

BIBLICAL EVIDENCE FROM OBADIAH AND PSALM 137 FOR AN EDMITE TREATY BETRAYAL OF JUDAH IN THE SIXTH CENTURY B.C.E.*

JASON DYKEHOUSE

jason_dykehouse@yahoo.com

South Texas School of Christian Studies

Corpus Christi, Texas, USA

Summary: Biblical Evidence from Obadiah and Psalm 137 for an Edomite Treaty Betrayal of Judah in the Sixth Century B.C.E.

Focusing on Obadiah and Psalm 137, this article provides biblical evidence for an Edomite treaty betrayal of Judah during the Babylonian crisis ca. 588–586 B.C.E. After setting a context that includes the use of treaties in the ancient Near East to establish expectations for political relationships and the likelihood that Edom could operate as a political entity in the Judahite Negev during the Babylonian assault, this article demonstrates that Obadiah's poetics include a density of inverted form and content (a reversal motif) pointing to treaty betrayal. Obadiah's modifications of Jeremiah 49, a text with close thematic and terminological parallels, evidence an Edomite treaty betrayal of Judah. Moreover, the study shows that Obadiah is replete with treaty allusions. A study of Psalm 137 in comparison with Aramaic treaty texts from Sefire reveals that this difficult psalm also evidences a treaty betrayal by Edom and includes elements appropriate for treaty curses. The article closes with a discussion of piecemeal data from a few other biblical texts, a criticism of the view that Edom was innocent during the Babylonian crisis, and a suggestion that this treaty betrayal may have contributed to the production of some anti-Edom biblical material.

* This article is a revision of part of my dissertation. I wish to acknowledge and thank both my dissertation director, Joel S. Burnett, whose scrutiny has greatly aided my study of biblical Edom, and Juan M. Tebes, who encouraged the production of this article. I'm also especially grateful to my wife, Pamela, whose support and generous gifts of time (and office doors!) made the writing of this work possible.

Article received: July 18th 2013; approved: October 16th 2013.

Antiguo Oriente, volumen 11, 2013, pp. 75–128.

Keywords: Edom – Judah – Babylon – treaty – Obadiah – Psalm 137

Resumen: Evidencias bíblicas de Abdías y el Salmo 137 para un rompimiento de tratado edomita a Judá en el siglo VI a.C.

Centrándose en Abdías y el Salmo 137, este artículo proporciona evidencia bíblica de un rompimiento de tratado edomita a Judá durante la crisis babilónica de ca. 588–586 a.C. Después de establecer un contexto que incluye el uso de los tratados en el antiguo Cercano Oriente, para establecer las expectativas para las relaciones políticas, y la probabilidad de que Edom pueda operar como una entidad política en el Negev judaíta durante el ataque babilónico, este artículo demuestra que la poética de Abdías incluye una concentración de forma y contenido invertido (un motivo de reversión) que apunta a un rompimiento de tratados. Las modificaciones de Abdías a Jeremías 49, un texto con paralelismos temáticos y terminológicos cercanos, evidencia un rompimiento de tratado edomita a Judá. Por otra parte, el estudio muestra que Abdías está repleto de alusiones a tratados. Un estudio del Salmo 137, en comparación con los textos de tratados arameos de Sefire, revela que este Salmo complejo también evidencia un rompimiento de tratado por parte de Edom e incluye elementos apropiados para las maldiciones de los tratados. El artículo concluye con una discusión de los datos parciales de algunos otros textos bíblicos, una crítica de la opinión de que Edom era inocente durante la crisis babilónica, y la sugerencia de que este rompimiento de tratado puede haber contribuido a la producción de un material bíblico anti-edomita.

Palabras Clave: Edom – Judá – Babilonia – tratado – Abdías – Salmo 137

This article argues that Obadiah and Psalm 137 evidence an Edomite treaty betrayal of Judah during the Babylonian assault on Judah ca. 588–586 B.C.E. Archaeological and epigraphic evidence for Edomite involvement in the fall of Judah is limited, yet the evidence we do have may be read as congruent with Edomite hostility at the time.¹ The focus here is on biblical evidence, and some summary statements on the historical context of the

¹ Epigraphic evidence has been found for Edomite hostility during the last days of the kingdom of Judah, notably ostraca from Arad, a Judahite fortress in the Beersheba Valley. Arad 24 is suggestive of such an Edomite threat:

This is an order from the king—a life-and-death matter for you. I send (this message) to warn you now: The(se) men (must be) with Elisha lest (the) Edom (ites) (should) enter there.

For this translation, see Pardee 2003: 85. Citing Arad 24, Obadiah, and Psalm 137, Herzog *et al.* (1984: 29) suggest that “it is most likely that Arad Stratum VI was destroyed by the Edomite invasion of the Negev at the time of the Babylonian conquest of Judah...”. For my attempt to coordinate epigraphic data with Edomite hostility and to reconstruct specifics of an Edomite campaign into southern Judah, see Dykehouse 2008: 135–208.

Negev, where both Judah and Edom exerted some influence in the early sixth century B.C.E., is necessary given the state of affairs in the study of Edom. First, it appears that during the seventh century Edom and Judah (along with caravaneers and local pastoralists and agriculturalists) were in a mutually-beneficial economic cooperative of trade-route facilitation under Assyrian supervision.² It is questionable that Edom had been aggressively encroaching upon the Judahite Negev.³ Judahite fortifications along the Beersheba Valley might help deter an invasion, but their more regular function may have been to protect, administer, and benefit from international trade route commerce.⁴ In this view, whatever Edomite forces were in the Negev prior to the Babylonian assault on Judah were likely ones escorting trade caravans and protecting other local interests.

Second, the geopolitical problem of an Edomite-Judahite border during the Babylonian crisis boils down to a question of Edomite and Judahite geopolitical “domain” (control) and “range” (direct influence) in the Negev.⁵ Where did the southern Judahite domain terminate? What was Edom’s effective, political range? Was Edom in a geopolitical position to assist Babylon in Judah’s destruction? To what extent do “Edomite” artifactual remains found in the Negev and Beersheba Valley evidence an Edomite presence? In the context of a cultural milieu of various tribal sub-groups and international trade in and around the Beersheba Valley, it has been argued that the Edomite wares would have functioned at least as status symbols to communicate (and socially protect) the ethnic identity of its users—groups with an Edomite cultural orientation.⁶ Given the distribution

² It is evident that Assyria attempted to control trade rather indirectly, leaving regional trade administration in the hands of caravaneers and local rulers, with whom Assyria made agreements and received tribute; see, e.g., Eph’al 1982: 93–94; Tebes 2006: 45–62. On the development of Edom’s economy and its prosperity due to the *pax Assyriaca*, see also Oded 1970: 177–186; Liverani 1979: 297–317; Bienkowski 1992: 1–12, esp. 4; Knauf 1992: 47–54.

³ E.g., Finkelstein 1992: 158; cf. Bartlett 1989: 141–142.

⁴ Cf. Bartlett 1999: 105.

⁵ Political “domain” may be defined as the territory under direct administrative and military control of a particular kingdom or people; political “range” may be defined as the limits of direct social, political, or military influence. In this sense, “range” is typically broader than domain, and a people’s range may overlap regions under the administrative control or rule (domain) of another kingdom. Indirect influence could, of course, be felt outside a range. “Domain” and “range” appear to be implicit in the problem of Edomite encroachment into Judah; cf. discussion related to the extent of an Edomite presence in the Beersheba Valley in Lipschits (2005: 141–146); cf. also Dearman 1995: 119–136, esp. 131.

⁶ See Thareani 2010: esp. 51–52. For another view, which more severely restricts the amount that so-called Edomite ware in the Negev reflects an “Edomite” ethnicity, see Tebes (2011a: 61–101), who concludes that cooking and serving wares of this type, however, were “explicitly used to draw an ethnic boundary” with Judah (92); note also Tebes 2006: 53–54.

of Edomite wares in contexts of international trade, it is likely that some of these groups had a history of cooperation (if not allegiance) to Edom.⁷ I see little reason to doubt that at least some of these groups would self-identify as Edomite. Accordingly, *in a context of the Babylon assault threatening Judah militarily, Edom's direct trade network experience and inter-tribal administrative, logistical, and military capabilities and allegiances could have allowed Edom the opportunity to assume greater operational control of the Beersheba Valley.* It is not unreasonable that parts of the valley could have been taken by force. Of course, any claim made on such control by Edom subsequent to the fall of Judah in 586 B.C.E. would likely require Babylonian approval, likely as part of a treaty relationship.

A general comment on treaties in the ancient Near East is necessary. For the purposes of this study, a treaty may be defined as “an agreement enacted between the leadership of two or more states in which one or more make promises under oath to perform or refrain from certain actions stipulated in advance.”⁸ The number of allusions to treaties in historical and literary texts from a great number of places in the ancient Near East suggests that treaties were used in forming international relationships throughout much of the region's history.⁹ The distribution of allusions to treaties suggests that states large and small would have engaged in treaty-making.¹⁰ Syro-Palestinian states would be no exception, but we do not know if the conference of envoys of Judah, Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Sidon under Zedekiah of Judah ca. 593 B.C.E. (Jer 27:1–15), which may have aimed at forming an anti-Babylonian coalition, resulted in an agreed-upon course of action against Babylonian rule.¹¹ Was Edom among those revolting from Babylon?

⁷ Bienkowski and van der Steen 2001: 21–47, esp. 40–41.

⁸ Mendenhall and Heiron 1992: 1179. Covenants manifest the perceived extension of blood ties, forming a basis for concomitant social obligations to ensure mutual wellbeing. Specifically, kinship created a social bond and a primary source of obligation; in terms of political relations, a covenant/treaty is an artificial brotherhood, a fictitious extension of kinship that establishes a quasi-familial relationship; see Kalluveetil 1982: 204–205, following Smith 1894: 318; see also Cross 1998: esp. 11–12. Answering the question of the specific origin and date of the perceived brotherhood of Edom and Judah is outside the bounds of the current study, particularly as definitive evidence is lacking. It is, however, reasonable (if not standard practice in biblical studies) to accept that an Edomite-Judahite kinship relationship predated the sixth century and that Edom would not have wholly denied that relationship. Of course, we have no data from Edom proper to support this view.

⁹ See McCarthy (1981: 8–9), which brings to the fore the connection between covenant and the formation of political relationships.

¹⁰ Treaty types of the ancient Near East include the parity treaty, the vassal treaty, and what may be called loyalty oaths; Parpola and Watanabe (1988: XV–XXIV) have discussed no fewer than seven types of treaties.

¹¹ Cf. Raabe 1996: 53, referencing Malamat 1987: 287–314. Malamat's statements on Judahite and Edomite political relations present Edom as having had some “role in the final destruction of the

In his commentary on Obadiah, Marvin Sweeney has noted treaty connotations in much of Obadiah, and states that Edom and Judah were treaty partners (Jer 27:3) prior to the Babylonian assault and that Edom was eventually betrayed by Babylon.¹² This article will expand on Sweeney's work and takes the opportunity to detail more fully the biblical evidence for an Edomite treaty betrayal of Judah in the sixth-century B.C.E.¹³

INVERSION OF FORM AND OF CONTENT: A REVERSAL MOTIF

Forms of biblical parallelism, chiasmus, and wordplay in various biblical texts have been described as "inverted."¹⁴ Biblical scholarship has also recognized a stylistic device called the *inverted quotation*, whereby textual elements among intertextual parallels appear in reverse order. In an innovative study of this phenomenon in the Hebrew Bible, P. C. Beentjes has advanced the discussion by identifying five basic types of "inverted quotations".¹⁵ Apart from the attention that the form of the "quotation" gives to an instance of inversion or reversal it is difficult to know how this stylistic device functions (what it "means").¹⁶ Setting aside semantic differences between "inversion" and "reversal", what Beentjes has demonstrated is that several types of reversals are perceivable among parallel quotations: *reversals* of content (e.g., negative theme or message ||

Judean kingdom" after having been in an alliance with Judah in the anti-Babylonian coalition that eventually "came to nothing" despite the revolts carried out by Judah, Ammon, and Tyre (297, 307 n. 40).

¹² See Sweeney 2000: 279–300, esp. 281–282, 285, 293–295.

¹³ Three criteria determine the biblical texts serving as bases for discussion. First, the texts must pertain to supposed sixth-century Edomite activity. Similarly, the texts must be datable to that period. Third, the texts must provide a relatively sustained discourse about supposed Edomite activities during the Babylonian crisis. Obadiah's pertinence to supposed Edomite activity during the sixth century is the general consensus. The book meets the criteria. Psalm 137 meets the second criterion, while the other criteria are met through a section devoted to the psalm, below.

¹⁴ See Watson 1984: esp. 127, 135, 246, 356–359. Clear enough is that inversion is a secondary technique and that modification is implicit in inversion; see also Watson 1994: esp. 95.

¹⁵ Beentjes 1996: 31–50, esp. 48; the five types are 1) inverted quotations of an *exact reflection* of another text (e.g., Gen 27:29 || Num 24:9); 2) inverted quotations of a reflection similar to that described above, yet with a *transformed content* (either positive to negative or the reverse; e.g., Hag 1:10 || Zech 8:12); 3) inverted quotations where a number of words from sentence "a" in a multi-sentence parallel changes places with a number of words from sentence "b" (e.g., Rom 10:20–21 || LXX Isaiah 65:1–2); 4) "selective" inverted quotations where a number of words appear in a parallel with a similar theme, yet in different sequence (e.g., Psa 83:14–16 || Isa 17:13–14); and 5) inverted quotations of small changes of merely a few words (e.g., Sir 48:1b || Mal 3:19). Of course, some examples of "quotations" in types three through five might more easily be attributed to established (oral) traditions, which would have less stability as literary traditions. See also Beentjes 1982: 506–523.

¹⁶ Watson 1984: 359 referencing Beentjes 1982: 506–523 and De Roche 1981: 400–409.

positive theme or message; cf., e.g., reversal of fortune); *reversals* of word or phrase order; and, indeed, *reversals* of consonants. Hebrew poets evidently made use of a technique by which an expected or traditional order of textual elements is *reversed*.

Important for the discussion of Obadiah to follow, is Beentjes' fourth type of inverted quotation, the "(selective) inverted quotation." Beentjes discusses a density of inversions in Psa 83:14–16 and Isa 17:13–14. The first four roots of Psalm 83 that Beentjes discusses appear *in exactly reversed order* in the Isaian parallel; a fifth root remains in identical order; and a final parallel term (√ בלהה || בהל), while in identical order in Isaiah, *manifests a transposition (or reversal) of two radicals* (לה || הל). Thus, this last word ("terror"; √ בהל [Psa 83:16] || בלהה [Isa 17:14]) reflects an *internal transposition (inversion) within a context of a larger inverted quotation*.¹⁷ But how do we make sense of this inversion?

A comment might help. Psalm 83 is a petition that God might defend God's people from an alliance of nations that are plotting destruction (vv. 1–6 [Eng. 1–5]). Nations head toward Israel and jeopardize its pastureland (vv. 3 [2], 13 [12]). Notably, the internal transposition in Isa 17:14 *introduces the results* of those activities of God predicted by Isaiah and for which the psalmist petitioned.¹⁸

At evening time, lo, <i>terror!</i>	לעת ערב והנה בלהה
Before morning, they are no more.	בטרם בקר איננו
This is the fate of those who despoil us,	זה חלק שוסינו
and the lot of those who plunder us.	וגורל לבזינו

After a series of terms in reverse order, "terror" appears with *transposed consonants immediately preceding the enemies' reversal of fortune*. Enemies were once victorious (v. 12), yet they vanish in a moment (v. 14). In a context dense with inversion, wordplay with a verbal form of √ בלה in the noun בלהה introduces and reinforces a thematic reversal. *Inversion of form introduces a role reversal*.

This example of the inversion technique indicates that biblical poets had within their artistry a literary device whereby a density of inversions (form)

¹⁷ For discussion see Beentjes 1982: 33–35, 48. Beentjes does not pursue the significance of this density of inversion apart from the extra attention it draws.

¹⁸ Emphasis mine. The translation is that of the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV).

occasionally functions to point to or reinforce an inverted condition (content). For convenience, this special inversion of *both* form and content may be called the “reversal motif”. Intertextually, the reversal motif may be found in some occurrences of “inverted quotations” (e.g., Psa 83:14–16 || Isa 17:13–14). Intratextually, the reversal motif can be seen in a particular manifestation of the inversion technique in contexts of reversal of fortune.¹⁹ *Either intertextually or intratextually, the reversal motif is characterized by a certain density of the inversion technique (form) appearing within a context marked by an inverted state of being, condition, or fortune (content).*

EXAMPLES OF INTRATEXTUAL AND INTERTEXTUAL INVERSION IN OBADIAH

Examples of intratextual and intertextual inversion in Obadiah will begin to evidence the book’s reversal motif. Obadiah 15b contains a thematic reversal of fortune.²⁰

As you have done, it shall be done to you;	כִּאֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתָ יַעֲשֶׂה לְךָ
your deeds shall return on your own head.	גַּמְלֶךָ יָשׁוּב בְּרֵאשִׁיךָ

In the context of the Edomite hostilities identified in Obad 11–14 (see below), verse 15b predicts a reversal of fortune for Edom, which shall be victimized in the manner of its victim. Obadiah prophesies that Edom will experience an inverted state of being (content), a component of the reversal motif.

