OVERREADING AMOS: SOUTHERN ENTRAPMENT AND PROPHETIC IDENTITY IN THE BOOK OF AMOS

A Thesis

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CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

MULTIPLE AUDIENCES, OVERHEARING, AND ENTRAPMENT

Thank you. And for your applause.
It has been a pleasure. I
Have never enjoyed speaking more.
May I also thank the real ones
Who have made this possible.
First, the cloud itself. And now
Gurnard's Head and Zennor
Head. Also recognise
How I have been helped
By Jean and Madron's Albert
Strick (He is a real man.)
And good words like brambles,
Bower, spiked, fox, anvil, teeling.

The bees you heard are from
A hive owned by my friend
Garfield down there below
In the house by Zennor Church.

The good blue sun is pressing
Me into Zennor Hill.

Gently disintegrate me
Said nothing at all.

from W.S. Graham's "Enter a Cloud" (1975)[1]

These lines, which make up the fifth and final stanza of W.S. Graham's poem "Enter a Cloud," mark an abrupt shift in the poem. Up to this point, the poem has consisted of Graham's description of lying in a bower of bramble and gazing at a cloud that sailed between Zennor and Gurnard's Head. Here in the last stanza, however, the poem changes scenes from that bower to an award ceremony, where Graham is accepting a prize for the poem we have just read. The

[1] Graham, *W.S. Graham, Selected by Michael Hofmann* (New York: The New York Review of Books, 2018), 64-67.

stanza is a parody of the polite applause and name-dropping that are familiar to anyone who has attended such a ceremony or a book review session at the SBL annual meeting.

What interests me most about the stanza is the effect of this sneak attack on Graham's audience. For four stanzas we have been detached observers, standing by as Graham creates a dialogue within the poem. In the first stanza we encounter the poet's *I* and then an unspecified *we*. In the second stanza, he apostrophizes the cloud ("O cloud, / I see you entering from / Your west gathering yourself / Together into a white / Headlong. And now you move / And stream out of the Gurnard"). In the third, he addresses "Jean in London," and in the fourth, he imagines Albert Strick waving at the cloud. For four stanzas we readers stand at a safe distance, watching addressees float in and out of the poem.

In the fifth stanza, however, the trap is sprung, and suddenly, we are pulled into the poem. We become another *you* in the poem's dialogue. It doesn't matter if we like the poem or not; we are compelled by the setting to join in the applause. We are also forced to listen appreciatively to the humble-brag thanks that Graham offers to the people and things that inspired the poem. What began as a conventional lyric poem about a cloud is in the end an ironic critique of literary culture in which we ourselves are implicated. Graham shows that we have been complicit all along, the hidden *we* whom he conscripted at the poem's outset. The poem "underlin[es] the ease with which the applause-seeking, readership-pleasing poet can slip into intellectual posturing. The readerly *you* is as much a figure to be sparred with, discomfited, tricked, as to be flattered, thanked, indulged."[2]

[2] Natalie Pollard, *Speaking to You: Contemporary Poetry and Public Address* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 91.

I begin this thesis with Graham's poem because it offers a modern example of what Robert Alter has called the "rhetoric of entrapment." Such rhetoric is commonplace in the prophetic literature of the Hebrew Bible, where we find prophets setting traps for their audiences not unlike the snare Graham springs on his unsuspecting audience in "Enter a Cloud." Biblical audiences, both in and in front of the text, are likewise drawn into prophetic speech, thinking it is a condemnation of someone else. The audience sees itself aligned with the prophet until suddenly, the tables are turned, and they are exposed as a target of prophetic ire no less than the someone else. Alter illustrates this rhetoric with Nathan's famous parable to David in 2 Samuel 12. The story of the depraved rich man is a trap, which the prophet springs as soon as David vents his outrage at the rich man. Nathan's climactic "You are the man!" (*'ātâ hā'îš*) exemplifies the rhetoric of entrapment. That which "might be construed by a complacent listener as referring to 'the others'" leads instead to the conviction of that very listener.[3]

The prophetic books of the Hebrew Bible offer numerous examples of this rhetoric. One instructive example is the song of the vineyard in Isaiah 5:1-7. The passage begins with an unidentified singer intoning a love song, and everything seems fine until the grapes are revealed to be rotten (v 2). At that point, the speaker turns to the audience ("dwellers of Jerusalem//men of Judah") and asks them to judge between singer/vigneron and the vineyard. Only later is it revealed that the same "men of Judah" are the seedlings that have turned rotten (v 7). Like David, these listeners were lured into the role of judge, only to find that they have themselves become the object of judgment.

[3] Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry* (rev. ed.; New York: Basic Books, 2011), 180; see also Carolyn J. Sharp, *Irony and Meaning in the Hebrew Bible* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2009), 125-86.

For both 2 Samuel 12 and Isaiah 5, however, there is another audience to consider, namely, the audiences of the texts themselves, which are most likely not identical to the addressees within the text. Even if we suppose that 2 Samuel 12 records an actual parable presented to David and that Isaiah was sung to men of Judah, neither addressee is the presumed audience of the textual version of those encounters preserved in the Hebrew Bible. Because the subject of this thesis is the book of Amos, I will not take the time to explore the external audiences of 2 Samuel and First Isaiah.[4] Instead, I will turn to an example from Amos to begin considering the question of audiences beyond those named within the text itself.

Within the book of Amos a good example of prophetic entrapment across multiple levels of audience is its opening series of oracles against foreign nations. The purpose of such oracles was to announce YHWH's vindication of his people by vanquishing their enemies, and for the first six oracles, it is so far, so good. The jingoistic tour takes an abrupt turn in the final oracle, however, as YHWH's wrath turns to Israel in 2:6. This turn reveals the preceding oracles to be a set-up; the audience was invited to share the wrathful gaze of YHWH against other nations and to acknowledge the justice of divine punishment for their transgressions. In the last oracle this justice is turned against the audience themselves, namely, the people of Israel. The book of Amos begins by letting the audience point with the prophet at the transgressions of others, but by the end the audience finds the prophet's finger has turned to their own transgressions.

Moreover, the Israelites are not just guilty of transgressions but are implicated in the same kind of crimes as the foreign nations. As Jeremy M. Hutton has shown, the crimes listed in 1:3-2:3 are not isolated problems within each nation but a set of interrelated troubles whose

[4] Good starting points for each would be Seth L. Sanders, "Absalom's Audience (2 Samuel 15-19)," *JBL* 138 (2019): 5123-36; and H.G.M. Williamson, *Isaiah 1-5: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary* (ICC; London: T&T Clark, 2006), 328-31, respectively.

common denominator is the Neo-Assyrian imperial economy.[5] The backdrop for the land-grabbing (1:3, 13), slave-trafficking (1:6, 9), and warfare (1:11) is the booming interregional trade that ran along the "King's Highway," a north-south trade route stretching from the Arabian peninsula through the Transjordanian highlands to Damascus (and then on to Syria and Mesopotamia). Although many scholars draw a sharp distinction between these international crimes and the more provincial transgressions of Israel, Hutton argues that the oppression and deviancy denounced in 2:6-8 are rooted in the same economic system: "It was precisely the upper class's participation in and hegemony over the avenues of international, long-distance trade that permitted their exploitation of the smaller-scale regional subsistence economies."[6] Thus, the rhetoric of entrapment in Amos 1-2 consists of a bait-and-switch but also no small continuity between the crimes of the nations and of Israel.

To take this example one step further, we can note that a diachronic reading of Amos 1-2 reveals another layer of audience and entrapment. Nearly all scholars regard the oracle against Judah (2:4-5) to be an interpolation, evidence of a later Judahite scribe who updated the text for a southern audience.[7] This compositional development shows a setting beyond the original performance of Amos's oracles against the nations (if there was such a performance) and beyond its initial textual composition by the first tradents of the oracles. The insertion of 2:4-5 shows that the oracles were at some point *re*read by later southern tradents who found its indictment relevant to their context. The rhetorical trap laid for Israelite elites could also be set for Judahite elites, who were likewise complicit in the oppression that had first been charged against the

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[5] Hutton, "Amos 1:3-2:8 and the International Economy of Iron Age II Israel," *HTR* 107 (2014): 81-113.
[6] Ibid., 112.
[7] See James Luther Mays, *Amos: A Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), 41-42; Hans Walter Wolff, *Joel and Amos: A Commentary on the Books of the Prophets* (trans. W. Janzen et al.; Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), 163-64; Jason Radine, *The Book of Amos in Emergent Judah* (FAT II/45; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 15-17; Göran Eidevall, *Amos* [AYB 24G; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017], 110-12.

foreign nations and Israel. The example of Amos 1-2 shows that the text's audience consists of multiple levels: the audience(s) of a presumed oral performance by the historical Amos, the audience(s) who read/heard the subsequent textualized version of the oracles written by tradents, and the audience(s) who read/heard the later version that had been updated by Judahite tradents.

These various levels of audience of the book of Amos and the interconnections among them are the focus of this thesis. I am especially interested in demonstrating that already in some of the book's earliest (eighth-century BCE) oracles, there is a southern horizon, which was the basis for later supplementation by sixth-century BCE scribes. In Chapter 2, I will argue that 6:1-7 dates to the mid-eighth century BCE and was meant to entrap Judahite elites, in addition to the oracle's more explicit attack on northern elites. In Chapter 3, I will argue that the portrait of the prophet Amos in 1:1 and 7:10-17 was written by and for sixth-century BCE audiences and that the portrait was partly based on earlier oracles, such as 6:1-7. In Chapter 4, I will propose a few further instances of eighth-century BCE oracles with a southern horizon that served as the basis for sixth-century BCE additions to the text.

Before laying the foundation for these arguments, I would like to explore entrapment and multiple audiences in other poetic traditions. My goal in the following survey is to establish both phenomena as characteristic features of poetry in general. As my brief tour of English lyric poetry, ancient Roman satire, and biblical poetry outside of the prophetic corpus will show, it is typical for poetry to engage more than one audience and sometimes to entrap them. Even when only one audience is addressed explicitly, there are others expected to "overhear" the poem, and in many cases this overhearing leads to the kind of entrapment described by Alter and exemplified by Graham's poem "Enter a Cloud." What these examples from other poetic traditions also show is that although the different levels of audience are distinct, there are often

continuities within them, which produce a rhetorical unity across the various levels. My exploration of these poetic traditions has been helpful background for my own thinking about the prophetic poetry in the book of Amos, and I hope it will be likewise helpful in this introductory chapter.

Overhearing English Lyric Poetry

Discussions of poetry and its audiences often mention the famous and influential quote of John Stuart Mill that "eloquence [i.e., rhetoric] is *heard*; poetry is *over*heard."[8] Indeed, this quote is the inspiration for the title of this thesis, but the concept of "overhearing" in this thesis differs significantly from Mill's use of the term. The point of his oft-quoted sentence was to *deny* that the audience played a meaningful role in the poet's creative work. This point becomes explicit as his paragraph continues: "The peculiarity of poetry appears to us to lie in the poet's utter unconsciousness of a listener. Poetry is feeling confessing itself to itself in moments of solitude." Steeped in the Romantic ideals of his time, Mill understood poetry as the product of isolation and self-communion; it is overheard because poets are oblivious to anything or anyone outside of their own minds.

Rhetoric, by contrast, actively engages its audience. It is a matter of "feeling pouring itself out to other minds, courting their sympathy, or endeavoring to influence their belief, or move them to passion or to action." Whereas poetry is turned inward, rhetoric is directed outward to an audience whom the author hopes to persuade in some way. For Mill poetry is an

[8] Mill, "What is Poetry?," *Monthly Repository* (1833), which was later published as "Thoughts on Poetry and Its Varieties," in *Dissertations and Discussions: Political, Philosophical, and Historical* (2 vols.; New York: Haskell, 1973 [orig. 1859]), 1:63-94 at 71.

end in itself, and as soon as it becomes a means to some other end, as soon as it seeks to have an effect on its audience in some way, "it ceases to be poetry, and becomes eloquence." A last quote from Mill provides another neat encapsulation of the opposition between the two: "Poetry, accordingly, is the natural fruit of solitude and meditation; eloquence, of intercourse with the world."

But how then do we understand poetry, such as the prophetic poetry of the Hebrew Bible, that explicitly addresses one or more audiences in the second-person? This question has been explored at length by scholars of English lyric poetry, a genre well-known for its use of apostrophe (literally, the poet's "turning away" from her audience to address an absent or imaginary person/thing), and the results of their analysis will be instructive for our study of Amos. Some critics, echoing (and often quoting) Mill's distinction between rhetoric and poetry, see apostrophe primarily in terms of the poet's subjectivity; the *you* of lyric poetry is more a poetic affectation than real engagement with the outside world. Barbara Johnson, for example, admits that apostrophe creates the possibility for relationship between the poet and an external object but insists that "the speech situation – presence – is about the poet, and his or her feelings about the object; addressing something reveals the nature of the subject, not the object."[9] For Northrop Frye apostrophe is actually a mode of concealment; by "pretend[ing] to be talking to himself or to someone else…the poet, so to speak, turns his back on his listeners."[10] The pretend encounter of apostrophe frees the poet from a real encounter with his audience. Both Johnson and Frye see the *you* of lyric poetry not as an actual interlocutor but as a trope within the poet's subjectivity.

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[9] Johnson, *Persons and Things* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 9.
[10] Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), 249-50.

Jonathan Culler likewise doubts that apostrophe can result in communication between the poet and others. Although its second-person address seems to open the possibility of dialogue between two subjects, Culler argues that apostrophe is, in fact, monologic. What seems like an invitation to dialogue with an object or person outside the poet is really a means of the poet establishing his own persona. The vocative is not an engagement of the other as subject but a projection of the poet's subjectivity. For Culler apostrophe is

> a way of constituting a poetical persona by taking up a special relation to objects…[T]his figure which seems to establish relations between the self and the other can in fact be read as an act of radical interiorization and solipsism. Either it parcels out the self to fill the world, people the universe with fragments of the self…or else it internalizes what might have been thought external.[11]

Such solipsism leads Culler to regard apostrophe as "the pure embodiment of poetic pretension"[12] and an embarrassment to readers. Rather than opening lines of communication between the poet and those outside his subjectivity, apostrophe alienates others; its self-serving purpose estranges the poet's audiences.

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[11] Culler, *The Pursuit of Signs: Semiotics, Literature, Deconstruction* (London: Routledge, 1981), 161-62. See also J. Mark Smith, "Apostrophe, or the Lyric Art of Turning Away," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 49 (2007): 411-37; Ann Keniston, *Overheard Voices: Address and Subjectivity in Postmodern American Poetry* (New York: Routledge, 2006); Anne Ferry, *The Title to the Poem* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), 105-38; Walter J. Ong, "The Writer's Audience is Always a Fiction," *Publications of the Modern Language Association* 90 (1975): 9-21.

[12] Culler, *The Pursuit of Signs*, 158.

Other critics of lyric poetry, however, have been more sanguine about the possibility of dialogue between poets and their audiences.[13] Noteworthy among these critics is T.S. Eliot, who identified three voices of poetry:

> The first voice is the voice of the poet talking to himself – or to nobody. The second is the voice of the poet addressing an audience, whether large or small. The third is the voice of the poet when he attempts to create a dramatic character speaking in verse.[14]

With the first voice Eliot acknowledges that all verse is the product of the poet's imagination; with the second he asserts the "social purpose" of poetry, i.e., its capacity to instruct, amuse, moralize, satirize, etc.; and with the third he describes poetry's capacity for multiple speakers. For Eliot the three are not mutually exclusive but interact with each other, as when a private poem (first) reaches a larger audience (second), or a poetic dialogue (third) is performed for an audience (second). Such interplay is also a feature within just the third voice, in that the poet must work within the limits of each character's subjectivity. This constraint, which is most apparent in poetic drama but also applicable to non-dramatic poetry, recognizes the autonomy of a poem's various subjects and the possibility of dialogue among them, the poet, and the audience(s).[15]

This possibility of dialogue is what makes Eliot's three voices instructive for our analysis of Amos. Although the book's depictions of northern elites are literary creations, they are more

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[13] It is worth noting, however, that although Culler ultimately rejects the possibility of dialogue through apostrophe, his work represents a significant departure from Mill's view of the poet's "utter unconsciousness." Even if apostrophe is simply a propagation of the poet's own self and its only effect on the audience is embarrassment, these results are still social encounters. Likewise, Northrop Frye's poet turning his back on the audience presumes knowledge of their presence; rejection is still a kind of social engagement (see Pollard, *Speaking to You*, 8).

[14] Eliot, *The Three Voices of Poetry* (1953), published in *On Poetry and Poets* (London: Faber and Faber, 1957), 96-112 at 96.

[15] Ibid., 102-04.

than projections of the prophet/poet's subjectivity. The characters "have claims upon the author…compel[ling] him to try to extract the poetry from the character, rather than impose his poetry upon it."[16] That is, even as we are mindful of the fictive quality of poetry, the personas in Amos represent distinct voices and perspectives, whose social and rhetorical power depends on their verisimilitude.[17] In this sense, poetic address within the book of Amos is dialogical, just not between the historical prophet and the addressees mentioned in the text. The dialogue also takes place between authors and audiences, and the textual voices are no less integral to this dialogue insofar as they represent a world that is recognizable and compelling to external audiences. We will look more at this prophetic discourse below; my goal here is simply to highlight how Eliot emphasizes the role of the audience in poetry, even suggesting that awareness of the audience figures into the poetry itself. In one of his two allusions to Mill's famous statement, Eliot asserts that poetry, even a love poem addressed to a specific person, "is always meant to be overheard by other people."[18] His addition of "meant" is a significant change to Mill's original quote because it implies that overhearing is not an accidental encounter with the poet's self-dialogue but a deliberate communication with an external audience.[19]

More recent scholars have likewise seen the *you* of lyric poetry as evidence of engagement and dialogue with multiple levels of audience. William Waters, for example, examines second-person address and argues that readers are "touched" by poems, i.e., implicated

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[16] Ibid., 103.
[17] Cf. F.W. Dobbs-Allsopp's discussion of the fictive and performative aspects of biblical lyric (*On Biblical Poetry* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015], 202). For more on the fictive quality of biblical poetry, see Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry*, 176; and for poetry more generally, see Barbara Herrnstein Smith, *On the Margins of Discourse: The Relation of Literature to Language* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978); and Käte Hamburger, *The Logic of Literature* (2d rev. ed.; trans. M. Rose; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973).
[18] Eliot, *The Three Voices of Poetry*, 97; also p. 109.
[19] Such transitivity is not unique to modern poetry but is also a feature of biblical poetry, such as the book of Lamentations (see Dobbs-Allsopp, *On Biblical Poetry*, 204-10).

in their claims and answerable to them.[20] For Waters all poetic addresses – even those to someone absent, something inanimate, or the poet's self-address – draw the reader into the poem's communicative interchange. In this way, Waters inverts the view that poetry, including second-person address, is a monologic projection of the poet's subjectivity; instead, he argues, every poetic utterance, even self-address, presumes intelligibility and reception by an external audience. For him poetry is not just a matter of overhearing but also direct interaction with a variety of audiences.

The most obvious example of this interaction is the poet's address to the reader, but Waters shows that even this address involves multiple levels of audience. For example, the reader's engagement may change at various points in a poem; different readers across time engage a poem in different ways; or readers take over the poet's position through their recitation of a poem.[21] Such complications lead Waters to conclude that "a comparative study of address must also register multiple addressees within a single poem (rather the rule than the exception), and must concede uncertainty in the plentiful cases where a *you* eludes simple categorization."[22] Far from lacking interlocutors, lyric address involves a surplus of them, and the interaction between these interlocutors within a poem and audiences outside it constitutes the "touch" in the title of Waters's book. He argues that there is continuity between the two sets of audiences; they are two sides of the same coin.[23] The communicative exchange that takes place within a poem is integral to its ability to affect external audiences.

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[20] Waters, *Poetry's Touch: On Lyric Address* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), 1.
[21] This last phenomenon is cited by Culler in a new preface to his reprinted book as the reason he modified his own view of poetry as overhearing (*The Pursuit of Signs*, xxii).
[22] Waters, *Poetry's Touch*, 7.
[23] Ibid., 2.

This exchange is central, for example, to Graham's poem "Enter a Cloud," quoted at the beginning of this chapter. In the last stanza, which supposedly breaks from the poetic artifice of the first four stanzas, Graham reintroduces the "real" versions of people and things from the previous stanzas, establishing continuity between their appearance inside and outside the poetry. Of course, we readers know that these putative *realia* of stanza five are still part of the poem, and their reappearance exposes that the award ceremony as no less artificial than the reprised images. For us outside the poem, however, Graham offers one last thread, connecting the reading audience to those inside the poem. The final couplet "Gently disintegrate me//Said nothing at all" is a repetition of the poem's opening lines. As bookends, the repeated lines give the poem structure, but also ironically, seem to announce its/our disintegration. "Disintegrate" evokes the cloud, which appears and dissipates over the course of the poem,[24] and thus establishes continuity between the cloud apostrophized in stanza two, thanked in stanza 5, and the cloud implied in Graham's last lines to us. What happens to audiences inside of a poem is not divorced from its effect on external audiences; often they are connected in ways that reinforce the overall purpose of the poem.

This kind of communicative exchange is not unique to poetry, however. Critics like Richard J. Gerrig and Alan Richardson have shown that everyday conversation likewise involves communication with multiple levels of addressee and should inform our understanding of the dialogue that takes place among the various audiences of poetry.[25] Richardson offers public prayer as a practical instance of this multilevel communication. Although such prayers are

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[24] Note also that after the cloud enters in stanza two, stanza three begins with only the second line of the couplet ("Said nothing at all"), as if the cloud has, for the moment, taken the place of disintegration.

