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AMOS OVERHEARD: AMOS 7:10–17, ITS ADDRESSEES, AND ITS AUDIENCE

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INTRODUCTION

Often attributed to the famous and influential quote of John Stuart Mill that "eloquence [i.e., rhetoric] is *heard*; poetry is *over*heard,"[1] the concept of overhearing has proved a useful tool for thinking about the way literature can engage multiple levels of audience at the same time. Critics of English lyric poetry and Roman satire, for example, have employed the concept to highlight the distinction between the addressees mentioned within a poem and the actual audiences outside of it.[2] The speaker in a poem may address any number of persons or objects, but none of these addressees is necessarily the audience of the poem. This point is most obvious in cases where the addressee is inanimate, but it is no less true when a speaker addresses

[1] John Stuart Mill, "What is Poetry?," *Monthly Repository* (1833), which was later published as "Thoughts on Poetry and Its Varieties," in *Dissertations and Discussions: Political, Philosophical, and Historical* (2 vols.; New York: Haskell, 1973 [orig. 1859]), 1:63–94 at 71. Ironically, the point of Mill's statement differs significantly from subsequent applications of the concept. According to Mill, poetry is overheard because of "the poet's utter unconsciousness of a listener. Poetry is feeling confessing itself to itself in moments of solitude" (ibid.). Whereas Mill, steeped in the Romantic ideals of his time, understood poetry as the product of isolation and self-communion, more recent discussions of overhearing highlight the interaction between poet, addressee(s), and audience(s).

[2] For lyric poetry, see Jonathan Culler, *The Pursuit of Signs: Semiotics, Literature, Deconstruction* (London: Routledge, 1981), 149–71; Herbert T. Tucker, "Dramatic Monologue and the Overhearing of Lyric," in *Lyric Poetry: Beyond New Criticism* (ed. C. Hôsek and P. Parker; Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985), 226–43; Ann Keniston, *Overheard Voices: Address and Subjectivity in Postmodern American Poetry* (New York: Routledge, 2006); Natalie Pollard, *Speaking to You: Contemporary Poetry and Public Address* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 7–30. For Roman satire, see Barbara K. Gold, "Opening in Horace's Satires and Odes: poet, patron, and audience," in *Beginnings in Classical Literature* (YCS 29; ed. F. Dunn and T. Cole; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 161–85; Ellen Oliensis, *Horace and the Rhetoric of Authority* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 6–7.

living beings. What is said to an addressee is meant to be overheard by an external audience, who is then implicated in the literary discourse. Second-person address in literature thus serves a rhetorical purpose, allowing authors to involve their audiences through the mediation of the addressees within a piece. The precise rhetoric varies, but in each case there is a triangulation between author, addressee(s), and audience(s).

Although this triangulation is prevalent in all modes of discourse, including prose texts and even everyday conversation,[3] in biblical studies the concept of overhearing has been applied mostly to poetic texts, such as the Psalms,[4] the book of Job,[5] and David's lament over Saul and Jonathan (2 Sam 1:17–27).[6] One area of the Hebrew Bible where the concept has been underutilized is the prophetic literature, where scholars tend to focus on the addressee(s) of prophetic speech.[7] For example, the only audience mentioned in Manfred Weippert's influential definition of prophecy is the "the actual addressees" (*den eigentlichen Adressaten*) of a prophet.[8] Our analysis

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

[4] See Gerald T. Sheppard, " 'Enemies' and the Politics of Prayers in the Book of Psalms," in *The Bible and the Politics of Exegesis: Essays in Honor of Norman K. Gottwald on his Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (ed. D. Jobling et al.; Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 1991), 61–83; and W. Derek Suderman, "Are Individual Complaint Psalms Really Prayers?: Recognizing Social Address as Characteristic of Individual Complaints," in *The Bible as a Human Witness to Divine Revelation: Hearing the Word of God Through Historically Dissimilar Traditions* (LHB/OTS 469; ed. R. Heskett and B. Irwin; New York: T & T Clark, 2010), 153–70.

[5] See Carol A. Newsom, *The Book of Job: A Contest of Moral Imaginations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 186.

[6] See Tod Linafelt, "Private Poetry and Public Eloquence in 2 Samuel 1:17–27: Hearing and Overhearing David's Lament for Jonathan and Saul," *Journal of Religion* 88 (2008): 497–526.

[7] Some exceptions include Andrew R. Davis, *The Book of Amos and its Audiences: Prophecy, Poetry, and Rhetoric* (SOTS; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023); Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry* (rev. ed.; New York: Basic Books, 2011), 172; and Patricia K. Tull, "Who Says What to Whom: Speakers, Hearers, and Overhearers in Second Isaiah," in *Partners with God: Theological and Critical Readings of the Bible in Honor of Marvin A. Sweeney* (eds. S. Birdsong and S. Frolov; Claremont, Calif.: Claremont Press, 2017), 157–68; J.J.M. Roberts, *First Isaiah: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015), 250, 271.

[8] See Manfred Weippert, "Aspekte israelitischer Prophetie im Lichte verwandter Erscheinungen des Alten Orients," in *Ad bene et fideliter seminandum: Festgabe für Karlheinze Deller zum 21. Februar 1987* (AOAT 220; eds. G. Mauer and U. Magen; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1988),

should expand to consider other levels of audience, not just as a matter of *relecture* by later readers/hearers but as a rhetorical feature of the text itself. The need for this expansion is obvious in cases where a prophet's addressees are fictive, but even when the addressees were (or seem to have been) a real audience, we must consider what a prophecy meant for overhearing audiences. As an interpretive lens, the concept of overhearing invites us to consider how prophetic texts (both poetry and prose) spoke to audiences beyond the addressees within a text.

In this article I examine the overhearing audiences of Amos 7:10–17 and contend that, although Amos and Amaziah are each other's addressee within the text, the real audience of the text consisted of rural Yehudites of the Persian period, who were meant to overhear the prophet's conversation and accept the new version of Amos it presented. After presenting evidence for a post-exilic date for Amos 7:10–17, I argue the purpose of story of Amos at Bethel was to redefine his prophetic function from oracular visionary to a scribal prophet whose revelation was more a matter of interpreting established texts than generating new ones. This shift in prophetic function has been widely attested during the post-exilic period,[9] and the depiction of Amos in 7:10–17 reflects this scribal turn and was meant to legitimize it for a Yehudite audience. According to this reading, 7:10–17 tells us little about the historical prophet Amos; instead, it tells us about the scribes who rewrote Amos as a scribal prophet and the audiences they were trying to convince to accept the persona.[10] Amos's words to Amaziah are not the audio-capture of

287–319 at 289–90. Among the various scholars who have enlisted this definition, see Martti Nissinen, *Ancient Prophecy: Near Eastern, Biblical, and Greek Perspectives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 20–21; Konrad Schmid, "Prognosen und Postgnosen in der biblischen Prophetie," *EvT* 74 (2014): 462–76 at 465; Jonathan Stökl, "Deborah, Huldah, and Innibanna: Constructions of Female Prophecy in the Ancient Near East and the Hebrew Bible," *JAJ* 6 (2016): 320–34 at 320; Alexandra Grund-Wittenberg, "The Future of the Past: Literarische Prophetien, Prophetenspruchsammlungen und die Anfänge der Schriftprophetie," *VT* 71 (2021): 365–96 at 368.

