LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

A Composition of Strategic Harmony
The Role of Hymnic Elements in the Compositional Strategy of Amos

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“Auā faauta mai, o le na faia mauga, ma na faia le matagi, ma ua faailoaina atu i le tagata lona manatu, o le na te liua le taeao i le pouliuli, o lē savali i luga o mea maualuluga o le lalolagi, o Ieova, o le Atua o ‘au, o lona suafa lea.”

- Amosa 4:13 -

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements i

Abbreviations ii

Abstract iv

Chapter 1: Introduction and Research Proposal 1

Introduction 1

Survey of Scholarship on the Composition of Amos 2

The Product of an Editorial Process 2

The Argument for Attribution to Amos 9

Historical and Literary Analysis 14

Historical Analysis 14

Literary Analysis 16

Research Proposal 19

Responding to Redaction Arguments 19

Dissertation Structure 20

Chapter 2: The Fit and Function of the Hymnic Fragments in Amos 23

A Survey on the Scholarship on the Hymnic Fragments of Amos 23

Post-Amos Compositions and Additions 23

Included by Amos 26

Intrusive or Intentional? 28

The First Hymn: Amos 4:13 29

The Second Hymn: Amos 5:8-9 34

The Third Hymn: Amos 9:5-6 41

The Functional Fit of the Hymns 47

The Historical Function 47
The Rhetorical Function 49
The Theological Function 52
Summary and Transition 54
Chapter 3: Hymnic Language Throughout the Land of the Old Testament 55
Songs, Psalms, and Hymns in the Ancient Near East 55
Differentiation of the Genres 56
Songs of the Hebrew Scripture 57
Psalms of the Hebrew Scripture 59
Hymns of the Hebrew Scripture 63
Extrabiblical Hymnic Literature 66
Sumerian and Akkadian Hymns 67
Hymns of the Hittites 69
Parallels in Egyptian and Hebrew Hymns 70
Old Testament Textual Strategies 72
Summary and Transition 77
Chapter 4: Hymns in the Preaching of the Prophets and Paul 81
Prophetic and Pauline Parallels 81
The Sounds of the Psalter in the Prophets 83
The Prophet's Proper Purpose 83
The Prophet's Purpose for the Psalter 84
The Function of Hymnic Language in the Prophets 87
Identification with Characters in the Narrative (Jonah 2:2-10) 88
Highlighting God's Character (Nahum 1:2-8) 93
Responding to Revelation (Habakkuk 2:6-20) 99

Remembering Israel's History with God (Habakkuk 3:1-19) 103
Inviting Israel to Faith in YHWH (Isaiah 42:10-13) 105
The Presence of Hymnic Language in the New Testament 110
Purposing Hymnic Fragments to Complete Messages 112
Summary and Transition 116
Chapter 5: Unpacking the Compositional Strategy 120
Introduction 120
Seeing the Strategy 120
Literary Implications 122
Surrounding Contexts 123
Literary Context (Genre and Subgenre) 125
Canonical Context 126
The Literary Strategy Behind the Hymns 129
Theological Implications 131
Thematic Context 131
Covenantal Context 133
Revelation-Historical Context 134
The Theological Strategy Behind the Hymns 136
Amos's Application of the Hymns 137
Summary and Transition 138
Chapter 6: Conclusion 140
Overview 140
Reviewing the Foundations of Amos Scholarship 140

Observing the Compositional Strategy through the Hymns 141
Implications for Old Testament Narratives 147
Shared Strategies in the Prophetic and Pauline Writings 149
Synthesis and Further Insights 152
Reflections 157
Scholarly Considerations 157
Ecclesial Considerations 159
Homiletical Considerations 161
Conclusion 162
Bibliography 164

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Abbreviations

ABC	Anchor Bible Commentary
AOTC	Apollos Old Testament Commentary
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
BBRSup	Bulletin for Biblical Research Supplement
BKAT	Biblischer Kommentar: Altes Testament
BZAW	*Beihefte zur Zeitschrift Für Die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*
BWANT	*Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament*
CBQ	*Catholic Bible Quarterly*
CBQM	Catholic Bible Quarterly Monograph Series
CHANE	Culture and History of the Ancient Near East
FAT	*Forschungen zum Alten Testament*
HALOT	Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament
HSS	*Harvard Semitic Studies*
IEJ	*Israel Exploration Journal*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JSOT	*Journal of the Study of the Old Testament*
JSOTSup	Journal of the Study of the Old Testament Supplements
LAS	*Leipziger Altorientalistische Studien*
LHBOTS	Library of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies (formerly JSOTSup)
OTT	Old Testament Theology
PEQ	*Palestine Exploration Quarterly*

SJOT	*Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament*
TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
VTSup	*Vetus Testamentum*, Supplements
WBC	Word Bible Commentary
ZAW	*Zeitschrift fur die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*
ZDP	*Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palastina-Vereins*

Abstract

Scholarship on the book of Amos has oft leaned in favor of a multilayered composition of the prophetic book, citing either post-exilic motifs or unusual thematic transitions as evidence. While most of the book of Amos is typically ascribed to the prophet himself, the attribution of certain portions to the work of later redactors brings into question the integrity of the message Amos seeks to convey, especially regarding a united theological message. Proponents of redaction claim that the portions in question would not have been part of the original composition due to their contents displaying post-exilic themes. Such a reconstruction brings into question the theology of Amos, positing that an original theology of an original 'incomplete' composition was then modified by the redactions that completed Amos, resulting in a 'completed theology,' which (for some scholars) results in the existence of multiple theologies in Amos.

The ramifications of such a scenario involve inconsistencies of theology from a canonical perspective, which open the entire Scripture and (of the utmost importance) the God, of whom Scripture reveals, to questions regarding historical, literary, and theological integrity. If the claims of those who suggest that an editorial process for the composition of Amos are true, then the interpretation of the theology of Scripture becomes a question of pre- or post-redaction. For example, the resulting theology that was true about God pre-redaction is not necessarily true about God after the redaction. Because of the influence of DtrH, this scenario applies to much of Scripture and creates an issue regarding the reliability of Scripture in communicating a consistent and coherent revelation about God.

Of particular interest are the three hymns or doxologies in Amos, found in Amos 4:13, 5:8-9, and 9:5-6. These portions of Amos have been presumed to be part of the later redactions. Reasons for this assertion include the supposed intrusive nature of these hymnic elements and

their awkward placement into the structure and thematic flow of Amos to the claim that the hymns contain later theology from their supposed cultic source in Judah. The absence of these hymns in a hypothetical 'original composition' would result in a different message to a different audience than that of the redactor's audience receiving a message including an interpolation of hymns. There seem to be, however, clear textual clues within Amos, along with supporting evidence from a contextual standpoint biblically and culturally, that suggest these fragments to be an intentional and integral part of a compositional strategy attributed to the prophet himself.

The purpose of this study is to demonstrate the authenticity and functionality of the hymnic elements within the book of Amos to its original composition and overarching, unified theological message. As opposed to a multi-layered redaction process, which would result in fluctuating focuses for Amos, this study argues that the function of the hymnic fragments in Amos suggests a unified composition and a united theology as directed by the prophet's compositional strategy.

For this dissertation it will be important to analyze the following areas: First, this dissertation will examine the three hymnic fragments in Amos and their functionality within the composition, determining if there is continuity in function within the book of Amos and an apparent compositional strategy. The goal of this portion will be to argue for the originality and authenticity of the hymnic elements within Amos's original composition. This study will suggest that each hymnic element functions as part of its arrangement and placement within the text, adding to the overall unity of Amos's message. Second, this study will review instances of the use of hymnic language in three different areas: Old Testament narratives and comparative extrabiblical literature, the Prophets' use of the Psalter, and the New Testament's application of hymns. The study of these areas aims to establish the use of hymnic language as a regular and

acceptable practice within the context of the Ancient Near East literary culture and the composition of Scripture to further indicate the authentic nature of the hymnic fragments to the original composition of Amos. After these areas have been reviewed, a section on the compositional strategy will consider the literary and theological implications of Amos's use of the hymns. This section will attempt to engage the literary and theological contexts of the hymns in Amos to discover an apparent compositional strategy from the prophet. Finally, this dissertation will end with an overview and synthesis of the research conducted, reflecting on the conclusions reached as a result of this study, the implications for the function of hymnic elements in Amos and other parts of Scripture, and other reflections that may arise.

Chapter 1: Introduction and Research Proposal

Introduction

The book of the prophet Amos boasts an embarrassment of riches when it comes to the secondary resources and scholastic ventures dedicated to its composition. As one of the first writing prophets and the perceived relevance of its social message throughout the ages, Amos tends to garner the most attention out of the Twelve from scholars at all ends of the theological spectrum.[1] Some have sought complex answers to what seems to be a complex composition. Others have focused on themes and structures to give shape to the overarching message. Yet, for most scholars of Amos, the argument for a redactive process is seen as most likely accurate and essential for Amos's composition to have arrived in its completed and modern state.

There are a few issues with this line of reasoning, which will be discussed throughout this chapter. The issue at hand is that the argument for redaction argues that the words found in the book of Amos, including some theologically important excerpts, do not all belong to the prophet himself but to redactors. This creates a myriad of complications theologically from both historical and literary elements of Amos, which will be discussed at length later. What is most important for the discussion of our research here, however, is to examine the evidence available in the text of Amos that argues for the attribution of the words of Amos and the composition of the text of Amos to the prophet himself.[2]

One such literary device that may add weight to this position is the use of hymnic language in the book of Amos, to which the primary focus of this paper will be given. The

[1] M. Daniel Carroll R., "Amos," in *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible: Joel, Amos, Obadiah*, by Anthony Gelston and M. Daniel Carroll R. (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2003), 5.

[2] Theoretically, this may also apply to the original composer of Amos, who would have been a contemporary of Amos, a disciple of his with direct access to the prophet.

hymns found in Amos 4:12, 5:8-9, and 9:5-6, often presumed to be late additions by proponents of redaction, can be argued to have a purpose specific to the original audience that could only find consistency with the text if they were attributed to Amos's original composition. An examination of the hymnic elements of Amos and the role of hymnic language throughout Scripture suggest that the hymns are not only part of the original composition of Amos, but that Amos can reasonably be attributed to the prophet because of the function and originality of the hymnic elements in the Amos corpus. What develops from this venture for veracity, however, is the recognition of a compositional strategy employed by the prophet that has literary and theological implications regarding the use of hymns in the book of Amos. Not only do these implications confirm a unified composition of Amos, but these implications also reveal an intentional approach by the prophet to utilize the hymns as a major component of his message.

In this introductory chapter, it is important to briefly review the larger scope of scholarship on Amos regarding its composition, where one group argues for an editorial process behind the current form of Amos, and the other group asserts the position of attribution of the text to the prophet. A literary and historical introduction to Amos will help to shape the background of this dissertation, followed by the close of this chapter, which will provide the research proposal and preview the stages in which the research will be explored.

Survey of Scholarship on the Composition of Amos

The Product of an Editorial Process

The theory of redaction in Amos has roots in the mid-twentieth century when Martin Noth's theory of a unified Deuteronomistic History (DtrH for short) heavily impacted the

modern approach to Old Testament biblical scholarship.[3] Noth believed that a single author (a Deuteronomist) had composed the literature of Deuteronomy to 2 Kings (commonly known as the Former Prophets) in an editorial process that took place during the exile.[4] The shared themes, language, and the focus on the extended history of Israel convinced Noth that the Deuteronomist, who would have been a Babylonian exile, had access to the oral and written traditions of Israel and Judah and had forged these traditions into a unified work.[5] Noth's view countered the traditional explanation for the composition of the Former Prophets, characterized as "a haphazard product of collation of independent traditions."[6]

Noth proposed that the Deuteronomist sought to create an etiology of destruction, explaining that Israel's demise was due to its constant rebellion against the warnings given by Moses in Deuteronomy. Hans Walter Wolff, however, asserted that while the DtrH was written to create an etiology, the explanation was not one of destruction but one of repentance and hope.[7] This understanding of the DtrH etiology spills over into Wolff's understanding of Amos's composition.

[3] Steven L. McKenzie, "Chapter 2: The Works behind the Historical Books," in *Introduction to the Historical Books: Strategies for Reading* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 2010), 14.

[4] Martin Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien*, 2nd ed. (Tübingen, 1957), 19.

[5] McKenzie, "Chapter 2: The Works behind the Historical Books," 15.

[6] C.E. Shepherd, "Deuteronomistic History," in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

[7] Hans Walter Wolff, "The Kerygma of the Deuteronomic Historical Work," in *The Vitality of Old Testament Traditions*, ed. Walter Brueggemann and Hans Walter Wolff, 2nd ed. (Atlanta, GA: John Knox, 1982), 83–100.

Concerning the composition of Amos, Wolff is recognized by scholars as a foundational voice in the redaction conversation. In his proposal, Wolff argues for a six-stage redaction process.[8] A summary of the stages are as follows:

1) Chapters 3-6 contain an original collection of the words of Amos.
2) The Oracles against Damascus, Gaza, Ammon, Moab, and Israel and the five visions were added later in Amos's ministry.
3) The account of Amos's interaction with Amaziah, and some minor sections, were added by a "school of Amos," disciples who exhibited a close affinity with the language of Amos already compiled in the previous two stages and added this account considering the Assyrian incursions.
4) A Josianic redaction that added the condemnation of Bethel (3:14b; 5:4b, 6), the image of divine wrath stemming from Jerusalem (1:2), the recollection of Israel's unfaithfulness (4:6-12), and all three hymnic sections.
5) An exilic DtrH redaction that appended sections for Judah's judgment (2:4-5; 3:1; 6:1), oracles against Edom and Tyre, salvation-history material (2:10-12; 5:25-26), and passages concerning the prophets (2:11-12; 3:7).
6) A postexilic redaction of eschatological blessing (9:11-15).

Stages 4-6 reflect the influence of DtrH etiology on Wolff's assessment. The rationale for these stages of redaction can be attributed to what Wolff defines as language that correlates with historical events in Israel's history that occur after Amos's ministry and not with the original

[8] Hans Walter Wolff, Waldemar Janzen, and Charles A. Muenchow, "Introduction," in *Joel and Amos*, ed. S. Dean McBride (1517 Media, 1977), 106–13.

corpus of Amos's message nor the language of the school of Amos regarding Assyrian engagements with the Northern Kingdom.

Wolff believes that DtrH makes use of popular traditions about Amos and adds certain layers to express the events occurring at the time surrounding those stages of redaction.[9] His work is foundational to the view of an editorial process in the composition of Amos, as recent redaction approaches to Amos have applied intertextual studies, literary approaches, and modern historical data to present newer arguments that resemble (and even amend) Wolff's original six-stage redaction.[10]

Jorg Jeremias also ascribes to the theory of an editorial process for Amos, sharing some views with Wolff, but also presenting a few variations since Jeremias sought the original message of the prophet under the layers of later redaction. Jeremias posits that the original message of Amos was for a specific audience, but that it was also "written down and at the same time continually updated on the basis of its meaning for an ever new and changing present."[11] That is to say the original message of Amos fit its original audience, but it did not apply to new audiences, which necessitated updating and redaction to either keep Amos relevant or to use Amos's name to legitimize a new message in a new context.

Jeremias argues for four editions of composition:

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[9] Wolff cites events such as King Josiah's destruction of the sanctuary of Bethel as a historical event following the time of Amos by a century that was expressed in the fourth stage of redaction. There are also assertions Wolff makes about the inclusion of the hymnic portions as they are related to Josiah's actions with Bethel, which will be discussed later in this paper. See Wolff, "Introduction" in *Joel and Amos*, 111.

[10] Coote moves from six stages of redaction to three: 1) the words of Amos against Samaria in the 8th-century, 2) a Josianic addition after the destruction of Bethel in the 7th-century, 3) Some of the Oracles against the Nations and the eschatological blessing added after the destruction of Jerusalem in the 6th-century. Robert B Coote, *Amos among the Prophets: Composition and Theology* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2005), 1–10.

[11] Jorg Jeremias, *The Book of Amos: A Commentary*, 1st American., Book, Whole (Louisville, Ky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 5–6.

1) The earliest composition of Amos contained the oracles against the nations in chapters 1-2 and the visions found in Amos 7-9, with the reasoning that these sections are thematically and structurally linked, as both sections feature five strophes each, with each section containing two strophic pairs followed by a concluding strophe of intensification.
2) A Josianic redaction of the seventh century, adding passages that condemned Israel and affirmed Josiah's reform efforts in Judah (2:8; 3:3‑8; 6:8‑10; 7:9, 10‑17; 8:3, 4‑7, 9‑10).
3) An exilic redaction after the fall of Jerusalem that added a DtrH layer, which substantiated the guilt of the people of God in the history of salvation, and a religious/liturgical layer, which sought to entice Israel to return to God through mentions of theological leitmotifs from exilic services of penance.[12]
4) A post-exilic redaction offered a final word of hope for the remnant of Israel and a connection to the adjacent books of the Twelve (Joel and Obadiah).

Jeremias posits that the composition of Amos is artistic, with the redactors influencing the text by a few different methods. Some of these include expanding original sayings directed toward specific people groups so that they may apply to the people of God as a whole, employing language similar to that of Hosea to create a connected message against Samaria, and reworking the older sayings of Amos to fit the theological issues of Judah pre- and post-fall.[13]

Tchavdar Hadjiev, whose contemporary work on the Old Testament prophets is well-respected, also argues for an editorial composition of Amos, but with fewer iterations than most.

[12] Jeremias claims that the hymns are added in this layer of redaction and that their function is one of praising God's creative power to point the exiles to repentance. According to Jeremias, Amos 4:6-13 is modeled after an exilic worship liturgy (cf. 1 Kings 8:30ff). Jeremias, *The Book of Amos: A Commentary*, 88.

[13] Jeremias, *The Book of Amos: A Commentary*, 6–7.

Hadjiev offers a "Two Scrolls Proposal" for Amos's composition, with some minor additions to the final edition. These scrolls, Hadjiev theorizes, were essentially collections of oracles that were self-contained compositions that were edited and combined to construct Amos. Hadjiev proposes that Amos 4:1-6:7 was originally a stand-alone literary work called the "Repentance Scroll." He suggests that its thematic elements regarding repentance form a hypothetical link to two separate historical events (the fall of Samaria in 722 B.C. and the failed siege of Sennacherib in 701 B.C.), respectively responsible for its initial form containing Amos 4:1-6:7 and its eventual revision, which added the rest of Amos 3 and 6.[14]

Hadjiev hypothesizes that a second scroll, the "Polemic Scroll," was also used to compose Amos. This scroll contained the "Oracles Against the Nations" along with the five visions in Amos 7-9, and its composition would have predated the invasion of Assyria. Carroll R. asserts that this means both scrolls would have contained material that could be attributed to the prophet Amos himself.[15] How much of the final scrolls would contain his words could not be known since the scrolls would hypothetically be edited by a redactor. According to Hadjiev, the combination of these scrolls would have taken place in 7th-century Judah by a redactor who would have wanted to use Amos in the context of worship, which Hadjiev identifies as a 'Liturgical Composition', with a final redaction occurring during the exilic period in Judah, when several passages were added to make sense of Judah's current situation.[16]

[14] Tchavdar S. Hadjiev, *The Composition and Redaction of the Book of Amos*, Book, Whole (New York;Berlin; De Gruyter, 2009), 393:179–98. Hadjiev speculates that the redactor of the Repentance Scroll would have obviously written after 722 B.C., but could have also written in 701 B.C. to address the feelings of euphoria and confidence that would have surrounded Sennacherib's failure, but these feelings would also be misplaced as they would have inflated the egos of the ruling class as opposed to humbling them.

[15] M. Daniel Carroll R., *The Book of Amos* (Chicago, IL: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2020), 49.

[16] Hadjiev, *The Composition and Redaction of the Book of Amos*, 393:199.

These three scholars are highly respected in Amos studies. Yet, there are some significant questions raised regarding the proposals by other scholars and even by the scholars themselves. John Bright critiques Wolff's proposal of multilayer redaction, questioning whether there are any tools that could differentiate if the complexities in Amos's composition belonged to a redactor or to the prophet himself.[17] Wolff himself shows the hypothetical nature in claiming that nowhere in Amos does the prophet offer hope of salvation or redemption—it is only the hands of later redactors who add 5:6 and 14 to shed a glimmer of light on the prophet's somber message.[18] Jeremias concedes that the recovery of Amos's message can only be achieved through a complicated, hypothetical reconstruction, which may have more accuracy describing the process of the redaction theories of Amos's composition than the actual historical composition of Amos.[19] While Hadjiev seeks to make textual connections in Amos with various events in Israel's history to argue for the Two Scroll composition of Amos, Hadjiev himself admits that the nature of his proposed reconstructions is "highly hypothetical."[20]

The admission of "hypothetical foundations" seems to be a common thread amongst proposals for an editorial process of Amos. In fact, it is a thread that has not gone unnoticed by Amos scholars. Shalom Paul states:

> Almost all of the arguments for later interpolations and redactions, including a Deuteronomistic one, are shown to be based on fragile and inconclusive evidence. When each case is examined and analyzed on its own, without preconceived conjectures and unsupported hypotheses, the book in its entirety (with one or two minor exceptions) can

[17] John Bright, "Book Review: A New View of Amos," *Interpretation* 25.3 (1971): 357.

[18] Wolff, Janzen, and Muenchow, "Introduction," 103.

[19] Jeremias, *The Book of Amos: A Commentary*, 6.

[20] Hadjiev, *The Composition and Redaction of the Book of Amos*, 393:208.

> be reclaimed for its rightful author, the prophet Amos. The results of the investigation support the integrity of the book.[21]

Though some assumptions may need to be made about minor aspects of the composition of any biblical book based on honest textual analyses, the proposals that vie for the legitimacy of an expansive editorial process of Amos not only struggle with improbable plausibility, but these proposals also create theological issues regarding the message of Amos, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

The Argument for Attribution to Amos

While the positions of Wolff, Jeremias, and Hadjiev are popular regarding Amos's composition, there are contrary arguments for attribution of Amos's composition to the prophet himself.[22] Scholars who affirm Amos as the source of the material in the book of Amos use two main approaches to support their claims. The first is the biographical argument, which connects the contents and the structure of the book of Amos with the events in the life of the prophet. John D.W. Watts proposes a biographical reconstruction of Amos's ministry according to the progression of visions that begin in chapter 7.

Watts argues that the first three visions characterize Amos's ministry from the beginning to its end in Bethel with Amaziah—a ministry conducted with the hope that Israel would repent—while the fourth and fifth visions confirm Israel's judgment and doom.[23] In Watts's

[21] Shalom M. Paul, "Introduction," in *Amos*, ed. Frank Moore Cross, A Commentary on the Book of Amos (Minneapolis, MN: 1517 Media, 1991), 6, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvb936pp.7.

[22] There are notable variations amongst these scholars regarding their theories on the composition of Amos. Yet, they are united in assuming that the corpus of Amos is the result of multiple redactions and cannot be attributed to the prophet himself.

[23] John D. W. Watts, *Vision and Prophecy in Amos*, Expanded anniversary ed. (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1997), 1–7. According to Würthwein, the visions also trace the progression of Amos from a

proposal, the first vision has no direct correlation in the text of Amos since it depicts Amos's first period of ministry. The second vision, however, depicts Amos's second period of ministry, which would have included Amos delivering the Oracles Against the Nations in Amos 1-2. The third vision, which is directed against the monarchy, matches the themes of Amos's third period of ministry, captured in the words of Amos 4-6 aimed specifically against the monarchy. The fourth and fifth visions would reflect Amos's interaction with Amaziah, where Amos would announce God's inescapable judgment of Israel and the war that was to engulf the kingdom.[24]

Francis I. Andersen and David Noel Freedman also assert that the majority of Amos's composition belongs to either the prophet himself or a close associate due to the seemingly unorganized nature of the final product.[25] They, like Watts, offer a theory that the composition of Amos revolves around a four-phase ministry of the prophet as expressed in the Visions:

1) Amos was called to prophesy to the Northern Kingdom and at that time received Visions 1 and 2; Amos then delivered exhortations to repentance seen in Amos 5 and 6, but Israel did not repent—not even after the plagues as reported in Amos 4.
2) Visions 3 and 4 revealed the consequences of Israel's disobedience, which Amos pronounced in the Oracles Against the Nations in Amos 1-2.
3) Amaziah's displeasure at these prophecies resulted in Amos's expulsion from Israel, which resulted in Vision 5 and its threats of a completed destruction in Amos 9.

Heilsnabi to a prophet of doom. Ernst Würthwein, "Amos-Studien," *Zeitschrift Für Die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 62. Jahresband (1950): 10–52.

[24] Watts, *Vision and Prophecy in Amos*, 4–5.

[25] Francis I. Andersen, David Noel Freedman, and Amos, *Amos: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Yale Bible 24A (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2008), 9–10.

4) The hope of salvation for the immediate future was lost, but the hope for the indeterminate future was presented, though with more vague terms and details.[26]

While the explanations of Watts, Andersen, and Freedman draw some interesting connections between their theories and the text, the biographical reconstruction theories fall into the same logical pitfall as those who argue for the redaction of Amos in that both approaches rely on highly speculative events to qualify their theories. The attempts to recreate Amos's ministry career without any solid textual evidence generate more problems than answers for the composition of Amos.

While the first approach for attribution to Amos may share in hypotheticals with redaction theory, the second approach relies more on history to establish a contextual background to the book. Shalom Paul uses the contextual approach to explain the content of Amos in this manner. In dealing with the opposing view, Paul questions the veracity of the redaction methods proposed by Wolff, stating that the fragile foundations and inconclusive evidence of redaction claims point the reader back to the rightful author of the book, the prophet himself.[27]

Paul argues that Amos's composition is rooted in earlier traditions and is well organized in the style of common literary genres.[28] While other commentators may take the organization of Amos to be evidence of redaction by applying modern conventions of form criticism, Paul provides literary criteria from ANE works contemporary to Amos's 8th-century dating that

[26] Andersen, Freedman, and Amos, *Amos*, 8.

[27] Paul, "Introduction," 6. This does not rule out the possibility that there were others who compiled Amos (scribes connected to the prophet, his disciples, etc.). It does, however, argue for the words of the Book of Amos belonging to the prophet and not to a later redactor or series of editorial boards throughout time.

[28] Paul, "Introduction," 6.

demonstrate the basic unity and originality of the composition of Amos.[29] Rather than assuming the content is the work of later redactors seeking to fit the themes of their time, Paul notes the geo-political turmoil that was brewing in the time of Jeroboam II, coupled with the boundless optimism that blinded Israel's leaders to their serious state of moral decay that was undermining Israel's superficial successes.[30] The historical events surrounding Israel during Amos's supposed ministry are enough to support a contextual approach to the composition of Amos.

John H. Hayes argues for Amos's composition to have taken place during the Northern Kingdom's political tensions with Syria, making historical sense of the composition of Amos within the 8th-century.[31] According to Hayes, the specific historical event influencing Amos's preaching is the political unrest brewing in the Northern Kingdom under Jeroboam II's reign due to the king's pro-Assyrian foreign policy. Hayes notes that Amos's distinctiveness "probably lies in his proclamation of a rapidly approaching disaster" that would signify the arrival of God's judgment on the rulers of Israel.[32] The historical activity surrounding Amos in 8th-century Israel is enough for Hayes to conclude that composition of Amos can be attributed to the prophet.

Marvin Sweeney asserts that an 8th-century composition fits with Amos's Judean identity and the socio-economic relationship between Judah and Israel during this period. Sweeney asserts that Amos speaks on behalf of his nation's interests and that his Judean partisanship

[29] For an extensive study of the literary forms of the ANE that argue for the unity and originality of Amos's literary composition, see Paul, "Introduction," 17-30.

[30] Paul, "Introduction," 2.

[31] John H. Hayes, *Amos: The Eighth-Century Prophet: His Times and His Preaching* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1988), 18–25.

[32] Hayes, *Amos*, 38.

permeates the entire book [33] While he does leave the possibility of a later redaction of Amos 2:4-5 to a Josianic redactor, Sweeney also acknowledges that Amos including the oracle concerning Judah would make "a great deal of sense."[34]

M. Daniel Carroll R. states that both Hayes and Sweeney have areas of issue on certain details, such as Hayes's hypothesis not finding support (possibly in reference to his theory on political unrest caused by a shadow monarchy led by Pekah) and Sweeney's ideas regarding Josianic redaction.[35] Yet, Carroll R. does state that the combination of observations made in these two studies, along with the comprehensive research provided by Paul, present very strong cases for the historical credibility and integrity of the book of Amos.[36]

With both the editorial and attribution approaches in view, it seems that the editorial perspective leans heavily on hypotheticals while the contextual approach for the attribution of Amos to the prophet seeks to connect historical contexts to the contents of the text. Based on this assessment, the proposal of this paper will ground itself in the foundations laid by the contextual approach advanced by Paul. The next step is to review the current scholarship on the hymnic fragments in Amos.

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[33] Marvin A. Sweeney et al., *Berit Olam: The Twelve Prophets: Volume 1: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah*, vol. Vol. 1 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000), 219. Cf. Wolff, Janzen, and Muenchow, "Introduction," 111-113.

[34] Sweeney et al., *Berit Olam: The Twelve Prophets: Volume 1: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah*, Vol. 1:230.

[35] Carroll R., *The Book of Amos*, 57.

[36] Carroll R., *The Book of Amos*, 57.

Historical Analysis

The details of the historical Amos garner much less debate than the composition of the book that takes his name. Most scholars agree that Amos prophesied in the middle of the 8th-century B.C. during the reign of Uzziah in Judah and Pekah in Israel. The superscription in Amos 1:1 dates the prophet's ministry between the reigns of Uzziah of Judah and Jeroboam II of Israel. Amos 1:1 also lists Amos the prophet as a man from the village of Tekoa in the southern kingdom of Judah, though his recorded ministry would not be to his own people in the south. The book of Amos records the prophet's ministry in the Northern Kingdom of Samaria—a ministry that indicts the Northern Kingdom for their injustice, indulgence, and false piety. These acts had a visible connection to the rampant cultic activity that had permeated the fabric of the northern culture, which was the focus of Amos's case against Israel. Amos's commission to the Northern Kingdom would have intensified his exchanges with those in Israel due to his identity as one from Tekoa in Judah.[37]

Other particulars about the prophet's personal details are not as readily available from the text. The prophet describes himself in the text as a shepherd, a cattleman, and a dresser of figs, but there is no mention of his family or his history, though in his exchange with Amaziah, Amos does state that he is not a son of a prophet (7:14). In that same verse, Amos also states he "was no prophet." Rather than stating he was not a prophet and instead just a man sent by God,

[37] Elaine A. Phillips, "Book of Amos, Critical Issues," in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016). Though there is no explicit reference to the prophet Amos by name in the historical books of the Tanakh, a curious mention of an unnamed prophet who was sent by God to declare His judgment upon Jeroboam appears in 1 Kings 13. Whether this was Amos or a prophet who preceded him is unknown.

Phillips clarifies that Amos's statement has nonverbal clauses that allude to Amos's role changing once God had called him from being a herdsman to becoming a prophet.[38]

Some scholars and exegetes have drawn the conclusion that Amos was poor due to his own descriptions of himself as a shepherd (7:14) and his harsh criticisms of the wealthy.[39] Yet, Auld points out that the term used for Amos' occupation נֹקֵד differs greatly from the typical word for shepherd .רֹעֶה[40] The only other appearance of this word in the Old Testament is in reference to the king of Moab, who is described as a wealthy breeder of sheep (2 Kings 3:4). Scholarly circles are undecided about this aspect of Amos's identity, whether he is a poor shepherd/migrant worker or a statesman with knowledge of wealth and power that has not been corrupted as is seen in Northern Israel.

In either case, the historical backdrop of the Book of Amos displays a social and spiritual climate that is filled with corruption. The text of Amos reveals that there is great moral decay within the Northern Kingdom, which drives Amos' call to moral obedience. One geographical factor was the Northern Kingdom's fertile landscape within the Jezreel Valley and other surrounding areas within the northern part of Israel. While certain areas of the ANE struggled with an arid and dry climate, the geographical setting of the Northern Kingdom allowed them to enjoy many economic benefits and to produce a large volume of exports.

In Amos 4:1, Amos references Bashan, which had been the setting of ancient volcanic eruptions which provided basalt rock that, when weathered, became rich grey-black soil, fertile

[38] Phillips, "Book of Amos, Critical Issues."

[39] Douglas Mangum, "Book of Amos," in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

[40] A. Graeme Auld, *Amos* (London, UK: T&T Clark, 1995), 39.

for growth.[41] Various surrounding areas contained unweathered basalt rock, which created boulders but did not aid growth. The Northern Kingdom, however, with its control over the northern Transjordan, was able to grow a massive agricultural industry. The Northern Kingdom's possession of physical abundance, coupled with its lust for financial abundance, caused them to make perilous ties to other nations at the expense of their loyalty to God and their responsibility to their own people.

Literary Analysis

From a literary standpoint, the book of Amos is immersed in rhetorical devices, vivid imagery, characterization, and poetic elements. Because of the riches found in this one book, it is imperative to balance examination and appreciation for the literary features so as not to lose sight of the connected and united flow of Amos. Amos's use of language, characterization, scenes, point of view, and plot are intentional and evident throughout the corpus. These pieces of Amos's overall composition animate his urgent and grave message, while introducing the reader to the character of the messenger, his audience, and his Master with intense flair.

While there are a few exceptions amongst scholars, the literary structure of Amos is commonly accepted to have three main sections with an introductory preface including the superscription (1:1-2): The Oracles against the Nations (1:3-2:16), The Words of God and the Prophet to Israel (3:1-6:14), and Visions of Israel's Future (7:1-9:15).[42] A more detailed outline from Carroll R. can be seen below:

I. Preface (1:1‑2)
    A. Superscription (1:1)
    B. Summary Oracle (1:2)

[41] Yohanan Aharoni, *The Land of the Bible: A Historical Geography*, 2nd Edition, rev.enl. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1979), 13.