[25] Gerrig, *Experiencing Narrative Worlds: On the Psychological Activities of Reading* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993). See also Alan Richardson, "Apostrophe in Life and in Romantic Art: Everyday Discourse, Overhearing, and Poetic Address," *Style* 36 (2002): 363-85; and Herbert H. Clark and Thomas B. Carlson, "Hearers and Speech Acts," *Language* 58 (1982): 332-73.

addressed to God, they "always aim to be overheard by the congregation, and…may be framed with public ideological effects as well as spiritual concerns in mind."[26] These prayers are not self-dialogue in disguise nor detached from a specific context, and the congregation's overhearing is not accidental but integral to the prayer's purpose and rhetoric.[27] Such rhetoric is commonplace in our ordinary conversations: "as language users, we have vast experience in both informing others with language that is not specifically addressed to them and in being informed by language that is not specifically addressed to us."[28] The prevalence of such overhearing in everyday speech sheds light on poetic address, revealing it to be embodied and rooted in particular social contexts rather than disruptive, pretentious, or embarrassing.

For such discourse Gerrig proposes a triadic framework comprised of the speaker, the addressee(s), and the side-participant(s). This triad and the term "side-participant" come from the work of two psycholinguists, Herbert Clark and Thomas Carlson, who identify overhearing as a common feature of everyday speech.[29] According to their terminology, "side-participants" are distinguished from "overhearers" (in Mill's sense) by their deliberate inclusion in the conversation; they are *meant* to overhear.[30] Providing many examples from literature and everyday conversation, Clark, Carlson, and Gerrig, as well as Alan Richardson and Michael Macovski, highlight the social and rhetorical aspects of overhearing.[31] Its purpose in both

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[26] Richardson, "Apostrophe in Life and in Romantic Art," 378.
[27] To offer a personal example, consider the prayer offered by an inmate at the Suffolk County House of Correction, where I used to help lead communion services. In the prayers of petition that followed our shared reflection, during which one inmate had been especially longwinded, another inmate prayed that God would give the service leader (i.e., me) the wisdom to cut off other speakers who ramble too long. The congregation said, "Amen."
[28] Gerrig, *Experiencing Narrative Worlds*, 105-06.
[29] Clark and Carlson, "Hearers and Speech Acts," 339-43. According to Richardson (citing the work of L.M. Findlay), an even earlier precedent may be found in Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* ("Apostrophe in Life and in Romantic Art," 368-69).
[30] Gerrig, *Experiencing Narrative Worlds*, 106.
[31] Richardson; and Michael S. Macovski, *Dialogue and Literature: Apostrophe, Auditors, and the Collapse of Romantic Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

literature and everyday speech is to create dialogue among a multiplicity of interlocutors. Such dialogue obliges interpreters to interrogate the contexts of various addressees and overhearers. Only by attending to their contexts will we gain insight into the ideologies at stake in the poetic dialogue and the claims the poetry makes on its various audiences, including later readers. A similar point has been made by Natalie Pollard in her analysis of the poetry of W.S. Graham, including "Enter a Cloud." She shows that Graham's poetic mélange of oppositional voices turns private address into a public discourse, in which readers are also implicated.[32] Graham's critique of class, wealth, status, power, and privilege entraps overhearers (intentional or not), forcing them to confront their participation in the same or comparable systems of power and status.

These discussions of audience in English lyric poetry have several implications for our study of audiences "overhearing" Amos. In general, the work of Eliot, Gerrig, and Pollard highlight the capacity of language to engage multiple audiences in multiple ways and the necessity of attending to the particular context of each audience. Some of these audiences are explicitly addressed in a work of poetry; others are "side-participants," who are meant to overhear the poem; and still others are overhearers, who were not an intended audience but whose encounter with the poem has an impact on its meaning. We regularly negotiate these different levels of audience in everyday conversations, and sometimes we do so in our exegesis, when, for example, a biblical passage mentions more than one audience, or when the addressed audience is probably not the (only) intended audience (e.g., oracles against foreign nations, polemics against idols).

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[32] Pollard, *Speaking to You*, 23.

When it comes to the prophetic literature of the Hebrew Bible, and for us the book of Amos in particular, this triangulation between poet, addressee(s), and overhearer(s) raises the question of who is actually being entrapped. Most often, the answer has been the addressee(s), such as David in 2 Samuel 12 or northern elites in the book of Amos, but the preceding discussion of English lyric indicates that the overhearers are the ones who are caught out by the poetry. This is the effect made transparent in Graham's poem "Enter a Cloud." In the poem he addresses the cloud, Jean in London, etc., but in the end it is us, the overhearers, who are the punchline of the poem. As we will discuss later in this chapter, this insight aligns well with recent biblical scholarship that has situated prophetic oracles less in the world created within the biblical texts and more in the world of the tradents who received, curated, and (re)produced the oracles. The audience that matters most is not the addressees within the text but scribal overhearers (or over*read*ers) who constitute the real audience(s) of the oracles.

Two further points to emphasize from English lyric are, first, the expectation of some continuity between the poetic address within the poem and its impact on the audience(s) outside the poem. They are, as Waters argued, two sides of the same coin, and part of our analysis of the book of Amos will be to explore how the indictment of elites in 6:1-7 correlates with the world of the tradents who comprise the passage's external audience and who are, in their own (different?) way, elites. Secondly and relatedly, the preceding discussion of English lyric shows that although the address within poetry is fictive, it is nonetheless bound by the constraints of verisimilitude. If there is to be continuity between internal and external audiences, the former must be recognizable to the latter. A comparable point has been made by Ehud Ben Zvi regarding prophetic texts:

> For these [prophetic] books to be successful – that is, accepted by the literati as authoritative literature and, therefore, studied, copied, and passed from generation to generation – the world of these books could not stand in flagrant contradiction with the world of knowledge and the theological or ideological viewpoints shared by authorship and primary readership and rereadership.[33]

These constraints make it necessary for interpreters to examine the historical context depicted within a passage and to consider what the depiction tells us about the context of the tradents who produced it.

Lastly, I return to an insight from Culler. Although I think he overstates the solipsism and poetic pretentiousness of apostrophe, his analysis is helpful in forcing us to confront the ways that poetic address expresses the values and interests of the author who produced the poem. In the case of the book of Amos, the authors are not the historical Amos but rather the post-Amos tradents who put his prophetic witness into writing along with their own writings. Just as, according to Culler's view, the figures within a poem are a vehicle for establishing the poet's own identity, the persona of the prophet in the book of Amos should be seen as serving the interests of the tradents who constructed that persona. This aspect of prophetic discourse will be the focus of my analysis of Amos 7:10-17, which, I will argue in chapter 3, tells us less about the historical Amos than the prophetic ideal that (post-)exilic tradents wanted to promote. This rhetorical aim has been noted by other scholars, but what has been overlooked is the way this prophetic ideal interacts with other texts within Amos. In particular, the prophetic ideal depicted in 7:10-17 is in several ways a foil of the portrait of excess in 6:1-7 (an earlier text) and a

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[33] Ehud Ben Zvi, "The Prophetic Book: A Key Form of Prophetic Literature," in *The Changing Face of Form Criticism for the Twenty-First Century* (ed. M. Sweeney and E. Ben Zvi; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2003), 276-97 at 289.

complement to the restoration promised in 9:11-15 (a contemporaneous text). The interaction between these passages will be discussed in chapter 3, but here we can note its affinity with the self-validation described by Culler. The tradents of Amos were not just challenging those who "overhead" the prophetic oracles addressed to corrupt elites; they were also establishing their own their identity through the prophetic persona they created.[34]

OVERHEARING ROMAN SATIRE

Another corpus of texts that can shed light on the various levels of audience at play in prophetic poetry is Roman satire, which in some ways is a closer parallel to biblical prophecy than English lyric. For one thing, as a set of ancient texts, Roman satire is closer in time to the Hebrew Bible, and its biting social critique invites comparison to similar discourses in prophetic literature. Indeed, such comparison has been the subject of numerous studies, in which the book of Amos has figured prominently.[35] The purpose of this section is not to undertake such a comparison or to argue the merits of identifying certain prophetic texts as satire. Rather this section, like the previous one, reviews recent scholarship from a related discipline – here, the

[34] A key question to be discussed in chapter 3 is why this persona is so different from the circumstances of the tradents. Rustic and lacking in professional training, the persona of Amos in 1:1 and 7:10-17 has almost the exact opposite background of the tradents.

[35] On the relationship between satire and prophecy more generally, see Thomas Jemielity, *Satire and the Hebrew Prophets* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992); Ze'ev Weisman, *Political Satire in the Bible* (SemeiaST 32; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998); David Marcus, *From Balaam to Jonah: Anti-Prophetic Satire in the Hebrew Bible* (BJS 301; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995); Gale A. Yee, "The Anatomy of Biblical Parody: The Dirge Form in 2 Samuel 1 and Isaiah 14," *CBQ* 50 (1988): 565-86 at 565-69; James S. Ackerman, "Satire and Symbolism in the Song of Jonah," in *Traditions in Transformation: Turning Points in Biblical Faith* (ed. B. Halpern and J. Levenson; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1981), 213-46 at 227-29; David Fishelov, "The Prophet as Satirist," *Prooftexts* 9 (1989): 195-211. For examples of scholarship designating all or parts of Amos as satire, see Francis Landy, "Vision and Poetic Speech in Amos," *HAR* 11 (1987): 239; Paul R. House, "Amos and Literary Criticism," *RevExp* 92 (1995): 183; Shalom M. Paul, *Amos* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 205; Leland Ryken, "Amos," in *A Complete Literary Guide to the Bible* (ed. L. Ryken and T. Longman III; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1993), 337-57.

study of Roman satire – for insights it might offer on the ways that the book of Amos engages overhearing audiences.

The best connection to the previous section comes in the work of classicist Ellen Oliensis who identifies "overreading" as a key concept in the rhetorical economy of Horace's satires. Citing as her inspiration Mill's statement that "poetry is overheard," Oliensis defines an overreader as "an unnamed but otherwise specified other who may be imagined as reading over the addressee's shoulder."[36] Both addressee and overreader (not to mention the reading public and posterity) are present as audiences of a satire, and in some cases, the addressee "functions as a conduit for another conversation with an overreader."[37] Although Oliensis has drawn the term from Mill's quote, her concept of overreading represents a significant departure from Mill's statement. Contrary to his view of the "poet's utter unconsciousness" of his various audiences, she argues that Horace "always has an eye out for the impression he is making on other overreaders."[38] Horace's vocatives to his powerful patron Maecenas are meant not just for him but also for an overreading public, and conversely, his second-person addresses to characters within his satires allow him to express what he could never say directly to the powers-that-be (e.g., Maecenas, Emperor Augustus).

Overreading for Horace is a game of misdirection and redirection. Oliensis draws an analogy to the game he likes to play on the Campus Martius, namely, "three-cornered catch" (*lusumque trigonem*, *S.*1.6.126), which involves passing a ball among three players.[39] For her the triangulated game is an apt metaphor for the way Horace keeps multiple audiences in play at

[36] Oliensis, *Horace and the Rhetoric of Authority* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 6.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid., 7.
[39] Ibid., 6, 36.

one time, and it bears a strong resemblance to Richard Gerrig's triadic structure of speaker, addressee(s), and side-participant(s), which we discussed in the previous section. Oliensis would agree with Gerrig that "as language users, we have vast experience in both informing others with language that is not specifically addresses to them and in being informed by language that is not specifically addressed to us."[40] Like Gerrig, she sees examples of this multilevel communication within everyday speech, and it is significant that Horace's own term for his satires is *sermones*, or "conversations." In Oliensis's view, if there is a difference in poetry, it is one of prevalence: "Horace's poetry is not just occasionally but always and inevitably triangulated in this way."[41] Poetic address for Horace is just as much about its effect on external audiences as it is on the characters actually addressed in his poems.

Another scholar who has explored the multiple audiences of Horace's satires is Barbara K. Gold. Drawing on the work of Peter J. Rabinowitz, who studied the interplay of multiple audiences in contemporary fiction and drama,[42] Gold identifies four different levels of audience at play in Horace's satires: (1) the primary audience, such as his patron Maecenas, to whom he dedicates the satire; (2) the internal audience, who are also addressed within the satire as vague targets to be scorned by (3) Horace's authorial audience, consisting of his elite peers who share his values and perspective; and finally, (4) the actual audience comprised of anyone at any time

[40] Gerrig, *Experiencing Narrative Worlds*, 105-06.
[41] Oliensis, *Horace and the Rhetoric of Authority*, 6. Likewise, Frederic V. Bogel has written that the "situation [of satire] can be figured as a triangle with the satirist at one point, the satiric object at another, and the reader or dramatic audience at the third" (*The Difference Satire Makes: Rhetoric and Reading from Jonson to Byron* [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004], 2).
[42] See Rabinowitz, "Truth in Fiction: A Reexamination of Audience," *Critical Inquiry* 4 (1977): 121-41; idem, "Shifting Sands, Shifting Standards: Reading Interpretation, and Literary Judgment," *Arethusa* 19 (1986): 115-34.

reading or hearing his satires.[43] Because the satires mean something different for each audience, Horace's engagement with all four results in multiple levels of meaning within a single text.

One effect of this multiplicity is the way Horace and other Roman satirists were able to implicate their peers and even themselves in their social critique. On one level, the satirist points his finger at objects of ridicule and invites sympathetic readers to share in his scorn, but as the satire proceeds these overhearers are themselves convicted. Indeed, some have seen this supposedly sympathetic audience as the satirists' primary target. Kirk Freudenburg, for example, argues that the satires of Rome are "less about the 'monsters' they construct than they are about the writers themselves"[44] as well as their peers:

> Early in the book, at *Sermones* 1.1.68-70, [Horace] cautions us against laughing too quickly at a miser whose constant grasping at gain likens him to Tantalus tormented in the underworld: "Why are you laughing? Change the name and the story is about you!" The poet catches us here, by deftly interposing a mirror between ourselves and the fool on the page. This is a programmatic warning. "Be careful!" he hints. These poems are loaded with traps.[45]

Victoria Rimell identifies a similar dynamic in Juvenal's satires when she write that

> it is our guilty consciences and red faces which are to take center stage in his war of words…Throughout the satires, the victim is usually also the villain, the satiric persona alternately (and indecipherably) our ally and adversary, even within the same poem.[46]

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[43] Gold, "Opening in Horace's Satires and Odes: poet, patron, and audience," in *Beginnings in Classical Literature* (YCS 29; ed. F. Dunn and T. Cole; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 161-85.
[44] Freudenburg, *Satires of Rome: Threatening Poses from Lucilius to Juvenal* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 13.
[45] Ibid., 7-8.
[46] Rimell, "The poor man's feast: Juvenal," in *The Cambridge Companion to Roman Satire* (ed. K. Freudenburg; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 81-94 at 89, 91.

According to this reading of Roman satire, multiple audiences are necessary for the genre to achieve its full impact. It is a literary bait-and-switch, one which lures one audience in with the promise of a shared laugh at the expense of another but later reveals that the joke is on them both.

This double-edged quality of Roman satire has largely been neglected by biblical scholars who have drawn parallels between it and prophetic literature. Instead, these scholars have tended to view both satirists and prophets as oppositional and unidirectional, standing apart from their targets and pointing a self-righteous finger at their flaws. Thus, in the words of Thomas Jemielity

> prophecy and satire, like the sermon, stand in uneasy and hostile relationship to the external world….Prophet and satirist likewise stand outside the accepted, the customary, the usual: they seek to subvert the closed system of the institution.[47]

Classicists and biblicists alike have cast doubt on this version of satire and prophecy; both have recognized the artificiality of a world created by the poetry. What more recent studies of satire have shown, however, is this artificial world is not altogether disconnected from the real world of the satirist. Rather, they are intertwined in complex ways, so that discourses that take place within the poetry are related to discourses taking place among the poet and his associates. Characters within the poetry are interlocutors within these external discourses, not as historical figures but as ciphers serving a rhetorical purpose. Satire did subvert the social and political world of its time, but not (or not only) the world depicted in the poetry. Like the ball in a game

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[47] Jemielity, *Satire and the Hebrew Prophets*, 60, 63. A similar view is expressed by Mikhail Bakhtin, for example, distinguishes between the festive laughter of people, who "do not exclude themselves from the wholeness of the world," and "the satirist whose laughter is negative [and who] places himself above the object of his mockery" (*Rabelais and his World* [trans. H. Iswolsky; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984], 12).

of three-cornered catch, satirical attacks bounce off their first target and land at the feet of an overhearing side-participant or the satirist himself.

How would this overhearing audience of elite peers who supposedly shared the satirist's values receive the social critique? Two possibilities come to mind. The first is conviction; the sympathetic audience recognizes its complicity in the social ills dramatized by the satirist. The effect is not unlike the entrapment identified by Natalie Pollard and discussed in the preceding section on English lyric. There we noted how the oppositional voices of modern poetic address "expose the 'gentle reader' in an ungentle position."[48] An example of this kind of entrapment is the "retroactive satire" of Juvenal, who criticizes figures and events from fifteen or so years earlier.[49] The purpose of his satire is not to change or reform the recent past – Tiberius, Sejanus, Claudius, and Nero are history at this point – but to use the past to convict his present audience.

The other possible reaction is actually the opposite of the first. Instead of recognizing their complicity in the social ills diagnosed by the satirist, the audience may construct or fortify its identity in opposition to the ills. Indeed, this is in part how the satirist establishes his own persona; he defines himself and his values over against the negative examples he depicts. In this self-definition through contrast, which Thomas Habinek has called "the double game of differentiation and identification,"

> the satirist mimes his opponents even as he ridicules them. He lets them speak and act through his text and his performance thereof. He thus re-creates what he professes to despise. Herein lies the paradox of satire as a playful construction of élite male identity. As play, satire constitutes a

[48] Pollard, *Speaking to You*, 23. Sometimes the satirist even exposes himself in an ungentle position; see Freudenburg, *Satires of Rome*, 13, 21, 40-43, 69-71, 93-95, 99, 115, 237, 251, 254, 258, 264; also Oliensis, *Horace and the Rhetoric of Authority*, 17-18

[49] Freudenburg, *Satires of Rome*, 212-15, 234-38.

> kind of boundary work that permits the satiric ego to establish itself in relationship to an external reality.[50]

In Habinek's analysis, Roman satire is just as much about the construction of the satiric self as it is the construction and ridicule of the satirist's opponents. The mockery reifies an identity and a set of values against which the satirist defines himself.[51] Such boundary-making is necessary because the distinctions between the satirist and his targets may be smaller than we think.[52] He holds up examples of social foibles and misbehavior in order to differentiate himself from them.

This double game likely extended to the members of the satirist's audience of overhearers who shared his values and likewise came to define themselves in opposition to the targets of his mockery. Although, as we have seen, the relationship between the satirist and his audience(s) is more complex and variegated than has often been recognized, it is reasonable to assume that they would identify with the satiric persona that was created through differentiation. The mutuality between the satirist and his sympathetic peers has been a longstanding presupposition of scholarship on satire,[53] one that has been expressed well by Ralph M. Rosen. Without discounting the complexities of the satirist-audience relationship, Rosen asserts that "the presence of an audience imagined to be sympathetic to the poet's complaints is essential for the success of satirical mockery, for if the poet is trying to make a case against a target, the justice of his cause must be convincing."[54] Thus, Roman satire involves much more than mockery; it is also about identity formation of the satirist and his sympathetic peers.

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[50] Habinek, "Satire as Aristocratic Play," in *The Cambridge Companion to Roman Satire*, 177-91 at 182 and 185.
[51] For self-validation as a common feature of satire and biblical prophecy, see Jemielity, *Satire and the Hebrew Prophets*, 81, 120.
[52] See also Bogel, *The Difference Satire Makes*, 1-83.
[53] For discussion and examples, see Bogel, *The Difference Satire Makes*, 8-9.
[54] Rosen, *Making Mockery: The Poetics of Ancient Satire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 19-20.

These two insights from Roman satire – its entrapment of an overhearing audience and its use of second-person address to establish the satirist's own persona – parallel and buttress those from our preceding discussion of English lyric poetry, solidifying them as the framework that will guide our analysis of overhearing audiences of the book of Amos. As in English lyric, the address to an audience within the satire makes claims on the audiences overhearing the poetry, and the encounters with the two audiences (the one internal, the other external) are distinct but related. The external overhearers might be implicated in the satirist's critique of internal addressees, or they may find in these addressees foils against which they can construct a social identity parallel to the satirist's own persona. Both effects provide insight into the overhearing audiences of the book of Amos. When we think about Amos 6:1-7, for example, we might ask how the indictment of the elites named in verse 1 would affect the external audiences of the oracle. Would the post-Amos tradents of the text, who were themselves elite, recognize any parts of themselves in 6:1-7, or would the description of self-indulgence serve to differentiate their own eliteness from that of the revelers? Was there an external audience beyond these tradents, and what might have been the text's effect on them? These questions will be addressed in chapter 2, and in chapter 3 similar questions will be asked of Amos 7:10-17. Did scribal elites recognize themselves in the figure of Amos in this passage, or would they have been challenged by the prophetic ideal he represents? Answers to these questions will have to wait until the next chapters. For now, we can note that such questions are not unique to the prophetic literature of the Hebrew Bible but are pertinent to poetic traditions of other cultures, in this case ancient Roman satire. In both traditions we find authors engaged in a double game of differentiation and identification with multiple levels of audiences.