[9] See Michael H. Floyd, "The Production of Prophetic Books in the Early Second Temple Period," in *Prophets, Prophecy, and Prophetic Texts in Second Temple Judaism* (ed. M. Floyd and R. Haak; LHBOTS 427; New York: T&T Clark, 2006), 276–97; Martti Nissinen, "Prophecy and Omen Divination: Two Sides of the Same Coin," in *Prophetic Divination: Essays in Ancient Near Eastern Prophecy* (BZAW 494; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2019), 341–51 (orig. 2010); Matthijs J. de Jong, "Biblical Prophecy — A Scribal Enterprise. The Old Testament Prophecy of Unconditional Judgement considered as a Literary Phenomenon," *VT* 61 (2011): 39–70; and Jeffrey L. Cooley, "Divinatory Process in Judah: Mantic Marginalia and the Growth of Isaiah 7,10–17," *Bib* 101 (2020): 26–46.

[10] Although Amos's depiction may have some historical basis, many now regard his character in the book of Amos as a literary persona rather than a historical figure (see Reinhard G. Kratz, "Die Worte des Amos von

an eighth-century BCE conversation but were put in his mouth by post-exilic scribes who were redefining his persona for a new milieu of biblical prophecy.

A POST-EXILIC DATE FOR AMOS 7:10–17

Much of the scholarship on 7:10–17 has focused on what Amos's words meant to Amaziah and vice versa, but just because each character is the addressee of the other's speech does not mean that they were the actual audience of the text. Even if the account has some historical basis in the eighth century BCE, most agree that the account, with its third-person references to Amos, dates after the event it describes. This belatedness, no matter how brief, should shift our focus from the meaning of Amos and Amaziah's words for each other to the meaning of their words for the overhearing audiences "listening in" on their exchange.

This shift becomes all the more urgent if the text is dated not a few years or decades after the event it claims to recount but a few centuries. Such is the case with Amos 7:10–17, which a growing number of scholars have dated to the post-exilic period.[11] Although there is a wide range of opinions on the text's dating, and no one opinion offers a sure date, its linguistic profile and its parallels with the Deuteronomistic History make a strong case for reading Amos 7:10–17 as a post-exilic composition and warrant serious consideration of the text's meaning in this context.

The linguistic evidence for a post-exilic dating consists of words and syntax that are characteristic of late Biblical Hebrew. Examples of this late style have been compiled in articles by Peter R. Ackroyd and Ernst Axel Knauf,[12] and I will not reproduce all of their analysis but instead mention and elaborate on some of their strongest evidence. The first is the verb pair *wayya'an…wayyō'mer*, which occurs at the beginning of 7:14. Knauf notes that within the prophetic corpus, the pair is most attested in post-exilic contexts. Of the eighteen occurrences of the pair in the minor prophets, all but one (in Hab 2:2) occur in post-exilic contexts (Joel 2:19; Hag 2:12–14; Zech 1:10–12;

Tekoa," in *Propheten in Mari, Assyrien und Israel* [FRLANT 201; ed. M Köckert and M. Nissinen; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003], 54–89; Tchavdar S. Hadjiev, *The Composition and Redaction of the Book of Amos* [BZAW 393; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009], 169–170; Göran Eidevall, *Amos* [AYB 24G; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017], 5–7).

[11] See, for example, Jürgen Werlitz, "Amos und sein Biograph. Zur Entstehung und Intention der Prophetenerzählung Am 7,10–17," *BZ* 44 (2000): 233–51 at 250; Eidevall, *Amos*, 202–03; Jason Radine, *The Book of Amos in Emergent Judah* (FAT II/45; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 40, 183–87.

[12] See Peter R. Ackroyd, "A Judgment Narrative between Kings and Chronicles?: An Approach to Amos 7:9–17," in *Canon and Authority: Essays in Old Testament Religion and Theology* (ed. G. Coats and B. Long; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), 71–87 at 74–76; and Knauf, "Jeroboam ben Nimshi: The Biblical Evidence," *HeBAI* 6 (2017): 290–307 at 297–300.

3:4; 4:5–6.11–12; 6:4.6; 13:9),[13] and we find a similar distribution across the rest of the Hebrew Bible.[14] In my opinion, however, the strongest evidence is the use of the verb pair 2 Chronicles 34:15, which is based on 2 Kings 22:8. Whereas the 2 Kings verse has only *wayyō'mer*, the 2 Chronicles verse has *wayya'an...wayyō'mer*; this revision supports the identification of the latter as an example of post-exilic Hebrew.

Another example cited by Knauf is the use of the participle in the phrase *'attâ 'ōmēr* (7:16), which he calls "a clear case of [Late Biblical Hebrew],"[15] and although I agree that this phrase is likely evidence of the passage's late date, the case is not as clear as Knauf states. It is true, generally speaking, that as the aspectual character of the Hebrew verbal system broke down, the participle became the most common way to express present and future actions,[16] but not every participle used to express contemporaneity is a late feature. For example, the predicative participle in Amos 7:16 might well be related to its use in direct discourse; indeed, every other instance of *'attâ 'ōmēr* occurs in direct speech (Exod 2:14; 33:12; 1 Kgs 18:11. 14). Still, it is significant that this usage is an outlier in the book of Amos; almost every other instance of the active predicative participle in Amos follows the particle *hinnēh*.[17] From these considerations, it is reasonable to conclude that *'attâ 'ōmēr* in 7:16 represents a different and probably later author than the rest of the book of Amos, but we cannot be sure of how much later.

Two last examples worth noting are the name *yiśḥāq* (7:9.16) and the use of the verb *nṭp* in the Hiphil in 7:16, both of which are cited by Ackroyd as late features.[18] For the former, he cites the scarcity of references to Isaac outside of Genesis and formulaic statements of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The only other time Isaac is mentioned in the prophetic books is Jeremiah 33:26, which is also

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[13] See Samuel A. Meier, *Speaking of Speaking: Marking Direct Discourse in the Hebrew Bible* (VTSup 46; Leiden: Brill, 1992), 172–73.

[14] See the list compiled in *DCH*, 6:495.

[15] Knauf, "Jeroboam ben Nimshi," 299.

[16] See P. Kyle McCarter, "Hebrew," in *The Ancient Languages of Syria-Palestine and Arabia* (ed. R. Woodard; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 36–81 at 64; Jan Joosten, "The Participle as a Component of the Verbal System in Biblical Hebrew," *JAAL* 13 (2021): 65–74.

[17] Tania Notarius, "The Active Predicative Participle in Archaic and Classical Biblical Poetry: A Typological and Historical Investigation," *ANES* 47 (2010): 241–69 at 249–53.

[18] Ackroyd, "A Judgment Narrative between Kings and Chronicles?," 74–75. Amos 7:9 is regarded by most as even later than vv. 10–17 and written to join it to vv. 7–8 (Hadjiev, *The Composition and Redaction of the Book of Amos*, 78–79; see also Hans Walter Wolff, *Joel and Amos: A Commentary on the Books of the Prophets* [trans. W. Janzen et al.; Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977], 295, 301–302; Jörg Jeremias, *The Book of Amos: A Commentary* [OTL; trans. D. Stott; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998], 142; Ludwig Schmidt, "Die Amazja-Erzählung (Am 7,10–17) und der historische Amos," *ZAW* 119 (2007): 221–35 at 225).

one of only two instances of the name written with a *śin* rather than a *ṣade* (also Ps 105:9). Based on the development of the orthography of the underlying verb *ṣḥq*/*śḥq*, which shows a clear shift from *ṣade* to *śin*, it is likely that the spelling of the name *yiśḥāq* is a late feature.[19] As for *nṭp* in the Hiphil, the verb in this stem is not a distinctively late form, since in Micah 2:6.11 we find the same form used in a negative description of prophetic speech. What is most significant about this verb in Amos, however, is that it occurs in the same stem in Amos 9:13 as part of the book's coda (9:11–15), which almost every scholar recognizes as a late, probably post-exilic, addition. Like the other linguistic evidence discussed in this section, these two features by themselves offer no certitude about the date of Amos 7:10–17, but collectively they make a cogent case that the text is a post-exilic composition.

