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Prophecy, Policy, and Restoration

An Approach to Understanding the Composition of the Book of Hosea

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PREFACE

The present doctoral dissertation maintains that the textual material in the present form of the book Hosea is best understood against the background of two different historical periods, the 8th century BCE when the underlying prophecies were proclaimed, and the time of the reform of King Josiah of Judah when the textual material underwent a major redaction. The study is based on two main premises. First, the 8th century prophecies emerged as a response to the situation of Assyrian expansion, and second, in the time of Josiah's reform the prophetic tradition got a positive reception in Judah, since there was a need for justification of the reform and for building a new identity after Judah's long vassalage to Assyria. Methodologically, the present study does not attempt to delineate various literary layers in the textual material but focuses on the present form of the text. The study shows that despite the long process of transmission, the text contains traces of ancient religious concepts and traditions. This implies that the process of transmission was also conservative, since the redactors respected the content in the sources by preserving some of the central ideas, even though they applied these ideas to the concerns of their time.

When I began to plan this study, I could not anticipate the amount of questions that eventually emerged. There have been moments when my feeling of inadequacy was almost overwhelming. I have painfully realized how far we are from the ancient world view, and how difficult it is to avoid anachronism. I really have had my highs and lows. In my former research as a medical molecular geneticist, I was constantly amazed by the beauty and the brilliance of the genetic code; now, when reading biblical texts, I am even more amazed since in the Bible, a text is always more than a text. These texts have pushed me forward.

This dissertation would never have been completed without the support and guidance of my supervisors, Prof. Antti Laato and ThD Lotta Valve, to whom I owe my deepest gratitude. I cannot but admire their vast knowledge in the field of biblical studies. Antti and Lotta: you have been inspiring and patient (!) supervisors, and because of you, I hoped – and I wish – that I could have done everything better and in a shorter period of time, but this is what I now have. Thank you, Antti and Lotta, for being my guides into the world of biblical texts.

I express my warm thanks to the OTSEM and Åbo Akademi University for financial support. I have had the privilege to meet many esteemed scholars and fellow students from Finland as well as from abroad at the OTSEM meetings. I also wish to thank members of the seminaries at Åbo Akademi University for all comments concerning my study; I particularly want to offer my thanks to ThD Pekka Lindqvist and Adjunct Prof. Risto Nurmela.

I thank Prof. Göran Eidevall, Prof. Jesper Høgenhaven, and Hon. Senior Lecturer Dr. David Reimer, the pre-examiners of my manuscript, for their valuable comments.

Mrs. Lorna Koskela is gratefully thanked for proof-reading the manuscript. On the basis of the reviewers' comments, I have made some changes on the text, and therefore, I am responsible for any grammar mistakes that appear in the text.

I also want to express my thanks to my husband Åke. Our long walks with our dogs and our sometimes heated and always noisy discussions on various topics have been an excellent counterbalance to the silence of my study. Our deep devotion to the wonders of nature and our interest in the stars of the nightly sky have been the spice of my life. I also owe my warm gratitude to my sister Tuula. When she taught me to read, the first word that I learned to spell was MA-TE-LI-JAT (reptiles). We were reading a worn-out book on animals which soon became read from cover to cover. Tuula has been a sister more than a sister since she was the one who took care of me when I was a serious little child. I also express my warm thanks to her family for the affectionate closeness that we share. My special and loving thanks go to my nephew Saku for our profound discussions on all aspects of life.

Finally, I thank all those people in whose prayers I have been. In my constant feeling of cosmic loneliness, through your prayers I have got strength to carry on. May God bless you all.

Piikkiö, May 2021

Kirsi Huoponen

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I INTRODUCTION

1.1. Task of the study

In this study, my contention is that the present form of the book of Hosea (hereafter, Hosea) is best understood as reflecting two historical periods, the last decades of the kingdom of Israel, and the time of King Josiah of Judah. The present form of the book is an end result of a long process of redaction. The final limiting point in time for the completion of the book dates back to the 2nd century BCE[1], since by then Hosea had become incorporated into the collection of the Book of the Twelve, as the reference in the Wisdom of Ben Sirach (49:10) indicates. This study is based on following premises.

First, the prophecies beneath the prophetic book of Hosea come from the northern kingdom of Israel, or Ephraim, as the kingdom is often called in the book, and they can be dated to the last quarter century of the kingdom. The prophecies were proclaimed in a situation, in which Near Eastern prophets – seers and diviners – used to emerge, since intermediaries of divine messages were needed in societies, which were experiencing on-going stress and/or rapid social change.[2] The prophecies were a response to the calamities caused by the expansion of the Assyrian empire and the threat that Assyrian imperialism posed to the very existence of Palestinian small states such as Israel and Judah. In the prophecies, wars and devastation resulted from a broken relationship between YHWH, the national God of Israel, and his people. This covenantal standpoint is a distinctive feature of the book, and in the prophecies, the imagery of marriage is used as a metaphor for the exclusivity of the relationship. The prophecies were intended to explain that the power of the Assyrian empire, its king and god Aššur, did not dominate the world, but even the catastrophic international events were according to the plan of YHWH.[3] Even though the textual material in Hosea can be read and understood against this background, the prophetic utterances cannot be

[1] All dates are given as BCE unless otherwise indicated.

[2] Robert M. Wilson, *Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980) 31. See also Hans M. Barstad, "What Prophets Do. Reflections on the Past Reality in the Book of Jeremiah," in Hans M. Barstad and Reinhard G. Kratz, (eds.), *Prophecy in the Book of Jeremiah* (BZAW 388; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009) 10–32, here 28.

[3] So Baruch A. Halpern, "Assyrian Ideology and Israelite Monotheism," in Andrew Gross (ed.), *In Pursuit of Meaning. Collected Studies of Baruch A. Levine* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2011) 3–28. In this book, Halpern shows how the prophecies of First Isaiah mirrored the threat of the Assyrian empire in Judah, and contributed to the breakthrough in the development of monotheism. I follow Halpern's view in that the Assyrian expansion did cause a response in the sphere of religion. Halpern also emphasizes the role of First Isaiah in counselling Judaean kings against rebellion and anti-Assyrian alliances; the same anti-alliance stance is prominent in Hosea too. As Halpern states, First Isaiah's doctrine was that it was the God of Israel who held imperial kings as his agents and, thus, that the Assyrian kings could not credit their gods with the military victories.

reconstructed on the basis of the text as we now have it, nor is it possible to remove separate lineary layers on top of what constitutes an allegedly earliest layer containing the prophecies. In Hosea all we have are the often very obscure references to obviously factual historical events, and motifs from ancient traditions and lore intended to explain the prevailing circumstances and assure the people that they should turn to YHWH, not to political allies and foreign gods.

Second, I maintain that in the time of Josiah's reform the prophetic message was applied for the concerns of the reform. It is likely that the first written collection of the prophecies was written shortly before the fall of Samaria or, alternatively, the first compilation was made in Judah in the aftermath of the event which had put an end to the kingdom of Israel. In Judah, the interest in northern literary works – annalistic, legal and prophetic texts – had presumably begun at the time of Hezekiah, but I emphasize the importance of the time of Josiah on account of the following aspects. First, in the time of Josiah, Judah began to build a new identity. Throughout its history, the kingdom had been in the shadow of the powerful kingdom of Israel, and it has been an Assyrian vassal for a long time. Only when the power of Assyria began to weaken, and the northern kingdom of Israel no longer existed as a political power, could hopes for the national revival and independency rise in Judah. This happened in the time of Josiah, when the reformist circles and the so-called "the people of the land," including groups from the former kingdom of Israel, saw an opportunity to begin to build Judah's identity as the sole people of YHWH. To establish Judah's link to ancient traditions and history, Judaean scribal circles appropriated the heritage of Israel which, however, still belonged to those Israelites who were living in the Assyrian provinces in the territory of the former kingdom of Israel. The reformist circles needed a political and religious justification for their policy and, at the same time, the fall of Israel still needed an explanation. The northern literary works were well suited to this purpose, and the northern prophetic message became used as part of Judah's response to the fall of the kingdom of Israel. The prophet's critical statements about the cult and the kings of Israel became a tool to demonstrate that Judah was the rightful heir of the Israelite traditions and, most importantly, the kingship of Israel could only belong to a Davidic king.

1.2. Survey of research

The following review of earlier studies of Hosea intends to demonstrate the methodological shifts that have taken place in this field of research on the one hand, and clarify my own approach to Hosea on the other. The amount of literature on Hosea is exhaustive, and therefore, only a limited number of studies can be discussed, and many studies which are of importance to my study will be referred to in their due context in the ensuing chapters of the study.

In many still very influential commentaries the historicity of the prophet Hosea has been taken for granted and, to a greater or lesser extent, the textual material has been attributed to the prophet himself.[4] In his historical and form critical commentary, Hans Walter Wolff, for example, is of the opinion that prophetic oracles were put into writing soon after their utterance by the prophet's followers, who arranged the recorded speeches, given at one and the same occasion, as formal entities which Wolff calls "kerygmatic units."[5] According to Wolff, the chronological order of the oracles is linked to specific historical events during the time of the prophet's ministry and, thus, the date of the prophecies can be determined "with a high degree of accuracy."[6] Wolff does not consider the redactional material as extensive since the prophetic traditions were – in the main – put into writing during the prophet's lifetime, occasionally with some contribution from the prophet himself.[7]

The rhetorical critical commentary of Francis I. Andersen and David Noel Freedman points to important literary features in Hosea and to the obscure and difficult language in the book.[8] Peculiar linguistic features are due to the "unfinished" oracular nature of the utterances and to YHWH's "preliminary reflections or soliloquies", which account for "the turbulent vacillation of many of the reflections, and the abrupt shifts from direct address to the people to third-person description".[9] Andersen and Freedman do not see the redactorial material as extensive. In their opinion, Hosea is an anthology in which many oracles have been preserved in their original form "by faithful conservators of the tradition",

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[4] So, e.g. Hans Walter Wolff, *Hosea. A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Hosea* (Transl. G. Stansell; Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974); Francis I. Andersen and David Noel Freedman, *Hosea* (AB; Garden City: Doubleday, 1980); A. A. Macintosh, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Hosea* (ICC; Edinburg: T&T Clark, 1997).

[5] Wolff, *Hosea*, xxx.

[6] Wolff dates the entire Hosea 1 to the time of Jeroboam II because of the mention of Jeroboam II in 1:1 and the judgmental saying about the Jehu's dynasty in 1:4, Wolff also relates 2:4–17 and 3:1–5 to the peaceful and prosperous time during Jeroboam II; the second period in a chronological order of the proclamation of the prophet is reflected in 5:8–11, 14; 7:8f, which speak about the Syro-Ephraimite war and the campaigns of Tiglath-pileser III, about a series of palace revolts (7:7; 8:4) and Israel's political vacillation between Egypt and Assyria (7:11); Wolff, *Hosea*, xxi.

[7] In Wolff's view, the earliest additions to the prophecies were made by the prophet's disciples; these additions are found in 8:14 and 10:11, which combine the material of Hosea with the sayings from Amos; in another early redactorial stage prophetic sayings were explained by supplementing them with other prophetic sayings in order to clarify the nature of Israel's transgression; for example, the expression עשׂו לבעל in 2:10 picked up the thought of 8:4 and 13:2. The earliest Judaean redaction is recognizable in 1:7 and 3:5, and it supplemented the Hosean prophecies with Judaean salvation eschatology in line with the prophet's own thinking; in the late phase of his ministry the prophet "looked with hope toward certain circles in Judah." In later Judaean redaction, the prophetic accusations against Israel were applied to concern Judah as well; for example, in 4:15 the pre-existing verse was expanded by adding the word "Judah," and in 12:3, the original "Israel" was displaced by "Judah." This final redaction took place during the exile or early post-exile period, when separate transmission complexes were combined, and the superscription in 1:1 and the closing words in 14:10 were added to the final composition of the book; Wolff, *Hosea*, xxxi–xxxii.

[8] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 58–59.

[9] Ibid., 45.

and which became combined with limited narrative material at the time of King Manasseh.[10] Andersen and Freedman do not suggest any Josianic redaction of Hosea, but do make the point that, during Hezekiah and Josiah, the reception of the compilation of the prophetic oracles functioned as "the marching plan" for the reforms of Hezekiah and Josiah.[11]

Undoubtedly, many exegetical comments in the above-mentioned commentaries are most insightful, but I am not inclined to regard the historical prophet as the author of the present textual material. This is because the whole issue of the historicity of the prophet and what he may or may not have said or thought is impossible to prove. Authentic prophetic words cannot be deduced from the present form of the text, since spoken words have a direct connection with the particular real-life situation in which they are uttered, and, on the basis of the present form of Hosea, it is impossible to determine any accurate dates of individual prophecies. When the oracles were written down, they became detached from their concrete setting in real life and were reinterpreted through selection and re-arrangements as well as textual changes.[12] As Antti Laato emphasizes, we cannot reconstruct the historical situations in which the prophets uttered their prophecies, since at the time the sayings were written down, be it by the prophet or somebody else, the intention to put them into writing probably differed from the situation behind the words spoken in a particular historical situation.[13] At every stage in the long process of transmission the pre-existing textual material was changed and obtained a new conceptual meaning. However, as Laato states, the process of transmission was also conservative; the redactors respected the content in the sources by preserving some of the central ideas, which they then used in new contexts.[14] This gives reason to presuppose that although the original prophetic words have not been preserved, we do still have remains of the contents of the prophecies.

The prophecies were transmitted in written form, which raises the question of why and by whom they were preserved, since it is obvious that without a community the prophecy could not have survived. In Wolff's view, the social milieu of the prophet was among the "forerunners of the Deuteronomic movement," who had connections with the northern Levitical circles; this affiliation also explains the similarities between Hosea and Deuteronomy.[15] The role of northern Levites in the transmission of Hosea has repeatedly emerged in

[10] Ibid., 52–53.
[11] Ibid., 54.
[12] See, e.g. Douglas A. Knight, *Rediscovering the Traditions of Israel* (SBL 16; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006) 8.
[13] Antti Laato, *History and Ideology in the Old Testament Prophetic Literature. A Semiotic Approach to the Reconstruction of the Proclamation of the Historical Prophets* (ConBOT 41; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1996) 194.
[14] Ibid., 136.
[15] Wolff, *Hosea*, xxiii, xxxi, 40, 226; Wolff refers particularly to phrases such as "knowledge of YHWH" and "forgetting" which appear in both Hosea and Deuteronomy. Wolff's original proposal is presented in his article "Hoseas geistige Heimat," *ThLZ* 81 (1956) 83–94; reprinted in *Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament* (ThB 22; München: 1973) 232–250.

scholarly discussion.[16] We do not know much about the role of Levites in 8th century Israel, but they could have been teachers. Marvin Sweeney makes an important point that as a whole Hosea is structured for didactic purposes, and given that the Levites were teachers of law, it may well be that Levitical circles were influential in finalizing the textual material in the book.[17] Michael Fishbane, for his part, refers to Nehemiah 8:1–8, which indicates that the long tradition of Levitical teaching and interpreting continued with Ezra, who, as Fishbane says, had "inherited a venerable Israelite tradition of scribal and textual scholarship."[18] Thus, the idea of the role of the Levites in producing and transmissing the prophetic tradition is possible, but, as Joseph Blenkinsopp rightly remarks, the weakness of this suggestion arises from the obscurity concerning the early history of Levites.[19]

In comparison to the above mentioned commentaries, Ehud Ben Zvi dissociates himself entirely from historical views by positing the composition of Hosea to the Persian period Yehud.[20] Despite its many insightful comments, I find Ben Zvi's approach far too one-sided. I understand that Ben Zvi makes a point of refraining from making any reconstructions of the history of Hosea, since he – quite rightly – indicates many problems in redaction critical studies. These include the hypothetical nature of textual reconstructs and the possibility – even likelihood – that redactional processes not only brought new material into source texts but also excluded some of it, thus, causing fundamental changes in it.[21] I do not, however, agree that the book was composed by and for a small group of literati in the postmonarchic Judah.[22] To my mind, the question is rather about the reception of Hosea and, thus, Hosea is not, as Ben Zvi claims, an "ideological construct" which presents "an ideological geography" in its literary world.[23] In all

[16] See, e.g. Stephen L. Cook, *The Social Roots of Biblical Yahwism* (SBL 8; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004), 145, 185, 272. Cook depicts the prophet as a "traditional, lineage-based priest," whose ancestors were Levitical officials at Shechem, Bethel, and Shiloh, and who had to fight for their traditional authority in a centralized society where powerful monarchic systems were competing with Israel's older, tribal and village structures. Cook builds his study on social-scientific and cross-cultural anthropology studies, which show how a new, centralizing political power within a lineage-based society may disenfranchise traditional ritual functionaries.

[17] Marvin A. Sweeney, *King Josiah of Judah. The Lost Messiah of Israel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001) 260–261.

[18] Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985) 37.

[19] Joseph Blenkinsopp, *A History of Prophecy in Israel* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983) 99. As Blenkinsopp notes, an early narrative about an individual Levite in Judges 17:7 locates him to Judah.

[20] Ehud Ben Zvi, *Hosea* (FOTL 21a; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005).

[21] Ibid., 6. For a more detailed discussion on the methodological problems concerning literary- and redaction-critical studies, see Laato, *History and Ideology*, 12–21.

[22] Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 13–14.

[23] Ibid., 139. Ben Zvi means, for example, that the negative connotations attached to names like Bethel are influenced by the concept of Jerusalem as the only legitimate center – a concept which, in turn, is an ideological construct by the Persian period. In my opinion, we should not exclude the possibility that certain views in Hosea have deep origins in Israel's ancient traditions which allows to probe into the depth-dimensions of the texts.

probability, Hosea owes its final composition to the postexlic period, but this does not mean that all the material in the book comes from that time. As I argue, traces of the prophecies have been retained in Hosea despite its later reworking.

Like Sweeney, Ben Zvi acknowledges the didactic nature of the book, but in line with his general view, Ben Zvi sees that the book was written to communicate with its primary postmonarchic recipients, who were, at the same time, the authors of the book. In this literary world, the obscurity of the language is intentional; it functions as a literary device that makes the intended readership approach the text on a general level, since any naming of historical figures such as the kings would have distracted from the intended way of reading the text.[24] I may be oversimplifying, but I see no reason why redactors, learned scholars, would have written anything as obscure and difficult as Hosea in order to elucidate the concerns of their own time. Although they expanded and developed their source material – like the priest-prophet Ezekiel did with Hosea's prophecies – they did not invent it. The redactors were, as Jean-Louis Ska calls them, "living channels of transmission of ancient and collective traditions," who were not interested in the past as such but "in the past that could inform, shape, and inspire the present."[25]

Nevertheless, I find many of Ben Zvi's observations on Hosea most interesting, and also insightful and thought-provoking. For example, he makes a point about the general difficulty of demarcating structural units in prophetic literature, since the arguments concerning whether a textual passage is an independent unit and what demarcates it are also decisive for how the text is interpreted. As Ben Zvi remarks, "every structural outline emphasizes particular meaning and de-emphasizes others."[26] This is absolutely true. In Hosea, there are frequent changes of addressees and themes and, therefore, it is sometimes very difficult to say where one unit ends and another begins, and on occasion it takes a lot of work to make sense of a passage under examination because of its rather incoherent nature.

Ben Zvi's thought concerning a particular "conceptual structure" in Hosea cannot be denied either, since Hosea follows a pattern known from other prophetic books as well: Israel was chosen by YHWH, but sinned against him and, therefore, YHWH punished Israel, and after an undefined time, YHWH would restore the relationship between him and Israel.[27] It is likely that this common feature in the biblical prophetic books speaks for the late date of their present structure but, this notwithstanding, does not exclude the possibility that some

[24] Ibid., 142.

[25] Jean-Louis Ska, "On Behalf of the Biblical Redactors," *ST* 59 (2005) 4–18, here 7.

[26] Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 122–124. Also Andersen and Freedman see that Hosea is not suitable for a form-critical analysis, but in their opinion, this is due to the "unfinished" form of the text with "the turbulent vacillation of many of the reflections, and the abrupt shifts from direct address to the people to third-person description;" Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 45.

[27] Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 8–9. According to Ben Zvi, in Hosea all the manifestations of the metanarrative – images of asymmetrical relationships, references to traditions as representing collective memory, allusions to Israel's sins with a repertoire of general images of cultic transgressions, trusting foreign powers and so on – are set in the former northern kingdom of Israel.

older concepts and terms were simply taken over by the redactors and reutilized in a new literary context.

The trend of a late dating of Hosea is followed by James Bos, who closely follows Ben Zvi in suggesting that Hosea – as a literary construct – comes from the Persian period.[28] One of Bos's arguments for the late date of Hosea is the lack of adequate literacy in the 8th century to produce such a long text as Hosea, especially as prophecies with an anti-monarchic sentiment could not have been put into writing in the context of the state bureaucracy, which in the 8th century was the only quarter with a sufficiently adequate writing skill.[29] As I understand it, however, the first written version of the prophetic oracles was not anything equal to the present prophetic book of Hosea; it is possible it was a modest collection of the prophetic oracles in a small scroll. Furthermore, Bos's argument is weakened in the light of the epigraphic evidence from Samaria ostraca, the Kuntillet 'Ajrud inscriptions, and several inscribed seals from Israel, since they demonstrate that in the 8th century, and even earlier, at least a small-scale textual-education system did exist.[30] Furthermore, in the 8th century there was a significant broadening of the monarchy and royal administration, which resulted in an expanding use of writing, and moreover in the 7th century Judah there is evidence that basic literacy extended even to the lower levels of bureaucracy.[31] Additionally, on the basis of the Neo-Assyrian evidence, we know that prophetic oracles were recorded after their utterance and archived for future consultation.[32] There is no reason, therefore, to doubt that Hosea's prophecies could have been put in writing due to the lack of adequate writing skills at that particular time.

In accordance with his opinion about the late date of Hosea, Bos only explains the essential topics in Hosea – the anti-monarchic ideology, the polemics against Benjamin, Bethel and Samaria, the theme of exile-return and the use of the traditions of Israel – against the background of the Persian period. Thus, as in the case of Ben Zvi, Bos does not take into account the possibility that all these themes may have their deep roots in the prophecy. Instead, according to Bos, the anti-monarchic texts in Hosea are attributed to the circle of priests, in whose interests it was to oppose the establishment of local monarchy, and the anti-Bethel stance

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[28] James M. Bos, *Reconsidering the Date and Provenance of the Book of Hosea. The Case for Persian-Period Yehud* (Literary of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 580; London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013).

[29] Ibid., 4–7.

[30] David M. Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart: Origins of Scripture and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) 163–164.

[31] Ibid., 4, 116, 165–166. As Carr also points out, it is obvious that common people were not trained to read or write in ancient societies. Thus, there was no need for silent reading, which also explains why many ancient texts were not written so that they could have been easily read by someone who did not know them well, but they were rather meant to be heard through an oral recitation. See also Richard S. Hess, "Writing about Writing: Abecedaries and Evidence for Literacy in Ancient Israel," *VT* 56 (2006) 342–346; Hess refers to the discovery of an abecedary from the 10th century BCE at the Judean site of Tel Zayit.

[32] Karel van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007) 178.

reflects the rivalry between Bethel and Jerusalem during the Persian period.[33] Undoubtedly, there was rivalry between the two shrines, in the same way as there was rivalry between various parties and groups in the postexilic period. While Bethel was able to serve as an alternative temple before the rebuilding of the Jerusalem Temple, prophecies with a critical attitude towards Bethel could have been used in order to provide support for later ideology; I will return to this issue in Chapter V. Furthermore, I do not share Bos's view that the presentation of Israel between the political powers i.e. Egypt and Assyria does not depict the geo-political realities of the 8th century.[34] Unlike Bos's claim, it is likely that Egypt was Israel's ally in the coalition against Assyria during the Syro-Ephraimite conflict, and the fact that Aram is not mentioned, a point also stressed by Ben Zvi, does not exclude the historical background of the prophecy, as I will discuss in Chapter II. Throughout their history, Israel and Judah had been relatively small political players, but their strategical position controlling important trade routes constantly put them in danger, and this was reflected in biblical tradition. Egypt and Assyria were realities which the small kingdoms were forced to face.

I earlier referred to Ben Zvi's critical standpoint on redaction critical studies, and that I basically agree with him on that point. Nevertheless, it is clear that biblical prophetic books have undergone different stages of redaction behind the present form of the book. My point, however, is that because the process of redaction is largely untraceable and complex I do not attempt to discern separate literary layers in the text.

The divergent conclusions in redaction critical studies come from using various criteria to define the redactional layers as well as from how one sees the principles according to which redactors are considered to have carried out their work. With regard to the latter point, I find the study of Ina Willi-Plein interesting in that she sees Hosea as having developed in successive stages by a redactorial principle that resembles rabbinic exegesis; on a textual level, this means that redaction consists of commentary-like additions to a literary kernel containing some original prophetic words.[35] Although such midrash-like principles of interpretation were developed only later, it is possible that such a particular way

[33] For Bos's conclusions, see *Reconsidering*, 68–69, 100–101.

[34] Bos, *Reconsidering*, 166; see also Hans M. Barstad, "Hosea and the Assyrians," in Robert P. Gordon and Hans M. Barstad (eds.), *Thus Speaks Ishtar of Arbela. Prophecy in Israel, Assyria, and Egypt in the Neo-Assyrian Period* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2013) 91–110.On the basis of onomastic evidence Barstad presents how combinations of names can point to historical events that are also documented in contemporary sources; for example, the numerous references to Egypt in Hosea (2:17; 7:11, 16; 8:13; 9: 3, 6; 11:1, 5, 11; 12:2, 10, 14; 13:4) are likely to speak for the actual political situation in the Near East. It is noteworthy that Barstad dates Hosea's prophecies to a somewhat earlier period than many other scholars, and posits them at the time of Jeroboam II.

[35] Ina Willi-Plein, *Vorformen der Schriftexegese innerhalb des Alten Testaments – Untersuchung zum literarischen Werden der auf Amos, Hosea und Micah züruckgehenden Bucher im hebräischen Zwölffprophetenbuch* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1971). According to Willi-Plein, the main principles in the redactorial reworking were the argument from analogy and interpretation deduced from the context, later expressed in the 2nd and the 7th rule of Hillel. As Willi-Plein states, "…kein neues Wort in den Text eingefügt werden kann, ohne in diesem bereits verankert, d.h. irgendwie aus dem Grundwort begründet und legitimiert zu sein;" Willi-Plein, *Vorformen*, 266.

of thinking and working with texts already existed during the literary growth of Hosea, and was applied to it.

As for Willi-Plein, she presumes the existence of a core text which triggered the growth of the textual material. Like many other scholars, Willi-Plein defines this core text on the basis of a historical criterion that the oldest textual material in Hosea comes from the period of the so-called Syro-Ephraimite war reflected in 5:8-6:6.[36] Although I am in agreement with Willi-Plein and others that the passage 5:8-6:6 does contain extracts from the prophetic message, I regard this particular passage as being but one of the passages in Hosea which can be related to the prophecy.

Willi-Plein's use of an alleged core text as the starting point is criticized by Gale Yee, who rejects this approach, and begins her own analysis on Hosea with the final redaction, from which she proceeds to earlier redactional stages until she is able to identify the material that consists of the transmitted prophetic tradition.[37] The reason for her choosing the final redaction as the starting point is that she regards the latest redactional stage as being the most influential.[38] According to Yee, the exilic redactor is responsible for the three-part structure of the book, which constitutes "an overarching framework for the redactor to articulate the literary purpose of the work," a journey from doom to hope, in accordance with the redactor's hopeful orientation that the repentance of the people will bring them back home from exile.[39] On the whole, Hosea is, in Yee's opinion, largely a product from the period of the exile. In my opinion, the amount of exilic material in Hosea is not extensive.

Yee's criteria for the identification of the final redactional stage are based on the occurrence of patterns of textual difficulties, such as sudden changes in person and number, repetitions, expansions, or obvious inconsistencies in thought, which she considers as important redactional markers especially when they tend to group in recurring patterns.[40] These criteria are well-accepted among scholars, and since these features are frequently seen in prophetic books, they are often taken as indications of the redactional process. However, as I have already briefly mentioned, not all inconsistencies necessarily point to the existence of redactional seams, and establishing literary tensions in the present form of the text is always

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[36] Ibid., 244.

[37] Gale A. Yee, *Composition and Tradition in the Book of Hosea. A Redaction Critical Investigation* (SBLDS 102; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987).

[38] Ibid., 48–49. Yee calls her approach redaction *and* composition critical; Yee's approach stems from a comment in Willy Schottroff's study of Jeremiah 2:1–3. According to Schottroff, prophetic traditions are available only when the redactorial contribution, by which the prophetic traditions are mediated, has been clarified; see Willy Schottroff, "Jeremiah 2, 1–3: Erwägungen zur Methode der Prophetenexegese," *ZTK* 67 (1970) 263–294, here 293.

[39] Yee, *Composition and Tradition*, 309–313.

[40] Ibid., 49–51. The final redactor is thus responsible for the three-part macrostructure in Hosea, which, according to Yee, describes a three-part journey motif of the wife/Israel back to YHWH as a spiritual as well as a physical journey; cf. Wolff, *Hosea*, xxxi; Wolff sees that the three-part structure of the present form of the book relates to the transmission of the material in three separate complexes, which at some point in the exilic or postexilic period were joined together.

a matter of interpretation.[41] For redactional critical studies in general, this is an extremely relevant point. As Laato has pointed out, arguments based on "literary tension" are flexible and, thus, scholars find different parts of the text to be in tension with each other.[42] What also plays a role in how we determine redactional layers is our own view on the intents of a particular layer.[43]

In addition to the time of the exile, Yee also dates the redactional stages in Hosea to the time of Josiah, which is in line with Cross' hypothesis of the double redaction in the Deuteronomistic history.[44] Yee limits the concern of the Josianic redactor to cultic matters, and sees that the redactor used his source as a warning to Judah, and presented the cultic transgressions, notably "the sin of Jeroboam", the calf-cult at Bethel and Dan, as the reason for the downfall of the northern kingdom.[45] It is easy to agree with this view but, to my view, there is more to this topic than merely the categorical statement that during the time of Josiah the redactor was focused on cultic matters.

Yee sees that the source material at the disposal of the Josianic redactor was a collection of prophetic sayings, made by the prophet's disciple. To legitimize the prophet's call, the disciple wrote the textual material in Hosea 1, in which the original prophetic marriage metaphor was transformed from denoting Israel's "whoring" with Egypt and Assyria to a description of the prophet's own marriage.[46] Yee's conclusion is that when the redactional material is stripped away, the remaining material represents the prophetic tradition, in which the main topic is Israel/Ephraim's foreign politics.

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[41] Laato, *History and Ideology*, 376.

[42] Ibid., 145; for a longer discussion and analysis of empirical models, see *History and Ideology*, 62–145.

[43] As Knight says, "For a method such as tradition history it means we need to show restraint in maintaining that we can reconstruct the growth of a text: if the text's meaning and especially its intents are so uncertain, then its preceding tradition's meaning and intents are equally uncertain – and probably even more so. The problem lies as much with us, not just with the subject matter we study," in Knight, *Rediscovering the Traditions of Israel*, 316.

[44] Yee, *Composition and Tradition*, 309. Frank Moore Cross has proposed the existence of two themes coming from the Josianic edition of the Deuteronomistic History (DtrH): the "sin of Jeroboam" and the faithfulness of David, which culminate in the account of Josiah's reform in 2 Kings 22: 1–23; see Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1973) 278–289.

[45] Yee, *Composition and Tradition*, 308–309. Yee characterizes the Josianic redactor (R1 in her study) as one being "steeped in the Deuteronomistic ideology." In Hosea, the redactor's cultic concern manifests itself as a reinterpretation of the "harlotry" motif which in the prophetic tradition has denoted the nations' foreign treaties; now, it became an imagery for a polluted form of the cult, which has infected the worship of YHWH from the priests and their kin (4:4, 6, 13b) down to the people themselves (4:17-19; 5:6-7; 6:6; 9:1). The climax of the redaction is in Hosea 10, where the redactor attributes the fall of the Northern Kingdom to the "sin of Jeroboam," the calves at Bethel and Dan, and it is for this sin that the redactor wants to warn his contemporaries in Judah. Other concerns of the redactor are demonstrated by concerns such as actualizing the northern tradition to include Judah (4:15; 5:5b; 6:4, 11a); a significant concern for the Law, witnessed by his allusion to the Decalogue (4:1-2), and the people's violations against the Law (4:6; 6:4, 6-7; 8:1, 12); maintaining the central sanctuary, "the house of YHWH," in Jerusalem (8:1), hence protests against the pilgrimages to Bethel and Gilgal (4:15; 9:15).

[46] Ibid., 307.

It is not difficult to share Yee's view that political aspects were an important stimulus for the prophecies. Yee is also correct in making a point about the inaccessibility of the oral stage of the material and that the written tradition is all we have.[47] As previously stated, we cannot bridge the abyss which separates the text and the actual utterance of the prophetic oracles, not to mention even their first written form.[48] The process of reinterpretation and modification began when the oracles were put into writing for the very first time: spoken words became a written tradition, and eventually a prophetic book.

The literary growth of Hosea can also be seen as a continuous *Fortschreibung*, which means a continuous extension of the existing material in a way which makes it difficult – if not impossible – to discern individual redactional layers. Martti Nissinen has used a colometric analysis on the poetic structure of Hosea 4 and 11, and comes to the conclusion that Hosea cannot be regarded as a collection of separate, originally oral prophetic words: it is an end result of both *Redaktion*, a systematic redactional reworking of longer texts, and a *Fortschreibung* of these texts.[49] Thus, each of the redactional stages in Hosea 4 and 11 makes a coherent whole with the previous one.[50] Whereas Nissinen does not completely reject the possibility of the existence of some prophetic sources, Susanne Rudnig-Zelt is of the opinion that Hosea as a whole originates with Judah and has no connection to the 8th century prophecy, but the book is a result of several stages of a *Fortschreibung,* in which distinctive theological views can be discerned.[51]

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[47] Ibid., 35–40.

[48] See the discussion in Laato, *History and Ideology*, especially 193–198.

[49] Martti Nissinen, *Prophetie, Redaktion und Fortschreibung im Hoseabuch* (AOAT 231, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1991) 37–38, 340, 346; according to Nissinen, the terms *Redaktion* and *Fortschreibung* overlap; both terms mean *Fortschreibung* in the sense that the pre-existing text continuously gives rise to the composition of subsequent texts.

[50] Ibid., 332–335, 341; see especially the table in note 186 on pages 333–334. According to Nissinen, the earliest redaction, involving the first systematic collection of the material, comes from a period close after the fall of Samaria. The collected material consisted of lamentations over the fall of the northern kingdom, and it had its original *Sitz im Leben* in a public lamentation ritual, and there is a possibility that underneath this redaction there may be authentic prophetic speeches. In the subsequent redaction, the use of ריב-theme and formal and lexical similarities with the Neo-Assyrian treaties indicate that the redaction dates to an early post-exilic period. Nissinen points to the post-exilic covenant theology, which makes up the background for the accusations of the priests breaking the covenant; Nissinen suggests that Hosea is referring to the conflict between the Deuteronomistic circles and the priests coming home in the Babylonian exile, and that the criticism is set in the former northern kingdom which fits in with the Deuteronomistic condemnation of the northern cult. The third redaction with a salvation eschatological perspective cherishes the idea of future restoration, and the idea of the land as the gift of YHWH.

[51] Susanne Rudnig-Zelt, *Hoseastudien. Redaktionskritische Untersuchungen zur Genese des Hoseabuches* (FRLANT 213; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006). The oldest layer consists of *Bildworte*, which predominantly use the term Ephraim for the northern kingdom, to which they refer with derogatory expressions. These words were written after 722 by the circles of Judaean royal officials and, according to Rudnig-Zelt, the statements about Ephraim were kind of "slogans" which played a role in the foreign political discussions. *Bildworte* were supplemented with *Kommentarverse*, which reflect on the situation of Ephraim and connect the *Bildworte* with each other; with their comments Judaean royal circles used the fate of the former northern kingdom, or Ephraim, as a warning to Judah for anti-Assyrian political actions. The following phase,

In her study on the transmission of Hosea in Judah, Grace Emmerson aims at identifying the Judaean and Israelite perspectives in the book by examining three areas in Hosea, in which Judaean reworking is most often suspected: the oracles of future restoration, the references to Judah, and the polemics against the northern cult.[52] To discern Judaean redaction from the prophetic, i.e. Israelite, material, Emmerson applies the criterion of incongruity in historical, linguistic and theological or conceptual areas. In the historical area, a Judaean redaction is suggested if a saying is inconsistent with the period of Hosea's ministry and reflects a Judaean view instead; in the linguistic area, syntactical irregularities suggest the presence of supplementary material; and in the theological or conceptual area, the ideas which are at variance with the broadly based evidence of the material in general as representing Hosea's attitude are thought to belong to later redaction. Eventually, the more the incongruities from separate areas coincide, the stronger the argument for the particular origin of the sayings.[53] Emmerson attributes most of the salvation sayings to the prophetic message in which the initiative for salvation was always YHWH's, and no repentance of the nation was required; as for the sayings about Judah, those which offer wide-ranging criticism of Judah are redactorial, whereas in those which come from the prophet himself the criticism is limited and specific and concerns the relationship between Israel and Judah; finally, concerning the cult, Emmerson sees that the prophet did not oppose the northern sanctuaries at Bethel and Gilgal as such but rather that merely the practices were condemned.[54]

Overall, Emmerson puts emphasis on the traditions and the conceptual context, and her view on the complexity of the matter is apparent in her conclusions about the references to Judah. Emmerson concludes that those references which express a wide-ranging criticism of Judah's cult and religious life belong to the 7th century Judaean redaction, whereas those showing more specific critique pointing to a hostile relationship between Judah and Israel on the one hand and the expression of confidence in the Davidic dynasty on the other belong to the prophet's message.

"*priestkritische Bearbeitungsphase*," was written in the Persian period and related to the crisis between the priests of the Second Temple and the prophetic circles concerning the inhabitants of the former northern kingdom as members of the people of YHWH. The latest redactions consist of texts such as the "*Abfall-Umkehr*"- and "*samariapolemisch*" texts; for Rudnig-Zelt's summary of the growth of Hosea, see *Hoseastudien*, 275–278.

[52] Grace I. Emmerson, *Hosea: An Israelite Prophet in Judaean Perspective* (JSOTSS 28; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984).

[53] Emmerson sees that the expressions of future hope, which were a consistent element in the prophet's message, differed from the Judaean way of thinking in relation to the initiative in salvation action: in the prophet's thinking, the initiative was always YHWH's, whereas according to a later Judaean view, a prerequisite to YHWH's saving action was the nation's penitence. Emmerson makes an important point when pointing out that in some cases the redactor could make his point by rearrangements, so that evidence of redactional influence is not obvious when sayings are examined individually, but it is the collection and arrangement of these fragmentary sayings which betrays the redactional reworking. Emmerson also attributed the polemic against Bethel to the redactor, and to his concern for the cult of Jerusalem; in this, the redactor's view is like the one found in the Deuteronomistic accounts of the reform of Josiah; Emmerson, *Hosea*, 6, 158–159.

[54] Ibid., 116, 161, 156–164.

Emmerson considers it unlikely that the prophet would have been anti-Judaean, since in that case his sayings would not have been preserved in Judah.[55] For the most part, I appreciate Emmerson's way of approaching Hosea as a whole, and I will bring up her views, some of which I do not go along with, in due course in my study.

As my survey of the literature had shown, there is disagreement in most areas concerning the book of Hosea. This is inevitable in a situation where there is no definite proof that the prophetic book has any connection with a historical prophet or even the time which we think the book portrays – as H. G. M. Williamson rightly puts it, "in the case of texts which are demonstrably more than 2000 years old, nothing can be proved."[56] Hosea's potential allusions to particular historical events and people are a matter of interpretation of a text, one which has undergone a long history of transmission during which any immediate connection with the historical prophet has largely been lost. However, in my opinion it is reasonable to argue that the book of Hosea would not have emerged without the prophetic tradition. I think it is very likely that the prophecies in Hosea have had a previous oral existence, although the book does not contain transcripts of prophetic speeches. Therefore, I prefer to use the term "prophetic tradition" merely to indicate that there have been prophecies, proclaimed in the 8th century Israel which at some point shortly before or after the fall of Samaria were put in writing, and became a written prophetic tradition. The earliest collection of the prophecies was the first redactional stage in a long process which eventually produced the present form of the book.

In prophetic studies, it is important to evaluate the concept of biblical prophecy in the light of the awareness about the prophecy in the ancient Near East in general, and how biblical prophece relates to it. In current research there is increasing interest in regarding the biblical prophecy as part of a Near Eastern

[55] Ibid., 161.

[56] Williamson presents some insightful and useful methods to identify possible older material in prophetic texts; in sum, they are as follows: 1) an event mentioned in the biblical text that can be corroborated by a contemporary external source which has not been known to a later biblical writer; 2) the reflection in positive terms of beliefs and practices which came to be changed and condemned in the post-exilic period; 3) the use of quotations and allusions by later writers demonstrating a development of a particular theme; 4) historical literary analysis revealing the development of the text from a core text; 5) historical development of ideology; see H. G. M. Williamson, "In Search of the Pre-Exilic Isaiah," in John Day (ed.), *In Search of Pre-Exilic Israel* (JSOTSS 406, London: T&T Clark International, 2004) 181–206, here 182. Unfortunately, many of them are not fully applicaple to Hosea, in which there are only very few references to historical events so that they could be corroborated by external sources. A good example is 5:8–6:6, which often is seen as the most "historical" text in Hosea, being related to the events during the so called Syro-Ephraimite war; I will deal with this passage and problems related to its interpretation in Chapter II. The reason for the unclarity of Hosea may be that history is reflected to Israel's, or Ephraim's, behavior, and historical events have only meaning as indications of the broken relationship between the nation and YHWH, in accordance with the covenantal language used in Hosea. Thus, for example, alliances with foreign nations and worshipping their gods meant breaking the covenant.

phenomenon of prophecy, as a form of divination.[57] The difficulty in defining "prophecy" in the case of biblical prophets stems from the reality that all we have are the prophetic books which grew from needs which most likely emerged far later than the prophecies themselves.[58] Therefore, it is no wonder that the interpretations of biblical texts have resulted in a wide variety of conclusions, especially as we seldom have definite proofs. Every approach has its problems, especially when we use biblical texts as a comparative material. Nevertheless, I agree with James Barr that our only option is not to turn to "residual logic" in case of biblical texts, which, according to him, means that when "other explanations being without proof, nothing is left expect to suppose an explanation through late ideology, fabrications of the literary elite, and other hypotheses."[59]

Another issue related to the Near Eastern prophecy is the peculiar nature of the biblical prophecy of doom. The prophecies in Hosea have often been read as prophecies of doom and regarded as essentially a scribal phenomenon created *ex eventu*.[60] Matthis de Jong makes a point concerning the ancient Near Eastern prophecy, used by the prophets to encourage the king in difficult times. The purpose of announcing the disaster was to avert it; thus, if the right action was undertaken, the disaster did not occur.[61] It is reasonable to assume that even if the prophecy did contain words of judgment there was also an element of hope; had the prophecy been exclusively judgmental what would it have achieved? The point of Hosea's prophecies was to make Israel turn to YHWH before it was too late and, thus, as I will demonstrate in due course, there had to be hope of a new beginning. By means of the prophecies, there was access to the divine, and the

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[57] Anne Marie Kitz, "Prophecy as Divination," *CBQ* 65 (2003) 22–42. In the Hebrew Bible, there are examples of technical divination, using means like urim and thummin, but, according to Kitz, the form of divination advocated in the Hebrew Bible can be defined as "divinely inspired interpretation of heavenly generated signs." This emphasizes the importance of the role of YHWH in that merely human attempts to interpret the signs are not accepted. Kitz refers to Hosea, in which the marriage of the prophet is a sign, which, when interpreted analogously, reveals "a more specific one-to-one correspondence between certain elements of the sign and its intended divine meaning." As for the biblical prophecy in the light of ancient Near Eastern prophecy, see Hans M. Barstad, "No Prophets? Recent Developments in Biblical Prophetic Research and Near Eastern Prophecy," *JSOT* 57 (1993) 39–60; Martti Nissinen, "How Prophecy Became Literature," *SJOT* 19 (2005) 153–172.

[58] For this, see Nissinen (2005).

[59] As James Barr says, "Central to this is the emphatic, but unequal, insistence of revisionist historiography on proof. Proof for the Davidic and Solomonic empire is not available, and that means that the reports of it are likely to be explicable as ideology from much later time. But for the highly conjectural suggestions made by the same historians about the exile, the return, the supposed part of the Persian government, and the activity of the literary elite during the Hellenistic period, commonly no such demand for proof is made;" the quotation is from *History and Ideology in the Old Testament.Biblical Studies at the end of a Millennium* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) 101.

[60] Matthijs J. de Jong, "Biblical Prophecy – A Scribal Enterprise. The Old Testament Prophecy of Unconditional Judgement considered as a Literary Phenomenon," *VT* 61 (2011) 39–70.

[61] De Jong (2011) 39–70, especially 49–50; see also Matthijs J. de Jong, *Isaiah among the Near Eastern Prophets. Comparative Study of the Earliest Stages of the Isaiah Tradition and the Neo-Assyrian Prophecies* (VTSup 117; Leiden: Brill, 2007) 311–312.

point in Hosea's prophecies was returning to YHWH. As for the motif of returning, I agree with Andrew Dearman in that "returning" in Hosea had to do with Israel's concrete turning back to YHWH; the issue at stake was not returning to the land, which is an exilic and postexilic theme.[62]

The redactors, who elaborated the sources at their disposal, were learned scholars whose ideological and political concerns were different from their sources, but they adopted the prophetic tradition because it contained some of the fundamental concepts in their religious thinking, and which they applied to their own time. This also means that biblical traditions have been transmitted to us through ideological lenses, and they often display polemical perspectives; the polemic may be open or hidden. Yet, I think, as far as concepts and traditions are concerned, that has been certain continuity. Fundamental elements – notions and motifs, religious concepts and fragments of ancient traditions – have survived a long process of transmission, and have found their way in prophetic books and tradition complexes. So, for example, Jacob, originally known in the Israelite stream of traditions, became part of the patriarchal story in the Pentateuch.

Finally, what also needs to be taken into consideration is the increasing knowledge of fundamental differences between the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah. In the 9th–8th centuries they were distinct entities; not only politically but also culturally and to some extent religiously. For a long time, Judah was in the shadow of Israel, which was superior in many ways. As archaeological findings attest, Israel was a well-developed state from the 9th century onwards, whereas Judah emerged as a fully developed state only in the 8th century.[63] In Judah's form of Yahwism, the cult was confined to David and Jerusalem, whereas in Israel, there was much more local variation, owing to heterogenous population and the kingdom's strong international contacts with other countries. The two kingdoms were also different in that in Judah, the single dynasty, that of David, survived, whereas in Israel, there were only two relatively long-lasting hereditary dynasties, those of Omri and Jehu.

As for the kingdom of Israel, its traditions have been transmitted to us through a Judaean perspective. This perspective, usually defined with the term "Deuteronomistic," also appears in Hosea. Therefore, many expressions and concepts in Hosea have been dated to the exilic and postexilic periods; this concerns particularly textual passages which combine several phrases known from allegedly Deuteronomistic sources. I would point to continuity, however. Later Deuteronomists had their ideological forerunners who, in very different circumstances and with different motives, drew from their sources, but whose phraseology became adopted by later circles and developed further. Thus, as I argue, the criticism of the northern cult, the emphasis on the covenant, and the reprimands of the contemporary Israelite monarchic institute in Hosea's prophecies paved the way for later Deuteronomistic concepts.

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[62] J. Andrew Dearman, *The Book of Hosea* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010) 6.

[63] Israel Finkelstein, "The State Formation in Israel and Judah. A Contrast in Context, a Contrast in Trajectory," *NEA* 62 (1999) 35–52.

1.3. Historical background of Hosea

As I argue in this study, Hosea is best understood when it is read as reflecting two historical settings, the 8th century Israel, and the time of the reform of Josiah. In what follows, I discuss why I think it is relevant to emphasize these two eras.

1.3.1. Last decades of the kingdom of Israel

In this study, I maintain that Hosea preserves remains of prophecies which were triggered by the events in the last decades before the fall of Samaria. This raises the question of what evidence in the textual material points to this. The prophecies are mainly targeted at Israel, or Ephraim, and the geography in the book is suggestive of an Israelite provenance, but, as earlier discussed, it is obvious that these features do not persuade those who regard the book as a literary construct which has nothing to do with real history. Likewise, the superscription of the book which mentions Jeroboam II is not decisive evidence in favor of the historical setting of the book. It is, however, curious as to why Jeroboam II is mentioned as the only Israelite king, especially as the superscription lists five Judaean monarchs – Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah.[64] The name of Jeroboam II also occurs in the superscription to Amos, but not in Isaiah or Micah. Thus, it is likely that the name of Jeroboam II is positioned in Hosea and Amos for the purpose of indicating the date and the location of the prophecies, albeit the late date of the superscription. It is likely that the superscriptions in Amos and Hosea go back to the exilic period in Judah when the scrolls containing the prophecies of Hosea, Amos, Isaiah and Micah were assembled into one scroll and, thus, the superscriptions indicated their chronological order.[65]

Jeroboam II was the second to last king of the dynasty of Jehu. In Hosea, Jehu's dynasty is explicitly mentioned in 1:4 which foretells its end. Jeroboam II's reign was long, but biblical sources do not provide much information about it. The brief mentions in 2 Kings 14:23–29 focus on the king's territorial expansions (vv. 25, 28).[66] Jeroboam II's regnal years were an economically prosperous period in Israel

[64] The regnal years of the kings of Israel and Judah are given according to the chronology by Antti Laato, *Guide to Biblical Chronology* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2015); the regnal years of the Judaean kings mentioned in 1:1 are as follows: Uzziah (Azariah) 786/85–735/34, Jotham, who was sixteen years a coregent until Uzziah's death, 750/49–735/34, Ahaz 735/34–716/15, and Hezekiah 715/14–697/96; Jeroboam II reigned in 787/86–747/46.

[65] Jakob Wöhrle, "No Future for the Proud Exultant Ones. The Exilic Book of the Four Prophets (Hos., Am., Mic., Zeph.) as a Concept Opposed to the Deuteronomistic History," *VT* 58 (2008) 608–627, here 609. For an opinion of the postmonarchic date of 1:1, see Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 30.

[66] There is no agreement among scholars about Jeroboam II's territorial expansions. 2 Kings 14:28 indicates that Jeroboam restored Damascus and Hamath, which has been questioned by some scholars; see, e.g. Mordechai Cogan and Hayim Tadmor, *II Kings. A New Translation with*

which was able to improve its economy by making use of the political situation when both Aram Damascus and Assyria had temporarily left Israel alone. In 802, Assyria's king Adad-Nirari III had besieged Damascus and made the state Aram Damascus subjugate to Assyria, which prevented Aram Damascus from conducting military operations, thus, putting an end to its continuous wars with Israel.[67] Furthermore, Assyria's military troops were engaged with the campaigns against Urartu, and at the same time, the Assyrian empire struggled with internal problems.[68]

Israel's economy was founded on olive-oil and wine production, as indicated by the Samaria ostraca, as well as on strong commercial activity including Arabian trade, well-developed trade networks, and the horse industry.[69] At the time of Jeroboam II, Israel likely controlled the desert trade route along the Darb el-Ghazza, an important route for the existence of overland Arabian trade.[70] Israel's control of the trade route is supported by archaeological finds at Kuntillet 'Ajrud, located on this particular trade route, which demonstrates a strong connection with Israel.[71] On the whole, control of the trade routes played an important role in ancient world politics, and Israel eventually lost control of important trade routes to Assyria and, at the same time, the income from the tolls on the transit trades ceased. This weakened Israel's economy which also suffered from the tributary economy during the reign of Menahem. Tributary economy became a problem, since it constituted a heavy burden for the people, especially the peasantry.[72]

For all economic prosperity, Jeroboam II's time was a period of great social injustice; this is reflected in the book of Amos. Social inequality is not an issue

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Introduction and Commentary (AB 11: New York: Doubleday, 1988), 160–162; Nadav Na'aman, "Azariah of Judah and Jeroboam II of Israel," *VT* 43 (1993) 280–284; for a different interpretation, see Menahem Haran, "The Rise and Decline of the Empire of Jeroboam ben Joash," *VT* 17 (1967) 266–297.

[67] John H. Hayes and J. Maxwell Miller (eds.), *Israelite and Judaean History* (London: SCM Press, 1977) 414.

[68] Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 163.

[69] Israel Finkelstein, *The Forgotten Kingdom. The Archaeology and History of Northern Israel* (SBL 5; Atlanta: SBL, 2013) 131–138. However, as archaeological finds of luxury items in Samaria demonstrate, it was probably only the ruling class that benefitted from the prosperity; see Rainer Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period* (transl. John Bowden; London: SCM Press, 1994) 165–167; Gale A.Yee, "She is not my Wife and I am not her Husband: A Materialistic Analysis of Hosea 1–2," *BI* 9 (2001) 345–383, here 349; Mario Liverani, *Israel's History and the History of Israel* (transl. Chiara Peri and Philip R. Davies; London: Equinox, 2005) 126. Nonetheless, a positive side effect of increased economic activity was that it contributed to the spread of writing, since writing skills were required by the development of the advanced administration; so Finkelstein, *Forgotten Kingdom*, 140. Whether this increase in literacy facilitated the earliest compilation of northern texts, as Finkelstein suggests, is an interesting possibility.

[70] Finkelstein, *Forgotten Kingdom*, 132. The reason why Israel was using the longer trade route along the Darb el-Ghazza to Elath was probably that the shorter route had fallen into the control of Judah as a result of Uzziah's territorial expansions, so Nadav Na'aman (1993) 233.

[71] Finkelstein, *Forgotten Kingdom*, 137–138.

[72] See Walter Houston, "Was There a Social Crisis in the Eight Century?" in Day (ed.), *In Search of Pre-Exilic Israel*, 130–149, here 146. Israel was located at the intersection of the major trade routes, which also earlier in its history had required that it constantly defended its borders on all sides.

in Hosea, however, which makes a point of political matters and the general state of the Israelite monarchy. As I will discuss in Chapter IV, the attitude towards Israelite kings in Hosea is negative. After the reign of Jeroboam II, the relatively stable dynasty of Jehu met its end, and one king after another came to power through a revolt.

In Hosea, the passage in 7:3–16 appears a graphic description of one of these revolts. Unfortunately, no names are given, so the king at stake remains unknown.

Tomoo Ishida has pointed out many interesting features concerning the Israelite monarchy, one of them being that military defeats under the rule of the king resulted in his or at least his immediate successor's deposition.[73] As Ishida further states, usurpations frequently took place during the times of war (1 Kings 15:27; 16:15–16; 2 Kings 9:1–13; 15:29–30) when the king was occupied with external enemies and, thus, it was no wonder that the usurpers were military leaders who could take over the position as the war-leader of the country which was one of the primary duties of the king as 1 Samuel 8:20 explicitly says.[74]

Another point made by Ishida concerns the reason for the instability of the Israelite monarchy: the rivalry between various groups. There may have been rivalry between the tribes, and the Gileadites seem to have had some influence on the changes from Shallum to Menahem and from Menahem to Pekah.[75] In Hosea, 6:8 and 12:12 express a strong animosity towards Gilead, and this may be related to the fact that Pekah's revolt was supported by men from Gilead (2 Kings 15:25).

Pekah is known for his connection with the events related to the so called Syro-Ephraimite war. Pekah was politically anti-Assyrian, and opposed Menahem's pro-Assyrian stance. At the time of Menahem, Israel had submitted to Assyrian vassalage, as attested in 2 Kings 15:19 and in the annals of Tiglath-pileser III.[76]

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[73] This concerns Jeroboam I and his son Nadab, Baasha and his son Elah, Jehoram, Menahem and Pekah; some other kings ruled for such a short time that they could not establish their rule at all; see Tomoo Ishida, *The Royal Dynasties in Ancient Israel. A Study on the Formation and Development of Royal-Dynastic Ideology* (BZAW 142; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1977); here 171–172. Overall, within a period of less than a year after the death of Jeroboam II, Israel was ruled by three kings. Zechariah, Jeroboam II's son, ruled for only six months (2 Kings 15:8–12). Zechariah was the last king of Jehu's dynasty, the end of which is prophesied in Hosea 1:4. He was assassinated by Shallum, a usurper (2 Kings 15:10, 13) who, after being in power for only one month, was murdered by another usurper, Menahem (2 Kings 15:14, 16–22). Menahem ruled in 746/45–737/36.

[74] Ibid., 174.

[75] Ibid., 174–176.

[76] Hayim Tadmor and Shigeo Yamada, *The Royal Inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III (744–727 BC), and Shalmaneser V (726–722 BC), Kings of Assyria* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2011) 13, 46; Tiglath-pileser III is called Pul in 2 Kings 15:19. That Menahem submitted to Assyria to secure his position is supported by the fact that in the Assyrian Summary Inscription, Menahem is mentioned along two vassal kings of Tabal and Tyre, whose payment bought Assyrian support; see Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 172. Hayes and Miller call this a first stage vassalage; the second stage followed if an anti-Assyrian conspiracy was suspected: this resulted in an immediate military intervention, the removal of the disloyal vassal and appointing a new, loyal one; there could also be deportation of portions of the upper class; if there was any effort against Assyria, the third stage vassalage followed which involved military intervention, and finally liquidation of the political independence of the region in question; Hayes and Miller, *Israelite and Judaean History*, 419.

Menahem's pro-Assyrian politics was likely continued by Pekahiah (2 Kings 15:23), who after his short rule was murdered by Pekah (735/34–732/31).[77] Pekah apparently cooperated with Aram and probably also with Egypt in order to form a coalition against Assyria, and his pressure on Judah resulted in a conflict with King Ahaz (735/34–716/15) in 734/733 (2 Kings 16:5; Isaiah 7:1–2), leading to the Syro-Ephraimite war.[78] There is almost general agreement among scholars that Hosea's prophecies reflect this period of time, and the passage in 5:8–6:6, either partially or in full, has been read against the historical background of the Syro-Ephraimite war; I will return to this topic in Chapter II.

One of the issues is that the Syro-Ephraimite war, or conflict, is not documented in Assyrian inscriptions. We are dependent, therefore, on biblical sources, Isaiah 7:1–17; 8:1–4, 2 Kings 16:1–9 and 2 Chronicles 28:5–20. On the basis of this textual material, the main event leading to the Syro-Ephraimite conflict was the threat imposed by Assyrian military campaigns in Palestine, which pushed Pekah, the king of Israel, and Rezin, the king of Aram Damascus, to form a coalition, which also Judah was expected to join. In Israel, there had been disagreements between different parties about whether to submit to or resist Assyria and the anti-Assyrian party seems to have gained the dominant position with Pekah's successful revolt.[79] It is likely that the anti-Assyrian alliance obtained more political weight by the involvement of other Palestinian states as well as Egypt, which was expected to give military aid to the small states against the superior Assyria.[80] Most likely the purpose of the coalition was to replace Ahaz with an Aramean son of Tabeel (Isaiah 7:6) and, thus, gain Judah as their coalition partner, since the ultimate goal of the coalition was to resist Assyria and, thus, it was hardly likely that Pekah and Rezin would have weakened themselves by waging war against Judah which was expected to become their partner in the anti-Assyrian coalition.[81] Historically, the formation of an anti-Assyrian coalition was nothing new, since in the face of Assyria's superior military power, coalitions between small states were the sole means of resisting Assyrian imperialism and

[77] For different solutions concerning the regnal years of Pekah, see, e.g., H. J. Cook, "Pekah," *VT* 14 (1964) 121–135; Edwin R. Thiele, "Coregencies and Overlapping Reigns among the Hebrew Kings," *JBL* 93 (1974) 174–200; Nadav Na'aman, "Historical and Chronological Notes on the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah in the Eighth Century B.C.," *VT* 36 (1986) 71–92; see especially Laato, *Guide to Biblical Chronology*, 43–49, the chronology of which is followed here.

[78] As in the Assyrian and Babylonian historical literature, בימי אחז in Isaiah 7:1 and אז in 2 Kings 16:5 are formulas which introduce quotations from earliest sources; so Hayim Tadmor and Mordechai Cogan, "Ahaz and Tiglath-pileser in the Book of Kings. Historiographic Considerations," *Bib* 60 (1979) 491–508, here 494. For a different biblical view on the war, see 2 Chronicles 28:5–21.

[79] Richard D. Nelson, *Historical Roots of the Old Testament (1200–63 BCE)* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014) 83.

[80] Nadav Na'aman, *Ancient Israel and Its Neighbors. Interaction and Counteraction* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2005) 29; Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 199.

[81] Hayes and Miller, *Israelite and Judaean History*, 426. Historically, the coalition may have been broader than 2 Kings 16:5 indicates; see Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 191.

retaining independence.[82] However, although the inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III indicate that he campaigned in Philistine around 734, the Assyrian sources about the campaign do not attest to the existence of the coalition formed by Pekah and Rezin.[83] This is against the practice of Assyrian kings to record such coalitions in their inscriptions, as the Kurkh Monolith of Shalmaneser III from ca 853 indicates.[84] Owing to the fragmentary nature of the inscriptions from that time, however, it is possible that much of the information related to this period of time has simply been lost.

Ahaz ended up paying tribute to Tiglath-pileser III as the Assyrian inscriptions from 734 corroborate.[85] The probable reason for his voluntary subjucation to Assyria was his fear of the coalition, as Isaiah 7:4 indicates. Ahaz, against the words of the prophet Isaiah (7:4–11), turned to Assyria for help against the coalition of Pekah and Rezin, which aimed at gaining the entire region of the Transjordan from Judah and also planned to replace Ahaz.[86] Ahaz may have hoped for military help from Assyria, or more probably he merely thought that by being loyal to Assyria, Judah would escape an Assyrian invasion. Tiglath-pileser III responded and turned his attention to Israel and Judah mainly because his primary interest was to secure the trading routes, which passed through Israel and Judah, since the same trade routes were also in the interests of Egypt.[87] According to the Eponym Chronicle, in 734/733 Tiglath-pileser III was campaigning in the southwest and conquered Philistia. The Assyrian king first turned against Damascus in 733–732, and subsequently Israel, with the consequence that by 732 the Israelite territories Galilee and Gilead were annexed as provinces to Assyria. The outcome of the anti-Assyrian coalition was, thus, disastrous for Israel and Pekah. In 732/731, Pekah's rule came to an end, when Tiglath-pileser III replaced him with pro-Assyrian Hoshea, as Tiglath-pileser III's royal annals attest.[88] The

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[82] Na'aman, *Ancient Israel and Its Neighbors*, 17. Na'aman mentions several alliances against Assyria, e.g., the Syro-Hittite kingdoms fought Shalmaneser III in 858; the twelve kingdoms of south Syria and Palestine fought against Assyria four times between 853–845, and the Syro-Hittite states fought Adad-nirari III in 805.

[83] Hayes and Miller, *Israelite and Judaean History*, 428. The relevant issue concerning this suggestion is that a war between the partners in the coalition would certainly not have improved their possibilities to fight Assyria.

[84] Na'aman, *Ancient Israel and Its Neighbors*, 1–12.

[85] Tadmor and Yamada, *Royal Inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III*, 112. The inscription on a clay-tablet from 734 mentions "Jehoahaz of the land of Judah" in a list of kings paying tribute to Tiglath-pileser III. In 2 Kings 16:8 the word שֹׁחַד, "gift," has a negative connotation, and Cogan and Tadmor remark that its use within the context of international relations is unusual in the Hebrew Bible; they conclude that the writer expresses criticism by using the term because of his disapproval of the appropriation of temple property; see Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 188, 336.

[86] Bustenay Oded, "The Historical Background of the Syro-Ephraimite war Reconsidered," *CBQ* 34 (1972) 153–165.

[87] The growth of international trade in the 8th century had increased the strategic importance of Israel and Judah; see David Aberbach, *Imperialism and Biblical Prophecy: 750–500 BCE* (London: Routledge, 1993) 7; Philip J. King, "The Eighth, the Greatest of Centuries?" *JBL* 108 (1989) 3–15, here 10.

[88] Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 335.

territory of Israel was greatly diminished and became restricted to the hill country of Ephraim around Samaria. This has prompted some scholars to suggest that the use of the name "Ephraim" in Hosea refers to this rump state of Israel; I will return to this issue in Chapter II.

King Hoshea was loyal to Assyria during his first regnal years only, and paid tribute to Shalmaneser V, the successor of Tiglath-pileser III (2 Kings 17:3). Hoshea later relinquished his pro-Assyrian politics as an Assyrian vassal and turned to Egypt (2 Kings 17:4). This may have taken place in 725 when Assyria sieged Tyre. Tyre's devastation is probably alluded to in Hosea 9:13.[89] Samaria was besieged for at least two years, and was captured in 722/721. In 720, Samaria was conquered for the second time, now by Sargon II, who organized the deportations of the people.[90] The former territory of Israel was subsequently organized as Assyrian administrative districts, and according to the Assyrian practice, foreign settlers were brought in from the provinces. It is likely that the deportations affected only a subset of the Israelite population, and perhaps a larger part of the population remained in the area.[91]

As I will show in the ensuing chapters in my study, many elements in Hosea's prophecies are best understood against these tumultuous years in the aftermath of the death of Jeroboam II. A somewhat different date is suggested by Hans Barstad who posits Hosea's prophecies to a period between Shalmaneser III (858–824) and Tiglath-pileser III (745–727), which corresponds to the rule of Jeroboam II (787/86–747/46); Barstad relates the prophecies to the confrontation between pro- and anti-Assyrian groups in Israel during that time.[92] As for Jeroboam II's pro-Assyrian political outlook, Barstad is likely correct, since without Israel and Assyria being on good terms and an agreement existing between them the territorial expansions of Jeroboam II would not have been possible.[93] Thus, the critique in Hosea for turning to Assyria may refer to Jeroboam II's politics but also to Menahem – in any, Israel's foreign politics was far from stable, as 7:11, 8:9, and 10:6 indicate.

To conclude, despite that the prophecy in Hosea is best understood against this particular historical period, it is obvious that Hosea's prophecies cannot and should not be read as historiography, and no detailed historical reconstructions can be made on the basis of the text; in other words, we should not read more into the text than what it really says. Nevertheless, I maintain that the prophecies in Hosea, as in many other prophetic books as well, were triggered by traumatic historical events, in this case, the decline of Israelite monarchy and the fall of

[89] Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 199.
[90] Ibid., 199.
[91] Gary N. Knoppers, "In Search of Post-Exilic Israel: Samaria after the Fall of the Northern Kingdom," in Day (ed.), *In Search of Pre-Exilic Israel*, 150–180, here 153.
[92] Barstad, "Hosea and the Assyrians," in Gordon and Barstad (eds.), *Thus Speaks Ishtar of Arbela*, 91–110. Barstad bases his claim on the occurrence of the names Egypt and Assyria in Hosea, and how this onomastic evidence points to historical events.
[93] Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 163.

Samaria.[94] However, in biblical prophetic books, the calamitous events were explained within the framework of religion. Israel and later Judah fell, as David Aberbach says, not because of "inevitable consequences of military weakness, of geographic vulnerability, of unavoidably inferior manpower and resources. They fell because of moral backsliding: had they retained their faith in God and observed the Law, the prophets imply, they would have been victorious."[95]

This can be seen at the background of the reform of Josiah: the observance of the Law would spare Judah from the fate of Israel. The fall of Israel also provided an opportunity because its heritage was now available to Judah, and this concerned also the name Israel.

1.3.2. Building Judah's identity: the reform of Josiah

Josiah's reform is a problematic issue, since the issue of its historicity – or the lack thereof – has thrown the nature of the reform and even its entire existence into question. No extrabiblical documents attest to the reform, and archaeological finds from this period do not unequivocally corroborate that the destruction of cult places was necessarily a result of Josiah's measures. Lisbeth Fried has concluded that the archaeologically-attested destruction of Judaean cultic sites cannot be assigned to Hezekiah and Josiah but rather goes back to the devastation during the campaigns of Tiglath-pileser III, Shalmaneser V, Sargon II, or Sennacherib and, thus, in Fried's opinion, the ideology ascribed to the reforms was but "an interpretation and explanation of a devastating present."[96] On a general level, I do not want to deny that biblical texts often *are* theological reflections, but even so, why would *all* that is written about Josiah's reform be an invention? Another reason for skepticism concerning the historicity of the reform of Josiah is the value of 2 Kings 22–23 as a historical source and the lack of biblical texts referring to the reform apart from those directly dependent on 2 Kings 22–23.[97] Personally, I am not inclined to regard 2 Kings 22–23 as a late text written only as a theological reflection on some past events which had nothing to do with a reform, but it is not

[94] For the impact of traumatic experiences on the production of biblical texts, see David M. Carr, *Holy Resilience: The Bible's Traumatic Origins* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014).
[95] Aberbach, *Imperialism and Biblical Prophecy*, 2.
[96] Lisbeth S. Fried, "The High Places (Bāmôt) and the Reforms of Hezekiah and Josiah: an Archaeological Investigation," *JAOS* 122 (2002) 437–465.
[97] For a late date of 2 Kings 22–23, see Juha Pakkala, "Why the Cult Reforms in Judah Probably did not Happen," in Reinhard G. Kratz and Hermann Spieckermann (eds., in collab. with Björn Corzilius and Tanja Pilger), *One God – One Cult – One Nation*: *Archaeological and Biblical Perspectives* (BZAW 405; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010) 201–235; and Juha Pakkala, "The Date of the Oldest Edition of Deuteronomy," *ZAW* 121 (2009) 388–401, here 390. According to Pakkala, "The main problem is that II Reg 22–23, and especially chapter 23, is one of the most edited texts in the entire Hebrew Bible and should not be used as a basis for any broader theory."

obvious that the text is an accurate historical report either; I will return to this issue below.[98]

Josiah's reform appears to have been a continuation of the reform of Hezekiah, his great-grandfather, whose cultic measures are listed in 2 Kings 18:4.[99] It is obvious that both reforms were connected with the contemporary political situation, since neither Hezekiah nor Josiah operated in a political vacuum, but the actions taken by them were dependent on – and, thus, also directly related to – the movements of the contemporary superpowers Assyria, Egypt, and Neo-Babylonia.

During the reform of Hezekiah and at the beginning of Josiah's reign, Judah was an Assyrian vassal. Judah's vassalage had begun during the reign of Ahaz, who had been obliged to pay tribute to the Assyrian king.[100] Ahaz receives a typically Deuteronomistic negative evaluation in 2 Kings 16, whereas Hezekiah, in contrast to his father, is evaluated positively in 2 Kings 18:5–7. Since under the reign of both kings Israel was subjected to Assyria, it is interesting that Hezekiah escapes the criticism of the Deuteronomistic historian(s) who, in line with their "nationalistic" ideology, opposed foreign alliances and were critical towards kings under whom Israel and Judah voluntarily became vassals to foreign powers.[101] The likely reason for Hezekiah's positive evaluation is that he rebelled against Assyria when, after the death of Sargon II in 705, he changed his policy in relation to Assyria. Hezekiah joined an anti-Assyrian coalition with Egypt and Palestinian small states, taking advantage of the situation when the new king Sennacherib was

[98] 2 Kings 22–23 has generally been considered to have a firmer historical basis than 2 Chronicles 34–35, which has not been recognized as a source for historical events in a similar way. For the interpretation of Chronicles, see Ehud Ben Zvi, "Observations on Josiah's Account in Chronicles," in Yairah Amit, Ehud Ben Zvi, Israel Finkelstein, and Oded Lipschits (eds.), *Essays on Ancient Israel in its Near Eastern Context. A Tribute to Nadav Na'aman* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006) 89–106, here 105. Ben Zvi points to the difference between the two presentations: in Kings, YHWH's decision to destroy Jerusalem is grounded mainly in the deeds of a single king, Manasseh, and Josiah's piety merely postpones the destruction. In Chronicles, the grounds for YHWH's decision are associated with the general disobedience of past generations and their kings rather than with Manasseh's generation or Manasseh alone (and who repents). Ben Zvi sees that Josiah was put to the test by YHWH; as he says, "What better test than informing Josiah of a future invasion that cannot be prevented and that will destroy temple, city, and monarchy to see whether he will restore the temple and lead his people to observe the instructions of YHWH's Torah."

[99] A more detailed account of Hezekiah's cultic actions is given in 2 Chronicles 29–31; however, the historicity of 2 Chronicles 29–31 has been questioned. Especially the involvement of Hezekiah in the affairs of Samaria, which was an Assyrian province, is unlikely; see Nadav Na'aman, "The Debated Historicity of Hezekiah's Reform in the Light of Historical and Archaeological Research," *ZAW* 107 (1995a) 179–195, here 180.

[100] In 2 Kings 16:8 the word שֹׁחַד, "gift," has a negative connotation, and Cogan and Tadmor remark that its use within the context of international relations is unusual in the Hebrew Bible; they conclude that the writer expresses criticism by using the term because of his disapproval of the appropriation of temple property; see Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 188.

[101] Nadav Na'aman, "The Deuteronomist and Voluntary Servitude to Foreign Powers," *JSOT* 65 (1995b) 37–53.; Tadmor and Cogan (1979) 491–508, here 51–52.

waging war elsewhere.[102] Unlike 2 Kings 18:7 leads us to understand, however, Judah could not free itself from Assyria. The biblical narrative does not state that Hezekiah's rebellion ended in a catastrophe when Sennacherib campaigned against the Levant and Judah in 701. Despite Jerusalem's apparently miraculous rescue from destruction when the Assyrian troops unexpectedly retreated, many areas in Judah were destroyed and Judah became an Assyrian vassal state. Hezekiah ended up paying tribute to Sennacherib (2 Kings 18:13–16), which is recorded in Assyrian sources in the Rassam cylinder.[103] Judah's Assyrian vassalage continued during the reign of Manasseh, Amon, into the early phases of Josiah's reign.[104]

During the reign of Manasseh (697/96–643/42), Judah recovered and experienced a peaceful and prosperous period, but Manasseh is given a very unfavorable evaluation in 2 Kings 21:1–18. It is possible that the negative presentation of Manasseh can largely be assigned to an exilic redactor, who, in the aftermath of the destruction of Jerusalem, had to depict Manasseh as an antithesis of Josiah in order to justify the disaster which took place despite Josiah's actions.[105] Nevertheless, it is obvious that Assyrian influence could have been

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[102] So Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 218–220. Cf. 2 Kings 18:7–8. Judah's relief because of Sargon's death is expressed in Isaiah 14:16–20.

[103] For the text in the Rassam Cylinder, see Kirk Grayson and Jamie Novotny, *The Royal Inscription of Sennacherib, King of Assyria, 704–681, Part 1* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2012) 65. The biblical account of Sennacherib's campaign to Judah is presented in 2 Kings 18:13–19:37 and Isaiah 36–37, which credit YHWH's angel for striking the Assyrians. For the Assyrian sources about Sennacherib's account of his campaign to Judah, see Antti Laato, "Assyrian Propaganda and the Falsification of History in the Royal Inscriptions of Sennacherib," *VT* 45 (1995) 198–226; as Laato proposes, the Assyrian sources use stylistic devices which have been used when a military defeat has been concealed, and thus the issue at stake can be of political propaganda in Assyrian sources.

[104] With Nadav Na'aman, "The Kingdom of Judah under Josiah," *TA* 18 (1991) 3–71, here 55–56. Na'aman suggests that the author of the Book of Kings wanted to depict Hezekiah's revolt as a success, and therefore omitted any mention of Assyria from that point on: no Assyrian domination is mentioned in the connection with Manasseh, Amon, and Josiah in the Book of Kings, since, according to Na'aman, the author wants to point out that under the sinful Ahaz Judah subjucated to Assyria and was subsequently freed during the reign of Hezekiah. As Na'aman further concludes, the author of the Book of Kings thus avoided having to describe the external reality in Josiah's day, i.e. that Judah was vassal to Assyria.

[105] See, e.g., Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 285–286; Sweeney, *King Josiah*, 52–63; William M. Schniedewind, "History and Interpretation: The Religion of Ahab and Manasseh in the Book of Kings," *CBQ* 55 (1993) 649–661; Ehud Ben Zvi, "The Account of the Reign of Manasseh in 2 Reg 21, 1–18 and the Redactional History of the Book of Kings," *ZAW* 103 (1991) 355–374. Manasseh is connected with the destruction of Jerusalem just like Ahab's sins are connected with the destruction of Samaria, which suggests that the portrayal of Manasseh in 2 Kings 21:1–18 is an intentional slander. The prototype for Manasseh was Ahaz, who, in dread of Assyrian invasion, Ahaz did not follow the prophetic advice, but his pro-Assyrian politics and foreign alliances were seen as evidence for trusting Assyria instead of YHWH (Isaiah 7:4–6; 8:1–8). In 2 Kings 16:1–4, Ahaz receives a negative evaluation. He did not do what was "right in the eyes of YHWH," but followed "the way of the kings of Israel" by passing his son through fire, and sacrificing on high places. His cultic transgressions thus follow the general pattern in the Deuteronomistic History and are found among those listed in 2 Kings 17:7–17, with the difference being that 2 Kings 16:1–4 condemns the king whereas in 2 Kings 17:7–17 the blame for idolatry is put on the Israelites; see, Ehud Ben Zvi,

strong during Manasseh's reign. Although Assyria is not known to have imposed its religious practices on its vassals, Judah's vassaldom opened it to external influences from other regions of the Near East more than at any other time in its history.[106]

Manasseh was succeeded to the throne by his son Amon, who probably continued the pro-Assyrian politics of his father. Amon was murdered by his servants in the royal palace (2 Kings 21:23), but the actual reason for the murder is not told. It is possible, however, that his political pro-Assyrian view played a role in this. The conspirators were subsequently killed by a group referred to as "the people of the land," עם־הארץ. This group was also responsible for making Amon's 8-year-old son, Josiah, king (2 Kings 21:24; 22:1). "The people of the land" was a politically active group in the history of Judah. It presumably represented various quarters of society – Jerusalem officialdom, Jerusalem priests, the Judaean middle classes, the prophets and the Davidic royal house – united by a devotion to the cult of YHWH in Jerusalem.[107] The group had influence over installing kings, and it is noteworthy that particularly the kings chosen by "the people of the land" are counted as righteous in the DtrH.[108] Thus, by placing Josiah on the throne they indicated their loyalty to the house of David and secured the Davidic dynasty.

During the early period of Josiah's reign, Judah was still a vassal state of Assyria. The time of Josiah, however, coincided with the beginning of the decline of the Assyrian empire in the aftermath of the death of Assyria's last great king, Ashurbanipal, ca 631.[109] There was no political vacuum, however, since after Assyria it was Egypt's turn to enter the fray. In the face of the rise of Neo-Babylonia, Assyria and Egypt became allies, and Egypt gave military assistance to Assyria.[110] Nevertheless, the situation made it possible for Judah, although formally under Egypt's control, to enjoy some independence which, in turn, offered an opportunity for the rise of nationalist consciousness and hope for the

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"The Account of the Reign of Manasseh in 2 Reg 21,1–18 and the Redactional History of the Book of Kings," *ZAW* 103 (1991) 355–374, here 360–362.

[106] Cogan (1998) 242–275, here 242–243. See also Na'aman (1991) 3–71.

[107] Albertz, *History of Israelite Religion*, 202–203, 224. According to Albertz, this broad basis can explain the influence of the reform movement, and its social acceptance, but, as he further points out, it was also its weakness, since due to conflicting internal interests, the wide movement also fell apart quickly.

[108] This has been pointed out by J. Alberto Soggin, "Der judäische *'am-hā'āres* und das Königtum in Juda," *VT* 13 (1963) 187–195; Soggin sees that the group "the people of the land" consisted of bearers of Yahwistic traditions, and had connections with the Deuteronomistic movement. For "the people of the land" as a term denoting landowing aristocrats, see also Lisbeth S. Fried, "The *'am-hā'āres* in Ezra 4:4 and Persian Imperial Administration," in Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming (eds.), *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006) 123–145.

[109] In a short period of time, within two decades of Ashurbanipal's death, the empire had collapsed. There were multiple reasons for Assyria's sudden collapse, but the rise of Neo-Babylonia and the military support of the Medes to Nabopolassar as well as internal political conflicts contributed to it; see Eckart Frahm, "The Neo-Assyrian period (ca. 1000-609 BCE," in Eckart Frahm (ed.) *A Companion to Assyria* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2017) 161–208, here 191–193.

