BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE EMERGENCE OF THE KINGDOM OF EDOM

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Summary: Biblical Archaeology and the Emergence of the Kingdom of Edom

Early Edom owes its success to the shortage of copper in the Near Eastern markets and the ability of its population to develop the copper mines in the Arabah. The revenues from the copper trade enabled the Edomites improve their life by relocating to the Negev Highlands and the eastern Beer-sheba Valley and constructing permanent settlements there. They established a polity whose centre was at Tel Masos and economic engine was at Khirbet en-Nahas in the Arabah. Shoshenq's campaign marked a turn in the polity's history, both politically and technologically. The Pharaoh probably set his protégé, Hadad, in the occupied territories, and through his agent controlled the Edomite polity. The Book of Kings relates the ups and downs in the relations of Judah and Edom in the 9th-early 8th centuries BCE. As long as Edom's centres were located in the regions west of the Arabah, Judah was able to conduct campaigns and occupy its territory. The turn in relations took place in the 8th century when the Edomites established their centres on the plateau, east of the Arabah, which guaranteed them security and enabled them to develop their kingdom beyond the reach of their western neighbor.

Keywords: Edom – Arabah – Copper – Tel Masos – Negev Highlands – Shoshenq – Hadad – Jehoram – Edomite Plateau – Edomite King List

Resumen: **La arqueología bíblica y el surgimiento del reino de Edom**

Los primeros tiempos de Edom deben su éxito a la escasez de cobre en los mercados del Próximo Oriente y a la capacidad de su población para explotar las minas de cobre en el Arabá. Los ingresos procedentes del comercio del cobre permitieron a los edomitas mejorar su vida trasladándose a las tierras altas del Néguev y al valle oriental de Beer-sheba, construyendo allí asentamientos permanentes. Establecieron un sistema político cuyo centro estaba en Tel Masos y el motor económico en Khirbet en-Nahas, en el Arabá. La campaña de Shoshenq marcó un giro en

la historia de la ciudad, tanto en lo político como en lo tecnológico. El faraón proba-
blemente colocó a su protegido, Hadad, en los territorios ocupados, y a través de su
agente controló el sistema político edomita. El Libro de los Reyes relata los altibajos
en las relaciones de Judá y Edom en los siglos IX y principios del VIII a.e.c. Mientras
los centros de Edom se encontraban en las regiones al oeste del Arabá, Judá podía rea-
lizar campañas y ocupar su territorio. El giro en las relaciones se produjo en el siglo
VIII, cuando los edomitas establecieron sus centros en la meseta, al este del Arabá, lo
que les garantizó seguridad y les permitió desarrollar su reino fuera del alcance de su
vecino occidental.

Palabras clave: Edom – Arabah – Cobre – Tel Masos – Tierras altas del Néguev –
Shoshenq – Hadad – Joram – Meseta edomita – Lista de reyes edomitas

Introduction

The typical political-geographical development of the ancient
Near East in the late second-early first millennium BCE involves the
emergence of tribal kingdoms that gradually grew from the initially
pastoral-agrarian, archaeologically invisible societies. Following their
growth in number and economy, the local families and clans began set-
tling in the land, building structures and other installations, and thereby
becoming visible to the archaeological research. As the settlement
process intensified and the economy developed, the number of settle-
ments increased significantly, the inhabited areas greatly expanded and
some settlements fortified, so that the presence of the initially invisible
families and clans became prominent in the landscape. Later, some
tribal groups gained political and economic power, unified forces, and
finally established polities/kingdoms that included an urban centre,
secondary centres and rural settlements. Naturally, the emergence of a
kingdom was not the final stage in this population's growth and
strengthening, but elaborating on later developments is not necessary
for my discussion.

Details of the growth of polities/kingdoms differ from one
region to another, depending on the climate conditions, natural resour-
ces and the historical reality in each region. What is common to all
regions is the dynamic process by which the agrarian-pastoral families

and clans turned from an almost invisible element on the ground into a prominent feature in the landscape. In the course of this process, some formerly pastoral nomads became village and urban dwellers, although they might have continued carrying on their former agricultural and pastoral activity. Their leaders and elite usually lived in well-constructed buildings or even palaces, frequently located in well-defended fortified towns or cities, and from these centres administered the affairs of the polity/kingdom and its inhabitants.[1]

Notwithstanding these remarkable developments toward urbanism, the tribal structure and solidarity of the families and clans were preserved for many generations and remained an important element within the internal structure of the established kingdoms.

As many scholars observed, pastoral nomads leave only fragmented evidence of their daily activity, and in the absence of textual evidence, tracing them in the landscape is difficult, sometimes even impossible.[2] The invisibility of the nomads is a real obstacle for the archaeological investigation, and scholars' inclination to base their research on the visible remains is the natural course of research. In recently published articles, Erez Ben-Yosef accused biblical archaeologists who discussed the rise of the Kingdom of Edom of what he called an "architectural bias"; that is, a preference for the visible elements on the ground over the almost invisible fragmented remains.[3] A closer look at his claims clarifies that the "architectural bias" indictment merely reflects his disagreement with the so-called "biblical archaeologists" on the territorial scope of the early desert polity.