The same can be said of parallels between Amos 7:10–17 and parts of the Deuteronomistic History (2 Sam 7:8; 1 Kgs 13; 2 Kgs 17:23; 25:21). Specifically, 1 Kings 13 shares several literary elements with 7:10–17 (the setting at Bethel; the arrival of a prophet from Judah; the condemnation of Bethel's sanctuary, priesthood, and king; the attempt to cut off prophecy; the reference to "bread," et al.), and there are three instances of lexical overlap with Samuel and Kings: *yiśrā'ēl gālōh yigleh mē'al 'admātô* in 7:11 and 17 (// 2 Kgs 17:23; 25:21); *lqḥ...mē'aḥărê haṣṣō'n* in 7:15 (// 2 Sam 7:8). Some scholars see the parallels as evidence that Amos 7:10–17 is dependent on (or influenced by) these Deuteronomistic texts,[20] and depending on how one dates 2 Samuel 7:8 and 2 Kings 17:23 and 25:21 in the development of the Deuteronomistic History,[21] this direction of influence could

[19] See A. van Selms, "Isaac in Amos," in *Studies on the Books of Hosea and Amos: Papers Read at the 7th and 8th Meetings of Die O.T. Werkgemeenskap in Suid-Afrika* (Potchefstroom: Pro Rege, 1966), 157–65.

[20] For Amos 7:11, 17 // 2 Kgs 17:23; 25:21, see Werlitz, "Amos und sein Biograph," 248–49 n. 44; and Jakob Wöhrle, " 'No Future for the Proud Exultant Ones': The Exilic Book of the Four Prophets (Hos., Am., Mic., Zeph.) as a Concept Opposed to the Deuteronomistic History," *VT* 58 (2008): 608–27 at 615. For Amos 7:15 // 2 Sam 7:8, see Werlitz, "Amos und sein Biograph," 248; and Richard C. Steiner, *Stockmen from Tekoa, Sycomores from Sheba* (CBQMS 36; Washington, DC: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 2003), 92–94. For parallels to 1 Kgs 13, see Ackroyd, "A Judgment Narrative between Kings and Chronicles?," 78–80; Helmut Utzschneider "Die Amazjaerzählung (Am 7:10–17) zwischen Literatur und Historie," *BN* 41 (1988): 76–101 at 92–97 (though Utzschneider dates Amos 7:10–17 to the wake of the 722 destruction); Eidevall, *Amos*, 203–04.

[21] With its reference to Judah's exile, 2 Kgs 25:21 is certainly post-587 BCE, but 2 Kgs 17:23 likely dates before the exile. In contrast the exilic insertion in 17:17–20, vv. 21–23 offers a standard deuteronomistic explanation for the exile Israel, i.e., the sin of Jeroboam (see Steven L. McKenzie, *The Trouble with Kings: The Composition of the Book of Kings in the Deuteronomistic History* [VTSup 42; Leiden: Brill, 1991], 140–41).

indicate a post-exilic date for Amos 7:10–17. Other scholars, however, have argued for the opposite direction of influence.[22] My goal here is not to settle this difference of scholarly opinions but to show that the points of comparison between Amos 7:10–17 and the Deuteronomistic History can and have been interpreted as evidence of the former's post-exilic date. At the very least, the evidence shows that the possibility of a post-exilic date cannot be excluded and therefore warrants further consideration of how Amos 7:10–17 fits into a post-exilic milieu. That is what this article offers.

REDEFINING AMOS AS A SCRIBAL PROPHET

A radical shift in prophetic function took place during the Persian period. There is an emerging consensus among biblical scholars that for much of Israel's history prophecy and divination represented "two sides of the same coin," i.e., they operated in the same symbolic world and served the same purpose of revealing divine knowledge.[23] The key distinction in the mediation of this knowledge was not between prophecy and divination but between technical/inductive methods (extispicy, astrology, etc.) and intuitive/non-inductive methods (dreams, visions, etc.) of divination; prophecy was a subset of the latter.[24] This classification ceased to hold in the Second Temple Period, however, as prophecy became a more technical method

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[22] For Amos 7:11, 17 // 2 Kgs 17:23; 25:21, see also Utzschneider "Die Amazjaerzählung," 99–100; and Jonathan M. Robker, *The Jehu Revolution: A Royal Tradition of the Northern Kingdom and its Ramifications* (BZAW 435; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012), 183 n. 43. For Amos 7:15 // 2 Sam 7:8, see Hermann Schult, "Amos 7_{15a} und die Legitimation des Aussenseiters," in *Probleme biblischer Theologie. Gerhard von Rad zum 70. Geburtstag* (ed. H. Wolff; München: Kaiser, 1971), 462–78 at 476–78. For the connections to 1 Kgs 13, see Otto Eissfeldt, "Amos und Jona in volkstümlicher Überlieferung," in *Kleine Schriften,* IV (ed. R. Seeheim and F. Maass; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1969), 137–42; Christoph Levin, "Amos und Jerobeam I," *VT* 45 (1995): 307–317 at 311–13; Jürgen Werlitz, "Was hat der Gottesmann aus Juda mit dem Propheten Amos zu tun? Überlegungen zu 1 Kön 13 und den Beziehungen des Textes zu Am 7,10–17," in *Steht nicht geschrieben? Studien zur Bibel und ihrer Wirkungsgeschichte* (ed. J. Fruhwald-Konig et al.; Regensburg: Pustet, 2001), 109–23.

[23] Nissinen, "Prophecy and Omen," 341–51. Other studies comparing the prophecy and divination include: Lester L. Grabbe, *Priests, Prophets, Diviners, Sages: A Socio-Historical Study of Religious Specialists in Ancient Israel* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press, International, 1995), 150–51; Anne Marie Kitz, "Prophecy as Divination," *CBQ* 65 (2003): 22–42; Eva Cancik-Kirschbaum, "Prophetismus und Divination — Ein Blick auf die Keilschriftlichen Quellen," in *Propheten in Mari, Assyrien und Israel* (ed. M. Köckert and M. Nissinen; FRLANT 201; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003), 33–53; Esther Hamori, *Women's Divination in Biblical Literature: Prophecy, Necromancy, and Other Arts of Knowledge* (AYBRL; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), 19–35.

[24] See Cancik-Kirschbaum, "Prophetismus und Divination," 44–51;

of divination.[25] According to Michael H. Floyd, in the wake of the destruction of Jerusalem and the Babylonian Exile,

> scribal practitioners of prophecy could learn through textual study the patterns of divine-human interaction discerned by their mostly nonscribal predecessors. Informed by such study, their practice of prophecy took the form of determining whether the patterns discerned by their predecessors in the pre-exilic situation were now being replicated in the post-exilic situation.[26]

To be sure, such hermeneutics existed before the exile, as shown by comparative studies of prophetic texts and Neo-Assyrian divinatory texts,[27] but in the post-exilic period this divinatory approach increased and played an essential role in the production of prophetic books.[28] The turn to scribal exegesis in this and later periods meant that prophecy had become more a matter of (re)interpreting existing oracles than of generating new ones.[29]

Amos 7:10–17 should be read in light of this post-exilic shift to scribal prophecy. According to this interpretation, the purpose of the text was to redefine Amos's prophetic role – to bring it in line with the shift toward scribal divination that took place in the post-exilic period. The prophet in this period was no longer a seer of visions (*ḥōzeh*) but an interpreter of the divine word. The scribes who undertook this redefinition did so by interrupting a series of vision reports (7:1–8; 8:1–2; 9:1–4), which exemplified an earlier mode of prophecy, with a depiction of the prophet engaged in the mode of prophecy that was prevalent in the scribes' own context.[30] This new

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Martti Nissinen, "What is Prophecy?: An Ancient Near Eastern Perspective," in *Prophetic Divination: Essays in Ancient Near Eastern Prophecy* (BZAW 494; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2019 [orig. 2004]), 53–73 at 58–59; idem, *Ancient Prophecy: Near Eastern, Biblical, and Greek Perspectives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 14–19; Jonathan Stökl, *Prophecy in the Ancient Near East: A Philological and Sociological Comparison* (CHANE 56; Leiden: Brill, 2012), 7–11.