OVERHEARING BIBLICAL POETRY

Before turning to the book of Amos and providing further introduction to the core arguments of this thesis, it will be worthwhile to look briefly at how overhearing audiences have been discussed in scholarship on other poetic traditions of the Hebrew Bible. One article that explicitly engages John Stuart Mill's concept of "overhearing" is Tod Linafelt's study of David's lament over Saul and Jonathan (2 Sam 1:17-27).[55] Unlike most analyses of the lament, which regard the poem as a straightforward elegy, Linafelt argues that it is more than an expression of David's personal grief. It is also "a shrewd piece of political rhetoric," whose purpose is to reinforce David's claim to the throne by denigrating Saul and Jonathan.[56] Evidence of this second, public function of David's lament is its repeated use of apostrophe. In the poem he addresses multiple audiences – Israel, the hills of Gilboa, the daughters of Israel, and Jonathan – none of whom are expected, or even able, to respond. The point of such apostrophe, as we saw in our above survey of the device in English lyric poetry, is to create a dialogical space beyond the speaker's monologic perspective. By opening lines of communications with external subjects, the poet draws attention to the multiple audiences overhearing his lament and the possibility of different meanings for each audience. For our purposes, Linafelt's interpretation offers a helpful parallel to the argument I hope to make for the book of Amos, namely, that we must consider audiences beyond the addressees within the text and the relationship between

[55] Linafelt, "Private Poetry and Public Eloquence in 2 Samuel 1:17-27: Hearing and Overhearing David's Lament for Jonathan and Saul," *Journal of Religion* 88 (2008): 497-526. I first read this article shortly after its publication in a seminar led by Linafelt at Loyola University Maryland, where I was adjuncting at the time. Rereading it for this project, I was struck by how much of my approach in this thesis mirrors Linafelt's interpretation of David's lament. Although I came back to Mill's work through other channels, I am sure the article had subconscious influence on my thinking. Thanks, Tod.

[56] Ibid., 516-17.

these two levels of audience. If David's lament is any guide, the internal addressees may well simply be poetic devices that serve a rhetorical purpose outside the poem.

Although Linafelt's analysis of David's lament is, to my knowledge, the only study that explicitly uses the concept of "overhearing," other studies have explored how biblical poetry engages multiples levels of audiences. Consider Carol Newsom's analysis of Job 29-31, in which she argues that, while Job's final soliloquy is addressed to an assembly of village elders, God is the "superaddressee" of the speech.[57] "Superaddressee" is a term used by Mikhail Bakhtin to denote a third party whose understanding of an utterance is superior to the immediate audience of the utterance.[58] The result is a triadic structure, not unlike the one proposed by Richard Gerrig,[59] in which Job's speech functions on two levels, one to the village elders and the other to God. The rhetorical purpose of this double approach is to bring the overhearer (God) in line with the sympathetic reception of the addressees (the elders). Job assumes that the elders, unlike the three friends who comprise his audience for most of his speeches, share his values and will recognize the injustice of his suffering. Job hopes that their sympathy will evoke a similar response in God, whose persuasion "must be indirect, an implicit concomitant of his persuasion of his peers."[60] As in other examples of overhearing already discussed, the intended effects on the addressees and overhearers are distinct but correlated. Evidence of this correlation is found in 30:20-23, the only verses which address God directly and reveal the presumption of his

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[57] Newsom, *The Book of Job: A Contest of Moral Imaginations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 186.
[58] The superaddressee "is a constitutive aspect of the whole utterance, who, under deeper analysis, can be revealed in it. This follows from the nature of the word, which always wants to be *heard*, always seeks responsive understanding, and does not stop at *immediate* understanding but presses on further and further" (italics original; Bakhtin, "The Problem of the Text in Linguistics, Philology, and the Human Sciences: An Experiment in Philosophical Analysis," in *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays* [trans. V. McGee; Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986], 103-31 at 126-27). See also the essay by Bakhtin's colleague V.N. Volosinov (or perhaps by Bakhtin himself), "Discourse in Life and Discourse in Art (Concerning Sociological Poetics)," in *Freudianism: A Critical Sketch* (trans. I. Titunik; ed. I. Titunik and N. Bruss; Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1976), 93-116.
[59] See Richardson, "Apostrophe in Life and in Romantic Art," 368.
[60] Newsom, *The Book of Job*, 193.

overhearing all along. These verses contain several words Job has already expressed to the elders,[61] and their repetition indicates that Job's complaint to them has all along been meant for God's ears also.

Of course, in this example from Job 29-31 there is one more level of overhearing audience to consider, i.e., the scribal elites who comprised the book's external audience.[62] How did the discourse among multiple audiences within the poetry affect the audience(s) outside of it? The answer to this question is well beyond the scope of this thesis, but we may note here Mark Hamilton's suggestion that the Achaemenid author of Job 29-31 was contemplating the loss of intellectual systems, social order, and perhaps their own status and that the chapters were meant to legitimize and re-create (literarily) the "well-ordered society" that had been lost.[63] Be that as it may, my interest in Job 29-31 is its complex layering of overhearing audiences; in addition to an overhearing (divine) audience within the poem, there is an overhearing and/or overreading Achaemenid audience outside the poem.

Our last example of multiple audiences of biblical poetry is perhaps also the most obvious. Within the Psalter interaction with different audiences is so commonplace, it can easily escape our notice, so that we overlook its rhetorical significance within a given psalm. Evidence of multiple audiences is as simple as tracking the various addressees within a psalm. In Psalm 4, for example, the speaker begins with a 2ms invocation of God and plea for vindication (v 2), then shifts his address to a 2mp group of listeners (vv 3-6), and finally concludes by returning to

[61] Cf. *hpk* in vv 15, 21; *ʿṣm* in vv 17, 21; *rûaḥ* in vv 15, 22. Likewise, Job 31, whose oath formulas may be considered a more direct engagement with God, echo language from Job's soliloquy to the village elders.
[62] See David J.A. Clines, "Why Is There a Book of Job, and What Does It Do to You If You Read It?," in *The Book of Job* (ed. W Beuken; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1994), 1-23.
[63] Hamilton, "Elite Lives: Job 29-31 and Traditional Authority," *JSOT* 32 (2007): at 86-89.

YHWH in the 2ms (vv 7-9).[64] The rhetoric of the psalm depends on all audiences listening to its entirety.[65] In acknowledging to YHWH his past deliverance and asking for vindication again, the speaker offers the assembly a model of the trust, which he calls on them to imitate. Meanwhile, the speaker expects YHWH to overhear his words to the assembly, which he hopes will move YHWH to act again on his behalf. Verse 3 contains the speaker's (indirect) complaint to YHWH concerning his prolonged injury,[66] and by exhorting others to faith in verses 4-6, he offers YHWH evidence of his own faith, which undergirds his plea in verse 1. As in Job 29-30, the use of matching language to each audience underlines the interlocking rhetoric of verses 2, 7-9 and 3-6.[67]

Many similar examples from the Psalms could be mentioned, but instead of expanding our analysis to further examples, it will suffice to cite the work of others who have argued that overhearing is an integral feature of biblical prayer. Gerald T. Sheppard, for example, in his study of the "enemies" in lament psalms proposed that "prayers are assumed to be overheard or, later, heard about by friends and enemies alike; and, furthermore, 'enemies' mentioned in these prayers, as often as not, belong to the very same social setting in which one prays."[68] The goal of the speaker is to expose the enemies' abuse, to bring judgment on them, or to reform them through admonition.[69] Although not every aspect of Sheppard's analysis holds up – his dependence on Norman Gottwald's sociopolitical approach leads him to define the overhearing

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[64] There may even be more than one group addressed in the middle section. It is possible that verse 3 addresses the speaker's opponents, and verses 4-6 shift to a larger group of listeners, perhaps the "many" mentioned in verse 7.
[65] Samuel Hildebrandt reaches a similar conclusion in his analysis of changing addressees in Ps 32 ("Whose Voice is Heard: Speaker Ambiguity in the Psalms," *CBQ* 82 (2020): 197-213 at 208-09.
[66] See Richard J. Clifford, *Psalms 1-72* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002), 52-53.
[67] Cf. *qr'* in vv 2, 4; *šm'* in vv 2, 4; *ṣdq* in vv 2, 6; *bṭḥ* in vv 6, 9; *lb(b)* in vv 5, 8; *škb* in vv 5, 9.
[68] Sheppard, "'Enemies' and the Politics of Prayers in the Book of Psalms," in *The Bible and the Politics of Exegesis: Essays in Honor of Norman K. Gottwald on his Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (ed. D. Jobling et al.; Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 1991), 61-83 at 72.
[69] Ibid., 73-78.

enemies too narrowly – his discussion of the dialogical character of the psalms is instructive. Also helpful is the work of W. Derek Suderman, who applied Sheppard's insight to rhetorical features of Psalms.[70] None of these audiences is directly addressed by the jussive statement, but as overhearers, all are affected by it.

As in Job 29-31, the overhearing identified in Psalm 4 takes place within the psalm, which still leaves the external overhearing to consider. The intended effect of a psalm on those who actually heard or read the psalm is even more elusive than with the other biblical texts discussed in this chapter. Given how little we know about the original setting of most psalms and given the almost unlimited interchangeability of roles within a psalm, we are left with countless possibilities. Certainly, the rhetoric of a psalm assumes that the external audience will identify with the vocatives and second-person pronouns within the psalm and thus take on the role of addressee(s) when the speaker talks to the audience and the role of overhearer when the speaker addresses God. Whether that takes place within a given performance or reading of a psalm is anyone's guess, but I think it is reasonable to assume that the overhearing depicted within a psalm is instructive for how overhearers outside of it were meant to engage it. Like Job 29-31, the Psalms show how complex the layers of overhearing can be within a sophisticated poem, but these complexities do not detract from the larger point to be taken from this brief discussion. Namely, multiple audiences, whether in or outside of the psalm, mean multiple

[70] One example is jussive sentences, which function on three rhetorical levels: first, they call for divine action; second, they warn enemies; and third, they court the support of the wider assembly of listeners (Suderman, "Are Individual Complaint Psalms Really Prayers?: Recognizing Social Address as Characteristic of Individual Complaints," in *The Bible as a Human Witness to Divine Revelation: Hearing the Word of God Through Historically Dissimilar Traditions* [LHB/OTS 469; ed. R. Heskett and B. Irwin; New York: T & T Clark, 2010], 153-70 at 166).

levels of rhetoric and meaning, but these levels, though distinct, are interrelated and mutually illuminating.

Overreading Amos

This thesis explores the overhearing audiences of prophetic texts now collected in the book of Amos. Like most scholars, I see the book of Amos as the product of prophetic oracles that were first delivered orally and later written down and arranged by tradents who revised, updated, and supplemented the testimony they had received with their own compositions.[71] The inevitable gap between the original performance of an oracle and its subsequent preservation (orally, textually, or both) often make it impossible to distinguish between the words of the prophet and those of the tradents. In fact, even the name and persona of "Amos" is now considered by many scholars to be the creation of tradents rather than biographical information.[72]

As the title of this subsection and thesis as a whole indicates, however, we will focus on how these texts were over*read* rather than overheard. Although many passages in the book of Amos presume an originally oral performance and there is no reason to deny an oral setting for such texts, we today have no way of reconstructing these performances or subsequent oral transmissions of the oracles attributed to Amos. We have no way of knowing if the texts preserved in the biblical book have the same content as the speeches delivered in these oral settings. Rather, as many scholars have shown in recent decades, biblical texts, including the oracles contained in the book of Amos, are the product of scribal activity. For this reason, our

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[71] See Ronald L. Troxel, *Prophetic Literature: From Oracles to Books* (Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 1-18, 37-53.

[72] See Tchavdar S. Hadjiev, *The Composition and Redaction of the Book of Amos* (BZAW 393; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009), 169-70; Göran Eidevall, *Amos* (AYB 24G; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), 5-7.

discussion of audience and the book of Amos begins with a distinction between the addressees within its texts and the scribal communities who constituted their primary audience. As in English lyric poetry and Roman satire, the external audience of overreaders is distinct from the addressees named in the book of Amos (who may or may not have been real audiences at one time), but as I hope to show in this thesis, also as in lyric and satire, the internal and external audiences are correlated.

By no means is this to suggest a simplistic evolution from oral prophecy to textualized prophecy. On the contrary, most recent scholarship on the relationship between the oral and written cultures within which the Hebrew Bible took shape agree that orality was not just a pre-literary stage in the development of biblical texts but persisted even after oral traditions became textualized.[73] There are now numerous studies demonstrating the persistence of oral culture alongside textual traditions, including biblical prophecy.[74] In my view, it is likely that the oracles preserved in the book of Amos continued to be communicated in oral settings not unlike the oral promulgation of written texts we find described in exilic and post-exilic texts of the Hebrew Bible (e.g., Ezek 2:8-3:3; Neh 8). Given the probability of ongoing oral transmission of prophetic testimony, we cannot rule out over*hear*ing as a mode of reception.[75]

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[73] Key studies on this topic include Susan Niditch, *Oral World and Written Word: Ancient Israelite Literature* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996); Raymond F. Person, "The Ancient Israelite Scribe as Performer," *JBL* 117 (1998): 601-09; David M. Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart: Origins of Scripture and Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); idem, *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible: A New Reconstruction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Frank Polak, "Sociolinguistics: A Key to the Typology and the Social Background of Biblical Hebrew," *Hebrew Studies* 47 (2006): 115-62; Karel van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007).

[74] See, for example, the contributions in Ehud Ben Zvi and Michael H. Floyd, eds., *Writings and Speech in Israelite and Ancient Near Eastern Prophecy* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000); Mark Leuchter, "The Pen of the Scribes: ," in *The Book of Jeremiah: Composition, Reception, and Interpretation* (ed. J. Lundbom et al.; Leiden: Brill, 2018), 3-25; Joachim J. Krause, "'Writing on the Heart' in Jeremiah 31:31-34 in Light of Recent Insights into the Oral-Written Interface and Scribal Education in Ancient Israel," *ZAW* 132 (2020): 236-49.

[75] See Philip R. Davies, "The Dissemination of Written Texts," in *Writing the Bible: Scribes, Scribalism, and Script* (ed. T. Römer and P. Davies; Durham, England: Acumen, 2013), 35-46.

Even as we acknowledge the persistence and importance of oral culture in the transmission of biblical prophecies, we also recognize that there is something distinctive about prophecy in its written form. In addition to signifying elite status and divine authority, "the written character of the prophetic books (among other books of the time) led to both actual textual fluidity and discursive as well as symbolic permanence."[76] A written prophecy conveys textual stability for transmission through time and space but at the same time creates conditions for the polysemy that occurs when individual texts are arranged into larger units.[77] I am especially interested in how earlier oracles became the basis of later supplements to the text. In responding to these earlier oracles, the later tradents, on the one hand, reveal the oracles' authority, but on the other hand, by combining them with their own responses, the tradents open the possibility for new meanings. Although this process of supplementation and recontextualization could, and probably did, occur also through oral retelling,[78] the focus of this thesis will be on the written texts available to us in the book of Amos.

For me the concept of overreading has been helpful for thinking about this process. The tradents who produced new texts and contexts based on earlier prophetic texts were overreaders multiple times removed from the addressees within the text and its first scribal audience. But the dynamics of continuity and discontinuity within that first overreading apply also to the ones that follow. Each audience is distinct, and yet certain rhetorical and literary features overlap from addressee to audience. These dynamics are similar to the concepts of *relecture*

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[76] Ehud Ben Zvi, "Introduction: Writings, Speeches, and the Prophetic Books – Setting an Agenda," in *Writings and Speech in Israelite and Ancient Near Eastern Prophecy*, 1-29 at 13-14. See also Joachim Schaper, "Exilic and Post-exilic Prophecy and the Orality/Literacy Problem," VT 55 (2005): 324-42; and Christophe Nihan, "The 'Prophets' as Scriptural Collection and Scriptural Prophecy during the Second Temple Period," in *Writing the Bible*, 67-85 at 68; Heath D. Dewrell, "Textualization and the Transformation of Biblical Prophecy," in *Scribes and Scribalism* (ed. Mark Leuchter; London: T&T Clark, 2020), 95-105.
[77] Ben Zvi, "The Prophetic Book," 287-88.
[78] Ben Zvi, "Introduction," 19.

(rereading) and *Fortschreibung* (updating), but I prefer overreading because the concept recognizes that addressees within the text, however artificial, are integral to its meaning. As we saw in the above survey of poetic address and as I hope to show in my analysis of Amos, the discourses inside a passage have significance for the discourses outside of it. In this way, overreading better articulates Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutics of distanciation, which is central to my approach to the text.[79] According to Ricoeur, the discourses that take place on the linguistic and literary levels of a work create distance both between the work and the audience(s) and between the work and its writer(s). These distances are what make new meanings possible for successive audiences, and in the biblical text this distanciation takes place at every stage of the text's formation. One of the geniuses of prophetic speech is its seeming ability to close gaps of time and space, so that "the readers' sense of overhearing a prophet speaking to his contemporaries is quickly lost, and it seems that the prophet is directly addressing the readers."[80] While that is a rhetorical effect of the text, the distances still exist and take new shape according to changes within and in front of the text. Insofar as each new context creates a new text, no oracle is ever really *re*read. All of us, in one way or another, are overreaders.

My focus on the way early written texts in the Amos tradition were the basis for later texts within the same tradition presumes that those early texts existed as texts in the eighth century BCE. Most discussion of written prophetic texts has understandably focused on the Persian period.[81] After all, this period seems to have been the most formative in the production

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[79] Paul Ricoeur, "The Hermeneutical Function of Distanciation," in *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences* (ed. and trans. J. Thompson; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 93-106.
[80] Michael H. Floyd, "The Production of Prophetic Books in the Early Second Temple Period," in *Prophets, Prophecy, and Prophetic Texts in Second Temple Judaism* (ed. M. Floyd and R. Haak; LHBOTS 427; New York: T&T Clark), 276-97 at 289; see also in the same volume, idem, "Introduction," 1-25 at 6-7.
[81] See Ehud Ben Zvi, "The Prophetic Book," 290, 293-94; idem, "Introduction," 10, 15-16; idem, "Toward an Integrative Study of the Production of Authoritative Books in Ancient Israel," in *The Production of Prophecy: Constructing Prophecy and Prophets in Yehud* (ed. D. Edelman and E. Ben Zvi; London: Equinox, 2009), 15-28; Diana Edelman, "From Prophets to Prophetic Books: The Fixing of the Divine Word," in *The Production of*

of prophetic books. It is reasonable to assume, however, that the source material for the book of Amos (and other prophetic books) consisted of oracles that had been written in earlier periods, closer in time to the historical prophet, and stored in archives and/or libraries that could be accessed by scribes of the Persian period.[82] Unfortunately, our only evidence for this process, besides hints within prophetic books themselves (e.g. Isa 8:16; 30:8; Jer 7:1-14//26:1-6), is circumstantial and comparative. Circumstantially, epigraphic and archaeological data from the Iron Age indicate that the technology and training for the documentation of oracles existed from the ninth century BCE and thus would have been available for the first tradents of Amos.[83] Additionally, the Balaam text from Deir Alla (ca, 800-750 BCE) provides an example from the eighth century BCE of a written prophetic tradition.[84]

Comparatively, the corpus of Neo-Assyrian prophetic texts provides evidence of the recontextualization and supplementation of earlier oracles into new collections. Without getting into the details of how single oracles recorded on disposable *u'iltu* tablets were selected and collected into archival *ṭuppu* tablets,[85] we can note how this process offers insight into the development of prophetic traditions in Iron Age Israel. Indeed, Martti Nissinen's description of how Neo-Assyrian collections took shape could well apply to the biblical evidence:

> The collections of oracles have been compiled by the scribes from among those individual oracles that eventually ended up in the archives. The editorial activity implies

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Prophecy, 29-54 at 40-43; Schaper, "Exilic and Post-exilic Prophecy," 324-42; Michael Floyd, "The Production of Prophetic Books," 285-92; Nihan, "The 'Prophets' as Scriptural Collection," 74-78; Thomas Römer, "From Prophet to Scribe: Jeremiah, Huldah, and the Invention of the Book," in *Writing the Bible*, 86-96 at 94-95.

[82] Edelman, "From Prophets to Prophetic Books," 41.

[83] See Christopher A. Rollston, "Scribal Education in Ancient Israel: The Old Hebrew Epigraphic Evidence," *BASOR* 344 (2006): 47-74; idem, *Writing and Literacy in the World of Ancient Israel: Epigraphic Evidence from the Iron Age* (ABS 11; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2010).

[84] See van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible*, 176.

[85] See Simo Parpola, *Assyrian Prophecies* (SAA 9; Helsinki: Helsinki University, 1997), LIII-LV; Martti Nissinen, "Spoken, Written, Quoted, and Invented: Orality and Writtenness in Ancient Near Eastern Prophecy," in *Writings and Speech in Israelite and Ancient Near Eastern Prophecy*, 235-71 at 247-48; idem, *Ancient Prophecy: Near Eastern, Biblical, and Greek Perspectives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 99-104.

> the reuse and reinterpretation of once-spoken prophetic messages in a new historical context; in fact, the new archival context made the prophecies a part of a written tradition which could serve as source material for texts representing other genres.[86]

My goal here is not to undertake a full-fledged comparison of these processes in Neo-Assyrian and biblical prophetic traditions[87] but simply to note the Neo-Assyrian corpus provides comparative evidence for written prophetic collections consisting of earlier oracles that have been recontextualized in new literary settings. While we cannot be certain that the texts in the book of Amos followed a similar literary development (in addition to whatever oral transmission took place), there is strong circumstantial and comparative evidence to suppose they did.

