

THE HYMNIC ELEMENTS OF THE PROPHECY OF AMOS: A STUDY OF FORM-CRITICAL METHODOLOGY*

Thomas Edward McComiskey**

The methodology of form criticism has provided the Biblical scholar with one more tool to use in the study of the literary history of the OT books. Its most important contribution has been in its isolation of certain literary types and in its insistence on a careful delineation of the life settings of those types. Like most schools of Biblical criticism it has had its staunch supporters and its vehement detractors, but it continues to dominate the field of OT studies as it has for decades.

Conservative scholars have generally tended to use form criticism, if at all, in a very limited way, choosing those aspects of the methodology that do not conflict with the constructs of their critical presuppositions and rejecting those that do. We find few conservative scholars who allow form-critical approaches to bring them to the point where they see complex accretive levels in many OT books. In spite of the serious reservations that most conservatives have about some aspects of form-critical methodology, serious critiques of it from a conservative viewpoint have not kept pace with the vast amount of material being produced from a form-critical perspective.¹ But the methodology of form criticism has not escaped the searching questions of those who are not conservative. The observation of J. Muilenburg in his presidential address to the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature in 1968 is still applicable, if largely unheeded. In his address Muilenburg critiqued form-critical methodology in this way:

Form criticism by its very nature is bound to generalize because it is concerned with what is common to all the representatives of a genre, and therefore applies an external measure to the individual pericopes. It does not focus sufficient attention upon what is unique and unrepeatable, upon the particularity of the formulation. . . . Exclusive attention to the *Gattung* may actually obscure the thought and intention of the writer or speaker. . . . It is the creative synthesis of the particular formulation of the pericope with its content that makes it the distinctive composition that it is.²

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**Thomas McComiskey is professor of Old Testament and Semitic languages at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois.

¹For a recent critique of aspects of form criticism by a conservative see C. E. Armerding, *The Old Testament and Criticism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983) 43-66.

²J. Muilenburg, "Form Criticism and Beyond," *JBL* 88 (1969) 1-18.

Muilenburg went on to plead for a balancing of form-critical methodologies with "rhetorical criticism." While a few scholars have responded,³ most have not. The result is that many commentaries written from a form-critical perspective use the methodology uncritically.⁴ Such an uncritical approach has several profound implications. One of them is that it greatly complicates the task of the Biblical theologian. By "Biblical theology" we do not mean simply Biblically-based theology, although that may be appropriate as well. Rather, we mean that system of theology that determines by exegetical means the contribution of each Biblical writer to a given theological theme. The preliminary application of form-critical methodology to a prophetic book, for example, requires the expenditure of much energy on the part of the Biblical theologian in determining the authentic saying of the prophet. J. L. Mays in his work on Micah concludes: "The sayings which can be attributed to Micah with confidence are collected in chs. 1—3."⁵ That is not a sufficient reason for rejecting form criticism out of hand, but it does warrant our giving it critical attention, particularly when we observe the great disagreement that exists among form-critical scholars with regard to the conclusions to which the methodology has led them.

The hymnic elements of the prophecy of Amos provide us with an unusually productive context in which to conduct this examination of form criticism. The reason for this is that there is almost universal agreement among critical scholars as to the criteria by which the historical provenance of the doxologies may be determined. Another reason for the appropriateness of the hymnic elements for our study is that conservatives are forced to do their form-critical homework in interpreting them. When we have identified these pericopes (4:13; 5:8—9; 9:5—6) as "hymns" or "hymn-like" we have identified the genre. If we find their origin in some form of the Israelite cultus we have identified the *Sitz im Leben*.⁶ Even if one concludes that they are from the pen of Amos one has determined that the "setting" is a literary one.

This study will examine the ways in which form criticism approaches the doxologies in the prophecy of Amos and will use these exalted hymns of praise as the catalyst for a critique of the form-critical method.

I. THE INTRUSIVE NATURE OF THE DOXOLOGIES

The apparently intrusive nature of the hymnic elements in Amos is an important argument for critics of the literary and form-critical schools.⁷ If the

³See for example J. R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah: A Study in Ancient Hebrew Rhetoric* (Missoula: Scholars, 1975); W. L. Holladay, *The Architecture of Jeremiah 1—20* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University, 1976).

⁴Some form-critical scholars balance the methodology with other approaches. Notable among these is H. W. Wolff, whose commentaries on OT books combine form criticism with careful attention to the stylistic peculiarity of the individual writers.

⁵J. L. Mays, *Micah: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976) 21.

⁶Note the conclusion of J. A. Motyer with regard to the questions of the literary type and setting of the doxologies: "The similarity of style shown by these three passages and their possible dissimilarity from the style of Amos are best explained by assuming that he was quoting here from some hymnic source." *The Day of the Lion* (London: Inter-Varsity, 1974) 20.

⁷Note the following comments: "Moreover verses 8 and 9 actually *interrupt* the flow of the exhortation

hymns fit awkwardly into the structure of the book and have a tenuous relationship with the surrounding context, the question of the possibility of intrusion arises and must be considered.

Of the three doxologies only the second can be said to be clearly structurally intrusive. The first (4:13) occurs at the end of a logical section and forms an apt conclusion to the threat of judgment in the preceding verse. That verse sets forth the ominous warning: "Prepare to meet your God, O Israel!" The doxology that follows is theophanic in nature. It depicts Yahweh as stepping into time and treading on the heights of the earth. This is similar to a theophanic depiction in Mic 1:3-7. Both theophanies picture Yahweh as striding across the heights of the earth, and both use the same terminology for that depiction.⁸ It may be affirmed, then, that the content and language of the theophanic depiction in the first hymn was current during the eighth century, when both Micah and Amos prophesied. Conceptually and theologically it is not anomalous to the period in which Amos lived. Indeed, similar types of theophanic depictions may be found much earlier (Judg 5:4-5; 2 Sam 22:8-16).⁹

The theophany in Micah presages divine judgment as Yahweh steps into time and history to effect his will. The theophanic depiction in the doxology of Amos 4:13 must be said to have the same function since it immediately follows the announcement that an encounter between Yahweh and the people is imminent. The theme of the hymn is exactly consonant with the theme of the immediately preceding context and is thus in conceptual agreement with it.

An important argument for the intrusive nature of the first doxology is the apparent corruption of the text just preceding it. The language seems clumsy, and its clausal structure appears to be broken. This is understood to be an indication of later interference with the text.¹⁰ The desultory nature of v 12

contained in verses 6 and 7, and continued in verses 10 and 11" (R. S. Cripps, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Amos* [London: SPCK, 1929] 184). "Amos 4:13; 5:8f; 9:5f all stand distinct from their immediate context in style and subject. . . . The earliest tradents of Amos-material may have inserted the hymnic descriptions of Yahweh's supernatural might on which earth depends at the climax of Amos' oracles which seemed to them to involve a coming theophany" (J. L. Mays, *Amos: A Commentary* [London: SCM, 1969] 83-84). "The second doxology does not seem to fit its context at all, interrupting either 5:7,10 or more probably 5:4-7; 14-15; and together with 5:13, setting off a passage containing authentic words of Amos (5:1-12)" (J. L. Crenshaw, *Hymnic Affirmations of Divine Justice* [Missoula: Scholars, 1975] 8). "The real difficulty is the second doxology, chap. v.8,9 which does break the connection, in a sudden and violent way. Remove it, and the argument is consistent. We cannot read chap. v. without feeling that, whether Amos wrote these verses or not, they did not originally stand where they stand at present" (G. A. Smith, *The Book of the Twelve Prophets* [New York: George H. Doran, n.d.], 1. 204).