[25] See John Barton, *Oracles of God: Perceptions of Prophecy in Israel after the Exile* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1986); de Jong, "Biblical Prophecy," 39–70.

[26] Floyd, "The Production of Prophetic Books," 288–89.

[27] Seth L. Sanders, "Why Prophecy Became a Biblical Genre: First Isaiah as an Instance of Ancient Near Eastern Text-Building," *HeBAI* 6 (2017): 26–62; Cooley, "Divinatory Process in Judah," 26–46.

[28] See Nissinen, "Prophecy and Omen," 344–45; idem, "How Prophecy Became Literature," *SJOT* 19 (2005): 153–72 at 155–57; de Jong, "Biblical Prophecy," 55–56.

[29] Nissinen traces this scribal trajectory to the "rewritten Bible" of later centuries and to the Dead Sea Scrolls ("Prophecy and Omen," 344; see also idem, "Pesharim as Divination: Qumran Exegesis, Omen Interpretation and Literary Prophecy," in *Prophetic Divination*, 663–80).

[30] Virtually every scholar recognizes 7:10–17 as an insertion that interrupts the series of visions spread across Amos 7–9. The shifts in perspective

prophetic persona comes into focus when, first, we observe parallels between the scribal and interpretive character of 7:10–17 and Amos's interpretive role in the passage, and second, we compare Amos's portrayal in 7:10–17 and in the vision reports.

The scribal character of Amos 7:10–17 is first apparent in its opening verses, which take place outside of the frame of the narrative and refer to a past written report sent by Amaziah to king Jeroboam. Although the text does not specify what he sent, the verb *šālaḥ* often takes as its object a written document of some kind,[31] and it is likely that *wayyišlaḥ* in v. 10 refers to the dispatch of a written report.[32] By beginning the narrative with a reference to an earlier document, the authors of 7:10–17 establish the written word as a key theme of the story, and this theme is further underscored by the fact that Amaziah's report contains a quote of even earlier words prophesied by Amos. The quoted oracle is not attested elsewhere in the book of Amos, so we have no context for its occasion or delivery; it only exists in the book as part of a written report that serves as a pretext for the confrontation that ensues in vv. 12–17. Thus, Amos 7:10–17 begins with a text within a text, and the two texts together set the stage Amos's redefinition as a scribal prophet.[33]

(first-person to third-person) and genre (poetry to prose) set the passage apart from its surrounding material and reveal 7:10–17 to be a distinct narrative, if not an independent one. There are a range of opinions on the date(s) of the visions and the relationship of the fifth vision (9:1–4) to the first four (Hadjiev, *The Composition and Redaction of the Book of Amos*, 60–77), but these issues have little consequence for my argument. It only matters that the five were a collection by the time the author of 7:10–17 drew on them for that text, and nearly every reconstruction of the five visions agrees that they were a collection by the post-exilic period. There are also different opinions on the number of verses that comprise the fifth vision (ibid., 62–65). Again, even if 9:1–4 is a composite text, it was almost certainly a set piece by the time 7:10–17 was composed.

[31] For biblical and epigraphic examples, see J. Blake Couey, "Amos vii 10–17 and Royal Attitudes Toward Prophecy in the Ancient Near East," *VT* 58 (2008): 300–14 at 310 n. 23.

[32] Cf. Jer 29:28, which features *šālaḥ* with no direct object, but based on the quote from the *sēper* earlier in the chapter (vv. 1, 5), the verb's implied object is a written text (see also Ezra 4:14; Neh 6:5).

[33] Other potential evidence of the scribal character of 7:10–17 is the peculiar use of the citation formula *kōh 'āmar* in v. 11. The phrase should introduce speech by an authoritative representative of the original speaker, but needless to say, that is not the relationship between Amaziah and Amos (Meier, *Speaking of Speaking*, 281–82). This departure from the usual use of the phrase may be a tell indicating that vv. 10–11 are not what they seem. They are not an actual report from Amaziah to Jeroboam but the literary representation of such a report (cf. Jacqueline Vayntrub, *Beyond Orality: Biblical Poetry on its Own Terms* [The Ancient Word; London: Routledge, 2019], 9–10).

Significantly, vv. 10–11 is not the only instance of reported speech in 7:10–17. Two others are Amos's account of his commission by YHWH in v. 15 (he was told: "Go, prophesy to my people Israel") and Amos's account of Amaziah proscribing his prophetic activity in v. 16 (he was told: "Do not prophesy against Israel and do not preach against the house of Isaac"), which differs from what the priest said in v. 12. Like vv. 10–11, vv. 15 and 16 contain reports of speech that took place outside of the story and are otherwise unattested. Taken together, these three instances of reported speech — one by Amos, one by YHWH, and one by Amaziah — create varying degrees of knowledge for the characters within the text and the audience outside the text. We do not know if Amos knows about Amaziah's report to the king; vv. 10–11 contain background information given by the authors of 7:10–17 to the audience, not by Amaziah to Amos. On the other hand, no one but Amos was present for the divine commission in v. 15, and only Amos and Amaziah know if the quoted speech in v. 16 is accurate. These disparities of knowledge raise the issue of reliability of prophetic speech, and although this issue probably existed in every period of Israel and Judah's history, it was particularly resonant in post-exilic Yehud.[34] The post-exilic authors of 7:10–17 have narrativized the issue, thematizing the uncertainty involved in the transmission of prophetic words and highlighting the need for hermeneutics in prophetic discourse

The authors do more than give expression to these issues, however; they also offer a scribal response in the form of Amos's final oracle, which interprets and revises the prophetic speech reported in v. 11. Whereas that earlier speech belongs to an unspecified past context, Amos's oracle in v. 17 occurs within the narrative setting of 7:10–17, and most significantly, it recycles and reinterprets the past oracle for the present literary context. Specifically, instead of "Jeroboam will die (*yāmût*) by the sword (*baḥereb*) and Israel will go into exile (*gālōh yigleh*)" (v. 11), it is Amaziah's children who will fall "by the sword" (*baḥereb*) and Amaziah who "will die" (*tāmût*), when Israel "goes into exile" (*gālōh yigleh*)" (v. 17). Amos's reinterpretation of the oracle is a metaprophetic display, which instructs the external audience on the function and purpose of prophecy.[35] The authors of 7:10–17 depict Amos doing what for them in the post-exilic period had become the defining task of scribal prophecy, namely, taking an oracle from the past and generating new meaning by reinterpreting it for a new context. Within the text the oracle in v. 17 is directed at

[34] See Martti Nissinen, "The Dubious Image of Prophecy," in *Prophetic Divination: Essays in Ancient Near Eastern Prophecy* (BZAW 494; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2019; orig., 2006), 577–95; Radine, *Book of Amos*, 194–97.

[35] Cf. Georg Steins's description of Amos 7:10–17 as a "Schlüsseltext" and "einem kleinen Drama," which instructed its audience in the scope of Amos's prophetic mission (*Gericht und Vergebung: Re-Visionen zum Amosbuch* [SB 221; Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk GmbH, 2010], 85, 95). For further discussion of 7:10–17 as "a little drama," see Rainer Kessler, *Amos* (IEKAT; Stuttgart: Kolhammer, 2021), 221.

Amaziah, but Amos's reinterpretation is most meaningful to the overhearers outside the text; only this audience received the background information in vv. 10–11 and are in a position to compare it to the oracle in v. 17.