The bone of contention in the dispute is the scope and nature of the desert polity of the early Iron Age. Ben-Yosef and his colleagues who researched the Faynan region[4] and Timna held to the opinion that

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[1] Rowton 1973; 1976.

[2] For discussions of pastoral nomads and the surrounding world, see Bar-Yosef and Khazanov 1992; Khazanov 1994; Cribb 1991; Schwartz 1995.

[3] Ben-Yosef 2019; 2020; 2021: 161-166.

[4] The designation Faynan for the northern Arabah takes its name from Wādi Faynan, located near several early Iron sites that produced copper, and from the large tell that carries this name and was identified with biblical Pi/unon. Yet, the application of this name for the early Iron Age

the early Edomite polity encompassed mainly the Arabah, where only a limited number of architectural remains have been discovered. In their opinion, the Negev Highlands and the eastern Beer-sheba Valley, where prominent architectural remains have been discovered, belonged to a different polity.[5] In contrast, their opponents posited that the early desert polity encompassed the Arabah, the Negev Highlands and the eastern Beer-sheba Valley, so that in addition to the fragmented architectural remains in the Arabah, there are plenty of visible remains available for reconstructing this polity.[6]

Israel Finkelstein responded to Ben-Yosef's claim of architectural bias and, to counter his allegations, put forward his historical-archaeological reconstruction of the emergence of the early desert polity.[7] Yet, his criticism did not entirely clarify the weaknesses of the "architectural bias" claim. To further investigate this claim, I first proceed to examine critically the picture of the rise of the Edomite Arabah polity that Ben-Yosef and his colleagues present. I then discuss the

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requires a comment (for a detailed analysis of the name, see Knauf 1987: 37-40). Pi/unon is mentioned in the Edomite genealogies (Gen 36:41; 1 Chr 1:52) and in the itinerary of the wandering in the desert (Num. 33:42-43)—all late compilations written in the early Persian period (for the desert itinerary, see e.g., Van Seters 1994: 153-164; Roskop 2011). Manfred Görg (1982: 18-19) suggested transcribing toponym No 45 in the topographical list of Ramesses II from ʿAmara West, *T3 Š3św p3-wnw*, and translated its name, *"Pwnw vom* Land der *Š3św-*Beduinen." Since the other toponyms that carry the element Shasu in Ramesses II topographical lists are located in south Transjordan, Görg suggested identifying *Pwnw* with biblical Punon. A number of scholars accepted this identification (Knauf 1987: 37-38; Bartlett 1989: 50; Levy and Najjar 2006:10; Tebes 2014: 8). However, in his edition of the topographical list of ʿAmara West, Kitchen (1996: 74 No. 45; 1999: 126) transcribed the toponym *T3 Šs Pwn* and rendered it "Shasu Land Pawan." As toponym No. 44 is "virtually certainly a misspelling for Qizzuwatna" (Kitchen 1999: 126), a kingdom located in south Anatolia, Görg's identification of toponym No. 45 with biblical Punon is unlikely. Thus, applying the name Punon/Faynan to the region of northern Arabah is acceptable, although notably there is no evidence that the name was in use in the early Iron Age.
[5] Levy 2009a; 2009b; Levy et al. 2004; Levy et. al. 2005; Levy and Najjar 2006; Levy, Ben-Yosef and Najjar 2012; Levy, Najjar and Ben-Yosef 2014. See also Tebes 2007; 2014; Maeir 2021.
[6] Knauf-Belleri 1995: 111-113; Fritz 2002; Finkelstein 2005: 119-122; 2014: 95-98; 2020: 16-21; Fantalkin and Finkelstein 2006: 24-28.
[7] Finkelstein 2020.

emergence of the Kingdom of Edom in light of the available historical sources and the archaeological evidence, and the place of Shoshenq's campaign in the establishment of the Edomite kingdom in the late 10th-9th centuries BCE.

THE WEAKNESSES OF BEN-YOSEF'S ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECONSTRUCTION

As observed in the introduction, there are certain lines of similarities in the development of ancient Near Eastern kingdoms. Among these similarities are: (a) All sectors of the population made efforts to gain a revenue and use it to improve their life; (b) families made efforts to improve their condition by replacing their residential tent with a stone house; (c) they frequently relocated their seat to a place that guarantees more safety and security; (d) members of families and clans joined forces to build villages and towns; (e) over the course of time, many of these settlements were surrounded by walls or other defense elements; (f) the tribal elite relocated its seat to an urban or fortified place from where it controlled the other members of the clan and tribe; (g) the kings lived in a large residence that served as a seat of their family and administration; and (h) economic expansion and increased trade in the polity brought about the growth of settlement, the building of fortifications and a greater incidence of luxury and imported items.