[110] Na'aman (1991) 3–71, here 38–40.

restoration of the kingdom of David.[111] Whether Josiah could have extended the borders of his kingdom to the territory of the former kingdom of Israel and carry out his reform there as 2 Chronicles 34:6–7, 33 suggests, is unlikely.[112] The more realistic view, perhaps, is that Egypt permitted Josiah's operations only in non-strategic areas and, thus, he was able to conquer the territory of Benjamin with Bethel; whether he extended his rule into the Samarian hill country remains debatable.[113]

Josiah may have conducted pro-Egyptian politics during the early period of his reign in the 630s and 620s, and Judah may have been either a vassal or an ally of Egypt, as Jeremiah 2:18, 36 suggests. When in the face of the threat from the Babylonians and the Medes, Egypt and Assyria became allies, Josiah may have relied on the victory of Babylonia, and tried to prevent the Egyptians from assisting Assyria.[114] Josiah's politics failed, however. He died in 609 after confronting Pharaoh Necho II at Megiddo (2 Kings 23:29–30). The precise reason why Necho killed Josiah remains obscure.[115] After Josiah's death, the political part of the reform program may soon have lost its support. However, as many scholars have pointed out, the impact of the reform on biblical literature and on the start of the development of the religion to Judaism has been extensive.[116]

Even though the impetus for the reforms of Hezekiah and Josiah was not at least purely religious, religion was intimately connected with them. The kings needed a religious authorization and justification for their measures, especially for the silencing of ancient and legitimate local cultic sites. In the case of Josiah, the prophecy of Huldah may also have played a role, as I will discuss below.

Baruch Halpern has highlighted a link between Hezekiah's reform and his preparations in the face of the Assyrian military threat.[117] The king seems to have anticipated Assyria's reaction to the rebellion since he had reinforced Jerusalem by building a massive fortification wall and the Siloam tunnel to secure the water supply, as Isaiah 22:9–11; 2 Kings 20:20; 2 Chronicles 32:5 indicate. With Sennacherib in mind, Hezekiah's means of defence was to concentrate the rural

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[111] Na'aman (1991) 3–71, here 55–57; Ernest Nicholson, "Reconsidering the Provenance of Deuteronomy," *ZAW* 124 (2012) 528–540.

[112] For various scholarly opinions concerning the borders of Josiah's Judah, see Na'aman (1991) 3–71.

[113] Na'aman (1991) 3–71, here 44, 57; Mordechai Cogan, "Into Exile. From the Assyrian Conquest to the Fall of Babylon," in Michael D. Coogan (ed.), *The Oxford History of the Biblical World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998) 242–275, here 259.

[114] Antti Laato, *Josiah and David Redivivus: The Historical Josiah and the Messianic Expectations of Exilic and Postexilic Times* (ConBOT 33; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1992), 79–80.

[115] See, e.g., Zipora Talshir, "The Three Deaths of Josiah and the Strata of Biblical Historiography (2 Kings XXIII 29–30; 2 Chronicles XXXV 20–5; 1 Esdras I 23–31)," *VT* 46 (1996) 213–236.

[116] For a comprehensive study on the impact of the reform of Josiah on biblical literature, see especially Antti Laato, *Josiah and David Redivivus*; Sweeney, *King Josiah*; see also Na'aman (1991) 3–71.

[117] Baruch Halpern, "Jerusalem and the lineages in the Seventh Century BCE: Kinship and the Rise of Individual Moral Liability," in B. Halpern and D. W. Hobson (eds.), *Law and Ideology in Monarchic Israel* (JSOTSS 124; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991) 11–107, especially 21–27.

population in fortresses in order to save them from Assyria and, thus, preserve them as an economic source. This unavoidably resulted in suppressing the local cult and abandoning the countryside to the hands of the enemy.[118] Hezekiah could not have done all this without a religious justification, which was available from prophetic sources – as Halpern remarks: "Hezekiah's policy had an ideological matrix in attacks on the cult in classical prophecy."[119] The abandonment of the countryside invited the devastation at the hands of Sennacherib's troops, which afterwards appeared as YHWH's judgment on the rural cult.[120] This appears to be consistent with the conclusion made by Lisbeth Fried that the devastation of the cultic sites should be assigned to the military campaigns rather than to the religious reformists but, nevertheless, it does not necessitate making the assumption that the reforms were merely later theological interpretations.

While Hezekiah's fear of Sennacherib's invasion of Judah may very well have been behind Hezekiah's reform, the circumstances were different at the time of Josiah, when a short period on the international political scene had opened up new opportunities for Judah and inspired Josiah's political and ideological goals. Judah aimed at building a new identity as the sole people of YHWH, and this included both political and religious measures. Nevertheless, although the kingdom of Israel as gone, it could not become ignored. Judah had to take into consideration the people living in the territory of the former kingdom of Israel, because Israel was the primary home of the Yahwistic traditions. Judah was in need of traditions to build itself a past as Israel, and therefore, northern literary works, including its prophetic tradition, was taken over by Judah. The kingdom of Judah traced its history to David, who had been the link between the tribes of Israel and Judah and, thus, the idea of a Davidic monarch ruling the Israelites once again, became a central tenet in the reform as Jeremiah 3:18, which expected the reunion of the houses of Israel and Judah, indicates.[121]

1.3.2.1. Josiah's reform in 2 Kings 22:1–23:30

The biblical narrative of Josiah is presented in 2 Kings 22:1–23:30. It is widely held that the present form of the text is written from the exilic perspective, but there is no general agreement either on the literary history of the text or on the possibility that the depiction of the refom has any historical basis. Norbert Lohfink has paid attention to the many tensions in 2 Kings 22–23, and, in accordance with

[118] As for the treatment of the rural population, Halpern points to an analogous warfare in the Peloponnesian War; see Halpern, "Jerusalem and the lineages in the Seventh Century BCE," in Halpern and Hobson (eds.) *Law and Ideology*, 21.

[119] Ibid., 27, 66. Halpers further points out that the prophetic critique of the cult with its strong aniconism could be used to rationalize the expropriation of the temple resources, to which the mention of the bronze serpent, נחשתן (2 Kings 18:4) may be related.

[120] Ibid., 42.

[121] So Sweeney, *King Josiah*, 223.

Frank Moore Cross's double Deuteronomistic redaction of the books of Kings, ascribes the textual material to Josianic and exilic redactors. On literary-critical grounds, Lohfink has separated an earlier *Kurzgeschichte* coming from the time of Josiah, in which the focus was on the discovery of the Torah, a prophetic inquiry, and the sealing of the covenant and celebration of Passover (22:3–12, 13*, 14, 15–20*; 23:1–3, 21–23).[122] To this short story, at some point during Josiah's final years, the Josianic redactor inserted the report of Josiah's cultic measures and, thus, the entire reconstructed Josianic textual material consists of 22:1–12, 13*, 14, 15–20*; 23:1–23, 25*.[123] With regard to the report of Josiah's cultic measures in 2 Kings 23:4–14, Lohfink points to their affinities with the Books of Kings but, nevertheless, he argues that the report was written on the basis of underlying sources related to Josiah.[124] Lohfink, thus, ascribes most of the textual material in 2 Kings 22:1–23:30 to the Josianic redactor. Lohfink's conclusion, however, is not accepted by all scholars.[125]

I have already pointed to the role of Huldah's oracle in 2 Kings 22:15–20 as an important element in lauching Josiah's reform. The oracle is seen by Marvin Sweeney as decisive for understanding the Josiah narrative, since the inevitability of the destruction puts the reform in a curious light as it raises the question as to why the reform was carried out in the first place if it was known in advance that it would be useless.[126] Sweeney's explanation for this tension is that an oracle of destruction could have been in the earlier version of the narrative, but YHWH's decision was understood as being reversible and, thus, Josiah's reform appears as an attempt to avert Huldah's oracle of judgment.[127] Assuming that this is indeed the case, Huldah's oracle fits well with the Near Eastern prophecies in general in which, if disaster was announced, it was with the purpose of averting it. Furthermore, if the right action was undertaken, the disaster did not occur.[128] This also implies that Huldah's oracle of Josiah's peaceful death was part of the earlier form of the narrative. Overall, as Sweeney points out, 2 Kings 22:1–23:30, in its present form, is not simply an evaluation of Josiah's reign; the purpose of the narrative is also to justify YHWH's decision to punish Judah and Jerusalem despite Josiah's exemplary righteousness.[129]

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[122] Norbert Lohfink, "The Cult Reform of Josiah of Judah: 2 Kings 22–23 as a Source for the History of Israelite Religion," in Patrick D. Miller, Paul D. Hanson, and S. Deal McBride (eds.), *Ancient Israelite Religion* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987) 459–475.
[123] Ibid., 459–475, here especially 462.
[124] Ibid. 459–475, here especially 465.
[125] For a late date of 2 Kings 22–23, see Pakkala, "Why the Cult Reforms in Judah Probably did not Happen," in Kratz and Spieckermann (eds.) *One God – One Cult – One Nation*, 201–235; Pakkala (2009) 388–401.
[126] Sweeney, *King Josiah*, 45. For Sweeney's outline for the structure of the Josiah narrative, see *King Josiah*, 40–51.
[127] Ibid., 51.
[128] For this concept in the ancient Near Eastern prophecies, see de Jong (2011) 39–70, especially 49–50.
[129] Sweeney, *King Josiah*, 40.

The reform of Josiah is also intimately connected with the issue of the literary history of Deuteronomy, because many of Josiah's measures are in accordance with Deuteronomy. This has raised a question as to whether Josiah's reform in 2 Kings 22:1–23:30 reflects the later literary levels of Deuteronomy or whether an early form of Deuteronomy goes back to the time of Josiah. The Josiah narrative in 2 Kings 22:1–23:30 begins with the decisive event of the reform, the finding of the Book of the Covenant, ספר הברית (2 Kings 23:2, 21), also called the Book of the Law, ספר התורה (2 Kings 22:8, 11). The scroll was found during the restoration of the Jerusalem Temple and became the written source authorizing the reform. We are not privy to the contents of the book (actually a scroll), but since Josiah's measures correspond to the requirements in Deuteronomy, it has commonly been thought that the scroll found in the Temple was an early core of Deuteronomy, the *Urdeuteronomium*.[130] The finding of the *Urdeuteronomium* initiated the literary formation of Deuteronomy. The compilers were influenced by the 7th century Assyrian Vassal Treaties, but they also incorporated many northern traditions into their work. The northern motifs include the focus on Shechem – although the name Shechem is not explicitly mentioned – the emphasis on the Mosaic rather than Davidic tradition to express the relationship between the people and YHWH, and the promulgation of Levitical and prophetic figures as models of authority rather than the monarch.[131] The scribes at the time of Josiah must have had northern literary sources at their disposal, and it is possible that they themselves traced their origin to the former kingdom of Israel.[132]

The northern traditions may have found their way to Judah in different ways. An early form of Deuteronomy may even have been written in Israel and brought to Judah after the fall of the kingdom; another possibility is that it was written in Judah by former northeners or by Judaean scribes who employed the Israelite literary work.[133] The idea of a massive flow of the inhabitants of the former northern kingdom to Judah after 720 is very unlikely, because Assyria would not have allowed any large-scale immigration.[134] Therefore, although the kingdom of

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[130] See, e.g., Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 53–54; Sweeney, *King Josiah*, 136–169. For a different view, see Pakkala (2009) 388–401; according to Pakkala, neither Deuteronomy nor the *Urdeuteronomium* fits into the monarchic context, but the oldest version of Deuteronomy derives from a post 586 BCE context.

[131] Sweeney, *King Josiah,* 138; see also Walter Brueggemann, "Trajectories in Old Testament Literature and the Sociology of Ancient Israel," *JBL* 98 (1979) 161–185.

[132] Sweeney, *King Josiah,* 138.

[133] Ibid.

[134] For various views concerning the immigration of northern refugees to Judah, see Israel Finkelstein, "Migration of Israelites into Judah after 720 BCE: An Answer and an Update," *ZAW* 127 (2015) 188–206; Philippe Guillaume, "Jerusalem 720–705 BCE. No Flood of Israelite Refugees," *SJOT* 22 (2008) 195–211; Na'aman (2007) 21–56; Nadav Na'aman, "Dismissing the Myth of a Flood of Israelite Refugees in the Late Eighth Century BCE," *ZAW* 126 (2014) 1–14. Na'aman rejects the hypothesis that Jerusalem grew rapidly due to immigration from the northern kingdom after the fall of Samaria; see particularly Nadav Na'aman, "When and How Did Jerusalem Become a Great City? The Rise of Jerusalem as Judah's Premier City in the Eighth-Seventh Centuries B.C.E.," *BASOR* 347 (2007) 21–56. Na'aman points to the wave of refugees from the devastated areas in Judah after 701, which temporarily increased the population of Jerusalem.

Israel no more existed, there were still Israelites living in the territory which at that time consisted of Assyrian administrative districts. The number of the Israelites could actually have been substantial, since the Assyrian exile probably affected only the upper classes and, thus, a minor section of society.[135]

It is possible that the integration of northern traditions in Judah took place through the territory of Benjamin. According to Ernst Knauf, the sanctuary at Bethel could have been the milieu in which the northern prophetic traditions were preserved and edited, since the sanctuary continued to function even as late as the 6th century when the Temple of Jerusalem was in ruins.[136] This, of course, raises the question concerning Josiah's measures against Bethel – I discuss this topic in Chapter III – but given that Josiah extended his reform to Bethel, it is not impossible that he got hold of the written works preserved at the sanctuary.[137]

Nevertheless, when composing Deuteronommy, the scribes drew on sources which displayed the phraseology which, thus, became defined as "Deuteronomistic." This phraseology was not their invention but had its deep roots in Israelite stream of traditions. That an ancient phraseology can survive is supported by empirical studies, which indicate how treaty terminology in the ancient Near East remained rather unchanged over several centuries.[138]

The event of "finding" the book has long been suspected of being fictitious, especially since the "discovery" of texts in order to legitimize a present claim was well known in the ancient Near East.[139] Furthermore, as Oded Lipschits points out, it is curious why the scroll was not discovered during the temple repairs undertaken earlier at the time of Joash/Jehoash (2 Kings 12).[140] Be this as it may, the uncertainties concerning the finding of the scroll do not diminish the importance of the message that a written source or sources existed which

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According to Na'aman, the suggestion that Jerusalem grew rapidly after the conquest of Samaria is contradicted by the historical, epigraphic, archaeological evidence.

[135] Knoppers, "In Search of Post-Exilic Israel: Samaria after the Fall of the Northern Kingdom," in Day (ed.), *In Search of Pre-Exilic Israel*, 150–180, here 153, 159. As Knoppers remarks, had the Israelites been totally eliminated, Jeremiah and Ezekiel could not have expressed hope for their reunification with Judah.

[136] Ernst Axel Knauf, "Bethel: The Israelite Impact on Judean Language and Literature," in Lipschits and Oeming (eds.), *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period*, 291–350; Na'aman (2007) 21–56.

[137] So Nadav Na'aman, "The Israelite-Judahite Struggle for the Patrimony of Ancient Israel," *Bib* 91 (2010) 1–23, here 20. Na'aman makes a suggestion that the scroll containing the prophecies was preserved in Bethel, and Josiah may have found it in the connection of plundering the temple archive. Na'aman points out that this was the manner in ancient world, just as Tukulti-Ninurta I and Ashurbanipal had seized the scholarly tablets of Babylon.

[138] Laato, *History and Ideology*, 138–145.

[139] Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 294; Nadav Na'aman, "The "Discovered Book" and the Legitimation of Josiah's Reform," *JBL* 130 (2011a) 47–62, here 49–53.

[140] Oded Lipschits, "On Cash-Boxes and Finding or Not Finding Books: Jehoash's and Josiah's Decisions to Repair the Temple," in Amit, Ben Zvi, Finkelstein, and Lipschits (eds.), *Essays on Ancient Israel in its Near Eastern Context*, 239–254; his conclusion is that the Josianic redactor, who was aware of the problem, stressed that no actual restoration of the Temple was carried out during Jehoash, but only a new fiscal system was developed.

inaugurated the reform of Josiah.[141] I see no reason to doubt the existence of some written document(s) which played an important role. As Na'aman sates, to execute a cultic reform with a drastic change in the traditional cult and rites of the kingdom, the king and priests needed an authoritative divine support.[142] When the scroll was read to the king, he tore his robe (2 Kings 22:11). Perhaps the purpose of this episode and the sign of grief was to stress the importance of ancient laws, which, according to Na'aman, were "ancient divine laws that had been forgotten and corrupted by previous generations."[143]

In addition to legal traditions, Josiah's inquiry to Huldah (2 Kings 22:14–20) shows an appreciation of prophetic oracles. Josiah seems to have had a great respect for prophets in general, since the short episode in 2 Kings 23:17–18 recounts how Josiah spared the bones of the prophet from Samaria. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that some form of Hosea's prophecies were included in the northern sources that were available at the time of Josiah (and perhaps earlier in the time of Hezekiah as well). My suggestion is that Hosea's prophecies did indeed play an important role in the authorization of Josiah's political and cultic measures.

The common view among scholars is that Josiah attempted to extend his rule over the former northern kingdom and, thus, restore the Davidic kingdom, which would reunite all tribes around the Temple of Jerusalem.[144] Where Josiah might have got this idea from is a difficult question, and analogies from the ancient Near East do not provide a comprehensive answer.[145] With the demise of the monarchy in the northern kingdom, the northern form of Yahwism has lost its formal support. Hosea's prophecies were fulfilled, and the cult criticism in the prophetic message could be regarded as being for the survival Judaean form of YHWH worship. Josiah's hope for the restoration of the Davidic kingdom required that the Israelites living in the territory of the former northern kingdom would come under Judah, thus, restoring the union which had previously existed between the northern tribes and Judah under the rule of David and Solomon. David's kingdom had primarily been based on personal authority and most probably did not enjoy at highly developed administration system at that time, as later existed at the time of Solomon who, in building the state-structures, exploited the northern tribes as

[141] As Halpern states, in the time of Josiah, as 2 Kings 23:2–3 implies, Judah took a stride toward "the transformation of Israelite religion into an elite religion of the letter, or what was fixed in writing;" in "Jerusalem and the lineages in the Seventh Century BCE," in Halpern and Hobson (eds.) *Law and Ideology*, 80.

[142] Na'aman (2011a) 58.

[143] Ibid. As Na'aman further points out, according to a general conception cults and rituals were of divine origin and thus drastic changes in them broke the divinely established order, which required that Josiah needed a new authoritative divine support for the reform – this was supplied by the "discovered" scroll.

[144] See, e.g., Laato, *Josiah and David Redivivus*, 58–68; Sweeney, *King Josiah*, 258.

[145] Kratz, "The Idea of Cultic Centralization and Its Supposed Near Eastern Analogies," in Kratz and Spieckermann (eds.) *One God – One Cult – One Nation*, 121–144.

forced labor.[146] David's kingdom may never have been called Israel. Rather, it was part of Israel for a while until the northern tribes disengaged themselves from David's house, and the kingdoms of Israel and Judah continued their existence as two separate entities. Nonetheless, the memory of this short-lived union contributed to the later appropriation of the name Israel by Judah.[147] Thus, in a sense, Josiah aimed at "re-establishing" the Davidic kingdom by hoping for the reunion between Judah and the inhabitants of the former northern kingdom living in the territory which consisted of Assyrian administrative districts at that time. There were probably a significant number of them, since the Assyrian exile is likely to have affected only the upper classes and, thus, a small section of the society.[148] Additionally, Jeremiah and Ezekiel do not indicate that all Israelites had departed the land, since the prophetic texts express hope for the reunification – which would not have been possible if all the population had been eliminated.[149]

In the time of Josiah, Judah was coping with "the deep impact of Assyrian trauma," as Carr puts it.[150] And in order to overcome this trauma, the reform was needed.

1.3.2.1. Parallels between 2 Kings 23:4–24 and Hosea

The report of Josiah's cultic measures in 2 Kings 23:4–24 shows many parallels with Hosea, which raises the question of the influence of Hosea's prophecies on Josiah's reform program. Most of Josiah's cultic measures are reported to have taken place in Judah, and therefore it is understandable that some of the objects of cultic purge are not mentioned in Hosea. Josiah's actions in the territory of the former kingdom of Israel are depicted in 2 Kings 23:15–20, and concern the high places in Bethel (2 Kings 23:15) and other high places in the north (2 Kings 23:19–20). Yet, many of the cultic objects opposed by Josiah appear in Hosea as well. Below, I only briefly list the parallels between 2 Kings 23:4–24 and Hosea, since I will present a detailed discussion on these parallels in Chapters III and V, respectively.

Baal, asherah, host of heaven. According to 2 Kings 23:4, Josiah purged the Temple of Jerusalem of all the cult objects which had been made for Baal (בעל), Asherah (אשׁרה) and the host of heaven (צבא השׁמים). These three objects also appear in 2 Kings 17:16 and 2 Kings 21:3. In 2 Kings 17:16, the blame for idolatrous practices is put on the Israelites, whereas 2 Kings 21:3 attributes them

[146] Erhard Blum, "Solomon and the United Monarchy: Some Textual Evidence," in Kratz and Spieckermann (eds.), *One God – One Cult – One Nation*, 59–78.
[147] Daniel E. Fleming, *The Legacy of Israel in Judah's Bible. History, Politics, and the Reinscribing of Tradition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012) 49.
[148] Knoppers "In Search of Post-Exilic Israel: Samaria after the Fall of the Northern Kingdom," in Day (ed.), *In Search of Pre-Exilic Israel*, 150–180, here 153.
[149] Ibid., 159.
[150] Carr, *Holy Resilience*, 59.

to Manasseh. The co-occurrence of these three objects raises the question of their possible connection and how they should be understood in the context in which they appear.[151] Regarding asherah, the expression "vessels made for asherah" in 2 Kings 23:4 suggests that a goddess is meant.[152] The term "asherah" does not occur in Hosea, but because of the connection between "asherah" and wooden items, the mention of עץ and מקל in 4:12 raises the question of their connection with what the Hebrew Bible knows as "asherah." It is clear that "asherah" had a role in the Israelite religion, as the inscription from Kuntillet ʿAjrud, with its mention of YHWH and "his asherah," indicate. Hosea does not mention the worship of the "host of heaven" either.

The term "Baal" occurs several times in Hosea (2:10, 15, 18, 19; 9:10; 11:2; 13:1), and always in a critical context. "Baal" worship was also practiced in Judah, as 2 Kings 23:4–5 and Jeremiah 2:8, 23; 7:9; 9:14; 11:13; 11:17; 12:16; 19:5; 23:13, 27; 32: 29, 35 indicate. However, the term "Baal" has a wide semantic range, and therefore, it is difficult to determine with precision what the term "Baal" stands for. Stig Norin has correctly pointed to the possibility that from the time of Manasseh on, in Judah "Baal" more likely represented some Assyrian form of worship and "Baal" was perhaps identified with Marduk and, thus, it was not conceptualized as a fertily god known from the Ugaritic texts.[153] This suggests that in the 8th century Israel, Baal worship meant something different than later in Judah, and this may be reflected in Hosea's prophecies.

Idolatrous priests. 2 Kings 23:5, 20 indicate that during the reform of Josiah, the ministry of idolatrous priests, הכמרים, and of the priests of high places, כהני הבמות, in Samaria, was terminated. The same term כמרים also occurs in Hosea, in 10:5, which connects this group of cultic personnel with the calf cult. Elsewhere in Hosea, in 4:6, 7, 9; 5:1; 6:9, a negative attitude towards the priests, כהנים, is also evident.

Cultic prostitution. In 2 Kings 23:7 it is stated that Josiah pulled down the house of the cult prostitutes, הקדֵשים. Hosea mentions קדֵשות in 4:14, in which the term has usually been understood in a similar fashion as referring to cultic prostitutes. The precise meaning of הקדֵשים and קדֵשות is not quite clear – the corresponding term to the word קדֵשה in the Ugarit is *qdšm*, which refers to all non-priestly temple personnel, dedicated to the deity but not to prostitution in the sense of a profession.

High places. According to 2 Kings 23:8, Josiah defiled and pulled down high places, הבמות, in Judah. In Samaria, Josiah demolished the altar and high place at Bethel (2 Kings 23:15) and took away the high places in Samaria (2 Kings 23:19). In Hosea, 4:12–14 speaks of naturally occurring high places, tops of the mountains and hills, but the word במה occurs in 10:8. The meaning of the word במה is not

[151] John Day sees that the host of heaven may have been understood as the sons of the goddess Asherah; cf. Job 38:7; see John Day, "Asherah in the Hebrew Bible and Nortwest Semitic Literature," *JBL* 105 (1986) 385–408, here 400. See also Stig Norin, "Baal, Ashera och himmelens hela härskara. Om kult i Jerusalem under 600-talet f.Kr.," *SEÅ* 65 (2000) 33–41.
[152] Day (1986) 385–408, here 401.
[153] Norin (2000) 33–41, here 40–41.

quite clear, but obviously a local shrine with an altar is meant. Such places were an essential part of a local cult in Israel and Judah, and therefore, their condemnation in Hosea as well as in connection with Josiah's reform requires an explanation.

Teraphim and stone pillars. Josiah is said to have got rid of teraphim, תרפים (2 Kings 23:24) and smashed the stone pillars, המצבות (2 Kings 23:14), which were ancient legitimate paraphernalia in the cult of Israel. Interestingly, there is no polemic against them in Hosea (3:4). Therefore, it is reasonable to ask whether their condemnation goes back to Josiah's reform.

Bethel. An interesting and important parallel between Hosea – and Amos – and Josiah's reform concerns the condemnation of the cult of Bethel. In 2 Kings 23:15 Josiah is reported to have demolished the altar and high place at Bethel, thus, fulfilling the prophecy in 1 Kings 13:1–3. In Hosea, Bethel is given a pejorative designation בית און in 4:15, 5:8 and 10:5. As I will discuss further, the background of the criticism of the cult at Bethel goes back to the traditions connected with Shechem and in the struggle between different forms of Yahwism, one favouring bull iconography and the other the ark. The polemical northern attitude towards the bull imagery appears in Exodus 32. An important issue is the role of Bethel in relation to Jerusalem both at the time of Josiah as well as in the period before the rebuilding of the Jerusalem Tempel in the postexilic period.

Celebration of the Passover. Josiah gave an order to celebrate the Passover in 2 Kings 23:21–23, which indicates his appreciation of the Exodus tradition. As an originally northern tradition, the Exodus was important for those Israelites living in the territory of the northern kingdom, and therefore, in order to appeal to the Israelites, Josiah introduced the Passover into Judah's festival calendar. Hosea's awareness of the Exodus tradition is indicated by several references to the tradition in different contexts: the theme "out of Egypt" occurs in 2:17; 11:1; 12:10, 14 and 13:4. Hosea also speaks of the "wilderness" (מדבר) in 2:5, 16; 9:10, and 13:5, 15.

As this list of the parallels between 2 Kings 23:4–24 and Hosea shows, their number is impressive. In my opinion, this suggests that Josiah's reform was carried out with the awareness of Hosea's prophecies, which were applied to Josiah's policy. Hosea's criticism of Bethel was originally proclaimed for different reasons and in different circumstances but it fit in well with Josiah's goal of demonstrating the supremacy of the Jerusalem Temple; somewhat similarly, the high places were under attack. The fall of the former powerful kingdom of Israel was not forgotten, and the measures which Josiah undertook were aimed at avoiding a similar fate for Judah. Israel had failed to follow YHWH's commandments and prophetic warnings, but Judah would not. Only after both kingdoms had failed, did it become obvious that Judah had not succeeded, but like Israel, it had stumbled.

1.4. Covenant in Hosea

The idea which permeates Hosea is the understanding of the relationship between Israel and YHWH in covenantal terms, and the theme of broken covenant dominates the book.[154] This assertion, however, needs further clarification, since we have to ascertain which covenant is it that Hosea refers to. The term ברית occurs five times in Hosea, in 2:20, 6:7, 8:1, 10:4 and 12:2. That the term is usually translated as "covenant" does not warrant the making of any general conclusions. On close inspection, 2:20, 6:7 and 8:1 refer to a ברית with YHWH as the other party, whereas 10:4 and 12:2 concern a ברית with other nations. This indicates that there is fluidity in how the term ברית is understood in Hosea, and it appears that a ברית is not used as referring to any clearly definable form. Perhaps we should speak of "contract" or "treaty" in Hosea rather than "covenant," but for the sake of simplicity, I will most often use the term "covenant." I do not assume, however, that there was any fully developed covenant theology in the 8th century Israel. Therefore, my suggestion is that in Hosea ברית is not understood as a theological notion known from later texts such as in Jeremiah and in Ezekiel. I think that in Hosea's prophecies, ברית was understood as an obligation to show loyalty, in a manner similar to ancient state treaties, which forbade the vassal from showing allegiance to other kings.[155] Therefore, I do not agree that the notion of the covenant in its entirety goes back to the Deuteronomistic movement in the 7th century, as has been proposed.[156] One of the arguments for the late date of the concept of covenant has been that the Deuteronomistic form of the covenant closely follows the later Neo-Assyrian treaty pattern, especially the vassal treaty of Esarhaddon, literary formal patterns and terminology of which have been used for characterizing people's covenantal relationship with YHWH. This does not, however, prove that the concept of covenant is a later theological invention, but only that the author of Deuteronomy formulated the covenant known to him on

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[154] See, e.g., Joseph Blenkinsopp, "The Prophetic Reproach," *JBL* 90 (1971) 267–278, here 269. As Blenkinsopp points out, the theme of broken covenant appears throughout the book at the level of vocabulary: ברית (2:20; 6:7; 8:1; 10:4; 12:2), תורה (4:6; 8:1, 12), צדק (2:19), מִשׁפט (2:19; 5:1, 11; 6:5; 10:4; 12:7), אמונה (2:22), אמת (4:1), חסד (2:21; 4:1; 6:4, 6; 12:7), רחם and related forms (1:6-8; 2:3, 6, 21), אהב (3:1; 11:1, 4; 14:5), ידע and דעת (2:22; 4:1, 6; 5:3-4; 6:6; 8:2; 13:4-5), פּשׁע (7:13-14), ריב (4:1, 4; 12:3). Since many terms appear both in Hosea and Deuteronomy, the issue of their literary dependence is obvious. In contrast to the majority of scholars, Douglas Stuart is of the opinion that Deuteronomy is earlier than Hosea, and he suggests that Hosea's oracles are based on Deuteronomy 4:20–31, and they expect blessing only after the curses of the covenant have been unleashed; Douglas K. Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah* (WBC 31; Waco: Word Books, 1987) 7–8. In my opinion, we do not have to think that the book of Deuteronomy is earlier than the 8th century prophecies, but it is obvious, as scholars generally agree, that Deuteronomy is based on northern traditions.

[155] Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School*, 81.

[156] See especially Lothar Perlitt, *Bundestheologie im Alten Testament* (WMANT 36; Neukirchen-Vlyun: Neukirchener Verlag, 1969) 139–155.

the pattern of political treaties current in his own time.[157] In my opinion, several aspects point to the antiquity of the concept of covenant. How the term ברית should be translated, however, is somewhat problematic: the term "covenant" is rather theologically loaded, other alternatives are "agreement," and, interestingly it is rendered a "brotherly obligation" in Amos 1:9.[158]

As a technical term כרת ברית goes back to the ancient practice of dividing up an animal, which may have symbolized the execution of those violating the treaty and, thus, the ancient practice was that the person swearing the oath pledged on his life to keep the treaty.[159] It is also noteworthy that the punishment of guilty parties took place in a public ritual action.[160] This evokes the punishment of the wife in Hosea 2 for her disloyalty, which suggests that the metaphor serves to depict the nature of the relationship between YHWH and his people.

In my study, I cannot enter into a detailed discussion of the development of the concept of covenant, but I would like to emphasize its long history during which it developed from early law codes and treaties used in political contexts already as early in 1400–1170 BCE.[161] In the 12th century Palestine, each small city state was vassal to either an Egyptian or a Hittite king, and the relationship between the king and the vassal was determined by a treaty or covenant. Many elements in Deuteronomy bear resemblance to ancient Hittite state treaties too, e.g. in recounting the political relationship between the ancestors of the vassals and the kings of Hatti, by describing the benevolent acts of the overlord on behalf of the vassal, and by granting land and rule to the vassal as a gift.[162] The Hittite vassal treaties differed from the Neo-Assyrian treaties in that the benevolence of the sovereign king was the basis for the vassal's loyalty. The question was about a debt of gratitude, which correlates with how Israel's "vassalage" to YHWH was understood – on the grounds of what YHWH has done for Israel in the Exodus from Egypt.[163] Thus, the political aspect in ancient Near Eastern treaties serving the interests of the king was applied to a religious need in Israel, but in both cases, loyalty tolerated no compromises.[164] Thus, in the traditions of Israel, elements from these old treaty forms have been preserved, and in Hosea's prophecies, ברית has been used in a sense which is perhaps best described as an obligation, as a

[157] Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School*, 60.
[158] See HALOT 1, 159.
[159] Robert Polzin, "*Hwqyᶜ* and Covenental Institutions in Early Israel," *HTR* 62 (1969) 227–240.
[160] So, analogously to the Hittite Plague Prayer, the execution of Saul's sons in 2 Samuel 21 for breaking their treaty with the Gibeonites (cf. Joshua 9) ends the famine. The Baal Peor incident in Numbers 25:1–5 may also originally be related to Israel's treaty with the Moabites involving the worship of Baal of Peor, which provoked YHWH's anger resulting in a public ritual act of execution as a punishment for disloyalty towards YHWH; Polzin (1969) 227–240, here 227–231.
[161] George E. Mendenhall, "Covenant Forms in Israelite Tradition," *BA* 17 (1954) 50–76; Kenneth A. Kitchen, "The Fall and Rise of Covenant, Law and Treaty," *TB* 40 (1989) 118–135.
[162] Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School*, 66–72; see also Mendenhall (1954) 50–76.
[163] Joshua Berman, "CTH 133 and the Hittite Provenance of Deuteronomy 13," *JBL* 130 (2011) 25–44.
[164] Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School*, 81.

personal relationship with YHWH. Such a relationship contains a particular concept חסד, a term with a wide semantic range related to kindness and love, but what is important is that it also denotes a joint obligation between two parties which have a close relationship.[165] Therefore, because of the benevolence of YHWH, Israel should show the same attitude towards YHWH.[166]

As Weinfeld states, the ancient Near Eastern marital formula "You are my wife and I am your husband" bears a close resemblance to the covenant formula לעם והייתי לכם לאלהי ואתם תהיו־לי, "I will be YHWH for you and you will be a people for me" in Leviticus 26:12, which describes Israel's relationship with YHWH.[167] This is echoed in 1:9, which is a negation of the formula. This raises an interesting question as to whether YHWH himself can break the covenant – in terms of the marriage analogy, he may do so. According to Deuteronomy 24:1–4, a man is prohibited from remarrying a woman who has left him for another man and subsequently returns – a situation analogous to the marriage in Hosea. As Michael Fishbane points out, however, Hosea represents an older legal tradition which permitted matrimonial reconciliation after a divorce due to sexual misbehavior: the wife can return and the marriage will be re-established.[168] This is the point in Hosea: YHWH's response to Israel's breaking of the covenant is to renew it.[169]

An important aspect concerning Hosea is that from the earliest times the fusion of political faithlessness was identified with religious faithlessness, which appears in the treaties of Šuppiluliuma and Aššurbanipal and their vassals as well.[170] This intertwining of politics and religion seems to play a role in Hosea's criticism of the monarchy. It is likely that in ancient Israel and Judah there were covenants between the king and people as elsewhere in the ancient Near East. Weinfeld points to a double covenant: the sovereign makes the vassal/the king but also the people swear loyalty to the king.[171] According to Weinfeld, 10:3–4 is a prophetic accusation of the people dishonoring the covenant between the king and the people.[172] I will return to this issue in Chapter IV.

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[165] For various meanings of the word חסד, see HALOT 1, 336–337.

[166] For the ancient origins of the concept of חסד a social and moral code of conduct, dispersed among ancient Near Eastern pastoral nomadic and seminomadic societies, see Sol Cohen, "Pastoral Idea of *Hesed* and the Symbolism of *Matzo* and *Hamets*," in S. Yona, E. L. Greenstein, M. I. Gruber, P. Machinist, and S. M. Paul (eds.), *Marbeh Ḥokmah. Studies in the Bible and the Ancient Near East in Loving Memory of Victor Avigdor Hurowitz* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2015) 111–137.

[167] Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School*, 81–82.

[168] Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, 311–312.

[169] Related to this, Rolf Rendtorff points to how the Primeval History in Genesis 1–11 and the Sinai story in Exodus 19–34 show a parallel structure in that in both cases there is a theme of God changing his mind – he will not bring destruction and confirms this by (re)establishing the covenant; see Rolf Rendtorff, "Covenant as a Structuring Concept in Genesis and Exodus," *JBL* 108 (1989) 385–393.

[170] Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School*, 85. In the treaty of Aššurbanipal, the expression "trusted in his own power" meant political disloyalty. In Hosea, we find the same idea of arrogance and wrong self-reliance as a sign of disloyalty towards YHWH.

[171] Ibid., 88–90. Weinfeld points out that in Judah, the persons who observed the double covenant, were the "people of the land," who also supported Josiah's accession to the throne (2 Kings 21:24).

[172] Ibid., 91.

The roots of the covenantal ideas in Hosea have probably come through traditions from Shechem. Shechem in mentioned once in Hosea, in 6:9, and without any polemic, which is explained by the importance of Shechem for the northern kingdom and its traditions. The covenant known in Hosea's prophecies stems from the tradition of the Exodus, which at Shechem was extended to other groups in the form of the covenant.[173] Shechem was an ancient Canaanite cult site, a sanctuary of El of the Covenant, which may play a role in how the term covenant was introduced into Israelite thought.[174] It is possible, however, that the Israelite cult site was not located in the city of Shechem, but rather was located just outside the city, because the Israelites did not want to establish their shrines on the sites of former Canaanite temples – this may concern Bethel/Beth -aven as well.[175]

Shechem is related to the traditions of the covenant ceremony (Joshua 24; Deuteronomy 11:29–30; 27), and its political importance is indicated in 1 Kings 12:1 which explains how Rehoboam had to go to Shechem to be made king of Israel. It is, however, noteworthy that Shechem is not explicitly mentioned in Deuteronomy, and when Shechem is mentioned elsewhere is the Hebrew Bible, views on it are very different as the positive stories in Genesis 12:6–7; 33:18–20 and negative ones in Genesis 34; 35:2–4 indicate. As Yairah Amit has convincingly discussed, the ambiguity regarding Shechem reveals a polemical attitude from the time when the temple of Jerusalem was in ruins, and Jerusalem had to ensure its status over the ancient cultic holy place Shechem.[176]

The literary history of Joshua 24 remains a controversial issue, as both early and late dates for its composition have been proposed.[177] To my mind, it can be accepted that although the present form of Joshua 24 is late and features many Deuteronomistic characters, it has been built on an earlier Israelite core.[178] The

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[173] Robert P. Carroll, "Psalm LXXVIII: Vestiges of a Tribal Polemic," *VT* 21 (1971) 133–150, here 139.

[174] Eduard Nielsen, *Shechem. A Traditio-Historical Investigation* (Copenhagen: Gad, 1955) 18.

[175] Nadav Na'aman, "Beth-aven, Bethel and Early Israelite Sanctuaries," *ZDPV* 103 (1987) 13–21, here 14, 19–21. Among cultic sites located outside the town, Na'aman mentions e.g. the cultic center of Gilgal east of Jericho (Joshua 4:19), Moreh in a grove of sacred trees near Shechem (Genesis 33:18–20), and Mamre outside the town of Hebron (Genesis 23:17, 19; 25:9; 35:27; 49:30; 50:13).

[176] As Yairah Amit states, the similarities between Shechem and Jerusalem are due to Judah's attempt to replace Shecem in the Judaean collective memory; see "Shechem in Deuteronomy. A Seemingly Hidden Polemic," in Ian Douglas Wilson, and Diana V. Edelman (eds.), *History, Memory, Hebrew Scriptures: A Festschrift for Ehud Ben Zvi* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2015) 3–13.

[177] For the 7th century setting, see Perlitt, *Bundestheologie*, 239–284; as for postexilic date, see John Strange, "The Book of Joshua – Origin and Dating," *SJOT* 16 (2002) 44–51; for early date, see S. David Sperling, "Joshua 24 Re-examined," *HUCA* 58 (1987) 119–136. Sperling dates Joshua 24 to the period of the early phase of the reign of Jeroboam II, mainly because there is no indication of a threat of destruction and no reference to the exile. He suggests that Joshua 24 was built on the old tradition of Shechem, where YHWH, the god of Exodus, became the covenant god of Shechem; as Sperling notes, Joshua 24 makes no reference to any earlier covenant or law associated with Moses at Sinai, Horeb, or the plains of Moab.

[178] Nielsen, *Shechem*, 86–141; for a more recent study which suggests that the roots of Joshua 24 may have been in the northern kingdom, see Ada Taggar-Cohen, "The 'Holiness School'– Creativity

issue at stake is a renewal of the covenant at Shechem, which was demanded by a new situation when the people involved – as well as the entire cultural milieu – were different in comparison with earlier periods.[179] Mendenhall, thus, sees the covenant at Shechem as a renewal of the Sinaitic covenant, but it has also been pointed out that the covenant at Shechem is an alternative covenantal tradition to the Sinai tradition.[180] As Shinan and Zakovitch suggest, the tradition preserved in Joshua 24 is in complete disagreement with the dominant biblical tradition since priority is granted to Shechem, and it refers to Israel's worship of idols in Egypt (Joshua 24:14), a notion shared by Ezekiel 20:7–8.[181] Joshua 24:7 only mentions the time in the wilderness, with no reference to the events that occurred there according to Pentateuch. Shinan and Zakovitch conclude that the giving of the Law was impossible for as long as the Israelites worshiped idols, and it was only in Shechem that they committed themselves to worshiping YHWH alone (Joshua 24:16–18).[182]

One of the interesting points related to Shechemite stream of traditions is the idea of YHWH as "jealous" in that he does not tolerate the worship of foreign gods in his land; as Nielsen further suggests, the idea of YHWH's jealousy against foreign elements and the idea of his jealousy against the apostate elements within his people could have been associated with the Shechemite ritual on the abolition of foreign deities.[183] At some point later on, the rejection of foreign gods became more exclusive and included the deities which had been worshiped in Canaan for a long time, and this process may have started with the reform movement of Josiah.

Regarding Shechem, an interesting aspect related to Hosea's alleged background is that Shechem was a Levitical city (Joshua 21:20–21).[184] As I will discuss in my study, the northern Levitical traditions from Shechem show features

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and Editorial Activity in the Book of Joshua: The Case of Joshua 24," in Yona, Greenstein, Gruber, Machinist, and Paul (eds.), *Marbeh Ḥokmah*, 541–557.

[179] See Brueggemann (1979), especially 169–172.

[180] Nielsen, *Shechem*, 122; Avigdor Shinan and Yair Zakovitch, *From Gods to God. How the Bible Debunked, Suppressed, or Changed Ancient Myths and Legends* (Transl. Valerie Zakovitch; Lincoln: The Jewish Publication Society, 2012) 114, 115; Shinan and Zakovitch connect Joshua 24 with a tradition told by pilgrims on their journey to Shechem, where Israel had received the Law.

[181] Shinan and Zakovitch, *From Gods to God*, 110–112.

[182] Ibid., 113.

[183] Nielsen, *Shechem*, 107. For an objection to Nielsen's conclusions concerning the pre-exilic context of the Shechemite traditions as evidence of the competition between Jerusalem and Shechem, see Niels Peter Lemche, "When the Past becomes the Present," *SJOT* 27 (2013) 96–106.

[184] As for the origin of the Levites, Mark Leuchter has suggested that the tribe of Levi may have originally consisted of sons who did not inherit property unlike the eldest brothers. Therefore, they joined to the groups of Mushite priests in ancient Israelite sanctuaries, which were located along tribal boundaries. This particular socio-economic strategy was determined by practical reasons when resources became increasingly strained. As for the biblical narratives of the origins of the tribe of Levi, they may have been compiled to establish an ancient connection between Levites and Moses, an originally Transjordanian figure; see Mark Leuchter, "The Fightin' Mushites," *VT* (2012) 479–500.

such as the animosity towards the cult of Bethel and Jeroboam I's policy, which also appear in Hosea.

To conclude, my contention is that in Hosea, a form of covenant, which had its basis in the Exodus tradition and a treaty at Shechem, is known. Whatever the historical background of these events, they were developed in the northern kingdom, and contributed to the understanding of the relationship between Israel and YHWH.

1.5. More detailed definition of the task

The main thesis in my study is that the composition of Hosea is best understood as reflecting the two historical settings, the 8th century Israel, and the time of Josiah's reform. As I have discussed, the prophecies were a response to the threat and devastation caused by Assyrian campaigns against the northern kingdom of Israel. It is likely that the first written collection of Hosean prophecies was compiled in the aftermath of Samaria's fall, and it took place in Judah. Although this early written version of the prophecies cannot be reconstructed on the basis of the present form of the book, I maintain that in Hosea there are elements which reflect the contents of these prophecies. In these prophecies, the fall of the kingdom of Israel was seen as a result from Israel's fornication; in other words, Israel had broken its covenantal relationship with YHWH. This required a proclamation of judgment, but there was still hope: the broken relationship could be restored. The message of restoration became important in later times. In the time of the reform of Josiah, it was harnessed for political goals: the restoration meant the reunification of Israel and Judah and the supremacy of Davidic kingship over the pan-Israelite monarchy.

In order to accomplish my task to show how Hosea relates to the two historical settings, the 8th century Israel, and the time of Josiah, I seek to answer to following questions concerning Hosea:

1. What is the origin of the references to Judah and how their origin relates to the ambiguous attitude towards Judah in Hosea?

Although the prophecies in Hosea had their provenance in the northern kingdom, the present form of the book contains several references to Judah. The references display a confusing attitude towards Judah, which suggests that they come from different compositional stages. Since the reading of the references to Judah greatly depends on one's view on the literary growth of the book, no general agreement has been reached on the origin of individual references. In Chapter II, entitled "Judah," I will explore the references to Judah in order to determine the historical background against which they are best understood.

2. What explains the sharp criticism of the cult in Hosea?

Hosea, as well as other biblical and extra-biblical sources, attest to religious pluralism in Israel. The northern form of Yahwism with the bull iconography represented an old and regional variant of Yahwism, which raises the question of why the cult is perceived as a problem if it had been practised in Israel for a long time, and it presented an authentic Yahwistic tradition. Since the phraseology used in the cult criticism highly parallels with the later Deuteronomistic phraseology, it is often postulated that critical attitude towards the Israelite cultic practices comes from the Deuteronomistic circles. I seek to show that at the background of cult-critical sayings in Hosea there are echoes of ancient traditions connected with Shechem and the so called "YHWH-alone" movement.[185] The Shechemite traditions explain the animosity towards Bethel which was adopted into the policy of the reform of Josiah. The worship of Baal is condemned in Hosea, but it is not always clear whether the term "Baal" refers to a deity, and what would be the precise identity of the deity at stake. Furthermore, Hosea seems to play with the different meanings of the term, and therefore, the use of the term may be case-specific.

In this chapter, I will study the many parallels between Hosea and the report of Josiah's cultic measures in 2 Kings 23:4–24. My contention is that that despite being a late composition, 2 Kings 23:4–24 contains material which is historically reliable and confirms the religious heterogeneity implied in Hosea.

3. How does the anti-monarchic attitude relate to the positive picture of David?

While some passages in Hosea display a positive stance on the monarchy by speaking of a future unification of the peoples of Israel and Judah under a common "head" (2:2) and of the people of Israel seeking David their king (3:4–5), whereas some other texts display a negative attitude (7:7; 8:4; 10:3; 10:7, 15; 13:10-11). These two views on monarchy are not easily reconciled with each other. Therefore, in Chapter III, I aim at determining whether the critical sayings about monarchy can be interpreted as reflecting anti-monarchic traditions which regarded the entire institution of kingship as alien to genuine Yahwism, or whether they reflect the chaotic state of the monarchy in the 8th century Israel, which after Jeroboam II's death was characterised by constant changes of rule and regicides. The pro-Davidic saying in 3:5 displays the idea that Israel should be ruled by a Davidic king. Although the verse fits in with the aim of the reform of Josiah, I will, however, consider the possibility that also in the 8th century Israel, there may have been circles who cherished the old traditions of David.

[185] See, e.g., Bernhard Lang, *Monotheism and the Prophetic Minority. An Essay in Biblical History and Sociology* (Bradford-on-Avon: Almond Press, 1983); Karel van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria & Israel. Continuity & Change in the Forms of Religious Life Family Religion* (Leiden: Brill, 1996) 334–338.

4. How are the traditions of the Exodus and Jacob understood in Hosea?
In Chapter V, I discuss the traditions of the Exodus and of Jacob. Hosea's awareness of the Exodus tradition is evident on the grounds of several references to the tradition, but many motifs known from the extant Pentateuchal tradition are not mentioned. I will explore the possibility that the Exodus tradition known in Hosea represents an early form of a tradition.

The Jacob tradition in Hosea 12 displays both similarities and differencies in comparison with the extant tradition of Jacob in Genesis. During the long process of development of the Genesis tradition, elements from both Israelite and Judaean traditions became assembled to form the present form of the patriarchal tradition. Therefore, the relation between the Jacob tradition in Hosea and Genesis is difficult to determine, and there is no agreement on the direction of their literary interdependence. In this study, I focus on exploring the possibility that Hosea is familiar with an early version of the tradition that was connected with the sanctuary of Bethel.

At the time of Josiah, the celebration of the Passover was introduced to Judah (2 Kings 23:21–23), which indicates Josiah's appreciation of the traditions of Israel. Josiah's motive was political, since by celebrating the Passover, Josiah could appeal to the Israelites who were living in the Assyrian provinces in the territory of the former kingdom of Israel so that they would accept the rule of Josiah.

In order to answer the questions above, I will examine a selection of texts in each chapter. My point of departure is the Masoretic text (hereafter, the MT) in BHS. In some cases, other textual witnesses, especially the Septuagint (hereafter, the LXX), will be taken into consideration. In general, I seek to present a literal translation, even though in some cases the translation will be awkward. After commenting on the textual passages, I present my conclusions concerning whether the text can best be understood as reflecting the 8th century prophecy or the ideology of the reform of Josiah. Since some textual passages deal with more than one theme, no overlap can be avoided; the textual analysis is carried out in the context which thematically best fits in with the text, however.

I use the term "redactors" to refer to those involved in any literary activity concerning the written prophetic tradition, be it collecting, rearranging, and/or reworking the pre-existing written material. This is simply a matter of choice although in some cases, such terms as "scribes," "editors," even "authors" and "compilers" could have been possible.[186]

[186] For discussions concerning the terms, see, e.g., John van Seters, "Author or Redactor?" *JHS* 7 (2007) 2–22; Ska (2005) 4–18.

II JUDAH

This chapter explores the references to Judah, with special emphasis on the question of whether the references to Judah are best understood in relation to the 8th century prophecy or to the time of Josiah's reform.[187] Although Hosea has its provenance in the northern kingdom of Israel, the number of references to Judah is remarkable – the name Judah, apart from the superscription in 1:1, is mentioned fourteen times, in 1:7; 2:2; 4:15; 5:5, 10, 12, 13, 14; 6:4, 11; 8:14; 10:11; 12:1, and 12:3. The references to Judah are diverse, and convey an ambiguous attitude towards Judah, which is widely held as an indication that the book has undergone a Judaean redaction in which the prophecies, originally targeted at the northern kingdom of Israel, have been updated to concern Judah as well. Thus, the references to Judah are important indicators in relation to the literary history of the book.

2.1. Judah, Ephraim, Israel, and Jacob in extrabiblical and biblical sources

2.1.1. Extrabiblical sources

The earliest extrabiblical mention of Israel is found in the 13th century Merneptah stele, which celebrates Pharaoh Merneptah's military victory over the Libyans and his campaign in Canaan. The stele gives a list of defeated Canaanite enemies, and names Israel alongside Ashekelon, Gezer and Yenoam. Unlike other names, which have the determinative sign for "land," Israel is marked with the determinative for "people."[188] Therefore, Merneptah's Israel can be regarded as

[187] The superscription in 1:1 has already been discussed in section 1.3.1. Therefore, it will be omitted here.

[188] Reading "Israel" in the Merneptah stele is not unanimously accepted among scholars; for various readings, see the summary in see Michael G. Hasel, "Merenptah's Reference to Israel: Critical Issues for the Origin of Israel," in Richard S. Hess, Gerald A. Klingbeil, and Paul J. Ray Jr. (eds.), *Critical Issues in Early Israelite History* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2008) 47–59. See also Kenneth Kitchen, "The Victories of Merenptah, and the Nature of their Record," *JSOT* 28 (2004) 259–272; Fleming, *Legacy of* I*srael*, 20, 242–243; Liverani, *Israel's History*, 25; Robert D. Miller II, "Identifying Earliest Israel," *BASOR* 333 (2004) 55–68; here 63; Anthony J. Frendo, "Back to Basics: A Holistic Approach to the Problem of the Emergence of Ancient Israel," in Day (ed.), *In Search of Pre-Exilic Israel*, 41–64, esp. 51–53; David Noel Freedman and David Miano, "His Seed Is Not: 13th-Century Israel," in Seymour Gitin, J. Edward Wright, and J. P. Dessel (eds.), *Confronting the Past: Archaeological and Historical Essays on Ancient Israel in Honor of William G. Dever* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006) 295–301, here 295; Philip R. Davies, *In Search of 'Ancient Israel'* (JSOTSS 148; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992) 61–63; Ingrid Hjelm and Thomas L. Thompson, "The Victory Song of Merneptah, Israel and the People of Palestine," *JSOT* 27 (2002)

the first reference to a group of people named Israel, which, as inferred from the order of the names on the stele, occupied a region in the hill-country of Palestine.[189] When and why these separate groups became known as – or began to call themselves – Israel is not known. It is possible that Israel was originally the name of the territory which was subsequently taken over by the groups living there.[190] Irrespective of the origin of the name Israel, the important piece of information given by the Mernepthah stele is that this ancient name was related to a group of people.

The origin and nature of early Israel remains a contested issue. Most scholars are of the opinion that early Israel was a heterogeneous group consisting of indigenous Canaanites, groups like the Shasu and the 'Apiru, mentioned in the Late Bronze Age Egyptian texts, and of some other immigrating groups.[191] Conclusions of the identity behind the name Israel cannot be made on the basis of the Merneptah inscription, but since the name Israel is listed among the enemies of Egypt, it appears that, as a collective group, Israel had the ability to be at war.[192] The existence of separate groups is corroborated by archaeological finds which

3–18. See also Othniel Margalith, "On the Origin and the Antiquity of the Name Israel," *ZAW* 102 (1990) 225–237, here 229; Othniel points to an interesting possibility that the Mernepthah inscription could be read lezreel, an inexperienced scribe's way of rendering Yezrael, the valley in the north of the country, which would conform to the rest of the inscription which has local names and suit the pun at the end "has no seed."

[189] As Kitchen (2004), 272, concludes, since Ashkelon represents the coastlands, Gezer the inlands behind the coast and below the hill-country proper, and Yenoam the Galilee region, this leaves only the hill-country to which Israel may be assigned. The order of the names also corresponds the marching route of the Egyptian army approaching inland from the coast, as noted by van der Toorn, *Family Religion*, 184.

[190] Gösta W. Ahlström, *Who Were the Israelites?* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1986) 40.

[191] See, e.g., Fleming, *Legacy of Israel*, 258–269; Liverani, *Israel's History*, 24–29.

[192] Fleming, *Legacy of Israel*, 242. Military cooperation between various groups or tribes is attested in biblical tradition as well, for example, in the Song of Deborah in Judges 5:2–31. A notorious problem in archaeology is, however, that anything exclusively "Israelite" in the Iron I material culture cannot be determined, and therefore, archaeological findings alone do not show who the early Israelites were. Elizabeth Bloch-Smith, "Israelite Ethnicity in Iron I: Archaeology Preserves What Is Remembered and What Is Forgotten in Israel's History," *JBL* 122 (2003) 401–425, has approached this issue by making use of both archaeological and biblical data. She has compared the groups living in the Palestinian highlands to the Philistines, who, unlike the Canaanites, had a material culture and practices which discerned them from other groups of people. Bloch-Smith defines certain "primordial features" which in the 12th–early 10th centuries distinguished the groups living in the Palestinian highlands from the Philistines; these "true primordial markers," attested in biblical and extrabiblical sources, included circumcision (1 Samuel 18:25–26; 31:4; 2 Samuel 3:14), maintaining a short beard (Leviticus 19:27; Deuteronomy 14:2), abstinence from eating pork (Leviticus 11:7–8; Deuteronomy 14:2), and the military inferiority of the Israelites (1 Samuel 13:5, 19; 17). Later, these practices became part of the collective Israelite memory and were codified into law, but, as Bloch-Smith remarks, "true primordial features" were very different from cult, kinship, and territory, which in biblical collective memory became regarded as decisive primordial unifying factors. As Elizabeth Bloch-Smith concludes, early groups, each of which originally had their own practices, were pushed towards a circumstantial confederation in the time of war, which then launched the process of a development of a common self-identity and assimilation of different practices.

have revealed areas of early and dense settlements in various regions.[193] These groups were probably not tribes in the same sense as in the biblical tradition, which defines the groups, or tribes, by kinship. Historically, the identity of the tribes – like Ephraim and Judah – grew from their association with a particular territory rather than from kinship.[194] A common paternal ancestor was the determinant in the formation of clans, which were the constituents of tribes.[195] However, the tribal system, although not grounded in kinship, built a collective identity for originally separate groups. Development of the system of collective identity was originally northern, part of the Israelite heritage, and played a role in the formation of Israelite traditions, such as the Jacob tradition and the Joseph story; the latter was important particularly in legitimizing the primary of Joseph.[196]

It is obvious that something other than kinship must have held the groups together in the face of a common enemy. As Mendenhall has pointed out, the solidarity between separate groups was guaranteed by a covenantal relationship, which at some point included YHWH as the chief god of Israel.[197] Mendenhall highlights the forms of covenant known in the Hittite Empire (1450–1200) as a model for the covenant, particularly the Hittite suzerainty treaties, under which no obligations were imposed on the sovereign, although the vassal was obliged to trust the benevolence of the sovereign.[198] At this point, it needs to be stressed that Mendenhall's idea of the covenant in early Israel has met with criticism among scholars who tend to regard the concept of covenant as a later invention.[199] It is not my intention to argue that the northern kingdom was a "covenantal" society, since during its existence there were strong and powerful clans which enjoyed some independence and not even the king ruling from Samaria could control them, as the many several revolts indicate.[200] As a religious concept, however, covenant appeared in Hosea's prophecies, and early treaties between benevolent sovereign and vassal, totally dependent on the sovereign, form the background of how the covenant was understood.

The first appearance of the name Israel as the name of a kingdom is known from the Kurkh Monolith of Shalmaneser III from ca 853. The inscription mentions three members of a Syrian-Palestinian anti-Assyrian coalition – Adad-idri of Aram-Damascus, Irḫuleni of Hamath, and *a-ḫa-ab-bu KUR sir-ʾi-la-a-a*, which is read as "Ahab of the land Israel."[201] The name Israel, as the designation

[193] For archaeological findings concerning the Israelite tribes, see Liverani, *Israel's History*, 63–64; see also Fleming, *Legacy of Israel*, 44–47.
[194] So, e.g., van der Toorn, *Family Religion*, 204; Fleming, *Legacy of Israel*, 73.
[195] Van der Toorn, *Family Religion*, 200.
[196] Kristin Weingart, "All These Are the Twelve Tribes of Israel. The Origins of Israel's Kinship Identity," *NEA* 82 (2019) 24–31, here 28–29.
[197] Mendenhall (1954) 50–76.
[198] Mendenhall (1954) 56.
[199] See, e.g., Perlitt, *Bundestheologie*
[200] For this, see Peter Dubovský, "Menahem's Reign before the Assyrian Invasion," in David S. Vanderhooft and Abraham Winitzer (eds.), *Literature as Politics, Politics as Literature. Essays on the Ancient Near East in Honor of Peter Machinist* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2013) 29–45.
[201] Kelle (2002) 639–666, here 641.

of the northern kingdom in the Assyrian inscriptions, is exceptional; more common names used were "house of Omri" and "Samaria."[202] The designation "house of Omri" does not appear in the Hebrew Bible, so it is possible that it was introduced by the Assyrians who had their first contact with Israel during Ahab and, thus, called his kingdom after its assumed founder.[203]

In other extrabiblical sources, Israel as the name of the kingdom was used in the Moabite Mesha stele from ca 840, and in the Aramean Tel Dan inscription from ca 841.[204] Thus, it is clear that at least from the 9th century on Israel was a political designation of the kingdom. A relevant historical detail may be that later in the inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III (745–727) the Iran stele from 738 mentions Samaria with the determinative "land," whereas a somewhat later inscription Layard 50a+50b+67a uses a determinative "city."[205] Whether this relates to some change in the status of the northern kingdom, as Kelle suggests, remains conjectural.[206] The last mentions of the kingdom of Israel are from the inscriptions from the time of Sargon II (722–705), and deal with the last years of Samaria.

The name Judah emerges in extrabiblical sources much later than Israel. The inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser III in the so-called Nimrud Tablet from ca 732 mention "Jehoahaz of the land of Judah" as one of the kings paying tribute to the king.[207] Judah's late appearance in extrabiblical sources does not exclude the existence of a kingdom in the southern hill country before that period. Archaeological excavations have revealed finds of several fortified cities (e.g. Lachish) from the 9th century, which points to a central government of some kind.[208] It is likely that this kingdom was called the "house of David," analogously with the designation "house of Omri." This is suggested by a writing ביתדוד, the "house of David," in the Aramean Tel Dan inscription from the 9th century; not all scholars, however, agree with this reading.[209] The nature of the kingdom ruled by

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[202] See the table in Kelle (2002) 640.

[203] So Kelle (2002) 649.

[204] Kelle (2002) 645; Fleming, *Legacy of Israel,* 244; for the translation of the inscription, see in K. A. D. Smelik, "The Literary Structure of King Mesha's Inscription," *JSOT* 46 (1990) 21–30; as for the Tel Dan Stela, see, e.g., William M. Schniedewind, "Tel Dan Stela: New Light on Aramaic and Jehu's Revolt," *BASOR* 302 (1996) 75–90, here 80; George Athas, "Setting the Record Straight: What Are We Making of the Tel Dan Inscription?" *JSS* 51 (2006) 241–255, here 254–255; André Lemaire, "The Tel Dan Stela as a Piece of Royal Historiography," *JSOT* 81 (1998) 3–14, here 4. Kelle argues that the use of the name Israel in the Mesha and Tel Dan inscriptions suggests that Israel was more a local designation, which the Assyrian scribes had used only in their first recorded contact with the kingdom; Kelle (2002) 640–641, 644.

[205] Kelle (2002) 657; Tadmor and Yamanda, *Royal Inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III*, 13.

[206] Kelle (2002) 657.

[207] Text no. 47 in Tadmor and Yamada, *Royal Inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III*, 104–106; Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings,* 122.

[208] Na'aman (2010): 1–23, here 16.

[209] There is no unanimity among scholars on the reading of the lexeme ביתדוד; for the reading "the house of David," see Schniedewind (1996) 80; Ehud Ben Zvi, "On the Reading '*bytdwd*' in the Aramaic Stele from Tel Dan," *JSOT* 64 (1994) 25–32; Athas (2006) 254–255; Lemaire (1998) 4;

David is disputed, as there are no extrabiblical sources explicitly attesting to the existence of a large empire corresponding to the biblical description of the united monarchy. Regarding the finds from Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer, archaeologists are divided over whether they in fact originate from the time of the Omrides in the 9th century rather than from the time of Solomon.[210]

2.1.2. Biblical sources

In biblical tradition, the name Israel appears in Genesis 32:29. It was the name given to Jacob after his struggle with a mysterious divine being at the River Jabbok; another version of his renaming occurs in Genesis 35:10, in which the name is given in connection with a blessing. Through Jacob, Israel came to denote a collective, the descendants of Israel, בני ישׂראל, unified by kinship and possession of the land. As will be discussed in Chapter V, Hosea shows awareness of the tradition about Jacob, but the tradition is used in a manner which suggests an early form of the tradition.

The biblical tradition, thus, sees the people of Israel as consisting of an entity of twelve tribes, the descendants of Jacob-Israel, who went down to Egypt and became a great nation there (Genesis 46:1–25). Even though the Hebrew Bible shows some inconsistency in the grouping of the tribes, the concept of Israel as a collective body with the ability to wage war is embedded in the biblical and, as already discussed above, also in the extrabiblical tradition related to the name Israel. According to Fleming, extrabiblical evidence parallels with how Israel is presented in the period of Judges, when individual leaders arose in the context of loose collaboration between regional groups.[211] In the ancient Song of Deborah (Judges 5:3–18), there is a reference to an alliance of war, to early military cooperation between different tribes under the name Israel; since it omits Judah, the question may be of a northern league, to which other groups later joined.[212] In Hosea, verse 5:8 contains a quotation from this old poem.

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for another view, see Niels Peter Lemche and Thomas L. Thompson, "Did Biran Kill David? The Bible in the Light of Archaeology," *JSOT* 64 (1994) 3–22.

[210] For "low" and "high" chronologies, see, e.g., William G. Dever, "Histories and Non-Histories of Ancient Israel: The Question of the United Monarchy," in Day (ed.), *In Search of Pre-Exilic Israel*, 65–94; Zachary Thomas, "Debating the United Monarchy: Let's See How Far We've Come," *BTB* 46 (2016) 59–69; Fleming, *Legacy of Israel*, 25 note 20; Finkelstein, *Forgotten Kingdom*, 83–117; Gary N. Knoppers, "The Vanishing Solomon: The Disappearance of the United Monarchy from Recent Histories of Ancient Israel," *JBL* 116 (1997) 19–44.

[211] Fleming, *Legacy of Israel*, 293.

[212] Freedman and Miano (2006) 295–301, 296. Freedman and Miano point out that the ten tribes in the Song of Deborah are the same as which in 1 Kings 11:26–39 are defined as the northern group separating from the united monarchy. Scholars have different opinions on how old the text in the Song of Deborah actually is and how it should be read. Serge Frolov, "How Old is the Song of Deborah?" *JSOT* 36 (2011) 163–184, dates the poem between 700–450 on the basis of the Deuteronomistic features of the text; for views supporting an earlier date, see, e.g., Frank Moore

The name Israel is a theophoric sentence, a two-part combination of the name of the god El, and of a verb; the root of the verb is, however, uncertain.[213] On the basis of the tradition in Genesis, the verb seems to derive from the root שׂרה, "to strive, contend;" the same etymology is suggested in Hosea 12:4. Other etymologies have also been presented. Othniel Margalith suggests that the verb in the name Israel is ישׁר, "to be straight," and the original form Išarel, thus, denoted "the people of the God who acts straight."[214] In Deuteronomy 32:4, YHWH is called with the word ישׁר, "just," which points to this possibility.

In the Deuteronomistic History, Israel appears as the name of the kingdom beginning with its first king, Saul. 1 Samuel 9:1–10:16; 11:13–14 contains three versions of how Saul became king; in the background, there may be an older pre-Deuteronomistic Benjaminite narrative.[215] Much of what concerns Saul in the Hebrew Bible is obscured by later polemical sentiment in the Hebrew Bible, which presents Saul from the later, pro-Davidic Judaean perspective. We do not know with certainty whether Saul was originally called a king; in 1 Samuel 9:16 and 10:1, he is referred to as נגיד, a military commander. Nevertheless, the Deuteronomistic History presents Saul as a king of Israel, but not as a king whose kingdom would last forever, since the everlasting kingship of Israel was reserved for the Davidic dynasty. The extant traditions of Saul are, thus, embedded in a literary framework which is compiled to present the superiority of David as the ruler of all Israel. However, what is important, also in relation to Hosea, is that there had been an ancient connection with Israel and David since at some early historical period, the collective Israel had accepted the rule of the house of David.[216] After the secession of the northern tribes, Israel developed its own stream of traditions, including the traditions of the Exodus, Jacob, and the covenant. In Judah, its traditions were built on David, whose rule the tribes of

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Cross, *From Epic to Canon. History and Literature in Ancient Israel* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1998) 53–70; Johannes de Moor, "The Twelve Tribes in the Song of Deborah," *VT* 43 (1993) 483–494, provides an alternative reading of the text, and suggests that the Song of Deborah does mention Judah, and thus the original order of the list of twelve tribes in the text is the same as that of the genealogy of Jacob's sons in Genesis 49; Helga Weippert, "Das geographische System der Stamme Israels," *VT* 23 (1973) 76–89, sees that the Song of Deborah reflects a time when Judah and Simeon did not yet belong to the pre-Israelite confederation; see also P. C. Craigie, "The Son of Deborah and the Epic of Tukulti-Ninurta," *JBL* 88 (1969) 253–265, here 257; in his article, Craigie points to many similarities between the Song of Deborah and the Epic of Tukulti-Ninurta, which is a piece of Assyrian poetry from the 13th century.

[213] For various renderings concerning the verbal part of the name Israel, see William F. Albright, "The Names "Israel" and Judah" with an Excursus to the Etymology of *tôdâh* and *tôrâh*," *JBL* 46 (1927) 151–185; G. A. Danell, *Studies in the Name of Israel in the Old Testament* (Uppsala: Appelbergs Boktryckeri, 1946) 22–28; Margalith (1990) 225–237, here 234; E. Sachsse, "Die Etymologie und älteste Aussprache des Namens ישׂראל," *ZAW* 34 (1914) 1–15.

[214] Margalith (1990) 232–234.

[215] For the contents of the older Saul-narrative, see, e.g., Nadav Na'aman, "The Pre-Deuteronomistic Story of King Saul and Its Historical Significance," *CBQ* 54 (1992) 638–658; Na'aman regards 1 Samuel 9:1–10, 16 as a pre-Deuteronomistic passage, belonging to what he calls the "Old Story of Saul." See also, J. Maxwell Miller, "Saul's Rise to Power: Some Observations Concerning 1 Sam 9:1–10:16; 10:26–11:15 and 13:2–14:46," *CBQ* 36 (1974) 157– 174.

[216] Fleming, *Legacy of Israel*, 110.

Israel had once accepted but then soon rejected, and which in the Judaean line of traditions was considered to be a sin.

The etymology of the name Judah in the biblical tradition is related to the verb ידה, to praise (Genesis 29:35). As one of the sons of Jacob, Judah became the eponymous ancestor of the tribe Judah. Like Ephraim, Judah was also a geographical designation (e.g. Judges 1:16; Joshua 11:21) and which became attached to a group of people living in that territory.[217] The group living in the southern highlands was different from Israel in that there was no tribal association comparable to Israel.[218] Assuming that Judah is not mentioned in an early biblical text, the Song of Deborah in Judges 5:2–13, it is possible that Judah was incorporated into the concept of the twelve tribes only later.[219] Nevertheless, the system of twelve tribes became sort of a code of identity of Israel, and as I will discuss below, this is how it was understood also in Hosea. Later, this system made it possible for Judah to take over the name Israel once the northern kingdom, the original Israel, no longer existed. The appropriation of the name Israel to Judah was a gradual process; the reform of Josiah may well have constituted a decisive period in this. When the northern traditions found their way to Judah, they were gradually introduced into Judah's own traditions. This process served Josiah's pan-Israelism, a policy aimed at strengthening Judah's relationship with the people from the territories of the former kingdom of Israel. Therefore, it was most appropriate to take over the name in which not only was a sense of political unity embedded, but which was also related to David, who was able – although briefly and not without problems – to unite all the twelve tribes under one monarch. As part of collective memory, quite independently of historical reality, this was able to awaken Josiah's inspiration for the Davidic rule over the Israelites – now living in the territory of the former kingdom of Israel.

In biblical tradition, the name Ephraim has a strong connection with a territory and a tribe which, as Joshua 17:14–18 suggests, was closely connected with the house of Joseph.[220] In the development of the Joseph story, Joseph was made the father of the two major groups in the central highlands – Ephraim and Manasseh – who, thus, could lay claim to the entire political heartland of the kingom of

[217] Ahlström, *Who Were the Israelites?* 42–43. Ahlström makes an interesting point that Judah may originally have denoted the southern part of the hill country of Israel, which means that Judah's territory was originally a subdivision of the territory of Israel, and, as he further suggests, this old geographical name Judah was converted into a political name by David.

[218] See Fleming, *Legacy of Israel*, 55–57, here 56.

[219] See, however, de Moor (1993) 483–494; de Moor suggests reading "Judah" in Judges 5:13, although the spelling is unusual *yôdāh*, 488. De Moor concludes that the original order of the list of twelve tribes in the Song of Deborah was the same as in Genesis 49, but the order was changed shortly after the division of the country into two kingdoms to meet the new political realities, 493. Another explanation to understand the absence of Judah in Judges 5 is provided by Cross, *From Epic to Canon*, 53–70, here 55 note 8; Cross suggests that Judah was a subdivision of Reuben, comparable to the house of Joseph.

[220] Heinz-Dieter Neef, *Ephraim. Studien zur Geschichte des Stammes Ephraim von der Landnahme bis zur frühen Königszeit* (BZAW 238; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1995) 318.

Israel.[221] Ephraim's prominent position among the tribes is indicated in Genesis 48:19-20 which tells how Ephraim, the eponymous ancestor of the tribe, was – for no obvious reason – put by Jacob before his elder brother Manasseh. The future splendor of Ephraim was, however, embedded in the very name. "Ephraim" is derived from the verb פרה, "to be fruitful", and a word play in Genesis 41:52 relates the etymology of the name to this verb. In Hosea, the etymology of the name Ephraim is also a pun: 9:16 speaks of Ephraim as yielding no fruit (פרי) and 13:15 points to Ephraim's thriving (פרה) among his brothers. Additionally, Israel's important and ancient cultic centers Bethel, Shiloh, and Shechem were located in the territory of Ephraim and many central characters in the Hebrew Bible are from the tribe of Ephraim: Joshua (1 Chronicles 7:27), Samuel (1 Samuel 1:1) and Jeroboam I (1 Kings 11:26).

The prominent position of Ephraim is evident in Hosea, in which the name represents the entire northern kingdom. The name Ephraim is used for the kingdom of Israel also in the early prophecies of Isaiah, which are contemporaneous with prophecies in Hosea. Thus, the use of the name Ephraim for the kingdom of Israel as a political entity separate from Judah is one of the elements which suggest the 8th century origin of the text.[222]

2.2. Judah, Ephraim, Israel, and Jacob in Hosea

In my study on Judah in Hosea, I will not focus on the occurrence of the name Judah only but also on how Judah appears together with the names Israel and Ephraim. Only in three verses, in 1:7; 5:10 and 6:11, only Judah is mentioned. In all other references to Judah, Judah is used in combination with other names: with Israel in 2:2; 4:15 and 8:14, with Ephraim in 5:12, 13, 14 and 6:4, with Jacob in 12:3, with Israel and Ephraim in 5:5 and 12:1, and with Jacob and Ephraim in 10:11. The meaning of a name can develop through history, and this process that is reflected in biblical sources too. Therefore, it is worth considering the meanings of the names. The best example is the name Israel. In the Hebrew Bible, Israel is the name given to Jacob, indicating that he is the eponymous ancestor of the nation, Israel is a political designation of the kingdom of Israel, a political entity separate from the kingdom of Judah, and Israel is also a comprehensive religious designation of the people of YHWH.[223] Thus, when Judah and Israel are used in the same context, it may suggest that two separate entities are meant. We cannot,

[221] So Fleming, *Legacy of Israel*, 79.

[222] In Hosea, Ephraim appears in 4:17; 5:3, 5, 11, 12, 13, 14; 6:4, 10; 7:1, 8, 11; 8:9, 11; 9:3, 8, 11, 13, 16; 10:6, 11; 11:3, 8, 9; 12:1, 2, 9, 15; 13:1, 12, and 14:8. It is noteworthy that the name Ephraim does not appear in Hosea 1–3. In other prophetic books, the name Ephraim occurs in Isaiah 7:2, 5, 7, 8, 9, 17; 9:9, 21; 11:13; 17:3; Jeremiah 4:15; 7:15; 31:6, 9, 20; 50:19, and Ezekiel 37:16; 48:5, 6.

[223] For how the development of the name Israel from a political designation to a religious one correlates with the literary history of the book of Isaiah, see Reinhard G. Kratz, "Israel in the Book of Isaiah," *JSOT* 31 (2006) 103–128.

however, ignore the possibility that the name Israel may occasionally carry a wider meaning including Judah.

In Hosea, the name Ephraim is often mentioned in parallel with the name Israel in a manner which indicates that they function as interchangeable names for the kingdom of Israel. Ephraim as denoting the northern kingdom is also mentioned in Isaiah 7:2, 5, 8, 9, 17 and in Jeremiah 31:6, 9, 20.[224]

The names Israel and Judah are known also in extrabiblical sources and, therefore, before beginning my examination of the references to Judah, I briefly discuss their occurrence in extrabiblical and biblical sources. As for Hosea, the information provided by Assyrian royal inscriptions is particularly important, since their references to the northern kingdom span over a time period of 150 years, from the Monolith Inscription of Shalmaneser III ca 853 to the inscription of Sargon II from ca 720, and the names that the inscriptions use for the kingdom are "House of Omri," "Samaria," and "Israel."[225] This confirms that in Hosea, Israel was understood as the name of the northern kingdom, and therefore, Israel could be used in parallel to Ephraim. The name Israel is far more ancient than Judah, which appears remarkably late in extrabiblical sources, about a hundred years later than Israel, in a tribute list of Tiglath-pileser III from ca 732.[226] Thus, extrabiblical sources demonstrate the prominent position of Israel in comparison with Judah and, furthermore, allow one to establish a historical and chronological framework which provides an essential comparative material to biblical sources.

2.2.1. Hosea 5:8–6:11. Judah and Ephraim

5:8 *Blow the ram's horn in Gibeah,*
the trumpet in Ramah.
Shout Beth-aven,[227]
behind you[228] *Benjamin.*

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[224] The name Israel appears in Isaiah 7:1, but since the verse is identical to the Deuteronomistic saying in 2 Kings 16:5, Isaiah 7:1 can be regarded as a later formulation.

[225] See especially Brad E. Kelle, "What is a Name? Neo-Assyrian Designations for the Northern Kingdom and Their Implications for Israelite History and Biblical Interpretation," *JBL* 121 (2002) 639–666.

[226] Text no. 47 in Tadmor and Yamada, *Royal Inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III*, 104–106; Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 122; Kelle (2002) 639–666, here 657.

[227] There is no preposition ב here; Macintosh suggests that the preposition is omitted for euphonic reasons in order to avoid the combination of the sound ב + ב; *Commentary on Hosea*, 193.

[228] LXX reads the MT's בגבעה and בברמה as ἐπὶ τοὺς βουνούς and ἐπὶ τῶν ὑψηλῶν "on the hills," and "upon the heights," and transliterates the MT's בית און as τῷ οἴκῳ Ων, "the House of On;" furthermore, in the LXX the phrase אחריך בנימין is changed to εξεστη βενιαμιν; the LXX thus sees the verb as חרד, "to tremble, startle;" so also BHS which suggests Qal imperfect יֶחֱרַד or Hiphil imperfect הַתֲרִידוּ; the verb retains a sense of fear, horror and shock; so Muraoka, 252; HALOT 1, 350. Thus, translations, "Benjamin is terrified" in W. Edward Glenny, *Septuagint Commentary Series: Hosea: A Commentary Based on Hosea in Codex Vaticanus* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 45, 106;

5:9 *Ephraim will be*[229] *a thing of horror*[230]
on the day of rebuke.[231]
Among Israel's tribes
I have made known[232] *that which is trustworthy.*[233]

5:10 *The princes*[234] *of Judah are*
like[235] *those who displace boundary marks,*
upon them I will pour out
my wrath like water.

5:11 *Ephraim is oppressed,*[236]

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so also, Wolff, *Hosea*, 104, with "terrify, Benjamin." Vulgata reads "post tergum tuum, Benjamin;" "behind your back, Benjamin."

[229] היה is in Qal imperfect indicative 3rd person singular feminine. Since Ephraim is usually masculine, the reference is to the land.

