588/87, and, as Aharoni (1970, 28) himself observes, it is possible that the ostracon pertains to the later rather than the earlier date. But in any case there is no pressing reason to alter Aram to Edom in 2 Kings 24. 2. In 599/98, as the BM text 21946 shows, Nebuchadnezzar 'from the Hatti land sent out two companies, and scouring the desert they took much plunder from the Arabs' (Wiseman 1956, 70 f.; see also Noth 1958, 133–57). If Jer. 49. 28–33 refers to his campaign, it was directed against 'Kedar and the kingdoms of Hazor'. The Qedarites lived in the Syrian desert east and southeast of Damascus, in certain circumstances ranging and raiding as far as the borders of Moab and Edom and even the Teima region (see Bartlett 1979, 59–62); but Rudolph argues strongly that the reference to Kedar in vv. 28b–29 is secondary and based on vv. 31–32, the original oracle referring only to Hazor, which Rudolph (1968, 294) and others see as a collective noun for those who dwell in ḥᵃṣērîm, 'tent-villages' (see Malamat 1962, 147). The precise location of the Arabs against whom Nebuchadnezzar campaigned is not clear, but, if Nebuchadnezzar was based in Syria, they are more likely to have been from the regions of south-eastern Syria and northern Jordan than from further south. That Nebuchadnezzar despatched Chaldaean troops with local Syrian, Ammonite and Moabite reinforcements makes good sense; the Edomites, however, were probably too far south and too inaccessible to be easily available to him. There is no independent evidence of Moabite and Ammonite activity against Judah at this time, though such activity would not be out of keeping with their threats against Judah perhaps a generation earlier, recorded in Zeph. 2. 8, or with the Ammonite attack on Gadite towns mentioned in Jer. 49. 1ff. The appearance of Chaldaean and Syrian troops, however, is supported by Jer. 35. 11, in which the Rechabites tell Jeremiah: 'When Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon came up against the land, we said, "Come, and let us go to Jerusalem, for fear of the army of the Chaldaeans and the army of Syrians".' There seems very little reason, here or in 2 Kings 24. 2, to replace 'Syrians' with 'Edomites'; as Rudolph observes (1968, 226), in Jer. 35. 11, ' "Edom" bei G. ist Schreibfehler oder Korrectur'.

Another passage which has often been explained by reference to Edomite military action or its results is Jer. 13. 19: 'The cities of the Negeb are shut up (suggᵉrû) with none to open them; all