⁸The similar terminology is in the words *wēdōrēk 'al bāmōtē 'āreš* in Amos 4:13 and *wēdārak 'al bāmōtē 'āreš* in Mic 1:3.

⁹Mays, *Micah* 42, says concerning the theophanic depiction of Mic 1:3: "This two-element description is a literary type which appears in hymnic (Judg. 5.4f.; Ps. 18.8-16=II Sam. 22.8-16; Pss. 68.8-9; 77.17-20; 144.5f.) and prophetic materials (Nahum 1.2-6; Hab. 3.3-15; Amos 1.2)."

¹⁰W. R. Harper notes "that this later editor here as everywhere, ignored, consciously or unconsciously, the poetic form of the production which he thus modifies. We may well understand that in a multitude of cases the closing words of earlier sermons, having lost in later times the direct and specific reference which they were intended to convey, have given place to utterances presenting more modern thought

may be observed in its failure to state what the threatened punishment is and in its apparently clumsy repetition of the word *'ēšeh* ("I will do"). In announcing the judgment it says, "Therefore thus I will do to you, O Israel; because I will do this to you. . . ." The failure to cite the nature of the punishment seems out of keeping with Amos' careful attention to that aspect of prophetic *kērygma* elsewhere in the prophecy.¹¹ Either this statement is a literary device calculated by the author to create an aura of uncertainty by purposefully omitting a reference to the judgment, or it is textually corrupt. The former possibility has much to commend it. Indeed, we can find the same device in the prophecy of Amos in the oracles against Judah, Israel and the surrounding nations. In that section there is a recurring suffix for which there is no apparent referent. The phrase, which occurs in 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 13; 2:1, 4, 6 is *lō 'āšībennū*¹² ("I will not revoke it"). Because this verb occurs eight times in these oracles in precisely the same fashion, the lack of a clear referent cannot easily be attributed to a corrupt text. It must be understood as an integral element of the oracles against the nations.

Various suggestions have been made as to what the referent may be,¹³ but it is difficult to construe it as anything other than the threat of divine punishment that God had determined and that he would not withdraw.¹⁴ Since it is for "transgressions" it must refer to punishment. But the punishment is not cited. The lack of a clear identification of the punishment would have created a dread uncertainty in the minds of Amos' hearers and would have made the

and form" (*Amos and Hosea* [ICC; Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1936] 102). "Diese Mahnung sich zu rüsten seinem Gotte entgegenzutreten, ist auffallend, weil sie 1) den Zusammenhang unterbricht, 2) durch *z't* auf ein inhaltlich noch gar nicht bestimmtes *kh* hinweist, 3) keinen klar erkennbaren Sinn gibt, da weder an Verteidigung noch Rechtfertigung zu denken ist, weil *kh* und *z't* sich nur auf die aus dauernder Unbussfertigkeit result, erende Vernichtung beziehen kann" (W. Nowack, *Die Kleinen Propheten* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1903] 146). "The cumbersome transition nevertheless reveals that the whole was not a single composition" (J. D. W. Watts, *Vision and Prophecy in Amos* [Leiden: Brill, 1958] 52). "The two introductory words *ky hnh* ("For [it is] so!") must be set aside as a secondary insertion into the old hymnic text" (H. W. Wolff, *Joel and Amos* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977] 216).

¹¹See for example 1:5, 8, 10, 14; 2:2, 5; 3:11, 15; 4:3 *et al.*

¹²For a discussion of the various interpretations of the suffix see Wolff, *Joel and Amos* 128. The same arguments are cited in J. Barton, *Amos's Oracles against the Nations: A Study of Amos 1.3–2.5* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1980) 18–19.

¹³The suggestion that the suffix refers to the turning back of the Assyrians (allowed by Cripps, *Amos* 119, and E. Hammershaimb, *The Book of Amos: A Commentary* [Oxford: Blackwell, 1970] 25) is difficult because Assyria is not mentioned in the context and is never cited by Amos as an instrument of God's anger. But more difficult is the fact that Assyria did not effect the punishment ascribed to Judah by Amos 2:5. The ultimacy of the language of that verse and its consonance with 2 Kgs 25:9 fit better with the Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem under Nebuchadnezzar. Wolff observes: "Apart from 1:15, exile is otherwise nowhere else threatened in these oracles" (*Joel and Amos* 128). Wolff, however, attributes the statement to the Deuteronomist (*ibid.*, p. 164).

¹⁴The fact that the suffix is masculine rather than feminine does not militate against the conclusion that it refers to the threatened punishment. While it is true that we would expect the feminine in cases where the referent is not presented on concrete terminology, the masculine may also be used in this way (GKC 135o). And Amos' use of gender is not always precise; see his application of a masculine plural suffix to the women against whom he spoke in 4:1 (*'ādōnehem*).

statement the more powerful and awesome in its implications. E. B. Pusey asks: "What was this which God would not turn back? Amos does not express it. Silence is often more emphatic than words."¹⁵

Whatever the referents suggested for the suffix¹⁶ the fact remains that one is not cited. If the incredulous suggestion is made that a later hand systematically erased the pronouncements of doom throughout this section several problems arise. Where would the statement of doom have been placed in the numerical formulas? These statements allow no room for an additional element. If it is suggested that a section of the text before v 3 has been lost in transmission then all objectivity has fled, for the assertion is completely hypothetical. In short, there is little evidence that brings the authenticity of this formula, as it is used in the undisputed oracles, into serious question.¹⁷ This is strong evidence for the possibility that the purposeful omission of the nature of an impending judgment was a characteristic of the style of Amos' prophetic oracles.

A similar motif is found in the oracle against Israel in 2:6-16. The authenticity of this section is universally acknowledged. In this oracle Amos described the sins of the rebellious society in the northern kingdom (2:6-8). He reminded them of God's gracious acts on their behalf (vv 9-11). After he described their rebellion in one short verse (v 12) Amos depicted the Lord as pronouncing his judgment upon them. But instead of a specific reference to the exile, the prophet used a series of metaphorical statements that describe an impending calamity but that tantalizingly avoid a specific statement telling what the calamity will be. He said they would be pressed down like a cart (v 13), the strong would become weak (v 14) and the men of war would die (v 15). Then he concluded by stating that "the mighty shall flee away naked in that day" (v 16). Amos held out the prospect of an awful calamity, but we are not told what the calamity was to be. Yet Amos could refer to that time of uncertainty as "in that day." It was a specific time, but one can hardly speak of a specific punishment. The vagueness of the description intensifies the threat because of the wonder, uncertainty and dreadful insecurity it engenders. It is certain and yet undefined, and therein lies its awful force.