[230] שמה refers to some horrible and atrocious event following judgement; HALOT 2, 1553; cf. Deuteronomy 28:37; 2 Kings 22:19; Isaiah 5:9; 24:12; Psalms 46:9. The LXX has ἀφανισμός; "ruin, destruction, annihilation;" Muraoka, 106.

[231] תוכחה, "rebuke," is a feminine noun derived from the Hiphil of the root יכח; HALOT 1, 410; HALOT 2, 1698. The expression "the day of rebuke" appears also in Isaiah 37:3 and 2 Kings 19:3; Isaiah 37–38 and 2 Kings 19–20 contain nearly identical narratives about the events concerning Hezekiah's revolt against Sennacherib; the priority of the versions is debated; see, e.g., Marvin A. Sweeney, *I and II Kings. A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007) 410–411. The word תוכחה occurs often (16 times) in the Proverbs and is connected with the theme of instruction and teaching.

[232] ידע is a Hiphil perfect 1st person singular; "to make known."

[233] נאמנה is a feminine Niphal participle of the verb אמן, "to prove to be firm, reliable, faithful; what is trustworthy;" HALOT 1, 63. The LXX has ἔδειξα πιστά; the verb δείκνυμι means "to act in such a way as to show evidence of," thus YHWH has demonstrated his loyalty, trustworthiness; Muraoka, 141, 559.

[234] The word שׂר has a variety of meanings, generally denoting "a person of note, head, first in a series;" HALOT 2, 1351. Cf. Jeremiah 24:1. The question is about high administrative officials, princes or leaders.

[235] Whether the princes of Judah are *like* those who displace boundary marks or in fact they *indeed* or *in every way* are such depends on whether the preposition כ in כמסיגי גבול is understood as expressing a conformity of kind or as a confirmatory כ *veritatis;* for this, see Grace J. Park, "Stand-alone Nominalizations Formed with ʾăšer and kî in Biblical Hebrew," *JSS* 61 (2016) 41–65; Bruce K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990) 202–205; Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 202, reads כ *veritatis* here.

[236] MT has Qal passive participles of עשׁק, "to oppress," and רצץ, "to oppress, crush, suppress;" the use of this form is likely a literary device which uses assonance to emphasize the meaning; so Wolff, *Hosea*, 113; Wolff thus follows Paul P. Saydon, "Assonance in Hebrew as a Means of Expressing Emphasis," *Bib* 29 (1955) 36–50, 287–304. The way of expressing emphasis in 5:11 is achieved by combining two words of different stems but very similar in sound and meaning; עשׁוק and רצוץ occur also in Deuteronomy 28:33; so, Saydon (1955) 38, 294. The LXX understands the verse differently and makes Ephraim the subject: κατεδυνάστευσεν Εφραιμ τὸν ἀντίδικον αὐτοῦ κατεπάτησεν κρίμα ὅτι ἤρξατο πορεύεσθαι ὀπίσω τῶν ματαίων; "Ephraim oppresses his opponent and tramples justice under foot;" see Wolff, *Hosea*, 104; Glenny, *Septuagint Commentary Series: Hosea*, 45, 107. Glenny understands the phrase as referring to Ephraim as the one who overpowers and dominates

crushed in justice,[237]
for he has been keen on going after what is empty.[238]

5:12 *And I am like pus*[239] *to Ephraim,*
like rottenness to the house of Judah.

5:13 *When Ephraim saw his sickness,*
and Judah his sore,
Ephraim went to Assyria,
and sent[240] *to the Great King,*[241]
but he cannot heal you,[242]
nor heal sore from you.

5:14 *For I am like a lion to Ephraim,*
and like a young lion to the House of Judah.
I will tear and go.
I will carry away with no-one to save.[243]

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those who bring a lawsuit against Ephraim for its injustices. Amos 4:1 uses the same verbs עשׁק, "to oppress," and רצץ, "to oppress, crush, suppress."

[237] The word משׁפט has several meanings, all of which relate to judgment and YHWH's legal decisions; the noun derives from the verb שׁפט, which has a wide range of meanings related to exercising authority and passing judgment, and maintaining justice.

[238] BHS suggests reading שָׁוְא as "worthless," "futile" instead of צו; Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 204, translates "futility," and takes the word as being cognate with Arabic "empty;" The LXX has μάταιος, "meaningless, worthless;" Vulgata uses "sordes;" "filth."

[239] The translation of עש as "moth" is also possible, but does not fit in with the metaphor of illness and healing; cf. Isaiah 50:9; 51:8. Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 207, translates עש in accordance with the Arabic cognate verbs underlying the word, and suggests "an emaciating disease." The LXX has ταραχὴ, "upheaval," or "cause of upheaval;" κέντρον, "a goad;" Muraoka, 395, 671.

[240] According to BHS, "Judah" may be the subject of וַיִּשְׁלַח; LXX adds the object πρέσβεις, "envoys, ambassadors."

[241] מלך ירב is likely to be a title *šarru rabū* of the Assyrian king. According to Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 414, there is a misdivision in the expression מלך ירב here which should correspond to the title of Assyrian king as מלכי רב, hence the common translation "Great King;" cf. המלך הגדול מלך אשור in 2 Kings 18:19. The letter י in מלכי is probably *yod compaginis* which expresses the grammatical connection between the two words; see Wolff, *Hosea*, 104. LXX reads "King Iarim," βασιλέα Ιαριμ. For alternative interpretations, see, e.g.,Barstad, "Hosea and the Assyrians," in Gordon and Barstad (eds.), *Thus Speaks Ishtar of Arbela*, 107–110; Barstad suggests that ירב is a short form of Jeroboam, and Heath D. Dewrell, "Yareb, Shalman, and the Date of the Book of Hosea," *CBQ* 78 (2016) 413–429; Dewrell takes ירב as a reference to Sennacherib. See also H. S. Nyberg, *Studien zum Hoseabuche. Zugleich ein Beitrag zur Klärung des Problems der altetestamentlichen Textkritik* (UUÅ 6; Uppsala: A. B. Lundequistska Bokhandeln, 1935) 38–38, for proposal that an Assyrian god is meant here.

[242] BHS suggests להם instead of לכם, and מהם instead of מכם.

[243] The Hiphil participle מציל occurs in the expression ואין מציל, "with no-one to save," "irrecoverable;" HALOT 1, 717; cf. Isaiah 5:29 and Judges 18:28.

5:15 *I will go I will return*[244] *to my place*[245]
until they pay for their guilt[246]
and seek my face
in their distress they will seek me.

6:1 *Come and let us return to YHWH*
for he has torn but[247] *he will heal us,*
he will strike[248] *and he will bind up us.*

6:2 *He will bring us back to life*[249] *after*[250] *two days,*
on the third day he will raise us up,
we will live before him.[251]

6:3 *Let us understand, let us press on knowing YHWH.*[252]
His appearance[253] *is as sure as the dawn.*
He comes to us like the rain,
like the spring rain which waters[254] *the earth.*

6:4 *What shall I do to you, Ephraim,*
what shall I to do to you, Judah?
Your kindness (חסד) is as the morning cloud
and as the dew which goes away early.

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244 This is an asyndetic construction, in which there is no conjunction; LXX adds καὶ.

245 מקום denotes a "place;" cf. Jeremiah 7:12, Isaiah 18:4; 26:21 and Micah 1:3, which, like Hosea, speak of מקום as YHWH's dwelling place.

246 יאשמו, a Qal imperfect 3rd plural masculine of אשם, means "to pay, suffer for one's guilt;" HALOT 1, 95. LXX has ἀφανισθῶσιν; "until they are destroyed."

247 Here contrasting clauses are connected with ו, which here means "but;" HALOT 1, 258.

248 The form יך in the phrase כי הוא טרף וירפאנו יך ויחבשנו is problematic in that as commentaries point out, the shortened imperfect form of נכה would require a prefixed ו; see, e.g., Dearman, *Hosea*, 188, note 24. BHS suggests reading והוא נכה; the translation "he has struck" is a better fit.

249 חיה is Piel imperfect 3rd person singular masculine, "to bring back to life;" HALOT 1, 309.

250 The preposition מן is used in temporal sense "after;" Waltke and O'Connor, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 213.

251 Cf. Genesis 17:18.

252 In the clause ונדעה נרדפה לדעת את־יהוה the verbs have an asyndetic sequence (there are no conjucations in the series of clauses); see Waltke and O'Connor, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 338; Nyberg, *Studien zum Hoseabuche*, 39–40.

253 כשחר נכון מוצאו, "his appearance" or "his coming forth" is as sure as dawn; the LXX reads εὑρήσομεν αὐτόν, "we will find him as sure as dawn;" BHS suggests כשחרנו כן נמצאנו, "when we seek him then we will find."

254 יורה is Hiphil imperfect 3rd singular masculine of ירה, "to throw, cast;" HALOT 1, 436; as BHS suggests, the verb is רוה and thus instead of יוֹרֶה we should read יַרְוֶה, "to water;" HALOT 2, 1195.

6:5 *Therefore I have hewn*[255] *by the prophets,*[256]
I have slain them by the words of my mouth.
My judgment will go forth like light.[257]

6:6 *For I desire kindness (חסד) and not sacrifice,*
and the knowledge of God rather than[258] *burnt offerings.*

6:7 *They violated*[259] *the covenant in Adam,*[260]
there they dealt treacherously with me.

6:8 *Gilead is a city of those who practice iniquity,*[261]
trodden in blood.[262]

6:9 *A band of priests*
like bandits lie in wait.[263]
They commit murder on the road to Shechem[264]

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[255] חצבתי is a Qal perfect 1st singular; the verb חצב means "to cut stones, hew out from rock;" HALOT 1, 342. In the MT, the verb has no object; BHS suggests חצבתיך.

[256] For בנביאים, "by prophets," BHS reads בנביאים, "in stones," referring to Exodus 31:18 and thus to the tablets of stone, inscribed by YHWH. The LXX sees that prophets were cut off and killed. בנביאים is ambiguous, and here I have translated the preposition as instrumental.

[257] The phrase ומשפטיך אור יצא, "your justices are light that comes forth," is unclear. The LXX has τὸ κρίμα μου ὡς φῶς ἐξελεύσεται, "my judgment will go forth like a light;" Muraoka, 413. The emendation ומשפטי כאור according to BHS is accepted here. The word אור may also refer to the sun or dawn; cf. Habakkuk 3:4.

[258] For the use of מ- (מן) here in a substitutive sense "rather than," see Waltke and O'Connor, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 214, note 99.

[259] עבר is here in a Qal perfect 3rd plural masculine form; the verb has a meaning "to pass over;" HALOT 1, 778–779. Therefore, it conveys the sense of ignoring and disregarding or violating the covenant; cf. Deuteronomy 17:2; Joshua 7:11, 15; 23:16; Judges 2:20; 2 Kings 18:12; Jeremiah 34:18.

[260] BHS suggests באדם. Adam is a place in Joshua 3:16, but the word אדם can also be understood as denoting "mankind, people." The word שׁם suggests that the question is about the place Adam. In the LXX, the word ἄνθρωπος is used; denoting English "like man" or as weaker "one;" Muraoka, 52.

[261] The verb פעל in the phrase פעלי און means "to commit, practice," hence the translation "those who practice iniquity," in other words, "evildoers;" so Wolff, *Hosea*, 106, 122. In the LXX, the word μάταιος, "meaningless, worthless," is used for און; Muraoka, 443.

[262] עקבה מדם conveys the idea of creeping behind somebody in blood; BHS suggests עקביהם דם; "their footprints are bloody." The LXX has ταράσσουσα ὕδωρ; "troubling water;" as Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 241, remarks, the author likely read מים for מדם.

[263] וכחכי is a Piel infinitive construct of חכה, "to lie in wait;" HALOT 1, 313; thus the translation "robbers (איש גדודים) lie in wait;" alternatively, if איש is understood as an object; see Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 241–242. Regardless of the translation the idea of murdering priests is retained, however.

[264] Literally, "On the road, they commit murder, to Shechem," for other examples of a broken construct chain, see Waltke and O'Connor, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 140. Here the intrusive element is the verb ירצחו.

because they made an evil plan.[265]

6:10 *In the house of Israel*[266]
I have seen what is horrible:[267]
there is Ephraim's fornication,[268]
Israel has defiled himself.

6:11 *Judah also – he has directed a harvest towards you*[269]
when I will restore the fortunes of my people.[270]

The passage begins in 5:8 with a summons to blow the horn and the trumpet. The blowing of the horn functioned as a warning of a military invasion (e.g. Numbers 10:9) but it also signified theophany (Exodus 19:16) and, thus, it refers to something terrifying. The place names Gibeah, Ramah, and Beth-aven put the geographical focus on the territory of Benjamin, the border district between Israel and Judah. Against the backdrop of the Syro-Ephraimite war, the order of the place names has been connected with a military attack from south to north, particularly when the accusation of Judah displacing boundary marks in 5:10 is read as pointing to Judah's northward intrusion through the district of Benjamin.[271] Benjamin was the border district between the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, but its affiliation has not always been clear. Whereas the Song of Deborah suggests a link between Ephraim and Benjamin, 1 Kings 12:21–24 and 15:17–22 see Benjamin as part of Judah after the secession of the northern tribes from Rehoboam's kingdom. According to Nadav Na'aman, archaeological evidence supports Benjamin's affiliation with Judah in the 8th century, but Philip Davies has suggested that Benjamin was part of Israel until the end of the kingdom.[272] In

[265] זמה means "plan," but it is often related to some infamy like fornication; thus "evil plan;" HALOT 1, 272; the LXX reads ἀνομία, "act which is in breach of law;" Muraoka, 55.
[266] BHS suggests reading בבית־אל for בבית ישׂראל.
[267] שׁעריריה denotes "something horrible, " with two feminine endings the word occurs only in Hosea; HALOT 2, 1619.
[268] זנות denotes "fornication," "unfaithfulness towards God;" HALOT 1, 276.
[269] שׁת is Qal perfect 3rd masculine singular of שׁית; "to direct towards, fix for;" HALOT 2, 1485.
[270] The preposition ב in the expression בבשׁובי is temporal; the phrase בשׁובי שׁבות עמי is used in the prophetic literature to denote the restoration from exile; cf. e.g. Amos 9:14; Jeremiah 29:14. Literally, בשׁובי שׁבות means "to turn a turning;" see HALOT 2, 1386; Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 248–249; Eidevall, *Amos*, 242. The reading in the LXX also understands that a reference to the exile here, as it says, ἄρχου τρυγᾶν σεαυτῷ ἐν τῷ ἐπιστρέφειν με τὴν αἰχμαλωσίαν τοῦ λαοῦ μου ἐν τῷ ἰάσασθαί με τὸν Ἰσραήλ, "begin to harvest for yourself when I bring back the captives of my people;" so, Muraoka, 18.
[271] Alt (1953); Wolff, *Hosea*, 112–113.
[272] Nadav Na'aman, "Saul, Benjamin and the Emergence of Biblical Israel (Part I)," *ZAW* 121 (2009) 211–224. An opposite view is held by Philip R. Davies, who maintains that Benjamin was part of Israel, and thus 1 Kings 12:16–21 is not reliable. Davies suggests that Benjamin was annexed to Judah at the time of pro-Assyrian Manasseh; see Philip R. Davies, "The Origin of Biblical Israel," in Yairah Amit, Ehud Ben Zvi, Israel Finkelstein, and Oded Lipschits (eds.) *Essays on Ancient Israel*

accordance with his interpretation of Benjamin's affiliation with Judah during the Syro-Ephraimite war, Na'aman sees in 5:8 a reference to Ahaz's counter-attack to the north-south campaign of Rezin and Pekah and to the mobilization of Benjamin to participate in the attack on Bethel.[273]

In my opinion, 5:8 the phrase אחריך בנימין, "Behind you Benjamin," is decisive in how the verse can be interpreted. The phrase is a quotation from the Song of Deborah, an ancient heroic poem in Judges 5:2–31 praising the military victory of Israel over the Canaanites.[274] The Song of Deborah aligns Benjamin with Ephraim in battle, pointing to the ancient concept of holy war and intertribal solidarity in a situation of war.[275] As discussed earlier, understanding the collective nature of Israel through a tribal system belongs to the traditions of Israel and was the reality in the kingdom in the 8th century. In line with the general trend in Hosea's prophecies – i.e. reflecting the past events and fragments of ancient traditions against the situation of that time – the reminder of intertribal solidarity in a war against a common enemy is ironic. Already the earliest extrabiblical mention of Israel connects it with a collaborative effort to fight the enemy, and it was war which pushed the heterogeneous groups into cooperation. Internecine conflicts destroyed this tradition of solidarity and violated the prophetic idea of the covenant, under which intertribal solidarity was an essential part of the covenantal relationship between the tribes in question and YHWH.[276]

In 5:9, the phrase אפרים לשׁמה תהיה points to the territory of Ephraim which will become "a thing of horror," or "desolation," שׁמה. In Deuteronomy 28:37, the curse of becoming שׁמה is targeted at the people of Israel by Moses, and the word שׁמה

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in its Near Eastern Context. A Tribute to Nadav Na'aman (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006) 141–148.

[273] Na'aman (2009) 220. H. G. M. Williamson, for his part, has speculated as to whether Isaiah 10:29 is referring to some Judaean counter attack against the approaching military troops of Ephraim and Aram Damascus, since the verse mentions Ramah and Gibeah in an opposite order to 5:8; see Williamson's conclusions on Isaiah 7:1–9 and 10:27–32, in H. G. M. Williamson, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Isaiah 1–27. Vol.2. Isaiah 6–12* (London: T&T Clark, 2018) 600. Note also Williamson's discussion on the problem with the verb נחה in Isaiah 7:2; Williamson concludes that the verb includes the sense "to make an alliance with;" Williamson, Isaiah *Isaiah 6–12*, 91–95. See also Oded (1972) 153–165; Roger Tomes "The Reason for the Syro-Ephraimite war," *JSOT* 59 (1993) 55–71.

[274] There is no consensus on the age of the Song of Deborah. For a summary of different proposals for the date of the poem, see Frolov (2011) 163–184; see also Baruch Halpern, "The Resourceful Israelite Historian: The Song of Deborah and Israelite Historiography," *HTR* 76 (1983) 379–401, and Fleming's discussion in *Legacy of Israel*, 64–66. The meaning of "behind Benjamin" can be related to an actual battle situation, in which the men of the tribe of Benjamin used to be in the vanguard of other fighters that were positioned behind them; so Craigie (1969) 253–265, here 257.

[275]Judges 20, which tells about the violence when the Israelites set an ambush around Gibeah and killed nearly all Benjaminites, points to the danger if the bloodshed between the tribes is renewed; Patrick M. Arnold, "Hosea and the Sin of Gibeah," *CBQ* 51 (1989) 447–460, here 459; also Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 562, point to Judges 19–20 and to the civil war with its awful consequences.

[276] Mendenhall (1954) 50–76. The importance of understanding the overall message in Hosea as related to a history of covenant-breaking is also made by Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, –7. See also Brueggemann (1979) 161–185.

also occurs in Micah 6:16. Historically, "desolation" may point to the horrific destruction caused by Assyrian troops, corroborated by archaeological finds, which have demonstrated that numerous sites in the territory of Ephraim were destroyed to such an extent that they never recovered.[277] The reference to Israel's tribes, שִׁבטי ישׂראל, is a reminder of the collective nature of Israel.[278] What is the "trustworthy" that the tribes have been informed of, though? Andersen and Freedman interpret the phrase so that YHWH had made known with certainty that Ephraim will become a desolation.[279] The term "Israel's tribes" is reminiscent of the concept of solidarity, and in this context rather the lack of it.

In 5:10, the focus turns to Judah's princes or military leaders, שׂרי יהודה, who are accused of being either *like* those who displace boundary marks or those who really do so. The cause of the accusation – the displacement of boundary marks – is reminiscent of the law preserved in Deuteronomy 19:14 and 27:17, which prohibits moving one's neighbor's boundary mark. This probably pre-Deuteronomic law has no particular connection with a military operation, but it does concern the violation of the ancient concept about the tenure rights of Israelite lineages to their inherited land.[280] Therefore, instead of referring to military aggression on Judah's side, it is possible to read the accusation against Judah as pointing to social injustices connected with an economic crisis in the 8th century, although this subject as a whole is given no explicit emphasis in Hosea.[281] It is obvious that Assyria's imperialistic politics, which included the obligations to pay tribute, had devastating effects on the economy of its vassal states. It is, however, difficult to explain why only Judaean leaders would be accused in 5:10, although in general terms; the accusation of violating the law in Deuteronomy 19:14 makes more sense because the owners of large estates were often royal officials, who could gain control of the impoverished small farms. It is also understandable that the burden of paying the tribute increased the demand to raise the taxation on the farmers. This resulted in an increased production of agricultural

[277] See especially Avraham Faust, "Settlement, Economy, and Demography under Assyrian Rule in the West: The Territories of the Former Kingdom of Israel as a Test Case," *JAOS* 135 (2015) 765–789; Peter Dubovský, "Tiglath-pileser III's Campaigns in 734–732 B.C.: Historical Background of Isa 7; 2 Kgs 15–16 and 2 Chr 27–28," *Bib* 27 (2006) 153–170, here 161, 165. As Faust on page 781 says: "Thus, a few regions (Galilee, Gilead, southern Samaria) were devastated and exhibit almost no remains from this period, while others continued to function for a short time before settlement disappeared almost completely (for example, the Beth-Shan valley, where some short-lived squatting is attested). In other areas, one can recognize some settlement and a degree of economic activity and recovery, even if only of a limited, regional significance (e.g., the northern coastal plain, the Jezreel valley, and perhaps also northern Samaria)." Nadav Na'aman also connects 9:13 to these campaigns and the destruction of Tyre in 734 – the saying about Ephraim bringing his children to the slaughter equals Tyre's destruction; see Na'aman, *Ancient Israel and Its Neighbors*, 63.

[278] Wolff, *Hosea*, 113; Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 200.

[279] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 399.

[280] Cook, *Social Roots of Biblical Yahwism*, 80–81.

[281] For the idea how an oppressive mode of production, embodied in the cult of 8th-century Israel, is embedded in Hosea, see Yee (2001) 345–383.

products, such as olive oil, which helped them survive the increasing taxes, but such a specialization was not possible for small farmers.[282]

In my view, 5:10 does not give a firm ground for explaining the accusation against Judah in the light of a social crisis. I would, in contrast to Martin Buss, however, retain Judah in 5:10, who suggests that the word Judah in 5:10 is redactorial and a substitute for Israel.[283] It is possible that the accusation of Judah has to do with some other conflict in which Judah was the aggressor,[284] or, the issue may indeed be Judah's attack to the north. Although Isaiah 7:1–6, 2 Kings 16:5 and 2 Chronicles 28 put the blame on Israel for threatening Judah in the Syro-Ephraimite war, and do not mention a Judaean counter-attack against Israel, this may be a Judaean perspective only. However, 5:10 may refer to a situation when Israel had to retreat from Jerusalem when Assyria was threatening them, allowing Judah's army to move north.[285] All these are possible, but what I regard as more likely is that behind the saying is an ancient connection with the boundary rearrangements and grant-type treaties in the ancient Near East, represented by the boundary stones, the so called *kudurru* inscriptions.[286] The land was granted by the king, and the royal grant, in this case the *kudurru*, protected the rights of the royal subject. Should this tradition have been known in ancient Israel, it is obvious that removing a boundary stone would have been an insult to YHWH. Thus, both Ephraim and Judah were involved in what raised divine anger comparable to flooding waters. The verb שׁפך means a massive pouring of water and, thus, the imagery visualizes the power of the wrath.[287] Similar imagery occurs in Isaiah 8:5–8, which compares flooding water to the power of the Assyrian invasion, a threat which in the 8th century fell upon both kingdoms.

5:11 says that Ephraim is oppressed and crushed "in מׁשׁפט." As remarked on earlier, the word מׁשׁפט means judgment but also just execution of judgment, justice. The message here is that Ephraim is "crushed by the requirements of justice."[288] The issue at stake is one of enforcing the covenantal curses on Ephraim, but nothing is said about Judah in this context. My overall impression is that 5:11 is related to the situation after the campaign of Tiglath-pileser III and the

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[282] See especially Houston "Was There a Social Crisis in the Eight Century?" in Day (ed.), *In Search of Pre-Exilic Israel*, 130–149.

[283] Martin J. Buss, *The Prophetic Word of Hosea. A Morphological Study* (Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1969) 13, 37.

[284] In 2 Chronicles 26, Uzziah is depicted as a warlike king who restored Elath to Judah (2 Chronicles 26:2). As for Hosea, Andersen and Freedman have suggested that the reference in 5:10 to Judaean leaders who replace boundary marks can be related to Uzziah's aggressive intrusion into the territories of Israel; in Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 34–35; see also Tomes (1993) 55–71, here 69, and Oded (1972) 159–161.

[285] J. J. M. Roberts, "The Rod that Smote Philistia. Isaiah 14:28–32," in Vanderhooft and Winitzer (eds.), *Literature as Politics*, 381–395, here 390.

[286] Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School*, 74.

[287] Klaus Koch, "Die Rolle der hymnischen Abschnitte in der Komposition des Amos-Buches," *ZAW* 86 (1974) 504–537, who says that "Gebrauch des Verbs das nirgends ein wachstumförderndes Begießen bedeutet, sondern stets ein abruptes gewaltsames Ausschütten;" the quotation is from page 518.

[288] So Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 204.

annexation of the northern parts of Israel to Assyria.[289] The verse explains Ephraim's fate as a result of willingly going after צו. The meaning of the word צו is unclear, and what Ephraim has pursued remains left open. Apart from 5:11, the word צו occurs only in Isaiah 28:10, in which the repetition of the word refers to the unintelligible speech of drunkards imitating prophetic words. The LXX uses the word μάταιος, which refers to something which is "empty," in other words, futile, which points to worshipping an idol. 5:11 does not concern idolatry but rather politics – Ephraim's confidence in foreign powers instead of in YHWH. Eidevall is correct in pointing to the verb הלך here as denoting adherence to a wrong "shepherd," the Assyrian king.[290]

5:12 speaks of how both Ephraim and Judah are inflicted. YHWH compares himself with pus, עש, and rottenness, רקב, in relation to them. Both pus and rottenness are indications of a severe state of illnesses, and it is YHWH who is at the bottom of this awful condition. In ancient thinking, diseases were seen as divine punishment, and as a sign of divine wrath and sanctions, indicating that the relationship with YHWH was broken. Healing from the illness required restoration of the relationship and, thus, the only one who could heal was YHWH, not the Assyrian king.[291] Both Ephraim and Judah were ill because they had not put their trust in YHWH and, thus, they had broken the covenantal relationship. In Judah, Ahaz had refused to adhere to the prophetic advice and turned to Assyria for help instead of turning to YHWH (Isaiah 7:3–17; 8:1–4; 2 Chronicles 28:16). As for Israel, it was vacillating between pro- and anti-Assyrian sentiments, to which 7:11; 8:9, and 10:6 refer.

5:13 begins with noting that both Ephraim and Judah saw, in other words, realized, their condition, but they did not look to YHWH for a remedy. Ephraim went to Assyria, which points to its pro-Assyrian political stance. At various times, Israelite kings attempted to conduct practical politics with Assyria, and during the reign of Jeroboam II, Israel was on good terms with Assyria. Menahem then subjugated voluntarily to Assyria and paid tribute to Tiglath-pileser III, obviously with a view to preventing Israel from an immediate Assyrian military invasion (2 Kings 15:19). Similarly, Hoshea was pro-Assyrian, and paid tribute to Assyria. Typically of Hosea, no names of the kings are given in 5:13 and, thus, we are left in the dark about a more precise historical context.

The phrase וישלח אל־מלך ירב does not specify who sent and what was sent to the Great King. On the grounds of the similarities between 5:12, 13 and 14, it may be assumed that Judah would be mentioned in 5:13, and some commentaries add Judah here.[292] The thought of Judah as the sender gets some support from 2 Kings 16:7–10 and 2 Chronicles 28:16, which recount Ahaz sending a message to the Assyrian king and asking for help under pressure caused by the anti-Assyrian

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[289] Göran Eidevall, *Grapes in the Desert. Metaphors, Models, and Themes in Hosea 4–14* (ConBOT 43; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wicksell, 1996) 85.
[290] Eidevall, *Grapes in the Desert*, 83.
[291] Cf. Jeremiah 30:13–18.
[292] Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 209–211; Andersen and Freedman suggest that the name Judah is omitted for the sake of the rhythm; *Hosea*, 413.

coalition led by Pekah and Rezin. After Ahaz's refusal to join the coalition, Ephraim and Aram attempted to replace Ahaz with a pro-Assyrian ruler, and Ahaz subsequently found himself in a difficult position. Egypt was probably involved in the anti-Assyrian alliance and, thus, Ahaz was forced to appeal to Assyria, which went against the prophetic advice (Isaiah 7:3–17; 8:1–4). Furthermore, as 2 Kings 16:8 states, Ahaz sent a bribe (שׁחד) to Tiglath-pileser III, thus, committing what was forbidden.[293] By asking for help from Tiglath-pileser III, Judah did what it had done in the past as well – turned to Israel's enemy for help as in the 9th century when Judah cooperated with Damascus and Asa bribed Hazael (Ben-Hadad?) in order to relieve Judah from the domination of Israel (1 Kings 15:16–22). If Ephraim is taken as the subject, it is possible that a delegation was sent to Assyria, because of the diplomatic relationship between Israel and Assyria during the reign of Jeroboam II.[294] Shawn Aster has suggested that such a delegation could have comprised "diplomats," since Israel's loyalty was manifested in the sending of emissaries on annual visits to the Assyrian palace.[295] Aster's view has been rejected by Nadav Na'aman, since according to an early 8th-century Assyrian wine list, Israelite envoys did not visit the Assyrian court as vassals but rather as ambassadors from an independent kingdom, and what is most interesting, the same situation is indicated in the wine list with respect to Judah too.[296] At the time of pro-Assyrian Menahem, this form of showing loyalty to Assyria may well still have been in practice, but not at the time of Pekah. It is also possible that it was not political representatives that were sent but some valuable items; if the sender was Judah, then 2 Kings 16:8 explicitly lists what was sent: silver and gold from the temple and treasuries from the royal palace.

All things considered, we may leave it open whether it was Ephraim or Judah who approached the Assyrian king since, in fact, *both* did. During the reign of Jeroboam II, both kingdoms visited the Assyrian court and brought gifts to the king, and in the context of the Syro-Ephraimite war, both Judah and Ephraim appealed to Assyria for their survival. The fatal error of *both* Ephraim and Judah was their reliance on foreign powers to help them out of the distress – which they could not do, and this explains the criticism towards Judah here. Again, the perspective in Hosea spans a longer period than merely the time of the Syro-Ephraimite war, and the issue at stake was, as Barstad correctly notes, the strong anti-Assyrian stance of the prophetic circles.

In 5:14 the metaphor of illness is changed to that of a lion, a theme which reappears in 13:7–8. YHWH becomes an enemy to Ephraim and Judah and

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[293] As Cogan and Tadmor note, "The laws of the Pentateuch forbid it (Exod 23:8; Deut 16:19); prophets speak out against it (e.g., Isa 5:23; Ezek 22:12); and in Wisdom literature, the giving of *sôhad* is considered a corrupt act, a perversion of justice (Prov 17:23; cf. Ps 15:5);" in *II Kings*, 188.
[294] Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 163.
[295] See Shawn Zelig Aster, "Israelite Embassies to Assyria in the First Half of the Eighth Century," *Bib* 97 (2016) 175–198.
[296] Nadav Na'aman, "Samaria and Judah in an Early 8th-Century Assyrian Wine List," *TA* 46 (2019) 12–20.

behaves like a lion.[297] Ephraim and Judah have become prey which no one can save and, thus, the action of YHWH is deadly. The verb, נצל, "to save, snatch away" occurs in Amos 3:12 describing how the shepherd snatches pieces of his lamb from the lion's mouth.[298] The presentation of YHWH as a lion may have its origin in the Ugaritic mythological concept of associating Death, or Mot, with a lion, and in Hosea, YHWH seems to appropriate the role of Mot here.[299] The function of the metaphor may also have been to show YHWH's supremacy over the Assyrian "lion," that is, the Assyrian king.[300] The idea of YHWH as a shepherd is also connected with the lion metaphor, as Kirsten Nielsen, with Eidevall, has proposed: YHWH as a shepherd is also the healer, a thought which also appears in Ezekiel 34:16.[301] Historically, Ephraim was literally ripped apart by Assyria, which functioned as a tool of YHWH's anger. Assyria, to which Ephraim had turned for help, did not save it. Strangely enough, the one who can save is also the one who kills – as Deuteronomy 32:39 and 1 Samuel 2:6 explicitly say.

In 5:15 the theme is YHWH's absence and withdrawal to wait for Ephraim's and Judah's repentance; a similar concept of YHWH's absence also appears in 5:6 and 9:12. As noted above, the reason for YHWH's absence is not his inability to save the people from the disaster, but rather his wrath, the purpose of which is to change the attitude of his people. YHWH's "place" seems to refer to a concrete location on earth, which represents a more ancient view of YHWH's dwelling than the concept of heaven as YHWH's "place."[302]

The passage in 6:1–3 likely found its way to an early collection of Hosea's prophecies, because the motif of healing connects it with the preceding verse 5:13. The poem may have been an expression of hope for physical healing, as the parallels between Hosea and some Akkadian texts indicate.[303] In Hosea, the original concrete meaning related to physical healing is used to express Ephraim and Judah's hope for healing on a national level. The context in which the passage

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[297] For more of the use of lion metaphors, see Eidevall, *Grapes in the Desert*, 86–88.

[298] See the discussion in Göran Eidevall, *Amos. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 24G; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017) 132–133.

[299] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 419; Ola Wikander, *Drought, Death, and the Sun in Ugarit and Ancient Israel. A Philological and Comparative Study* (ConBOT 61; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2014), note 508 on page 232; see also Wikander's discussion on Psalm 22:14–16; as he says; "also the general context of being hunted by metaphorical, ravenous beasts that open their jaws to swallow their victim, yet again a return of the old Mot imagery" in *Drought, Death, and the Sun*, 164, 199.

[300] See Eidevall's discussion on the meaning of the lion metaphor in *Grapes in the Desert*, 86–88.

[301] Kirsten Nielsen, "I am like a lion to Ephraim. Observations on animal imagery and Old Testament theology," *ST* 61 (2007) 184–197, here 187.

[302] Albert Kamp, "The Conceptualization of God's Dwelling Place in 1 Kings 8: A Cognitive Approach," *JSOT* 40 (2016) 415–438, here 463. Cf. Isaiah 18:4. We can read this in the light of Exodus 29:46, in which YHWH's presence among Israel is the goal of the Exodus: YHWH brought Israel from Egypt so that He may dwell among them.This connection between Exodus 29:46 and the deliverance from Egypt is pointed out by Rolf Rendtorff, *The Covenant Formula. An Exegetical and Theological Investigation* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998) 20.

[303] See also Michael L. Barré, "Bulluṭsa-rabi's Hymn to Gula and Hosea 6:1–2," *Orientalia* 50 (1981) 241–245.

occurs, however, indicates that Ephraim and Judah's reliance on YHWH's favor had no proper foundation. They had forgotten the covenantal requirements by approaching Assyria in hope for their healing (5:13). Thus, the quotation functions as a literary way to explain the prophetic message.

In 6:1–3 appears a quotation from the speech of the people. The passage shows several links with preceding as well as following verses, including the use of the verbs "to heal," רפא (6:1; 5:13; 7:1) and "to tear," טרף, (6:1; 5:14), the imagery of sickness and healing (6:1; 5:12–13; 7:1), the motif of the knowledge of YHWH (6:3; 6:6), the use of various forms of precipitation (6:3; 6:4) and dawn (6:3; 6:5.[304] The passage begins with an exhortation to return to YHWH in 6:1. On the basis of previous verses, the speakers in 1st person plural are Ephraim and Judah.[305] The verb "return" שׁוב here means returning to YHWH, not returning from exile, and it carries a sense of repentance.[306] The speakers admit that they have been torn and struck by YHWH, but in 6:2 they express their hope that YHWH will bring them "back to life" after two days, and "raise them up" on the third day so that they will "live before him," i.e. in his presence. The expression "before him" may also refer to the cultic worship of YHWH. The time element referring to the number of days can be interpreted either literally as a period of three days or as denoting a short indefinite time.[307] This terminology of "revival" and "resurrection" in 6:2 has attracted plenty of scholarly attention. J. Wijngaards sees that the entire passage as concerning the treaty with YHWH and, thus, the verbs יחינו (Piel of חיה) and יקמנו (Hiphil of קום) in 6:2 are related to restoration of the covenant on YHWH's part.[308] According to Michael Barré, these verbs, standing parallel to one another, constitute a fixed formulaic pair which is found in biblical and extrabiblical texts, and their primary meaning is related to a real-life situation and physical healing from a disease, in other words, returning to

[304] Korpel (2009) 122–129; see also Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 418.

[305] Korpel suggests that especially the kings and princes are meant here since, according to her, only high-ranking officials could be considered responsible for the actions mentioned in Hosea 5–6. Korpel says, "They are the ones who mobilize the army by blowing the trumpet (Hos. 5:8, cf. 1 Sam. 13:3; 2 Sam. 2:28; 18:16), among them are 'the princes of Judah' (Hos. 5:10), they are the only ones empowered to negotiate with the Assyrians in the hope they would 'heal' their nation (Hos. 5:13), they are the target of the prophetic criticism (Hos. 6:5), yet enjoy the support of the priests (Hos. 6:9). On the basis of Hos. 6:6, it may be assumed that they tried to pacify God with insincere guilt offerings (cf. Hos. 5:15)." In Marjo C. A. Korpel, "The Demarcation of Hymns and Prayers in the Prophets," in Raymond de Hoop, Marjo C. A. Korpel and Stanley E. Porter (eds.), *The Impact of Unit Delimitation on Exegesis* (Leiden: Brill, 2009) 115–145, here 128; see also Wolff, *Hosea*, 118.

[306] With Dearman, *Hosea*, 6.

[307] Wolfgang M. W. Roth, "The Numerical Sequence x/x+1in the Old Testament," *VT* 12 (1962) 300–311. The temporal expression belongs to a category of the so called "x/x+1" pattern, which is common in the Hebrew Bible and in ancient Near Eastern sources in general. This pattern is used in two half verses exhibiting parallelism.

[308] J. Wijngaards, "Death and Resurrection in Covenental Context (Hos. VI 2)," *VT* 17 (1967) 226–239. Wijngaards refers to ancient Hittite vassal treaties, in which "killing" meant "removing from the kingship" and "driving out of the land," and, thus, restoration of a vassal to his throne was described as "raising him from death to life;" see Wijngaards (1967) 226–239, here 231, 233,238. For the covenantal context, see also Good (1996) 280; Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 424–425; Eidevall, *Grapes in the Desert*, 96.

health life and rising from a sick-bed, and they may be related to a covenantal renewal only secondarily.[309] However, in Hosea the idea of a covenantal renewal ceremony is appropriate. It is obvious that there is also an echo of Baal mythology in Hosea, and in contrast to Barré, John Day strongly argues for his claim that the issue at stake in Hosea is resurrection from death, not "simply healing," since the imagery is taken from the imagery of the dying and rising fertility god, Baal.[310] The point that in general Hosea draws from the Baal mythology is certainly correct, but to what extent that could stand behind 6:1–3 is not very obvious to me. As Wijngaards correctly remarks, the question in the prayer is not the resurrection of a god but of the people.[311] The origin of the passage may be the same as Psalm 80, a communal lament which shows some parallels with Hosea and has been placed in the last decades of the northern kingdom before the fall of Samaria."[312]

6:3 depicts the people's expectation of the appearance of YHWH and, thus, their hope for national resurrection. It is difficult to ascertain whether it shows true repentance, but the prayer does obtain an ironic nuance by evoking a sense that the people expect an automatically favorable response from YHWH and moreover, since there is no confession of guilt from the people, it appears that they are not sincere.[313] Their חסד had turned out to be short-term, like the morning mist and dew, which evaporate quickly in the heat of the day, as is explicitly said in 6:5.

6:4 shifts the speaker to YHWH, who expresses his inner struggle in a manner which is reminiscent of 11:8. 6:4 appears to be YHWH's indirect answer pointing at the failure of Ephraim and Judah to adhere to חסד. The mention of Judah is embedded in YHWH's speech, and similarly to 5:12–14, 6:4 addressees both Ephraim and Judah. This has given a reason to doubt that 6:4–6 should be read after 5:12–15.[314] To my understanding, this is not necessary, since 6:4 appears to be YHWH's indirect response to the liturgical poem in 6:1–3, in which the speakers are Ephraim and Judah.

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[309] Michael L. Barré, "New Light on the Interpretation of Hosea VI 2," *VT* 28 (1978) 129–141; as for biblical texts, Barré points to Hosea 6:2, Isaiah 26:14, 19 and 2 Kings 13:20–21.

[310] John Day, *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan* (JSOTSS; London: Continuum, 2010) 117. The issue of whether Baal belongs to the category of "dying and rising gods" is somewhat disputed. Day favors this concept in contrast to Mark S. Smith, who suggests that the concept of Baal as a "dying and rising god" is incorrect, but Baal is rather a "disappearing god" like in the ancient myth of Telepinus; see Mark S. Smith, "The Death of "Dying and Rising Gods" in the Biblical World: An Update, with Special Reference to Baal in the Baal Cycle," *SJOT* 12 (1998) 257–313; see also his discussion on the same topic in his book *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism. Israel's Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic Texts* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001) 104–131; see also Wikander, *Drought, Death, and the Sun*, 161–170.

[311] Wijngaards (1967) 226–239, here 228.

[312] Martin J. Buss, "The Psalms of Asaph and Korah," *JBL* 82 (1963) 382–392, 384 note 7. As Wolff suggests, 6:1–3 may originally have been an independent text, a penitential song belonging to the popular piety, sung by the priests during the time of danger; Wolff, *Hosea*, 116–117.

[313] Korpel (2009) 129; for an opposite view, see Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 420.

[314] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 426.

The word חסד has a wide semantic range, meaning "kindness, loyalty, faithfulness, goodness, graciousness" but it also denotes a joint obligation between two parties which have a close relationship.[315] As 6:4 indicates, although YHWH had shown חסד to his people, the response of Ephraim and Judah was not חסד. Since both Judah and Ephraim are addressed, there is a clear connection with 5:8–14.[316] The vocabulary in 6:4 evokes 13:3, in which the same metaphors from the sphere of nature are used to depict Ephraim's annihilation.[317] The mention of Judah in 6:4 is embedded in YHWH's speech. Similarly to 5:12–14, 6:4 addressees both Ephraim and Judah. This has given a reason to doubt that 6:4–6 should be read after 5:12–15.[318] To my understanding, this is not necessary, since 6:4 appears to be YHWH's indirect response to the liturgical poem in 6:1–3, in which the speakers are Ephraim and Judah, and I regard it as part of the prophetic tradition in Hosea.

6:5 is difficult. The expressions "hew in pieces" (חצב) and "kill, slay" (הרג,) may be understood metaphorically, depicting the crushing power of YHWH's words. At the same time, "hewing" evokes working stone, and that the Law was hewed on the stone tablets. Regarding this possibility, the suggestion of Shalom Spiegel is interesting. There may have been some confusion between נ and פ in the older Hebrew script and, thus, the substitution of על־כן for על־כף allows the translation "on a rock I have hewn."[319] This remains, of course, conjectural. With regard to the phrase באמרי־פי, Stuart points to Deuteronomy 33:9, in which the words אמרה and ברית are used in parallel, and to Deuteronomy 32:1, in which a summons to hear אמרי־פי, "words of my mouth" begins the passage dealing with covenant curses and blessings.[320]

The phrase משׁפטיך אור יצא is also problematic; I accept the emendation suggested by BHS and translate "my judgment will come forth like light." This phrase can be compared with Zephaniah 3:5, in which the words משׁפט and אור also occur in parallel, as the text says, "He brings his justice to light." The reference to light also emphasizes that the judgment is irresistible – like a light, it breaks through.[321]

The covenantal language continues in 6:6 with the words חסד and דעת אלהים, which also occur in 4:1, 6: 6:3–4 and 6:7. The motif in 6:6 is YHWH's rejection of sacrifices, and in this regard 6:6 evokes Amos 5:21–24. As Eidevall points out, the motif of divine rejection of sacrifices and certains feasts occurs in the Ugaritic Baal mythology as well.[322] YHWH's refusal to accept the sacrifices speaks for his

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[315] For various meanings of the word חסד, see HALOT 1, 336–337.

[316] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 426, prefer reading 6:4–6 after 5:12–15.

[317] The use of the metaphors of precipitations is likely connected with the drought-death motif in Hosea 13; for this, see Wikander, *Drought, Death, and the Sun*, 161–170.

[318] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 426.

[319] Shalom Spiegel, "A Prophetic Attestation of the Decalogue: Hosea 6:5 with Some Observations on Psalms 15 and 24," *HTR* 27 (1934) 105–144.

[320] Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 110.

[321] See Spiegel (1934) 105–144, here 109.

[322] Eidevall, *Amos*, 166

anger and for the inability of the people to please him. This does not mean, however, that sacrifices as such are condemned, but rather that the rejection of sacrificial offerings was always situation-bound.[323] The message of YHWH is the same as in Jeremiah 9:23: YHWH delights in חסד, מִשְׁפָּט and צדקה.

The term "covenant," ברית, occurs in 6:7, which contains an enigmatic saying about breaking the covenant כאדם, "like Adam." Most scholars follow BHS and change the preposition reading באדם, "at Adam," which makes better sense. The word "there," שָׁם, on the second line of the verse points to a location and, thus, offers support for reading a place name here. The reading כאדם, "like Adam," referring to Adam or human beings collectively, is how the phrase is read in the LXX. This reading is equally difficult, since it appears to me that referring to human beings in general is not appropriate here since at least in the 8th century prophecies the covenant concerned only Israel as YHWH's people.

A place called Adam is mentioned in Joshua 3:16, which recounts how the water in the Jordan stopped flowing at Adam a great distance away from the place where the feet of the priests who carried the ark touched the water. Nothing in that narrative, however, relates to any kind of violation of the covenant in this context, and if Hosea here is speaking about some event in the past, we have no knowledge of it. Scholars have therefore looked for ways to interpret the sayings. An aspect which may be of significance is that the place called Adam was located in the region of the Transjordan, which has an interesting place in the history of Israel, and which had its own religious traditions.[324] Macintosh relates the reference to the Transjordanian Adam to the revolt of Pekah, which was conducted from the Transjordan; this makes good sense especially in the light of the verse that follows, since it mentions Gilead.[325] This is, of course possible, but the saying in Hosea is too obscure to make such a detailed conclusion.

The expression עבר ברית in 6:7 and 8:1 also occurs in Deuteronomy 17:2, Joshua 23:16, Judges 2:20 and 2 Kings 18:12, which all speak of the violation of the Torah.[326] But, as in the context of the term מִשְׁפָּט, there may be chronologically different conceptual frameworks beneath the expression עבר ברית. Weinfeld refers

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[323] Eidevall, *Amos*, 166

[324] The issue of regionally varying traditions has been discussed by Stephen Russell. He suggests that Cisjordan Israelites celebrated the Exodus from Egypt in the Bethel calf cult as a journey of the tribal collective Israel from Egypt to Cisjordan, and this tradition did not include the sojourn in the wilderness; Transjordanian Israelites focused on deliverance from oppression of Egypt rather than on a journey from Egypt to Canaan; the oppression may have taken place within the land of Canaan instead of Egypt; for this, see Stephen C. Russell, *Images of Egypt in Early Biblical Literature. Cisjordan-Israelite, Transjordan-Israelite, and Judahite Portrayals* (BZAW 403; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009).

[325] Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 238. I would like – for interest's sake – to point to the fact that in Hosea, there may be distant remnants from early traditions related to the Transjordan, which was a staging-post for entrance into Canaan "from Shittim to Gilgal," and which was connected with the group led by Moses; for this, see Cross, *From Epic to Canon,* 53–70, here 68. I will discuss Cross's discussion on Israel's early sacral traditions and their relationship with Hosea in the ensuing chapters.

[326] Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School*, 367 note 4. According to Perlitt, in 6:7 the question is not of the covenant between YHWH and Israel; in *Bundestheologie,* 143.

to Joshua 7:11, 15 in which the violation of the covenant was due to neglecting the custom embedded in the concept of חרם.[327] We may also speculate whether behind the saying about breaking the covenant lies an ancient tradition alluded to in Psalm 78:9, which says that Ephraim had turned back on the day of battle and, thus, did not keep YHWH's covenant.

The following verse 6:8 mentions Gilead, another location in the Transjordan Gilead irrespective of whether it is Jabesh-Gilead or Ramoth-Gilead, or the territory of Gilead as a whole which is at stake. 6:8 points to Gilead as a place for those who commit to some obviously bloody iniquity. Gilead is given a critical evaluation in 12:12 too, which also connects Gilead with some evil. As said earlier, a strongly negative attitude towards Gilead may be associated with the revolt of Pekah, who executed his revolt with the help of fifty men from Gilead (2 Kings 15:25).[328] Historically, this seems plausible, but, admittedly, the saying is obscure and, thus, open to various interpretations.

6:9 accuses priests of lying in wait and committing murder on the road to Shechem. As I have discussed earlier, Shechem gets no polemics in Hosea, which extends its origin to ancient Shechemite traditions. In 6:9, what was taking place at Shechem is not an issue, but the verse refers to a murderous episode on the road leading to Shechem which was related to brigands active there.[329] It is impossible to determine what particular event 6:9 concerns, but various proposals have been made. Macintosh sees in the verse the continuation of the theme of Pekah's revolt, and suggests that there was some priestly conspiracy in support of Pekah; Wolff, for his part, raises the possibility that the assault was on Levitical and prophetic opposition circles, who had their residence in Shechem.[330] The phrase used of the priests as making an evil plan or something similar, אשׁו זמה, occurs also in Judges 20:6 in the narrative of the rape of the Levite's concubine by the men of Gibeah. Merely on the basis of this parallel, however, it is impossible to determine a connection between 6:9 and the narrative.

6:10 evokes 5:3 as it speaks of Ephraim's fornication and Israel's defilement, connected with שׁעריריה, "something horrible," which YHWH saw in the "house of Israel." If the original reading was the "house of El," בבית־אל, as suggested by BHS, the phrase makes an ironical pun with the Jacob tradition. In Genesis 28:17,

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[327] Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School*, 367 note 4.

[328] So, e.g., Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 241.

[329] The translator of the LXX had the murder of Shechem son of Hamor in Genesis 24 in mind, and those accused of the murder are the priests. The LXX reads, καὶ ἡ ἰσχύς σου ἀνδρὸς πειρατοῦ ἔκρυψαν ἱερεῖς ὁδόν, ἐφόνευσαν Σίκιμα, ὅτι ἀνομίαν ἐποίησαν; "And your strength of a brigand – priest have hidden the way, they have murdered Sikima, becaue they have engaged themselves in breaching the Law;" the word ἀνομία means "act which is in breach of law; lawlessness;" see Muraoka, 55.

[330] Wolff, *Hosea*, 122; see also Wolff (1956) note 70 on page 249; for similar interpretation of 6:9, see Cook, *Social Roots of Biblical Yahwism*, 71–72; 257–259. Rudnig-Zelt, for her part, refers to Ben Sirach 50:26, in which, according to her, Shechem refers to the north as a whole, and concludes that also in Hosea, Shechem means the north, and the priests here are the priests of Jerusalem with their hostile attitude towards the inhabitants of the former northern kingdom; see Rudnig-Zelt, *Hoseastudien*, 144.

Jacob calls the place, Bethel, the "gate of Heaven," שַׁעַר הַשָּׁמַיִם; in Hosea, in the House of Israel, or in the House of El, "a horrible thing," שַׁעֲרִירִיָּה, is seen.[331]

6:11 is a difficult verse. It begins with a mention of Judah, and the word גַּם in גַּם־יְהוּדָה is usually taken as an indication of a redactional addition.[332] The phrase גַּם־יְהוּדָה also occurs in 5:5, where, as in 6:11, the switch to Judah comes in a context which otherwise addresses Israel and Ephraim. The meaning of the word קָצִיר, "harvest," is obscure. It can be associated with joy like in Isaiah 9:2, but conversely with a judgment as in Amos 8:2 and in Jeremiah 51:33. The phrase בְּשׁוּבִי שְׁבוּת in the second clause means "to turn a turning," which can be understood as "restoring the situation which prevailed earlier."[333] On the other hand, שְׁבוּת may relate to "captivity,"[334] as it seems to have been read in the LXX.[335]

2.2.1.1. Conclusions

To my mind, the passage 5:8–6:11 and the references to Judah in it are best understood in relation to the 8th century prophetic tradition. On the basis of 5:8–6:11, we cannot reconstruct the events of the Syro-Ephraimite war. This is not, however, to argue that there would not be a connection to Tiglath-pileser III's campaigns against Philistia (734) and later against Aram and Israel (733–732), which, in all probability, triggered the prophecies. My contention is that 5:8–6:11 deals with the hostility between Ephraim and Judah in a reflective manner, and the contemporary hostilities were but another example of how both kingdoms had violated the ancient concept of solidarity.

Throughout the passage, the names Ephraim and Judah are used as referring to separate political entities, which fits in with the 8th century. The name Ephraim is used in similar fashion in the prophecies of Isaiah (7:2, 5, 8, 9, and 17).[336] Isaiah and Hosea display, however, a different attitude. Whereas in Hosea Ephraim and Judah are treated with an equal attitude, Isaiah shows open hostility towards Ephraim. This can be explained by the Judaean origin of Isaiah: Isaiah's focus is not on international relations on a large scale but on the survival of the Davidic dynasty, now threatened by the plan of the coalition to replace Ahaz with the "son of Tabeel."[337]

Some scholars make a distinction between the names Israel and Ephraim. They regard the use of the name Ephraim in the 8th century prophecies as an indication

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[331] So Nielsen, *Shechem*, 290.
[332] So Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 247–248; Wolff, *Hosea*, 123.
[333] See HALOT 2, 1387.
[334] See HALOT 2, 1386.
[335] Ἄρχου τρυγᾶν σεαυτῷ ἐν τῷ ἐπιστρέφειν με τὴν αἰχμαλωσίαν τοῦ λαοῦ μου – "begin to harvest for yourself when I bring back the captives of my people."
[336] The name Israel appears in Isaiah 7:1, but since the verse is identical to the Deuteronomistic saying in 2 Kings 16:5, Isaiah 7:1 can be regarded as a later formulation.
[337] Williamson, *Isaiah 6–12*, 112–113.

that Ephraim denotes the rump state around Samaria i.e. that which was left of the territory of the kingdom of Israel after Assyria had annexed large regions of Israel and made them Assyrian provinces. To my mind, it is more likely that the name Samaria would have been preferred as the name of the rump state, not Ephraim, since 10:7, for example, speaks of the king of Samaria, not the king of Ephraim.

Both Ephraim and Judah are condemned in 5:12, 13, 14 because of their fraternal strifes in the past and in the present, and the compiler of the passage had several historical situations in mind.[338] The Syro-Ephraimite war was but another situation in which the kingdoms of Israel and Judah came into conflict with each other. In their internecine conflicts, both Ephraim and Judah used to turn to each other's enemies for help and, thus, they both were guilty of political maneuvering and foreign alliances. Regarding the alliances, in the Syro-Ephraimite war Egypt was likely an ally of Israel not only against Assyria but also against Judah. Such alliances were disapproved by the prophets, because trusting in foreign powers was a sign of forgetting YHWH. Both kingdoms were under same judgment and punishment of becoming abandoned, should YHWH withdraw from them (5:15). The withdrawal of YHWH in 5:15 meant a period of trial, evoking the behavior of the metaphorical husband (YHWH) in 3:5, in which the metaphorical wife (Israel) is forced to go through a period of trial before she repents.

At the background of the prophetic judgment there may be the tradition of intertribal solidarity that had played an important role in maintaining societal order. Conflicts resulted in trespassing each other's fixed boundaries and, thus, violated the ancient tribal traditions. The tribal system was related to territories, and it formed the entire social structure of Israel. The prohibition of trespassing was an ancient social conduct, going back to the Sumerians. It was meant to guarantee peace between neighbors, and it constitutes the origin of the treaty form in the ancient Near East.[339] Now, Ephraim and Judah were in danger, because through their hostilities, they had violated the solidarity embodied in the concept of חסד (6:4, 6), an old code of conduct, including not only how the people related to YHWH, but how they related to each other. The roots of the term חסד go back to ancient social and moral guidelines practiced among Near Eastern's pastoral and seminomadic societies.[340] Compassion and reciprocity were important

[338] A territorial dispute between the two kingdoms could also have been about the control over the region of Transjordan. As Bustenay Oded has remarked, after the death of Jeroboam II Israel lost the hold of Transjordan, which gave an opportunity to King Uzziah of Judah to take over the region (2 Chronicles 26:8; 27:5). Thus the aim of an Aram-Israelite alliance of that time could have been to dislodge Judah from the Transjordan, to which Judah had strong ties; see Oded (1972) 153–165, here 155–156.

[339] Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School*, 72–73. As Weinfeld points out, in the Hittite treaties as well as in Deuteronomy, the land is given to the vassal as a gift. In the Hittite treaties, the granting of the land was very often mentioned together with the explicit warning not to trespass beyond the boundaries set by the overlord.

[340] Cohen, "Pastoral Idea of *Hesed* and the Symbolism of *Matzo* and *Hamets*," in Yona, Greenstein, Gruber, Machinist, and Paul (eds.), *Marbeh Ḥokmah*, 111–137, here 114.

elements in חסד, and neither Ephraim nor Judah had shown these in their mutual relationship, and therefore, could not be rightly related to YHWH either.[341]

This passage, as I have discussed, is deep anchored in the 8th century horizon. It shows that politics and religion were intertwined in the prophecies. Assyria was regarded as a tool for chastisement in the hands of YHWH, and it was not the superior power of the god Aššur which gave military power to Assyria, but YHWH. Wars were a divine punishment, as a sign of divine wrath, resulting from the nation's broken relationship with YHWH, and meant the enforcement of the curses embedded in the covenantal relationship. Thus, the dangerous covenantal relationship with YHWH did not guarantee the people's safety but, should it become violated, it posed a danger to the very existence of the people.[342]

At the time of Josiah, the prophetic criticism of foreign alliances was read as a warning. Ephraim belonged to the past, and Judah was facing a new political situation. The end of Judah's vassalage to Assyria was an important shift in the direction of independence and freedom from foreign alliances, which were made out of necessity but which eventually had proven to be useless and dangerous – both kingdoms had ended up in becoming Assyrian vassal states. The condemnation of foreign alliances and warnings about their hazardous outcome in the Hosean tradition fitted well in supporting Josiah's political goals as promoting Judah's independence from foreign powers. As for the passage in 6:1–3, it may have been read in reformist circles as pointing to the "death" of Ephraim but also to its "resurrection," which, according to the reformist ideology, would take place in connection with the reunion of Ephraim and Judah. This concept is in line with Jeremiah 31:6–9 which speaks of Ephraim coming with weeping to Zion.

In the exilic period, 6:1–3 could have been read as a lamentation over the fate of both Israel and Judah. As Albertz notes, the writings of the prophets of judgment were launched into exilic worship, and this cultic usage also resulted in updating and commenting on existing collections.[343] Although elements of the prophecy stand behind the covenantal language, it is likely that the language has been finalized in the exilic period. The emphasis on morality rather than sacrifices would be an appropriate message for them who mourned for the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem.

6:11 is difficult to interpret, since it is not easy to determine more precisely whether it is a positive or a negative statement, or what the harvest that has been reserved for Judah is. One way to interpret it is to read the first clause in 7:1 as belonging to 6:11 and, thus, the message would be that Judah will have its harvest when the fortunes of the people are turned, and Israel is healed. Thus, Israel would mean both Ephraim and Judah. This evokes Jeremiah 30–31, in which the restoration of Israel is associated with its reunification with Judah under the rule

[341] Gerald L. Keown, "Hosea 6:4–6," *RevExp* 90 (1993) 253–255.
[342] This thought is expressed by Gili Kugler, "The Threat of Annihilation of Israel in the Desert: An Independent Tradition within Two Stories," *CBQ* 78 (2016) 632–647.
[343] Albertz, *History of Israelite Religion*, 380.

of Davidic dynasty, and this fits in with the policy of the reform of Josiah.[344] The harvest of Judah is Israel, no more and no less.

If the reference to Judah is read in connection with 6:10, the harvest gets a negative overtone. Judah's fate will be like Ephraim's. The phrase בשובי שבות עמי also occurs in Amos 9:14, in which the phrase has usually been taken as a reference to the return from exile.[345] This is how the LXX reads the statement, as it speaks of bringing back the captives. In the light of these texts, 6:11 seems to refer to the restoration after the judgment, i.e. the exile, which affects both Israel and Judah. Thus, the message would be in line with 5:5 if it is read as a statement. The perspective is then from the period of the exile.

2.2.2. Hosea 5:1–7. Judah, Israel, and Ephraim

5:1 *Hear this, priests,*
Listen attentively, house of Israel,[346]
house of the King, listen:
for the judgment is for you!
Indeed, you have been a snare at Mizpah,[347]
a net spread on Tabor,

5:2 *a pit at Shittim that they made deep.*[348]
I – a fetter for all of them.[349]

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344 Sweeney (1996) 569–583.

345 Tchavdar S. Hadjiev, *The Composition and Redaction of the Book of Amos* (BZAW 393, Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009) 121; Eidevall, *Amos*, 242.

346 The verb הקשׁינו is in the plural form שׂרי ישׂראל instead of בית ישׂראל.

347 The LXX reads σκοπιά, "group of watchmen, look-out place on an elevated ground, peak; site of cult," for מצפה; see Muraoka, 626. Thus, in the LXX, the snare is to the watchmen, not "at Mizpah." Instead of a metaphorical designation, the LXX reads תבור as a place name Ιταβύριον.

348 The phrase ושׁחטה שׂטים העמיקו is difficult, and the text may be corrupted. שׁחטה can be read as a feminine noun "slaughter" from the root שׁחט, "to slaughter;" so Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 386. BHS suggests reading שׁחת, "a pit, trap;" HALOT 2, 1473. שׂטים can be taken as a plural noun "revolters" when reading שַׂטִּים instead of שִׁטִּים, the toponym "Shittim," so Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 386. BHS, however, suggests reading בשׂטים (or השׂטים) ושׁחת, "a pit at Shittim." העמיקו, a Hiphil perfect 3rd plural masculine of עמק, whch may be an asyndetic relative clause, "that they made deep;" so, e.g., Wolff, *Hosea*, 94. עמק can be understood as an auxiliary verb to indicate the depth of an action; HALOT 1, 847. The LXX reads the phrase as a reference to the net at Itabyrion, ὃ οἱ ἀγρεύοντες τὴν θήραν κατέπηξαν, "which the game hunters have firmly fixed."

349 The phrase ואני מוסר לכלם contains no verb, and depending on how the word מוסר is read, there are alternative ways to understand the text. The root of the noun is the verb יסר, "to instruct, chastise, rebuke;" the noun denotes "chastisement," but, when personified, "taskmaster, chastisement" is appropriate; HALOT 1, 557; cf. the LXX's ἐγὼ δὲ παιδευτὴς ὑμῶν; "I will be your instructor." The word also has a less common meaning "fetter," which continues the imagery of hunting; the dual meaning allows a word play. The LXX reads 5:2 as continuing from 5:1: ... οἱ ἀγρεύοντες τὴν θήραν κατέπηξαν, "[a net spread on Itabyrion] which they that hunt the prey have fixed." Another possibility, as Andersen and Freedman suggest, is that מוסר may be a passive hophal participle of

5:3 *I know Ephraim,*
and Israel is not hidden from me.
Indeed[350]*, Ephraim has committed fornication,*[351]
Israel has defiled[352] *itself.*

5:4 *Their deeds do not allow them*[353]
to turn to their God,[354]
for the spirit of fornication is among them,[355]
and they do not know YHWH.

5:5 *The pride of Israel*[356] *testifies*[357] *to his face*[358]*.*
and Israel and Ephraim will stumble[359] *in their iniquity;*
Also, Judah will stumble with them

or

Will Judah also stumble with them?[360]

5:6 *With their flocks and herds*[361] *they go*
to search for YHWH,

סור, "be removed, put aside from," but as they further note, the passive role is difficult to apply to YHWH; Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 389.

350 A confirmatory כ *veritatis.*

351 זנה is a Hiphil perfect 2nd person singular masculine, the meaning of which would then be "to encourage to commit fornication;" the question is likely of the internal Hiphil, which means that the subject works in connection with itself as the cause of the action; it also refers to entering into a state or receiving a quality; see Waltke and O'Connor, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 440–441.

352 The Niphal of טמא means "to defile oneself;" HALOT 1, 376.

353 According to BHS, יתנו in the MT is the result of haplography, the original being יתנום. Thus "them" is added here.

354 נתן with the preposition לְ means "allow;" HALOT 1, 734; the object is the infinitive form of שׁוב, "to return."

355 קרב has here a prepositional use; the usual meaning refers to things like entrails and inward parts in general; HALOT 2, 1135–1136.

356 גאון has often been understood as referring to "pride" or "arrogance;" the LXX reads ὕβρις. The meaning of the word can also be positive and denote "splendor, eminence;" HALOT 1, 169.

357 ענה has several meanings; usually it is understood as "to reply, answer," but in legal actions, the meaning is "to testify;" HALOT 1, 853–854. According to BHS, the waw-consecutive construction ועָנה should be עָנה.

358 Literally, "against his face."

359 The 3rd person plural form of the verb כּשׁל, "to stumble" makes both Israel and Ephraim as subjects. The LXX has ἀσθενέω, "to be weak, not able to function properly;" Muraoka, 97. BHS suggests that singular form should be read here, and the mention of Israel can be omitted.

360 According to BHS, כּשׁל גם־יהודה עמם can be deleted for metric reasons. The LXX reads Ἰσραὴλ καὶ Ἐφραὶμ ἀσθενήσουσιν ἐν ταῖς ἀδικίαις αὐτῶν, καὶ ἀσθενήσει καὶ Ἰούδας μετ᾽ αὐτῶν, "Israel and Ephraim will be weak in their iniquities and Judah also will be weak with them;" Muraoka, 452, translates the verb ἀσθενέω as "languish."

361 צאן is a collective, "flocks" (sheep and goats); בקר has a collective meaning "herds" (bovine animals, oxen).

but they do not find[362]
– that is,[363] *he has withdrawn*[364] *from them.*

5:7 *They have dealt treacherously*[365] *with YHWH*
for they have given birth to illegitimate children.[366]
Now[367] *the new moon*[368] *will devour them,*
their shares of possession.[369]

5:1–7 begins with a typical prophetic opening command to listen. The end of the passage is demarcated in 5:8 by a new command and, thus, 5:1–7 can be regarded as a separate textual unit. The passage is, however, incoherent with frequent shifts of the speaker and the addressees. YHWH speaks in the 1st person in 5:1–3, but in 5:4–7, the narrator speaks of YHWH in the 3rd person. In 5:1, YHWH speaks directly to the priests, the house of Israel and the house of the king, but in 5:2 there is a shift to the 3rd person plural, and perhaps the addressees are the same as in 5:1. 5:3 speaks of Israel, or Ephraim, in the 3rd person singular, but 5:4 shifts to the 3rd person plural and, thus, it is unclear who "they" are. The question may be of Israel and Ephraim or those mentioned in 5:1; the first alternative is more likely because in the rest of the passage the focus is on Israel/Ephraim. The 3rd person plural verb form in 5:5 is also bewildering, since it seems to point to Israel and Ephraim being treated as separate entities. The reference to Judah in the same verse is abrupt and confusing in the context which presents strong criticism of Israel/Ephraim. Thematically, 5:1–7 is closely linked with the preceding chapter Hosea 4, even to the extent that it has been considered to be part of a unit which begins in 4:1.[370] The parallels between 5:1–7 and 4:4–19 include the focus on the priests (5:1 and 4:4–6), the concepts of "committing fornication" (5:3 and 4:10, 18) and of "spirit of fornication" (5:4 and 4:12), the verb "stumble" (4:5 and 5:5),

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[362] There is no object, which likely is "him" as the LXX reads.
[363] The LXX reads here a causal clause and begins with ὅτι, "because;" Muraoka, 511. I read ו here as explanatory, "that is;" HALOT 1, 258.
[364] As suggested in HALOT 1, 322; other meanings are "draw off" and, as a participle, "ready for fighting;" the LXX has ἐκκλίνω, "to turn away, shun, avoid;" Muraoka, 209.
[365] The verb בגד occurs also in 6:7.
[366] The word זר has a wide spectrum of meanings related to otherness: "strange, different, heterogeneous, illicit, non-Israelite, peculiar, illegitimate" and the like; HALOT 1, 279.
[367] עתה has, in addition to a temporal use, a logical and emphatic use, but these two uses merge in translation; Waltke and O'Connor, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 667.
[368] The primary meaning of חדֹשׁ is "new moon;" the day on which the crescent reappears; alternatively, it denotes "month" or "mating season, heat;" cf. Jeremiah 2:24; see HALOT 1, 294. The LXX reads ἐρυσίβη, "rust" (in corn), but also, as in Joel 1:4; 2:25, the word refers to "natural disasters mentioned with varieties of locust;" Muraoka, 292.
[369] The word חלק means "share of possession;" HALOT 1, 323. Likely "with their plots of land;" cf. Wolff, *Hosea*, 95. The word used in the LXX is κλῆρος, "allotment;" Muraoka, 400, reads "rust will consume them and their estates."
[370] Buss, *Prophetic Word of Hosea,* 31; see also Eidevall, *Grapes in the* Desert, 51. Hosea 4 as a whole shows correspondences with the Neo-Assyrian treaties, as Martti Nissinen has demonstrated; see Nissinen, *Prophetie,* 168–186.

and the motif of "knowledge of God" (5:4 and 4:6).[371] In addition to these parallels, 5:1–7 shares several correspondences with 6:7–7:2 too.[372] Therefore, when interpreting the passage, Hosea 4 and 6:7–7:2 are important, since the overarching theme in all these texts is Israel's breach of the covenant and the consequences thereof.

In the opening verse 5:1 there is a three-fold command to listen. שׁמע, קשׁב and אזן are all verbs related to hearing and, thus, the audience is urged to heed what follows.[373] The recipients of YHWH's speech in 5:1 include the priests (הכהנים), the house of Israel (בית ישׂראל) and the house of the king (בית המלך). The identity of the priests in question is not defined and, thus, their connection with the priest mentioned in 4:4 is unclear.[374] However, both 5:1 and 4:4 use the word כהן, not כמר, which in 10:5 refers to idolatrous priests connected with the calf cult. The priests in 5:1 may be those ministering in the official state cult at the sanctuary at Bethel. This gets some support from Amos 7:10–17, which describes a confrontation between the prophet and Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, and that in Hosea the attitude towards the cult at Bethel is critical. Another possibility is that the priests of high places are meant. In 4:4–9 the priests are considered as being responsible for "feeding" on the people's sins, which refers concretely to the priests' selfish interests in the sacrificial cult as they received their own portion from the meat and cereal offerings.[375] Thus, as 8:11 explicitly says, the more altars were built, the more opportunities there were for sinning.

The term "house of the king" refers to the royal court, to the royal establishment at large. As for the expression "house of Israel," it is not evident whether it means the nation, the ordinary people or the leaders. BHS suggests reading "princes of Israel" for "the house of Israel," but according to Wolff, this reading is not likely since "princes of Israel" would belong to the "house of the king."[376] Wolff points to Micah 3:1, in which a similar command to listen is addressed to "the rulers of the house of Israel," קציני בית ישׂראל, and Wolff concludes that בית ישׂראל in 5:1 is an abbreviation of a longer phrase, in which "clan chieftains" could be meant.[377] It seems to me as well that the nation's ruling elite is in question. The use of the word המשׁפט supports this suggestion, since it

[371] Wolff, *Hosea*, 96; Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 90; Eidevall, *Grapes in the Desert*, 67–77.
[372] Eidevall, *Grapes in the Desert*, 104; Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 121–122; Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 433; Andersen and Freedman suggest that 5:1–7 and 6:7–7:2 need to be examined together.
[373] For the use of the same verbs, see, e.g., Proverbs 7:24, Psalm 49:2, Isaiah 28:23; 49:1; 51:4, Deuteronomy 32:1; Micah 1:2; Joel 1:2; Jeremiah 13:5. Wolff points out the use of some important catchwords such as "justice" (משׁפט), "to teach" (ירה), "to contend" (ריב), "to chastise" (מוסר) etc., which appear elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, and that in Hosea, YHWH is presented as "Israel's teacher of law;" see Wolff, *Hosea*, 97.
[374] As for the mention of a priest in 4:4, the phrase ועמך כמריבי כהן in 4:4 is problematic. For a list of suggested readings, see Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 347–348; see also Nissinen, *Prophetie*, 98–102; Nissinen's translation is "Dir aber gilt meine Anklage, Priester!" See also Jack R. Lundbom, "Contentious Priests and Contentious People in Hosea IV 1–10," *VT* 36 (1986) 52–70.
[375] With Wolff, *Hosea*, 81.
[376] Ibid., 97.
[377] Ibid.

denotes judgment as well as execution of a just judgment, in other words, maintaining and caring for just governance and order.[378] The administration of judgment belonged to the domain of the rulers and, thus, the message of YHWH, כי לכם המשפט, "the judgment is yours," is an irony: משפט – judgment – comes on those who hold the executive power and who at the same time are responsible for משפט – justice.[379] In passing, it is difficult, if not impossible, to say with precision how such a fundamental notion as משפט was perceived more than 2000 years ago. Nevertheless, it is interesting that משפט, like many other concepts as well, has its own development from a concrete meaning to an abstraction, since in the case of משפט, the development was from a "customary thing" to justice based on the law.[380] A semantic difference is also detectable in how the word משפט is used in Hosea. There are six occurrences of the word, in 2:21; 5:1, 11; 6:5; 10:4 and 12:7, and out of them, 2:21 and 12:7 speak of justice, or what is right and should be, rather than judgment.

In 5:1–2 all three groups of addressees are accused of having been "a snare at Mizpah," "a net spread out on Tabor," and "a deep pit at Shittim;" the latter translation is but one of the possible ways how the difficult phrase ושחטה שטים העמיקו can be translated. Instead of a place name, שטים may be a plural noun derived from the verb שטה/שוט; "to deviate, fall into false paths;" so, for example, Macintosh, who translates "These perverse men have delved deep into corruption."[381] ושחטה can be changed to שחת, a noun denoting a "pit, trap," or alternatively, שחטה may be an infinitive construct from the verb שחת, "to destroy, annihilate, behave corruptly." This makes good sense in light of 9:9, in which there is a phrase העמיקו־שחתו, "they have deeply corrupted themselves," "they are deep in sin."[382] Furthermore, שחטה may be a feminine noun deriving from the verb שחט, "to slaughter;" so Andersen and Freedman, who translate "The rebels are deep in slaughter."[383] In favor of the latter it is significant that the verb שחט has a cultic connection, as it refers to slaughtering in the sense of sacrificing animals or humans.[384] It is impossible to say with certainty which of these possible

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[378] For this, see Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 175, who translates: "for yours is the government;" therefore he also translates the preposition כי as adversative "yet" instead of "indeed, surely, perhaps;" see also Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 133.

[379] Dearman, *Hosea*, 171; Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 133.

[380] See Osborne Booth, "The Semantic Development of the Term מִשְׁפָּט in the Old Testament, "*JBL* 61 (1942) 105–110. Booth identifies eleven different meanings for the word משפט, which can be separated into three larger groups: 1) manner or custom, depending on the criterion of what a customary thing is, 2) judicial decision, based on a definitely promulgated law, and 3) this meaning is based on the idea of what is right, including meanings "that which should be", and "proper administration of law by man;" in later prophets, the meaning of the word is to be found in the two latter groups.

[381] HALOT 2, 1316; cf. Psalm 101:3; see also Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 178–179.

[382] HALOT 2, 1470.

[383] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 380, 386–388. Andersen and Freedman refer to Ezekiel 16:21; 23:39, which speak of slaughtering, and to Psalm 106, which describes the apostasy with similar ideas as Hosea but using different words. They suggest that slaughtering in 5:2 can refer to child sacrificing at Mizpah and Tabor.

[384] HALOT 2, 1459.

translations is correct, but 5:1–2 seems to follow a triple system: three addressees, three trapping devices, three places. The other possibilities can, however, be equally justified in terms of divine judgment.

In biblical texts, such as the Psalms, those who set the hunting devices are wicked persons.[385] As Eidevall remarks, in Hosea the wicked ones are not depicted as hunters, but rather as the trapping devices used by the hunters.[386] Eidevall concludes that the idea here is that the wicked hunters who use the trapping tools have themselves become these devices, they are simply instruments and, thus, the metaphorical equation serves as a rhetorical device to undermine the authority of the political and religious establishment.[387] This indeed seems to be the point also in the light of 5:2 in which YHWH declares that he himself is מוסר to them all. The phrase ואני מוסר לכלם has a twofold meaning. The word מוסר can be translated as "chastisement" but also as "fetter," shackle;" the latter alternative, pointing to an additional device for catching animals, suits the motif of hunting. Those who have set the traps, have themselves become hunted down by YHWH, eventually ending up in shackles.

The toponyms Mizpah, Tabor and Shittim in 5:1–2 may be metaphorical, as Eidevall suggests and, thus, they can serve as metonyms for the inhabitants of the cities, those who are the hunted game but whose helplessness is a sign of their guilt rather than their innocence.[388] The sound of Mizpah, Tabor and Shittim may also have played a role, since the names of the trapping devices recall the consonant sounds in the names.[389] Although it cannot be proved, I would nonetheless suggest that these places have been chosen for their connection with some past events, which evoked certain associations in the audience. On the grounds of the present form of the text, however, only conjectural suggestions can be made.

Mizpah may denote Mizpah at Gilead or Mizpah at Benjamin. Mizpah of Benjamin was the place where the tribes of Israel assembled on various occasions. According to 1 Samuel 10:17–27, Saul was pronounced king there (1 Samuel 10:17–27), after which Samuel announced to the people "the manner of the kingdom" (1 Samuel 10:25).[390] However, there is nothing in 5:1–7 as a whole which relates to Saul, nor is there any specific criticism of the monarchy as an institution. 1 Samuel 7:5–7 tells how the Israelites, who were afraid of the Philistines, assembled at Mizpah before taking up arms confessing their sins to YHWH. As for Mizpah at Gilead, Heinz-Dieter Neef points to its connection with

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[385] Eidevall, *Grapes in the Desert*, 69, note 95. Eidevall points to Psalms 7:16; 9:16; 10:9; 35:7–8; 57:7; 64:6; 140:6; 141:9.
[386] Ibid., 70.
[387] Ibid.
[388] Ibid., 69–70.
[389] Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 90–91; see also Gert Kwakkel, "Paronomasia, Ambiguities and Shifts in Hos 5:1-2," *VT* 61 (2011) 603–615.
[390] An interesting possibility is that "the manner of the kingdom" was a form of a covenant, which was needed in a historical turning-point when the monarchy was introduced in Israel; this has been suggested by Zafrira Ben-Barak, "The Mizpah Covenant (I Sam 10 25) – The Source of the Israelite Monarchic Covenant," *ZAW* 91 (1979) 30–43. I will return to this issue in Chapter IV.

the Jacob tradition: according to Genesis 31:49, Mizpah was the place where Jacob and Laban made a treaty, which included the commitment not to enter into the territory of the other for harmful purposes.[391] It is obvious that if this part of the Jacob tradition was known in the 8th century, it could have been understood as an objection to the hostile terms between Israel and its neighboring states. It is possible that as a place, Mizpah may have carried a positive overtone in that it was related to events with intertribal solidarity and the people's commitment to trusting YHWH, which the 8th century Israel seemed to have forgotten. This is the case in Jeremiah 2:23, in which the worship of the Baals seems to relate to defilement. The connection of Shittim with the incident at Baal Peor is clear; both Mizpah at Benjamin (1 Samuel 7:6) and Mizpah at Gilead (Genesis 31:45) were places of cultic activity, and so also Mt. Tabor. Furthermore, perhaps we should not ignore the translation in the LXX, in which מצפה is read as denoting a group of watchmen; this evokes 9:9, in which the prophet calls himself a "watchman, צפה, of Ephraim," on whose paths snares are set.