A distinctive feature of this thesis is the premise that the first tradents who wrote the oracles of the prophet Amos were based in Judah rather than Israel. Most interpretation of Amos focuses on its northern setting, and certainly this is an important horizon of the text. But there is no evidence that this setting comprises the totality of the prophet's career, or that it was the context of his earliest tradents. Even if we accept the testimony of Amos 1:1 and 7:10-17, which many think are (post-)exilic, the texts only report that the prophet left his Judahite hometown of Tekoa to prophesy in Israel sometime during the reign of Jeroboam II (786-746 BCE). There is no mention of how long he (or his tradents) stayed there. In my view, it is more likely that Amos's visit to Israel was one part of his prophetic career rather than its entire (or even primary)

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[86] Nissinen, *Ancient Prophecy*, 100.

[87] Some examples of such comparison include Matthijs J. de Jong, *Isaiah among the Ancient Near Eastern Prophets: A Comparative Study of the Earliest Stages of the Isaiah Tradition and the Neo-Assyrian Prophecies* (VTSup 117; Leiden: Brill, 2007), esp. 437-42; Karel van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible*, 123-24, 173-204; Manfred Weippert, "'Das Frühere, siehe, ist eingetroffen…': über Selbstzitate im altorientalischen Prophetenspruch," in *Oracles et prophéties dans l'antiquité: actes du Colloque de Strasbourg 15-17 juin 1995* (ed. J. Heintz; Paris: De Boccard, 1997), 147–169 (I am grateful to Heath Dewrell for this reference, which he cites in his "Textualization and the Transformation of Biblical Prophecy," 98 n. 27).

focus. The same would be true for the tradents who first wrote down his oracles; it seems to me likely that these tradents were based more, perhaps only, in the south than the north.[88]

If, according to this premise, the book of Amos was, from its earliest formation, produced in the south, then we should consider that the southern horizon of the book is more prevalent and earlier than typically recognized. In terms of prevalence, I mean that this horizon could apply to more than just texts with a southern reference or allusion in them; it could pertain to any text that does not have an explicitly northern orientation. In terms of dating, I mean that the southern horizon is not a strictly post-721 BCE phenomenon. In my view, it is unlikely that Amos's tradents felt so at home in Israel that only after it fell did they decide to head south. Certainly, as we shall discuss, some of the southern references in the book of Amos date after 721 BCE, sometimes quite a bit later, but we should not rule out the possibility of a southern horizon that dates to the mid-eighth century BCE.

As I have said, all this is a premise that I have brought to my study of the book of Amos. One goal of this thesis is to make a compelling case for this premise, so that it is no longer just an assumption but is supported by evidence. The first step to that goal is Chapter 2, which is devoted to a close reading of 6:1-7. This passage is unique in the book of Amos for its explicit address to elites in both the Northern and the Southern Kingdoms. Most interpreters think that this passage, in one form or another, originated with the historical Amos, but many see its southern references, especially Zion (v 1) and David (v 5), as late additions to the text. Others see these references as original to the text and evidence of the overall lateness of the passage.

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[88] I am not the first to suggest an early southern horizon for the book. W.S. McCullough, for example, proposed a southern audience in addition to the northern one ("Some Suggestions about Amos," *JBL* 72 [1953]: 247-54 at 250-51). Other scholars see chs 8-9 as the product of Amos's preaching back in Judah after he was expelled from Bethel (John D.W. Watts, *Vision and Prophecy in Amos* [exp. ed.; Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1997], 85-86; Robert Gordis, *Poets, Prophets, and Sages: Essays in Biblical Interpretation* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1971], 222).

My analysis takes a different approach by arguing that the southern references are integral to the text and that the passage as a whole dates to the mid-eighth century BCE (i.e., pre-Tiglath-pileser III). I argue that the text *as text* does not date to the time of the historical Amos and its audience was not carefree revelers in Zion and Samaria. Rather, Amos 6:1-7 is a composition by tradents a few decades removed from the prophet, and its audience consisted of overreading scribal communities in Judah, who would be challenged by the indirect cultic critique that pervades the passage.

Chapter 3 focuses on Amos 7:10-17. Along with many scholars, I see this third-person narrative as an exilic or post-exilic narrative meant to establish the persona of the prophet Amos and to unify the emergent book of Amos around that persona. According to this dating, the key question to ask of 7:10-17 is not if it offers a historically reliable biography of the eighth-century BCE prophet, but what does this prophetic persona tell us about the tradents who produced the text. More specifically, why would these tradents create a persona of an agrarian and untrained prophet that was so different from their own identity as highly trained and sophisticated scribal elites? One answer, I contend, has to do with the de-urbanized landscape of the (post-)exilic period, but I am more interested in how this persona plays off of earlier texts within the Amos tradition, especially 6:1-7. Having established in Chapter 2 that 6:1-7 is an early text within the Amos tradition, I argue here that its depiction of self-indulgent elites served as a foil for the depiction of the prophet in 7:10-17 and that the indirect cultic critique in 6:1-7 provides important background for the encounter between Amos and the priest Amaziah. The evidence for this interpretation consists of lexical connections between 6:1-7 and 7:10-17, which show that Amos's persona represents a prophetic ideal that stands in direct opposition to the elite lifestyle depicted in 6:1-7. For the (post-)exilic tradents who created it, this persona offered a way to

differentiate their status as scribal elites from the revelers' detached and extravagant elitism and to establish some affinity with the rural realities of post-exilic Yehud.

In a concluding Chapter 4 I summarize the conclusions of the work and propose other texts within the book of Amos that may also illustrate the dynamics examined in Chapters 2-3 but whose footing was not sturdy enough to build a full argument (e.g., 3:3-8, 9-11; 8:1-2; 9:1-4).

Thus, this thesis consists of a close examination of two texts within the book of Amos – 6:1-7 and 7:10-17 – and the relationship between them. Although it is a rather small corpus, I hope that my analysis will bring to light several aspects of the book that have been underappreciated or have escaped noticed altogether. My principal insights can be found in the subtitle of the thesis. In terms of southern entrapment, I aim to show that the southern horizon of the book of Amos is not in every case a late monarchic or post-exilic feature. The book was undoubtedly edited and supplemented in the south during these periods, but I will argue that the book envisions a southern audience as early as the mid-eighth century BCE. If a compelling case can be made that 6:1-7 dates to the mid-eighth century BCE and is directed at a southern audience, then it invites us to consider this audience for other parts of the book, which are typically assumed to have a northern orientation. In terms of prophetic identity, I hope to add to the growing body of scholarship, which sees the prophetic persona of Amos as one of the latest additions to the book. More literary than historical, its purpose is to unify the book's diverse contents around this prophetic identity. The unique insight of this thesis is to show how this persona is a product of its post-exilic milieu as well as the Amos tradition. By comparing 7:10-17 to our preceding analysis of 6:1-7, we can see how the prophetic identity of Amos was constructed in dialogue with other texts from the book.

Throughout the entire thesis the concept of overreading will provide the framework for my analysis. Beginning with 6:1-7, I will argue that the address to southern elites within the text provides evidence of a southern overreading audience outside of the text. Then, in 7:10-17 we find evidence of another overreading of 6:1-17, this time by the post-exilic tradents who wrote the story of Amos's encounter at Bethel. These tradents are not the addressees within 6:1-7, and they are not the intended overreading audience of the writers who first textualized 6:1-7. These post-exilic tradents are overreaders multiple times removed, whose encounter with the text shaped the prophetic identity that we now know as Amos.

CHAPTER 2 – WHO IS "AT EASE IN ZION"? (AMOS 6:1-7)

INTRODUCTION

We begin our study of Judah overreading the oracles of Amos with 6:1-7, which, in the opinion of most scholars, originated with Amos himself.[89] The reason for our study of this passage is that it contains the book's only explicit address to a Judahite audience. The oracle begins by announcing woe to two distinct groups: "you who are at ease in Zion and you who are carefree on the hill of Samaria" (v 1). The reference to Zion in this verse (*bĕṣîyôn*) has generated a variety of opinions. Some find it awkward and in need of deletion or emendation.[90] To these scholars the reference is an outlier in a passage that otherwise concerns the Northern Kingdom. After all, references to Samaria and the "House of Israel" (v 1) and "Joseph" (v 6) bracket the passage, and between them the focus seems to be on northern elites, who are addressed with vocative participles and a mix of second-person and third-person verbs.[91] Self-indulgent and oblivious to the brokenness of Joseph all around them, these northerners seem to be the primary audience of 6:1-7. They are the ones whose lack of empathy Amos finds unconscionable and whose exile he announces as imminent. The fact is, however, that there is no text critical justification for deleting or emending *bĕṣîyôn*; awkward or not, it belongs in the passage.

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[89] For a survey of various opinions on the development of the text, see Tchavdar S. Hadjiev, *The Composition and Redaction of the Book of Amos* (BZAW 393; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009), 169-70.

[90] For deletion, see Hans Walter Wolff, *Joel and Amos* (trans. W. Janzen et al.; Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), 269-70. Suggested emendations of *bĕṣîyôn* include *bĕgā'ôn* (*BHS*) and *babbiṣṣārôn* (Wilhelm Rudolph, *Joel-Amos-Obadja-Jona* [KAT 13/2; Gütersloh: Mohn, 1971], 215).

[91] On participles as vocatives, see GKC §126e-f; *IBHS* §13.5.2a, c. On the use of third-person forms as the continuation of a direct address initiated with a second-person form, see *IBHS* §4.7d; and Delbert R. Hillers, "*Hôy* and *Hôy*-Oracles: A Neglected Syntactic Aspect," in *The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of His Sixtieth Birthday* (ed. C. Meyers and M. O'Connor; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1983), 185-88.

Those who retain *bĕṣîyôn* take two different approaches. Some regard it at face value as an example of Amos momentarily addressing his southern homeland,[92] while others consider it evidence of the passage's composition in Judah after the fall of the Northern Kingdom in 721 BCE.[93] In this chapter I argue for a historical context in between these two positions. In my view the reference to Zion and the passage as a whole provide crucial evidence for the southern overreaders of the Amos tradition, but this audience should be dated some time after the historical prophet (ca. 760 BCE) and before 721 BCE. The *Grundbestand* of Amos 6:1-7 likely originated with the historical prophet in the Northern Kingdom, and it may have been performed before the addressees named in verse 1. But the text that survives in the Hebrew Bible is not a transcript of that performance and was probably not written by the prophet himself. More likely, it is the work of early tradents of Amos, scribes who were writing for a southern audience beyond the scene described in the passage. The reference to "those at ease in Zion" is a tell of this audience and provides evidence of the southern setting of this version of the oracle.

This chapter consists of two parts. First, I make a case for situating Amos 6:1-7 in the Southern Kingdom in the mid-eighth century BCE. The case hinges on Amos 6:2, which, I will argue, dates to the mid-eighth century BCE and is integral to the overall passage, especially 6:1, whose north/south parallelism it continues. Secondly, I will present an exegesis of Amos 6:1-7 and consider what the passage might have meant to its mid-eighth-century BCE southern

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[92] See Paul, *Amos*, 200; James Luther Mays, *Amos: A Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), 115.

[93] See Erhard Blum, "'Amos' in Jerusalem. Beobachtungen zu Am 6,1–7," *Henoch* 16 (1994): 23-47 at 33-36; Gunther Fleischer, "Das Buch Amos," in U. Dahmen and G. Fleischer, *Die Bücher Joel und Amos* (NSKAT; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2001), 115-292 at 214; Joyce Rilett Wood, *Amos in Song and Book Culture* (JSOTSup 337; London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 35-35; Theodor Lescow, "Das vorexilische Amosbuch: Erwägungen zu seiner Kompositionsgeschichte," *BN* 93 (1998): 23-55 at 34; Klaus Koch, *Amos: untersucht mit den Methoden einer strukturalen Formgeschichte* (3 vols; AOAT 30; Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker, 1976), 2:105-06, 120-25; Jason Radine, *The Book of Amos in Emergent Judah* (FAT II/45; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 32, 36, 213; Göran Eidevall, *Amos* (AYB 24G; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), 176.

overreaders. Drawing on insights from the introductory chapter, I will argue that these overreaders are distinct from the addressees specified in the passage, but there is rhetorical continuity between the two. The southern overreaders are not the same as "those at ease in Zion and carefree in Samaria" (v 1), but the discourse that takes place within the text is not irrelevant to them. Of course, on one level, the passage's warning against self-indulgence could apply to overreaders of any period, including our own, but I am also interested in exploring the significance of an identifiable cultic critique within the passage. Whatever the oracle may have meant in its original oral performance to carefree elite in Samaria (and perhaps Zion), the textual version preserved in Amos 6:1-7 was meant to entrap cultic elites in mid-eighth-century BCE Judah by drawing unflattering comparisons between their ritual world and the world of the decadent elites addressed in the passage.

TEXT AND TRANSLATION

Before examining this evidence of a southern entrapment in Amos 6:1-7, we begin with the text and translation of the passage:

[1] Woe to you at ease in Zion	[1] הַוֹי הַשַּׁאֲנַנִּים בְּצִיּוֹן
And carefree on the hill of Samaria,	וְהַבֹּטְחִים בְּהַר שֹׁמְרוֹן
You leaders of the first among nations	נְקֻבֵי רֵאשִׁית הַגּוֹיִם
To whom the House of Israel turns:	וּבָאוּ לָהֶם בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל:
[2] Cross over to Calneh and see,	[2] עִבְרוּ כַלְנֵה וּרְאוּ
Go from there to Great Hamath,	וּלְכוּ מִשָּׁם חֲמַת רַבָּה
And go down to Gath of the Philistines:	וּרְדוּ גַת־פְּלִשְׁתִּים
	הֲטוֹבִים מִן־הַמַּמְלָכוֹת הָאֵלֶּה
	אִם־רַב גְּבוּלָם מִגְּבֻלְכֶם:
	[3] הַמְנַדִּים לְיוֹם רָע
	וַתַּגִּישׁוּן שֶׁבֶת חָמָס:
	[4] הַשֹּׁכְבִים עַל־מִטּוֹת שֵׁן

Are you better than these kingdoms,

Or is their territory larger than yours?[94]

3 You who push away the day of woe

Convene a sabbath of violence.

4 You who lie on beds of ivory,

Lazing on couches,

Eating lambs from the flock

And calves from the stall.

5 Singing along to the sound of the harp,

They esteem their instruments like David's.[95]

6 Drinking from wine bowls,

they anoint themselves with the first-rate oils –

But are not sickened by the ruin of Joseph.

7 Therefore now they will go into exile, first among exiles –

The lazy days of *marzēaḥ* over.[96]

וּסְרֵחִים עַל־עַרְשׂוֹתָם
וְאֹכְלִים כָּרִים מִצֹּאן
וַעֲגָלִים מִתּוֹךְ מַרְבֵּק׃
5 הַפֹּרְטִים עַל־פִּי הַנָּבֶל
כְּדָוִיד חָשְׁבוּ לָהֶם כְּלֵי־שִׁיר׃
6 הַשֹּׁתִים בְּמִזְרְקֵי יַיִן
וְרֵאשִׁית שְׁמָנִים יִמְשָׁחוּ
וְלֹא נֶחְלוּ עַל־שֵׁבֶר יוֹסֵף׃
7 לָכֵן עַתָּה יִגְלוּ בְרֹאשׁ גֹּלִים
וְסָר מְרַזַּח סְרוּחִים׃ פ

CALNEH, HAMATH, AND ESPECIALLY GATH (V 2)

Historical background of 6:2

Our study of Amos 6:1-7 begins with careful analysis of verse 2, which I will argue provides evidence of the passage's mid-eighth-century BCE date and its southern horizon. Most date this

[94] Many emend this text by transferring the prefix *min–* to *gĕbûlām*, but I agree with Eidevall that the emendation lacks warrant (*Amos*, 175). The versions support the MT, and according to the principle of *lectio difficilior*, the better sense of the emended text should be a reason in favor of the received Hebrew text. For my interpretation of this verse according to this translation, see below.

[95] On this translation, see nn. 77-78 below.

[96] My attempt at capturing the alliteration of the Hebrew and the repetition of *srḥ* from v 4 (both discussed below).

verse to the late eighth century BCE and therefore regard it either as a later addition to the words of Amos, or evidence that the passage as a whole dates to these later decades.[97] This dating is based on the historical events thought to underlie the references to Calneh, Hamath, and Gath, namely their conquest by Neo-Assyrian kings in the late eighth century BCE. In particular, the royal inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III (745-727 BCE) report the king's capture of Kunalia (Calneh) and Hamath in 738 BCE,[98] and the annals of Sargon II (721-705 BCE) report his capture of Gimtu (Gath) in 711.[99] If these reports provide the historical background for Amos 6:2 and if the cities are cited as cautionary tales for the prophet's audience, then a late eighth-century BCE date for the verse would seem to be unavoidable.

In my judgment, however, the historical and archaeological evidence supports an earlier dating of verse 2, one prior to the western campaigns of Tiglath-pileser III and Sargon II. This evidence shows that Calneh, Hamath, and Gath were already diminished by the time of their conquest by these Assyrian kings. If their fates were meant as a warning to elites in Israel and Judah, that warning makes the most sense in the wake of their earlier defeats near the end of the ninth century BCE, when the cities fell from prominence, rather than in the late eighth century, when their power had long since waned.[100]

The destruction of Gath at the end of the ninth century BCE brought to an end the city's most prosperous period, when at 50 hectares it was one of the largest sites in the southern

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[97] For examples of the former, see Blum, "'Amos' in Jerusalem," 31-34; Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 274-75; Fleischer, "Das Buch Amos," 214, 217. For the latter, see Radine, *The Book of Amos in Emergent Judah*, 56-60; Göran Eidevall, *Amos* (AYB 24G; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), 176.
[98] For Calneh, see RINAP 1, nos. 12, 14, 26; for Hamath, see RINAP 1, nos. 13, 31.
[99] See RINAP 2 1:258; 2:282; 3:10'; and 7:104.
[100] Na'aman, "In Search of Reality Behind the Account of David's Wars with Israel's Neighbors," *IEJ* 52 (2002): 200-224 at 210-12.

Levant.[101] Both Nadav Na'aman and Aren Maeir attribute this destruction to the Aramean king Hazael (ca. 840-800 BCE), not only because the event is mentioned in 2 Kings 12:18 (17) but also because the siege trench dug at the site is more representative of Aramean warfare than Assyrian.[102] After this destruction, Gath never regained its prominence. Instead, it stood in the shadow of Ashdod, whose expansion coincided with Gath's contraction. Indeed, this is the situation reflected in Sargon II's account of his campaign in 711 BCE. The primary focus of this campaign was Ashdod, which is called a "royal city" (Akk. *āl šarrūtišu*) and whose king Azuru plays a leading role in the account. Gath is only mentioned in passing as a subsidiary town that was also captured. If Amos 6:2 were written in the late eighth century BCE, it would have made more sense to list Ashdod as an example of a precipitous fall rather than past-its-prime Gath. As it is, the verse more likely dates to earlier in the century, closer to the time of Gath's downfall and its aftermath.

Similar arguments can be made for Hamath and Calneh. Around the same time that Gath was destroyed, Hamath entered a period of decline and contraction. Evidence of this decline comes from the Zakkur inscription (ca. 800 BCE), in which Zakkur, calling himself the king of Hamath and Lu'ash, recounts the siege of his capital by a coalition of seventeen kings led by Ben-Hadad, son of Hazael.[103] For our purposes it is significant that the capital under siege is not the city of Hamath but Hazrach (biblical Hadrach; modern Tell Afis).[104] This transfer of capital corresponds to the political shift marked by the reign of Zakkur, an Aramean usurper who

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[101] Aren M. Maeir, "The Historical Background and Dating of Amos VI 2: An Archaeological Perspective from Tell eṣ-Ṣâfī/Gath," *VT* 54 (2004): 319-34 at 322-23.
[102] Maeir, "The Historical Background and Dating of Amos VI 2," 325-27; Na'aman, "In Search of Reality Behind the Account of David's Wars with Israel's Neighbors," 210.
[103] For text and translations, see C.L. Seow, "Zakkur Stela," in Martti Nissinen, *Prophets and Prophecy in the Ancient Near East* (2d ed.; WAW 41; Atlanta: SBL Press, 2019), 253-57.
[104] For an overview of the latter, including its identification with Tell Afis, see Stefania Mazzoni, "Tell Afis: History and Excavations," *NEA* 76 (2013): 204-12.

brought an end to a line of Neo-Hittite rulers and established Hazrach as the base of his rule.[105] Other evidence for the decline of Hamath is found in the Antakya stela erected by Adad-nirari III in 796 BCE, marking the boundary between Hamath and Arpad.[106] The town of Naḫlasi, mentioned in the inscription as the location of the boundary, is unknown, but the reference in the inscription to the division of the Orontes River and the findspot of the stela near the modern town of Antakya by the Orontes are telling. Both indicate that the transfer of some of Hamath's territory to Arpad and thus signify the contraction of the former.