Since the apparently purposeful omission of a stated judgment may be found in undisputed portions of Amos, we may wonder if form-critical methodology is as balanced as it might be in its conclusions relative to the context preceding

¹⁵E. B. Pusey, *The Minor Prophets* (London: Nisbet, 1906), 2. 58.

¹⁶It is unlikely that *qôl* ("voice") in v 2 is the referent of the suffix on *'ăšîbennû* for a number of reasons. First, it is removed from *'ăšîbennû* by a considerable distance in the structure of vv 2-3. Second, *kôh 'ămar YHWH* ("thus says Yahweh") is a formula that introduces a new logical unit. A linguistic or conceptual connection with the preceding context is thus questionable. Third, the physical impossibility of recalling one's voice renders the connection doubtful. It is not an idiom that may be found in the OT. Fourth, when the voice of God heralds divine judgment—as it does for example in Jer 25:30-31—the voice of God is always distinct from the punishment itself. Fifth, since that which is not revoked (*lô 'ăšîbennû*) is for transgressions, the suffix (*-nû*) refers most appropriately to punishment for those transgressions rather than to the voice that heralds them.

¹⁷The disputed oracles are 1:9-10; 1:11-12; 2:4-5. There is unanimous agreement that the remaining oracles reflect the message of Amos.

the first hymn. If Amos purposefully omitted a reference to a specific judgment in two passages generally attributed to him, the possibility that the same motif was used in 4:12 deserves more serious consideration than it has been given. The omission of such a statement would explain the fact that the two verbs *'ešeh* ("I will do") occur in such close proximity and appear to sustain an awkward relationship to each other.

The second hymnic element (5:8–9) seems to interrupt the flow of thought in the context. It is preceded and followed by negative characterizations of the people of Amos' day. If the hymn is removed from its present position, the remaining contexts blend together into one extended condemnation of the ungodly society in which Amos lived.

It may be argued that the hymn is not structurally or syntactically intrusive because of the change in the grammatical modes in which the people were addressed or characterized in the sections preceding and following the hymn. In the preceding verses (6–7)¹⁸ the structure is that of second-person plural imperatives followed by a plural participle and a third-person plural perfect. In the context that follows the hymn, the structure is comprised of third-person plural verbs in v 10 with the subsequent pronouncement of judgment in v 11 in the second-person plural. Since the statement preceding the second doxology begins with a direct address to the people and the statement following it consists mainly of a depiction of them, it may appear that we have a new pericope beginning at v 10. Understood in this way the hymn would thus form an apt conclusion to the preceding context and would not be structurally intrusive.

There are several problems associated with this suggestion, however, chief of which is the fact that this complex use of grammatical persons may be observed elsewhere in the book within logical units. For example, in the oracle against Israel in 2:6–11 there is a similar pattern observable in the verbs that characterize or address the people. This pattern involves four distinct grammatical forms. The introductory formula is followed by an infinitive construed with a third-person suffix. This is followed by a plural participle. The rest of the oracle, except for one infinitive, is comprised of two series of verbs, one in the third-person plural (vv 7–9) followed by a series in the second-person plural (vv 10–11). Since the oracle is clearly defined by its content as well as the "says the Lord" that begins and ends the oracle, we can be confident that the section is a unit. Thus the change following the hymn at 5:8–9 is not necessarily an indication of the beginning of a new pericope. We may also note that the preceding context ends with a verb in the third-person perfect, and the context that follows the doxology begins with similarly inflected verbs. There is thus a sense in which the hymn interrupts the context conceptually and structurally.

The apparent intrusiveness of a given pericope must be taken into account when the literary structure of a book is being considered. The interpreter must make a judgment as to whether an apparently intrusive element is the result of the author's style, an early editor's hand, or an accretion by a later redactor.

¹⁸Watts disagrees with this division. He includes vv 6–7 in the doxology. This rests in part on the rendering of the translation of v 7 in the LXX, which has a singular subject, and on the presence of imperatives in v 6, which Watts affirms are elements found in ancient Israelite hymnology (*Vision* 73).

Much depends on the presuppositions of the interpreter. But all too often the possibility that structural peculiarities are integral to the author's style is not given the consideration it deserves. The motif of intrusion is often used uncritically. Any assessment of the shaping of the book of Amos must involve a consideration of the writer's style if it is to be a balanced assessment.

An examination of the prophecy of Amos reveals another pericope that is clearly structurally intrusive. This is the description of the ten men who die in a house while attempting to hide from the divine wrath (6:9-10). A reading of vv 8, 11 will demonstrate how closely these two verses that surround the pericope are related. Verse 8b says, "I abhor the pride of Jacob and hate his strongholds, and I will deliver up the city and all that is in it." Verse 11 states: "For, behold, the Lord commands, and the great house shall be smitten into fragments and the little house into bits."

It is apparent that the destruction of the city is the theme of both verses. Verse 11 begins with *ki* ("for") and must find its referent in v 8, for there is nothing about the destruction of houses or cities in vv 9-10, which verses we suggest are intrusive. These verses state: "And if ten men remain in one house, they shall die. And when a man's kinsman, he who burns him, shall take him up to bring the bones out of the house, and shall say to him who is in the innermost part of the house, 'Is there still anyone with you?' he shall say 'No'; and he shall say, 'Hush! we must not mention the name of the Lord!'" The fact that these verses are written in prose, not in the poetic language of the surrounding context, also supports their intrusive nature. Thus we may conclude that this section is a literary intrusion because it interrupts the flow of the section. It occurs before *ki*, which logically refers to the preceding context, and it is in prose while its surrounding context is poetic. If vv 9-10 were written by Amos, and if the section has not been altered in the history of the transmission of the book, we may affirm that Amos did not find the "intrusion" an objectionable literary type.

The question of Amos' authorship of vv 9-10 is crucial. One may argue that just as the intrusive nature of the second doxology supports a late date for it, so one should ascribe the pericope of 6:9-10 to a later writer on the same grounds. Yet there is surprising agreement among modern commentators of all stripes that the section is to be attributed to Amos. To be sure, some have denied its authenticity,¹⁹ but the style, atmosphere and linguistic devices in these verses give strong support to the likelihood of their having been written by Amos. We may note several things in this regard. First, there is the air of awful finality in this verse, so typical of Amos' style. Second, we find in this passage the peculiar use of the unreferred suffix that we discussed earlier and that we found to be a characteristic of Amos' style. Just as the suffix on *'ăšî-bennû* has no stated referent, so the suffixes of the second major clause of v 10 have no stated referent. The first two clauses read literally: "And it will be that

¹⁹Harper observes: "These verses are a later insertion . . . made in order to illustrate the last phrase of verse 8. This is evident because of (1) the marked interruption of the continuity of thought between verse 8 and verse 11; (2) the utterly strange and incongruous conception thus introduced; (3) the impossibility of arranging the material of these verses (viz. 9.10) in any poetical form, much less the form which characterizes the remainder of the piece" (*Amos and Hosea* 151).

if ten men are left in a house and they die, and when his kinsman lifts him up, that is the one who burns him, to carry the bones out of the house. . . ." It is readily apparent that the grammatical inflections move from ten men who died to one of them whose relative comes to dispose of the body. But this man who died is not cited in the text; we must assume his existence. In short, the second clause contains suffixes that have no stated referent.

