



Michał Marciak (Rzeszów, Poland)

FROM EDOM TO IDUMEA: ANALYSIS OF SELECTED PASSAGES FROM THE HEXATEUCH*

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Introduction

The aim of this paper is to examine the Septuagint passages (LXX) parallel to the passages from the Hebrew Bible that may be relevant to the study of the historical geography of Edom/Idumea. To be precise, the focus will be on the passages that speak about the Israelites' exodus from Egypt and their conquest (settlement) of Canaan. The following passages will be analyzed: Numbers 20:14–21 ("Edom denies Israel passage"); Deuteronomy 2:1–8 ("Wanderings in the desert"); and Joshua 15:1–10 ("Allotment for Judah").¹ The purpose of our comparison of the Hebrew and Greek texts is to verify that the LXX passages do not contain any textual changes (compared to the Hebrew text) that may reflect historical changes that occurred between the time of the composition of the Hebrew Bible and the time of the creation of the Greek Bible (LXX). To be specific, the historical process which underlines the working hypothesis of this paper is the migration of the Edomites from Transjordan into the Negev and southern Judah.

Generally speaking, the Iron Age kingdom of Edom was primarily located east of the 'Arabah valley and south of the Dead Sea:² its northern border was

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¹ Of course, many other passages could be analyzed, but the passages mentioned above were chosen upon a preliminary inquiry as the most promising for the present purpose.

² An excellent overview of the historical geography of Edom is offered by Edelman 1995.

marked by the Brook Zered (the Wadi el-Ḥasa), while its southern border fell either on Wadi al-Ghuweir or, more likely, on Ras en-Naqb; to the west and east, the land of Edom was well demarcated by two other natural landmarks—the ‘Arabah valley and the Arabian desert, respectively.³ Thus, the heartland of Edom was a mountainous country, and this area is sometimes labeled as *Edom proper*.⁴ At the same time, Edom as a political entity expanded its borders southwards and westwards to reach the shore of the Red Sea at Eilat and the Negev (see Figure 1).⁵ The nature and course of Edom’s expansion into the Negev is a matter of complicated debate. The first traces of Edomite presence in the eastern Negev can be observed as early as the late monarchic period (the second half of the seventh and early sixth centuries BC),⁶ but the emergence of the province of Idumea, which included the northern Negev (as well as southern Judah as far as Beth-Zur), definitely took place by the Hellenistic period. It was most likely a gradual process, perhaps connected with the migration of a population or economic influence (control of trade routes through the region).⁷ At any rate, the Hellenistic-Roman province of Idumea and the Iron Age kingdom of Edom, even at its furthest extension, are two completely different matters (see Figures 1–2).

Analysis of the selected passages

Generally speaking, the passages under examination refer to the meeting between the Edomites and the Israelites (with the latter wandering in the desert after the exodus from Egypt) and to the settlement of the tribe of Judah after the conquest (to use the Biblical terminology) of Canaan.

In Numbers 20:14–21, after the unsuccessful attempt to enter the land of Canaan from the south (Num 14:45), the Israelites, stationed in Kadesh, seek permission to cross the territory of Edom so that an attack against Canaan can be made from the east. Their request for permission is turned down, and the Israelites have “to go around the land of Edom” in the direction of the Gulf of Aqaba (and then turn north to pass to the east of Edom).

The most relevant passage describing the frontier of Edom is Num 20:16 (WTT):⁸

³ Edelman 1995, 2–3.

⁴ Edelman 1995, 4.

⁵ Edelman 1995, 2–3.

⁶ See Arieḥ 1995, 33–40.

⁷ De Geus 1979–80, Edelman 1995, 6.

⁸ The translation of the New Jerusalem Bible (Num. 20:16): “When we appealed to Yahweh, he heard our cry and, sending an angel, brought us out of Egypt, and here we are, now, at Kadesh, a town on the borders of your territory.

וּנְצַעַק אֶל־יְהוָה וַיִּשְׁמַע קוֹלֵנוּ וַיִּשְׁלַח מַלְאָךְ וַיִּצְאֵנוּ מִמִּצְרָיִם:
וְהַיְהִי אֲנַחְנוּ בְּקֵדְשׁ עֵיר קְצֵה גְבוּלָהּ:

In turn, the parallel passage in the LXX is as follows (Num. 20:16 LXT):⁹

καὶ ἀνεβοήσαμεν πρὸς κύριον καὶ εἰσήκουσεν κύριος τῆς φωνῆς ἡμῶν καὶ
ἀποστείλας ἄγγελον ἐξήγαγεν ἡμᾶς ἐξ Αἰγύπτου
καὶ νῦν ἐσμεν ἐν Καδης πόλει ἐκ μέρους τῶν ὁρίων σου