Comparing Obadiah with its close parallel in Jeremiah 49 evidences intertextual inversion in several ways. These inverted quotations reveal Obadiah’s inversion of *form*.²¹ **Table 1** provides obvious terminological

¹⁹ A good example is the artistry around $\sqrt{\text{בוש}}$ (“to be ashamed”) found in the *chiasmus* of Psa 6:11 (Eng. 10), which describes once-successful enemies (cf. v. 8) who “turn away” ($\sqrt{\text{שוב}}$) in confusion; *chiasmus* (formal inversion) and wordplay (inversion of ב and ש) cooperate to draw attention to the enemies’ reversed state of being; see Watson 1984: 26, 245–249; note also the caution in Watson 1994: esp. 210–211, of reading the literary device into a text. The number of instances Obadiah evidences inversion should satisfy the caution.

²⁰ The translation is that of the NRSV. For a helpful study on intertextual thematic inversion in terms of juxtaposed identities and futures of Edom/Esau and Judah/Jacob through a comparison of Obadiah with select texts from Genesis, see Anderson 2010: 247–255.

²¹ The inverted quotation is apparent if we compare the parallels that are primarily *terminological* rather than *thematic* (Jer 49:7a γ –b β || Obad 8; Jer 49:12 || Obad 16; and Jer 49:22b || Obad 9a; cf. also Jer 49:10a α || Obad 6). This article assumes a Jeremian priority; for discussion, see Dicou 1994: 58–62; cf. Raabe 1996: 22–31.

parallels between Jeremiah 49 and Obadiah organized according to the Jeremian verse order.

Table 1

Parallels between Jeremiah 49 and Obadiah with Strong Terminological Agreement

<i>Jeremiah 49</i>	<i>Obadiah</i>
לאדום v. 7a α	לאדום v. 1b β
כה אמר יהוה צבאות v. 7a β	כה־אמר יהוה v. 1b α
אס־בצרים באו לך לא ישארו עוללות v. 9a	אס־בצרים באו לך הלוא ישאירו עוללות: v. 5b
אס־גנבים בלילה השחיתו דים: v. 9b	אס־גנבים באו־לך אס־שודדי לילה איך נדמיתה v. 5a הלוא יגנבו דים

		שמועה שמענו מאת יהוה	
		וציר בגוים שלח	
		קומו ונקומה עליה למלחמה:	
		הנה קטן נתתיך בגוים	
		בזוי אתה מאד:	
		זדון לבך השיאך	
	vv. 14–16	שכני בחגוי־סלע	vv. 1c–4
		מרום שבתו	
		אמר בלבו מי יורדני ארץ:	
		אס־תגביה כנשר	
		ואס־בין כוכבים שים קנך	
		משם אורידך	
		נאס־יהוה:	
שמועה שמעתי מאת יהוה			
וציר בגוים שלוח			
התקבצו ובאו עליה וקומו למלחנ			
כי־הנה קטן נתתיך בגוים			
בזוי באדם:			
תפלצתך השיא אתך			
זדון לבך			
שכני בחגוי הסלע			
תפשי מרום גבעה			
כי־תגביה כנשר קנך			
משם אורידך			
נאס־יהוה:			

With a remarkably close and extended parallel with Jer 49:14–16, Obadiah 1c–4 (see below) serves as a signal identification of the inversion technique perceivable in much of Obadiah.²² This *beginning* section parallels a portion *toward the end* of the anti-Edom oracle of Jeremiah 49. While Obadiah 5 has nearly indistinguishable literal correspondence with Jer 49:9, the order of the correspondence is *inverted* (Obad 5a || Jer 49:9b; *then* Obad 5b || Jer 49:9a). In short, each time an extended terminological parallel appears in Obadiah, it parallels an earlier portion of Jeremiah. As will be shown, some paralleled verses also have components appearing in reverse order. Thus, Obad 1–5 is as an extended inverted quotation of Jeremiah 49. Attention to inversion in Obadiah will evidence treaty betrayal as part of the rhetorical situation of this difficult text.

²² Syntactic components of the oracles' rather formulaic introductions (Jer 49:7 and Obad 1b) happen to appear in reverse order. The priority of the object of the oracle in Jer 49:7a, however, might be due to the oracle's inclusion in a collection of oracles against the nations introduced as a whole with a messenger formula (46:1). No part of Jeremiah's oracle against Edom subsequent to verse 16 has a strong terminological parallel in Obadiah (see, however, the thematic parallel of Jer 49:22b and Obad 16).

OBADIAH 1–6 AND ITS PARALLELS IN JEREMIAH 49

The title of Obadiah. Two words constitute the title, (חזון עבדיה, “Vision of Obadiah”). We do not know who this “Obadiah” is. Some commentators prefer to understand the work as anonymous and “Obadiah” (עבד) as a symbolic or representative title.²³ In this view, the prophet is a “Servant of YH[WH]” (עבדיה). Symbolic or not, the label constituting the second word of the book happens to mirror typical designations of lesser parties in relationships established through ancient Near Eastern vassal treaties.²⁴ The *first* word might also evidence treaty terminology. The book is identified as Obadiah’s “vision” (חזון; usually understood from חזה meaning “to see, perceive”).²⁵ Important for the discussion is that within the “Vision of Isaiah” (חזון ישעיהו [Isa 1:1]), two of the four occurrences of the root are clearly in a treaty context (28:15a, 18a):²⁶ “an *agreement* (חזה) with Sheol” twice parallels “a *treaty* (ברית) with Death”. Additionally, no fewer than three linguistic possibilities show how a “treaty” might be connoted by this root.²⁷ Accordingly, a reader attuned to the usage and connotations of חזה + עבד might consider this “Vision of Obadiah” as referencing through allusion “The Agreement of the Servant of YH[WH].”

²³ E.g., Watts 1969; Bič 1953: 11–25.

²⁴ Kalluveettil 1982: 74, 93–98, 120–124, 129.

²⁵ See Jepsen, *TDOT* 4:280–290, esp. 281, 284; see also Raabe 1996: 93–96.

²⁶ The two other occurrences of the root in Isaiah are also noteworthy in light of the present thesis: Isa 29:11 connects “vision” (חזון) with “sealed document” (הספר החתום), and Isa 21:1–2 connects a “vision” with the Negeb and betrayal (בגד).

²⁷ חזה is congruent with treaty contexts by 1) prophetic ceremonies (such as augury) known from treaty ratification rituals; 2) by a fixed-*vision* of a determined future; or 3) by metonymy (the stipulations are the *envisioned* agreements of the parties); see Kalluveettil 1982: 31–32; Weinfeld 1973: 190–99, 196 n. 87. It is possible that the Isaian parallels with ברית provided above are derived instead from an entirely different root, perhaps that evidenced by S. Arabian *ḥdyt* (“agreement”; ח-ד-ת); for this possibility, see Kalluveettil 1982: 31–32. Alternatively, Waston (1994: 213, with bibliography) has advocated repointing the word in 28:15 to *ḥāzē* (“breast”), which would result in a phrase “we will press the breast,” which corresponds to the Akkadian *sibīt tulē* (“touching the breast”) an idiom for “making a pact” and describing a treaty ratification gesture.

Obadiah 1 and Jeremiah 49:14. Subsequent to the messenger formula, Obadiah references international politics. **Table 2** presents these verses divided by cola.²⁸

Table 2
Obadiah 1 and Its Jeremian Parallel

<i>Jeremiah 49:14</i>		<i>Obadiah 1</i>	
שמועה שמעתי מאת יהוה	v. 14aα	חזון עבדיה	v. 1a
וציר בגוים שלוח	v. 14aβ	כה־אמר יהוה לא־דום	v. 1b
התקבצו ובאו עליה	v. 14bα	שמועה שמענו מאת יהוה וציר בגוים שלח	v. 1c
וקומו למלחמה	v. 14bβ	קומו ונקומה עליה למלחמה	v. 1c

Jeremiah 49:14aα references some report (“I have heard a report”; שמועה שמעתי). Obadiah 1cα updates Jeremiah with a first person plural verb (“We have heard a report”; שמועה שמענו). With one difference, the parallel continues: “from YHWH that²⁹ an envoy unto the nations had been sent.” Obadiah’s use of “envoy” (ציר) implies international diplomacy.³⁰ Incidentally, the vowel pointing of Obadiah in the MT also modifies the temporally ambiguous *qal* passive participle (שְׁלוּחַ) in Jeremiah with a Pual perfect (שִׁלַּח), suggesting that the mission is fully underway. The mention of a report and of an envoy suggest a royal court context for Obad 1b–c, but whether that envoy is human or celestial (i.e., from the divine court) depends in part on how one understands the sender.³¹ If the envoy is human

²⁸ Discussion is facilitated by an analysis of cola as demarcated in the Masoretic text (MT) by heavy disjunctive accents. Detailed presentations of the cola of Obadiah are provided by Renkema (2003: 45–89) and Dick (2005: 1–32).

²⁹ Reading an explicative *waw*; cf. Rudolph 1971: 302.

³⁰ See Isa 18:2; 57:9; Jer 49:14; Obad 1; cf. Prov 13:17; 25:13. Isaiah 57:9 demonstrates connotations of “international” diplomacy, albeit to the netherworld (Sheol). As above, Isa 28:15 (cf. v. 18) references a “treaty with Death and an agreement with Sheol” (ברית אֶת־מוֹת וְעִם־שְׂאוֹל עֲשִׂינוּ חוּה). As these verses suggest, ציר is at home in treaty contexts. Isaiah 28:18–19 also mentions “a report” (cf. Obad 1cα) associated with a rejected treaty (cf. Obad 7a with discussion, below).

³¹ Rudolph (1971: 302) suggests an angelic envoy, a view that continues to be influential; cf. Raabe 1996: 114; Barton 2001: 135–136.

rather than angelic and if the sender is a head of state, then additional international intrigue is perceivable: some political entity has completed a diplomatic mission among the nations.³² The text, however, provides too little information to determine both who the “we” of verse 1cα represents and whether anything that follows שמועה שמענו is necessarily part of the report. Either on account of the report or because of some other situation, there is a command to “Rise up! And let us arise against it for battle!” (קומו ונקומה עליה למלחמה). Edom (v. 1b) is typically understood as the referent of the feminine singular prepositional phrase (עליה) connected with √קום.³³ This root in the imperative occurs seventeen times in military contexts in the HB, including summons to war contexts,³⁴ yet Obadiah’s double use of the root is peculiar, perhaps signaling preparations for an imminent and unexpected conflict.³⁵ Verse 1 is difficult, yet it is rather clear that a theme of divulgence begins the prophecy proper: an envoy makes an international circuit as more persons become privy to some report coupled with a muster for battle. The situation somehow pertains to Edom (לאדום [v. 1b]; perhaps also עליה [v. 1cβ]). What is Edom’s role in these affairs?

Obadiah 2 and Jeremiah 49:15. This parallel, demarcated by cola in **Table 3**, evidences the inversion technique and suggests a change of fortune for Edom.

³² See, e.g., Allen 1976: 144–145; Wolff 1986: 46–47; cf. also Raabe 1996: 117, 157–160.

³³ The sole feminine singular noun in Obad 1 is שמועה (“report”; cf. LXX). The masculine singular referent (i.e., אדום [“Edom”]), however, is sound for no fewer than three reasons: a feminine singular head noun such as “land of...” (ארץ) might have dropped from אדום; toponyms are usually understood as feminine despite a masculine form (GKC §122h); and, intertextually, Obadiah retained the identical proposition and suffix of the Jeremiah parallel (49:14), the feminine singular referent of which is possibly in the preceding verse (“Bozrah” [בצרה]; cf. Renkema 2003: 121. For “land of Edom,” see, e.g., Gen 36:16, 17, 21, 31; Num 20:23; 21:4; 33:37; Judg 11:18; 1 Kgs 9:26; Isa 34:6; 1 Chr 1:43; 2 Chr 8:17. For discussion of the possibilities, see Raabe 1996: 118–119. Also possible is that a diplomatic mission calls to arms Edomite forces against Jerusalem (f. sing.; cf. discussion on Psa 137, below); the emphatic “Rise up! And let us arise against [Jerusalem/Judah]!” fits a context of an envoy calling for Edomite forces to arise against and surprise an erstwhile treaty partner.

³⁴ Josh 8:1; Judg 4:14; 5:12; 7:9, 15; 9:32; 18:9; 1 Sam 23:4; Isa 21:5; Jer 6:4, 5; 49:14, 28, 31; Obad 1 (2x); Mic 4:13.

³⁵ The use of two volitives from קום in one verse is found only here; the root is commonly used as the first imperative (followed by a verb of motion) in calls to war (cf. Deut 2:24; Josh 8:1; Judg 7:9; 18:9; 1 Sam 23:4; Jer 6:5; 49:28, 31). Jeremiah reverses the tendency (וקומו follows והתקבצו ובאו); Obadiah’s peculiar repetition deviates from tradition and might signal Jeremiah’s peculiar use of √קום. Raabe (1996: 117) suggests that a surprise attack might be indicated.

Table 3
Obadiah 2 and Its Jeremian Parallel

<i>Jeremiah 49:15</i>	<i>Obadiah 2</i>
כִּי־הִנֵּה קִטְן נִתְחַיֵּךְ בְּגוֹיִם v. 15a	הִנֵּה קִטְן נִתְחַיֵּךְ בְּגוֹיִם v. 2a
בְּזוּי בְּאָדָם v. 15b	בְּזוּי אֶתְּהָ מֵאָד v. 2b

The parallels assert that Edom is to be insignificant among the nations (קטן) (נתחייך בגוים). Obadiah modifies Jeremiah, however, by proclaiming that Edom (here אֶתְּהָ) shall be “despised utterly” (בְּזוּי . . . מֵאָד), which modifies Jeremiah’s “humankind” (אָדָם) with the inverted position of the ם, which appears last in Jeremiah’s בְּאָדָם, yet occurs first in Obadiah’s מֵאָד. This inverted position also reinforces a change in status suggested by the content of the parallel—Edom will be made *exceedingly* despicable (√ בִּזְוָה + מֵאָד is found nowhere else in the MT). Is the change an intensification of Jeremiah’s “despised among humanity” (בְּזוּי בְּאָדָם), which itself communicates that Edom is the *most* despised in the world?³⁶ Given the context of hubris (e.g., Obad 3) and the deception attributed to Edom (see below), מֵאָד is a significant modification: *exceptional* (מֵאָד) despicability has now befallen Edom, and YHWH will become involved in tearing Edom down (see discussion on v. 4c, below). What has Edom done to deserve this intensified status?

Obadiah 3–4 and Jeremiah 49:16. This parallel with much literal correspondence describes Edom’s hubris.³⁷

³⁶ On the superlative, cf. GKC §132c.

³⁷ Cf. Jer 21:13 and 49:4–5. Ancient Near Eastern oracles commonly accuse enemies of hubris; see Barton 1990: 51–64.

Table 4

Obadiah 3–4 and Its Jeremian Parallel			
<i>Jeremiah 49:16</i>		<i>Obadiah 3–4</i>	
תפֿלצתך השיא אתך זדון לבך	v. 16α	זדון לבך השיאך	v. 3α
שכני בחגוי־סלע מרום שבתו	v. 16β	שכני בחגוי־סלע מרום שבתו	v. 3β
תפשי מרום גבעה	v. 16γ	...	
...		אמר בלבו	v. 3bα
...		מי יורדני ארץ	v. 3bβ
כ־יתגביה כנשר קנך	v. 16bα	א־סתגביה כנשר	v. 4a
...		וא־ס־בין כוכבים שים קנך	v. 4b
משם אורידך נא־ס־יהוה	v. 16bβ	משם אורידך נא־ס־יהוה	v. 4c

At least four of Obadiah’s modifications are important for the thesis. First, in v. 3b, Obadiah adds to Jeremiah by presenting Edom as “one who says in his heart, ‘who shall bring me down to earth?’” (אמר בלבו מי יורדני ארץ). The question presupposes that Edom thought its political affairs to be in good order. A second modification suggests one reason for Edom’s confidence: a secret element was part of its national security. Although Jer 49:16α parallels Obad 3α with the phrase זדון לבך (“the pride of your heart”), Obadiah elaborates with the addition of *אמר בלבו* (“*the one who says* in his heart”). The elaboration is important for the thesis. Although *אמר* technically means to vocalize, the phrase is an example of a common idiom (*לב + אמר*) for internal discourse meaning “thinking, believing, intending” (see, e.g., Psa 14:1; 27:8; 53:1; Isa 49:21; Ezek 28:2; Zech 12:5). The idiom has parallels in treaty texts. A similar idiom (*לבב + יסק*) occurs twice in the treaty text of Sefire III:14–17, which warns that secret plots show an unfaithfulness to the gods of a treaty, violate the treaty relationship, and make one deserving of death³⁸ (cf. Obad 4c, with discussion on v. 2b,

³⁸ Cf. also Sefire II B:5; for these texts and discussions, see Fitzmyer 1995: 122–3, 138–9, 154.

above). In both Jeremiah and Obadiah, Edom's hubristic statements reference the defensive qualities of Edom's physical geography (Obad 3aβ || Jer 49:16aβ), but unlike the Jeremian parallel, Obadiah adds an internal (and perhaps secretive) discourse to Edom's national security.

Obadiah's development of a theme of secrecy is further seen in comparing the beginning of the verse (זדון לבך השיאך; "deceived you, has the pride of your heart." [v. 3α]) with its Jeremian parallel (השיא אתך זדון לבך; "...the pride of your heart has deceived you." [Jer 49:16α]). Obadiah's inverted subject/verb order of זדון לבך and √ II. נשא ("beguile, deceive") evidences the inversion technique and draws attention to verb. The second occurrence of √ II. נשא in Obadiah is in an explicit treaty deception context (השיאוך, הברייתך [v. 7a–7b]). Obadiah's modification to invert "deception" (Obad 3α), both accentuates the interiority and secrecy of Edom's words and foreshadows a context of explicit treaty betrayal. Is a secret treaty part of Edom's national security plan? If so, with whom did Edom form a treaty?