It is difficult to attribute this phenomenon to a later redactor or a school of disciples.²⁰ If we should attribute this "intrusion" to Amos' disciples we are forced to posit a group of people who were not only loyal to Amos' ideals but who also slavishly copied his style to the extent that they, like him, omitted suffixal referents. Such a conclusion is forced and completely without historical evidence. If they copied Amos' style so closely one wonders how their contributions to the literary development of the book may be identified, for it is divergences of style that betray the presence of the contributions of this school to the literary growth and development of the book. Also, the verse is characterized by the quick succession of various types of dependent clauses so typical of Amos' style. We may observe this phenomenon in the oracles of chaps. 1 and 2 as well as in 3:9-11; 5:14-15; 6:1-7; 8:4-6.²¹ Furthermore, the broken nature of the section reminds us of 3:12, where the style is clipped and nonessential words are omitted. If we read the last line of 3:12 literally we may observe this. It describes those who will be rescued as "those who dwell in Samaria with the corner of a couch and in Damascus a bed." We have observed that a reference to the corpse that was to be burned was omitted in 6:9-10. This is strikingly similar to the style of 3:12.²² Moreover, the superstitious Yahwism apparent in the prohibition against speaking the name of Yahweh lest he bring further calamity is hardly consonant with the religion of exilic and postexilic times. It fits best with the religious syncretism of the eighth century. Thus caution should be exercised in giving it an historical provenance beyond the time span from Amos to the exile. Amos made several references to the popular Yahwism of his day. It apparently involved such Yahwistic elements as belief in the "day of the Lord" (5:18), affirmation of Yahweh's presence with his people (v 14), and the observation of Levitical requirements (vv 21-23). At least a formal sort of Yahwism was observed in the time of Amos. But at the same time the people could "swear by Ashimah of Samaria, and say, 'As thy god lives, O Dan,' and, 'As the way of Beersheba lives'" (8:14). In the statement of the man in Amos' picture who cringes among the corpses in the house we find a Yahweh who acts not on the basis of one's relationship to him but on the basis of the superstitious

²⁰Wolff posits a "school of Amos" (*Joel and Amos* 108-111) that promulgated the original sayings of the prophet. He says of this school that "its own divergent language can be recognized. In any given instance it is often difficult to distinguish between the *ipsisima verba* of the prophet and the new formulations and supplementations of the disciples" (*Joel and Amos* 109). Wolff does not attribute the phenomenon of the unREFERRED suffixes in 6:9-10 to this school.

²¹Wolff observes this phenomenon in the latter two passages but attributes the style to the "school of Amos" (*ibid.*, p. 281).

²²The verse is attributed to Amos by Wolff, *ibid.*, p. 197; Mays, *Amos* 66; Harper, *Amos and Hosea* 81.

pronouncement of his name. This is not the Yahweh of Moses but the Yahweh of the pagan mind—a Yahweh who is little more than the pagan gods, whose activities were determined by what was done to anger or placate them. Such was the religion of Amos' day. Finally, it is extremely difficult to explain why a redactor in exilic or postexilic times would write these words.

The fact that this section appears to depict a plague rather than a siege of war does not provide sufficient reason for concluding that it is out of place in this context, for plague is often an accompaniment of war.

If we are correct in our conclusion that the stylistic evidence lends strong support to the possibility that the prophet Amos penned the words of 6:9–10, certain observations may be drawn about the literary type that we have designated the "intrusion." Whether it is a device used purposefully for its dramatic effect, or whether it is the result of the writer's spontaneity of thought, is impossible to determine. We may observe, however, that the device as it is used in 6:9–10 functions as an explicative element—that is, it is a vivid illustration of the previous statement. Its interruptive nature creates an aura of urgency. It is as though the writer was so caught up in the importance of what he was saying that he could not wait to underscore his urgent message with an illustration, even at the cost of interrupting the unity of the section.

This seems to be the function of the hymnic elements as well. We have observed that the first hymn begins with the words *ki hinnēh* ("for, behold"). It is clearly explicative in function. And each doxology can be shown to illustrate poetically and theologically some aspect of the prophetic word in the preceding context.

The third doxology, like the first, is not conceptually or structurally intrusive and forms an appropriate conclusion to the preceding oracle.

II. THE SOPHISTICATED THEOLOGY OF THE DOXOLOGIES

In the process of form-critical evaluation of a pericope it is not enough that it appear intrusive. It must give some evidence of lateness as well before it is assigned to a period beyond that of the author.²³ In the case of the doxologies this is to be found in the concept of Yahweh as Creator. This concept is found only in the first doxology, where it depicts Yahweh as "he who forms the mountains and creates the wind" (4:13). This is the only occurrence of *bārā* ("create") in the hymns in Amos. J. L. Crenshaw states the matter in these words: "It is said that Yahweh was not thought of as Creator of the cosmos until the time of Second Isaiah, who emphasizes the fact in a context of new creation."²⁴ He also says, "The designation of Yahweh as Creator (*bhōrē*) of the universe is the bone of contention, especially significant since the Yahwistic creation account lacks a cosmogony."²⁵

²³G. A. Smith says on this: "It is only where a verse, besides interrupting the argument, seems to reflect a historical situation later than the prophet's day, that we can be sure it is not his own" (*Twelve Prophets* 142).

²⁴Crenshaw, *Hymnic* 11.

²⁵*Ibid.*

This contention is based on a supposition the implications of which have been given little attention by critical scholars of all schools. That supposition is that a Yahweh cosmogony did not exist early in Israelite history. Since the early "J" documents lack a cosmogony there is a reluctance to posit the crystallization of such a cosmogony until the period of the exile and Second Isaiah's masterful expression of Israelite monotheism. The implications of this conclusion are enormous. Such a conception of ancient Hebrew religious thought places the Hebrews millennia behind their pagan neighbors and, at least in the matter of cosmogony, places in serious question the widely-held belief that the Hebrews borrowed many of their ideas about God from the cultures with which they had commerce. Are we to believe that Yahweh's role as Creator came into Hebrew religion only with an alleged Second Isaiah? This does not seem to be his understanding, for he asks his fellow countrymen, "Have you not known? . . . The Lord is the Creator of the ends of the earth" (40:28). He assumes that knowledge on their part.