When examining in this light Ben-Yosef and his colleagues' reconstruction of the emergence of the Kingdom of Edom, it becomes clear how unlikely the picture they drew is. According to their reconstruction, for about three hundred years, from the mid-12th century BCE until the mid-9th century BCE, the copper mines at Khirbet en-Nahas, Khirbet al-Jariyeh and other nearby sites produced hundreds of tons of copper, which was exported to neighboring and remote regions. Yet, in spite of the enormous revenues earned from the copper trade, the social and economic conditions of the tribal agro-pastoralist population that lived in the Arabah did not change. They continued to live in tents and huts (not visible to archaeologists) within the hot plain, near the badly

polluted region of the Arabah, and made no effort to build stone struc-
tures and fortifications that might improve their daily life and certainly
increase their security. And like all members of the clans and tribes, the
tribal leaders and elite lived under poor conditions in the midst of the
hot plain. Moreover, only a few notable items,[8] including a scarab of
Pharaoh Shoshenq, were discovered in the Faynan region. Seemingly,[9]
the elite of the Faynan chiefdom avoided using luxury imported items
and used the same daily artifacts as all other members of the tribe.

The overall picture these scholars depict is that in spite of the
enormous profits gained from the copper trade, no significant change
took place in the life of the local population. The residents remained
pastoral-agrarian nomads throughout these three hundred years and,
besides the remains left behind from the process of copper production,
left few visible remains in the area. This picture raises two questions:
(a) Where did all the enormous revenues from the copper production
go? (b) Why did the inhabitants of the Arabah, and in particular the
elite, behave so differently from all other members of ancient Near
Eastern tribes, not taking advantage of the gains of their hard work to
create a better life and more secure existence?

Ben-Yosef and his colleagues did not answer these questions. In
my opinion, the answer is self-evident: the reconstruction they suggest
for the emergence of early Edom is wholly erroneous. Members of the
local tribes indeed operated the copper mines, which was the main
source of their revenues, and their mining and smelting activity left its
marks near their laboring sites. They also used the Arabah for pasture
and agriculture. But their permanent dwellings were constructed out of
the plain, in the Negev highlands, the eastern Beer-sheba Valley, and
possibly also the Edomite plateau.[10]

In sum, the claim of architectural bias in the research of ancient
Edom lacks concrete foundations. Assuming that such a bias exists, it
is perceived in the disregard to the dynamics of the rise of early tribal

[8] Levy 2009b: 256-258; Münger and Levy 2014.
[9] Levy, Münger and Najjar 2014; Münger and Levy 2014: 748-749.
[10] Finkelstein and Lipschits 2011.

kingdoms and the reconstruction of the early desert polity in a way that is alien to the ancient reality. In fact, in its main outlines, the emergence of early Edom is not different from other ancient Near Eastern tribal societies. But naturally, every kingdom emerged in a different way, according to the local conditions and the historical reality in its region, and the same holds true regarding Edom in the early Iron Age.

The Kingdom of Edom in the Ninth Century BCE

The Textual Evidence

Discussion of the emergence of the Kingdom of Edom[11] involves two different kinds of data; textual data, which is mainly biblical, and archaeological data. My discussion combines these two sets of data, beginning with the biblical text.[12]

I open with the question, what might have been the *terminus ante quem* for the emergence of a kingdom in Edom? In my opinion, the answer should be sought in the account of 2 Kings 8:20-22a. This slightly corrupted text might be rendered as follows:

> *In his days Edom rebelled against the authority of Judah and set up a king of its own. Then Jehoram crossed over to Zoar[1] (*צֹעָֽרָה*) with all his chariots. When he rose at night, the Edomites who had surrounded him defeated him!* (וַיַּכֶּה אֹת<ה> אֱדוֹם הַסֹּבֵיב אֵלָיו) *and his chariot commanders,[13] and the army fled back home. So Edom rebelled against the authority of Judah until this day.*

[11] I use the term "kingdom" as a "literary" designation, the way it appears in the biblical text.
[12] The Edom that the Book of Kings referred to is always located in the Arabah, whereas the Edomite plateau and the Negev Highlands play no role in the accounts. All the wars narrated are conducted in the Arabah, and an historical continuity exists in each episode between the subjugation of Edom and the organization of maritime ventures in the Gulf of Eilat. Such is the case with the continuity between David and Solomon (2 Sam 8:13ab-14a; 1 Kgs 9:26-28; 10:22; 11:15-16), Jehoshaphat (1 Kgs 22:48-50; cf. 2 Kgs 3:9, 26), and Amaziah and Uzziah (2 Kgs 14:7, 22). For a detailed discussion of these episodes, see Na'aman 2015, with earlier literature.
[13] The text is usually translated, "He and his chariot commanders set out at night and attacked the Edomites, who had surrounded him." But chariots never fight at night, and this translation does not explain the circumstances of the defeat.

The dry, chronistic style of the text indicates that it was extracted from a written source. It relates Edom's rebellion in the time of Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat (ca. 849-842). The king reacted by organizing a military campaign, and with his troops and chariots proceeded to Zoar, a town located near the southeastern edge of the Dead Sea.[14] Jehoram must have trusted the advantage of his chariots over the Edomite infantry in a battle held in the open field. But the Edomites conducted a surprise night attack, thereby neutralizing the advantage of the chariots and defeating the Judahite army, which fled homeward from the battlefield.

The reference to the Edomite rebellion, the setting of an Edomite king and the breaking of Judah's yoke indicates that prior to this episode, Judah was deeply involved in the affairs of Edom and might have benefited from the profits of the copper trade managed by the Edomites.[15]

Additional textual support for the establishment of a kingdom at Edom in the 840s BCE comes from two other sources.