The answer may be found in a fourth modification. Obadiah 4b adds a national-security location from which Edom could be torn down (v. 4c), namely, one among the stars: ואם־בין כוכבים שים קנך ("Even if among the stars your nest is established...").³⁹ An astronomical hubris might be at play, but the phrase might also allude to a mundane ally. Babylonian iconography is replete with astral imagery, and worship of the stars in ancient Israel was particularly strong in times of Mesopotamian political influence.⁴⁰ The thematic and terminological parallels with Isaiah 14:13—part of an oracle concerning Babylon's fall—are noteworthy in this regard.

<p>You had said in your heart, "I shall ascend the heavens. I shall lift up my throne above the stars of El, and I shall sit on the Mount of Assembly at the far-reaches of Zaphon."</p>	<p>ואתה אמרת בלבבך השמים אעלה ממעל לכוכבי־אל ארים כסאי ואשב בהר־מועד בירכתי צפון</p>
--	--

With the idiom אמר + לב, Babylon's hubristic statement about its elevation includes a secretive quality (cf. Obad v. 3bα, above). Babylon seeks to lift

³⁹ See Barr 1991: 150–61; whether קן literally means "abode" and is used metaphorically for a nest, or means "nest" and is used metaphorically for Edom's abode might not alter the sense.

⁴⁰ For a concise discussion, see Lelli 1999: 809–15. Note also Amos 5:26; 7:43 and discussion in Paul 1991: 194–98. For a detailed presentation, see also Keel and Uehlinger 1998: 283–372.

its throne above the “stars of El” (לְכוֹכְבֵי־אֵל) only to be cast down ($\sqrt{\text{ירד}}$ [Isa 14:15; cf. Obad 4c]). Similarly, Obadiah has hypothesized that even if Edom is established in such a starry abode (כוֹכְבִים [v. 4b]) it would nevertheless be torn down. The divine abode, Zaphon (צָפוֹן; “North”), upon which Babylon seeks an administrative position is also suggested by Obad 6b (מִצְפְּנֵי; $\sqrt{\text{צפן}}$; see below). No other biblical verse provides as many terminological and thematic parallels with Obad 3b α –4 as does Isa 14:13. Obadiah’s modification (בֵּין כּוֹכְבִים) makes sense: Edom’s secretive rhetoric of national security (v. 3b) is connected to Babylon intertextually with Isaiah and through the use of astral imagery (v. 4b).

Obadiah 5–6 and Jeremiah 49:9–10. Obadiah’s propensity toward the inversion technique is seen in the final cluster of close parallels with Jeremiah 49 (**Table 5**).

Table 5
Obadiah 5–6 and Its Jeremian Parallel

<i>Jeremiah 49:9–10</i>		<i>Obadiah 5–6</i>	
אִם־בְּצָרִים בּוֹא לְךָ	v. 9a α	אִם־יִגְנְבִים בּוֹא לְךָ אִם־שׁוֹדְדֵי לַיְלָה	v. 5a α
לֹא יִשְׁאָרוּ עוֹלָלוֹת	v. 9a β	אִיךְ נִדְמִיתָה	v. 5a β
אִם־יִגְנְבִים בְּלֵילָה הַשְּׁחִיתוּ דִים	v. 9b α	הֲלוֹא יִגְנְבוּ דִים	v. 5a γ
כִּי־אֲנִי חֲשַׁפְתִּי אֶת־עֵשׂוֹ	v. 10a α	אִם־בְּצָרִים בּוֹא לְךָ	v. 5b α
גְּלִיתִי אֶת־מִסְתְּרָיו	v. 10a β	הֲלוֹא יִשְׁאָרוּ עוֹלָלוֹת	v. 5b β
וּנְחַבָּה לֹא יוֹכֵל	v. 10a γ	אִיךְ נִחַפְּשׁוּ עֵשׂוֹ	v. 6a
שָׁדַד זָרְעוֹ וְאֲחִיו וְשִׁכְנֵיו	v. 10b α	נִבְעוּ מִצְפְּנָיו	v. 6b
וְאֵינְנוּ	v. 10b β		

Inversion of verse groups, phrases, and consonants are perceivable in the parallel. Several modifications of Jeremiah support the thesis. Obadiah introduces the *first* colon of verse 5 with an element that introduces the *last*

colon of Jer 49:9 (. . . אִם־גַּנְבִים; “If thieves . . .”). Obadiah modifies Jeremiah by beginning the unit with theivery, accentuating the theme of secrecy suggested by verse 3bα (אָמַר בַּלְבּוֹ). A reference to the night (לַיְלָה; connoting mystery and danger) appears in the *introductory colon* of Obad 5, yet its parallel (בַּלַּיְלָה) appears in the *last colon* of Jer 49:9. Although Obadiah’s introduction to verse 5 is nearly identical to the introductory colon of Jer 49:9 (. . . בּוֹא לְךָ; with Obadiah substituting גַּנְבִים for Jeremiah’s בְּצִרִים), Obadiah has retained that introductory colon exactly and literally, yet has transposed it into the second to last colon of Obad 5 (אִם־בְּצִרִים בּוֹא לְךָ). Additionally, the second colon of Jeremiah (v. 9ab), has been transposed with some modification to the position of last colon of Obad 5. The modification includes an accentuation of the questioning implied by the syntax of Jer 49:9a by including an interrogative (ה) connected with a negative particle (הֲלוֹא). Jeremiah includes only the negative particle (לֹא). The modification highlights the interrogative. Obadiah also inverts the order of defective⁴¹ spelling in a series of two otherwise identical words: the two in Jer 9aβ read יִשְׂאָרוּ עוֹלָלוֹת, whereas the two in Obad 5bβ read יִשְׂאִירוּ עוֹלָלוֹת, highlighting the consonants י and ו.⁴² Given the hypothesis of a Jeremian priority, Obadiah has surprised a reading audience familiar with the opening colon of Jer 49:9 in two ways. A literal parallel might be expected to begin immediately in verse 5 || אִם־ . . . בּוֹא לְךָ [Jer 49:9aα]), yet that literal parallel occurs later in the verse (5bα). In what is otherwise a parallel of literal agreement, Obadiah has opted to *substitute* Jeremiah’s “grape-gatherers” (בְּצִרִים; √ בצר “to cut off, enclose”) with a root denoting secretive thievery (√ גנב).⁴³ Why this substitution in a context of so much inversion?

⁴¹ Reading יִשְׂאָרוּ in Jer 49:9 with the MT as a *hip ʾil*.

⁴² Nogalski (1993: 63) suggests that these orthographic changes “have little bearing upon either the meaning of the text or the intention of the redactor.” For Nogalski, the (other) reversals evidenced in a comparison of Jer 49:9 and Obad 5 may be understood as Obadiah’s inversion of the Jeremian order “so that the themes of destruction and remnant appear in the same order as Amos 9:8–10)” (p. 66). Such might be the case (see also Nogalski’s explanation of the added interrogative הֲלוֹא), but given the frequency of inversion in Obadiah it is not clear that the reversed order of defective spellings are likely due to an “orthographical preference of the redactor” (p. 63) unless that preference had rhetorical significance.

⁴³ The nominal form may designate a habitual or professional thief; see Hamp, *TDOT* 3: esp. 41.

Through rootplay with $\sqrt{\text{בצר}}$, it is possible that Obadiah's substitution for thievery produces a pun on the Edomite royal city of Bozrah (בצרה). The inverted order of defectively spelled words between the inverted occurrences of בצרים and גנבים in the Jer 49:9 and Obad 5 parallel has highlighted *defective* spelling and the consonants ו and י (see above). Obadiah's negative particle (הלוא) is spelled fully, unlike Jeremiah's. Obadiah's full spelling also directs our attention to the added interrogative (ה). In a context heavy with inversion that draws attention to spelling, Obadiah's extra ה provides some textual support for a complex rootplay in Obad 5: "grape-gatherers" or more literally "those who shall cut off/enclose" ($\sqrt{\text{בצר}}$) may be understood as a reference to Bozrah (בצרה = ה + בצר).

The surprise⁴⁴ interjection of Obad 5aβ (איך נדמיתה; NRSV "how you have been destroyed!") between the reversed occurrences of בצרים and גנבים is informative. Obadiah 5 is typically understood as suggesting that plundering and destruction are closer and more damaging than Edom might suppose. The occurrence of נדמיתה, however, provides a challenging ambiguity.⁴⁵ Should we read the phrase as "How you are similar!" ($\sqrt{\text{I. דמה}}$), "How you are destroyed/cut off!" ($\sqrt{\text{II. דמה}}$), or both? Is allusion being made to the root דמם (i.e., "How you are silenced!"; cf., דומה in Isa 21:11; Psa 94:17; 115:177). Reading with $\sqrt{\text{I. דמה}}$, we see that the complex rootplay likening Edom's principle city with thievery is reinforced: Obadiah exclaims, "How you are *similar* [to a thief, to a destroyer in the night]!" The polysemous נדמיתה also suggests Edom's *destruction* and that Edom's hubristic and interior dialogue connected with Mesopotamian imagery (v. 3) will be *silenced*. Whichever position one takes, verse 5 evidences much inversion of form and a complex pun: Bozrah is likened to a devastating ($\sqrt{\text{שדד}}$) and secretive thief ($\sqrt{\text{גבר}}$) of the night. Themes of secrecy and international politics (established in vv. 1–4) continue, yet in verse 5 the

⁴⁴ Given a text heavy-laden with inversion, it is doubtful that the phrase is accidentally transposed from the end of the verse (contrast BHS).

⁴⁵ The consonants are pointed as a *nip ʾal* perfect, second person singular (נְדַמִּיתָה).

sense of danger is heightened and the Edomite political capital might be implied.

Further evidence for the inversion technique and an Edomite treaty betrayal of Judah may be gleaned from Obad 6 in comparison with Jer 49:10α–β (see Table 5, above). Jeremiah 49:10 declares that YHWH has “stripped Esau, uncovered his enclosures” (שִׁפְתֵי אֶת־עֵשָׂו גִלִּיתִי אֶת־מִסְתָּרָיו) (שִׁפְתֵי אֶת־עֵשָׂו גִלִּיתִי אֶת־מִסְתָּרָיו). The noun מִסְתָּר (‘‘hidden/enclosed place’’) has the explicit sense of a physical location.⁴⁶ In Obadiah, however, Esau is not ‘‘stripped’’ (√חִשַׁף), he is ‘‘searched out, uncovered’’ (√חִפֵּשׂ),⁴⁷ evidencing an intertextual inversion on the miniscule level through the reversed order of two consonants (ףֶשׁ > פֶּשׁ). The *nip’al* stem of חִפֵּשׂ occurs only here. Translations such as ‘‘pillaged’’ are common,⁴⁸ but the etymology of the root suggests not aggression but uncovering something hidden, mysterious, or requiring discernment.⁴⁹ This connotation (if not denotation) is evident in the Ugaritic etymological equivalent found in the phrase *bt ḥpṭt* (‘‘The House of Under’’),⁵⁰ which designates (part of) the netherworld through which Baal’s subordinates are to pass toward Mot. Accordingly, Obadiah has modified Jeremiah in order to connote not only a physical search, but also discernment of something hidden or secretive. Translations appear to have been influenced heavily—perhaps too heavily—by the Jeremian parallel (√חִשַׁף; ‘‘stripped’’). Thus, rather than ‘‘How Esau is pillaged!’’ the phrase might better suggest, with English wordplay, ‘‘How Esau is *understood!*’’

⁴⁶ See also Ps 10:8; 17:12; 64:5; Isa 45:3; 53:3; Jer 13:17; 23:24; Lam 3:10; and Hab 3:14. Contrast סִתָּר, which carries connotations both of physical concealment and of intellectual secrecy; see Wagner, *TDOT* 10:362–372, esp. 369–371.

⁴⁷ On the root, see Mass, *TDOT* 5: 112–114.

⁴⁸ E.g., RSV/ NRSV: ‘‘ransacked’’; NIV: ‘‘pillaged’’; NJB: ‘‘looted’’; JPS ‘‘thoroughly rifled’’; contrast KJV: ‘‘searched out’’; contrast also(?) Vulgate: *quomodo scrutati sunt Esau*; cf. the use of the root in 2 Chr 18:29 (*hitpa’el*; lit. ‘‘let myself be searched for’’).

⁴⁹ The context of Psa 64:7 [6] includes evil planning (מִסֵּד מְרֵעִים; v. 3 [2]) and deep/obscure interior thoughts of heart (וְקָרַב אִישׁ וְלֵב עִמּוֹ; v. 8 [7]); compare the discernment suggested by √חִפֵּשׂ in Prov 20:27; cf. also Amos 9:3 (in *pi’el*).

⁵⁰ KTU 1.4 VIII:7; cf. 1.5 V:15; the root is used to describe things brought up from below (e.g. drawing water) or the affect of something *from below* (e.g. grain; things dug); cf. Maas, *TDOT* 5:112–14. The accentuating translation, ‘‘House of Under,’’ may be supported further as the phrase occurs in parallel both with the ‘‘thriving(?) of the earth/netherworld’’ *’ḡsr arš* [KTU 1.4 VIII:4]; cf. agricultural ‘‘thriving’’ in a possible etymological relationship between *’ḡsr* and Arabic terms as suggested by Gordon [1965: 465]) and ‘‘those who go down into the earth/netherworld’’ *’yrdm’ arš* [KTU 1.4 VIII:8–9]). For another view, related bibliography, and a different translation (i.e., ‘‘house of the couch’’) based on a comparison with Heb. בְּבֵית הַהֶקְשִׁית [see 2 Kgs 15:5]), see Wyatt 1998: 113.

What has been discerned? What has “come up” about the brother, Esau? A secrecy theme continues.

Evidence for a secretive Edomite alliance may be observed in Obad 6b, where the prophet modifies Jeremiah’s “his hidden places” (מסתוריו from √ סתר) into “his hidden places/treasures” (מצפניו from √ צפן), a *hapax legomenon*. Although מצפניו is from a root meaning to hide or treasure up, the root came to be used to signify “north” (צפון), and there are a dozen or so times in the HB where “the north” designates a Mesopotamian power.⁵¹ Accordingly, Obadiah has modified a Jeremian term denoting a physical location with one that both denotes *something hidden* and connotes *northernness*. The reversal of expectations (if not reversal of state of being) is surprising: Obadiah communicates that Esau/Edom, a people from the south (cf. תימן [v. 9]),⁵² may now be understood (cf. √ חפש [v. 6a]) as having cached a secret northernness. Given the sixth-century context, an Edomite relationship with Babylon is most likely what Obadiah implies.

The verb used to divulge this revelation complements this context of Edom’s “hidden-northernness.” Whereas Jeremiah has “uncovered” (גלה √), Obadiah provides a *nip ʿal* perfect from בעה. Representative translations of this term in Obad 6 include “searched out” and “ransacked,” which provide some distinction from Jeremiah’s גליתי, yet appears (again) to be governed as much by the parallels (both נחפשו in Obadiah and גליתי in Jeremiah) as by semantics and etymology. The occurrence of √ בעה in Isa 21:12 suggests that the root in the *hip ʿil* connotes the “inquiry” (not “searching”) of sentinels. In Isaiah 64:1 [2] the root (in *qal*)—if it is the same root—connotes the boiling effects of fire upon water. In Isa 30:13, the root (in *nip ʿal*) connotes the noticeable swelling out of a stressed and fractured wall. What, then, is bubbling up from biblical Edom? In Aramaic, the root in *pe ʿal* denotes asking, seeking, petitioning, and examining. An Ugaritic occurrence suggests “reveal,” which corresponds to the Targum of Obad 6.⁵³ In the MT of Obad 6, the verb is in the *nip ʿal* stem. Considering the

⁵¹ Cf. uses of the root in Is 14:31; 41:25; Jer 1:14, 15; 4: 6; 6:1, 10:22; 22; 13:20; 15:12; 25: 9, 26; 46:20, 24; 47:2; Ezek 26:7; 38: 6, 15; 39:2; cf. Zeph 2:13.

⁵² For a direct connection between “South” (תימן) and Esau/Edom, see Gen 36:9–11; Jer 49:7, 20; Amos 1:12; Obad 1:9.

⁵³ Raabe (1996: 146–148) considers “revealed” based on the Targum of Obadiah and an Ugaritic occurrence of the root (KTU 1.3 III 28–29): *atm w ank ibgyh b tk gry spn* (“Come, and I shall

various nuances of the root, secrecy is again a theme: “[Esau’s] hidden-northernness has *swelled or bulged out*.” Focusing on the connotations of inquiry and petitioning, the *nip’al* suggests that Esau’s northernness “has become divulged,” (or, reciprocally, “divulged itself”)—quite different from traditional “has been searched or ransacked.” In sum, Obadiah 5–6 charges Edom (a land to the south of Judah) with hiding a secret northernness. It is an ironic reversal: south northerly is.

As is frequently noted, Obad 1–6 displays a literary cohesion around the theme of Edom’s doom.⁵⁴ The poetic technique of inversion in these verses also provides cohesion, as inversion is evidenced at the verse, colon, phrase, and consonantal level. As stated above, a certain density of inversion of form can point to or reinforce a content-oriented *reversal of fortune* or *reversal of state of being*. Obadiah 6 alone reflects both inverted *form* (√ חפשׁ || √ חשׁף) and inverted *content* (south northerly is), which accentuates the themes of Edom’s secrecy and a divulged relationship. Upon leaving Obad 1–6, one might ask to what does Obadiah’s rhetorical exercise of the reversal motif point?

OBADIAH 7 AND THE LANGUAGE OF ALLIANCE

Obadiah’s extended “inverted quotation” has ended.⁵⁵ With verse 7, overt references to a broken international alliance begin.