Judah is taken into exile, wholly taken into exile'. Alt (1925, 108 = 1953, 280 f.) inferred from this that after 597 B.C. the region south of Hebron was lost to Judah, and Noth (1960, 283) followed him, suggesting that this land 'was presumably left to the Edomites'. This reads too much into the text. The older commentators (e.g. Streane 1899, 106) thought that the verse meant that the entrances were 'shut up' or blocked by ruins. According to Albright (1932, 105), the verse means that owing to the vulnerability of the Negeb cities 'the gates were kept closed, and a watch was placed upon the walls. There was no force strong enough to relieve them.' The NEB translates *sugg^erû* as 'besieged', following BDB which compares Josh. 6. 1, 'Now Jericho was shut up from within and from without . . . none went out and none came in'. Jer. 13. 19b, 'all Judah is taken into exile', surely suggests that Babylonian activity is in mind; but there are two difficulties: first, Nebuchadnezzar's short campaign in the winter of 598–97 B.C. allowed him no time, after the capture of Jerusalem, to campaign elsewhere, whether against Lachish or the Negeb cities (cf. Shea 1979, 113–16); and, secondly, the historical and archaeological evidence for destruction in the Negeb in 597 B.C. is non-existent. A. Lemaire (1977, 235), following Aharoni (1970, 18), argues that Stratum VI at Arad was destroyed early in 597 B.C., but he does this on the doubtful grounds that ostracon 24 (with which he connects 2 Kings 24. 2 and Jer. 35. 11) shows that it was the Edomites rather than the Chaldaeans who invaded the Negeb; and once Ramath-negeb had succumbed to the Edomite attack, 'tout le Négeb passa sous le contrôle édomite'. This reconstruction is plausible, but each link in the chain is weak, and there is nothing definite to show that Ramath-negeb and Arad were destroyed in 597 rather than 587 B.C., or that they were destroyed by Edomites, or even that Ramath-negeb was destroyed. Neither of the two sites proposed for Ramath-negeb has been excavated, and ostracon 24 does not tell us that it was in fact destroyed. We know just as little about any other cities which might have been 'shut up' at this time. Albright (1967, 217) suggested that the final phase at Tell Beit Mirsim followed a partial destruction of the fortifications in 598/97 B.C., but, according to Kenyon (1979, 298), there was no major disturbance to be traced there between c. 930 and 588 B.C. Beersheba, mentioned as the southernmost town of Josiah's kingdom (2 Kings 23. 8) is a possibility, but according to Aharoni (1975, 167) it was sacked in 701 B.C. and not re-established; Kenyon (1979, 297) brought the date down to 'somewhere in the middle of the seventh century'. At Tell Meshash a small fortress was erected in the seventh century and destroyed at the beginning of the sixth (Kempinski 1977, 818 f.), but this was not necessarily in 597 B.C. It is thus not easy to see just what Jeremiah had in mind, at least if Jer. 13. 19 dates from after 597 B.C. But in fact the problem is easily solved if we suppose that Jer. 13. 18 f. was a threat uttered by Jeremiah before Jehoiachin was deposed, and that the Babylonian sieges and deportation from the Negeb here envisaged by the prophet did not after all occur in 597 B.C. (Noth 1958, 155). The Negeb thus remained Judah's, and Alt's suggestion falls; Jer. 13. 18 f. gives no reason for supposing that the region became Edomite after 597 B.C. Indeed, if with most scholars we may attribute to 587 B.C. the destructions of Tell ed-Duweir (whether Lachish III or Lachish II, if Lachish at all), Tell Zakariyah, Tell Beit Mirsim, Bethshemesh, Bethzur, Ramat Rahel, Engedi and Arad (cf. Hayes and Miller 1977, 475; Weinberg 1969), then in 587 B.C. Judah still extended south past Bethzur and Engedi towards Arad in one direction and towards Lachish and Debir in another. Only Beersheba is missing; Aharoni (1979, 410), however, argued that the region between Arad and Lachish remained populated down to the time of Nehemiah by Judaeans who had escaped deportation in 587 B.C., for a number of the cities of this region listed in Joshua 15. 21–32 reappear in the list of Neh. 11. 25–30: Dimonah = Dibon (?) (but see Aharoni 1970, 24, note 27), Kabzeel = Jekabzeel, Moladah, Bethpelet, Hazar-shual, Ziklag. If this is so, and we may trust the Nehemiah list, then the hard evidence for an Edomite take-over of southern Judah during the exilic period has largely disappeared —

unless we follow the suggestion of L. H. Brockington (1969, 195) that the lists 'may indicate that the Jews were beginning to reoccupy towns taken over by the neighbours who encroached on their territory during the exile'. But this is to multiply hypotheses. On the basis of what little evidence we have, it seems most likely, first, that the population of the towns and settlements in the border country between Arad and the Beersheba region in the late seventh and early sixth centuries B.C. was partly Edomite in origin; second, that there is no evidence for any besieging and capturing of cities of the Negeb in 597 and 587 either by the Babylonians or by the Edomites (who would have little interest in destroying places with a partly Edomite population). And further: there is no firm evidence that the Edomites proceeded to settle themselves further north on any great scale the moment Jerusalem fell. It took another two or three hundred years for the region between Arad and Bethzur to become known as Idumaea.

It is time to turn to Edom's behaviour in the events surrounding 587 B.C. In Zedekiah's fourth year, Edom apparently joined Judah in discussing revolt (Jer. 27). Edom's presence at this meeting may indicate Judah's need of support rather than Edom's willingness to give it. Edom may have agreed with Jeremiah's view, that rebellion would bring disaster, for when Judah rebelled, only Egypt, Tyre, and perhaps Ammon were associated with her. The obvious policy for Edom was to lie low and say nothing; Babylon could be relied upon to inflict considerable damage on Edom's old enemy without any active commitment on Edom's part. On the other hand, any help Edom gave Judah might have serious consequences. Probably Jer. 40. 11 provides the most reliable piece of evidence for Edom's behaviour in 589–87 B.C.: 'When all the Jews who were in Moab and among the Ammonites and in Edom and in other lands heard that the king of Babylon had left a remnant in Judah and had appointed Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, son of Shaphan, as governor over them, then all the Jews returned from all the places to which they had been driven, and came to the land of Judah. to Gedaliah at Mizpah'. It is interesting, in view of past relationships, that people from Judah could find refuge in Edom, but individual and national relationships are not always the same thing. If the Babylonians campaigned as far south as Arad in 588–87 B.C., the destruction they brought probably affected inhabitants of Edomite as well as of Judahite stock, and Edom would be the natural refuge for both; Jews from around Jerusalem and Bethzur might escape across the Jordan to Moab and Ammon.