The idea that Yahweh is the Creator of the universe is consonant with Amos' theology, although one does not find a concrete expression of that concept in the prophecy. This consonance may be seen in such passages as 4:6, where Yahweh sends famine, and 4:7, where he withholds the rain. These statements of the divine activity, while they do not prove that Amos attributed to Yahweh creative sovereignty over the universe, certainly complement that idea.

It is clear that Yahweh was more than simply a national God to Amos, for the prophet affirmed that Yahweh's presence pervades the universe. He said that if the people went to Sheol they would find Yahweh there, and if they climbed to the heavens Yahweh would bring them down (9:2). Such language, if not proof that Amos believed that Yahweh created all things, is consonant with such a belief.

Most important, however, is the contention that Yahweh is not called "Creator" until the time of Second Isaiah. This is the crux of the matter. The argument of form criticism in this regard is linguistic as well as theological. If we do not find Yahweh designated "Creator" until the late exilic or early post-exilic periods it is likely that the concept developed late in Israelite history. Thus the hymns of Amos must be placed late because they reflect that theological concept.

Two verses that must be examined in this regard are Isa 37:16; Jer 27:5. Both verses attribute to Yahweh the role of fashioner of the universe. True, the word *'āśā* is used in these verses, not *bārā'*, but they do affirm that Yahweh "made" (*'āśā*) the earth (Jer 27:5) and the heavens (Isa 37:16). Neither of these verses has escaped critical scrutiny.²⁶ Indeed, in a recent commentary on Isaiah 1—39 R. E. Clements has concluded that Isa 37:16 represents a Deuteronomic pericope in an extensive "Josianic redaction."²⁷ But in recent years the prose narratives of Jeremiah have come under increasingly more stylistic and lin-

²⁶B. Duhm attributed the invocation of Hezekiah's prayer (Isa 37:16) to a narrator; *Das Buch Jesaja* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1922) 268. R. E. Clements sees in it "a stamp and character which are very markedly Deuteronomic" (*Isaiah 1—39* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980] 284).

²⁷Clements, *Isaiah 1—39* 284; cf. p. 6.

guistic examination, due largely to the work of J. Bright,²⁸ and one is hard pressed to find a recent commentator on Jeremiah who will deny the integrity of Jer 27:5. In the light of this, the contention that Second Isaiah is chiefly responsible for the formulation of the role of architect of the universe for Yahweh is questionable. Indeed the concept may probably be moved earlier to less than a century and a half beyond Amos.

There are several implications of the critical view that may be considered here. Chief of these is that several psalms that apply the term *bārā'* to Yahweh (Pss 89:12 [MT 13]; 104:30; 148:5) must be placed during or after the time assigned to Second Isaiah. This is somewhat problematical for Psalm 104 because several scholars²⁹ have observed affinities between it and the Hymn to the Aten of Amunhotep IV.³⁰ This would require a pre-exilic provenance for the psalm³¹ and thus a pre-exilic use of *bārā'* to depict the role of Yahweh in creation. Psalm 89 is placed by M. Dahood in the "post-Davidic monarchic period."³² Perhaps this is too early, for the language of the psalm seems to depict the early exile—the walls have been breached and the strongholds laid in ruins (v 40). The covenant with David seems now an empty promise (vv 38–39).

While this evidence is not conclusive, it does illustrate that the form-critical argumentation based on the use of *bārā'* involves more than the occurrences of the word in Second Isaiah. There is the strong likelihood that the word was used earlier than the late exilic period, and the argument that the occurrence of *bārā'* in a pericope is an indication of lateness should be understood to be somewhat tenuous since serious questions continue to surround the use of *bārā'* in the development of Israelite Yahwistic theology.

In comparison to the use of *āśā* to describe the role of God in creation, *bārā'* is used far fewer times in the OT. The question may actually be one of stylistic usage rather than a reflection of the growth and development of theological thought in Israel. It is difficult to regard the one occurrence of *bārā'* in the hymns as a necessary indication of their late exilic origin.

III. THE DIVINE TITLES

A third argument for the lateness of the hymns is the title "Yahweh, God of Hosts is his name." Several forms of this title appear in Amos, but it is the occurrence of the word *šēm* ("name") in the title that gives it its late provenance, because that precise expression is not found in undisputed passages earlier

²⁸J. Bright, *Jeremiah* (AB; Garden City: Doubleday, 1965); "The Date of the Prose Sermons of Jeremiah," 70 (1951) 15–35. Bright says in the latter work: "It must therefore be borne in mind in the present discussion that the question is not: could or did Jeremiah say it? but: what date for it seems to be required by the evidence?" (p. 17).

²⁹J. Breasted, *The Dawn of Conscience* (New York, 1933) 366–370; M. Dahood, *Psalms III* (AB; Garden City: Doubleday, 1970) 33–48.

³⁰ANET 370–371.

³¹So Dahood, *Psalms III* 33.

³²Dahood, *Psalms II* 311.

than Second Isaiah. Crenshaw says, "It is not sufficient to show that *YHWH* ³²*lōhē ṣ'bhā'ōth* was used prior to Amos; one must consider the entire refrain *YHWH* ³²*lōhē ṣ'bhā'ōth ṣ'h'mō*. Once this is done, a different picture emerges, and the probability of lateness increases tremendously."³³ The word *ṣēbā'ōt* occurs in divine titles in Amos on nine occasions³⁴ in different formulations,³⁵ but the formula *YHWH* *lōhē ṣēbā'ōt* with *ṣēmō* ("his name") in the first doxology is the critical issue.

Once again we may observe that form criticism is very rigid in its categorizations. Because Second Isaiah uses this precise formulation of the divine name on four occasions³⁶ and it is not used in quite that form in undisputed passages earlier, the formula is regarded as a peculiarity of the late exilic or postexilic periods.

Within the constructs and presuppositions of form criticism this approach is valid. If one should appeal to the occurrence of the divine title *YHWH* *lōhē ṣēbā'ōt ṣēmō* in Amos 5:27, a usage outside the doxologies, one finds that its integrity is questioned because of the desultory nature of vv 25–27. The title in 5:27 is questioned also because it occurs with *'āmar* ("says"), a usage unusual in Amos. One may not appeal to the somewhat similar usage of the title in 6:8, because the line in which it occurs is also questioned, chiefly because the phrase "says the Lord, the God of Hosts" is not in the LXX. If one should refer to the somewhat similar *YHWH* *lōhē haṣṣēbā'ōt* *YHWH* *zīkrō* in Hos 12:6, one finds that this section is almost universally denied to Hosea.³⁷ The undisputed passages that remain are thus found no earlier than texts assigned to Second Isaiah. Form critics for the most part deal fairly and precisely with the data within the parameters of their presuppositions.