עַד־הַגְּבוּל שֶׁלְחוֹךְ כָּל אַנְשֵׁי בְרִיתְךָ v. 7a

הַשִּׂיאוּךְ יִכְלוּ לְךָ אַנְשֵׁי שְׁלֹמֶךָ v. 7b

לְחַמֵּךְ יִשִּׁימוּ מִזֹּרֵךְ תַּחְתִּיךָ v. 7cα

אֵין תְּבוּנָה בּוֹ v. 7cβ

reveal it in the center of my divine mountain, Zaphon [√ צפן]; cf. the translation of Wyatt 1998: 78). Coincidentally, √ צפן here appears in the same context as √ בעה.

⁵⁴ For Obad 1–6 (or 1–7 or 1/2–9) as displaying a unifying theme of “Edom’s doom” (or similar terminology), see, e.g., Allen 1976: 146; Stuart 1987: 414; Sweeney 2000: 289.

⁵⁵ Thematic parallels do continue (Obad 8 || Jer 49:7b; Obad 9 || Jer 49:22b; and Ob 16 || Jer 49:12). Syntax and translation problems in Obad 7 have generated much discussion, particularly in relation to להמך and מזור (v. 7cα). In isolation, מזור is most easily read as “wound” (cf. Jer 30:13; Hos 5:13 [2x]); for discussion, see Nogalski 1998: 67–71.

Three terms likely synonymous with “treaty” are found in Obad 7a–cα: אַנְשֵׁי בְרִית (“men of your covenant”) || אַנְשֵׁי שְׁלֶמֶךָ (“men of your peace”) || לַחֲמֶךָ (“your bread”). While the first two phrases are readily at home in treaty discourse, the same may be said of לַחֲמֶךָ (v. 7cα). Eating in treaty contexts suggest the kinship relations, intimacy, security, and perhaps economic incentive of the established relationship.⁵⁶ Additionally, לַחֲמֶךָ (“your bread”) in Obad 7 might reflect a specific treaty ratification meal.⁵⁷ In either case, by synecdoche the term expresses the whole of the treaty. Accordingly, with לַחֲמֶךָ and a term referencing the intended result of mutual well-being (שְׁלֶמֶךָ), the supposed benefits of Edom’s formal treaty relationship is highlighted. In Obad 7, however, Edom’s peaceful co-operators shall deceive (√ II. נִשָּׂא) Edom and engage in hostile actions (יִכְלוּ לַךְ). Indeed, Edom was already deceived (√ II. נִשָּׂא) in its secret statement of geopolitical security (v. 3). Thus, Obad 7 communicates a terrible reversal of fortune: Edom’s own treaty partners act to its detriment. The verse ends with a terse statement of Edom’s inability to comprehend or anticipate this reversal (אֵין תְּבוּנָה בּוֹ; 7d, see below).

Attention to the consonant ך, which occurs nine times in Obad 7a–cα, is helpful. A second person singular pronominal suffix (ך) ends each of the three synonyms for treaty in the verse. In the HB, a pronominal suffix with ברית most often designates *the initiating party*, although not necessarily the superior party, of the treaty/covenant.⁵⁸ The verse suggests that Edom *initiated* the treaty relationship. The alliteration (and rhyme)⁵⁹ of verse 7 due to the frequency of ך accordingly places a special emphasis on Edom’s relations with its allies. Evidently, this treaty was Edom’s choice. Given the operative historical context of the current study (see introduction), Obadiah’s allusion to an erstwhile hidden collusion between Edom in the

⁵⁶ For connotations of political intimacy, see Kalluveettil 1982: esp. 11, 34–35. For bread in Obad 7 as a reference to economy, see Renkema 2003: 145–147.

⁵⁷ See, e.g., Gen 26:26–31; see also Kalluveettil 1982: 15–16, 212. An important text in this regard is Esarhaddon’s Succession Treaty (6:153–56; cf. also 6.560–562); for texts and discussion, see Parpola and Watanabe 1988: 8–9, 11, 35, 52. See also the ratification ceremony in the treaty between KTK and [Mati’ilu of] Arpad in Sefire IA:40.

⁵⁸ See Raabe 1996: 150, noting exceptions of Ezek 16:61 and Zech 9:11.

⁵⁹ שלחוך כל . . . בריתך השייך יכלו לך . . . שלמך לחמך . . . תחתך. For end-rhyme, see Watson 1994: 122, 150–151, 172.

south and a divulged (Mesopotamian) “north” (Obad 4–6) provides sufficient information to identify Babylon as the political power with which Edom chose to form a new treaty relationship.

Attention to verbal forms in verse 7 and a consideration of “the border” (הגבול; v. 7a) to which Babylon sends Edom help reveal the story of this treaty relationship between Babylon and Edom. Apart from the context of verse 7b–c, there is no reason to conclude that this *sending* (שלח in *pi'el*) is hostile. Usage of the root elsewhere demonstrates that the form reflects a *release* of a treaty partner in peace subsequent to the ratification of a new treaty.⁶⁰ The definite article (ה) suggests that Obadiah is referencing a particular border. Obadiah’s audience might have understood “the border” as the economically important Edomite-Judahite border. A biblical occurrence of הגבול provides textual support for this possibility; Numbers 34:3–5 describes a border virtually identical to the arc of Judahite border fortifications of the early sixth century.⁶¹ With this textual support for a border fitting the context of Edomite-Judahite relations ca. 588–586 B.C.E., Obad 7a might reference Babylon’s release of Edom (and its forces) into a strategic position at the Edomite-Judahite border soon after the treaty was formalized. Whatever the case, the treaty relationship toward ensuring mutual wellbeing (שלם) described in Obad 7a did not last. Edom may have been sent or released (שלחוד) to a strategic border (הגבול; Obad 7a), but a trickery comes into play. The wellbeing (שלמד) sought by the relationship comes to deceive (השיאוד) and overpowers (יבלו לך) Edom (Obad 7b). With the action of the last verb, Babylon impairs (ישימו מזור) Edom with the “bread” (לחמך) of their relationship. If an economic incentive for cooperating with Babylon is implied by לחמך, then Obadiah suggests that Edom’s new portion in the control of international trade passing through Edom and the Edomite-Judahite border became a primary

⁶⁰ On שלח in *pi'el* see especially 1 Kgs 20:34b (twice with Ahab as speaker: ואני בברית אשלהך ויכרת-לו; בברית וישלההו). Compare also Gen 26:27–31. Translations of Obad 7a tend to suggest hostility (e.g., NRSV, NIV); cf. LXX ἐξάπέστειλάν; Vulgate *emiserunt*. הגבול appears as the Edomite border with Moab in 2 Kgs 3:20–21.

⁶¹ Num 34:3–5 describes an arc stretching west from the southern end of the Dead Sea to Kadesh-Barnea; “the border” (הגבול) appears in v. 5; cf. also הגבול in Josh 15:1–4).

cause of Babylon's eventual assault on Edom. History evidently supports this factor.⁶² Edom's fortune with Babylon has been turned on its head.

Obadiah 1–7 is a good example of how the inversion technique (re: form) can introduce reversal of fortune (re: content). The numerous instances of inverted form in Obad 1–6 and the reversal of fortune suggested by Obad 6–7 (cf. above on 15b) might leave a learned tradent, auditor or (re)reader wondering if a deeper reversal in Obadiah is at work at the point the inverted quotation ends. Why has there been so much inversion preceding the moment Obadiah begins new material? Why does Obadiah predict Edom's fall at the hands of treaty partners? The answer may be found in the density of inversion itself. According to Obad 15b, just as Edom has done, such shall be done to Edom, whose dealings will return upon its own head (כַּאֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתָ יַעֲשֶׂה לְךָ גַּמְלָךְ יִשׁוּב בְּרָאשְׁךָ). Verse 7 communicates that a treaty partner (arguably Babylon) “deceived” (נָשָׂא II. וְ) Edom. On the surface, the reversal of fortune in verse 7 is rather straightforward: a relationship has changed for the worse. Inversion, however, is normative in Obadiah 1–6, and the reversal of Edom's fortune anticipated by verse 7 may be much more precise: *Edom had previously deceived its own alliance partner*. As a Judahite composition, Obadiah commends the conclusion that Edom deceived Judah. This precise reversal of fortune is the meaningful result of the reversal motif in this instance. Accordingly, verse 7 announces Edom's eventual political misery (reversal of fortune) based on an application of the so-called *lex talionis* (e.g. v. 15b) pertaining to a betrayed alliance: like Judah, Edom shall suffer treaty betrayal.

OBADIAH 8–14: NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND ACTIVITIES CONTRARY TO EXPECTATION

Obadiah 8–10. Kinship language and a cluster of functional synonyms for Edom (e.g., Teman) are apparent in verses 8–10. Although treaty allusions

⁶² In ca. 551 B.C.E., King Nabonidus of Babylon evidently critically weakened Edom, probably as part of a campaign aimed at imperial expansion and control of the region's trade routes and the vast wealth of Arabia; see Crowell 2007: 75–88; note also Lindsey 1976: 23–39; for discussion of the motivations (which may have included control of the region's trade routes and the vast wealth of Arabia) and for and historical problems related to Nabonidus' imperial expansion and sojourn to Teima in Arabia, see Beaulieu 1989: esp. 165–166, 178–185.

are unclear,⁶³ Obadiah's choice of terminology in much of verses 8–10 befits a treaty betrayal context.

הלוא ביום ההוא נאם יהוה	v. 8a
והאבדתי חכמים מאדום	v. 8b α
ותבונה מהר עשו	v. 8b β
וחתו גבוריך תימן	v. 9a
למען יכרת־איש מהר עשו מקטל	v. 9b
מחמס אחיך יעקב תכסך בושה	v. 10a
ונכרת לעולם	v. 10b

Wisdom and understanding (חכמים . . . ותבונה [v. 8]) link these verses with the end of verse 7 (אין תבונה בו). At the bridge between themes of wisdom and of violence, three toponyms appear: the wise will perish from Edom (v. 8b α); understanding will perish from Mount Esau (v. 8b β); and broken will be the warriors of Teman (v. 9a). In the Jeremian parallel, Teman, “Southland,” is twice directly associated with counsel and planning that cannot survive (49:7, 20a). In Obadiah, the immediately preceding context is similar, but Obadiah places Teman (“Southland”) in direct connection with its terrified warriors (וחתו גבוריך תימן [v. 9a]). Given the political overtones of Obadiah 1–7 and the emerging military overtones in vv. 9–14,

⁶³ Kinship language does not in itself evidence a treaty relationship between Edom and Judah, but it is among the diverse terminology used to designate treaty relationships; see, e.g., 1 Kgs 20:32–33; cf. also *ahūtum/ahūtum* (“brotherhood”) in ANE treaties (Kalluveettil 1982: esp. 17–19, 99, 198–210). $\sqrt{\text{כרת}}$ (v. 9) is at home in contexts of treaty formation (Gen 15:18; Exod 23:32; 24:8; 34:10, 12, 15; Deut 4:23; 5:2, 3; 7:2; 9:9; 28:69; 29:11, 13, 24; Jos 9:15; 24:25; 1 Sam 11:1; 18:3; 2 Sam 3:13; 5:3; 1 Kgs 8:21; 20:34; 2 Kgs 11:4, 17; 17:35; 23:3; 1 Chr 11:3; 2 Chr 6:11; 21:7; 23:3, 16; 34:31; Ezra 10:3; Job 40:28; Jer 31:33; 34:8; Ezek 17:13; Hos 10:4.); the root is also used to describe the consequences of treaty infraction; see G. Hasel (*TDOT* 7:339–352); cf. Kutsch (*TLOT* 2:635–637). The conceptual connection between *cutting* covenants and being *cut off* from a covenant group appears in Gen 17:14. For another double-duty use of the root, see Gen 15:10, 18. If we consider the cutting of animals in Jer 34:18, then the root serves triple-duty; cf. the triple-duty function of an interdialectal semantic equivalent of Heb. $\sqrt{\text{כרת}}$ (Aram. $\sqrt{\text{גזר}}$; cf. also Heb. גזר) in Sefire IA:7; IA:40; and IB:40–43, whereby the root denotes, respectively, the cutting (i.e., concluding) of a treaty (cf. Gen 15:18), the ceremonial threat placed upon representatives who might violate it (cf. Gen 15:10–17; Jer 34:18), and the inability for treaty partners to cut off other treaty members' households (cf. Gen 17:14). For these texts and related discussion, see Fitzmyer 1995: 42–43, 46–47, 52–53, 69, 97, and 114–115.

what are we to make of Temanite warriors at the cusp of wisdom and violence?

Some biblical evidence has been read as suggestive of a highly developed sapiential tradition in Edom,⁶⁴ yet the evidence for a renowned Edomite wisdom is meager and a significant portion of the biblical evidence is comprised of Obad 8–9 and Jer 49:7.⁶⁵ In Obadiah, “wisdom” language appears in a context of diplomacy/foreign policy, secrecy, failed treaties, and (with vv. 11–14) an international assault. It is interesting that Isaiah 29:13–15 attributes nearly identical “wisdom” language to Judah in a similar context of international invasion and siege (see vv. 3, 7–8).

The Lord said, “It is because these people draw near with their mouths and lips honoring me—yet their hearts are far from me, and their reverence of me is a commandment of popular instruction—

ויאמר אדני כי נגש העם הזה
בפיו ובשפתיו כבדוני ולבו רחק
ותהי יראתם אתי מצות ממני
אנשים מלמדה

that I shall again amaze this people with shocking awe! I will destroy the wisdom of their wise-ones, while the discernment of their discerners becomes hidden.”

לכן הנני יוסף להפליא
את־העם־הזה הפלא ופלא
ואבדה חכמיו ובינת נבניו תסתתר

Woe to those who go to great depths to hide a plan from YHWH. Their workings are in darkness and they say, “Who shall see us?” and “Who shall know what we are up to?”

הוי המעמיקים מיהוה לסתר עצה
והיה במחשך מעשיהם
ויאמרו מי ראנו ומי יודענו

Both Isaiah 29:13 and Obad 3 reference an internal or secretive dialogue of the heart (בפיו ובשפתיו כבדוני ולבו רחק ממני [Isa 29:13b] || אמר בלבו [Obad 3b]). Rhetorical questions of Judahites in Isa 29:15b (ויאמרו מי ראנו ומי יודענו) parallels that of Edomites in Obad 3b (מי יודני ארץ). A triple verbal parallel appears in descriptions of lost wisdom (ואבדה חכמיו ובינת נבניו)

⁶⁴ Cf. Bar 3:14, 22, 23 (πρόνησις [prudence]; √ σύνασις [understanding]; √ ασαύω [to know]; σοφία [wisdom]); see also Job 1:1; 2:11.

⁶⁵ For a helpful review of the possible meanings of a wisdom tradition in Edom, relevant bibliography, and a cautious conclusion that Edom’s metallurgic knowhow was an element of the tradition, see Tebes 2009: 97–117.

תסתתר [Isa 29:14b] || מהר עשו|| [Obad 8b; cf. v. 7cβ]). Because a context of deficient national *political strategies* (not to mention secretive planning) evidently marks both Obadiah and Isaiah 29, it is not clear that Obadiah references an exceptional wisdom tradition in Edom as is sometimes advocated. More likely is that an ironic reversal of fortune is found: Obadiah states that Edom's secretive court diplomacy seeking to guarantee its geopolitical security will ultimately fail.⁶⁶

Obadiah 11-14. These verses constitute the single most detailed biblical description of supposed Edomite hostility against Judah ca. 586 B.C.E.

ביום עמדך מנגד	v. 11aα
ביום שבות זרים חילו	v. 11aβ
ונכרים באו (שערו) [שערין]	v. 11bα
ועל־ירושלם ידו גורל	v. 11bβ
גם־אתה כאחד מהם	v. 11bγ
ואל־תרא ביום־אחיד ביום נכרו	v. 12aα
ואל־תשמח לבני־יהודה ביום אבדם	v. 12aβ
ואל־תגדל פיך ביום צרה	v. 12b
אל־תבוא בשער־עמי ביום אידם	v. 13aα
אל־תרא גם־אתה ברעתו ביום אידו	v. 13aβ
ואל־תשלחנה בחילו ביום אידו	v. 13b
ואל־תעמד על־הפרק להכרית את־פלטיו	v. 14a
ואל־תסגר שריתיו ביום צרה	v. 14b

Verse 11aα begins the list of charges against Edom and includes a two-word phrase (עמדך מנגד) unique to Obadiah and often translated into English as “your standing aloof.” This understanding of עמדך מנגד (*qal* infinitive construct [עמד√] with preposition) is often supported through a reference to

⁶⁶ Cf. the discussion on Obad 8 with references to court counsel (rather than a general Edomite wisdom tradition) provided by Renkema (2003: 152).

התיצב מנגד, unique to 2 Sam 18:13,⁶⁷ but is “stood aloof” an appropriate translation of Obadiah’s עמדך מנגד, a phrase utilizing a verb of a different root and in the *infinitive*? An answer may be found in consideration of the apparent specialized use of the *qal* infinitive construct of עמד in biblical Hebrew. Setting Obadiah’s use aside, with one possible exception,⁶⁸ every time the *qal* infinitive construct is used, an official legal, political, military, or cultic status is evident.⁶⁹ This observation suggests that whatever עמדך מנגד implies, it is likely a fulfillment of an official directive of the Edomite leadership.⁷⁰ Whether or not the complex preposition מנגד denotes hostility, it does denote an obvious presence. This presence eventually turns hostile (vv. 13–14).