For the decades following this contraction we know little of the kingdom of Hamath and Lu'ash, but the few references we do have suggest that Hazrach continued to serve as the capital. The city is the focal point of three Assyrian campaigns mentioned in the Eponym Chronicle (772, 765, 755 BCE),[107] and when Tiglath-pileser III conquered the region in 738 BCE, Hazrach (Akk. Ḫatarikka) was one of the two cities to become a new provincial capital.[108] As we saw above, that campaign of 738 BCE is often cited as the historical background of Amos 6:2, as if that conquest resulted in the downfall of "Great Hamath." But as in the Zakkur inscription, the headliner of Tiglath-pileser III's account of his campaign in northern Syria is not Hamath but Hazrach.[109] Indeed, by 738 BCE Hamath had not been *rabbâ* for a long time. Its decline had begun at the end of the ninth century BCE and continued through the eighth. After the creation of the two imperial provinces what was left of Hamath was just one of numerous cities paying

[105] John David Hawkins, "Hamath in the Iron Age: The Inscriptions," *Syria, Supplément IV* (2016): 183-190.
[106] RIMA 3 A.0.104.2.
[107] See Alan Millard, *The Eponyms of the Assyrian Empire, 910-612 BC* (SAAS 2; Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1994), 58-59.
[108] See Karen Radner, "Provinz. C. Assyrien," *Reallexikon der Assyriologie* 11/1-2 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2006), 42-68 at 58.
[109] See RINAP 1, 42:1; 49 rev 1; 50 rev 1.

tribute to Tiglath-pileser III.[110] The greatness of Hamath lay in the ninth century BCE and its value as an example of reversed fortune should be located in the first half of the eighth.

When we come to the city called Calneh in Amos 6:2 (Neo-Hittite Kunulua; Akkadian Kunalia; modern Tell Tayinat), we find a similar story of contraction at the end of the ninth century BCE and into the eighth. In Assyrian sources Kunulua first appears in Ashurnasirpal II's account of his ninth campaign (ca. 870 BCE), which mentions several cities ruled by Lubarna in the land of Patina. Among them is Kunulua, which is called Lubarna's "royal city" (*āl šarrūtišu*).[111] This status is corroborated by archaeological remains from Tell Tayinat, which include symbols of royal authority, such as statuary and monumental architecture.[112] Kunulua's designation as a "royal city" continued into the reign of Shalmaneser III, whose "Black Obelisk" recounts a coup in 829 BCE against Lubarna and the dispatch of Shalmaneser's field marshal to suppress the coup and install a replacement ruler of his choosing.[113] Around the same time as this political turmoil is the raid of Hazael into *'MQ*, i.e., Unqi, the Aramaic name for Patina, which was adopted in Assyrian sources. Our knowledge of the raid comes from an inscription on a horse's bronze nose-piece, which identifies the nose-piece as booty "our lord Hazael"

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[110] See RINAP 1, 14:11; 27:4; 32:4'. Notably, Hamath is missing from the list of tributaries in the so-called Iran Stela (RINAP 1, 35). Though the stela dates to 737 BCE, its inscription is based on earlier sources and recounts campaigns from 745 BCE to its present. On the omission of Hamath, see Hayim Tadmor, *The Inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III, King of Assyria: Critical Edition, with Introductions, Translations, and Commentary* (Jerusalem: Israeli Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1994), 265-68. Some interpreters cite as evidence of Hamath's strength Tiglath-pileser III's reference to its nineteen "districts," which he captures (RINAP 1, 13:9; 31:5). But it is hard to know the significance of this number. For one thing, Akk. *nagû* is not used by Assyrian kings prior to Tiglath-pileser III, so we cannot know how many "districts" Hamath held before 738 BCE. Also, even within Tiglath-pileser III's inscription, the scale of the word is unclear. For example, the land of Damascus consisted of 16 "districts" containing 591 cities (RINAP 1, 20:17'), but the land of Israel had the same number of "districts" (RINAP 1, 21:3'; 22:3').

[111] RIMA 2 A.0.101.1 iii 72, 78 and A.0.101.2:48.

[112] See James F. Osborne et al., "Urban Built Environments in Early 1st Millennium B.C.E. Syro-Anatolia: Results of the Tayinat Archaeological Project, 2004-2016," *BASOR* 382 (2019): 261-312 at 263-64.

[113] RIMA 3 A.0.102.14: 150, 156; see also A.0.102.16: 274', 285'.

received "from *'MQ* in the year when our lord crossed the river."[114] The coup and the raid may or may not be related, but in any event they both attest to instability in the land surrounding Calneh at the end of the ninth century BCE.

Further evidence of trouble in Calneh comes from two texts already discussed: the Zakkur stela and the Antakya boundary stela. In the former we find the king of *'MQ* listed in the coalition led by Ben-Hadad, son of Hazael, against Zakkur. Along with the Hazael booty inscription and the name change from Patina to Unqi, the Zakkur inscription indicates the rise of Aramean power in northern Syria. This rise is further reflected in the archaeology of Tell Tayinat, where "at some point in the latter part of the ninth century, the buildings in the West Central Area associated with this phase [i.e.,] were levelled and, it would seem, the visible symbols and expressions of Luwian culture were destroyed intentionally with them then as well."[115] As for the Antakya inscription, our above analysis of the text showed that the rise of Aramean power came at the expense of Hamath, whose territory was ceded to the rising kingdom of Arpad. Now we can note that the same seems to be true of Patina/Unqi, the western neighbor of Arpad. Although this outcome is not explicit in the inscription itself, Manfred Weippert has noted that the stela's findspot northwest of the Orontes River was in territory that belonged to Unqi.[116] If this spot was the original location of the stela (again, the site of Naḫlasi is unknown), it would represent a contraction of the kingdom of Unqi.

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[114] See Israel Eph'al and Joseph Naveh, "Hazael's Booty Inscriptions," *IEJ* 39 (1989): 192-200; also Alan Millard, "The Hazael Booty Inscriptions," *COS* 2.40 (pp. 162-63).

[115] Timothy P. Harrison, "Tell Ta'yinat and the Kingdom of Unqi," in *The World of the Aramaeans II: Studies in History and Archaeology in Honour of Paul-Eugène Dion* (ed. P. Daviau et al.; JSOTSup 325; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 115-32 at 127-28. See also idem, "Landscapes of Power: Neo-Hittite Citadels in Comparative Perspective," in *Cities and Citadels in Turkey: From the Iron Age to the Seljuks* (ANES 40; ed. S. Redford and N. Ergin; Leuven: Peeters, 2013), 97-114 at 105-08.

[116] See Manfred Weippert, "Die Feldzüge Adadniraris III. nach Syrien: Voraussetzungen, Verlauf, Folgen," ZDPV 108 (1992): 42-67 at 58-59 n. 97.

Altogether this evidence indicates that, like Gath and Hamath, Calneh's most significant fall from power took place at the end of the ninth century BCE rather than towards the end of the eighth. If anything, 738 BCE marked a kind of revival for Calneh. Like other cities in the region, its transformation into a provincial capital included new construction throughout the city. The excavators of Tell Tayinat have shown that the Neo-Assyrian period at the site is characterized by continuity of monumental architecture and the construction of new elite buildings in the upper city, and furthermore they identify similar development of urban spaces in neighboring Syro-Anatolian cities.[117] Calneh works best as an example of precipitous decline in the first decades of the eight century BCE rather than at the end of that century.

Insights from exegesis of 6:2

In the preceding examination of the cities mentioned in Amos 6:2, we argued that the historical and archaeological evidence strongly favors events from the early eighth century BCE as the background of the verse. Because much of this evidence is well-known, the argument is not especially groundbreaking, but it leads us to what I consider my own contribution to the interpretation of this verse. First, I will show that a careful exegesis of Amos 6:2 provides further support for the date argued above. Secondly, and bringing us to the relevance of this whole discussion for the southern horizon of 6:1-7, I will show that Amos 6:2 is not only integral to the meaning of the overall passage but continues the engagement with the Southern Kingdom that began in 6:1.

[117] See Osborne et al., "Urban Built Environments," 302-07.

On the first point, several textual details in Amos 6:2 match the extrabiblical evidence adduced above. The first two come from the punchline of the verse, when the prophet asks his audience(s), "Are you better than these kingdoms? Or is their territory greater than your territory?" The rhetorical effect of these questions depends on the audiences' memory of the three cities' royal status (*mamlākâ*) and large territory (*gĕbûl*), memories that are more easily located in the mid-eighth century BCE rather than the late part of the century. The only time Calneh, Hamath, and Gath could be considered *mamlākôt* is in the ninth century BCE. That is when Calneh was called a "royal city," Hamath was still the capital of its eponymous and independent polity, and Gath was at its most prosperous. It is the time when the three cities would have enjoyed wealth comparable to that described in the rest of 6:1-7. At the end of the eighth century BCE this prosperity, like the royal status of the cities, would have been a distant memory and an unconvincing set-up for the indictment of carefree luxury that follows verse 2.

Furthermore, and turning to *gĕbûl*, I would emphasize that the abasement of Calneh, Hamath, and Gath is couched in terms of territory lost and gained. The rhetorical question "Is their territory greater than your territory?" presupposes a time of contraction (not necessarily destruction) for the three cities and of expansion for Israel and Judah. Many commentators emend the text by transferring the comparative *min–* to "their territory," but the received Hebrew text is more than intelligible, not to mention text critically sound. Whereas the emended text punctures the false confidence of the elites, the received text focuses on the reduction of Calneh, Hamath, and Gath, essentially asking: "These once strong states, are they any bigger than you now?" The first half of the eighth century BCE provides the best setting for this rhetorical question. As we saw above, the problem for Calneh and Hamath was not destruction so much as shrinkage, and this seems to be the situation reflected in Amos 6:2b. Although this rhetoric

could also fit the cities' Assyrian annexation in the second half of the eighth century BCE, I would stress again that by this time, all three had already been reduced to a fraction of their former dominion. The rhetoric of Amos 6:2 works best when the cities exemplified a precipitous fall from power, not when they were downgraded from a regional has-been to an imperial province.

This lengthy detour into the historical background of Amos 6:2 leads now to my main interest in the verse, which is to show the evidence it provides of a southern horizon for 6:1-7. The principal argument of this thesis is that although an earlier version of the oracle may have been addressed to northern elites, the textualized version that survives in the Hebrew Bible is the work of early tradents whose audience consisted of southern overreaders in the mid-eighth century BCE. Because some scholars argue that this southern horizon, which is most explicit in the reference to Zion in 6:1, is a sign of an oracle's lateness, it has been necessary to establish the date of 6:2 to the first half of the eight century BCE. In this way we can show that the engagement of Judah in this passage was not a later addition to the text but was integral to the oracle as it was written by the first tradents of Amos.

Amos 6:1 contains a unique address to elites of Judah as well as Israel, and most interpreters assume that the engagement with the Southern Kingdom ends there and that the rest of the passage focuses on northern elites. A close reading of verse 2, however, shows that both kingdoms continue to be implicated in that verse as well. Commentators have noted the cities mentioned in the verse represent opposite ends of the Levant (Calneh, Hamath in the north and Gath in the south),[118] but more important, in my opinion, is the way that this geography engages

[118] Shalom Paul, for example, suggests that the cities' locations at opposite ends of the Levant serve as a geographical merism (*Amos*, 204).

both kingdoms. Calneh and Hamath, for example, were cities in northern Syria whose histories and circumstances were interwoven with Israel's. Israel joined Hamath in the coalition that resisted Shalmaneser III and fought against his army at Qarqar in 853 BCE, and it was listed together with Hamath and Calneh (Kinalua) on the "Black Obelisk" as tributaries of the Assyrian king.[119] These shared histories are what made the two cities a powerful warning of the ruin that lay ahead for Israel.

It is hard to imagine that "Gath of the Philistines" would have similar impact on northern elites. Gath had almost no contact with cities to its north; it is not mentioned in Assyrian sources before Sargon II, and its archaeological remains show no evidence of interaction with cities in Israel or Syria.[120] Gath's regional trade involved sites along the eastern Mediterranean, including Phoenicia, rather than the northern interior.[121] For a Judahite audience, however, the fate of Gath would surely have resonated. The city's location on the Wadi Elah gave it ready access into Judah, up to Jerusalem itself.[122] The connection between Gath and Judah in the ninth and early eighth centuries BCE is best attested in the "pre-*lmlk*" jars that were found beneath the destruction level attributed to Hazael (Temporary Stratum 4).[123] Chemical analysis has shown that the jars were manufactured in the Shephelah, and because they are precursors to the *lmlk* jars produced and exchanged by the royal administration of Judah, they provide clear evidence of

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[119] For the battle of Qarqar, see RIMA 3 A.0.102 2 ii 78-102; for the "Black Obelisk," see RIMA 3 A.0.102 14 and 88.
[120] See William M. Schniedewind, "The Geopolitical History of Philistine Gath," *BASOR* 309 (1998): 69-77; and Aren M. Maeir, "Philistia Transforming: Fresh Evidence from Tell eṣ-Ṣafi/Gath on the Transformational Trajectory of the Philistine Culture," in *The Philistines and Other "Sea" Peoples in Text and Archaeology* (ed. A. Killebrew and G. Lehmann; ABS 15; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), 191-242 at 216-32.
[121] See Aren M. Maeir, Louise A. Hitchcock, and Liora Kolska Horwitz, "On the Constitution and Transformation of Philistine Identity," *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 32 (2013): 1-38 at 26.
[122] See David A. Dorsey, *The Roads and Highways of Ancient Israel* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 189-91.
[123] See Itzhack Shai and Aren M. Maeir, "Pre-*lmlk* Jars: A New Class of Iron Age IIA Storage Jars," *Tel Aviv* 30 (2003): 108-23 at 110.

economic activity between Gath and Judah in the decades before the former's destruction. Its demise would probably have meant nothing to the northern elites addressed in Amos 6, but for "those at ease in Zion," the reminder of Gath's ruin would have hit close to home.[124]

The reference to Gath for a Judahite audience is all the more significant when we consider that Judah's growth at the beginning of the eighth century BCE came at the expense of Gath. We mentioned above that the main beneficiary of that destruction was Ashdod, which expanded eastward into the erstwhile territory of Gath and took its place as a regional power, but Ashdod was not the only beneficiary. The kingdom of Judah also took advantage of the vacuum to its west, spreading into the Shephelah and eventually encompassing Gath itself. Admittedly, the evidence for Judahite control of the city comes from the end of the eighth century BCE, but it is reasonable to see this evidence as the culmination of an expansion that began after the fall of Gath at the end of the ninth century BCE.[125]

This shift in power from Gath to Judah brings into sharper focus the significance of Amos 6:2 for a Judahite audience. Like the examples of Calneh and Hamath for the text's northern addressees/audience, Gath was a warning to Judah that their days of growth were not endless. In recent history Gath, too, had grown into a regional power, only to fall at the hands of Hazael. But Gath is not just any city-state whose fortunes had turned, but the one whose demise had enabled the prosperity Judah was now enjoying. If, as the text commands, Judahite elites went down from Zion to Gath, they would encounter there remains that offer a window into their

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[124] See Jörg Jeremias, *The Book of Amos: A Commentary* (trans. D. Stott; OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 115 n. 28.

[125] For the archaeological evidence, see Aren M. Maeir, "Chapter 1: The Tell es-Safi/Gath Archaeological Project 1996-2010: Introduction, Overview and Synopsis of Results," in *Tell es-Safi/Gath I: The 1996-2005 Seasons. Part 1: Text* (ed. A. Maeir; Ägypten und Altes Testament 69; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2012), 1-88 at 49-56; Alexander Fantalkin and Israel Finkelstein, "The Sheshonq I Campaign and the 8th-Century BCE Earthquake – more on the Archaeology and History of the South in the Iron I-IIa," *Tel Aviv* 32 (2006): 18-42 at 31. Cf. Mic 1:10; 2 Chr 26:6.

present and their future.[126] In the ruins of Gath they would observe the destruction that had led to their current prosperity, and they would also see in them the future consequences of their excess and indifference. In this way, the city in Amos 6:2 represents a different kind of memory from the one that Daniel Pioske has recently highlighted in his study of Gath in the books of Samuel.[127] He argues that scribal memories of the city's size and status made it an attractive setting for stories about David and the beginning of the kingdom of Judah. Amos 6:2 likewise makes the case that Judah's history and identity are bound up with Gath, but unlike the authors of Samuel, the tradents of Amos see the site as a specter of ruin rather than a symbol of protection and opportunity.

This analysis of Amos 6:2 demonstrates that the southern horizon introduced in verse 1 continues into the next verse. The eighth century BCE was a period of prosperity and expansion for both Zion and Samaria, but because Amos is considered a northern prophet, most commentators focus on evidence of this prosperity in Israel. Much of this evidence is familiar: how the campaigns of Adad-nirari III against Damascus (ca. 800 BCE) provided the Northern Kingdom relief from the Aramean hegemony it had endured since the time of Hazael;[128] how kings Joash and Jeroboam II took advantage of the opportunity to reclaimed lost territory "from

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[126] The command to "go down (*rĕdû*) to Gath" may imply an audience in the central highlands of Judah rather than the northern kingdom and thus provide further evidence for a Judahite audience. When the Hebrew Bible describes someone approaching Gath from the north, the person is said to "go up" (*'lh*) to Gath (2 Kgs 12:17), but whenever someone journeys toward Gath from Judah, that person "goes down" (*yārad*) to the city. For example, when Eliab reprimands David for coming to the army's camp in the valley of Elah, he asks, "Why did you come down (*yāradtā*) here?...You came down (*yārādtā*) to see the battle" (1 Sam 17:28). The argument is tenuous, however, because the evidence is thin, and there is an apparent contrary example in 1 Chr 7:21, which reports that the sons of Ephraim "went down" (*yārĕdû*) to steal cattle from the men of Gath. Some scholars, however, take "Gath" in this verse to refer to a different site, namely, Gittaim, which was located in the territory of Benjamin (2 Sam 4:3; Neh 11:33; see Ralph W. Klein, *1 Chronicles: A Commentary* [Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006], 232-33).

[127] Pioske, *Memory in a Time of Prose: Studies in Epistemology, Hebrew Scribalism, and the Biblical Past* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 85-133.

[128] These campaigns are recounted in three inscriptions (RIMA 3.A.0.104.6:17-20; 7:6-8; 8:15-21), which also record the heavy received from a Damascene "lord" (Akk. ^{m}*ma-ar-'i*), likely Ben-Hadad III. By contrast, Joash is listed as a tributary in only one of the three (7:8).

Lebo-Hamath to the Sea of Arabah" (2 Kgs 14:25; see also 13:25; 14:28; and cf. Amos 6:14);[129] and how Israel increased trade and commerce during this period.[130]

Undoubtedly, this situation in the Northern Kingdom provides an important backdrop for 6:1-7, but much of the same could be said for the Southern Kingdom in the eighth century BCE. In Judah, too, the century saw "demographic growth, economic development, the resettlement of the countryside, urbanization, [and] increased international connections,"[131] and in Jerusalem itself there is evidence of substantial growth around this time.[132] Significantly, this growth cannot be attributed in its entirety to the influx of refugees after the fall of Samaria in 721 BCE; rather it was a process of gradual expansion that began in the ninth century BCE and continued steadily through the eighth.[133] This view of the Southern Kingdom during the eighth century BCE contributes to the larger goal of this section, which is to show that the southern horizon invoked in 6:1 continues in 6:2 and that both verses, indeed the entire passage, are "anchored in

[129] See Andrew R. Davis, *Reconstructing the Temple: The Royal Rhetoric of Temple Renovation in the Ancient Near East and Israel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 178-80. On the phrase "from Lebo-Hamath to the Arabah Sea/Wadi" in both 2 Kgs 14:25 and Amos 6:14, see Baruch Halpern, "The Taking of Nothing: 2 Kings 14.25, Amos 6.14 and the Geography of the Deuteronomistic History," in *The World of the Aramaeans I: Biblical Studies in Honor of Paul-Eugène Dion* (ed. P.M.M. Daviau et al.; JSOTSup 324; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 186-204.

[130] See Israel Finkelstein, *The Forgotten Kingdom: The Archaeology and History of Northern Israel* (ANEM 5; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), 129-39.

[131] Avraham Faust, "Society and Culture in the Kingdom of Judah during the Eighth Century," in *Archaeology and History of Eighth-Century Judah* (ed. Z. Farber and J. Wright; Atlanta: SBL Press, 2018), 199.

[132] See Hillel Geva, "Jerusalem's Population in Antiquity: A Minimalist View," *Tel Aviv* 41 (2014): 131-60 at 138-41; Ronny Reich, Eli Shukron, and Omri Lernau, "Recent Discoveries in the City of David, Jerusalem," *IEJ* 57 (2007): 153-69 at 156-57, 161-63; and Yiftah Shalev, Nitsan Shalom, Efrat Bocher and Yuval Gadot, "New Evidence on the Location and Nature of Iron Age, Persian and Early Hellenistic Period Jerusalem," *Tel Aviv* 47 (2020): 149-72.

[133] See Nadav Na'aman, "The Growth and Development of Judah and Jerusalem in the Eighth Century BCE: A Rejoinder," *RB* 116 (2009): 321-35; idem, "Dismissing the Myth of a Flood of Israelite Refugees in the Late Eighth Century BCE," *ZAW* 126 (2014): 1-14; and Faust, "Society and Culture in the Kingdom of Judah during the Eighth Century," 197.

the pre-722 world."[134] The social and historical setting of 6:1-7 is not unique to the Northern Kingdom, and its southern horizon is best located before the fall of Samaria.