(a) The account of Amaziah's victory over Edom in the Valley of Salt and the conquest of Sela', a place located in the northeastern Arabah (2 Kgs 14:7). Sela' was probably an Edomite stronghold that controlled the northern route leading to the Arabah. Amaziah (ca. 817-788 BCE) first defeated Edom, and then conquered the stronghold and stationed garrison in the place to secure his holding of the region. The account indicates that prior to Amaziah's conquest, the Edomites controlled the region and constructed the stronghold in order to defend their kingdom from attack by its northern enemies.[16] The subjugation of Edom enabled Uzziah, his son, to build Elath, near the shore of the Gulf of Aqaba (Tell el-Kheleifeh) (2 Kgs 14:22) and thereby participate in the international commerce that developed in the region in the first half of the 8th century BCE.

[14] Tsafrir, Di Segni and Green 1994: 263.
[15] For the account of Jehoshaphat's rule in Edom, see Na'aman 2004.
[16] For the archaeological investigation of as-Sela', see Hart 1986; Lindner, Hübner and Gunsam 2001, with earlier literature; Da Riva, Munizaga and Corrada Solares 2017; Da Riva 2019; 2020: 176-178.

(b) The Calah inscription of Adad-nirari III (810-783 BCE) was written in about 800 BCE. The relevant portion of the inscription runs as follows:[17]

> *I subdued (the territory stretching) from the bank of the Euphrates, the land Hatti, the land Amurru in its entirety, Tyre, Sidon, Samaria [KUR Humri], Edom (and) Philistia [Palaštu], as far as the Great Sea in the west. I imposed tax (and) tribute upon them.*

Adad-nirari first enumerated the two large geographical regions (Hatti and Amurru) he subdued, and then the five best-known Levantine kingdoms the royal scribe was aware of (Tyre, Sidon, Israel, Edom and Philistia). This list of kingdoms is followed by a detailed account of the campaign the Assyrian king held against Damascus, the most important kingdom in the region. The reference to Edom among the conquered Levantine kingdoms indicates that the Assyrians considered it an independent kingdom.

The Archaeological Evidence

On the basis of the archaeological data from Tel Masos, Finkelstein first posited that the site was the centre of a tribal polity (i.e., chiefdom) that encompassed the eastern Beer-sheba Valley and the Negev Highlands.[18] Later, he accepted the suggestion of Knauf[19] and Fritz[20] concerning the centrality of Tel Masos in the mining and production of the copper in the Arabah.[21] According to this understanding, the polity/kingdom of Edom encompassed the Arabah, the Negev highlands and the eastern Beer-sheba Valley. Tel Masos, located in the midst of the Beer-sheba Valley, was the main centre of this polity and

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[17] Grayson 1996: 213, lines 11-14.
[18] Finkelstein 1984; 1988: 241-246, 248-249; 1995: 103-126.
[19] Knauf-Belleri 1995: 111-113.
[20] Fritz 2002.
[21] Finkelstein 2005: 119-122; 2014: 95-98; 2020: 16-21; Fantalkin and Finkelstein 2006: 24-28.

the seat of its ruler and tribal elite. From his seat at the centre of the Beer-sheba Valley, the tribal chief/king controlled the mining and smelting operations at Khirbet en-Nahas, Khirbet al-Jariyeh and other sites in the Arabah, and directed the caravans that transported the copper to northern urban centres and to the Mediterranean shore, where the copper could have been loaded onto ships.[22] All the villages and farmsteads unearthed in the Negev highlands and the eastern Beer-sheba Valley formed part of this polity/kingdom. These villages must have been the permanent seats of the workers who labored in the copper industry and the pastoral and agrarian nomads who used the Arabah and other parts of the polity for pasture and agriculture. It is possible that the Edomite plateau east of the Arabah was part of the early desert polity, but this cannot be verified with certainty.[23]

Concerning Tel Masos, the centre of the polity/kingdom, Juan Manuel Tebes examined in detail the results of the site's archaeological excavations and observed their possible public and ritual role.[24] He further observed the imported vessels uncovered in the excavations and the evidence of metallurgical activity at the site.[25] In this light, he supported Finkelstein's early suggestion that Tel Masos was the centre of a chiefdom that transported the copper to the coastal region and encompassed the eastern Beer-sheba Valley and the Negev Highlands,[26] whereas the Arabah, where the copper was produced, belonged to a neighbouring polity.[27] The excavators of the Wādi Faynan and Timna regions also supported the division of this territory between the two neighboring polities.[28]

I already noted that the segregation of the Arabah from the Beer-sheba Valley and Negev Highlands is unlikely. In fact, scholars

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[22] Yahalom Mack et al. 2014.
[23] Finkelstein 1992; 1995: 127-137.
[24] For the excavations of Tel Masos, see Fritz and Kempinski 1983.
[25] Tebes 2003; 2007.
[26] Finkelstein 1984; 1988: 241-246, 248-249; 1995: 103-126.
[27] Tebes 2003: 75-76; 2007: 74-88; 2014: 4-12.
[28] Levy 2009a; 2009b; Levy et al. 2004; Levy et al. 2005; Levy and Najjar 2006; Levy, Ben-Yosef and Najjar 2012; Levy, Ben-Yosef and Najjar 2014; Ben-Yosef 2019; 2020.

have observed some evidence that indicates the territorial unity of the two regions.