Other elements of Obadiah 11 support this understanding of עמדך מנגד. The verse ends with “even you were like one of them” (גם־אתה כאחד מהם). Obadiah’s emphatic use of גם־אתה “even you” implies a reversal of expectation. The verse identifies “strangers” (זרים) and “foreigners” (נכרים) as those involved in the assault. The terms likely pertain to Babylonian forces and auxiliaries from tribute nations under Nebuchadnezzar’s authority. The description of their activities makes it rather clear that these peoples were hardly neutral, indifferent, or disinterested in their dealings with Judah. Edomites were *like* them; they were not *aloof*. Determined, hostile actions were taken. Opponents took Judah’s efficacy (שבות זרים חילו) (11aβ), entered its gate[s] (שעריו) (שעריו) (11bα), and divvied up Jerusalem (ועל־ירושלם ידו גורל) (11bβ). Taking together the official connotations of the *qal* infinitive construct of עמד and Obadiah’s statement of Edom’s similitude with foreign peoples engaged in military

⁶⁷ See Ringgren *TDOT* 11:178–187.

⁶⁸ Ezra 10:13; but, given the context, it would be difficult to designate as “unofficial” this use of עמד; cf. Ezek 1:21, 24, 25; 10:17.

⁶⁹ Accepting the categorizations, for legal status, see Exod 18:23; Num 35:12; Josh 20:6, 9; Ezra 9:15; for military positioning, see Judg 2:14; 1 Sam 6:20; Is 10:32; Ezek 13:5; Esth 8:11; 9:16; Dan 8:7; Dan 11:15; for cultic status, see Exod 9:11, 28; Num 16:9; Dtr 10:8; 18:5; 1 Kgs 8:11; 1 Chr 23:30; 2 Chr 5:14; 29:11; 34:31; Jer 18:20; Ezra 2:63; Neh 7:65; for political status, see Gen 41:46; Jer 40:10; Ezek 17:14; Dan 1:4; 11:1, 4. For the root connoting official service, see Ringgren, *TDOT* 11:178–187; note also official connotations of *infinitival* occurrences of יצב.

⁷⁰ Contrast Wolff 1986: 45, and, especially, Barton 2001: 145. The Edomite position at the crossroads (תעמד עליה־פרק) would be an effective strategic deployment of troops; on √ פרק in an Edomite context, see Gen 27:40.

operations, a more likely reading of *ביום עמדך מנגד . . . גם-אתה כאחד מהם* (Obad 11α, by) is not “on the day of your standing *aloof*...*even* you were like one of them,” but rather “on the day of your [official] stationing in opposition...*even* you were like one of them.” The lack of aloofness is all too clear in the description that follows. In the gates (v. 13) and at the crossroads (v. 14a), Edomites are presented as braggarts (v. 12), relishing the aggressive manifestations of betrayed kinship expectations (vv. 12–14). It is a surprise reversal of sorts;⁷¹ intimate kin and trade partners have officially taken their stand with the foreigners and strangers assaulting Judah and taking its wealth.

Three observations on Obadiah 12–14 support the thesis. First, each of the three verses contains terminology at home in treaty contexts: *אחיד* (12α; cf. 1 Kgs 20:32); *להכרית* from $\sqrt{\text{כרת}}$ (v. 14); and *תשלחנה* from $\sqrt{\text{שלח}}$ (v. 13).⁷² If this last form is related to the idiomatic expression *שלח יד ב-*, then conspiracy might also be implied.⁷³ Second, an interesting possibility comes to light with attention to Obadiah 13αβ, which reads *אל-תרא גם-אתה ברעתו* (“Do not look—even you—into [Judah’s] disaster!”). Only here does Obadiah repeat a vetitive (see v. 12α; note v. 1cβ). Obadiah 13 also repeats the emphatic *גם-אתה* (“*even* you”; cf. v. 11). Why has Obadiah introduced this doubly repetitive “do not look—even you!” within this verse? It is rather interesting that what immediately follows this double repetition is a term with consonantal and phonemic similarity to *בְּרִיתוֹ* (“his covenant, treaty”), namely *בְּרֵעָתוֹ* (“into his disaster”; v. 13αβ). Could this double repetition around a verb meaning to look coupled with a certain density of terminology at home in treaty contexts unveil *ברעתו* as Judah’s “disastrous-

⁷¹ A chiasmic pattern of A-B-C-B'-A' seen in the five cola of Obad 11 supports the thesis. A reference to “foreigners entering his gates” occupies the center (v. 11ba). The verse begins and ends with descriptions of Edom’s disposition (v. 11α, by) in connection with the actions of those assaulting Jerusalem (v. 11αβ–bβ). As kin, Edomites may at times enter Judahite gates, but those of verse 11 did so in a manner inconsistent with kinship expectations; by v. 13α there is an ironic reversal of Edom’s status: Edom is implored to stop entering one such gate (*אל-תבוא בשערי-עמי*).

⁷² See Kalluveettil 1982: esp. 127–128, 199–201, 207.

⁷³ According to Tawil (1980: 30–37), the idiom in Aramaic and Hebrew has at least two connotations: a) “to harm/smite”; b) “to plot, conspire, scheme” (less frequently). For possible examples of the expression *שלח יד ב-* implying conspiracy, see Est 8:7 and Psa 55:21. *יד* is absent in Obad 13, prohibiting an easy conclusion of implied conspiracy; see also Kalluveettil 1982: 21, n. 24. On an elliptical hand, see 2 Sam 6:6 and Psa 18:16; see also, e.g., Barton 2001: 147–148. Energetic understandings aside, making sense of *תשלחנה*, which is pointed as a feminine plural in the MT, remains a challenge.

treaty” with Edom?⁷⁴ A third observation is the comparison made by Marvin Sweeney between the content of Obad 12–14 and prohibitions known from ANE treaties. According to Sweeney, “This stylistic aspect... emphasizes that Edom grossly violated whatever treaty might have bound the two nations together.⁷⁵ Sweeney suggests in particular that the vetitive pertaining to the cutting down of fugitives (v. 14) “plays upon the stipulations of most treaties that call upon an ally to capture and return any enemy fugitives to the king with whom it is allied.”⁷⁶ These observations collectively suggest that Obadiah accuses Edom of violating treaty expectations.

Obadiah, of course, objects to other Edomite actions. Edom ogled twice, boisterously cheered (v. 12aβ, b), entered the gate of “my people” (v. 13aα), worked against Judah’s efficacy/wealth/army (v. 13b),⁷⁷ took up a position so as to cut off fugitives (v. 14a) and delivered survivors to captivity (v. 14b).⁷⁸ Conceptually similar expectations, both of word and deed, among parity treaty partners are seen in stipulations from “The Treaty of Šamši-Adad V with Marduk-zakir-šumi, King of Babylon,” which was formulated in a time of significant political turmoil:

Šamši-Adad shall not say (any) evil words about Marduk-rimanni [... to] the king, (viz): “Kill, blind, or se[ize him], nor] shall King Marduk-zakir-šumi listen to him (should he say such things). [He shall not] him, [nor ...] to poi[nt] an eye, toe or finger [...], nor] ... [... of his ...] and his country. He shall not give back the captives [...]. The king shall indicate to him the fugitives [who] fled [from Assyria to Babylonia].⁷⁹

⁷⁴ Similarly, given Aramaic עדין, עדי, עדין (“oath”; cf. Heb עדות) and Akkadian *adē* (“oath,” which was standard for Neo-Assyrian treaties of the first millennium; see Barré 1987: 653–656; Parpola 1987: 161–189, esp. 184–186), perhaps both אידם (“their calamity”) and אידו (“his calamity”) in v. 13 are phonemic wordplays, identifying Judah’s “calamity-oath” with Edom (אדום).

⁷⁵ Sweeney 2000: 293.

⁷⁶ Sweeney 2000: 293. On fugitives in ANE treaty stipulations, see also “The Treaty between KTK and Arpad,” translated by Franz Rosenthal, *ANET* 659–661, 660 (=Sefire III:4–7); see also McCarthy 1981: 46–47; cf. also the stipulations regarding fugitives in the “Treaty between Mursilis and Duppi-Tessub of Amurru,” (*ANET*, 203–205) and the “Treaty between Idrimi and Pilliya,” (*ANET*, 532); note also Sefire III:4–7, 19–20 (Fitzmyer 1995: 136–137, 139–141). See also the fugitive clauses in the “Treaty Between Hattusilis and Rameses II” (translated by Albrecht Goetze [*ANET*, 203]).

⁷⁷ Treaty loyalty prohibits “raising/sending a hand against” an ally; cf. Sefire I B:23–25 as restored and discussed in Fitzmyer 1995: 49–51, 108 (with bibliography); cf. also Sefire II B:6; and “Esarhaddon’s Succession Treaty,” 66–67 (§ 5) in Parpola 1987: 31.

⁷⁸ Cf. Ezek 35:5; Amos 1:6, 9, 11; Joel 4:19 (3:19).

⁷⁹ “Treaty of Šamši-Adad V with Marduk-zakir-šumi King of Babylon,” obverse lines 8–14; for presentation of the text and translation, see Parpola and Watanabe 1988: 4.

Military aggression, improper words, agreements regarding captives and fugitives and, perhaps, ogling (“to poi[nt] an eye” || √ראה 2x [Obad 12, 13]) are addressed both in the treaty of Šamši-Adad V with Marduk-zakir-šumi and in Obad 12–14. We cannot know whether these verses reference specific language of an Edomite-Judahite treaty, but it seems clear enough that Obad 12–14 has much in common with the content and form of stipulations found in ANE treaties. If these verses do reflect *specific* language of an Edomite-Judahite treaty, then Edom acted in a manner inconsistent with the treaty.

OBADIAH 15–21: THE AFTERMATH OF BETRAYAL

Obadiah 15–16. In the discussion of inversion and the reversal motif in Obadiah, verse 15 has already been noted as an example of *lex talionis* and applicable for the development of the reversal motif. Verse 16 might further allude to an Edomite-Judahite treaty relationship due to the language that it employs, yet it is clear that the verse poses difficulties for interpreters.

כִּי־קִרֹב יוֹם־יְהוָה עַל־כְּלֵה־גוֹיִם	v. 15a
כַּאֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתָ יַעֲשֶׂה לְךָ	v. 15bα
גַּמְלֶךָ יָשׁוּב בְּרֵאשֶׁךָ	v. 15bβ
כִּי כַּאֲשֶׁר שָׁתִיתָ עַל־הָר קִדְשֵׁי	v. 16aα
יִשְׁתוּ כְּלֵה־גוֹיִם תַּמִּיד	v. 16aβ
וְשָׁתוּ וְלָעוּ	v. 16bα
וְהָיוּ כְּלוֹא הָיוּ	v. 16bβ

Nearly uniformly, commentators read verse 16 as pertaining to the “cup of wrath” metaphor of YHWH’s judgment.⁸⁰ But there is a significant problem with the metaphor here. Who is the “you” who has been drinking (כי כאשר

⁸⁰ Such an understanding appears warranted given the parallel in Jer 49:12. For a detailed excursus, see Raabe 1996: 206–243; on the cup as a metaphor for judgment, see, e.g., Psa 75:8 (contrast 116:13); Isa 51:17, 22; Jer 25:15, 28; 49:12; Ezek 23:31–34; consider also 1 Cor 10:21; 11:27; Rev 14:10. For redaction-critical discussions, see Carroll 1986: 50–55; Nogalski 1993: 69–71.

שתיהם [v. 16α] from the cup of wrath(?) on YHWH's(?) holy mountain? Judahites?⁸¹ Edomites?⁸² There is no consensus.⁸³

A comparison with treaty ceremonies may help. The otherwise commonplace activity of drinking (Heb. √ שתה; Akk. *šātu*), often specified as from a cup (Heb. כוס; Akk. *kāsu*), was evidently a regular feature of treaty ratification ceremonies. Two examples should suffice.⁸⁴ Genesis 26:28–31 references eating and drinking (√ שתה) in the context of concluding a treaty agreement (ברית). This element in treaty ratification ceremonies may also be seen among the stipulations of the treaties of Esarhaddon, one of which forbids the treaty partner from concluding treaties with other political entities through “drinking from a cup”.⁸⁵ If we consider the wealth of treaty references throughout Obadiah, we might suggest a third understanding of v. 16: Edom had once drunk upon Mount Zion as part of a treaty ratification ceremony.⁸⁶ But Edom is not alone in the drinking (שתיהם [v. 16α]). As the form is a second person masculine plural (exceptional in Obadiah with Edom as subject), we must ask who *else* drank with Edom upon Mount Zion. Judah? Given the treaty allusions and the international context of Obad 1 and 15ff, perhaps the drinkers are representatives of two or more Palestinian states who met in Jerusalem and formed an anti-Babylonian league.⁸⁷ Given the context, the drinkers include representatives

⁸¹ So most recent commentaries; see, e.g. Raabe 1996: 203–204.

⁸² So most ancient authorities; cf. discussion in Watts 1969: 61; Stuart 1987: 420. The future aspect of Edom's punishment (e.g., Obad 8–10, 18–19, 21) makes it unlikely that Edom has already been a drinker of the cup of wrath.

⁸³ If the drinker is Edom, the locale is odd, unless it refers not to the cup of wrath, but to a celebratory drinking bout in Jerusalem following the fall of Judah (see Renkema 2003: 191). If the drinker is Judah, why is the change of subject not specified? And how are we to understand Obadiah's modification of the Jeremian parallel (לא תנקה כי שתה תשתה) [49:12b]? If the drinking subject is Judah, then verse 16 might not reflect an application of the *lex talionis* of verse 15, but an argument from lesser to greater or an intensification of the punishment dished out to the nations compared to that dished out to Judah (e.g., Raabe 1996: 204–205). Effectively, this interpretation of the verse suggests that if Judah drank a cup of punishment, so too all the nations must drink—but unto oblivion. On Jewish and Christian interpretation of this difficult verse through the Reformation, see Elowsky 1992: esp. 114–124.

⁸⁴ Sweeney (2000: 295) refers his readers also to such biblical texts as Exod 24:9–11 and Isa 25:6–10; see also LXX Gen 31:54.

⁸⁵ “Esarhaddon's Succession Treaty” 6:153–156; see Parpola and Watanabe 1988: 35; *ANET* 536.

⁸⁶ Cf. Sweeney 2000: 295.

⁸⁷ Verse 16 could then be understood as follows. “Just as you [Edom and other league partners] drank [in order to conclude a covenant], so all the nations will drink continuously; they will drink and gulp down and they shall be as if they never were [a different kinship/covenant group].” Obadiah could

of Edom and Judah at least. With the history of interpretation that is available to us for this verse,⁸⁸ we know that Obad 16 provides a considerable challenge. Safely and simply, we can state that Obadiah again includes terminology known from treaty contexts.

Obadiah 17–21. These verses describe the anticipated restoration of an exiled Israel to and from specific territories (vv. 17, 19–21). A brief comment will show that these verses thematically parallel territorial regulations (and related commercial clauses) known from ANE treaties. Specific territorial regulations and commercial clauses are seen in 1 Kings 20:34, which pertains to a treaty between Ahab and Ben-hadad. The verse communicates that unnamed and disputed cities under the control of the Syrian king are returned to Israel as a stipulation of the agreement.⁸⁹ Quite similar is a territorial stipulation in a treaty between Zidanta I of Hatti and Pilliya of Kizzuwatna, which addresses issues related to previous territorial infractions.

*The cities which Pilliya took will be given back to the Sun and those of Pilliya which I took will be given back to Pilliya.*⁹⁰

These examples of territorial clauses show that treaties were often concerned with political geography, which presupposes that economies and populations were affected. The treaty of Abba-AN of Yamkhad and Yarimlin of Alalakh reflects the economic value of transferred lands in a territorial clause.

*The city of Imar along with its fields, the city of...and the city of Parre in exchange for the city of Uwiya; the city of Adrate in exchange for the territory which is....*⁹¹

then be seen as asserting that nations become engrafted into Israel's fate through covenant; betrayal of which has kinship-group consequences (cf. בִּיתָ + patronymics in Obad 18).

⁸⁸ A fourth possibility is that Obadiah may be utilizing two different connotations of drinking (שָׁתָה). Edom (and others) drank from a [treaty] cup on YHWH's holy mountain and on that holy mountain all nations will experience the cup of judgment that pertains to the day of YHWH (v. 15a). Understanding two connotations of שָׁתָה in this verse is not without precedent; see, e.g., John Calvin, summarized by Elowsky (1992: 121–122).

⁸⁹ Cf. Kalluveettil 1982: esp. 202–203, 206–207; see also 1 Kings 9 with Fensham 1969: 71–87; cf. also Gen 31:44–52.

⁹⁰ For this translation, other examples of territorial clauses from treaties of the ANE, and related bibliography, see Kalluveettil 1982: 202–203.

⁹¹ For this translation see McCarthy 1981: 307; cf. also the history of transference of Tal'ayim and its villages in Sefire III:23–27.

This treaty specifies that surrounding agricultural areas (“fields”) of particular cities would be included in the transfer. In this regard, consider Obad 19–20.⁹²

¹⁹ Those of the Negeb shall possess Mount Esau, and those of the Shephelah the land of the Philistines; they shall possess the land of Ephraim and the land of Samaria, and Benjamin shall possess Gilead.

וירשו הנגב את־הר עשו
והשפלה את־פְּלִשְׁתִּים
וירשו את־שֹׁדֵה אֶפְרַיִם
וְאֵת שׁוֹדֵה שְׁמֵרוֹן
וּבְנֵימָן אֶת־הַגִּלְעָד

²⁰ The exiles of the Israelites who are in Halah shall possess Phoenicia as far as Zarephath; and the exiles of Jerusalem who are in Sepharad shall possess the towns of the Negeb.