By contrast, Amos's depiction in the vision reports that surround 7:10–17 is remarkable for its absence of interpretation by the prophet. In these and other vision reports in the prophetic books, "God is seen asking the prophet what it is that they see, and then gives the interpretation to the prophet."[36] For example, Amos must be told the meaning of the plumb line and the basket of figs. Comparison of the five visions to 7:10–17 reveals an inverse relationship between the prophet's proximity to YHWH and his interpretive role. In the visions, Amos sees YHWH (9:1) and shares his divine company and outlook, as they set their sights together on various scenes, but he depends on YHWH to interpret the scenes. In 7:10–17, instead of adopting YHWH's subjectivity, Amos is the object of divine action and the recipient of a divine command, but his role as interpreter of YHWH's word has been expanded.

Another important aspect of Amos's interpretive role in 7:10–17 is the way it mirrors the work of the scribes who produced the text itself. These scribes were not just offering a new version of Amos in 7:10–17; they were also recycling and reinterpreting language from the vision reports in their depiction of the new version. These connections include: *bĕqereb ʿammî yiśrāʾēl* (≈ *bĕqereb bêt yiśrāʾēl*) in 7:8.10; *lōʾ-ʾôsîp ʿôd* (≈ *lōʾ-tôsîp ʿôd*) in 7:8.13; 8:2; *ʿammî yiśrāʾēl* in 7:8.15; 8:2; *melek* in 7:1.10; *ʾkl* in 7:2.4.12; *ḥereb* in 7:10.17; 9:1.4.[37] These shared words and phrases indicate that 7:10–17 was composed in light of the vision reports. The language from the visions was not just recycled, however; it was recontextualized. In particular, words associated with divine action were recast as human action by the prophet. For example, *ʿammî yiśrāʾēl* in 7:8 and 8:2 are the object of divine testing and punishment, but in 7:15 the *ʿammî yiśrāʾēl* are the object of Amos's prophesying. Similarly, the phrase verb *lōʾ-ysp ʿôd* refers in 7:8 and 8:2 to YHWH no longer pardoning but in 7:13 to Amos no longer prophesying. Lastly, the verb *ʾkl* in 7:2, 4 describes a mighty fire summoned by YHWH, but in 7:12 it is part of an idiom indicating Amos's employment as a prophet. In all these examples, words and images used in the visions to depict divine action have been revised in 7:10–17 to describe the prophet's actions. At the same time that the authors of 7:10–17 were redefining the prophet

[36] Jonathan Stökl, "Prophetic Hermeneutics in the Hebrew Bible and Mesopotamia," *HeBAI* 4 (2015): 267–92 at 289. See also Susan Niditch, *The Symbolic Vision in Biblical Tradition* (HSM 30; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1983), 21–41, 70–72.

[37] See Hadjiev, *The Composition and Redaction of the Book of Amos*, 80–81; Kessler, *Amos*, 228–29. This list does not include the parallels in 7:9 (*yiśḥāq, miqdāš, yārobʿām, ḥereb*; cf. vv. 10, 13, 16), which is probably an even later verse (see n. 18 above).

Amos as an interpreter of the divine word, they themselves were reinterpreting earlier parts of the Amos tradition. It was a kind of parallel process, in which the scribes depicted Amos performing the same task in which they were engaged.

Further evidence of the shift to scribal prophecy in 7:10–17 is the passage's break from the visionary mode of prophecy that Amos personifies in the vision reports before and after the narrative. The visionary Amos is apparent in the repeated use of the verb *r'h*, which occurs in the formulaic instruction of the first four visions ("This is what Lord YHWH showed me [*hir'anî*]…"), and twice more in YHWH's questions to the prophet in 7:8 and 8:2 ("What do you see [*rō'eh*], Amos?"). Finally, the last vision begins Amos's first-person declaration "I saw…" (*rā'îtî*). These seven instances of *r'h* make it impossible to miss that Amos's job is "to see," and it is also significant that two of the instances are the participle *rō'eh*, which elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible is a technical term for a seer.[38] Moreover, the emphasis on sight is not restricted to the prophet but is also a defining feature of YHWH, at least in the last vision. There he declares that even if the targets of his attack hide from his divine sight (*minneged 'ênay*), he will fix his eye on them (*śamtî 'ênî*) (9:3–4). Thus, the vision reports depict Amos and YHWH engaged in the same action; the prophet is a seer, who receives visions from YHWH, the God who sees.

Amos 7:10–17, by contrast, portrays Amos as the mediator of the divine word. This prophetic function finds expression in the passage in several different ways. It is most apparent in Amos's declaration to Amaziah in v. 16 — "Hear *dĕbar-YHWH*" — and in the divine speech formula that introduces his oracle of doom against Amaziah in v. 17 (*kōh-'āmar YHWH*…). Significantly, the latter formula echoes the *kōh-'āmar 'āmôs*… Amaziah uses in v. 11 to introduce Amos's oracle. The identical introductions create an analogy between the prophet and YHWH, similar to the analogy found in the vision reports between the seeing of the prophet and the eyesight of YHWH. Thus, in both the visions and the biographical narrative, YHWH and Amos perform similar actions, but the shared action is different in each. In the visions, they both see, but in 7:10–17, they both speak the divine word.[39]

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[38] See H. Fuhs, **ראה**, *TDOT*, 13:208–42 at 237–39.

[39] Moreover, the *dĕbar-YHWH* in v. 16 may be another sign of the 7:10–17's post-exilic composition. If, as William M. Schniedewind has argued, the meaning of the "word of God" shifted in the post-exilic period from a word received and proclaimed to one interpreted (*The Word of God in Transition: From Prophet to Exegete in the Second Temple Period* [JSOTSup 197; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995], 130–62), then it is significant that the "word" in v. 16 is Amos's reinterpretation of a past oracle, in contrast to occurrences of the divine word received and proclaimed elsewhere in the book (3:1; 4:1). Cf. also the view that the divine-prophetic word was part of the post-exilic elaboration of the Elijah-Elisha legends (see Steven L. McKenzie, *1 Kings 16–2 Kings 16* [IECOT; Stuttgart: Kolhammer, 2019],

This focus in 7:10–17 on the prophet as an interpreter of the divine word reveals an overlooked irony in Amaziah's address of Amos as a *ḥōzeh* in v. 12. This word has been interpreted in various ways, with some arguing that the term was an insult,[40] others that it was synonymous with *nābîʾ*,[41] and still others that it had a royal connotation,[42] especially in ancient Judah.[43] Most of these interpretations take for granted the historicity of v. 12 and ask what Amaziah meant by calling Amos a *ḥōzeh*. By asking a different question — namely, why did the post-exilic scribes who wrote 7:10–17 put this word in Amaziah's mouth? — we can recognize *ḥōzeh* as part of the larger metaprophetic discourse taking place in 7:10–17.[44] Some scholars have suggested that the term was occasioned by the placement of 7:10–17 in a series of vision reports.[45] I agree that *ḥōzeh* in 7:12 should be read against the backdrop of the visions but not as a straightforward description of Amos. Rather, it was an ironic designation,[46] whose purpose was to underscore the shift from a visionary mode of prophecy to a more word-centric mode.[47]

44–45; also Rudolf Smend, "Das Wort Jahwes an Elia: Erwägungen zur Komposition von 1 Reg. xvii–xix," *VT* 25 [1975]: 525–43).

[40] E.g., Simon Cohen, "Amos *Was* a Navi," *HUCA* 32 (1961): 175–78 at 177; James L. Crenshaw, *Prophetic Conflict: Its Effect Upon Israelite Religion* (BZAW 124; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1971), 67.

[41] James L. Mays, *Amos: A Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969), 136; Schmidt, "Amazja-Erzählung", 227; Eidevall, *Amos*, 208; Nicodème B. Kolani, *Le livre d'Amos: La place et la function des éléments supposes tardifs* (BZAW 510; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2019), 276.