Similarly, Tabor as a place can have a positive connotation related to collaboration between the tribes. [392] Mt. Tabor relates to Deborah, who, according to Judges 4:6, passed on YHWH's message to Barak so that he should lead his men to Mt. Tabor before attacking Sisera. The issue at stake was more likely religious observances of some sort, as the men were preparating themselves for the battle. Shittim has commonly been associated with a cultic transgression, since Shittim is the location of the incident at Baal Peor, to which 9:10 refers; I will discuss 9:10 in Chapter III. Shittim was, however, the place where the Israelites stayed before their entry to Canaan (Numbers 25:1; Joshua 2:1; 3:1) and related to other events as well.[393]

Despite the ambiguity surrounding Mizpah, Tabor and Shittim the following verse 5:3 points to a cultic connection. There is a shift in addressees. As in 5:3 YHWH speaks to Ephraim and Israel. Israel and Ephraim occur as parallel designations, which indicates that the name Israel is used in its political meaning. Thus, the message concerns the northern kingdom only. The Niphal form of the verb טמא, "to defile oneself," also occurs in 6:10, which evokes 5:3 as it speaks of

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[391] See Heinz-Dieter Neef, *Die Heilstraditionen Israels in der Verkündigung des Propheten Hosea* (BZAW 169; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1987) 216–221.

[392] Therefore, I agree with Marvin Sweeney in that as a place where Israel gathered to oppose an enemy, Tabor set the organizational pattern of the northern kingdom; Sweeney, *King Josiah*, 265. Mt. Tabor may have been named after the god Tammuz, which was the god mentioned in Ezekiel 8:14. Barak was called בן־אבינעם, "son of the father of pleasantness," in which נעם is an epithet of Tammuz and, assuming that the god was worshiped at Mt. Tabor, Barak and his men probably went on Tabor to consecrate themselves before the battle. Tammuz also had a Sumerian epithet denoting "net;" "the Lord of the Net;" so Julius Lewy, "Tabor, Tibar, Atabyros," *HUCA* 23 (1950) 357–386, here 361.

[393] Shittim was the place of the Balaam episode (Numbers 22–24), the census (Numbers 26), and the victory over the Midianites (Numbers 31); it was also the place where Moses died (Deuteronomy 34:5–8) and Joshua became the leader (Deuteronomy 34:9), and additionally, the Israelites were given various commands and laws, some of which were to the conquest of Canaan (e.g. Numbers 33:50–56). The saying in Micah 6:5 is also interesting, as it asks the people to remember "from Shittim to Gilgal." This seems to refer to Israel's crossing over the Jordan.

Ephraim's fornication and Israel's defilement, connected with שׁעריריה, "something horrible," which YHWH has seen in the "house of Israel." Here again, the original reading could have been the "house of El," בבית־אל, as suggested by BHS, allowing to read a similar pun with the Jacob tradition as in 5:3.

Fornication means unfaithfulness towards YHWH, be it in the sphere of politics or of the cult. With regard to the cult, fornication denotes idolatry, and being in touch with idols results in defilement, becoming unclean, which also means that there is no entry to the presence of YHWH.

5:4 begins with מעלליהם, "their deeds;" it is evident that some evil deeds are meant here; cf. 4:9; 7:2; 9:15; 12:13. "They" may refer to those addressed in 5:1.[394] Alternatively, "they" may denote Israel and Ephraim mentioned in the preceding verse 5:3, but because of the plural form "their" this is problematic, although not impossible. The phrase "and they do not know YHWH" is fundamentally important. In Hosea, דעת אלהים, "knowledge of God," is understood in terms of marriage, an emotional experience that is reciprocal and, thus, דעת אלהים is not knowledge about God, but rather an awareness of God or even sympathy for God.[395] An arrogant attitude prevents sympathy and reciprocial commitment, and in this particular case, as 5:5 says, Israel's arrogance testifies to his face.

5:5 bears close resemblance to 7:10 since the phrase וענה גאון־ישׂראל בפניו occurs in them both. The meaning of the phrase is unclear, because, in the first place, it is not explicit what the expression גאון־ישׂראל stands for. The word גאון denotes things like "pride, arrogance," but also "splendor," "eminence." גאון־ישׂראל has been understood as referring to the sanctuary of Bethel as well as to an arrogant attitude.[396] As for the latter reading, it seems to have been influenced by the well-known Proverbs 16:18, in which גאון clearly refers to "pride." Jeremiah 48:29, Zechariah 9:6; 10:11, Isaiah 16:6, and Ezekiel 32:12 also associate the word with the arrogant attitude of nations. In Hosea, however, the meaning may be more concrete by pointing to the "land," since the word גאון occurs in other texts in connection with judgment of a land and, thus, the saying "Israel's pride testifies against itself" in Hosea follows a common pattern.[397] An interesting point is that in Joshua 24, the Israelites themselves serve as the witnesses of the covenant, which means that they are called to testify against themselves when they violate the covenant.[398] Perhaps the point here is that the destruction of land speaks for itself.

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[394] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 390.

[395] So Abraham Heschel, *The Prophets* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962) 73–74.

[396] For Bethel, see Emmerson, *Hosea*, 66; see also Danell, *Studies in the Name Israel*, 129, who suggests that the similar lexeme "Jacob's pride" in Amos 6:8 has the same meaning; however, Hadjiev, *Amos*, 102–103, reads Amos 6:8 as denoting arrogance and self-reliance. As for the meaning denoting an arrogant attitude, see Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 392, with "a presumption, trust in one's own splendor;" Wolff points to an attitude, pride that "is the evidence of the audience's inability to repent;" Wolff, *Hosea*, 100.

[397] Thus Eidevall, *Amos*, 184, 219; Eidevall points to the phrase "Jacob's גאון" in Amos 6:8 and 8:7; cf. Psalm 47:5 and Nahum 2:3.

[398] Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School*, 62.

In 5:5, the name Israel in the first line seems to function as an interchangeable name for Ephraim in the second line, but the second mention of Israel in parallel with Ephraim is problematic, and appears an addition to a pre-existing text, especially as parallelism is restored when the second mention of Israel is dropped from the text.[399] However, this requires that the plural verb יכשלו is emended as singular. Some scholars tend to retain the second mention of Israel here, and explain the use of the plural verb form by interpreting Israel and Ephraim as separate entities, the Gileadite Israel, annexed by Assyria, and Ephraim under the control of Samaria.[400]

The mention of Judah in 5:5 is quite abrupt in the context which otherwise focuses on Israel-Ephraim. The use of the word גם and the the change of the verb כשׁל from imperfect to perfect both suggest that the reference to Judah has been incorporated into a pre-existing textual layer.[401] Also, without the reference, the accusations against Israel-Ephraim continue in 5:6–7. Andersen and Freedman oppose the view that the mention of Judah comes from a later hand and read it as a prediction of a disaster for Judah as "Judah will stumble with them."[402]

There is also the possibility that the saying is a question "Will Judah stumble with them?"[403] The question leaves the option for Judah to disentangle itself from following the ways of Israel-Ephraim; in other words, Judah was in a situation where it still could make a decision about its future.

In 5:6 the expression "with their flocks and herds" refers to cult and sacrificing as the means to achieve a close association with YHWH. But the people will not find him, since YHWH has "withdrawn from them;" the translation is uncertain, because this is not the usual meaning of the verb חלץ.[404] The point, however, is YHWH's absence, a theme which reappears in 5:15. Sacrifices are not forbidden, but they are of no use if YHWH is not present. A ritualistic worship, as Jeremiah 14:12 indicates, will not help end the crisis. As for this particular text in Jeremiah, Ola Wikander sees it as turning the ancient Hittite myth of Telepinu on its head: in the story of Telepinu, the god could be appeased by a sacrificial meal made by other gods, but YHWH requires a change of attitude.[405] In Hosea, this is explicitly indicated in 6:6, which emphasizes – to use Ben Zvi's expression – "the primacy

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[399] So, e.g., Emmerson, *Hosea*, 65–66; Wolff, *Hosea*, 95; Wolff sees that the plural forms (יכשלו בעונם) result from the addition of וישׂראל; so also BHS.

[400] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 382, 390, 393; Cook (1964) 121–135. Cook concludes that the sayings in which only the name Israel is used, come from the period before the campaigns of Tiglath-pileser III, and when both Ephraim and Israel are used, the reference is to two separate regions – the rump state Ephraim and the rest of the kingdom of Israel.

[401] Wolff, *Hosea*, 95, 100; Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, lxxi, 186; Yee, *Composition and Tradition*, 275–276, Emmerson, *Hosea*, 65–66.

[402] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 393.

[403] Thus, it is a polar question, a sort of "yes-no" question, in which the entire proposition is questioned, not just one feature of it; see Waltke and O'Connor, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 684–685.

[404] HALOT 1, 322; the usual meaning in Qal is "to draw off;" cf. e.g. Deuteronomy 25:9; Isaiah 20:2. Macintosh suggests that in the phrase חלץ מהם the sense is "detachment" and "separation" of YHWH from his people; Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 187–188.

[405] Wikander, *Drought, Death, and the Sun*, 150–154.

of morality over sacrifices."[406] Another link with the myth of Telepinu is the concept of divine wrath as a reason for a god's absence and, thus, it is divine anger, not the power of death, which has devastating consequences related to the land.[407] The consequences of YHWH's absence are presented in 5:6–7: the punishment losing their "portions" means the land.

Why will "new moon" devour their land? The word חדֹשׁ occurs also in 2:13, in which YHWH declares that he will put an end to her "new moons," and a very similar judgment is proclaimed in Isaiah 1:11–15. In the LXX, the word used in Isaiah 1:13, 14 is νουμηνία, "new moon, the first day of the month."[408] The same Greek word for חדֹשׁ occurs in Hosea 2:13 too, but the LXX, however, understands the saying in 5:6 as referring to a disaster caused by rust or mildew or by locusts which all destroy the crop. As Edward Glenny points out, the translator in the LXX understood 5:6 as a curse for breaking the covenant, since the same word ἐρυσίβη, "locust," is used in Deuteronomy 28:42.[409] Wolff regards the translation of חסיל in the LXX as original, and translates it as "locust" here, but other alternatives have also been proposed.[410]

Karel van der Toorn draws attention to the fact that the concept of חדֹשׁ relates to Israelite family rituals in particular, and on the grounds of 1 Samuel 20, concludes that חדֹשׁ denotes the period when the moon is not visible, the interlunium.[411] This period was considered as being unsuitable for daily work – cf. Amos 8:5 – and, perhaps for this very reason, it was a period of increased ritual activity, also in the cult of the Baals.[412] The saying in Hosea may, thus, concern festivities celebrated in the sphere of family religion; I discuss this topic further in Chapter III.

The word חלק means "share of possession," and I think it can be understood in light of Joshua 18:5–10, which speaks of territorial portions of the land, allotted by YHWH. The word also appears in Amos 7:4, which speaks of the destruction of the land by fire.[413] It is, thus, possible to interpret the enigmatic sayings about destructive "new moon" as a reference to festivities which, instead of securing the fertility of the land, will eventually destroy the land. False and idolatrous celebrations signified the breach of covenant, the consequence of which was the loss of the land, the ultimate punishment.

The word זרים has a wide range of meanings related to being strange, different, non-Israelite and, thus, illegitimate. The word occurs in 7:9 and 8:7 too, in which it refers to strangers in the sense of non-Israelites. In 7:9 "strangers" consume Ephraim's strength; in 8:7 "strangers" consume their grain. What, however, is meant by בנים זרים, "strange children"? Some commentators have understood it as

[406] Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 125; Ben Zvi calls this "a widespread ideological topos."
[407] Wikander, *Drought, Death, and the Sun*, 151.
[408] Muraoka, 477.
[409] Glenny, *Septuagint Commentary Series: Hosea*, 105.
[410] Wolff, *Hosea*, 101; see also Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 189–190.
[411] Van der Toorn, *Family Religion*, 212–213.
[412] Van der Toorn, *Family Religion*, 213, 295.
[413] See Eidevall, *Amos*, 196.

referring to "bastards," especially as the treacherous and unfaithful behavior of the people is at stake in the first line.[414] It seems to me that בנים זרים should be understood in the light of the name of the son "Not-my-people." Thus, it denotes that those who have broken the covenant are strangers to YHWH; they are not his people. Thus, the message is comparable with 6:7 which uses the same verb בגד, "to deal treacherously," in connection with breaking the covenant.

2.2.2.1. Conclusions

The textual passage in 5:1–7 can be understood as a prophetic accusation against the contemporary Israelite cult, which proves the nation's incapability of maintaining a proper relationship with YHWH. As stated in Exodus 23:32–33, Israel was forbidden from making a covenant with other nations and their gods, because worship of other gods would become a snare, מוקשׁ, to Israel. Judges 2:3; 8:27 and Deuteronomy 7:16 also connect the word מוקשׁ with idolatry. Joshua 23:12–13 mentions both מוקשׁ and פח; the passage forbids Israelites from intermarrying and associating with the remnants of the nations that remain among them in the land of Canaan so that they would not become "snares" and "traps" for Israel. Thus, in Hosea's prophecies, the worship of other gods becomes a snare and trap for the people (5:1–2). The term "fornication" in 5:3 points to idolatrous cultic practices too.

However, the exact nature of idolatry remains unclear since the place names – Mizpah, Tabor, and Shittim – evoke several associations, which are difficult to connect with a historical situation. That notwithstanding, I do think that some real-life events were the reason why these places in particular were mentioned. One possibility is that Mizpah and Tabor are related to early traditions about tribal assemblies. As 1 Samuel 10:17–27 indicates Mizpah was such a place, and Tabor is known as the first place where Israel gathered together to oppose an enemy.[415] It is not impossible that the places as such retained positive associations, since the accusation in 5:1 targeted at people whom have become traps at Mizpah and on Tabor and, thus, may not concern the places themselves. Furthermore, tribal collaboration could have been an important element in the northern kingdom, unlike in Judah, which was far less heterogenous in this sense. The tradition of tribal collaboration occurs also in the Song of Deborah, which will be discussed later.

As for Shittim, it was the place where Israel camped before crossing over the Jordan and entering Canaan, and therefore, it is a place of importance. It evokes the incident at Baal Peor, to which 9:10 refers. However, reading "Shittim" is only but one way to read the word. Instead of Shittim, the word שׂחטה can be read as a derivative of the verb שׂחט, "to slaughter." This is suggested, for example, by

[414] Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 189–190; Wolff, *Hosea*, 101.
[415] So Sweeney, *King Josiah*, 265.

Andersen and Freedman, who in this context point to many biblical texts where the verb is used in connection with child sacrifice – Ezekiel 16:21 and 23:39 speak of sacrificing children to idols, in Genesis 22:10 Abraham is about to slaughter his son, and also Psalm 106:36–39 mentions child sacrifice.[416] Since this topic is closely related to the reading of 9:10, this issue is taken up further in Chapter III.

I maintain that 5:1–7 as a whole can be read as reflecting the 8th century prophetic tradition. The accusations are directed to Ephraim, or Israel, and their ruling classes, who are neglecting their essential duties: proper dispensation of justice and conducting a right cult. In this passage, Israel and Ephraim are interchangeable designations of the northern kingdom. Therefore, the mention of Israel in the second line is questionable, since the 3rd person plural verb יכשלו implies that Israel and Ephraim are not used as parallel designations for the northern kingdom. Thus, I regard the mention of Israel on the second line of 5:5 as being added to a pre-existing textual layer.[417]

The only saying about Judah is positioned in the third line of 5:5. Judah either stumbles with Israel/Ephraim or, alternatively, there is a rhetoric question "will Judah also stumble."

As said, the prophecies underlying the present form of 5:1–7 did not originally concern Judah, and the insertion of Judah was made in order to build a contrast between the sinfulness of Ephraim and righteous Judah. Such a change would fit in with the time of Josiah's reform and its policy. Read as a question "Will Judah stumble," the saying must have pre-dated the fall of Jerusalem in 586. In the time of Josiah, such a question could have functioned as a statement of hope for Judah, and an exhortation to avoid the fate of the kingdom of Israel/Ephraim. Thus, the sinful Israel in 5:1–7 serves as a guideline to Judah on keeping the covenant under a righteous king who follows the covenant and acts accordingly concerning the administration of justice and conducting the cult. An alternative reading "Judah will stumble with them" fits better with the exilic context and the awareness that Judah fell like Israel before. In that case, the saying would be a pessimistic *ex post facto* remark, made by an exilic redactor who has extended the underlying source text using the same vocabulary. In this case, the saying about Judah relates to the present form of 2 Kings 17:7–18, and its exilic redaction with the destruction of both Israel and Judah in view. Thus, it would resemble the exilic addition Isaiah 3:8–9 to Isaianic 8:1–7.[418]

2.2.3. Hosea 10:9–13. Judah, Ephraim, and Jacob

10:9 *Since the days of Gibeah,*
you have sinned, Israel.

[416] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 386–387.
[417] With the text apparatus in BHS.
[418] Williamson, *Isaiah 6–12*, 299.

There they stood.[419]
Will war not overtake them in Gibeah[420]
with the wicked?[421]

10:10 *When it is my desire*[422] *I will chastise them.*[423]
Nations will be gathered against them,
in their being bound[424] *to their two iniquities.*[425]

10:11 *Ephraim, a trained heifer,*[426]
one loving to thresh.[427]
When I passed by the beauty of her neck[428]
I harnessed[429] *Ephraim.*

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[419] The MT has עמדו, the verb עמד has a number meanings related to "stand;" BHS suggest to read עָרְדוּ, "they rebelled;" the LXX has ἵστημι, "to stand firm;" Muraoka, 343. Nyberg, *Studien zum Hoseabuche*, 76, reads "blieben sie stehen, blieben sie unwirksam."

[420] The phrase לא־תשׂיגם is generally regarded as a rhetorical question; Wolff, *Hosea*, 178, and Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 411, translate with "surely."

[421] The phrase לא־תשׂיגם בגבעה מלחמה על־בני עלוה is difficult. The verb נשׂג denotes "to collect, reach;" HALOT 1, 727; Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 411, translates "overtake;" the LXX has καταλαμβάνω; "to befall;" Muraoka, 374. Instead of Gibeah, the LXX reads βουνός, "hill;" the phrase thus has a translation "the war against the children of injustice will never overtake them in the hill;" so Glenny, S*eptuagint Commentary Series: Hosea;* 147–148; Glenny points to the preceding verse 10:8, in which the hill may provide relief from the war against the children of injustice. For a different translation, see Nyberg, *Studien zum Hoseabuche*, 78–79. The preposition עַל occurs also in 10:14, in which it means "with"; see also HALOT 1, 827.

[422] The MT reads a noun אוה here, and thus באותי can be translated as "according to my desire;" HALOT 1, 21. The LXX has translated ἔρχομαι, "I will come" from באתי; so also Wolff, *Hosea*, 178. Nyberg, *Studien zum Hoseabuche*, 79, suggests "Weh," "Schmertz;" "In meinem Weh;" cf. אוי in 7:13.

[423] ואסרם is usually understood as being a Qal imperfect 1st person of the verb יסר, "to chastise, discipline."

[424] The verb אסר means "to bind, tie," also in the sense of tethering animals, "to harness;" cf. 1 Samuel 6:7; figuratively it means binding oneself by an obligation; HALOT 1, 75.

[425] The ketib is עינתם, "two eyes." Nyberg, *Studien zum Hoseabuche*, 79, retains this reading, and does not read שׁתי as a numeral "two" but as infinitive construct of שׁתה, "to drink," and translates לשׁתי עינתם, "um ihre Quellen zu trinken."However, most scholars read the word עון "iniquity, wickedness" here in line with the LXX's ἀδικίαις, "injustices."

[426] The Pual participle of the verb למד in the phrase עגלה מלמדה is usually understood as "trained;" HALOT 1, 531.

[427] In the MT, the verb is דוּשׁ, "to tresh," but the LXX reads ἀγαπᾶν νεῖκος, "loving quarrel" or "quarrelsome;" so, Muraoka, 472.

[428] The phrase ואני עברתי על־טוב צוארה probably does not mean "beauty" or "goodness" of the neck, but rather Ephraim's visible strength and power, as Wolff, *Hosea*, 185, suggests. Andersen and Freedman translate the phrase "I place upon her neck a fine yoke;" Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 560; thus reading עֹל instead of עַל which makes good sense, although the verb עבר is difficult to adjust here unless read as a Hiphil with a sense of "put on"; HALOT 1; 780.

[429] ארכיב is a Hiphil form of the verb רכב, the exact meaning of the verb is not quite clear, but it is connected with riding, which here would mean "I will cause to be ridden," which does not make good sense; thus it is better to understand the Hiphil form as denoting "to yoke the ox to the plough, to harness;" HALOT 2, 1233.

Judah plowed,[430]
Jacob harrowed for him.[431]

10:12 *So for yourselves according to righteousness,*
reap according to the measure of חסד*,*[432]
harrow[433] *your uncultivated ground.*
It is the time[434] *to seek YHWH*
until he comes and sends justice to rain[435] *on you.*

10:13 *You (pl.) have ploughed wrong,*
you (pl.) have reaped wickedness,
you (sg.) have eaten fruits of lie,
because you (sg.) have trusted in your way,[436]
in multitude of your (sg.) mighty warriors.

10:9 begins with a historical retrospect of the "days of Gibeah," from which time on Israel has sinned. The place name Gibeah also occurs in 5:8 and 9:9. The latter verse also speaks of "days of Gibeah" in the phrase העמיקו־שׁחתו כימי הגבעה, "they have deeply corrupted themselves as in the days of Gibeah." Thus, the place seems to be associated with some particular sin. As I discussed in connection with 5:8, Gibeah may be related to the violence of Ephraim against Benjamin, and so it refers to a fraternal strife in the past. Therefore, an ancient version of the story in Judges 19–20, which tells how the Ephraimites murdered the population of Gibeah through a clever ambush, may be in the background.[437] In that case, the point is that Gibeah had been the scene of a fratricide, now being repeated. When the Israelites killed nearly all the Benjaminites at Gibeah, 10:9 may say that Israel retained the same attitude – hostility and violence – throughout its history. However, another aspect related to the tradition preserved in Judges 19 is that the Benjaminites had violated the demand for hospitality embedded in the concept of חסד, which then led to drastic consequences for the clan.[438] Against this

[430] יחרוֹשׁ is Qal imperfect 3rd singular, "to plough." The LXX reads παρασιωπήσομαι, "pass over in silence, take no notice of, turn a deaf ear to;" Muraoka, 531.
[431] The LXX redas ἐνισχύσει αὐτῷ ᾽Ιακώβ, "Jacob showed himself to be stronger;" Muraoka, 239, which evokes Jacob's fight with a divine being.
[432] לִפי means "according to the measure of, in full measure;" HALOT 2, 916.
[433] The verb ניר means making the soil cultivable for the first time; HALOT 1, 697. The LXX reads τρυγήσατε εἰς καρπὸν ζωῆς, "gather in fruits of life;" Muraoka, 689.
[434] עת with infinitive denotes the proper time for an event; HALOT 1, 900.
[435] The verb used here is a Hiphil from ירה (II) used metaphorically with צדק, "to rain righteousness."
[436] There is a change from the 2nd person plural to the 1st person singular here. Literal translation of בדרכך; a more dynamic translation would be "actions" or even"policy," as Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 425, suggests; in the LXX, ἅρμασίν, "chariots;" so also BHS with ברכבך.
[437] Arnold (1989) 447–460.
[438] Cohen, "Pastoral Idea of *Hesed* and the Symbolism of *Matzo* and *Hamets*," in Yona, Greenstein, Gruber, Machinist, and Paul (eds.), *Marbeh Ḥokmah*, 111–137, here 122.

background, all are guilty simply because if they sow violence, they will also reap it.

After addressing Israel in the 2nd person singular form, the rest of the verse speaks of an undefined "them." What precisely is meant with the phrase שׁם עמדו is unclear. Wolff has suggested that the verb עמד has a sense of "remaining unchanged."[439] In 2 Kings 23:3, the verb is used in terms of the people's committing themselves to the covenant, "all the people took their stand in the covenant," but in 10:9, there is nothing which connects it to covenant. Neither is it clear who the "sons of injustice" are. Ibn Ezra explains this difficult verse by rearraging the order of the words, "there they stood with the sons of iniquity," that is, the Benjaminites, which, according to Ibn Ezra, means that the people's present behavior was such that they were no longer afraid that the war similar to that which overtook the Benjaminites could overtake them."[440] Despite the difficulties with the text, this is perhaps the best way to explain the point in the verse.

10:10 is also a difficult verse to interpret. I have followed the MT here and read the noun אוה, "wish, desire." Some commentators follow the LXX and read the verb באתי; "I have come (or I will come) and chastise them. Given that the word עינתם should be emended to עונתם, "their iniquities" or the like, the question still concerns which two iniquities are at stake here. Jeremiah 2:13 also speaks of two iniquities, שׁתים רעות, but the issue is metaphorically the people's choice between living God and idols. As Buss remarks, descriptions of evil in Hosea are quite generalized here.[441] The verb אסר, "to bind," is used in 1 Samuel 6:7 denoting the harnessing of the cows and, thus, it connects the verse to what follows in 10:11, where the imagery from agriculture continues.

In 10:11, Ephraim is compared to a heifer. It is puzzling why the masculine Ephraim is compared to a feminine עגלה, instead of using עגל, a bull-calf. The use of the feminine gender could be derogatory, like the feminine plural עגלות in 10:5 designating the "calves of Beth-aven." There is, however, nothing which favours this derogatory sense, but here the expression "trained heifer" contrasts with Israel who is likened to a stubborn cow, כפרה סררה, in 4:16.[442] The phrase ואני עברתי על־ טוב צוארה, "I passed over the beauty of her neck" conveys an idea of a sudden discovery and election.[443] The heifer, or Ephraim, is said to love to thresh. Andersen and Freedman propose an alternative translation "Ephraim whom I loved is a heifer trained to thresh," the point they make is that no animal loves to thresh in the first place, and also this reading establishes a connection between

[439] Wolff, *Hosea*, 184; so, for example, in Jeremiah 48:11 and Leviticus 13:5, 37.
[440] Lipshitz, *Commentary of Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra on Hosea*, 94, notes 29–32 on 99–100.
[441] Buss, *Prophetic Word of Hosea*, 98.
[442] With Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 567.
[443] Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 417–418; Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 561, 567; Wolff, *Hosea*, 185. Eidevall, *Grapes in the Desert*, 160–161, points to the use of the verb "harnessing" as not functioning as a metaphor for divine punishment, but of Ephraim's election to service. Also Ezekiel 16:6 speaks of YHWH as "passing by;" here in Hosea the motif of finding is connected with the election in the cultivated land.

10:11 and 11:1, both of which describe YHWH's love of Ephraim-Israel.[444] The verb דוׁש is usually read as "to thresh, to tread out grain," but its metaphorical meaning "to trample down," i.e. "to destroy people" allows a dual meaning.[445] The verb אהב is probably not "love" here, and the meaning is more concretely related to being useful; thus, the translation would rather be that Ephraim was "used to threshing" as Abraham Malamat suggests.[446] However, if Andersen and Freedman are correct in translating "Ephraim whom I loved is a heifer trained to thresh,"[447] the point becomes clear. A trained heifer is not like a "wild ass," with which Ephraim is compared in 8:9 or a "stubborn heifer" as Israel is called in 4:16. Wild and stubborn animals follow their own paths irrespective of what their master wants – as in 4:16, YHWH can no more "pasture" them, and they must be left alone (4:17).

10:12 uses the terms צדק and חסד which belong to the covenantal language; the same terms appear in 2:21 in which YHWH speaks of betrothing the wife Israel with צדק, משפט, חסד, and רחמים. The imperatives are all in 3rd person plural, which raises the question of whether those addressed are Ephraim, Judah, and Jacob from the previous verse. The verse states what is expected by YHWH: that the people would act according to the demands of the covenantal relationship. What is noteworthy here is the reciprocity of the relationship: blessings and rewards follow the proper conduct.

10:13 points to Israel's wickedness by using agricultural metaphors; the shift in person in the middle of the verse is curious and may indicate a change in the identity of the intended recipient of the message. It is also possible that the lines with the 2nd person plural addressees should be read in connection with 10:12.[448] This is supported also by the style, since there is also a change in the language which in the sayings addressed to "you" in singular is more concrete. The first two lines in 10:13 use a characteristically covenantal language in accusing the addressees of not acting in accordance with the covenantal relationship with YHWH. Consequently, what is brought on them is not חסד and צדק, but quite the opposite, רׁשע and עול.[449]

The language becomes more concrete in the message targeted at the undefined singular you, who is accused of eating the fruits of "falsehood," כחׁש, by trusting in his "own way" and military armament. It seems to me that in all probability, Ephraim is the addressee. This can be concluded from the occurrence of the word כחׁש. It is rare in the Hebrew Bible, and apart from Hosea, it occurs only in Job

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[444] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 560, 567; see also the textual notes in Wolff, *Hosea*, 179.
[445] HALOT 1, 218; see also Micah 4:13 and Amos 1:3.
[446] For the use of the verb אהב in this sense, see Abraham Malamat, *History of Biblical Israel: Major Problems and Minor Issues* (Leiden: Brill, 2001) 401–405.
[447] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 560, 567; see also the textual notes in Wolff, *Hosea*, 179.
[448] See Wolff, *Hosea*, 186–187.
[449] The word עול occurs previously in 10:9, which speaks of "sons of wickedness." עול appears to be something which is opposite to צדק, sort of injustice and unrighteousness. In Hosea the word רׁשע occurs only here; it is common in Psalms, and denotes "wickedness," being also something opposite to צדק.

16:8, Psalm 59:12, and Nahum 3:1. In Hosea, the word is used also in 7:3 and in 12:1, and both verses are related to Ephraim. Following some rabbinic sources, Macintosh suggests that the addressee of the message is King Hoshea, who relied on his military resources and rebelled against Assyria.[450]

2.2.3.1. Conclusions

The passage is a historical retrospect with a reference to Judah in 10:11. The verse is unique in that it mentions Ephraim, Judah and Jacob. This raises the question of what especially the name Jacob stands for. It is obvious that Jacob refers to the patriarch known from the Israelite stream of traditions, but does Jacob here denote Israel as a whole, including Judah? To my view, it not likely, but the name Jacob in Hosea is used for the northern kingdom of Israel, since in Isaiah 9:7–8, the use of the names Jacob and Israel in 9:7 makes them identical with the names Ephraim and Samaria in 9:8.[451]

The agricultural imagery in the verse creates an impression of cooperation, a joint effort, and unity. The concept of unity is embedded in the name Jacob known from the tradition of Jacob's renaming as Israel in Genesis 32:29 and 35:10, and raises the question if this tradition was known in the 8th century Israel, and furthermore, did it include Judah. As I will discuss in Chapter V, the tradition of Jacob has a long history of development from an ancient folk lore to the extant form in Genesis, which presents the Judaean view of the tradition connecting Jacob with Abraham and Isaac. However, in relation to 10:11, we are not dependent on the extant tradition of Jacob's twelve sons; the number of the sons is irrelevant, and it is possible that the all-inclusive number of twelve represents a later concept.[452] Historically, the tribes of Israel were connected by kinship at all, but they were separate groups living in certain territories, and the development of the narratives reflect local interests. The leading group in Israel was Ephraim in the central highlands, and the group Judah probably appeared later in the southern highlands; as Cross suggests, Judah may have been a western division of Reuben, which explains why Judah is not mentioned in the Song of Deborah.[453] Nevertheless, in the monarchic period, the tribes in Israel evolved into powerful segments in the Israelite society to such an extent that the rivalry between the tribal groups influenced the dynastic changes in the kingdom.[454]

I maintain that Jacob is used as a parallel designation of Israel. This fits in well with how Jacob is understood in Hosea 12: Jacob and Israel are the same, although the tradition of Jacob's renaming does not appear in Hosea. However, the verse

[450] So, e.g., Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 427.
[451] For Isaiah 9:7–8, see Williamson, *Isaiah 6–12*, 423.
[452] Fleming, *Legacy of Israel*, 77 note 12.
[453] Cross, *From Epic to Canon*, 53–70, here 55 note 8.
[454] See Ishida, *Royal Dynasties in Ancient Israel*, 174–176.

can be read as pointing to the collaboration of the tribes of Ephraim and Judah. Furthermore, given that religious concepts in the 8th century prophecies preserved in Hosea go back to the traditions in Shechem and its ancient covenantal traditions, 10:11 reflects the tradition and ideal of the intertribal collaboration in line with the ancient pan-Israelite ideology located in Shechem, as Deuteronomy 27 indicates.[455] In the 8th century context, this would have been again a reminder about the need of collaboration in the face of a common enemy.

At the time of Josiah, this message would surely have raised hopes for future co-operation between the northeners and the people of Judah. Jeremiah 31:16–22 focuses on the repentance of Israel as the basis for the restoration of the relationship with YHWH. There was no common enemy at this point, but the message could have been read as pointing to both Ephraim and Judah as the people of YHWH, descendants of Jacob. The idea of a Davidic dynasty was emphasized at the time of Josiah, since, under the rule of David, there was a period of tribal unity; it was, however, short-lived. But, as Daniel Fleming remarks, Judah never gave up the idea that Israel was once ruled by a Davidic king, and this claim explains why Judah, after the fall of the northern kingdom, appropriated the name Israel.[456]

2.2.4. Hosea 12:1–3. Judah, Ephraim, Israel, and Jacob

12:1 *Ephraim has surrounded me with lie*
and with deceit the house of Israel,
but Judah still goes about with God.
and is faithfull to the holy ones.[457]

12:2 *Ephraim feeds on wind,*
and pursues the east wind all day.
He multiplies lie and violence
with Assyria they make a treaty,
and oil is brought to Egypt.

[455] For this, see Antti Laato, "The Cult Site on Mount Ebal. A Biblical Tradition Rewritten and Reinterpreted," in Erkki Koskenniemi and J. Cornelis de Vos (eds.), *Holy Places and Cult* (SRB 5; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2014) 51–99, here 73.
[456] Fleming, *Legacy of Israel*, 49.
[457] The word קדושׁם is problematic; Wolff sees that the issue is of "holy people;" in other words, Hosea's circles; Wolff, *Hosea*, 210. Andersen and Freedman point out the word may refer to pagan gods; Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 603. Smith suggests that the word denoted the divine council as in Psalm 89:6 and Zechariah 14:5. In a Phoenician inscription, "holy ones" denote deities in general; Psalm 89:6–8 speaks of קדושׁם as "sons of God," i.e. divine beings, and describes them as an assembly or council around YHWH; the later description of angelic hosts may derive from this old use of the term; see Smith, *Origins of Biblical Monotheism*, 93, 96, 141.

12:3 *Yahweh has a contention with Judah,*
he will call Jacob account according to his ways,
according to his deeds he will repay him.

12:1–3 can be read as an introduction to 12:4–15, which through references to Jacob deals with Ephraim's current situation – this topic will be discussed in Chapter V. However, in the light of 12:4–15, the references to Judah in 12:1, 3 are suspicious.

12:1 begins with a description of how Ephraim and the house of Israel stand with YHWH: with lie and deceit; Ephraim here denotes the northern kingdom, and the meaning of the "house of Israel" may be the same as in 5:1 in which it can be understood as part of the ruling elite. On the grounds of his dating Hosea 12 to the period to a period shortly after Gilead was annexed to Assyria, Wolff suggests that Ephraim here denotes a rump state that was left from Israel.[458] To my view, the northern kingdom is meant here, as also elsewhere in Hosea where Ephraim is used, but as I have said, the possibility that the rump state Ephraim is meant cannot be totally excluded.

In the LXX, Judah is connected with the preceding clause, and thus Judah too is accused of "ungodliness," ἀσέβεια, alongside the house of Israel. The LXX reads the rest of the verse as νῦν ἔγνω αὐτοὺς ὁ Θεός, καὶ λαὸς ἅγιος κεκλήσεται Θεοῦ; "and now God knows them and they will called the holy people of God." The reason for the LXX's reading is that the MT's עד רד עם אל is read as ידעם אל עת. The verb רד is also problematic. It can be read as Qal participle of רוד, "to roam about freely."[459] In 8:9 Ephraim is compared with a wild ass, which is lonely, and thus the idea of roaming freely fits better with Ephraim here too. Another difficult word is קדוֹשִׁם, with whom Judah is said to wander. The term קדוֹשִׁם, "holy ones," can refer to YHWH's council, but this does not fit here; another possibility is that קדוֹשִׁם refers to foreign deities.[460] It is likely, however, that the word is a collective denoting God.[461]

12:2 is an accusation against Ephraim, which here denotes the northern kingdom. Ephraim is accused of making a treaty with Assyria; this is alluded also in 7:11. Thus, Ephraim is after nothingness, a stormy wind which increases lying and violence. The mention of oil brought to Egypt because it was a customary element in ancient treaty making. According to Assyrian texts in a prism of Esarhaddon, the people of Assyria swore an oath of loyalty to their king by oil and water.[462] The point here may be of vassal treaties – as earlier discussed, Ephraim became Assyria's vassal at the time of Menahem; Pekah, for his part, cooperated with Egypt and Aram against Assyria, and thus, launched the events of the Syro-

[458] Wolff, Hosea, 209.
[459] HALOT 2, 1194.
[460] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 603.
[461] R. B. Coote, "Hosea XII," *VT* 21 (1971) 389–402, here 391.
[462] Dennis J. McCarthy, "Hosea XII 2: Covenant by Oil," *VT* 14 (1986) 217–221.

Ephraimite war. Therefore, it is possible that 12:2 speaks of this particular vassal treaty, and the mention of sending oil to Egypt points to a political alliance.

In 12:3, Judah is commonly read as resulting from the replacement of Israel by Judah.[463] This would mean that Jacob denotes Israel here, which makes good sense in light of the rest of the chapter. As earlier remarked, the use of the names Jacob and Israel for the northern kingdom in the 8th century context is also in line with Isaiah 9:7. Furthermore, as William Whitt points out, also in Amos, Jacob is a term for the northern kingdom.[464]

2.2.4.1. Conclusions

The reference to Judah 12:1 has often been regarded as a later gloss made on the underlying earlier text; so, Macintosh, for example, who suggests that instead of ויהודה, the reading was והוא.[465] Yee ascribes the second part of the verse with the reference to Judah to an exilic redactor; she understands קדוֹשׁם as denoting YHWH and sees here an intentional redactorial device to show that Judah is still loyal to YHWH, which builds a contrast to Israel.[466] The reading of the LXX is of interest, as it links Judah with the same judgment as Israel. The negative attitude towards Judah can also be read by interpreting the word קדוֹשׁם as denoting some other God(s) than YHWH.[467] Both statements about Judah get a negative overtone if also the mention of Judah in 12:3 is retained. Such a critical overlook on Judah could be understood in the 8th century prophecies of Hosea, but the reason for condemning Judah – and Ephraim – is related to the their internecine strifes and therefore, this interpretation is not likely.[468]

When Hosea 12 as a whole is taken into consideration, it becomes more evident that Judah is not part of the 8th century prophecies since in 12:4–15, Judah is of no concern. The focus is on Ephraim's contemporary transgressions, and how they were observable also in their ancestor, Jacob. Thus, the reading with Judah represents a later redactional stage. In 12:1, the positive saying of Judah wandering with YHWH could be dated at some point after the fall of Samaria, but if we read the verse are speaking of Judah's worship of idols, then 12:1 would belong to the same compositional stage with the accusation of Judah in 12:3. Such an attitude towards Judah appears in the time of exile, and is seen in prophecies of Ezekiel.

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[463] E.g. Wolff, *Hosea*, 211.
[464] William D. Whitt, "The Jacob Traditions in Hosea and their Relation to Genesis," *ZAW* 103 (1991) 18–43, here 20–21.
[465] Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 473.
[466] Yee, *Composition and Tradition*, 231, 317.
[467] So Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 603.
[468] So also Emmerson, *Hosea*, 116.

2.2.5. Hosea 1:2–9. Judah and Israel

1:2 *The beginning of YHWH's speaking through Hosea.*
YHWH said to Hosea: Go, take yourself a woman of fornication and children of fornication, for the land surely has committed fornication away from[469] *YHWH.*

1:3 *And he went and took Gomer daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son.*

1:4 *And YHWH said to him: call his name Jezreel for in a little while and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel on the house of Jehu and put an end to the rule of the house of Israel.*

1:5 *And it will be on that day that I will break the bow of Israel in the Valley of Jezreel.*

1:6 *Then she conceived again and gave birth to a daughter, and he said to him: Call her name Lo Ruhamah,*[470] *for indeed I will not continue any longer*[471] *to have compassion on the house of Israel but I will utterly carry away*[472] *them*[473].

1:7 *But on the house of Judah I will show compassion, and I will save them by YHWH, their God, but I will not save them by bow or by sword or by war, by horses or by charioteers.*[474]

1:8 *When she had weaned Lo Ruhamah, she conceived and bore a son.*

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[469] The word מאחרי means "become unfaithful;" HALOT 1, 36.

[470] רחם denotes "to have mercy, to be compassionate;" HALOT 2, 1216–1217. The name contains a pual form "to find mercy," thus Lo Ruhamah means "she finds no mercy." The verb has also a covenantal connotation as meaning "to love;" for this see Michael Fishbane, "The Treaty Background of Amos 1 11 and Related Matters," *JBL* 89 (1970) 313–318.

[471] כי is an emphatic adverb "for indeed; " עוד as a constituent adverb, which qualifies the time extent of the predicate; hence the expression "any longer;" Waltke and O'Connor, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 657.

[472] The phrase כי־נשׂא אשׂא להם is complicated. The LXX has ἀλλ᾽ ἢ ἀντιτασσόμενος ἀντιτάξομαι αὐτοῖς; "opposing I will oppose them;" so in Glenny, *Septuagint Commentary Series: Hosea*, 33; Muraoka, 60, suggests "I shall become their sworn enemy," in which the Hebrew verb שׂנא, "to hate," is assumed. כי in the phrase introduces a subordinated clause beginning with "that;" HALOT 1, 471. Wolff, *Hosea*, 8, translates "Instead, I will completely withdraw it [mercy] from them." Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 23, points to the possibility that the verb is נשׂא, "to deceive."

[473] The use of the preposition ל since the question is of an object here.

[474] After a clausal negative, ו with a noun often has an alternative force; see Waltke and O'Connor, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 648–649.

1:9 *Then he said: Call his name Lo Ammi, for you are not my people and I not I am for you.*[475]

The textual passage 1:2–9 belongs to the first main structural unit in Hosea, consisting of chapters 1–3. The use of the marriage metaphor distinguishes Hosea 1–3 from the rest of the book, and scholars have long been intrigued by the description of the prophet's marriage with "a woman of fornication" and "the children of fornication" born to them. Hosea 1–3 has been intensively looked at as a background to interpret the prophetic message in the remainder of Hosea, and also attempts to build biographical reconstructions of the prophet's life and marriage with his wife have been extensive.[476] Opinions are divided over whether the prophet's marriage should be understood as a metaphor or whether it should be considered as a real act taken by the prophet "to expose the guilt of contemporary Israel, who has succumbed to the Canaanite fertility rites."[477] The marriage can be compared with similar peculiar commands which other prophets are said to have received from YHWH, and it is impossible to know with certainty if the question is about a particular literary genre in biblical prophetic books or about a recollection of a sort of non-verbal communication, a prophetic sign-act, that took place between the prophet and his audience.[478] It is not my concern in this study to ponder on the historicity of the prophetic figure, and therefore, I content myself with understanding the marriage imagery as a tool which serves to describe the covenantal nature of the relationship between Israel and YHWH.[479]

The symbolic names of the "children of fornication" – Jezreel, Lo Ruhamah and Lo Ammi – depict various aspects in the prophecy against Israel by pointing to the consequences of their mother's "fornication", that is, her violation of the covenantal relationship with YHWH. The names Lo Ruhamah, "No-compassion," and Lo Ammi, "Not-my-people," express more directly the outcome of YHWH's anger, whereas the name of the first son, "Jezreel," "God sows," is a place name

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[475] The phrase is ואנכי לא־אהיה לכם. There is a negation of YHWH's name אהיה.

[476] In commentaries, there is plenty of discussion on the marriage imagery in Hosea, but for an excellent review on Hosea 1–3, see Brad E. Kelle, "Hosea 1–3 in Twentieth-Century Scholarship," *CBR* 7 (2009) 179–216; see also R. Abma, *Bonds of Love: Methodic Studies of Prophetic Texts with Marriage Imagery (Isaiah 50:1–3 and 54:1–10, Hosea 1–3, Jeremiah 2–3)* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1999) 110–213. Concerning the origin of the marriage imagery, Kelle summarizes four options that prevail amongs scholars: first, the marriage imagery is connected with the historical prophet's personal life; second, the metaphor is related to Israel's lapse into a fertility cult of Baal; third, the language comes from the idea of covenant between Yahweh and Israel, and fourth, the imagery comes from the language of curses in ancient Near Eastern vassal treaties; *Hosea 2*, 50–51. To my view, the last two alternatives best explain the use of the metaphor in Hosea.

[477] Wolff, *Hosea*, xxii.

[478] See, e.g., Georg Fohrer, "Die Gattung der Berichte über symbolische Handlungen der Propheten," *ZAW* 64 (1952) 101–120; and also, Kelvin Friebel, "A Hermeneutical Paradigm for Interpreting Prophetic Sign-Actions," *Didaskalia* 12 (2001) 25–45.

[479] As Ben Zvi correctly states, the marital metaphor is not used as a description of prophet's actual family life but as a tool to represent the history of the relations between YHWH and Israel; this use of the metaphor was possible because the audience could share a common understanding of marriage as an asymmetrical and highly hierarchical relationship; see *Hosea*, 35.

and is, thus, connected with events related to the location. 1:4 relates to the demise of the house of Jehu and the kingdom of Israel as a whole, and is connected with the following verse 1:5, which speaks of breaking "the bow of Israel," which means Israel's military strength; I discuss 1:4–5 in detail in Chapter IV.

In 1:6, the name of the daughter, "Lo Ruhamah", "No-compassion," indicates the end of YHWH's compassionate attitude towards Israel. The outcome of this is expressed by a difficult phrase כי־נשׂא אשׂא להם. The verb נשׂא has a wide range of meanings related to "lifting up," "carrying," and even "lifting up one sins," signifying forgiveness.[480] In this meaning, נשׂא has been used, for example, in Psalm 32:1 and Micah 7:18. Since the message in 1:6 is judgmental, forgiveness does not make much sense, but there is no negative here. It is possible that לא אוסיף negates the entire clause, allowing the translation "I will certainly not forgive them."[481] Another possibility is that the כי clause after the negative clause expresses an unrealizable event; this is proposed by Abma, who translates "let alone that I will forgive them."[482] Wolff, for his part, reads the phrase as an elliptical phrase; "For I will no longer have mercy on Israel; instead, I will withdraw it from them."[483] Andersen and Freedman put forward that לא אוסיף negates all four following clauses, which extends the judgment onto Judah too in 1:7.[484] I am of the opinion that the meaning "carry away" is also worth considering, since in 5:14 the verb נשׂא is used in this particular meaning in a metaphorical depiction of YHWH as a predatory lion who "carries away" his pray – that is, Ephraim and Judah. Such a concrete meaning of נשׂא also appears in Micah 2:2, which uses the verb in a reference to evil humans who carry away their plunders. Irrespective of which translation is opted for in 1:6, they all point to some ominous event awaiting Israel.

The reference to Judah in 1:7 makes a sudden change by shifting the focus onto Judah. The verse is built on 1:6, as it picks up the motif of compassion and reverses the fate of the house of Israel in respect of the house of Judah. The intrusive nature of 1:7 is rather obvious also in light of following verses 1:8–9, which continue the theme of the children's names from 1:6. In 1:9, the second son gets the name "Lo Ammi," "Not-my-people," which expresses the end of the covenantal relationship

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[480] At the background of "lifting up one's sins" is the ancient tradition in Leviticus 16 about the scapegoat which is released in the wilderness (Leviticus 16:22). Mary Douglas has discussed this tradition in "The Go-away Goat," in Rolf Rendtorff and Robert A. Kugles (eds.), *The Book of Leviticus. Composition and Reception* (Leiden: Brill, 2003) 121–141. She points out that that the ancient tradition probably meant that the goat simply "lifted up" the sins of the people, sort of eliminating them.

[481] Waltke and O'Connor, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 657.

[482] Abma, *Bonds of Love*, 122, 126–127.

[483] Wolff, *Hosea*, 8.

[484] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 187–197; accordingly, they read: "never again shall I show pity for the state of Israel or forgive them at all; nor for the state of Judah will I show pity, or save them. I will not save them from bow and sword and weapons of war, from horses and horsemen." In this context, Andersen and Freedman refer to a similar use of לא in Jeremiah 3:2, 22:10; Numbers 21:19; Micah 7:1 and Isaiah 38:18. In my opinion, it is very difficult to decide whether this reading is more likely than the habitual one, but since it has not been proposed by other scholars, I prefer the more usual way of translating the text.

between YHWH and his people Israel. This is confirmed in the final clause, in which YHWH proclaims that he will no longer be their God – no more "I am" to Israel and, thus, the phrase לא־אהיה לכם reverses the name אהיה in Exodus 3:14.[485]

2.2.5.1. Conclusions

Scholarly opinions are highly divergent about the dating of 1:7, and all possible dates have been proposed. Emmerson ascribes 1:7 to the historical prophet, who here expresses his confidence in Judah's future; as Emmerson suggests, the prophet, in a state of anarchy, turned his hopes to Judah.[486] Emmerson assigns only the present position of the verse to Judaean redactors, who, thus, attempted to make sure that the "house of Israel" in 1:6 is read in a limited political sense as a designation of the kingdom of Israel, and not in its sacral sense of the people of God; Emmerson suggests that the background of 1:7 is an early concept of a Holy War "whereby deliverance is won by Yahweh's power alone without recourse to human strength."[487] As for the use of the names Israel in 1:6 and Judah in 1:7, also Ben Zvi sees that they are used here in order to avoid any confusion with the sacral name of Israel although Ben Zvi places the text – as well as the whole composition of Hosea – in the Persian period Yehud.[488] Yee, for her part, ascribes 1:7 to the exilic redactor, who, in accordance with the theme in 2:20, speaks of a new covenant, to which the destruction of military equipments "bow," "sword," and "war" is connected.[489] Macintosh dates 1:7 to the time period immediately following the reform of Josiah, as the verse reflects the idea that Judah was considered as YHWH's chosen people after the rejection of the northern kingdom of Israel.[490] Wolff, for his part, considers the possibility that 1:7 looks back to Jerusalem's deliverance from Sennacherib in 701.[491]

1:7 builds up a strong contrast between the houses of Israel and Judah by being an absolutely positive saying about Judah in the context of judgmental prophecies targeted at Israel.[492] According to 1:6, YHWH appears to have made his final

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[485] The amount of research on the meaning of YHWH's name is vast. It is out of the limits of this study to go into the depths of its origin. I would, however, like to point to Johannes de Moor's suggestion of an Egyptian background of Exodus 3:14 in that he refers to an Egyptian religious text where the god Re calls himself "I am who I am;" see Johannes de Moor, *The Rise of Yahwism. The Roots of Israelite Monotheism* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1997) 268–269.

[486] Emmerson, *Hosea*, 93.

[487] Ibid., 88–93. For a view that 1:7 comes from the 8th century prophet, see also Danell, *Studies on the Name Israel*, 139, note 10.

[488] Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 57.

[489] Yee, *Composition and Tradition*, 66–68.

[490] Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 25–26.

[491] Wolff, *Hosea*, 20–21.

[492] See, however, Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 187–197, who have a different view, since they connect כי־נשׂא אשׂא להם in 1:6 to 1:7, and apply the negative opening phrase לא אוסיף עוד to every clause in 1:6–7, which extends the negative statement also to Judah. They translate, "Never again

decision concerning Israel and rejected his people as a covenantal partner, while in 1:7 Judah will be saved by YHWH himself, with no need for military intervention. Thus, YHWH shows "compassion" towards Judah, which is one of the elements in the concept of חסד, a precondition in the covenant.[493] 1:7 differs from 2:2 which speaks of Judah and Israel and their future reunification; in 1:7, it is only Judah that will survive. Based on these different perspectives in 1:7 and 2:2, I argue that these verses have their origins in different periods of time.

Macintosh points to Psalm 78 as another text which puts forth the election of Judah and depicts the history of Ephraim as a constant rebellion against YHWH, and which justifies the divine selection and the leadership of Judah.[494] In my view, 1:7 does not present such a polemical attitude towards Israel/Ephraim as Psalm 78. Rather, it is a separate statement about Judah's salvation against the backdrop that Israel will not be saved – or, *was* not saved. As for Wolff's suggestion, there is no doubt that the concept of Judah's salvation without military arms in 1:7 evokes the miraculous salvation of Jerusalem in the time of Hezekiah (2 Kings 19:30–36). I find this date unlikely because the rural areas of Judah were badly devastated during the campaign of Sennacherib, even though Jerusalem, a strongly fortified city, along with its royal house, was saved from the destruction when the Assyrian troops suddenly retreated. In my opinion, 1:7 has to come from an earlier period than 701.

To my mind, the possibility that the term "house" refers to the dynasty cannot be excluded, although it does not affect the message: 1:7 is a Judaean insertion, which has been positioned here to emphasize the different fates of Israel and Judah. Judah's salvation indicates that 1:7 pre-dates the destruction of Jerusalem in 586, and therefore, it cannot be postmonarchic. Regardless of whether we date the judgmental sayings directed to Israel in 1:2–6, 8–9 to a period before – as I suggest – or shortly after the fall of Samaria in 720, the most plausible date for 1:7 is shortly after the fall of Samaria in 720, when the kingdom of Judah was rescued from an Assyrian invasion without being drawn into a war aginst Assyria.[495] Regarding the period of Josiah's reform, 1:7 does not fit with Josiah's policy which appealed to the Israelites still living in the territory of the former northern kingdom for their return under the Davidic rule as Jeremiah 2:2–4:2 and 30–31 indicate.[496] In 1:2–9, there is no hope and positivity related to the

shall I show pity for the state of Israel, or forgive them at all; nor for the state of Judah will I show pity, or save them. I will not save them from bow and sword and weapons of war, from horses and horsemen." Andersen and Freedman refer to a similar use of לא in Jeremiah 3:2, 22:10; Numbers 21:19; Micah 7:1 and Isaiah 38:18. However, this reading has not been proposed by other scholars, but it can be viewed as possible.

[493] Moshe Weinfeld, "*Bᵉrît* – Covenant vs. Obligation," *Bib* 56 (1975) 120–128. As for the etymology of the word n, ברית, Weinfeld points that the word may relate to other ancient Near Eastern languages in which the treaty stipulations were expressed as a bond; cf. Ezekiel 20:37.

[494] Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 26.

[495] For a similar view, see Abma, *Bonds of Love*, 149–150.

[496] See Sweeney, *King Josiah*, 216–221, 225–233; Sweeney suggests that a text originally addressed to the former kingdom of Israel in Jeremiah 2:2–4:2 was reworked into a text addressed to

restoration, and nothing in the literary context in which 1:7 has been inserted gives rise to this kind of hopeful thought.

As for Hosea's prophecies in this context, 1:4 is a prophecy concerning the destruction of the kingdom of Israel and parallels the end of Jehu's dynasty and the end of the kingdom of the house of Israel, ממלכות בית ישׂראל. The word ממלכות denotes "kingdom," but, on the basis of Joshua 13:12, 21, 27, 30, 31, ממלכות points to the kingdom as a territorial domain.[497] The end of Jehu's dynasty and the fall of Samaria were not contemporaneous events and, thus, it is possible that the end of the kingdom could refer to its diminished size when large parts of it were annexed to the Assyrian empire.[498] It remains unsolved as to whether the events in 733 or the fall of Samaria in 720 make the historical background for the prophecies in Hosea 1, but be this as it may, my impression is that 1:7 is connected with some imminent event related to the fall of Israel and, thus, gives a Judaean point of view in relation to these events.[499]

2.2.6. Hosea 2:1–3. Judah and Israel

2:1 *And the number of the children of Israel will be*[500] *like the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or counted, and it will be that in the place where*[501] *it was said to them: You are not my people it will be said*[502] *to them: Children of the living God.*[503]

Jerusalem/Judah in Jeremiah 2–6; reworking is found in Jeremiah 2:2; 3:6–10, 11; 4:3–6:30; see also Sweeney (1996) 569–583.

[497] So also, Stuart A. Irvine, "The Threat of Jezreel (Hosea 1:4–5)," *CBQ* 57 (1995) 494–503, here 501.

[498] Ibid., 502–503.

[499] For a similar opinion, see Abma, *Bonds of Love*, 150.

[500] In והיה is a common prophetic expression for events in the future; in general, the ו prefixed to a verb in the perfect indicates action in the future; Waltke and O'Connor, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 520.

[501] The phrase במקום אשׁר means "in the place where;" HALOT 1, 626 has "in the same place that." For the translation "in retribution for," see Lipshitz, *Commentary of Ibn Ezra on Hosea*, 27; Ibn Ezra understands the place as that of the exile. For the translation "instead of," see Wolff, *Hosea*, 24, 27. Brad E. Kelle identifies the place as Jezreel; in *Hosea 2. Metaphor and Rhetoric in Historical Perspective* (SBL 20; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005), 214.

[502] Niphal of אמר; "to be said."

[503] The term אל־חי is not unique to Hosea, but occurs also in Joshua 3:10 (אל חי); 2 Kings 19:4, 16 (אלהים חי); Psalm 42:3; 84:3 (אל חי); Isaiah 37: 4, 17 (אלהים חי); the phrase בני אל־חי, "children of the Living God" occurs, however, in Hosea only.

2:2 *And the children of Judah and the children of Israel will be assembled together, and they will set themselves one head*[504] *and they will go up*[505] *from the land for great the day of Jezreel.*[506]

2:3 *Call your brothers: Ammi and your sisters: Ruhamah.*

The passage 2:1–3, with its change of tone, appears a distinct unit because it does not contain the marriage imagery which appears in the remainder of Hosea 2. The passage looks forward to the future as the prophetic expression והיה indicates. In 2:1 there is a promise of restoration addressed to "the children of Israel." The term seems to refer to the northern kingdom only, as 2:2 speaks of two separate entities, the children of Judah and the children of Israel, which will be reunited, and in the second part of verse "Not my people" is renamed the "children of the living God," בני אל־חי. Israel receives a promise of descendants, whose number is comparable to "the sand of the sea," an expression used to indicate an immeasurable amount.[507] This promise of progeny evokes the promises to the patriarchs – to Abraham (Genesis 13:16; 15:5; 22:17), to Isaac (Genesis 26:24), and to Jacob (Genesis 28:14; 32:13), but the literary dependence of 2:1 on the extant patriarchal narratives remains obscure. In passing, we may note that according to the proposal of Erhard Blum, the original northern Israelite Bethel account is found in Genesis 28:11–13a*, 15, 16–22, which means that only a promise of divine protection was included in the early tradition in Genesis.[508]

The promise of descendants in 2:1 is a sign which indicates the renewal of the relationship between Israel and YHWH. Another sign is the change of the name "Not my people" to "the children of the living God," בני אל־חי, which, like the change of a name in biblical traditions in general, involves a deep transformation as in the case of Jacob. The change of the name occurs in "a place where," במקום אשר. The undetermined "place" has generated several suggestions. First, the reference may be to the same place where the name Lo Ammi was given, and in this case, it refers to the land. More specifically, the location may be Jezreel, which is mentioned in the next verse.[509] Second, the place may also denote YHWH's "place" as in 5:15; and in Micah 1:3. The idea of YHWH's dwelling as a physical place comes from the Ugaritic texts which speak of the abode of El and his council at a cosmic mount of assembly in the north.[510] Given the use of mythical language, it is possible that an ancient concept of YHWH's abode looms in the background

[504] The word ראש means "head," in other words, a leader of a sort; cf. Isaiah 7:9, which refers to Samaria as the "head" of Ephraim. The LXX uses the word ἀρχή, "rule, dominion;" Muraoka, 94.
[505] The expression עלו מן־הארץ, "go up away from the land," i.e. "to depart" also occurs in Exodus 1:10.
[506] Scholars tend to add a verb "to be" here; the tense is either the present or the future.
[507] Cf. Genesis 22:17; 32:13; Jeremiah 33:22.
[508] Erhard Blum, "Noch Einmal: Jacobs Traum in Bethel – Genesis 28:11–22," in Steven L. McKenzie and Thomas Römer (eds.), *Rethinking the Foundations* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2000) 33–54.
[509] Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 36.
[510] Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 36–39.

of the phrase במקום אשר as in 5:15, which suggests that the decision of the renaming was made in YHWH's heavenly "court." The idea of YHWH as a judge appears in 5:2 as well. Third, the phrase במקום אשר can also have the meaning "where" or "instead." Wolff, for example, prefers this option on the grounds that the translation "place" is meaningless without any identifation of the place.[511] Fourth, it is possible to read the phrase in the light of 2:16, which implies that the restoration of the relationship between Israel and YHWH takes place in the wilderness.[512] This positive view of wilderness also appears in Jeremiah 31:3–4, which refers to the Exodus-wilderness tradition by pointing to the relationship between YHWH and the "Virgin Israel," thus, rendering a thematic parallel to 2:16. Additionally, Jeremiah 2:2 sees the wilderness as an ideal place. It is, however, difficult to reconcile wilderness with the place where the previous name "Not my people" was given.

In 2:2 the children of Judah and Israel – in this order – are both addressed. The issue at stake is a reunion of the peoples of Judah and Israel, who will appoint themselves a single head, ראש אחד. The thought of a reunion of Judah and Israel is echoed in Ezekiel 37:15–28, although Ezekiel uses the word מלך rather than ראש. Ezekiel is written from the exilic perspective and the thematic similarity points to the reception of earlier prophecy in later prophetic circles.[513] Jeremiah 3:18 also points to the reunion of the houses of Israel and Judah, as they will "walk together," no leader is mentioned, however.

We do not know with certainty whether the word ראש in Hosea means a king in the same sense as מלך, but in my opinion, this is very unlikely considering the use of the word in the Hebrew Bible. The word ראש has its origin in the context of the tribal society, and it was used to denote a person chosen and appointed as a "head" for some obvious abilities, concerning military or judicial matters, but later even matters related to temple cult and organization.[514] The early use of the word can be seen in the case of Jephthah (Judges 10:18; 11:8, 9, 11), who was asked by the elders of Gilead to become their ראש; also Saul was nominated as the "head of the tribes (1 Samuel 15:17), and the tribal association of ראש appears also in Deuteronomy 33:15. The word ראש was originally connected with judging, but later became used for the leading priest of the Jerusalem Temple. As Bartlett suggests, this was not because of military associations but it is much more likely that the title was applied to the priest because of the part he played in judicial matters.[515] It may well be that in Hosea ראש is deliberately favored for מלך in order to avoid the judgmental tone associated with מלך.[516] It is, however, impossible to know what is precisely meant with the word ראש, but it seems to me that the word is used here because of its connection with the northern tribal traditions.

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[511] Wolff, *Hosea*, 27.
[512] With Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 203. They point to Deuteronomy 14:1 as the background of the saying in Hosea.
[513] With Kelle, *Hosea 2*, 218.
[514] J. R. Bartlett, "The Use of the Word ראש as a Title in the Old Testament," *VT* 19 (1969) 1–10.
[515] Bartlett (1969) 5.
[516] So, e.g., Wolff, *Hosea*, 27; Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 36.

The expression עלו מן־הארץ, "go up from the land" in 2:2 is problematic. The verb עלה, "go up," is used for going to Israel from the land of captivity, and furthermore, הארץ is traditionally understood as denoting Israel.[517] Thus, the phrase seems to point to the Exodus, and it appears in Exodus 1:10. The Hiphil form of עלה belongs to the Exodus formula, which was associated with the confessional language used in the cult at the sanctuary of Bethel.[518] It seems, however, that here the verb should not be understood in a spatial sense as referring to departing from the land as in the Exodus, since the name of the land is not given as in 2:17, which explicitly speaks of "coming out of the land of Egypt." Thus, instead of understanding the phrase as referring to coming up from the land of exile, there are alternative ways to understand the phrase עלו מן־הארץ.

William Holladay has remarked that the word ארץ carries a nuance of "underworld," so, for example, in 1 Samuel 28:13, and therefore in Hosea the phrase may be "coming up from the underworld", evoking the idea of the nation's resurrection in 6:2.[519] According to Wijngaards, "coming from the underworld," i.e., resurrection, comes from covenantal language: the resurrection in 6:1–3 actually denotes the renewal of the covenant, a "covenantal resurrection," which will restore all the good things inherent in good covenantal relations.[520]

Another possibility is to read "to go up from the land" as being linked to the agricultural imagery used in Hosea and, thus, understand the meaning of the phrase as referring to Israel as growing up like a plant. The agricultural imagery fits in with the name Jezreel, "May El sow;" in other words, Israel will flourish on the day of God's "sowing."[521] This idea appears in 2:25, in which YHWH speaks of "sowing her in the land." Thus, the name Jezreel gets a positive meaning, and all the negativeness which in 1:4–5 is associated with Jezreel is reversed.[522]

Another way of reading the verb עלה is suggested by Kelle, who regards 2:2 as a description of a joint military campaign by Israel and Judah at the time of King Hoshea.[523] Kelle points to the verb עלה in particular, the wide semantic range of which also included "to march against."[524] It is known that Hoshea revolted against Assyria, but the text itself does not allow much support for reading it specifically against this historical event, although this possibility cannot be excluded.

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[517] For various ways to read the phrase, see Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 31–33.
[518] J. Wijngaards, "הוציא and העלה A Two-fold Approach to Exodus," *VT* 15 (1965) 91–102.
[519] William L. Holladay, "'Eres–"Underworld": Two More Suggestions," *VT* 19 (1969) 123–124.
[520] Wingaards (1967) 226–239.
[521] So also, Dearman, *Hosea*, 106. See, however, the opposite view of Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 46, who sees here a connotation attached to exile, since, as he says, Jezreel, as "sowing" means "scattered seed," i.e. exile.
[522] Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 36–37.
[523] Kelle, *Hosea 2*, 224.
[524] Ibid., 221–223; see also HALOT 1, 829.

2.2.6.1. Conclusions

2:1–3 displays a linguistic style and a perspective which differs from Hosea 1 and Hosea 4–25, which speak of the wife Israel and the children.[525] 2:1 concerns only Israel, which is given a promise of progeny and of a reversal of its relationship with YHWH, whereas 2:2 is addressed to both Judah and Israel. According to Wolff, the promise of the increased number of the Israelites in 2:1 means the nullification of the judgment, which is indicated by the renaming of the people as the "children of the living God."[526] The reversal of the name "Not-my-people" means the people's restored status. "Not-my-people" are strangers, different, non-Israelite, and illegitimate, which evokes 5:7 with a notion of בנים זרים, "strange children," who have alienated themselves from YHWH by violating the covenant. Therefore, becoming "children of living God" points to a new possibility, which is opened up only by the living God – not by worship of Baal, which is a prominent topic in Hosea 2. Thus, the epithet "living" can be considered as an anti-Baal epithet used in order to contrast YHWH and Baal.[527]

The promise of progeny evokes the promises to the patriarchs in Genesis.[528] According to J. A. Emerton, the patriarchal promises were used bind together the three cycles of stories, the cycles of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and, as he further suggests, the confidence and hope displayed in the promises may reflect the nationalistic hopes at the time of Josiah.[529] The same sentiment in 2:1 may, thus, be regarded as an indication that the verse comes from the time of Josiah. Furthermore, the tradition of Abraham comes from Judah, and therefore, it s not likely that in Israel it would have played any role – unlike the tradition of Jacob.

The main point in 2:2 is the reversal of Jezreel in 1:4. In this verse, Jezreel was associated with the end of the rule of the kingdom of Israel, but in 2:2 it is connected with the reunion of Israel and Judah. Such a concept can be reconciled with the ideology of Josiah's reform.[530] The "head" can, thus, point to a Davidic

[525] Wolff, *Hosea*, 26, ascribes the present position of 2:1–3 to an editor, who intentionally placed the passage in its present position after the words of doom, "to exhibit immediately the entire range of tension in the prophet's message." Many scholars have combined one or more verses in the passage to Hosea 1; for various views and a detailed analysis of Hosea 2, see especially Kelle, *Hosea 2*. See also Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 36–37, who points to several affinities with 2:1–3 and 1:1–9, indicating their close connection. See also Abma, *Bonds of Love*, 152–202.

[526] Wolff, *Hosea*, 26–27.

[527] See Smith, *Origins of Biblical Monotheism*, 104.

[528] It is generally accepted that the patriarchal traditions were combined perhaps only in exilic or postexilic periods, since earlier, various tribes used to have their own traditions. The origins of the ancient tales of ancestral heroes remain in the dark. As for the Jacob tradition, its geographical setting locates it in the northern kingdom, especially at Bethel; see Chapter V in the present study.

[529] J. A. Emerton, "The Origin of the Promises to the Patriarchs in the Older Sources of the Book of Genesis," *VT* 32 (1982) 14–32, here esp. 28, 31–32. The stories of Abraham and Jacob are linked by the promise of blessing for the nations with the Niphal of ברך (12:3, 28:14), and those of Abraham and Isaac by the use of the Hitpael (22:18, 26:4).

[530] See, however, Peter Machinist, "Hosea and the Ambiguity of Kingship in Ancient Israel," in S. Dean McBride, John T. Strong and Steven Shawn Tuell (eds.), *Constituting the Community: Studies*

ruler, especially if 2:2 is interpreted in the light of 3:5. As Laato has pointed out, 3:5 bears a thematic resemblance to Jeremiah 30:8–9 in that the leader of the reunion will be a Davidic king.[531] This thought is closely related to Josiah's reform, one of the aims of which was to restore the Davidic rule over the former kingdom of Israel.

2.2.7. Hosea 4:15. Judah and Israel

4:15 *If you, Israel, fornicate,*[532]
let not Judah become guilty[533].
Do not go to Gilgal, do not go up to Beth-aven,
do not swear by the living YHWH[534].

4:15 continues the theme of fornication from 4:14, which will be discussed in the next chapter. 4:15 speaks of Israel's fornication, i.e. its apostasy, in the first clause of the verse, and then, quite abruptly, warns Judah not to indulge in similar wrongdoing. Furthermore, the verse brings an abrupt change to 2nd person address in the preceding verses, and the 3rd person jussive form is akward, and therefore, many commentators regard the verse as a gloss made by a Judaean redactor.[535]

The second half of the verse is a caution against going to Gilgal or Beth-aven and swearing by the living YHWH. The warning of swearing appears a negation of Deuteronomy 6:13, which urges the Israelites to take oaths in YHWH's name. The mention of swearing evokes Jeremiah 4:1–2, which counsels Israel to give up idolatrous practices so that they could swear by the name of YHWH in a sincere and truthful way. Thus, the point in 4:15 seems to be the nature of the cult in Gilgal and Beth-aven, which actively attracted pilgrims. In Amos 4:4, going to Gilgal and Bethel intensifies the sinfulness of the people, and in Amos 5:5, the people are prohibited to go to Gilgal and Bethel, because "Gilgal will go into captivity," and Bethel "will come to nothingness." Regarding Amos 4:4 and 5:5, Hadjiev attributes both sayings to the prophetic tradition in which the cult places were not

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on the Polity of Ancient Israel in Honor of S. Dean McBride, Jr. (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2005) 153–181, here 179, note 50; Machinist suggests that 2:2 may also refer to the cooperation between Jeroboam II and Uzziah (Azariah), necessitated by Israel's territorial expansion (2 Kings 14–15) which – without cooperation – would have met with hostilities from Judah's side.

[531] See Laato, *Josiah and David Redivivus*, 114. Kelle, for his part, suggests that the common "head" is King Hoshea, who reigned during a temporal union of Judah and Israel; Kelle, *Hosea 2*, 197–199. This suggestion, however, finds no support in other biblical texts. See also Na'aman (1993) 280–284.

[532] The LXX reads "But you, Israel, do not be ignorant," the verb ἀγνοέω means "to act in ignorance," but it obviously has a religious meaning "to sin willfully ignoring and disregarding divine injuctions;" Muraoka, 6.

[533] The expression אל־יאשם is a jussive; "let Judah not be guilty."

[534] Cf. Deuteronomy 6:13, which urges taking oaths in YHWH's name.

[535] So, e.g., Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 162; see, however, Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 72.

illegitimate as such, but where the worship of YHWH was not proper, since the criticism shoud be read in light of the social evils in Amos 3:9–10; 4:1 and 5:7–12, and no idolatry is mentioned in these contexts. Hadjiev does not see any later pro-Jerusalem polemics in the sayings either, since Jerusalem is not mentioned in the context of these sayings.[536] Thus, the point is not the sanctuaries as such but rather the worshipers.

2.2.7.1. Conclusions

It is possible that in its present form 4:15 comes from a Judaean redactor, who modified the saying in Amos and added "Judah" into it. The use of Beth-aven instead of Bethel may have been influenced by Amos. Such a warning to Judah fits with Josiah's anti-Bethel policy, and since Gilgal was equal to Bethel as a cultic place, it was no more than part of the same illegitimate form of a northern cult. In 2 Kings 23:15, the altar and the high place in Bethel were demolished by Josiah. He is said to have burned the high place and ground it to powder, but to make sense of burning the high place, we have to assume that 2 Kings 23:15 refers to the Asherah pole.[537] According to 2 Kings 23:16, Josiah then burned human bones on the altar and thus defiled it, thus fulfilling the prophecy of the destruction of the altar in Bethel by him in 1 Kings 13:2.[538] The account of Josiah's measures is strongly polemical and attempts to support the reform in the territory of the former kingdom of Israel. Because of the defilement of the altar, no sacrifices could be performed, and thus the sanctuary was desecrated. Therefore, when the sanctuary was no longer in use, the form of Yahwism practised there was declared as non-existant.

2.2.8. Hosea 8:8–14. Israel, Ephraim, and Judah

8:8 *Israel is swallowed up,*
now they[539] *are among nations,*
like a vessel in which no one delights.[540]

[536] Hadjiev, *Amos*, 17–20; see also Eidevall, *Amos*, 142–143, 152–153; Jules Francis Gomes, *Sanctuary of Bethel and the Configuration of Israelite Identity* (BZAW 368; München: de Gruyter, 2012) 145.
[537] Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 289.
[538] This indicates the use of the theme "Prophecy and Its Fulfillment," in the books of Kings; Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 299.
[539] For the use of a plural verb form after a collective noun; see Wolff, *Hosea* 150, note g.
[540] The LXX speaks of σκεῦος ἄχρηστον, "useless vessel."

8:9 *Indeed, they have gone up*[541] *to Assyria,*
Ephraim – a wild ass[542] *alone.*[543]
They have recruited[544] *lovers.*[545]

8:10 *Even they have accepted a harlot's fee*[546] *among the nations.*
Now I will gather them up.[547]
They will shortly writhe[548]
because of the burden[549] *of the king of princes.*[550]

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[541] עלה is usually read as "to go up;"often denoting "going up" away from Egypt; in other words, from slavery; HALOT 1, 828. This problem has been known for long, and different solutions have been presented; see Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 316.

[542] The word פרא in the phrase פרא בודד לו has commonly translated as "wild ass," according to the MT's פֶּרֶא. In the LXX the word is read differently, with ἀναθάλλω, "to sprout afresh;" Muraoka, 39. Since in Hosea there are several wordplays with the name Ephraim and the root פרה, "to be fruitful, to sprout" and the like, it seems likely that there is a wordplay here as well. In the phrase καθ᾽ ἑαυτὸν, the preposition κατά has a wide range of meanings, but especially with ἑαυτὸν it indicates separation, dissociation or seclusion; Muraoka, 367. The translation according to the LXX would thus be "Ephraim has sprouted for himself alone;" Glenny suggests that the point is that Ephraim flourished in the past by its foreign treaties but without taking into consideration YHWH's will; see Glenny, *Septuagint Commentary Series: Hosea*, 130.

[543] בודד is a Qal participle from the verb בדד and means "alone, solitary;" HALOT 1, 109.

[544] התנו is a Hiphil perfect 3rd plural masculine of תנה; the meaning of the verb is uncertain, but it is related to "to giving fee for favours, to recruit enthusiastically;" HALOT 2, 1760. The usual translation is "they have hired lovers;" so, e.g., Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 501. In the LXX, the phrase is Εφραιμ δῶρα ἠγάπησαν; "Ephraim loved gifts;" "gifts" can be understood as "bribes," which is one the meanings of the word δῶρον; see Muraoka, 181–182. Nyberg, *Studien zum Hoseabuche*, 63, suggests that Hiphil of תנה means "Hurenlohn geben," or "to give a harlot's fee."

[545] אהבים is a plural of the noun אהב; cf. Piel participle in 2:9.

[546] יתנו is a Qal imperfect 3rd plural masculine of תנה. The translation suggested by Nyberg, *Studien zum Hoseabuche*, 63, "Hurenlohn nehmen," "to accept a harlot's fee" fits in well with the context, which deals with Ephraim's foreign politics, regarded as "fornication" in Hosea's prophecies. The LXX differs from the MT, and uses the verb παραδίδωμι, which has a sense of abandoning, "to give up and hand over to a third party;" so Muraoka, 526.

[547] The verb קבץ means "to gather up," "to assemble," and like in Ezekiel 20:34, the issue at stake is to assemble for judgment; HALOT 2, 1063. The verb in the LXX is εἰσδέχομαι, "now I will receive them," which is difficult to understand.

[548] ויחלו is a Hiphil of חלל, "to begin, to allow to be profaned," but this does not make sense; see, however, Abe Lipshitz, *The Commentary of Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra on Hosea* (New York: Sepher-Hermon Press, 1988) 80. Another possibility is that the verb is חדל, "to cease doing;" HALOT 1, 292; this reading is adopted by the LXX which uses the verb κοπάζω; Muraoka, 406; "they will cease anointing a king and princes."The verb may also be חיל, "to writhe," and thus it would be וְיָחִילוּ; so Wolff, *Hosea*, 133. See also the discussion on various possible ways to read the verb in Paul (2005) 145–154.

[549] In the LXX, משא, "burden," is read as the verb משׁח, "to anoint." The word here likely means "burden of tribute," as Paul (2005) 145–154, here 148–149, and Wolff, *Hosea*, 144.

[550] Here I follow the suggestion of Paul and Wolff that the phrase מלך שׂרים, "king, princes," does not refer to Israelite royals, but rather to the Assyrian king, and the Hebrew expression is a reflex of the Mesopotamian royal title, šar šarrāni, "king of kings;" Paul (2005) 145–154, here 149; Wolff, *Hosea*, 144.

8:11 *Ephraim has made many altars for sinning.*[551]
They have become for him altars for sinning.

8:12 *I wrote for him a multitude of my law;*
they are regarded as strange.

8:13 *The sacrifices of my gifts,*[552]
they sacrifice meat and eat.[553]
YHWH has no pleasure in them.[554]
Now he will remember their iniquity
and punish their sins.
They will return to Egypt.[555]

8:14 *Israel forgot his maker,*[556]
and built palaces,
and Judah made numerous inaccessible towns.[557]
But I will send fire against his cities,
and it will consume her[558] *fortified palaces.*

Similarly to 5:8–6:6, Hosea 8 begins with a command to sound an alarm and, thus, a new unit begins only in 9:1, which is directly addressed to Israel. The first three verses 8:1–3 appear to function as an introduction to what follows; the command is addressed to an unidentified group "they," but on the basis of what follows, the addressees seem to be those addressed in 8:4 onwards.[559] 8:4–13 deals with Israel's/Ephraim's various transgressions. In 8:4–7, illegitimate kings and idolatry are under fire, 8:8–10 deal with Israel's/Ephraim's reliance on foreign powers, and in 8:11–13 Israel's/Ephraim's sacrificial cult is condemned. As for the names,

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551 Perhaps it would be best here to accept the emendation לְחַטֵּא, "to take away sin;" see Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 128.

552 This is a literal translation. The phrase זבחי הבהבי is problematic because the word הבהבי is a hapax legomenon. In Aramaic and post-biblical Hebrew, the verb הבהב means "to roast," rendering the translation "my roast sacrifices." Some scholars accept the emendation suggested by BHS, and to read the phrase as זבחים אהבו, "They love sacrifices;" so, e.g., Wolff, *Hosea*, 133.

553 After *ygtl* (יזבחו) which refers to a present-time situation, *wayygtl* (ויאכלו) represents a sequential or explanatory situation in the same time frame according to a perfective aspect; Waltke and O'Connor, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 559.

554 The verb is רצה

555 The LXX adds καὶ ἐν Ἀσσυρίοις ακάθαρτα Φάγονται, "they will eat unclean food in Assyria," to the end of the verse; cf. 9:3.