Altogether this evidence supports the thesis of this chapter that the audience of 6:1-7, as it is preserved in the Hebrew Bible, consists of Judahite elites in the mid-eighth century BCE. This audience is distinct from the addressees within the passage, i.e., elites from both kingdoms. One or both of these addressees may have comprised an original audience of the oracle's oral performance by Amos, but its textual form is the product of the prophet's first tradents who were based in Judah in the decades after his career and whose audience consisted of southern overreaders. So far this argument has focused on 6:2, which continues the southern perspective introduced in verse 1 and which fits the time and place of my proposal. The next step is to show to demonstrate how 6:1-2 fit into the larger unity of 6:1-7 and to explore what the passage as a whole might have meant for this southern audience.

A Feast in the Funhouse Mirror (6:3-7)

Having argued that Amos 6:1-2 dates to the mid-eighth century BCE and is meant for a southern audience, as distinct from the two sets of addressees in the verses themselves, we can turn our attention to further details within the oracle that were meant to resonate with this southern audience. The details under discussion in this section lack the kind of historical referents that would allow us to date them to the same time frame as verses 1-2, but several aspects of 6:1-7 provide evidence of its compositional unity. First, verses 3-7 make less sense

[134] Walter Houston, "Was There a Social Crisis in the Eighth Century?," in *In Search of Pre-exilic Israel: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar* (JSOTSup 406; ed. J. Day; London: T&T Clark, 2004), 130-49 at 143.

without the opening announcement of woe; they are not incomprehensible without verse 1, but certainly more intelligible with it as an introduction to the oracle. Second, the mix of participles and second-person verbs in verses 1-2 and 3-7 indicate the syntactical unity of the passage. Finally, we may note some of the passage's wordplay involves all seven verses. The root *r'š*, for example, occurs three times: first to designate "the notables of the first (*rē'šît*) of the nations" (v 1), then to describe their "first-rate (*rē'šît*) oil" (v 6), and finally, with bitter irony, to announce their place at the head (*bĕrō'š*) of the procession into exile (v 7). Another example of wordplay involves *gôyim* in verse 1 and *gōlîm* verse 7.[135] There are other examples of wordplay just within verses 3-7 (e.g., *šebet* [v 3]// *šēber* [v 7]; *sĕruḥîm/sĕrûḥîm* [vv 4, 7]; sr *mrzḥ swrḥym* [v 7]), but the repetition of *r'š* and the connection between *gôyim* and *gōlîm* only work if the passage is taken as a whole.

The most obvious example of a detail intended for the southern addressees of 6:3-7 is the reference to David in verse 5. As with *bĕṣîyôn* in verse 1, interpreters may be divided into three groups: those who regard *kĕdāwîd* as a later gloss;[136] those who consider it original and a sign of the book's lateness;[137] and those who take it as original to the eighth-century BCE prophet.[138] I myself fall into the last group for reasons I will detail below in the subsection on *kĕdāwîd*. In this paragraph I want simply to introduce my view of 6:3-7 as a whole. In my opinion, the reference to David serves, along with other elements of 6:3-7, to indict southern addressees for making themselves the object of their own worship. The repeated use of cultic imagery in this passage, including the reference to David, contribute to this overall condemnation. Of course,

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[135] This is not the only place in the book where we find a play on the root *glh*; see also *haggilgāl gālōh yigleh* in 5:5.
[136] Mays, *Amos*, 113; Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 272-73, 276; Fleischer, "Das Buch Amos," 214, 220.
[137] Eidevall, *Amos*, 180. Discussion of the reference to David in 6:5 is oddly missing from Jason Radine's monograph, *The Book of Amos in Emergent Judah*.
[138] Rudolph, *Joel-Amos-Obadja-Jona*, 217; Paul, *Amos*, 206-07.

this condemnation could well have applied to northerners and probably did in an original performance of the oracle, but because this chapter argues for an audience of southern overreaders, I will focus my analysis on how this cultic discourse would have resonated with them. First, however, I will make my case for this cultic discourse by examining key words and phrases from the passage, namely, *mizrāqê yayin* (v 6), *rē'šît šĕmānîm yimšāḥû* (v 6), *šebet ḥāmās* (v 3), and *marzēaḥ* (v 7). I will use these elements to demonstrate the rhetorical unity of the passage and to set up my analysis of *kĕdāwîd* in verse 5. This analysis will be followed by a final section in which I discuss how the passage's depiction of self-worshiping elites would have entrapped southern overreaders.

Wine bowls (*mizrāqê yayin*) – verse 6aα

Perhaps the strongest evidence of a cultic discourse in 6:3-7 is the use of the term *mizrāqîm* to denote the drinking vessels of the revelers. As many have noted, the thirty-two occurrences of *mizrāq* in the Hebrew Bible are found only in cultic contexts. These include descriptions of the Tabernacle and Temple, where the *mizrāq* is mentioned alongside other altar appurtenances, such as ash pots, shovels, firepans, forks, and snuffers (Exod 27:3; 38:3; Num 4:14; 1 Kgs 7:40, 45, 50; 2 Kgs 12:14; Jer 52:18-19). Although these texts do not specify the *mizrāq*'s cultic purpose, the word's etymology implies that it was used to collect sacrificial blood to be "scattered" (Heb. *zāraq*).

The best examination of *mizrāq* in textual and archaeological sources is a pair of articles by Jonathan S. Greer, who surveys the biblical references, the iconography of bowl-drinking in ancient Near Eastern art, and a possible example of a *mizrāq* found in the sacred precinct of Tel

Dan.[139] Greer rightly emphasizes the cultic purpose of *mizrāq* and downplays its supposedly larger size compared to ordinary cups (Heb. *kôs*).[140] Indeed, what distinguishes a *mizrāq* from a *kôs* is not its facilitation of heavy drinking (cf. Isa 51:22) or its finer construction (cf. Jer 51:7) but its use in worship. Where I would disagree with Greer and others is their view of how this cultic background fits into the rhetoric of Amos 6:3-7. They take it as evidence that the scene described in these verses is a cultic feast involving foreign deities or at least influenced by foreign religions,[141] but in my opinion, the point of the passage is the incongruity of using cultic vessels at a non-religious event. For comparison we may consider the opening scene of James Joyce's *Ulysses*, in which Buck Mulligan lifts a bowl of shaving lather and intones the opening words of the Latin Mass.[142] Mulligan is not a priest, and of course, the shaving bowl is not a chalice; his gesture and words are a parody of the mass and serve to define his character's irreverence. Likewise, the use of a *mizrāq* in 6:1-7 does not make the party cultic but serves to characterize the revelers. Their use of a sacred vessel is jarring because their gathering is *not* cultic in nature.[143] Like the other religious elements of 6:4-7, the *mizrāq* implies that the revelers have made their lifestyle a kind of worship. The problem, moreover, is not just that they pursue excess with a religious devotion but also that their use of the *mizrāq* reverses its intended purpose. A vessel meant to collect and scatter has been transformed into a vessel of

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[139] Greer, "A *Marzeaḥ* and a *Mizraq*: A Prophet's Mêlée with Religious Diversity in Amos 6.4-7," *JSOT* 32 (2007): 243-62; idem, "An Israelite *mizrāq* at Tel Dan?," *BASOR* 358 (2010): 27-45.
[140] Greer, "A *Marzeaḥ* and a *Mizraq*," 250 n. 25.
[141] Ibid., 250-51, 261. See also Hans M. Barstad, *The Religious Polemics of Amos: Studies in the Preaching of Am 2, 7B-8; 4, 1-13; 5, 1-27; 6, 4-7; 8, 14* (Leiden: Brill, 1984), 141; Philip J. King, *Amos, Hosea, Micah: An Archaeological Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1988), 157-59; Max E. Polley, *Amos and the Davidic Empire: A Socio-Historical Approach* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 89.
[142] Joyce, *Ulysses* (London: Bodley Head, 1937), 1.
[143] See Francis I. Andersen and David Noel Freedman, *Amos: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 24A; New York: Doubleday, 1989), 564; Jeremias, *The Book of Amos*, 113.

consumption. In this way, the *mizrāq* symbolizes the self-centered indulgence of the revelers and their lack of outward concern for the ruin outside their bubble of luxury.

Anointing with top-quality oil (*rē'šît šĕmānîm yimšāḥû*) – verse 6aβ

The religious overtones that begin in verse 6 with *mizrāq* continue into the second colon with the description of anointing with fine oil. These overtones have been noted by most commentators, so I will not discuss them at length. It is enough to point out that the verb *mšḥ* denotes ritual anointing of priests, prophets, and above all, kings, and is to be differentiated from the verb *sûq*, which describes the use of oil for hygienic and cosmetic purposes (e.g., 2 Sam 12:20; 14:2).[144]

The phrase *rē'šît šĕmānîm* is consistent with the ritual connotation of *mšḥ*. The qualifier *rē'šît* functions on several levels. Literarily, it echoes the *rē'šît* at the beginning of 6:1-7, where it designated Israel as the "first" among nations (v 1), and anticipates the *rō'š* at the end of the passage, where the revelers are given a head start into exile (v 7). Within verse 6 *rē'šît* both identifies the olive oil as "the best" and also tells us something about its production as such. The oil in verse 6 was the best because it came from the first extraction. Unlike secondary pressing techniques, the first extraction of oil involved filling a container with water and cracked olives, stirring them together, and then skimming the oil from the surface.[145] This process yielded the highest quality product, which in the eighth-century BCE Samaria ostraca is called "washed oil" (*šmn rḥṣ*). Most likely, this is the same pure oil mentioned in Priestly texts for use in the

[144] See Greer, "A *Marzeaḥ* and a *Mizraq*," 408-09.
[145] See Lawrence E. Stager, "The Finest Olive Oil in Samaria," *JSS* 28 (1983): 241-45.

Tabernacle (Exod 27:20; 29:40; Lev 24:2).[146] Lastly, *rē'šît* calls to mind the "first fruits" (*rē'šît bikkûrê 'admātĕkā*), which Israel was commanded to return to YHWH as an offering at the Temple (Exod 23:19; 34:26; cf. Deut 26:2, 10; 1 Sam 2:29). By keeping the *rē'šît šĕmānîm* for themselves, the revelers have more than failed in this obligation; they have flouted it.

For our study two main points of significance emerge from this analysis. First, the two cola of verse 6a feature a similar rhetoric. The top-quality oil used by the revelers is more than an extravagance, just as the *mizrāq* is more than a fancy wine vessel; both are cultic accoutrements that have been repurposed into party accessories. Often these elements are interpreted as evidence that this party described in 6:3-7 is a religious feast, but in my opinion, that conclusion misunderstands the intended effect of the cultic bowls and oil. They are included in the scene not because they belong there but because they *don't* belong; their placement in the scene highlights the deviance of their lifestyle. Their revelry has become a kind of religion for the elites. We noted above that their use of the *mizrāq* for consumption reverses its intended purpose for collection and distribution, and we can observe a similar reversal with the *rē'šît šĕmānîm*. Instead of offering this "first fruit" in recognition of YHWH as its divine source, they have made themselves the recipients of what belongs to God.[147]

Secondly, the royal connotations of the verb *mšḥ* build on the reference to David in the preceding verse 5 and suggest a political critique mixed in with the cultic discourse. We will discuss the David reference in another subsection, but already we can note here that the verb *mšḥ* exposes the misguided political ambitions of the revelers.[148] As with *mizrāq* and *rē'šît šĕmānîm*,

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[146] Comparison is sometimes made to the Akkadian cognates *šamnu rēštu*/*rūštu* (Paul, *Amos*, 208), but most instances of the phrase occur in lists of tribute or commodities. The few instances of *šamnu rēštu* in the context of cult are too early to be relevant to our analysis (e.g., Shamshi-Adad I [ca. 1800 BCE] in RIMA 1 A.0.39.1 46).
[147] See Jeremias, *The Book of Amos*, 113.
[148] See Eidevall, *Amos*, 180-81.

the verb represents a perversion of its traditional use. Usually, the subject of *mšḥ* is a prophet or priest, and the action expresses the divine election of someone for leadership. In Amos 6:1-7, however, the revelers have anointed each other. By combining in themselves the roles of the divine intermediary and divinely appointed leader, they have made a mockery of the election ritual. The choice of *mšḥ* to describe their self-anointing exposes their failed leadership. The revelers may be "notables (*nĕqubê*) of the leading nation" – a phrase that may contain a subtle polemic[149] – but they are no "messiahs."

"A sabbath of violence" (*šebet ḥāmās*) – verse 3b

A final cultic allusion to examine before looking at the reference to David in verse 5 is the phrase *šebet ḥāmās* in verse 3. There is no consensus on the meaning of this phrase, so my proposed reading is necessarily tentative. Many take the first word from the root *yšb* ("to sit, dwell"), but that still leaves a wide range of possible meanings, such as "a habitation of violence" or "a reign (i.e., sitting on a throne) of violence."[150] Others think *šebet* is derived from *šbt* ("to cease") and take the phrase to mean "a violent end."[151] I agree that the root is *šbt* but propose it be revocalized as *šabbāt* and translated "a sabbath of violence."[152] According to this

[149] Amos 6:1 is the only instance where the root *nqb*, whose basic meaning is "to perforate," denotes leaders, the assumption being that these members of society are "marked out" in some way for leadership. But it is noteworthy that the root also has a negative valence, meaning "to curse" (Job 3:8; Prov 11:26) and "to slander" (Lev 24:11, 16). Thus, *nqb* in Amos 6:1 may be a double entendre, identifying the revelers both as leaders and as cursed.
[150] For the former, see Garrett, *Amos*, 184-85. For the latter, see Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 272; Eidevall, *Amos*, 175; also Vulgate.
[151] See Rudolph, *Joel-Amos-Obadja-Jona*, 216; Fleischer, "Das Buch Amos," 218. Rudolph takes *šebet* as a substantive and *ḥāmās* as a genitive of quality with an adjectival function, but Paul points out that Hebrew grammar does not support this reading (*Amos*, 205). Instead, it would yield "cessation of violence," which is the exact opposite Rudolph's translation.
[152] Samuel Iwry also reads *šabbāt* here but takes it to mean "week" rather than "Sabbath" ("New Evidence for Belomancy in Ancient Palestine and Phoenicia," *JAOS* 81 [1961]: 27-34 at 34; see also Douglas K. Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah* [WBC 31; Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1987], 357-59). That is possible, but Iwry and Stuart's rending of

reading, the prophet, with bitter irony, refers to the people's gathering as a misguided Sabbath. It is indeed a day of rest but not one that brings them closer to YHWH and fellow worshipers; instead, their day of rest is one of self-indulgence that leads to violence – both the collateral damage their wealth and indifference inflict on others (cf. *šēber* in v 7) and the ruin they will bring on themselves in the end.

Although this reading has been dismissed as too speculative, there are in fact several of pieces of evidence to support it.[153] For one thing, both the LXX and Peshitta render *šebet* as "Sabbaths." Secondly, this would not be the only instance in the book where contempt for the Sabbath is called out (cf. 8:5). Thirdly, *šabbāt ḥāmās* provides a compelling parallel for *yôm rā'* in the first line of verse 3. Not only are they equal measures of time, but each phrase represents a positive tradition twisted into a negative. The *yôm rā'*, like *yôm YHWH* in Amos 5:18-20 and *yôm mar* in 8:10, is widely recognized as a reversal of the traditional meaning of *yôm YHWH*. For Amos, it is no longer a day of YHWH's victory against his people's enemies (cf. Isa 13:6, 9; Ezek 13:5; Joel 1:15; 2:1, 11; 3:4; 4:14; Obad 15; Zeph 1:7, 14; Mal 3:23) but a day of punishment for the people themselves. Through ignorance, denial, or indifference the revelers in Amos 6:3 think they can put off this coming disaster, not realizing that their "Sabbath" epitomizes the calamity they have brought to the poor and needy of their society. Hebrew *ḥāmās* denotes crimes against persons and here likely refers to the exploitation of the poor, which has made possible the luxury described in 6:4-6 (cf. 4:1; 5:10-12; 8:4-6). Just as the day of vindication has been transformed into a day of judgment, so the day of rest, whose purpose, according to Deuteronomy 5:12-15, was social solidarity, has become a day of violence.

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mĕnaddîm as "(fore)casting" is faulty. It is questionable that the root here is cognate with Akk. *nadû*, but even if it is, there seem to be no examples of this Akk. word meaning "to cast dice" (*CAD* N/1, pp. 68-100).

[153] Paul, *Amos*, 204, and Garrett, *Amos*, 185, respectively.

According to these arguments, there is good reason to read *šbt* in Amos 6:3 as *šabbāt* and to see *šabbāt ḥāmās* as an ironic description of the revelers' decadent lifestyle and the harm it has brought to the poor and needy. Like *mizrāq*, *rē'šît šĕmānîm*, and *mšḥ* in 6:6, *šbt* in verse 3 has been drawn from the world of worship and recast in a scene of extravagant luxury. Like those other elements, the term fits the context to an extent; a party is a time of rest and leisure, and wine and oil are not inappropriate in such a setting. The cultic overtones of each element, however, expose the problem with the scene: this lifestyle has become its own kind of religion. The revelers have made themselves into the focus of their "Sabbath" and are oblivious to its violent impact on those outside their circle of elites. Rhetorically, *šabbāt ḥāmās* fits in well with the rest of the passage.

Singing along[154] to the sound of the harp (*nēbel*),
They esteem[155] their instruments like David's[156] – verse 5

At last, we come to the reference to David, which, along with "Zion" in verse 1, is the other strongest indication of a southern audience for Amos 6:1-7. Having demonstrated the clear cultic overtones in verses 3 and 6, I will here argue for similar nuances in verse 5. Building on the insights from the previous sections, I will show that the reference to David in verse 5 serves the same function as *šbt* in verse 3 and *mizrāq*, *rē'šît šĕmānîm*, and *mšḥ* in verse 6, namely, it

[154] This *hapax legomenon* is a well-known difficulty. For various proposals, see Paul, *Amos*, 206. The translation "singing" is supported by the Vulgate, but more than that, it seemed the safest and most neutral rendering of an obscure word.
[155] Heb. *ḥāšĕbû* is another difficult word with a range of interpretations (for possibilities, see again Paul, *Amos*, 206). My translation adopts the meaning of *ḥšb* "to respect, hold in high regard" (see *HALOT*, p. 360; cf. Isa 13:17; 33:8; 53:3; Mal 3:16) and takes *kĕlê-šîr* as direct object and *lāhem* as a possessive.
[156] I take *kĕdāwîd* as a pregnant use of the preposition *kĕ–* (Joüon-Muraoka §133h; BDB, p. 455a; GKC §118.6; 141.2 [p. 452 n. 4]). In its expanded form the line would read, "They esteem their instruments like [the instruments of] David." Cf. Ps 18:34: "who made my feet like [the feet] of hinds" (see also Isa 29:4; 63:2; Jer 50:9; Lam 5:21).

offers a further example of how the revelers have warped their cultic heritage. Naturally, the mention of David calls to mind his kingship, especially when his name is combined with *mšḥ* in the following verse, but more than that, the musical elements of verse 5 evoke his role as a leader of worship. In this section I will examine these elements and demonstrate how *kĕdāwîd* fits into the rhetorical aims of the overall passage.

First, however, we must address the possibility that *kĕdāwîd* as a late gloss, as not a few scholars hold.[157] Alternatively, there are others who consider the word original and a sign of the overall lateness of 6:1-7,[158] and still others who take it as original to the eighth-century BCE prophet.[159] Those who subscribe to the first option often argue that the phrase is "metrically superfluous and apparently unknown to the LXX" and that the *plene* spelling of David's name indicates a post-exilic date.[160] None of these arguments is compelling, however. Although the *plene* spelling does reflect later usage, David Noel Freedman (whose own name in Hebrew, דוד, lacked the *plene* vowel, according to modern usage) has argued that the orthography may be the result of levelling through the Book of the Twelve, where all but one instance of David are written *plene*.[161] Indeed, the one exception (Hos 3:5) actually supports this theory because the manuscript evidence is mixed; the Leningrad Codex has the name with the defective spelling, Aleppo Codex the *plene* spelling. Of course, this evidence does not prove that *kdwd* is original

[157] Mays, *Amos*, 113; Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 272-73, 276; Fleischer, "Das Buch Amos," 214, 220.
[158] Eidevall, *Amos*, 180. Discussion of the reference to David in 6:5 is oddly missing from Jason Radine's monograph, *The Book of Amos in Emergent Judah*.
[159] Rudolph, *Joel-Amos-Obadja-Jona*, 217; Paul, *Amos*, 206-07.
[160] All three arguments are neatly packaged in Jörg Jeremias, *The Book of Amos: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 108 n. 6.
[161] Freedman, "The Spelling of the Name 'David' in the Hebrew Bible," *HAR* 7 (1983): 89-104 at 100.

to the text and that only its orthography is late, but it does show that this view of the text is not implausible.[162]

Regarding the Greek text, it is not quite right to say that *kĕdāwîd* is missing from the LXX. True, we do not find *hōs David* there, but neither is it altogether empty. The second line of 6:5 reads: *hōs hestōta elogisanto kai ouch hōs pheugonta* ("since they considered them as permanent and not as fleeting").[163] The *Vorlage* of this Greek text is hard to reconstruct, but in the *BHQ* apparatus Anthony Gelston has suggested that the translator misread *dwd* as *dwr* ("generation"; cf. Akk. *darū* "to last, continue"). This may be correct, but in truth the entire line is obscure. What is most important for our purposes is that the LXX shows something in place of *kĕdāwîd*, and though it may not match the Hebrew of the MT, it offers evidence against a scribal interpolation, as even Wolff concedes.[164]

Lastly, regarding the supposed metrical superfluity of *kĕdāwîd*, I would reply with this statement from F.W. Dobbs-Allsopp: "the simple fact is that biblical verse is not metrical."[165] Because its rhythm does not follow a strict pattern whose components can be counted, the difference in the number of syllables or stresses between the two lines of verse 5 tells us nothing about the place of *kĕdāwîd* in the verse's history of composition. This would be true even if meter were identifiable in biblical verse. After all, what better way to convey the tipsy singing of the revelers than to describe their efforts with imbalanced poetry? In any event, appeals to meter do not make a convincing case that *kĕdāwîd* is an interpolation.