It may be observed, however, that the reasons given for the rejection of the title in Amos 5:27 are not necessarily conclusive. It has not been universally rejected by critical scholars. S. R. Driver³⁸ has cautioned against denying the authenticity of this phrase, and more recently K. Cramer argued for the authenticity of the word *ṣēmō* ("his name") in the title of 5:27.³⁹ The argument of Cripps against the authenticity of portions of the divine title is based primarily on the fact that vv 25–26 do not fit together well and this witnesses to the interference of a later hand in this section.⁴⁰ But the difficulty that scholars

³²Crenshaw, *Hymnic Affirmations* 22.

³³3:13; 4:13; 5:14, 15, 16, 27; 6:8, 14; 9:5.

³⁵*'ādōnāy* *YHWH* *lōhē haṣṣēbā'ōt* (3:13); *YHWH* *lōhē ṣēbā'ōt* (4:13; 5:14, 15, 27; 6:8); *YHWH* *lōhē ṣēbā'ōt 'ādōnāy* (5:16); *YHWH* *lōhē haṣṣēbā'ōt* (6:14); *'ādōnāy* *YHWH* *haṣṣēbā'ōt* (9:5).

³⁶Isa 47:4; 48:2; 51:15; 54:5.

³⁷For a survey of those who consider Hos 12:5 a gloss see Crenshaw, *Hymnic Affirmations* 79.

³⁸S. R. Driver, *The Books of Joel and Amos* 121–122.

³⁹K. Cramer, "Amos: Versuch einer theologischen Interpretation," *BWANT* 3 (1930) 1–215.

⁴⁰"Loose as the present connection between verse 26 and verse 25, the speech could not have ended at verse 25; and if verse 27 is the conclusion of the discourse, some further denunciation or threat is needed between verses 25 and 27" (Cripps, *Amos* 301).

have with the integrity of these verses is due largely to their interpretation of this difficult passage that deals with the Israelites' images and their star-god. If the perspective of the passage is put into the future then it does appear that something "is needed between the two verses."⁴¹ However, if the verses are read in keeping with the Masoretic tradition they set forth the disobedience of Israel in the past, and v 27 may thus be understood as the pronouncement of judgment based on their past disobedience: "Therefore I will take you into exile beyond Damascus."⁴²

This consideration is vital, for if the divine name in 5:27 is authentic the form-critical argument for a late date for the doxologies based on the occurrence of *šēmō* in the title is invalid. Amos 5:27 would thus attest to a pre-exilic usage of the name found in the refrains of the doxologies. It must be observed that in the final analysis the validity of this form-critical argument depends on how a context is interpreted. It is a distinct possibility that the whole title of 5:27 is from the hand of Amos. Without the evidence of intrusiveness there is little warrant for doubting the authenticity of the title.

We must also observe that the refrains in the doxologies are not uniform. The divine titles appear in the following order: In the first doxology (4:13) the title *YHWH 'ēlōhē šēbā'ōt šēmō* occurs. In the second (5:8-9) the refrain occurs not at the end of the hymn as in 4:13⁴³ but at the end of v 8. The phrase is *YHWH šēmō* ("Yahweh is his name"). And in the third hymn (9:5-6) there are two titles: *'ādōnāy YHWH haššēbā'ōt* ("the Lord Yahweh of Hosts") and *YHWH šēmō*. In Second Isaiah only two forms of the title occur: "I am the Lord, that is my name" (42:8) and "The Lord of Hosts is his name" (47:4; 48:2; 51:15). It is readily apparent that none of the titles that occur in the doxologies in the prophecy of Amos occurs in Second Isaiah. The form-critical contention stands or falls with one word—namely, the word *šēm* ("name").

Several occurrences of similar phrases may be found in Jeremiah as well, but most of them are considered late redactions. However, the phrase "My name is Yahweh" occurs in a verse in Jeremiah that may be authentic: 16:21. J. Bright says of the pericope in 16:19-21: "The passage swarms with Jeremianic expressions, and the idea of the turning of the nations to Yahweh rests on very old tradition (cf. various pre-Exilic Psalms), was certainly current in 'Deuteronomic' circles of Jeremiah's day (e.g., I Kings VIII 41-43), and is not without echoes in the words of Jeremiah himself (e.g., IV 1-2)."⁴⁴

An examination of the word *šēm* in connection with the divine name reveals an occurrence of the phrase "Yahweh is his name" in Exod 15:3. The occurrence of this phrase necessitates consideration. Many older scholars placed this song, often called the Song of Miriam (Exod 15:1-8), very late. But more recent

⁴¹Crenshaw, *Hymnic Affirmations* 77.

⁴²For a discussion of this verse on the basis of the MT see C. F. Keil, *The Twelve Minor Prophets* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949), 1. 289-296.

⁴³But see Wolff, who understands v 9 as "a later addition." He holds that the text is "badly damaged and difficult to interpret" (*Joel and Amos* 241).

⁴⁴Bright, *Jeremiah* 113.

scholarship has tended to support the antiquity of the song.⁴⁵ F. M. Cross and D. N. Freedman, for example, argue on the basis of Canaanite affinities that the poem "is scarcely later than the twelfth century in its original form."⁴⁶ The dating of pericopes on the basis of linguistic data is far more precise than dating them on critical assumptions. In the Song of Miriam we have clear linguistic and mythological parallels that cast considerable doubt on the placement of this piece of material late in Israelite history. It thus may witness to a very early occurrence of the phrase "Yahweh is his name," which, we have found, occurs only in Amos and not in Second Isaiah. Crenshaw dismisses this argument too lightly when he says, "Too much importance should not be attributed to this use of *YHWH shēmō*, especially in view of divergent views in regard to the date of the song."⁴⁷ It is true that the views of the provenance of this song oscillate between a late date and an early date⁴⁸ but, as B. Childs notes: "Of the various arguments brought forth the philological arguments carry the most weight. The cumulative evidence forms an impressive case for an early dating of the poem, particularly the tense system and the orthography."⁴⁹ When the evidence is evaluated the philological material proves to be of greatest value because it is far more objective and concrete than other criteria and should caution against too rigid an application of the argument from the divine titles. The form critic may argue as Crenshaw does that "the cumulative evidence favors, nay, almost demands, the assumption that the doxologies do not come from Amos, and, in fact, are from a much later time,"⁵⁰ but the cumulative value of evidence depends entirely on the strength of the data that support it. True, we have found the preponderant usage of titles of that nature in Second Isaiah and sections of Jeremiah attributed to the postexilic period, but these may be stylistic choices of the writers.

We may also note the phrase *bēyāh šēmō* ("Yahweh is his name") in Ps 68:5, a psalm now regarded by many as early because of its affinities with Canaanite and Phoenician.⁵¹

If the divine titles were static in their formulation one might argue that they are crystallizations of Israelite thought and expression in its development

⁴⁵For a survey of some of the literature on this question see Crenshaw, *Hymnic Affirmations* 87 n. 51.

⁴⁶F. M. Cross, Jr., and D. N. Freedman, "The Song of Miriam," *JNES* (1955) 240.

⁴⁷Crenshaw, *Hymnic Affirmations* 87.