556 The word עשׂהו, their "maker," is a Qal participle of עשׂה. Since the question is about YHWH, a possible translation is "the one who has created them," "creator;" HALOT 1, 890. It seems to me, however, that the word "maker" retains a more concrete meaning of forming and shaping.

557 ערים בצרות, "inaccessible towns" because of high walls.

558 The feminine suffix refers to ערים, "cities," as in Amos 1:7, 10, 14; so Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 332; Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 511.

559 So, Wolff, *Hosea*, 134.

Israel occurs only in 8:8 and 14; elsewhere the name Ephraim is used. Judah is also mentioned in 8:14 which criticizes both Israel's and Judah's building projects.

The point in 8:8–10 is Israel/Ephraim's illicit foreign relations. 8:8 describes Israel's state as being "swallowed up" among the nations, becoming a vessel "in which there is no delight;" in other words, it is useless and, thus, unwanted. The imagery of a useless vessel or pot is used in Jeremiah 22:28 too, in which the point of comparison is Jehoiachin, the last king of Judah, who was taken into the Babylonian captivity.[560] Another image used for Ephraim's situation occurs in 7:8, which refers to how Ephraim "mixes himself with the nations" and compares Ephraim to "a bread not turned," which, in other words, is half baked and, thus, of no use. This is because it has been "swallowed up," in other words, it does not exist anymore. This suggests that the exile is at stake.

The phrase כי־המה עלו אשור, "they have gone up to Assyria," in 8:9 is curious in that the verb עלה is usually associated with deliverance from slavery. Here, however, Ephraim's "going up to" Assyria refers to Ephraim's political connections with the empire, perhaps diplomatic relationships to which I have referred to earlier in my discussion of 5:13. The term "lovers" has a political meaning here; as William Moran has demonstrated the term "love" has had a political connotation for a long time, and in extrabiblical texts from the 18th to the 7th centuries, "love" is used to describe the loyalty and friendship joining independent kings, sovereign and vassal, king and subject.[561] In 8:9, Israel's adulterous lovers point to Israel's political alliances with foreign powers as the verse explicitly says. Thus, the meaning of אהבים here differs from the Piel participle form מאהב which occurs in 2:9, where, as I have already discussed, the word refers to gods other than YHWH. All the same, "lovers" always indicate Israel's illicit partnership with parties other than YHWH, be they foreign allies or deities.

The comparison between "wild ass" and Ephraim in 8:9 is somewhat difficult to explain. In 4:16, Ephraim is called "a stubborn heifer;" the word used there is סרר, and "stubbornness" is a characteristic strongly disliked by YHWH as Exodus 32:9 says. The word for wild ass also occurs in Jeremiah 2:24 and, as many scholars have pointed out, it clarifies the metaphor pointing to Ephraim's willful behavior.[562] The word פֶּרֶא allows a word play with the root פרה, "to be fruitful, to sprout," which can be found in the background of the name Ephraim as indicated in Genesis 41:52; this seems to have influenced how the verse was translated in the LXX, which reads "Ephraim has sprouted for himself alone."

Recruiting "lovers" – political allies – is a breach of the concept of treaty, an act of disloyalty which requires punishment. The plural verb התנו raises the question of who does this concern here, since if Ephraim was at stake a 3rd person singular form would be expected. Andersen and Freedman see that Ephraim is not

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[560] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 500; Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 315.

[561] William L. Moran, "The Ancient Near Eastern Background of the Love of God in Deuteronomy," *CBQ* 25 (1961) 77–87.

[562] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 505. As Eidevall also notes "wild ass" functions here as a symbol of independence; Eidevall, *Grapes in the Desert*, 134-135.

the subject of the verb but rather that "they" refers to the kings and princes mentioned in 8:10.[563] This is possible, since it was the king and his officials who were in charge of foreign affairs. The first line in 8:10 uses the same verb תנה; "they have recruited among the nations," or, preferably, "they have accepted a harlot's fee among nations," as I translate the phrase. This makes the absence of an object understandable. Foreign alliances meant fornication, being unfaithful to YHWH. In the LXX, the verse is understood as referring to "abandoning;" "they will be abandoned among the nations."

The phrase עתה אקבצם ויחלו מעט ממשׂא מלך שׂרים in 8:10 is problematic. In the first place, what does אקבצם mean? The verb קבצ is ambiguous: is the question about a positive or a negative gathering? The verb also occurs in 9:6, referring to Egypt as gathering them. It seems most likely that the issue at stake is gathering for judgment.[564] The translation in the LXX is different, as it says that YHWH will now "receive" them. It is possible that when the verse is interpreted in terms of a later perspective, YHWH's "receiving" them from foreign land(s) makes sense.

The verb ויחלו is also unclear. It has often been postulated that the root is חיל, "to writhe," which conveys a sense of pain; cf. Micah 4:10. The translation of מעט as temporal "soon, shortly" suggests that the tense is future, "they will shortly writhe." A follow-up question will be what makes them writhe, that is, what causes them pain. The answer is ממשׂא מלך שׂרים; literally "because of the burden of the king, princes." If מלך is taken as a construct, then the phrase is "the king of princes."[565] Shalom Paul makes important remarks concerning this saying: he takes the word משׂא as the interdialectal semantic equivalent of Akkadian *biltu*, which is one of the several technical terms in Akkadian for "tribute;" he further points out that the expression מלך שׂרים is a reflex of the extremely common Mesopotamian royal title, *šar šarrāni*, "king of kings," and in this context is applied to Tiglath-pileser III.[566] Perhaps the translators of the LXX were not aware of this as they ended up with a totally different reading.[567]

8:11 changes the focus from foreign politics to the sacrificial cult: Ephraim has multiplied "altars of sin," or alternatively, "altars to take away sin," but which have become "altars of sinning" for them. The logic behind the phrase seems to be the dependency between the number of altars and sins: the more sin, the more altars were needed for sacrificing and removing the sins. Local shrines had been

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[563] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 505.

[564] Ibn Ezra explains the gathering in a punitive sense; Lipshitz, *Commentary of Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra on Hosea*, 80, 84 note 27; see also HALOT 2, 1063.

[565] Cf. Isaiah 10:8; the point is by Herbert Cohn, "King of Princes: An Exegesis on Hosea 8:10," *JBC* 28 (2000) 34–37.

[566] Shalom M. Paul, "משׂא מלך שׂרים. Hosea 8:8–10 and Ancient Near Eastern Royal Epithets," in B. Halpern, M.H.E. Weippert, Th.P.J. van den Hout, I. Winter (eds.), *Divrei Shalom. Collected Studies of Shalom M. Paul on the Bible and the Ancient Near East 1967–2005* (CHAN 23; Leiden: Brill, 2005) 145–154.

[567] The translation in the LXX is διὰ τοῦτο παραδοθήσονται ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν νῦν εἰσδέξομαι αὐτούς, καὶ κοπάσουσιν μικρὸν το χρίειν βασιλέα καὶ ἄρχοντας; "Therefore they will be delivered to the nations. Now I will receive them, and they will cease a while to anoint a king and princes;" cf. 3:4.

acceptable for centuries, but, as 1 Kings 3:2 indicates, only until the temple in Jerusalem was built. In the 8th century prophecy, however, the problem with the local shrines may not have been the number of the altars, as such, but rather, as Andersen and Freedman suggest, the nature of the worship.[568] In Hosea, this denoted the confusion between Baal(s) and YHWH as the object of worship.

8:12 speaks of multitude or abundance of law, רבו תורתי, which YHWH has written for him. Obviously Ephraim is meant here. The תורה is singular, however, and therefore the use of word רבו is problematic. Macintosh reads רבו as a 3rd plural perfect of רבב, which points not merely to the multitude but also to what is "great."[569] The word may also have a sense of fullness. It is also noteworthy that the use of the word רבו makes up a pun with the word הרבה from the previous verb.

8:13 is a notoriously difficult verse; there are various proposals how to solve the problems. One of the difficulties concerns the word הבהבי. It is a hapax legomenon; it is perhaps corrupted and a duplication of אהב, "to love," or יהב, "to give."[570] It is also possible that verse has been emended several times. Macintosh points to rabbinic sources in which the following phrase יזבחו בשׂר ויאכלו was seen as an early gloss meant to explain the word הבהבי.[571] BHS suggests that the phrase יהוה לא רצם is a gloss and may have been derived from Jeremiah 14:10.[572] As Nicholson suggests, it is perhaps better to retain the phrase for the reason that it seems to refer to the sacrifices in the first line.[573] Thus, despite textual difficulties, the message in 8:13 can be understood as being that the sacrificial cult was corrupted, and therefore unacceptable. This kind of sacrificial cult may be related to the concept of חדשׁ, a new moon festival associated with increased ritual activity, also in the cult of the Baals.[574] The punishment of their sin is the return to Egypt, which has been regarded as a metaphor for captivity here.[575] This is in line with Deuteronomy 28:68, in which returning to Egypt is a curse for disobedience.

8:14 is the only mention of Judah in the chapter which otherwise focuses on Israel/Ephraim, and the redactional nature of the verse is suggested by its sporadic nature in the chiastic structure formed by 8:9–13.[576] 8:14 bears resemblances to both Amos and Deuteronomy 32. In the proclamations of punishment in Amos 1:4, 7, 10, 12; 2:2, 5, the phrase ושׁלחתי אשׁ, "I will send fire," is used; the idea of fire as kindled by YHWH's wrath appears in Deuteronomy 32:22. Israel is accused of forgetting his maker, וישׁכח ישׂראל את־עשׂהו. The word "maker" is not used elsewhere in Hosea, but does appear, for example, in Isaiah 27:11; 44:2; 51:13, and 54:5. The idea of YHWH as Israel's "father" who "made" him occurs

[568] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 508.
[569] Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 324; see also HALOT 2, 1172.
[570] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 510.
[571] See the discussion in Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 328–329.
[572] So E. W. Nicholson, "Problems in Hosea VIII 13," *VT* 16 (1966) 355–358.
[573] Ibid., 358.
[574] Van der Toorn, *Family Religion*, 213, 295.
[575] With Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 137.
[576] See Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 502.

in Deuteronomy 32:6; this is not far from the thought in Hosea 11:1 and 13:4.[577] The word ארמון may denote "the massive fortified residence of the king", thus, a fortified palace.[578] The word occurs frequently in Amos's oracles against the nations in 1:3–2:3 and also in the oracle against Judah in 2:4–5.

2.2.8.1. Conclusions

The passage contains one reference to Judah in 8:14. The verse 8:14 accuses Israel of forgetting YHWH and building palaces, and Judah is criticized for building cities which are "inaccessible," obviously because of their high walls. The stereotypic phrase about YHWH's sending fire against "his cities" seems to concern Israel only. Although the same phrase about fire occurs in the oracle against Judah in Amos 2:4–5, the accusations against Judah are different and concern rejection of the law and of being led astray by "lies." Therefore Amos 2:4–5 has often been regarded as a Deuteronomistic theological reflection on the causes behind the destruction of Jerusalem in 587.[579] In 8:14, Israel's transgression is their forgetting YHWH. The point in 8:14 seems to be that lavish building projects signify economic prosperity, which was related to social oppression – this is seen especially in Amos 3:9–10; 4:1; 5:7–12 – and false self-confidence which prevent sympathy and reciprocial commitment embedded in the concept of covenant as I have already discussed. In the first line of 8:14 Israel is blamed for forgetting their "maker," עשֵׂהו, which means resorting to one's own strength, as the nation had become arrogant and self-satisfied.

As for the peak of building activities, archaeological finds corroborate that the Omrides were superior builders, since findings at the sites of Samaria, Megiddo, and Hazor show massive fortifications and palaces.[580] It is likely that also at the time of Jeroboam II the economic prosperity allowed building palaces. In Judah, building activity has been related to the reign of Uzziah, or Azariah (2 Chronicles 26:9) and to Hezekiah, when new wall was built in Jerusalem, as well as the Siloam tunnel, and fortifications were also renovated elsewhere.[581] Macintosh dates the verse to the time of Jeroboam II and Uzziah, and regards it as a prophetic condemnation of Israel's (including Judah) reliance on its own resources.[582]

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[577] Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 332–333.
[578] HALOT 1, 89.
[579] Hadjiev, *Amos*, 27–28; as for Deuteronomistic expressions, Hadjiew points to שׁמר חק and the theme of being disobedient to the will of YHWH revealed in the Torah. See also Eidevall, *Amos*, 100–101, 110–112, who also regards the saying about Judah as coming from the exilic period, when it was included in order to provide an explanation for the disaster of 587.
[580] Finkelstein, *Forgotten Kingdom*, 84.
[581] Halpern, "Jerusalem and the lineages in the Seventh Century BCE," in Halpern and Hobson (eds.) *Law and Ideology*, 21–23.
[582] Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 333.

Wolff and Emmerson also regard the content of 8:14 as coming from the prophet, the present position of the verse may be later, though.[583]

It is impossible to say which particular period 8:14 refers to, but nevertheless, I find it difficult to ascribe the verse as a whole to a later redaction, since the message fits all too well with the prophecy however much the text has been reshaped later. It seems to me that the earlier form beneath the present form of 8:14 concerned only Israel, which denotes the northern kingdom in this case, and the mention of Judah has been added later, after the fall of the kingdom of Judah. Thus, 8:14 in its present appears to be an exilic retrospect.

[583] Wolff, *Hosea*, 109; Emmerson, *Hosea*, 75–76. Emmerson connects the condemnation of building operations with the prophetic opposition to the hostilities between Israel and Judah.

III CULT

In this chapter, my aim is to examine the background of the cult criticism in Hosea. The phraseology used in Hosea shows many affinities with Deuteronomy, in which one of the basic theological views is the struggle against idolatry.[584] This has raised the question of whether Hosea's criticism of cultic practices is a sign of later Deuteronomistic redaction. In this chapter, I will show that in the background of many cult critical statements in Hosea there are echoes of ancient Israelite traditions and religious concepts. They emphasized the personal relationship between YHWH and Israel which had its basis in the tradition of the Exodus. In their later reception, Hosea's cult critical statements offered an explanation and justification for the fall of the northern kingdom. Thus, at the time of Josiah, the prophecies lent themselves to the policy of the reform, and were used as a warning to Judah not to follow the practices of the former kingdom of Israel. At the same time, Josiah, by appreciating northern prophetic tradition, attempted to appeal to the Israelites living in the territory of the former kingdom of Israel to turn to Judah and accept the cult in Jerusalem.

3.1. Elements in Hosea's cult criticism

The religion in pre-exilic Israel and Judah was heterogeneous. Both biblical and extrabiblical sources corroborate that religious pluralism and polytheism were prevalent. Although YHWH was the national god in both kingdoms, other deities were worshiped alongside YHWH. Samaria ostraca contain many personal names containing an element of "Baal", and Kuntillet 'Ajrud and Khirbet el-Qōm inscriptions provide evidence for the worship of deities such as Asherah and Baal. Originally YHWH was not part of the Canaanite pantheon and not a fertility god-type deity like the Ugaritic Baal, but the provenance of the cult of YHWH and his worship as a warrior god from the desert were located in the far south, where the oldest biblical tradition places YHWH.[585] This early form of the worship of YHWH came to Canaan with a group who also brought their tradition of the exodus from Egypt. One of the earliest Yahwistic places was Shiloh, which was

[584] Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School*, 366–370; among the explicitly mentioned things are baal, or baals, בעל, בעלים (2:10, 15, 18, 19; 11:2; 13:1), other gods, אלהים אחרים (3:1), a detestable thing, שׁערוריה (6:10), images of idols, עצבים (4:17; 8:4; 13:2; 14:9), objects to abhor, שׁקוצים (9:10), cast images, מסכה (13:2), man-made gods, אלהינו למעשׂה ידינו (14:4), mountain and hill tops, ראשׁי ההרים and הגבעות (4:13), calf/calves, עגל or עגלה (8:5, 6; 10:5; 13:2), and graven images, פסלים (11:2).

[585] Smith, *Origins of Biblical Monotheism*, 140, 146. Cf. Deuteronomy 33:2; Judges 5:4–5; Psalm 68:9, 18, and Habakkuk 3:3.

taken over by the adherents of Moses.[586] Shiloh had been a place where El was worshiped, and where the epithet צבאות was applied to YHWH. In Canaan, the Israelites – a heterogeneous body of various groups – assimilated local religious habits and deities and, thus, the worship of Asherah as YHWH's consort may be an early but a secondary development in the worship of YHWH. Nevertheless, echoes of an early confrontation between the worshippers of YHWH and those practicing local cults seem to have been preserved in 9:10.[587] With regards to Hosea, an important point is the cult of Shechem, which, similarly to Shiloh, became Yahwistic in the early history of Israel, and as a result of the Yahwistic inclusion of an old cultic site of El, YHWH received the title of "El of the Covenant" (Judges 9:46).[588] It is also important to note that the relation between the Levites and Shiloh is not as obvious as that of between Shechem and the Levites in Deuteronomy 27:14.[589] Regarding Shechem the mounts Gerizim and Ebal had a long history as sacred sites. Abraham, Jacob and Joseph are all connected with Shechem (Genesis 12:6–7; 33:18–20; 35:4–5; Joshua 24:32), and the old tradition in Deuteronomy 11:26–30; 27 recounts rituals on Ebal and Gerizim. In Hosea 6:9, Shechem is mentioned without any polemic which suggests a favourable attitude towards it, but later biblical texts tend to present Shechem in a negative light.

In the polytheistic milieu, in Hosean prophecies cultic offenses became called "fornication." This results from the use of the marriage imagery to depict the exclusive relationship between Israel and YHWH. The view was not monotheistic, however. In Hosea, there is no claim for the existence of only one God, since this notion developed in a long process which continued until the postexilic period. The proper relationship between YHWH and Israel meant that YHWH alone was Israel's god, and this is how the Shema in Deuteronomy 6:4 can be understood.[590] Other nations had their own national gods, but in the land of Israel, people were to be loyal to YHWH.

The bond between Israel and YHWH in Hosea is based on the tradition of the Exodus. As I will discuss in Chapter V, the extant tradition of the Exodus is an amalgamation of various local traditions, but in the stream of traditions known in Hosea, a peculiar concept of a personal bond between a god and a group of people was emphasized, an aspect which later played an important role in the

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[586] As Leuchter points out, an early Mushite takeover of Shiloh is supported by the Egyptian names of the Elides, the Shilonite priesthood; see Leuchter (2012) 479–500, here 484.

[587] So de Moor, *Rise of Yahwism*, 205.

[588] Smith, *Origins of Biblical Monotheism*, 140.

[589] Differences between Shiloh and Shechem include that the Benjaminites were more closely connected with Shiloh whereas Ephraim and Manasseh were connected with Shechem and Bethel, and that Shiloh seems to have had a special connection with Judah (cf. Genesis 49:8–12) since the Ark was located there and not in Shechem; similaritities include that both Shiloh and Shechem lost their positions when the religious centre of the northern kingdom was moved to Bethel; see Nielsen, *Shechem*, 315–322.

[590] Smith, *Origins of Biblical Monotheism*, 153. As Smith says, some biblical passages should not be interpreted as monotheistic, although they do condemn the veneration of other deities, their existence is not denied.

development of the covenant theology.[591] In Hosea's prophecies, the covenantal relationship between YHWH and Israel resembled the pattern in ancient Hittite suzerainty treaties in that the requirement of the vassal's loyalty and obedience was based on past benefits which the vassal had received with no real right.[592] In ancient Hittite treaties, there was also a prohibition of foreign relations and the worship of their gods; in the Hittite context, the purpose of the prohibition was to protect the interests of the king of the Hittite empire.[593] In Hosea, this covenantal form was shaped to imagery related to family life, and therefore, the marriage imagery conveyed a message of the exclusiveness of the relationship between Israel and YHWH. Israel was not to owe the land and its fertility to other gods, nor trust in foreign political powers and alliances with them, since these signalled of lack of trust and proper understanding of YHWH as the provider of the people's daily needs. The people had to show knowledge of YHWH.

On the grounds of the book of Hosea, not much can be said about the circles who collected and transmitted the prophecies, but without them the prophecies could not have survived. A rather established scholarly opinion refers to northern Levites and the traditions at Shechem as the milieu of Hosea's prophecies. This view has potential, since, as I will discuss below, it not only explains the roots of the animosity towards the bull iconography but also the persuasive nature of the extant form of the book, since in later times, Levites were known as scribes and teachers who may have been responsible for the finalization of Hosea. The group must have consisted of defenders of certain fundamental concepts in the Israelite religion, which later found their way into the ideology of the Deuteronomists. Scholars have often suggested that behind Hosea's cult criticism looms the influence of the so-called "YHWH-alone" movement, which can be defined as a religious tendency fighting for the supreme position of YHWH in the Israelite religion.[594] We are in the dark about the very origins of the movement, but it is possible that the deep roots of the "YHWH-alone" idea extend into the Transjordan, where immigrating groups of YHWH-worshippers first settled and confronted the local cult; echoes of this confrontation are preserved in 9:10.[595] YHWH was not originally part of the Canaanite pantheon (cf. Deuteronomy 33:2;

[591] Albertz, *History of Israelite Religion*, 61–63.
[592] Mendenhall (1954) 50–76, here 58–59.
[593] Ibid., 68.
[594] Lang, *Monotheism and the Prophetic Minority*, 19. It has to be emphasized, however, that although the "YHWH-alone" movement probably started as a religious resistance, it cannot be detached from a broader social and political context as being merely religious; for this, see Yee's characterization of the YHWH-alone movement for not being "simply as a theological" movement, but it was joined "in complex ways to a wider socio-political environment through interconnections with monarchy, cult, and foreign policy;" see Yee (2001) 361. As for the aniconism, Mettinger points out that ancient West Semitic aniconism in the form of cults centered on standing stones. As he says, Israelite masseboth were later lumped together with iconic images, and became forbidden; Tryggve N. D. Mettinger, *No Graven Image? Israelite Aniconism in Its Ancient Near Eastern Context* (ConBOT 42; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1995) 194.
[595] So de Moor, *Rise of* Yahwism, 205.

Habakuk 3:3),[596] but at some very early point various Canaanite elements, deities and cultic practices were introduced into the cult of YHWH, as many ancient biblical texts which draw from the mythology of Ugaritic Baal cycle indicate. Additionally, the impact of monarchy encouraged the religious imagery of other deities within the cult of YHWH.[597]

The "YHWH-alone" tendencies regained strength and were intensified in the 9th century due to the politics practiced by Ahab and Jezedel. During Ahab's reign, official state-sponsored worship of the Phoenician Baal, a type of storm god, was at its peak in Israel, and in "YHWH-alone" circles it was experienced as a threat to the cult of YHWH.[598] The defenders of the supremacy of YHWH came from prophetic circles which the officially supported Baal cult had put into a competitive position.[599] Other supporters of the movement were members of the old aristocracy, whose influence was diminished because of the growth of royal bureaucracy and development of trade relations with Phoenicia.[600] It is possible that the supporters of the "YHWH-alone" were also behind Jehu's revolt. Whatever Jehu's measures in the sphere of cult were, and despite the massacre of Baal's prophets, Baal worship was not uprooted from Israel. However, as van der Toorn remarks, the time of the Omrides launched a process of radicalization of the demand for loyalty to YHWH and enfranchisement from the political establishment among prophetic orders.[601] This also looms in the background of the criticism of the monarchy in Hosea, a topic to which I return in Chapter IV.

Religious diversity in monarchic times was observable at various levels. The official cults in Israel and Judah were Yahwistic, but the forms of Yahwism were different.[602] The religious diversity was even more subtle, since different groups had divergent religious practices, and the family religion, or popular piety, in rural areas was very different to the more urban official religion.[603] The latter aspect is an issue which may explain some of the cult critical sayings in Hosea, and is discussed further below.

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[596] Mark S. Smith, *The Early History of God. Yahweh and the Other Deities in Ancient Israel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002) 25.
[597] Smith, *Early History of God*, 189.
[598] Smith, *Early History of God*, 71.
[599] Van der Toorn, *Family Religion*, 334.
[600] Van der Toorn, *Family Religion*, 335. Van der Toorn points to the conflict between Ahab and Naboth as an illustrative example of how the old nobility was overruled by the royal establishment.
[601] Van der Toorn, *Family Religion*, 337.
[602] Francesca Stavrakopoulou and John Barton, "Introduction: Religious Diversity in Ancient Israel and Judah," in Francesca Stavrakopoulou and John Barton (eds.), *Religious Diversity in Ancient Israel and Judah* (London: T&T Clark International, 2010) 1–8. Some scholars point to the existence of "poly-Yahwism" indicated by the inscriptions from Kuntilled ʿAjrud which refer to "YHWH of Samaria" and "YHWH of Teman," and thus Deuteronomy 6:4 may be interpreted in the light of this background and thus emphasizing the unity of YHWH; for this, see, e.g., Herbert Niehr, "Israelite Religion and Canaanite Religion," in Stavrakopoulou and Barton (eds.), *Religious Diversity*, 23–36, here 31.
[603] For a discussion on urban and rural religion in Israel and Judah, see Philip R. Davies, "Urban Religion and Rural Religion," in Stavrakopoulou and Barton (eds.), *Religious Diversity*, 104–117.

3.2. Israelite cult in Kings 17:7–23

2 Kings 17:7–23 has been described as "a homily on the fall of the northern kingdom."[604] The narrative uses stereotypic Deuteronomistic phraseology, but there are also features which distinguish the text from a typical Deuteronomistic perspective.[605] The extant form of 2 Kings 17:7–23 is attributable to more than one redactional hand, but the literary history of the text remains a contested issue, as can be inferred from various conclusions concerning the date of various sections in the textual material and its final compilation.[606] Whoever the compilers were, they have used a variety of historical sources – annals, chronicles, inscriptions and the like – but their focus was not on the history as it was but rather on the explanation of why Israel was exiled. The text is an expression of theodicy, since Israel's punishment was justified, and, therefore, the righteousness of YHWH is not questioned.[607]

The list of the various forms of apostasy ascribed to the Israelites in 2 Kings 17:7–23 is long, consisting of building of high places, במות (v. 9), setting up standing stones, מצבות, and Asherahs, ואשׁרים (v. 10), burning incense, קטר (v. 11), worshipping idols, הגלּלים (v. 12), going after vanity and becoming vanity, וילכו אחרי ההבל ויהבלו (v. 15), making molten images, מסכה, two calves, שׁנים עגלים, and an Asherah, אשׁירה, worshipping all the host of heaven, כל־צבא השּׁמים, and serving Baal, בעל (v. 16), passing their sons and daughters through fire, באשׁ, practicing divination, ויקסמו קסמים, seeking omens, וינחשׁו (v. 17), and persisting "in all the sins of Jeroboam," בכל־חטאות ירבעם (v. 22). Because of all this, Israel was carried

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[604] Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 204.

[605] For stereotypic phrases, see Appendix A in Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and Deuteronomic School*, 320–324. The main difference between the Deuteronomistic perspective and 2 Kings 17:7-23 concerns the feature that in Kings 17:7-23 it is not the king but rather the people who are described as showing the initiative in idolatry; see Hartmut N. Rösel, "Why 2 Kings 17 Does Not Constitute a Chapter of Reflection in the Deuteronomistic History," *JBL* 128 (2009) 85–89.

[606] Cogan and Tadmor assign 2 Kings 17: 21–23a to the Josianic editor (Dtr^1), and 2 Kings 17:7–18 to the exilic redactor (Dtr^2), 2 Kings 17:19–20 is an exilic addition; see Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 207; for the double-redaction modell, see *Cross, Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 274–289. Sweeney, *I and II Kings*, 395, dates 2 Kings 17: 21–23 to the time of Josiah; for the postexilic origin of 2 Kings 17, see Rösel (2009) 85–89. Ronnie Goldstein has concluded that the early stratum in Kings 17 may come from its very close proximity to the fall of Samaria, and thus it could be the first recorded explanation of the events leading to the destruction. Goldstein grounds his suggestion on 2 Kings 17:9–11, in which certain difficult Hebrew phrases can be interpreted as a loan of Akkadian idioms. Goldstein concludes that 2 Kings 17:9–11 deals with Israel's breaking of the covenant, and the problematic Hebrew syntax in the passage is due to later redactors who were not familiar with the Akkadian idioms, and interpreted the difficult phrases in light of Deuteronomy; thus there is a relation between the extant form of 2 Kings 17:9 and Deuteronomy 12:2–4; see Ronnie Goldstein, "A Suggestion Regarding the Meaning of 2 Kings 17:9 and the Composition of 2 Kings 17:7–23," *VT* (2013) 393–407. In my opinion, it is noteworthy that Goldstein's suggestion implies that the generalized way to describe Israel's idolatry in 2 Kings 17 comes from a later redaction, but the point that the oldest core text dealt with the breaking of the covenant is, of course, interesting in the light of Hosea.

[607] Sweeney, *I and II Kings*, 389.

away from the land to Assyria (v. 23). This list shows many parallels with Hosea, which mentions high places, במות (10:8), standing stones, מצבות/מצבה (3:5; 10:1, 2), burning insence, קטר (2:15; 4:13; 11:2), molten image, מסכה (13:2), calf/calves, עגלים/עגל (8:5, 6; 13:2), and baal/baals, בלים/בעל (2:10, 15, 18, 19; 9:10; 11:2; 13:1). In Hosea, neither "asherah," אשׁרה, nor the "host of heaven," צבא השׁמים, are mentioned explicitly; neither is the sin of "passing sons and daughters through fire" mentioned in relation to the kings of Israel.[608] However, as I will discuss in this chapter, in Hosea there may be some implicit references to the cult related to "asherah." The term "host of heaven" belongs to a form of astral worship, which early on became part of the cult of YHWH by YHWH's assimilation with El.[609] Astral worship may have had some indigenous component in ancient Israel, but the influence of the Assyrian astral cult during Judah's long vassalage to Assyria intensified the criticism.[610] Astral cult is of no concern in Hosea's prophecies because they originated before the Assyrian conquest of Israel and the subsequent introduction of Assyrian religious practices into the land. The criticism against any Assyrian influence can be connected with the reform of Josiah, which attempted to purge the Judaean cult from the elements introduced at the time of Manasseh, one of them being the worship of celestial bodies, a practice which Manasseh may have adopted from the Assyrians (2 Kings 21:3).

In 2 Kings 17:21, the cardinal sin of the Israelites was that Jeroboam led Israel away from following YHWH and caused them to sin. From the Judaean perspective, Jeroboam's main sin was the altar at Bethel, a sin which was subsequently corrected by Josiah as a man of God in 1 Kings 13:1–3 had proclaimed. Bethel was also central in Josiah's religious purge, and Josiah's animosity towards Bethel, thus, stands behind the measures which Josiah took in the territory of the former northern kingdom – the demolition of the altar and high places in Bethel and elsewhere in the towns of Samaria (2 Kings 23:15, 19–20). By means of the demolition of the altar, the form of Yahwism in Israel became nullified in the hope that the Israelites living in the territory of the former kingdom of Israel would center their cult in Jerusalem. Bethel, or Beth-aven, is also an object of scorn in Hosea, and I will discuss the possibility that the negative attitude towards Bethel reflected the inner struggle in Israel between two religious camps favoring alternative iconographies, and this anti-Bethel stance was applied by Josiah and made a useful tool in legitimizing his policy.

[608] Scholars point to parallels between 2 Kings 17: 7–18 and the description of Manasseh's sins in 2 Kings 21:2–7; e.g., Pauline A. Viviano, "2 Kings 17: A Rhetorical and Form-Critical Analysis," *CBQ* 49 (1987) 548–559, here 552; Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 205, 207.
[609] For this, see Lloyd R. Bailey, "The Golden Calf," *HUCA* 42 (1971) 97–115.
[610] Smith, *Origins of Biblical Monotheism*, 62–63.

3.3. Baal in Hosea

It it obvious that in Hosea a separation between YHWH and Baal(s) is made. However, it is not always clear what is meant with term Baal(s), since the wide semantic range of the term raises the possibility that the meaning of the term is case-specific. Baal may refer to a god known from the Ugaritic texts, in which Baal was the epithet of the storm god Hadad, whose local manifestations different "baals" were.[611] Baal also denoted "lord," as well as nameless, numinous beings, "owners of the place," housing wells, trees, rocks and the like. Moreover, there are also various political aspects which can be connected with the term Baal.[612]

Biblical texts indicate that the use of the element Baal was not perceived as problematic in the early period, since it is used in ancient biblical names Jerubbaal (Judges 6:32; 9:39), Eshbaal (1 Chronicles 8:33; 9:39), and Meribbaal (1 Chronicles 8:34; 9:40), and the name of Saul's uncle was Baal (Chronicles 8:30; 9:36). It was only later that the element became avoided, as the change of בעל to בשׁת suggests (2 Samuel 2–4); perhaps the reason for using a euphemism was that Baal was considered a reference to the god Baal.[613] The word בשׁת is usually translated as "shame," a feminine noun derived from the verb בוֹשׁ, "to be ashamed," which is its common meaning in Hebrew.[614] However, some scholars have made a point of other meanings of the word בשׁת. A. van Selms makes an interesting remark that the word בשׁת does not only refer to the psychological experience of being ashamed but also to the objective experience of shame as a result of something, which, according to van Selms, means "disappointment." Thus, the word בשׁת, "disappointment," was used as a substitute for Baal in order to indicate that Baal could not fulfill the prayers of his worshippers, because he was unable to provide rain, which was Baal's primary function.[615] This naturally evokes the episode on Mount Carmel during a severe drought, when the prophets of Baal prayed for rain in vain (1 Kings 18). However, it is possible that the בשׁת-element comes from an Akkadian word *bāštu*, which is akin to "dignity," "vigor,"

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[611] Day, *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan*, 68; R. W. Green, *The Storm God in the Ancient Near East* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2003) 173; Saul M. Olyan, *Asherah and the Cult of YHWH in Israel* (SBLMS 34; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988) 35.

[612] A thorough discussion about the term "baal" has been presented in Kelle, *Hosea 2*, 122–166. Kelle points to a widespread biblical and extrabiblical tradition of using the term with the political meaning of "ally," "treaty-partner," or "overlord." See also Albertz, *History of Israelite Religion*, 173; Jörg Jeremias, *Hosea und Amos. Studien zu den Anfängen des Dodekapropheton* (Forschungen zum Alten Testament 13, Tübingen: Mohr, 1996) 89.

[613] Smith, *Early History of God*, 45–46. For a view that the form of each of the three personal names in 2 Samuel and the corresponding form in Judges, 1 Samuel, or 1 Chronicles are alternates, and both names are authentic, see Gordon J. Hamilton, "New Evidence for the Authenticity of *bšt* in Hebrew Personal Names and for Its Use as a Divine Epithet in Biblical Texts," *CBQ* 60 (1998) 228–250; Hamilton suggests that the word boshet has a dual meaning, "shame" and "protective spirit."

[614] HALOT 1, 116–117.

[615] A. van Selms, "Boset as a Substitute fo Ba'al," OTWSA 19, Old Testament Essays, Studies in the Chronicler (1979) 1–9.

"guardian angel," "patron saint," and this implies that the names with the בשׁת-element may be authentic and alternative to the forms with the element Baal.[616]

Historically, Baal worship became a major problem for YHWH worshippers during the reign of Ahab and Jezebel in the 9th century, when the cult of the Phoenician Baal was promoted as an official cult alongside the cult of YHWH in Israel. According to biblical narrative, Ahab had married Jezebel, daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, who urged him to worship Baal (1 Kings 16:31). Ahab is said to have built the temple of Baal in Samaria, where he set up an altar for Baal and made an Asherah (1 Kings 16:32–33). The court also sustained a large number of prophets of Baal in the state cult (1 Kings 18:19; 2 Kings 10:19). However, Ahab was also a YHWH worshipper as the Yahwistic names of his sons Ahaziah and Jehoram corroborate. It is likely that Ahab's intention was not to eliminate worship of YHWH, but rather to establish a dual cult.[617] This resulted in a severe conflict between the two camps of cultic officials – between devotees to YHWH and those of Baal (1 Kings 18). Since Baal was associated with rain and, thus, fertility of the land, the great drought with its resulting famine (1 Kings 18:1–2) offered the Yahwistic circles the opportunity to show that the cults of YHWH and Baal were irreconcilable, as Baal(s) could not perform their primary function of providing rain because obviously he was in the Netherworld.[618]

The historical details related to the Ahab and Elijah narratives have been questioned. The evaluation of Ahab fits the religious interests of the Deuteronomists to present all the kings of Israel as apostates in order to justify the fall of the northern kingdom too well.[619] It may well be that Ahab and Jezebel were intentionally described extremely negatively, but nevertheless, there is no reason to doubt that their religious policy created a conflict in Israel. In the background of Ahab's religious measure there were also political motifs. Israel was developing into a powerful kingdom, and Ahab benefitted from the increase of profitable foreign trade and good relations with Phoenicia. However, the economic support to Jezebel's Phoenician Baal cult and its personnel, along with the state system itself, were a considerable burden on the common people, when the wealth from expanded foreign involvement was given out primarily to the ruling elite.[620]

The situation culminated in the revolt led by Jehu, who, according to 2 Kings 10:18–28, put an end to Baal worship in Israel as well as to the Omride dynasty.

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[616] Matitiyahu Tsevat, "Ishbosheth and Congeners," *HUCA* 46 (1975) 71–87; Hamilton (1998) 228–250.

[617] Van der Toorn, *Family Religion*, 328–338; Smith, *Early History of God*, 72.

[618] F. C. Fensham, "A Few Observations on the Polarisation between Yahweh and Baal in I Kings 17–19," *ZAW* 92 (1980) 227–236, here 234.

[619] So, e.g., Susanne Otto, "The Composition of the Elijah-Elisha Stories and the Deuteronomistic History," *JSOT* 27 (2003) 487–508, here 492. Otto remarks that Baal is not mentioned in the history of the Northern Kingdom before Ahab in 1 Kings 16:31, except in 2 Kings 17:16. Furthermore, another discrepancy is that after Elijah's victory over Baal in 1 Kings 18, Jehu's cultic reform was, nevertheless, necessary. To explain the discrepancies, Otto regards 1 Kings 17–19 as a post-Deuteronomistic insertion.

[620] Yee (2001) 361–362; van der Toorn, *Family Religion*, 334–335.

In reality, the goals of Jehu's revolt may not have been religious but rather aimed at displacing Ahab, in which Jehu, with the help of Aram, succeeded.[621] Jehu did not eliminate the cult of Baal from Israel, as the polemic against Baal in Hosea's prophecies and elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible shows. Also, epigraphic sources from the 9th–6th centuries indicate the continuation of Baal worship.[622] As for Judah, the worship of deities with Baal-names may have been less common in Judah than in Israel, since in Judah the official state religion had a higher degree of dominance than in Israel, which was more heterogeneous.[623]

In later Deuteronomistic style, it is likely that the plural form Baals became a technical term for all unacceptable forms of worship of YHWH associated with other gods and goddesses.[624] Whereas in the 8th century, the issue at stake was the mistake of identifying Baal as the god of fertility instead of YHWH, at the time of Josiah, as Stig Norin has proposed, the term "Baal" was understood as a more generic term referring to Assyrian and Babylonian influence.[625]

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[621] Andrew M. King suggests that the Jehu narrative in 2 Kings 9–10 employs several stereotyped motifs present in Assyrian Royal Inscriptions to legitimize Jehu's reign since, as a usurper, Jehu needed legitimization. Such common motifs are e.g. divine election, characterization of the enemy, chaos vs. order, exaggerated rhetoric and violence. As Kings points out, despite the hyperbolic language in the Jehu narrative, it is likely that Jehu's extermination of the house of Ahab was complete, since destroying a known number of potential claimants to the throne was easier than wiping out all adherents of Baal, and, as King further remarks, for Jehu "termination of political rivals would be a higher priority than ridding all Israel of non-Yahwistic worship;" Andrew M. King, "Did Jehu Destroy Baal from Israel? A Contextual Reading of Jehu's Revolt," *BBR* 27 (2017) 309–332; here particularly 331–332.

[622] Rainer Albertz and Rüdiger Schmitt, *Family and Household Religion in Ancient Israel and the Levant* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2012) 346, 508, 512–513. Rainer Albertz and Rüdiger Schmitt calculated 28 different theophoric elements in 404 Hebrew personal names, and found the element "baal" in 2.8% of the names, which is a low percentage in comparison with the occurrence of the elements YHWH in 59.4% and El in 13.1% of the Hebrew names; in comparison, out of 251 Phoenician names 21.9% had the element "baal. More specifically, in the Hebrew names the element "baal" occurred predominantly in birth names, in 5 of the 11 known names, which suggests a connection between this particular deity and fertility in general, but, as the authors point out, however, that the number of known Baal names is relatively low, and therefore the percentages should be considered provisional at best.

[623] Jeremy M. Hutton, "Southern, Northern and Transjordanian Perspectives," in Stavrakopoulou and Barton (eds.), *Religious Diversity*, 149–174.

[624] Jeremias, *Hosea und Amos*, 89. Smith, *Early History of God*, 79, explains the ambiguity of the term "baal(s)" in terms of biblical tradition which generally grouped and conflated a number of different gods as "baals," lords or gods of various places the names of which are embedded in some biblical place names, including Baal Peor (Numbers 25:3, 5; Deuteronomy 4:3; Psalm 106:28; Hosea 9:10), Baal Gad (Joshua 11:17; 12:7; 13:5), Baal Hazor (2 Samuel 13:23), Baal Hermon (Deuteronomy 3:9; Judges 3:3; 1 Chronicles 5:23) and the like.

[625] Norin (2000) 33–41.

3.3.1. Hosea 2:4–19. Baal and Baals

2:4 *Contend with your mother, contend*
for she is not my wife
and I am not her husband.
Let her remove her fornications from her face[626]
and her adulteries[627] *from between her breasts.*

2:5 *or else*[628] *I strip her naked*
and let her stay naked as in the day of her birth.
And I make her like a desert,[629]
and I make her like a land of drought
and let her die of thirst.

2:6 *On her children I will show no compassion,*
because they are children of fornication.

2:7 *For their mother has been unfaithful,*
she who conceived them has behaved shamefully,[630]
for she said: I shall go with my lovers[631] -
those who give me[632] *my bread, my water,*
my wool, my linen, my oil, my drink.[633]

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[626] LXX reads ἐξαρῶ τὴν πορνείαν αὐτῆς ἐκ προσώπου μου, "I shall get her fornication out of my sight;" the translator has read the word πρόσωπου under the influence of Hebrew פנים; so Muraoka, 601.

[627] The word נאפופים occurs only in Hosea. It is a derivative of the verb נאף, which means "to commit adultery;" the metaphorical meaning is "to practice idolatry;" so HALOT 1, 658, which suggests here the translation "offspring of adultery."

[628] The particle פן, here used with an imperfected, denotes "rejection of a consequence whch might be possible;" so HALOT 2, 937.

[629] מדבר is usually translated as "wilderness," "desert," which connects the word with dry and uncultured land, but it also fits for feeding flocks like "pasture," "steppe," see HALOT 1, 547, and also "wasteland;" see Shemaryahu Talmon, *Literary Motifs and Patterns in the Hebrew Bible* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2013) 55–75, here 57.

[630] הבישׁה is a Hiphil of בוש, "to be ashamed;" here "to act shamefully;" HALOT 1, 117.

[631] מאהבי, Piel participle of אהב, "lovers;" in the Hebrew Bible this word has illicit connotations as well as the word ἑραστής in the LXX; see also 2:9, 12, 14, 15.

[632] נתני is a passive participle with a 1st person singular suffix.

[633] The LXX reads πάντα ὅσα μοι καθήκει; "all that is due to me," Muraoka, 349.

2:8 *Therefore,[634] I will bar your way[635] with thorn bushes*
and build up her wall[636]
so that[637] she does not find her paths.

2:9 *She follows after her lovers,*
but does not reach them.
She searches for them,
but she does not find.
Now[638] she says: Let me go and return to my first man,
for it was better for me than now.[639]

2:10 *As for[640] her, she does not know that I gave her*
the grain and the wine and the oil;
I gave her generously[641] silver and gold.
They made to Baal.[642]

2:11 *Therefore, I will return and take back my grain in its season[643]*
and my new wine in its appointed time
and I will take away my wool and my flax
to cover[644] her nakedness.

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634 לכן is often the first word in a judgment oracle and in a transition from the proof of guilt to the threat of punishment; Wolff, *Hosea,* 35ff; HALOT 1, 530. According to Yee, *Composition and Tradition,* 81–84, the final redactor uses the three instances of לכן to refashion the tradition at his disposal (2:8–9; 2:11–15; 2:16–17), and thus the use of לכן gives the chapter its present literary coherence.

635 In the MT, there is the 3rd feminine singular suffix; the LXX reads "her path" in line with BHS, which suggests דרכה.

636 This is a literal translation of וגדרתי את־גדרה; a possible meaning is "I will block her way with a wall of stones;" so HALOT 1, 181.

637 In this verse, the second clause beginning with "so that" expresses a purpose of the first clause; see Waltke and O'Connor, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax,* 650.

638 I read this as a disjunctive-ו clause; see Waltke and O'Connor, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax,* 651-652.

639 The noun on which the comparison is based is preceded by the preposition מן; see Waltke and O'Connor, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax,* 264–265.

640 Commentators take והיא as an emphatic use of the pronoun, hence the translation "as for," or "for her part, she;" so, Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea,* 54.

641 The Hiphil of רבה, "to increase, to become numerous;" with the preposition ל, "to give generously for someone;" see HALOT 2, 1177.

642 There is a sudden change from the 3rd person singular feminine to the 3rd person plural masculine עשׂו. The reading of 2:10 in the LXX (2:8) differs from the MT in that עשׂו is in the 3rd singular feminine, αὐτὴ δὲ ἀργυρᾶ καὶ χρυσᾶ ἐποίησεν τῇ Βααλ. Glenny, *Septuagint Commentary Series: Hosea,* 76, sees that the purpose of the feminine article τῇ perhaps helps the reader avoid the word "baal" and use the word "shame," αἰσχύνη, instead; so also Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea,* 56; Wolff, *Hosea,* 31.

643 HALOT 1, 901.

644 לכסות is a Piel infinitive of כסה, "to cover;" the Piel infinite construct with ל points to a purpose.

2:12 *Now I will uncover her shame*[645]
to the eyes of her lovers,
and no one will deliver her from my hand.

2:13 *I will put an end to all her joy,*
her festival, her new moon festival, and her Sabbath
and all her times of festivities.

2:14 *I shall destroy her wine and her fig tree(s)*
of which she said: they are a gift[646] *for me*
which my lovers gave me.
But I will make them a thicket,
and wild animals[647] *will eat them.*

2:15 *I will punish her for the days of the Baals*
when she burned incense to them.[648]
She adorned herself with earrings and her ornaments,
and went after[649] *her lovers,*
but she forgot me, says YHWH.

2:16 *Therefore, behold, I will seduce her*
and lead her into the wilderness
and speak to her heart with her.

2:17 *And I will give her back her vineyards from there*
and make the Valley of Achor as a door of hope.
There she will respond as in the days of her youth,
and as on the day her coming up from the land of Egypt.

2:18 *And it will be on that day, says YHWH,*
you will call me "my man;"

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[645] The word נבלתה is a hapax legomenon, translated as "shame," perhaps meaning "pudenda;" HALOT 1, 664; similarly the LXX with the word ἀκαθαρσίαν; Muraoka, 18. Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 58–60, translates "her lewd behavior/vile corruption;" and reads the word as a variant from of a noun נבלה, "folly, willful sin, stupidity;" HALOT 1, 664.

[646] The word אתנה is also a hapax legomenon, usually understood as a gift given to a harlot; HALOT 1, 103. As Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 63–64 points out, there is word play תאנתה/נתנו using the root תנה, "to recruit," cf. 8:9, 10.

[647] חית השדה, literally "living creatures of the field."

[648] The phrase קטר לבעל, "to burn incense to baal," in 2:15, is a direct reference to cultic practices. The Piel form of קטר, "to burn incense to a deity," is often used of idolatrous worship; cf. Jeremiah 7:9; 11:13, 17; 19:13; 32:39, and 2 Kings 23:5. Here קטר is in the Hiphil form although in 11:2 and 4:13 the form is Piel. As Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 258, remark, the use of the Hiphil and Piel forms of קטר is flexible, and thus there is no strict rule that Piel is used for pagan worship.

[649] The expression הלך אחרי has two meanings, in a secular context, it means "to go behind, to follow," and in a religious sense, "to follow a god;" thus the meaning is negative; HALOT 1, 247.

and you will no longer call me "my Baal."

2:19 *And I will remove the names of the Baals from her mouth*
and they will no longer be remembered by name.[650]

The passage 2:4–19 is part of Hosea 2, in which the focus is the relationship between the wife and her husband. I share the view of many commentators that the woman denotes Israel, the land, and the children are the Israelites.[651] This makes sense particularly in the light of 2:5, which speaks of making the mother like a land drought, a desert, and in 1:2 it is explicitly said that the land, הארץ, has "fornicated away" from YHWH.[652] The same connection between the misbehaviour of the wife and the damage to the land also appears in Jeremiah 3:1 and Deuteronomy 24:1–4.

The word ריב in 2:4 points to a contention rather a lawsuit, which would have required a judge to solve the problem. In 2:4, YHWH himself will be the judge, and seeks restitution by his own means. The issue at stake is not a lawsuit, a juridicial process in the court, but the parties argue their cases amongst themselves.[653] The bilateral nature of the contention between YHWH and Israel is well understood in the context of the marriage imagery, which here also serves as a device to demonstrate that YHWH is the real provider of daily necessities, like a husband's responsibility provide his wife with food, clothing and oil. Here, the

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[650] Niphal imperfect 3rd person plural of זכר, which means "to be remembered, be thought of;" HALOT 1, 270.

[651] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 431–444; Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, xiii, 49; Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 47–48; Wolff, *Hosea*, 33–34.

[652] So, e.g., Laurie J. Braaten, "God Sows: Hosea's Land Theme in the Book of the Twelve," in Paul R. Redditt and Aaron Schart (eds.), *Thematic Threads in the Book of the Twelve* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2003) 104–125. Undoubtedly, the problem with understanding the mother as a land, which in Hebrew is a feminine word, relates to the fact that in the Hebrew Bible Israel is always treated as a masculine, e.g. in 11:1 and in Exodus 4:22, Israel is YHWH's son; also the names of the people in biblical texts are masculine, whereas there is a large number of examples in the Hebrew Bible where a city is treated as a female; see also John J. Schmitt, "The Gender of Ancient Israel," *JSOT* 26 (1983) 115–125. For a comprehensive summary of the scholarly discussion on the identity of the wife in Hosea 2, see Kelle, *Hosea* 2, 82ff. and the references therein; Kelle reads the mother as the city of Samaria, and remarks that the motif of turning into a desert in the Hebrew Bible often occurs with cities that are either conquered or which stand as objects of God's judgment; cf. Isaiah 14:17; 27:10; Jeremiah 4:23–26; 9:11–13; 22:6; see Kelle, *Hosea 2*, 86 note 24; 234. But, as Braaten suggests, the issue at stake here is the agricultural imagery applied to the "woman of whoredom," i.e. the land; see Braaten, "God Sows: Hosea's Land Theme in the Book of the Twelve," in Redditt and Schart (eds.), *Thematic Threads in the Book of the Twelve*, 108. Hayyim Angel presents a very different opinion, and reads the text against the backdrop of 4:4–9, in which the priest is under fire, and therefore, Angel concludes that the mother depicts corrupted priests whose followers are the children; Hayyim Angel, "Rebuke Your Mother: But Who Is She? The Identity of the "Mother" and "Children" in Hosea 2:4–7," *JBQ* 44 (2016) 13–20. See also Yee (2001) 345–383, who presents a view that the male elite is feminized by a metaphor of an adulterous wife who runs after her lovers, or the foreign nations, and through this shaming metaphor, Hosea criticizes the nation's male leadership for exploiting the pesantry.

[653] Michael DeRoche, "Yahweh's *rîb* Against Israel: A Reassessment of the So-Called 'Prophetic Lawsuit' in the Preexilic Prophets," *JBL* 102 (1983) 563–574.

mother is mistaken about who her real husband is, and the real provider of what she needs to live. This builds the frame in which the worship of Baal(s) is criticized in Hosea 2.

In 2:4, the saying "she is not my wife and I am not her husband" is similar to the divorce formula found in the Elephantine papyri marriage contact.[654] The divorce process continued by stripping the wife and sending her forth, but here in Hosea the procedure and the threats appear as conditional. If she does not change her behavior, she will be punished. Themes of drought and death are introduced in 2:5 as a punishment of the wife's fornication, i.e. relying on her lovers, "Baals." They are not capable to providing her bread, water, wool, linen, oil, and drink (2:7), if YHWH causes a drought and withholds the water. Death is not the punishment, however, but an enstrangement from the wife's previous life: from her "lovers" (2:9), and she will be deprived from her grain and wine, wool and flax (2:10), in other words, the products of the land, and from her festivities (2:13) and wine and fig trees (2:14). In her disappointment, she plans to go back to her first man as 2:9 states.

2:10 presents YHWH's accusation of "not-knowing." The verb ידע has a wide semantic range, and here "not knowing" has a sense of "not understanding" or "not acknowledging," since on the basis of her past experience, the wife Israel have understood and been aware of what YHWH had done for her. The three-word formula "grain, wine, oil" belongs to the Deuteronomistic phraseology (e.g. Deuteronomy 7:13; 11:14; 12:17; 14:23; 18:4; 28:51), but it occurs in the Ugaritic texts too.[655] The mention of three basic dietary ingredients chrystallizes the people's dependence on the fertility of the land which required yearly rainfall, which was the main concern for ordinary people living off farming. The woman's worship of a wrong deity as the provider of all the good meant that she neglected her duty in a covenantal relationship. YHWH should have been honoured in appropriate cultic rites, just as a vassal honours the human suzerain treaty with expected demonstrations of servitude and covenant loyalty, which meant a public demonstration of loyalty.[656] By turning to "lovers," Israel, the wife, committed fornication. She had mistaken YHWH for her "lovers," מאהביה, and therefore, her public demonstration of loyalty to YHWH – the cult – was false.

2:10 refers back to 2:9, in which the wife hankers for her "lovers," מאהביה. The term "lover" has a political connotation here. In extrabiblical sources the term "lover" is related to treaties between the sovereign and vassal, the king and subject.[657] In biblical sources, the political overtone is obvious in Ezekiel 16:26,

[654] Markham J. Keller, "The Elephantine Papyri and Hosea 2, 3," *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Period* 8 (1977) 139–148.
[655] Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 56, refers to ANET, p. 148 and CTA 16.III, pp. 74f; KTU 1.16 p. 50; Wolff, *Hosea*, 37, 39.
[656] Saul M. Olyan, "Honor, Shame, and Covenant Relations in Ancient Israel and its Environment," *JBL* 115 (1996) 201–218.
[657] Moran (1961) 77–87.

28, 33, 35, 37, 39; 33:5, 9; Jeremiah 2:25, 33; 22:20–23, and Lamentations 1:2, 19.[658]

The phrase עשׂו לבעל in 2:10 is syntactically awkward. The change to the 3rd plural masculine verb is abrupt, and "they" remains undefined. The phrase evokes 8:4, which says, "Their silver and gold they have made into idols for themselves," and 13:2, "They made themselves molten images from their silver according to the shape of idols." Since 8:4 and 13:2 do not explicitly state what the objects that were made represented, it has been suggested that the phrase עשׂו לבעל in 2:10 has been inserted here to elucidate the terms used in other sayings.[659] As for the word מסכה, "molten image," it is used for the bull image as Exodus 32:4, 8 indicates. All in all, 2:10 seems to speak of an object representing the deity, a concrete metal-plated statue.

2:12 speaks of an ultimate punishment, when the metaphorical wife is left totally in the hands of her husband. As 2:13 says, the wife is also deprived of her festivities. The new moon festival and the Sabbath are mentioned in parallel, which indicates that the Sabbath was celebrated as a lunar festival. This suggests a pre-exilic origin of the saying, since the Sabbath was detached from the lunar cycle only in the post-exilic period and subsequently became the Sabbath day.[660] We do not know what kind of feasts were at stake here, or to what extent they involved sexually loaded fertility rites, as often has been thought. On the basis of the next verse, however, the issue at stake is that of the great autumn festival, since 2:14 uses a strong metaphor concerning the destruction of the wines and fig trees. As Wolff points out, this message is connected with the end of the festivities in 2:13, since the autumn festival, חג, came after the grape and fig harvest, and when those were destroyed, the festivals came to their ultimate end.[661]

Baal is mentioned in 2:15 in the expression "the days of the Baals," which has been read both as a reference to Canaanite cult feasts but also to the longtime devotion to idols in the history of Israel.[662] The most appropriate reading is to interpret "the days of the Baals" as local festivities concerned with the yield of the crops and involving the consumption of food like raisin cakes (3:1).[663] Probably the "days of Baals" as local celebrations were not the same as the festivities mentioned in 2:13, which were events based on the calendar and celebrated by all people.[664] It is also possible that the expression "the days of Baals" retains a sarcastic statement that all festivities had become devoted to Baal rather than YHWH. The phrase קטר לבעל/ קטר לבעלים "to burn incense to baal(s)," is an

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[658] J. A. Thompson, "Israel's 'Lovers'," *VT* 27 (1977) 475–481.

[659] Wolff, *Hosea*, 37; Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 54.

[660] Albertz, *History of Israelite Religion*, 408–409; see also Rainer Albertz, "Exile as Purification: Reconstructing the 'Book of the Four'," in Redditt Schart (eds.), *Thematic Threads in the Book of the Twelve*, 232–249; see especially Albertz's comment on page 243 regarding Amos 8:4–7 with a similar conclusion.

[661] Wolff, *Hosea*, 38.

[662] Wolff, *Hosea*, 40; Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 256.

[663] Van der Toorn, *Family Religion*, 295.

[664] Ziony Zevit, *The Religions of Ancient Israel. A Synthesis of Parallactic Approaches* (London: Continuum, 2001) 568.

explicit reference to cultic practices. The Piel form of קטר is often used of idolatrous worship, as Jeremiah 7:9; 11:13, 17; 19:13; 32:39, and 2 Kings 23:5 indicate. In Hosea, the Piel form of קטר occurs in 11:2 and 4:13, but in 2:15 the verb is in the Hiphil form. The use of different form is, however, flexible and, thus, there is no strict rule that Piel would be used exclusively is association with unlawful or pagan cults.[665]

2:15 ends with the concluding expression נאם־יהוה, indicating the end of an oracle. Accordingly, there is a clear change in tone in 2:16, which abruptly introduces the theme of restoration and the reversion of the threat of YHWH's punitive actions, which are expected on the basis of previous verses. The restoration of Israel will take place in the wilderness, and because this motif is connected to the Exodus tradition, a more detailed discussion on 2:16–17 is presented in Chapter V.

In 2:18, the word בעל is used as a synonym for the word אִישׁ, "man," "husband" as is found also in 2 Samuel 11:26, Joel 1:8 and Isaiah 54:5. There is an obvious word play here with the word בעל, which also means "lord, master." 2:18 indicates that YHWH could have been called Baal, a practice that here became rejected.[666] The expression "on that day," והיה ביום־ההוא, in 2:18, refers either to the near future or an eschatological time to come, and it is common particularly in prophecy. The formula occurs three times in 2:18–25, and on the grounds of the occurrence of the formulas והיה ביום ההוא and נאם־יהוה in the passage, the passage has been ascribed to the exilic redactor of Hosea.[667]

In 2:19, the word Baal is used in plural, which raises doubts that Baals is here used in a general sense, and not as a designation of an individual god. 2:19 continues the theme of restoration The use of the word זכר, "to name, to mention, to remember," connects 2:19 with the cult, since זכר, combined with שׂמ, denotes a particular cultic occasion when the god was presented by mentioning the divine name. This determined the identity of the deity which received the offering in the rituals, since similar offerings may have had different meanings when addressed to different deities.[668] This verse makes it clear what was wrong in the worship. It was not the cult in itself, but rather that the people were calling a wrong deity. Elimination of the name of a god eliminated its worship, as Deuteronomy 12:3 indicates, and therefore, the wrong names had to be removed. I see here a very concrete way of understanding the importance of not calling YHWH Baal, because of the danger of confusing the bearers of the same name with each other.

[665] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 258.
[666] Hutton (2010) 149–174, here 155.
[667] Yee, *Composition and Tradition*, 82–83.
[668] Zevit, *Religions of Ancient Israel*, 568.

3.3.2 Hosea 9:10. From wilderness to Baal Peor

9:10 *Like grapes in the wilderness*
I found Israel,
like early figs[669] *on a fig tree at its beginning*
I saw your fathers.
They came to Baal Peor
and consecrated themselves[670] *to shame,*
and they became abhorrences[671] *according to their loving.*[672]

In 9:10, the focus is on the past which is reflected on by means of the contemporary situation depicted in the beginning of the chapter. It depicts a sad picture of Israel's future: there is no reason to rejoice, since Ephraim shall return to Egypt and eat unclean food in Assyria (9:3–6); the prophet is met with scorn and traps are put in all his ways (9:7-8), and there is corruption like in the days of Gibeah (9:9). Against this gloomy background, 9:10 begins by alluding to Israel's early history, to the pleasant first encounter with YHWH, but then shifts to what happened subsequently when Israel came to Baal Peor.

The name Israel in 9:10 denotes the ancestors, or fathers, of contemporary Israel, otherwise we would expect the name Ephraim to have been used, especially as it appears elsewhere in Hosea 9. YHWH is said to have "found" Israel; the verb מצא means an accidental finding and, thus, a sense of suddenness and surprise is conveyed.[673] At this point, it needs to be stressed that, unlike some scholars, I do not read "wilderness" here as a place of finding Israel.[674] It is the pleasantness

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669 As Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 200, remarks, there is a pun with the word בכורה here, since the word evokes a firstborn, בכור, which is Israel's position in the face of YHWH.

670 נזר carries a connotation of an act of self-denial, "to separate oneself," also "consecrate oneself to a deity;" HALOT 1, 684. The LXX uses the verb ἀπαλλοτριόω, "to estrange;" according to Muraoka, 17, the translation is "they shamelessly estranged themselves" and, thus, here "shame," αἰσχύνη, is not used as a substitute for Baal; see also Glenny, *Septuagint Commentary Series: Hosea,* 140.

671 The word used here is שִׁקּוּצִים, denoting "an abhorrence, an object to abhor, horror, monster" but also "filth" in a secular context; here the word is used to indicate the disgust of the people in the eyes of YHWH. The word refers to images and symbols of pagan deities in cultic contexts; HALOT 2, 1640.

672 In the MT, כאהבם is vocalized as if it was a Qal infinitive with the plural 3rd person plural suffix; "according to their loving," but some commentators favor a suffixed noun; so Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 361, for example, translates "like the object of their desire." Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 536, translate "They became disgusting like the one who loved them." The LXX has "καὶ ἐγένοντο οἱ ἐβδελυγμένοι ὡς οἱ ἠγαπημένοι;" "the detested have turned into the beloved;" Muraoka, 3. Thus, in the LXX, as Glenny notes, the phrase has been understood as a reference to the inter-mingling and confusion of the Moabites and the Israelites; Glenny, *Septuagint Commentary Series: Hosea,* 140.

673 HALOT 1, 619.

674 Thus, contra Dearman, *Hosea*, 251.

of the finding which is expressed by means of the metaphor "like grapes in the wilderness." As Eidevall points out, this obvious contradiction in terms – there are no grapes in the wilderness – implies something which is impossible, and thus beyond human understanding of things and, thus, although "grapes" and "figs" may also stand for desirable acts and attitudes, this is not the case here, since nothing in the attitudes of the people is indicated to have been the reason for their finding.[675] 9:10 also speaks of "seeing" the fathers; the verb ראה also has a meaning "to choose, selecting something for oneself."[676] In Hosea, Israel was found in Egypt; as 11:1 explicitly says, and the wilderness period was a time of harmony in the relationship between Israel and YHWH as 12:16–17 and 13:5 indicate; the same tradition is found also in Jeremiah 2:2. Thus, the concept of Israel being found in Egypt is in contrast with the view in Deuteronomy 32:10, which speaks of finding in the wilderness. Therefore, it is understandable why in Hosea it is said that Israel's apostasy began when they came to Baal Peor, where the Israelites stayed before their entry to Canaan (Numbers 33:49).

Baal Peor in 9:10 is a name of a geographical location, having an element "baal" like many other place names in the Hebrew Bible.[677] This indicates the connection of the place with a local manifestation of Baal, with the Baal of the Mount Peor in the area of Moab. It is likely that 9:10 refers to the engagement of Israelites in the worship of this deity; this can be understood on the basis of the use of "shame" as a euphemism for Baal.

In Hosea, the word שִׁקּוּצִים appears only in the phrase וַיִּהְיוּ שִׁקּוּצִים כְּאָהֲבָם in 9:10. It is a term for idols, as Deuteronomy 29:17 and Jeremiah 4:1; 7:30; 16:18; 32:34 indicate. As Andersen and Freedman remark, in 1 Kings 11:5 מִלְכֹּם, or מֹלֶךְ, is the שִׁקּוּץ of the Ammonites.[678] As for this particular deity, Molech was a name or a title of a Canaanite underworld god *mlk*, whose name may have been distorted with the vowels of the word בֹּשֶׁת.[679] It is, thus, possible that the reference to Baal Peor does not necessarily point to the worship of Baal but to Molech, and to the practice of child sacrifice.[680] The Hebrew Bible contains some ambiguous passages which

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675 Eidevall, *Grapes in the Desert*, 149–151; as parallels to the metaphor in Hosea, Eidevall points to Isaiah 5:1–7 and Micah 7:1; he also refers to the Hittite Telepinus Myth, in which the attitude of faithfulness toward the divine king is likened to the sweet contents of figs, olives, and grapes. See also Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 199–200, who refers to Jeremiah 24. Not even the land was given due to Israel's goodness, but rather it was the evil of the nations living there before Israel as Deuteronomy 9:4–5 indicates; see Tikva Frymer-Kensky, "Pollution, Purification, and Purgation in Biblical Israel," in Carol M. Meyers and M. O'Connor (eds.), *The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth. Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of His Sixtieth Birthday* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1983) 399–414, here 408.

676 HALOT 2, 1159.

677 In the Hebrew Bible, there are many toponyms with the element "baal," e.g. Baal Zephon (Exodus 14:2,9; Numbers 33:7), Baal Meon (Numbers 32:38); Baal Gad (Joshua 11:17; 12:7; 13:5), Bamoth Baal (Joshua 13:17), Kiriath Baal (Joshua 18:14); here "baal" presumably means "owner of a place."

678 Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 541.

679 Day (1986) 213–214.

680 Andersen and Freedman speculate that the sin at Baal Peor could have been child sacrifice; a topic which appears in Psalm 106:34–39 and in Ezekiel 20:26, 31; *Hosea*, 537–538.

may hint at child sacrifice being practiced in ancient Israel and Judah.[681] Jeremiah 32:35 speaks of how the people in Judah and Israel built high places for Baal (הבעל) in the Valley of Ben Hinnom to make their sons and daughters pass through fire to Molech (מלך); it is, however, uncertain whether or not the children were sacrificed to Molech or whether the expression "passing through fire" means a sort of a rite, a "dedication by fire."[682] In this context, the purpose of the child sacrife remains obscure, since such a sacrifice was usually done in the face of a serious threat, as indicated in 2 Kings 3:26–27 by the mention of the king of Moab who sacrificed his firstborn son. All things considered, 2 Kings 23:10 indicates that there was a practice of passing through fire connected with the Valley of Ben Hinnom which Josiah put to an end by defiling Tophet where the burning occurred.

3.3.3. Hosea 11:1–2. Sacrifing to Baals

11:1 *When Israel was a young boy I loved him,*
and I called my son[683] out of Egypt.

11:2 *They called them,*
so they went away from them.[684]
They sacrificed to the Baals,
and they burned incense to graven images of idols.[685]

In 11:1, YHWH speaks of Israel as a beloved child whom he had called away from Egypt. This retrospective saying resembles Jeremiah 31:9, which speaks of Ephraim as YHWH's firsborn, בכור, and Exodus 4:22, in which Israel is called בני

[681] Jo Ann Hackett, for example, points to the texts about dedicating the firstborn to YHWH in Exodus 13:1–2; 22:28–29 and the binding of Isaac in Genesis 22:1–19; For this, see the discussion of Jo Ann Hackett, "Religious Traditions in Israelite Transjordan," in Miller, Hanson, and McBride (eds.), *Ancient Israelite Religion*, 125–136, here especially 131–133.

[682] For this meaning of the verb עבר see HALOT 1: 780. In Leviticus 18:21, the same verb עבר is used in a prohibition to sacrife children to Molech.

[683] The LXX has a plural "his children," τὰ τέκνα αὐτοῦ.

[684] The phrase קראו להם כן הלכו מפניהם in the MT does not make much sense. The change to the 3rd plural is curious and, thus, BHS suggests כדי קראי, "as often as I called," the LXX reads YHWH as the subject here: καθὼς μετεκάλεσα αὐτούς, "as I called them." The LXX reads the beginning of 11:1, "for Israel was a child," as connected with 10:15, which makes the fact that Israel was a child a reason for the judgment that Israel's king would be destroyed; see Glenny, *Septuagint Commentary Series: Hosea*, 152–153. Macintosh, for his part, reads the preposition ל in להם as *dativus commode*, and translates "they have made their own call;" Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 439. As for מפניהם, "from their faces," BHS suggests מפני instead of מפניהם, so also the LXX with ἐκ προσώπου μου αὐτοὶ.

[685] פסלים means a divine image which is carved from wood or sculptured from stone; it is read as "idols;" e.g. 2 Kings 17:41; Isaiah 10:10; 21:9; 30:22; 42:8; Micah 1:7; 5:13; Jeremiah 8:9; 50:38; 51:47, 52.

בכרי ישראל, YHWH's firstborn son. 11:1 calls Israel נער, a young boy. At a conceptual level this evokes 2:17, in which the phrase כימי נעורים, "in the days of her youth," also refers to Israel's youth as the time of responsiveness to YHWH's call. The image of being "a son of a god" also occurs in ancient Hittite treaties in the context of promises of dynasty.[686]

The motif of "calling" continues in 11:2, which introduces a sudden change from YHWH's 1st person singular speech to the 3rd person plural, "they." The MT does not make a good sense here regarding who is calling whom. In the Targum, those who call are understood as prophets; in the background of this reading is 2 Kings 17:13, which points to how YHWH had warned Israel and Judah through his prophets and seers.[687] The textual apparatus in BHS suggests the reading "As often as I called them, they went away from me," which seems reasonable in the light of 11:1 in which YHWH is the caller. However, the identity of those who are called remains open. Macintosh understands the calling in a political sense, and points to the similarity between 11:2 and 7:11, where the verbs הלך and קרא are used; 7:11 says, "They called to Egypt, now turned to Assyria."[688] Although this suggestion cannot be ruled out, it is perhaps better to accept the reading suggested by BHS here. Nonetheless, it is intriguing why the MT ended up in reading the plural forms here. One possibility is that Israel in 11:1 denotes Jacob, and those who were called were his sons, the ancestors of Israel. In the LXX, it is not the "son" who is called from Egypt, but Israel's children, ἐξ Αἰγύπτου μετεκάλσα τὰ τέκνα αὐτοῦ. It is obvious that "his children" are the children of Israel, perhaps the children of Jacob-Israel. Although YHWH called them, they went away from him, estranging themselves from YHWH. This corresponds to Ephraim's behavior in 8:9, in which Ephraim is compared to a wild ass, and in 4:16, in which the image of a stubborn heifer is used. Another possible interpretation is that the "calling" in 11:2 is connected with the incident at Baal Peor in 9:10, since both are historical retrospects.

3.3.4. Hosea 13:1–3. Baal and death

13:1 *When Ephraim spoke*[689] *terror*[690]

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[686] Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School*, 79. Weinfeld points to Šuppiluliumaš's words to Mattiwaza from ca 1300 BCE, the same words echo in Psalm 2:6–7 and Psalm 89:31.

[687] Kevin J. Cathcart and R. P. Gordon, *The Targum of the Minor Prophets* (Edinburg: T&T Clark, 1987) 54.

[688] Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 440–441.

[689] Literarally, "when-to-speak-Ephraim." Alternatively, כ can be read as an asseverative כ; so, e.g., Yee, *Composition and Tradition*, 249, 365 n351; Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 186; Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 624, 629; Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 518. The LXX translates δικαιώματα αὐτὸς ἔλαβν ἐν τῷ Ισραηλ καὶ ἔθετο αὐτὰ τῇ Βααλ, "he received ordinances in Israel and established them for Baal;" Muraoka, 170.

[690] The רתת word is a *hapax legomenon*. רִתַּת appears in the Qumran text 1QH4 with the meaning "terror;" Wolff, *Hosea*, 219. In Jeremiah 49:24 the meaning of the word appears to be the same, but the vocalization is רֶתֶת. The word is also associated with meanings like "trembling," even "shivering, a feverish ague;" HALOT 2, 1300–1301.

he was elevated[691] *in Israel,*
but he became guilty at Baal and died.

13:2 *And now they continue to sin,*
and they made themselves molten images from their silver
according to the shape of idols.[692]
All of it, work of craftsmen.
To them they are saying: sacrifice,[693]
men who kiss calves.

13:3 *Therefore they will be like morning cloud,*
and like the dew that goes away early,[694]
like chaff dispersed from a threshing-floor,
like smoke from a window.

The passage in 13:1–3 appears a rather coherent unit dealing with the cult. 13:1–2 present the accusation, and 13:3 proclaims the verdict. The passage bears several similarities with Hosea 8: making kings and idols (עצבים) in 13:2, 10–11 and 8:4, reference to crafsmen (חרשׁ) in 13:2 and 8:6, and explicit references to calves (עגל) in 13:2 and 8:5, 6.[695] The difference between Hosea 13 and 8 concerns the outcome of Ephraim's guilt: in Hosea 8 it is exile and the destruction of its cities, while in Hosea 13 Ephraim dies.[696]

The first half of 13:1, כדבר אפרים רתת נשׂא הוא בישׂראל, is extremely difficult, and no general agreement of the meaning of the phrase has been achieved. The phrase begins with a construct with an infinitive and a preposition; usually Ephraim is taken as the subject here; so here, "when Ephraim spoke."[697] Some scholars take YHWH as the speaker in the phrase כדבר אפרים רתת, since as Andersen and Freedman remark, in biblical texts only YHWH's word can cause fear, and thus it is YHWH who has spoken terrifyingly against Ephraim, and lifted up (his voice) against Israel.[698] רתת may denote "terror," but how would Ephraim's *speaking*

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[691] נשׂא has a wide range of meanings, and its meaning here is unclear. BHS suggests a Niphal form, in which case it could be translated as "to be elevated;" HALOT 1, 724–727.

[692] The word תבונה means things such as "understanding," "skill;" HALOT 2, 1680. A better reading would be to read the word תבנית "shape, model" here; so Nyberg, *Studien zum Hoseabuche*, 101; cf. Jeremiah 44:13. This is supported by the LXX, which uses the word εἰκών, "likeness," in κατ᾽ εἰκόνα εἰδώλων, "so that it will resemble idols;" Muraoka, 192. Stuart Irvine refers to some ancient Mesopotamian analogues which support the concept that the question is about the making images on the basis of a precise model; see Stuart A. Irvine, "Idols כתבונם: Hosea 13:2a," *JBL* 133 (2014) 517–509, here especially 513–515.

[693] The phrase להם הם אמרים זבחי אדם עגלים ישקון is syntactically difficult. The MT suggests זבחים or זבחו instead of זבחי, which, combined with אדם, refers to human sacrifice; so, Wolff, *Hosea*, 219, with the translation "They say to themselves: those who sacrifice men kiss calves."

[694] The verb שׁכם means "to rise early," but here joined with another verb חלך, it means "early."

[695] Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 269.

[696] Ibid.

[697] So also Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 518–519.

[698] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 624, 629

raise terror? The only explanation here is that it is a reference to Ephraim's prominent position among the tribes, in other words, Ephraim's power. Regarding the meaning of רתת, it is worth considering that the word may also mean "feverish ague." As for Hosea 13, Ola Wikander has pointed out that there is an association of drought with death, since drought in general relates to fever and illness connected with personified Death.[699] If a deadly illness is at stake in 13:1, it fits well conceptually with the mention of Ephraim's death in the same context, but the connection with the MT is difficult to figure out.

The mention of Baal does not seem to have any logical connection with the previous statement in the verse. Andersen and Freedman suggest that in the expression בבעל can be a short from for Baal-Peor, if ב is locative.[700] But why would Ephraim "die" at Baal Peor? Perhaps the point here is that those who are dead are utterly cut off from the relationship with YHWH. As stated earlier in connection with 6:1–3, "death" and "killing" belong to ancient covenantal language, and here too Ephraim's "death" may related to the end of the covenantal relationship with YHWH. Historically, Ephraim's "death" took place in 720, when the kingdom fell. On the other hand, there may an ironic statement concerning Baal as a dying and rising god – the one who worships Baal, dies himself.

13:2 is a difficult verse, and scholars have ended up in variable translations. Many commentators see a reference to human sacrifice here, but it is difficult to connect this practice with "calves" which also are mentioned.[701] Nevertheless, Andersen and Freedman read the phrase זבחי אדם as synonymous to זבחי מתים in Psalm 106:28, and come to conclusion that both speak of sacrificing humans.[702] On the other hand, זבחי מתים can also denote sacrifing for the dead, thus denoting a form of ancestor cult, which was part of the Israelite religion.[703] If this is correct, the irony becomes obvious, as in 13:1 Ephraim is said to have died.

The vocabulary of 13:3 resembles 6:4, in which Ephraim's and Judah's covenantal fidelity is compared to morning cloud and dew which evaporate quickly in the heat of the day. In 13:3, it is Ephraim who is compared to a rapidly vanishing dew, which comes and goes. The word "dew" also has connections with the Baal Cycle, in which the land dies when Baal takes the rain and the dew with him into the underworld. However, Baal is not a real god, and therefore in 14:6 YHWH declares that he will be the dew to Israel when Israel is restored.

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[699] YHWH himself appropriates the role of Mot, and regarding this, in 13:7–8 YHWH depicts himself as a lion, as Mot in Ugarit; Wikander, *Drought, Death, and the Sun,* 163–164.

[700] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea,* 630, 632.

[701] Ibid., 625.

[702] Ibid., 632.

[703] For this, see the discussion of Francesca Stavrakopoulou, "Popular Religion and Official Religion: Practice, Perception, Portrayal," in Stavrakopoulou and Barton (eds.), *Religious Diversity,* 37–58, especially 44–47.

3.3.2. Conclusions

The Baal Cycle highlights Baal's main function as the provider of rain and fertility of the land, and depicts Baal as a god dying and rising along with the yearly cycle of vegetation. Many features suggest that the language in Hosea draws from the imagery of the dying and rising Baal.[704] This indicates the use of the language known in that time and, in addition to Hosea, many other biblical texts have adopted the language of the theophany of YHWH derived from the storm god Baal.[705] Also many mythical elements in Hosea can be related to the Baal.[706] Nevertheless, we may ask whether in all instances Baal in Hosea was referring to the god Baal known from the Ugaritic sources. To my view, in the 8th century the worship of Baal, the storm god, was not a serious threat to the position of YHWH as the primary god of Israel in the official cult as it had been in the 9th century, when the Omride king Ahab contributed to the worship of the Phoenician Baal in Israel. But, as van der Toorn rightly remarks, the promotion of Baal at the time of Ahab gave impetus to the rise of more exclusive Yahwism.[707] This can be seen in the polemic against Baal in Hosea.

The message in Hosea was that YHWH should no longer be referred to as Baal, since calling out a wrong name was to acknowledge the wrong deity, a wrong "husband," and thus the worship of Baal was conceptually linked to marital infidelity. Therefore, it is not surprising that most references to Baal(s) occur in 2:4–19, in which the focus is on the relationship between the wife and her husband. As we have seen, the semantic range of the term Baal allowed multiple connotations, one of them being such as "owner," in other words, "husband."[708] Therefore, to depict the position of Israel in relation to YHWH, marriage as a

[704] For Baal as a dying and rising god, see Day, *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan,* 117. Day's interpretation has been questioned by Smith, who suggests that the concept of Baal as a "dying and rising god" may not be the correct term, but rather that Baal is a "disappearing god", a term which characterizes various storm-gods in general. Smith maintains that ritual information in the Ugaritic texts shows clear correspondences with the language and imagery associated with Baal's death in the Baal Cycle, which does not demonstrate a ritual background to Baal's death and return to life in the cycle, but rather is a literary borrowing of such language from the cult of deceased kings and ancestors; for this, see Smith (1998) 257–313. As for Hosea's "baalistic" language, Day refers in particular to the imagery of death and resurrection in Hosea 5-6 and 13-14 as being taken from the imagery of the dying and rising Baal; see Day, *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan,* 117.