[42] Carroll R., *The Book of Amos*, 62.

II. The Oracles against the Nations (1:3‑2:16)
    A. Oracle against Damascus (1:3‑5)
    B. Oracle against Philistia (1:6‑8)
    C. Oracle against Tyre (1:9‑10)
    D. Oracle against Edom (1:11‑12)
    E. Oracle against Ammon (1:13‑15)
    F. Oracle against Moab (2:1‑3)
    G. Oracle against Judah (2:4‑5)
    H. Oracle against Israel (2:6‑16)

III. The Words of God and the Prophet to Israel (3:1‑6:14)
    A. Divine Exposure of Israel’ s Guilt (3:1‑4:13)
        1. Two Tales of One City (3:1‑4:3)
        2. Love Can Be Blind (4:4‑13)
    B. Prophetic Lament for the Death of Israel (5:1‑6:14)
        1. What’s in a Name? (5:1‑17)
        2. The Delusion of Religion (5:18‑27)
        3. The Delusion of Power (6:1‑14)

IV. Visions of Israel’s Future (7:1‑9:15)
    A. Two Visions of Natural Disaster (7:1‑6)
    B. A Vision of Military Defeat (7:7‑17)
        1. Vision: Tin Fortresses (7:7‑9)
        2. Expansion: The Confrontation at Bethel (7:10‑17)
    C. A Vision of Religious Failure (8:1‑14)
        1. Vision: A Basket of Disaster (8:1‑3)
        2. Expansion: The Cost of Religious Perversion (8:4‑14)
    D. A Vision of Divine Sovereignty in Judgment (9:1‑15)
        1. Vision: The Shaking of the Temple (9:1‑6)
        2. Expansion: The Hope beyond the Ruins (9:7‑15)[43]

S. R. Driver notes a literary plan accompanies each section. The first section introduces the theme of Amos, which is judgment upon Israel; the second section exposes the Northern Kingdom’s false sense of security; and the third section reinforces the theme of God’s judgment

[43] Carroll R., *The Book of Amos*, 64–65.

upon Israel.[44] These themes follow a logical sequence in communicating Amos's overall call to Israel to repent. Whereas some scholars who hold to redaction assert that parts of the corpus are directed to a later Judean audience, the literary organization and flow of Amos suggests a Samarian focus.

Amos also employs patterns familiar to ANE wisdom literature, such as pentads and heptads. Gese notes Amos's sets of five in reference to the five visions and the fivefold refrain in 4:6-11, with the purpose of each stage of the pentad being that of progressive intensification.[45] James Limburg notes that the series of sevens in each major segment of Amos cannot be ignored as coincidental, but that their implementation of "divine speech formulas" has theological and organizational significance.[46]

Primary to Amos's literary fabric is the presence of rhetorical devices. Karl Möller argues that Amos employs deliberative rhetoric and numerous other literary devices to convince Israel about the best course of action for the future. Möller employs a five-step approach to examine the rhetoric of Amos, in identifying rhetorical units, the rhetorical situation, the rhetorical genre, the rhetorical strategy, and finally, the rhetorical effectiveness of its application. [47] While it is safe to say that the initial perlocutionary goals of the prophet were not met in Israel, the book of

[44] S. R. Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, Meridian Books Edition, 7th printing. (Cleveland, OH: The World Publishing Company, 1963), 314–16.

[45] H. Gese, "Komposition Bei Amos," in *Congress Volume Vienne* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 1980), 74–95. Gese also includes the OAN as part of the pentad, presuming that the Oracles against Tyre, Edom, and Judah are the work of redactors.

[46] James Limburg, "Sevenfold Structures in the Book of Amos," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 106.2 (1987): 218–20, https://doi.org/10.2307/3260633.

[47] Karl Möller, *A Prophet in Debate: The Rhetoric of Persuasion in the Book of Amos*, Book, Whole (New York; London; Sheffield Academic Press, 2003), 372.;372;39–40.

Amos, shaped by the prophet's literary appeals and rhetorical aims, stands as a testimony to later generations of the absolute folly of refusing to heed God's call to repentance.

Some scholars claim that the literary complexities of the book, often cited as evidence for redaction, present (instead) a robust argument for attribution to the prophet himself. Carroll R. states that the repetition of themes and vocabulary is widespread in the text corpus, creating a "literary tapestry of consummate skill," which does not rule out attribution to Amos unless one were to assert that the prophets were simply "incapable of sophisticated theological artistry."[48] If Amos, as Wolff asserts, is responsible for the OAN and chapters 3-6, both of which contain incredible literary facets, then it can also be assumed Amos is more than capable of composing the entire corpus.

Research Proposal

Responding to Redaction Arguments

Much of the running commentary in this introductory chapter has provided somewhat of a response to the redaction arguments on Amos, displaying openly the position this research finds its footing. Scholars, including the likes of Paul, Carroll R., and others to be mentioned, provide a strong overview for the position of attribution. Rather than rehashing those points from earlier, the remainder of this paper will address them in further detail, if necessary, further along in the following chapters.

One area, however, that needs to be addressed in regard to the redaction arguments of Amos is the theological implications those redaction proposals create for the corpus of Amos. If the original composition of Amos had been adjusted throughout the centuries to fit the context of

[48] Carroll R., *The Book of Amos*, 59.

changing audiences over two centuries, as redaction proponents suggest, this means that the theology of Amos's original composition needed to be adjusted to fit a different audience (from Samarian to Judean). Consequently, such an adjustment also alters the message of Amos, implying that redactors changed/edited the message God gave to His prophet in order to fit the cultural climate of the people of their time according to what they believed was pertinent in pre- and post-exilic Judah.

Theologically, this presents a problem for the way in which the text of Amos is viewed. Rather than being the message God gave to Amos to proclaim to Israel, the book of Amos becomes a text based on the words God gave to Amos and later adapted to fit a people outside of that context.[49] The inspiration and authenticity of God's Word, should the arguments for redaction of Amos be true, are brought into question in the case of Amos. Human agency becomes the focus as opposed to God's initial message to His originally intended audience having a canonical function for later generations. The tools at hand to argue for one composition of Amos are solid and sensible. Yet, an examination of the hymns and their function in the book of Amos may yield fruitful results to further reinforce Amos's role as the author of the book ascribed to him.

Dissertation Structure

The aim of this research, then, is to argue for the inclusion of the hymnic elements in a unified composition of Amos and to demonstrate their function toward the theological message of Amos. The chosen method of study for this paper will be the hermeneutical triad method, which uses an understanding of the historical setting and the literary context to grasp the

[49] Though the Southern Kingdom is not completely distant from the issues confronting the Northern Kingdom, the contents of the book of Amos have one initial audience to be the recipients of the prophet's perlocutionary pleas.

theological message of the passage.[50] It is this message that is of the utmost importance in biblical exposition, and it is this message that will shed light on the compositional strategy contained in Amos's corpus. Ultimately, this theological message determines the purpose of the components that lead to its revelation, which also means that if a historical or literary component that is present in our current text were to be a later addition, then, as a result the entire theological message would also change.

The first place to start will be in the book of Amos itself, examining the suitability of the hymns to their place in Amos's structure/story, along with their function in Amos's overarching message to Israel. Secondly, it will be important to examine the use of hymnic language throughout Israel's history and the history of its neighbors to show that the use of hymnic language would have been familiar in Amos's cultural, historical, and theological contexts. The next step will be to observe the use of hymnic language in the writings of the prophets and to consult the source material of much prophetic prose, the Psalms. The goal in this chapter will be to show how the practice of implementing hymns into prophetic speech is normal amongst the prophet's literary peers. Also contained in this section will be an analysis of the use of hymnic language in the New Testament. By comparing the use of hymns in the Epistles, the expected outcome is to show a parallel in presence and purpose of hymnic language in communicating God's Word to His people.

The anticipated outcome of this research is that these discussions will uncover what is already present in the text, which is a visible compositional strategy employed by the prophet Amos in his use of hymnic language. The literary and theological objectives demonstrated by the

[50] Andreas J. Köstenberger and Richard Duane Patterson, *Invitation to Biblical Interpretation: Exploring the Hermeneutical Triad of History, Literature, and Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2011).

prophet's compositional strategy reveal a purpose to each component of each part of Amos's corpus, especially the presence of the hymns. The implications of this outcome reveal that the use of hymnic language in Amos (and to a larger extent, the entire Scripture) are not simply section markers but are theological exclamation marks that work to underscore the prophet's overarching message.

The dissertation will close with an overview of the research conducted. The assertion of attribution to Amos is significant in that it clears any doubt about modified theologies in the text or untrustworthy portions of the Scripture. Another drawback of assuming modified theologies through late additions to the text of Amos is that the entire Scripture becomes open for debate as to which theology has been altered and therefore is relative and not necessary for the believer. Having researched evidence that suggests the texts of Scripture are reliable for placing one's faith is of extreme importance. Once the historical and literary aspects of hermeneutical study reveal the theological message of the hymnic elements in Amos, then a proper application of the text can be reached for the individual believer and the Body of Christ as a whole.

Chapter 2: The Fit and Function of the Hymnic Fragments in Amos

A Survey on the Scholarship on the Hymnic Fragments of Amos

In the previous chapter, a survey of the scholarship on the composition of Amos provided a foundation for the proposal of this paper. Because the hymnic fragments of Amos are integral to this venture, a survey on the scholarship on the hymnic fragments of Amos is in order. While many of the positions taken on the hymnic fragments can find their roots in the larger bodies of argument regarding redaction or attribution, the reasonings behind these arguments and the evidence used to support the assertions made add to the overarching claims made in this chapter by highlighting the fit and function of the hymnic fragments in Amos. This chapter will examine whether the hymnic fragments are the result of patchwork or planned work, followed by a discussion on the functional and theological implications of the hymns as intentional parts of the original composition.

Post-Amos Compositions and Additions

It comes as no surprise that a majority of those who argue for an editorial process of Amos's composition would assume that the hymnic elements of Amos are late additions. Wolff claims a date of origin after the original Amos, most likely in the Josianic Age, with two main purposes. First, Wolff theorizes that the insertion of hymns at different points would create confusion amongst its original audience if the book of Amos was first transmitted orally.[51] Second, Wolff posits that the inclusion of the hymns provides Amos's threats of judgment (which precede each respective hymn) with a proper response.[52] Because Wolff assumes the inclusion of the hymns to have taken place after the historical Amos, Paas speculates Wolff's

[51] Wolff, Janzen, and Muenchow, "Introduction," 106.

[52] Wolff, Janzen, and Muenchow, "Introduction," 254–56.

opinion of the hymns as having very little significance to the composition and early redactional history, since Wolff reckons that the hymns contain an independent character, separate from the message of Amos.[53]

The form of the hymns is participial, which was used in the ANE to make theological claims about a deity.[54] Wolff's line of reasoning assumes that the hymns in Amos, which attribute to God the powers of creation over other gods who claim ownership, grew out of Israel's conflict with its cultural environment in preexilic times.[55] Such reasoning finds contention with commentators who claim that the cosmic eschatology and creation theology contained in these hymns are to be considered a later phenomenon.[56]

Reputable Old Testament scholar, Klaus Koch, theorizes along the same lines as Wolff. Koch asserts that there are four main sections in Amos's composition defined by the introductory and concluding formulae found in the passages (1-2; 3-4; 5:1-9:6; 9:7-15). Where Wolff considered the hymns to be late additions that respond to Amos's threats of judgment, Koch considered the hymns to be redactional clauses purposed only to mark divisions in Amos's progression.[57]

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[53] Stefan Paas, "Seeing and Singing: Visions and Hymns in the Book of Amos," *Vetus Testamentum* 52.2 (2002): 254.

[54] Frank Crüsemann, "Studien Zur Formgeschichte von Hymnus Und Danklied in Israel," *Wissenschaftliche Monographien Zum Alten Und Neuen Testament* 32 (1969): 86–95.

[55] Hans Walter Wolff, Waldemar Janzen, and Charles A. Muenchow, "A Reproach of the Cult Pilgrims and Its Later Interpretation," in *Joel and Amos*, ed. S. Dean McBride (1517 Media, 1977), 215–17, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvb9375w.21. Wolff later admits in the same section the difficulty of explaining how these hymns, which have preexilic motifs, could be part of a composition from a postexilic setting.

[56] John Barton, *The Theology of the Book of Amos*, Book, Whole (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 145–46.

[57] Klaus Koch, "Die Rolle Der Hymnischen Abschnitte in Der Komposition Des Amos-Buches," *Zeitschrift Für Die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 86.4 (1974): 504–37.

For Koch, the hymns function as structural markers rather than playing a rhetorical or theological role in the corpus. Paas notes that these views of Wolff and Koch have been shared amongst many Amos scholars, shifting the focus of the hymns to a more comprehensive one as to their role in the composition of Amos, negating any possibility that these hymns could have been utilized by the historical Amos.[58] Auld, however, offers a thorough critique of Koch's proposal:

> What does concern me is the suggestion that the editorial procedures being noticed were devised to take account of and to demonstrate recognition of breaks in the text inherited by these editors of Amos. If we have good textual evidence that some of these markers… were introduced quite late, we must at least ask ourselves how many more were added much later than the activity of Amos and his close circle, even when we have no such evidence.[59]

Commentators who hold to a post-Amos view of the inclusion of the hymns often find little value to their inclusion apart from structural uses—an explanation for their placement in the text that supports the theory of redaction in Amos. If, however, the hymns have a functional role beyond that of a structural marker, and instead have a rhetorical and theological purpose, then it seems natural to assume that the hymns were part of Amos's original messages to Israel, or, at the very least, part of his original and authentic composition of the book of Amos.

It must be acknowledged that a few of these commentators that the late additions of these hymns did have theological purposes. Brevard S. Childs suggests that the hymnic fragments are mere tools used by a redactor to support a specific theological focus.[60] Such reasoning, however, has theological implications that are quite problematic, which were discussed in the previous

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[58] Paas, "Seeing and Singing: Visions and Hymns in the Book of Amos," 255.

[59] Auld, *Amos*, 57.

[60] Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*, First American., Book, Whole (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1979), 405.

chapter. Childs's reasoning also does not explain why the prophet himself could not utilize these hymns to reinforce his own message. Calls for a late addition of the hymns rest on the already questionable grounds set by the argument for an editorial process of Amos. The hypotheticals of the latter do no favors to the reasonings of the former.

Included by Amos

Several scholars attribute the inclusion of the hymns to the prophet himself, citing no good evidence to the contrary despite the various explanations made to fit the hymnic elements within the arguments for redaction. While the evidence for original inclusion will be examined further in the chapter, the primary arguments assert that the hymns contain historical, functional, and theological appropriateness in line with the entire corpus of Amos.

Some commentators point to the Creation themes in the hymns and their underlying message of YHWH's supremacy over other gods, which, according to their reasoning, would have no place in the book of Amos if it were to be included in an 8th-century composition.[61] The assertion is that the Creation themes in the hymns point to a later, more developed theology that would have arisen during or after the exile. John Barton notes that the hymns celebrate YHWH as a cosmic deity who has the power to both create and destroy in the natural realm and political realm, which, Barton concludes, has theological assumptions of the Persian age.[62] Sigmund Mowinckel credits the influence of the concept of dualism found in Persian eschatology to have influenced postexilic redactors in developing a biblical dualism. Mowinckel states that while Persian eschatology emphasizes the conflict between good and evil, and man's ability to take sides and affect the outcome, DtrH redactors adapt this eschatology to view the world as God's

[61] Phillips, "Book of Amos, Critical Issues."

[62] Barton, *The Theology of the Book of Amos*, 145–46. Cf. Zechariah 8:11-13.

creation and the place where His will [shall] be done and His kingdom be manifested by His agency.[63]

This reasoning, however, is at odds with what Wolff posits as a difficulty in affirming a postexilic origin of these hymns. Wolff states that the participial cola are informed by a special hymnic tradition used "to celebrate the general activity of God in the world of nature and humanity," to which Wolff assumes is aimed at the issue of syncretism and Israel's idolatry of foreign gods.[64] Crüsemann notes the parallels found in Isaiah and in Job that reflect this tradition outside of Amos, both of which Wolff presumes to be redacted by DtrH.[65] This makes it difficult for Wolff to attribute the hymns to an original composition of Amos since idolatry of foreign gods does not seem to be an issue in the content of Amos's address to Israel. It is clear to Wolff, however, that the hymns used in Amos originated from preexilic times. But the issue, as Wolff explains, is how this type of hymn fits with the DtrH themes Wolff perceives to be in the book of Amos and, to a larger extent, how a postexilic addition of these hymns could fit with a preexilic origin of these hymns.

The answer to Wolff's conundrum could very well be that the preexilic origin of the hymns also points to a higher probability of a preexilic inclusion of the hymns. While this simple solution does not confirm an 8th-century inclusion of the hymns, assuming the hymns to be included prior to the exile would rule out the influence of Persian eschatology. C. Hassell Bullock notes that the theological climate of the 8th-century was "sufficiently adequate" for

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[63] Sigmund Mowinckel, *He That Cometh: The Messiah Concept in the Old Testament and Later Judaism*, Biblical Resource Series (Grand Rapids, Mich: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 2005), 264–65.

[64] Wolff, Janzen, and Muenchow, "A Reproach of the Cult Pilgrims and Its Later Interpretation," (ed. McBride), 217.

[65] Crüsemann, "Studien Zur Formgeschichte von Hymnus Und Danklied in Israel," 86–95.

Amos to laud YHWH as the Creator and Controller of the world.[66] Both Amos and Hosea, whose ministries ensue during the reign of Jeroboam II in the 8th-century, attest to this theological climate, as both prophets reference God's role in creation.[67] This assertion is, of course, contingent on the premise that both prophetic corpuses were composed in the 8th-century.

Yet, the research suggests this to be the case (for Amos, at least). Recent studies regarding religious life in the Northern Kingdom have shown undeniable evidence of "complex Yahwism," official and popular religion, and prophetic critique of the religious cult.[68] J. D. W. Watts concluded in an earlier study that a fully formed doctrine of "Jahweh as creator" was in effect prior to Amos, and that "monotheistic faith and expression" predate the 8th-century in Israel.[69] There is, then, strong reason and research to assume that the hymns in the Amos corpus are likely to have been part of its 8th-century composition.

Intrusive or Intentional?

Many commentators, however, have commented that the placement of the hymns is abrupt due to their style, content, and placement in the text. So, even if the hymns were an 8th-century B.C. or earlier work, their seemingly 'disruptive' presence in the text may allude to a

[66] C. Hassell Bullock, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Prophetic Books* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2007), 76.

[67] Amos's discussion of God as Creator seems to be limited to the hymns. Yet, His power over creation can be seen throughout Amos (4:7, 9-11; 7:1, 4; 8:9). Hosea also recognizes God as the only Creator of the universe and the only living God. See discussion in Michael Deroche, "The Reversal of Creation in Hosea," *Vetus Testamentum* 31.4 (1981): 405, https://doi.org/10.2307/1518396.

[68] M. Daniel Carroll R., *The Book of Amos* (Chicago, IL: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2020), 71–74; See also: Bill T. Arnold and Brent A. Strawn, eds., *The World around the Old Testament: The People and Places of the Ancient Near East* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2016); Jonathan S. Greer, John W. Hilber, and John H. Walton, eds., *Behind the Scenes of the Old Testament: Cultural, Social, and Historical Contexts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2018).

[69] Watts, *Vision and Prophecy in Amos*, 64.

later redaction or addition, as Wolff and company claim. In the following section, the hymnic portions of Amos will be examined within their context to determine whether they are intrusive and therefore are present as a result of a redactor, or if the text suggests the hymnic portions to be an intentional inclusion of the original composition.

The First Hymn: Amos 4:13

Those who vie for a redacted and/or layered composition of Amos claim that the hymnic fragments are late additions to the text based on the perceived disharmony with their respective surrounding contexts. Hadjiev is one such scholar, asserting that the style and content of the hymnic fragments cause these portions to stand out sharply from the rest of the text. The first hymn is used by Hadjiev to display its protrusion from the text, where he explains that Amos 4:13 has very little interplay with the plagues that are mentioned in 4:6-11, citing the lack of connection to the plagues recorded in YHWH's accusations against Israel and the elements of nature listed in the subsequent hymn.[70] The framing of these observations easily lends itself to the assumption that the first hymn has nothing to do with its surrounding context.

Yet, Hadjiev later points out that the correspondence between vv. 6-11 and the first hymn can be found in the connection between the fivefold repetition of the phrase 'Yet, you have not returned to Me," and the five participles in the first hymn.[71] These participles show the actions of YHWH in contrast to the inaction of Israel as they fail to respond with repentance to YHWH's discipline. The fivefold repetition of Israel's inaction acts as an indictment, which is then countered by the five participles in the hymn that illustrate the actions of the Creator, who comes to judge the nation with warfare. F. M. Cross, Jr. suggests that the name of YHWH is not only an

[70] Tchavdar S. Hadjiev, *The Composition and Redaction of the Book of Amos*, vol. 393, Book, Whole (New York; Berlin; De Gruyter, 2009), 129.

[71] Hadjiev, *The Composition and Redaction of the Book of Amos*, 393:129.

allusion to Creation, of which themes are abundant in the hymnic portions of Amos, but also represents holy war imagery.[72] This is relevant especially when referencing YHWH as 'the God of hosts' at the end of the hymn, since this divine title indicates His power over all His angelic armies.[73]

The view that Wolff purports, that the hymnic portions appear as a polemic against foreign gods, could argue for the first hymn being an intrusion to the text since the title 'Lord of hosts' was claimed to be used to combat alternative claims to superiority of gods of other ANE cults.[74] It would seem, as mentioned earlier, that Wolff is correct in saying this hymn is intrusive since Amos does not deal with idolatry of foreign gods. Yet, the inclusion of the hymn is meant to reveal to Israel exactly who they have rejected and who comes to meet them: the Creator of the earth and the Commander of the armies of heaven.

Köstenberger and Patterson note that announcements of judgment account for most Old Testament prophecy, which often begin with an accusation stating YHWH's charges, and end with the announcement of a specific judgment to be imposed.[75] The accusations in vv.6-11 ultimately lead to the judgment, which is Israel preparing to meet the God whose characteristics are described in the first hymn. While Hadjiev may consider the hymn to have little interplay with vv.6-11, the participles of the hymn suggest that the same God who sent the plagues to elicit

[72] Frank Moore Cross, "Yahweh and the God of the Patriarchs," *The Harvard Theological Review* 55.4 (1962): 225–59.

[73] Matthew J. McMains, "Hosts," in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

[74] Tim Meadowcroft, "Sovereign God or Paranoid Universe? The Lord of Hosts Is His Name.," *ERT* 27.2 (2003): 113–27; Gary V. Smith, "The Concept of God/the Gods as King in the Ancient Near East and the Bible.," *Trinity Journal* 3.1 (1982): 18–38.

[75] Köstenberger and Patterson, *Invitation to Biblical Interpretation*, 321.

Israel's repentance is the same God whom the hymn highlights as the One to bring Israel's judgment.

The first two participles mention the power of YHWH as the One who forms mountains and creates the wind. Commentators debate whether the רוּחַ refers to the wind or to the human spirit, though the context of the passage seems to imply that wind is the proper translation. Carroll R. states that the use of the mountain and the wind highlight YHWH's creation over the material and ephemeral and His unmatched strength.[76] Israel's complacency in their rejection of YHWH's numerous warnings will be met with YHWH's daunting power to destroy. While the Northern Kingdom may seek alliances with regional powers in part to secure themselves and their indulgent desires, they have broken the alliance with the ultimate power, YHWH, from whom no other power can save.

The third participle, which is central to the five-participle sequence, reveals that God has made known to Israel His complaint, so that Israel is without excuse regarding their impending judgment. While in the context of the hymn itself, this third clause may intend to praise God for His connection to mankind, the context of the hymn within the passage acts as a prosecution of Israel and their ignorance of God's word revealed to them.[77] Israel has no way to plea for offense without understanding or awareness—Israel has been willful in their sin and their refutation of God's threats.

The fourth participle presents God's power to make the dawn into darkness. Because the two nouns שַׁחַר and עֵיפָה sit next to each other in the clause, the literal translation is that God

[76] Carroll R., *The Book of Amos*, 248.

[77] There is much debate about this clause in the hymn surrounding God's declaration: what He declares and to whom, which goes beyond the scope of this paper. For more discussion on this clause of the first hymn, see Paul, "Introduction," 154.

"makes dawn darkness". While the Creation account, as Carroll R. rightly notes, recalls God creating light from out of the darkness, the third clause of the hymn praises God's ability to reverse the fundamental processes of nature. Carroll R. states the following:

> Yahweh cannot be manipulated by cultic fare, nor is he bound to the ideological commitments of the sanctuaries. He has established a natural order of things in the cosmos of which his moral demands are part; God is able to intervene in accordance with his will.[78]

Israel's cultic practices may seem right in their own eyes, but the indictments throughout Amos argue otherwise. The gap between Israel's idea of God and the reality of His identity mirrors the distance Israel's sin has placed between them and God, since, as the portion that precedes the first hymn outlines, Israel does not respond to His warnings and instead continues in the practices of its faulty religious ideology.

The fifth participle and its placement in the fourth clause, 'and treads on the high places of the earth', may also have intent towards Israel's empty worship of YHWH. Many commentators translate בָּמָה (high places) to mean the cultic sites mentioned throughout the Old Testament often used for worship of Canaanite deities.[79] These were treated in Scripture as unsanctioned places for worshipping God and were also places that Israelite kings would frequent to worship other gods (cf. 1 Kgs 11:7-11; 2 Kgs 23:8-9).[80] Because YHWH 'treads' on these places, this hymn may speak to God's displeasure with Israel's religion, possibly due to the fact that they worship God in ways He does not desire, which hearkens back to the high places

[78] Carroll R., *The Book of Amos*, 249.

[79] Koch, "Die Rolle Der Hymnischen Abschnitte in Der Komposition Des Amos-Buches," 509–13; Wolff, Janzen, and Muenchow, "A Reproach of the Cult Pilgrims and Its Later Interpretation," (ed. McBride), 224; Jeremias, *The Book of Amos: A Commentary*, 79.

[80] John T. Swann, "High Place," in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016). Worship of God was to be centralized at the place God had appointed for Israel—the Temple at Jerusalem (cf. 2 Chron. 3:1).

being unsanctioned for worship of YHWH. Amos 4:4-5 seem to signal this displeasure as YHWH mocks Israel's cultic practices, as He exhorts Israel sarcastically to enter its holy places and to continue in their transgressions, which He identifies as their religious rituals.

Walter Brueggemann links the hymn directly to Israel's covenant worship and posits that the purpose of vv.4-13 is that of a liturgy of covenant renewal. The structure, Brueggemann concludes, highlights the broken covenant in vv.4-5, followed by the judgment upon the broken covenant in vv.6-12b, the call to covenant renewal in v.12c, and praise for the covenant God found in vv.13's hymn.[81] A compelling argument arises from this analysis, as Brueggemann asserts the passage is not about repentance or judgment, but instead about the necessity of the covenant being renewed because of the character of the covenant God.[82]

While elements of covenant are part of this passage, it stands fair to reason that the progression of Amos directly before and after the first hymn seems to indicate that God comes not to renew the covenant but to fulfill the curses of breaking the covenant (cf. Amos 5:1-2, 16-17). In treaties that were made in the ANE, the suzerain would execute a covenant over his conquered vassal that would conclude with a litany of curses and blessings.[83] The covenant YHWH maintains with Israel also has curses and blessings (cf. Lev. 26:3-46; Deut. 28:1-68), and because Israel has broken its covenant with YHWH, the God of hosts comes to faithfully carry out the terms of the litany and curses (cf. Deut. 28:25)

[81] W. Brueggemann, "Amos IV 4-13 and Israel's Covenant Worship," *Vetus Testamentum* 15.1 (1965): 13, https://doi.org/10.2307/1516514. In Brueggemann's study on Amos 4, connections are made between the hymn in v.13 and YHWH's interaction with Israel at Mt. Sinai, which Brueggemann cites as the Sinai Theophany.

[82] Brueggemann, "Amos IV 4-13 and Israel's Covenant Worship," 13.

[83] Victor Harold Matthews and Don C. Benjamin, *Old Testament Parallels: Laws and Stories from the Ancient Near East*, Fully Revised and Expanded Fourth Edition. (New York: Paulist Press, 2016), 97.

Ultimately, the review above suggests that the first hymn is not intrusive to the text, but rather integral in pointing Israel to the Judge who comes to bring their judgment. Though the LORD has warned Israel about their estrangement from the covenant, they persist in their waywardness with misplaced assurance in their empty religious practices. The hymn in v.13 reveals to Israel their covenant God is the powerful Creator who has made His precepts known to them and is not bound by their insular perceptions of Him, but is revealed to be displeased with their religiosity, and is coming to wage war for YHWH is His name. Without the first hymn present, Israel is called to meet a God they believe they already know. The presence of the first hymn aides Israel in recognizing the character of the One true God, whom they claim to worship—the Creator who comes to destroy them for their transgressions against His covenant.

The Second Hymn: Amos 5:8-9

Some commentators have trouble identifying this passage as a literary unity, and the primary reason is the placement of the second hymn, although there are other reasons, which are heavily tinted with redaction perspectives. Wolff notes that the second hymn is in immediate proximity to the mention of Bethel in 5:4-6, which Wolff believes is part of the text as a look back on the past.[84] Jeremias believes that the entire unit of 5:1-17 belongs to an exilic redaction and, following a similar logic to that of Wolff, that the praise for God in the second hymn is directly inserted by a redactor as commentary in hindsight on the destruction of the Temple.[85] Absent from these reasonings is the consideration that the text could be a forthtelling look to Israel's future based on their rebellion against God. Present with it, however, remain the questions discussed earlier that argue against redaction and contend for attribution to Amos.

[84] Hans Walter Wolff, "Das Ende Des Heiligtums in Bethel," *Archäologie Und Altes Testament* (1970): 287–98.

[85] Jeremias, *The Book of Amos: A Commentary*, 78.

Regarding the placement of the hymn, however, there seems to be a considerable consensus amongst most scholars that it is out of place since Amos's arraignment of Israel begins in v.7 yet does not continue until v.10.[86] The majority of these scholars conclude that because the piece is syntactically unconnected to its context and breaks the flow of verse 7 and verses 10-13. Even the shift from cosmic imagery in verse 8 to historical judgments in verse 9 creates some tension in accepting the vv.8-9 as belonging together. There may, however, be reason to consider its apparent 'abruptness' as a function of the original design.

Thomas McComiskey acknowledges the discussion on the intrusive nature of the hymns, specifically the second one, but also opens the discussion on whether the intrusive element is a result of the author's style.[87] While most attribute the intrusiveness of the second hymn to the hand of a redactor, McComiskey notes that a similar passage in 6:9-10 that also qualifies as intrusive should be attributed to a later date on the same grounds as the second hymn, yet it is generally accepted by modern commentators as belonging to Amos.[88] Therefore, there is textual evidence that may suggest the writing style of Amos 'appears intrusive'. There must, however, be a reason for such a literary approach to strengthen the position of attribution to the prophet.

Hadjiev states that in regard to the second hymn, "the surprising nature of its abrupt appearance contributes to its climactic function as the centre of the chiasm."[89] The second hymn is set amidst what is generally accepted to be the centerpiece of the book of Amos in its entirety

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[86] Shalom M. Paul, "Funerary Dirge over the Nation and a Ray of Hope," in *Amos*, ed. Frank Moore Cross, A Commentary on the Book of Amos (1517 Media, 1991), 167, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvb936pp.16.

[87] Thomas Edward McComiskey, "The Hymnic Elements of the Prophecy of Amos: A Study of Form-Critical Methodology," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 30.2 (1987): 144–45.

[88] McComiskey, "The Hymnic Elements of the Prophecy of Amos: A Study of Form-Critical Methodology," 144.

[89] Tchavdar S. Hadjiev, *Joel and Amos: An Introduction and Commentary* (InterVarsity Press, 2020), 139.

and is displayed as a chiastic structure (also known as a concentric structure as seen in Table 1 below.[90]

Table 1. Amos 5:1-17 as a Concentric Composition

A. 5:1-3 Lamentation
B. 5:4-6 Exhortation: Seek!
C. 5:7 Injustice
D. 5:8-9 Doxology
C'. 5:10-13 Injustice
B'. 5:14-15 Exhortation: Seek!
A'. 5:16-17 Lamentation

This literary analysis was pioneered by Jan de Waard, who saw the chiastic structure as revealing the meaningful relationships already present in the organization of the text.[91]

Chiasmic structure organizes the second half of a composition to mirror the themes, words, and motifs of the first half, but in reverse order. Köstenberger and Patterson note that these two mirroring parts of the unit are united around a common core that forms the most important idea or intended emphasis of the author.[92] In the case of 5:1-17, the central idea is communicated through the hymn in vv.8-9, which highlights the power of God the Creator in direct contrast to the unjust character of Israel. Though some commentators may view the hymn as intrusive, the fact that the surrounding unity is in a chiastic structure explains, as Carroll R. correctly notes, the logic of the passage.[93] Wilgus also observes that the participles of the hymn

[90] Göran Eidevall, *Amos: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Book, Whole (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), 24G:152. It is true that initially de Waard saw vv.8-9 as separate units within the chiasmic structure. See de Waard, 173-174. Yet, when the second division of the tripartite of Amos is taken into context, viewing 5:8-9 as a single entity is more appropriate, with 9 acting as a transitionary piece.

[91] Jan De Waard, "The Chiastic Structure of Amos V 1-17," *Vetus Testamentum* 27.Fasc. 2 (1977): 176–77.