Other hard evidence for Edom's behaviour in 587 B.C. is less easy to find than one might suppose. Most of the passages usually quoted picture Edom's attitude rather than her actions, and behind these complaints lies the communal memory of Edom's past enmity as much as any precise knowledge of present or recent wickedness. Lam. 4. 21 f., for example, says nothing precise:

> 'Rejoice and be glad, O daughter of Edom,
>   dweller in the land of Uz;
> but to you also the cup shall pass;
>   you shall become drunk and strip yourself bare.
> The punishment of your iniquity, O daughter of Zion, is accomplished,
>   he will keep you in exile no longer;
> but your iniquity, O daughter of Edom, he will punish,
>   he will uncover your sins'.

Edom's iniquity is not specified; it does not appear to be particularly recent. Zion's punishment is done; Edom's is still to come. Similarly, Isa. 34 lyricises over the sword which will descend in judgement upon Edom, but there is no mention of Edom's crimes, unless it is a case of 'they that

take the sword perish with the sword'; but Edom's reputation for coming out with the sword went back, as we have seen, for several centuries. Mal. 1. 2–5 again reveals that the Lord hated Esau and that Edom will be called the wicked country with whom the Lord is angry for ever, but no explanation for this is given. The situation is not much better with Joel 4. 19 (EVV. 3. 19):

> 'Egypt shall become a desolation,
> and Edom a desolate wilderness,
> for the violence done to the people of Judah,
> because they have shed innocent blood in their land.'

Wolff (1977, 84) emphasizes the part played by tradition in this concluding addition to the book of Joel. Both Edom and Egypt are long-standing arch-enemies; both feature, with the catchword 'desolation', in earlier prophecies about the Day of Yahweh (for Egypt, cf. Ezek. 29. 10, 12; 32. 15; and for Edom, Ezek. 35. 3, 4, 7, 9, 14, 15). The violence (*ḥamas*) perhaps echoes Obad. 10; the thought is present, if not the word, in Amos 1. 11. Wolff concludes: 'Thus this piece of the addition is also determined much more strongly by received prophetic words than by present distress.'

We are on no firmer ground with Ezek. 25. 12. Ezekiel 25 is a collection of four undated oracles of doom against foreign nations, brief and colourless (as Eissfeldt (1966, 377) observes) beside the oracles against Tyre and Egypt. They share a common form; the first two oracles, against Ammon and Moab, show close similarity and parallelism, as do the second pair, against Edom and the Philistines. Edom's crime is that it has 'acted revengefully against the house of Judah and has grievously offended in taking vengeance upon them', and the Philistines are indicted in similar terms. Why Edom took revenge, how, or when is not specified, any more than it is in the case of the Philistines. If 587 is in mind (as verse 3 suggests), then Edom appears, if anything, rather less guilty than the other nations.

Ezek. 35 attacks Edom, under the name of Mt Seir (used in contrast to 'the mountains of Israel' in ch. 36). There are four oracles, with a number of minor expansions (e.g., verses 7–8, 10b, 13, 15a). The first oracle (vv. 3–4) brings no accusation; in the second (vv. 5–9), Mt Seir is threatened 'Because you cherished perpetual enmity, and gave over the people of Israel to the power of the sword at the time of their final punishment'; and 'because you are guilty of blood' (if here with the RSV and NEB we follow the Greek interpretation: on this see Zimmerli 1962, 852). This latter charge, if properly understood, is vague; the former charge repeats in different words the accusation of Amos 1. 11,

> 'he pursued his brother with the sword . . .
> his anger tore perpetually',

and it may owe more to prophetic tradition than to any witnessed event. The third oracle (vv. 10–12) brings a new charge:

> Because you said, 'These two nations and these two countries shall be mine, and we will take possession of them'.