וּגְלוֹת הַחֲלִיזָה לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
אֲשֶׁר־כְּנַעְנִים עַד־צָרְפַת
וּגְלוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם אֲשֶׁר בְּסַפְרָד
יִרְשׁוּ אֶת עָרֵי הַנֶּגֶב

Similar to the language of the Abba-AN treaty, Obad 19 makes reference to a transference of “fields” (שָׂדֶה; NRSV “land”) associated with specific toponyms. The most frequently specified accusation against Edom in Ezekiel is tied to Edom’s desire for or possession of Judahite land.⁹³ The references to Judahite/Israelite territory as an Edomite objective suggest that economic and territorial gain was a primary motivation for the supposed Edomite hostility against Judah in the sixth century. Obadiah 17–21 specifies a political geography of a restored Israel that is rather inverted from mid-sixth-century geopolitical reality. Given the treaty allusions provided by this study, it is evident that the rhetorical situation of Obadiah 17–21 fits a treaty context. In leaving Obadiah, a summary of this rhetorical situation might prove helpful.

⁹² Text-critical and translation problems are numerous in these verses. The translation provided is that of the New Revised Standard Version.

⁹³ The land of Israel is a regular concern in Ezekiel, and accusations against Edom correspond with this general concern (Ezek 35:10, 12; 36:5b; see Block 1998: 322–34). Evidently, Judahites did not hear Edom’s (secretive) declarations (אֶמְרָךְ [35:10]) and “all the abusive speech” (אֶת־כָּל־נִאְצוּתֶיךָ) [35:12]; cf. a treaty context in two of the three occurrences of נֶאֱמַר in Jeremiah [14:21; 33:24–25]; cf. also the Ugaritic etymological equivalent in a context of political turmoil [KTU 1.17 II: 3, 18]). In sum, Edomite secrecy per Ezekiel pertains to its desire 1) to possess the two lands (perhaps Israel and Judah; cf. Ezek 37:22); 2) to have Israel’s mountains for its own devouring (עַל־הָרֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל . . . נִתְּנוּ) [35:12]); and 3) to have its pastureland for booty (נִגְרֶשֶׁה לְבוֹ) [36:5]).

EVIDENCE FROM OBADIAH FOR EDMITE TREATY BETRAYAL: A SUMMARY

Obadiah constructs with artistic subtlety and nuance a text with numerous allusions to Edomite treaty betrayal. Themes of diplomacy, secrecy, deception, treaty relationships and betrayal, coupled with the reversal motif suggest that collusion between Edom and Babylon was effected at the expense of Judah. Given the distributions of these allusions, the theme of Edomite treaty betrayal appears to be part of Obadiah's rhetorical situation and essential to its organization.

Both words in the title of Obadiah (חזון עבדיה; v. 1a) reflect treaty terminology. Accordingly, the two-word title may provide a subtle clue that treaty relationships constitute a theme of the book. Verse 1c α relates the dissemination of a report pertaining to an envoy's international diplomatic mission. Although the purpose and content of that mission remain elusive, Obadiah communicates that the mission is fully underway and begins the oracle with a verse manifesting terminology found in treaty contexts as well as themes of international diplomacy and political intrigue in a context of battle. Somehow, Edom is bound up with this intrigue, which provides Edom an exceptional (מאד) despicability (v. 2). A theme of secrecy emerges with verse 3. The inversion technique highlights Edom's connection with deception ($\sqrt{\text{II. גשא}}$), which foreshadows a deception of Edom (by Babylon) in an explicit treaty context (v. 7). With an idiomatic expression suggestive of secrecy (לב + אמר [v. 3b α]), Edom communicates its supposed geopolitical security. This security may be connected to Babylon through the modifications Obadiah makes of the Jeremian parallel (e.g., כוכבים [v. 4b]), particularly as Edom, a kingdom to the south (cf. תימן [v. 9]), has a "hidden northernness" (מצפוני; v. 6b). In the same context and in consideration of Obadiah's modifications within an inverted quotation of Jeremiah, Edom's capital city, Bozrah, is likened a secretive and destructive thief in the night (v. 5a α – β). Through a modification of Jeremiah, Obadiah divulges this once-secret collusion ($\sqrt{\text{בעה}}$ [v. 6]). Obadiah communicates that this revelation was unexpected and dangerous: south northerly is. In short, Obadiah's rhetorical artistry in verses 1–6 subtly contains allusions to a Mesopotamian power, international diplomacy, secrecy, and discernment, and these rhetorical features may be subsumed under the theme of Edomite treaty betrayal, yet *it is only at the point that Obadiah's clear modifications*

of the Jeremian parallel ceases that a theme of treaty betrayal becomes explicit. With a density of treaty terminology (שלחוך, בריתוך, שלמד, לחמד), verse 7 clearly communicates that Edom shall be deceived by its own treaty partner. Given the working inferences of the study, this partner is Babylon. In consideration of the reversal motif, whereby the density of inverted *form* accentuates a reversal of *content*, the reversal of Edom's fortune anticipated by verse 7 may be much more precise: Edom previously deceived its own alliance partner, Judah. Usage of the consonant ך reinforces this precise reversal of fortune and suggests that Edom was the initiating party in its alliance with Babylon. That alliance was ultimately destructive for Edom, and the language of wisdom in verse 7b–8 communicates the reversal of Edom's expectations in regard to its political counsel and plans for national survival.

Verse 11 begins the identification of specific violations of Judah on the part of its brother. Translations of עמדך מנגד (11א) that present Edom having “stood aloof” might be inaccurate. Rather, Edom appears to have stationed itself in intimate opposition to Judah as a matter of official national policy. Significant similarity between the vetitives and content of verses 12–14 and stipulation sections of ANE treaties suggests a play on the form of treaty stipulations. Verses 17–21 describe a restored territory of Israel, and these verses show some similarity to territorial clauses in ANE treaties. All in all, Obadiah may be read as steeped both with treaty terminology and with allusions to an Edomite treaty betrayal. To be sure, nowhere does Obadiah overtly state that a treaty between Edom and Judah was violated; the theme, however, subtly permeates the work, perhaps as an organizing factor,⁹⁴ and commends the following rhetorical situation. Edom initiated a clandestine treaty with Babylon to the detriment of Edom's deceived and treaty-based ally, Judah. What remains is a study of other texts in light of this conclusion.

ALLUSIVE EVIDENCE: PSALM 137 AND OTHER BIBLICAL TEXTS

This section is organized around a discussion of Psalm 137, which is generally considered a composition either of the late exile or a time shortly

⁹⁴ According to Gudas (1993: 1281–1282), New Critics “have found the term [i.e., ‘theme’]...indispensable for pointing to the values and principal unity in a poem. However, they warn that the poem, or at least the good poem, is not a mere rhetorical device for ornamenting a prosaic [theme]...or making it more persuasive. The good poem does not assert [its theme].”

thereafter. Tradition history challenges prohibit inclusion of other texts possibly pertaining to sixth-century Edomite-Judahite relations.⁹⁵ For purposes of discussion, the psalm is divided into units according to the disjunctives *'atnāḥ* and *sillūq*.⁹⁶

By the rivers of Babylon— there we sat down and there we wept	על נהרות בבל שם ישבנו גם־בכינו	v. 1a
when we remembered Zion.	בזכרנו את־ציון	v. 1b
On the willows there	על־ערבים בתוכה	v. 2a
we hung up our harps.	תלינו כנרותינו	v. 2b
For there our captors asked us for songs, and our tormentors asked for mirth, saying,	כי שם שאלונו שובינו דברי־שיר ותוללינו שמחה	v. 3a
“Sing us one of the songs of Zion!”	שירו לנו משיר ציון	v. 3b
How could we sing the LORD’s song in a foreign land?	איך נשיר את־שיר־יהוה על אדמת נכר	v. 4a v. 4b
If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand wither!	אם־אשכחך ירושלם תשכח ימיני	v. 5
Let my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth, if I do not remember you, if I do not set Jerusalem above my highest joy.	תדבק־לשוני לחכי אם־לא אזכרכי אם־לא אעלה את־ירושלם על ראש שמחתי	v. 6
Remember, O LORD, against the Edomites the day of Jerusalem’s fall, how they said, “Tear it down! Tear it Down!	זכר יהוה לבני אדום את יום ירושלם האמרים ערו ערו	v. 7a

⁹⁵ E.g., the Jacob-Esau narratives of Genesis 25–28 and 32–33; Num 20; Deut 2; 23:17; Isaiah; Amos 1–2; Joel 4:19 (3:19); Mal 1:2–3 (cf. Rom 9:13); Psa 83; Psa 108.

⁹⁶ The translation is that of the New Revised Standard Version.

Down to its foundations!”	עד היסוד בה	v. 7b
O daughter Babylon, you devastator! Happy shall they be who pay you back	בת־בבל השדודה אשרי שישלם־לך	v. 8a
what you have done to us!	את־גמולך שגמלת לנו	v. 8b
Happy shall they be who take your little ones and dash them against the rock!	אשרי שיאחו ונפץ את־ עלליך אל־הסלע	v. 9a

Verse 7 focuses on Edomites, who are presented as reiteratively calling for some unknown entity to tear down (ערו, *pi'el* of √ ערה; lit. “lay bare, make naked, strip”) Jerusalem to its foundation (עד היסוד ב ה; lit. “unto the foundations in her”). Apart from this aggressive language, verse 7 does not suggest that Edom was hostile against Jerusalem during the Babylonian campaign. A difficulty is whether verses 8–9 focus on Edom or Babylon. If Edom remains in focus in verses 8–9, then Edomite hostility is evidenced as are treaty allusions.⁹⁷ Verse 8aα is the fulcrum: בת־בבל. Does this colon and what follows refer yet to Edom or does the focus return to Babylon?

The limitation of the focus in Psa 137:7–9 to one upon the Edomites is defensible through terminological and thematic parallels. A terminological parallel (ה[ה]סלע) exists between verse 9 and Obad 3. The psalm ends with a proclamation that blessed-happiness is in store for the one who takes the little ones (of Edomites and/or Babylonians) and shatters them “upon the rock” (אל־הסלע; v.9). The definiteness of this rock suggests a specific location is to be understood, and a few texts mention an Edomite “Rock” (“the Sela”; ה.סלע).⁹⁸ Intertextual evidence may support a connection of the psalm’s הסלע with Edomite territory. The context suggests that the target of

⁹⁷ A treaty allusion not otherwise addressed in this study is the correspondence between the withering of the right hand (תשכה ימיני [v. 5]) and oath-making and punishment (see, e.g., Gen 14:22–23; Exod 6:8; Psa 144:8); on this correspondence, see Bar-Efrat, “Love of Zion,” 7–8, esp. note 13.

⁹⁸ See 2 Kgs 14:7 (cf. 2 Chr 25:12); Jer 49:16. Two geographically appropriate formations have been suggested for this biblical, Edomite Sela^c: Umm el-Biyarah, and Khirbet es-Sela^c. See Hart 1986: 91–95. On Khirbet es-Sela^c, see Bartlett 1989: 51–52; Fanwar 1992: 1073–4; Crowell 2007: 75–88. The fact that סלע is a common noun simply meaning “rock” prohibits an uncomplicated equation of either of these with the defensible “clefs of rock” where Edomites dwell according to Obad 3 (בהגוי־סלע). Obadiah attests “Sela” without the article (סלע). Poetic terseness aside, contrast הסלע (Jer 49:16).

the atrocities of verse 9 are the little ones (עלליך) of an entire population (Babylonian and/or Edomite).⁹⁹ What is being envisioned is the seizing and transportation of some thousands to the rock upon which their bodies would be dashed. Such horrific logistics are not without biblical precedent. According to 2 Kgs 14:7, Amaziah's exploits included killing ten thousand Edomites and the taking-by-storm a stronghold named "Sela" (סלע). Gruesome detail of the same campaign is provided in 2 Chr 25:11–12, a text with semantic as well as thematic parallels with Psalm 137:9 and producing a similar vision of a large population associated with Edom that is apprehended and split upon the rock. The parallels provide an intertextual warrant for reading verses 7–9 with Edom yet in focus.

The psalm also reflects an etymological and thematic relationship to Obad 15b. We can compare אשרי שישלם לך את-גמולך שגמלת לנו ("Happy shall they be who pay you back what you have done to us"; Psa 137:8aβ–b) with

כאשר עשית יעשה לך גמלך ישוב בראשך ("Just as you have done it shall be done to you. Your dealings will return upon your own head!"; Obad 15). Thematically, this parallel closely aligns with the concept of *lex talionis* and anticipates a reversal of fortune. The etymological parallel should be obvious: גמולך ("your dealings" [Psa 137:8a]) parallels גמלך ("your dealings" [Obad 15b]). The root is occasionally employed in economic contexts (e.g. 2 Sam 19:36; 2 Chr 20:11; 32:23–29 [v. 25]; Joel 4:4 [3:4]; cf. English "camel" and its etymology). Its occurrence in an Edomite context is noteworthy given the thesis of treaty betrayal and the economic advantage Edom would gain with control of southern Judah.

A primary obstacle in reading verses 8–9 as pertaining to Edom, however, is not a lack of literary affinity between the psalm and other anti-Edom texts, but whether verse 8α (בת-בבל; "daughter-of-Babylon") references Babylon or Edom. The colon is often taken as a literary intensification: Babylon as a capital city is personified.¹⁰⁰ No fewer than three possibilities, however, have been proposed for understanding Edom rather than Babylon as the appropriate reference. The first two rely on a redactional assumption¹⁰¹ or a supposed textual error.¹⁰² Neither is warranted by

⁹⁹ Babylonian little ones (ועלליהם) are the targets to be split apart according to Isa 13:16a; similar horrors are found elsewhere; see also Hos 14:1 [Eng. 13:16] and Nah 3:10.

¹⁰⁰ See Fitzgerald 1975: 167–183, esp. 182; cf. Allen 1983: 237. As Fitzgerald acknowledges (e.g., 1975: 173, 174, 179, 180) genitival constructions of בת- plus toponym/gentilic are ambiguous.

¹⁰¹ According to Briggs (1902: 2.486), verses 8–9 demand that Edom remains in the context; colon 8aa is a misfortunate redactional gloss.

evidence available from ancient manuscripts. A third possibility is intriguing. In an article arguing that the anti-Edom oracles of Obadiah and Jeremiah 49 were post-exilic prophetic responses to Psalm 137, Graham S. Ogden suggests that the phrase **בַּת־בָּבֶל** may legitimately be understood as “the ally or confederate of Babylon.”¹⁰³ Ogden can then understand Edom as the object of the imprecations of the remaining verses; Edom as a child of Babylon (cf. “son” as a vassal’s identification) becomes confused for its lord. In short, Edom may remain in focus, providing a warrant to examine elements in the psalm with treaty connotations corresponding to the theme of Edomite treaty betrayal.

Consider again verses 7–8, divided by cola and translated so as to accentuate treaty allusions discussed below.

Remember, YHWH, the Edomites,	זכר יהוה לבני אדום	v. 7a α
the day of Jerusalem, the ones who said, “Strip [her]! Strip [her]”	את יום ירושלים האמרים ערו ערו	v. 7a β
down to the foundations in her!	עד היסוד בה	v. 7b
O daughter of Babylon	בת־בָּבֶל	v. 8a α
—destroyed/destroyer—Happy are those who fulfill a covenant of peace with/repay you	השדודה אשרי שישלם־לך	v. 8a β
your own dealings	את־גְּמוּלָךְ	v. 8b α
that you dealt to us!	שגמלת לנו	v. 8b β

Verse 8 declares that Edom’s destruction is justified. In a context of *lex talionis*, $\sqrt{\text{שלם}}$ occurs in the *pi’el* (“to complete, reward, make compensation, replace”; v. 8a β).¹⁰⁴ The root is at home in treaty contexts. We have seen that Obad 7 provides a relevant example, suggesting that Edom’s peace-covenant (**שְׁלֵמָךְ**) partners will betray Edom (**הַשִּׂאוּךְ**) rather

¹⁰² Kellermann (1978: 48) emends to **בַּת־אֲדוּמִים**.

¹⁰³ Ogden 1982: 89–97, 91. In support of his understanding of **בַּת־בָּבֶל** as pertaining to alliance, Ogden references his reader to the work of H. Haag, (“bath,” *TDOT* 2:336), who understands the figurative uses of **בַּת־** (with a toponym) to include one in which villages and cities of a great city can be considered daughters. This well-attested figurative use suggests that **בַּת־** at times specifically references a weaker or smaller political entity under the aegis or control of the genitive (in our case, **בָּבֶל**). This use would befit Edom as a vassal of Babylon.

¹⁰⁴ *BDB*, 1022; G. Gerleman, “שלח” *šlh* to send,” *TLOT* 3:1330–1348, esp. 1340–1341.

than “fulfill” (cf. $\sqrt{\text{שָׁלַם}}$) the treaty.¹⁰⁵ Is the psalm referencing a similar reversal of expectation—a similar payback?

This section will show that Psalm 137 reflects treaty curses and that violence such as described in verses 7–9 would be appropriate by ANE standards should betrayal occur. A treaty written in Aramaic and dating to the mid-eight century is helpful. The curse section of Sefire I A (a vassal treaty between the suzerain Bar-Ga’yah of KTK and his vassal, Mati’el of Arpad) has themes and terminology that are strikingly similar to the psalm. Consider lines 29–30, 35, and 40–41.¹⁰⁶

29...Nor may the sound of the lyre be heard in Arpad; but among its people (let there rather be) the din of affliction and the noi[se of crying]³⁰ and lamentation! ...³⁵...Just as wax is burned by fire, so may Arpad be burned and [her g]reat [daughter-cities]!⁴⁰ ...[and just as]⁴¹ a [har]lot is stripped naked], so may the wives of Mati’el be stripped naked, and the wives of his offspring, and the wives of [his] no[bles]!