Thus, the city of Kadesh is presented as the landmark marking the frontier of Edom (see Figures 3–4). In Num. 20:16, Kadesh is described as being located גְבוּל קְצֵה. The Hebrew term קְצֵה translates in the spatial sense as “end, edge, border, extremity” (and in the temporal sense as “end”).¹⁰ Remarkably, this term denotes a point that, though it is located on the extremity of a given space, is still more inside than outside the area. For instance, in Gen 23:9 Abraham buries his wife Sarah in the cave near Hebron that he bought from Ephron the Hittite for this purpose. Before the transaction, the cave was described as being located in Ephron’s fields, to be precise, בְּקְצֵה שְׂדֵהוּ. Thus, though the cave was located “at the end of his field,” it was still more within its borders than outside of them. In turn, in 1 Sam. 14:27 הַמַּטֵּה קְצֵה הַמַּטֵּה refers to the “end of the staff” that Jonathan, son of Saul, dipped into the honeycomb. Again, in Judg. 7:11 קְצֵה הַחֲמִשִּׁים אֲשֶׁר בַּמְחֹנֶה describes the outposts of the enemy camp where Gideon went to gather intelligence before the battle with the Midianites. Thus, the meaning of קְצֵה appears to be inclusive—it does not denote something which lies outside of a given entity, but at its very end. In turn, גְבוּל may mean a mountain, boundary, enclosure (as a specific technical term), or territory,¹¹ and if we take into account the meaning of קְצֵה in Num. 20:16, it follows that גְבוּל should be understood as a “territory” enclosed with borders.¹²

Given the literal meaning of the key expression קְצֵה גְבוּל in Num 20:16 alone, one may think of Kadesh as being located within the borders of the Edomites. At the same time, the context of the narrative suggests that Kadesh was situated in non-Edomite territory, as the Israelites could settle there before sending embassies to the Edomites. It has been argued that this ambiguity reflects two distinctive perspectives: one sees Kadesh as an Edomite city (in accordance with the historical setting, perhaps dated to the mid-to-late eighth century BC),¹³ and the other is purely literary. Otherwise, one might suggest

⁹ The Brenton translation (LXA) from BW 10 (Num. 20:16): “And we cried to the Lord, and the Lord heard our voice, and sent an angel and brought us out of Egypt; and now we are in the city of Cades, at the extremity of thy coasts. (Num. 20:16 LXA).

¹⁰ Holladay 2000, *ad loc.* (BW 10).

¹¹ Holladay 2000, *ad loc.* (BW 10).

¹² Gray 1912, 269.

¹³ Bartlett 1989, 90–93; Levine 2000, 492.

that in Num 20:16 the city of Kadesh is located very close to the borders of Edom and functions as a sort of border town (if modern comparisons can be of any guide to us) on the non-Edomite side (for the identification of Kadesh, see below).

In the LXX, קצה is put as μέρος and גבול as ὄριον. The word μέρος is usually translated as a “part” (“in contrast with a whole,” thus meaning “part, aspect, feature”),¹⁴ and as such (especially in classical literature) may denote one’s portion, heritage, or lot.¹⁵ This term (in the plural as τὰ μέρη) also appears in Biblical geographical or geopolitical passages where, combined with the proper names of various countries, it points to subdivisions (often translated as districts or regions) of a given geographical or geopolitical entity; examples include μέρη of Galilee in Mt 2:22, μέρη of Libya around Cyrene in Acts 2:10, μέρη of Tiro and Sidon in Mt 15:21, μέρη of Caesarea Philippi in Mt 16:13, μέρη of Dalmanutha in Mark 8:10, and μέρη of Macedonia in Acts 19:1. In Num 20:16, we have the idiomatic expression ἐκ μέρους, meaning literally “from a part [of].”¹⁶ This expression emphasizes the state of being an integral part of something; for instance, it is used for parts of the human body in Paul’s well-known analogy of *Christ’s Ecclesia* as the human body in 1 Cor. 12:27.¹⁷

Next, ὄριον is a frequent choice for the Hebrew גבול in the LXX.¹⁸ This term in the singular denotes a “boundary,” but in the plural it means a geographical area within boundaries—a region, district, land, or territory (especially in the NT).¹⁹ For instance, in Mt. 2:16 King Herod is said to have ordered the slaughter of all the male children in Bethlehem and “in all its environs” (ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς ὀρίοις αὐτῆς).

All in all, it seems that the literal translation of ἐκ μέρους τῶν ὀρίων in Num 20:16 should be as follows: “from a part of your land.” The LXX’s version may be seen as more inclusive in its meaning than that of the Hebrew phrase קצה גבולך, although in both cases the literal meaning suggests more or less the same thing—Kadesh was technically located within Edom’s borders.

Another important Biblical passage which may contribute to our knowledge on the historical geography of Edom and Idumea is Deuteronomy 2:1–9, which, generally speaking, retells the episode from Num. 20:14–29.²⁰

¹⁴ Louw/Nida 1996, *ad loc.* (BW 10).

¹⁵ Liddell/Scott/Jones/McKenzie 1996, *ad loc.* (BW 10); Thayer 1889, *ad loc.* (BW 10).

¹⁶ Louw/Nida 1996, *ad loc.* (BW 10).

¹⁷ Louw/Nida 1996, *ad loc.* (BW 10).

¹⁸ Thayer 1889, *ad loc.* (BW 10).

¹⁹ T. Friberg/B. Friberg/Miller 2000, *ad loc.* (BW 10); Thayer 1889, *ad loc.* (BW 10); Moulton/Milligan 1997, *ad loc.* (BW 10); Gingrich 1983, *ad loc.* (BW 10); Danker 2000, *ad loc.* (BW 10).

²⁰ Phillips 1973, 22; Weinfeld 1992, 166; Braulik 2003, 30.