[705] See especially Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 156–177; Day, *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan*, 91–127.

[706] In his analysis of Hosea 13, Ola Wikander points to several important aspects: when presenting YHWH as the one who sends the destructive hot winds, Hosea relates to the process in the development of the Israelite religion, when YHWH appropriated the drought-imagery once applied to Mot, and the Ugaritic cognates with the Hebrew מדבר have a connection with the death of Baal; Wikander, *Drought, Death, and the Sun*, 161–170.

[707] Van der Toorn, *Family Religion*, 336–337.

[708] For several meanings attached to the word "baal," see HALOT 1, 142–144.

human relationship aptly showed that YHWH was Israel's "baal," her husband and lord.

To my mind, the issue at stake are local cultic practices, because no charge of confusing YHWH with Baal is put on the king, i.e. on the official cult connected to the royal shrine. The worship of Baal-type deities may have involved practices, like rites associated with the dead, which, in propetic circles, were not considered as Yahwistic. In the sphere of family religion, Baal worship responded to the people's main concern, their daily needs. People were totally dependent on annual crops and fertility in all its aspects, i.e. concerning the land, humans and animals, and one their main concern was that the rains came on time. In their need of agricultural blessing, it is no wonder that they turned to the local manifestations of a deity believed to control the meteorological phenomenon, andvenerated them as the provider of the rain.[709]

The polemic against Baal(s) in Hosea is best understood as reflecting the beginning of the differentiation of YHWH from practices previously regarded as compatible with the worship of YHWH.[710] The concept of YHWH as Israel's true "Baal" was cherished in the circles in which Hosea's prophecies were produced and transmitted. They were the same northern circles which also cherished the tradition of the Exodus as the context in which the personal relationship between YHWH and Israel was established. As Rainer Albertz says, this relationship, connected with a historical event, developed a certain "intrinsic exclusiveness."[711] This "exclusiveness" obtained its formal expression in early covenants, influenced by ancient Hittite treaties, in which foreign relationships outside the Hittite empire were forbidden.[712] Therefore, I disagree with Kelle's suggestion that the term Baal(s) in Hosea 2 is used in a political sense, referring to Israel's illicit political alliances, the wife's metaphorical lovers, her "paramours," who take the place of the husband.[713] Political partners are spoken of with derivatives of the verb אהב (2:7, 9, 12, 14, 15; 8:9). Nevertheless, in the framework of a covenantal relationship, all "lovers," other deities and political allies, were illicit, and because both aspects – polical and religious – were included in the covenant, the consequences of the breach of the covenant were the same.

9:10 may carry a trace of an ancient tradition reflecting the encounter of the early worshippers of YHWH and the indigenous people in the Transjordan. 9:10 is often read in the light of Numbers 25:1–5, which recounts how Israelite men, enticed by Moabite women, perpetrated sexual immorality and worship of the Baal of Peor. At the background of this reading is the assumption that the fornication of the wife Israel in Hosea's imagery refers to Canaanite fertility rites, in which the Israelites joined right after their entry to the Transjordan. To my view, it is possible that the issue at stake is not about fertility rites but whatever the incident at Baal Peor was, it was a severe transgression against YHWH. Apart

[709] Van der Toorn, *Family Religion*, 240.
[710] See Smith, *Early History of God*, 189–190.
[711] Albertz, *History of Israelite Religion*, 175.
[712] Mendenhall (1954) 59.
[713] For the term "Baal" in Hosea, see Kelle, *Hosea 2*, 163–166.

from 9:10 and Numbers 25:1–5, the Baal Peor incident is mentioned in Joshua 22:17, Psalm 106:28 and Deuteronomy 4:3. In Joshua 22, the reference to the "sin of Peor" occurs in the narrative of the rebellious behavior of the Transjordanian tribes (Joshua 22:15–17); Psalm 106:28 speaks of how the Israelites "yoked" (צמד) themselves to the Baal of Peor and ate the sacrifices of the dead (מתים); Deuteronomy 4:3 points to the terrible consequences of the case with Baal Peor, which evokes the tradition preserved in Numbers 25. As for the extant form of Numbers 25, scholars have pointed out that the issue at stake there was the prohibition of intermarriage.[714] This motif of intermarriage may, however, be a later expansion to earlier biblical passages which refer to some other incident.[715] There is, however, a connection between apostasy and intermarriage since foreigners would lead the Israelites to worshipping foreign deities, in this particular case, the Baal of Peor.[716] It is, thus, possible that in Hosea there are traces of the ancient covenantal concept which prohibited Israelites from entering into a covenant, or alliance of kinship, with foreign nations. In ancient Hittite treaties, the gods acted as witnesses to international covenants and, therefore, the Israelites could not make covenants with foreign people since it meant recognizing their god(s) as witnesses and guarantors of the covenant.[717] Thus it is possible that the sin which caused Yahweh's anger was Israel's formal attachment by covenant to Baal Peor.[718] For the same reason, on the grounds of the concept of covenant, there is opposition to foreign alliances in 5:13; 7:11; 10:6, and 12:2, because

[714] See, e.g., Joseph Blenkinsopp, "The Baal Peor Episode Revisited (Num 25:1–18)," *Bib* 93 (2012) 86–97, who sees that Numbers 25 concerns the prohibition of intermarriage; Blenkinsopp dates the extant form of Numbers 25:1–5 to the Persian period. He points to a change in attitude towards the Midianites in Numbers 25: whereas a close kinship between the Israelites and the Midianites (cf. Moses's Midianite wife) was earlier accepted, the Aaronid author of the final form of the Baal Peor episode denied the Midianite connection before entry into the land. The earlier version of the episode may have dealt with a "covenant of kinship" between the Israelites and Midianites resident in Moab, sealed by marriage between high-status individuals from each of these lineages; the present form then displays the attitude of the Aaronid priesthood to intermarriage from the mid- to late-Achaemenid period. See also Rainer Albertz, "A Pentateuchal Redaction in the Book of Numbers? The Late Priestly Layers of Num 25–36," *ZAW* 125 (2013) 220–233, 222–223; according to Albertz, "it has become more and more apparent that the short scene about the apostasy with Baal-Peor is not part of an older source, but a rather late and complex non-priestly tradition, which was used by the priestly redactor together with the Phinehas episode for constructing a decisive crisis of apostasy and mixed-marriages just before the conquest of the land." See also David A. Pettit, "Expiating Apostasy: Baal Peor, Moses, and Intermarriage with a Midianite Woman," *JSOT* 41 (2018) 457–468; Lauren A. S. Monroe, "Phinehas' Zeal and the Death of Cozbi: Unearthing a Human Scapegoat Tradition in Numbers 25:1-18," *VT* 62 (2012) 211–231, and the references therein. Monroe's point is that the tradition in Numbers 25:1–5 takes the authority of Moses as given, but already in Numbers 25:6 his role is diminished in comparison with Phinehas, the priest of Aaronite lineage.

[715] Young Hye Kim, "The Finalization of Num 25, 1–5," *ZAW* 122 (2010) 260–264, concludes that although the present form of Numbers 25:1–5 is the product of priestly redaction, which is most clearly manifested in the chiastic structure the passage, built on a pre-Deuteronomistic stratum in 25:4a.

[716] Pettit (2018) 462.

[717] Mendenhall (1954) 60, 64.

[718] Polzin (1969) 227–240, here 230.

foreign gods were needed as witnesses, which meant the recognition of their functionality.

It is likely that at the time of Josiah's reform, the practices related to family religion were brought under tighter official control because they were influenced by foreign religious practices during Assyrian dominion. But, the presentation of Josiah's cultic measures in 2 Kings 23:4–24 raises the question of their motive. One motive may have been Josiah's anti-Assyrian stand and purge of the cult from some Assyrian religious elements which were incorporated into the cult during Judah's long vassalage to Assyria. Although Assyria may not have directly imposed its religion on vassal states,[719] it is difficult to think that there would have been no Assyrian influence at all, since some cultic measures taken by Josiah refer to Assyrian practices such as the horses dedicated to the sun (2 Kings 23:11). The Assyrian influence may not have been as strong in Judah as in the former kingdom of Israel, where the practice of Assyrian kings of resettling people in conquered areas had resulted in a variegated syncretism among the cults imported by the new settlers (2 Kings 17:29–34).[720] This notwithstanding, we have to ask why Josiah undertook a cultic reform by attacking not only imported cultic practices but also taking a stand against centuries-old local cultic practices.[721] The long-standing tradition had allowed the worship of YHWH in different places, and there are no Near Eastern analogies that would explain why the reform of Josiah was directed against local cultic practices.[722] Reinhard Kratz refers to the possibility that Deuteronomy 6:4–5 was directed against the local differentiation of YHWH, and was meant "to bind the northern Israelites, who had lost a religious and political home, to Judah and Jerusalem."[723] It is also possible that Josiah was instigated by the religious circles in Jerusalem or elsewhere in Judah, who had their roots in the former northern kingdom, and who hoped that returning to ancient traditional concepts would save Judah from the fate of Israel.

3.4. Asherah in Hosea?

The word אשרה, "Asherah," does not occur in Hosea, but because of the prominent role of Asherah as the object of criticism elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, the possibility that it is implicitly referred to in Hosea must be taken into consideration.

[719] Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 219; Frahm, "The Neo-Assyrian period (ca. 1000-609 BCE)," in *Companion to Assyria*, 245; Liverani, *Israel's History*, 151.
[720] Liverani, *Israel's history*, 151.
[721] For this, see Reinhard G. Kratz, "The Idea of Cultic Centralization and Its Supposed Near Eastern Analogies," in Kratz and Spieckermann (eds.), *One God – One Cult – One Nation*, 121–144.
[722] Ibid.
[723] Ibid.

The use of the term Asherah in biblical texts is ambiguous. It is used both in singular and plural forms (אשׁרות/אשׁרים), and with and without the definite article.[724] This ambiguity has generated various proposals for the meaning and function of Asherah. Asherah has been understood as being a cultic object, a wooden pole, or a stylized tree, which may have been a symbol of the goddess with the same name. Regarding Hosea, the mention of עץ and מקל in particular in 4:12 has raised the question of whether they, as wooden items, have anything to do with what in the Hebrew Bible is known as "Asherah." This is because Asherah is associated with trees and wooden materials as indicated by the verbs used in connection with the word. Asherah can, for example, be כרת, "cut down," (2 Kings 18:4), גדע, "hewn" (Deuteronomy 7:5), and שׂרף, "burned with fire" (Deuteronomy 12:3). In Deuteronomy 16:2, Asherah equals a tree, "an asherah, or any tree," כל־ אשׁרה עץ; furthermore, the use of the verb נטע, "plant," suggests that Asherah is a living tree.[725] Some other meanings have also been connected with Asherah, such as "holy place," "temple," and even "wife," and "consort,"[726] and thus it has been understood as not being not a name, but rather a title of the primary goddess of the pantheon, the female counterpart of the male high-god.[727] The fact that there was some kind of confusion concerning what Asherah really means is evident on the basis of the LXX, in which there is the translation ἄλσος, a "grove." This attests to a long-standing association of Asherah with trees, but perhaps without exact knowledge what Asherah had been; the phenomenon of sacred groves in Hellenistic religion may have influenced the translation.[728]

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[724] Exodus 34:13 (אשׁריו); Deuteronomy 7:5 (אשׁריהם), 12:3 (אשׁריהם), 16:21 (אשׁרה); Judges 3:7 (האשׁרות); 6:25 (האשׁרה), 26 (האשׁרה), 28 (האשׁרה), 30 (האשׁרה); 1 Kings 14:15 (אשׁריהם), 23 (אשׁריהם), 15:13 (אשׁרה), 16:33 (האשׁרה), (אשׁרים), 18:19 (האשׁרה); 2 Kings 13:6 (האשׁרה); 17:10 (אשׁרים), 16 (אשׁרה); 18:4 (האשׁרה); 21:3 (אשׁרה), 7 (האשׁרה); 23:4 (אשׁרה), 6 (האשׁרה), 7 (אשׁרה), 14 (אשׁרים), 15 (אשׁרה); 2 Chronicles 14:3 (האשׁרים); 15:16 (אשׁרה), 17:6 (האשׁרים); 19:3 (האשׁרות); 24:18 (האשׁרים); 31:1 (האשׁרים); 33:3 (אשׁרות), 19 (האשׁרים); 34:3 (האשׁרים), 4 (האשׁרים), 7 (האשׁרים); Isaiah 17:8 (האשׁרים); 27:9 (אשׁרים); Jeremiah 17:2 (אשׁריהם); Micah 5:13 (אשׁריך).

[725] For a detailed discussion and a complete classification of references indicating the association of Asherahwith the trees, see Steve A. Wiggins, "Of Asherahs and Trees: Some Methodological Questions," *JANER* 1 (2002) 158–187.

[726] Benjamin Sass, "On epigraphic Hebrew *'ŠR* and **'ŠRH*, and on Biblical Asherah*," *Transeuphratène* 46 (2014) 47–66; Sass suggests that on the grounds of Phoenician and Aramaic inscriptions, אשׁרה can refer to "holy place, temple," and to various other "places" and "traces," but never to a deity, cult-object, symbol or tree, 47–66. According to Sass, the transformation of אשׁרה from "temple" into idolatrous objects, possibly also the goddess Asherah, could have stemmed from the Deuteronomists' opposition to 'YHWH's Asherah', the divinized temple of Jerusalem gaining so much in prestige as to compete with the supremacy of YHWH himself.

[727] Tilde Binger, *Asherah. Goddesses in Ugarit, Israel and the Old Testament (*JSOTSSp 232; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997) 145–148. Binger points out that understanding the word as a title, explains 1) the use of suffixes on her name, 2) the way the word could have been used as a divine name and an ordinary noun, and 3) why the goddess could be called the same thing in cultures chronologically and geographically separated from one another.

[728] Smith, *Early History of God*, 115.

3.4.1. Hosea 4:12–14. Worship of a goddess or divination

4:12 *My people consult his wood[729] his staff informs him.[730]*
For a spirit of fornication has led astray,[731]
and they have fornicated from underneath[732] their God.

4:13 *On the tops of the mountains they sacrifice,*
and upon the hills they burn incense,[733]
under the oak and the poplar and the terebinth,[734]
because her[735] shadow is good.
Therefore, your daughters fornicate,
and your daughters-in-law[736] commit adultery.

4:14 *I will not punish your daughters because they fornicate,*
and your daughters-in-law for committing adultery,
for they[737] go off with[738] the prostitutes,[739]
and they sacrifice with הקדֹשׁות.[740]

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[729] In the phrase בעצו ישׁאל the verb שׁאל means "to consult," and points to a technical consultation of the oracle; HALOT 2, 1372; עץ denotes "trees as a collective," "an individual tree," "wood" as material, or "a stick;" here, as in Jeremiah 2:27, it is regarded as pointing to a wooden idol; HALOT 1, 864. Deviating from the MT, the LXX reads ἐν συμβόλοις ἐπηρώτων, "they inquired by means of tokens;" Muraoka, 646.

[730] מקל in the phrase ומקלו יגיד means "a rod," "a staff" of a wanderer or of a shepherd, or a staff used for divination; HALOT 1, 627. The verb יגיד, Hiphil of נגד, means "to tell, inform;" the LXX seems to understand the phrase as referring to divination, since it reads καὶ ἐν ῥάβδοις αὐτοῦ ἀπήγγελλον αὐτῷ, in which the verb ἀπαγγέλλω has a meaning "to tell in the way of explaining or interpreting a mystery or riddle;" Muraoka, 62.

[731] The Hiphil of תעה, "to err," so, here "to cause to err;" also "to cause to go astray;" HALOT 2, 1767. The verb התעה is without object, and BHS proposes the suffix עָם־; but in agreement with the MT, the LXX does not have an object either.

[732] מתחת, "from underneath;" HALOT 2, 1723.

[733] The Piel of קטר, "to make a sacrifice, go up in smoke," is used of the official as well as of pagan cults, accompanied by incense; therefore, the translation "burn incense;" HALOT 2, 1095.

[734] אלון means "oak;" לבנה refers to a white tree of a sort, perhaps "storax-tree" or "white poplar;" אלה means a massive tree, often translated as "terebinth."

[735] The suffix is feminine singular.

[736] כלה means also "a bride" but here "draughters-in-law" fits better.

[737] "They" is in the 3rd person plural masculine, and therefore, for the sake of clarity, some English Bible translations, like NKJV and NIV, have "the men themselves."

[738] In the LXX, the verb συμφύρω, "to associate with;" Muraoka, 649.

[739] The LXX has the verb ἐπισκέψωμαι, "with a view to helping;" Muraoka, 279.

[740] הקדֹשׁות is often understood as referring to "cult prostitutes;" HALOT 2, 1075. The LXX translates קדֹשׁה as a participle form of the verb τελέω, "to consecrate to deity;" Muraoka, 675, suggests the translation "devotees" here. As Glenny points out, the participle τετελεσμένων occurs in the LXX in Numbers 25:5 and Psalm 105:28 (106:28 in the MT) in the context of ancient Israel's involvement in the Baal cult; Glenny, *Septuagint Commentary Series: Hosea*, 98.

People without understanding[741] *will be ruined.*

Hosea 4 is a difficult chapter, which is characterized by lack of unity with changes in the form of the person concerning those who are accused. Additionally YHWH speaks in the 1st person as well as being spoken of in the 3rd person. The chapter begins with YHWH's contention with Israel. The reason for the contention is that there is no truth, אמת, no mercy, חסד, or knowledge of YHWH, דעת אלהים, in the land (4:1). All these are covenantal concepts, and their omission has led to swearing, lying, murdering, stealing and adultery (4:2), which have severe implications in nature (4:3). The accusations against the priest are presented in 4:4–10, after which the serious cultic accusations are targeted at the people in 4:11–14; the speaker is YHWH. There are also many intertextual links between 5:1–7 and 4:4–19; and concerning the passage under examination, the concept of "spirit of fornication," רוח זנונים, occurs in 5:4 and 4:12.

4:12–14 begins with a statement that the people are consulting "wood," עץ, and "staff," מקל. The word עץ can be used in several meanings related to wooden items, including an individual tree, trees in plural, wood as a material, pieces of wood, or sticks, and also as referring to wooden idols. In the latter sense, the word עץ occurs in a formulaic phrase "wood and stone," עץ and אבן, e.g., in Deuteronomy 4:28; 28:36, 64; 29:17; 2 Kings 19:18; Jeremiah 2:27; 3:9, and Ezekiel 20:32, all of which refer to idolatry; the word אבן in the phrase most likely denotes a standing stone, מצבה.[742] In Jeremiah 2:27, עץ and אבן are addressed as "father" and "mother," suggesting that the female and male deity are meant.[743] Therefore, it is possible to think that the use of the word עץ in 4:12 is an implicit reference to a worship of a female deity. If the word אבן denotes a standing stone, מצבה, then עץ is an Asherah pole.[744] Against this background, it seems likely that the issue at stake in 4:12 is the Asherah cult with connection with trees.

The theme of "fornication" which was introduced in Hosea 1–3 continues in 4:12. The verb זנה is common in Hosea, and with its derivatives it occurs 16 times in the book. In the Hebrew Bible, it has been used in both a metaphorical and literal sense. Metaphorically, זנה relates to trade and politics and points to having questionable dealings with various nations, and in cultic language, it refers to

[741] The verb בין is usually translates as "understand," but its basic meaning may be related to distinguish; cf. the word בֵּין, which denotes "between;" HALOT 1, 122–123. The LXX may have an error here, as it reads ὁ λαὸς ὁ συνίων; here should be οὐ συνίων; see Glenny, *Septuagint Commentary Series: Hosea*, 42.

[742] Nicholas Wyatt, "Word of Tree and Whisper of Stone: El's Oracle to King Keret (Kirta), and the Problem of the Mechanics of Its Utterance," *VT* 57 (2007) 483–510, 500.

[743] Saul M. Olyan, "The Cultic Confessions of Jer 2, 27a," *ZAW* 99 (1987) 254–259. According to Olyan, Jeremiah 2:27a, Deuteronomy16:21–22, and the evidence from Kuntillet 'Ajrûd taken together suggest a consort relationship between YHWH and Asherah. Olyan regards Jeremiah 2:27a as the only example in Israelite literature (including the epigraphic sources) where Asherah is described as a mother goddess. Thus, Olyan rejects the belief that in the Iron Age Israel Asherah as a cult symbol had lost its primary associations with the goddess and had been wholly or almost wholly assimilated to YHWH, perhaps functioning as his own symbol.

[744] Wyatt (2007) 483–510, here 500.

disputable intercourse with deities other than YHWH, i.e. idolatry. The literal meaning of זנה is to commit prostitution by profession or to engage in extramarital sex.[745] In 4:12, the use of זנה and its derivatives relates to illegal cultic practices. The "spirit of fornication" has led the people astray, to "fornicate from under their God;" the locational expression מתחת, "from under me," denotes to the relationship between YHWH and Israel, in which Israel, as a wife, is the subordinate.[746]

In 4:13 the term "fornication" refers to a cultic offense of a sort associated with hill-top rituals and sacred groves. The mountains tops, ראשי ההרים, and hills, גבעות, denote natural heights, unlike the term במה, "high place," which occurs in 10:8. The expressions "on the tops of the mountains," "upon the hills," and "under oak and poplar and terebinth" resemble the phrase "on every high hill and under every green tree," which is a common stereotypic phrase in the Hebrew Bible. The phrase evokes Deuteronomy 12:2, in which both mountains and hills are mentioned.

4:14 first states that the daughters and daughters-in-law will not be punished. The verse addresses males who go off with prostitutes (זנות) and who sacrifice with קדשות. The words זנה and קדשה are used in parallel, but this does not indicate that they are necessarily the same.[747] Sexual fertility rites associated with "cult prostitutes" in this context may be based on a misunderstanding of the word קדשה.[748] The corresponding term to the word קדשה is the Ugaritic term *qdšm*, which refers to all non-priestly temple personnel dedicated to the deity but not to prostitution.[749] It is possible that the function of the *qdšm* in Ugarit was related to divination, and only later was their role associated with prostitution.[750] The confusion may be due to the vocalization in the word *qadesh* and understanding the word קדשה as a derivative from a word denoting "to be holy;" thus the

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[745] For the use of the verb זנה see, e.g., Abma, *Bonds of Love*; Irene E. Riegner, *The Vanishing Hebrew Harlot: The Adventures of the Hebrew Stem znh* (New York: Peter Lang, 2009).

[746] See Riegner, *Vanishing*, 105–106, 216; Riegner sees זנה as a comprehensive term for the complex of non-Yahwist religious praxis, including ceremonies, deities, religious sites, beliefs, and participants; the negative assessment of זנה as a reference to non-Yahwist religious praxis was a by-product of a trend towards the exclusive worship of one deity.

[747] Kristel Nyberg, "Sacred Prostitution in the Biblical World?" in Martti Nissinen and Risto Uro (eds.), *Sacred Marriages: The Divine: Human Sexual Metaphor from Sumer to Early Christianity* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2008) 305–320, here 312.

[748] Andersen and Freedman read the word as "sacred prostitutes;" *Hosea*, 343. Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 156, translates the word as "cult-women."

[749] Karin Adams, "Metaphor and Dissonance: A Reinterpretation of Hosea 4:13–14", *JBL* 127 (2008) 291–305, here 304. Adams sees that the קדשות were women with a cultic role, who later became regarded as non-Yahwistic. Van der Toorn explains that women who did not have any money of their own, in order to get money included in the obligations of the sacred vows they had taken, practised prostitution and, thus, van der Toorn's conclusion explains why it is only the women who are mentioned in Hosea; van der Toorn (1989) 203; see also the comment in Eidevall, *Grapes in the Desert*, 59 note 46.

[750] Johannes de Moor, "The Holy Ones," in Göran Eidevall and Blaženka Scheuer (eds.), *Enigmas and Images. Studies in Honor of Tryggve N. D. Mettinger* (ConBOT 58; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2011) 203–212, here especially 206–208.

masculine *qdšym* became understood as "holy men," rather than understanding them as some kind of priestly assistants.[751]

3.4.2. Conclusions

As already discussed, the polemics against the worship of Asherah in Hosea are implicit, but it is reasonable to assume that in addition to the worship of Baal(s), a goddess was also worshiped in Israel. There are no biblical texts which corroborate that YHWH had a spouse, but in the inscriptions originating from the 9th–8th centuries from Kuntillet 'Ajrud and Khirbet el-Qom, Asherah is mentioned alongside YHWH.[752] As I have remarked earlier in paragraph 1.3.1., in the time of Jeroboam II, Kuntillet 'Ajrud was located on the trade route that was controlled by Israel, attesting to a connection between Israel and Kuntillet 'Ajrud.

There are various reconstructions for the inscriptions. In the Kuntillet 'Ajrud inscriptions, most scholars, however, read two blessings, "I bless you by the YHWH of Samaria and by his asherah" (Inscription I), and "I bless you by the YHWH of Teman, and by his Asherah (Inscription II)." Although both inscriptions connect Asherah to YHWH, opinions diverge concerning whether Asherah refers to a goddess, perhaps the consort of YHWH, or whether it denotes a cult object. Scholars who regard Asherah as a cult object, base their argument on the possessive suffix, which is usually not taken by personal names in classical Hebrew.[753] However, the final ה in the names is not necessarily a possessive suffix but a locative-accusative ending, and the inscriptions may refer to a connection between YHWH and a geographical location "Samaria's/Teman's YHW," and "Samaria's/Teman's Asherah," a concept that is compatible with the existence of several YHWH sanctuaries in Israel.[754] In the problematic Khirbet el-Qom inscription, there is a blessing by or from YHWH, and some scholars have read Asherah there as well.[755]

Although YHWH is not said to have a spouse, the positioning of the Asherah poles and standing stones, מצבות, adjacent to each other point to a presentation of a divine male-female duality typical of the Near Eastern religions.[756] Many

[751] Edward Lipinski, "Cult Prostitution in Ancient Israel?" *BAR* 40 (2014) 49–56, here 52.

[752] Kuntillet 'Ajrud has been assumed to be a way station, where travelers rested and made votive offering before continuing on, but, according to Na'aman and Lissovsky, it may not have been merely a way station, but also a place with some sanctity, due to a prominent sacred tree (or a sacred grove) in its vicinity and, thus, the association of the goddess Asherah with sacred trees could explain the elements discovered there; in Nadav Na'aman and Nurit Lissovsky, "Kuntillet 'Ajrud, Sacred Trees and the Asherah," *TA* 35 (2008) 186–208.

[753] Binger, *Asherah*,107, points out that even the most rigid grammatical rules may have exceptions, in religious language in particular suffixes could be added to proper names; on the other hand, see Binger's suggestion that אשׁרה is a title, not a name.

[754] Ibid., 107–108.

[755] For the different readings, see Binger, *Asherah*, 94–109.

[756] Albertz, *History of Israelite Religion*, 85; this duality appears also in Jeremiah 2:27.

biblical texts, e.g. Exodus 34:13; Deuteronomy 7:5; 12:3; 16:21–22; 1 Kings 14:23; 2 Kings 23:14; Micah 5:12–14, and 2 Chronicles 14:2, show that אשׁרה and מצבה were set up side by side. This is also evidenced by archaeological findings at Lackish, where the source of the ashes found in front of מצבה is most likely אשׁרה.[757] However, regarding מצבות, this may not have been their original purpose, which is indicated by the fact that there is no polemic against מצבות in 3:4, but rather that they are listed more as a legitimate cultic object. 10:1 does not express any explicit polemic against standing stones either when it says that Israel "made good מצבות;" the phrase, as Zevit suggests, may refer to some kind of artificial dressing of the stones.[758] It is not exactly clear what the cultic role of the standing stones were; they were probably not equated with the deity, but somehow assured the god's presence.[759] According to Tryggve Mettinger, מצבות were the most original aniconic cultic symbols in West Semitic cults, and part of the Yahwistic cult from the very beginning.[760] The legitimacy of מצבות is indicated not only by Hosea but by many other biblical texts as well; in Genesis 28:18–22; 35:14, for example, it is stated that Jacob set up מצבה in Bethel.

John Day has pointed to Julius Wellhausen's original proposal of that the phrase אני עניתי ואשׁורנו in 14:9, which is usually read as "It is I who answer and look after him," can be emended to "I am his Anat and his Asherah."[761] This reading is supported by the fact that in the same verse YHWH compares himself with a tree, which is unique in the Hebrew Bible.[762] Interestingly, Baruch Margalit has noted that אשׁרה was originally a common North-West Semitic noun meaning "wife, consort," literally "she-who-follows-in-the-footsteps of her husband," and thus, the metaphoric use of the term "follow in someone's footsteps" means the marital fidelity of a wife to her husband and, thus, to show her fidelity and loyalty to YHWH, Israel should "walk behind" her husband YHWH – in other words, Israel should be his אשׁרה.[763] This makes good sense in light of the marriage imagery used in Hosea to depict the relationship between YHWH and Israel. This being the case, Hosea combines the polemic against Baal with that against Asherah – Baal is the "wrong husband" and Asherah the "wrong wife." The real wife, "Asherah," is Israel, and the real husband, "Baal," is YHWH. This also implies that in Hosea, the close connection between Asherah and YHWH is taken as obvious. In the Canaanite pantheon, El's spouse was the goddess Athirat, which in the Hebrew Bible is equated with Asherah, and at the time when YHWH was equated with El, he could have appropriated El's consort.[764] As stated earlier,

[757] Zevit, *Religions of Ancient Israel*, 263.
[758] Zevit, *Religions of Ancient Israel*, 259.
[759] Ibid., 260–261.
[760] Mettinger, *No Graven Image*, 193, see also the discussion on page 174.
[761] Day (1986) 385–408, here 404–405, and references therein.
[762] Ibid., here 404.
[763] Baruch Margalith, "The Meaning and Significance of Asherah," *VT* 40 (1990) 264–297; see, however, Day, *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan*, 62.
[764] Day, *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan*, 47.

however, there are no biblical texts which speak of Asherah as YHWH's consort, although many texts do indicate that Asherah was understood as a goddess.[765]

The mention of wooden objects in Hosea may also be related to the polemical use of עץ and אבן in other biblical texts. The oracular function of trees and stones is known from Near Eastern and Ugaritic sources.[766] As for the religious significance of trees, Genesis 12:6–8 refers to the "Oak of Moreh, אלון מורה which may have been a tree giving oracles, since מורה can be read as "one who teaches," or "teacher."[767] The reference to a sacred tree shows that an ancient tradition is at stake. Another ancient oracular practice, accepted in Israel, was the use of the lots Urim and Thummin, which are mentioned in 1 Samuel 14: 41, for example. A question asked with the help of the Urim and Thummin was a binary question with an answer of "yes" or "no;" presumably one of the Urim and Thummin lots was designated "yes" and the other "no."[768] According to Deuteronomy 33:8, Urim and Thummin were under the control of the Levites, and thus their use was not connected with the practices in the family religion.

In Hosea, however, the use of the verbs שׁאל and נגד in 4:12–14 may point to divination of a sort, practiced in the sphere of family religion, since both women and men are said to have participated. Perhaps 4:12– 14 refers to an occasion of sacrificial meals celebrated by families at local sanctuaries.[769] Divination was related to the worship of Asherah, since wooden poles, Asherahs, as cultic objects sacred to the goddess Asherah, were associated with a kind of an oracular tradition.[770]

At the time of Josiah's reform, the practices related to family religion were brought under tighter official control because they were influenced by foreign religious practices during the Assyrian dominion.[771] This also explains why the pairing of Baal, Asherah and the host of heaven can be understood as more like a general reference to idolatry (2 Kings 23:4). The term Asherah occurs in the context of Josiah's reform in 2 Kings 23: 4, 7, 14, 15, which indicate that the question pertains to a goddess.[772] Conversely, 2 Kings 23:6 speaks of the Asherah pole which was burned, and thus it denotes a wooden symbol of the goddess,

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[765] In 2 Kings 23:4, Asherah is positioned between two other divinities, Baal and the host of heaven, suggesting that Asherah is understood as a divine being; in 1 Kings 15:13, Maakah is said to have done a horrible thing (מפלצת) to Asherah, and given that some kind of cult object is at stake, it implies that Asherah is not an object in itself, but a goddess to whom the object was made; 1 Kings 18:19 speaks of the prophets of Baal and Asherah; 2 Kings 13:6 refers to the Asherah in Samaria despite of Jehu's attack against the Baal worship and Baal's prophets.

[766] As Wyatt mentions, "two of the chief iconic forms used in Israelite religion, to judge from the reiterated attacks on them, the ʾašērāh and the maṣṣēbāh, were precisely in the media of wood (ʿēṣ) and stone (ʾeben) respectively;" Wyatt (2007) 483–510, here 498.

[767] See also Genesis 13:18; 21:33; 35:8.

[768] Herbert B. Huffmon, "Priestly Divination in Israel," in Meyers and O'Connor (eds.), *The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth*, 355–359, here 356.

[769] Albertz and Schmitt, *Family and Household Religion*, 4, 63.

[770] Wyatt has pointed to the possibility that the Asherah cult was the means by which royal oracles were delivered in Israel and Judah; Wyatt (2007) 483–510, here 505 note 76.

[771] So Albetrtz and Schmitt, *Family and Household Religion*, 4.

[772] Day, *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan*, 43.

perhaps the pole which Manasseh is said to have made and put in the Temple of Jerusalem in 2 Kings 21:3, 7. It is, however, difficult to say with any certainty how the individual terms were conceptualized at the time of Josiah and from then on, and goddessees were called by various names. Jeremiah 7:18; 44:15–28 refers to a goddess, "Queen of Heaven," whose cult included acts like burning incense, pouring libations and baking cakes, and on the basis of Jeremiah, the worship of this goddess was popular in the sphere of family piety. That a goddess once had been worshiped alongside YHWH is also indicated by the worship of the goddesses Anat-Yahu and Anat-Bethel alongside YHWH at Elephantine, which indicates a continuation of the worship of Anat in pre-exilic Israel.[773]Moreover, it is possible that Asherah did not disappear but looms in the background of the imagery of a personified Wisdom as a concept of the "Tree of life" in Proverbs 3:18. To my understanding, the 8th century prophecy underpins 4:12–14, and the condemnation of idolatry is likely to be related to the worship of Asherah and divination. Holladay has suggested that 4:13, as an authentic prophetic saying, is the origin of all the other biblical sayings relating to idolatrous worship on high places.[774] Nissinen, however, objects to Holladay's view and concludes that Hosea 4:11–14 brings together motifs like "sacrifice," "make offerings," "hills," "mountains," "trees," "fornication" from different sources (Deuteronomy 12:2; Jeremiah 2:10; 3:6; 1 Kings 22:44; 2 Kings 16:4) in the fashion of the postexilic text in Isaiah 57:5–7, and therefore, on the basis of the accumulation of phrases, Nissinen dates 4:11–14 to the postexilic period.[775] The existence of contradicting opinions indicates the complexity of dating the phraseology which occurs in many biblical texts. It is obvious that much of the textual material in Hosea has been formulated and finalized by the later Deuteronomists, but nevertheless, I think that the (re)use of typically deuteronomistic formulations does dot exclude their earlier origin.

It seems to me that Karin Adams is correct in highlighting that the sexually loaded language in Hosea should be read metaphorically as pointing to illicit cultic practices, and in 4:12–14, the women – along with the men – are accused of cultic apostasy.[776] Thus it is possible to say that both the males and females were "fornicating," and somehow the males are regarded as being guiltier since they had associated themselves with הקדֵשׁות and הקדֵשׁים. The issue at stake may by of a sort of sacred prostitution, but whether it ever existed in ancient Israel remains a matter of debate. As far as הקדֵשׁים are concerned, 2 Kings 23:7 suggests that their cultic role may have involved sexual services, as the verse refers to specific "houses" connected to the temple. Be this as it may, it is reasonable to conclude that קדֵשׁה refers to some devotee to a form of cult, which was regarded as non-Yahwistic and which was forbidden to the Israelites (Deuteronomy 23:18–19).

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[773] Day, *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan*, 227.
[774] See William L. Holladay, "On Every High Hill and Under Every Green Tree," *VT* 11 (1961) 170–176, here 176.
[775] Nissinen, *Prophetie*, 214–215; also Yee considers 4:13 as redactorial; *Composition and Tradition*, 166.
[776] Adams (2008) 291–305.

3.5. Bethel and its cult in Hosea

The name Bethel, בית־אל, is mentioned twice in Hosea, in 10:15 and 12:5, although the mention of Bethel in 10:15 is disputable, since the LXX reads οἶκος τοῦ Ισραηλ, "House of Israel," which is also suggested by BHS. In 4:15, 5:8 and 10:5, the name Beth-aven, בית און, is used. It has usually been read as "House of Iniquity" or "House of nothingness;" this derogatory reading of Beth-aven (אָוֶן בֵּית) likely derives from Amos 5:5, which says that Bethel will become אָוֶן, "nothingness."[777] The terms "Bethel" and "Beth-aven" are, however, names of separate localities, situated close to each other, as Joshua 7:2 indicates. The reading of Beth-aven in a pejorative way seems to be a later word play with the original name, which may have been בֵּית אָוֹן, Beth-on, "House of Strength."[778] Another possibility is that the name was the "House of the Stone Pillar," deriving from the standing stone that Jacob erected there as indicated in Genesis 28:18; 35:14.[779] The original meaning of the name, be it referring to strength or to a standing stone, explains why biblical texts like Joshua 7:2, 18:12, Judges 5:14, and Samuel 13:5, 14:23, mention Beth-aven without any negative connotation.

The names Bethel and Beth-aven can also be explained in the light of Nadav Na'aman's study showing that many Israelite cult places were built at some distance from a near-by town, which explains why they were given a different name.[780] Beth-aven could have specifically denoted Bethel's sanctuary located to the east of the town itself, but the name Bethel was used too, probably because it was particularly appropriate as it denoted "House of God".[781] Similarly Moreh, known from its sacred tree (Genesis 12:6), was located north or northwest of

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[777] As Shalom M. Paul mentions in his commentary, the translation "nothingness" is preferred to "wickedness," since only then will the pun be correctly understood. According to Paul, Amos reinterprets אֵל as אַל; Paul also points to the LXX, which in Amos 5:5 reads ὡς οὐχ ὑπάρχουσα, "like that which is not;" in Shalom M. Paul, *Amos. A Commentary on the Book of Amos* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991) 164.

[778] Reading may be a matter of pronunciation, so R. B. Coote, who points out that in the north the words אָוֹן and אָוֶן were pronounced identically; see Coote (1971) 389–402, here 393. As for the LXX, it has the transliteration Βαιθων in Joshua 18:12 and in 1 Samuel 13:5, 14:23; τῷ οἴκῳ Ων in Hosea 4:15, 5:8, and 10:15, but Βαιθηλ in Hosea 12:5; the word אוֹן occurs in Hosea 12:4, 9 denoting "strength, wealth," further demonstrating the use of a word play.

[779] Na'aman (1987) 13–21, here 14; see also Ernst Axel Knauf, "Beth-aven," *Bib* 65 (1984) 251–253.

[780] According to Na'aman, this also suggests that there was no continuity between Canaanite temples and Israelite cultic sites; Na'aman, (1987) 13–21, here 14, 19–21. Unfortunately, there is still uncertainty concerning the precise location of Bethel and Beth-aven, since archaeological findings have not explicitly confirmed the sites. For a summary of the archaeological findings related to Bethel, see, e.g., Gomes, *Sanctuary of Bethel*, 2–7; Blenkinsopp (2003) 93–107; Knauf, "Bethel: The Israelite Impact on Judean Language and Literature," in Lipschits and Oeming (eds.), *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period*, 291–350; Klaus Koenen, *Bethel. Geschichte, Kult und Theologie* (OBO 192; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003).

[781] Na'aman (1987) 13–21, here 17.

ancient Shechem, at the foot of Mount Ebal, and many of the traditions relating to a cultic place near Shechem refer to this sacred site.[782]

The town Bethel was located close to the southern border between the Ephraimite and Benjaminite territories (Joshua 16:1–2). Bethel appears in the story of Abraham in Genesis 12:8, which recounts how Abraham put up his tent in a place located between Bethel and Ai and built an altar there. Bethel has a central position in the tradition of Jacob too. In Genesis 28:11–20 it is told how Jacob reached a certain place, מקם, where he stopped for the night, and had a dream, in which he saw the Lord. He set up a stone pillar, מצבה, and renamed the place, formerly Luz, Bethel. This narrative can be regarded as an Israelite cult-foundation legend of the sanctuary at Bethel, and it also features in Hosea (12:5), which connects Bethel with a particular tradition of weeping at Bethel. In Bethel, there was an Oak of Weeping (Genesis 35:8), and the Israelite tribes wept there before going to war with Benjamin (Judges 20:23, 26; 21:2). The Elijah-Elisha narrative in 2 Kings 2 is also connected with Bethel. Thus, in light of these originally northern traditions, which provide no hint that the cult in Bethel is in any way idolatrous, we have to ask why there is an ironical attitude towards the sanctuary in Hosea, and what exactly kindled the prophetic animosity to the sanctuary. Bethel is given sharp criticism in Amos too. Amos 3:14 is a prophecy of the destruction of the altars of Bethel, and Amos 4:4 is a parody of an address to a cultic congregation in Gilgal and Bethel.[783] In Amos 5:5 there is a prohibition against seeking Bethel, entering into Gilgal, and crossing over to Beer-Sheba. The verse evokes Hosea 4:15, as will be discussed below. In Amos 7:10–17, there is a report of a conflict between the prophet Amos and and Amaziah, the priest of Bethel. The date of these textual passages is problematic, however, but they are attributed to the prophetic tradition at least in part.[784] As Eidevall, in the context of his discussion of 4:4, points out, the condemnation of northern sanctuaries did not need to be "inner-cultic," but the condemnation of cultic sites "would rather seem to be part of the divine punishment."[785] I think Eidevall is correct when he concludes that Amos's condemnation of the sanctuaries may be an expression of the idea that YHWH has abandoned the northern sanctuaries, and the reason therefore why the cult is meaningless is because the relationship between the worshippers and YHWH was broken.[786] Overall, the condemnation of Bethel fits in well with the ideology of the reform of Josiah, but for different ideological reasons. Josiah's idea of cult centralization involved the concept of the superiority of the Jerusalem Temple, and by desecrecating the altar of the sanctuary (2 Kings 23:15), Bethel was cheated out of its position as a sanctuary. The prophetic

[782] Na'aman (1987) 13–21, here 20.
[783] Eidevall, *Amos*, 141.
[784] See Eidevall, *Amos*, 134–135, 141–143, 156–157, 202–213; Hadjiev, *Amo*s, 162–163, 144–145, 147, 76–95.
[785] Eidevall, *Amos*, 142.
[786] Eidevall, *Amos*, 142. As for Hosea, Emmerson – and correctly, I think – suggests that in Hosea there is no condemnation of the sanctuary itself but rather it is the worshipers' apostasy which profanes the sanctuary; see Emmerson, *Hosea*, 124–138.

criticism of Bethel justified Josiah's measures amongst those circles who never had given up the idea that the northern kingdom would be free from its obligation to the Jerusalem Temple.[787] Since Bethel still functioned in the 6th century, it is obvious that the "anti-Bethel" attitude in Hosea was read against the rivalry between Bethel and Jerusalem.

On the whole, the issue of Bethel and its cult is an intricate issue, with many uncertainties concerning the exact nature of the cult practised there. In the Deuteronomistic History, the polemic against the sanctuary of Bethel emerges in 1 Kings 12:26–33 with the account of Jeroboam ben Nebat's, or Jeroboam I's, actions, and the sins of Jeroboam then, according to 2 Kings 17:21–23, became the reason why the northern kingdom of Israel fell and the people were exiled. A strong anti-Bethel sentiment characterized the policy of Josiah's reform as well, and is reflected in 1 Kings 13:1–5 and 2 Kings 23:15.

In what now follows, I examine the texts connected with Bethel and its cult, and seek to elucidate where the criticism towards Bethel in Hosea arose and why it was appropriated in the time of Josiah to support the policy of the refom.

3.5.1. Hosea 4:14–15. Do not go to Beth-aven

4:14 *Will I not punish your daughters because they fornicate,*
and your daughters-in-law for that they commit adultery,
because they go off with the prostitutes,
and they sacrifice with הקדֵשׁות?
People without understanding will be ruined.

4:15 *If you, Israel, fornicate,*[788]
let not Judah become guilty[789].
Do not go to Gilgal, do not go up to Beth-aven,
do not swear by the living YHWH[790].

4:15 continues the theme of fornication from 4:14, discussed earlier. 4:15 speaks of Israel's fornication, i.e. its apostasy, in the first clause of the verse, and then warns Judah not to indulge in similar wrongdoing. The second half of the verse is a caution against going to Gilgal or Beth-aven and swearing by the living YHWH. The warning of swearing appears a negation of Deuteronomy 6:13, which urges the Israelites to take oaths in YHWH's name. The mention of swearing evokes

[787] Ziony Zevit, "Deuteronomistic Historiography in 1 Kings 12–2 Kings 17 and the Reinvestiture of the Israelian Cult," *JSOT* 32 (1985) 57–73, here 60.
[788] The LXX reads "But you, Israel, do not be ignorant," the verb ἀγνοέω means "to act in ignorance," but it obviously has a religious meaning "to sin willfully ignoring and disregarding divine injuctions;" Muraoka, 6.
[789] The expression אל־יאשם is a jussive; "let Judah not be guilty."
[790] Cf. Deuteronomy 6:13, which urges taking oaths in YHWH's name.

Jeremiah 4:1–2, which counsels Israel to give up idolatrous practices so that they could swear by the name of YHWH in a sincere and truthful way. Thus the point in 4:15 seems to be the nature of the cult in Gilgal and Bethel, which actively attracted pilgrims; the same idea can be found in Amos 4:4 and 5:5, in which both Gilgal and Bethel occur. Regarding Amos 4:4 and 5:5, Hadjiev attributes both sayings to the prophetic tradition in which the cult places were not illegitimate as such, but the worship of YHWH was not proper, since the criticism shoud be read in light of the social evils in Amos 3:9–10; 4:1 and 5:7–12 since no idolatry is mentioned in these contexts. Hadjiev does not see any pro-Jerusalem polemics in the sayings either, since Jerusalem is not mentioned in the context of these sayings.[791] The point thus is not the sanctuaries as such but rather the worshipers.

In Hosea, however, there seems to be some special wickedness and evil which is connected at least with Gilgal, as 9:15 and 12:12 also indicate. The place named Gilgal is known in Joshua 4:19–20, as the place located on the east border of Jericho where Israel camped after coming to the land, and where Joshua set up the twelve standing stones to honor the event. The stones explain the name Gilgal, "heap of stones," and suggest that Gilgal refers specifically to a cultic site near Jericho.[792] Gilgal was also the place where Samuel ministered as a judge (1 Samuel 7:16), and where Saul was made king (1 Samuel 11:14–15). The most plausible explanation for the antipathy towards Gilgal is related to its role as a cultic site. This is indicated by 12:12, according to which "in Gilgal they sacrifice bulls, their altars will be like stone heaps," here is a word play with the name Gilgal, גלגל, and a stone heap, גל. Gilgal was connected with an ancient Benjaminite tradition related to an annual ritual celebrating the crossing over the Jordan – a tradition, which only later was extended to apply to the Exodus tradition.[793] Joshua 5:10 states that the Passover was celebrated there for the first time after the entrance into Canaan, and according to 1 Samuel 10:8, Gilgal was a cultic place where sacrifices were made, as 12:12 explicitly says. The reason for the critique of Gilgal in Hosea is likely to be the competition between Shechem and Gilgal. Richard Nelson has pointed to Deuteronomy 27 as referring to this, since Deuteronomy 27:2, 3, 8 refers to the Gilgal traditions, and the competing Shechem tradtion is represented by the altar and sacrifices on Mount Ebal in Deuteronomy 27:4–7.[794] This gives grounds to think that the saying goes back to

[791] Hadjiev, *Amos*, 17–20; see also Eidevall, *Amos*, 142–143, 152–153; Gomes, *Sanctuary of Bethel*, 145.

[792] Na'aman (1987) 13–21, here 19.

[793] John Mauchline, "Gilead and Gilgal: Some Reflections on the Israelite Conquest of the Palestine," *VT* 6 (1956) 19–33; Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 123 note 37. Cross points to the ancient New Year and covenant-renewal festival in the spring, which was connected with the sanctuary at Gilgal. As Cross further says, "Exodus and entrance, the sea-crossing from Egypt and the river-rossing of the Conquest were ritually fused in these cultic acts, followed then by the consummation of the covenant which created the community at Sinai and established them in the land at Gilgal;" *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 138.

[794] Richard D. Nelson, *Deuteronomy. A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002) 316.

the prophecy, especially given that the roots of Hosea are in the traditions related to Shechem.

At the same time, it is possible that in its present form 4:15 comes from a Judaean redactor, who modified the saying in Amos and added "Judah" into it. The use of Beth-aven instead of Bethel may have been influenced by Amos. Such a warning to Judah fits with Josiah's anti-Bethel policy, and since Gilgal was equal to Bethel as a cultic place, it was no more than part of the same illegitimate form of a northern cult. In 2 Kings 23:15, the altar and the high place in Bethel were demolished by Josiah. He is said to have burned the high place and ground it to powder, but to make sense of burning the high place, we have to assume that 2 Kings 23:15 refers to the Asherah pole.[795] According to 2 Kings 23:16, Josiah then burned human bones on the altar and thus defiled it, thus fulfilling the prophecy of the destruction of the altar in Bethel by him in 1 Kings 13:2. The account of Josiah's measures is strongly polemical and attempts to support the reform in the territory of the former kingdom of Israel. Because of the defilement of the altar, no sacrifices could be performed, and thus the sanctuary was desecrated. Therefore, if the sanctuary was no longer in use, the form of Yahwism practised there could be declared as non-existant.

3.5.3. Hosea 8:1–11. Calf of Samaria

8:1 *The ram's horn to your lips!*
Like an eagle on the house of YHWH.[796]
Because they have violated[797] *my covenant*
and rebelled against my Law.

8:2 *To me they cry "My God, we know you!"*[798]

8:3 *Israel has rejected good,*
an enemy will pursue him.

8:4 *They have made kings but not from me;*
they have installed officials but without my knowledge. [799]

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[795] Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 289.

[796] The phrase אל־חכך שפר כנשר על־בית יהוה is difficult, since what is "like an eagle", כנשר, over the House of YHWH is not indicated. Dearman, among others, suggests "One like an eagle is upon the House of YHWH;" Dearman, *Hosea*, 216.

[797] For the verb עבר, see note 442.

[798] The place of "Israel" as the last word in the verse is odd, and it may be a dittography; so, e.g., Dearman, *Hosea*, 216 note 22. This is supported by the LXX which reads, ἐμὲ κεκράξονται ο Θεός ἐγνώκαμέν σε.

[799] The Hiphil verb השׂירו is probably a denominative from שׂר; "to install officials;" HALOT 2, 1313, 1363. The LXX reads ἑαυτοῖς ἐβασίλευσαν καὶ οὐ δι' ἐμοῦ ἦρξαν καὶ οὐκ ἐγνώρισάν μοι; "they

Their silver and gold they have made into idols[800] *for themselves*
so that it will be cut off.[801]

8:5 *Reject your calf, Samaria.*[802]
My wrath burns against them.
How long will they be incapable of purity?

8:6 *For indeed it is from Israel.* [803]
A craftsman made it,
it is no god.
Indeed, the calf of Samaria will become splinters![804]

8:7 *Since they sow the wind,*
they will reap the whirlwind;
stalk without ear, it will never yield flour -
or if it does, foreigners will swallow it.

8:8 *Israel is swallowed up,*
now they are among nations,
like a vessel in which no one delights.

8:9 *Indeed, they have gone up*[805] *to Assyria,*

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made a king by themselves and not through me, they ruled and did not make known to me; Muraoka, 115.

[800] The word עצבים denotes "idols;" HALOT 1, 865.

[801] יכרת is a Hiphil imperfect 3rd person singular of כרת, "to cut off, to be exterminated," HALOT 1, 501. In the LXX, the verb is ἐξολεθρεύω, "to destroy utterly;" Muraoka, 253. The intended meaning the statement is obviously the same. The singular form comes abruptly after the plural forms; therefore, "it" seems to refer to the calf of Samaria in the next verse.

[802] The verb זנח means "to reject," but also has a sense of being rancid, so, to "stink;" HALOT 1: 276. The subject of the verb is not clear; according to the MT, it is the calf, because the form of the verb זנח is Qal perfect 3rd person singular. The LXX has the imperative form of the verb ἀποτρίβω, "to get rid of;" Muraoka, 86.

[803] In the phrase כי מישׂראל והוא the prefix ו in והוא likely has an emphatic force, and the inversion of the word order is used as a rhetorical device to emphasize "Israel;" so Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 307. Wolff reads כי מישׂראל as part of 8:5, and he translates "but they are from Israel," presupposing the subject "they;" Wolff, *Hosea*, 132, 141.

[804] Wolff's reading is in accordance with the LXX, which reads 8:6 as καὶ αὐτὸ τέκτων ἐποίησε, καὶ οὐ θεός ἐστι· διότι πλανῶν ἦν ὁ μόσχος σου, Σαμάρεια, "A craftsman made it, it is not god, therefore your calf deceived you, Samaria." The word שׂבבים in the phrase כי־שׂבבים יהיה עגל שׂמרון is a hapax legomenon; HALOT 2, 1382, suggests the translation "splinters." For other possibilities, see Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 308–310.

[805] עלה is usually read as "to go up;"often denoting "going up" away from Egypt; in other words, from slavery; HALOT 1, 828. This problem has been known for a long time, and different solutions have been presented; see Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 316.

Ephraim – a wild ass[806] *alone.*[807]
They have recruited[808] *lovers.*[809]

8:10 *Even they have accepted a harlot's fee*[810] *among the nations.*[811]
Now I will gather them up.[812]
They will shortly writhe[813]
because of the burden[814] *of the king of princes.*[815]

The passage begins in 8:1 with a similar summons to blow the horn as in 5:8. This raises the question of whether a military threat is indicated or whether the summons is connected with a cultic setting. In Deuteronomy 28:49, there is

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[806] The word פרא in the phrase פרא בודד לו has commonly translated as "wild ass," according to the MT's פֶּרֶא. In the LXX the word is read differently, with ἀναθάλλω, "to sprout afresh;" Muraoka, 39. Since in Hosea there are several word plays with the name Ephraim and the root פרה, "to be fruitful, to sprout" and the like, it seems likely that there is a word play here as well. In the phrase καθ᾽ ἑαυτὸν, the preposition κατά has a wide range of meanings, but particularly with ἑαυτὸν it indicates separation, dissociation or seclusion; Muraoka, 367. Thus, the translation according to the LXX would be "Ephraim has sprouted for himself alone;" Glenny suggests that the point is that Ephraim flourished in the past because of its foreign treaties but without taking into consideration YHWH's will; see Glenny, *Septuagint Commentary Series: Hosea*, 130.

[807] בודד is a Qal participle from the verb בדד and means "alone, solitary;" HALOT 1, 109.

[808] התנו is a Hiphil perfect 3rd plural masculine of תנה; the meaning of the verb is uncertain, but is related to "to giving fee for favors, to recruit enthusiastically;" HALOT 2, 1760. The usual translation is "they have hired lovers;" so, e.g., Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 501. In the LXX, the phrase is Εφραιμ δῶρα ἠγάπησαν; "Ephraim loved gifts;" "gifts" can be understood as "bribes," which is one the meanings of the word δῶρον; see Muraoka, 181–182. Nyberg, *Studien zum Hoseabuche*, 63, suggests that a Hiphil of תנה means "Hurenlohn geben," or "to give a harlot's fee."

[809] אהבים is a plural of the noun אהב; cf. Piel participle in 2:9.

[810] יתנו is the Qal imperfect 3rd plural masculine of תנה; the meaning of the verb is uncertain, and "to recruit" is but one possibility, see HALOT 2, 1760. Nyberg, *Studien zum Hoseabuche*, 63, translates "Hurenlohn nehmen," "to accept a harlot's fee." This fits in well with the context, which deals with Ephraim's foreign politics, regarded as "fornication" in Hosea's prophecies.

[811] The LXX differs from the MT, and uses the verb παραδίδωμι, which has a sense of abandoning, "to give up and hand over to a third party;" so Muraoka, 526.

[812] The verb קבץ means "to gather up," "to assemble," and like in Ezekiel 20:34, the issue at stake here is to assemble for judgment; HALOT 2, 1063.

[813] ויחלו is a Hiphil of חלל, "to begin, to allow to be profaned," but this does not make sense; see, however, Lipshitz, *Commentary of Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra on Hosea*, 80. Another possibility is that the verb is חדל, "to cease doing;" HALOT 1, 292; this reading is adopted by the LXX which uses the verb κοπάζω; Muraoka, 406; "they will cease anointing a king and princes."The verb may also be חיל, "to writhe" and, thus, it would be וְיָחִילוּ; so Wolff, *Hosea*, 133. See also the discussion on various possibilities to read the verb in Paul (2005) 145–154.

[814] In the LXX, משׂא, "burden," is read as the verb משׁח, "to anoint." The word here likely means "burden of tribute," as Shalom Paul suggests; see his article "משׂא מלך שׂרים. Hosea 8:8–10 and Ancient Near Eastern Royal Epithets," in Halpern, Weippert, van den Hout, and Winter (eds.) *Divrei Shalom*, 145–154, here 148–149; see also Wolff, *Hosea*, 144.

[815] Here I follow the suggestion of Paul and Wolff that the phrase מלך שׂרים, "king, princes," does not refer to Israelite royals, but rather to the Assyrian king, and the Hebrew expression is a reflex of the Mesopotamian royal title, *šar šarrāni*, "king of kings;" Paul, "משׂא מלך שׂרים. Hosea 8:8–10 and Ancient Near Eastern Royal Epithets," in Halpern, Weippert, van den Hout, and Winter (eds.) *Divrei Shalom*, 145–154, here 149; see also Wolff, *Hosea*, 144.

proclamation of judgment in which the attacking foreign nation is compared with an eagle (נשׁר), suggesting a military setting, but appears again, in 8:1–3, as Emmerson suggests, to have its origin in a cultic covenant curse.[816] The curse is directed towards the land, as indicated by the expression "House of YHWH."[817] The specific transgression of which Israel is accused concerns the appointing of kings (8:4a), worshipping images (8:4b–6), and having illegitimate relationships with other nations (8:7–10).[818]

In this chapter, I focus on 8:4b–6, but it should be noted, however, that the juxtaposition of the issue of monarchy with cultic offences appears to be an implicit reference to the relationship between the cult and the kings. Thus, the situation with the cult of Bethel is different from what we see in the context of Baal(s): the cult of Bethel is an official state cult, worship of Baals meant worshiping of local manifestations of Baal, or YHWH.

In 8:4b "they" refers to Israel as a collective and accused them of making idols. The same word appears in 13:2, according to which "they made themselves molten images from their silver according to the shape of idols." In addition to this, Hosea 8 as a whole bears several similarities with Hosea 13. Like 8:4, 13:2, 10–11 speak of kings and idols (עצבים), like 8:6, 13:2 refers to crafsmen (חרשׁ), and 8:5, 6 and 13:2 refer to calves (עגל).[819] In 1 Samuel 31:9 and 2 Samuel 5:21 עצבים denote the images of the gods of the Philistines, in Isaiah 10:11 עצבים refer to Samaria's idols, and Jeremiah 50:2 speaks of the idols of Babylon, which indicates that עצבים do not mean the bull images, but rather that עצבים denote all kinds of cultic images.

The first clause in 8:5 is problematic because in the MT the verb זנח is Qal perfect 3rd person singular. The verb occurs also in 8:3, which speaks of Israel's rejection of what is "good", a term which carries covenantal connotations.[820] In 8:5, the subject is unclear, it can be "your calf;" so, for example, Dearman who translates "Your calf is wretched, Samaria."[821] I think it is best to follow the LXX here, and read the verb as an imperative זְנַח as also Nyberg suggests.[822] Thus the clause can be read as YHWH's demand to Samaria for rejecting the calf imagery.

The last clause in 8:5 presents a rhetorical question similar to Jeremiah 13:27.[823] Jeremiah, however, uses a different word for purity, תהר, whereas in Hosea the word is נקין. In Genesis 20:5, the word is used for "clean hands," pointing to clear conscience, and in Amos 4:6 there is an expression "clean teeth," denoting a state of hunger. Instead of "purity," some commentators prefer the translation "innocence."[824] It may be that a physical cleanness is indicated here in

[816] Grace I. Emmerson, "The Structure and Meaning of Hosea VIII 1–3," *VT* 25 (1975) 700–710.
[817] Nyberg, *Studien zum Hoseabuche*, 62; Emmerson (1975) 700–710.
[818] Emmerson (1975) 700–710, here 705.
[819] Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 269.
[820] Emmerson (1975) 700–710, here 704 and the references therein.
[821] Dearman, *Hosea*, 216 note 24.
[822] Nyberg, *Studien zum Hoseabuche*, 62.
[823] So Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 494.
[824] Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 302.

Hosea; the reference may be to a ceremonial hand washing as an act of ritual purification, and as Andersen and Freedman further suggests; the point here,however, is that Israel cannot call to YHWH with purity or innocence since her hands have been contaminated by the making of idols.[825]

In 8:6, the saying "it is not god," ולא אלהים הוא, evokes the cultic cry at Bethel "here are your gods, Israel, that brought you up from the land of Egypt," הנה אלהיך ישׂראל אשׁר העלוך מארץ מצרים (1 Kings 12:28). The text draws on Israelite traditions which connect Bethel, the bull imagery and the Exodus from Egypt.[826] The Exodus tradition is discussed in Chapter V. The saying "it is not god" is important since it suggests what may have been the problem with the calf or bull imagery. Although YHWH could be connected with an image and some properties of a bull, the image should not be worshiped as a god; in other words, YHWH should not be reduced to an image. This is because an image is חרשׁ עשׂהו, made by a craftsman. In Deuteronomy 27:15, the maker of מסכה is cursed.

3.5.2. Hosea 10:5–15. Calves of Beth-aven

10:5 *For the calves[827] of Beth-aven*
the inhabitants of Samaria are afraid.[828]
Indeed, its people will mourn for it
and its idolatrous priests[829] will shout in exultation[830] over its glory,
since it has gone away[831] from them.[832]

10:6 *Also it will be brought to Assyria,*
a tribute to the Great King

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[825] So Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea,* 495.
[826] Russell, *Images of Egypt,* 34–46.
[827] The LXX reads a singular form μόσχος instead of a plural feminine noun עגלות.
[828] III גור, "to be afraid;" HALOT 1, 185. Wolff translates "Samaria's inhabitants worship the calf of Beth-aven;" see Wolff, *Hosea,* 171 notes i-j.
[829] כמרים is used for idolatrous priests; the term also occurs in 2 Kings 23:5, and in Zephaniah 1:4.
[830] The verb גיל is a technical term in Canaanite cultic language; meaning "shouting in exultation," HALOT 1, 189. The joyful tone does not fit the context, however, and therefore, Alexander Rofé suggests that the verb is "to uncover themselves" (omitting *yod* and spelling *yglw*) which refers to ancient mourning practices; Alexander Rofé, "Zechariah 12:12 and Hosea 10:5 in the Light of Ancient Mourning Practice," in Chaim Cohen, Victor Avigdor Hurowitz, Avi M. Hurvitz, Yochanan Muffs, Barusch J. Schwartz, and Jeffrey H. Tigay (eds.), *Birkat Shalom: Studies in the Bible, Ancient Near Eastern Literature, and Post Biblical Judaism: Presented to Shalom M. Paul on the occasion of his Seventieth Birthday* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2008) 299–304.
[831] The Qal form of the verb גלה has a wide range of meanings including "to uncover, expose" "to leave, disappear," "to go into exile," HALOT 1, 191; cf. 1 Samuel 4:21–22, in which the glory has departed from Israel because of the capture of the ark.
[832] The Qal form of the verb גלה has a wide range of meanings like "to uncover, expose" "to leave, disappear," "to go into exile," HALOT 1, 191.

Ephraim will receive shame[833]
and Israel will be ashamed of its idol.[834]

10:7 *Samaria – her king will be destroyed,*
like a twig[835] *on the surface of the water.*

10:8 *Destroyed will be the high places of Aven,*[836]
the sin of Israel.
Thorns and thistles[837] *will grow up on their altars*
And they will say to the mountains: cover us
and to the hills: fall over us.

10:9 *Since the days of Gibeah,*
you have sinned, Israel.
There they stood.
Will war not overtake them in Gibeah
with the wicked?

10:10 *When it is my desire I will chastise them.*
Nations will be gathered against them,
in their being bound to their two iniquities.

10:11 *Ephraim, a trained heifer,*
one loving to thresh.
When I passed by the beauty of her neck,
I harnessed Ephraim.
Judah plowed,
Jacob harrowed for him.

10:12 *So for yourselves according to righteousness,*
reap according to the measure of חסד,
harrow your uncultivated ground.
It is the time to seek YHWH

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[833] The phrase בשנה אפרים יקח is problematic. The word בשנה has usually been read as בשת, "shame;" the verb לקח usually means "to take away, accept, receive," which makes the translation "Ephraim will receive shame" possible.

[834] The word עצתו in the phrase ויבוש ישׂראל מעצתו is unclear, and the suggested reading is עצבו, "his idol." The LXX has βουλή, "counsel," after עצה, "advice, plan." It may also denote "wood," even a "wooden statue;" see HALOT 1, 866–867.

[835] קצף is a hapax legomenon; For "twig," see HALOT 2, 1125; Vulgata suggests "foam;" for this, see Chayim Cohen, "Foam in Hosea 10:7," *JANES* 2 (1969) 25–29.

[836] The phrase is במות און, denoting either the "high places of Aven" or "high places of iniquity." The LXX has βωμοὶ Ων; "altars of On."

[837] The word דרדר occurs only here and in Genesis 3:18. It means a species of thistle, and in Genesis 3:18, used in parallel with thorns, related to the curse that YHWH declared on the ground because of the fall of Adam.

until he comes and sends justice to rain on you.

10:13 *You (pl.) have ploughed wrong,*
you (pl.) have reaped wickedness,
you (sg.) have eaten fruits of lie,
because you (sg.) have trusted in your way,
in multitude of your (sg.) mighty warriors.

10:14 *Rage of battle*[838] *will rise against your people.*
All your fortresses will be destroyed
as Shalman destroyed Beth Arbel
on the day of war.
Mothers together with their children will be dashed.[839]

10:15 *Thus will Bethel do to you,*[840]
by reason of the wickedness of your wickedness.[841]
At dawn will be completely destroyed[842]
the king of Israel.

The passage in 10:5–15 presents a strong polemic against the "calves" and "the high places" of Beth-aven. The "calf cult" is explicitly mentioned in 8:5, 8:6, 10:5 and 13:2, but only in 10:5 the calves are related to Beth-aven. 10:5 has generally been read as describing the reaction of the people of Samaria, the capital city of Israel, to what will happen to the "calves" of Beth-aven.[843] The fear for the calves was related to the practice attested in Assyrian inscriptions that sometimes the statues of the gods of defeated nations were taken as booty by the Assyrian army, and held hostage for the good behavior of the vassal and his kingdom.[844] 10:6 seems to refer to this Assyrian practice.

The noun עגלות, "calves," a feminine plural, in 10:5 may be a derogatory expression; it is likely that as an abstract plural it refers to the "calf cult."[845] The term used for the priests in this context is כמרים. In 2 Kings 23:5 they are connected with the idolatrous cult in places in Judah related to worship of Baal, the sun and the moon, and the host of heaven; Zephaniah 1:4 connects כמרים only to Baal worship. It is difficult to know with certainty what the cultic role of כמרים involved, since in Hosea, כהנים are also mentioned in polemical contexts (4:6, 7,

838 HALOT 2, 1370.
839 Pual imperfect of רטשׁ; "to smash, das to pieces," HALOT 2, 1223.
840 The 3rd person singular form in the phrase ככה עשׂה לכם בית־אל suggests that בית־אל would be the subject. The LXX reads οὕτως ποιήσω ὑμῖν, οἶκος τοῦ Ἰσραήλ; "Thus I will do to you, house of Israel." Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, reads the use of the verb as impersonal
841 Literal translation of מפני רעת מעלליכם.
842 Completeness is indicated by the phrase נדמה נדמה.
843 So, e.g., Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 400.
844 Mordechai Cogan, "Judah under Assyrian Hegemony: A Reexamination of Imperialism and Religion," *JBL* 112 (1993) 403–414, here 408.
845 See Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 399–400, and the references therein.

9; 5:1; 6:9), but כמרים are clearly connected with a from of cult which came to be considered idolatrous.

I have taken the expression שׁכן שׁמרון as the subject and thus, because of the plural verb יגורו, שׁכן can be understood in a collective meaning. Alternative readings are offered by some scholars, who take שׁכן שׁמרון as a title for the god on the basis of royal and cultic associations of שׁכן (Numbers 35:34, Deuteronomy 33:16, Psalms 135:21).[846] Zevit understands "the Dweller of Samaria" as denoting a god other than YHWH,[847] but I wonder why the "Dweller of Samaria" would not be YHWH, since most scholars read two blessings, "I bless you by the YHWH of Samaria and by his אשׁרה" (Inscription I), and "I bless you by the YHWH of Teman, and by his אשׁרה" (Inscription II) in the Kuntillet 'Ajrud inscriptions.[848] If these inscriptions refer to local cults of YHWH, 10:5 may also allude to a Yahwistic cult practised in Samaria. Nowhere is it indicated that the "calf" would have been in Samaria, and therefore the reference to Samaria's inhabitants may only depict the people's reaction to the Assyrian practice of taking booty from the sanctuaries.

10:8 speaks of the "high places" of Beth-aven. The word במה occurs several times in the Hebrew Bible; in the LXX, the word βωμός means an altar with a base, relating to a pagan or illegitimate cult, but the word ὑψηλός is also used; it denotes a thing which is high, elevated.[849] The word is used specifically for a cult place of a sort, but there is confusion about what במה exactly was. According to four prevailing interpretations במה was 1) primitive open-air installations on a natural hilltop, equipped with some combination of a sacred pole, asherah, a standing stone, and altar(s), 2) an artificially elevated platform upon which religious rites including sacrifices took place, 3) a sacrificial altar and 4) a mortuary installation; out of these, the first interpretation is the most widely accepted.[850] The 12th century "Bull Site" discovered in the hill country of Ephraim and Manasseh seems to have been a typical high place, fitting the biblical presentation of high places, and the bronze bull indicates the direct connection of במות with Canaanite practices.[851] It seems that the "high places" of Beth-aven denote an altar-like construction.

The saying about the destruction of the high place of Beth-aven evokes 1 Kings 13:2 according to which the man of God declared the destruction of the altar of

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[846] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 550, 556.
[847] Zevit, *Religions of Ancient Israel*, 572.
[848] Binger, *Asherah*, 102–105, see also Appendix 2 on pages 164–175.
[849] Muraoka, 124, 708.
[850] Beth Albert Nakhai, *Archaeology and the Religious of Canaan and Israel* (ASOR Books 7; Boston: American Schools of Oriental Research, 2001) 162; see also Fried (2002) 437–465; van der Toorn, *Family Religion*, 253; W. Boyd Barrick, "On the Removal of the High Places in 1–2 Kings," *Bib* 55 (1974) 257–259; see especially note 2 on page 257; W. Boyd Barrick, "On the Meaning of בֵּית־הַבָּמוֹת/בָּתֵּי־הַבָּמוֹת and the Composition of the Kings History," *JBL* 115 (1996) 621–642; Humphrey H. Hardy II and Benjamin D. Thomas, "Another Look at Biblical Hebrew bama 'High Place'," *VT* 62 (2012) 175–188; William G. Dever, "The Middle Bronze Age "High Place" at Gezer," *BASOR* 371 (2014): 17–57; Zevit, *Religions of Ancient Israel*, 262–263.
[851] Dever, *Did God Have a Wife*, 136.

Bethel – a measure which was executed by Josiah as stated in 2 Kings 23:15. Historically, Josiah did not destroy the city of Bethel since the cult site Beth-aven may have been located outside the town.[852] The destruction of the altar of the cult place was, however, the culmination point which, according to the later Judaean historian, put to an end the apostasy in Israel caused by Jeroboam I.

In 10:14, violence against the people is compared with the destruction of Beth Arbel by Shalman, which obviously refers to some horrific event in the past. Shalman can be an abbreviation of Shalmaneser and, thus, the reference could be to the events in 722 when Shalmaneser V attacked Samaria.[853] Another suggestion is that Shalman is the Moabite king Salamanu, who appears in the tribute list of Tiglath-Pileser III.[854] According to 2 Kings 13:20, however, Moabite raiders annually tormented Israel, and there is no mention of Salamanu's attack against the country.[855] A third possibility is that Shalmeneser III is meant here, and the reference is related to his campaigns in the region of Galilee and the battle of Qarqar in 853, in which King Ahab participated. The unclarity concerning the location of Beth Arbel is, then, problematic.

The reference to Bethel in 10:15 is curious. The word ככה, "thus," points to the devastation proclaimed in 10:14, and to such a degree the judgment will be. The 3rd person singular masculine עשׂה in 10:15 leaves the identity of the destructor open. If "Bethel" is taken as the subject, the verse does not make good sense, and various alternative readings have been proposed; see textual notes. Be this as it may, the issue at stake is some horrific devastation in the past. The word Bethel is used here as also in 12:5, not the pejorative name Beth-aven. The reading in the LXX – "house of Israel" – may be better because the pejorative name Beth-aven would have been more likely in Hosea.[856]

3.5.4. Hosea 13:2. Work of craftsmen

13:2 *And now they continue to sin,*
and they made themselves a molten image from their silver

[852] Na'aman has convincingly pointed out that many Israelite cult places were built at some distance from the near-by town, which explains why they were given a different name. Therefore, there was no continuity between Canaanite temples and Israelite cultic sites; Na'aman, (1987) 13–21, here 14, 19–21. Unfortunately, archaeological findings have not explicitly confirmed the sites, so there is still some uncertainty concerning precise location of Bethel and Beth-aven; for summaries of the archaeological findings, see, e.g., Gomes, *Sanctuary of Bethel*, 2–7; Blenkinsopp (2003) 93–107; Knauf, "Bethel: The Israelite Impact on Judean Language and Literature," in Lipschits and Oeming (eds.), *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period*, 291–350; Klaus Koenen, *Bethel. Geschichte, Kult und Theologie* (OBO 192; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003).
[853] 2 Kings 17:1–5; see, e.g., Dewrell (2016) 413–429, here 421–422; Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 336.
[854] Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 336.
[855] Wolff, *Hosea*, 188; Dewrell (2016) 413–429, here 420.
[856] So Wolff, *Hosea*, 181.

according to the shape of idols.[857]
All of it, work of craftsmen.
To them they are saying: sacrifice,[858]
men who kiss calves.

Much of what concerns 13:2 has been discussed earlier in other contexts; that 13:2 bears many similarities with 8:4–6, has already been mentioned. The term מסכה, "molten image," is used for the bull image, cf. Exodus 32:4, 8. "Kissing" an image is a sign of veneration as in 1 Kings 19:18, in which it is related to the cult of Baal. Here the kissing is related to the calves, a rite which could have taken place in the context of an annual festival at Bethel, in which the bull image was carried in a procession.[859]

As discussed earlier, scholars have ended up with a variety of different translations of the difficult phrase להם הם אמרים זבחי אדם עגלים ישקון, זבחי אדם is particularly problematic.[860] The possibility that human sacrifices are at stake here is appropriate. Emmerson suggests that 13:2 could be understood in the context of Josiah's reform, since Josiah abolished the habit of offering humans in the Valley of Hinnom in Judah.[861] Other translations are possible, however, and it may well be that the ambiguity of the phrase may be deliberate.[862] As for the provenance of 13:2, I am inclined to read against the 8th century prophecy, as an objection to worshipping the image as YHWH.

3.5.5. Conclusions

In Hosea the attitude towards Bethel is ambiguous in that it is not clear what exactly is being criticized – the sanctuary as such or the cult that was practised there, if these two can be distinguished. The name Bethel occurs in 10:15 and

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[857] The word תבונה means things like "understanding," "skill;" HALOT 2, 1680. A better reading would be to read the word תבנית as "shape, model" here; so Nyberg, *Studien zum Hoseabuche*, 101; cf. Jeremiah 44:13. This is supported by the LXX, which uses the word εἰκών, "likeness," in κατ' εἰκόνα εἰδώλων, "according to the likeness of idols,""so that it will resemble idols;" Muraoka, 192; Irvine refers to some ancient Mesopotamian analogues which support the concept that the question is about making images on the basis of a precise model; see Irvine (2014) 517–509, here especially 513–515.

[858] The phrase להם הם אמרים זבחי אדם עגלים ישקון is syntactically difficult. The MT suggests זבחים or זבחו instead of זבחי, which, combined with אדם, refers to human sacrifice; so, Wolff, *Hosea*, 219, with the translation "They say to themselves: those who sacrifice men kiss calves." See also Ibn Ezra, who reads "Sacrificers of men kiss calves;" Lipshitz, *Commentary of Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra on Hosea*, 123. The LXX reads αὐτοὶ λέγουσι· θύσατε ἀνθρώπους, μόσχοι γὰρ ἐκλελοίπασι, "say them: sacrifice men, for the calves have ceased to exist."

[859] Van der Toorn, *Family Religion*, 289.

[860] See Emmerson, *Hosea*, 146–151.

[861] See Emmerson, *Hosea*, 146. See also my discussion on 5:1–7 and 9:10, in the context of which the issue of child sacrifice has been raised.

[862] Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 281–282.

12:5. In the latter verse, Bethel is connected with the Jacob tradition, and no polemic whatsoever is presented in this context. 10:15 is a prophecy of Bethel's destruction, which will be an event comparable to when "Shalman destroyed Beth Arbel." As previously stated, it is possible that instead of Bethel we should read "House of Israel" as in the LXX, since we would expect the original saying to refer to the fall of the northern kingdom rather than the destruction of Bethel. Anyway, this prompts to ask from whose hands the change of the name comes.

All other sayings which can be regarded as referring to Bethel use the name Beth-aven, which, as said, may have been a separate location from Bethel. Beth-aven occurs also in 5:8 which quotes an old poem and, the reference to Beth-aven is unpolemical. In 4:15, which has been discussed in Chapter II relative to its reference to Judah, there is a prohibition to go to Gilgal and Beth-aven. Although the present form of the verse is likely to have been compiled under the influence of Amos, beneath the verse there may be an 8th century prophecy in which Beth-aven and Gilgal both were looked on as somehow illicit. Gilgal may have had a rival tradition with Shechem, and therefore, it is strongly criticized in Hosea. No explicit reason is presented for the critical attitude towards Beth-aven in 4:15, however; it is only seen as a place the pilgrims should not visit. 10:5 speaks of the "calves" of Beth-aven, which raises the question of the cult that Jeroboam I is said to have established in his royal sactuary as the narrative in 1 Kings 12:25–33 recounts.

As the state sanctuary of the northern kingdom, the cult in Bethel was connected with Jeroboam I's setting up of the calf in the sanctuary. In the later Deuteronomistic thinking, this became Israel's arch-sin, "the sin of Jeroboam." However, it is hardly possible that the cult introduced by Jeroboam I was anything but Yahwistic, since YHWH had established his position as the national god of Israel long before the secession of the northern tribes from Judah. The origin of the bovine imagery has roused enormous scholarly interest, but the provenance of the imagery that Jeroboam I introduced is not easy to determine, however, since the connection between a bovine figure and a deity is ancient. In the early Egyptian presentation of Amun-Ra the deity was depicted as "bull," and in the Ugaritic texts, one of the epithets of El was "bull." Related to Egypt, it is interesting that both Joshua 24:14 and Ezekiel 20:7–8 are familiar with a tradition which differs from other biblical sources as it refers to Israel's worship of idols in Egypt. Although it is highly hypothetical, it may not be totally impossible that the bovine imagery had its roots in Egypt in the worship of Ra, and the idol worshipped by the Israelites was an Egyptian god.[863] Also Baal, too, was occasionally connected with bull imagery, since he could transform himself into an ox.[864] All in all, it is reasonable to assume that at some early stage in the development of Israel's religion the bull imagery was linked to YHWH. This

[863] So, Allan Langner, "The Golden Calf and Ra," *JBQ* 31 (2003) 47–43.
[864] De Moor, *Rise of Yahwism*, 48–49, 72, 74; Koenen, *Bethel*, 132. As de Moor points out, a bronze bull figurine found at Hazor represents El rather than Baal; de Moor, *Rise of Yahwism*, 127.

probably took place when YHWH and El were assimilated, and when many descriptions and epithets of El were applied to YHWH.[865]

This form of Yahwism may have been a legitimate form of YHWH worship in ancient Israel for centuries, and the role of Jeroboam I thus remains obscure if he only revived an ancient form of Yahwism; in other words, Jerobeam's cult was going back to an old traditional form of Yahwism. This form of Yahwism goes back to the tradition in the wilderness known in some other form than what we now have: the polemical narrative in Exodus 32.