In a context of lamentation, an inter-dialectical etymological and semantic equivalence is apparent in the abandonment of music from the lyre (כנר [Sefire I A:29] || כנרותינו [Psa 137:2b]). In both texts, a lesser polity under the governance of a greater polity may be implied by kinship language, namely the topographical mention of daughter-city/cities: one of Babylon, and those of Mati’el’s Arpad (ארפד וּבנותו) [Sefire I A:35]¹⁰⁷ || בת־בבל [Psa 137:8a]). Moreover, these daughter cities are found in a parallel context of destruction (“burned”; $\sqrt{\text{יָקַד}}$ [Sefire I A:35, 37] || “destroy(ed)”; $\sqrt{\text{שָׁדַד}}$ [Psa 137:8]). Jerusalem is personified and feminine, and about her are the only words in the psalm associated with the sons of Edom (בני־אדום [137:7]), who call for her to be stripped ($\sqrt{\text{עָרָה}}$).¹⁰⁸ This sexual assault is paralleled

¹⁰⁵The phrase “Fulfill the treaty” (תשלם עדיא; Aram. $\sqrt{\text{שָׁלַם}}$) appears to be a standard clause of declaring that a treaty is fully observed; see, e.g., Sefire I B:24 (presented and discussed in Fitzmyer 1995: 50, 51, and 108).

¹⁰⁶The translation is that of Fitzmyer 1995: 44–47.

¹⁰⁷For the restoration and the possibility that the great daughters of Arpad may pertain to subject cities or regions, see Fitzmyer 1995: 46–47, 91, 93.

¹⁰⁸For $\sqrt{\text{עָרָה}}$ (“to strip”) with YHWH against Zion, see Isa 3:17, which is set in a context of the systematic stripping of the fineries of the daughters of Zion (בנות־ציון [v. 16]) following the judgment of YHWH (vv. 13–24), perhaps for its own covenant violation leading to exile (cf. 2 Kgs 22:8–23:27).

etymologically and semantically in the Sefire treaty (“and just as a harlot is stripped”; [נהיה] [ואיך זי תערר ז] [Sefire I A:40–41]¹⁰⁹ || “Strip [her]! Strip [her]!”; ערו ערו [Psa 137:7aβ]). Should Mati^{el} betray the treaty, stately ladies suffer indignity (I A:41). Thus, in but a few lines of the curse section of Sefire I A, one finds numerous thematic, etymological, and (in the case of subject cities or regions as “daughters”) kinship and syntactical parallels with Psalm 137. One also finds lament and the end of lyre play as (allied) cities are conflagrated and female principals are vandalized. Although we do not have enough treaties from the Iron Age to make a defensible conclusion about the frequency with which these elements appeared together in treaty curse sections, we can say that the language of Psalm 137 is at home in known treaty curses.

Treaty curses and retributive justice might also be in the context of the invective in Psalm 137, where “blessed-happiness” (אשרי) is in store for the one who pays Edom back (שישלם-לך [v. 8aβ]) for its treaty violation of Judah (את-גמולך שגמלת לנו [v. 8b]). The mode of payback is horrific: Edomite “little ones” (עלליך) are to be shattered upon the Sela^c (Psa 137: 9). This horror further evidences the psalm’s treaty context; an etymological and thematic parallel is found in a treaty curse identifying a specific legal consequence of treaty infraction. Consider Sefire I A:14, 21–22, which precedes but by a few lines the excerpt cited above.

Now if Mati^{el}, the son of Attarsamak, the kin[g of Arpad,] should prove unfaithful [to Bar-Ga^yah.... [then] should seven nurses anoint [their breasts and] nurse a little one, may he not have his fill...¹¹⁰

Should the treaty be violated, nursing will not fend off starvation for the “little one” (עלים [I A:22]; cf. Lam 2:11–12, 19–20; 4:4). A presumably quick(er) death-by-shattering is in store for the “little ones” (עלליך) of Psa 137:9. Oaths among partners during treaty formation made such horrors a mutually-approved, foreseen course of action in the event of treaty betrayal.

¹⁰⁹ For the restoration (Aram. √ ערר rather than עבד), see Fitzmyer 1995: 97–98, citing also Neh 3:5; Jer 13:26–27; Ezek 16:37–38; Hos 2:5.

¹¹⁰ Emphases mine; the translation is that of Fitzmyer 1995: 45 with three changes. First, “[then]” has been added in order to clarify context. Second, “little one” has been substituted for “young boy,” accentuating the etymological parallel. Third, a redundant (?) bracket that followed “nurses” has been removed.

A divine witness sanctioned the act (Sefire I A: 7–13; cf. Psa 137:7a[?]), and the treaty would have been communicated publically (cf. Sefire I B:8–10). The Judahite and Edomite leadership would have acknowledged that such retribution was sanctioned and that the one who would carry out such acts would be divinely favored (אשרי [Psa 137:8, 9]). The “scandalous” statement that blessed-happiness is in store for the one who shatters little ones (Psa 137:8–9) simply reflects this fact.¹¹¹ Psalm 137:7–9 is ironic: the sons of Edom are presented as vocalizing a curse wish that could have been applicable to *themselves* in their own broken treaty with Judah.

With the treaty curse language of Psa 137 in mind, consider the only direct reference to Edom in Lamentations (4:21–22).¹¹²

²¹ Rejoice and be glad, O daughter Edom, you that live in the land of Uz; but to you also the cup shall pass; you shall become drunk and strip yourself bare.

ישי ושמחי בת־אדום (יושבת)
[יושבת] בארץ עוז גם־עליך תעבר־כוס
תשכרי ותתערי

²² The punishment of your iniquity, O daughter Zion, is accomplished, he will keep you in exile no longer; but your iniquity, O daughter Edom, he will punish, he will uncover your sins.

ת־עונך בת־ציון לא יוסיף להגלותך
פקד עונך בת־אדום גלה על־חטאתיך

As verse 21 begins to anticipate a future punishment on the daughter of Edom,¹¹³ verse 22 interjects a declaration that the punishment of the daughter of Zion has reached completion (v. 22a). Given covenant infidelity as the overarching biblical (theological) context of Judah’s exile and given the current study of Edomite treaty betrayal, this shift of status in Lam 4:21–22 does not appear to be a transferring of Judah’s guilt onto the scapegoat, Edom, as some have seen in anti-Edom texts,¹¹⁴ but rather *a shift in status relative to the timing of a retributive justice deserved by each for covenant (treaty) violation*. The poet of Lamentations states that Judah is completing

¹¹¹ On Psalm 137 as the “scandal” psalm, see Peterson 1989: 96. Through the mutually-accepted, divinely-witnessed Edomite-Judahite treaty curses, Edom accepted a threat of destruction. In an ANE worldview, the one who carried out a retributive justice sanctioned by the invectives of the treaty would be carrying out actions “blessed” by those divine witnesses. The psalmist, as a matter of course or of theology, seems either powerless or unwilling to carry out such actions.

¹¹² The translation is that of the New Revised Standard Version.

¹¹³ Given the syntax בַּת + toponym, Lamentations might be extending the referent to include an unnamed associate of Edom.

¹¹⁴ See, e.g., Gosse 1989: 511–517; see also discussion in Dicou 1994: 15–16.

its punishment for covenant infidelity to YHWH (v. 22a) whereas Edom can anticipate the consequences of its own covenant infraction (v. 21b, 22b).

Psalm 137 and Lamentations 4:21–22 provide important data for the historical reconstruction. They might reflect a curses section in the Edomite-Judahite treaty, namely, lament, an end of lyre play, the stripping of principals, city destruction, and the wasting of little ones. These texts also evidence that the Edomite treaty betrayal of Judah took place in the sixth century B.C.E., reinforcing the pertinence of Obadiah to that date. Third, unlike Obadiah, the psalmist directly associates Edom *with Babylon*. Thus, Psalm 137 and Lamentations provide considerable historical weight to the argument already made: Edom conspired with Babylon against Judah in the sixth century B.C.E.

SYNTHESIZING PIECEMEAL DATA: EZEKIEL, A NORTH-SOUTH AXIS, AND THE DATE OF BETRAYAL

With Palestine in imperial disarray ca. 588 B.C.E., Nebuchadnezzar had to decide which kingdom to subdue first. After considering options for dealing with the Palestinian states persisting in rebellion, and for whatever reasons, Babylon undertook a “Judah-first” strategy.¹¹⁵ With Judah, Tyre, and Ammon in active revolt, why might Nebuchadnezzar first attack the rebel state *at the center*? Was it due to omens and extispicy (see below on Ezek 21:24–27 [Eng. 19–22])? A “divide and conquer” stratagem? This study has shown that sixth-century anti-Edom texts are replete with allusions to a secretive Babylonian-Edomite treaty divulged during the Babylonian assault on Judah. Attacking Judah first would make good sense if a turncoat (Edom) was poised to engage Judah from the south. The resulting north-south axis running from Riblah (2 Kgs 25:2, 6) through Judah to Edom would effectively overwhelm Zedekiah’s kingdom and would prohibit efficient communications necessary for joint military operations of Ammonite and Tyrian rebel forces, perhaps inclining them away from attempting to assist Judah (cf. Lam 4:17).

It appears, then, that Judah was caught in a surprise attack, whereby the Judahite front (north) and rear (south) were attacked simultaneously. Verses 5, 10, and 12 of Ezekiel 35 present Edom as engaged in geopolitical hostility. In this context, consider Ezek 36:1–4 (NRSV; emphasis mine),

¹¹⁵ Portions of Phoenicia may have been subdued early, yet Tyre was left in its rebellion until Jerusalem fell (cf. Ezek 29:17); see also Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 1.156; *Ant.* 10.228; for an overview, see Katzenstein 1992: 686–690, esp. 690.

which evidences a multi-national campaign against Judah (cf. also Jer 34:1, 7):

¹And you, mortal, prophesy to the mountains of Israel, and say: O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the LORD. ² Thus says the Lord GOD: Because the enemy said of you, “Aha!” and, “The ancient heights have become our possession,” ³ therefore prophesy, and say: Thus says the Lord GOD: Because they made you desolate indeed, **and crushed you from all sides**, so that you became the possession of the rest of the nations, and you became an object of gossip and slander among the people; ⁴ therefore, O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord GOD: Thus says the Lord GOD to the mountains and the hills, the watercourses and the valleys, the desolate wastes and the deserted towns, which have become a source of plunder and an object of derision to the rest of the nations **all around**;

“From all sides” and “all around” (both מסביב; see also Lam 1:17; 2:22; Ezek 23:22) suggest that the Babylonian assault from the north included military actions west (Lachish and Azekah?) and east of Jerusalem (e.g., 2 Kgs 25:4–5; Ezek 21:18–23[?]), and was accompanied by actions in the south. It is significant that “all of Edom” (כל-אדום כלא/אדום כלא [35:15; 36:5]) appears in the verses *immediately prior to and after* Ezek 36:1–4. “Edom” *literarily* brackets (surrounds) the verses about Judah being surrounded. This artistry in the context of a multi-national assault suggests again that military coordination occurred among Babylonian forces from the north and Edomite forces hostile in the Negev to the south.¹¹⁶

As mentioned in the introduction to this article, literary evidence suggests that as late as 593 B.C.E. (if not later) Edom was among the Palestinian states contemplating an anti-Babylonian league. It is not uncommon to date the beginning of Zedekiah’s rebellion to some five years latter (ca. 589 B.C.E.).¹¹⁷ Did Edom carry out diplomacy with Babylon early on in the revolt? Two years (ca. 589–Tevet 588/587 B.C.E.)¹¹⁸ is a rather long time to

¹¹⁶ For further support of the point, see Ezek 21:1–5 (Eng. 20:45–49), which immediately precedes a prophecy concerning a campaign *against Jerusalem* (21:6–12 [21:1–7]) and which prophesies an imminent campaign *against the Negev* (Ezek 21:2 [20:46]). Twice in the immediate context one finds “from the Negev/South to North” (Ezek 21:3, 9 [Eng 20:47; 21:4]).

¹¹⁷ The ascension of Pharaoh Hophra (Apries) in 589 B.C.E. and his activities in the eastern Mediterranean may have spurred rebellion. Alternatively, revolt may have occurred earlier, following Psammetichus’ parade through Palestine; see Ahlström 1993: 793–794; Lipschits 2005: 70–72.

¹¹⁸ This article follows the basic chronology for Zedekiah’s rule as presented by Hayim Tadmor (1979: 44–60). The general result of this chronology is that Zedekiah’s ascension took place

keep true loyalties clandestine. One piece of evidence suggests a more reasonable date. Ezekiel 21:24–27 [Eng. 19–22; NRSV] presents Nebuchadnezzar discerning whether to attack Ammon or Judah first.

¹⁹ *Mortal, mark out two roads for the sword of the king of Babylon to come; both of them shall issue from the same land. And make a signpost, make it for a fork in the road leading to a city;* ²⁰ *mark out the road for the sword to come to Rabbah of the Ammonites or to Judah and to Jerusalem the fortified.* ²¹ *For the king of Babylon stands at the parting of the way, at the fork in the two roads, to use divination; he shakes the arrows, he consults the teraphim, he inspects the liver.* ²² *Into his right hand comes the lot for Jerusalem, to set battering rams, to call out for slaughter, for raising the battle cry, to set battering rams against the gates, to cast up ramps, to build siege towers.*

According to the passage, divination and extispicy rather than objective political and military strategy determines the course of action. For Ezekiel, diplomatic correspondence with representatives of an allied Palestinian state is not part of the decision-making process leading to a Judah-first policy. If this last point accurately corresponds to history, then an argument from Ezekiel's silence is that Edom decided to collaborate with Babylon only subsequent to an intelligence report that Babylon was indeed moving toward Judah first (i.e., some moment after Nebuchadnezzar's forces headed specifically for Judah yet before their arrival). This sudden shift in Edomite diplomacy would not require Edom to keep its formal relationship with Babylon clandestine for any great length of time. Even so, the paucity of evidence does not allow for a definitive date for the formation of Edom's treaty with Babylon against its deceived and treaty-based ally, Judah. This study does not determine whether Edom chose to betray its erstwhile ally after a prolonged deception of Judah or only subsequent to Babylon's advance upon central Palestine in order to suppress rebel states. More work on this point is called for. What does seem clear from the biblical evidence is that by the time of the Babylonian assault on Judah in the tenth month (Tebet) of Zedekiah's ninth year (December 588/January 587 B.C.E.), Edom

sometime shortly after 1 Nisan 597, yet his first regnal year would have been reckoned from Nisan 596 through Adar 595 B.C.E. According to 2 Kgs 25:1 (cf. Jer 52:4; Ezek 24:1), the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem began on the tenth day of the tenth month (Tebet) of Zedekiah's ninth year (which ran from Nisan 588 to Nisan 587 B.C.E.). In a conversion to the Gregorian calendar, Tebet of Zedekiah's ninth year corresponds to December 588/January 587 B.C.E. On 9 Tammuz of Zedekiah's eleventh year (mid July 586 B.C.E.), after a siege lasting about eighteen months, the walls of Jerusalem were breached and the city fell (2 Kgs 25:3; cf. Jer 52:6).

had initiated and acted upon a clandestine treaty with Babylon to the detriment of Edom's deceived and treaty-based ally, Judah.

CONCLUSION

Through an analysis of biblical evidence, this article has provided a rather specific reconstruction, one that contrasts reconstructions that minimize Edomite hostilities against Judah during the events of 588–586 B.C.E. John R. Bartlett has produced requisite work in the study of Edom and has advocated Edom's innocence during the fall of Jerusalem and Judah.¹¹⁹ Obadiah 11–14 accuses Edom of specific actions against Judah, yet for Bartlett these accusations are not a “historian's description” but are derived from Obadiah's “imagination.”¹²⁰ Bartlett holds that Jer 40:11 is “[p]erhaps the most reliable piece of evidence” for Edomite behavior during the Babylonian attack and siege of Jerusalem.¹²¹ Consider Jer 40:11–12 (NRSV), set in a context sometime *after* the fall of Jerusalem and communicating that Judahites were residing in Edom:

Likewise, when all the Judeans 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 son of Ahikam son of Shaphan as governor over them, then all the Judeans returned from all the places to which they had been scattered and came to the land of Judah, to Gedaliah at Mizpah; and they gathered wine and summer fruits in great abundance.

Bartlett understands these verses as evidencing the peaceful treatment that Judahites returning from Edom had received there during the attack and siege.¹²² In this view, because Edom appeared willing to harbor Judahite refugees, Edom was not the enemy Obadiah envisioned. Setting aside the point that the official political relationships of a nation do not always reflect the behavior of every sub-group of and individual in that nation, I would offer that it is unclear whether Jer 40:11–12 evidences peaceful treatment of Judahites by Edom during the siege of Jerusalem. A comment on the context of Jeremiah 40 is in order. Subsequent to a protracted Babylonian siege, Jerusalem fell and Gedaliah, a pro-Babylonian governor, was appointed by

¹¹⁹ See, e.g., Bartlett 1982: 23; Bartlett 1989: esp. 151, 156–157; and Bartlett 1995: 20.

¹²⁰ Bartlett 1989: 155–156.

¹²¹ Bartlett 1989: 151.

¹²² Bartlett 1989: 151, 154, 157. The verse and Bartlett's position have proven influential and cited for reconstructions that minimize Edomite aggression against Judah at the time; see, e.g., Dicou 1994: esp. 184; see also Tebes 2011b: 224 with 232.