In form this is reminiscent of the charges made against Moab and Ammon in ch. 25, which begin with the same phrase, 'Because you/Moab said'. As for content, the theme of taking possession of the land appears several times in Ezekiel, mainly in secondary material (cf. Wevers 1969, 76, 254). In Ezek. 7. 24, part of a prose addition to the poem of 7. 10–27, God threatens, 'I will bring the worst of the nations to take possession of their houses', and in Ezek. 25. 4 the Ammonites are similarly threatened. In Ezek. 33. 24, part of the editorial introduction

to 25–29, 30–33, those left in Judah after 587 claim that 'the land is surely given to us to possess' — a phrase closely paralleled in words attributed to Edom in 35.12. In Ezek. 36. 2 the enemy claimed 'The ancient heights have become our possession', and in v. 5 the nations 'gave my land to themselves as a possession with wholehearted joy and utter contempt, that they might possess it and plunder it'. The phrase 'and against all Edom' (v. 6) is an accretion (Wevers 1969, 268). The charge in Ezek. 35. 10 that Edom wanted to possess the lands of the two nations and two countries (probably Judah and Israel are meant) is thus a conventional charge which might be made against others beside Edom. The accusation is based not so much on any particular material threat from Edom — the idea of taking possession of Israel and Judah would be somewhat unrealistic — as on the general understanding of how enemies of Israel might be expected to behave. Israel's possession of the land is a dominant theme in the Old Testament; an enemy is above all one who threatens to dispossess.

Ezek. 35. 13 appears to be an additional comment on the 'revilings' of verse 12. The charge, 'You magnified yourselves against me with your mouth, and multiplied your words against me', is similar to that of Obad. 12a and may be based upon it; but the sin of magnifying oneself and multiplying one's words against God is frequently attributed to Israel's enemies and others; cf. Ps. 35. 26, Job 34. 37, Zeph. 2. 8, 10, Jer. 48. 26, 42, Dan. 11. 36. This is another conventional charge laid against any nation or person who is thought to oppose Yahweh and his people.

The fourth oracle (vv. 14–15) is not entirely clear. The sense of the enigmatic v. 14 (on which see Wevers 1969, 267) is probably given by the following gloss (absent from the LXX), 'As you rejoiced over the inheritance of the house of Israel, because it was desolate'. Human rejoicing over the fate of enemies is common enough in the Old Testament; in Micah 7. 8, the prophet cries: 'Rejoice not over me, O my enemy' and general advice is given in Prov. 24. 17; 'Do not rejoice when your enemy falls.' In Obad. 12, Edom is warned not to gloat over or rejoice over the people of Judah. This is behaviour expected of an enemy, whether he has taken part in the destruction concerned or not.

Ezek. 35, then, brings a number of charges against Edom couched in familiar and conventional terms. Not one of them necessarily reflects any specific action of Edom's in 587 B.C. In Ezekiel, Edom is but one enemy among several of whom similar charges are made.

Perhaps the most famous accusation against Edom is that of Ps. 137. 7: Edom is accused of saying *'ārû, 'ārû 'ad hayʿsôd bāh* which the RSV translates, 'Rase it, rase it! Down to its foundations!' The verb *'ārāh* in the Piel usually means 'lay bare', 'strip', and is used of laying bare *pudenda* (Lev. 20. 18, 19; Isa. 3. 17), one's *nephesh* (Ps. 141. 8, Is. 53. 12), cedar work (Zeph. 2. 14), a shield (Isa. 22. 6), a chest (2 Chron. 24. 11), and a jar (Gen. 24. 20). In Ps. 137 the object is not specified but is probably the city of Jerusalem; Dahood (1970, 273) suggests, comparing the MT of Hab. 3. 13 (cf. Albright 1946, 13), that the phrase *'ad hayʿsôd bāh* here means 'to her tail-end', 'buttocks', and that here Jerusalem is depicted as a woman being despoiled of her clothing', just as in Lam. 4. 21 it is said of Edom herself that she shall be drunk and strip herself bare *(titʿʿārî)*. Such a cry for Jerusalem's humiliation might be appropriate in Ps. 137, juxtaposed with the psalmist's cry for the humiliation of the daughter of Babylon, who is to lose her children. But whichever way we take the phrase, it does not amount to a charge of Edom's physical involvement in any military act. It is simply an imaginative, dramatic presentation of what was taken to be Edom's attitude, in which Edom cries out against Jerusalem, using a word with at least humiliating sexual overtones.

This brings us at last to Obadiah, much quoted in this connexion and much, I think, misunderstood. Apart from Sellin, who separated out vv. 2–10 as an oracle from the ninth century B.C., most commentators have concluded that vv. 1–14, 15b have the events of 587 B.C. in mind. Particular complaints begin with verse 11:

'On the day that you stood aloof,
  on the day that strangers carried off his wealth,
and foreigners entered his gates
  and cast lots for Jerusalem,
  you were like one of them.'