First, like the sites excavated in the Arabah, the excavations at Tel Masos extracted a large number of copper/bronze items as well as evidence of copper smelting in the place.[29] Second, petrographic analysis of wheel and handmade pottery unearthed at early Iron IIA Negev Highlands sites indicated that some of the vessels have copper smelting slag as inclusion and were produced in the Arabah.[30] Lead isotope analysis of these slag-tempered inclusions demonstrates that the slag was a byproduct of the contemporaneous smelting operations at Wādi Faynan.[31] The copper slags in these vessels has established a clear link between copper production in the Arabah and many Negev settlements. The inhabitants of these settlements must have worked in copper production in the Arabah, and when they returned home brought with them their day-to-day vessels.

Third, there is a natural overlap between the list of southern toponyms in Shoshenq's topographical inscription and the Iron I-early Iron IIA system of settlements located in the Negev Highlands, the eastern Beer-sheba Valley and the Arabah.[32] Scholars agree that control over the prosperous mining and production centres of copper in the Arabah and the direction of copper to Egypt were the main objects of Shoshenq's campaign to south Canaan.[33] The Egyptian involvement in the copper production is attested by the change in the production technique in the copper industry centres in the late 10th-9th centuries,[34] and by the discovery of a scarab that carries Shoshenq's name at Khirbet Hamra Ifdan.[35] Thus, the long list of toponyms noted in Shoshenq's

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[29] Tebes 2003: 70; 2007: 79-80, with earlier literature in notes 47-51; Finkelstein 2020: 17.

[30] Martin and Finkelstein 2013; Martin et al. 2013.

[31] Yahalom-Mack et al. 2015.

[32] Of the vast literature written on Shoshenq's campaign, see Kitchen 1973: 293-300, 432-447; Wilson 2005: 101-133; Moers 2005; Lipiński 2006; Jansen-Winkeln 2008; Levin 2010; Mayes 2011; Gass 2015.

[33] Fantalkin and Finkelstein 2006: 24-28; Levy 2009b 256-258; Levy, Münger and Najjar 2014; Finkelstein 2014: 96-98.

[34] Ben-Yosef et al. 2019; Ben-Yosef 2019: 368 n. 28, with earlier literature.

[35] Ben-Yosef et al. 2012: 64; Levy, Münger and Najjar 2014.

topographical inscription can safely be identified with the sites disco-
vered in the excavations and surveys of these Negevite regions. The lis-
ting of these toponyms in the Egyptian inscription indicates that their
occupation was part of the Egyptian efforts to control the regions invol-
ved with the mining, production and transportation of the copper.

Concerning terminology, most scholars used the term "chief-
dom" (rather than kingdom) to describe the 10th-9th century BCE polity
governed by the Edomites. Moreover, some scholars drew a strict line
between the early Edom of the 10th-9th centuries BCE whose centre was
at Tel Masos, which they called "chiefdom," and the Edom of the 8th-
7th centuries BCE, whose centre was at Buseirah and was located on the
plateau, which they designated "state."[36] Tebes, on the other hand,
called both polities by the term "chiefdom."[37]

In contrast to modern scholars, the Book of Kings and the
Assyrian royal inscriptions called the rulers of Edom by the title
"king." Although for the present discussion the issue of terminology is
secondary, some comments on the difference in terminology between
the early and late polity are in order.

First, the Iron I-IIA Edomites developed a system that included
the mining and production of copper in the Arabah as well as its distri-
bution to far-away destinations. This composite system lasted many
decades and required a stable staff that mobilized the workers for
manual work and transportation, operated the mines and the production
of copper, and coordinated the distribution of copper to the consumers
abroad. Second, the Edomites constructed two major centres; one at
Khirbet en-Nahas that ran the production and another at Tel Masos that
coordinated its transportation and the negotiations with the consumers.
Third, in the absence of textual evidence, many aspects that are essen-
tial for the terminological discussion remain entirely unknown, such as
hierarchy, inter-tribal relations, administration, cult and self-conscience.
Outwardly, the achievements of the early Edomite polity/kingdom in

[36] See e.g., Finkelstein 1995: 103-153; 2005; 2020: 16-24; Bienkowski and Van der Steen 2001;
Porter 2004. For detailed discussion, see Tebes 2014; 2016: 113-116 with earlier literature.
[37] Tebes 2016: 117-120.

the copper production and trade are no less remarkable than those of the late kingdom in the Arabian trade. Since the written sources called both the rulers of the early and the late Edomite polities "kings," the difference of terms—"chiefdom" for the first and "state" for the second—appears artificial. In light of the biblical and Assyrian testimony, I prefer to call both of them "kingdoms," thereby avoiding the problem of comparing them one against the other.