[92] Köstenberger and Patterson, *Invitation to Biblical Interpretation*, 285.

[93] Carroll R., *The Book of Amos*, 264.

correlate to the participles in Amos 5:7, 10, 12-13, revealing an interconnected theme running through the entire unit and meeting at the hymn.[94]

In the first clause of the hymn, the power of YHWH is celebrated by recalling His power in creation and the harmony of His created order. Pleiades and Orion were thought to actively participate in the change of the seasons from winter to summer.[95] Both were necessary to keep the rhythmic cycle of the earth. Yet, it is the Lord who made these two cosmic powers and, therefore, is in control of them. The word עשׂה in the first clause is the same participle used in the first hymn, which may indicate a connection between the two. One possibility is that the power YHWH possesses to make the dawn into darkness is His alone, and the affirmation in 5:8 that He made the constellations, often considered in ancient thought to be deities that could affect human life, shows God to be the Supreme Power, leaving Israel nowhere else to turn for safety and from judgment.

The second clause underlines YHWH's power to make change as He 'changes' deep darkness into morning and 'darkens' day into night. The change of darkness into morning and the darkening of day into night speaks of the regular oscillation of the day, a callback to the initial act of creation when God subdued the forces of chaos and established the rhythm of light and darkness. John W. Hilber notes the strong Creation themes found in this clause, with the deep darkness being linked to the separation of light and darkness in the beginning (Gen 1:2-5).[96]

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[94] J. Blair Wilgus, "Judgment on Israel: Amos 3-6 Read as a Unity" (The University of Edinburgh School of Divinity, PhD diss., 2012), 152.

[95] The text translates כִּימָה and כְּסִיל as "the Cluster" and "the Fool" respectively. For identification of these constellations, see Jeffrey L. Cooley, *Poetic Astronomy in the Ancient Near East: The Reflexes of Celestial Science in Ancient Mesopotamian, Ugaritic, and Israelite Narrative*, vol. 5 of *History, Archaeology, and Culture of the Levant* (University Park, USA: Penn State University Press, 2013), 229–31.

[96] John W. Hilber, *Old Testament Cosmology and Divine Accommodation: A Relevance Theory Approach* (Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2020), 164. Hilber notes that the references to constellations, separation of light and

The harmonious beginning of God's creation strikes an unusually haunting chord in the midst of the events happening in Amos. Yet, this clause is not solely purposed to show God's power to create harmony. In this portion of the hymn, Amos shows how Israel lacks accord with the harmony God has created.

The use of הפך here points back to its use in v.7, where הפך revealed the connection between actions and consequences, and how Israel executed those actions of injustice, which will ultimately have consequences. Hadjiev states that Israel's act of turning justice into wormwood is in direct opposition to the divine act of turning darkness into day.[97] In other words, to go against justice and righteousness is to go against what God has set in place. The hymn highlights God as the one who will execute the consequences for Israel's injustices. Eidvall notes the connection and contrast between vv.7-8: "whereas in v.7 the leaders in Israel are accused of turning justice into wormwood (that is, into injustice), YHWH is here extolled because He is able to turn deep darkness into morning and day into night."[98]

The next participles of verse 8 highlights YHWH's power to call (קרא) for the waters of the sea to be poured (שׁפך) out upon the surface of the earth.[99] Even the waters of the sea, as mighty and as chaotic as they are, know the voice of their Creator and obey His call for His purposes, unlike Israel, who consistently rejects God's call. Eidevall states that the depiction of

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darkness, separation of water and earth, along with the possible mention of the heavenly sea in Amos 9:6 hearken back to the creation in Genesis 1.

[97] Hadjiev, *Joel and Amos: An Introduction and Commentary*, 140.

[98] Göran Eidevall, "The Words of Amos (3–6)," in *Amos*, A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary (Yale University Press, 2017), 158, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1vgwbb6.15.

[99] Some commentators believe that YHWH calling together the waters of the sea is a reference to unleashing the waters separated at Creation in another deluge-like situation. This assumption, however, conflicts with the covenant God makes with Noah (Gen 9:8-17) and the promise to never use the waters to flood the earth for destruction.

God's power over the sea reminds Amos' audience that "YHWH has the power to let the forces of chaos loose, undoing the order of creation and threatening all life on earth."[100] YHWH not only has the power to create, but also the power to destroy. It seems that because Israel has created extreme chaos within His creation, YHWH will destroy Israel with chaos.

The clause 'The LORD is His name' has been said to be the centerpiece of the concentric composition, which is essentially the centerpiece of the entire book of Amos. Carroll R. states that the stress of this verse is on the LORD and His name, specifically His person:

> "YHWH is misrepresented in the official cult and in popular religious expressions. The nation has crafted its own theologies, and these have led it astray and ultimately to its doom. The prophetic word demands a clear vision of the deity."[101]

Israel has their own ideas about who God is. The hymns remind Israel of who God truly is. On the whole, this indictment matches those of the unit that includes the first hymn, in that Israel has abandoned YHWH and true religion in exchange for a god and religion of their own making.

The end of verse 8, with the clause "The LORD is His name," marks the end of the hymn proper, but not of the hymn. De Waard had initially outlined verse 8-9 as separate, parallel parts of the chiasmic composition, with 8 listed as 'D' and 9 listed as 'D'', though both are essentially the centerpiece of the composition.[102] Both verses, however, are to be recognized as one unit of the composition, as it becomes clear that both verses spoke to the central interplay of the hymn between order and chaos. While some commentators believe the shift from the cosmic imagery

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[100] Ibid.; Sarlo notes that the term יָם is often used in the Old Testament to refer to the chaotic abyss that was the world before Creation. See Daniel Sarlo, "Sea," in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016); Walton also notes that the ancients imagined the primordial sea to be "encircling the earth like a serpent." See John H. Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 166–67.

[101] Carroll R., *The Book of Amos*, 265.

[102] Jan De Waard, "The Chiastic Structure of Amos V 1-17," *Vetus Testamentum* 27.2 (1977): 173, https://doi.org/10.2307/1516994.

in v.8 to the historical judgments in v.9 indicates the work of a later redactor, Carroll R. notes that the juxtaposition of YHWH's power in creation and over history underscores His sovereignty in judgment.[103]

Another clause, which describes the LORD's activity in the hymnic style, is found in v.9. There are, however, challenges to be addressed in addressing this portion of the hymn. Many commentators consider this verse to have unsurmountable translation issues, with Wolff regarding this verse to be so badly damaged that redaction can be the only explanation.[104] The meaning of 'בלג' is uncertain, yet the essence of the verse comes through clearly: the LORD has the power to destroy and the authority to do so completely.[105]

Wilhelm Rudolph summarizes the hymn in this way: "All human strength and all human means of might and protection cannot prevail against YHWH, precisely because he is the omnipotent creator."[106] Based on this analysis of the hymn, it may be concluded that God has the power to undo all corrupting transformations made by Israel mentioned in the surrounding units of the concentric composition because the universe belongs to Him and all creation depends on Him, also. But as Eidevall notes, "this could be a source of either hope (for justice) or fear (of divine judgment)."[107] Israel will be held accountable for their actions towards others and their attitudes towards YHWH.

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[103] Carroll R., *The Book of Amos*, 263; cf. Jeremias, *The Book of Amos: A Commentary*, 91.

[104] Hans Walter Wolff, Waldemar Janzen, and Charles A. Muenchow, "Funerary Lamentation over Israel," in *Joel and Amos*, ed. S. Dean McBride (1517 Media, 1977), 241; See also Norman H. Snaith, *The Book of Amos.*, Study Notes on Bible Books (London, UK: The Epworth Press, 1945), 90.

[105] Eidevall, "The Words of Amos (3–6)," 158.

[106] Wilhelm Rudolph, "Joel, Amos, Obadja, Jona," in *Joel, Amos, Obadja, Jona*, ed. Alfred Jepsen and Wilhelm Rudolph, vol. 13 of *Kommentar zum Alten Testament* 2 (Gütersloh: G. Mohn, 1971), 201.

[107] Eidevall, "The Words of Amos (3–6)," 158.

Upon further examination of the second hymn and its literary and contextual elements, it seems that the hymn not only connects well with its surrounding contents but also provides the perfect emphasis for Amos's message to Israel. Were the second hymn a late addition to the chiastic structure, it would mean the injustices of Israel to be the central focus. Yet, all throughout the content of Amos the injustices of Israel are a prelude to the judgment of the LORD. The hymn is necessary in this chiasm to contrast Israel's chaotic disobedience with God's righteous power to create and destroy sovereignly and justly. Also, based on the content of the hymn and its literary and historical connections, there is no reason to assume that the hymn cannot be attributed to an original 8th-century composition of Amos.

The Third Hymn: Amos 9:5-6

The debate surrounding the third and final hymn in Amos usually centers on its suspected role as the end of an earlier composition of Amos. Wolff concludes that the hymn functions as an *exomologesis*, a pre-exilic Judaic confession acknowledging personal guilt while also praising God for His destruction of the Bethel sanctuary.[108] Jeremias saw the "dark conclusion" of the hymn as the end of an exilic composition that reviewed not only the destruction of Bethel and its faulty worship but also the destruction of the Jerusalem temple.[109] There is no surprise as to the position of these commentators based on previous familiarity with their studies in Amos. Yet, there are areas of the argument that are open for debate.

It has already been mentioned in this paper that Wolff's view of Amos is heavily influenced by his presupposition of DtrH redaction. The nationalistic view of Judah's involvement in the redaction of Amos is imprinted on the third hymn, which ultimately

[108] Hans Walter Wolff, Waldemar Janzen, and Charles A. Muenchow, "None Will Escape," in *Joel and Amos*, ed. S. Dean McBride (1517 Media, 1977), 341, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvb9375w.33.

[109] Jeremias, *The Book of Amos: A Commentary*, 159–60.

overshadows the hymn's proclamation of God's glory and forces the reader to see Judah claiming God's actions against Israel as a victory for the Southern Kingdom. Jeremias takes this view one step further by including Jerusalem's demise in his explanation in order to justify the involvement of an exilic editor. While critique of Israel's religious practices is certainly warranted, the measure of those practices is not Judah, but the Lord. Looking at the third hymn in its immediate context, juxtaposed to Amos's final vision in 9:1-4, along with its connection to the rest of Amos, reveals the hymn to be an intentional and original portion of the text that ultimately exalts YHWH and no one else.

The fifth and final vision of Amos culminates the vision series, much like how the third and final hymn culminates the hymn series. Throughout the vision series, Amos's speaking involvement progressively decreases, while YHWH becomes more vocal from the third vision on. Amos goes from intercessor to witness, as YHWH arises to action against Israel. In the last vision, only the LORD speaks, as He stands in the heart of Israel's religious center next to the altar to deliver His judgment upon His people. In concurrence with the third and fourth visions, the fifth vision delivers a declaration of doom. In this vision, the depth and breadth of YHWH's judgment ensures that no one, not even Israel, will escape Him.

The third hymn displays solid connections to the final vision. Carroll R. notes the syntactical connections of the two units, including the common use of pentads, and the initial conjunction in v.5 to the verses before it.[110] There are also thematic connections between the two in Table 2 below:

[110] Carroll R., *The Book of Amos*, 407. Carroll R. notes that in vv.2-4 the vision contains five conditional sentences that begin with the preposition 'אִם', and end with 'שָׁם', while the hymn contains a pentad of verbs (as with the other two hymns in 4:13 and 5:8-9.

Table 2. Thematic connections between the final vision and the final hymn.

A. (v.1: *rāʿaš* - רעשׁ)
B. (v.2: heaven//netherworld)
C. (v.3: bottom of the sea)
D. (climax in v.4a: exile)
E. (v.4b: 'My eye is set for evil and not for good')
A'. (v.5: *mûḡ* - מוג)
B. (v.6a: heaven//earth)
C. (v.6b: waters of the sea)
D. (climax: *Yhwh šēm* - יְהוָה שְׁמוֹ)

Paas notes that this visible example shows the structural unity of the vision and the hymn, with 'E' acting as the center of this pericope to connect the sections together thematically.[111] It is at this point of Amos where the actions of Israel's sin finds their consequence: the eyes of YHWH are against them, whereas before His eyes were set on them for their welfare (Gen 44:21; Jer 24:6). Israel in 5:7 had turned justice into wormwood; YHWH's eyes are now set on Israel not for טוֹבָה, but for רָעָה.

The final hymn opens, unlike the other two, with the longest epithet for YHWH: the Lord GOD of hosts, which forms, as Carroll R. identifies, an 'envelope structure' with YHWH at the end of v.6.[112] In this way, the longer title has been suggested to indicate the last of the hymns in the hymn series. The first colon of the final hymn contains two verbs, נגע and מוג. Since the final hymn is preceded by the final vision, this longer epithet is fitting. The common English translation of נגע is 'touched', yet the Hebrew word conveys more of an aggressive contact, even an attacking blow.[113]

[111] Paas, "Seeing and Singing: Visions and Hymns in the Book of Amos," 261. Paas also notes that v.4b creates a bridge towards the next textual unit where the eyes of the Lord GOD are mentioned again in v.8.

[112] Carroll R., *The Book of Amos*, 411.

[113] Ludwig Köhler et al., *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, 1st English ed. (Leiden; New York: E.J. Brill, 1994), 668. Cf. Pss 104:32 and 144:5 for similar uses of נגע.

The second verb describes the reaction of the land to YHWH's strike. Some translations render the word 'melts', whereas most commentators consider מוג to convey a 'violent quaking' of the earth (cf. Pss 46:7; 75:4).[114] The impact of YHWH's strike does not cease with the quaking of the earth, as all who dwell in the land mourn, and the tremors of the land are likened to the swelling and sinking of the Nile in Egypt (cf. Amos 8:8). The land, which is solid in mass, is made to rise and fall like the sea that answers to God's call. As Paul notes, "The cosmic upheaval of land and sea are by-products of the theophany of the Deity who appears in order to execute judgment."[115]

The last portion of the hymn provides two more participles. The first participle contrasts God breaking down the earthly (9:1) as He builds (בנה) in heaven. There is much debate over the translation and the significance of what YHWH builds. While some translators interpret מַעֲלָה to mean "upper chambers" (cf. 1 Kgs 17:19, 23; Neh 3:31, 32; Pss 104:3, 13), a better translation may be "steps" (Exod. 20:26; 1 Kgs 10:19-20; Ezek. 40:6, 22, 26, 31, 34, 37).[116]

Niehaus notes that the translation of "steps" is meant as metonymy so that the text would instead communicate that YHWH builds His temple in the heavens. Whether this means that YHWH is distancing himself from the temple at Bethel, or that the capitals of Israel will be struck while YHWH constructs His heavenly temple, the point is that Israel's religion and

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[114] See translation notes from Stefan Paas, "Creation Texts in Amos," in *Creation and Judgement* (Brill, 2003), 292–93; Köhler et al., *HALOT*, 555; Wolff, Janzen, and Muenchow, "None Will Escape," 342; Eidevall, "The Words of Amos (3–6)," 231; Shalom M. Paul, "Fifth Vision: Inescapability from Divine Judgment.," in *Amos*, ed. Frank Moore Cross, A Commentary on the Book of Amos (Minneapolis, MN: 1517 Media, 1991), 280, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvb936pp.29.

[115] Paul, "Fifth Vision: Inescapability from Divine Judgment.," 280.

[116] Those who translate "upper chambers" include Wolff, Janzen, and Muenchow, "None Will Escape," 336–37; Rudolph, "Joel, Amos, Obadja, Jona," 242; Paul, "Fifth Vision: Inescapability from Divine Judgment.," 280; Those who translate "steps" include Eidevall, "The Words of Amos (3–6)," 232; Paas, "Creation Texts in Amos," 294; Jeffrey J. Niehaus, *Amos*, ed. Thomas Edward McComiskey, The Minor Prophets (Grand Rapids, MI, Oxford: BakerAcademic ; Lion [distributor], 2009), 483–84.

lifestyle, symbolized by the Bethel temple, are illegitimate in the eyes of YHWH, who will judge Israel from His heavenly throne.

The second clause in v.6 expresses YHWH's complete sovereignty, as the hymn recounts the fact that He has already established (יסד) His vaulted dome over the earth. While there are many scholarly suggestions over the significance of the vaulted dome, the main idea is that YHWH reigns with absolute control over all creation in the earth and the heavens.[117] There is no way to counteract the authority of YHWH over all of creation. His authority has been set since the very beginning and cannot be manipulated by earthly institutions.

The final participles of the hymn repeat verbatim the latter half of the hymn contained in 5:8, with YHWH calling for the waters of the sea to pour them out on the face of the earth. Rather than being descriptive of the way YHWH will destroy Israel, this imagery instead seems directed at displaying God's power to judge and destroy totally and completely. Continuing the common theme amongst the hymns in Amos, the third and final hymn declares, "The LORD is His name," to conclude the series.

At this point of the dissertation, it seems there is little evidence (if any) to assume that the third hymn is not an intentional inclusion of the composition of Amos. Jeremias states that 9:5f displays clearer than ever before how consciously the hymnic statements were chosen for their respective contexts.[118] Though Jeremias states this with the assumption that a redactor would have placed the hymns intentionally with an earlier composition, the lack of evidence for

[117] Andersen and Freedman cross-reference Pss 78:69 to conclude that מַעֲלֵה describes the heavenly temple as having an earthly infrastructure. Paul asserts that the Lord's dwelling place in heaven is pictured as a vault, fixed upon the horizon (c.f. Prov 8:27). Andersen, Freedman, and Amos, *Amos*, 854; Paul, "Fifth Vision: Inescapability from Divine Judgment.," 280.

[118] Jeremias, *The Book of Amos: A Commentary*, 159.

redaction points to the likely conclusion that the hymns were an intentional and integral part of the original composition of Amos.

Paas argues that all of Amos 9:1-6 was composed as a structural unity because of the intertwined theology in the vision and the hymn. There is, however, a strong possibility for Paas that the third hymn was written, not as a persuasion to Israel but as a proclamation of what has already occurred, since Paas speculates that the vision and the hymn breathe "a certain distance towards the history of Amos' message", implying the involvement of a redactor.[119] Carroll R., however, notes that studies of ANE prophecy strongly suggest that prophecies were written down shortly after their delivery and that Amos, as a person of means, would have been able to hire a scribe to transcribe his message.[120] Carroll summarizes the case for attribution to Amos in this way.

> What is more, the book's literary quality intimates that it was a written work from the beginning. There is no reason to doubt that the literary and theological richness of the text goes back to the prophet himself, unless one presupposes arbitrarily a narrow bandwidth for the prophet's literary sensitivities and theological acumen.[121]

Certainly, if this assertion by Carroll R. is true of the composition of Amos, then this would naturally apply to the inclusion of all the hymns. Rather than being seen as intrusive, it is most likely that they were an intentional part of the original composition.

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[119] Paas, "Seeing and Singing: Visions and Hymns in the Book of Amos," 273.

[120] M. Daniel Carroll R., "Twenty Years of Amos Research," *Currents in Biblical Research* 18.1 (2019): 41.

[121] Carroll R., "Twenty Years of Amos Research," 68.

The Functional Fit of the Hymns

The contextual appropriateness of the hymns suggests that the inclusion of the hymns was not the work of redaction, but rather the work of the original composition. Based on the research in the previous section there are convincing amounts of textual evidence that demonstrate each individual hymn's intentional connection to their immediate context and to each other. Instead of interrupting the flow of Amos, the hymns help to carry the message of Amos in ways that are appropriate historically, rhetorically, and theologically.

The Historical Function

From a historical perspective, the use of hymns in Amos would not be foreign to Amos or to his audience as hymns would figure as a natural part of Israel's religious life. The singing of hymns in worship would be a regular practice. Yet, because Israel's regular worship is done in the context of their idolatry to a concept of YHWH they have created, Amos uses hymns in his message to convict Israel of their faulty religious practices. In Amos 5:21-23, YHWH makes known His disdain for Israel's cultic practices.[122]

This critique of cultic practices in the north is supported by archeological research of the ANE, specifically in northern Israel. Research shows that in the first half of the 8th-century, coinciding with the reign of Jeroboam II, the cult of the Northern Kingdom was reorganized and reestablished in Northern Israel.[123] Jeroboam II was successful in recapturing parts of the northern most territories of Israel that were lost after the end of the Omride dynasty. Tel Dan, an

[122] There is even research that suggests hymns were sung in more secular rituals, such as the marzeah. Eidevall notes that most banquets in the ANE would have some type of religious ritual, but Amos's specific reference to this in 6:4-7, alongside the archeological findings at Tel Dan, seem to confirm marzeahs as the specific target of Amos's critique. See Eidevall, "The Words of Amos (3–6)," 174.

[123] Israel Finkelstein, *The Forgotten Kingdom: The Archaeology and History of Northern Israel*, Ancient Near East Monographs Number 5 (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), 139.

ancient city in Northern Israel, became a state-sponsored cult center that held major religious festivals, such as the *haggim*, which are the three major festivals of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, Feast of Harvest, and Feast of Ingathering; and the *asserot*, or the *"solemn assemblies"*.[124] These festivals are the very ones that the LORD condemns in Amos 5:21-22.

At the Tel Dan excavation digs, a room outside the annex contained pottery dating back to the 8th-century B.C. amidst other debris and burnt mud brick, attributed to the attack of Tiglath-pileser II of Assyria in 722 B.C.[125] Much of the site at the Tel-Dan resembles a place of cultic worship. One might assume that this would be an area for the worship of many gods from the surrounding areas because of the Northern Kingdom's unfaithfulness to the LORD. But the most important find in this area was a stamped jar handle dating back around the time of Amos bearing the name *ImmadiYaw*, which means, "YHWH is with me."[126]

The significance of this iconographic feature is that it affirms the Northern Kingdom's religious identity as one that ascribes to YHWH as their God. The book of Amos gives every indication that the Northern Kingdom was "Yahwistic in practice". Even if all the evidence reveals that they were idolatrous and far from YHWH, Israel identified as Yahwistic. Greer also points out that while the site in Northern Israel would have been an explicitly Yahwistic center, the rituals and paraphernalia of the Northern Kingdom were very similar to the Aramean,

[124] John H. Walton, Victor H. Matthews, and Mark W. Chavalas, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament*, 10/16/00 Edition. (Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Academic, 2000), Amos 5:21. religious feasts and assemblies; Andrew R. Davis, "Area T, Stratum II," in *Tel Dan in Its Northern Cultic Context* (Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), 100.

[125] Davis, "Area T, Stratum II," 78.

[126] Jonathan S. Greer, "The Cult at Tel Dan," in *Wandering Arameans Outside Syria: Textual and Archaeological Perspectives*, ed. Angelika Berlejung, Andreas Schüle, and Aren M Maeir, 1st. Edition. (Wiesbaden, Germany: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2018), 6.

Phoenician, and other regional cults.[127] Though there is no specific reference to idolatry towards other gods, it is possible that Israel has a lesser view of God because of the influence of lesser gods onto their religious perspectives.

The following chapter will explore in more depth the role of hymns throughout ANE and specifically in Israel's time. For the purposes of this chapter, YHWH's displeasure with Israel's songs strikes at a core pillar of their worship. The word used for song 'שִׁיר' is found in superscriptions of many Psalms and in calls to praise. Carroll R. notes the irony that the songs and hymns the people would sing in the sanctuaries as festive songs of worship are but noise to YHWH.[128] While the hymns Amos uses may seem like noise to Israel in the context of his message of judgment (7:10), the hymns of the text ultimately serve the purpose of pointing Israel to the emptiness of their ritualistic practices against the full might of the true and living God YHWH.

The Rhetorical Function

From a literary perspective, these hymnic fragments stand alongside their contexts as a counter-testimony to the false sense of security Israel has in its worship practices. The above sections, in their focus on the individual hymns, demonstrate the structural and contextual appropriateness of the hymns to their immediate passage and to all of Amos. Paas notes the universal theme of YHWH's creation power in each individual hymn unites the three hymns in the character of judgment.[129] This theme is not exclusive to the hymns, as creation resounds throughout the surrounding contexts of the hymns and plays an integral part in the visions also.

[127] Greer, "The Cult at Tel Dan," 6.

[128] Carroll R., *The Book of Amos*, 285.

[129] Paas, "Creation Texts in Amos," 326.

Gerhard Pfeifer notes that there is much in the three hymns that is reminiscent of the rest of the book of Amos. In referencing the connection of the hymns to the rest of Amos, Pfeifer writes, "The way of thinking of the prophet Amos, which is characterized by a concrete understanding of the world and its powers, the identity of the word of God and the word of the prophet, and consistency in the sequence of individual thoughts, can also be seen here."[130] Contrary to the opinions of some commentators, the words of Amos and the hymns do not contradict each other. Rather, they complement each other and carry out a unified message, which can be seen in the themes and literary techniques applied throughout the corpus.

The inclusion of the hymns also serves Amos's rhetorical strategy. Hans Barstad notes that Amos employs religious polemics to convince Israel of his message.[131] In short, Amos aims to expose Israel's false ideologies about their relationship with God so that they may repent before it is too late. Attached to these polemics are the rhetorical devices of word play, aural imagery, and also the use of dirge-like rhythms. The literary craftmanship in the book of Amos cannot be denied and is given much credit by most, if not all, of its commentators.

While Barstad posits that Amos's polemical argument is to convince Israel that YHWH is the only deity worth worshiping, and, in turn, denouncing all other deities, the text seems to suggest that Amos utilizes polemics for the purpose of convincing Israel of their idolatrous idealization of their own cultic lifestyle. Amos does this most effectively by employing hymns that highlight YHWH's true nature in contrast to their passive ideas about Him to deliver a

[130] Gerhard Pfeifer, "Jahwe Als Schopfer Der Welt Und Herr Ihrer Machte in Der Verkundigung Des Propheten Amos," *Vetus Testamentum.* 41, no. 4 (1991): 479.

[131] 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*, vol. 34, Book, Whole (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1984), 4; Wolff also believes that the text utilizes polemics, but views them as the work of Josianic redactors critiquing the cult at Bethel. See Wolff, Janzen, and Muenchow, "A Reproach of the Cult Pilgrims and Its Later Interpretation," 217–18.

dreadful, but honest picture of Israel's condition before their God. Similar to the sarcastic invitation offered by YHWH in 4:4-5 to commit sins in their religious rituals, the hymns act as somewhat of a taunt to Israel, portraying the God they claim to know.

There is no concrete way of identifying whether these hymns would have been familiar to Israel. It is likely, however, that the themes and content of these hymns regarding YHWH's creative and destructive power would have been familiar, though possibly unvisited for some time. It is possible that the context in which these hymns would have been used by Amos proves their inclusion in Amos's compositional strategy. Whether these hymns were familiar or not may not have mattered as much as the message these hymns carried on their own and in collaboration with Amos's message to Israel.

There are several commentators who consider the content and the context of the hymns to argue for Amos's authorship of the hymns. John D.W. Watts cites the work of Amos K. Cramer, who argues that each hymnic portion belongs so closely to its context that it cannot be lifted out, which points to the hymns being an intentional composition of the prophet himself.[132] If Amos had a particular message to deliver to Israel, and it needed to strike at the root of their issue, which was their religion, a hymn that already speaks to every issue he addresses may or may not be available. Yet, based on the surrounding contents of the writings in Amos, it is clear to see that his literary abilities could afford him the tools to compose a hymn.

R. K. Harrison also notes another tool in the possession of the prophet: a deep knowledge of the Mosaic Torah. According to Harrison, the words of the hymn appear to be "genuine words of the prophet Amos that proclaimed a belief in God as the creator of the world and the guiding

[132] John D. W. Watts, "An Old Hymn Preserved in the Book of Amos," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 15.1 (1956): 33.

spirit in all of life."[133] These doctrinal statements are rooted in Mosaic Torah, which Harrison asserts are "merely being recapitulated by Amos in a form designed to meet particular circumstances."[134] The circumstance is communicated by the hymns, which Carroll R. notes is Israel's idolatry of a false YHWH "whom it has shaped according to its own will and pleasure and celebrated at Bethel, Dan, and other sanctuaries, but these centers and their erroneous religion are doomed."[135]

Harrison dismisses the notion that Judaean peasantry or cultic prophets, or even the cultic prophets of Israel, who were indifferent to morality and religion, could have been able to compose the eschatology present in Amos 4:13 or the notes of doom that seemed foreign to the public in the north during Amos's ministry. The question of authorship of the hymns, then, seems to indicate Amos as the originator. Such a designation seems appropriate since the book of Amos carries a high degree of literary craftsmanship and intentionality. The hymns would naturally fit those descriptions, with little to no textual evidence left to argue otherwise.

The Theological Function

It is fitting that the historical and rhetorical functions of the hymns are ultimately purposed in communicating Amos's theological message to Israel. McComiskey cites the sophisticated theology of the hymns, their setting, and their use of divine titles as evidence for inclusion in the original composition of the text.[136] The hymns support Amos's charges against Israel for its idolatrous ideologies about God and their worship of Him as they re-introduce Israel

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[133] R. K. Harrison, "The Book of Amos," in *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1969), 893.

[134] Harrison, "The Book of Amos," 893.

[135] Carroll R., *The Book of Amos*, 247.

[136] McComiskey, "The Hymnic Elements of the Prophecy of Amos: A Study of Form-Critical Methodology," 140–43.

to the righteous God. Because Israel had lost touch with God's true identity through their own ideologies about their religion, the portions preceding (or, in the case of the second hymn, surrounding) the hymns emphasize the judgment to come and the One who comes to judge.

From a theological perspective, the hymns are rich in their understanding of YHWH, as they highlight the all-powerful God Israel claims to praise in order to bring them to the realization of their position against Him. The hymns maintain that YHWH is the creator and sustainer of the universe (4:13), and that just as He is capable of creation, He is also capable of destruction (5:9; 9:5). He is also a covenant God (4:13 - "The LORD God of hosts is His name"), a mighty Suzerain and Commander of the armies of heaven, whose earthly vassal has breached the covenant between them. Because Amos's message surrounding the hymns points out Israel's unrighteousness, the hymns themselves imply the righteousness of God comes in strength and power.

Israel has fooled themselves into thinking that their form of religion is pleasing to God. Yet, Amos's use of the hymns, especially with the refrain-like phrase "The LORD is His name", provides a stiff reality check for the Northern Kingdom. Watts summarizes this way:

> This is radical Jahwism in the clearest expression possible... Jahweh stands supreme and alone, independent of ritual, gracious in intent, revealing his purposes to men, demanding only to be honestly sought in worship, but prepared to wreak awful judgment upon those refusing his invitation.[137]

Israel may have been able to sing the hymns with clear conscience were it not for the prophet exposing Israel's deluded religious lifestyle. In the context of the message that surrounds the hymns, the verses of praise for YHWH ring as death knells for Israel.

[137] John D. W. Watts, "Amos: Across Fifty Years of Study," *Review & Expositor* 92.2 (1995): art. 2, pp. 189–93.

Summary and Transition

The research and discussion above aimed to show the intentionality of the hymns in the book of Amos along with their function in presenting the core message. The presence of the hymns in Amos fit a literary, historical, and theological need in the composition of Amos. They are contextually suitable for inclusion in the original composition. Contrary to the claims of scholars who argue for a late addition of the hymns because of their intrusive nature, a study of the hymns and their placement in the text suggests that they are textually and structurally suitable, also. The study of Amos's hymns shows how integral these portions are to the text and provides reason for accepting the hymns as part of a unified 8th-century B.C. composition.

In addition, Amos's use of hymns could be considered culturally appropriate due to the familiarity of hymnic language in Israel and throughout the ANE. In the following chapter, the use of hymnic language in the Old Testament will be explored along with a look at some examples of extrabiblical hymnic literature that display the appropriateness, acceptability, and ingenuity of Amos's use of hymns. That the hymns belong to the literary, historical, and canonical landscape of the Old Testament may argue for the role of the hymns in proving Amos to have a united theology and a predominantly original composition attributed to the prophet.

Chapter 3: Hymnic Language Throughout the Land of the Old Testament

Songs, Psalms, and Hymns in the Ancient Near East

Previous chapters have engaged the popular argument held by some commentators that the supposed "abrupt placement" of the hymns supports a redacted/layered composition of Amos. These positions, however, disregard the presence and the purpose of hymns as they are deployed in the Old Testament, which is a result of music (as an all-encompassing genre) being an integral aspect of ANE life and culture. A cursory look at Israel's journey in the Hebrew Scriptures cannot ignore the fact that music was a vital element in the development and formation of Israel's story in Scripture.[138] The conclusion of the prior statement could also easily apply to the area around Israel, the people groups, and nations with whom they interacted in Scripture.

Dirk Human cites the extensive scholarship and archaeological findings that confirm the relationship between music and cultic activity in the ANE between 1300 B.C. and 200 AD.[139] A strong case could be made from a biblical standpoint that this relationship reaches even earlier, which could find support from studies that have discovered the sudden appearance of an elaborate music culture around 2600 B.C. in Sumerian and Egyptian society that presupposes "…a long previous development [of music] of which no trace is left."[140] Human correctly notes that though ancient Israel had developed its own religious and cultural identity, its presence

[138] Ovid R. Sellers, "Musical Instruments of Israel," *The Biblical Archaeologist* 4, no. 3 (1941): 33–34.

[139] Dirk Human, "Cultic Music in The Ancient Orient and In Ancient Israel/Palestine," *Verkündigung Und Forschung* 56.2 (2011): 45, https://doi.org/10.14315/vf-2011-56-2-45.