⁴⁸See for example M. Noth, who regards the poem as relatively late (*Exodus* [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962] 123), and Cross and Freedman, "The Song of Miriam," who argue for an early date. B. Childs argues that "Noth's position has relied too uncritically on the assumption that shortness in length reflects antiquity" (*Exodus* [London: SCM, 1974] 247).

⁴⁹Childs, *Exodus* 245–246.

⁵⁰Crenshaw, *Hymnic Affirmations* 24.

⁵¹W. F. Albright understands the psalm as a collection of incipits that were recorded in the Solomonic period ("A Catalogue of Early Hebrew Lyric Poems [Psalm LXVIII]," *HUCA* 23 [1950-51] 1–39). He is followed by M. Dahood, who extends the principles set forth by Albright (*Psalms III* 130–152). See also S. Iwry, "Notes on Psalm 68," *JBL* 71 (1952) 161–165.

throughout Israel's changing history. But they are not static. It is difficult to argue that the presence of the word *šēm* in a title is a mark of lateness if even one example of that phenomenon may be found earlier.

IV. THE SETTING OF THE HYMNS

Other arguments for a late date for the doxologies could be considered,⁵² but they are not within the scope of this article. We must give attention now to the question of the setting of the hymns. J. D. W. Watts characterized the hymns as "a Psalm from the Yahwistic cult." He placed them in the cultic setting of the annual fall festival. He concluded that "the prophet's speech of judgment led up to the singing of the hymn at its appropriate place in the celebration."⁵³ The conclusions of Watts have been met effectively by Crenshaw, who shows in part that some of the theories used by Watts to develop his thesis depend on his distinctive evaluation of the parameters of the hymns.⁵⁴ T. H. Gaster posits the setting as an ancient hymn "to the god Yahweh Sebaoth."⁵⁵ He finds illustrations of this in "Babylonian texts" and "Phoenician legends."⁵⁶

Wolff understands the setting of the first hymn to be a redactor's response to the destruction of the altar at Bethel.⁵⁷ H. L. Bern sees the first two hymns as the cultic expression of the fear of God. The words of 5:8 are the answer of the community to the conditional threat of 5:6. The hymn of 9:5-6 differs from the others in that there is no exhortation to the community in the preceding context. He concludes that it is an imitative confession of a redactor who wished to confess his faith personally.⁵⁸

⁵²The participial structure of the hymns is also used in support of their lateness because of the presence of similar structures in Job, late sections of Jeremiah, and Second Isaiah. It is difficult to determine why the creative work of God was celebrated in participial forms. Perhaps the distinctive nature of the participle contributed a mood or atmosphere to that which the writer wished to convey. Amos uses participles in his cosmic depiction of Yahweh forming locusts (7:1) and calling to contend by fire (7:4). But the participle is used frequently by Amos, and this may have no significance. There are brief catenae within a number of psalms that utilize participles to depict aspects of God's character and celebrate his creative power. Note the following from Book I of the Psalter: Pss 9:12-13 (11-12 English); 11:7; 18:51 (50 English); 19:2 (1 English); 22:29 (28 English); 29:5, 7; 31:24; 33:4, 5, 7; 34:23 (22 English). If it is objected that these sections also contain other verbal forms such as imperatives, it may be pointed out that this is true of the doxologies in Amos as well. Many of these psalms are now considered to be early. M. Dahood observes: "These considerations thus point to a pre-Exilic date for most of the psalms, and not a few of them . . . may well have been composed in the Davidic period" (*Psalms II xxx*).

⁵³Watts, *Vision* 65.

⁵⁴Crenshaw, *Hymnic Affirmations* 38 and n. 140.

⁵⁵T. H. Gaster, "An Ancient Hymn in the Prophecies of Amos," *Journal of the Manchester Egyptian and Oriental Society* 19 (1935) 23.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, p. 24.

⁵⁷Wolff, *Joel and Amos* 217-218.

⁵⁸H. L. Bern, *Die sogenannten Hymnenfragmente im Amosbuch* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1974) 324-325.

Crenshaw believes the hymns to be a prophetic response to the Israelite "temptation to swear by foreign deities" after the "confrontation between Israelite and Assyro-Babylonian religion."⁵⁹

Mays regards them as coming from a cultic source in Judah.⁶⁰ He holds that the three hymnic elements of Amos comprise one hymn and concludes that "nothing in the form or content of the hymn indicates that it could not have been current in Amos's day."⁶¹ He continues: "The earliest tradents of Amos-material may have inserted the hymnic descriptions of Yahweh's supernatural might on which earth depends at the climax of Amos's oracles which seemed to them to involve a coming theophany."⁶²

We must note at the outset of our study of the setting of the hymns that they evince a striking conceptual affinity to their immediate contexts. The first hymn is connected to the preceding context by strong ties, for it depicts in highly exalted language the words "prepare to meet your God." The words *kî hinnēh* ("for, behold") underscore the conceptual connection of the hymn to its preceding context. A similar conceptual connection may be observed in the second hymn, for the destruction predicted in v 6 is vividly illustrated by the destructive power of God in v 9 of the hymn. The third hymn depicts Yahweh's presence as pervading the universe: He "builds his upper chambers in the heavens and founds his vault upon the earth" (v 6). This is consonant with the affirmation of vv 2-4 that there is no place in the universe where the people may go to escape Yahweh.

While this phenomenon could be the result of a redactor's placing hymns of appropriate content at compatible points in the prophecy, it also supports other possibilities. One of them is that the doxologies are poetic representations of theological truth written by Amos himself to give awesome validation to the content of the oracle that precedes each doxology. According to this view the setting would thus be a literary one.

This is the conclusion adopted here. It has not enjoyed enthusiastic support in the history of the interpretation of the prophecy of Amos. But it deserves consideration because of the consonance of the literary style of these doxologies with the style of generally undisputed portions of the book. This conclusion will provide the catalyst for our critique of form criticism and serve to place its methodology in sharper focus.

One of the most prevalent views of the setting of these doxologies is that they were hymns that were current in the Hebrew cultus of the exilic or post-exilic periods. However, there is something that must be observed in this connection. Two of the doxologies are linked conceptually to a more distant oracle in the book. It is the oracle of 8:7-10 in which Yahweh swears by the pride of Jacob. The second doxology (5:8-9) speaks of day darkened into night (v 8),

⁵⁹Crenshaw, *Hymnic Affirmations* 92.

⁶⁰Mays, *Amos* 13.

⁶¹*Ibid.*, p. 83.

⁶²*Ibid.*, p. 84.

and 8:9 says that God will darken the earth in daylight. The third doxology (9:5–6) says that all who dwell in the 'ereš will mourn (v 5), while 8:8 says of the 'ereš that "everyone mourns who dwells in it." The verbal and conceptual similarity of these clauses is striking. The clause in 8:8 reads *wē'ābal kol yōšēb bāh*, and the clause in 9:5 reads *wē'ābēlū kol yōšēbē bāh*. The difference is simply one of number.