The passage that is most relevant for the historical geography of Edom/Idumea in Deut. 2:1–9 can be found in the first verse, which reads as follows in the Hebrew Bible (WTT):²¹

וַנָּפֹן וּנְסַע הַמִּדְבָּרָה לְדָרֹךְ יַם־סוּף כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה אֵלַי וּנְסַב אֶת־הַר־שַׁעִיר יָמִים רַבִּים: ס

In turn, the Greek version of Deut. 2:1 (LXT) is as follows:²²

καὶ ἐπιστραφέντες ἀπήραμεν εἰς τὴν ἔρημον ὁδὸν θάλασσαν ἐρυθρὰν ὄν τρόπον ἐλάλησεν κύριος πρὸς με καὶ ἐκυκλώσαμεν τὸ ὄρος τὸ Σηὶρ ἡμέρας πολλὰς

In Deut. 2:1, the Israelites are reported to have started their journey from Kadesh anew with the purpose of reaching Canaan (see Figure 4). Deut. 2:1 describes the very beginning of this route. Two landmarks along the first stages of the route are mentioned: the Sea of Suph in the Hebrew text, or the Red Sea in the Greek text, and Mt. Seir in both texts.

The proper name *ים־סוף* mentioned in the Hebrew text in Deut. 2:1 literally means the “sea of rushes” or “sea of reeds,” and is most frequently used to describe the Egyptian coast of the Red Sea—the modern Gulf of Suez (e.g., see Jos. 2:10; Ex. 10:19, 13:18, 15:4, 15:22, 23:31; Deut. 11:4; Jos 4:23; Num. 33:10–11; Neh. 9:9; Ps 106:7, 106:9, 106:22, 136:13, 136:15).²³ However, in a few cases, the name is also applied to a part of the Red Sea known as the Gulf of Aqaba (1 Ki 9:26; Num 21:4 and likely Num. 14:25; Deut. 1:40, 2:1; perhaps Judg. 11:16 and Jer. 49:21).²⁴ The geographical context points to the latter identification; otherwise, the Israelites would have turned back towards Egypt.²⁵

The reference to Mt. Seir (הַר־שַׁעִיר) in the Israelites’ itinerary is also important. The etymology and meaning of the name *שַׁעִיר* are not entirely clear, and three major explanations have been put forward.²⁶ First, the term is most frequently taken to mean “hairy,” and consequently is thought to point to a forested region. Second, it has also been argued that the term may mean “goaty,” and thus characterizes Edom as a “goat land” or “goat mountain.” Lastly, another explanation points to the root *s’r* II, meaning “to sweep or whirl away”; this etymology would suggest that Edom was a windswept and barren mountainous region

²¹ The translation of the New Jerusalem Bible (NJB) from BW 10 (Deut. 2:1): “We then turned round and made for the desert, in the direction of the Sea of Suph, as Yahweh had ordered me. For many days we skirted Mount Seir.”

²² The Brenton translation (LXA) from BW 10 (Jos. 15:1–4): “And we turned and departed into the wilderness, by the way of the Red Sea, as the Lord spoke to me, and we compassed mount Seir many days.”

²³ *Brown/Driver/Briggs 1907, ad loc. (BW 10); Levine 2000, 518.*

²⁴ *Brown/Driver/Briggs 1907, ad loc. (BW 10).*

²⁵ Weinfeld 1992, 126; *Levine 2000, 86.*

²⁶ See Edelman 1995, 7–8.

The identity of Mt. Seir is not entirely clear, either.²⁷ First, Mt. Seir is sometimes referred to as a synonym for the Edomite territory in general, or at least for a portion of it (especially the western slopes of the Edomite plateau or its southern part, the esh-Sherah region between Wadi al-Ghuweir and Ras en-Naqb). Second, it has also been argued that Mt. Seir denotes a mountain range that was located west of the ‘Arabah (which was incorporated into the territory of the kingdom of Edom at some point in its political expansion). Third, some scholars, apparently looking for a “middle ground,” have claimed that Mt. Seir can be used for the mountains and rough steppe on both sides of the ‘Arabah.

At any rate, the LXX names are parallel to the Hebrew terms. First, ים־סוף is replaced with the most frequently used Greek name for the well-known seawater inlet of the Indian Ocean lying between the continents of Africa and Asia—Ἐρυθρὰ θάλασσα. This name is as equally ambiguous as the Hebrew name and may consequently be attributed to various parts of the Red Sea (or even the Indian Ocean).²⁸ Second, the Hebrew הר־שעיר is translated as τὸ ὄρος τὸ Σηϋρ, which is also equivalent to the Hebrew term.²⁹ In light of both the Hebrew and Greek versions of Deut. 2:1 (as well as Deut. 2:12), it can be said that Mt. Seir was occupied by the Edomites. The case of the Red Sea is less certain, but the fact that the Israelites could freely use the path leading to the Red Sea may imply that it did not belong to the Edomites.

All in all, the Hebrew and Greek versions of the narrative in Deut. 2:1 do not essentially differ when it comes to details that are relevant to the historical geography of Edom/Idumea.

The third and final Biblical passage to be analyzed in this paper can be found in the book of Joshua, which, generally speaking, presents the conquest of Canaan by the Israelites and the subsequent delineation and allotment of the conquered land.³⁰ In particular, Josh. 15:1–10 describes the allotment of the tribe of Judah, and a detailed description of the course of Judah’s southern border is given in Josh. 15:1–4 (see Figure 3). It is worth quoting this passage in detail (Jos. 15:1–4 WTT):³¹

²⁷ See Edelman 1995, 8; Seebass 2003, 100.

²⁸ Sturdy 1976, 280.

²⁹ Perlitt 2013, 138.

³⁰ Boling 1982, 363.