THE EMERGENCE OF THE EDOMITE KINGDOM IN THE LATE TENTH CENTURY BCE

The point of departure for my discussion is Shoshenq's topographical inscription—the only written source available for research of the late 10th century BCE.[38] The list of places indicates that the campaign was directed at two regions: the districts that encircled the central hill country on all four sides (toponyms Nos. 11-65) and the southern desert regions (toponyms Nos. 66-150). The last five toponyms in the list (extension 1a-5a) are located in north Sinai, near the southern border of Philistia.

Whereas many of the toponyms in the northern districts are identified with certainty, the only toponyms identified with certainty from the list of southern sites are Arad (Nos. 108-111), located in the eastern Beer-sheba Valley; and Sharuhen (No. 125), located in south Philistia. The other unidentified toponyms should be sought between the two identified ones; that is, along Naḥal Besor and Naḥal Beer-sheba and their tributaries, and also in the Negev Highlands and probably the Arabah, where the production of the copper took place.[39]

Detailed analysis of the toponyms located in the southern region is not necessary for my discussion.[40] Many toponyms are rendered by two words and their registration in the list required two cartou-

[38] For the list of literature, see above note 32.

[39] For the distribution of the Iron IB and early Iron IIA sites at the southern desert fringe, see recently Kipfer 2021, with earlier literature.

[40] For details, see Aḥituv 1984: passim; Wilson 2005: 118-132; Lipiński 2006: 105-130; Levin 2010, with earlier literature.

ches (i.e., *p3 ḥqr* ... [7x], *p3 ngb* ... [3x], ʿrd … [2x], *šbrt* ... [2x], *ḥydb* ... [2x]). The overall number of southern cartouches is 84, and even if we subtract the double names from the count, we reach a remarkable number of settlements and farmsteads located in the southern fringe of the desert.

According to the Book of Kings (14:25-26), Shoshenq attacked Jerusalem and despoiled a heavy booty. The account makes the impression that the campaign was aimed chiefly at the Kingdom of Judah. It contradicts the Egyptian inscription, according to which the campaign was directed primarily against the Northern Kingdom and the southern pastoral nomads. We may reconcile the contrasting sources by assuming that the author of Kings (the Deuteronomist) learned from an old source that Shoshenq had been given a tribute that included golden shields when he reached Jerusalem in the fifth year of Rehoboam's reign. The Deuteronomist knew no other detail about the campaign, which had taken place hundreds of years before his time. Seeking to clarify his short source, he logically expanded it and presented a picture according to which (a) Jerusalem was the main target of the Egyptian campaign; and (b) the payment was a booty despoiled after the Pharaoh had conquered the city. Thus, the seeming contradiction of sources arises from the nature of the source available to the Deuteronomist and the way he worked his source.

No other biblical text explicitly mentioned Shoshenq's campaign. Yet, there are two other stories, not yet investigated in this context, that might indirectly illuminate the campaign. These stories relate the flight of Hadad the Edomite and Jeroboam the Ephraimite to Egypt and their temporary sojourn under the aegis of Shoshenq. The two stories formed part of the account of the three revolts that broke out against Solomon as punishment for his religious sins in his old age (1 Kgs 11:14-28, 40).

Common to Hadad's and Jeroboam's stories is that the two protagonists were fugitives in Egypt, stayed there under the protection of the Pharaoh and returned homeward after Solomon's death. Moreover, the author relates that Hadad married an Egyptian princess who bore

him a son (Genubath) (1 Kgs 11:19-20); and the LXX "alternative story" of the division of the kingdom (3Reg 12,24 a-z) filled in many missing details in the story of Jeroboam, including his marriage to an Egyptian princess who bore him a son (Abija) (3Reg 12,24e). Although the latter is a late controversial source,[41] its author might have used a text that (in contrast to the biblical Judahite story) described Jeroboam in a favourable light and mentioned his marriage to an Egyptian princess.[42]

Both stories of Hadad and Jeroboam were deliberately cut short, and their end is missing. The story of Hadad's revolt relates that he belonged to the royal Edomite family, fled to Egypt, married an Egyptian princess, and after Solomon's death sought to return homeward (I Kings 11:14-22).[43] However, the story ends abruptly after verse 22, and Hadad's endeavors following his return to Edom are missing. Likewise, the account of Jeroboam's rebellion is cut short after verse 28, most probably by the Deuteronomist, who chose to insert at this point the prophetic speech he put in the mouth of Ahijah the Shilonite (verses 29-39). The Deuteronomist left only Jeroboam's flight to Egypt after his failed revolt (v. 40). Moreover, details of Jeroboam's operations between his flight to Egypt (1 Kgs 11:40), his return after Solomon's death (1 Kgs 12:2) and his enthronement (12:20a) are missing. The Judahite author seems to have deliberately omitted all details concerning Jeroboam's sojourn in Egypt and his operations after his return to Mount Ephraim, because he sought to ridicule the emergence of the Northern Kingdom and describe it and its ruler ironically.[44]

I already observed that Shoshenq's campaign was conducted to the territories of the future kingdoms of Israel and Edom, Jeroboam's and Hadad's homelands. In this light I posit a bold conjecture: that the Deuteronomist worked an old story that narrated Jeroboam's and Hadad's flight to Egypt, their marriage to Egyptian princesses, their

[41] For discussion of the LXX story, see Talshir, 1993; Schenker 2000: 214-257; Sweeney, 2007: 165-195.
[42] For details, see Na'aman forthcoming.
[43] For the episode of Hadad, see Bartlett 1976; Edelman 1995: 174-183; Bosshard-Nepustil 2000.
[44] For details, see Na'aman 2021: 183-187.

return homeward and their ascendance on the thrones of Israel and Edom. This story might have reached the author of the "alternative story," who included parts of its contents into his account of Jeroboam's exploits.