Of greater significance is the linguistic affinity of the third hymn with a phrase in 8:8. With the exception of two words these references to the rising and receding of the Nile are verbally the same. Also, the second doxology uses the word *hāpak* ("turn") in 5:8. The word also occurs in the immediately preceding verse.

This evidence poses several problems for the view that holds that the doxologies were cultic hymns or, if they are grouped together, a cultic hymn of three stanzas, added in exilic or postexilic times. If the doxologies were composed for cultic use, independently of the text of Amos, and incorporated into the text by a redactor, how can we explain their striking verbal similarity to phraseology in Amos' oracles? One may explain it by positing an extensive reworking of the text of Amos, but that is completely subjective. We must reach our conclusions on the evidence at hand.

Another possibility is that the doxologies were a cultic hymn (or cultic hymns) current in Amos' day⁶³ added by Amos, a redactor, or a "school of Amos." Several conservative scholars have allowed for this possibility.⁶⁴ The view is attractive, but it poses the same problem as the previous view. How is it that two phrases in the hymns are almost exactly verbatim with the Amos-material? Mays suggests with regard to the consonance between 8:8 and 9:5: "If Amos did use a line from the original hymn in his oracle ending at 8:8 . . . that would explain the attraction of this specific hymn to the Amos-material."⁶⁵ But we wonder why the hymn was added at such a distance from the point of attraction, and in a completely different literary unit. The doxology occurs in the vision of the destruction of the temple (9:1 ff.), while the consonant clause occurs in the vision of the summer fruit (8:1 ff.).

It is not enough to say that this similarity was the cause of their attraction. We must attempt to explain the similarity. It is difficult to explain it as sheer coincidence. Perhaps Amos used language current in the prevailing cultus, but again this possibility is difficult to prove.

If, however, we view the data against the possibility of Amos' authorship of the doxologies these problems are not as severe, and we find that we have objective data with which to deal.

The objective material may be found in an aspect of Amos' literary style that will emerge from this study. Authentic Amos-material is characterized by the repetition of similar verbal and conceptual phraseology. This phenomenon ties the Amos-material together. It is woven into the fabric of the prophecy.

⁶³So *ibid.*, pp. 83–84.

⁶⁴See for example Motyer, *The Day of the Lion* 169 n. 1.

⁶⁵Mays, *Amos* 84.

Not only does this phenomenon mark the oracular material, but it extends into the doxologies as well. There are three clauses in the doxologies that find counterparts in nondoxological material in Amos. Since this phenomenon is a peculiarity of Amos' style and since it pervades the hymns as well as the oracles, we have an objective factor that lends strong support to the view that the hymns are authentic Amos-material as well.

This phenomenon of repetitive phraseology occurs so frequently in the narrow compass of the book, and with such precision, that its significance cannot be denied. The following parallels serve to illustrate this phenomenon: *wēšil-lahti 'ēš* ("I will send fire") occurs in 1:4, 7; 2:2; *wēhikrattī yōšēb* ("I will cut off the inhabitant") occurs in 1:5, 8; cf. 2:3; *wētōmēk šēbet* ("the one who holds the scepter") occurs in 1:5, 8; *wē'ākēlā 'armēnōtēhā* ("it will devour her strongholds") occurs in 1:7, 14. The concept of turning justice to wormwood occurs in separate sections of Amos-material: 5:7, *hahōpīm lēla'ānā mišpāt*; 6:12, *hāpaktem . . . šēdāqā lēla'ānā (/mišpāt)*. Trampling on the poor occurs three times: 2:7, *haššō'āpīm 'al . . . dallīm*; 5:11, *bōšaskem 'al dāl*; 8:4, *haššō'āpīm 'ebyōn*. A reference to "smiting the house" occurs twice: 3:15, *wēhikkēt bēt*; 6:11, *wēhikkā habbayit*.

Thus generally undisputed Amos-material is marked by a repetition of similar clauses. Since this same stylistic peculiarity also embraces two of the doxologies, we may conclude that this stamp of Amos' literary style is on them as well as on the oracle material.

We may observe several other factors. The doxologies are refrains that have an appropriate relationship with each section to which they are connected. The use of the refrain may be shown to be integral to Amos' literary style, for it occurs elsewhere in the prophecy in different forms. For example, the refrain "says the Lord" occurs consistently in the undisputed oracles against the nations. The words "this also shall not be" function as a refrain in the vision of 7:1-9. And we have observed the frequent use of the formula *lō 'āšibennū* in the oracles against the nations.

Also, the hymns function in the same way the intrusion of 6:9-10 functions: to illustrate the foregoing material. This also is consonant with Amos' literary style.

Objective literary data thus strongly support the authenticity of these hymnic elements. Data such as these are stronger evidence than those often appealed to in support of redactive accretions. There is no reason why Amos could not have written these hymns to give awesome theological support to his pronouncements. They are woven into the fabric of the prophecy linguistically and conceptually. Amos demonstrates elsewhere his ability to fashion original verbal motifs in the history of prophetic material. It is not difficult to see these hymns as poetic expressions of truths that the prophet had set forth earlier in more prosaic language.

Form criticism has rendered service to Biblical scholarship in many ways. It has drawn attention to literary types that enable us to go more deeply into the texts.⁶⁶ It has developed criteria by which accretive levels may be deter-

⁶⁶See in this regard C. Westermann, *The Praise of God in the Psalms* (Richmond: John Knox, 1965).

mined in the development of certain books such as Jeremiah, a book that witnesses to its own redactive history.

In the case of the doxologies, however, we note a tendency to base conclusions on evidence that may be seriously questioned. One wonders if the positive statements we read in form-critical works should not be qualified or other options presented.

Form critics often assume complex redactive histories behind the material with which they are working. Indeed there are pericopes in the OT that may contain evidence of a later provenance than the books in which they occur, but sometimes pericopes are pronounced later accretions by form critics when the evidence is not strong. This basic assumption of form criticism needs further evaluation.

In recent years the tendency has been to divide certain prophetic books into increasingly more numerous literary units. Often the data appealed to for this are vague and speculative. And, as we observed earlier, the processes of Biblical theology become even more complex until we are left in uncertainty about the original words and theologies of the various authors of the prophetic corpus.

There is also a tendency to give precedence to form-critical assumptions over matters of style when drawing conclusions. Stylistic criteria give us objective data and should provide balance in the application of critical methodologies.

Much of the evidence appealed to in support of the doxologies as redactive intrusions is questionable. We found a divine title, similar to those in the doxologies, that is regarded by many scholars as antedating the eighth century. We found that the alleged intrusiveness finds a counterpart in authentic Amos-material. And we observed an appeal to the preponderance of evidence rather than to the quality and strength of that evidence. Form-critical conclusions should be stated with greater fairness, objectivity and balance. There is much at stake. In the prophetic books, not only is it the nature and identity of the prophetic word that is at stake but the authority of that word as well.