³¹ The translation of the New Jerusalem Bible from BW 10 (Jos. 15:1–4 NJB): “The portion falling to the tribe of the sons of Judah, by clans, was near the frontier of Edom, from the desert of Zin southwards to Kadesh in the south. Their southern frontier began at the tip of the Salt Sea, at the southerly bay; it proceeded south of the Ascent of Scorpions, crossed Zin and came up to Kadesh-Barnea from the south; past Hezron, it went on to Addar and turned towards Karka; the frontier then went on to Azmon, came out at the Torrent of Egypt and reached as far as the sea. This is to be your southern frontier.”

- ¹ וַיְהִי הַגּוֹרֵל לַמַּטֵּה בְנֵי יִהוּדָה לְמִשְׁפַּחַתָּם אֶל־גְּבוּל אֲדוּם מִדְּבַר־צֶן וְגַבְהַ מִקְצֵה תִּמְנָן:
- ² וַיְהִי לְהֵם גְּבוּל לְגַב מִקְצֵה יָם הַמֶּלַח מִן־הַלְשׁוֹן הַפְּנִיָה גַבְהַ:
- ³ אֶצְרָף אֶל־מִגְבָּב לְמַעְלָה עַקְרֵיבִים וְעֵבֶר צֹנָה וְעַלָּה מִגְבָּב לְקִדְשׁ פְּרַגְעַ וְעֵבֶר הַצָּרוּן וְעַלָּה אֲרָרָה וְסָבַב הַקְּרָקָה:
- ⁴ וְעֵבֶר עַצְמוֹנָה וְצֶאֱזָרָה וְגַב מִצְרַיִם (וְהָיָה) [וְהָיָה] תְּצַאֲוֹת הַגְּבוּל יָמָה זֶה־יְהִינָה לְכֶם גְּבוּל גַּבְהַ:

In turn, the parallel passage in the LXX reads as follows (Num. 20:16 LXT).³²

- ¹ καὶ ἐγένετο τὰ ὄρια φυλῆς Ἰουδα κατὰ δήμους αὐτῶν ἀπὸ τῶν ὁρίων τῆς Ἰδουμαίας ἀπὸ τῆς ἐρήμου Σιν ἕως Καδης πρὸς λίβα
- ² καὶ ἐγενήθη αὐτῶν τὰ ὄρια ἀπὸ λιβὸς ἕως μέρους τῆς θαλάσσης τῆς ἀλυκῆς ἀπὸ τῆς λοφιάς τῆς φερούσης ἐπὶ λίβα
- ³ καὶ διαπορεύεται ἀπέναντι τῆς προσαναβάσεως Ἀκραβιν καὶ ἐκπεριπορεύεται Σεννα καὶ ἀναβαίνει ἀπὸ λιβὸς ἐπὶ Καδης Βαρνη καὶ ἐκπορεύεται Ἀσωρων καὶ προσαναβαίνει εἰς Ἀδδαρα καὶ περιπορεύεται τὴν κατὰ δυσμὰς Καδης
- ⁴ καὶ πορεύεται ἐπὶ Ἀσεμωνα καὶ διεκβαλεῖ ἕως φάραγγος Αἰγύπτου καὶ ἔσται αὐτοῦ ἡ διέξοδος τῶν ὁρίων ἐπὶ τὴν θάλασσαν τοῦτο ἔστιν αὐτῶν ὄρια ἀπὸ λιβὸς

Two other noticeable textual changes (of importance for the present inquiry) between the Hebrew and Greek texts can easily be distinguished.³³ First, in Josh. 15:1 (which appears to give a general summary, as the southern border is drawn again and in more detail starting in Josh. 15:2), the Hebrew text mentions only the Zin Desert as the southernmost landmark of the border with Edom, while the Greek text mentions both the Zin Desert and Kadesh.³⁴ The lack of Kadesh in the Hebrew text in Josh. 15:1 is likely a textual issue (perhaps a scribal omission);³⁵

³² The Brenton translation from BW 10 (Jos. 15:1–4 LXA): “And the borders of the tribe of Juda according to their families were from the borders of Idumea from the wilderness of sin, as far as Cades southward. And their borders were from the south as far as a part of the salt sea from the high country that extends southward. And they proceed before the ascent of Acrabin, and go out round Sena, and go up from the south to Cades Barne; and go out to Asoron, and proceed up to Sarada, and go out by the way that is west of Cades. And they go out to Selmona, and issue at the valley of Egypt; and the termination of its boundaries shall be at the sea: these are their boundaries southward.”

³³ For a list of other minor linguistic differences, see Boling 1982, 362–363.

³⁴ The expression *מקצה תימן* is usually translated as an indication of the general extreme southern direction. For instance, Görg 1991, 72: “im äußersten Süden”; Buttrick 1953, 628: “at the farthest south”; Woudstra 1981, 232: “in the extreme south.” At the same time, it is theoretically possible (so Görg 1991, 72, n. 15.1) to think of Teman as a proper name (a synonym for Edom, or a name for one of its regions). However, the problem is that the term Teman is a *taw*-performative noun from the root YMN, meaning “south,” and as such it can be used as a general description of any southern region; in addition, as a proper name, it most likely served as a designation for the northern part of the Edomite plateau around the city of Bozrah (see Edelman 1995, 4). The LXX version suggests the first meaning of Teman as a southern region—πρὸς λίβα.

³⁵ At any rate, the current text has two expressions, *גבבה* and *מקצה תימן*, both pointing to the southern direction; this is in fact a tautology. See Butler 1983, 179.

its consequences for the historical geography of Edom/Idumea should not be overestimated, as the name Kadesh is mentioned in a more detailed description in Josh. 15:3 (likewise in the Greek text).