Nebuchadnezzar and watched over by a Babylonian garrison (cf. Jer 41:2–32; Kgs 25:22–24). Judahite political prisoners and exiles had evidently already been taken by Babylon, and a rebellious faction and its leaders had been executed (2 Kgs 25:19–21). What is clear is that Jer 40:11–12 speaks of a time when political conditions in Judah had changed.¹²³ Judah was no longer in revolt. Indeed, “When all the Judeans who were in Moab and among the Ammonites and in Edom *and in all the lands* (בְּכָל־הָאֲרָצוֹת)...all these Judeans returned from all the places to which *they had been scattered* (גִּדְחוּ־שָׁם)...” is also suggestive of an imperial allowance or policy toward the *return* of Judahites (captured, hiding, or harbored) once hostilities ceased. It does not specify how Judahites *came to be* in Edom. With a pro-Babylon leadership functioning in Judah, and with Edom an ally of Babylon, Edom and Judah would have returned to a rather equal footing—albeit as subjects of Babylon. As has been noted in this article, how allies are to treat captives and fugitives is a regular component of ancient Near Eastern treaties, and Edom and Judah’s common loyalty to Babylon could signal the release of any Judahite captives Edom may have taken during the crisis. In short, Jer 40:11–12 speaks of a return of Judahites from several lands sometime after the revolt was quelled and after Babylon appointed Gedaliah as governor of Judah; accordingly, these verses may have little bearing on Edom’s political relations with and treatment of Judahites during the Babylonian assault on Jerusalem and Judah ca. 588–586 B.C.E.

This article has argued that Edom kept clandestine from Judah a treaty relationship with Babylon and surprised Judah during the Babylonian assault. A literary-critical question arises. Why would Obadiah present a prophecy of such subtle allusion to betrayal? Why not just say “Edom betrayed Judah”? What makes sense to me is that Obadiah’s artistry reflects the hiddenness of Edom’s eventually manifested political relationships and aggressive actions during the Babylonian crisis. In this regard, a comment is also in order pertaining to biblical Edom. Foundational ancestral stories had kept Esau/Edom at the closest fringe of Jacob/Israel (Gen 25, 27, 32–33, 35:29). Given the sociological function of treaties to extend kinship, which was a basis for ethical responsibility, not only did the biblical descendants of Esau fail to act as kin of Jacob during the Babylonian crisis, they had rejected that kinship for one with Babylon, which provided them some

¹²³ It remains uncertain how much time past between the fall of Jerusalem and the return of the fruitful growing season mentioned in v. 12; two months or as many as five years may have past (cf. Jer 52:28–30). For discussion of the political context, for notes on textual issues in Jeremiah 40:11–12, and for relevant bibliographic references, see Keown, Scalise, and Smothers 1995: 232–238.

territorial gain.¹²⁴ It appears, then, that after generations of tension (e.g., 1 Sam 14:47; 2 Kings 3; 8:20–22; 14:7; 16:6) Edom chose against Israel/Judah and became through treaty betrayal a people akin to the nations.¹²⁵ Perhaps it was this sixth-century violation of a mutually-perceived kinship and treaty relationship binding Edom to Judah that made Edom's political actions dreadfully painful (cf. Lam 1:2, 19; 4:21–22) and contributed to the production of other anti-Edom texts.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ABEL, F.-M. 1937. "L'expédition des Grecs a Pétra en 312 avant J.-C." In: *Revue Biblique* 46, pp. 373–391.
- AHLSTRÖM, G.W. 1993. *The History of Ancient Palestine*. Minneapolis, MN, Fortress Press.
- ALLEN, L.C. 1976. *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah and Micah*. New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans.
- ALLEN, L. C. 1990. *Ezekiel 20–48*. Word Biblical Commentary 29. Dallas, TX, Word.
- ALLEN, L. C. 1983. *Psalms 101–150*. Word Biblical Commentary 21. Waco, TX, Word.
- ANDERSON, B. A. 2010. "Poetic Justice in Obadiah." In: *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 35/2, pp. 247–255.
- ASSIS, E. 2006. "Why Edom? On the Hostility towards Jacob's Brother in Prophetic Sources." In: *Vetus Testamentum* 56, pp. 1–20.
- BARR, J. 1991. "Is Hebrew נֶסֶת 'Nest' a Metaphor?" In: A.S. KAYE (ed.), *Semitic Studies in Honor of Wolf Leslau*. Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, pp. 150–61.
- BARRÉ, M.L. 1986. "The Meaning of *ל'ִיבְנֵי עֵדוּם* in Amos 1:3–2:6." In: *Journal of Biblical Literature* 105, pp. 611–31.

¹²⁴ Edomite encroachment into southern Judah could have led to a mid-sixth-century sociological exigency among some Judahites: was Esau—rather than Jacob—the true inheritor of the blessings of Abraham? See Assis 2006: 1–20. Assis, however, minimizes the importance of Edomite involvement in the destruction of Judah for the development of the exceptional attitude toward Edom in biblical sources (2006: 3, 15–17).

¹²⁵ Arguably, no other nation apart from Israel receives more biblical attacks than Edom. Stuart (1987: 405–406) provides a convenient table of prophetic oracles against the nations, and states in regard to Edom that "more sheer space" is devoted to oracles against Tyre and Moab. Such is the case if Isaiah 34 is counted as an oracle against the nations in general (as Stuart counts), rather than one principally against Edom. Stuart acknowledges that mention of Edom has a "somewhat wider distribution."

- BARRÉ, M.L. 1992. "Treaties in the ANE." In: D.N. FREEDMAN (ed.), *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 6. New York, NY, Doubleday, pp. 653–56.
- BARTLETT, J.R. 1982. "Edom and the Fall of Jerusalem, 587 B.C." In: *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 114, pp. 2–24.
- BARTLETT, J. R. 1989. *Edom and the Edomites*. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series 77. Sheffield, Sheffield Academic Press.
- BARTLETT, J. R. 1992. "Biblical Sources for the Iron Age in Edom." In: P. BIENKOWSKI (ed.), *Early Edom and Moab: The Beginning of the Iron Age in Southern Jordan*. Oxford, Collis, pp. 13–19.
- BARTLETT, J. R. 1995. "Edom in the Nonprophetic Corpus." In: D.V. EDELMAN (ed.), *You Shall Not Abhor an Edomite for He Is Your Brother: Edom and Seir in History and Tradition*. Atlanta, GA, Scholars Press, pp. 13–32.
- BARTLETT, J. R. 1999. "Edomites and Idumaeans." In: *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 131, pp. 102–114.
- BARTON, J. 1990. "History and Rhetoric in the Prophets." In: M. WERNER (ed.), *The Bible as Rhetoric*. London, Routledge, pp. 51–64.
- BARTON, J. 2001. *Joel and Obadiah*. In: J.L. MAYS, C. NEWSOME and D.L. PETERSEN (eds.), *Old Testament Library*. Louisville, KY, Westminster John Knox Press.
- BEENTJES, P. C. 1982. "Inverted Quotations in the Bible: A Neglected Stylistic Pattern." In: *Biblica* 63, pp. 506–23.
- BEENTJES, P.C. 1996. "Discovering a New Path of Intertextuality: Inverted Quotations and Their Dynamics." In: L.J. DE REGT, J. DE WAARD and J.P. FOKKELMAN (eds.), *Literary Structure and Rhetorical Strategies in the Hebrew Bible*. Assen, Van Gorcum, 1996, pp. 31–50.
- BEAULIEU, P. 1989. *The Reign of Nabonidus King of Babylon 556-539 B.C.* New Haven, CT, Yale University Press.
- BIČ, M. 1953. "Zur Problematik Des Buches Obadjah." In: *Vetus Testamentum* 1, pp. 11–25.
- BIENKOWSKI, P. 1992. "The Beginning of the Iron Age in Southern Jordan: A Framework." In: P. BIENKOWSKI (ed.), *Early Edom and Moab: The Beginning of the Iron Age in Southern Jordan*. Oxford, Collis, pp. 1–12.
- BIENKOWSKI, P. and E. VAN DER STEEN. 2001. "Tribes, Trade, and Towns: A New Framework for the Late Iron Age in Southern Jordan and the Negev." In: *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 323, pp. 21–47.
- BLOCK, D. I. 1998. *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 25–48*. New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans.

- BRIGGS, C. A. 1907. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms*. Edinburgh, T & T Clark.
- CROSS, F. M. 1998. *From Epic to Canon: History and Literature in Ancient Israel*. Baltimore, MA, Johns Hopkins University Press.
- CROWELL, B. L. 2007. “Nabonidus, as-Sila^c, and the Beginning of the End of Edom.” In: *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 348, pp. 75–88.
- DE ROCHE, M. 1981. “The Reversal of Creation in Hosea” In: *Vetus Testamentum* 31, pp. 400–409.
- DEARMAN, J.A. 1995. “Edomite Religion. A Survey and an Examination of Some Recent Contributions” In: D.V. EDELMAN (ed.), *You Shall Not Abhor an Edomite for He Is Your Brother: Edom and Seir in History and Tradition*. Atlanta, GA, Scholars Press, pp.119–36.
- DICK, M.B. 2005. “The Poetics of the Book of Obadiah.” In: *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages* 31/1, pp. 1–32.
- DICOU, B. 1994. *Edom, Israel's Brother and Antagonist*. JSOTSup 169. Sheffield, Sheffield Academic Press.
- DYKEHOUSE, J.C. 2008. *An Historical Reconstruction of Edomite Treaty Betrayal in the Sixth Century B.C.E. Based on Biblical, Epigraphic, and Archaeological Data*. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Baylor University, Waco, Texas.
- ELOWSKY, J. 1992. *The Annals of Obadiah: A Record of the Wars and Peace Treaties in the History of Its Interpretation*. MA Thesis, Concordia Seminary, Clayton, Missouri.
- EPH^cAL, I. 1982. *The Ancient Arabs: Nomads on the Borders of the Fertile Crescent 9th–5th Centuries B.C*. Leiden, Brill.
- FANWAR, W. M. 1992. “Sela.” In: D.N. FREEDMAN (ed.), *Anchor Bible Dictionary* vol. 5. New York, NY, Doubleday, pp. 1073–1074.
- FENSHAM, F. C. 1969. “The Treaty between the Israelites and the Tyrians.” In: *Vetus Testamentum Supplements* 17, 71–87.
- FINKELSTEIN, I. 1992. “Horvat Qitmit and the Southern Trade in the Late Iron II.” In: *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins* 108, pp. 156–70.
- FITZGERALD, A. 1975. “BTWLT and BT as Titles for Capital Cities.” In: *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 37, pp. 167–83.
- FITZMYER, Joseph A. 1995. *The Aramaic Inscriptions of Sefire*. Revised ed. *Biblica et Orientalia* 19/A. Rome, Pontificio Instituto Biblico.
- GORDON, C. 1965. *Ugaritic Textbook*. 3 vols. *Analecta Orientalia* 38. Rome, Pontificum Institutum Biblicum.

- GOSSE, B. 1989. "Ézéchiél 35–36, 1–15 et Ézéchiél 6: la désolation de la montagne de Séir et le renouveau des montagnes d'Israël." In: *Revue Biblique* 96, pp. 511–17.
- GUDAS, F. 1993. "Theme." In: A. PREMINGER and T.V.F. BROGAN (eds.), *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*. Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, pp. 1281–1282.
- HART, S. 1986. "Sela^c: The Rock of Edom?" In: *Palestine Excavation Quarterly* 118, pp. 91–95.
- HERZOG, Z., A. AHARONI, A.F. RAINEY, and S. MOSHKOVITZ. 1984. "The Israelite Fortress at Arad." In: *Bulletin for the American Schools of Oriental Research* 254, pp. 1–34.
- KALLUVEETIL, P. 1982. *Declaration and Covenant: A Comprehensive Review of Covenant Formulae from the Old Testament and the Ancient Near East*. Analectica Biblica 88. Rome, Biblical Institute Press.
- KATZENSTEIN, H. J. "Tyre," In: D.N. FREEDMAN (ed.), *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 6. New York, NY, Doubleday, pp. 686–90.
- KEEL, O. L., and C. UEHLINGER. 1998. *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God in Ancient Israel*. Translated by Thomas H. Trapp. Minneapolis, MIN, Fortress Press, 1998.
- KELLERMANN, U. 1978. "Psalm 137." In: *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 90, pp. 43–58.
- KEOWN, G.L., P.J. SCALISE, and T.G. SMOTHERS. 1995. *Jeremiah 26–52*. Word Biblical Commentary 27. Waco, TX, Word.
- KNAUF, E. A. 1992. "The Cultural Impact of Secondary State Formation: The Cases of the Edomites and the Moabites." In: P. BIENKOWSKI (ed.), *Early Edom and Moab: The Beginning of the Iron Age in Southern Jordan*. Oxford, Collis, pp. 47–54.
- LELLI, F. 1999. "Stars." In: K. VAN DER TOORN, B. BECKING and P. W. VAN DER HORST (eds.), *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*. Revised ed. Leiden, Brill, pp. 809–815.
- LINDSAY, J. 1976. "The Babylonian Kings and Edom." In: *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 108, pp. 23–39.
- LIPSCHITS, O. 2005. *The Fall and Rise of Jerusalem*. Winona Lake, IN, Eisenbrauns.
- LIVERANI, M. 1979. "The Ideology of the Assyrian Empire." In: M.T. LARSEN (ed.), *Power and Propaganda: A Symposium on Ancient Empires*, pp. 297–317.

- MALAMAT, A. 1987. "The Last Years of the Kingdom of Judah." In: L. PERDUE, L. E. TOOMBS and G.L. JOHNSON (eds.), *Archaeology and Biblical Interpretation*. Atlanta, GA, John Knox Press, pp. 287–314.
- MCCARTHY, D. J. 1981. *Treaty and Covenant*. 2nd ed. Analecta Biblica 21a. Rome, Biblical Institute Press.
- MENDENHALL, G. E., and G. A. HEIRON. 1992. "Covenant." In: D.N. FREEDMAN (ed.), *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 1. New York, NY, Doubleday, pp. 1179–1202.
- NOGALSKI, J. D. 1993. *Redactional Processes in the Book of the Twelve*. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 218. New York, NY, de Gruyter.
- NOGALSKI, J. D. 1998. "Obadiah 7: Textual Corruption or Politically Charged Metaphor?" In: *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 110, pp. 67–71.
- ODED, B. 1970. "Observations on Methods of Assyrian Rule in Transjordan after the Palestinian Campaign of Tiglath-Pileser III." In: *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 29, pp. 177–186.
- OGDEN, G. S. 1982. "Prophetic Oracles against Foreign Nations and Psalms of Communal Lament: The Relationship of Psalm 137 to Jeremiah 49:7–22 and Obadiah." In: *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 24, pp. 89–97.
- PARDEE, D. 2003. "Arad 24: Military Movements." In: W.W. HALLO (ed.), *Archival Documents from the Biblical World*. Context of Scripture, vol. 3. Leiden, Brill, p. 85.
- PARPOLA, S. 1987. "Neo-Assyrian Treaties from the Royal Archives of Ninevah." In: *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 39, pp. 161–89.
- PARPOLA, S., and K. WATANABE. 1988. *Neo-Assyrian Treaties and Loyalty Oaths*. In: R.M. WHITING (ed.), *State Archives of Assyria* 2. Helsinki, Helsinki University Press.
- PAUL, S. 1991. *Amos*. Hermeneia. Minneapolis, MN, Fortress.
- PETERSON, E. H. 1989. *Answering God: The Psalms as Tools for Prayer*. San Francisco, CA, Harper & Row.
- RAABE, P. R. 1996. *Obadiah*. Anchor Bible 24d. New York, NY, Doubleday.
- RENKEMA, J. 2003. *Obadiah*. Historical Commentary on the Old Testament. Transl. by Brian Doyle. Leuven, Peeters.
- RUDOLPH, W. 1971. *Joel, Amos, Obadja, Jona*. Kommentar Zum Alten Testament. Gutersloh, Gutersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn.
- SMITH, W. R. 1894. *Religion of the Semites*. New Brunswick, NJ, Adam and Charles Black.

- STUART, D. 1987. *Hosea-Jonah*. Word Biblical Commentary 31. Waco, TX, Word.
- SWEENEY, M. A. 2000. *The Twelve Prophets*. Berit Olam. Collegeville, MI, Liturgical Press.
- TADMOR, H. 1979. "The Chronology of the First Temple Period: A Presentation and Evaluation of the Sources." In: *World History of the Jewish People* 4/1, 44–60.
- TEBES, J.M. 2006. "Trade and Nomads: The Commercial Relations between the Negev, Edom, and the Mediterranean in the Late Iron Age." In: *Journal of the Serbian Archaeological Society* 22, pp. 45–62.
- TEBES, J.M. 2009. "The 'Wisdom' of Edom." In: *Biblische Notizen* 143, pp. 97–117.
- TEBES, J.M. 2011a. "The Potter's Will: Spheres of Production, Distribution and Consumption of the Late Iron Age Southern Transjordan-Negev Pottery." In: *Strata: Bulletin of the Anglo-Israel Archaeological Society* 29, pp. 61–101.
- TEBES, J.M. 2011b. "The Edomite Involvement in the Destruction of the First Temple: A Case of Stab-in-the-Back Tradition?" In: *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 36, pp. 219–255.
- THAREANI, Y. 2010. "The Spirit of Clay: 'Edomite Pottery' and Social Awareness in the Late Iron Age." In: *Bulletin for the American Schools of Oriental Research* 359, pp. 35–55.
- WATSON, W. G. E. 1984. *Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to Its Techniques*. In: *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series* 26. Sheffield, University of Sheffield.
- WATSON, W. G. E. 1994. *Traditional Techniques in Classical Hebrew Verse*. *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series* 170. Sheffield, University of Sheffield.
- WATTS, J. D. W. 1969. *Obadiah: A Critical Exegetical Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans.
- WEINFELD, M. 1973. "Covenant Terminology in the Ancient Near East and Its Influences on the West." In: *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 93, pp. 190–199.
- WOLFF, H.W. 1986. *Obadiah and Jonah: A Commentary*. Transl. by M. Kohl. Minneapolis, MN, Augsburg Publishing House.
- WYATT, N. 1998. *Religious Texts from Ugarit: The Words of Ilmilku and His Colleagues*. Sheffield, Sheffield Academic Press.