[140] Marcelle Duchesne-Guillemin, "Music in Ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt," *World Archaeology* 12.3 (1981): 287.

alone in the ANE allowed for convergences in culture, music, and even religion with its ancient neighbors.[141]

As the research discovers music as a conventional fixture of life in the ANE, it is possible to conclude that God's prophets would have most certainly employed hymnic language in their messages towards God's people, especially as their messages stemmed from the God Israel would worship with music, and in the case of Amos, especially seeing as God takes issue with Israel's worship that includes music (Amos 5:23). The following sections will examine the genres of music in the Old Testament, and the ways in which they are utilized in Scripture and in the surrounding ANE cultures. The purpose of these sections is to lend support to the argument for an original composition of Amos by the prophet whose implementation of hymns in his writings would not only have been commonplace but (to some degree) expected from a prophet of Amos's caliber and calling.

Differentiation of the Genres

The writings of the Old Testament are swathed with various types of poetic and musical compositions, consisting of songs, psalms, and hymns. Gale A. Yee notes that the prominence of Israelite worship in Scripture is part of the larger story of God's interaction with the descendants of Abraham as recounted through the text of the Torah.[142] Because the Scripture recounts events that occur in the foreground of Ancient Israel's historical and cultural context, the presence of music comes as no surprise. Human notes that cultic music belonged to the religious sphere of

[141] Human, "Cultic Music in The Ancient Orient and In Ancient Israel/Palestine," 45–46.

[142] Gale A. Yee, Jr. Page Hugh R., and Matthew J. M. Coomber, "Introduction to Wisdom and Worship," in *Wisdom, Worship, and Poetry: Fortress Commentary on the Bible* (Lanham, MD: 1517 Media, 2016), 512.

society, meaning that, for Israel, songs, psalms, and hymns revolved around the Temple.[143] The musical portions of Scripture, then, are not only present to enhance the context of the text—they are integral parts of the context just as music is an integral aspect of Israel's relationship with God.

While the terms 'songs', 'psalms', and 'hymns' are often used interchangeably in describing cultic music in Scripture, commentators have attempted to distinguish the three based on their linguistic and literary features. The term 'song' is applied to prose compositions that are meant to be sung, often expressing emotions, praise, and other themes that highlight God's relationship with His people. John Arthur Smith notes that songs are often introduced into their context "by means of short preambles that announce sung performance, while the song texts themselves contain direct references to singing."[144]

Songs of the Hebrew Scripture

Songs found in the Scripture are intentional components of the narrative texts to which they belong. As Robert Boling observes, songs in the Old Testament are typically associated with celebrations, victories, or events of significance in the surrounding passages and were often not used within the context of corporate worship.[145] Though the verses of the song may not always recount the surrounding events of the text with specificity, the thematic appropriateness of the songs is apparent. The *Song of the Sea* (Exodus 15), the *Song of Deborah* and Barak (Judges 5), the *Song of Moses* (Deuteronomy 32), and the *Song of Hannah* (1 Samuel 2) are examples of songs that fit their surrounding texts. In most of the songs of the Old Testament,

[143] Human, "Cultic Music in The Ancient Orient And In Ancient Israel/Palestine," 45.

[144] John Arthur Smith, "Musical Aspects of Old Testament Canticles in Their Biblical Setting," *Early Music History* 17 (1998): 227.

[145] Robert G. Boling, *Judges*, The Anchor Bible 6A (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2008), 117.

there are victories that range from national triumphs to individual successes. Yet, the focus is not on the individual or on the nation—the focus in biblical songs is always on who YHWH is and how He has provided the victory.

The *Song of the Sea* is set within the narrative of Israel's liberation from Egypt at the hand of YHWH, which Brian D. Russell asserts to be a theological summary of the book of Exodus.[146] According to the text, Moses and the Israelites sang this song after they had safely crossed the Red Sea while escaping Egypt's pursuing army. The song praises YHWH for delivering the Israelites from their oppressors and performing miraculous deeds on their behalf, highlighting the themes of YHWH's power, protection, and faithfulness, while also emphasizing the destruction of their past and future enemies. In summary, the song is a witness to YHWH's character as a God of salvation—One who delivers His people from the clutches of bondage and any threat to their freedom through miraculous works.

Steven Weitzman contends that the context of the song, with references to Israel's future entry into Canaan, is evidence for a later addition, though the song itself displays characteristics that suggest its origins as an earlier composition.[147] Weitzman later admits that his postulation regarding the relationship between the compositions of the Song and the text surrounding it is unverifiable.[148] When taken in the context of the entire book of Exodus, where YHWH points Moses and the Israelites toward their future conquest of Canaan because of the promise he made

[146] Brian D. Russell, *The Song of the Sea: The Date of Composition and Influence of Exodus 15: 1-21*, Studies in Biblical Literature v. 101 (New York, NY: Peter Lang, 2007), 2.

[147] Steven Weitzman, "Song and Story in Biblical Narrative: The History of a Literary Convention in Ancient Israel" (Indiana University Press, 1997), 6–9.

[148] Weitzman, "Song and Story," 6.

to their fathers (Ex. 6:8; 13:6, 11), the references to the future in the Song of the Sea, even set within the larger narrative of the Torah, make perfect sense.

The *Thanksgiving Song of Hannah* in 1 Samuel 2 contains elements of a victory hymn but has contents that make a designation of a victory song more appropriate.[149] Unlike the Song of the Sea, there are no explicit connections to the narrative context found in the hymn, and the narrative does not make any mention of the hymn before or after its appearance in the text (though many implicit connections can be drawn). Yet it remains an appropriate feature of the text because of the celebration found in the narrative and the song's designation as one of victory. Watts notes that it is also possible that this song would be familiar to the text's audience since it contains national victory connotations, along with the fact that it was appropriate for an Israelite woman to sing a song such as one found in 1 Samuel 2:1-10 from a traditional and textual standpoint.[150]

Psalms of the Hebrew Scripture

While the songs of the Old Testament were often grounded exclusively within the context of a narrative in Scripture, psalms were often used in the context of worship as a response to the God of Scripture as revealed to Israel in their biblical history. A common method used to study the psalms is Herman Gunkel's 'form-critical approach,' which rejects the credibility of the superscripts and reconstructs a psalm's *Sitz im Leben* by its genres.[151] There is, however, strong

[149] James W. Watts, *Psalm and Story: Inset Hymns in Hebrew Narrative* (London, United Kingdom: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2009), 26.

[150] Watts, *Psalm and Story : Inset Hymns in Hebrew Narrative*, 29–31. Cf. 1 Sam 18:6. For an overview on the Victory Song tradition of Israel in the Scriptures, see Eunice Blanchard Poethig, *The Victory Song Tradition of the Women of Israel (Miriam, Deborah, Jewish Music, Hebrew Poetry)* (Union Theological Seminary, 1985), 6–9.

[151] Hermann Gunkel and Joachim Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms: The Genres of the Religious Lyric of Israel*, Mercer Library of Biblical Studies (Macon, Ga: Mercer University Press, 1998), 15–17. Gunkel's work on the form-critical approach to the book of Psalms is monumental. Little time is given to his work here since the traditional-historical approach is adopted throughout the scope of the paper.

evidence for accepting the traditional-historical approach, pioneered by Franz Delitzsch, which accepts the veracity of the superscriptions.[152]

Terry G. Carter defines psalms as poetic elements of the Scripture, which are often classified into three broad categories: praise, thanksgiving, and lament.[153] Walter C. Kaiser, however, consolidates these categories since praise and thanksgiving have very similar qualities, resulting in two categories: praise and lament.[154] The characterization of the psalms promotes a poetic structure where ideas are often repeated or contrasted for emphasis. Robert Alter cites the psalmist's use of parallelism, which heightens or intensifies the psalm as it moves from a standard term in the first verse to a more literary term in the second verse.[155]

Psalms consistently display a connection to worship and prayer, and as a result they are most often sung in the context of corporate worship. Sigmund Mowinckel suggests that the biblical 'psalmody', or singing of psalms in public, found its appropriate *Sitz im Leben* in the cult of Ancient Israel, as opposed to a non-cultic setting.[156] The narrative flow of the Scripture seems to display this notion held by Mowinckel, since YHWH's deliverance of the Israelites would shape their identity on a national and cultural level. Yee notes that just as adherence to the Torah formed a response to God's salvific work on behalf of the people, "the Psalms reflect[ed] the

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[152] Franz Delitzsch and D. Eaton, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, Biblical Commentary on the Psalms v. 3 (Princeton, NJ: Hodder and Stoughton, 1889), 2–3. Delitzch argues that the similarities between Psalm 90, with a superscription that attributes Moses as the author, and the Song of Moses in Deuteronomy 32, along with the lack of solid evidence against the traditional attribution to Moses as author, support the validity of the superscription of the Psalm. This study goes beyond the scope of this paper. The underlying argument regarding a trust of the text, however, is pertinent to the discussion of the composition of Amos and the role of the hymns in that discussion.

[153] Terry G Carter, J. Scott Duvall, and Daniel Hays, *Preaching God's Word: A Hands-On Approach to Preparing, Developing, and Delivering the Sermon* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 278.

[154] Walter C. Kaiser, *Preaching and Teaching from the Old Testament: A Guide for the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 153–60.

[155] Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry*, Revised Edition. (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2011), 23.

[156] Sigmund Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2004), 20–24.

ongoing encounter of individuals and communities with [YHWH] in the midst of the rhythms of daily life."[157] Though the majority of the psalms are placed outside of the narratives of the Old Testament, the same general principle applies in that these compositions are a response to who YHWH is as revealed in the history of Israel and in the accounts of Scripture.

James Luther Mays provides a case study via Psalm 3 as to the anatomy of a psalm.[158] In his analysis, Mays notes the following structural qualities: a superscription, poetic elements, and a contained composition.[159] In the case of Psalm 3, the superscription before verse 1 attributes the psalm to David while he is fleeing his son, Absalom (2 Sam. 15:14-17). It contains poetic elements of metaphor, "But You, O Lord, are a shield about me" (v.3); idiom, "For You have smitten all my enemies on the cheek; You have shattered the teeth of the wicked" (v.7); hyperbole, in that his enemies are innumerable (vv.1, 2, 6); and similes throughout the text. Finally, after he has expressed his confidence in YHWH, David closes by petitioning YHWH to bless His people, ending David's praise and lament in this psalm (vv.7-8). Ultimately, Psalm 3 communicates a mixture of praise and lament, as David laments the presence of his enemies, but praises God for His presence with him.

Because these psalms were originally set to prayers, their function was to guide God's people in articulating their distresses and celebrations within the setting of corporate worship.[160]

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[157] Yee, Page, and Coomber, "Introduction to Wisdom and Worship," 511–12.

[158] James Luther Mays, *Psalms: Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Louisville, KY: Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, 2011), 20–23.

[159] Mays does include 'translation' as one of the aspects of a psalm's anatomy. This aspect, however, is not pertinent to the discussion of this paper. See Mays, *Psalms: Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*, 23.

[160] Craig C. Broyles, "Book of Psalms," in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

Craig Broyles notes that the psalms literally put words in the worshiper's mouth that encouraged reflection on a healthy dependency on and acknowledgement of God:

> "As the psalms were hammered out over generations of people living with God, they are deeply personal, not as expressing an individual's experiences, but as evoking the experiences that should typify the people of God."[161]

As Broyles demonstrates above, the role of the psalms in the corporate worship of the Ancient Israelites is crucial to their religious culture in the sense that it gave Israel the opportunity to articulate for themselves their understanding of who YHWH is through the lens of the biblical narratives.

David's Psalm of Deliverance in 2 Samuel 22 has loose links to its place in the narrative, and slightly stronger connections to other areas of Samuel and the Scriptures. Because of its identification of a psalm based on its textual arrangement, an assumption may be made that this psalm would have been used in corporate worship after its composition. As David nears the end of his life, amidst the political jostling of those around him, David praises God for being the centerpiece of faithfulness, power, and justice throughout his life of triumph and trial. While David's allusions to YHWH may not have immediate textual connection in proximity to 2 Sam. 22, the Psalm fits with the overall narrative arch of David's life story as recounted in 1 & 2 Samuel.

Watts notes that many interpreters have commented on the similarities between David's Psalm of Deliverance (2 Samuel 22) and the Song of Moses (Deuteronomy 32) as evidence of a Deuteronomic redaction.[162] Watts notes the psalm's marked change in tone compared to the text and the events that envelope it:

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[161] Broyles, "Book of Psalms."

[162] See footnote on Delitzsch on p.6. for discussion on Song of Moses.

> In the narratives, the king is the center of attention; even when the focus is on his soldiers, as in 21.15-22 and 23.8-39, it is their status as David's servants which calls attention to them. God appears in the narratives only rarely (21.1, 14; 24.1, 25) and then simply to set up the conditions for the subsequent account of David's actions. In the psalm, on the other hand, the figure of the king is matched by vivid descriptions of Yahweh's actions and motives. [163]

The analysis Watts produces on David's psalm argues based on the tonal differentiation between the psalm and the surrounding text. Brevard S. Childs, however, considers the psalm to be an intentional theological commentary on the entire history of David, concluding that the psalm, as part of the final four chapters (which are often seen as a 'clumsy appendix' by some commentators), offers "a highly reflective, theological interpretation of David's whole career adumbrating the messianic hope, which provides a clear hermeneutical guide for its use as sacred scripture."[164] Overall, the psalms in Scripture provide an informative glimpse into the depth of Ancient Israel's worship, as intended as a response to the revelation of God throughout Israel's history in the Old Testament.

Hymns of the Hebrew Scripture

While psalms cover a broad range of reasons for thanksgiving and praise, hymns are specifically focused on praising God for His divinity, and the qualities attributed to His divine nature. In this hymnic formula, worshipers declare and are reminded of the power to create and destroy that, for the Ancient Israelites, belonged to YHWH alone, which made Him (and Him alone) worthy of exclusive devotion and allegiance. David Seal writes that hymns were part of Israel's worship experience incredibly early in their history and that their purpose was to tell of

[163] Watts, *Psalm and Story: Inset Hymns in Hebrew Narrative*, 107.

[164] Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*, 275.

the attributes of the Lord.[165] The implications of this hymnic formula are drawn out in Amos's messages to Israel regarding their unfaithful and superficial worship of YHWH.

As seen in the hymns deployed in the book of Amos, hymnic language displays liturgical expressions of praise unto God, doxological in content and in nature.[166] It is safe, then, to assume that Israel and Judah, who would most likely identify themselves as Yahwistic (though it may have only been in name and not practice), would utilize hymns in their corporate worship. By default, then, the use of hymnic language by Amos to promote the core of his messages would be effective and, to some extent, expected instead of foreign, as concluded by some redaction theorists.

Readers familiar with the Old Testament could expect to find hymns in the psalms and in the writings of the prophets. Yet, one area of Scripture seldom considered when it comes to expecting hymns is that of the book of Job. The classification of "Wisdom Literature" is often applied to this narrative that relates the story of a righteous man's suffering, apparently as a result of what some would call a heavenly wager between God and the accuser (Job 1:6-12).[167] While Job's content wrestles in deep, reflective fashion with the concept of God's justice as displayed in His sovereignty, 'wisdom hymns' arise throughout the strained and serious discourse that occurs in Job.

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[165] David Seal, "Early Christian Hymns," in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

[166] Roy E. Gane, "Worship, Sacrifice, and Festivals in the Ancient near East," in *Behind the Scenes of the Old Testament: Cultural, Social, and Historical Contexts*, ed. Jonathan S. Greer, John W. Hilber, and John H. Walton (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic: A Division of Baker Publishing Group, 2018), 363.

[167] Kathrine J. Dell, "Book of Job," in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

Grant Osborne identifies wisdom hymns as songs that carry two major themes: the glorification of wisdom and thanksgiving to God as Creator and Redeemer.[168] The book of Job contains five hymns: one spoken by Eliphaz (Job 5:9-16), and the other four spoken by Job (Job 9:5-12; 12:13-25; 26:5-15; 28). While each hymn seems to be alien to the text that precedes and follows, there is a method and a purpose to the placement of the hymns. Shimon Bakon states that while the wisdom hymn in Chapter 28 does not seem to fit organically within the framework of the soliloquy, "it is in full accord with the major thesis of the book and with the Voice of the Lord from the Whirlwind, in particular."[169] Whether this section would be better categorized as a poem rather than a hymn is worthy of consideration, though that discussion may be better served outside of this particular study. Nevertheless, it is important to note that this particular literary unit does indeed convey the theological core of the book of Job.

Douglas Sean O'Donnell breaks down the structure of Chapter 28's wisdom hymn into three sections: man's ingenuity on display (vv.1-11), man's ingenuity is hollow (vv.12-22), and God is infinitely omniscient.[170] O'Donnell's perspective of this wisdom hymn's role in the book of Job finds agreement with Bakon's earlier statement, as O'Donnell points out the centrality of the last verse in the hymn to Job and to all of Old Testament wisdom literature:

> "And to man He said,
> 'Behold, the fear of the LORD, that is wisdom;
> And to depart from evil is understanding.'"

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[168] Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, Rev. and expanded, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 249.

[169] Shimon Bakon, "Two Hymns to Wisdom: Proverbs 8 and Job 28.," *Jewish Bible Quarterly* 36.4 (2008): 226. Bakon also holds to a hypothesis championed by J. P. Weinberg that Elihu is the author of the book of Job. Elihu's composition of Job, if Weinberg's claim is true, could also be fertile ground for a comparison of Amos's composition of his book, with the inclusion of hymns being present in both texts. See J.P. Weinberg, "Was Elihu, the Son of Barachel, the Author of the Book of Job?," *Transeu*.16 (1998): 149–66.

[170] Douglas Sean O'Donnell, "Job," in *ESV Expository Commentary. Vol. IV, Ezra-Job*, ed. Iain M. Duguid, James M. Hamilton, and Jay Sklar (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020), 599–603.

The role of this hymn glorifies YHWH as the key to wisdom, and in its instruction, calls the reader and/or seeker of wisdom to worship Him.[171] In essence, the role of the hymn is meant to call the audience to worship YHWH for who He is as Creator. Additionally, His power as Creator alone should also call the backsliding people of God to recognize YHWH's power as Destroyer, that they may hearken to wisdom, depart from evil, and fear the LORD.

Since the previous chapter has covered the function of hymns in detail, there is no need to delve deeper into the role of hymnic language here until it is discussed in the following chapter in the context of the prophets' and the Apostle Paul's use of hymns. There is, however, benefit to briefly considering the presence of hymnic language in ANE culture as seen in the religious texts of surrounding nations as it shows that Israel's use of hymnic language is not an isolated event.

Extrabiblical Hymnic Literature

Hymnic language in narrative contexts is commonplace in ANE texts, in which cuneiform texts use hymns primarily as concluding structural elements. The civilizations of the ANE produced some of the world's earliest written records, most often including a rich variety of religious texts, many of which may be classified as hymns. The Song of the Sea in Exodus 15 has garnered comparisons to other ANE hymnic texts that belong to a wider category of triumphal songs, demonstrating a connection between how ANE peoples viewed the role of hymns in cultic life.[172] Ultimately, these hymns provide a window into the spiritual and cultural lives of these ancient peoples.

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[171] James W. Knox notes that the term "fear of the Lord" is a description of personal piety—the act of worshiping and obeying YHWH h. See James W. Knox, "Fear of the Lord," in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

[172] William Foxwell Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan: A Historical Analysis of Two Contrasting Faiths* (Eisenbrauns, 1994), 7:33.

Just like the hymns of the Hebrew Scriptures, other ANE hymns often began with a call to worship or invocation followed by a description of the deity's deeds or attributes. Victor Harold Matthews cites the large corpus of ANE hymns and their standard template, which is often comprised of a call to worship and creation story.[173] Some of the distinctions as to the content of hymns of these ancient neighbors display the importance of music in worship shared by those in the ANE.

Sumerian and Akkadian Hymns

Sumerian hymns are among the earliest known hymns in human history, originating from ancient Sumer in what is now Southern Iraq. These hymns often praised deities according to the standard invocation/description of deity formula and would recount events that involved that deity. Most famous of the Sumerian hymns is the "Hymn to Inanna," dating back to the Isin period and dedicated to the goddess of love, war, and fertility named Inanna.[174] The hymn exalts Inanna for having gained the crown of An, the Sumerian king of the gods, as she sits on his throne and holds his scepter. Similar to the biblical hymns that depict YHWH as victorious over other "gods", Sumerian hymns attributed to a certain deity will exalt their god or goddess, though the implied belief is that the other gods are real whereas in the Hebrew hymns, YHWH alone is real.

With the rise of the Akkadian Empire in the ANE, hymns were also composed in the Akkadian language. These hymns extolled the virtues of various deities, like Shamash, Ishtar, and Nisaba. Broyles notes that Enḫeduanna, daughter of King Sargon of Akkad, had compiled 42

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[173] Victor Harold Matthews and Don C. Benjamin, "Hymn of Merneptah," in *Old Testament Parallels: Laws and Stories from the Ancient Near East*, Fully Revised and Expanded Fourth Edition. (New York: Paulist Press, 2016).

[174] Åke W. Sjöberg, "A Hymn to Inanna and Her Self-Praise," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 40.2 (1988): 165–66, https://doi.org/10.2307/1359660.

temple hymns from Sumer and Akkad, highlighting the Akkadian fascination with hymnic compositions.[175] Some of the more prominent hymns are composed in honor of Marduk, the patron god of Babylon, who is mentioned in Jeremiah 50:1-2.[176] The prophet speaks of the shame to come upon Babylon when the false gods are exposed as being false. Yet, the Akkadian hymns seem to assume that Marduk is real.

William Moran observes that a hymn to Marduk in Ludlul Bēl Nēmeqi depicts the Akkadian god as one who assigns wrath and mercy to their respective times of the day, with wrath displayed during the night and mercy arriving at the dawn of the new day.[177] The stands in contrast with the psalmist's understanding of God's activities throughout the cycle of the day. In Psalm 42:8 YHWH is said to "send His goodness in the daytime And His song will be with me in the night…" But toward the wicked, God is indignant. In Psalm 7:11-12, the psalmist writes:

> God is a righteous judge,
> And a God who has indignation every day.
> If a man does not repent, He will sharpen His sword;
> He has bent His bow and made it ready.

Unlike Marduk, whose mercy and anger are dependent on the sun and moon, YHWH's righteousness and wrath are based on His own judgments, available at all times of the day. Whereas the Akkadian hymns may use nature to dictate the characteristics of their god, the Hebrew hymns understand the elements of creation as vessels for displaying YHWH's character, a character that is not beholden to the phases of nature.

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[175] Broyles, "Book of Psalms."

[176] N.T. Parker, "Marduk," in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

[177] William L. Moran, "Notes on the Hymn to Marduk in Ludlul Bēl Nēmeqi," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 103.1 (1983): 256–57.

Hymns of the Hittites

The Hittites, who ruled in Anatolia (modern-day Turkey), left behind religious texts, including hymns that celebrated their pantheon of gods and goddesses that ruled over the different forces of the natural world, yet the core of their theological ideas was often the result of seeking inspiration from the religious ideologies of their ANE neighbors. According to Alice Mouton, most Hittite hymns were translations of foreign compositions, exalting gods that modeled Mesopotamian deities, with some hymns being imported directly from Syria.[178] Similar to what occurred with the Roman adaptations of Greek mythology, the Hittites seemed to readily adapt the beliefs and religious stories of their foreign counterparts.

Some of this may be due to the emphasis in Hittite religion on the correlation between national prosperity and religious practice. Linzie Treadway notes that the Hittites held firmly to the notion that the strength of their civilization depended on the excellence of their worship and ritual practice, and that their ability as a people to attract and retain the favor of a growing number of gods bolstered their cultic standing.[179] There is even record of a trilingual hymn, 'Prayers to the Sun-god' (Sumerian-Akkadian-Hittite), that reveals Hittite interest in the cultic liturgies of other ANE civilizations.[180] The transfer and convergence of some aspects of neighboring cultic practices is to be expected. Yet, for the Hittites, the number in their pantheon was essential, which naturally leads to plagiaristic parallels in cultic doctrine. This example of

[178] Alice Mouton, "Hittite Literature," in *Behind the Scenes of the Old Testament: Cultural, Social, and Historical Contexts*, ed. Jonathan S. Greer, John W. Hilber, and John H. Walton (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2018). Mouton

[179] Linzie M. Treadway, "Hittite Religion," in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

[180] Christopher Metcalf, "New Parallels in Hittite and Sumerian Praise of the Sun," *Die Welt Des Orients* 41.2 (2011): 168–69.

emulation and adaptation is often applied to all ANE religions, especially when seeking to discredit the veracity of the Old Testament.

Parallels in Egyptian and Hebrew Hymns

The presence of ancient Egyptian hymns, however, proves that similarity does not necessarily equal mutuality when it comes to source or origination. Ancient Egyptian religion had produced various hymns dedicated to its numerous deities, and outside of the hymns of the Hebrew Bible, are the most familiar to the academic community. Egyptian texts mix the modes of presentation, which is where hymnic appearances in Hebrew texts find their strongest ANE parallels. There are many explanations as to why these similarities are present, with the relationship between the two peoples having ample documentation in biblical and extra-biblical texts. The history between the two peoples cannot be ignored. Yet, at the same time, the shared history does not necessarily explain the parallels contained in the hymns of the two cultural religions.

The Hymn of Merneptah, or the Merneptah Steel, shares important characteristics with many Hebrew psalms and also provides some element of historical veracity to the biblical account of Israel chronologically. In the 'Creation Story' portion of the hymn, Merneptah (incarnate in Amun Re) declares the following:

> *I razed the city walls of Yanoam to the ground;*
> *I left the people of Israel childless and without grain*.
> [*Egyptian*: their seed is not].[181]

[181] Matthews and Benjamin, "Hymn of Merneptah." Though it is beyond the scope of this paper, a study of the parallels between this stanza in the Hymn of Merneptah and the 10th plague in Ex. 12:29 may prove fruitful, since the mention of Merneptah leaving Israel childless may have some tints of avenging the death of the firstborn in Egypt, though there is no record of Merneptah's campaign into Canaan apart from the Merneptah Steele.

On one hand, as C.S. Locatelle observes, this mention of Israel is the earliest known extrabiblical reference to the people of YHWH.[182] On the other hand, the stanza is very reminiscent of psalms that either recall or call for God's victory over opposing nations (Pss 83:9-12; 108:9; 149:6-9.). There are also parallels to psalms that celebrate YHWH as the divine patron who provides food for Israel and protects Israel from its enemies, similar to Merneptah's claim that he is the divine patron who protects Egyptians from their enemies, as his victories in Libya and Syria-Palestine should prove.[183]

The "Great Hymn to the Aten" is one of the more well-known Egyptian hymns. It praises the sun disk, Aten, and was composed during the reign of Pharaoh Akhenaten and his attempt to enforce monotheism in Egypt (1358-1340 B.C.).[184] The Hymn to Aten has often been compared to Psalm 104 due to its portrayal of Aten being the source of warmth, light, and even newborn life. Additionally, because of the similarities between some of their core elements, the tenets of Atenism are cited as the genesis of the Hebrew faith.

Yet, as Mark Janzen correctly asserts, the reign of Akhenaten and the presence of the Hebrews in Egypt do not coincide, considering both early or later dates for the exodus; furthermore, the theological content and comparison between YHWH and Aten have no common

[182] C.S. Locatell, "Merneptah Steele," in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016). Though some scholars question whether the stele has anything to do with Israel at all, the scholarly consensus is that the Israel mentioned in the hymn is the Israel of the ANE. See Ann E. Killebrew, "Israel During the Iron Age II Period," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of the Levant: C. 8000-332 BC.*, ed. M. L. Steiner and Ann E. Killebrew (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2014), 730.

[183] Matthews and Benjamin, "Hymn of Merneptah."

[184] Elliott Ritzma, "Hymn to Aten," in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

ground other than the theme of rejecting all other gods.[185] Miriam Lichtheim attributes these "resemblances" cited by some commentators to the generic similarities between Egyptian hymns and biblical psalms, of which literary interdependence is not probable.[186]

The intended result of these comparisons, however, is not to show interdependence but the importance of hymnic language in the ANE. As an area that was rich in cultic activity, it is to be expected that the practices of the adjacent civilizations would esteem similar aspects of worship. The integral nature of hymnic language in ANE cultures outside of Israel, as it flowed from the cultic circle to every aspect of daily life, demonstrates that the importance of hymnic language was not exclusive to Israel, and that the use of hymnic language, especially in a cultic speech, would be easily recognizable and not foreign to any ANE audience. Hence, the compositional strategy of Amos to include hymns in his message to the Northern Kingdom can be seen as culturally and cultically appropriate.

Old Testament Textual Strategies

Consideration of the compositional strategy of Amos has led this study to examine the use of hymns in the Old Testament, and in some of the adjacent ANE cults, to find parallels and support for the position of this dissertation regarding the intentional use of hymns in Amos by the prophet. Worth similar consideration, then, are the textual strategies applied by the biblical authors in the composition of the entire Old Testament. There is no denying the presence of thematic patterns and narrative structures throughout the Old Testament. The question is how

[185] Mark D. Janzen, "Akhenaten and the Amarna Period," in *Behind the Scenes of the Old Testament: Cultural, Social, and Historical Contexts*, ed. Jonathan S. Greer, John W. Hilber, and John H. Walton (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2018).

[186] Miriam Lichtheim, "The Great Hymn to Aten (1.28)," in *The Context of Scripture*, ed. William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger Jr. (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2003), 45.

these patterns were able to remain consistent throughout this ancient text over its 1,500-year arrangement. As has been noted in this dissertation's study of Amos, some Old Testament Scholars consider the work of a redactor the most plausible explanation, while others see no textual evidence either for a redactor or against the traditionally accepted historically based reading.

John Sailhamer, a well-known Old Testament scholar, proposed a view that garnered much attention in biblical scholarship regarding the understanding of the Pentateuch and the textual strategies applied to the composition of the Torah. According to Sailhamer, the Torah underwent a two-part composition, with Moses responsible for most of the text, and an anonymous post-exilic prophet/author who sought to arrange the Torah in a way that anticipated Israel's history in and out of the Promised Land completing the text.[187] Sailhamer bases his proposal on thematic similarities throughout the text that contain material and insights assumed to have arisen "much later than Moses."[188] These materials include references to the meditation on God's Law (תּוֹרָה) both day and night (Josh. 1:8; Ps 1:2), which Sailhamer believes are strategic 'seams', or 'canonical glue', implemented by the post-exilic editor to keep the Tanakh connected to the Torah.[189]

While the majority of Sailhamer's work focuses on material covering a scope much broader than this dissertation, the discussion involving textual strategies of the Old Testament is worth engaging for the sake of this study. Sailhamer argues that a prophetic editor may not only have had a role in the finalization of the Torah but also in the composition of the rest of the

[187] John Sailhamer, *The Meaning of the Pentateuch: Revelation, Composition, and Interpretation* (Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Academic, 2009), 203.

[188] Sailhamer, *The Meaning of the Pentateuch*, 203–5.

[189] Sailhamer, *The Meaning of the Pentateuch*, 217.

canon to ensure a consistent thematic presence throughout the Tanakh, a technique he calls the 'compositional approach.'[190] Sailhamer acknowledges that the composition of every biblical book has a literary strategy, which is in agreement with the findings of this paper regarding the composition of Amos. The contention lies in Sailhamer's claims that the literary strategy of the prophetic books does not necessarily belong to the prophets, but to the biblical authors who used the prophets' words, allowing the prophets to speak with the author's arrangement while still communicating the message on the heart of the biblical author.[191]

Multiple issues arise from this reasoning, such as the result of multiple theologies from the pre- and post-redacted text, the intent of the original author versus the direction of the later redactor, and the literary strategy that could only belong to the last editor as opposed to the prophets to whom their books are attributed. In laying the foundation for his proposal, Sailhamer introduces the work of Walter Kaiser, who provides a view on the compositional strategy of Scripture that bears consideration for this study.

Kaiser maintains that the prophets played a passive role in shaping their verbal echoes of Moses and the prophets, not reading into the earlier Old Testament Scriptures what could only be known from later prophecy.[192] The same approach could be applied to the understanding of the hymnic elements in Amos that seem to resonate with events dated after an assumed original composition of the text. It is not bizarre to assume that a prophetic text that details Israel's downfall at the hands of YHWH could foretell events that have long been in motion, especially if YHWH is involved. An editorial process that changes the text to fit modern understandings, even

[190] Sailhamer, *The Meaning of the Pentateuch*, 52–55.

[191] Sailhamer, *The Meaning of the Pentateuch*, 274.

[192] Walter C. Kaiser, *Toward an Old Testament Theology*, 1st Paperback Edition. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1991); Sailhamer, *The Meaning of the Pentateuch*, 249.

in a well-meaning sense, comes from an eisegetical standpoint that compromises the integrity of Scripture and violates the original author's intent for the text. Sailhamer even goes so far as to state that Kaiser's insistence on the original author's intent is a proper goal of biblical interpretation, though Sailhamer's own proposals disregard this goal.

Though Sailhamer seeks to answer questions regarding the continuity of Scripture between individuals centuries apart, one significant aspect missing from the discussion, and that is the role of the Holy Spirit in the composition of the Tanakh. Sailhamer cites the work of Ernst Hengstenberg, who mentions the presence of an "echo of divine revelation" in the mind of the nation and in the writings of the prophets.[193] Rather than the presence of a hypothetical unknown editor to make connections in a final composition of the Tanakh, there is a known presence involved in the recording of God's revelation as displayed in the history of Israel, that being the Holy Spirit (2 Tim. 3:16-17), and a known God with whom Israel interacts to guide the process of biblical writing. The names of the people in Israel's history may change, but at their core they are still human beings riddled with sin, and the constant actor in the text of Scripture is the God of Israel, YHWH, whose promise of redemption for His creation, despite His creation, remains a consistent and prominent theme throughout all the Bible.[194]

Sailhamer considers both Kaiser and Hengstenberg to make positive contributions to biblical exegesis since both desire for the Old Testament to be read in its original Old Testament context. Taking this consideration one step further, the synthesis of both viewpoints is indeed

[193] Sailhamer, *The Meaning of the Pentateuch*, 249; Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg, *Christology of the Old Testament: And a Commentary on the Messianic Predictions.*, trans. Theodore Meyer, Second Edition., vol. 1 of *Hengstenberg's Christology of the Old Testament* 2 (Edinburgh, Scotland: T&T Clark, 1868). Sailhamer tends to follow Hengstenberg's train of thought by

[194] For more on Promise Composition Theology, see Walter Kaiser, Jr., *The Promise-Plan of God : A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2009).

beneficial for this study in that the divine influence that threads the writings of the Old Testament together does not depend on a redaction or editorial process and therefore the original human author's intent can be respected and examined in that context. Compositional strategies do not have to be attributed to later editors because of what seems to be later insight not available to early date writers. The role of God the Holy Spirit in the composition of the Scripture that is a revelation of the God of Israel must not be discounted, though that role cannot be fully examined within the scope of this paper.