Combining this conjecture of a deliberate shortening of the stories of Hadad and Jeroboam with the details of Shoshenq's topographical inscription might enable the suggestion that in the course of his campaign, the Pharaoh conquered vast regions all around the central highlands and the desert fringes and set the two fugitives, who had been exposed to Egyptian culture and possibly married Egyptian ladies, on the thrones of Israel and Edom.[45] Jeroboam's kingdom roughly overlapped with the territories that Shoshenq conquered in his campaign, including the northern Shephelah (see 1 Kgs 15:27), the Jezreel and Beth-shean Valleys, and the region near the Jabbok River (see 1 Kgs 12:25). Hadad's kingdom must have overlapped with the regions that the Egyptian troops conquered; that is, the Beer-sheba Valley, the Negev Highlands and the Arabah. As nearly all the southern toponyms registered in Shoshenq's topographical list are unidentified, the scope of his kingdom remains conjectural.

Assuming that this scenario (admittedly highly speculative) is viable, we may date the establishment of the Edomite kingdom already to the late 10th century BCE. As the Hadad story narrates that he was of royal descent, his predecessors might also have been considered kings. But the presentation of Hadad as a prince might as well have been literary and thus should be treated with caution.

It is difficult to estimate how long the Egyptian presence in the Land of Israel and the desert fringes lasted. Finkelstein posited that the Egyptian influence continued for several decades, until the early 9th century BCE.[46] This estimation is possible but lacks concrete evidence. To date, no scarab of Osorkon I (924-889 BCE), Shoshenq's heir on the throne of Egypt, has been found in either the Kingdom of Israel or

[45] Finkelstein (2020: 48) suggested that Jeroboam's rise to power could have been associated with Shoshenq's campaign.
[46] Finkelstein 2014: 98.

Edom. The presence of Egypt in the south is indicated archaeologically by Shoshenq's scarab discovered at Khirbet Hamra Ifdan[47] and by the new technology of Egyptian origin that enhances the copper industry in the Arabah.[48] In fact, since the supply of copper to Egypt was the interest of both sides, Egypt could have preserved its influence in the south by maintaining close contacts with the Edomite leaders rather than by establishing a governor and troops to supervise the conquered territory.

THE EDOMITE KING LIST IN GENESIS 36

In his "architectural bias" article, Ben-Yosef treated Genesis 36:31-39 as a text "which most scholars agree contains authentic materials on Edom before the days of David."[49] Finkelstein correctly observed that many researchers consider this text a late composition that depicts realities of the late 6th or 5th centuries BCE.[50] Indeed, Chapter 36 is composed of Priestly (vv. 1-8, 40-43) and post-Priestly (vv. 9-29) genealogical lists that should be dated no earlier than the Persian period.[51]

Commentators and other scholars examined in detail the genealogical lists in Chapter 36, including the list of names,[52] the toponyms,[53] the structure of the Edomite tribal society reflected therein and the contribution of the genealogies for illuminating the Edomite society in the early Persian period.[54] The list of eight kings "who reigned in the land of Edom before any king reigned over the Israelites" (Gen 36:31-39) forms a well-defined literary unit within the Edomite

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[47] Levy, Münger and Najjar 2014; Münger and Levy 2014: 748-749.

[48] Ben-Yosef et al. 2019; Ben-Yosef 2019: 368 n. 28, with earlier literature.

[49] Ben-Yosef 2019: 363.

[50] For Ben-Yosef's response, see 2020: 45-47.

[51] Knauf 2001: 293-300; Nash 2018: 113-121.

[52] In addition to the commentaries, see Meyer 1906: 338-345; Moritz 1937; Kornfeld 1985; Bartlett 1989: 86-90; Knauf-Belleri 1995: 100-107.

[53] Bartlett 1989: 44-51; Knauf-Belleri 1995: 100-107, 116-117.

[54] Meyer 1906: 345-354; Knauf 1985: 250-251; Knauf-Belleri 1995: 106-107; Nash 2018: 123-128.

genealogies. In the early stages of research, scholars interpreted the list as is; namely, as a list of Edomite kings who ruled Edom in the pre-monarchical period. However, it is now clear that the king list was composed hundreds of years after this period. The late date of composition raises questions regarding the historical reality hidden behind the list and the possible sources available to its author. Although scholars already examined the list in detail,[55] some questions still remained unsolved and call for a further consideration.