For a long time scholars made a point of the connection between Exodus 32 and the narrative of Jeroboam I in 1 Kings 12:25–33, and of remarkable similarities between the figures Aaron and Jeroboam I.[866] Despite many affinities, the issue of the literary interdependence between Exodus 32 and 1 Kings 12:25–33 is difficult. The present form of Exodus 32 is an end product of several stages of redaction, and the deepest roots of the narrative may go back to an ancient cult legend of the sanctuary claiming Aaronid authority for its iconography.[867] It is obvious that in this old tradition, the bull iconography was not considered to be illicit. Similarly to the ark, which was originally a sort of mobile war standard, the bull image was related to divine guidance and protection.[868]

The presentation of the Levites and Moses as opponents of the bull imagery in Exodus 32 was used, however, to demonstrate how the Levites obtained their cultic role as opponents to the golden calf and adherents of Moses. This polemic puts the blame for making the idol on Aaron, against whom Moses and the Levites stood. This naturally raises the issue of whether the polemics in Exodus 32 is directed against the priests of Bethel, who traced their ancestry back to Aaron (Judges 20:26–28). Aberbach and Smolar ascribe the bitter polemic against Aaron to the Zadokite priesthood of Jerusalem, but according to Cross, the polemic has an earlier origin among the rival priesthood, the Mushites from Shiloh, who

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[865] Smith, *Early History of God*, 41.

[866] See Moses Aberbach and Leivy Smolar, "Aaron, Jeroboam, and the Golden Calves," *JBL* 86 (1967) 129–140; the similarities include 1) both Aaron and Jeroboam I made "golden calves;" 2) the formula used with reference to the calves; 3) both Aaron and Jeroboam built an altar for the calf worship; 4) sacrifices were offered in honor of the calves; 5) Jeroboam appoints priests who were not of the tribe of Levi to minister to the calf worship; in Exodus 32:26–29 the Levites were the opponents of the calf worship; 6) the making of golden calves came to be disastrous to the whole nation in both cases; 7) both Aaron and Jeroboam came under severe divine displeasure; 8) in both accounts, an intercession is made for the sinners; 9) the desecration of Bethel's altar by Josiah was connected with the slaying on it the priests of the high places and burning human bones; the Levites slew three thousand Israelites for participating in the calf cult; 10) the golden calf made by Aaron and the altar of Bethel were destroyed in a similar manner by burning and grinding them into dust; 11) additional punishments were imposed on the Israelites and on Jeroboam, respectively; 12) the sons of Aaron and Jeroboam had virtually identical names; 13) both Jeroboam's and Aaron's sons bring glory to God in their deaths.

[867] Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 74

[868] Regarding this, Russell refers to 2 Chronicles 13:8; see Russell, *Images of Egypt*, here 37 note 58. Russell here follows the suggestion earlier made by Otto Eissfeldt, "Lade und Stierbild," *ZAW* 58 (1940).

favored an alternative iconography, the ark.[869] Thus, the polemic may go back to the circles in Shiloh, those who were devotees of the ark iconography which was later adopted in Jerusalem by David, and in the Shilonite version of Exodus 32, Aaron became the founder of the unacceptable bull iconography. Only in the later Judaean version was the blame put on the people.[870]

The explanation for the animosity towards Bethel and its cult may be that alternative religious imagery, the ark, was favored in certain circles. The Levitical circles in Shechem were opponents of the bull imagery, perhaps because in Bethel, the image came to be worshiped as a god, and thus YHWH was reduced to an image. Given that Hosea's prophecies drew on Shechemite stream of traditions, the antipathy towards the calf imagery may come from there. The point made by Stephen Cook is also noteworthy. The Levitical circles may have hated the calf imagery because it was a symbol of their exclusion, and the calf imagery that Jeroboam I introduced at Bethel, alienated them from the shrine.[871]

It may well be, as I already discussed in connection with 8:6, that although it had been appropriate to use the imagery of a bull to depict certain properties of YHWH, the image itself should not have been worshiped as YHWH. The image was not the god of Israel who brought the nation out of Egypt, only an object made by a craftsman, and YHWH could never be reduced to anything that a human could make. The bull image was probably meant to be a pedestal for the invisible deity, like the cherub throne in the cult in Jerusalem. Thus, the object which was meant to indicate the presence of YHWH became his form. We should not exclude the possibility that the bull-calf image was also connected to Baal, although the bovine iconography in Bethel, as an old cult site of El, is usually connected with El rather than Baal.[872] In addition to the particular iconography, the animosity that the Levitical circles had felt against Jeroboam I may also have been his not choosing Shechem as the religious center of his kingdom; also the rift between the Mushite and Aaronide priesthoods may have played a role.[873]

Those texts which deal with the bull imagery are highly polemical and, therefore, they may have distorted the original traditions behind them. The narrative of Jeroboam I in 1 Kings 12:25–33 has raised questions concerning its literary history, and Juha Pakkala, for example, suggests that the mention of the bulls is a late addition to the pre-existing textual material, in which Jeroboam's sin was that he constructed the temples in high places, because his primary interest was in the location of sacrifice.[874] Undoubtedly, from a later Judaean standpoint, Jeroboam committed a grave sin in making the ancient shrine of Bethel a royal sanctuary and endangering the position of Jerusalem, and thus, the rivalry between the two forms of Yahwism was also linked to political matters.

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[869] Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 198–199.
[870] Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 198
[871] Cook, *Social Roots of Biblical Yahwism*, 248–251.
[872] Smith, *Origins of Biblical* Monotheism, 32.
[873] Mark Leucter, Jeroboam
[874] Juha Pakkala, "Jeroboam without Bulls," *ZAW* 120 (2008) 501–525.

At the time of Josiah's reform, the very existence of rural shrines and cult places became a problem, and it is obvious that this was the view of the compiler of 2 Kings 17:7–23 as well. In my view, Ziony Zevit makes an important remark when he says that from the Judaean point of view, Jeroboam's sin was not the establishment of the kingdom itself, which was, as Zevit says, "a reflection of divine will" and, according to the Deuteronomistic historiography, the major reason for the establishment of the northern kingdom was Solomon's cultic improprieties (1 Kings 11:7–13).[875] However, as Zevit further points out, the Deuteronomistic historiography saw that the formal political distinction did not free Israel from its obligation to the Jerusalem Temple, which, "under the protection of the Davidic monarch reigning in Jerusalem, was to have become the recognized center of a pan-Israel amphictyony."[876] This seems to be related to Josiah's attempts to centralize the cult in Jerusalem, which has, however, puzzled scholars. Why would Josiah destroy the rural shrines which had been there for ages, and would that not have meant that no support for the reform was expected from those it concerned? If we do not assume that the cult centralization was carried out of necessity, because of the destruction caused by wars, as Fried suggests, there are perhaps more political motives than religious ones for the supremacy of the Jerusalem Temple. Halpern sees that centralization and prophetic critique worked together to keep down the old establishment which was in the way of radical economic and military reform policies.[877] This may hold true as far as Judah was concerned, but the demand for centralization and the destruction of local cult places is difficult to explain in the territory of the former northern kingdom. To some extent, the Assyrian habit of importing foreign settlers influenced the religious practices in the former northern kingdom (2 Kings 17:24–41), but Yahwistic circles who were able to continue their religious practices also existed, which explains the existence of the Yahwistic Samarian community in the Persian period.[878]

As for the centralization of the cult, it is obvious that it forms the fundamental point in Deuteronomy. It is clear that YHWH had been worshiped at royal as well as at local sanctuaries. The main impetus for the idea of cult centralization may in fact have been the rivalry between two forms of Yahwism – the worship of YHWH of Samaria and the YHWH of Jerusalem. This notwithstanding, the problem is that when looking at the background for Josiah's actions in relation to the high places, we are dependant on the later textual material in Deuteronomy. Given that local worship at the high places was introduced to complement the royal cults at Bethel, Dan and Jerusalem, it is possible to assume that the high places eventually became condemned during the reforms of Hezekiah and Judah because they had strenghtened the role of local priesthood, which became more

[875] Ziony Zevit, "Deuteronomistic Historiography in 1 Kings 12–2 Kings 17 and the Reinvestiture of the Israelian Cult," *JSOT* 32 (1985) 57–73, here 60.
[876] Zevit (1985) 57–73, here 60.
[877] Baruch Halpern, "Jerusalem and the lineages in the Seventh Century BCE: Kinship and the Rise of Individual Moral Liability," in *Law and Ideology,* 11–107, here 85.
[878] Knoppers (2004) 159, 171–172.

independent from the royal religious establishment.[879] This does not, of course, explain the reason for the criticism of the high places in Hosea, where the issue was of the identity of the deity that was worshiped.

Josiah defiled the altar at Bethel (2 Kings 23: 15) and killed the priests of the high places (2 Kings 23: 20). As Aberbach and Smolar have suggested, the killing of the Israelites by the Levites in Exodus 32:26–29 may be an exact parallel to Josiah's slaughter of the priests of the calf cult that Jeroboam I introduced.[880] If the Mushite Levites wrote Exodus 32 merely for political reasons, it is possible that Josiah could have used it as a justification for killing the "idolatrous priests" of the high places, or, alternatively, Exodus 32 was used as a source to write the narrative of Josiah's reform. Either way, the deep and ancient difference between the two forms of Yahwism became a political weapon during the time of Josiah. It became formulated as the sin of Jeroboam, a measure to evaluate the kings, and which was the explanation for the destruction of Israel. It functioned as a tool to show that Josiah was the righteous king, who could prevent the fate of Israel with regard to Judah. However, in the Josiah narrative, the bull imagery is not mentioned. The likely reason for this is that this image no longer existed, since it had been taken as booty by the Assyrians, as Hosea in 10:5–6 explicitly says.

Baal-type deities were worshiped in Judah too, although it was more common to worship deities with Baal-names in Israel, because of Israel's closer relations with its neighbors in the north.[881] It is, however, likely that in Jeremiah, Baal as well as Asherah, are no longer understood as Canaanite deities, but that the terms are more general references to the influence of Assyrian religion.[882] According to 2 Kings 23:4, Josiah purged the Temple of Jerusalem of all the cult objects which had been made for Baal, Asherah and the host of heaven, צבא השׁמים. These objects of worship also occur in 2 Kings 17:16; 21:3. In all probability, some of this foreign religious influence was due to Judah's long vassalage to Assyria.[883] As we have seen, Jeremiah (2:23; 9:14) speaks of "Baals" in the plural, pointing to all foreign deities, and Zephaniah 1:4–5 includes priests and worshippers of the host of heaven among the "remnant of הבעל," which may be a collective plural.[884] It may well be that at the time of Josiah's reform 2:18 was read as supporting the cultic measures intended to purge the worship of YHWH from elements which could be considered as foreign. As already stated, it seems to me that the condemnation of Baal(s) in Hosea's prophecies was a general condemnation of an element related to multiple cult places: the confusion about the identity of the worshiped deity.

At the time of Josiah, local practices in the territory of the former northern kingdom of Israel were condemned further. In the background was the idea that

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879 Nakhai, *Archaeology and the Religious of Canaan and Israel*, 167.
880 Aberbach and Smolar (2000) 129–140, here 132–133.
881 Hutton (2010) 149–174.
882 Norin (2000) 33–41.
883 Norin (2000) 33–41.
884 Halpern, "Jerusalem and the lineages in the Seventh Century BCE," in Halpern and Hobson (eds.) *Law and Ideology*, 83.

YHWH is one and the same for *all Israel*, which meant the rejection of local cult forms.[885] Therefore, the reformers had to demonstrate that those Israelites, who still were living in the territory of former northern kingdom, had no right to their former inheritance because of their on-going "idolatrous" practices.[886] In this context, the cult criticism in Hosea's prophecies was adopted for political reasons. As we have seen in the context of the reform of Hezekiah, the king who in biblical tradition is remembered as a great and pious reformer, was also a real politician who in order to save the countryside in the face of an imminent military attack used religious concepts to authorize his manouvers. Undoubtedly, this was the case with Josiah as well. The prohibitions, developed by the early Deuteronomic and Deuteronomistic circles, had their background in earlier religious beliefs. But, as Joseph Blenkinsopp points out, the background for the prohibition of many practices was an attempt to establish a centralized civil and religious bureaucracy in Judah and the need for the state to transfer allegiance from the kinship network to itself.[887] This is what happened at the time of Josiah. Thus, the authority exercised at the household level became restricted in many ways, one of them being a command that the households should partake in sacrificial meals only at the central sanctuary, and thus meals which formed part of the cult of the dead ancestors became prohibited.[888]

As for Josiah's alleged destruction of Bethel, there is no indisputable archaeological evidence of its destruction in the time of Josiah, and Bethel may well have been existing in the Neo-Babylonian and Persian Period.[889] I have earlier referred to Lisbeth Fried's conclusion that the archaeologically-attested destruction of Judaean cultic sites cannot be assigned to Hezekiah and Josiah but it goes back to the devastation during the campaigns of Tiglath-pileser III, Shalmaneser V, Sargon II, or Sennacherib and, thus, the ideology ascribed to the reforms was but "an interpretation and explanation of a devastating present."[890] However, if Josiah demolished and defiled the altar, he probably did not have had destroyed the entire sanctuary. But, assuming that Bethel was functioning in the exilic-postexilic times, there could have been rivalry between Jerusalem and Bethel when Jerusalem had to reassert its supremacy over Bethel and Mizpah.[891] Nevertheless, it is obvious that in the time of Josiah, Bethel became the symbol of

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[885] Albertz, *History of Israelite Religion,* 206.

[886] Mordechai Cogan, "Israel in Exile – the View of a Josianic Historian," *JBL* 97 (1978) 40–44. See especially 43 n17, in which Cogan states that "The contrasting treatment of *bamot* personnel in Judah (2 Kgs 23:5) and in Samaria (23:20) clearly suggests that whatever the ethnic background of the northern priests may have been (Israelite or foreign), Josiah's agents considered them out and out pagans, and so, subject to the deuteronomic laws of *herem*."

[887] Joseph Blenkinsopp, "Deuteronomy and the Politics of Post-Mortem Existence," *VT* 45 (1985) 1–16.

[888] Blenkinsopp (1985) 6.

[889] Knauf, "Bethel: The Israelite Impact on Judean Language and Literature," in Lipschits and Oeming (eds.), *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period*, 291–350, here 296.

[890] Fried (2002) 437–465.

[891] Davies, "The Origin of Biblical Israel," in Amit, Ben Zvi, Finkelstein, and Lipschits (eds.), *Essays on Ancient* Israel, 141–148.

the separation from the temple in Jerusalem, and therefore, the worship in that sanctuary could not be tolerated.[892]

[892] With Yairah Amit, "Bochim, Bethel, and the Hidden Polemic (Judg 2,1–5," in Gershon Galil and Moshe Weinfeld (eds.) *Studies in Historical Geography and Biblical Historiography. Presented to Zecharia Kallai* (Leiden: Brill, 2000) 121–131, here 128.

IV MONARCHY

Several passages in Hosea deal with issues related to kings and monarchy (1:4; 2:2; 3:4–5; 5:1–2; 7:3–7; 8:4; 10:3, 7, 15; 13:10–11), which is not surprising when the connection between the prophecy and kings in the ancient Near East is taken into consideration. However, apart from the kings listed in the superscription, the book does not mention kings other than Jehu (1:4) and David (3:5) by name.

The attitude towards the monarchy appears twofold. While some passages display a positive stance on the monarchy by speaking of a future unification of the peoples of Israel and Judah under a common "head" (2:2) and of the people of Israel seeking David their king (3:4–5), other texts display a negative attitude. These two views on monarchy are not easily reconciled with each other, and therefore most scholars have come to the conclusion that the passages referring positively to Israel and Judah are part of Judaean redaction. A divergent opinion has been presented by Emmerson, who suggests that because of the chaotic state of the Israelite monarchy, the prophet had turned his hopes for political stability to Judah's hereditary monarchy.[893] The discussion on the negative statements on the monarchy has revolved around issues like whether the monarchy as an institution is condemned from the outset in Hosea or whether only the contemporary state of the monarchy is criticized. This matter is not easily solved, since in Hosea the criticism is not targeted at a particular king, and no clear reasons for the critical attitude are presented.

4.1. Criticism of kings

4.1.1. Hosea 1:2–5. End of the house of Jehu

1:2 *The beginning of YHWH's speaking through Hosea.*[894]
YHWH said to Hosea: Go, take yourself a woman of fornication and children of fornication,[895] *for the land surely has committed fornication away from YHWH.*

1:3 *And he went and took Gomer daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son.*

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[893] Emmerson, *Hosea*, 105–113, here especially 110.

[894] This is the literal translation of תחלת דבר־יהוה בהושׁע. The preposition in ב can also be translated as "to" here; so, e.g., Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 7.

[895] Children are the objective of לך, but English translators usually add a verb "have;" e.g. Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 22; Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 7.

1:4 *And YHWH said to him: call his name Jezreel for in a little while*[896] *and I will avenge*[897] *the blood of Jezreel on the house of Jehu and put an end to the rule of the house of Israel.*[898]

1:5 *And it will be on that day that*[899] *I will break the bow*[900] *of Israel in the Valley of Jezreel.*

The passage begins by telling about the birth of the prophet's son who receives a symbolic name Jezreel. The verse 1:4 is formed as a twofold prophecy of the end of the house of Jehu and the end of the kingdom of Israel. The name Jezreel is a prophecy in itself since YHWH will avenge the blood of Jezreel on the house of Jehu. The "blood of Jezreel" is understood as referring to the violence connected with the coup of Jehu (2 Kings 10:1–25).[901] Jehu's violence would repeat itself at Jezreel, and thus it is possible that the blood shed at Jezreel reflects what happened to Zechariah, the last member of Jehu's dynasty, who was murdered at Jezreel.[902] At the same time, it may simply be another example of Hosea's use of historical events in a typological manner since Jehu's alliance with Aram resulted in the slaughter of the royalty of Judah (2 Kings 10:12–14) similarly to the coalition between Pekah and Aram in the context of the Syro-Ephraimite war which endangered the king in Judah.[903]

YHWH is determined to put an end to ממלכות בית ישׂראל. The word ממלכות can be understood in different ways. It can mean "kingdom," but, on the basis of Joshua 13:12, 21, 27, 30, 31, ממלכות refers to a kingdom as a territorial domain. Other meanings are possible though. Andersen and Freedman remark that ממלכות

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[896] עוד מעט, "just a little time;" HALOT 1, 796.

[897] The basic meaning of the word פקד has been widely discussed; see, e.g., John R. Spencer, "*PQD*, the Levites, and Numbers 1–4," *ZAW* 110 (1998) 535–546; HALOT 2, 956.

[898] The word ממלכות in the phrase ממלכות בית ישׂראל means "royal dominion, kingship" as well as "kingdom;" HALOT 1, 595. The common translation of the phrase is "the kingdom of the house of Israel," but a better translation would be "reigning;" so in the LXX, in which the word βασιλεία does not only refer to the territory ruled but also to "dominion, reigning, period of reign, position of superior rulership;" Muraoka, 114. Thus Andersen and Freedman may be close to the mark as they read ממלכות as the object of the verb שׁבת and translate the word as "rule;" Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 183–185. Andersen and Freedman also make a difference between בית יהוא and בית ישׂראל and translate "the dynasty of Jehu" and "the state of Israel."

[899] והיה ביום ההוא, literally "and it will be on the day that," which is a prophetic introductory formula.

[900] A simile of the broken bow also occurs in the vassal treaty of Esarhaddon; Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School*, 136.

[901] See, e.g., Schniedewind (1996) 75–90, here 83–85.

[902] Thomas Edward McComiskey, "Prophetic Irony in Hosea 1.4: A Study of the Collocation פקד על and its Implications for the Fall of Jehu's Dynasty," *JSOT* 58 (1993) 93–101, here, 100. As for the end of the dynasty of Jehu at Jezreel, McComiskey refers to the murder of Zechariah in the city of Iblaam located in the Jezreel Valley; this reading is possible on the basis of the Lucianic recension of the LXX which reads "Iblaam" (the LXX reads the Hebrew words קבל עם "before the people" in 2 Kings 15:10 as "Keblaam"), see also Dearman, *Hosea*, 92–93; Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 170–171.

[903] So, Schniedewind (1996) 75–90, here here 85.

can denote "dominion," "rule," and they interpret 1:4 as speaking of the punishment of the house of Jehu by abolishing its reign over the house of Israel.[904] Stuart Irvine, for his part, suggests that ממלכות refers to the end of the "extended kingdom" of Israel, which means its gradual territorial reduction from the final part of Jeroboam II's reign onwards.[905] Since "breaking the bow" in 1:5 1:5 means the end of Israel's military strength, 1:4 does not easily fit with the end of Jehu's dynasty, which took place when Zechariah, the last representative of the dynasty, was murdered in 747/46.

The word "Jezreel" also occurs in 1:5, 2:2, and 2:24. It can be deduced from 1:5 that the word "Jezreel" in the expression "blood of Jezreel" refers to the Valley of Jezreel, which had played an important role in the history of Israel. In biblical tradition, Jezreel is closely connected with Israel's military victories and defeats (Judges 6–8; 1 Samuel 29:1–6), and the actions of Jehu and Ahab (2 Kings 9–10). Jezreel was also known for its fertile farmland, and it was a strategically important location at the intersection of central trade routes. As a rule, Jezreel had been a place of bloodshed many times, but in 1:4 Jezreel is related to the dynasty of Jehu as an object of divine vengeance.

Jehu, on the other hand, was a usurper, and it was he who put an end to the rule of the Omrides (2 Kings 9–10) by killing Joram, the last Omride king; this took place in 841, perhaps with some support from Aram.[906] Israel did not, however, benefit from being on good terms with Aram, but lost some its territories in the Transjordan (2 Kings 10:32–33).[907] Furthermore, Jehu became a vassal to Assyria, which is attested by the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III. Thus, as stated, the situation during the time of Jehu was analogous to the Syro-Ephraimite war, when, as an ally of Aram, Pekah's politics brought on the invasion of Assyria and the resultant annexation of large territories of Israel. Similarly to Pekah, Jehu was a threat to the Davidic dynasty, since he slew Judah's king Ahaziah, who had been an ally of Joram of Israel. So, Jehu put an end to the political peace which had prevailed between Israel and Judah during the time of the Omrides.[908]

Despite Jehu's violence and his killing of the king of Judah along with his relatives, Jehu's treatment in the Deuteronomistic history is positive, although not completely. The Deuteronomists, who uniformly condemn all Israelite kings, do not use their standard formula of judgment for Jehu. Instead, in 2 Kings 10:30, Jehu is said to have "done well" because he destroyed the house of Ahab and wiped out worship of Baal from Israel; as for the latter, he was not successful. The Deuteronomists had to shape the narrative to explain why Jehu's dynasty was exceptionally long lasting – something, which was regarded as a sign of divine favor. Thus Jehu became came to be depicted as having acted according to the intention of YHWH to destroy the house of Ahab (2 Kings 9:8–9; 10:30), and therefore, Jehu, who fulfilled the divine will, was not totally condemned but was

[904] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 184.
[905] Irvine (1995) 502–503, here 502.
[906] See Schniedewind (1996) 75–90, here especially 82–85.
[907] Ibid., 85.
[908] Hayes and Miller, *Israelite and Judaean History*, 391–392.

promised a dynasty.[909] Nonetheless, the Deuteronomists' view on Jehu is not completely positive, but it was moderated by presenting the promise of dynasty to Jehu as finite (2 Kings 10:30) because Jehu failed to keep the Law carefully and followed the sins of Jeroboam (2 Kings 10:31); the latter is a stereotypic Deuteronomistic way to degrade the kings of Israel.[910]

It is possible that in the background of the present narrative of Jehu there is an original Israelite version, which saw Jehu as a violent usurper.[911] If this was known at the time when Hosea's prophecies were given, it is understandable why in Hosea's prophecy Jehu's dynasty was said to come to its end in the same way as Jehu's violent rise to power. Nevertheless, the use of the name Jezreel in Hosea is not easy to connect any particular historical event, since the same name is used in different menaings: in 1:4–5 Jezreel is related to judgment but in 2:2 the judgment is reversed. This duality is embedded in the name Jezreel, "God sows," itself. YHWH sows the land, Israel, and provides all the good – not Baal. What YHWH has sown he may also take away, however, and thus both salvation and judgment are embedded in the term Jezreel.[912] Perhaps the idea of judgment is also that the seed is scattered.[913] If we read 1:4 in the light of 2:2, the "scattered seed" will be collected by the reunion of Israel and Judah, an important aspect in the policy of the reform of Josiah.

4.1.2. Hosea 8:4–6. Kings not from YHWH

8:4 *They have made kings, but not from me;*
they have installed officials, but without my knowledge.
Their silver and gold they have made into idols for themselves

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[909] See Walter Brueggeman, "Stereotype and Nuance: The Dynasty of Jehu," *CBQ* 70 (2008) 16–28.

[910] According to Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 122, the promise to Jehu was added *post eventum* to explain the long survival of the dynasty; for a different view, see David T. Lamb, "The Non-Eternal Dynasty Promises of Jehu of Israel and Esarhaddon of Assyria," *VT* 60 (2010) 337–344, who has compared the promises given to Jehu and Esarhaddon, and concludes that more specific non-eternal promises like those granted to Jehu and Esarhaddon would actually have been more effective as political propaganda in the short-term than indefinite promises like those given to David, Solomon and Jeroboam I, and therefore he dates the promise to the time of Jehu. See also King (2017) 309–332, who points to how the Deuteronomistic historians were obliged to legitimize the reign of Jehu, who was a usurper. Kings points out how the depiction of Jehu's revolt shows many motifs known from Assyrian texts, one of the motifs which was to present the election of the king as an act of divine election, which, in the case of usurpers, was especially important in order to legitimize their rule; conversely, the characterizing deposed kings as illegitimate provided another tool to justify the usurpation.

[911] Ernst Würthwein, "Die Revolution Jehus. Die Jehu-Erzählung in altisraelitischer und deuteronomistischer Sicht," *ZAW* 120 (2008) 28–48.

[912] For this point concerning the name Jezreel, see Braaten, "God Sows: Hosea's Land Theme in the Book of the Twelve," in Redditt and Schart (eds.), *Thematic Threads in the Book of the Twelve*, 109.

[913] See Ben Zvi, *Hosea*, 46.

so that it will be cut off.

8:5 *Reject your calf, Samaria.*
My wrath burns against them.
How long will they not be able to innocence?

8:6 *For indeed it is from Israel.*
A craftsman made it,
it is no god.
Indeed, the calf of Samaria will become splinters!

These three verses are part of a longer passage 8:1–8, already discussed in Chapter III in the context of Hosea's cult criticism. I focus here on 8:4, the first half of which deals with an issue related to the monarchy. As deduced from previous verses, the subject "they," הם, in 8:4 denotes the people of Israel, who are said to have made kings and installed officials without YHWH's consent.[914] Nothing more is specifically said about the kings, but in the second verse half, the topic is turned to the cult, especially the calf of Samaria. The context thus makes an association between kings and the cult, and therefore some commentators, as well as rabbinic sources, have seen a connection here with Jeroboam I.[915] Such a reading of 8:4 certainly fits with the Deuteronomistic concept the "sin of Jeroboam," which stigmatized all Israelite kings as apostates. Nevertheless, nothing is said directly about the role of the kings in conducting the cult. The saying about the kings may have been put in its present context by a redactor, perhaps at the time of Josiah's reform, in whose interests it was to slander the kings of the former kingdom of Israel on the basis of their cultic connections. Thus, it seems to me that the original statement about kings had a different meaning.

Overall, I think that there is no general anti-monarchic tendency in 8:4 in that the monarchy as an institution had been opposed, but the saying refers to kings who are "not from YHWH," in other words, they do not have any support from YHWH. In the history of Israel, many kings were killed by usurpers – Nadab son of Jeroboam I was killed by Baasha (1 Kings 15:27), Elah, Baasha's son, was killed by Zimri, one his officials (1 Kings 16:9–10), and Zimri met his death after reigning for only seven days when Omri, the commander of the army, was proclaimed king (1 Kings 16:15–19); these events took place in 884/883. The dynasty of Omri was long-lasting, but, as discussed above, it met its end with Jehu's revolt. The last king of Jehu's dynasty was Zechariah, after whose death there were five kings in Israel within a period of ten years. Zechariah, son of Jeroboam II, ruled only for six months (2 Kings 15:8–12) before he was murdered

[914] The text speaks literally of making kings without YHWH's "knowing," but as it is commonly understood, nothing happens without YHWH's awareness and, thus, the expression ולא ידעתי refers to YHWH's approval or the like; Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 492.
[915] Emmerson, *Hosea*, 105–107; Lipshitz, *Commentary of Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra on Hosea*, 79.

by Shallum. Shallum was a usurper, a captain in the royal army, and his reign meant that the dynasty of Jehu came to an end. Shallum's reign was short, lasting for only one month (2 Kings 15:13), because he, in turn, was murdered by Menahem, another military officer (2 Kings 15:14). This presumably took place in 743, and Menahem reigned until 738, when his son Pekahiah took the throne, but he was killed by Pekah. Pekah, in turn, was eliminated in the context of Tiglath-pileser III's campaign in Palestine in 732 and replaced by Hoshea, who reigned over a small rump state around Samaria in 732–724. Hoshea, a vassal to Assyria, turned from his pro-Assyrian politics towards Egypt (2 Kings 17:4), which resulted in Assyria's move against Israel, the imprisonment of Hoshea and the conquest of Samaria in 721.

The successors of Jeroboam II – Zechariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah, Pekah, and Hoshea – are not even mentioned in the superscription of Hosea. Since the length of the reign of Jeroboam II is not commensurable with the combined regnal years of the Judaean kings Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, who are listed in the superscription, the omission of the kings after Jeroboam II appears intentional. We can but speculate on the reason for this. It may be that the later Judaean redactor had no access to the annals of the kings of Israel or that his source material was not annalistic in character.[916] Another possibility is that the kings after Jeroboam II were omitted as illegitimate, but this explanation leaves open the question of why Zechariah, the son of Jeroboam II and his legitimate successor, is not mentioned.[917]

Ultimately, Israel failed in maintaining a stable hereditary dynasty like the Davidic dynasty in Judah. As Tomoo Ishida has suggested, the reason for the dynastic instability was the failure of kings in their royal duty as war-leaders, and this inspired the usurpers, who were often military officers, like Zimri and Jehu, to overthrow them.[918] In biblical sources, however, even the two longest-lasting dynasties in Israel – the dynasties of Omri and Jehu – are evaluated on the basis of their religious actions.

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[916] Menahem Haran, "The Books of the Chronicles 'of the Kings of Judah' and 'of the Kings of Israel': What Sort of Books Were They?" *VT* 49 (1999) 156–164. In his article, Haran refers to 1 Kings 11:41 (ספר דברי שלמה), 1 Kings 14:19 (ספר דברי הימים למלכי ישראל) and 1 Kings 14:29 (ספר דברי הימים למלכי יהודה), and suggests that the late Deuteronomists did not have access to the single copies of the original annals, but rather that they merely refer to quotations which they had at their disposal, and the word ספר refers to a particular copy, not the original.

[917] Nadav Na'aman makes an interesting point that the names and regnal years of certain kings were expunged for later political and religious reasons from Assyrian and Egyptian sources. In the Assyrian King-List the names and the regnal years of the heirs of Ishme-Dagan I as well as the names of the usurpers who succeeded them on the throne have been omitted; in Egyptian sources, the existence of the four "Amarna kings" (Akhenaten, Smenkhkare, Tutankhamun and Ay) was officially ignored in several king-lists composed at the time of the Egyptian XlXth Dynasty (or, at least, under Seti I and Ramesses II) because of the hatred of the memory of the "Amarna kings, " on account of the heretical religious reform of Akhenaten; in Na'aman (1986) 71–92.

[918] Ishida, *Royal Dynasties in Ancient Israel*, 173; as Ishida further notes the usurper usually executed his plan during the reign of a new king who could not stabilize his governance of the kingdom weakened by the military failure of his predecessor.

Against this background, 8:4 appears to summarize the view on Israelite monarchy as it is presented in the books of Kings. All Israelite kings were illegitimate, and had no legitimation from YHWH. Although 2 Kings 17:7–23 puts the blame for the destruction of the kingdom of Israel on the people, it nevertheless, speaks of "practices that the kings had introduced" in 2 Kings 17:8. This obviously points to the archsin of Israel, the sin of Jeroboam, which rendered all Israelite kings as apostates. However, Hosea 8:4 does not actually state this, but rather the verse speaks of kings who were not "from YHWH" and officials who had not got YHWH's approval. It seems to me that this statement is separate from the cult criticism in the following verses, although 8:4 speaks of kings and cult in the same verse. Were all the kings "not from YHWH" since there were divine promises of dynasty to Israelite kings, namely Jeroboam I (1 Kings 11:37–38) and Jehu (2 Kings 15:12)?

In fact, in his role as a king, Jeroboam I did not do anything basicly wrong, since what he did was in the authority of a king.[919] Therefore, the reasons have to be found somewhere else. In my opinion, there is one likely reason: the opposition of the Mushite Levites, who traced their traditions to Shiloh and the Ark, and through Shiloh, to David and Jerusalem.[920] I have already discussed the role of these Levitical circles in the background of Exodus 32, in which they connect themselves with the authority of Moses. But, regarding the issue of monarchy in general, Halpern points to the words of the Shilonite prophet Ahijah, who expresses his objection to a type of king like Solomon (1 Kings 11:33).[921] Thus, it can be summarized that an ideal king should conduct a proper cult, be a military leader, and be righteous. Defining what in fact the proper cult was depends of course on the viewpoint. In the case of Hosea, the viewpoint fits well with the traditions coming from Shiloh and Shechem. Thus, to conclude, I regard 8:4 as reflecting elements from the 8th century prophecy, although the text in its present form is later.

At the time of Josiah's reform, the prophetic element was interpreted as referring to the kings of Davidic lineage as the kings "from YHWH," in other words, the only divinely chosen kings. The experience of Solomon's Canaanite city-king type of kingship was corrected with the Law of the King in Deuteronomy 17:14–20, which demands righteousness. Thus, as Sweeney notes, the conditions in which the king excercises his power are defined by the example of Solomon, whom the king is not supposed to follow.[922] The Law of the King, which in fact

[919] Zevit lists several measure from Deuteronomistic sources: kings did appoint non-Levitical priests (2 Samuel 8:18), dismiss Levitical priests (1 Kings 2:26), build temples and shrines (1 Kings 6; 16:32–33; 2 Kings 21:2–7), and in general were involved in cultic policies and politics (2 Kings 16:2–4, 8, 10–18; 18:2–5; 23:4–20); as for cultic actions, Zevit further remarks that both biblical and extrabiblical sources indicate that royal involvement in cultic affairs was the rule rather than the exception; Zevit (1985) 57–73, here 61–62.

[920] For this, see Baruch Halpern, "Levitic Participation in the Reform Cult of Jeroboam I," *JBL* 95 (1976) 31–42.

[921] Halpern (1976) 31–42, here 41.

[922] Sweeney, *King Josiah*, 162.

enhances the role of the king by the centralization of the cult along with centralization of the legal functions and economic resources, fits in well with the ideology of the reform of Josiah, and could have been written in support of the reform.[923]

4.1.3. Hosea 7:3–8. Revolt at the court

7:3 *They make the king glad*[924] *with their wickedness,*
the princes with their lies.

7:4 *They all are ranging,*[925]
like a burning oven.[926]
The baker has ceased to stoke,
from the kneading of the dough until it is leavened.[927]

7:5 *The day of our king*[928]
the princes cause themselves to be sick[929] *with heat from wine,*
he joins hands with scoffers.[930]

7:6 *For they flare like an oven,*
their heart burns in them.
Their anger smolders all night;

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[923] Ibid., 168.

[924] The 3rd person plural Piel imperfect form of שׂמח; so, the LXX with εὐφραίνω.

[925] 7:4 calls them מנאפים, "adulterers," a plural Piel participle of נאף, "commit adultery;" so also the LXX with μοιχεύω, "to commit adultery;" Muraoka, 466. BHS suggests that the verb may be אנף, "to be angry" and, thus, "raging" may be a better translation; see Shalom M. Paul, "The Image of the Oven and the Cake in Hosea 7:4–10," *VT* 18 (1968) 114–120.

[926] The expression כמו תנור בערה is problematic, since the feminine participle form בערה derived from בער, "to blaze up, scorch, burn" does not fit in with the masculine noun תנור, "oven;" therefore, the reading הם בער proposed by BHS is adopted here, giving a translation "they are like a burning oven."

[927] The second half of the verse is difficult. In אפה ישׁבות מעיר מלוּשׁ בצק עד־חמצתו, the baker is said to have ceased to מעיר, a Hiphil participle of עור, "to wake up" but it may also mean "disturbing a fire;" "stoke." מלוּשׁ is a Qal infinitive, "to knead," here "from kneading" of the dough until it is leavened. The LXX: πέψις, hapax, "act of cooking;" Muraoka, 555, κατάκαυμα; act of burning; Muraoka, 372.

[928] The phrase יום מלכנו lacks the preposition; the reading "the day of our king" may not be correct. Andersen and Freedman translate it as "By day they make our king ill, the princes, with poisoned wine;" Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 447.

[929] The Hiphil 3rd person plural of חלה; literally, "cause themselves to be sick;" Waltke and O'Connor, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 450.

[930] In 7:5, the verb החלו, a Hiphil perfect of חלה, "to be ill." In the phrase חמת מיין, the construct state of חמה, "heat," is put before the word with the preposition, usually translated as "become sick with the heat of wine." So Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 259.The verb משׁך used with יד denotes "to extend one's hand;" here "he extends his hand to לצצים, to "rebels, scoffers;" the word is a Qal participle of לצץ. The "day of the king" is unclear.

in the morning it burns like a flaming fire.[931]

7:7 *All of them are warm as an oven,*
and they consumed their rulers.
All their kings fell.
No one among them to call on me.[932]

7:8 *Ephraim mixes himself*[933] *with the nations,*
Ephraim is a bread not turned.[934]

The passage in 7:3–8 forms a separate unit within Hosea 7. This text, before anything, has been regarded as part of the 8th centuty prophecy; it fits so well with the historical events during the last decades before the fall of Samaria. The text apparently describes a conspiracy against a king; the scene is at the royal court, but the time and the king remain unknown. The passage uses imagery of an oven and baking to depict the rage of the conspirators. In 7:3, the 3rd plural Piel imperfect form of the verb שׂמח is usually read as "to make glad." It is likely that the king and the royal officials were deceitfully led to their cheerful mood, most likely with drinking.[935] In the MT of 7:4, the conspirators are called "adulterers," מנאפים, but the meaning of the word remains obscure, unless it refers to the deceitful nature of the conspirators. It is possible that the original verb should be אנף; the translation "they are raging" makes sense especially as the conspirators are compared to a burning oven.[936] The reference to the baker, אפה, is puzzling; it certainly fits in with the metaphor of baking, and allows a word play with נאף, "to commit adultery." The baker is said to have ceased from stoking the fire, which can refer to a short period of rest before the actual action gets started. 7:5 describes a sort of revelry at the court; the reason – the day of the king, whatever that means – remains obscure.

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[931] In 7:6, the expression כי־קרבו can be understood as modal "as they approach;" but the emendation בקדחו, "to flare" is appropriate here as it is followed logically by כתנור, "for they flare like an oven." See also Wolff, *Hosea*, 107.The continuation would then be לבם בארבם, in which בארבם is the infinite construct of the verb ארב, "to lie in ambush;" it is, however, more likely that בם בער should be here, "their heart burning in them." The word אפהם denotes "their baker;" but BHS suggests another point than in the MT and reads "their anger." ישׁן can be translated as "sleeping," but also "to smoulder" if the word anger is accepted here.

[932] The verb יחמו in 7:7, is the Qal imperfect of חמם, "be warm;" ואכלו את־שׁפטיהם; they consume, in other words, destroy שׁפטיהם, Qal participle from שׁפט, denoting those who judge, that is, "judges," in a broader meaning, "rulers," in every case they are officials with an important position in the court.

[933] תבוללּ is a hapax legomenon, a Hitpolel form of בלל, "to mix up;" HALOT 1, 134; therefore, the reflexive form. The verb is associated with baking, especially the mixing of oil with flour and kneading; see Paul (1968) 114–120, here 117.

[934] In other words, the bread is only half-baked.

[935] Isaiah 28:1 points to the drunkards of Ephraim, involving also the priests and the prophets (Isaiah 28:7); see Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 455.

[936] Paul (1968) 114–120.

Overall, the imagery of an oven depicts the rage of the conspirators, who "consume" their rulers, well. This probably looks back to the revolts throughout the history of Israel's monarchy, as we have already discussed in the context of 8:4. As for the date of the sayings, 7:8 speaks of the threat of the exile, perhaps referring to Assyrian practice of deportations. If we read the passage in the light of 1:4, the king at stake may be Zechariah (2 Kings 15:10). Macintosh, however, suggests that the issue at stake is the assassination of Pekahiah by Pekah in Samaria in 735.[937] On the basis of the text, it is not possible to say with certainty who king is, but Pekah is, of course, possible particularly as he is connected with the events of the Syro-Ephraimite war. Macintosh is likely right too in pointing out that Pekahiah could be regarded as "our king" (7:5) since he was the only king who succeeded to the throne without resorting to treachery or violence.[938] The saying "all their kings fell" in 7:7 appears to be a retrospective saying, referring to all those nine revolts after the death of Jeroboam II.

The metaphor of a loaf which is not turned in 7:8 has given rise to various interpretations. According to Paul, the metaphor refers to Ephraim's powerlessness in the face of the Assyrian threat, but I think that Wolff hits the mark by pointing out the fact that a half-baked loaf should be turned quickly to prevent burning.[939] In other words, Ephraim is facing an immanent threat, and there is no time to wait.

4.1.4. Hosea 13:9–11. No more kings

13:9 *He will destroy you,[940] Israel,*
for in me, in your help.[941]

13:10 *Where[942] now is your king*
so that he may save you in all your cities,[943]

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[937] Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 261.
[938] Ibid.
[939] Paul (1968) 114–120, here 118; Wolff, *Hosea,* 126.
[940] The word שׁחתך can be read as a noun "your destruction;" so, Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea,* 535. Some commentators emend the MT's 3rd person singular form to 1st person singular, "I will destroy you;" so, Wolff, *Hosea*, 221.
[941] The phrase כי־בי בעזרך is problematic; it may be read as מי בעזריך, "who will help you," as Wolff, *Hosea*, 221, suggests.
[942] אהי is a *hapax legomenon*, which occurs here and twice in 13:14. Most commentators read it as a dialectical variant of אַיֵּה, "where," since two further occurrences of אהי in 13:14 speak against a possibility that it would be a scribal mistake; see, e.g., Dearman, *Hosea*, 317. Instead of "where," Macintosh interprets the word as a taunting exclamation "so much, then, for your king;" Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 537.
[943] The expression בכל עריך is strange – why salvation would take place only in cities? BHS proposes an alternative reading וכל־שׁריך ויׁשפטוך, "and all your officials that they may judge you;" see, however, Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 538, who opts for the MT, and retains בכל עריך; he

and your judges[944] *of whom you said,*
"Give me a king and princes".

13:11 *In my anger I gave you a king,*[945]
and in my wrath, I took away.

The passage in 13:9–11 forms a unit within Hosea 13 with Israel addressed in the 2nd person singular.[946] 13:9 is difficult, and various readings have been suggested to make better sense of the content.[947] The point in 13:9 is, however, clear. YHWH, who is Israel's helper, is now its destruction. The idea of YHWH as destroying his people may be quite an ancient myth; as Gili Kugler has suggested, in its earliest form, exemplified by Psalm 78:38, the threat of annihilation is due to the people's general behavior of stubborness and lack of trust in YHWH.[948] In the background in Hosea is also the concept of the covenantal relationship between Israel and YHWH. If Israel keeps the covenant, it survives, but should Israel break it, curses will fall on it.

The point in 13:10–11 is the people's request for a king. 13:10 appears to be a rhetorical question concerning the king. In the second line, the phrase בכל עריך has often been emended as וכל שׂריך, "and all your princes." Whether there is a misreading here or not, the point in the verse is the inefficacy of the king which the people had asked for themselves. In 13:4, the people are forbidden to acknowledge any Savior other than YHWH, but now they went on to put their trust in a king, who could not save them. In the background may well be the situation in the time of Hoshea, the last king of Israel, as some commentators have proposed.[949]

13:10–11 evokes 1 Samuel 8 in that the verb שׁפט is used both in13:10 and in 1 Samuel 8:5, 6, 20, in which it refers to passing judgment as the domain of the king; in Hosea, the word may denote royal officials, sort of magistrates, and thus it is pointed out in Hosea that the entire royal system is dysfunctional. Furthermore, the reference to the people's request for a king suggests a connection between 13:10–11 and 1 Samuel 8, as both imply that the monarchy was not introduced on YHWH's initiative.[950] According to Wolff, the prophetic circles

notes that especially cities were the object of invaders. In my opinion, the suggestion of BHS makes better sense, however, since as we have seen in 5:1–7, proper judging are important themes in Hosea.

[944] The word שׁפטיך is a Qal participle derivative from the verb שׁפט, which has a broad spectrum of meanings related to pass justice and ruling; see HALOT 2, 1625.

[945] As Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 538, remarks, the singular "king" may serve as a collective noun, "kings."

[946] Wolff, *Hosea*, 223.

[947] For example, Wolff, *Hosea*, 221, has "I will destroy you, O Israel. Who will help you?" Dearman, *Hosea*, 317, reads "It is your destruction Israel, indeed from me, from your helper."

[948] Kugler (2016) 632–647, here 647.

[949] Wolff, *Hosea*, 227; Dearman, *Hosea*, 324; Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 538–539; Macintosh suggests that the use of the verb "save" may play on the etymology of the king's name.

[950] So, e.g., Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 636. Overall, the complex and disputed textual history of Samuel is beyond the scope of this study; for different views, see, e.g., Timo Veijola, *Das*

knew the tradition that the people had requested the king from YHWH, a tradition which later was taken up into the Deuteronomistic history.[951]

The view of the monarchy in 1 Samuel 8 is critical, and it implies that the people have rejected YHWH as their king (1 Samuel 8:8). In the "Rule of the King" (1 Samuel 8:11–18) the prophet Samuel then tells the people what the king will claim as his rights, and he depicts a king who is an oppressive tyrant. This depiction of a king differs from the Deuteronomistic reasons for condemning the kings – disobedience to the Law, tolerance of idolatrous cult, and following the sin of Jeroboam – and focuses on the social oppression introduced by monarchy.[952] Regarding the model for the king in 1 Samuel 8:11–17, the phrase "all other nations" may refer to oppressive Canaanite city kings, but as Ronald Clements suggests, the historical situation reflected in the passage could be Solomon's use of forced labor from Israel in order to carry out his building projects which led to the split of the northern tribes from Judah (1 Kings 11:26–40).[953] Thus, as Clements further suggests, the warning "on that day you will cry out to Yahweh your God on account of your king" in 1 Samuel 8:18 may refer to the day at Shechem when the elders of Israel petitioned Rehoboam to lessen the burdens of his father's reign.[954]

Mark Leuchter dates the composition of 1 Samuel 8:11–18 to the time of Josiah, and points to its similarity with the Neo-Assyrian royal annals.[955] This does not exclude the possibility that Hosea'sprophecy, which in its original context was targeted at the contemporary kings, triggered the compilation of the text.

Königtum in der Beurteilung der deuteronomistischen Historiographie. *Eine redaktions–geschichtliche Untersuchung* (AASF B, 198; Helsinki; Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1977); Walter Dietrich, *David, Saul und die Propheten. Das Verhältnis von Religion und Politik nach den prophetischen Überlieferungen vom frühesten Königtum in Israel* (BWANT 122; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1992); Walter Dietrich, "The Layer Model of the Deuteronomistic History and the Book of Samuel," in Cynthia Edenburg and Juha Pakkala (eds.), *Is Samuel among the Deuteronomists? Current Views on the Place of Samuel in a Deuteronomistic History* (SBL 16; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013) 39–65, here 47.

[951] Wolff, *Hosea*, 227.

[952] Ronald E. Clements, "The Deuteronomistic Interpretation of the Founding of the Monarchy in Sam. VIII," *VT* 24 (1974) 398–410, here 399. See also Hans Jochen Boecker, *Die Beurteilung der Anfänge des Königtums in den deuteronomistischen Abschnitten des 1. Samuelbuches. Ein Beitrag zum Problem des Deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerks* (Neukirchen-Vlyun: Neukirchener, 1969) 17.

[953] As Clements remarks, although Solomon was the king who came closest to this picture of a king, he is not accused of such oppressions; Clements (1974) 398–410, here 403–404.

[954] Clements (1974) 404.

[955] Mark Leuchter, "A King Like All the Nations: The Composition of 1 Sam 8,11–18," *ZAW* 117 (2005) 543–558, here especially 548–550. Leuchter, for example, points to the description of military conscription in 1 Samuel 8:12 which matches almost verbatim with Sargon's records of military brigades and units; also the claim that the king will take women to perform the duties of servants in the court (1 Samuel 8:13) is based on the Assyrian records.

4.1.5. Hosea 10:1–15. No king in Israel

10:1 *Israel was a luxuriant vine,*[956]
yielding fruit accordingly.[957]
According to the multitude of his fruit
he increased altars.
According to the goodness of his land,
he made good standing stones.[958]

10:2 *Their heart is divided,*[959]
now they will pay for their guilt.
He will break[960] *their altars,*
devastate their standing stones.[961]

10:3 *For now they will say,*
"We have no king,
for we do not fear YHWH.
And the king, what can he do for us?"

10:4 *They have spoken words,*
false oaths, making covenant.
Judgement has sprouted like a poisonous plant
on the furrows of the field.
10:3 *Surely, they now say,*
"We have no king, for we do not fear YHWH.
And the king - what could he do for us?"

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[956] The phrase גפן בוקק ישׂראל is problematic because the Piel participle בוקק occurs only here. The verb בקק has two meanings. It can be interpreted in the light of Nahum 2:3, in which the verb בקק points to "laying waste;" HALOT 1, 150. Another possibility is to see the word as a participle of the root בקק denoting "to be luxuriant;" HALOT 1, 150–151. The LXX supports this reading with the verb εὐκληματέω, "to have vigorously growing branches;" Muraoka, 301.

[957] The phrase פרי ישׁוה־לו is also difficult. The Piel of the verb שׁוה is "to make like," HALOT 2, 1437; thus, the question may be of commensurability; so Wolff, *Hosea*, 170, who translates "he yielded fruit accordingly." The LXX reads ὁ καρπὸς εὐθηνῶν αὐτῆς; "its fruit being plentiful;" Muraoka 299.

[958] The phrase היטיבו מצבות has a sense of "making something good, well" here the translation is as suggested in HALOT 1, 408.

[959] הלק לבם can be understood in various ways; the verb הלק can mean "to make smooth" or "to apportion," hence the translation "their heart is divided" is possible; so the LXX ἐμέρισαν καρδίας αὐτῶν; "they have divided their heart." The phrase can mean that they have "a false heart;" so Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 547.

[960] The verb ערף means "to break the neck of an animal;" here it is used metaphorically for the destruction of the altars. The LXX has the verb κατασκάπτω, "to raze to the ground;" Muraoka, 382.

[961] The verb שׁדד, "to devastate," is used here in a Polel stem; it also occurs in Jeremiah 5:6; HALOT 2, 1419–1420.

10:4 *They speak words, false oaths,*
making covenant.
Judgement sprouts like a poisonous plant
on the furrows of the field

10:5 *For the calves of Beth-aven*
the residents of Samaria are afraid
Indeed, its people will mourn for it,
and its idolatrous priests will howl for it
over its splendor
since it has gone away from them.

10:6 *It will be even brought to Assyria*
as a tribute to the Great King
Ephraim will receive shame
and Israel will be ashamed of its counsel.

10:7 *Samaria – her king will be destroyed,*
like a twig on the surface of the water.

10:8 *Destroyed will be the high places of Aven,*
the sin of Israel.
Thorns and thistles will grow up on their altars
And they will say to the mountains: cover us
and to the hills: fall over us.

10:9 *Since the days of Gibeah,*
you have sinned, Israel.
There they stood.
Will the war not overtake them in Gibeah
against the sons of wickedness?

10:10 *When I desire I will chastise them.*
Nations will be gathered against them,
in their being harnessed to their two עינתם.

10:11 *Ephraim was a trained heifer*
who loved to thresh
When I passed over the beauty of her neck,
I harnessed Ephraim.
Judah plowed,
Jacob harrowed for him.

10:12 *Sow to you in righteousness*
according to mercy,

plough the fallow ground
for a time to seeking YHWH
until he comes to rain righteousness to you.

10:13 *You have ploughed wickedness*
you have reaped injustice
you have eaten the fruits of lie
because you have trusted in your way
in your many warriors.

10:14 *Rage of battle will rise against your people.*
All your fortresses will be destroyed
as Shalman destroyed Beth Arbel on the day of war.
Women together with their children will be dashed.

10:15 *Thus he will do for you, Bethel,*
by reason of the wickedness of your wickedness
At dawn will be completely destroyed
the king of Israel.

The saying "we have no king" in 10:3 is obscure. It can be understood as denoting the disappearance of the entire institution of the monarchy or alternatively, it can be read as a reference to YHWH as a king and thus as a denial that YHWH is the king for the people.[962] This gets some support from 1 Samuel 8:7, in which YHWH says that the people have rejected him as their king. Historically, there was a period when Israel was without a king after the imprisonment of Hoshea by the Assyrians in 723/722 shortly before the fall of Samaria in 720 and this may the issue here; it cannot be proved, however. In my opinion, here again we may find that a historical motif is used to depict a religious concept. Thus the key issue in 10:3–4 may be that the people have broken the covenant between the king and the people, a form of covenant common in the ancient Near East.[963] An interesting possibility is that "the manner of the kingdom" in 1 Samuel 10:25 refers to a form of a covenant, needed at a historical turning-point when the monarchy was introduced in Israel.[964] The purpose of this covenant was to turn two unequal parties, the king and the people, into a single entity that was subject to YHWH; this was the religious aspect of the covenant, whereas the politico-social aspect concerned the king and the people.[965] In Hosea, the statement about having no king in parallel with not fearing YHWH points to the breaking of this covenant, and the sarcastic rhetorical question about the king points to a powerless king. The covenantal context is also referred to in 10:4, in which also the word מִשְׁפָּט is

962 Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 553.
963 See Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School*, 88–91.
964 Ben-Barak (1979) 30–43.
965 Ibid., 37.

found. As I have earlier noted, the word means "judgement" as well as execution of a just judgement, which maintains order in society. If the covenant is broken, no societal order can be expected.

The king of Samaria in 10:7 is perhaps Hoshea, who was imprisoned by the Assyrians. The king of Samaria has become "foam," if we accept this translation here, it means practically non-existant, annihilated. The king is helpless and goes with the stream, as one whose fate is completely determined by those who are stronger than him, and who disappears without a trace.

4.2. Positive picture of Davidic kingship

4.2.1. Hosea 3:4–5. Seeking David

3:4 *For the Israelites will remain many days without a king and without a prince and without a sacrifice*[966] *and without massebah and without ephod and teraphim.*

3:5 *Afterwards the children of Israel will return and seek YHWH their God and David their king.*
They will come trembling to YHWH and to his goodness at the end of the days.[967]

3:4 states that the Israelites will live many days without a king and official, in other words, without the royal establishment. 3:4 depicts a state without an established political structure (אין מלך ואין שׂר), without an effective religious system (ואין זבח ואין מצבה) and without a reliable means of establishing the will of YHWH (ואין אפוד ותרפים). It is difficult to say whether the issue at stake is a particular historical situation, like the imprisonment of Hoshea, when there was probably no king in Israel, or, as has been also suggested, 3:4 uses a literary image of a disordered society.[968] On the grounds that the saying presents ancient cultic objects as acceptable, I find no reason to date the sayings later then the 8th century, in contrast to Rudnig-Zelt, who dates the entire Hosea 3 to the Persian period, and its prevailing anti-Samaritan outlook; she relates 3:4 to the isolation of the wife in

[966] The LXX reads θυσιαστήριον; it refers to altar to which cultic offerings are brought; Muraoka, 335. ἱερατεία priestly office 338 sacrifice, altar, priesthood δῆλος manifestation 146

[967] This is the usual translation of באחרית הימים; it is understood as an eschatological statement. Another possibility is suggested by John T. Willis, "The Expression *be'acharith hayyamin* in the Old Testament," *ResQ* 22 (1979) 54–71, here 64, who, instead of an eschatological reading, reads "in days to come" which refers to a much closer future event.

[968] Paul A. Kruger, "The Face of Disorder: A Note on Hos 3,4," *ZAW* 124 (2012) 249–254, here 251, 253.

3:3 and suggests that in 3:4 the question is of the isolation of the northern kingdom which is deprived of all the distinctive features of its independence, its royal establishment and the cult of its own.[969] Rudnig-Zelt is correct in associating 3:3 and 3:4, but it is not necessary to postulate that the date of the saying is late. It may well refer to a real concrete situation before the fall of Samaria, when many of the means to communicate with YHWH were non-existant.

In 3:5, the verb שׁוב means "to return," also in a religious sense as returning to YHWH. As for the verb פחד when used with the preposition אל, the meaning "to approach in trepidation"[970] denoting trembling before YHWH is appropriate; those who did not fear YHWH (10:3), now approach him in fear. Some commentators suggest that ואת דוד מלכם and באחרית הימים are Judaean additions, related to messianic eschatology.[971] Since some of the traditions connected with Hosea have a pro-Davidic stance as previously discussed, I regard 3:5 as part of the prophetic tradition, although in its present form, it may come from the time of Josiah. The exilic period, when the release of Jehoiachin could have given some hope of renewing the Davidic dynasty, is not likely.[972]

4.3. Conclusions

In this chapter, I have shown that the background of the criticism of monarchy in Hosea is mainly the contemporary situation after the death of Jeroboam II, when all the kings were considered illegitimate because of their access to the throne was through coups. As Ishida suggests, the usurpers had to resort to "opportunistic manipulation of YHWH's backing to legitimize themselves."[973] They had no divine approval mediated by the prophets.

The dynasty of Jehu ended in a bloody revolt as it had begun. This situation is reflected in 1:4, which is part of the 8th century prophecy and comes from a period before the fall of Samaria. Also 7:3–7 has its origin in real-life situation as a palace revolt. In addition to these sayings, there are also critical perspectives on the monarchy in 8:4, 10:3, 7, 15, and 13:10–11.

In 8:4, the people are accused of appointing kings not from YHWH, in other words, from their own desire to have a king. This evokes 1 Samuel 8:5, when the people turned to Samuel and requested a king to rule them. The answer to the people's request was Saul and, therefore it is relevant to ask whether the anti-monarchic attitude in Hosea could be related to the establishment of the monarchy

[969] Susanne Rudnig-Zelt, "Vom Propheten und seiner Frau, einem Ephod und einem Teraphim – Anmerkungen zu Hos 3:1–4, 5," *VT* 60 (2010) 373–399, here, 381; Rudnig-Zelt refers to 2 Chronicles 15:3 as a parallel text.
[970] HALOT 2, 922.
[971] Wolff, *Hosea*, 63.
[972] See Tadmor and Cogan, *Kings II*, 328–330.
[973] Ishida, *Royal Dynasties*, 178.

and its first king, Saul. In my opinion, this is not the case. Saul was anointed by Samuel the Shilonite, and, moreover, Saul may not have been a king originally, but rather a charismatic leader in a war of liberation as in 1 Samuel 9:1–10, 16, Samuel anoints Saul as a נגיד, "leader," "officer." It needs to stressed, however, that the tradition about Saul in 1 Samuel is complex, and 1 Samuel 9:1–10, 16 is but one of three different versions of the choice of Saul, and thus it is difficult to say which form of the tradition was known in the 8th century.[974] As for the treatment of Saul in the Hebrew Bible in general, it is obvious that there is much anti-Saul polemic, since in their present form, the traditions of Saul are embedded in a literary framework compiled in such a way to present the superiority of David as the ruler of all Israel.

Saul is not explicitly mentioned in Hosea, although some geographical names which appear in Hosea are related to Saul, including Mizpah in 5:1, Gilgal in 4:15 and 9:15, and Gibeah in 5:8, 9:9, and 10:9. I have dealt with these particular passages earlier and therefore, merely some additional comments, related to Saul, follow. As we have seen, neither 9:9 nor 10:9 mention Saul, nor do they speak of any events associated particularly with royal establishment. Gibeah functioned as a stronghold of Saul, and Saul was named king in Mizpah (1 Samuel 10:17–25) or Gilgal (1 Sam 11:12–15), so it is not likely that question would be about the introduction of the kingship. The mentions of Gibeah evoke the story of a Levite and his concubine in Judges 19, but in these passages the one who is accused is Israel whereas in Judges the blame for the rape of the concubine is put on the tribe of Benjamin.[975] The association of Judges 20 and Hosea is also corroborated by the mention of weeping in Bethel in Judges 20:23, since in the tradition about Jacob in Hosea, which according to my understanding represents a variant tradition to the one preserved in Genesis, mentions the weeping in association with Bethel (12:5). Given that Hosea has its origin among Levites, the connection with Gibeah in Hosea and the story of the Levite in Judges is even more probable.[976]

However, even if the anti-monarchic attitude is not connected to Saul directly, it is important to consider the old traditions which are embedded in 1 Samuel. Saul's army did not consist of professional warriors but tribal members (1 Samuel 14:52), whose commitment was related to the covenantal obligation to bear arms in the "wars of Yahweh," which was an important theme in the concept of the kingship of YHWH.[977] A monarchy was incompatible with the concept of YHWH as the king of Israel, and this tradition could have preserved in Israel for a long time. Furthermore, we have to take into consideration the change that the monarchy brought to the social-religious conventions of the pre-monarchic

[974] Na'aman (1992) 638–658, regards 1 Samuel 9:1–10, 16 as a pre-Deuteronomistic passage, belonging to what he calls the "Old Story of Saul." According to Fleming, *Legacy of Israel*, 182, "in the full books of Samuel and Kings, the institution of kingship appears to be identified especially with David, and Saul must be identified as a king because the keepers of David's lore understood him to have competed with a prior power in the house of Saul."
[975] Arnold (1989) 447–460.
[976] See also van der Toorn, *Family Religion*, 314.
[977] Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 221.

society. Stephen Cook relates the prophetic tradition in Hosea as originating from a social world where "genealogical lineage, ancestral farmland, and fertility intertwine to form the fabric of everyday life."[978] In this society, tribal solidarity was important, and as Cook proposes, in Hosea the idea of one tribally structured entity was clung to.[979] Saul's kingship was accepted as a necessity since he was more of a military leader than anything else, and in the pro-Saul narratives, Saul follows social patterns which were at home among Israel's agrarian communities.[980] Thus, it is likely that in the prophetic tradition in Hosea there is no polemic against Saul, but rather that the criticism is directed towards the contemporary monarchy. As for the original narrative of Saul, in its earlier form it was probably a kind of folklore concerning a Benjaminite tribal hero, and the story of Saul was only at a later stage united to the David cycle.[981] Thus, the negative picture of Saul is determined by the figure of David, and comes from later redaction.

My overall conclusion is that most of the monarchy-related sayings in Hosea can be understood in the light of the 8th century prophecy, which is anchored to Israel's old traditions and its social and religious conventions. The assault on the monarchy in Hosea is explicable in the following ways: In the first place, certain antimonarchic tendencies were deeply rooted in the tribal society.[982] In Hosea there are reflections of old traditions related to Israel's long history as a tribal society without kings, to which monarchy was only later introduced, forced by an external military threat. There is no doubt that a new system was accepted somewhat controversially, and not without reserve, although it was considered to have its justifications. The institution of the monarchy in Israel began with Saul, but whether we should call Saul a king is not quite clear, since there are no indications that he ever established a kingdom with a well-developed royal establishment, other than some administrative apparatus in place of decentralized system that was needed for the support of the army.[983] Whether the criticism of the monarchy harked back to a tribal society, is not obvious, since nothing in Hosea indicates that the pre-monarchic decentralized society was not an ideal in itself. Additionally, in the tribal system there was a tendency for power and wealth to accumulate to certain regions and families not to mention the hostilities between different tribes.[984] Nevertheless, regional identities were persistent and remained strong during the monarchy.[985] This regionality was also indicated by the

[978] Cook, *Social Roots of Biblical Yahwism*, 231.
[979] Ibid., 232.
[980] Mark Leuchter, "The Rhetoric of Convention: The Foundational Saul Narratives (1 Samuel 9–11) Reconsidered," *Journal of Religious History* 40 (2016) 3–19.
[981] Dennis J. McCarthy, "The Inauguration of Monarchy in Israel. A Form–Critical Study of I Samuel 8–12," *Int* 27 (1973) 401–412. According to Bruce C. Birch, 9:1–14, 18–19, 22–24; 10:2–4, 9, 14–16a make up an old folk tale; see his article "The Development of the Tradition on the Anointing of Saul in 1 Sam 9:1–10:16," *JBL* 90 (1971) 55–68.
[982] With Laato, *History and Ideology*, 265.
[983] Van der Toorn, *Family Religion*, 273.
[984] Marvin L. Chaney, "Systemic Study of the Israelite Monarchy," *Semeia* 37 (1986) 53–76.
[985] Fleming, *Legacy of Israel*, 88–90.

existence of different geographical variations of traditions, which later were adopted by Judah and became a common heritage of the postexilic community.

The term the "sin of Jeroboam" is not explicitly mentioned in Hosea. Regardless of this fact, in 8:4–6 the king and the calf cult are juxtaposed in a manner which associates the royal institution and this cultic transgression; also in 5:1–7 the royal house is among other power-wielding groups in society that are rebuked for leading the people into idolatry. As we have seen in my discussion on 5:1–7, the exact nature of the cultic transgression remains enigmatic, but typically of Hosea, the present is reflected against the past. This seems to be the case with the monarchy as well. As Peter Machinist says, in Hosea the behavior of the king is not at the center of evil as in the Deuteronomistic History, but the attitude towards the monarchy in Hosea is determined by the same idea as in every other biblical source on monarchy: its subjection to the will of YHWH.[986] In this regard, the monarchy in Israel is seen as a series of failures. As Machinist further remarks, both biblical and extrabiblical evidence from ancient Near Eastern sources demonstrate that a range of obligations both to humans and to the divine were required from the kings, and should the kings fail at these duties, they were criticized from both sources; but what is absent in non biblical sources is the more radical questioning of the kings and the notion that human kingship is, as Machinist puts it, "a usurpation of God's role as king on earth."[987] Thus it is obvious that the king was not supposed to be like the kings of other nations, a sort of a despot, nor was he wide open to foreign religious influences like Solomon. In my opinion, Clements is correct in that the memory of Solomon was one of the rememberances conveying a negative attitude towards the monarchy in Israel. The historical reality in the background of the revolt of northern tribes against Rehoboam and the reasons for the split of Israel from Judah were naturally more various than the use of forced labor, but, nevertheless, it is one of the implications of the development of the monarchy in a relatively short time, and its detachment of the pre-monarchic tribal society. And as for the use of forced labor, Solomon was not the only king who used it; in the time of the Omrides forced labor could have been used for the massive building projects as well as the upkeep of sthe trong military establishment. Another reason for the antipathy towards Solomon among the Levitical circles was that he excluded Abiathar and his descendants from the priestly office (1 Kings 2:27), which resulted in the Levites turning to Jeroboam I – even though they were disappointed with him at the end.

We should also consider what role the historical differences between the kingdoms of Israel and Judah may have played in Hosea. In Judah, only one royal house was maintained throughout the existence of the kingdom, but in Israel the situation was different form the outset. Israel was formed and had a long history as a heterogeneous political body without kings. Local groups or tribes, like Ephraim, were powerful and strong, and the monarchy was a later addition to this

[986] Machinist (2005) 153–181; Machinist refers in particular to Psalm 89, Deuteronomy 17:14–20, and 1 Samuel 8–12.
[987] Machinist (2005) 153–181, here 174–177.

identity.[988] As Tomoo Ishida has discussed, in the background of the changing dynasties in Israel was, in addition to the rivalry of powerful tribes, the role of the king as a military leader, and where there were military failures the dynasty was changed.[989] The northern tradition of the Exodus, regardless of the reality, also had its influence. The tradition of liberation from oppression motivated the secession of the northern tribes from Judah, where, starting with the kingship of Solomon, the monarchy had become comparable to the oppressive monarchic system elsewhere in the ancient Near East. In addition to the Exodus, the ancient traditions from Shechem with their animosity towards the bull iconography also alienated certain circles from the monarchy during Jeroboam I.

One of these ancient traditions was the tradition of YHWH's kingship, which later became developed in the Judaean imperial theology. Originally, according to the ancient texts like Exodus 15, YHWH was the warrior king who fought for the benefit of Israel; that is to say that YHWH was not regarded as a universal king. A fundamental opposition of a human king is indicated in Judges 8:22–23, which tells how Gideon refused to become king.

The heavy taxation in the times of the tributary economy in the periods of Menahem and Hoshea may also have contributed to criticism. The tribute, which Menahem had to pay in exchange for Assyrian help, is mentioned in 2 Kings 15:19–20 as well as in Tiglath-pileser's inscriptions, and the tribute was financed by taxes on the leading families, and even Hoshea had to pay tribute to Assyria.[990] As Yee has pointed out, during the tributary economy the actions of the royal government increased the demand for highly exportable agricultural products such as grain, wine, and oil, the end result of which was that the village farmers hardly could carry on the production.[991] A detail which can be mentioned is that in the Samaria ostraca there are references to quantities of wine and oil which were brought to the palace.[992] If Hosea has its roots among rural Levitical circles, it would be no wonder if these circles were well aware of the tensions and conflicts between the existing rural village system and the monarchic institution. The extraction of the agricultural surplus was accomplished through taxation, which gave an advantage to the ruling aristocracy – criticized in Amos in 5:11 and 7:1, and in Hosea 9:1.[993]

As it is well known, in ancient Israel religious and political dimensions could not be separated from each other, also seen in Hosea. The offenses of the kings against the people violated the covenantal relationship to YHWH, which was to

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[988] Fleming, *Legacy of Israel*, 43, 179, 294. As Fleming, to my mind, correctly, says, the Israelite monarchy was constrained by a decentralizing political tradition that allowed the turnover of royal houses; in practice, as Fleming remarks, the heirs to kings who were founders of a royal house could easily be deposed if they failed to gain the support of the wider political body of Israel; here, 294.
[989] Ishida, *Royal Dynasties in Ancient Israel*, 171–172.
[990] Graham I. Davies, *Hosea. New Century Bible Commentary* (London: Harper Collins, 1992) 27.
[991] Yee (2001) 347–348.
[992] Davies, *Hosea*, 26.
[993] See D. N. Premnath, "Amos and Hosea: Sociohistorical Background and Prophetic Critique," *Word & World* 28 (2008) 125–132.

guarantee the unity of the tribes as the people of YHWH. Human kings were not to exceed their authority, which was given them from the supreme king, YHWH and, thus, as I have discussed above, the illegitimacy of the kings in 8:4 and 13:10–11 was related to their appointment as kings in a manner which neglected YHWH's supremacy. The treaties with foreign nations made by the kings were not only political but also religious transgressions with oaths sworn to foreign deities and thus could not be approved in Hosea.

The monarchy was a central theme in Josiah's policy. After the fall of the northern kingdom, it became evident that all the northern kings had failed in their duties as proper kings. When the Israelite kings were gone, the Davidic dynasty remained the only possibility to restore the future of the former kingdom of Israel. Therefore, it was Josiah who was the righteous Davidic king, who would wipe out the cultic wrongdoings of the Israelite kings. In his bid to show the worthlessness of the kings of Israel, Hosea's prophecies provided a valuable tool to justify why a Davidic king should rule over Israel. This also raises an important question of whether in the 8th century prophecy there could have been elements that indicate a pro-Davide attitude, and if so, why. It is possible that David was able to establish his kingdom because he respected the previously existing tribal system and established a kingship which was conditional, dependent on following the commandments of YHWH; this is reflected in Deuteronomy 17:14–20.[994] David took the ark, the symbol of the tribal covenant, to Jerusalem, makin it the successor of Shiloh, and choose the Mushite Shilonite Abiathar to serve as a priest in Jerusalem.[995] Thus, David was able to attach the northern tribes to his kingdom, for a relatively short time, though.

It is also likely that the time of Josiah was appropriate for the criticism of Solomon. In The Law of the King in Deuteronomy 17:14–20, the monarch portrayed appears to be Solomon, and – although the Law of the King does not restrict king's royal power, it defines the conditions by which it may be exercised.[996] Weinfeld relates the present form of the Law of the King to the Josianic period, and suggests that the selection of the restrictions and the present arrangement point to an anti-Solomonic tendency; the commandments in this law may, nevertheless, be ancient.[997]

Regarding the positive statements about the monarchy, the leading principle in them is the unity of Israel and Judah/ David as the people of YHWH. In this context, the role of the Shechemite traditions plays a role, since they represented an all-Israelite attitude.[998] Thus, the idea of the unity of the tribes may be ancient, and it was certainly applied to the goals of Josiah's reform, when Josiah tried to adjust the heritage of the former kingdom of Israel with Judah. There is no doubt

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[994] For this, see Laato, *History and Ideology*, 265-266; Antti Laato, "Psalm 132 and the Development of the Jerusalemite/Israelite Royal Ideology," *CBQ* 54 (1992) 49–66.
[995] Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 231–232.
[996] Sweeney, *King Josiah*, 162.
[997] Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School*, 168–169.
[998] See especially Nielsen, *Shechem*. See also Nigel Allan, "Jeroboam and Shechem," *VT* 24 (1974) 353–357.

that it was during the time of Josiah that the Shechemite traditions found their way to the hands of the Judaean scribes, who then incorporated them into what was to become Deuteronomy.

Some scholars have seen a later anti-Benjaminite polemics, which can be dated to the Persian period, in the anti-monarchic stance in Hosea. Bos dates the ideology of kingship in Hosea to the Persian period Yehud, when the Judahite leaders wanted to undermine the legitimacy of their northern competitors, part of which was the polemic against Bethel which reflects the attempt to delegitimize Bethel in favor of the rebuilt temple of Jerusalem.[999] In my opinion, in later reception Hosea may certainly have been read with this polemic in mind, but there is no need to assume that all the themes and motifs have originated from that time.

[999] Bos, *Reconsidering*, 87–96.

V TRADITIONS

The two Pentateuchals traditions known in Hosea are the traditions of the Exodus and Jacob. In Hosea, these traditions are referred to in a fragmentary manner, which has caused a vivid scholarly discussion about how the traditions in Hosea are related to the extant Pentateuchal traditions. What complicates the matter is that Pentateuch has had a complex literary development during which originally separate traditions were united into larger tradition complexes.[1000] This chapter focuses on the traditions of the Exodus and Jacob as they appear in their present form in Hosea and, on the basis of the texts, I discuss what purpose these fragmentary references served in terms of the 8th century prophecy on the one hand and the agenda of Josiah's reform on the other.

5.1. Exodus

The extant biblical tradition is presented in Exodus 1–15, but the entire Hebrew Bible contains numerous references to the Exodus in the form of formulaic expressions recalling the liberation out of Egypt.[1001] There is a broad agreement among scholars that the Exodus tradition owes its origin to the northern stream of traditions, and that the extant tradition is a composite developed over hundreds of years. It, therefore, reflects perspectives which were absent from its earliest versions, which were based on the experiences of various groups, not only on those of the small group which came to Canaan from Egypt under the leadership of Moses. Some of the memories that have found their way to the extant tradition most likely originated in Canaan, and carried recollections of the oppressive rule of Egypt in Canaan in the 13th-12th centuries.[1002] Such memories were easily fused

[1000] See, e.g., Thomas Christian Römer, "The Elusive Yahwist: A Short Story of Research," in Thomas B. Dozeman, Konrad Schmid (eds.), *Farewell to Yahwist: The Composition of the Pentateuch in Recent European Interpretation* (SBL Symposium Series 34; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006) 9–27, esp. 24–27; see also David M. Carr, "What Is Required to Identify Pre-Priestley Narrative Connections between Genesis and Exodus? Some General Reflections and Specific Cases," 159–180 in the same volume; Konrad Schmid, *Genesis and the Moses Story. Israel's Dual Origins in the Hebrew Bible* (Transl. James D. Nogalski; Siphrut 3, Literature and Theology of the Hebrew Scriptures, Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2010) 80.

[1001] Wijngaards points to the forms of the formula, one with the verb הוציא and the other with the verb העלה; understood as "I liberated you from Egypt" and "I made you come (here) out of Egypt," respectively; Wijngaards (1965) 91, 98. See also Walter Gross, "Die Herausführungsformel: zum Verhältnis von Formel und Syntax," *ZAW* 86 (1974) 425–453; using both lexical (cf. Wijngaards) and syntactical methods Gross identifies nine different formulas, and in contrast to Wijngaards, Gross finds no reason for the choice of הוציא and העלה.

[1002] E.g. Nadav Na'aman, "The Exodus Story: Between Historical Memory and Historiographical Composition," *JANER* 11 (2011b) 39–69; Russell, *Images of Egypt*; Leuchter (2011b).

with the memories of slavery in Egypt, as preserved in Exodus 1:11.[1003] The memories from Canaan could then be transferred to Egypt by the prominent figure of Moses, a tribal leader and a prophet, and the tradition of YHWH's origin from the southern periphery of Canaan.[1004] The role of Moses is also indicated in Hosea 12:14, which may be the oldest source pointing to the role of Moses as a prophet.[1005]

There may have been a sort of dichotomy in local variations of the Exodus tradition. Stephen Russell has distinguished regionally varied traditions within Cisjordan and Transjordan Israel, and suggests that Cisjordan Israelites celebrated an Exodus from Egypt in the Bethel calf cult as a journey of the tribal collective Israel from Egypt to Cisjordan. This tradition did not include the sojourn in the wilderness, whereas Transjordanian Israelites focused on deliverance from the oppression of Egypt rather than on a journey from Egypt to Canaan.[1006] I am not as convinced as Russell that we may posit the tradition known in Hosea to one of these local traditions, but as I will discuss in this chapter, some of the features that Russell connects with the Cisjordan traditions, like the absence of the motif of a long wandering in the wilderness do fit in well with the Exodus in Hosea. An aspect which best characterizes Hosea is, however, the way how traditions as well as historical motifs are dealt with. As Michael Fishbane points out, the issue here is a form of typology, which "seeks to adapt, interpret, or otherwise illuminate a present experience by means of an older datum."[1007] In the case of Hosea, my concern is less the historicity of the Exodus and more on the message it is meant to convey. I do agree, however, with Nadav Na'aman that the Exodus tradition is not merely a myth but rather reflects the Israelite experience from its emergence as nation, and therefore, it is characterized by a strong opposition to subjection to foreign nations and the aspiration for freedom.[1008]

As several scholars have noted, the Exodus tradition has a central place in the material with its origin in Israel, whereas the Judaean 8th century prophetic texts – First Isaiah and Micah – do not mention the tradition.[1009] Amos shows an awareness of the Exodus tradition in 2:10; 3:1, 5:25, and 9:7, but the origin of these verses is disputed.[1010] The Song of the Sea in Exodus 15:1–17 and Psalms 78 and 114, which have been regarded as early Judaean texts, refer to the Exodus,

[1003] See Graham Davies, "Was there an Exodus?," in John Day (ed.), *In Search of Pre-Exilic Israel*, 23–40, here 28–30.
[1004] Na'aman (2011b) 39–69, here 66.
[1005] Ibid.
[1006] Russell, *Images of Egypt.*
[1007] Fishbane (1985) 351–351.
[1008] Na'aman (2011b) 39–69.
[1009] Davies, "Was there an Exodus?" in Day (ed.), *In Search of Pre-Exilic Israel*, 24–40; see also Na'aman (2011b) 39–69.
[1010] Eidevall ascribes 2:10; 3:1b, and 5:25 to the exilic-postexilic redaction; as for 9:7, Eidevall sees it as redactional but not coming from the same redaction as 3:1–2, although in line with 3:1–2, 9:7 dismisses the idea of Israel's privileges because of the Exodus of Egypt; see Eidevall, *Amos*, 117, 123, 169, 236. Hadjiev attributes 2:10; 3:1 and 5:25 to the exilic redaction of Amos, whereas he considers that 9:7 has a pre-exilic origin; Hadjiev, *Amos*, 48, 113–114, 203.

indicating that the Exodus tradition was not unknown in Judah at the time of the early monarchy.[1011] It seems likely, however, that when the kingdom of Israel was still in existence, the Exodus, as a foundation tradition of Israel, was regarded as a competing tradition with the Judaean concept of an election based on David and Jerusalem. Only with Josiah's pan-Israelite political agenda, did the Exodus tradition begin its development in Judah, which is indicated by Josiah's inauguration of the celebration of the Passover in Judah (2 Kings 23:21–23). The full appropriation of the Exodus tradition in Judaean traditions was obviously based on the fact that it worked well in reflecting later historical experiences in the exilic and early post-exilic periods as well.