This seems to me to make it clear that Edom was not among the strangers and foreigners but that, on the principle that those who are not with us are against us, was 'like one of them'. The phrase 'stand aloof' (*ʿāmad minneged*) can be used literally, as in 2 Kings 2. 7, of standing physically apart, or figuratively, as in Ps. 38. 11 ('my friends and my companions stand aloof from my plague') of failing to provide help or comfort. Edom is clearly accused of doing nothing to help Jerusalem in her time of need.

At first glance, vv. 12–14, especially in the RSV, suggest that Edom's part was much more active. These verses speak of Edom's gloating, rejoicing and boasting, 'entering the gate of my people', 'looting his goods', cutting off fugitives and delivering up survivors. Gloating, rejoicing and boasting refer to attitudes rather than to any active participation in Jerusalem's fall. The charges of cutting off fugitives and delivering up survivors could have some foundation, in spite of the note in Jer. 40. 11 that some refugees found safety in Edom; others, after all, may not have been so lucky. The charges in v. 13, however, of entering the gate of God's people and looting are more serious. They appear to pick up the description of Babylonian activity in v. 11. Edom is pictured as behaving just as Babylon behaved; 'you were like one of them'. Edom, the arch-enemy, is being credited with Babylon's behaviour.

There is, however, good reason for caution in assuming too easily that these verses can be taken as an authentic chronicle of Edom's activities in 587 B.C. The RSV translates these verses with the repeated phrase 'you should not have . . .', imparting to our ears the suggestion that Edom *had* behaved in these particular ways. In fact the author is projecting himself, in lively fashion, into the past, looking back vividly to the day of Judah's misfortune, ruin, distress, and calamity. He addresses the Edomites directly, 'do not gloat, do not rejoice', and so on. There is a dramatic sense of the contemporaneity of the occasion in which the prophet, in some excitement, warns Judah's ancient enemy against typical hostile behaviour. 'You should not have gloated', as a translation, misses the immediacy of the original. The prophet is not simply criticising Edom for what she did; he is vividly imagining the events of the fall of Jerusalem — the enemy rejoicing, boasting, entering the gates, looting and killing — and he imagines Edom taking part in all this. The use of *ʾal* with the imperfect in this way is documented by BDB (p. 39,. *sub ʾal* (c)): 'in poetry *ʾal* sometimes expresses vividly the emotion or sympathy of the poet'; so, for example, in Ps. 50. 3, in the middle of a description of a theophany, the poet suddenly turns to the use of the imperfect: *yāboʾ ʾelōhênû wᵉʾal yeḥᵉraš*, 'may our God come and may he not keep silent!' God is suddenly and dramatically urged to behave in a manner appropriate to the occasion, just as in Obadiah the Edomites are dramatically urged to avoid the savage behaviour of a conquering army. It is interesting and perhaps important to note that in vv. 1–10, Obadiah threatens Edom herself with all the usual miseries of conquest — the enemies' taunts (v. 2), the plundering (v. 5 f.), the failure of allies (v. 7), the slaughter (v. 8) — and then in vv. 11–14 he warns Edom against indulging in precisely these activities, in terms sometimes reminiscent of the wisdom tradition:

'Do not rejoice when your enemy falls,
  and let not your heart be glad when he stumbles' (Prov. 24. 17).

These verses in Obadiah should not be understood as an historian's description of Edom's behaviour in 587 B.C. The poet derives his picture largely from his imagination.

We come lastly to the most explicit and probably least accurate reference to Edomite behaviour in 587 B.C., in I Esdras 4. 45: 'You Darius also vowed to build the temple which the Edomites (Gk. 'Idoumaioi) burned when Judaea was laid waste by the Chaldaeans.' There has been no previous suggestion that the Edomites did any such thing; 2 Kings 25. 9 and 2 Chron. 36. 19 (cf. Jer. 52. 13, 51. 24 ff.) attribute this act to the Chaldaeans, and their witness must surely be followed. How then is this statement to be explained?