The compositional strategy found in the Old Testament, then, does have a common thread throughout all the books of the Tanakh that may help to explain the thematic connections that extend past the assumed chronological date of the book. This possibility does not impact the relevance of the text for its immediate audience, nor does it require later editing to connect the text to the rest of Scripture. The compositional strategy for each book of Scripture can be attributed to the original author since there is an original theme and a constant actor engaging with Israel throughout their history, that actor being YHWH. Because YHWH never changes (Mal. 3:6) and because man never changes (to some extent—Eccl. 1:9), it can be assumed that the themes of Scripture, regardless of the period, would be consistent. Regarding events that are predicted with great accuracy, one not only needs to look to the prophecies regarding Jesus's birth, life, and death to consider the fact that no redaction was needed for the Old Testament prophecies in order to foretell the arrival of the Messiah.

Sailhamer must be given credit, as he attempts to argue his theory from an evangelical foundation, seeking to respect the authority and divine inspiration of the text while engaging questions surrounding the Bible's composition. Yet, those who side with Sailhamer and the notion of an unknown editor importing their contemporary values onto texts that predated their

input by centuries is the fact that Jesus references Moses and Moses's written acknowledgment of Him (John 5:46-47). Where exactly this acknowledgment resides in the Torah is more of an issue for those who hold to the involvement of an editor, since if their theories are correct, then this statement of Christ's is possibly erroneous. The burden of proof, then, would be to find which part of the Torah Jesus is referencing and to determine whether that part can be attributed to Moses or to the post-exilic editor. Both ventures are beyond the scope of this paper, but nevertheless raise a concern for Sailhamer's claims.

Summary and Transition

Hymnic language was part of a broad cultural and literary background in the ANE, in which it was employed to connect the audience to the message of the text through important thematic elements in common with the surrounding narrative. The above study exhibited the multiple textual venues where musical compositions were included as natural components of the literary constructions to which they belonged. The distinctions between songs, psalms, and hymns and the examples of each genre's function in the Scriptures provided an overview of how powerful and how natural the inclusion of a musical composition was in communicating and continuing the progression of the text and its overarching message.

If, as some commentators surmise, the songs or hymns were later additions to the text and not genuine aspects of the text, the lack of the songs or hymns diminishes the picture of the importance placed on worship of YHWH in Israel for the original audience and the people involved in the narratives. The notion that a revival in the late 7th-century B.C. sparked a level of religious devotion amongst the people of Judah that required them to impress their pious sentiments onto the historical accounts of their ancestors in the form of redaction seems

problematic, eisegetical, and highly hypothetical. The fact that the presence of songs and the use of hymnic language organically develops throughout the Scripture speaks more to the constant ebb and flow of Israel's commitment to YHWH; all the while YHWH remains constant in His commitment to Israel. The tools for religious expression were always present with Israel throughout their journey, and the presence of songs, psalms, and hymns throughout the text testifies to their integral role in Israel's cultic practice.

The research in this chapter also demonstrated that the purpose of songs and hymns in the narratives of Scripture are very similar. Some commentators have viewed the lack of a song or hymn's specific mention of things related to the text as evidence for a later addition, rendering the musical composition irrelevant to the text. Even when there are no specific links to the text found in these songs, such as that of Hannah's Thanksgiving Song, or the hymns, such as the ones found in Amos, it does not negate the intentional inclusion of the song or hymn in the text by the author.

A song that so closely narrates the events happening in the text before or after it would seem redundant and may even position itself as a better candidate for being identified as a product of redaction. Hymns and songs naturally advance the text to its intended and logical destination because these hymns and songs are part of the original composition of the text. Whether acting as a climax or continuation of the narrative, the function of the hymn cannot be overlooked, and the importance of hymnic language for the original audience cannot be diminished.[195] The hymnic language used in songs and hymns reminds the audience of who God

[195] David Allan Hubbard, *Joel and Amos: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 171. Hubbard notes that the doxology in Amos 4:13 brings the preceding passage to a climax as it introduces the glorious Judge who will pass the judgment mentioned in the previous verses. The climactic function of the hymns is a distortion of the original text if it is added later.

is, His role in the narrative, and the role of the people in response to God's identity and involvement in the narrative, which is the overarching function of the Scripture.

The discussion in this chapter also considered the role of hymnic language in the surrounding ANE civilizations. As expected, cultic practices in the ANE had many similarities among the nations when it came to music. The composition of hymns and their utilization in cultic practice demonstrated the importance and the presence of hymnic language that was universal in ANE religions. The comparison between the hymns of the different ANE religions provided stark differences between the gods of the ANE and the God of Israel, which could certainly cause Israel to take pride in the distinctiveness of their God as proclaimed in their cultic hymns. Such cultic (and, to some extent, cultural) pride would provide the perfect premise for Amos to use hymnic language against a religiously lapsed Israel. Nevertheless, the primary detail gained from the study of hymns in the ANE revealed that the familiarity with hymnic language was not simply a facet of Israel during the time of Amos but was a constant feature in the cultures of the ANE for centuries. There would be no good reason to assume that Amos could not include the hymns in his text for the audience of his time.

A short but significant discussion was held regarding the role of compositional strategy in the Old Testament, with the resulting conclusion being that each author had a compositional strategy connected to the activity of YHWH with Israel and guided by the "echo of divine revelation" as administered by the Holy Spirit to maintain a consistent theme that could be reasonably attributed to the traditional biblical authors, aside from minor editorial additions that do not affect the context or theology of the text.

Since hymnic language was a significant part of Israel's culture, it is to be expected that God's prophets would use hymns and hymnic language in their preaching to God's people. It is

also expected that the New Testament writers would do the same. In the following chapter, the focus of the discussion will be placed on the ways in which the Old Testament prophets and the New Testament writers implemented hymns in their messages. The intent is to demonstrate the common practice of using hymns in prophetic and apostolic texts in messages to God's people, and, in doing so, validate Amos's inclusion of hymns in his prophetic corpus as part of a unified composition of the prophet's book.

Chapter 4: Hymns in the Preaching of the Prophets and Paul

Prophetic and Pauline Parallels

Proponents of a multi-layered composition of Amos suggest that the inclusion of the three hymns in the prophet's writings must be attributed to a later editor due to the assumptions of literary intrusion and cultural irrelevance. The previous chapters of this paper have attempted to present evidence in support of unified composition. Chapter 2 examined the textual intentionality of the hymns within Amos, while Chapter 3 surveyed hymnic language's interwoven nature in the biblical narrative and in the cultural climate of the ANE. Both chapters provide textual and extrabiblical support that suggest a unified composition of the prophetic corpus, as opposed to a multi-layered redactional claim, if the original inclusion of the hymnic elements of Amos is valid.

With the immediate textual and narrative/cultural aspects of the argument already discussed, this chapter will move to engage the broader genre under the writings of the prophets and their use of hymns in their preaching and written texts. Just as Amos includes hymns in his preaching with intention, several of the Hebrew prophets also employ this literary approach by using hymns in their preaching. More specifically, the use of hymns from a pre-existent psalter in prophetic preaching is not only recognizable to the modern-day reader, but the verses and choruses would have been all too familiar to the hearers in the cultic landscape of Israel and Judah.

The writings of the prophets contain various inclusions of hymnic language—from Isaiah in the 8th-century to Jeremiah in the early 6th-century, with a plethora of prophets utilizing hymns in between. Rather than a mere literary accessory, hymnic language was often utilized by the prophets to demonstrate the presence of God in the present circumstances of His people.

Whether it was to remind His people to their delight or their dismay, the use of hymnic language targeted an immediate audience familiar with the message behind the melodies of these hymns. That this practice was common among the prophets is of no question—therefore, prevalence of hymns in the preaching of the prophets should not only exhibit a normative practice for prophetic writings but should also suggest that the hymns of Amos were indeed part of a unified composition of Amos.[196]

In addition to engaging the prophets' use of hymnic language, this chapter will also engage the use of hymnic language in the New Testament, specifically in the writings of the Apostle Paul to the Churches. While the use of hymns in the New Testament does not match the frequency found in the Old Testament, their impact is no less significant. Just as the prophets of Israel and Judah utilize hymnic language more often to chasten but also to hearten God's people, Paul utilizes the hymns of the early Church to exhort, teach, and correct the believers in a way that is not all too different than that of the prophets who preceded him.

The parallels between the prophets and Paul in their use of hymnic language are both striking and significant to this study and ultimately adds support to the notion that the presence of hymns in the prophetic corpus of Amos cannot be simply attributed to redaction. Paul's use of hymnic language is an integral part to the rest of his epistle for his intended audience insomuch that it cannot be separated from the text or superimposed from a later redaction; the same can be argued of the prophets' use of hymnic language, specifically as it applies to hymns found in Amos.

[196] Harrison asserts that the composition of the hymns in Amos, because they are integral to the surrounding texts could be attributed to the prophet himself. While there is room to consider such a claim within the direction of this paper's base argument, the context of this current chapter has no room to digress on this curious venture. Although, it seems unlikely that Amos would compose a hymnic element, which is the case in Amos's corpus, as opposed to a full psalm. See Harrison, "The Book of Amos," 893.

The following discussions will arrive in two sections: the first will observe the role of the psalms in prophetic prose and the function of hymnic language in the writings of the prophets. The second will examine the use of hymnic language in the New Testament, specifically in Paul's epistles. The aim of both sections is to show that the prophetic and Pauline use of hymnic language was a normative practice amongst biblical authors, supporting the argument for Amos's inclusion of hymnic language in a unified composition that can be attributed to the prophet himself.

The Sounds of the Psalter in the Prophets

The Prophet's Proper Purpose

The function of the prophets in the contexts of the biblical narrative is a vocation oft misunderstood. The variety of forms, genres, and subgenres can lead to misunderstanding as to who the prophets are and how the prophets should be studied.[197] Even the very word "prophecy" commonly evokes an image of a mystic soothsayer, or one whose purpose is to foretell future events. Adding to this confusion are applications of prophetic ministry throughout the ages of the Church that have led to a skewed perception of the actual role of the prophet. The prophet has been relegated to a mere fortune teller whose goal was to be right about the future.

Yet, the Hebrew prophets primarily anticipated the punishment of evil and/or a better life on earth for faithful Israelites because of YHWH's purpose for the prophets in calling His people to repentance. As Paul Reddit notes, the prophets "spoke the truth about the present and what would happen if people did not change their behavior and return to YHWH's ways." [198] When

[197] Köstenberger and Patterson, *Invitation to Biblical Interpretation*, 772.

[198] Paul Redditt, "The Prophets," in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

the prophets turned their attention to the future, it was to warn Israel and Judah of their impending doom due to their repeated violations of their covenant with YHWH.

A cursory following of the biblical narrative in the Old Testament reveals that neither Israel nor Judah would heed the counsel of the prophets or the God who sent them. Carl Steuernagel observes that since the most common response to the prophets' preaching of repentance is rejected, which results in judgment for Israel and Judah, the prophets assume the national Messianic hope as the core vessel of their message of repentance.[199] The Psalter shares this Messianic hope, which makes it fertile ground for the preaching of the prophets who witness the need for God's people to be rescued from their own descent into destruction. Yet, the core purpose of the Psalter, which is rooted in Israel's cultic history and essence, is utilized by the prophets in a way that points Israel back to the One Whom they know to be God and what they know about Him.

The Prophet's Purpose for the Psalter

C. Hassell Bullock notes that the Psalter reflects Israel's portrait of life and worship through the centuries of Israel's history, a microcosm of Israel's faith and history reflecting basic doctrines and central events.[200] The importance of the psalms in corporate worship (addressed in the previous chapter) and the place of cultic activity in the fabric of Hebraic life would have embedded the message of the Psalter into the hearts and minds of the people of Israel and Judah as a formation of a theological framework. Whether the people would adhere to this framework is evident in the outcomes recorded in Scripture. What remains important, however, is that the

[199] For a comprehensive overview of the basic forms of prophetic speech, in which Steuernagel and other scholars have their works on the prophets shared, see Claus Westermann, *Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech*, Book, Whole (Cambridge [England];Louisville, Ky; Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), 17.

[200] C. Hassell Bullock, "The Psalms and Faith/Tradition," in *The Psalms: Language for All Seasons of the Soul*, ed. Andrew J. Schmutzer and David M. Howard, vol. 51 (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2013).

Psalter had a substantive presence in Hebrew culture, a presence that Hebrew prophets could leverage to remind Israel and Judah that their transgressions are not committed in ignorance of God's Law or character.

It must be acknowledged that the Psalter most relevant to this discussion is neither the Masoretic Text Psalter (MT Psalter) nor the Septuagint Psalter (LXX Psalter) but the Pre-Existent Psalter, of which scholarship is sparse, though significant overlap can be reasonably assumed.[201] Though the pre-existent psalter is not available to us, there are textual examples of the prophets using psalms and hymns, which would have most likely been part of a known composition, to communicate their messages to the people with relevance. For the purposes of this discussion, the closest reference point would be the MT Psalter, which (as an assumption for the purposes of this discussion) would share similar overarching themes with those found in the Pre-existent Psalter. Steuernagel asserts that the MT Psalter contains allusions to the 'salvation prophecy' and speculates that such a theme would be of lesser importance to the older (pre-exilic) prophets as opposed to the latter prophets of the exile onward.[202] There is, however, no evidence to suggest that the theme of Messianic salvation would not be as important to the prophets who foresaw Israel's demise as it would be to those who had experienced Israel's demise.

Certainly, the recency of the exile for the post-exilic prophets and psalmists would have deeply influenced their respective work. Nevertheless, the prophet's psalmody primarily includes those of the Patriarchs, of the Exodus, of Moses, of David, and of the First Temple. This same

[201] Hulisane provides an informative overview of the differences between the MT Psalter and the LXX Psalter, utilizing the Davidic figure of Pss. 90-96 as a case study of sorts. See Ramantswana Hulisane, "David of the Psalters : MT Psalter, LXX Psalter and 11QPsa Psalter," *Old Testament Essays* 24.2 (2011): 431–63.

[202] Westermann, *Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech*, 17–18.

prophet also sees the stewards of this spiritual treasury fumbling towards God's judgment. Such a distressing spectacle—and the impending, unavoidable outcome—could easily compel the prophets to grasp depictions of YHWH's kingship and power to deliver Israel through His consecrated king found in their pre-exilic psalter (Ps. 2). As Redditt explains regarding pre-exilic psalmody, "YHWH's saving activity, whereby He puts things 'right,' extends into the human realms of history and justice."[203]

While the picture of the salvation prophecy's application would have naturally become more in-focus after the exile, the cultic reality that YHWH was the only means of salvation was always clear in the journey of Israel regardless of time-period. Michael D. Morrison cites the Flood and the Exodus in the Torah as examples in Israel's cultic regulations as examples of God's salvation from physical danger, which (in the cultic doctrine of the Hebrew) translated to aspects of everyday life—especially Israel's nationalistic aspirations of land, fertility, and military success (Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 28).[204]

The prophets spoke of salvation in terms of the nation's restoration. Though they received the unenviable reputation of bringing forth YHWH judgments, the prophets also proclaimed the salvation of YHWH for Israel. Al Fuhr and Gary Yates recognize the prophets as 'forth-tellers' whose oracles of salvation anchored themselves in "the unilateral covenants; the unconditional blessings of the Abrahamic, Davidic, and new covenants are acknowledged by the prophets as the basis for eschatological hope."[205] These covenants obviously preceded the

[203] Redditt, "The Prophets."

[204] Michael D. Morrison, "Salvation," in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

[205] Al Fuhr and Gary Yates, *The Message of the Twelve: Hearing the Voice of the Minor Prophets* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2016), 21.

eventual exile. Yet, from these covenants the prophets preached national redemption through YHWH, the sole Source of salvation for the people.

It is in the Psalter where the truths of these covenants and the One with whom Israel makes its covenant are memorialized through song for the people's understanding and spiritual formation. Fuhr and Yates write, "The prophets often used the language of the Psalter to express praise and thanksgiving, exalting the name of YHWH through a genre familiar to the temple courts of Israel."[206] For this reason, it may be construed that the use of the Psalter by the prophets was for the purpose of reminding the people of Israel and Judah what they already knew about God: His character, His commands, His righteousness, and His wrath. The use of the Psalter and hymnic language in the prophets resounds a clear intentionality that finds difficulty in attribution to redaction centuries removed from its intended audience as opposed to attribution to original composition by the prophets themselves.

The Function of Hymnic Language in the Prophets

By ascertaining the proper role of the Hebrew prophet, and by grasping the general purpose for which the prophets employed the Psalter, the argument for the original inclusion of the hymns in Amos (and thus an original composition of Amos by the prophet himself) finds even more solid footing. It is important, however, to examine the use of hymnic language in different prophetic writings to view patterns in the Hebrew text that support a common use of the Psalter amongst the prophets that may strengthen the argument of this paper. The following sections will observe the use of the Psalter in different books of the prophets, demonstrating a widespread use of hymnic language.

[206] Fuhr and Yates, *Minor Prophets*, 34.

Identification with Characters in the Narrative (Jonah 2:2-10)

An issue some scholars cite with regard to the hymns in Amos is their seemingly intrusive nature, which leads to the conclusion that the hymns are indeed foreign to the original composition of the text.[207] Yet, the following passage of study from Jonah 2:2-10 demonstrates a similar use of hymnic language for the purpose of connecting the intended audience with the message of the text in which the hymn/psalm abides. As mentioned earlier, the prophets intentionally used the language of the Psalter because of the familiarity of the words and themes, entrenched in the souls of the people due to the cultural makeup of Israel and Judah around their cultic identity as YHWH's chosen people.[208] The use, then, of the Psalter in the prophet's preaching can be applied for the purposes of placing the prophet's audience in the figurative shoes of those within the narrative.

It should be noted that for the purposes of this discussion, the author of Jonah is assumed to be an anonymous author writing around the time of the Israelite prophet Jonah mentioned in 2 Kings 14:25, whose ministry occurred around the reign of King Jeroboam in the 8th-century B.C.[209] Daniel C. Timmer et al. note that the book does not claim Jonah as the author (1:1), most likely indicating that the writer of the book of Jonah may not have been the prophet himself.[210] While some scholars may presume a post-exilic composition of Jonah's writings, the

[207] Hadjiev, *The Composition and Redaction of the Book of Amos*, 393:129.

[208] The instilling of these doctrinal values through psalmody would naturally occur within the setting of corporate worship. As Israel and Judah are held accountable on a national level, the prerequisite for these judgments assumes rightly Israel's national exposure to God's Law within the corporate cult. See Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 20–24.

[209] Brenda Heyink, "Book of Jonah," in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

[210] Daniel C. Timmer, David G. Firth, and Tremper Longman III, *Obadiah, Jonah and Micah: An Introduction and Commentary* (Westmont, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2021), 31–34.

involvement of the Neo-Assyrian Empire in the text along with the pseudo-cultic climate in Israel in the 8th-century suggests that the message of the text fits much better with an 8th-century composition.

Much of the skepticism surrounding 8th-century authorship also arises around the attempts to explain the prophet's stay in the great fish apart from the miraculous. It can be claimed, however, that the author of the text writes the account as factual and as a natural point of progression for the entire book. An alternative explanation risks limiting the power of God to command creation as He wills in contrast to the disobedience of His created people, along with the desperation and ultimate lack of self-awareness Jonah displays with the use of his psalm in the narrative.

The text from Jonah occurs within the context of the prophet Jonah's staunch disobedience of the Lord's commission of Jonah and Jonah's attempt at death by sea being foiled by the Lord's commission of a great fish to swallow Jonah (1:17). After three days and three nights in the belly of the fish, Jonah utters the prayer that is found in chapter two, which contains literary markers that identify it as a Hebrew Psalm. T. Desmond Alexander notes Jonah's psalm as one that relates closely to the prophet's immediate circumstances and is, therefore, a product of the expressions found in the Psalter that have influenced Jonah to compose this psalm.[211]

Whether this is a valid assumption is not readily discernable. What is clear, however, is that the psalm uses Psalter-based terms and phrases and applies them to a personal experience (Jonah's). In verse two, Jonah exclaims,

> "I called out of my distress to the LORD,
> And He answered me.
> I cried for help from the depth of Sheol;

[211] T. Desmond Alexander, "Jonah: An Introduction and Commentary," in *Obadiah, Jonah and Micah* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 124–25.

You heard my voice."

Jonah begins his psalm with an overview of events that result in the Lord delivering the submerged prophet. Though Jonah is on the precipice of entering Sheol, the Lord hears Jonah's cry and delivers him. This language of God's people calling out to Him and God answering them is prevalent in the Psalter (cf. Pss. 18:6; 118:5; 120:1).[212] This language would have been familiar to Jonah's audience and easily relatable to their own experiences on an individual and collective level. Brevard Childs asserts that the psalm used is meant to evoke the readers' sympathies and identification with the characters and events of the surrounding narratives (i.e. Exodus 15).[213] This literary move is evident in Jonah 2, as the audience is connected to Jonah's situation using hymnic language and themes from the Psalter. With this initial identification with Jonah through the Psalter, the audience is made to see themselves gratefully in the hands of their God who delivers.

There comes, however, a great switch as verse three—when applied to Jonah's situation—reveals the prophet to be ingenuine and oblivious to his role in his distress. In verse three, the prophet proclaims:

> "For You had cast me into the deep,
> Into the heart of the seas,
> And current engulfed me,
> All your breakers and billows passed over me."

The honest reader need not look far to identify the inconsistencies between Jonah's prayer with the actual events recorded in the previous chapter. For it was Jonah who refused to repent and instead sentenced himself to death by instructing the sailors of the ship to cast him

[212] Alexander, "Jonah: An Introduction and Commentary," 125.

[213] Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*, 424.

into the sea (1:15). Jonah sought death instead of obedience to God. Yet, in his prayer, Jonah places the responsibility for his current predicament in the ocean at the feet of the Lord,

Timmer notes that Jonah's language is similar "to that used by genuinely pious biblical psalmists," with Psalm 42:7 offering an exact parallel to his words about the billows and the waves.[214] Yet, the contrast between Jonah and the writer of Psalm 42 is laughable, at best. The psalmist, as Timmer observes, laments the attacks of his godless enemies and his distance from the Temple in Jerusalem, but Jonah's distance from the Temple is the result of his disobedience and his attempt to flee from the Lord.[215]

What is being presented before the audience through the experiences of the prophet and his supposed piety is the in-depth depiction of hollow faith. On the surface, Jonah's psalm seems to signal a change of heart and a sense of remorse for what the prophet has done. Absent from Jonah's psalm, however, is any confession of sin or any sense of remorse. Alexander contends that Jonah is acknowledging God's sovereignty in 2:3 and that the prophet is fully aware of his sins.[216] If the book of the prophet ended after the psalm, there might be a stronger case for this position.

Yet, the reality of the book of Jonah is that this psalm is sandwiched in between highly emphasized instances of pagan submission to YHWH as the background to Israelite contention with YHWH. Timmer notes that even though Jonah in 2:4 seeks to look toward God's holy temple, such an act is "theologically impossible" due to Jonah's refusal to repent. Timmer writes, "The prophet falls under prophetic condemnation, as it were, by approaching God first without

[214] Timmer, Firth, and Longman, *Obadiah, Jonah and Micah: An Introduction and Commentary*, 62–63.

[215] Timmer, Firth, and Longman, *Obadiah, Jonah and Micah: An Introduction and Commentary*, 63.

[216] Alexander, "Jonah: An Introduction and Commentary," 126–27.

cleansing his heart by repentance (cf. Isa. 1:12-15; Amos 4:4-5; 5:21-24)."[217] Certainly, this understanding of approaching the Most High God would be a rudimentary doctrine for the prophet from Gath-Hepher. Nevertheless, Jonah stays true to form according to the narrative of the text. Though there is nowhere anyone can go to flee the presence of the Omnipresent God, the one who should be closest to Him is, indeed, most far in spirit. In no uncertain terms, Jonah is self-deceived about his spiritual condition and his culpability regarding the judgment that has befallen him.

Based on what is portrayed about the cultic climate of 8th-century Israel throughout the Hebrew Scriptures, the religious elite of the Northern Kingdom could easily find their likeness in the attitude and actions of the prophet Jonah. In fact, as Fuhr and Yates observe, the name "Jonah" in Hebrew means "dove," which suggests that the prophet in some way represents Israel as a whole (cf. Ps. 74:19; Hos. 7:11; 11:11).[218] Though the themes of disobedience and contentiousness toward YHWH would not be readily acknowledged, the connection created through the use of hymnic language found in the opening of the prayer is the perfect bridge for 8th-century Israel to identify with the prophet during his prayer.[219]

Just as the author of Jonah utilizes the language of the Psalter so that his audience may identify with the prophet, Amos also uses the hymnic language to have his audience identify with those who unwittingly bring judgment upon themselves while attesting to the truths of the hymns Amos employs (cf. Amos. 4:12-13). By acknowledging the truths that are in the hymns Amos

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[217] Timmer, Firth, and Longman, *Obadiah, Jonah and Micah: An Introduction and Commentary*, 63–64.

[218] Al Fuhr and Gary Yates, "The Book of Jonah: The Question of Historicity," in *The Message of the Twelve: Hearing the Voice of the Minor Prophets* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2016), 163.

[219] Hans Walter Wolff, Waldemar Janzen, and Charles A. Muenchow, "A Reproach of the Cult Pilgrims and Its Later Interpretation," in *Joel and Amos*, ed. S. Dean McBride (1517 Media, 1977), 215–17.

uses, Amos's audience places themselves under the judgment of the God they exalt. The author of Jonah's use of the psalter to connect the audience to the prophet's disposition in the narrative has immediate relevance for the cultic events and spiritual temperature of the 8th-century. It may be more difficult, however, to associate these spiritual failings and the historical contexts that surround them with a 5th-century remnant if one were to hold to a redaction composition of Amos.

The pious overtones and the superficial sincerity of the prayer would ironically find resonance in the Israelite heart for all the wrong reasons. This resonance, however, would open the door for the author's intended message to penetrate the heart of the audience to recognize their distance from the God who has not only commissioned them to be vessels of His grace, but to also (once again) be participants of His grace through repentance. While the language of the psalter is an instrument for the prophet to expose the issue at the heart of Israel's faith journey, the author also uses the instrument of hymnic language to point to the solution, which must not be lost. Fuhr and Yates underscore the goal of the book of the prophet, "What ultimately matters here is recognition of the truthfulness of the message of the book concerning the mercy of God and his redemptive concern for all peoples,"—and in the case of Jonah's message to Israel, His concern especially for His own.[220]

Highlighting God's Character (Nahum 1:2-8)

A factor in the minds of some advocates for redaction in reference to Amos is that the hymns seem to lack direct relevance to the surrounding texts since they are of a doxological nature.[221] The judgments levied against Israel project a tone of destruction and dismay in light of

[220] Fuhr and Yates, "Jonah: Historicity," 162–64.

[221] Jeremias, *The Book of Amos: A Commentary*, 35.

Israel's continued disobedience, while the doxologies seem out of place due to their high praise and worship-centered exaltation of YHWH. This exaltation, however, is an integral part of the psalms to highlight God's character as a means of reminding His people exactly who it is they are transgressing against and/or repenting towards. In the book of Nahum, the prophet utilizes an acrostic to achieve this exact purpose for his audience.

The words of Nahum are attributed to a 7th-century B.C. prophet by the name of Nahum from Elkosh, of whom little is known. While no dates are given in the superscription, S.D. Snyman et al. assert that it is reasonable to date Nahum's writings between 663-612 B.C.[222] Fairly unique in the writings of Nahum is that the explicit target audience is the Assyrian empire in their decline. While the overt focus may be the celebration of an evil empire's demise, the overarching message is that of God's ultimate victory over the forces of evil, a timely reminder to His people who will soon go into exile that He will be victorious throughout the course of human history.[223]

Such is the case with Nahum's acrostic, which opens his book (1:1-8). Hebrew acrostics use all the letters of the alphabet either in successive lines (Psalm 9) or in stanzas (Psalm 119); yet the acrostic used in Nahum 1 is incomplete, possibly indicating an origin in pre-existent material used by the author who is most likely Nahum (Nah 1:1). Snyman notes that the acrostic psalm comes to an unexpected end at the letter *kaph*, halfway through the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet, which raises questions as to why Nahum would only quote half of an existing psalm. If the psalm used was familiar to Nahum's audience, the obvious adaptation of it

[222] S.D. Snyman, David G. Firth, and Tremper Longman III, "Nahum: Introduction," in *Nahum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah: An Introduction and Commentary* (Westmont, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2020), 5–6.

[223] Al Fuhr and Gary Yates, "The Book of Nahum: Theological Message and Application of Nahum," in *The Message of the Twelve: Hearing the Voice of the Minor Prophets* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2016), 205–6.

would draw attention to Nahum's intended message over the acrostic itself. Fuhr and Yates convincingly reason that the complete acrostic was not necessary to emphasize the main point of Nahum's book: God's power as a divine warrior.[224] By using only the necessary part of the acrostic, Steven Tuell notes that Nahum constructs a theological base for the reasons the enemies of God's people have fallen: God Himself.[225] It is within this acrostic, as David W. Baker and Donald J. Wiseman observe, that God's character is presented in the language of theophany: highlighting God's patience and power in cosmic terms (vv.2-6) before concluding with God's goodness and deliverance on a more personal level (vv.7-8).[226]

In Nahum 1:2, Duane L. Christensen identifies a significant structuring of terms to describe God's character: אֵל קַנּוֹא (a God ['El] of jealousy) is placed over וּבַעַל חֵמָה (a lord (Ba'al) of wrath) in the chiastic structure of the verse. Christensen notes that these are deliberate allusions to the Canaanite deities of Sea, Rivers, and Ba'al to remind the reader in the foreground of Assyria's fall that only YHWH is to be regarded as God and Lord.[227] This is an aggressive stance taken in the beginning of this acrostic. This stance, however, is appropriate in light of Assyria's collapse at the hands of the Almighty God, whose characteristic as the only God and Lord as proclaimed in this acrostic is being applied to a recent historical event for Nahum's audience.

[224] Fuhr and Yates, "Nahum: Theological Message," 208.

[225] Steven Tuell, "Book of Nahum," in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

[226] David W. Baker and Donald J Wiseman, *Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 26–29.

[227] Duane L. Christensen, *Nahum* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009), 178–79.

According to John D. Barry et al., acrostic patterns were possibly used to either aid memorization or to portray comprehensiveness.[228] In the case of Nahum, his use of this acrostic would not only speak to God's complete and total status as the one and only victorious Deity over all foreign gods, the acrostic would underscore the expectation that God's character as the true Deity would be known (memorized) amongst His people (cf. Deut. 6:4). The fact that Nahum only utilizes half of the supposed pre-existent acrostic seems to indicate that even half of the psalm makes the case for the totality of YHWH's ultimate standing as God.

The most significant impact of this acrostic for Nahum's audience, however, can be found in the imagery produced from the hymnic language. Fuhr and Yates note that the hyperbolic bravado of YHWH treading the clouds, drying up the rivers, and bringing mountains down stresses for Nahum's audience YHWH's ultimate power over creation.[229] For the ANE Hebrew mind, God's power over everything takes precedence over God's presence everywhere. The ANE belief was that deities were restricted in their power to their region. Though YHWH was known as the God who traveled with His people, the concept of His power over other nations in their lands was not necessarily clear to the people of Ancient Israel. The implementation of Nahum's acrostic is crucial in reinforcing the people's understanding that God is powerful and sovereign over all creation and over all nations.

Robert B. Chisholm also notes that the Lord's rebuke in 1:4 is more accurately to be seen as a 'battle cry' with militaristic connotations.[230] According to Chisholm, the warrior's battle cry

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[228] John D. Barry et al., eds., "Acrostic Psalms," in *Faithlife Study Bible* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

[229] Fuhr and Yates, "Nahum: Theological Message," 209.

[230] Robert B. Chisholm, "The Downfall of Nineveh (Nahum)," in *Handbook on the Prophets* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), 429–30.

is a common motif in ANE literature. From Canaanite mythology to Egyptian and Assyrian history writing, the battle cry of a people's god or leader instilled fear in the opposition and ultimately symbolized victory over the enemy before the battle had even begun.[231] In the case of Judah, Assyria had long been the intimidators, roaring from the north to instill fear in God's people. Nahum's use of the Psalter, however, indicates a turn of the tide of Judah.

YHWH's battle cry in Nahum's acrostic, which dries up the sea and rivers, along with the fertile areas of Bashan, Carmel, and Lebanon, is not only important for displaying God's power over creation, but also His power over other kings and other gods. While the battle cries of earthly leaders and regional gods may shake armies, YHWH's battle cry causes the upheaval of the whole earth. One other important aspect of the battle cry is the combination of the effects and the emotion. The effects of YHWH's battle cry, specifically where Nahum speaks of YHWH rebuking the sea and making it dry (1:4), issue a reminder of YHWH's past triumphs in Israel's history (the Israelites march through the Red Sea, Ex. 14:19-31).[232] YHWH's victories in the history of His covenant relationship with His people can assure Judah that their God shall once again be victorious.