5.2. Exodus in Hosea

Hosea's awareness of the Exodus tradition is evident on the grounds of several references to the tradition in different contexts. The theme "out of Egypt" occurs in 2:17; 11:1; 12:10, 14 and 13:4, and Hosea mentions "wilderness" (מדבר) in 2:5, 16; 9:10, and 13:5, 15.[1012] Hosea also refers to Egypt many times without any explicit connection to the Exodus tradition (7:11, 16; 8:13; 9:3, 6; 11:5, 11 and 12:2).

In comparison with the extant Exodus tradition in the Pentateuch, Hosea does not refer to the enslavement of the Israelites in Egypt nor to Israel's long wandering in the wilderness, and Hosea also lacks motifs such as plagues, the golden calf episode, the Sinai covenant and theophany. However, the book contains references to the return to Egypt in 8:13; 9:3, and 11:5 which is looked on as a punishment which may relate to some element in the collective memory for which the return to Egypt serves as a typology. It is an argument from silence to say that this indicates Hosea's knowledge of another version of the tradition, since, as David Carr points out, typically of ancient writings, the first written version was probably already written in such a way that it could not easily be read by someone who did not already know the tradition well.[1013] However, if some of these elements which are absent from Hosea had been known in the 8th century, it is likely that at least one of them would have been referred to.

The key aspect related to the Exodus tradition in Hosea is the establishment of the relationship between YHWH and Israel and its connection with a historical event of coming out of Egypt (11:1, 12:10). In the 8th century prophecies, uttered

[1011] Davies, "Was there an Exodus?" in Day (ed.), *In Search of Pre-Exilic Israel*, 26–27; see also Mark Leuchter, "Eisodus as Exodus: The Song of the Sea (Exod 15) Reconsidered," *Bib* 92 (2011) 321–346, who also suggests an early date for the Song of the Sea.

[1012] The word מדבר is usually translated as "wilderness," "desert;" undoubtedly connected with dry and uncultured land, but also fits in with feeding flocks like "pasture," "steppe," see HALOT 1, 547. See also Wikander, *Drought, Death, and the Sun*, 168–169, in which the connections between מדבר and death, implied also in the Ugaritic myth, are discussed.

[1013] Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart*, 4.

in the face of an imminent disaster, the important message to the people was that in spite of the consequences of the breach of the covenant, YHWH could make a new one covenant with the people – but only after the punishment had been suffered.

5.2.1. Hosea 2:16–17. Restoration in the wilderness

2:16 *Therefore, behold, I will seduce[1014] her*
and lead her into the wilderness
and speak to her heart[1015] with her.

2:17 *And I will give her back her vineyards from there*
and make the Valley of Achor as a door of hope.
There she will respond[1016] as in the days of her youth,
and as on the day her coming up[1017] from the land of Egypt.

In 2:16–17, there are two elements which point to the Exodus tradition: the motif of wilderness in 2:16, and the so-called Exodus formula in 2:17. Wilderness is a place where the wife, Israel, ends up, which evokes the tradition of Israel's sojourn

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[1014] This is but one of the alternative translations of מפתיה, the Piel participle of פתה, other translations are "to persuade, entice;" in Jeremiah 20:7 the verb denotes to deceive, when the prophet says to YHWH that פתיתני יהוה ואפת; "you have seduced me, YHWH, and I have let myself be seduced." The LXX translates πλανῶ; "to lead away from the right path;" Muraoka, 560. Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 271–271, point out that in one occurrence in Ugaritic texts (UT 52:39) the verb describes the sex act, and that "in its typical use, the verb indicates deception for sinister purposes." Mordechai A. Friedman, "Israel's Response in Hosea 2:17b: "You are my Husband," *JBL* 99 (1980) 199–204, translates "to coax."

[1015] The expression דבר על לב, "speak to one's heart" is often associated with a language of courting and love; thus Wolff, *Hosea*, 31, translates "Therefore I myself will now allure her. I will bring her into the wilderness and woo her heart;" Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 69, reads "Accordingly I shall woo her myself and lead her to the desert and comfort her."

[1016] The wife's response is expressed by the verb ענה, which has can be translated as "to reply, respond, answer," and, in legal actions, "to testify," cf. 5:5 and 7:10, but it also means "to follow willingly," and even "to sing;" HALOT 1, 853–854; for the different roots attested to the verb, see also Delekat (1964) 7–66, especially in 35 The meaning "to answer, respond" is used by most commentators but with an indication of a kind of subordination, so Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea,* 71–73, "she will be wholly attentive," or in Wolff, *Hosea,* 31, 43, "she shall willingly follow." Michael V. Fox, "Jeremiah 2:2 and 'Desert Ideal'," *CBQ* 35 (1973) 441–150, remarks that the verb does not indicate obedience in a general way but always indicates a specific response; Fox translates "sing," denoting singing in the sense of joyful festal singing, perhaps associated with the harvest, 449. Beth Glazier-McDonald, "Malachi 2:12. *'ēr wĕ'ōneh* – Another Look," *JBL* 105 (1986) 295–298, suggests that Malachi is opposing the syncretism that has entered the YHWH cult through intermarriage, and that thus the sexual connotation of ענה refers to fertility rites.

[1017] In the phrase וכיום עלתה מארץ־מצרים there is a so called העלה Exodus formula, but since in this context, I do not deal with the Exodus tradition. I postpone the discussion of the formula to Chapter V.

in the wilderness. Nowhere in Hosea does the motif of the long wilderness wandering occur, which fits in with the use of the העלה Exodus formula used in the phrase וכיום עלתה מארץ־מצרים in 2:17. In contrast to the so called הוציא formula, this formula has an immediate connection with the coming to the land without prior wandering in the wilderness, as Wijngaards suggests.[1018] The העלה formula is found especially in early prophetic texts, and it probably has a connection with cultic proclamations; it s possible the formula belonged to confessional language connected with the cult at Bethel.[1019]

Apart from 2:16, the wilderness in Hosea is a land of drought, ארץ ציה (2:5) and aridness, ארץ תלאבות (13:5), and a place from where YHWH sends destructive natural phenomena – an east wind, קדים, and "the wind of YHWH," רוח יהוה – as his punitive agents (13:15).[1020] This view parallels with how wilderness is understood in the Hebrew Bible in general. It is depicted as an arid and desolate place (e.g. Jeremiah 2:24; 9:11; 50:40; 51:43; Job 38:26), not suitable for any living thing, other than outlaws and fugitives in need of a temporary refuge (e.g. Genesis 16:6–14; 1 Samuel 22:2), and it also has a mythical dimension (Isaiah 13:21).[1021] The mythical conception of the wilderness and its connection to death and drought shows how the language used in Hosea draws on the Ugaritic myth.[1022] This has also been pointed out by Ola Wikander, who refers to Hosea's presentation of YHWH as the one who sends the destructive hot winds, which seems to point to the process in the development of the Israelite religion, when YHWH was appropriating the drought-imagery once applied to Mot.[1023]

To my understanding the positive sentiments are not attached to the concept of wilderness as such. The issue at stake is not the wandering in the wilderness, as it

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[1018] Wijngaards (1965) 91–102. According to Wijngaards, the formula with הוציא can be understood as denoting "I liberated you from Egypt," as in Exodus 6:6, whereas the formula with העלה means "I made you come (here) out of Egypt," as in Exodus 3:8.

[1019] Wijngaards (1965) 91–102. The העלה formula occurs, however, in a post-exilic prophetic text in Nehemiah 9:18, but Wijngaards emphasizes that the formula is embedded in the prophetic critique of the golden calf, and can be a quotation, which further indicates the connection of the formula with the northern cult. This association with the northern cult, as Wijngaars assumes, was the probable reason for avoiding it in later texts.

[1020] קדים is a drought causing wind, destroying all vegetation and causing death (cf. Genesis 41: 23, 27; Exodus 10:13, 14:21).

[1021] For a detailed treatment of the מדבר motif in biblical texts, see Talmon, *Literary Motifs and Patterns*, 55–75.

[1022] Furthermore, in a Ugarit myth there is an identification of Mot with the desert, which may be one reason for the often so negative view of the wilderness in the Hebrew Bible; so Talmon, *Literary Motifs and Patterns*, 59–60. Talmon further points out that the mythic aspect of the wilderness is retained in the scapegoat ritual (Leviticus 16:7–10, 22).

[1023] Wikander, *Drought, Death, and the Sun*, 161–170. Overall, Hosea makes use of a mythological language and, thus, also the idea about Baal as the provider of the rain and the fertility of the land is important. Hosea contains many references to agricultural products, which relate to the concern over the fertility of the land, and the imagery of death and resurrection in Hosea 5–6 and 13–14 may indeed have been taken from the imagery of the dying and rising Baal. It is the very concern for the land and its fertility that scholars have often seen as a reason for the worship of Baal, as the practice of agriculture replaced the old nomadic lifestyle, which made the people more aware of the cyclic nature of the year and their dependence on it.

is known in the extant Pentateuchal Exodus tradition, but rather that "wilderness" refers to some period in the past, which we cannot name. Wilderness also means isolation, being devoid of many things that one needs for living. Therefore, the "wilderness" was a place where the relationship between YHWH, the "husband," and Israel, the "wife," was unbroken and harmonious, because Israel, whatever it means in this context, trusted in YHWH's guidance. Without YHWH's guidance, the wilderness was but a place of death and drought. Since there are no prospects for living, the woman had to be "seduced" to follow the man, YHWH, there. In the wilderness the woman would be devoid of all what she needs for living, unless the husband provided them for her – and moreover, in the wilderness there are no others to turn to. Therefore, in a place of death, where no human can survive, the woman learns to put her trust in YHWH's help. The point in 2:16–17 is to depict, by means of an image of the wilderness, Israel's dependence on YHWH: without YHWH, there will be only death (cf. 13:1).

The relationship between Israel and YHWH is highly asymmetrical by nature, and there is no doubt that the marriage metaphor has its source in ideologies of exclusivity and inequity that were imbedded in the social and material practices of marriage in ancient Israel.[1024] Asymmetrical relationships were also connected to honor and shame: the wife, by her adulterous behavior, had brought dishonor onto her husband, since in all asymmetrical relationships the suzerain's honor was dependent on the inferior. In the sphere of religion, YHWH's worshippers were obliged to honor him through appropriate cultic rites, just as a vassal honors the human suzerain with the expected demonstrations of servitude and covenant loyalty; in other words, a public demonstration of the loyalty was needed.[1025] In Hosea, the wife showed no loyalty, but had run after her lovers, and had not understood that it was YHWH who had provided her with all she had. Like in a patron-client relationship, which involves the client's access to things such as protection, honor, and material benefits, the patron gains honor through the widespread knowledge that he can sustain his client; the client in turn gains honor by being associated with such a figure, and the breaking of this bond by one or the other results in the shaming of the opposite partner.[1026] When applied to Hosea, it is clear that the wife, by publicly going after her lovers, behaved in a manner which brought shame to her patron-God YHWH; that is, Israel dishonored YHWH by worshiping Baal and relying on foreign nations instead of YHWH. Therefore, she is taken into the wilderness – to come to her senses, deprived of all those things that she thought she could obtain from others than YHWH.

The wife is not said to love her husband, YHWH. As Susanne Ackerman has pointed out, the concept of interpersonal love in biblical texts is peculiarly one-sided: no woman is said to love a man, and no child is described as loving his or

[1024] Yee (2001) 345–383.
[1025] Olyan (1996) 201–218.
[1026] Raymond T. Hobbs, "Reflections on Honor, Shame, and Covenant Relations," *JBL* 116 (1997) 501–520.

her parents.[1027] In an asymmetrical relationship with YHWH, Israel was supposed to demonstrate her love by being loyal and obedient, and when failing to so, it brought shame on her, and the shame was the wilderness, in other words, exile.[1028] This was probably how the original prophetic saying was read in the exilic period, when the perspective was totally different. Exile was, however, an utmost shame on YHWH as well. As Pieter de Vries says in his analysis on Ezekiel, "the fact that the people are still exiled is an offence to the name of YHWH," and that "the nations interpreted the captivity as a sign of YHWH's weakness," and he concludes that the only reason why YHWH grants Israel recovery is that YHWH can no longer endure the defilement of is name.[1029] Thus, the restoration is not because of Israel, but because of YHWH himself. The question here is of a "theological lesson": in the wilderness, the inferior Israel can do nothing but understand that it does not survive without the superior, and that YHWH is the provider of all Israel's needs, and that no other god can do the same.

In the wilderness, the covenant, marriage, will be renewed, and past sins will be atoned for as the naming of the Valley of Achor to the Entrance of Hope shows. Many scholars have read an exilic perspective here. So, for example, Yee who ascribes 2:16–17 to an exilic editor, who extends the received tradition about the chastisement of the wife with the hope of returning to the land, envisions the future return of Israel from the Babylonian exile as a new Exodus, as a new covenant and a new settlement in the land, and Yee refers to word plays, המדבר and ודברתי in 2:16 and עמק עכור לפתח תקוה in 2:17, as being typical of the exilic redaction.[1030] The present form of the text may be late, but beneath the text there is an ancient tradition which relates to the importance of the territory of Reuben in Israel's past. Cross points to the possibility that some elements of early Israel, the "Moses group," came to be settled for a time in the territory of Reuben before their entrance into Canaan, and this tradition stands behind Hosea's use of the Valley of Achor.[1031] Behind the use of the name "Achor" there may indeed be a reminiscent of an ancient tradition which connects Levites with Moses.

[1027] Susan Ackerman, "The Personal is Political: Covenantal and Affectionate Love (ʾāhēb, ʾahăbâ) in the Hebrew Bible," *VT* 52 (2002) 437–458

[1028] As Hobbs (1997) 503, notes, the "shame" of Israel/Judah was in exile, which is also widely acknowledged by the nations who mock the exiles (1 Kings 9:7; Psalms 44:13; 79:4; 137:7–8; Jeremiah 24:9; Ezekiel 5:15; Micah 2:4), is a result of their Patron par excellence, YHWH, not being able to sustain his clients, and this was what led in turn to the creative theological activity of the exilic and postexilic prophets.

[1029] Pieter de Vries, "Ezekiel: Prophet of the Name and Glory of YHWH – The Character of His Book and Several of Its Main Themes," *JBPR* 4 (2012) 94–108; the quotations are from page 104; de Vries points to Ezekiel 20:44; 36:22–23; 39:7.

[1030] Yee, *Composition and Tradition*, 79–81. In contrast to Yee, Emmerson attributes YHWH's graciousness to the prophet's theology, in which, unlike in the later Judaean theological concept, YHWH is regarded as the sole initiator of the restoration and Israel's repentance is not needed for the repair of the broken relationship; Emmerson, *Hosea*, 21–25.Also Russell dates Hosea 2:16–17 (as well as 7:11, 16; 8:13; 9:3, 6; 11:1, 5, 11; 12:2, 10, 14, and 13:4 all of which mention Egypt) to the 8th century BCE; *Images of Egypt*, 56.

[1031] Cross, *From Epic to Canon*, 56–57, 68. According to Cross, Reuben's place as the firstborn of Jacob in Genesis 49:3 suggests Reuben's important role in Israelite society in the past. Reuben was

As for the wilderness motif in 2:16–17, my conclusion is that there is nothing which supports its relating to the concept of Israel's long wandering in the wilderness. Taking into consideration the point made by Cross, I believe that 2:16–17 contains elements from the prophecy, distant echoes from the tradition connected with the arrival into Canaan from the territory of Reuben. Typically of Hosea, however, ancient motifs are used in typological exegesis to present the situation at hand. In the prophecy, the message was that the time in the wilderness, i.e. before entry in the land of Canaan, was positive.

Jeremiah has apparently taken the tradition from Hosea, as Jeremiah 2:2 speaks of Israel who, as a bride, followed YHWH in the wilderness, "through a land unsown," בארץ לא זרועה. The expression "not sown" is interesting as it denotes an uncultivated land. This evokes the idea of Israel as a land, the bounty of which is the result of YHWH's "sowing," not attributable to Baal.[1032] Thus the motif of "YHWH's sowing" also explains the sexual connotations in 2:16–17.

Jeremiah 31:2–4 too refers to Israel's wandering in the wilderness and "rebuilding" Virgin Israel, which clearly echoes Hosea 2:16–17. Thus the text in Jeremiah suggests a connection with the reform of Josiah. According to Sweeney, this text in Jeremiah is part of the older textual layer, which may have been written in order to support the reform of Josiah, and Josiah's interests in extending his rule over the former northern kingdom.[1033] Norbert Lohfink also regards Jeremiah 31:2–4 as part of the material which may go back to the prophet himself, and which can be dated to the time of Josiah.[1034] Thus it seems that Jeremiah, in his early prophecies, has followed Hosea's prophecy in 2:16–17, and taken the theme of Israel finding YHWH's favor in the wilderness. It would fit in well with Josiah's pan-Israelite ideology, that a new covenant would join the Israelites with Judah, under the rule of a Davidic monarch, and thus 2 Kings 23:2–3 tells of how Josiah renewed the covenant as a call to the Israelites and as a sign of the restoration of the broken relationship.

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the place of the "second giving" of the law and the covenant rites before the crossing of the Jordan, where the rites were taken at Shechem (Deuteronomy 27:2–8), and as Cross further points out, Levites, the adherents of Moses, attributed their traditions, by way of Shechem, to the valley in Reuben.

[1032] Braaten, "God Sows: Hosea's Land Theme in the Book of the Twelve," in Redditt and Schart (eds.), *Thematic Threads in the Book of the Twelve*, 109. Aloysius Fitzgerald has interpreted the metaphor against the background of a pattern of West Semitic mythological thought that capital cities were regarded as wives of the patron god of the city, and this notion was adapted in biblical texts. This view is followed by Brad E. Kelle, who dates Hosea 2 to the time of the Syro–Ephraimite crisis, and suggests that the wife here denotes the city of Samaria, and therefore the metaphorical sayings function as a commentary on Samaria's political actions. In my opinion, the understanding of the land as the wife is more appropriate. So, e.g., Odil Hannes Steck, "Zion als Gelände und Gestalt. Überlegungen zur Wahrnehmung Jerusalems als Stadt und Frau im Alten Testament," *ZThK* 86 (1989) 261–281, here, 276–277, 279–280.

[1033] Sweeney (1996) 569–583.

[1034] Norbert Lohfink, "Der junge Jeremia als Propagandist und Poet: Zum Grundstock von Jer 30–31," in P.-M. Bogaert (ed.) *Le Livre de Jérémie: Le prophète et son milieu, les oracles et leur transmission* (Leuven: Peeters, 1981), 351–368, here 362.

5.2.2. Hosea 13:4–5. From the land of Egypt

13:4 *I am YHWH your God*
from the land of Egypt.
You shall know no God but me
no Savior besides me.

13:5 *I knew*[1035] *you in the wilderness,*
in the land of drought.[1036]

The passage 13:4–5 appears abruptly, and it seems to be out of place. The passage is positioned between the accusations against Ephraim in 13:1–3 and 13:6. The charges are the same as elsewhere in Hosea: the worship of Baal (13:1); the making idols (13:2), forgetting YHWH (13:6), and placing false trust in kings (13:10). There is also a shift in person, since after the 3rd person speech in 13:1–3, Ephraim is directly addressed in 13:4–5.

13:4 begins with a traditional self-introductory formula in the Hebrew Bible. מן can be applied to time figuratively, denoting *terminus a quo*, a time from which point onward. The saying of YHWH, as the God from the land of Egypt, expresses the fundamental thought in the prophetic tradition. YHWH is a deity anchored to history, and the particular event in the history formed the basis of the religion, not the worship of Baals. The formulation is also found in the Decalogue (Exodus 20:2–17; Deuteronomy 5:6–21), which is echoed in Hosea 4:2–3.

13:4 presents the assertion that Yahweh had already chosen Israel in Egypt. YHWH is defined as the Savior; the Hiphil participle מושיע is used of Ehud, a military hero, in Judges 3:15.[1037] The verse also evokes Isaiah 43:11; 45:21

13:5 speaks of the wilderness as a land of drought, במדבר בארץ תלאבות, where Israel was "known" by YHWH, which can be understood as "tending, looking after" as in the LXX. According to Wikander, the drought-death motif from the Ugaritic mythology here is grounded in the Exodus tradition, pointing to YHWH's guidance of Israel in the wilderness.[1038] The word תלאבות points to an interesting connection between dryness, death and disease, given that the word may also be related to disease, a sort of an infection caused by the heat.[1039] Thus the verse has

[1035] The LXX uses the verb ποιμαίνω, used of God tending and looking after his people; Muraoka, 571.

[1036] The word תלאבות is a hapax legomenon, and the exact meaning of the word is unclear. In the LXX, תלאבות has been understood as denoting "an uninhabitable land," ἐν γῇ ἀοικήτῳ. According to HALOT 2, 1736–1737, the preferred translation is "dryness, aridness," but תלאבות also has a connotation of a kind of infectious fever caused by the heat of the sun; for this, see Wikander, *Drought, Death, and the Sun,* 161–170.

[1037] Russell has suggested that the military tone associated with the word Savior is related to the situation of Israel in the face of Assyrian military threat, and the point is to indicate that YHWH is the only Savior to rescue Israel; Russell, *Images of Egypt*, 61.

[1038] Wikander, *Drought, Death, and the Sun*, 165.

[1039] Ibid., 165–168.

a conceptual similarity to 13:1, which speaks of Ephraim's "dying" as a result of worshiping Baal. Whatever the line of thought has been here, it is not easy to comprehend, but nevertheless, it seems to me 13:5 can be related to the prophecy, whereas 13:4 seems to be later. It is possible it was motivated by the concept of wilderness in 13:5, although, as Wikander remarks, on the basis of the LXX the ancient translators had no idea what the land of תלאבות meant.[1040]

5.2.3 Hosea 11:1. Calling the son out of Egypt

11:1 *When Israel was a young boy I loved him,*
and I called my son out of Egypt.

11:2 *They called them,*
so they went away from them.[1041]
They sacrificed to the Baals,
and they burned incense to graven images of idols.[1042]

11:1 calls Israel YHWH's son. This is an echo of Exodus 4:22, in which YHWH calls Israel בני בכרי, "my firstborn son." These sayings depict YHWH's in terms of a different relationship to that 2:16–17, in which Israel is the wife. The imagery of a "son" follows the ancient fatherly image of kings as sons of a deity, and thus a similarity between 11:1 and the oracle addressed to Esarhaddon of Assyria can be observed.[1043] The motifs of the Exodus tradition are present in 11:1, as the verse refers to Israel's youth, that is, its past, YHWH's love for Israel for no particular reason, and Israel's coming out from Egypt. Thus 11:1 refers to Israel as being the elect of YHWH.

The first question concerns the identity of Israel. In Exodus 4:22, Israel denotes the ancestors in Egypt, and it is likely that the same group is meant here as well. The people were loved by YHWH, but the deep meaning of love here is more than a tender feeling, since obviously love in its covenantal sense is meant – at least

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[1040] Ibid., 165.

[1041] The phrase קראו להם כן הלכו מפניהם in the MT does not make much sense. The change to the 3rd plural is curious and, thus, BHS suggests כדי קראי, "as often as I called," the LXX reads YHWH as the subject here: καθὼς μετεκάλεσα αὐτούς, "as I called them." The LXX reads the beginning of 11:1, "for Israel was a child," as connected with 10:15, which makes the fact that Israel was a child a reason for the judgment that Israel's king would be destroyed; see Glenny, *Septuagint Commentary Series: Hosea*, 152–153. Macintosh, for his part, reads the preposition ל in להם as *dativus commode*, and translates "they have made their own call;" Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 439. As for מפניהם, "from their faces," BHS suggests מפני instead of מפניהם, so also the LXX with ἐκ προσώπου μου αὐτοὶ.

[1042] פסלים means a divine image which is carved from wood or sculptured from stone; it is read as "idols;" e.g. 2 Kings 17:41; Isaiah 10:10; 21:9; 30:22; 42:8; Micah 1:7; 5:13; Jeremiah 8:9; 50:38; 51:47, 52.

[1043] Wolff, *Hosea*, 198; cf. 2 Samuel 7:14.

this is how the election is interpreted in Jeremiah 31:32. An interesting aspect related to sonship is that, in ancient Egyptian wisdom it was spiritually related to the raising of and educating of the child.[1044]

Moran has pointed out that in Deuteronomy the father-son relationship is never connected with love, and therefore, assuming that Hosea's prophecies pre-dates Deuteronomy, the compilers of Deuteronomy had a different view on the concept of love than Hosea did.[1045] It ispossible that the form of a covenant, or treaty, known in Hosea was more ancient than the Assyrian treaties; whereas the Assyrian treaties demand an oath of allegiance from their vassals in terms of love, in Hosea it is the love of YHWH towards Israel that matters, and in fact, Israel is never said to love YHWH.[1046] In Deuteronomy, love can be commanded and it is expressed in loyalty to the obedience of the Law; in other words, it is covenantal.[1047] In 1 Samuel 18:16 too, when Israel and Judah are said to love David, the love there means recognizing David's leadership, which is in accordance with the concept of love in the Amarna and the Assyrian sources.[1048] It may well be, as Moran suggests, that the view on love in Hosea is based on an older covenantal tradition than Deuteronomy.[1049]

As I have already remarked, Susan Ackerman has studied the view of interpersonal love in biblical texts, and noticed that the concept of love is peculiarly one-sided: no woman is said to love a man, and no child is described as loving his or her parents.[1050] Thus, the loving party is the hierarchically superior party in the relationship, and this is also the case in Hosea. Ackerman's conclusion is that it is precisely this understanding of love which makes it easy for the biblical authors to move between politically-based and interpersonally-based images of YHWH, as in Hosea, notably e.g. in 3:1, 11:1, 4.[1051] "Being responsive" in actual fact means to keep the covenant, to love YHWH, and it is in this which Israel failed.

Another issue in 11:1 is that it posits the origin of Israel in Egypt, and not in connection with the ancestral story in Genesis, which suggests that the Exodus tradition is earlier and was originally separate from the patriarchal stories.[1052] Thus, in Hosea, the Exodus tradition is not connected with Jacob, since the Jacob tradition in Hosea is connected to the foundation of Bethel.

[1044] Ibid., 198

[1045] Moran (1963) 77–87, here 78. Moran sees the concept of covenantal love in Deuteronomy as antedating Hosea, which in the light of ancient treaty texts may be possible.

[1046] Moran (1963) 77–87, here 78, 84.

[1047] Ibid., here 78.

[1048] Ibid., 81.

[1049] Ibid., 81.

[1050] Ackerman (2002) 437–458.

[1051] Ackerman (2002) 447–448.

[1052] See especially Schmid, *Genesis and the Moses Story*, 75; Schmid's main argument is that Genesis and the Moses story were two competing traditions of Israel's origins that were not combined before the early Persian period.

5.2.4. Hosea 9:10. Baal Peor

9:10 *Like grapes in the wilderness*
I found[1053] *Israel,*
like early figs on a fig tree at its beginning
I saw your fathers.
They came to Baal Peor
and consecrated themselves to shame
and their detestable objects according to their loving.

The second half verse has already been discussed in the context of Baal in Hosea, so the focus here on is the first half of the verse, in which the motif of wilderness occurs. The passage speaks of "seeing" the fathers, but the verb carries a connotation of choosing as well. The same verb מצא occurs in Deuteronomy 32:10, in which Jacob is the object of finding, and the verb ראה is used in Ezekiel 16:6 to describe the origin of Jerusalem. All these texts thus point to a specific event in the wilderness.

The phrase has been read as an indication of a particular "discovery tradition." As for the interdependence of these texts, given that Deuteronomy 32:10 is a pre-exilic cultic hymn, it is likely that Ezekiel is using Deuteronomy 32 and applies it to his contemporary context of idolatry and illegitimate foreign relations.[1054] In 9:10, the best reading is that the "wilderness" is not the place where Israel was found, but finding Israel was as delightful as "grapes in the wilderness."[1055]

Although 9:10 speaks of "finding," the view in the book is that Israel's origins were in Egypt. Thus 9:10 does not necessarily point to any particular point of election; it only builds a contrast between the early Israel and its later fall into idolatry because in Hosea, the past is always interpreted as a past that continues.

5.2.5. Conclusions

My conclusions are that the Exodus tradition known in Hosea was one of the perhaps many separate traditions circulating in the northern kingdom of Israel and which later influenced the compilation of the extant traditions. On the basis of the

[1053] מצא means to "find or meet accidentally;" HALOT 1, 619.

[1054] See Jason Gile, "Ezekiel 16 and the Song of Moses: A Prophetic Transformation?" *JBL* 130 (2011) 87–108.

[1055] With Thomas B. Dozemann, "Hosea and the Wilderness Wandering Tradition," in Steven L. McKenzie, Thomas Römer, and Hans Heinrich Schmid (eds.), *Rethinking the Foundations. Historiography in the Ancient World and in the Bible Essays in Honour of John Van Seters* (BZAW 294; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2000) 55–70.

present form of Hosea, it is not possible to determine what the early form of the tradition had been, but the main concept in the tradition was that Israel coming out of Egypt was a decisive event related to the establishment of the relationship between YHWH and a group of people, which later became part of the heterogenous collective body known as Israel. Like the traditions preserved in 1 Samuel 12:8, Hosea does not mention the long sojourn in the wilderness before the entry into Canaan, a tradition known in Pentateuchal form of the Exodus tradition.

The historicity of the Exodus tradition is not my concern in this work, but it would be difficult to deny that the tradition has been based on some actual experience and which, over the course of time, became part of the collective memory, in which the past and the present are interrelated. Therefore, in Hosea, there are sayings which speak of returning to Egypt (8:13; 9:3, 6), and coming back from there in the future (11:11). Perhaps some memory of Egypt was recalled as a place where the people went in a time of crisis, as had been the habit of the pastoral nomads.[1056] An important tradition has been preserved in Exodus 15:1–18, 21, where there is an old Yahwistic tradition of migration from Egypt, which may have given rise to later versions of the Exodus story.[1057]

Originally, there were the oral traditions of distinct groups of people like Canaanite worshipers of El, groups that had memories of a migration from Egypt, the Yahwistic Shasu bedouins, and others, whose memories converged and produced more complex traditions, which eventually intermingled. As late as in the 8th century there were no longer any accurate memories of what had happened long ago, and thereafter only the essence of the tradition was transmitted. Whoever the primary hearers of the prophetic message were, they were most likely able to position themselves within the tradition, and it is possible that they knew much more about it than we can ever say.

Regarding the tradition known in the 8th century Israel, the parallels between Moses in Exodus 2–5 and Jeroboam I suggest that an early form of the Exodus narrative was compiled as a legitimation document for Israel, and this charter myth was transmitted within official government circles. However, variant traditions, which were older and more variable, were very likely to have still been in circulation. An important point also concerns whether the Exodus tradition was an independent tradition in relation the Jacob tradition, and most scholars answer yes to this question.[1058]

An interesting element in Hosea is that it equals Egypt and Assyria. It is obvious that in all these sayings, Egypt is a metaphor for Assyria, which is able to reverse the Exodus (8:13; 9:3, 6; 11:5; 11:11). In Hosea, the past equals the present, and therefore, the way Hosea refers to the Exodus tradition can also be

[1056] Russell, *Images of Egypt*, 61.
[1057] K. L. Noll, "An Alternative Hypothesis for a Historical Exodus Event," *SJOT* 14 (2000) 260–274, here 266–267.
[1058] See, e.g., Schmid, *Genesis and the Moses Story*, 75–76.

read against the political situation in the 8th century.[1059] It is also important to note that Egypt played an important role in international politics along with Assyria in the 8th century setting, and thus the interest in Egypt in Hosea indirectly points to this as well. As Hans Barstad aptly remarks, the references of going back to Egypt would mean that the salvation history was turned upside down: instead of salvation there would be punishment.[1060]

As for the significance of the Exodus tradition in Hosea, it can be explained by the idea that Hosea had Levitical roots. The Levites had probably already legitimated themselves with reference to Moses in the period before the state and traced themselves back to the Exodus group. This association would also explain how the variant version of the tradition has been preserved, and why it was not completely forgotten when – much later on – the extant Pentateuchal Exodus tradition was put into writing.

The importance of the Exodus tradition for Israel is indicated by the fact that the course of Jeroboam I's revolt has striking parallels with the Moses story.[1061] As Albertz notes, these parallels may have appeared in the first narrative form from the contemporary experiences of Jeroboam's revolt, giving the old tradition of the Exodus direct social relevance.[1062]

Although the Exodus tradition had its roots in Israel, it became appropriated by Judah. An outward sign of Josiah's appropriation of the Exodus tradition was that Josiah, according to 2 Kings 23:21, commanded celebrating the Passover. The celebration of the Passover was carried out as ordered in Deuteronomy 16:5–7, and the chosen place was obviously interpreted as Jerusalem. The traditions, which at some later point in time became compiled to the extant tradition of the Exodus, were part of the northern stream of traditions, and the association of Judah with the Exodus tradition is obscure. Perhaps some elements related to the Exodus tradition were known in Judah already before the time of Josiah, but most likely it was downplayed in comparison with Judah's own election tradition connected with David and Jerusalem (e.g. 2 Samuel 7). The way Judah later, perhaps some time after the reform of Josiah, appropriated the Exodus tradition can be deduced from Psalm 78. As Carroll has shown, the psalm uses several motifs to point to the rebellious nature of Ephraim in order to make Judah stand out, over Ephraim, as YHWH's elect; moreover, to legitimate Judah's claim the competing Ephraimite tradition had to be denounced.[1063] Judah positioned itself in the Exodus tradition by demonstrating that Ephraim's history was nothing but rebellion

[1059] See Liverani, *Israel's History*, 278, who points out that the terminology "bringing out" and "bringing back," "sending out," "sending in" had been applied in the Late Bronze Age texts to indicate a shifting of sovereignty, without implying a physical displacement of the people concerned, but merely a shift of the political border.
[1060] Barstad, "Hosea and the Assyrians," in Gordon and Barstad (eds.) *Thus Speaks Ishtar of Arbela*, 91–110.
[1061] See Albertz, *History of Israelite Religion*, 141–142; Shinan and Zakovitch, *From Gods to God*, 213–220.
[1062] Albertz, *History of Israelite Religion*, 142.
[1063] Carroll (1971) 133–150, here 147.

against YHWH. This fits with the agenda of the reform of Josiah, and can be seen in 2 Kings 17 as well. Undoubtedly, the Hosea tradition was useful in showing why Israel had fallen.

In the exilic time, the Exodus tradition became even more important as we see in the book of Ezekiel, in which the tradition became a new Exodus for the exiles. For Ezekiel, the legitimation of the exiles as Israel is based on the Exodus tradition, in which an important point is that YHWH once established his relationship with Israel not in the land, but away from there.[1064] Here, the tradition in Hosea had its role.

5.3. Jacob tradition

Hosea 12 contains a few references to the tradition of Jacob which makes it the most studied chapter in the book. The way how Jacob is portrayed in Hosea is ambiguous, and therefore, scholars have for long pondered whether Jacob is depicted as a positive or a negative figure. Another issue which have attracted a lot of scholarly interest is the number allusions to the episodes known in the extant Jacob tradition in Genesis. The literary interdependence of these two traditions is a problematic issue. Genesis has a long and complicated literary history on which no scholarly consensus has been achieved. Furthermore, the traditions in Genesis are difficult to date.[1065] It is, however, commonly accepted that the tradition of Jacob has its origin in the Israelite stream of traditions. The place names Bethel, Shechem, Manahaim, and Penuel, which occur in Genesis, are located in the territory of Israel. However, as Fleming correctly says, "there is a geographical obstacle to the alignment of Hosea's Jacob references and the full narrative in Genesis, since only two geographal details are offered in Hosea."[1066] This, and other aspects in the Jacob tradition in Hosea, give reason to regard it as an early form of the tradition.

5.3.1. Hosea 12:4–15. Ephraim is Jacob

12:3 *Yahweh has a contention with Judah,*
he will call Jacob account according to his ways,
according to his deeds he will repay him.[1067]

[1064] Dalit Rom-Shiloni, "Ezekiel as the Voice of the Exiles and Constructor of Exilic Ideology," *HUCA* 76 (2005) 1– 45, here 43.
[1065] See e.g. Whitt (1991) 18–43.
[1066] Fleming, *Legacy of Israel*, 75.
[1067] This verse has been discussed earlier in 2.3.4.

12:4 *In the womb he took his brother by the heel,*[1068]
in his strength[1069] *he strove with God.*[1070]

12:5 *He strove*[1071] *with the angel*[1072] *and prevailed.*[1073]
He wept and implored favor of him.[1074]
He found him[1075] *at Bethel*
and there he spoke to us.[1076]

12:6 *YHWH, God of Sabaoth*[1077]*, YHWH is his name*[1078].

12:7 *And you will return by your God.*
Observe חסד *and* מִשְׁפָּט
and wait for your God continually.

12:8 *A merchant*[1079] *in whose hands false balances.*
He loves to oppress.

[1068] The use of the verb עקב allows a pun with the name Jacob, and its meanings "to seize someone by the heel" and "betray;" HALOT 1, 872. Genesis 25:26 reads וידו אחזת בעקב עשו, "and his hand took hold of Esau's heel," in Genesis 27:36 the verb is related to "deceiving, supplanting;" see also Jeremiah 9:3. The LXX reads πτερνίζω,"to kick the heel with a view to throwing the opponent;" Muraoka, 605.

[1069] Depending on the vocalization, און can mean "generative power," "strength," "wealth" (אוֹן), cf. 12:9; vocalized as אָוֶן, the word denotes "iniquity, sin, misery." The LXX has κόπος, "hardship;" ἐν κόποις αὐτοῦ ἐνίσχυεν πρὸς Θεὸν, "in his struggles he defeated God;" see Muraoka, 407. Here און can be understood as a reference to Jacob in his manhood, contrasting the saying about the "womb" in the first line.

[1070] The verb שׂרה in the phrase שׂרה את־אלהים means "to strive, contend;" HALOT 2, 1354.

[1071] The root of וישׂר is not clear; it may be the same שׂרה as in the previous verse, so the LXX. Another possibility is שׂרר, "to hold dominion."

[1072] The word מלאך denotes "messenger," either human beings or messengers of God, also heavenly messengers, or angels; HALOT 1, 585.

[1073] It is not clear if the verb וישׂר in the phrase וישׂר אל־מלאך ויכל is derived from שׂרה or from שׂרר, "to rule." BHS suggests substituting את for אל. In the LXX the verb is ἐνισχύω, "to display strength;" Muraoka, 239.

[1074] The LXX has the 3rd person plural forms of the verbs κλαίω and δέομαι; "they wept and begged me."

[1075] The verb is a Hitpael form of חנן, "to favor somebody," thus, the translation here. The LXX has the 3rd person plural forms of the verbs κλαίω and δέομαι; "they wept and begged me."Also, here the LXX uses the verb εὑρίσκω in the 3rd person plural, "they found me."

[1076] The 1st person plural form עמנו in the phrase ושׁם ידבר עמנו is often changed to the 3rd person singular to indicate that YHWH spoke with Jacob; the LXX has καὶ ἐκεῖ ἐλαλήθη πρὸς αὐτόν; "there it was spoken to them."

[1077] The meaning of the epithet צבאות in the phrase אלהי הצבאות is unclear; for various suggestions, see HALOT 2; 996–997. צבאות can denote "the military troops of Israel," "the stars," "the mythical natural powers of Canaan deprived of might," "heavenly beings making up the heavenly household of YHWH." The LXX has παντοκράτωρ, an intensive abstract plural denoting "Almighty."

[1078] The noun זכר denotes "memorial," "mention of a name." It is connected with liturgy and denotes the mention and invocation of God in liturgies; HALOT 1, 271.

[1079] The word כנעני means both "Canaanite" and "tradesman, merchant;" HALOT 1, 485; the LXX has Χαναάν, "Canaan."

12:9 *Ephraim says: Surely I have become rich.*
With all my wealth they will not find in any iniquity or sin.

2:10 *I, YHWH, your God from the land of Egypt.*
I will make you dwell[1080] *in tents again*
as at the time of a feast.[1081]

12:11 *I have spoken to the prophets,*[1082]
I have increased visions,
and through the prophets[1083] *I have used parables.*[1084]

12:12 *Is there iniquity in Gilead,*[1085]
yes, they have come to nothing.[1086]
and if at Gilgal they sacrife bulls,
so also their their altars become like heaps of stones[1087]
on the furrows of the field.

12:13 *Jacob fled to the land of Aram,*
Israel served for a wife,
for a wife he looked after sheep.

12:14 *By a prophet YHWH brought Israel from Egypt,*[1088]
and by a prophet he was kept. [1089]

[1080] The Hiphil imperfect 1st person singular of ישׁב, "cause to dwell," "cause to sit;" HALOT 1, 445.
[1081] The phrase כימי מועד is difficult, since the word מועד has different meanings, such as "a point of time," "assembly," "festival," and "meeting." Macintosh refers to ibn Ezra and Kimchi, and translates it "as in the days of the assembly;" denoting the assembly of Israel brought about by the Exodus of Egypt; Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 499; Wolff translates it "as in the days of meeting;" he interprets the phrase as a reference to YHWH's first "meeting" with Israel in the wilderness; Wolff, *Hosea*, 201, 215, cf. the Targum "as in the days of old," in Cathcart and Gordon, *Targum of the Minor Prophets*, 57; the LXX reads καθὼς ἡμέρᾳ ἑορτῆς; "like the time of a feast;" cf. 9:5.
[1082] ודברתי על־הנביאים; instead of "by" the prophets, the LXX has πρὸς, "to."
[1083] וביד הנביאים; "through the prophets," or "by means of the prophets"; so Macintosh, *Commentary on Hosea*, 501.
[1084] The verb דמה has generally been understood as "speaking in parables;" HALOT 1, 225.
[1085] The phraseאם־גלעד און אך־שׁוא היו בגלגל is difficult. BHS suggests reading עם or ב instead of אם, "with Gilead." The suggestion made by Andersen and Freedman, however, makes good sense. If Gilead and Gilgal are understood as parallels here, then both cult places are accused of idolatry; Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 618.
[1086] For the translation of אך־שׁוא היו, see HALOT 2, 1426.
[1087] As Ginsberg points out, becoming like heaps of stones in the field is akin to becoming worse than useless, since heaps of stones on ploughed land do nothing but reduce the productivity from the areas they cover; see H. L. Ginsberg, "Hosea's Ephraim, More Fool Than Knave," *JBL* 80 (1961) 339–347, here 434 note r.
[1088] The Hiphil perfect 3rd person singular of עלה; "cause to go up," i.e. "bring."
[1089] The Niphal perfect 3rd person singular of שׁמר; "he was guarded."

12:15 *Ephraim has provoked bitter anger,*[1090]
his Lord will allow him to bear his bloodshed[1091]
and repay him for his disgrace.

Hosea 12 begins the last part in the tripartite structure of the book. There are divergent proposals for the structure of the chapter. According to Wolff, the chapter is not representing a rhetorical unit, but consists of five loosely connected rhetorical units, vv. 1–3; vv. 3–7; vv. 8–9; vv. 10–12, and vv. 13–14; the summary statement in v. 15 ends the chapter.[1092] Andersen and Freedman regard Hosea 12 as single literary unit and emphasize how every verse in Hosea 12 is connected with another verse: the word מרמה, "deceit," appears in 12:1 and 12:8; the word און, "strength, wealth" occurs in 12:4, 9; a word play with the word מצא, "find," turns up in 12:5, 9, and the verb שׁמר, "keep," is used in 12:7, 13, 14.[1093] Regarding the structure, I concur with Erhard Blum's view. He divides the passage in three strophes, consisting of 12:3–7; 12:8–11, and 12:12–14; 12:3 is an introduction, and 12:15 a summary.[1094] Blum sees that each strophe consists of two parts; the first part in which Israel's behavior is critically examined, and the second part in which an alternative option or position is presented. To my mind, Blum's proposal explains well the structure of the chapter giving it an internal logic.

Blum also gives an accurate date for the composition of Hosea 12: the chapter was composed at some point shortly before the fall of Samaria when Ephraim was still self-confident though confronted with the devastation of Gilead.[1095] Although many other scholars have ascribed Hosea 12 to the 8th century prophet, there are also divergent opinions.[1096] To my mind, the final composition of the chapter most likely comes from Judaean redactors, as the reference to Judah in 12:3 indicates. This verse is an introduction to what follows, and Judah is a later addition to the material in which Israel and Jacob were used as parallel terms for the northern kingdom.

The "core" of the Jacob tradition occurs in 12:4–5, 13. 12:4 lets us know that Javob was a twin because he could seize his brother's heel in the womb. The same

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[1090] The verb הכעיס is a Hiphil form of כעס, "be irritated, angry." Here it is used with the word תמרורים which occurs only here and in Jeremiah 6:26; 31:15; the meaning of the word is "bitterness;" with the verb הכעיס the meaning is "cause bitter offence;" HALOT 2, 1758.

[1091] The verb נטשׁ in the phrase ודמיו עליו יטוּשׁ means "to lay out, stretch out, give up," but with על the meaning is "to allow to bear his bloodshed;" HALOT 1, 695.

[1092] Wolff, *Hosea*, 208–209.

[1093] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 596.

[1094] Erhard Blum, "Once Again: Hosea and the Pentateuchal Traditions." In Cana Werman (ed.) *From Author to Copyist: Essays on the Composition, Redaction, and Transmission of the Hebrew Bible. In Honor of Zipi Talshir* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2015) 81–94. In his study, Blum does not analyze 12:1–2, as as for 12:3, he regards the mention of Judah in the MT as a later redactorial reworking. I have discussed this verse earlier in section 2.3.4.

[1095] Ibid., 87.

[1096] See, e.g. Rudnig-Zelt, *Hoseastudien*, 275–278; Yee, *Composition and Tradition*, 317; Bos, *Reconsidering*, 158–163.

tradition is found in Genesis 25:24–26. The use of the verb עקב allows a word play, and in Genesis 27:36, the verb is used as denoting "to defraud," other possibilities are "take by the heel" used here; Blum, for his part, translates the verb as "kick."[1097] As Karl William Weyde correctly remarks, the birth story in Genesis knows nothing of deception: Genesis 25:22 tells that the twins "pushed each other around," and Jacob was born with his hand holding on Esau's heel.[1098] Thus, it is not easy to determine whether the verb carries a connotation of defraud in Hosea. 12:4 evokes, however, the story in Genesis 38:27–30 which tells of the birth of the twins Perez and Zerah, and how the birthright of the first twin was cheated from him when he was still in the womb. In Hosea, the name of the brother of Jacob is not told, and it has been postulated whether it was not Esau as it is usually thought.[1099]

Jacob strove with God "in his strength," the word used here is אבון. This makes an interesting link to the name "Beth-aven," בית און. The verb used of Jacob's combat with God, אלהים, is שׂרה, here read as "strive," which allows another word play, in this case with the name Israel. The same word play with the name Israel appears also in Genesis 32:28.

12:5 is ambiguous. It refers to Jacob's combat with an "angel," מלאך, a term which does not occur in Genesis 32:24. Wolff, for example, regards the word מלאך as a later addition to the underlying original text, and by changing the preposition אֶל to אֵל, God is made the subject who prevailed, not Jacob.[1100] It makes good sense that "El" is meant here, since also the tradition in Genesis 28:10–12; 35:1–15 locates the encounter between God and Jacob in Bethel, "House of El."

Genesis 32:23–33 also knows the tradition of Jacob's wrestling but in the Genesis tradition, Jacob wrestles with a mysterious "man," איש. Underlying the episode may be an ancient lore of a hero fighting with a divine being as the reading of Genesis 32:23–33 in light of the Gilgamesh Epic indicates.[1101] In the old folk tale, the strong hero defeated his supernatural opponent but in 12:5, we are left with uncertainty in relation to the identity of Jacob's adversary and the outcome of the struggle after all. In the old story, the one who wept could have been the divine being, but the one who weeps may also be Jacob, assuming that he is the loser of the combat; so, for example, Nyberg, who translates "Und das Numen, der Engel, kämpfte und siegte."[1102] Jacob's weeping has no parallel in the Genesis traditions, unless the meeting of Jacob and Esau in Genesis 33:4 is meant. So, for

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[1097] Blum, "Once Again: Hosea and the Pentateuchal Traditions," in Werman (ed.) *From Author to Copyist*, 81–94, here 83.

[1098] Karl William Weyde, "The References to Jacob in Hos 12:4–5." In Arvid Tallberg (ed.) *Text and Theology. Studies in Honour of Prof. Dr. Theol. Magne Sæbø* (Oslo: Verbum, 1994) 336–358, here 337.

[1099] Whitt (1991) 18–43.

[1100] Wolff, *Hosea*, 206; so, also M. Gertner, "An Attempt at an Interpretation of Hosea XII," *VT* 10 (1960) 272–284, here 277.

[1101] Esther Hamori, "Echoes of Gilgamesh in the Jacob Story," *JBL* 130 (2011) 625–642; Hamori does not, however, identify a date when the Gilgamesh framework would have been brought into the Israelite material.

[1102] Nyberg, *Studien zum Hoseabuche*, 94–95.

example, William Holladay who, on the grounds of the chiastic structure of 12:3–6 suggests that Jacob's meeting with Esau is at stake.[1103] In my opinion, this is not the case, since it is impossible to reconcile the extant narrative of Esau and Jacob with the fragmentary Jacob tradition in Hosea, and, more importantly, the mention of weeping may reflect an old tradition of weeping that is associated with Bethel.

The second half of the verse is also difficult. To all appearances, it was YHWH who spoke with Jacob at Bethel. In Genesis 28, Bethel is the "house of God" or the "gate of heaven," but in Genesis 35, Bethel is described three times as "the place at which God spoke with him (Genesis 35: 13, 14, 15) and from which God "ascended" (Genesis 35:13).[1104] Thus, the older Genesis story may have been an etiological explanation for the name Bethel, but there is no agreement concerning which of the texts in Genesis made up the older layer of the extant story.[1105] Such a tradition surely could have been venerated in Bethel, and it is possible that the fragmentary presentation of the Jacob story in Hosea has some connection with the liturgy at Bethel.

Verse 12:6 seems to give an identification of the deity with whom Jacob wrestled. The epithet יהוה אלהי הצבאות in Hosea is a version of the archaic epithet יהוה צבאות, which relates to the holy war ideology and refers to YHWH as a leader of his heavenly armies fighting for Israel.[1106] The concept of cosmic armies occurs in Judges 5:20, which is interesting, since in Hosea there is also a quotation from the Song of Deborah in 5:8.[1107] The origins of the name יהוה צבאות, "YHWH of the heavenly hosts," can be traced back to Shiloh and the ark iconography, and the concept of the Holy War.[1108]

In 12:7 echoes the promise to Jacob in Genesis 28:15 that YHWH will lead Jacob back to his land. The verb שׁוב as well as the concepts of חסד and משׁפט belong to the covenantal language, and also occur in 6:4–6. The purpose of 12:7 appears to give an explanation for the identity of the deity in 12:6.

12:8 and 12:9 are critical examinations of the contemporary Israel/Ephraim. Ephraim is like a merchant, כנען; here is a word play with the word which also means "Canaanite" is used. In 12:9, Ephraim boasts about his wealth, which he

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[1103] William L. Holladay, "Chiasmus, the Key to Hosea XII 3-6," *VT* 16 (1966) 53–64.

[1104] Erhard Blum, "The Jacob Tradition," in Craig A. Evans, Joel N. Lohr, and David L. Petersen (eds.), *The Book of Genesis: Composition, Reception, and Interpretation* (Leiden: Brill, 2014) 181–211, here 190–192.

[1105] As for the Jacob story in Genesis, there is no general agreement how the extant literary form of the tradition has developed; John van Seters, for example, suggests that in the story before its incorporation into the larger Jacob story, Jacob merely has a dream about angels ascending and descending a staircase between heaven and earth and concludes £rom this that it is a "gateway to heaven" and therefore a sacred place and a "house of God", i. e., an etiology for the name Bethel has been preserved in Genesis 28: 11–12, 16a, 17–19; see John van Seters, "Divine Encounter at Bethel (Gen 28,10–22) in Recent Literary-Critical Study of Genesis," *ZAW* 110 (1998) 503–513.

[1106] Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Epic*, 70.

[1107] Cross refers to Judges 5:20, which tells how the stars from the heavens fought against Sisera; Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Epic*, 70.

[1108] Ibid., 105.

has got in his own right. This is Ephraim's arrogance, which means disloyalty to YHWH.

Verse 12:10 uses the Exodus formula, which may be a quotation from the liturgy of the sanctuary in Bethel. The reference to living in tents evokes that a nomadic life style as a sort of reversal to the point of departure. Tents are also related to the ancient festival Sukkot, the Feast of Booths (Leviticus 23:24), which was an agricultural festival. I think that Blum's suggestion makes the best sense that the issue at stake is a reference to Jacob in Genesis 25:27 as יוֹשֵׁב הָאֹהָלִים, as one living in tents.[1109]

12:12 refers to two locations, Gilead and Gilgal, which are evaluated critically in Hosea. As discussed earlier, a strongly negative attitude towards Gilead may be associated with the revolt of Pekah, who executed his revolt with the help of fifty men from Gilead (2 Kings 15:25), and Gilgal may have been condemned because of its rivalry with Shechem. Here in Hosea there is probably a sarcastic reference to Gilead which was annexed by Assyria.

12:13 speaks of Jacob as fleeing to Aram and serving there in order to get a wife. The verb שָׁמַר takes no object here, but Genesis 30:31 points to Jacob's watching over flocks at Laban's house. The verse has an ironic overtone when it is read in comparison with the role of Moses, the prophet, who "kept" the Israelites when they came to the Promised Land. 12:13 recounts of Jacob's flight to Aram and how he served for a wife there; Jacob's travel to Aram also appears in Genesis 28:1–5, and Genesis 29:18–20 recounts Jacob's seven year long servitude for Rachel.

The Exodus tradition appears again in 12:14, and the tradition is connected here with the role of Moses as a prophet; at least this is how the reference to the prophet has almost exclusively been understood. We may, of course, wonder why the name Moses is not mentioned. Van der Toorn suggests that by omitting the name, the role of prophetic office is emphasized over the person of Moses.[1110] This may well be the case, since in Israel, Moses became the archetype of all prophets. The background for this conception goes to Moses' role as an intermediary between YHWH and the people; in other words, the texts assume that any form of revelation must be under the authority of Moses or later, under the authority of a prophet like Moses. This concept is present in Deuteronomy 18:9–22, which prohibits all forms of divination unless they are carried out by a prophet like Moses. The date of this passage in Deuteronomy may be late, but if this is the case, the author may have used the prophetic tradition preserved in Hosea.[1111] The role of the prophets turns up also in 12:11, which makes a point of prophets as to whom YHWH speaks. This evokes 2 Kings 17:13, which mentions how Israel and Judah had been warned through prophets and seers, thus promoting the role of the prophets.

[1109] Blum, "The Jacob Tradition," in Evans, Lohr, and Petersen (eds.), *The Book of Genesis*, 181–211, here 86.

[1110] Van der Toorn, *Family Religion*, 298.

[1111] Christopher Nihan, "Moses and the Prophets: Deuteronomy 18 and the Emergence of the Pentateuch as Torah," *SEÅ* 75 (2010) 21–55, here 33.

12:15 is a summary statement and a prophecy of doom. Ephraim will pay for his violence. As in the case of Jehu's dynasty in 1:4, the question at stake here is cause and effect – bloodshed means more bloodshed.

5.3.2. Conclusions

My contention is that Hosea 12 contains fragments from an early version of the Jacob tradition which displays both differences and similarities with the extant Jacob tradition in Genesis, as discussed above. The question about the dependence of Hosea on the Jacob tradition in Genesis still plays an important role in scholarly discussion, and there seems to be no concensus on the horizon. This is understandable in the light of the complexities concerning the literary history of both Genesis and Hosea which complicates all efforts to distinguish authentic early elements in the traditions.

Whatever the original Jacob story was, it is certain that it was an Israelite tradition.[1112] As for Abraham, he was only later made the first patriarch. This was done in Judah in order to emphasize the supremacy of Judah over Israel when the northern kingdom existed no more.[1113] The earliest Jacob story was likely oral, an old folk lore about a hero known for his cunning and strength; some traces of this lore may be found in 12:4 which refers to Jacob's strength. Such a hero would have been popular among the people. In the sphere of family religions, the stories of a clever trickster were common, and no ethical aspects were related to the behavior of the hero.[1114] In the traditional tribal society, the identity of the family lineages and their right to the land were crucial, and the Jacob tradition suited well the interests of the family religion – unlike the Exodus tradition which became a national charter myth for the northern kingdom.[1115]

Therefore, we may ask why Jacob in Hosea is compared to the contemporary Israel, and what does it actually mean that Jacob is Ephraim, i.e. the northern kingdom. I think that Na'aman is quite right about making a point of reading the Jacob tradition in Hosea in its own right.[1116] In that case, it possible that Jacob's brother is not Esau as in the Genesis narrative, but Judah and, thus, the question

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[1112] As Fleming correctly remarks, geography alone connects Jacob with the north, and this landscape has not originated in Judah; *Legacy of Israel*, 75.

[1113] So Israel Finkelstein and Thomas Römer, "Comments on the Historical Background of the Jacob Narrative in Genesis," *ZAW* 126 (2014) 317–338, here 319.

[1114] Several trickster narratives are found in the Hebrew Bible. The trickster theme occurs in the narratives of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses; see Andrew Nicholas Dean, *Trickster Revisited: Deception as a Motif in the Pentateuch* (New York: Peter Lang, 2009) 69. Dean also points to another theme, which is the attack of the deity who attacks both Jacob and Moses on their return from the liminal place; see *Trickster Revisited*, 70.

[1115] Van der Toorn, *Family Religion*, 300.

[1116] Nadav Na'aman, "The Jacob Story and the Formation of Biblical Israel," *TA* 41 (2014) 95–125.

is about two kingdoms.[1117] To my mind, this observation is important in that it contributes to our understanding of why the tradition of Jacob is used in Hosea in the first place. Assuming that the prophetic tradition stands behind the present form of Hosea 12, it may well be that the historical backround is the time of the Syrp-Ephraimite war and thus, and the prophetic criticism of the hostilities between the kingdoms. As I have earlier discussed, the prophetic circles may have cherished the idea of a political unity between Israel and Judah, and therefore, the oppressive behavior of Israel, i.e. Ephraim, was criticized. This memory of the past unity was related to David who was able to unite the tribes, and, which was important, appreciated the northern traditions. Only later, the idea of the twelve tribes was developed as an all-inclusive concept of Israel, and, as Na'aman suggests, the narrator of the tradition in Genesis drew from the prophecies the concept of an ancestor as a representative of the nation, i.e. the idea that Jacob is Israel.[1118] In Hosea, Jacob is Ephraim.[1119]

Given that Hosea 12 uses an early version of the Jacob tradition, it is reasonable to consider whether the prophecies drew from some oral tradition or whether there was some early written version. Obviously, no definite answers can be given. One suggestion what Sweeney brings forward is that the Jacob narratives were written as an account that addressed Israel's conflicts with Aram and Edom during the late 9th and early 8th centuries. In this Israelite form of the tradition, Judah's marginal status in the view of Israel appears as Judah's position among the sons of Leah, which, according to Sweeney, is in accordance with the political situation before the Syro–Ephraimite was when Judah was a vassal to Israel.[1120] After the fall of the kingdom of Israel, the Jacob narratives were brought south and edited by Judean scribes "in an effort to demonstrate how Jacob's flawed character led ultimately to the emergence of Judah as the leading tribe of Israel."[1121]

In Hosea, Jacob is connected with Bethel which in the context of the Jacob tradition is mentioned without any polemics. As Fleming remarks, Bethel may have had a particular interest in the unity of Israel in terms not defined by the monarchy, and thus, the tradition of Jacob points to Bethel's special role in Israel's identity as an association of distinct peoples.[1122] It is possible that the early form of the Jacob tradition was put in writing in Bethel at some point in the 8th century, and, in that case, it could have found its way in the 8th century prophecies.[1123]

Also the reference to weeping in 12:5 is related to Bethel. In Judges 20:23, 26; 21:2 it is told how the Israelite tribes wept there before going to war with Benjamin, and in Genesis 35:8 there is a mention of the "Oak of Weeping." This

[1117] Ibid., 111–112.
[1118] Ibid.
[1119] As Fishbane puts it, "Jacob serves as the typological prototype for all Israel and their various covenantal transgressions," *Biblical Interpretation*, 377.
[1120] Ibid., 248.
[1121] So Marvin A. Sweeney, "The Jacob Narratives: An Ephraimite Text?" *CBQ* 78 (2016) 236–255. The quotation is from page 238.
[1122] Fleming, *Legacy of Israel*, 320.
[1123] Ibid., 321.

tradition may well have been known in the 8th century prophetic circles in Israel.[1124] In Judges 2:1–5 there is also a story connected with weeping in Bochim and, interestingly, Bochim and Bethel may be one and the same. According to Yairah Amit, at the background of speaking on Bochim instead of Bethel is the critical stance towards Bethel in biblical literature.[1125] In Judaean thinking, the sanctuary at Bethel was an affront to the temple in Jerusalem, a sin which was subsequently corrected by Josiah as has been predicted in 1 Kings 13:1–3. However, as earlier said, in the 8th century prophetic circles, Bethel was criticized for its calf imagery, a symbol of their exclusion from the shrine.[1126] There is polemic against Bethel in Hosea's Jacob tradition, and I am inclined to think that the purpose of the Jacob tradition in Hosea was not to downgrade Bethel, which, after all, had been the shrine of the Levites before the introduction of the calf imagery. But, because of the form of Yahwism that was practiced at Bethel in the 8th century, the sanctuary is under fire in Hosea, and, at the same time, the tradition of Jacob was no more venerated by the prophetic circles.[1127] As far as Jacob is concerned, he was not the real ancestor of the people, and idea which found its way to the later Deuteronomistic thinking as well. Albert de Pury emphasizes that the only passage which refers back to Jacob is Deuteronomy 26:5–9, but Jacob is not mentioned by name, he is not an Israelite but a foreigner, an Aramean, he is about to perish, and only his offspring in Egypt will become a great nation.[1128] Perhaps at the background is the sarcastic saying in Hosea 12:3 about Jacob's flight to Aram – he fled but Moses brought up the people, Jacob kept (שׁמר) sheep but through Moses Israel was preserved (Niphal of שׁמר).[1129] Thus, Hosea 12 is aware of the traditions of Jacob and the Exodus as independent concepts of the origins of Israel.[1130]

To conclude, I maintain that the Jacob tradition known in Hosea represents an early stage in the long development of the tradition. During a long period of time, the early Israelite story of Jacob became embedded in a larger compilation of patriarchal narratives – with completely different aims. The time of Josiah and Josiah's pan-Israelism played an important in the merging of the northern Jacob

[1124] Note also the suggestion made by Amitai Baruchi-Unna that the same tradition of weeping may be found in Micah 1:10 too; in Baruchi-Unna, "Do not Weep in Bethel. An Emendation suggested for Micah i 10," *VT* 58 (2008) 628–632.

[1125] Amit, "Bochim, Bethel, and the Hidden Polemic (Judg 2,1–5)," in *Studies in Historical Geography and Biblical Historiography*, 121–131. As Amit says, the use of the name Bochim in the narrative is suspicious: it is mentioned already at the beginning of the story, and, besides in this narrative, it does not appear elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible.

[1126] Cook, *Social Roots of Biblical Yahwism*, 248–251.

[1127] Just as a matter of interest, I point to the suggestion of Israel Finkelstein and Thomas Römer that the earliest traditions of Jacob come from the Transjordan, and Jacob became identified with Israel only in the 8th century, when he was made the founder of the foremost sanctuaries, and when the sanctuary of Bethel was constructed; see Finkelstein and Römer (2014) 317–338.

[1128] Albert de Pury, "The Jacob Story and the Beginning of the Formation of the Pentateuch," in Dozeman and Schmid (eds.), *Farewell to Yahwist?* 51–72, here 56, 72.

[1129] Van der Toorn, *Family Religion*, 299.

[1130] Schmid, *Genesis and the Moses Story*, 74–76.

tradition and southern stories of Abraham, since the situation in Judah demanded a story which would combine the people in Judah and those living in the former territory of the kingdom of Israel.[1131]

[1131] So Finkelstein and Römer (2014) 317–338.

VI CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this study, my aim has been to defend my thesis that Hosea in its present form is best understood against the backdrop of two historical settings, the 8th century, when the prophecies underlying the prophetic book were generated in the northern kingdom of Israel, and the time of the reform of Josiah in Judah. The prophecies were triggered by traumatic experiences during the campaigns of Tiglath-pileser III and the subsequent fall of Samaria. Yet, nothing in Hosea directly speaks that the fall of Samaria has already taken place.

As for the 8th century prophecies, they have not been preserved verbatim. Therefore, I have avoided to read the texts as if they could provide historical details. This does not mean, as I have shown, that the texts could not be understood as reflecting certain periods of time. It is obvious that it is possible to read almost every biblical against almost every possible historical background, but it does not imply that everything in the text derives form that particular time. My contention is that Hosea is a depth-dimensional composition, and so it has been read in this study.

I have also – and intentionally – faded away the historical prophet, and therefore, Hosea throughout the study denotes the book. This is not to argue that the prophet could not have existed, most probably he did. The exact words are beyond our reach, and all we have, is their prolongation in a form of a prophetic book. My contention is, however, that the redactors not only elaborated but also preserved important elements like allusions to ancient traditions and religious concepts.

In chapter II, I have studied the references to Judah in Hosea. The references to Judah reveal an ambiguous attitude. In some references, which I regard as part of the 8th century prophecy, Ephraim and Judah are treated equally. This concerns especially the references in 5:8–6:6. In this passage, both kingdoms are accused of breaking the concept of intertribal solidarity, a concept which also appears in 10:11. According to Hosea's prophecies, Ephraim and Judah were to collaborate with each other, not fight each other and turn to each other's enemies for help. By doing this, both Ephraim and Judah violated the demand of solidarity embodied in the concept of חסד (6:4, 6), an old code of conduct concerning how the people should relate to each and to YHWH. This concept of intertribal solidarity comes from the ancient pan-Israelite ideology which has its roots in Shechem, as Deuteronomy 27 indicates.

The references, which build a contrast between Israel/Ephraim and Judah, come from Judaean redaction. 1:7 is an early addition, which comes from shortly after the fall of Samaria in 720, as it expresses a Judaean point to the event in the light of Judah's salvation from Assyrian invasion. The reference to Judah in 5:5 can be read as a question "Will Judah stumble?" and in this case, the statement pre-dates the fall of Jerusalem in 586. It may come from the time of Josiah, when this question retained hope for Judah, as it functioned as an exhortation to avoid

the fate of Israel. The statement "Judah will fall" fits better with the exilic context and the awareness that Judah fell like Israel before. Such a saying about Judah relates to the present form of 2 Kings 17:7–18, and its exilic redaction carried out with the destruction of both Israel and Judah in view.

6:11 speaks of the restoration of both Israel/Ephraim and Judah. If 6:11 is connected with the first clause in 7:1, Ephraim's healing becomes connected with Judah's harvest and restoration. This evokes Jeremiah 30–31, in which the restoration of Israel is associated with its reunification with Judah under the rule of Davidic dynasty, and this fits in with the policy of the reform of Josiah. Thus, Judah's harvest is Israel. 2:2 evokes Jeremiah 30–31, in which the underlying textual material has been compiled in order to support the reform of Josiah and also connects the reversal of the theme Jezreel with the reunion of Israel and Judah under one leader, "head," which points to a Davidic ruler, especially when 2:2 is interpreted in the light of 3:5. In fact, Judah may never have given up the idea that Israel was once ruled by a Davidic king, and this claim explains why Judah, after the fall of the northern kingdom, also appropriated the name Israel. .

In chapter III, I have shown that the criticism of Baal worship in Hosea 2 largely relates to the practices in the family religion, in which different manifestations of the storm god type Baal were worshiped in local shrines, at the "high places." By using a "baalistic" language and the marriage imagery, the prophecies demonstrate the confusion concerning the identities of Israel's real "baal" and YHWH. In 9:10, the reference to the incidence in Baal Peor indicates the worship of Baal had been a long-standing temptation for the people. I have also discussed the role of Asherah, although in Hosea Asherah is not directly polemized. Hosea seems to contain some implicit polemics against a goddess, and it combines the polemic against Baal with that against Asherah by indicating that Baal is the "wrong husband" and Asherah the "wrong wife." Other cultic paraphernalia such as standing stones, ephod and teraphim, are not condemned in Hosea, which indicates that they were legitimate cultic objects. As for the standing stones, מצבות, they were the most original aniconic cultic symbols in West Semitic cults, and part of the Yahwistic cult from the very beginning.

At the time of Josiah's reform, the practices related to family religion were brought under tighter official control because they were influenced by foreign religious practices during Assyrian dominion. In Josiah's time, the pairing of Baal, Asherah and the host of heaven seem to be a general reference to all kind of idolatry (2 Kings 23:4). Regarding especially the territory of the former northern kingdom, Josiah extended his religious purge also there for the reason that YHWH should be one and the same for all Israel, and He should be worshipped in Jerusalem.

With regard to Bethel, my conclusion is that it is opposed in Hosea's prophecies because the circles tracing their traditions to Shechem and the ark iconography were opponents of the form of Yahwism practiced in Bethel. This had to do with the bovine imagery, and the image being worshiped as a god and, thus, reducing YHWH to an image. Undoubtedly, from the Judaean standpoint, Jeroboam I had committed a great sin in making the ancient shrine of Bethel a

royal sanctuary and endangering the position of Jerusalem, and therefore, the altar of the sanctuary was defiled by Josiah. The rivalry between the two forms of Yahwism was linked to political matters, but the rift between the Mushite and Aaronide priesthoods also played a role, as the polemics in Exodus 32 indicate.

The deep and ancient difference between the two forms of Yahwism became a political weapon at the time of Josiah. It became formulated as the sin of Jeroboam, a measure to evaluate the kings, and which was used as the explanation for the destruction of Israel. It functioned as a tool to show that Josiah was the righteous king, one who could prevent the fate of Israel with regard to Judah. However, in the Josiah narrative, the bull imagery is not mentioned. The most likely reason for this is that there the image was no longer used, since it had been taken as booty by the Assyrians, as Hosea in 10:5–6 explicitly states.

In chapter IV, I have argued that the situation after the death of Jeroboam II, when all the kings were considered illegitimate because their access to the throne took place through coups, lies in the background of most of the criticism of the monarchy in Hosea. Therefore, most of the monarchy-related sayings in Hosea can be understood in the light of the 8th century prophecy, which is anchored to Israel's old traditions and its social and religious conventions. First, in Hosea there are reflections of old traditions related to Israel's long history as a tribal society without kings, to which the monarchy, forced by an external military threat, was only later introduced. Second, the kings who acceded to the throne by revolts, had not subjected their kingship to the will of YHWH, intermediated by the prophets. Third, the forced labor at the time of Solomon resulted in the antipathy towards him among the northern tribes. This antipathy towards Solomon among the Levitical circles was due to the exclusion of Abiathar and his descendants from the priestly office (1 Kings 2:27), which resulted in the Levites turning to Jeroboam I – and ultimately becaming disappointed with him. The tradition of liberation from oppression had motivated the secession of the northern tribes from Judah, where, under the kingship of Solomon, the monarchy had become comparable to the oppressive monarchic system elsewhere in the ancient Near East. Fourth, the heavy taxation in the times of tributary economy during the reigns of Menahem and Hoshea also contributed to criticism.

The offenses of the kings against the people violated the covenantal relationship with YHWH, which was to have guaranteed the unity of the tribes as the people of YHWH. Human kings were not to exceed their authority, given to them from the supreme king, YHWH, and thus, as I have discussed above, the illegitimacy of the kings in 8:4 and 13:10–11 was related to their appointment of kings in a manner which neglected YHWH's supremacy. The treaties with foreign nations made by the kings were not only political but also religious transgressions with oaths sworn to foreign deities, and which could not be approved in Hosea.

The monarchy was a central theme in Josiah's policy. After the fall of the northern kingdom, the Davidic dynasty was the only possibility to restore the future of the former kingdom of Israel. In his bid to show the worthlessness of the kings of Israel, Hosea's prophecies provided a valuable tool to justify why a Davidic king should rule over Israel. It is also likely that the time of Josiah was

ripe for the criticism of Solomon. In The Law of the King in Deuteronomy 17:14–20, the monarch portrayed appears to be Solomon, and – although the Law of the King does not restrict king's royal power, it does define the conditions under which it may be exercised.

Regarding the positive statements about the monarchy, the leading principle in them is the unity of Israel and Judah/ David as the people of YHWH. In this context, the Shechemite traditions play a role, since they represented an all-Israelite attitude. During the time of Josiah, the Shechemite traditions found their way into the hands of the Judaean scribes, who then incorporated them into what was to become Deuteronomy.

In chapter V, I have studied the traditions of the Exodus and Jacob in Hosea. I have argued that Hosea knows a version of both traditions which is different and also earlier than the version in the Pentateuch. The Exodus tradition known in Hosea was one of the many separate traditions circulating in the northern kingdom of Israel and which later influenced the compilation of the extant traditions. The main concept in the tradition known in Hosea was that Israel coming out of Egypt was a decisive event related to the establishment of the relationship between YHWH and the people. By a typological exegesis, in Hosea, the past and the present are interrelated, and therefore, Hosea speaks also of returning to Egypt.

The way in which Judah later, perhaps some time after the reform of Josiah, appropriated the Exodus tradition can be deduced from Psalm 78. Judah positioned itself in the Exodus tradition by demonstrating that Ephraim's history consisted of nothing but rebellion against YHWH. This fits in with the agenda of the reform of Josiah, and can be seen in 2 Kings 17 as well. An outward sign of Josiah's appropriation of the Exodus tradition was that Josiah commanded celebrating the Passover (2 Kings 23:21). This celebration of the Passover was carried out, as ordered in Deuteronomy 16:5–7, and the place chosen was obviously interpreted as Jerusalem.

As for the Jacob tradition, I maintain that the references to Jacob in 12:4–5 refer to some early form of the tradition, which was probably connected with the liturgy at Bethel, where the story was venerated as a tradition of the sanctifying the sanctuary. In Hosea, Jacob is compared to the contemporary Israel, and in fact, Jacob is Ephraim, i.e. the northern kingdom. I have discussed in Chapter V, this may indicate – assuming that the brother is Judah, not Esau – that the use of the tradition in Hosea points to the 8th century situation during the Syro-Ephraimite war. All in all, the Jacob tradition in Hosea is a good example of the complexity of the development of biblical traditions: some elements have found their way in the extant Pentateuchal traditions and can be identified, some have become polemized and blurred.

Both the Exodus and the Jacob tradition were charter myths of Israel, which were taken over by Judah only later and subsequently combined. In the northern kingdom, these traditions were separate and likely even competing traditions. However, although Jacob in Hosea is paralleled with the behavior of the contemporary Israel, nevertheless, it may be that tradition about Jacob is not rejected after all, since we have to bear in mind that the traditions in their earlier

forms were different from how they appear in their extant forms. In the tradition of Jacob, the emphasis is on ancestry in contrast to the tradition about the Exodus, which is based on YHWH's call and election of Israel. In the traditional Israelite tribal society, the Jacob tradition fitted in well with the interests of the family religion, whereas the Exodus tradition became a national charter myth for the northern kingdom. The Exodus tradition, on the other hand, was the tradition of the state religion in Israel. In Hosea's prophecies, it is the tradition of the Exodus which was related to the origins of Israel: the true Israel came from Egypt.

To conclude, although the present form of the text is late, I have found many elements in the book which can be related to traces of the 8th century prophecies. The first written version of the prophecies was compiled perhaps in Judah after the fall of Samaria by circles who subsequently passed the collection, the written tradition, from one generation to another. We do not know who these circles were, but as I have discussed, they may have a Levitical scribal community. I am attracted by the idea that the place for the first compilation of Hosean prophecies would have been Anatoth, the home of the prophet Jeremiah, who drew on the same pool of traditions as Hosea.

The historicity of the prophet has not been my concern, since it is likely that much of the material comes from the circles which transmitted the material, and their views cannot be distinguished from the prophetic tradition. The main redaction, however, comes from the time of Josiah's reform, when the prophecies were read as a justification for the fall of the northern kingdom and as a warning to Judah. Yet, at the same time, the reformist circles were aware that in order to fulfil the goals of their pan-Israelite ideology, they had to take over the traditions of the former kingdom of Israel, and introduce their own traditions into them. Many of the Israelite traditions were still owned by the people living in the territory of the former kingdom of Israel. Therefore, in order to appeal these people, Josiah introduced the celebration of the Passover, but moved the location to Jerusalem. This was but one indication of the old conviction that Jerusalem was the temple of all Israel, and that the tribes of Israel had forgotten this. Therefore, at the time of Josiah, it was time for Jacob to come home under the righteous Davidic king, who would correct the misdeeds of the kings of the past.

ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
ANEM	Ancient Near Eastern Monographs
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
BA	*Biblical Archaeologist*
BAR	*Biblical Archaeology Review*
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
BBR	*Bulletin for Biblical Research*
BHS	Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia, ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1977.
BI	*Biblical Interpretation*
Bib	*Biblica*
BTB	*Biblical Theological Bulletin*
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
BZ	*Biblische Zeitschrift*
BZAW	*Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*
CHAN	Culture and History of the Near East
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CBR	*Currents in Biblical Research*
ConBOT	Coniectania Biblica, Old Testament
FOTL	Forms of the Old Testament Literature
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
HALOT	Ludvig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament, Volume 1-2*. Leiden: Brill, 2002
HBM	Hebrew Bible Monographs
HBT	*Horizons in Biblical Theology*
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
HUCA	*Hebrew Union College Annual*
ICC	International Critical Commentary
Int	*Interpretation*
JANER	*Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions*
JANES	*Journal of the Near Eastern Society*
JAOS	*Journal of American Oriental Study*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JBPR	*Journal of Biblical and Pneumatological Research*
JBQ	*Jewish Bible Quarterly*
JHS	*Journal of Hebrew Scriptures*

JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
J Relig Hist	*Journal of Religious History*
JSOT	*Journal of Study of the Old Testament*
JSOTSS	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series*
JSS	*Journal of Semitic Studies*
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
Muraoka	T. Muraoka, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint*. Leuven: Peeters, 2009.
NEA	*Near Eastern Archaeology*
Or	*Orientalia*
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
OTSWA	Oud Testamentaise Wergemeenschap in Sui-Afrika
ResQ	*Restoration Quarterly*
RevExp	*Review and Expositor*
SEÅ	*Svensk Exegetisk Årsbok*
SBL	Studies in Biblical Literature
SBLABS	Society of Biblical Literature Archaeology and Biblical Studies
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SJOT	*Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament*
SRB	Studies in the Reception History of the Bible
ST	*Studia Theologica*
TA	*Tel Aviv*
TLZ	*Theologische Literaturzeitung*
UUÅ	Uppsala Universitetes Årsskrift
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
WBC	World Biblical Commentary
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
ZDPV	*Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins*
ZTK	*Zeitschrift fur Theologie und Kirche*
ZAW	Zeitschrift fur de Altentestamentliche Wissenschaft

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