Second, in the Hebrew text of Josh. 15:2, the southern tip of the Salt Sea (known in modern times as the Dead Sea) is called לִשְׁוֹן, “the tongue” (apparently after its shape), while the Greek text has a unique name (attested only in Jos. 15:2 and 5, as well as Jos. 18:19), λοφία, which translates as “backfin,”³⁶ and as such compares the form of the southern tip of the Salt Sea to the tail fin of a fish (probably of the protocercal type).³⁷

Several other more general observations are in order. First of all, the southern border of Judah is drawn by referring to several geographical landmarks (see Figure 3). At the same time, the southern border is also characterized by the explicit mention of Edom and an indirect reference to Egypt (the Torrent of Egypt in Jos. 15:4) as Judah’s southern neighbors. It follows that Judah did not border Edom along the entire course of its southern border. In fact, the reference to Edom in Josh. 15:1 suggests that Judah neighbored Edom on its southern border as far as the Zin Desert (and Kadesh). Thus, the geographical landmarks that are important for drawing the border between Judah and Edom are as follows: the southernmost tip of the Salt Sea, the Ascent of Scorpions, the Zin Desert, and probably Kadesh-Barnea. According to Josh. 15:1–4, all these landmarks belong to the territory of Judah (and not to Edom),³⁸ but it should still be stressed that Edom (as presented in Josh. 15:1–4) does extend beyond the ‘Arabah valley.³⁹

The identification of the Salt Sea as the modern Dead Sea is beyond doubt; however, it should be noted that the surface of the Dead Sea has been rapidly shrinking throughout most of the twentieth century (mainly because of the diversion of incoming water from the Jordan River for agricultural use), and thus its

³⁶ Liddell/Scott/Jones/McKenzie 1996, *ad loc.* (BW 10).

³⁷ The term λοφία may also be translated as the mane on the neck and back of certain animals (esp. the mane of horses and the bristly back of boars and hyenas), but this meaning is less likely for the name of a body of water. See Liddell/Scott/Jones/McKenzie 1996, *ad loc.* (BW 10).

³⁸ This conclusion results from the use of the verb עָבַר. According to Boling 1982, 365, this verb in the boundary lists “describes a segment of the border which is somehow diverted from what might otherwise seem to be a more straightforward route.” In the passage under discussion, the verb עָבַר occurs in vv. 3–4, 7, 10, 11. With regard to the Edomite border, עָבַר refers to the Zin Desert in v. 3. In the Greek Bible, this role is played by the verb ἐκπεριτορεύομαι (to encompass, to make a detour), which perfectly reflects the idea of a diverted line to include a place located slightly off the straight line. In turn, the location of the Ascent of Scorpions and Kadesh-Barnea on the Judahite side is expressed by the Hebrew preposition מִנֶּגַב (from the south) and the Greek prepositions ἀπέναντι, meaning “opposite, in front of, before” (for the Ascent of Scorpions), and ἀπὸ λαβός, which translates as “from the south” (for Kadesh-Barnea). For the prepositions, see also Butler 1983, 179–180.

³⁹ Miller/Tucker 1925, 120.

ancient surface was certainly larger (also, the southernmost tip is no longer clearly recognizable as the shape of a tongue or fishtail).⁴⁰ In turn, given the geographical context, the Ascent of Scorpions must refer to one of the passes leading from the 'Arabah northwest towards Beersheba.⁴¹ Next, the Zin Desert is widely equated with the desert region adjacent to Kadesh-Barnea (see below) in the northeast (modern region of northeastern Sinai and the central Negev).⁴² Finally, Qadesh-Barnea is widely identified with the well-watered valley of the Ain el-Qudeirat oasis, where the Sinai desert merges with "the High Negev" (understood as the region between the Beersheba basin to the north, the Arabah to the east, and the springs and wadis leading towards the coast to the west).⁴³ It should be stressed that according to Josh. 15:1–4, both in the Hebrew and Greek texts, all these locations mark the border between Judah and Edom, but they are all located on the Judahite side of the frontier.

Summary

A comparison of the Hebrew and Greek texts of Numbers 20:16, Deuteronomy 2:1, and Joshua 15:1–4 does not reveal any textual differences that would reflect the historical process of the migration of the Edomites from Transjordan into the Negev and southern Judah and the creation of the province of Idumea, which included the northern Negev and southern Judea as far as Beth-Zur.

To be precise, both the Hebrew and Greek texts of Num 20:16 present the city of Kadesh as the landmark dividing the territory of the Edomites from the territory temporarily accessible to the Israelites. In both the Hebrew and Greek texts of Deuteronomy 2:1, Mt. Seir is presented as the core of the territory of the Edomites, while the Red Sea is most likely located outside their territory. Lastly, in Joshua 15:1–4, both the Hebrew and Greek texts draw the southern border of the tribe of Judah to include the southernmost tip of the Dead Sea, the Ascent of Scorpions, the Zin Desert, and Kadesh-Barnea.

⁴⁰ See Neumann/Kagan/Stein 2010, 11–26.

⁴¹ Gray 1912, 456; Buttrick 1953, 628.

⁴² See Wooley/Lawrence 1914–15, 69–71; Woudstra 1981, 234; Görg 1991, 73; Bruins/van der Plicht 2007, 483–486, 493–494.

⁴³ See Wooley/Lawrence 1914–15, 69–71; Meyers 1976, 148; Boling 1982, 365.