I Esdras is a Greek version of the final chapters of 2 Chron., Ezra, and part of Nehemiah, into which has been incorporated the story of the three guardsmen. This, and some confusion between Darius I and Darius son of Artaxerxes, has had disastrous results for the sequence of Persian kings and the order of events in I Esdras. I Esdras 4. 42–46 is clearly part of the redactional work associated with the incorporation of the story of the three guardsmen, and it presupposes the situation created in I Esdras 2 by its bringing forward to the time before Darius I of the letter from Samaria to Artaxerxes, which complained not only that the walls of Jerusalem were being rebuilt (as in Ezra 4. 7–16) but also that the Jews were laying foundations for the temple. The date of these verses is bracketed by I Esdras' relationship with Ezra, and by Josephus' use of I Esdras. A useful *terminus a quo* would be the date of the story of the three guardsmen, and this might be given by the reference in I Esd. 4. 29 to 'Apame, the king's concubine, the daughter of the illustrious Bartacus', perhaps identifiable with Apama, daughter of the satrap Artabazos III, who was given, according to Arrian (Anab. 7. 4. 6) and Plutarch (Eumenes 1), by Alexander the Great to Ptolemy son of Lagus (see Torrey 1910, 40–44). If so, the story (according to Torrey, originally in Aramaic) may derive from the third century B.C. (Torrey 1910, 31–67). Eissfeldt (1966, 576), on the grounds that I Esd. 4. 40a and 4. 59 show knowledge of Dan. 2. 37 and 2. 22 respectively, believed that I Esd. in its present form is later than Daniel, and S. A. Cook (in Charles 1913, 5; cf. Torrey 1910, 84 f.) noted that 'as a translation the linguistic features suggest that it belongs to the time of the old Greek translation of Daniel, and was perhaps due to the same translator'.

All this fits well with the reference to the Idumaeans in I Esd. 4. 45 (and in v. 50; though we must perhaps reckon with Torrey's argument that vv. 47–51 belonged to the Chronicler's original work). It is clear that this reference to the Edomite burning of the temple comes from a time long enough after 587 B.C. for the real part played by the Edomites to have been irrelevant. The author indeed happily ignores the fact that the Chronicler himself unambiguously ascribes the burning of the temple to the Babylonians. For our author, rewriting Chronicles and Ezra, the Babylonians are past and gone; but the Idumaeans are a very present reality. In 312 B.C. we hear of an eparchy of Idumaea (Diod. XIX. 95. 2; 98. 1). Half a century later we read in the Zenon papyri of Idumaeans at Marisa, 259/58 B.C. (PZC 59006, 59015 verso, 59804; Edgar 1925, 10, 34). Marisa appears in the account of Judas' campaigns against the Idumaeans and Philistines as lying between Idumaean Hebron and Philistine Azotus (1 Macc. 5. 68). 1 Macc. 4. 61 notes that Judas fortified Bethzur 'so that the people might have a stronghold that faced Idumaea'. John Hyrcanus later took 'numerous cities in Idumaea, including Adoreon and Marisa' (Josephus, BJ I. 63; Ant. XIII. 257; see revised Schürer 1979, 6; Hengel 1974, II, 172). The region around Marisa could be called 'the plains of Idumaea' (1 Macc. 4. 15), and when Judas needs to retire and regroup, he falls back on Adullam (2 Macc. 12. 38), nine miles NE of Marisa. It is clear that perhaps by the end of the third century B.C. the border of Judah and Idumaea ran between Bethzur and Hebron, and westwards north of Marisa.

In pre-exilic times, Judah reached south to Hebron and Beersheba and beyond. By the third century B.C., the land south of Bethzur was totally alien, the home of Idumaeans living in Hellenised cities like Adora, Marisa, Hebron and Beersheba (for Beersheba, see Aharoni 1975, 167). It is is not surprising that 1 Esdras 4. 50 makes Darius give orders that 'the Idumaeans

should give up the villages of the Jews which they held', or that 1 Esdras 8. 69 lists the Idumaeans (where Ezra 9. 1 speaks of Amorites) among those with whom the Jews have contracted mixed marriages — another sign of grievance felt against the Idumaeans. In this situation it is not surprising that a Jewish historian, editing the Ezra narrative for his own contemporaries, should underline Idumaean wickedness, and improve upon already well-developed traditions of the villainy of the Idumaean ancestors in 587 B.C. Obadiah in his imagination pictured Edom sharing in the looting and slaughter; 1 Esdras went a stage further in crediting the Idumaeans (and by implication their Edomite ancestors) with burning the temple, a crime in fact perpetrated by the Babylonians.