[42] Ziony Zevit, "A Misunderstanding at Bethel: Amos VII 12–17," *VT* 25 (1975): 783–90 at 787; Pietro Bovati and Roland Maynet, *Le livre du prophète Amos* (Paris: Cerf, 1994), 299 n. 17.

[43] Robert R. Wilson, *Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 254–56.

[44] For the term "metaprophetic," see Ehud Ben Zvi, *Signs of Jonah: Reading and Rereading in Ancient Yehud* (JSOTSup 367; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003), 80–98 (esp. 85); and Carey Walsh, "The Metaprophetic God of Jonah," in *History, Memory, Hebrew Scriptures: A Festschrift for Ehud Ben Zvi* (ed. I. Wilson and D. Edelman; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2015), 259–72.

[45] S.R. Driver, *The Books of Joel and Amos with Introduction and Notes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1897), 206; Shalom Paul, *Amos: A Commentary on the Book of Amos* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 240.

[46] I am not alone in reading Amaziah's use of *ḥōzeh* as ironic, though the nature of the irony varies among interpreters (see Driver, *The Books of Joel and Amos*, 206; Wilhelm Rudolph, *Joel-Amos-Obadja-Jona* [KAT 13/2; Gütersloh: Mohn, 1971], 255; Duane A. Garrett, *Amos: A Handbook on the Hebrew Text* [Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2008], 220).

[47] Another aspect of the word's irony in 7:12 is that it may not have meant "visionary" to its post-exilic audience. In Chronicles, for example, where *ḥōzeh* occurs with disproportionate frequency, it denotes more of a historiographer than a seer (see Schniedewind, *The Word of God in Transition*, 40–44).

According to this reading, *ḥōzeh* is a set-up, which gives the authors of 7:10–17 an opportunity to reiterate Amos's redefined role as an interpreter of the divine word. The shift in prophetic function can be seen by comparing Amaziah's command to Amos after the vocative *ḥōzeh* (v. 12) with a similar command from YHWH in v. 15. In both verses Amos is commanded to "go (*lēk*) and prophesy (*tinnābē'/hinnābē'*)," but there is a key difference in what each command entails. For Amaziah, "going and prophesying" is connected to his perception of Amos as a *ḥōzeh*, but "going and prophesying" for Amos means proclaiming YHWH's word, as he does in v. 16. This comparison highlights Amos's role in 7:10–17 as mediator of the divine word, and it also shows the literary character of the passage. Here Amaziah is not a historical figure who mistook Amos for a *ḥōzeh* but a foil who embodies a misunderstanding the authors of 7:10–17 were seeking to dispel. Amos's reply was not a correction of Amaziah but of the post-exilic audience overhearing their conversation. If this audience, like Amaziah, still thought of the prophet as a *ḥōzeh*, now they know that he was an interpreter of the word of YHWH.

Thus, comparison of 7:10–17 to the surrounding vision reports sheds light on the overall scribal character of the former, including the persona of the prophet at the heart of the passage. For all their changes to the persona of Amos, however, the authors' depiction of him as a scribal prophet also contains important threads of continuity. Even as they marked a move away from prophetic vision and legitimized the new way of being a prophet in post-exilic Yehud, the authors of 7:10–17 did not abandon depictions of the earlier mode; the persona of Amos the visionary was not expunged. Rather, the redefinition should be seen as a way of rebooting Amos for a new context of prophecy.

A RURAL PROPHET FOR A RURAL AUDIENCE

What more can be said about the post-exilic overhearers who constituted the actual audience of Amos 7:10–17 rather than the addressees within the text? To answer this question I propose two levels of overhearing audiences, one internal and the other external. For both levels of audience, the text served the same purpose — to legitimize the post-exilic scribal prophecy depicted in the text. Internally, 7:10–17 was a metaprophetic text, written by scribes for other scribes and explaining to themselves their prophetic identity and their place within prophetic tradition. Like the Amos portrayed in the passage, these scribes were not visionaries (*ḥōzeh*) but mediators and interpreters of the divine word. Like Amos, they were neither *nābî'* nor *ben-nābî'* in the traditional sense but had nonetheless received a divine commission to prophesy in the same manner depicted in 7:10–17, i.e., through the interpretation of earlier prophecies. Indeed, in the context of the post-exilic scribal turn in prophecy, Amos's famous statement denying his status as a *nābî'* indicates

not only a separation from institutional prophecy, as many suppose,[48] but also a break from the traditional functions of a prophet.[49] For other scribal prophets in Yehud, the example of Amos in 7:10–17 authorized their mode of prophecy by attaching it to an established historical prophet.

Externally, for non-scribal audiences, the text served the same legitimizing function. Although we cannot reconstruct with certainty the dissemination of prophetic texts, it is reasonable to assume their public promulgation in some form or another (cf. Ezek 2:8–3:3; Neh 8).[50] For these public audiences, the depiction of Amos in 7:10–17 as a mediator and interpreter of the divine word embedded within the earlier vision reports established continuity between the two modes of prophecy. According to this depiction, scribal prophecy was not an aberration or departure from Judah's prophetic tradition but a legitimate development of that tradition. This apologetic aspect of 7:10–17 is most apparent in the misunderstanding between Amaziah and Amos. Based on the vision reports in chs. 7–9, post-exilic overhearers may well have, like Amaziah, mistaken Amos for a *ḥōzeh*. The exchange between Amaziah and Amos in 7:12–14 acknowledges the potential for confusion over prophetic identity and function in post-exilic Yehud, while at the same time clarifying (and legitimizing) the new interpretive mode of prophecy. Amos 7:10–17 made the case to public audiences that scribal prophecy was an integral part of the revered tradition associated with Amos.

This non-scribal audience may also offer insight into Amos's self-designation as a *bôqēr* and a *bôlēs šiqmîm* in 7:14. Scholars have long faced the challenge of reconciling the apparent rusticity of these occupations with the sophisticated poetry found in the book of Amos, and many suppose that they refer to the work of an agribusiness elite rather than subsistence farmer.[51] But even if we regard

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[48] Paul, *Amos*, 247; Eidevall, *Amos*, 210.

[49] Writing on the statement, Yair Hoffman speculates that "Amos's answer reflects, in fact, a very serious inner conflict and his ambiguous feelings regarding his own identity" ("Did Amos Regard Himself as a *Nābî'*," *VT* 27 [1977]: 209–12 at 212). I think Hoffman has rightly named the tension at the heart of 7:10–17, but I read it less as ambivalence than the result of the post-exilic shift in prophetic function.

[50] See Rainer Albertz, "Public Recitation of Prophetical Books?: The Case of the First Edition of Deutero-Isaiah (40:1–52:12*)," in *The Production of Prophecy: Constructing Prophecy and Prophets in Yehud* (ed. D. Edelman and E. Ben Zvi; London: Equinox, 2009), 96–110; Philip R. Davies, "The Dissemination of Written Texts," in *Writing the Bible: Scribes, Scribalism, and Script* (ed. T. Römer and P. Davies; Durham, England: Acumen, 2013), 35–46; Michael H. Floyd, "The Ritual of Reading and the Dissemination of Prophetic and Other Authoritative Texts in Second Temple Judaism," in *History, Memory, Hebrew Scriptures: A Festschrift for Ehud Ben Zvi* (ed. I. Wilson and D. Edelman; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2015), 335–46.