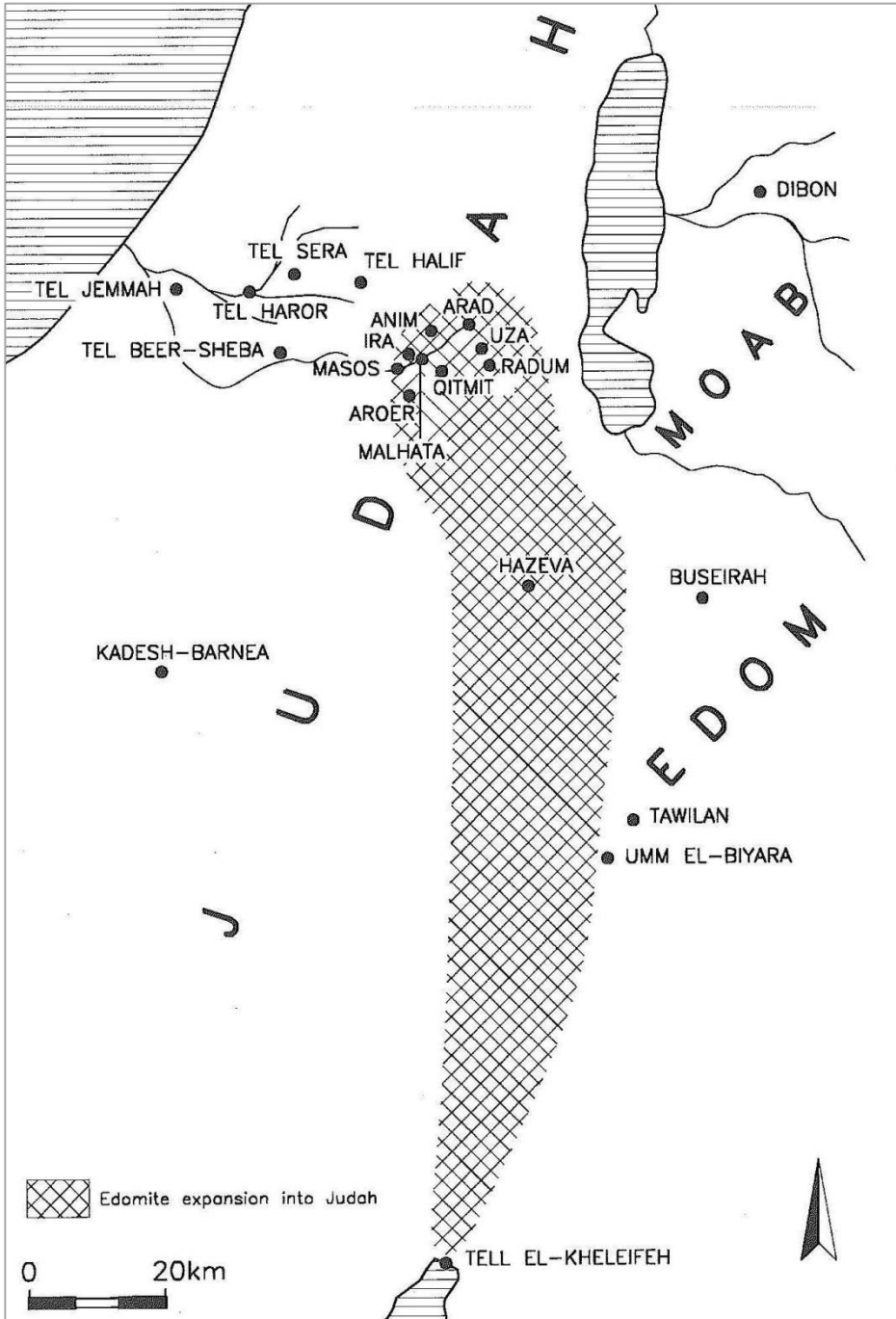


Figure 1. Judah and Edom in the monarchic period (Beit-Arieh 1995, 40)