First, where did the author get the idea that kings reigned in Edom before the Israelite monarchical period? The answer is self-evident: he learned it from the biblical history that relates that when the Israelites entered Transjordan from the south, Edom was already an established kingdom (Num 20:14-21; cf. Deut 1:4-5, 8). In this light, he established Balaam/Bela son of Beor, who according to biblical history operated during the time of the Israelite penetration to Transjordan, as the first king of Edom (for further details see below).

Second, what suggested to the author that eight kings ruled Edom before the emergence of the Israelite monarchy? It seems to me that he established his list on the basis of the number of saviours mentioned in the Book of Judges. The list of so-called "minor judges" was inserted into the Book of Judges in a late period and was not part of the scroll the author of Chapter 36 consulted.[56] The early list of saviours included Othniel, Ehud, Barak/Deborah, Gideon, Abimelech, Jephthah and Samson (or Samuel), which match in number the seven kings that reigned after Balaam/Bela of the conquest generation. This conjecture is supported by Knauf's observation that "Die Notiz über den Midianiter-Sieg des 'Königs' Hadad 39,35 beruht auf nicht mehr als der synchronisation der Abfolge der 'Grossen Richter' mit der Königsliste; Hadad wie Gideon stehen jeweils an vierter Stelle."[57] Also, it may be the case that Ehud's designation בֶּן-הַיְמִינִי ("Benjaminite";

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[55] In addition to the commentaries, see Bartlett 1965; Knauf 1985; Nash 2018: 118-120.
[56] Na'aman 2019, with earlier literature.
[57] Knauf 2001: 300.

Judg 3:15) influenced the establishing of Husham's origin in "the Land of the Temanites" (Gen 36:34).[58]

Third, one of the riddles of the list is the seat of Saul, the sixth king, in Rehobot ha-Nahar (verbally "Rehobot by the River"; Gen 36:37). Although scholars observed that there is no *nāhār* ("stream/river") in Edom, they nevertheless identified the toponym with major desert wādîs (e.g., Wādi el-Ḥesa and Wādi el-Guweir) located in the region of ancient Edom.[59] However, none of these wādîs fits the designation *nāhār* in biblical Hebrew.

The key to the name is the story of Balaam/Bela, the prophet and first Edomite king, whose seat was in Pethor, "which is by the River" (אֲשֶׁר עַל-הַנָּהָר) (Num 22:5). The author must have misunderstood the location of Pethor, a north Mesopotamian city located near the Euphrates, and identified it in Edom. He thus sat Saul, the sixth king, in the same district as the seat of the first king. Rehobot (in the combination Rehobot ha-Nahar) should be interpreted either as a place name, or, in light of Gen 10:11 (רְחֹבֹת עִיר), as a literary designation for a large/spacious city (derived from the verb *rḥb*).[60] The author's misunderstanding of the reality of the Balaam episode explains the appearance of a toponym that includes the element "river" in an area where no river can be found.

The identification of the other cities referred to in the Edomite list of kings is not necessary for the present discussion.[61] In my opinion, the eclectic list of personal and geographical names was borrowed from all kinds of sources and does not reflect the reality of any particular period. The list might prove to be a valuable source for research of

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[58] For discussion of the Land of the Temanites, see de Vaux 1969. Teman in combination with YHWH *(Yhwh Tēmān)* is mentioned several times in the Kuntillet ʿAjrud inscriptions and refers to YHWH as god of the southern desert regions. For details, see Na'aman 2017, with earlier literature.

[59] For discussions of the toponym, see Bartlett 1965: 308-309; 1989: 50-51; Zwickel 1985; Knauf 1987.

[60] For this interpretation, see Sasson 1983. For different interpretations of רְחֹבֹת עִיר, see Dossin 1934: 108-109; Hurowitz 2008: 517, with earlier literature.

[61] For details, see Knauf-Belleri 1995: 104-106, with earlier literature; Hutton 2009.

Edomite oral memories and folklore, but not for the historical study of early Edom.

In sum, early Edom owes its success to the shortage of copper in the Near Eastern markets and the ability of its population to develop copper mines in the Arabah and sell their copper to nearby and remote countries. The revenues from the copper trade enabled the Edomites to improve their life by relocating to the Negev Highlands and the eastern Beer-sheba Valley, constructing permanent settlements and farmsteads and thereby becoming visible to the archaeological research. The Edomite clans established a polity whose centre was at Tel Masos in the Beer-sheba Valley and whose economic engine was located in Khirbet en-Nahas in the Arabah. Shoshenq's campaign marked a turn in the polity's history, both technologically and politically. The Pharaoh might have set his protégé, Hadad, in the occupied Edomite territories, and through this agent controlled the Edomite polity and secured the supply of needed copper to Egypt. The Egyptian campaign was pro-bably memorialized in the stories of Hadad's and Jeroboam's flight to Egypt and their return to rule their respective countries.

The Book of Kings relates the ups and downs in the relations of Judah and Edom in the 9th-early 8th centuries BCE. As long as Edom's centres were located in the regions west of the Arabah, Judah was able to conduct campaigns and occupy its territory. The turn in relations took place in the 8th century BCE, when the Edomites established their centres on the plateau, east of the Arabah, which guaranteed them secu-rity and enabled them to develop their kingdom out of the reach of their western neighbour.

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