[51] According to this view, a *bôqēr* is no mere herdsman but a breeder of cattle; a *bôlēs šiqmîm* is not just a dresser of sycamores but a plantation owner (and a *nōqēd* is no hired hand but a chief shepherd); see Richard C. Steiner,

Amos as a stockbreeding and fruit tree magnate, this high-level career in business is still a far cry from the scribal training necessary to compose and write poetic prophecies. The issue is not resolved by regarding *bôqēr* and *bôlēs šiqmîm* as scribal fabrications because we are left with the question of why the authors of 7:10–17 would create a rustic persona for the book's eponymous prophet, especially when the scribes themselves were elite *literati* based in more urban contexts.[52] If the purpose of 7:10–17 was to legitimize the scribal prophecy, why did its authors depict Amos as a rural agriculturalist?

An answer to these questions may lie in the rural composition of 7:10–17's non-scribal audience. Archaeological studies have shown that post-exilic Yehud was marked by the attenuation of urban life and the growth of rural settlements. By portraying Amos as a herdsman from a small town outside of Jerusalem, the scribes created a prophetic persona that could bridge the gap between their elite urban context and the rural setting of their external audiences.

According to studies by Oded Lipschits and others,

> the most conspicuous phenomenon that took place in Judah following the destruction of Jerusalem was the sharp deterioration of urban life as contrasted with the stability of the rural settlements north of the capital, in the region of Benjamin, as well as in the area south of the city between Bethlehem and Beth-zur.[53]

Although Jerusalem during the Persian period maintained some religious importance (as the site of the to-be-rebuilt Temple) and some administrative significance (as attested by the seal-stamped jar handles found there, indicating the collection of agricultural commodities), its status was marginal compared to the new prominence of Mizpah to its north and Ramat Raḥel (biblical Beth-hakkerem) to its south, which served as the political, economic, and administrative

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Stockmen from Tekoa, Sycomores from Sheba (CBQMS 36; Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 2003), 67, 102, and 76, respectively.

[52] On the social location of Yehudite scribes, see Martti Nissinen, "How Prophecy Became Literature," *SJOT* 19 (2005): 153–72 at 157–59; Floyd, "The Production of Prophetic Books," 291. On social status and literacy more generally, see Ian M. Young, "Israelite Literacy: Interpreting the Evidence," *VT* 48 (1998): 239–53; and idem, "Israelite Literacy: Interpreting the Evidence, Part II," *VT* 48 (1998): 408–22.

[53] Oded Lipschits, "The Rural Economy of Judah during the Persian Period and the Settlement History of the District System," in *The Economy of Ancient Judah in Its Historical Context* (ed. M. Miller et al.; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2015), 237–64 at 237. See also Oded Lipschits and Oren Tal, "The Settlement Archaeology of the Province of Judah: A Case Study," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Fourth Century B.C.E.* (ed. O. Lipschits et al.; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 33–52; Yuval Gadot, "In the Valley of the King: Jerusalem's Rural Hinterland in the 8th–4th Centuries BCE," *Tel Aviv* 42 (2015): 3–26 at 19–21; Lester L. Grabbe, *A History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period, Volume 1. Yehud: A History of the Persian Province of Judah* (LSTS 47; London: T&T Clark, 2004), 197–208.

headquarters of the Persian empire. As its rural hinterland fell into the orbit of these cities, Jerusalem was cut off from the settlements that had once supported it. Amos's hometown of Tekoa was just such as town; its location on the other side of Ramat Raḥel put it in the Beth-hakkerem district.[54]

The demographic and economic landscape of post-exilic Yehud indicates that the non-scribal audience of Amos 7:10–17 likely consisted of rural people who made their living in agriculture. It was for this rural audience that Amos was depicted as a *bôqēr* and a *bôlēs šiqmîm*. The non-elite character of Amos's occupations was part of the authors' strategy to legitimize among Yehudites the scribal prophecy practiced by Amos in this passage. This argument presumes that the portrayal of a scribal prophet working among the elite *literati* in Jerusalem would have been less compelling than a small-town prophet with an agricultural background. The latter persona made the prophet a recognizable and sympathetic figure with whom the larger population of Yehud could identify.[55] Although Amos's self-designation in 7:14 is addressed to the priest Amaziah, its audience consisted of rural Yehudites overhearing their conversation. This audience found in the conversation a scribal prophet who, besides mediating and interpreting the divine word, was engaged in the kind of work that was prevalent in their communities. By establishing this affinity between Amos's prophetic persona and the book's rural audiences, the authors of 7:10–17 made their new mode of scribal prophecy accessible and familiar to those audiences.

Although it is impossible to prove that this effect was the aim of the authors, Amos 7:10–17 was not the only (post-)exilic biblical tradition that courted rural audiences. For example, Jakob Wöhrle and Rainer Albertz have both argued that the collection of the so-called "Book of the Four" (Hosea-Amos-Micah-Zephaniah) represents a similar attempt by exilic scribes to opt out of their elite scribal status and identify instead with the non-elite members of Judahite society.[56] Similarly, Yigal Levin, in his study of the book of Chronicles, has pointed out that even though the Chronicler was part of the

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[54] Lipschits, "The Rural Economy of Judah during the Persian Period," 243.

[55] On the value of such sympathy, see Diana Edelman's comment that "the Persian-era audience is to sympathize with the stance taken by the prophetic characters in the book" ("From Prophets to Prophetic Books: The Fixing of the Divine Word," in *The Production of Prophecy: Constructing Prophecy and Prophets in Yehud* [ed. D. Edelman and E. Ben Zvi; London: Equinox, 2009], 29–54 at 42).

[56] Albertz writes that the preservation of these prophetic traditions by exilic scribes indicates that "descendants of the Judean elite chose to save and interpret the heritage of the most radical prophets and identified themselves with the interests of ordinary Judean farmers" ("Deuteronomistic History and the Heritage of the Prophets," in *Congress Volume Helsinki 2010* [VTSup 148; ed M. Nissinen; Leiden: Brill, 2012], 343–67 at 364). See also Jakob Wöhrle, *Die frühen Sammlungen des Zwölfprophetenbuches. Entstehung und*

cultic elite within Jerusalem, the book's genealogies (chs. 1–9) depict Israel as the clan-based society that continued to exist among the agrarian populace outside of Yehud's administrative centers.[57] This depiction served a rhetorical purpose; it was the Chronicler's way of promoting a unified view of "all Israel," one that spoke to the agrarian communities presented in the genealogies rather than the cultic elite who wrote them. On the other hand, Louis Jonker argues that the genealogies were meant to legitimize the cultic elite in Jerusalem in the eyes of Chronicles' rural audience.[58] By featuring agrarian communities in the genealogies, the Chronicler was seeking to secure their loyalty and their continued contributions to the sacred economy in Jerusalem.

Amos 7:10–17 should likewise be seen as an attempt to bridge the gap between the elite/urban world of textual production in Yehud and the non-elite/rural world in which most of Yehud's population lived. Although it may seem counterintuitive that scribal prophets would legitimize their work by creating a rustic persona as their avatar, the move is not unlike the depiction of David as a shepherd boy who is appointed king by YHWH (1 Sam 16:11; also 16:19; 17:15; 2 Sam 7:8). As many commentators have shown, this depiction is at odds with other aspects of David's character in 1 Samuel and most likely reflects literary and theological aims rather than historical reality.[59] Why would the authors of 1 Samuel 16 recast David the warrior, nobleman, musician, and courtier as a humble shepherd? The answer has to do with the way this image legitimized David in the eyes of the authors' audience. Specifically, it connected him to the biblical motif of shepherd leaders (e.g., Joseph, Moses) and the larger ancient Near Eastern use of shepherd as a metaphor for king.[60] Even though David the king represented the highest political authority in Israel, the authors of 1 and 2 Samuel saw an advantage to ascribing to him rustic origins.

These depictions of David and Amos are hardly unique in this regard. As Hermann Schult has shown in his study of "the calling of the shepherd or farmer," they are part of a longstanding trope (up to the present) of elites claiming humble origins for themselves and thereby securing

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Komposition (BZAW 360; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2006), 280–83; idem, "'No Future for the Proud Exultant Ones,'" 608–27.