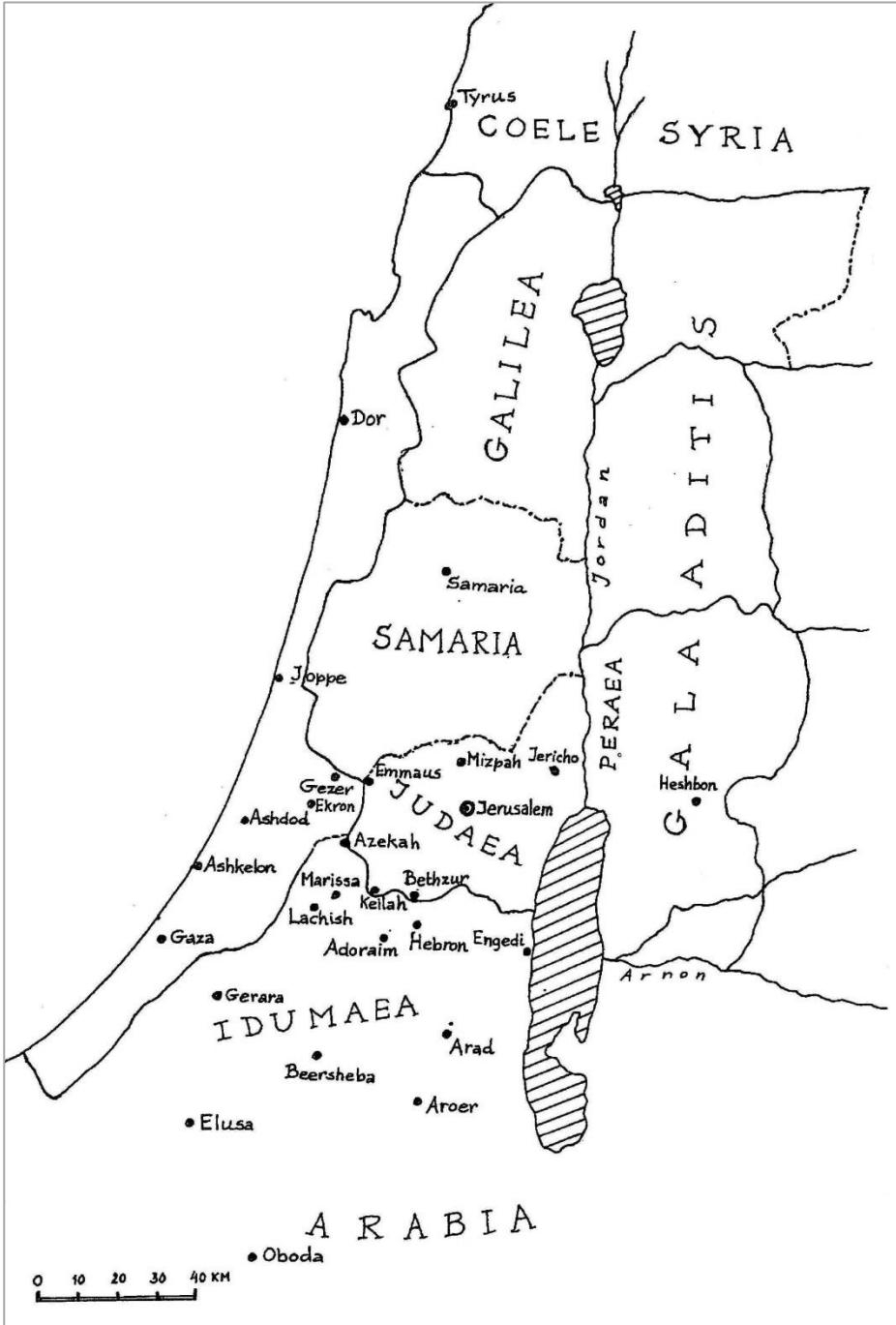


Figure 2. Idumea and Judea in the Hellenistic and early Roman period (de Geus 1979–80, 58)

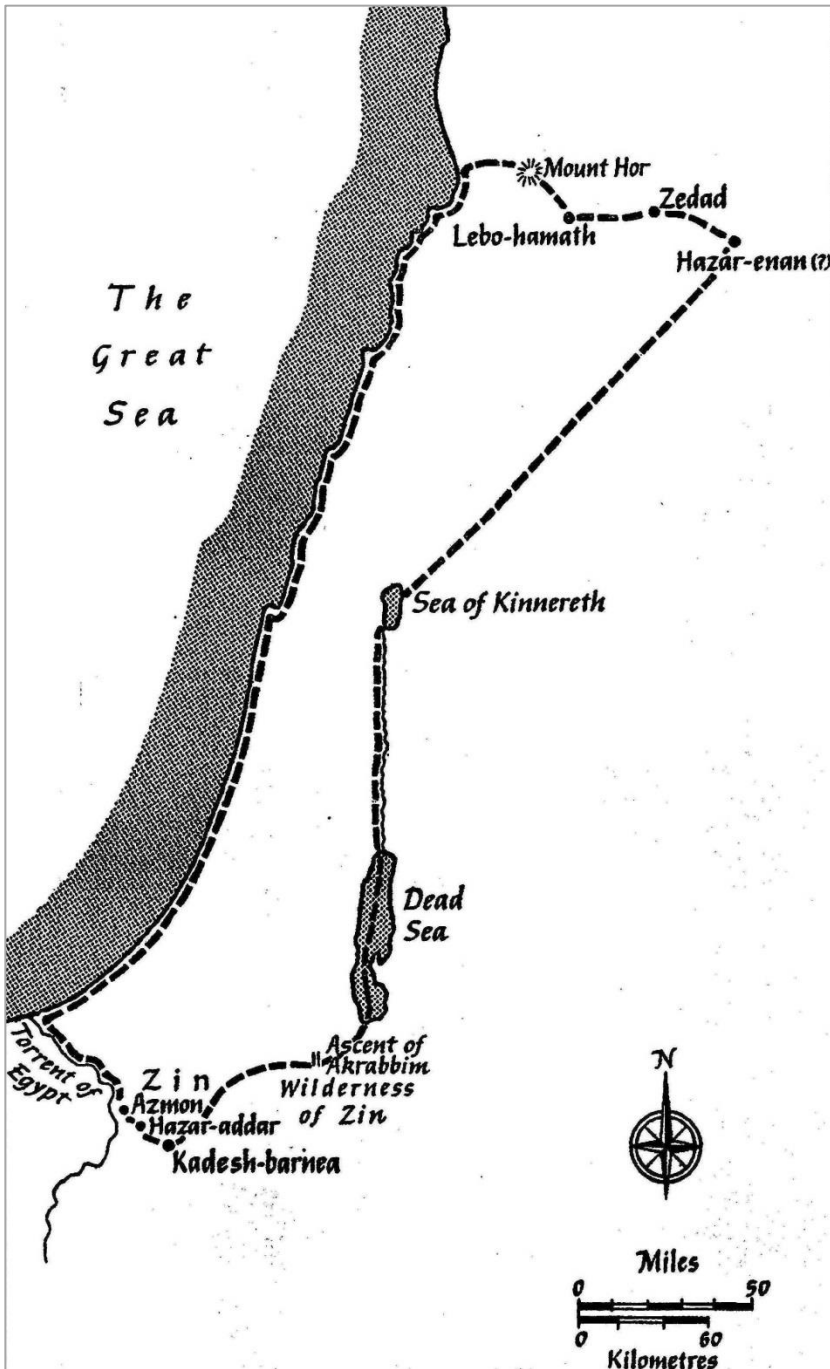


Figure 3. Judah's southern border according to Joshua 15:1-10 (Sturdy 1976, 233)