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[162] Notably, within Amos 6:1-7 we have an example of mixed orthographies: *sĕruḥîm* in v 4 and *sĕrûḥîm* in v 7.
[163] Translation of George E. Howard, *A New English Translation of the Septuagint* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 793.
[164] Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 272-73.
[165] Dobbs-Allsopp, *On Biblical Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 9; see further, pp. 95-177.

In sum, none of the three arguments for taking *kĕdāwîd* as a post-exilic gloss is decisive, and since I do not take *ḥāšĕbû* as a reference to David's invention of musical instruments, I do not think the lateness of that tradition (1 Chr 23:5; 2 Chr 7:6; 29:26-27; Neh 12:36; Ps 151:2) is applicable to Amos 6:5. Admittedly, the preceding counterarguments do not prove that the phrase is original, but that has not been my goal. Rather, my goal has been to show that its originality is at least plausible. With that threshold met, and perhaps even surpassed, we now proceed to consider how *kĕdāwîd* functions in the overall passage

Turning our attention to the evidence of cultic overtones in verse 5, we begin with the word *nēbel*. Although this stringed instrument is not exclusively associated with cultic contexts, many biblical references mention it in such contexts, including the only other instance of *nēbel* in the book of Amos. In 5:21-23 YHWH rejects key elements of Israel's cult, namely, burnt offerings as well as "noisy songs" (*hămôn šireykā*) and "melodious harps" (*zimrat nĕbāleykā*). These references to *šîr* and *nēbel* in a cultic setting make it reasonable to suppose a similar connotation when the same words occur a few verses later in 6:5.

The connection to Amos 5 is significant not only because it sheds light on the cultic connotation of *šîr* and *nēbel* in 6:5 but also because chapter 5, like 6:1-7, has both a northern and southern horizon. Although it is tempting to suppose that the cultic critique in 5:21-27 is set in a northern sanctuary, as I myself have previously assumed,[166] it is noteworthy that the three sanctuaries mentioned by name in 5:5 include two in the Northern Kingdom (Bethel and Gilgal) and one in the Southern (Beersheba).[167] This is not to suggest that these very cultic sites provide

[166] Andrew R. Davis, *Tel Dan in Its Northern Cultic Context* (ABS 20; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), 152-55; see also Paul, *Amos*, 188-89.

[167] For the archaeology of Beersheba, see Ze'ev Herzog and Lily Singer-Avitz, *Beer-Sheba III: The Early Iron IIA Enclosed Settlement and the Late Iron IIA-Iron IIB* (3 vols.; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2016). In terms of cultic remains, the site is most famous for the large four-horned altar, whose stones were found in the rebuilt wall of

the setting for 5:21-27; the chapter is a mix of individual oracles, with no direct link between verses 4-5 and verses 21-27. Still, the reference to Beersheba shows that the tradents who wrote these verses were not narrowly focused on cultic sites in the north, and the subsequent critique of cult in verses 21-27 may be directed at southern worship as well.[168] If so, this commonality would not be the only one shared by 5:21-27 and 6:1-7. Many scholars have noted the affinity between these two texts, not least their comparable use of *nēbel* with a cultic connotation.[169]

The mention of *nēbel* in Amos 5:23 shows that the instrument has a place in northern cultic settings and probably southern, too. Further evidence of the latter come from references to *nēbel* in Samuel and Kings, which indicate its place in the southern cult. In 1 Samuel 10:5, for example, it is mentioned among the instruments played by the prophets who are descending from the *bāmâ* at Gibeat-elohim in Benjamin; their instruments are presented as an integral part of their prophetic activity and presumably the *bāmâ* they have just departed. Admittedly, the territory of Benjamin is not exactly the southern heartland, but assuming that Gibeat-elohim is

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a Stratum II (720/715-701 BCE) storehouse. The original site of the altar remains unknown, but the excavators have concluded that "thus altar must have been dismantled during the rebuilding of the city in Stratum II and thus could have been in use in Stratum III," which has been dated to 800-720/715 BCE (3:1477; for the dating of Strata III-II, see 1:23-26, 29).

[168] Unsurprisingly, many consider the reference to Beersheba in 5:5 to be a post-721 BCE Judahite gloss (Fleischer, "Das Buch Amos," 194; Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 228, 239; Julian Morgenstern, "Amos Studies IV," *HUCA* 32 [1961]: 295-350 at 319) or evidence that the entire passage was written in post-721 BCE Judah (Eidevall, *Amos*, 157, 222; Radine, *The Book of Amos in Emergent Judah*, 69). Without ruling out either possibility, I would note two reasons that suggest a date before 721 BCE. First, the reference presumes a northern audience, since southerners would not "cross over" to Beersheva; the verb makes most sense for a northern audience, one that did not exist after 721 BCE. Second, the destruction of Beersheva in 701 BCE leaves a rather small window after 721 BCE to add Beersheva to the text. Amos 5:5 presumes Beersheva can still be visited, but that won't be the case just twenty years after 721 BCE.

[169] On this affinity, see Fleischer, "Das Buch Amos," 213-14; Hadjiev, *The Composition and Redaction of the Book of Amos*, 184-85; Jörg Jeremias, "Amos 3-6: From the Oral Word to the Text," in *Canon, Theology, and Old Testament Interpretation: Essays in Honor of Brevard S. Childs* (ed. G. Tucker et al.; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 217-29 at 224-25. A key difference between the two passages is their respective audiences. Although Amos 5:5 refers to northern and southern locales, the audience seems to be strictly northern. Amos 5 opens by addressing only "the house of Israel" (v 1), and when verse 5 mentions Beersheva, the (northern) audience is told not to "cross over" (Heb. *'br*) to the site. By contrast, 6:1-7 is addressed to both northern and southern audiences.

another name for Gibeah of Benjamin/Saul, we can at least see the reference as a departure from northern locales.

An even more significant verse is 2 Samuel 6:5, which associates the *nēbel* with David and the Jerusalem cult. In this verse the instrument is part of the music that accompanies David's dancing and the entrance of the ark into Jerusalem:

> David and all the Israelites were reveling before YHWH <u>with sonorous instruments and songs</u> – with lyres, harps (*binbālîm*), tambourines, sistrums, and cymbals.

This translation by P. Kyle McCarter includes an important (and <u>underlined</u>) emendation to the MT, namely, changing *běkōl ʻăṣê bĕrôšîm* ("with every sort of cypress wood") to *bkly ʻz wbšyrym* ("with sonorous instruments and songs").[170] Support for this emendation comes from the LXX, which reads *en organois hērmosmenois…kai en ōdais* ("with tuned instruments…and with songs"), and partly from 4QSam[a], which reads *bklʻz* [*w*]*bšyrym*. Moreover, it sheds light on a similar phrase later in the passage, which describes David's activity with the instrument. Whereas MT 2 Samuel 6:14 reads *bĕkol ʻōz* (NRSV: "with all his might"), LXX again reads *en organois hērmosmenois* ("with tuned instruments"), which probably reflects Hebrew *bkly ʻz*.[171] Adopting the LXX reading, McCarter follows Yitzhak Avishur's analysis of the verb *mĕkarkēr* in verse 14 as meaning "strumming" rather than "dancing."[172]

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[170] McCarter, *II Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 9; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1984), 163-64. David P. Wright accepts *bšyrym* but in a lengthy footnotes objects to *bkly ʻz* ("Music and Dance in 2 Samuel 6," *JBL* 121 [2002]: 201-25 at 205-07 n. 15). In his view *bkly ʻz* makes less sense in the passage than MT's *bkl ʻṣy*, but this argument actually supports rather than refutes McCarter principal claim that the MT is a *lectio facilior*. All the arguments adduced by Wright demonstrate the likelihood that a scribe changed *bkly ʻz* to *bkl ʻṣy* rather than vice versa.

[171] Ibid., 166.

[172] See ibid., 171; and Avishur, "*Krkr* in Biblical Hebrew and Ugaritic," *VT* 26 (1976): 257-61.

This emended text has important implications for our study. Not only does it reinforce the cultic aspect of *nēbel*, but the verse situates its use in worship at Jerusalem. Even more significantly, 2 Samuel 6:5 suggests a cultic nuance within the reference to David in Amos 6:5. Most often, the comparison to David in the latter verse is cross-referenced with verses where David plays music in the royal court of Saul (1 Sam 16:23; 19:9) or with later traditions of his fabrication of musical instruments (1 Chr 23:5; 2 Chr 7:6; 29:26-27; Neh 12:36; Ps 151:2).[173] In my opinion, neither tradition is relevant to Amos 6:5 – the latter because I argued above against rendering *ḥāšĕbû* as "to devise" in favor of "to esteem" (nn. 77-78 above), and the former because the melancholic context of David's playing for Saul does not match the festive setting of 6:1-7. By contrast, 2 Samuel 6:5 is set in a similar context of a celebration and also has the advantage of mentioning the same musical instrument, i.e., the *nēbel* (cf. *kinnôr* in 1 Sam 16:16, 23).[174] According to this comparison, the allusion to David in Amos 6:5 does not allude to the music he played before Saul or the instruments he is said to have invented, but it evokes an early tradition featuring the king as a musical leader in worship.

Thus, the emended text of 2 Samuel 6:5, 14 provides clear evidence of *nēbel* used in the Jerusalem cult and associated with David. Moreover, the parallel between these verses and Amos 6:5 includes more than the instrument alone; in both places we find *nēbel* mentioned with the word *kĕlî* and *šîr*. Just as significant as the content of these verses is their source. They are not pulled from an obscure passage but from the climactic scene of the "Ark Narrative" (1 Sam 4:1-7:1 [+ 2 Sam 6]), which many regard as a pre-Deuteronomistic narrative based on an even

[173] For the former, see Eidevall, *Amos*, 180. For the latter, see Fleischer, "Das Buch Amos," 214, 220; Mays, *Amos*, 113; Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 276.
[174] On the differences between the two instruments, see King, *Amos, Hosea, Micah*, 154.

older tradition.[175] Even scholars who consider 2 Samuel 6 a later addition to the Ark Narrative still consider the chapter to be a pre-Deuteronomistic composition likely based on older source material.[176]

By recognizing the cultic overtones of *nēbel* and David in 6:5, we can see how the verse aligns with the overall rhetoric of the passage. Like the elements analyzed in the previous subsections, the reference to *nēbel* and the comparison to David do not make the party depicted in Amos 6:3-7 a cultic feast. Rather, the cultic overtones of all these elements serve as ironic counterpoints of the impiety of the party and its revelers. The sarcastic comparison to David reveals their inflated self-regard ("They esteem their instruments like David's") and the cultic subtext exposes their narcissism as a kind of idolatry.[177] In one way, the party is the opposite of a religious festival, but in another way, it has become its own kind of liturgy, albeit one focused inwardly on the revelers rather than outwardly to YHWH. Unlike David and the people in 2 Samuel 6:5, whose merriment (Heb. *śḥq*) and music took place *lipnê YHWH*, the revelers in Amos 6 celebrate by themselves and for themselves.

If the above analysis is correct and *kĕdāwîd* is original to the text and was meant to provide a sarcastic counterpoint to the self-involved revelry depicted in Amos 6:1-7, then the comparison to David represents another key example of southern entrapment in the passage. It is reasonable to assume that the invocation of David would resonate more with a southern audience

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[175] See Jeremy M. Hutton, *The Transjordanian Palimpsest: The Overwritten Texts of Personal Exile and Transformation in the Deuteronomistic History* (BZAW 369; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009) 369-71; Antti Laato, *The Origin of Israelite Zion Theology* (LHB/OTS 661; London: T&T Clark, 2018), 75-78.
[176] See Patrick D. Miller and J.J.M. Roberts, *The Hand of the Lord: A Reassessment of the "Ark Narrative" of 1 Samuel* (JHNES; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), 34-35, 93-94; also Hutton, *The Transjordanian Palimpsest*, 127, 215. Not every scholar sees this material as early, however; Wolfgang Zwickel, for example, dates it to the post-exilic period ("David: Historische Gestalt und Idealisiertes Vorbild: Überlegungen zu Entstehung und Theologie von 2 Sam 6," *JNSL* 20 [1994]: 79-123 at 96-97, 105).
[177] Greg Goswell, "David in the Prophecy of Amos," *VT* 61 (2011): 243-57 at 249.

than a northern one. It is hard to imagine that northern elites would be wounded by a sarcastic comparison to the founding king of Judah. For southern elites, however, David would have been one of their most venerable traditions, and in the eyes of the tradents who produced the text, that is what makes the allusion effective. They condemned the indulgent lifestyle of southern elites by placing their behavior beside an image of David at his most pious.

Nearly everyone agrees that the book of Amos is an indictment of social injustice and moral turpitude in the Northern Kingdom, and many see references to the Southern Kingdom as updates for later Judahite audiences. I agree that the references to "David" and "Zion" were probably not part of any performative by the historical prophet, but that does not mean that they were tacked on to an "original" version of the oracle. Both are integral to the text we have, which, I have argued, was written by early southern tradents for a southern audience. These tradents showed that excess and indifference were not just northern problems but were just as prevalent in Judah. They exposed these problems not through a straightforward diagnosis of them but through a rhetoric of entrapment, one that involved the ironic use of cultic language and allusions to highlight the revelers' almost religious devotion to their indulgent lifestyle.

The lazy days of *marzēaḥ* are over (v 7)

Lastly, we turn our attention to the word that has attracted the most attention in Amos 6:1-7, namely, the reference to *marzēaḥ* in verse 7. My goal in this section is not to review the ancient Near Eastern background of this religious institution, since there are studies that have

examined the relevant sources at depth.[178] Instead of replicating their work, I will simply begin by noting what, according to John L. McLaughlin, were the constituent features of the *marzēaḥ*: participation by members of the upper class, the consumption of alcohol, and a clear religious connection.[179] My purpose in this section is to argue that the word *marzēaḥ* in verse 7 does not mean that the preceding verses should be taken as a straightforward description of a *marzēaḥ*. Rather, like the other elements of 6:1-7 examined in this chapter, the term is used ironically. The party depicted in verses 4-7 is not literally a *marzēaḥ*, but because of the revelers' quasi-religious devotion to self-indulgence, their party is derisively called one. Undoubtedly, elements of the party are reminiscent of a *marzēaḥ* – otherwise the sarcastic designation would not work – but the scene is not a snapshot of one. What we have instead is an allusion to the *marzēaḥ* that has been refracted through the funhouse mirror of prophetic rhetoric.

Support for this interpretation of *marzēaḥ* comes mostly from literary considerations. First of all, many commentators have noted the wordplay in verse 7 but have not considered its implications for interpreting the mention of *marzēaḥ*. The wordplay involves complex alliteration among the last three words of the verse (*sr mrzḥ swrḥym*), namely, three *reš*'s, three sibilants, two *ḥet*'s, and two *mem*'s, spread evenly across the phrase. Observing this alliteration, some translators, myself included, have tried to replicate it in their renderings.[180] The larger significance of the alliteration, however, is its suggestion that the word *marzēaḥ* serves a purpose

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[178] See especially John L. McLaughlin, *The* marzēaḥ *in the Prophetic Literature: References and Allusions in Light of the Extra-Biblical Evidence* (VTSup 86; Leiden: Brill, 2001); Theodore J. Lewis, *Cults of the Dead in Ancient Israel and Ugarit* (HSM 39; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 80-94; Hans Barstad, *The Religious Polemics of Amos: Studies in the Preaching of Am 2, 7B-8; 4, 1-13; 5, 1-27; 6, 4-7; 8, 14* (VTSup 34; Leiden: Brill, 1984), 127-42; Philip J. King, *Amos, Hosea, Micah: An Archaeological Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1988), 137-61; Greer, "A *Marzeaḥ* and a *Mizraq*," 243-62.

[179] McLaughlin, *The* marzēaḥ *in the Prophetic Literature*, 65-79.

[180] Cf. Shalom Paul's translation, "Spent will be the sprawlers' spree" (*Amos*, 199, 210). For other examples in English and German, see McLaughlin, *The* marzēaḥ *in the Prophetic Literature*, 83-84 n. 19.

beyond its semantic value. I would go further to argue that poetic technique calls attention to the fictive nature of the passage; it reminds us that we are not reading a report of a real dinner party but a poetic representation of the kind of extravagant lifestyle the prophet wants to condemn. This view of *marzēaḥ* borrows from Ralph M. Rosen's study of Roman satire, in which he argues that the poetic form of satire implies its fictionality. As marked speech, the poetry alerts its audience(s) to the artificiality of satire; it offers mimetic representations of reality rather than significations of an actual lived reality.[181] Likewise, the poetic features of Amos 6:1-7 – the alliteration in verse 7 as well as the wordplay involving *r'š* (3x), *srḥ* (2x), *rab(bâ)* (2x) *šebet/šēber* elsewhere in the passage – signal that the passage is not intended as a textbook definition of a *marzēaḥ*.[182] Elements of a *marzēaḥ* are surely here, but rhetorically, the prophet and/or his tradents are up to something different.

As a fictive representation of a *marzēaḥ*, Amos 6:1-7 is not so different from the many examples of prophetic speech, which are based on, and adapted from, existing forms of speech. The passage is no more a report of an actual *marzēaḥ* than Amos 4:4-5 is a real call to worship, 5:1 is a real lament, or 8:5-6 is a snippet of real dialogue from the marketplace. These, too, are literary fictions; they all have some verisimilitude with life in ancient Israel and Judah, but they are nonetheless fabrications, literary creations used for a specific rhetorical purpose. Katharine J. Dell refers to these adaptations as "misuses" because they take an existing form of speech and

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[181] Rosen, *Making Mockery: The Poetic of Ancient Satire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 22-23. For more the fictive quality of poetry in the Hebrew Bible, see Dobbs-Allsopp, *On Biblical Poetry*, 202; and Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry* (rev. ed.; New York: Basic Books, 2011), 176. For poetry more generally, see Barbara Herrnstein Smith, *On the Margins of Discourse: The Relation of Literature to Language* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978); and Käte Hamburger, *The Logic of Literature* (2d rev. ed.; trans. M. Rose; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973).

[182] Cf. the remarks of Eidevall: "Amos 6:4-6 does not necessarily provide an eyewitness account of what happened on a specific occasion, when the members of such an exclusive association were gathered in their house. Rather, this passage uses the concept of the *marzēaḥ* in order to depict the lifestyle of the elite more broadly – a lifestyle that involved a lost of feasting and drinking, as well as exclusive banquets of the *marzēaḥ* type" (*Amos*, 174).

give it a new context and new meaning (as opposed to "reuses," in which forms assume a new context but keep the same meaning).[183] The point is that the fictive quality of 6:1-7 is consistent with the larger repertoire of prophetic speech and rhetoric, especially in the book of Amos. Its purpose is not to offer an account of a real *marzēaḥ* but to confront audiences with a scene whose distortions expose the corruption of the revelers addressed in the passage and also the complicity of the overreading audiences.

The confrontation in 6:1-7, as we have shown throughout this chapter, involves the use of cultic terms to highlight the warped religiosity of the revelers' self-indulgence. That rhetoric culminates with the reference to *marzēaḥ* in verse 7, and like the other cultic elements examined in this chapter, the comparison to a *marzēaḥ* would likely have resonated in both the Northern and Southern Kingdoms. The only other instance of the word in the Hebrew Bible occurs in Jeremiah 16:5, where it is associated with mourning rites; in addition to being forbidden to lament and grieve, the prophet is told not to enter the *bêt marzēaḥ*.[184] Although this verse dates later than the mid-eighth century BCE setting of the tradents who wrote Amos 6:1-7, it provides at least some evidence of the *marzēaḥ* within Judah. Without pressing this evidence too far, I think it is reasonable to assume that the term would be as familiar to those at ease in Zion as to those carefree in Samaria.

More importantly, the reference to *marzēaḥ* in Jeremiah 16:5 may give us a clue to the term's rhetorical function in Amos 6:7. A striking feature of the reference in Jeremiah is its antithetical pairing with "house of feasting" (*bêt mišteh*) a few verses later (16:8). With so much attention dedicated to the comparison of Hebrew *marzēaḥ* to its ancient Near Eastern cognate, it

[183] See Katharine J. Dell, "The Misuse of Forms in Amos," *VT* 45 (1995): 45-61.
[184] See McLaughlin, *The* marzēaḥ *in the Prophetic Literature*, 185-95.

is easy to overlook a more basic point in Jeremiah 16:5-8. The *bêt marzēaḥ* and the *bêt mišteh* represent opposite social spaces; their opposition, like "great and small" in verse 6, constitutes a merism, signifying Jeremiah's ban from all manner of social gatherings.[185] Without knowing the details of what took place in the *bêt marzēaḥ*, we can at least appreciate that for Jeremiah and his audience it represented the opposite of the *bêt mišteh*.[186]

This contrast is significant for understanding the function of *marzēaḥ* in Amos 6:1-7. Most of the passage depicts a scene whose consumption and mirth would be more at home in the *bêt mišteh*. If, as in Jeremiah 16, *marzēaḥ* represents the opposite of *mišteh*, then the punchline of Amos 6:7 begins to come into focus. Even if, as many now agree, the *marzēaḥ* lacks connection to the cult of the dead or an official funeral banquet,[187] Jeremiah 16 indicates its association with funerary practices and, at the very least, its connotations of grief and mourning. If these connotations apply to the *marzēaḥ* in Amos 6:7, then the word represents the reversal of verses 4-6: The decadent feast is revealed to be a wake! The same way someone today might shout "It's your funeral" to people who are oblivious to the destructive consequences of their present actions, the word *marzēaḥ* redefines the preceding scene according to its ultimate result. In neither case is the language an actual description of the behavior observed; the revelers' party is not a *marzēaḥ* any more than it's really "your funeral." Rather both are comparative, and the comparison is meant to be jarring to the audiences.