[57] Christoph Levin, "Who Was the Chronicler's Audience? A Hint from his Genealogies," *JBL* 122 (2003): 229–45.

[58] Louis Jonker, "Agrarian Economy through City-Elites' Eyes: Reflections of Late Persian Period Yehud Economy in the Genealogies of Chronicles," in *The Economy of Ancient Judah in Its Historical Context* (ed. M. Miller et al.; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2015), 77–101.

[59] For just one example, see Steven L. McKenzie, *King David: A Biography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 47–67.

[60] See Beate Pongratz-Leisten, *Religion and Ideology in Assyria* (SANER 6; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015), 210–17.

> die Sympathien der kleinen Leute. Er verkörpert ihre Wunschträume, und sie können ihn als einen der ihrigen betrachten und sich mit ihm identifizieren.[61]

This shared trope between David and Amos even includes a striking parallel in their presentation as shepherds, as both are said to be "taken from following the sheep" (*lqḥ…m'ḥr[y] hṣ'n*; Amos 7:15; 2 Sam 7:8). Admittedly, the analogy between the Amos persona and the shepherd David is not perfect, because the herdsman image in 7:10–17 does not connect the prophet to an enduring metaphor within ancient Israel. The two shepherd images are comparable, however, in that both are more rhetorical than historical. The images may have some basis in history, but their use in the books of Amos and Samuel represents appeals to audiences. In the case of Amos, the persona would have connected the prophet to the predominant demographic of post-exilic Yehud.

Although numerous scholars date Amos 7:10–17 to the post-exilic period, few consider how it would have been received by actual audiences at that time. Assuming that the text served a rhetorical purpose beyond the world of the scribal elites who produced it,[62] even if we can only speculate on the ways it was disseminated to external audiences,[63] we must take into account the fact that the population of post-exilic Yehud was by and large a rural one. In my view, it is reasonable to suppose that Yehudites living in rural towns and villages would have found Amos's rustic persona a compelling figure, and it is further possible that this effect was no accident but a deliberate feature of the text. The depiction of Amos as an agriculturalist was an appeal to the rural communities of Yehud and a legitimization of the scribes who wrote 7:10–17. It established scribal prophecy as a valid continuation of the Amos tradition but also made this new mode of prophecy accessible to rural Yehudites by showing that the scribal prophet Amos was not so different from them.[64]

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[61] See Schult, "Amos 7$_{15a}$ und die Legitimation des Aussenseiters," 472.

[62] See Ehud Ben Zvi, "What is New in Yehud? Some Considerations," in *Yahwism after the Exile: Perspectives on Israelite Religion in the Persian Era* (ed. R. Albertz and B. Becking; Assen: Royal Van Gorcum, 2003), 32–48 at 47–48.

[63] For possible scenarios, see n. 50 above.

[64] Ben Zvi writes, "The *literati* were ideologically centered on Jerusalem and its temple, but were still focused, as reality would have forced them, on Yehud (and in terms of memory, Judah) as a whole" ("Remembering the Prophets through the Reading and Rereading of a Collection of Prophetic Books in Yehud: Methodological Considerations and Explorations," in *Remembering and Forgetting in Early Second Temple Judah* [ed. E. Ben Zvi and C. Levin; FAT 85; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012], 17–44 at 41).

CONCLUSION

Amos 7:10–17 is a narrative that thematizes the very concept of prophecy.[65] By dramatizing the scribal turn that took place in prophecy during the Persian period, the text established scribal prophecy as a legitimate development of the Amos tradition and provided its audience with an interpretive key for reading other prophetic books. This audience was distinct from the addressees within the narrative. Indeed, the recognition of the metaprophetic and scribal character of 7:10–17 shifts our focus away from the significance of the dialogue for the characters who exchange it — i.e., what Amos's words mean for Amaziah and vice versa — to its meaning for external audiences who overheard their conversation. For these overhearers Amos 7:10–17 was an instructional text, whose purpose was to educate them about this new mode of scribal prophecy and convince them that it was not disconnected from earlier modes of prophecy or from the rural realities of post-exilic Yehud.[66]

These goals were achieved, first, by embedding the portrait of Amos the scribal prophet into a set of visions, which featured Amos in an older, more traditional mode of prophecy. The juxtaposition of the scribal prophet Amos of 7:10–17 and the visionary Amos of chs. 7–9 creates some tension within the text, but it also insists that the two personas are not discontinuous; there is still one Amos. In this regard, it is significant that the visions resume in ch. 8 after the prose narrative. There are different views on why 7:10–17 was inserted where it was,[67] but whatever the reason, the location affirms

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[65] Other metaprophetic texts include Mic 3:5–8; Isa 55:7–11; and the book of Jonah (see Ehud Ben Zvi, "The Prophetic Book: A Key Form of Prophetic Literature," in *The Changing Face of Form Criticism for the Twenty-First Century* [ed. M. Sweeney and E. Ben Zvi; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2003], 276–97 at 285; idem, *Signs of Jonah*, 85).

[66] For a comparative example of an instructional story about a prophet, see Blum's interpretation of the Deir 'Alla inscription. He reads it as a "weisheitlich-lehrhaften Text" and "eine weisheitlich geprägte Erzählung vom Wirken eines „geschichtlichen Sehers" ("Israels Prophetie im altorientalischen Kontext: Anmerkungen zu neueren religionsgeschichtlichen Thesen," in *"From Ebla to Stellenbosch": Syro-Palestinian Religions and the Hebrew Bible* [ed. I. Cornelius and L. Jonker; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2008], 81–115 at 92 and 96, respectively).

[67] Several scholars see the placement of 7:10–17 between the third and fourth visions as an attempt by editors to account for the shift from forbearance in the first three visions to destruction in the final two (H.G.M. Williamson, "The Prophet and the Plumb-Line: A Redaction-Critical Study of Amos 7," in *"The Place is Too Small for Us": The Israelite Prophets in Recent Scholarship* [ed. R. Gordon; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1995], 453–77 at 470–71; Kratz, "Die Worte des Amos von Tekoa," 58; Steins, *Gericht und Vergebung*, 84–85.) Hadjiev argues that the original location of the narrative was at the end of the visions and was only later transposed to its current place between the third and fourth visions (*The Composition and Redaction of the Book of Amos*, 81–82, 94).

the scribal prophet described in the narrative was not a replacement of the visionary prophet but a new addition to the ongoing Amos tradition. Along these same lines, it is also noteworthy that the book's superscription — mostly likely one of the latest additions to the book that summarizes the contents that follow[68] — combines *dābār* with the verb *ḥāzâ* and thus provides evidence against a sharp distinction between prophetic word and vision.

Secondly, Amos's depiction as a *bôqēr* and a *bôlēs šiqmîm* made the prophet a more familiar and sympathetic figure for rural audiences. Although the authors of 7:10–17 were elite *literati*, as were the scribal prophets whose method Amos exemplified in the passage, they were careful not to portray Amos as a member of this scribal elite. Instead the authors cast him as a member of the agricultural workforce that comprised most of the populace in Yehud. This characterization was more rhetorical than historical; it was a prophetic persona curated to make scribal prophecy relevant and legitimate within the rural milieu of post-exilic Yehud.

Was it successful? Although Zechariah 13:5 indicates that not everyone bought the fake rusticity of post-exilic prophets,[69] the image of Amos as a herdsman and dresser of sycamores has endured and even dominated the interpretation of the book of Amos. By this measure, the scribes who invented the persona were wildly successful in their rebranding of the prophet as something other than a member of the elite *literati*.

[68] See Ronald L. Troxel, *Prophetic Literature: From Oracles to Books* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 13–14).

[69] See Nissinen, "The Dubious Image of Prophecy," 587–91.