A review of the complaints made against Edom shows very clearly that Edom has been falsely maligned. The roots of Judah's hatred for Edom go back to the monarchic period; the Davidic conquest of Edom and Edom's later successful fight for independence left a legacy of bitterness which turned Edom into the archetypal enemy of Judah. When Judah fell to the Babylonians, and Edom remained unscathed, it was inevitable that Edom should come in for harsh language; naturally such an enemy on Judah's borders coveted the land, would gloat over Judah's distress, would kill fugitives, join in the looting, and eventually be blamed for the most painful catastrophe of all, the burning of the temple. In fact, Edom played no direct part in the events of 587 B.C. The only firm piece of evidence suggests that some Judaean refugees found sanctuary in Edom. For the remaining prophetic evidence, we must accept Ackroyd's verdict (1968, 224): 'To argue from such oracles to precise exilic experience is inappropriate; the expression of hostility to Edom, originating in a complex series of historical experiences, belongs to the development of Israel's understanding of the hostile world, that which is opposed to God and his purpose. In this, historic experience had its influence, but was not the sole determinant.' That seems to me right. But the historic experience which influenced the prophetic complaints against Edom's behaviour in 587 B.C. derived from earlier history rather than from anything done by Edom in 587 B.C. For the destruction of Jerusalem and Judah in 587 B.C., Edom cannot be held in any way responsible. The prophets, and many of their less critical followers, owe Edom an apology.

[1] For photograph, text, and facsimile, see Aharoni 1970, 16–27. For Qinah as Kh. Ghazzeh, see Abel 1933, 272; idem 1938, 88; Lemaire 1977, 191; for Qinah as Kh. et-Taiyib, see Aharoni 1970, 21. For Ramoth-negeb as Kh. Ghazzeh, see Aharoni 1970, 23; he locates it here mainly on the grounds that it 'is the first point against which an Edomite attack would be expected and since men were being sent there from Arad it seems obvious that it was closer to the Edomite border, apparently to the south or southeast of Arad'. For Ramoth-negeb's identification with Kh. el-Gharra, see Lemaire 1977, 191 f.

[2] Malhata has been identified with Moladah (Josh. 15. 26; 19.2; 1 Chron. 4. 28; Robinson 1841, 621 f.; Abel 1938, 89), Hormah-Zephath (Num. 14. 45; 21.3; Deut. 1. 44: Garstang 1931, 82, 216), Arad of Beth-yeroham (the Jerahmeelite?) of Shishak's list (Aharoni 1979, 329).

[3] The basic list of the tribes and clans of Esau appears in Gen. 36. 10–14. The heart of this list is the enumeration of the families of the two sons Eliphaz and Reuel, to which has been added mention of a concubine Timna, who bore to Eliphaz Amalek, and also mention of the sons of Oholibamah, daughter of Anah, daughter of Zibeon, which probably derives from the list of the Horites in Gen. 36. 20–28 (see 24 f.). Timna and Amalek are well known

as the names of a mining site in the southern wadi Arabah and a semi-nomadic group belonging to the Negeb. This leaves the family lists of Eliphaz (for whose name cf. Eliphaz the Temanite, Job 2. 11) and Reuel (cf. Moses' father-in-law, a Midianite, Exod. 2. 18, Num. 10. 29). Teman was a region in Edom, and Midian the region in north-west Arabia to the south of Edom. The list makes Teman the first born of Eliphaz, followed by Omar, Zepho, Gatam (names otherwise unknown in the O.T.), and Kenaz, a clan which settled in the Hebron region of Judah (cf. Num. 32. 12; Josh. 14. 6, 14; 15. 17; Judg. 1. 13; 3. 9, 11). The names of Reuel's sons form two pairs, apparently meaning 'descent', 'rising', and 'here', 'there', which suggests artificiality. Nahath also appears as a Judahite (2 Chron. 31. 13), Zerah as a clan of Judah (Gen. 38. 30; cf. Num. 26. 13; 1 Chron. 6. 6, 26), and for Shammah compare 1 Sam. 16. 9, 2 Sam. 23. 11, and the Jerahmeelite (1 Chron. 2. 28, 32) or Calebite (1 Chron. 2. 44 f.) clan Shammai. There is little in these names, in short, which positively suggests that the writer was drawing on genuine, early Edomite material, and much that suggests that he was preparing a list of names appropriate to the much later Edom that he knew, an Edom bordering upon Judah in the Negeb. See also Bartlett 1969, 1–20.

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