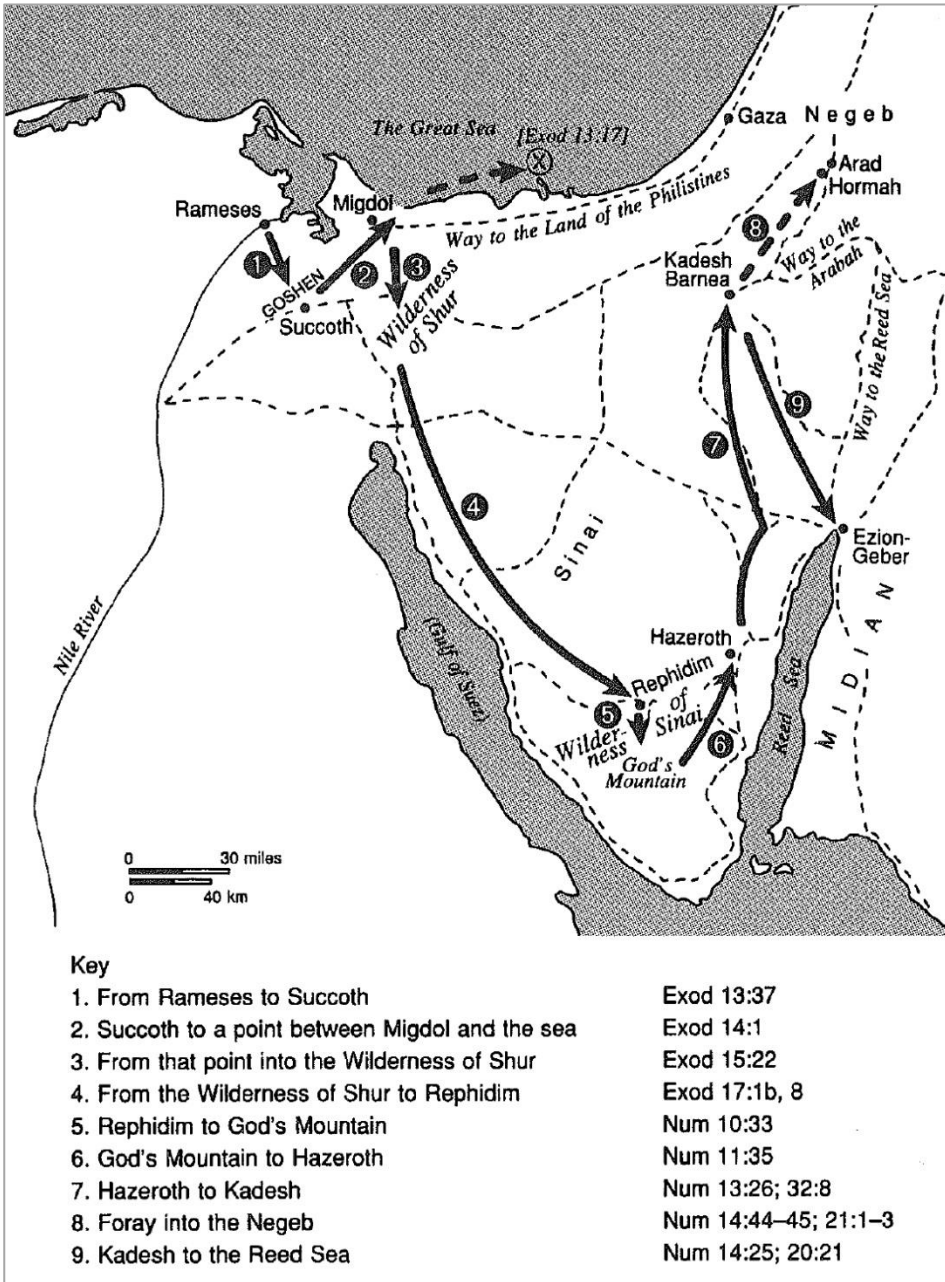


Figure 4. The wilderness period (Levine 1993, map 2)

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Abstract

This paper deals with selected parallel passages from the Hebrew (MT) and Greek (LXX) Bibles that are relevant to the historical geography of Edom/Idumea: Numbers 20:16, Deuteronomy 2:1, and Joshua 15:1–4. The purpose of the comparison of the Hebrew and Greek texts is to verify that the LXX passages do not contain any textual differences that may reflect historical events that occurred between the time of the composition of the Hebrew Bible and the time of the creation of the Greek Bible (LXX). To be more precise, the historical event in question is the migration of the Edomites from Transjordan into the Negev and southern Judah and the creation of the province of Idumea, which included the entire Negev and southern Judea as far as Beth-Zur. In the end, the comparison shows that, despite minor textual differences, the Greek text does not contain any differences which may be attributed to the influence of the historical event in question.