In addition, the emotion of YHWH's battle cry as revealed in 1:6, with His indignation and burning anger, reveals God's zeal against His enemies and His intention to defeat those who stand against Him. In this case, the Assyrians have long tormented His people, who have suffered assault after assault from the Empire. For Nahum's audience, this battle cry is a reminder that YHWH is not passive or apathetic toward their torment, but deeply invested in

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[231] Robert B. Chisholm, *Interpreting the Minor Prophets* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub. House, 1990), 169–70.

[232] Joshua Joel Spoelstra, "Passage of the Red Sea," in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

their well-being and zealous against those who mistreat them. As 1:7 declares, YHWH "knows those who take refuge in Him," meaning that He acknowledges those who have placed their faith in Him and He rewards them with His protection, His providence, and His power for their deliverance and their enemy's destruction.[233]

Nahum masterfully applies the acrostic psalm to highlight the characteristics of God that trigger terror in His enemies, while eliciting comfort and confidence in His people. Chisholm writes, "The angry warrior-judge is also the protector of his people (v.7). Nahum's message focuses on God's judgment of Nineveh, but there is another side to the coin. The judgment of Nineveh would also mean deliverance and freedom for Judah."[234] Nahum's use of the language of the Psalter activates the theology of the people of Judah, in that the time-tested characteristics of God they have heard and recited on a national level are deeply relevant to their lives on a national and historical level.

Ironically, Amos's use hymnic language does the exact same thing; except in the case of Amos and his audience the implications of the theology applied is very different from Nahum and his audience. While Nahum's audience can find comfort and confidence in the truths of who YHWH is, Amos's audience can only find deep concern. For the God of the Psalter, whom they know to form mountains, create winds, and tread on the high places of the earth according to the first hymn Amos uses in 4:13, who is the same God Nahum's acrostic highlights, is a God who is coming to do battle with Israel. For Amos's audience, Israel is guilty; and according to Nahum's

[233] King Josiah and his reign in Judah go beyond the scope of this paper. Yet, the potential time period in which Nahum's message would have met Judean ears combined with Josiah's religious reforms, whether occurring simultaneously or preceding one another, bears consideration for possible synergies or causality between the two. See Douglas Mangum, "Josiah, King of Judah," in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

[234] Chisholm, "The Downfall of Nineveh (Nahum)," 429.

acrostic psalm (1:3), "the LORD will by no means leave the guilty unpunished." Nahum's use of the Psalter to highlight God's character is highly effective, and so is Amos's use.

Responding to Revelation (Habakkuk 2:6-20)

Regarding the supposed "intrusive nature" of the Amos hymns, Thomas McComiskey states that only the second hymn (5:8-9) can be seen as truly intrusive. Even with that admission, McComiskey concludes, a counterpart found in 6:1-10, which scholars are unanimous in attributing to the prophet, mirrors the intrusive nature of 5:8-9 and must therefore qualify 5:8-9 as an original component of Amos's original composition.[235] In addition, Amos's use of the second hymn may also be seen as the prophet utilizing hymnic language as a response to revelation that verifies the revelation and calls the people to acknowledgement and action.

The judgment of the Lord is being passed upon Israel, and the appropriate response is praise for the Lord, which the inclusion of hymnic language accomplishes. Gary V. Smith cites the extensive familiarity of the prophets with the hymnic literature of the nation, noting that some would use a hymn to mark the end of a literary unit and to elicit a reaction of praise based on God's promises of salvation.[236] This function of hymnic language, which is key to Amos's preaching in 8th-century B.C. Israel, is also demonstrated in the hymnic interludes found in the taunt song of Habakkuk 2:6-20.

Habakkuk's ministry occurs during the late 7th-century B.C. in Judah, where two pressing questions are apparent: 1) Why does God allow evil to go unpunished in Judah (1:3)? and 2)

[235] McComiskey, "The Hymnic Elements of the Prophecy of Amos: A Study of Form-Critical Methodology," 156–57.

[236] Gary V. Smith, *Interpreting the Prophetic Books: An Exegetical Handbook* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, a division of Kregel, Inc., 2014), 43.

Why would God use a wicked nation like Babylon to judge Judah (1:13)?[237] The prophet lays out these questions before YHWH in chapter 1 in somewhat of an accusatory fashion, Yet, YHWH answers the prophet in two segments, introduced by the affirmation that though judgment will come upon Judah, He will not judge indiscriminately, for "the righteous will live by his faith" (2:4).[238] There will be judgment of the peoples in Judah, but those who live by faith can take refuge in the Lord. Robert D. Haak notes that the oracle of salvation in this initial segment naturally transitions to a "reversal of fortunes" expressed with woe oracles in this taunt song.[239]

The taunt song in 2:6-20 continues YHWH's response to the prophet. This compilation of five woe oracles is not only intended to prepare Judah's enemies for their downfall, but to answer the complaints of Judah regarding the hardships they endure at the hands of the Babylonians. Baker et al. note that the song uses the literary form of a dirge to ridicule Babylon and ultimately depicts the Empire as an object lesson for those who overstep God's bounds.[240] YHWH's use of a funerary dirge in His response to Habakkuk's questions resembles that of His Amos's eulogy for Israel a few centuries earlier in 5:1-17.

Habakkuk's taunt song is shaped by the five woe oracles that fill it—oracles that pass judgment on Babylon for five of their identified crimes. Miller categorizes the five oracles according to their placement in the passage:

2:6-8	Woe to the plunderer and extortioner. Babylon plundered vanquished nations and forced others to pay tribute.

[237] Stephen R. Miller, "Book of Habakkuk," in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

[238] S.D. Snyman, David G. Firth, and Tremper Longman III, "Habakkuk: Commentary," in *Nahum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah: An Introduction and Commentary* (Westmont, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2020), 71–72.

[239] Robert D. Haak, *Habakkuk*, Book, Whole (New York; Leiden; E.J. Brill, 1992), 44:15–16.

[240] Baker and Wiseman, *Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah*, 61.

2:9-11	Woe to those who build an empire by unjust gain. Babylonians built their empire with wealth unjustly taken from other nations.
2:12-14	Woe to those who build a city with bloodshed and injustice. Nebuchadnezzar built Babylon with the spoils of unjust wars.
2:15-17	Woe to the violent and those who degrade others. Babylonians degraded other nations and treated them violently. They would reap what they sowed.
2:18-20	Woe to those who trust in false gods. Babylon's false gods cannot save the empire from the judgment of YHWH, the true and living God.[241]

Chisholm notes that the woe oracles herald the oncoming embarrassment that will befall Babylon at the hands of YHWH. While many conquered peoples of Babylon had suffered the forced humiliation of their captors, YHWH would soon expose Babylon for all their cruelties and transgressions against their prisoners.[242]

What underpins these woe oracles, however, are the two hymnic interludes, which Fuhr and Yates identify as integral to the composition. Fuhr and Yates note that these praises contrast with the indictments against Babylon:

> While "countries exhaust themselves for nothing" (2:13), the knowledge of Yahweh's glory fills the earth (2:14). And while the utter disgrace of Babylon will "cover" its "glory" (2:16), the "glory" of the Lord will fill the earth as the waters "cover" the sea (2:14). Likewise, while breathless idols made of "mute stone" "cannot speak" (2:18–19), everyone on the earth is "silent" in the presence of the Lord (2:20).[243]

Snyman et al., note that 2:14 is almost a verbatim quote from Isaiah 11:9, which was a hymnic interlude used in prophecy against the background of the mighty Assyrian Empire.[244] Just as

[241] Miller, "Book of Habakkuk."

[242] Robert B. Chisholm, "A Panorama of the Future (Habakkuk)," in *Handbook on the Prophets* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), 440–41.

[243] Al Fuhr and Gary Yates, "The Book of Habakkuk: Exposition - 2:6-20 'Woe to Him...' (A Taunting Song of Woe Oracles)," in *The Message of the Twelve: Hearing the Voice of the Minor Prophets* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2016).

[244] Snyman, Firth, and Longman, "Habakkuk: Commentary," 76.

YHWH brought Assyria to its end (as noted earlier by Nahum), so too would YHWH bring Babylon to its end. The interjection of the hymnic interlude amidst the taunt song prepares Israel to cease complaining and to begin praising.

The second hymnic interlude in 2:20 bookends the taunt song and demands silence from the whole earth before YHWH —a fitting response for those who have questioned Him both in action and in conversation. Baker and Wiseman state that this hymnic interlude contrasts with the frenetic activity of man "to create 'speaking' gods, and the tumultuous cries of worshippers to make dumb idols respond."[245] While this activity speaks of the enemies of God, Habakkuk himself has not been idle. Throughout his writings, the prophet has levied questioning against YHWH, who is able to respond and does so. Yet even this final hymnic interlude—though directed against YHWH's enemies—prompts an acknowledgment and action in its command for all the earth to cease their questioning of YHWH, Habakkuk and Judah included. The resulting response from Habakkuk is a hymnic prayer that appears in 3:1-19.

In comparison to Amos, the placement of hymns in both corpuses shows intentionality regarding the revelation of God's impending action. For Habakkuk's audience, God is preparing to act against their oppressors; for Amos's audience, God is preparing to act against the audience themselves. The natural progression of these revelations towards the hymns and the application of hymnic language in these passages operates as an authentication of the revelations that preceded them since these hymns proclaim truths about God that the audiences know to be certain. Their acknowledgement of the truths contained in and proclaimed by these hymnic portions demands actions to be held accountable by their acknowledgment. Both Amos and

[245] Baker and Wiseman, *Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah*, 67.

Habakkuk use the language of the psalter in these ways to connect with their respective audiences.

Remembering Israel's History with God (Habakkuk 3:1-19)

Some scholars have questioned the original inclusion of the hymns of Amos based on the observation of what seems to be "a later theology" in the hymns.[246] The specific issue is that the mention of God as Creator appears to be a result of Persian influence and would therefore assume a post-exilic redaction of Amos.[247] While McComiskey deals with these assumptions historically and textually, the response to this supposition of a late theology—rooted in a biblical theology that follows Israel's journey with YHWH—can be found in the fact that the Psalter has always acknowledged God as Creator. It is with this in mind that the prophets utilize the language of the Psalter to remind Israel of their history with the God of the Universe who has been with them from the very beginning.[248]

In Habakkuk 3:1-19, the prophet prays a psalm of praise to the Lord. The passage signals its identity as a psalm with a superscription, musical instruction, and distinct literary units. Stephen Miller and Max Anders record that the terminology of 3:1 indicates that the psalm was sung in corporate worship.[249] J. J. M. Roberts suggests that Habakkuk adapted an archaic hymn

[246] McComiskey, "The Hymnic Elements of the Prophecy of Amos: A Study of Form-Critical Methodology," 147–48.

[247] Barton, *The Theology of the Book of Amos*, 145–46.

[248] Amos's discussion of God as Creator is limited to the hymns. Yet, His power over creation can be seen throughout Amos (4:7, 9-11; 7:1, 4; 8:9). Hosea also recognizes God as the only Creator of the universe and the only living God. Deroche, "The Reversal of Creation in Hosea."

[249] Stephen Miller and Max Anders, *Holman Old Testament Commentary - Nahum-Malachi* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2004), 78.

based on the presence of archaic poetry in the text and similarities to ancient poems in Scripture with the same motif of the Lord coming from His home in the south to rescue His people.[250]

The psalm begins with Habakkuk's initial testimony of awe, indicating the prophet's change from disbelief to belief and anticipation (3:2). This is followed by a theophany of God as the Divine Warrior (3:3-15), which Fuhr and Yates's note alludes to Israel's history, but is clearly a prophetic vision of the God who has acted in the affairs of history utilizing language common to the psalms of Israel: "The point is clear—the God who acted in the past is just as awesome as the God who will act in the present and in the future."[251]

In 3:16, the prophet testifies for a second time, responding to the theophany regarding YHWH's arrival as Divine Warrior and trembling in anticipation of the "day of distress." In this testimony, the prophet himself models the response expected from his audience upon observing and accepting the words of the hymnic prayer. Fuhr and Yates observe that this shift in testimony from petition to patient expectation culminates in the closing hymn of the prayer and the book, which beckons Judah to trust in the Lord no matter the circumstances because God reigns.[252] Because the God who will deliver judgment upon Judah is the same God who has been faithful to Israel throughout its existence, Habakkuk and his audience may rejoice in the God of their salvation, the God who delivered His people countless times before and will do so again.

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[250] Theodore Hiebert notes the likelihood of the archaic nature of the hymn in Habakkuk 3 due to the mention of Cushan and Midian and the possibility that reference to their trembling in 3:7 is positive due to the J. J. M. Roberts, *Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah: A Commentary*, 1st ed., Book, Whole (Louisville, Ky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), 84; Theodore Hiebert, "The Hymn of Triumph in Habakkuk 3," in *God of My Victory: The Ancient Hymn in Habakkuk 3* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2018), 94–97, https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004369443.

[251] Al Fuhr and Gary Yates, "The Book of Habakkuk: Exposition - 3:1-19 'Yet I Will Triumph in Yahweh' (A Psalm of Praise)," in *The Message of the Twelve: Hearing the Voice of the Minor Prophets* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2016), 233.

[252] Fuhr and Yates, "Habakkuk 3:1-19," 234–36.

The hymnic prayer of Habakkuk uses terms and language that elicit a theology not unfamiliar to his audience. Habakkuk's use of the psalm employs language from the Psalter that recalls ancient truths about God's history with Israel embedded in the souls of the descendants of Abraham, exhorting Habakkuk's audience to look back in order to look forward. The intended response is that Habakkuk's audience would stop questioning and trust based on the reminders from the Psalter of God's power and faithfulness to go forth for the salvation of His people (3:12). In similar fashion, the third hymn of Amos in 9:5-6, which recalls God's power to fell a world power like Egypt, if not the whole entire world through the Flood, is the God whom Israel has set themselves against. God's power to create and sustain Israel is the same power that can destroy them. The language of the Psalter utilized by Amos, as it is used by Habakkuk, points their audiences back at their history with God to lead them in a response of praise. Whether either audience responded is not immediately available in the text. What is evident, however, is the intention of the prophets to use hymnic language to direct their audiences back to the Lord using these elements of corporate worship.

Inviting Israel to Faith in YHWH (Isaiah 42:10-13)

The previous sections have reviewed the use of hymnic language by the prophets of the Twelve. The Major Prophets also employ hymns in their writings as part of their own compositional strategies. Examples can be found in the book of the prophet Isaiah, whose 8th-century activity in the Northern Kingdom would have made him a contemporary of the prophet Amos.[253] Debate on Isaianic authorship has occupied much of Old Testament scholarship, with some commentators contending for multiple authors from multiple time periods. Paul D.

[253] John D. Barry, "Book of Isaiah," in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

Wegner, however, presents multiple factors (consistent with the findings of this dissertation regarding Amos) that argue for the attribution of the entire Isaianic corpus to the 8th-century prophet—factors such as theology, language, similarities to other pre-exilic prophets, canonicity, the nature of prophecy, content, evidence from Qumran, and New Testament reference.[254]

While seemingly inconsequential, Isaianic authorship is important for the reasons mentioned in earlier chapters as to why Amos's authorship is important. Even more important for this discussion is Isaiah's widespread use of hymns. Smith identifies seven hymns in Isaiah 40-55, noting that their function is to mark the end of a literary unit:

> 40:12–42:13—vv. 10–13 are a hymn
> 42:14–44:23—v. 23 is a hymn
> 44:24–45:25—vv. 24–25 are a hymn
> 46:1–48:22—vv. 20–21 are a hymn
> 49:1–13—v. 13 is a hymn
> 49:14–52:12—vv. 7–10 are a hymn
> 52:13–55:13—vv. 12–13 are a hymn[255]

In each literary section, Isaiah employs these hymns to invite Israel to praise God for the things that He would do for them in the future. While some commentators view these forward-looking segments as evidence for a later composition, Wegner rightly notes that predictive prophecy delivered to a nation does not require that the initial hearers be present when the prophecy is fulfilled, for it is the 8th-century nation to whom the prophecies were given, and it is the future generations of the nation that will witness their fulfillment.[256] In any case, though these hymns

[254] Paul D. Wegner, David G. Firth, and Tremper Longman III, *Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary* (Westmont, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2021), 30–35.

[255] Smith, *Interpreting the Prophetic Books*, 43.

[256] Wegner, Firth, and Longman, *Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary*, 31. It is strange that later Wegner considers the hymn in 42:10-13 to function as a hymn of praise for something that will take place shortly (their release from captivity in Babylon) instead of considering Isaiah's literary and theological strategy for using the hymn in his 8th-century setting.

will find resonance with the generation that sees the fulfillment of these prophecies, Isaiah utilizes these hymns to invite a wayward Israel back to a posture of praise to God.

Isaiah 42:10-13 follows a section commonly referred to as the beginning of the "Servant Song." Isaiah 42:1-9 is the first of four poems devoted to the Servant of YHWH, who acts on Israel's behalf. The Messianic themes and verbiage are very strong in this song and are further developed in the third (50:4-9) and fourth song (52:13-53:12). In this opening section of the Servant Song, Isaiah introduces the Servant as one who will make justice prevail for the nations (1-4), followed by what J. Alec Motyer calls a "tailpiece" that is purposed to confirm whatever has just been declared.[257] It is following this tailpiece that Isaiah places the hymn found in 10-13 as an invitation to praise YHWH for what has been revealed.

Isaiah invites Israel to sing 'a new song' to YHWH, a common exhortation, Wegner notes, which is found in Old Testament hymns of praise.[258] This new song is to be sung to YHWH because of what He has revealed He will accomplish for Israel. Since Israel's spiritual condition at the time of Isaiah's ministry was in terminal decay, this section would presuppose Israel's oncoming destruction as foretold throughout Isaiah's previous preaching. It would seem, then, that the invitation to praise is not a measure that will save Israel from the consequences of their sin (5:24-25). Nor is it, as Wegner presumes, a song in response to being set free from captivity in Babylon (though it could be used in such a setting).[259] Instead, the invitation to praise found in the hymn is purposed by Isaiah to draw Israel's attention to YHWH's activity on

[257] J. Alec Motyer, *Isaiah* (Westmont, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 294.

[258] Wegner, Firth, and Longman, *Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary*, 309. Cf. Pss. 33:3; 40:3.

[259] Wegner, Firth, and Longman, *Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary*, 31.

Israel's behalf. Israel's activity has resulted in a looming time of suffering and sorrow. YHWH's activity on Israel's behalf is reason for Israel, and the world, to sing a new song.

The hymn Isaiah employs calls for a global exaltation of YHWH (10-12). Creation is called to praise YHWH. Even those nations who are enemies of Israel are commanded to give glory to the God of Israel.[260] These commands, which are assumed to be obeyed, could be seen in contrast to the reality of Israel's spiritual condition in the 8th-century B.C., which was superficial and sometimes non-existent. Yet, even those who are not designated as 'YHWH's people', even inanimate objects of creation are called to praise YHWH. Therefore, there is no excuse for Israel to miss the opportunity to praise YHWH, also, along with the rest of the world.

That the rest of the world should be so concerned about what YHWH does for His wayward nation is truly curious. Yet, this puzzling factor ultimately reminds Israel of their favored position amongst all nations, that out of all the other peoples of the world, YHWH chose them and continues to stand by His choice despite Israel's awful choices against YHWH. Surely a nation that has spurned their deity as many as Israel did to YHWH deserves to be abandoned if for nothing else other than breach of covenant. But 42:13 reveals that YHWH will go out on behalf of His people as a warrior, like 'a man of war' to fight their battles. Instead of abandoning Israel in the dregs of their consequences, YHWH goes forth for Israel to prevail against His enemies.

Granted that if Isaianic attribution is the basis for this composition, then one could easily say that such a hymn and message is misplaced in 8th-century B.C. Some would question what exactly Israel would have to celebrate with an increase in economic disparity, a decline in

[260] John D. Barry, "Sela," in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016). Sela is mentioned in Judg 1:36; 2 Kgs 14:7; 2 Chr 25:11-12; Isa 15:9-16:1, 42:11.

national morality, all while the Assyrians stalked their boarders. The invitation for praise for Isaiah's immediate audience not only points to a future response, but a present commitment to faith in YHWH. Despite all that is going on around them, Israel has yet another opportunity to renew their trust in YHWH who has proved Himself trustworthy without fail. Though they would predictably reject the invitation (or fail to accept), Israel would be able to look back to see that YHWH had always provided opportunities for Israel to repent and trust Him. The words of the prophet to later generations would serve as a judgment on the previous generation of Israel and an urgent invitation to those in Exile and the those returning. Isaiah uses this hymn (and the other hymns in his corpus) as an invitation to his immediate audience to turn back to YHWH that they might place their faith in Him, for though their Exile is yet to arrive, it is certainly on its way. While they are in exile, Israel will be able to look back to see what YHWH has called them to do through the prophet Isaiah: to praise Him as an act of faith in YHWH and His promises.

The hymnic language used by Isaiah invites Israel to praise and to faith as a response to what YHWH has declared He will do.[261] By placing this hymn after the confirmation of the first portion of the Servant Song, Isaiah strategically calls Israel to join with the rest of the world in praising YHWH for what He will do. If the rest of Creation will praise YHWH at His command, there is no reason for Israel to refrain from doing the same. Isaiah uses a hymn that is a liturgical celebration to call Israel back to its liturgical roots in relationship with YHWH. The hymn models the proper response of the people in declaring what YHWH deserves (praise), from whom (all creation), and for what reason (because of His actions on behalf of His people). Not only does YHWH deserve praise, but YHWH is also worthy of Israel's faith.

[261] Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 233.

Much like Amos, who utilizes hymns to draw Israel's eyes back to YHWH as confirmation of what the prophet has previously declared, Isaiah exhorts Israel to praise their God who commands praise from the world because of what He will do for His nation. Amos and Isaiah implement their selected hymns strategically for the purpose of drawing Israel back to YHWH.

The Presence of Hymnic Language in the New Testament

While the previous section reviewed the use of hymnic language amongst the prophets, the following section brings the New Testament's use of hymnic language into focus, specifically that of the Apostle Paul. The time between the last writings of the prophets and the first epistles of Paul spans almost half a millennium. The book of Malachi is generally dated around the late 6th-B.C., while Paul's first letter (widely regarded to be 1 Thessalonians) is dated between 49-53 A.D.[262] Though the span of years is even greater between Paul and Amos, the use of hymnic language by the Apostle, in function and fit, mirrors that of the prophets of old who preceded him. Such a connection speaks of the importance of the Psalms to the early Christians, demonstrated by the New Testament's frequent use of the Psalter.

Ralph P. Martin notes that the Christian Church "was born in song," rooted in Psalms intended for the congregational worship of the Temple.[263] Hymns and songs captured in the New Testament narratives find parallels in the Old Testament narratives, pointing to the centrality of worship in the history of God's people. The songs of Mary, Zechariah, Simeon, and the heavenly

[262] Rob O'Lynn, "Book of Malachi," in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016); Andrew R. Talbert, "First Letter to the Thessalonians, Critical Issues," in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

[263] Ralph P. Martin, *Worship in the Early Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979), 39–40.

host in Luke's Gospel, along with the hymn at the Throne of the Creator in Revelation, denote events in the biblical narrative that engender hymnic praise. Additionally, the Gospel accounts of Jesus and His disciples singing a hymn before His betrayal (Matt. 26:30; Mark 14:26) and Luke's account of Paul and Silas singing hymns while imprisoned in Philippi (Acts 16:25) mark for believers the place of hymns at crucial points in the life of their Lord and His servants. Accordingly, for the early Christians, hymnic language would be an integral component of the 1st century B.C. Christian experience.

The New Testament not only records the singing of hymns in its narratives, but also the commands to sing hymns and the use of hymns in the Epistles for the purpose of enhancing teachings presented in the text. Their presence and particular placements in the text lend a glimpse into Early Christian worship attributes, which featured a Christocentric view of life deeply rooted in the Jewish Scriptures and psalm tradition, while being aware of its context in the imperial culture.[264] The historical backdrop of struggle inside and outside of the Church in Scripture further heightens the truths affirmed by the hymns of the New Testament that proclaim Christ's sovereignty and supremacy over all.

W. Hulitt Gloer also distinguishes between God-centric hymns that do not contain any specific Christian elements while Christocentric hymns are focused on Jesus's humiliation and exaltation, His pre-existence, His servant nature, and His cosmic Lordship.[265] The 'God-centric hymns', however, by no means detract from the Christo-centricity of the Christian faith, nor do the Christocentric hymns draw attention away from God. Their purposes are specific to the text

[264] Matthew E. Gordley, *New Testament Christological Hymns: Exploring Texts, Contexts, and Significance*, Book, Whole (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2018), 36.

[265] William Hulitt Gloer, "Homologies and Hymns in the New Testament: Form, Content and Criteria for Identification," *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 11.2 (1984): 123.

in which they are found, which speaks to the overarching message of the New Testament narrative. Nevertheless, the importance of hymns in the life of the early Christian Church cannot be understated.

Purposing Hymnic Fragments to Complete Messages

Because hymns had been embedded in the fabric of the early Christian Church, it was only fitting for hymns to be used in messages for the early Christian Church. The prophet employed hymns in his preaching because of relevance, not only to the cultural context of his audience, but also the topical content of his message for the people. Rather than a mere verbal decoration, hymns were essential to the message of the prophets because hymns were essential in the spiritual life of the people. The same can be said for the early Christians, which is why Paul's use of hymnic language is appropriate and powerful.

The Apostle Paul exhorts the believers in Ephesus to speak to one another "in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs…" (Eph. 5:19) and counsels the believers in Colossae to teach and admonish one another "with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God" (Col. 3:16). Gordley notes the evidence from within the New Testament and from the broader Greco-Roman world that "hymn singing was an important feature of early Christian gatherings."[266] This inclusion of the hymnic passages in the New Testament provides penetrating insights into the ways in which the early Church understood Jesus and His significance for themselves and for humanity has a whole. To sing these hymns was to be reminded of the core components of their faith and the central figure, Christ Jesus.

Paul also utilizes what most commentators identify as hymnic fragments to accentuate the finer points of his message. Stephen E. Fowl asserts that Paul uses hymns in his epistles to

[266] Gordley, *New Testament Christological Hymns: Exploring Texts, Contexts, and Significance*, 37.

support ethical positions, countering the influence of false teaching.[267] The focus is never on the content of the hymn, per se, but on the ways in which the hymn elevates the points of the text in which it is found. Köstenberger and Patterson also note that creeds are usually contained in hymns, and that Paul would have used hymns to emphasize creedal/doctrinal truths that were pertinent to his message.[268] Whether in the beginning, middle, or end of his exhortation, Paul's use of hymnic language is intentional and integral to his preaching.

The most notable uses of hymnic language in the Pauline Epistles are found in Philippians 2:5-11 and Colossians 1:15-20. Smith notes that without directly quoting Isaiah 52-55, Paul seems to be drawing on the themes found in these passage as he places his Christological hymn in Philippians 2, and that in Colossians 1, Paul is drawing on the Wisdom literature that would have been familiar to and utilized by the prophets.[269] Both hymnic fragments are used to communicate doctrinal truths about the person of Jesus Christ, and in each of their respective contexts, Paul utilizes these hymnic fragments to address issues in the respective Church communities. A bounty of scholarship on these hymnic fragments exists; to reiterate what already stands would belabor the fine and fruitful points.[270] Rather, the focus of

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[267] Stephen E. Fowl, *The Story of Christ in the Ethics of Paul: An Analysis of the Function of the Hymnic Material in the Pauline Corpus*, Book, Whole (London, UK: Bloomsbury, 2015), 20.

[268] Köstenberger and Patterson, *Invitation to Biblical Interpretation*. Köstenberger and Patterson assert that Paul would have borrowed from hymnic language in the early Christian liturgical context to exhort Christians to humility for the sake of unity by employing a hymn that highlighted Christ's humility.

[269] Smith, *Interpreting the Prophetic Books*. 365.

[270] See Seal, "Early Christian Hymns"; Gordon D. Fee, "Philippians 2:5–11: Hymn or Exalted Pauline Prose?," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 2.1 (1992): 29–46, https://doi.org/10.5325/bullbiblrese.2.1.0021; Årstein Justnes, "Un-Pauline Paul? Philippians 2.6-11 in Context," *Symbolae Osloenses* 86.1 (2012): 145–59, https://doi.org/10.1080/00397679.2012.705069; Ralph P. Martin, *A Hymn of Christ: Philippians 2:5-11 in Recent Interpretation & in the Setting of Early Christian Worship*, 1st ed., Book, Whole (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 1997), https://go.exlibris.link/J6NjxQ85; Thomas Tobin, "The World of Thought in the Philippians Hymn (Philippians 2:6-11)," in *The New Testament and Early Christian Literature in Greco-Roman Context: Studies in Honor of David E. Aune*, ed. John Fotopoulos (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2006), 91–104; Adela Yarbro Collins, "The Worship of Jesus and the Imperial Cult," in *The Jewish Roots of Christological Monotheism*, ed. Carey C. Newman, James R. Davila, and Gladys S. Lewis (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 1999), 234–57; Matthew E. Gordley,

examination for this section will review Paul's use of a hymn as a means of anchoring his message in a hymn less popular in biblical scholarship than the two mentioned above, yet no less powerful in presence and purpose.

In Ephesians 5, Paul warns the believers of partaking in unfruitful deeds of darkness, in that they are not only disgraceful to recount, but also that they will become visible when they are exposed by the light (Eph. 5:11-13). It is in verse 14 that Paul cites what commentators generally conclude is a hymn familiar to both Paul and the Ephesians, with allusions to texts like Isaiah 26:19 and 60:1-2. The excerpt of the hymn states the following:

> "Awake, sleeper,
> And arise from the dead,
> And Christ will shine on you."

Darrell Bock asserts that the excerpt of this hymn highlights the call to experience the benefits of resurrection in Christ, and that it is Christ's light "that illumines them and the way into a flourishing life (John 8:12)."[271] John Muddiman writes, "The sleeper is one who lacks moral vigilance; the dead are those sunk in sin; and the light is what both exposes immorality and also produces the fruit of good works."[272]

Some scholars have claimed the fragment to be part of a baptismal hymn that utilized the light/darkness imagery.[273] While there is no way to verify the complete hymn's reference to unfruitful deeds of darkness or lack thereof, Paul uses the hymn to contrast the light of living in

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The Colossian Hymn in Context: An Exegesis in Light of Jewish and Greco-Roman Hymnic and Epistolary Conventions, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament 228 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007).

[271] Darrell L. Bock, Eckhard J. Schnabel, and Nicholas Perrin, *Ephesians: An Introduction and Commentary* (Westmont, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2019), 89.

[272] John Muddiman, *The Epistle to the Ephesians: A Commentary*, Black's New Testament Commentary (New York; London: Continuum, 2001), 243.

[273] William W. Klein et al., *Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon* (Grand Rapids, MI: HarperCollins Christian Publishing, 2017), 163.

Christ by which all else is exposed and revealed, as it is proclaimed in the hymn, to his warning about participating in things of darkness. William W. Klein notes Paul presses into service lines from the hymn "that remind believers of who they are in Christ—and the need to live accordingly."[274]

The placement of the hymn in the middle of Paul's exhortation plays an important role. The verses that precede the hymn urge the Ephesians away from dark deeds because they will be exposed in the light. Opening the chapter is Paul's imperative command that the believers be imitators of God (5:1). This imitation cannot take place if the believer is engaged in immorality of any sort. The hymn itself is a reminder to the believer who is now alive in Christ that because Christ shines on them, they cannot hide in the darkness. Paul's use of the hymn underscores the points made in the previous verses and ultimately calls the Christian, who may be spiritually drowsy, to action. After Paul has reminded the believers of who they are meant to be as imitators of God, and who they are not meant to be as partakers in darkness, the hymn functions as a rousing reminder: to the believer who is walking in the light to remain in the light, and to the believer who is being lulled by the world into a dark slumber to awake and arise from the dead.[275]

The placement of the hymn in the middle of Paul's exhortation also shapes the path of the verses that follow. In verse 15, Paul begins with, "Therefore," indicating a connection to the hymn, and that connection is to counsel the believers to choose the better option between contrasting states (wise, unwise; understanding, foolishness; drunkenness with fine, infilling of the Spirit). The better option of these contrasts is possible because, as the hymn Paul cites

[274] Klein et al., *Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, 163.

[275] Bock, Schnabel, and Perrin, *Ephesians: An Introduction and Commentary*, 89.

implies, the Christian is no longer asleep, in the dark, or dead, but alive because Christ shines on them. Because Christ shines on the believer, the believer cannot hide in darkness, but far greater is his privilege to experience the blessings of resurrection in Christ, that include wisdom, understanding, and the indwelling of the Spirit, whose presence moves believers to speak to each other in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (5:19).

The function of hymnic language in the Epistles as applied by Paul mirrors the function of hymnic language in the prophets. The hymns in Ephesians 5 and Jonah 2 function to evoke a response from the audience. The hymns in Colossians 1 and Nahum 1 function to display the characteristics of Jesus/God. The hymns in Philippians 2 and Habakkuk 2 function to cease complaining (in the Philippians' case, division) and elicit praise. The presence of hymns in the writings of the prophets was not without purpose. The same can be said for the hymns in Paul's Epistles. These parallels cannot be attributed to coincidence or redaction. They do, however, demonstrate a consistency between the prophets and the Apostle Paul in their use of hymnic language.