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[185] Further evidence of the connection between the two is the repetition of *lō'-tābô'* with each house.
[186] Although some have supposed the *bêt marzēaḥ* and *bêt mišteh* are synonymous parallels in Jer 16, others regard them as distinct (e.g., Jon D. Levenson, *Resurrection and the Restoration of Israel: The Ultimate Victory of the God of Life* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006], 50). My own reading takes this distinction one step further to see the two as a merism.
[187] See Lewis, *Cults of the Dead in Ancient Israel and Ugarit*, 94.

In this way, the use of *marzēaḥ* matches the rhetoric we have traced throughout Amos 6:1-7. The cultic overtones of various words in the passage do not indicate a cultic feast but a decadent party whose revelers have turned their self-indulgence into a quasi-religion. Such rhetoric is built on the ironic misuse of forms, which, as Dell has shown, is characteristic of prophetic speech in the book of Amos (and other prophetic books). Likewise, *marzēaḥ* does not serve as a designation for the revelry but proclaims its destiny. Coming as it does in the climactic announcement of judgment in verse 7, the word underscores the punishment by recasting the party as a funeral. There may even be a hint of this reversal in the repetition of the root *srḥ* in verses 4 and 7. Almost all translate this verb "to hang, sprawl" in both instances, but there is a by-form of the root (*srḥ* II) that means "to rot; ruin."[188] Like the root *nqb* in verse 1, which can mean both "marked out (for leadership)" and "cursed" (see n. 71 above), *srḥ* may be a double entendre, denoting the revelers' sprawling posture as well as, in the end, their ruinous rot.

Thus, verse 7 is not a continuation of the carefree revelry but a reversal of it, and the reference to *marzēaḥ* should be considered part of this punchline. It also provides a funerary bookend to the *hôy* at the beginning of the passage. That interjection is widely recognized as a cry of mourning (e.g., 1 Kgs 13:30; Jer 22:18), which is used in the prophetic literature of the Hebrew Bible to announce judgment.[189] Like the *qînâ* in Amos 5:1, *hôy* is a proleptic and ironic expression of the mourning that will take place when the judgment is executed. The funerary connotations of *hôy* and its ironic usage in 6:1 make it an effective pendant to *marzēaḥ* in 6:7.

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[188] See Jer 49:7 (// *'bd*); Sir 42:11; *HALOT* translates "to rot, stink," based on MHeb usage (p. 769). Cf. Akk. sarāḫu "to ruin, destroy" (see *CAD* S, p. 171; *AHw*, p. 1028).

[189] See McLaughlin, *The* marzēaḥ *in the Prophetic Literature*, 89-94; Richard J. Clifford, "The Use of *hôy* in the Prophets," *CBQ* 28 (1966): 458-64.

The passage begins and ends with language indicating the mourning that will soon replace the revelry encapsulated by verses 1 and 7.

Overreading Amos 6:1-7

The preceding analysis of 6:1-7 has made a cogent, perhaps even compelling, case for reading the passage as an indictment of southern elites of the mid-eighth century BCE. Of course, this southern audience is not the only audience. It is reasonable to assume that some version of the oracle was first delivered by the historical prophet to northern (and, not impossibly, southern) elites similar to the addressees mentioned in 6:1. I have argued, however, that these elites are not the audience of the text as we have it, nor are the addressees mentioned in the text itself, who may or may not have been the prophet's first audience. Insofar as the text of Amos 6:1-7 is the work of tradents who put the oracle into writing, its audience consisted of whoever happened to read or hear this mid-eighth century BCE iteration of it. It is an audience of overreaders, distinct from the addressees within the text but expected to recognize themselves in its unflattering vignette of excess and self-indulgence. These overreaders were side-participants, standing at some remove from the actual scene depicted in 6:1-7 but nonetheless implicated in its social and cultic discourse.

The argument that the text of 6:1-7 should be dated to Judah in the mid-eighth century BCE rests on two main arguments: first, the historical elements of the text most likely belong to that period rather than the end of the eighth century BCE (or later); and second, the features that would resonate with a Judahite audience are integral to the passage. Although I wish it were possible to make a definitive argument for this reading of Amos 6:1-7, the evidence will not

allow such certitude. Scholarly opinions on this passage are mixed. Some date most of it to the time of Amos and see the Judahite touches as later additions; others see these touches as integral to the passage and evidence of its overall lateness. My goal in this chapter has been to argue for a third option, namely, to see the southern horizon as both early and integral to the instantiation of the oracle we find in the Hebrew Bible. This argument cannot rule out the other two options altogether, but it does propose an alternative reading that is at least as compelling.

If this interpretation is correct, it leaves two key questions yet to be answered: who was this southern overreading audience, and what was the intended effect of 6:1-7 on them? In this chapter's final section I propose answers to these questions. The best way to begin thinking about the mid-eighth century BCE southern audience of the text is to bring into focus the tradents who produced the text in the first place. As I discussed in the introductory chapter, it is reasonable to suppose that these tradents were disciples of the historical prophet who through oral and written methods preserved his words and later put them into written form.[190] Hans Walter Wolff called these tradents "the old school of Amos," which, according to him, "was probably active in the generation between 760 and 730" and whose "activity must be sought in Judah, in the realm which was the master's homeland."[191] Putting aside the problematic term "school,"[192] I think Wolff is right to locate the first tradents of the Amos tradition in this time and place. Because their work would have required scribal training, the tradents belonged to the small fraction of Judahites who were able to read and write.[193] Such *literati* would be, for the

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[190] See James L. Crenshaw, "Transmitting Prophecy across Generations," in *Writings and Speech in Israelite and Ancient Near Eastern Prophecy* (SymS 10; eds. E. Ben Zvi and M. Floyd; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000), 31-44.
[191] Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 110.
[192] See the discussion of this term in Christopher A. Rollston, *Writing and Literacy in the World of Ancient Israel: Epigraphic Evidence from the Iron Age* (ABS 11; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2010), 91, 94-95.
[193] See Ian Young, "Israelite Literacy: Interpreting the Evidence, Part I," *VT* 48 (1998): 239-53; idem, "Israelite Literacy: Interpreting the Evidence, Part II," *VT* 48 (1998): 408-22.

most part, members of the highest levels of society and personnel of various state institutions, such as the palace, temple, and army,[194] but it is also probable that texts were also produced within smaller groups independent of state sponsorship. This is the view argued by Seth L. Sanders, who writes that "from the eighth century onward we find an increasing range of voices and social locations in Hebrew…. The epigraphic evidence points to Hebrew scribes working outside of large institutions, which makes them less like monks or clerks and more like potters or metalworkers."[195]

This understanding of scribes as "craft producers" provides a compelling milieu for the early tradents of the Amos tradition. This view has been critiqued by Christopher A. Rollston who insists that scribal education took place under the aegis of state bureaucracies,[196] but by Rollston's own account this education "was often a small enterprise, with a handful of students, often in a domestic context."[197] Besides pointing up the problem with the term "school," this view of scribal education as a small-scale operation within domiciles would seem to lend itself to the craft model that Sanders proposed. Part of Rollston's objection is a reaction against the way Sanders characterizes the state model of scribalism, as if it assumes that the state is the only setting of such activity. He acknowledges that not all scribal activity comes from officialdom; indeed, Rollston, like many, assumes that there was a substantial number of "scribes who were,

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[194] See Christopher A. Rollston, "Scribal Curriculum during the First Temple Period: Epigraphic Hebrew and Biblical Evidence," in *Contextualizing Israel's Sacred Writings: Ancient Literacy, Orality, and Literary Production* (AIL 22; ed. B. Schmidt; Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015), 71-101; idem, *Writing and Literacy in the World of Ancient Israel*, 128-29.

[195] Sanders, *The Invention of Hebrew* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 130-31.

[196] Rollston, "Scribal Education in Ancient Israel: The Old Hebrew Epigraphic Evidence," *BASOR* 344 (2006): 47-74 at 68; see also idem, "Scribal Curriculum during the First Temple Period," 94-97; idem, *Writing and Literacy in the World of Ancient Israel*, 113.

[197] Rollston, "Scribal Curriculum during the First Temple Period," 81. See also idem, *Writing and Literacy in the World of Ancient Israel*, 115-26; Karel van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007), 55-59; David M. Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart: Origins of Scripture and Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 20-22, 52-53, 65-67, 113-15.

in essence, private professionals, not in the direct employ of the state."[198] Here we may also mention the view of Jessica Whisenant, who argues for a gradual decentralization of scribal activity, beginning in the eighth century BCE, from state institutions to the private domain.[199] She sees this shift as a key step toward the writing and collecting of texts, including prophetic oracles, that would become the basis of biblical books.[200] Such a shift does not mean that non-institutional scribes were less elite; it just means that their work took place outside the direct sponsorship and oversight of the state.[201]

Altogether the brief review of scholarship indicates that there is strong evidence for scribal activity in eighth-century BCE Judah and that no small portion of it took place in small communities outside of state institutions. These conditions provide an important backdrop for thinking about the tradents who produced Amos 6:1-7 and the audience they expected to overread their condemnation of carefree elites. We need not imagine a state-sponsored institutional setting for these tradents; they could have been trained and worked in a small group. Indeed, if there is a state-sponsored institution implicated in Amos 6:1-7, it is not as the tradents but as the audience. More specifically, I think that the intended audience of the oracle consisted of temple elites, who were implicated in its condemnation by the cultic discourse detailed above. In our analysis of various cultic terms in 6:1-7 we showed that throughout the passage there is a consistent cultic subtext which draws an unflattering comparison between the elites' revelry and worship. There I argued that this comparison was meant to depict the revelers' extravagance as a

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[198] Rollston, "Scribal Curriculum during the First Temple Period," 80. Cf. van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible*, 59, 82; Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart*, 120-21.
[199] Whisenant, "Let the Stones Speak!: Document Production by Iron Age West Semitic Scribal Institutions and the Question of Biblical Sources," in *Contextualizing Israel's Sacred Writing*, 133-60 at 149-50.
[200] Ibid., 152-54.
[201] Rollston writes that "even in these [non-royal and non-sacerdotal] capacities, the scribe would have been considered an educated member of elite society" (*Writing and Literacy in the World of Ancient Israel*, 89).

kind of self-worship, but it is also possible to look at the comparison from the other direction, i.e., to see it as a critique of the temple by its comparison to a luxurious party. This critique has not gone unnoticed by interpreters, but their analysis is often preoccupied with the reference to *marzēaḥ* and assumed to be targeted at northern cult from the time of the historical prophet. If, however, we situate Amos 6:1-7 in Judah in the mid-eighth century BCE, the polemic is directed not against northern worship or cultic personnel but against southern cult, likely the temple elite in Jerusalem. According to this reading, the oracle in the textual form we have it is an attack on the excesses of the temple cult with its fancy wine bowls and oils.[202] The tradents paint a picture of worship that is no less oblivious to the outside world than a flashy dinner party.

Can we be more specific about the cultic critique being leveled against the temple elite? Most likely not. A mid-eighth century BCE date places the text sometime during the reigns of the Judahite kings Uzziah (785-759 BCE), Jotham (759-743 BCE), and Ahaz (743-727 BCE), which, as we discussed above, was a time of prosperity and expansion for Judah. It would be tempting to mine the descriptions of these kings' reigns in the books of Kings and Chronicles for possible parallels to the interpretation proposed here. After all, the temple and its cult play a role in the reigns of all three: Uzziah has a confrontation with the temple priesthood and is struck with a skin disease because of his improper worship (2 Chr 26:16-21); Jotham built the temple's upper gate (2 Kgs 15:35; 2 Chr 27:3); and Ahaz has a temple priest build a new altar, claims the old altar for his private use, and removes bronze from cultic equipment to pay tribute (2 Kgs 16:10-18; 2 Chr 28:21, 24). I am doubtful, however, that any of these texts can shed any light on Amos 6:1-7 critique of temple elites. Besides their questionable historicity, the reports, even if

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[202] See Gunther Fleischer, *Von Menschenverkäufern, Baschankühen und Rechtsverkehrern: die Sozialkritik des Amosbuches in historisch-kritischer, sozialgeschichtlicher und archäologischer Perspektive* (AMT 74; Frankfurt: Athenäum, 1989), 241-42.

they could be corroborated, would tell us little about what a small prophetic community might have found objectionable about the temple.

The most we can say, I think, is that the mid-eighth century BCE tradents who produced 6:1-7 inflected the oracle with an indirect critique on the perceived excesses of the Jerusalem temple cult. It is not as explicit as other cultic polemics in Amos, such as 5:21-27, but it is reasonable to assume that the audience of 6:1-7, which most likely consisted of other elite scribal communities, would recognize the cultic discourse. The passage's cultic imagery invites comparison between the scene of extravagant revelry and the world of the temple; no other institutions are implicated in the oracle – not the palace, not the military, not the merchant class. The imagery singles out the temple as a mid-eighth century BCE expression of the more general problem of excess and indifference among elites. Although we cannot rule out that this imagery and subtext of 6:1-7 were part of an original performance by the prophet Amos decades earlier, I prefer to see them as part of the distinctive spin the Judahite tradents gave to their instantiation of the oracle. The explicit addressees within the oracle are those at ease and caefree in Zion and Samaria, but its actual audience – the ones who overread the prophetic attack on these elites – consisted of scribal elites from various institutions of Judah. Like the triangulated discourse we observed in English lyric poetry and Roman satire, where a critique would bounce off the addressees and land at the feet of the overhearing side-participants, Amos 6:1-7 points first to a general lifestyle of excess but is soon redirected to a group of cultic elites closer to home.

There is another function of this oracle to consider, however. In the introductory chapter's survey of non-biblical poetry, we observe that second-person address often serves as a way for authors to establish their identity in opposition to the addressees. Classicist Thomas Habinek called this dynamic "the double game of identification and differentiation," in which a

Roman satirist makes fun of characters who are uncomfortably close to the satirist's own persona as a way to differentiate himself from them. Thus, in *Satire* I.9 Horace ridicules a feckless social climber as a way of deflecting the criticism that could well be levelled against him.[203] It is possible that there is a similar differentiation taking place in Amos 6:1-7. After all, the tradents who produced this text, however we imagine them, have more in common with the oracle's overreading audience than not. Both tradents and audience are part of the same class of Judahite *literati* who could read and write, and for this reason, it would have been crucial for the tradents to define elitism in way that excludes them from the condemnation. They do so by establishing an affinity between the easy-living addressees in the text and the temple elite implicated in the cultic imagery. This way the tradents can distance themselves from the elite culture of which they are a part. "Not us," the text implies. "Yes, we're scribes with years of training and we make a living as professional writers for other elites, but we're not the problem. It's *those* elites with their cultic bowls and fancy oils; they're the problem."

This reading may seem like a stretch, but support for it comes from a parallel text in First Isaiah. In 32:9-14 the prophet addresses elite women and makes them a synecdoche of the grief and degradation soon to come to all.[204] The women are told to strip themselves naked (*'ōrā*, v 11), and in this way, they preview the imminent bareness (*mĕ'ārôt*) of the city (v 14). Their lament-stricken breasts (*šādayim*) are a near-homophone of the lamented fields (*śĕdê*) mentioned in the same verse (v 12). Most notably for our comparison, the women are twice called *ša'ănān* and *bōṭēḥ* (vv 9, 11), which is the same word pair we find in Amos 6:1.[205] The relative rarity of

[203] In the words of Kirk Freudenburg, "[Horace] himself is the poster-boy of this man's own shameless ambition" (*Satires of Rome: Threatening Poses from Lucilius to Juvenal* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001], 63).
[204] See Sharon Moughtin-Mumby, "Feminist/Womanist Readings of Isaiah," in *The Oxford Handbook of Isaiah* (ed. L.-S. Tiemeyer; New York: Oxford University Press, 2021).
[205] Several commentators have noted the parallel (e.g., Paul, *Amos*, 200 n. 6; Blum, "'Amos' in Jerusalem," 36; J.J.M. Roberts, *First Isaiah: A Commentary* [Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015], 415; Willem A.M. Beuken,

this word pair makes its repetition in Amos and Isaiah intriguing, but my interest here is how Isaiah 32:9-14, like Amos 6:1-7, conveniently defines elite culture as altogether different from the tradents who produced the text. In Isaiah we find a gendered definition of this culture rather than the images of leisure and cult in Amos, but the texts achieve a similar purpose, namely, to present a portrait of privilege from which the authors can distance themselves. It would have been more accurate for the authors of Isaiah 32:9-14 to make elite men the synecdoche of destruction since they were the ones who wielded power and were most responsible for the crisis in Judah, but such a vignette would have hit too close to home for Isaiah and his tradents, who were members of this same male elite. This is not to say that the books of Amos and Isaiah (and the rest of the prophetic books) give men a pass; there are plenty of passages critical of them, too. But Isaiah 32:9-14 is not the only passage in Amos and Isaiah that uses women to define a culture of destructive wealth and indifference (cf. Amos 4:1; Isa 3:16-4:1).[206] The point is that both Amos 6:1-7 and Isaiah 32:9-14 did more than criticize boozy and oblivious elites; they also helped establish the social identity of the tradents who wrote the texts. As professionally trained scribes, these tradents were *literati* within the same elite culture which they ridicule, but you would never know that from their depictions of this culture. In addition to their outward attack, the portrayals of "at ease" and "overconfident" elites also have an inward purpose. They serve as foils, allowing the tradents of the Amos and Isaiah traditions to differentiate their own elite identity from the excess and witlessness they represent.

Isaiah II, vol. 2, *Isaiah 28-39* [HCOT; Leuven: Peeters, 2000], 225), and at least one has enlisted it as support for a late eighth century date for Amos 6:1 (Fleischer, "Das Buch Amos," 216). For a counterview, see Hans Wildberger who argues that it is wrong to read Amos 6:1 and Isa 32:9,11 in light of each other (*Isaiah 28-39: A Continental Commentary* [trans. T. Trapp; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002], 250).

[206] On the connections between Isa 3:16-4:1 and 32:9-14, see Willem A.M. Beuken, "Women and the Spirit, the Ox and the Ass," *ETL* 74 (1998): 5-26 at 16-20.

Altogether this chapter has shown that the question of audience for Amos 6:1-7 does not have a single answer. Rather, like many poetic texts, biblical and otherwise, the oracle engages multiple levels of audience. The first consists of the addressees named within the text: "you who are at ease in Zion and carefree in Samaria" (v 1). These addressees may well have been a real audience of an earlier version of this oracle (in speech or text), but by the time of the oracle's textualization in mid-eighth century BCE Judah, the revelers existed only as literary constructs, characters within the poetry whose depiction was meant to entrap an overreading audience of southern elites. These elites represent a second audience for the text. They are not the same as the addressees within the text, but as overreaders, they were "listening in" on the prophetic condemnation of the revelers and meant to recognize themselves in its depiction of excess and indifference. For the tradents who put Amos 6:1-7 into writing, there was enough continuity between the revelers and their own audience for it to be an effective indictment within their context a few decades after the historical Amos.

In this concluding section of the chapter we have tried to sketch out who this overreading audience might have been. For one thing, they were most likely elite members of Judahite society. After all, as we discussed in the introductory chapter, prophetic texts, like Amos 6:1-7, were produced within and among the scribal elite of ancient Judah, and although we cannot rule out a public dissemination of the oracle, at this time we have no evidence of such broadcasting. I have argued that within the small circle of *literati* who comprised this overreading audience, there is good reason to think that the oracle was directed at temple elite. This argument is based on the multiple instances of cultic terms in the passage, which would be more resonant with temple officials than other reading and writing members of ancient Judahite society. According to this reconstruction, these temple elite were overreading side-participants who were implicated

in the critique of Amos 6:1-7 by its prevalence of cultic terminology. What begins as an extravagant dinner party turns into a scene with cultic elements that would have been all too familiar to this overreading audience. We will never know for certain the earliest form of this oracle, but the instantiation we have in the Hebrew Bible is the work of southern tradents in the mid-eighth century BCE.

Yet another audience consists of the tradents themselves. Oracles like Amos 6:1-7 are written not just for external audiences but also for internal ones. They serve to instruct the tradents' own scribal community of their identity and values. In my opinion, it is entirely possible that this could have been the *only* real audience of the oracle, that it never reached the ears or eyes of boozy revelers or temple elite. Instead the oracle stayed within the confines of the prophetic community that produced it, where its depiction of extravagance and indifference could serve as a negative example and a foil. Perhaps the best evidence that the oracle served this purpose comes from a later text, Amos 7:10-17, in which post-exilic tradents of the Amos tradition created the prophet's persona partly in contradistinction to the scene described in 6:1-7. How this audience of post-exilic overreaders made 6:1-7 the basis of a third-person narrative starring the prophet Amos is the subject of the next chapter.