Summary and Transition

Because the psalter was a prominent part of Israelite cultic practice, the prophets engaged the psalter to engage their audiences in their message. Psalms were utilized in different ways by each prophet to communicate points appropriate for their specific audience. The hymns of the Psalter, which most often focused on God's creation power (as it does in Amos), are often employed by the prophets either to comfort the heart with God's power or cut the heart with God's judgment.[276] The research and accompanying discussions in this chapter have attempted to demonstrate the validity of such a claim through the apparent purposeful implementation of

[276] Paas, "Creation Texts in Amos," 323.

hymnic language that shows relevance to the proposed timeline of the particular prophets and their audience. The examples throughout the prophetic corpus suggest that there is no reason to assume that Amos did not include the hymns in his original composition to address the issues of worship and idolatry in Israel.

Synagogue worship, which would have resembled temple worship and the inclusion of hymns from the psalter, would have likely influenced the shape of early Christian worship as recorded in the New Testament in addition to the exhortations used in the Epistles that include hymnic language. The study of Paul's use of hymnic language revealed striking parallels in the way the prophets and Paul applied hymnic language in their messages. It can be assumed that Paul, a learned Pharisee, would have been well-versed in the prophet's use of the psalter and may even have taken inspiration from the prophets in his messages to a worshiping community of believers as we see in his epistles.

Even Paul's Christological hymn in Philippians 2:5-11 shows influence from Isaiah 52-55, sharing the aim of the prophets in pointing the people to the characteristics of who God is. For Isaiah's audience, He is a Suffering Servant; for Paul's audience, that Suffering Servant is revealed to be Jesus. Both sections end with hymns that focus on exaltation of YHWH.

Isaiah 55:12-13	**Philippians 2:9-11**
"For you will go out with joy And be led forth with peace; The mountains and the hills will break forth into shouts of joy before you, And all the trees of the field will clap *their* hands. "Instead of the thorn bush the cypress will come up, And instead of the nettle the myrtle will come up, And it will be a memorial to the LORD, For an everlasting sign which will not be cut off."	For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The use of hymnic language in the preaching of the prophets and of Paul are so precise and purposed, that the hand of a redactor does not seem feasible for the sake of a missing theological link should redaction be the case.

The examples of prophetic and Pauline use of hymnic language would suggest that a hymn that is part of a passage or composition has been intended as part of the original message. Just as Paul used hymns in the context of his exhortations to the believers, so did Amos use hymns in the context of his warnings to the Northern Kingdom. Theorizing a late addition of the hymns to either the prophets or Paul affects the theology of the overarching message and ignores the relevance of those hymns to the original audience. Scholarship supposing such is lacking and seldom explored due to these factors. Yet, for Amos, the scholarship in favor of redaction seems to ignore the connections between the other prophets, Paul, and Amos's use of hymnic language.

One area that is often overlooked, or disregarded, is the literary ability of the prophets to compose intricate and far-reaching compositions that incorporate hymnic language that forthtells events. Wegner rightly notes that commentators who hold these positions discount the presence of YHWH's Spirit in the composition of His Word delivered by His prophets, which is a hermeneutical lens of its own.[277] As discussed in previous sections, unless skewed by recency bias there is no reason to doubt the literary and theological acuity of these prophets to compose and/or include liturgical hymns in the text that are meant for their immediate audience, while reverberating throughout the generations that will follow.

In any case, it has been the goal of this chapter to establish a link between the three, and it has been the purpose of this paper to demonstrate how the prophet's application of the hymnic

[277] Wegner, Firth, and Longman, *Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary*, 31.

fragments reveal not only a unified composition but also a strategic composition that has literary and theological implications. In the following chapter, the literary and theological implications of Amos's hymnic elements will be discussed along with possible effects on the reading of other texts that utilize hymnic language.

Chapter 5: Unpacking the Compositional Strategy

Introduction

Based on the previous chapters of study, it has become increasingly evident that the prophets, and Amos in particular, employ a compositional strategy that includes an intentional placement of hymns in their writings. For the sake of this research, it has already been established that a unified composition of Amos can be comfortably attributed to the prophet himself. Despite the positions of those who argue for a multi-layered composition that is admitted (by its proponents) to have many hypothetical hinges to its reliability, attribution to Amos comfortably fits within a hermeneutical triad of history, literature, and theology. The place of worship in the life, culture, and history of Israel makes the use of a liturgical component like the hymn a natural conclusion historically. The goal of this section, then, is to further unpack the implications of a compositional strategy that utilizes hymns from a literary and theological standpoint. The subsequent section would then consider any doctrinal or applicational takeaways that become apparent because of the discussion on compositional strategy.

Seeing the Strategy

Paramount in identifying the compositional strategy of Amos is using the hermeneutical triad, which was used in this dissertation primarily to establish the hymns in Amos as part of a unified composition that could be attributed to the 8th-century prophet himself. The hermeneutical triad, as presented by Köstenberger and Patterson, consists of three major dimensions of hermeneutics—history, literature, and theology.[278] The rise of historical criticism in the 16th and 17th-centuries paved the way for a hermeneutical lens that was characterized by "…an anti-supernatural bias and historical skepticism on the part of most of its proponents,"

[278] Köstenberger and Patterson, *Invitation to Biblical Interpretation*, 78–83.

while a heavy reliance on the literary contexts produced an 'aesthetic theology' that was further exacerbated by postmodern meddling.[279] Much of the argument for an editorial composition of Amos could be seen as a mix of the two aforementioned approaches. While the supernatural essence of prophetic texts was disregarded as an explanation for the components that foretold Israel's destruction, literary criticisms of the text disregarded authorial intention for the original audience if there indeed were redactions. Nicholas G. Piotrowski and Graeme Goldsworthy note that the presuppositions of an expositor, if not acknowledged, can influence the expositor's analysis and interpretation of the text in a way that reflects their presuppositions more than it reflects the actual message of Scripture.[280] Though all expositors are susceptible to such trappings, it is evident that much of the study backing redaction theories is grounded in these assumptions of anti-supernatural bias and a dismissal of original authorial intent and capabilities.

For this dissertation, it was important to acknowledge the presupposition of the researcher, namely that God was active in the history of His people and the composition of His Word. The implication of this presupposition for this dissertation was that the text of Amos was compiled as a unity with a united theology, as opposed to an editorial composition resulting in a plurality of theologies and readings.[281] Important to this study was the approach of allowing the text to reveal its veracity and reliability instead of imposing presumptions of veracity and reliability on it, although reading the Bible as a true and authoritative document is a hermeneutic of its own.

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[279] Köstenberger and Patterson, *Invitation to Biblical Interpretation*, 77.

[280] Nicholas G. Piotrowski and Graeme Goldsworthy, *In All the Scriptures: The Three Contexts of Biblical Hermeneutics* (Westmont, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2021), 59–61.

[281] Köstenberger and Patterson, *Invitation to Biblical Interpretation*, 77.

The ensuing finding via the hermeneutical triad was not only a reliable trust in the originality and veracity of the text, but also a realization that there was a compositional strategy at hand in the prophet's use of hymnic language in the text. If the use of songs and hymns in the historical narrative portions of the text were meant to highlight the place religion assumed in the life and history of Israel, then the use of songs and hymns in prophetic texts could also serve a purpose that fulfilled more than a simple literary marker or textual interlude. The next step, then, is to consider the literary and theological implications of Amos using the hymns in their given places in the text. The following sections will adapt the contexts suggested by Fuhr and Köstenberger for studying the written text of the Bible.[282]

Literary Implications

The entire composition of Amos is recognized by most scholars as a majestic literary work of Scripture, complete with intricacies of word, imagery, and thought that provide the expositor with an embarrassment of riches in which to delve. There is no doubt, then, that the hymns contained in the texts of Amos also carry a literary purpose. To find that literary purpose, it is necessary to engage the literary context. Smith notes that some prophets used hymns to mark the end of a literary unit, which, in the case of Amos, could mean that the hymns functioned as literary punctuation marks.[283] Though the designation may seem to belittle the value of the hymns, it is important to remember that the purpose of punctuation is to separate sentences and their elements, and also to clarify their meaning.[284] It is with this in mind that the contexts of the

[282] Richard Alan Fuhr and Andreas J. Köstenberger, *Inductive Bible Study: Observation, Interpretation, and Application through the Lenses of History, Literature, and Theology* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2016), 181.

[283] Smith, *Interpreting the Prophetic Books*, 43.

[284] "Punctuation.," *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2024, https://www.oed.com.

hymns from a literary standpoint be examined to understand the literary function and meaning, and from there derive the literary implications.

Surrounding Contexts

The surrounding contexts of a particular text include the words and phrases within the structural framework of surrounding sentences and paragraphs. Fuhr and Köstenberger aptly describe the importance of understanding these surrounding contexts, in that "thoughts are expressed in association rather than isolation."[285] So that an exegesis of a text is not conducted in a manner disconnected from its textual context and, thus, incorrect, an understanding of the surrounding contexts is required. The common Christian culture usage of verses such as Jeremiah 29:11 for a high school graduate come to mind as applied without understanding the surrounding contexts of a verse.

Surrounding contexts guide expositors within the literary boundaries that comprise the unit in which the text is laid, creating a focused main idea for the unit that contains sensible connections to the units surrounding it. For the hymns in Amos, the surrounding contexts are very clear. Though the hymns are part of two major units—the Words of Amos (3-6) and the Visions of Amos (7-9)—each hymn plays an important role in its own subunit, which further shows its integral nature to the overall composition and the intentionality of the prophet in using these hymns as part of a compositional strategy.

The first hymn of Amos sits at the end of YHWH's recollection of Israel's rejection of His discipline (4:6-11). The section after the hymn begins a new subunit that includes another hymn. The main idea of the unit is that because Israel refuses to yield to the discipline YHWH administers for the purpose of repentance, Israel must prepare to meet YHWH, who comes not to

[285] Fuhr and Köstenberger, *Inductive Bible Study*, 25.

discipline but to destroy, as implied in the way the hymn is applied. The hymn provides a seamless transition to the next unit (5:1-17), which speaks of the aftermath of YHWH's arrival should Israel continue in injustice. It also connects to the previous unit of 3:1-15, which announces Israel's inevitable judgment, just as the precursor to the hymn in 4:12-13 commands Israel to prepare for their inevitable meeting with YHWH, who will come to them since they failed to return to Him.

The second hymn of Amos is the centerpiece of a chiasm found in 5:1-17. Being in the middle of the chiasm makes the hymn's immediate surrounding context easily identifiable. The subunit's surrounding context includes 4:1-13's guarantee of YHWH's arrival to judge Israel and 5:18-6:14's woe speeches decrying Israel's injustice. The main idea of the subunit, and the hymn, is that at the end of all things, whether by Israel's salvation or destruction, YHWH will be praised. The connection between the hymn and the sections around it are highlighted by the contrast between Israel's propensity to turn justice into injustice (5:7; 10-13) and YHWH's power to change darkness into morning and to darken day into night. The subunit's connection to the sections that precede and follow it are connected by YHWH's judgment of Israel's empty worship. Israel frequents its holy places (4:4-5; 5:21-24) but fails to forsake its rebellion and return to the Holy One of Israel.

The third hymn of Amos is found toward the end of the Visions and Oracles unit, and directly follows the conclusion of the fifth and final vision. The final vision describes how thoroughly YHWH will exact judgment on Israel, emphasizing the totality of His sovereignty over Israel's destruction. The subunit that follows the third hymn is an oracle of judgment that reminds Israel of YHWH's sovereignty over and care for all peoples. The main idea of the hymn is that YHWH is justified in His absolute judgment over Israel and over the world. This hymn

connects perfectly to the surrounding contexts, as it highlights YHWH's power and prerogative to judge all peoples. The same right YHWH has to judge all the other nations, as the Oracles Against the Nations demonstrated (1:3-2:3), is the same right YHWH carries to judge Israel. The surrounding contexts of the hymns in Amos help to identify the immediate context of the hymns and their connection to the rest of the text. As noted previously, the literary function of the hymns underscores the main message of the subunit.

Literary Context (Genre and Subgenre)

Recognizing the literary genre of a given text is crucial to understanding the author's original intent. As has already been discussed in depth in previous chapters, the hymns in Amos have been identified as such due to the presence of strophes and/or rhythm and their doxological content.[286] These hymns are set in the wider genre of prophetic literature, which carries several subgenres. These hymns could also be identified as belonging to the psalm subgenre due to language shared with that of the Psalter. For the purposes of this paper, the hymns were identified to function as hymns within the genre of prophetic literature.

The function of these hymns is certainly to emphasize the main point of the subunit. Smith notes that the prophets were well versed in the hymnic literature of the nation, and "several prophets repeated or created hymns to emphasize a point they wanted to highlight."[287] The fact that these hymns were mainly used in liturgical settings, however, provides another facet of interpretation worth considering. Because these hymns are doxological in nature, their literary purpose, then, is to draw the reader's attention to God and His activity throughout the corpus. Attention to Israel is paid only in light of who YHWH is proclaimed to be in the hymns.

[286] Köstenberger and Patterson, *Invitation to Biblical Interpretation*, 473.

[287] Smith, *Interpreting the Prophetic Books*, 43.

The hymns provide the measure through which Israel's actions, and YHWH's impending actions, should be understood. Knowing that the hymns are a genre unto themselves might make them easy to overlook in any textual setting they appear. It is possible this has been done in the study of Amos. Yet, because the hymns in Amos are used within the genre of prophetic literature, it is important to consider their function and purpose as they are used by the prophet.

Canonical Context

As Fuhr and Köstenberger explain, there is a sense in which context extends beyond distinct units to include the literary setting of books, collections of books, the Testaments, and ultimately the whole Bible.[288] The canonical context of the hymns in Amos within the corpus of Amos is quite apparent. The judgment that YHWH is to bring upon Israel stems from the hypocrisy of their spiritual life as displayed in their facilitation of injustice and excess. The irony of Amos using hymns to spell Israel's judgment provides a necessary sting for those in the Northern Kingdom who have tricked themselves into believing they are right with God.

The placement of these hymns in their respective subunits sharpens the accusation against Israel regarding their false piety. In 4:6-12, Israel is accused of not returning to YHWH, so the hymn in 4:12-13 tells Israel to brace itself for its meeting with YHWH. In 5:1-17, the result of Israel's injustice is highlighted in chiastic fashion, so the hymn at the center of the chiasm (5:8-9) highlights the God who brings justice. In 9:1-4, the final vision highlights Israel's total destruction, so the hymn the follows—being the final hymn of the corpus—provides a fitting depiction of YHWH's authority and power to bring about justice through destruction.

Because the content of the hymns is so intertwined with the text, placement of these hymns elsewhere in Amos is unimaginable and would make little sense. Their current placement,

[288] Fuhr and Köstenberger, *Inductive Bible Study*, 202.

however, points Israel back to the root of all their issues: their insincere worship of YHWH. YHWH sends His prophet Amos to warn Israel that their worship of YHWH is not a cover for their injustice towards others. The same God they praise for His goodness in worship (though they may do so disingenuously) is the same God that is coming to judge them. When Israel prays that YHWH would judge all the evil nations (as He declares He will in the Oracles Against the Nations), Israel is also praying judgment on themselves, for they, too, are evil, as YHWH reminds them through Amos's oracles.

There are also correlations throughout the Minor Prophets to Amos, that being YHWH's consistent call for Israel to repent, and Israel's consistent failure to do so. As Fuhr and Yates assert, the role of the prophets as 'covenant reinforcement mediators' was to frame the message in new and innovative ways in order to "get the attention of the people and to remind them of covenant obligations before the proverbial hammer dropped."[289] In utilizing the hymns in this manner, Amos definitely sought to be innovative in his approach, using hymnic language Israel would have used in worship to accuse Israel of hypocritical worship and to warn them of impending judgment.

The fact that the prophets were tasked with reminding Israel of their covenantal obligations naturally connects Amos with the Torah, since it is in the Torah where the covenant between YHWH and Israel is recorded. the phrasing of the first hymn, as Brueggemann points out, has connections to YHWH's interaction with Israel at Mt. Sinai, in which a covenant has been established between YHWH and Israel.[290] Amos is not communicating that YHWH is coming to renew the covenant that Israel has broken; Amos confirms through the use of hymnic

[289] Fuhr and Yates, *Minor Prophets*, 20.

[290] Brueggemann, "Amos IV 4-13 and Israel's Covenant Worship," 13. Cf. Exod 19.

language that YHWH is coming to break Israel for their breach of covenant, of which YHWH had warned Israel in the Torah through Moses (Lev 26:14-26; Deut 29:25-29). Amos's canonical connection to the Torah deepens the impact Amos's indictments make, for they reveal just how corrupt Israel's spiritual nature has become.

Of course, the canonical context of Amos extends beyond the Testaments. Stephen in Acts 7:42-43 quotes the prophet:

Amos 5:25-27	**Acts 7:42-43**
"Did you present Me with sacrifices and grain offerings in the wilderness for forty years, O house of Israel? "You also carried along Sikkuth your king and Kiyyun, your images, the star of your gods which you made for yourselves. "Therefore, I will make you go into exile beyond Damascus," says the LORD, whose name is the God of hosts.	"But God turned away and delivered them up to serve the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, 'IT WAS NOT TO ME THAT YOU OFFERED VICTIMS AND SACRIFICES FORTY YEARS IN THE WILDERNESS, WAS IT, O HOUSE OF ISRAEL? 'YOU ALSO TOOK ALONG THE TABERNACLE OF MOLOCH AND THE STAR OF THE GOD ROMPHA, THE IMAGES WHICH YOU MADE TO WORSHIP. I ALSO WILL REMOVE YOU BEYOND BABYLON.'

Both accusations in their immediate context are being lodged against those who would consider themselves worshipers of YHWH—the 8th-century B.C. religious elite of Israel by YHWH through the prophet Amos and the 1st-century A.D. Sanhedrin by Stephen. The direct quotation of Amos is applied by Stephen to a Sanhedrin that was spiritually comparable to the religious elite of Amos's day. Such a comparison reveals a continual hard-heartedness of YHWH's people in different historical contexts over 700 years apart, tied together by religio-cultural contexts that are strikingly similar. The canonical context of Amos makes a natural fit in the time of Stephen, where liturgical elements are used to reprimand those who use them. The hymnic elements and language of the Psalter the religious elite of Israel sang in worship and the texts of the prophet

Amos that the Sanhedrin might read in their synagogues were used, respectively, by those outside of their circles to reveal their separation from YHWH.

Overall, the canonical context of Amos reveals a thematic fabric that is deeply interwoven with the rest of Scripture and the overarching biblical narrative. The literary connections of Amos that are visible in other parts of the Bible reveal a shared strategy that, though (in some cases) separated by centuries the common literary connections point to recurring experiences between YHWH and His people.

The Literary Strategy Behind the Hymns

In his study of Amos, S.R. Driver noted a visible literary plan that accompanied the outline of each section.[291] This would ultimately mean that every literary unit and device would also serve to accomplish that plan. Certainly, the hymns have a function, and their literary brilliance seems to indicate that they accomplish their purpose in the text. The research conducted in this dissertation makes clear that there is a literary strategy attached to the use of hymns in Amos and it is important to understand what that purpose is.

Multiple scholars have often regarded the hymns as literary units that sometimes act as literary markers for the end of a unit.[292] The reality is that these hymns fit better as literary exclamation points with content aimed to provide shock value for Amos's audience. In his words to Israel, Amos displays Israel's false devotion to YHWH as exhibited in their rebelliousness toward Him, and then confirms YHWH's judgment of them by citing hymns that contained language they would have used in their own worship. The irony and sarcasm are subtle, but it is almost as if Amos is using the words Israel would sing in worship against them.

[291] Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, 314–16.

[292] Smith, *Interpreting the Prophetic Books*, 43.

Hymns, as has been shown in the previous chapter, were used for multiple purposes by the prophets. There is no doubt that the hymns of Amos accomplish a few of them. Yet, in the case of Amos bringing suit against Israel on behalf of YHWH, Amos uses the hymns in a continuation of his satirical attack on Israel to show Israel the superficiality of their religion and the reality of YHWH's righteousness.[293] The hymns sung about YHWH's awesome and destructive power were not simply nice harmonies—they were true doctrinal declarations about the living God, YHWH is His name. If Amos's aim is to strike a nerve, using Israel's liturgical practices against them is a guaranteed strategy. Amaziah, priest of Bethel, did not respond favorably to Amos (Amos 7:10-17), and the Sanhedrin did not respond lightly to Stephen's quotation of Amos against them (Acts 7:54-60).

In essence, Amos's literary strategy in employing the hymns can be viewed in two ways: either Amos uses these hymns as exhortations/warnings or as satirical devices against a hard-hearted nation. The literary implication of this assumption is that when liturgical elements, such as prayers or hymns, are used in prophetic speech or dialogues, they can be used as satiric vehicles for the purposes of attacking the religious hypocrisy of YHWH's people. This can be found in Malachi's disputation with Israel (Mal 1:6–14; 2:7–9, 13–14, 17; 3:13–15) and also in Jesus's Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector (Luke 18:9-14). The traditional liturgical elements/figures that are upheld as righteous are uncovered in a negative light to challenge the preconceived religious notions of the respective audiences.

It cannot be assumed that when a hymn or prayer appears in Scripture that it is a neutral unit or an endorsement of those whom it addresses. It must be read in its literary context in order to properly understand the message it conveys. This could possibly be a reason why some

[293] Köstenberger and Patterson, *Invitation to Biblical Interpretation*, 335.

commentators have often concluded that the hymns in Amos were intrusive and did not fit the text. After considering the literary contexts of the hymns in Amos, the literary implications become an important component to understanding the literary purpose of the hymns.

Theological Implications

Most important in the study of Scripture is God's revelation through the text. This arrives through an understanding of the theological context of the Scripture as revealed through a comprehensive approach of the historical and literary components of the text. The previous chapters have invested much study to these areas of the hermeneutical triad to great effect. It is because of these inroads made that a proper venture into the theological context of the passage can begin. Fuhr and Köstenberger identify three forms of context that relate to the theological message of the Bible: thematic context, covenantal context, and revelation-historical context. The following sections will engage these contexts in the hymns of Amos to discover the theological implications of the hymns as they are utilized in the prophet's message to Israel.

Thematic Context

According to Fuhr and Köstenberger, theological context involves "the consideration of theological motif as a form of context.[294] In other words, a theme that is repeated throughout a section sets contextual boundaries for what the text means to convey. All three hymns include the declaration of YHWH's name formula, almost as if Israel needs to be reintroduced to who their God truly is. In the case of the hymns used in Amos, the themes of YHWH's absolute power and sovereignty, along with His ability to create and destroy, are prominent in all three hymns.

[294] Fuhr and Köstenberger, *Inductive Bible Study*, 205.

In 4:12-13, YHWH's power to create, dictate, change, and conquer are emphasized. In 5:8-9, YHWH's ability to reverse creation and bring destruction upon the strong is proclaimed. In 9:5-6, YHWH's creative and destructive sovereignty over the cosmos is lauded. In all three hymns, YHWH's power and sovereignty are exalted. These exaltations are fitting for a service of worship, and for a people who would be in covenant relationship with YHWH, these doctrinal affirmations of YHWH's character should presumably inspire reassurance and courage. Yet, the historical and literary context surrounding these hymns in Amos may indicate that Amos's audience may not have felt that way about the doctrinal declarations made in these hymns.

The immediate thematic context of the hymns in proclaiming YHWH's power and authority to judge is true. It is interesting to consider that the thematic contexts of the hymns themselves have such a stark contrast to the thematic contexts of the subunits in which they reside. Yet, once they are combined, the overall thematic context is clear. As these hymns are placed within their surrounding subunit contexts, the thematic contexts reveal Israel's defiance of YHWH veiled by their cultic activity, which will be punished by the God they claim to worship. Hence, the importance of the hymns to provide a thematic context for the God Israel will soon meet according to His charge in 4:12.

The thematic contexts of these sections confirm two evident truths: that Israel, like the other nations, remains in rebellion, and that YHWH will administer His just wrath to all nations, including Israel. This means that these hymns and their accompanying subunits can be interpreted to communicate the theme of YHWH's righteous judgment on an unrighteous Israel due to the reoccurring motifs found in the texts. These thematic contexts help to define what the text is and is not highlighting, and it also reveals the importance of the hymns to the composition of the text.

Covenantal Context

Fuhr and Köstenberger also recommend engaging the covenantal context of a text, which "entails the consideration of the theological covenants that regulate God's relationship to his people throughout salvation history."[295] In other words, the covenants of the Old Testament provide the framework that explains the expectations and the responsibilities of YHWH's relationship with His people.[296] Fuhr and Yates note that the prophets often foretold the historical details of Israel's future as a result of YHWH's covenant faithfulness and Israel's covenant unfaithfulness.[297] In the case of Amos's use of hymns, then, the covenantal context is apparent and strong.

All three hymns are placed in their respective positions as a result of Israel's breach of covenant with the God who is described in those hymns. The God with whom they entered covenant is the same God of whom Amos's hymns sing. There are even aspects of the hymns that hint back to YHWH's victory over Egypt through the plagues and over Pharaoh's army through the Red Sea, characteristics of YHWH with which the people covenanting with YHWH at Sinai would have been familiar (Exod 24). These details reveal that YHWH has not changed in His faithfulness to His covenant with Israel. It also, unfortunately, reveals that Israel has not changed in their inability to remain faithful to their covenant with YHWH. In fact, it is even possible that they have become worse in their covenant obligations in the sense that their worship of YHWH is a façade, and their breach of the covenant is a daily reality.

[295] Fuhr and Köstenberger, *Inductive Bible Study*.

[296] Matthews and Benjamin, *Old Testament Parallels*, 97.

[297] Fuhr and Yates, *Minor Prophets*, 20.

Though Israel has failed to keep its end of the covenant, YHWH is faithful to keep His end of the covenant, which includes administering justice for Israel's transgressions. The covenantal context of the hymns, then, plays a significant role in emphasizing YHWH's judgment as a just and necessary action while also emphasizing Israel's false piety as a colossal and egregious disaster. YHWH is faithful to His promises regarding blessings or curses of His covenant with His people. Israel's failure to uphold their covenant obligations is not native to Amos's account—it is an epidemic of narrative proportions in the journey of mankind. Therefore, the hymns of Amos provide a bittersweet melody of YHWH's faithfulness to His covenant and Israel's dire need of repentance.

Revelation-Historical Context

The revelation-historical context of a text considers "the unfolding drama of God's interaction with his people."[298] Because the biblical authors were not privy to the entirety of God's plan at the time of their writings, they were not able to understand how their writings would have an impact in God's salvation-historical progression plan. For Amos, he would have been unaware as to how his words condemning Israel's rejection of YHWH (5:25-27) would be used to condemn the Sanhedrin 700 years later for rejecting the Messiah (Acts 7:42-43). Amos would have also been unaware as to how YHWH would bring His people back from Exile.

Though there would be an oracle of restoration from YHWH that could be trusted (Amos 9:11-15), the overwhelming sense of condemnation for Israel—which was a righteous necessity—could have been soul-crushing for the prophet. The immediate reality for Israel was destruction at the hands of the God who delivered them. Certainly, as Daniel was distressed after his vision of the four beasts and the glorious appearance of the Son of Man, it can be assumed

[298] Fuhr and Köstenberger, *Inductive Bible Study*, 209.

that the prophet Amos, though armed with a promise of restoration, would have been distressed because of the current state of the Northern Kingdom and their unwillingness to harken to the doom that was fast approaching.

What can be gathered from this revelation-historical context is a sense of deep desperation and despair for God's people and an even deeper remorse toward YHWH. His faithfulness to bless has been returned with unfaithfulness; His love for Israel has been spurned in favor of love for lavishness; His desire for justice in His land has been rebuffed, as His people use the land to exploit the poor and exalt the elite. A sadness for YHWH and a frustration with Israel is held in tension for the reader of the text who dwells in the revelation-historical context of Amos. YHWH is the only one who can bring proper justice upon Israel, which requires their destruction. And yet, YHWH is also the only one who can bring about His promise of restoration. The question that arises, of course, is how.

While some may desire to quickly jump to the arrival of the Messiah, the revelation-historical context of Amos produces a meaningful and reflective appreciation for God's faithfulness despite His people's failure, and His grace to later fulfill the covenant on His people's behalf. In the moment of the text, however, YHWH is seen as the only hope for Israel. He is a hope that they now reject. But He is also their only hope for a future. The hymns are seen in this particular context as liturgical elements that should be sung by YHWH's people with joy, but instead to be sung as a siren song heralding Israel's demise. Still, the claim is true that either by salvation or destruction, YHWH is to be praised. It is worth considering, then, for Amos's immediate audience if this God who is able to turn the darkness into dawn could also eventually turn Israel's destruction into deliverance.

The Theological Strategy Behind the Hymns

As these theological contexts have been engaged, a theological strategy seems to make itself known. While the theology of the hymns themselves may carry a completely different tenor from the passages in which they are found, the placement of the hymns in their sections provides the contrast needed to focus Israel on the seriousness of their situation. As Smith writes, hymns were often used by the prophets to invite the people into a posture of praise.[299] But in the case of Amos, the hymns are used to convict Israel of breaking their covenant with the God they claim to praise. The hymns are also used to confront Israel with the characteristics of the God against whom they transgress.

The thematic context of the hymns keeps the weight of YHWH's characteristics on the minds of Amos's audience, while the covenantal context burdens Israel with their breach of covenant with the God who has been so good to them. The revelation-historical context may not have been apparent to Amos's audience at this time, but the anticipation and uncertainty of how YHWH would fulfill His promise of restoration may have induced a position of repentance. In any case, the strategy Amos employs in his use of the hymns is a sophisticated plan to use a satirical approach to apply pressure on Israel's conscience. It would be extremely difficult—after hearing Amos's accusations—for Amos's audience to go forth and sing hymns with similar language from the psalter and not be convicted. Whether the response is one of introspection or ignorance, Amos's strategy accomplishes its objective in forcing Israel to respond to the information placed in front of them so that they cannot plead innocence nor ignorance to the judgment YHWH will bring upon them.

[299] Smith, *Interpreting the Prophetic Books*, 43.

Amos's Application of the Hymns

Another interesting factor that arose in this study is how Amos takes a liturgical component of worship (a hymn) most likely purposed for use in corporate worship and applies the theology of the hymns in a completely different setting. Amos uses the doctrinal truths proclaimed in the hymn, which was most likely used for praise of YHWH and exhortation of His people, to confirm the condemnation of Israel by the God the hymn proclaims. One would have to ask whether Amos is taking the hymns out of context.

Surely, one could think the hymn to be out of place and somewhat odd. Yet, the area of focus should be on the theology of the hymn and if the theology of the hymn can be applied to the context of Amos's judgment against Israel. The theology of the hymn declares YHWH as all powerful and all sovereign. There are no doctrinal issues with those statements, and certainly those characteristics of YHWH are worth praising in the context of the worshiping body of YHWH's people. That same theology, however, can also be applied in the context of a prophetic judgment speech. Of course, the setting may seem strange, but the truth of YHWH's character still applies.

It would be similar to a modern-day preacher lamenting the rebellion of his Church audience, and quoting the hymn, "The Battle Hymn of the Republic."

> "Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord;
> He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored;
> He hath loosed the fateful lightning of his terrible swift sword:
> His truth is marching on."[300]

The theology of the hymn is the same in every setting: God will vanquish His enemies. The application of those truths, however, can have adverse effects depending on the audience and the

[300] Julia Ward Howe, "Battle Hymn of the Republic," Library of Congress (Washington, DC, 2002), https://www.loc.gov/item/ihas.200000003/.

one applying those strategies. This hymn, which has oft been sung with great jubilation in churches over the past century and a half, has a wonderful message of joy and courage for those who are on the side of the Lord. But if we are His enemies, then the first verse takes on a completely different application.

In the same way, the hymns of Amos carry hymnic phrases and language that would have been most likely purposed for corporate worship in what would have been a setting of celebration, especially with all the festivals and religious songs Israel performs much to YHWH's displeasure (5:27). It appears that Amos's strategy is to have his audience question whether they truly know the God whom they praise. For it seems that Israel believes they are immune to the judgment they would so readily see poured out upon their enemies not realizing that YHWH will not withhold judgment from Israel either. The familiarity of the hymn and phrasing used would be advantageous for Amos's strategy in challenging his audience on their views of their covenant with YHWH. The satirical nature of Amos's attacks could provide the reality check needed for those who would listen to the prophet.

Summary and Transition

This section has proved fruitful in revealing that the compositional strategy employed by Amos purposed the hymns to be more than literary markers to signal the end of sections, but rather as literary and theological devices that played integral roles in seeking to convict YHWH's people of their covenantal violations. The literary implications revealed that the application of a hymn's message was dependent upon its literary context; and in the case of the context of Amos's hymns, the message of the hymns made them more than a literary marker and more of an exclamation mark for Amos's compositional strategy. Amos may have needed a literary device

that would have caught his audience off guard. They could have been so used to prophetic calls to repentance that may have accompanied the plagues YHWH sent (4:6-11) that Amos needed an approach that would shake Israel to its core. The literary strategy Amos employs is creative and effective.

The theological implications of Amos's compositional strategy develop the understanding of YHWH's faithfulness to uphold His covenant obligations along with the recognition of His creative power, which is oft lauded in liturgical hymns, to enforce the bounds of that covenant. Amos uses the hymns made for congregational worship to convict and condemn the congregation. That a hymn would be used to carry theological truths that could be applied in such a way to pierce the heart of Amos's audience is masterful and well-planned. The double-edged sword of the truths of YHWH's characteristics and identity is put on full display by Amos. For Amos's audience to even try to sing these songs in worship would have cut to the heart in a way that would either aggravate the ego toward further rebellion or aggrieve the spirit toward a first step of repentance.

The research conducted has discovered what has always been present in the text: a compositional strategy of the prophet Amos as highlighted by his use of hymns. This "discovery" could be considered even more beneficial than the initial case for a unified composition of Amos as revealed by a study of the hymns in Amos. The compositional strategy of Amos regarding the hymns provides great insight into the literary and theological implications of Amos's use of hymns. In the next and final section, an attempt to provide an overview and synthesis of the current study will take place followed by some closing thoughts on this venture of research.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Overview

The study conducted throughout the previous chapters has attempted to demonstrate the inclusion of the hymns of Amos as a unified composition that can be attributed to the prophet himself.[301] The impetus for this paper stems from the remarkable debate over the hymns of Amos (4:12-13; 5:8-9; 9:5-6) enveloped in the overarching discussion of authorship and date of Amos's constitution. Though an oft-touted position is that of one holding to a multi-layered 6th-century B.C. or later composition, the alternative position is well-supported in scholarship and, more importantly, in Scripture. Nevertheless, the hermeneutical drive for this study sought to explain what appeared to be an intentional use of hymnic language in Amos that could not be separated from the original composition and the literary and theological designs that constructed the 8th-century B.C. corpus.

Reviewing the Foundations of Amos Scholarship

This paper began by surveying the research already existing on the book of Amos, assessing research that concluded that Amos was the product of an editorial process and research that argued for attribution to Amos. Wolff, Jeremias, and Hadjiev were cited as the leading scholars regarding an editorial process of Amos, with all theories from these scholars showing influence from DtrH scholarship from the likes of Noth. These theories assumed historical influences not mentioned in the text as settings for the supposed sections of redaction, which include the insertion of the hymnic fragments. Most editorial scholars agree that there were multiple stages of edition, though they may vary on the actual number of stages; most also agree

[301] Or a close associate of Amos. The ultimate point is that the composition of Amos is not a layered or redacted project as posited by some, but an actual 8th-century B.C. composition relevant to the people of the time with instructive overtones for God's people who would look back on the Northern Kingdom's demise in the future.

that the final composition would have taken place during or after the exilic period in Judah to make sense of 6th-century Judah's contextual experience. One other area where editorial process scholars agree is that the postulations of redaction are highly hypothetical. The hypothetical reconstructions of an editorial process are unsupported and are merely theorized based on historical events that could possibly coincide with a redaction of Amos, though the textual evidence for such arguments is scarcely supported.

Commentators such as Paul, Hayes, Sweeney, and Carroll R. contend for an attribution to Amos on multiple hermeneutical grounds. Though there are also theories in this scholarly camp that also use reconstruction to explain the composition of Amos, there are others that focus on a textual analysis that considers the historical, literary, and theological objectives of the composition of Amos as a whole in their understanding of the role of the hymns. Overall, the scholars who argue for attribution to Amos present these cases for the historical credibility and theological integrity of the book of Amos.

As this dissertation would examine Amos's use of hymnic language to verify the assertions of those in the 'attribution' camp, the theological integrity of the book of Amos was heavily in view. This introductory look also considered the historical and literary aspects of Amos. Such consideration provided a foundational vantage point for viewing the hymns and their place in Amos through the proper hermeneutical lenses.

Observing the Compositional Strategy through the Hymns

The following action of the dissertation research observed the fit and function of the hymns in Amos to demonstrate the essential nature of the hymns to the core message of the entire corpus. Contrary to commentators who assert that these hymns are intrusive to the literary flow of the text, the research conducted in this paper found evidence to suggest that the hymns

could be considered as part of the compositional strategy of the unified composition attributed to the prophet. Not only did the inclusion of the hymns demonstrate a functional purpose, but there they also displayed a strategic approach, both in a literary and theological sense, which could be attributed to the 8th-century prophet.

Amos 4:12-13 is the conclusion to the chapter that precedes it. Rather than an intrusive imposition onto the text, the hymn is a vital component that reintroduces Israel to the Judge who brings their judgment. This Judge, of whom they sing in their cultic songs from the psalter, is not only the Judge of their enemies, but the Judge of all people, including them. Israel cannot proclaim the truths of their righteous Deity in their hymns and expect that these same truths do not apply to them solely because they worship him in their sanctuaries.[302] Amos challenges the spiritual knowledge and position of favor Israel believes they have with God by including the hymn in 4:12-13 in his words, for it reminds Israel that their Creator, with whom they have covenanted, will destroy those who violate their covenants with Him.[303]

The hymn in 4:12-13 proves itself to be necessary for the unit to function as the prophet intended. Without the presence of the hymn to close this unit, 4:6-11 become a thread of allegations against the Northern Kingdom highlighting their rebellion against YHWH. One could even (erroneously) venture to say that YHWH failed in His attempts to correct a stubborn Israel if there is no hymn. An incomplete unit paints an incomplete picture of the character of the God who will not be mocked as One who is mocked without proper response. With the inclusion hymn, however, the unit portrays Israel's blatant rejection of YHWH's discipline, falling under

[302] M. Daniel Carroll R., *The Book of Amos* (Chicago, IL: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2020), 249.

[303] W. Brueggemann, "Amos IV 4-13 and Israel's Covenant Worship," *Vetus Testamentum* 15.1 (1965): 1–15; Victor Harold Matthews and Don C. Benjamin, *Old Testament Parallels: Laws and Stories from the Ancient Near East*, Fully Revised and Expanded Fourth Edition. (New York: Paulist Press, 2016), 97.

the growing shadow of YHWH's awesome and fearsome arrival. The majestic hymn shows Israel that the God they praise through hymns in worship is the same God who is coming to destroy them.

This hymn also emphasizes a vital component of the overarching theme of Amos: that YHWH has the power and the authority to administer judgment upon all the world, including His own people, because He is the Creator of the entire world. A late insertion of the hymn would leave Chapter 4 missing connections to the surrounding chapters that foretell YHWH's ultimate response in bringing destruction upon Israel. The chapters prior to the hymn reveal what Israel had done and what God will do in response. The first hymn in Amos establishes the reason as to why YHWH is within His right to bring Israel to justice: Israel has transgressed against the Creator, the One who is able to bring them to absolute justice.

Amos 5:8-9 receives the most skepticism from scholars as to its place in the surrounding text, citing the seemingly abrupt appearance of the hymn, along with other historical considerations. The literary techniques employed around the hymn, however, namely the chiastic structure of the surrounding chapter, would argue for an intentional insertion of the hymn by the prophet and that the seemingly abrupt nature of the hymn is part of the intended literary effect to catch Israel's attention.[304] The shift to contrasting themes within the chiastic structure is forcefully and majestically emphasized in the hymn. The report of Israel's propensity to turn justice into wormwood (5:7) is juxtaposed with YHWH's rightful power to reverse creation and bring chaos (5:8).

[304] McComiskey, "The Hymnic Elements of the Prophecy of Amos: A Study of Form-Critical Methodology," 144–45.

The placement of the second hymn is a natural fit due to the literary and theological components displayed in the doxology. Since the hymn is set as the core of the chiastic structure, there is a clear sense of intentionality from the original author. Without the second hymn, the core emphasis of the chiasm becomes the injustices of the Northern Kingdom; though they are constantly on display throughout the corpus of Amos, the injustices of Israel are cast as the antagonistic actions overshadowed by the impending arrival of the protagonist. While Israel's heinous misdeeds run rampant in Amos's assessment, the second hymn plays the heroic theme of YHWH who is coming to destroy evil. The chiasm performs its literary duty in revealing that Israel, though beckoned to repent, will fail to heed the call, and will suffer judgment (which runs in connection to the content in 4:6-12). The hymn performs its purpose of not only revealing YHWH as Israel's Savior or Destroyer, but also emphasizes the fact that (because the hymn is indeed a doxology and because it is also positioned as the prominent idea of the chiasm) at the end of all things, YHWH will be praised. Israel's worship may be faulty in its faith and way of life, but YHWH will still be recognized as God, whether through the Northern Kingdom's salvation or their destruction.

The second hymn also provides the intended emphasis for the prophet's urgent message to the Northern Kingdom to turn to YHWH. The theology of YHWH as Creator and Destroyer was a developed theology during the time of Amos, yet the Northern Kingdom seemed to have forgotten that YHWH, who had created Israel and granted them their blessings, could also destroy them for their transgressions. Amos's placement of the second hymn as the emphasis of the chiasm reveals that YHWH, who is coming to destroy Israel, is also the only One who can save Israel. There is no other god and no kingdom of man that can spare the Northern Kingdom from YHWH's wrath. But YHWH can indeed have mercy if He so pleases. The placement of

praise as the intended emphasis of the chiasm could be seen as Amos's attempt to have Israel see that their only means of salvation is YHWH Himself. Without this hymn, the chiasmic emphasis for Israel is their own sin, which renders an incomplete theological message.

Amos 9:5-6 culminates the hymn series in Amos, with features that are unique apart from the other two hymns, though these differences ultimately show its fit with the other hymns and the entire corpus overall. While the first hymn announces what will happen and the second hymn announces what is happening, the third hymn logically announces what has happened all within the scope of a prophetic arrangement.[305] The third hymn deploys vivid imagery that justifies God's absolute power to bring absolute judgment through absolute destruction.

Further displaying the prophet's strategic inclusion of the third hymn (and the hymns, in general) are the connections between the final hymn and the final vision (9:1-4). The function of the vision is to describe the totality of YHWH's judgment and YHWH's sovereignty over the devastation that will occur in the Northern Kingdom. The function of the final hymn, then, is to remind Israel that it is because they have incurred the wrath of the YHWH, the God of Creation, Israel shall be utterly destroyed. Because He is indeed the Creator of the entire universe, YHWH may do as He pleases with His Creation. One may say that such judgment could be arbitrarily abused. Yet, throughout his composition, Amos has contrasted the transgressions of the Northern Kingdom, who erringly believe they are righteous, with the hymnic proclamations of YHWH's character and nature. This strategy Amos implements leaves no room for Israel to plead ignorance or innocence, nor does it allow Israel to claim injustice in YHWH's execution of judgment.

[305] M. Daniel Carroll R., "Twenty Years of Amos Research," *Currents in Biblical Research* 18.1 (2019): 41.

Most scholars who argue for an editorial composition of Amos consider the visions to be attributable to Amos. If this is correct, the absence of the third hymn in an original composition poses theological issues since there are obvious connections and purposes for the placement of the vision adjacent to the hymn. An original corpus without the third hymn would communicate the totality of YHWH's judgment but would not necessarily reinforce YHWH's divine right to exact such judgment. With the inclusion of the third hymn, Amos reinforces YHWH's divine right to judge Israel in such a total and complete way, playing a vital role in the literary and theological transition to the close of the book of Amos.

Removing these hymns from their textual locations would communicate an entirely different message and theology. Thus, the natural conclusion is that these hymns were indeed intentionally included in a unified composition from the 8th-century B.C. Since most commentators who affirm a post-exilic addition of the hymns also affirm the texts surrounding the hymns could most likely be attributed to the 8th-century B.C. prophet, an issue arises that has been completely overlooked. If what these scholars posit is true, the message to Amos's original audience has been affected by an outside editor to communicate a message with the hymns that was never intended initially.

The functional fit of the hymns, however, demonstrates that the historical, rhetorical, and theological objectives fulfilled by the presence of the hymns as part of the larger corpus could not be completed without them. If it is the complexity and literary richness of the text that causes some to conclude that an 8th-century prophet could not have composed such a work, that particular view may be influenced by recency bias. The literary quality of Amos, with all its literary distinctives and intricacies, should point to a unified composition that can be attributed to the prophet himself. Ultimately, these literary intricacies can be better explained in light of the

theological strategy highlighted by Amos's use of the hymns in their respective passages as part of the overarching narrative of the corpus.

Implications for Old Testament Narratives

Reviewing the fit and function of the hymnic fragments in Amos provided an insightful look behind the intentionality of the literary arrangement of Amos driven by the theological basis of Amos's commission to the Northern Kingdom, suggesting that the hymns were part of the prophet's compositional strategy. The resulting research and conclusions regarding the compositional strategy in Amos required a look toward the rest of Scripture to observe similar compositional strategies around the use of hymns within narrative and prophetic passages. Since none of Scripture is written in a vacuum, and since Amos shares literary genres and canonical connections with many other portions of Scripture, it was important to consider the other areas of the Bible that could 1) support the claims of this dissertation and 2) possibly display the implications of a compositional strategy as revealed through the use of hymnic language in the book of Amos.

The attention of the study naturally turned to a focused exploration of the world of the Old Testament, examining the use of hymns within the narratives of Scripture and the adjacent ancient cultures. The research in this chapter developed two significant inferences. First, the inclusion of hymns and songs in the Old Testament narratives displayed the historical importance of worship of YHWH in Israel for the people involved in the narratives and for the original audience of the text. To suppose the hymns of Amos are late additions to the text conflicts with the practice of including hymns and psalms in historical narratives to emphasize the cultic core of Israel's identity. Amos's use of hymns is consistent with Israel's literary traditions, which in turn suggests that the hymns in Amos are part of a unified composition.

Examples such as the *Song of the Sea* (Exodus 15), the *Song of Moses* (Deuteronomy 32), and the *Thanksgiving Song of Hannah* (1 Samuel 2) demonstrated the Old Testament authors' use of songs in the context of worship as a response to the revelation of YHWH to Israel through events in their history. Because Israel's cultic activity was intertwined with its cultural history, the inclusion of songs in the biblical accounts of their relationship with YHWH was expected and normal. The use of psalms in the Old Testament accurately reflected the constant interaction between the individuals and communities of Israel with YHWH in their daily routines, further reinforcing the theological component that drove Israel's cultural and historical existence. Psalms often provided commentaries on a person's/community's life in relation to YHWH, since there could be no separation of YHWH from Israelite life, no matter how hard Israel tried to do so.

Second, the presence of hymnic language in ANE religions demonstrated a widespread regional familiarity with the purpose of hymns within the cultic sphere, from which Amos's audience would not be exempt. Rather than assuming the hymns of Amos were inserted later for the purpose of a later audience, the widespread presence of hymns in cultic practice before and during Amos's time suggests that the hymns of Amos served an immediate purpose for Amos's immediate audience. It would be reasonable, then, to assume that the hymns Amos used (or at least the language and style of the hymns) in his critique of the Northern Kingdom may have been very familiar to his cultic audience.[306] From a canonical and cultural perspective, the assertion that the hymns in Amos were not only part of a unified composition but are also evidence of a unified composition has strong potential.

[306] Watts, "An Old Hymn Preserved in the Book of Amos"; Harrison, "The Book of Amos," 883. Had Amos composed the hymns himself, as Harrison suggests, the purpose of connecting the Northern Kingdom to their fundamental issue of the hypocrisy of their cultic life is still served.

At the end of this discussion, space was given to consider the compositional strategy of the Old Testament and its impact on the present study of the compositional strategy of Amos. On a much broader stage the debate between the role of an editor and the original author's intent was displayed thanks to Sailhamer's theory on textual strategies in the Tanakh, more specifically the Pentateuch, which had ramifications for the rest of the Old Testament. The major implications of compositional strategy observed in Amos in the utilization of the hymns could be found in the fact that Amos employed hymns as a literary and theological device in his messages because the use of song in the narrative recollections of Israelite history and in their cultic activity was normative.

It would be strange for Amos to critique the Northern Kingdom's empty worship and not use hymnic language in his composition. Hence, Amos's use of hymns is not only an expected part of his approach (both culturally and regionally from a historical perspective) but it also communicates a theological message that is connected to the rest of Scripture in further revealing the character and person of YHWH.

Shared Strategies in the Prophetic and Pauline Writings

This dissertation also sought to examine the ways in which the other prophets in the Twelve employed the use of hymns in their compositions. This study proved fruitful, for though different prophets utilized the hymns for purposes suited to their own audience, the resulting conclusion was that the use of hymns in prophetic writings was a normative practice applied by the prophets to turn the people's focus towards the character and nature of God. Jonah's prayer psalm engages the audience so that they might identify with the prophet in his sense of false piety (Jonah 2:2-10). The hymnic language resounded with familiar motifs heard within the context of worship, yet the setting within the narrative of the rebellious prophet creates an

unmistakable dissonance. Jonah's psalm achieves its objective of putting his audience in the hotseat of partiality in regard to salvation, whereas YHWH extends forgiveness to all who would repent, which should ultimately call unruly Israel to repentance.

The other prophetic examples also reveal compositional strategies in the use of hymns, with the purpose of highlighting YHWH's character as a means of drawing Israel to deeper reliance on Him. The prophetic use of hymns is deliberate, intentional, and effective in completing their set objectives. There is no doubt that the use of hymnic language is highly effective because of the cultic nature of Israel's identity and because of their historic relationship with YHWH. The scholarly discussion surrounding these prophetic corpuses that employ hymns in their texts never addresses the possibility of later addition. While an argument from silence is not convincing, it seems reasonable to assume that since there is no reason to consider a late insertion of the hymns used in the writings of others in the Twelve, though the use and placement of these hymns share similarities with the way in which the hymns of Amos appear in the text, that the same could be said of Amos.

The study of Paul's use of hymnic language showed many similarities to that of the prophets' use of hymnic language in their writings. Through Paul's application of hymns in his letters to different Christian communities, the text displays the intentionality and integral nature of the use of hymns in writing. If these hymns are removed from the message, part of the message is lost, which in turn creates a completely different message. From a theological perspective, the message to the original audiences of the prophets and Paul becomes muddled. The resulting effect is that the people of God throughout the ages would have received incomplete messages that would conflict with the message received by a later audience. The compositional strategy of Paul's letters in utilizing hymnic language, however, demonstrates a

clear and intentional purpose for the hymns that adds to the overall theology of the epistle, a theology that would be somewhat incomplete without its presence. Just as hymns were an important part of the Israelite cultic experience, hymns were also mainstays of the 1st century A.D. Christian experience.

In summary, this dissertation set out to examine the hymns of Amos with a hermeneutical lens to determine whether they were part of a unified composition of Amos or if their presence was a result of redaction. The resulting opinion of this study is that the hymns in the book of Amos are part of the prophet's compositional strategy, demonstrating a unified composition of the text based on relevant historical, literary, and theological considerations. The textual evidence, along with all accompanying research, seems to support this assertion while further supporting the presence of a compositional strategy from the prophet that stands in harmony with other compositional strategies utilized throughout Scripture.

A deeper dive into the compositional strategy of Amos also proved to be a rewarding venture. As the literary and theological implications of Amos's compositional strategy were considered, a more robust and defined outline of Amos's intentions rose to the surface. It became evident that Amos's literary strategy for the hymns was to provide an abrasive shock to his audience with a clear satirical attack on Israel's cultic hypocrisy and that the theological strategy was to impress upon Israel's conscience their failure and YHWH's faithfulness. While this may seem like an opportunity for Israel to return to God's grace, Amos's strategy was to show Israel that YHWH's faithfulness to His covenant obligations meant that He would keep His promises regarding the blessings and the curses that Israel would receive.

The hymns would therefore carry a significant literary and theological purpose in calling Israel to respond. Amos's application of doctrines found in the hymns revealed an application of

theological truths for the purpose of convicting Israel of their transgressions against YHWH. The ability to ignore these truths while singing in worship was ripped away from Israel's religious elite. They would now be constantly bothered by Amos's compositional strategy that pinned them up against their rebellion with no liturgical practice behind which they could hide.

This section also engaged with Amos's application of the theological themes of the hymns in a very different setting, showing that hymns could be used to apply theological truths about YHWH to a relevant situation outside of its regular setting. While the truths of God's character could encourage those who are right with YHWH, they could also discourage those who are not right with Him. Like a police siren would be a welcome sound for one desiring help and a warning sound for one who breaks the law, so, too, is the hymn that proclaims the characteristics of a righteous God a welcome sound for those who obey Him and a warning sound for those who oppose Him.

Synthesis and Further Insights

Much of the research on the hymns of Amos that argues for a later insertion seems to presuppose redaction due to the intricate and noteworthy composition of Amos from a literary perspective. As this study has shown, however, when these claims are put in conversation with studies that consider the literary style of Amos displayed throughout the entire composition from the perspective of communicating a coherent message, the alternative standpoint then appears to be the more appropriate standpoint. The hymns appear to be intentional and functional components of the text and not haphazard interpolations from a later time. This position is further solidified when the compositional strategy of Amos, along with the literary and theological implications, are taken into consideration.

Once the canonical, historical, and geo-cultural contexts are introduced into the conversation, the background of Amos's initial audience seems more palatable for the use of hymns in Amos's message. Add to this the normative practice of using hymns in the messages of the prophets, the likelihood of Amos utilizing these hymns in the original, unified composition of his corpus increases significantly. The result of this research would suggest that the hymns of Amos are not only an original inclusion of the text but also argue for a unified composition of Amos from the position of consistency and intentionality of message to present a consistent theology throughout the book of the prophet. Without these hymns in their particular places, the composition of Amos presents a markedly different theology.

This approach of reviewing redaction claims in the prophets in conversation with the entire Scripture could be considered one of the contributions of this research, especially when considering claims of redaction in the prophets. Whether this approach could be considered effective regarding claims of redaction for other areas of Scripture is unknown. The results of this particular study, however, have proven beneficial and thought-provoking. The hymns of Amos are not viewed in a vacuum, but in-line with the overall historical narrative of Scripture, which tells a consistent theology of who God is. One could contend that the redaction position on the hymns of Amos is posed in response to textual indicators that fit with a post-exilic redaction in line with biblical history. Yet, when this claim is measured against a comprehensive expositional view of the text, as demonstrated in this dissertation, the redaction claim position becomes a bit more problematic.

Leading proponents of redaction in Amos must be given credit, however, for openly acknowledging their claims and proposed reconstructions of Amos to be 'highly hypothetical.'[307]

[307] Hadjiev, *The Composition and Redaction of the Book of Amos*, 393:208.

It must also be acknowledged that this dissertation has its own limitations that future research could possibly resolve. The focus of this dissertation involved the theological and literary functions of the hymnic elements in Amos as a unified composition. To consider redaction claims on larger portions of Scripture would require greater research and examination that go beyond the scope of this paper. Another limitation may still exist in regard to this paper's response to the textual strategy in the Pentateuch proposed by Sailhamer.[308]

While the discussion of this paper maintains that the supposed 'commentaries' in the text that point to an updated version of the Pentateuch do not consider the editorial role of the Holy Spirit according to Scripture, there are more points to cover for a satisfactory conversation that are found outside the bounds of this particular research focus. This study maintains, however, that the compositional strategy of the Old Testament authors is better suited in the hands of the originally attributed authors as opposed to an unknown editor imposing a later understanding according to their context upon the texts of earlier composers.

The approach in this paper, however, does reinforce the importance of upholding the principles of biblical exposition in regard to the hermeneutical triad of history, literature, and theology, with theology being a core component that is often neglected in many biblical studies. By highlighting the purpose of the hymns in Amos as part of the revelation and reintroduction of YHWH to the Northern Kingdom, the assertion that the hymns in Amos could be part of a unified composition became more palatable. In fact, because the placement of these hymns masterfully exposed Israel's false piety, the likelihood of the hymns being part of the original, unified composition increased significantly. All these important aspects were discovered when the literary and theological implications were engaged. Without engaging the theological

[308] Sailhamer, *The Meaning of the Pentateuch*, 194.

component of hermeneutics, the theological message of the immediate text becomes inconsistent with the revelation of God throughout other areas of the text. The same can be said when a lack of attention is paid to the literary contexts of the text.

While in this study the effect on the consistency of theology has been used to examine the validity of redaction claims in Amos, such a study on consistency of theology throughout Scripture could produce fruitful research and conversations when applied to redaction claims on other areas of Scripture. A question to ask regarding areas of Scripture where scholars propose that redaction has taken place would be how the resulting theologies of the text prior to the redaction and after the redaction would differ.

During this study, the research revealed that most proponents of an editorial process did not consider the theological ramifications of such redactions to the texts that were attributed to the prophet. Such modifications have implications for the overall consistency of theology regarding the character and nature of God, the theology of the narrative of Scripture, and the spiritual disposition of God's people. To claim redaction based on observations of the text is understandable, but such claims also need to be examined within the framework of the purpose of the text, which is primarily theological. The compositional strategy of Amos revolves around his theological objective, which is to warn the Northern Kingdom of their looming demise at the hands of the God they claim to worship.

The redaction claims considered in this study regarding Amos seem to employ certain elements of historical and literary analysis. What is often missing, however, is an explanation as to how these claims affect the theological consistency of the text. A potential reason for this oversight on theological consistency could be that such a review may cause issues for the relevant redaction claim, as observed in this study, or simply that the theological portion of the

hermeneutical triad is not the driving force in the exposition of the text but the result of the work of historical and literary examination.

An issue that often arises around the application of theology in the hermeneutical process, however, is arriving at a consensus of what is an acceptable biblical theology, since variant theologies can influence the exposition of the text, resulting in markedly different conclusions. Numerous studies have devoted their resources to this, but the general idea for how to arrive at a workable (rather than 'acceptable) biblical theology should include a desire to know God (theology) based on what the text reveals in light of its historical and literary components. Biblical hermeneutics on its own is no easy feat; attempting to traverse the deep and astonishing pages of Scriptures without seeking to know the equally deep and astonishing God who reveals Himself in the Scriptures will result in research that creates a disconnected narrative focused on everything in the Bible but the God of the Bible.

The argument for the veracity of the hymns and a unified composition is strengthened by an understanding of the compositional strategy of Amos and the literary and theological implications of his use of the hymns. In reference to the findings regarding the compositional strategy of Amos, these findings could also be applied to the ways in which the other prophets utilize the hymns in their writings. Certainly, there were many examples in the chapter on the prophets of hymns being used as encouragements to the people. It would be an informative undertaking to review the literary and theological implications of the hymns used by the other prophets and whether their strategies find resonance with the strategies of Amos.

Reflections

Scholarly Considerations

There are a few important insights gained from this study that can be offered as reminders for research in Bible exposition. First, it is evident that the purpose of the prophet in utilizing the hymns is not for literary style or historical explanation, but out of a desire to point his audience to God. Redaction theorists have often surmised that the Deuteronomist, out of his experience in the Exile, wrote and redacted texts in order to inform his audience of the reason why they were exiled: failure to adhere to God's Law.

The opinion arising from this dissertation is that the biblical writers, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, composed their writings with the primary purpose of revealing God to His people. Just as Amos utilizes the hymns to highlight God's character in response to the Northern Kingdom's cultic hypocrisy, the biblical writers have the primary purpose of revealing God in human history. Anything recorded about human activity is done in light of who God is revealing Himself to be in the Scriptures. This is not to say that a comprehensive understanding of God's nature can be attained. It does mean, however, that the nature of God must be in focus when researching the Scripture in any capacity.

The compositional strategy displayed in Amos reveals that there is an original intent that must be respected and observed for the intended message. The byproduct of multiple theologies from the pre- and post-redaction texts as an issue that cannot be ignored if one is to adhere to redaction. A lack of consistency in these theologies with the overarching narrative of Scripture must ultimately be addressed by those holding to redaction of Amos or any part of the Old Testament.

Secondly, the importance of viewing portions of Scripture as part of a larger narrative of Scripture as opposed to an individual writing is extremely beneficial to scholarly research. The claims made by scholarly research and biblical study must be measured against the entire backdrop of Scripture from beginning to end to ensure narrative and theological coherence. This requires a biblical literacy that is informed by sound hermeneutical practices to connect portions of the text to the overarching theme of who God is as revealed in His relationship with mankind, specifically Israel. Not only does this practice help to prevent errant views of the text, but it also opens the researcher to the marvelous wonder of the text because of the revelation of the marvelous and wonderful God of the text.

Both approaches were applied and further realized throughout the research conducted in this paper, proving highly beneficial in adding to an already growing appreciation of the composition of Scripture as a whole and an ever-growing reverence and admiration for the God who is revealed in Scripture. If the approach to scholarly research is grounded in the desire to grow in the knowledge of God, then it is quite probable that the results of that research will only increase the researcher's desire for more of God, as can be attested by the one contributing this research.

It is worth noting that Amos's use of the theological attributes of the hymns in a setting and space foreign to its regular usage is a literary and theological method that should garner more study. The prophet's application of the theological truths found in the hymns reveal another way in which YHWH sought to gain His people's attention. Israel thought that they were right with YHWH because they performed all their religious motions religiously. Therefore, any challenge to their devotion to YHWH would have met strong resistance, along with their own evidence to the contrary.

What Amos's compositional strategy does is that it takes a liturgical element with which Israel is familiar (the hymn) and uses it as the proverbial hammer to condemn Israel. The use of the theology in the hymns for his specific situation is similar to Jesus's use of religious elements in parables to convict the Pharisees and Sadducees. While some may claim Amos is taking these hymns out of context, it is Amos's use of the theological claims in the hymns that are exegetically compliant and effective for his objectives in preaching to the people.

Ecclesial Considerations

The results of this study can be seen as beneficial for the Body of Christ in a few ways. First, there are scholarly assertions to reassure the Church community that the Bible they read in worship is a trustworthy and accurate representation of the nature of God and His word for their lives. Many believers are often unwillingly captive to the opinions of critics that are seemingly backed by scholarship, resulting in a feeling of hopelessness and resignation to a faith that is certain of God without the ability to explain why (1 Pet. 3:15-16), or at least a certainty that a satisfactory response can be found in Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

It is the hope of the contributor of this dissertation that the findings of this study can help to assure the believer that they can trust the veracity of the text and that the compositional strategies found in Amos are employed with a theological purpose, as is every compositional strategy in the Scripture. The contentions of biblical critics that have gained a foothold in the minds of the Church must be contested by expositors equipped to provide a solid and fair exegetical analysis of the text that seeks the theological understanding of the text for the exaltation of God and the edification of His saints.

Second, the compositional strategy observed in Amos should demonstrate to believers that each part of the biblical text serves a purpose in its immediate context and in the larger

narrative of Scripture. The immediate context helps believers to see theological concepts in specific scenarios, while the role that text plays in the larger narrative helps the believer to see the continuity and consistency of all of Scripture. A grasp of the larger narrative also helps the believer to appreciate the richness of the text's immediate context.

Attention should be given, then, by pastors and teachers in the Church to the compositional strategies within the text and their connections to the surrounding and overarching narratives of Scripture. The use of a hymn in a prophetic text that praises YHWH is not always means for celebration, as demonstrated in Amos. Teachers of the Bible must be aware of these compositional strategies to help the believer grasp the overarching message.

Training believers to gain an awareness of compositional strategies may require time and familiarity with the overarching themes of Scripture and the chronology of events in the entire Bible. Yet, this is a venture that is well worth it. Not only will this aid believers in being biblically literate to discern truth in biblical scholarship and biblical commentaries, but it will also avail believers of the great joy of seeing the canonical and thematic connections throughout different books and subunits of Scripture.

Equipping believers with an eye for compositional strategies in the text does not have to be an overwhelming exercise. Rather, it can be a matter of preaching the purposes of different aspects of the biblical text with the purpose of seeing the characteristics of YHWH more clearly. The more a believer is trained to seek YHWH in the Scripture, the more they will be able to observe His constant presence throughout the text, explaining the connectivity and consistency of the text in ways redaction is unable.

Homiletical Considerations

It goes without saying that Amos is a masterful preacher, whose heavy rhetoric and use of elements familiar to a worshiping audience would undoubtedly cause great discomfort in many Churches today. Amos's compositional strategy, however, should be a great encouragement for the teaching pastor. Amos's fearless delivery of YHWH's judgments upon Israel and his gift for executing a literary and theological strategy are tools from which to learn and study for the pastor who finds himself in a similar context today.

Worth consideration from a homiletical standpoint is Amos's use of liturgical hymns as a reminder of YHWH's faithfulness to deliver on His covenant promises. This type of approach will often err on the side of blessing. But there is much to learn from Amos's application of a praise hymn within the setting of Israel's condemnation. The same Lord Israel praises is the same Lord who punishes Israel. The same God who is able to save is the same God who is able to destroy. When Christians pray for Christ to return, Christians are also praying for Christ to judge. The theology of the hymns we sing are truly double-edged and are meant to sober us toward and sure relationship with God. The theological ramifications of the hymns we sing and the prayers we pray are quite significant.

It can be very easy to view psalms, hymns, prayers, and even seemingly encouraging portions of the Scripture and overlook their contexts. Christian preachers will do well, then, to recognize the theological implications of Scripture's use of liturgical elements in passages to consider their purpose and the message they intend to emphasize so that his preaching may point people to the faithful One who keeps His promises.

Conclusion

In closing, this dissertation concludes its research and asserts that the hymns of Amos are part of an 8th-century B.C. compositional strategy that can be attributed to the prophet himself. The presence of the hymns of Amos is not intrusive but serves a theological purpose and is appropriate from a literary, historical, and canonical standpoint. Other areas in Scripture that utilize hymns do so in a parallel way without question to the later interpolation of said hymns, furthering support for the hymns of Amos as part of its original and unified composition. The hymns in Amos also share compositional strategy similarities with other prophetic writings and with the writings of Paul where hymns are employed in the text for theological purposes.

The opportunities for continued study in the areas of compositional strategy could prove quite fruitful for scholarly and ecclesial purposes. The strategies of Amos, along with the literary and theological implications of his strategies, provide areas of study to bolster familiarity and homiletical comfort with the prophetic texts and the various genres they contain. If a strategy for the use of hymns can be discerned, then strategies for the use of other genres within prophetic writings along with other literary devices can be examined for greater understanding. This understanding, of course, must be sought with a desire to know God more and to further equip God's people.

The significance of this research for the body of believers can be found in a number of different settings. Certainly, the tools for exegetical study of prophetic genres and the use of liturgical elements such as hymns are areas that can continue to build the believer's ability to seek after God in His Word and to be discerning of truth when engaging scholarly works, popular opinions, or commentaries. What may be of even greater value to the modern Church, however, could be the message Amos delivers to Israel. It is common practice for believers to

disregard any comparison to any wrongdoer, let alone Israel's apostate nature as depicted in Scripture. Yet, Amos's challenge to Israel is a challenge to every believer to examine their devotion to the Lord, lest our songs of praise become confirmations of His judgment upon us.

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