

The Fifth Vision of Amos in Context¹

Aaron Schart

The five visions of Amos undoubtedly belong to the seminal texts of Israelite prophecy. At the end of the writing of Amos they form a well-designed composition, which reflects the private encounter of the prophet with YHWH in a visionary realm.² Two pairs of visions (Amos 7:1-3 // 7:4-6 and 7:7-8 // 8:1-2) lead the reader to the final “showdown.” In the fifth vision (9:1-4), the prophet finally sees God directly at the center of the land, the temple.³ God commands him to strike the temple building in order to destroy it. Apparently not every prophet or prophetess had so overwhelming an encounter with the God of Israel. After the downfall of Northern Israel and the temple of Bethel, Amos’ vision cycle was acknowledged to have foreseen this downfall. Many generations of readers have found inspiration in these texts. It turned out that the texts were not only relevant for Northern Israel, but for Judah as well. Because visions, especially when they lead to a direct encounter with God, are emotionally overwhelming, but at the same time ambiguous and vague, words cannot grasp their meaning completely.⁴

¹ Earlier versions of this paper were given as lectures at the Universities of Tübingen (12.12.1998) and Bonn (12.07.2000). I am appreciative for the stimulating discussions there.

² A convenient, up-to-date overview of the mainstream interpretation of the vision cycle is provided by Siegfried Bergler, “‘Auf der Mauer - auf dem Altar’: noch einmal die Visionen des Amos,” *VT* 50 (2000) 445-471, esp. 447-450. More sensitive to the theological issues involved is Jörg Jeremias, “Rezeptionsprozesse in der prophetischen Überlieferung - am Beispiel der Visionsberichte des Amos, in *Rezeption und Auslegung im Alten Testament und in seinem Umfeld* (ed. Reinhard Gregor Kratz and Thomas Krüger; OBO 153; Freiburg [Schweiz] Göttingen: Universitätsverlag / Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997), 29-44.

³ The fifth vision picks up terminology from the third vision. To understand the relation of both it is important to notice that ׀׀׀ in the third vision (Amos 7:7) was inserted very late; it is not yet attested in the Septuagint! Therefore in the original text the person that held the ׀׀׀ remained unidentified as in the first two visions. This explains why Amos’ answer to the question “What do you see?” does not mention God (Amos 7:8); see Jörg Jeremias, *Der Prophet Amos* (ATD 24/2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995) 95; against Bergler, “Auf der Mauer – auf dem Altar,” 455.

⁴ Dalene Heyns, “Theology in Pictures: the Visions of Amos,” in *Feet on Level Ground*” (ed. Koot van Wyk; Berrien Springs, Mich.: Hester, 1996) 132-172, esp. 164: “The prophetic proclamation may never get bogged down in verbal structures,

That is one reason why Amos entrusted his private experience to his followers. In the end it turned out that many generations could use the texts for reflecting on their own endangered situation before the God of Israel.

In this paper I want to investigate how the understanding of the fifth vision changed over time. It occurred mainly by modifying the context in which the vision was imbedded and understood. Since Brevard Childs has underlined the importance of context, redaction criticism now acknowledges that many of the redactors created complete and more or less coherent books.⁵ As a consequence, it is imperative to read every text in its literary context. It is not sufficient, for example, merely to interpret the hymnic fragment in Amos 9:5-6 as a hymnic affirmation of God's superior name. One must ask what consequences the insertion of the hymn has for the sense of the fifth vision and the writing of Amos, and even the Twelve (or its precursors) as a whole. Through the course of redaction history the text of the vision proper remained remarkably stable; however, through the modification of the context the sense of the fifth vision was profoundly modified. I will follow the different stages from the oldest to the youngest.⁶

I. The Vision in the Hebrew Text

A. The Oldest Layer, Amos 9:1-4a*

The oldest literary layer of the fifth vision that can be reconstructed with any confidence comprises Amos 9:1-4a*.⁷ There are three points to con-

may never only speak in stereotypes as the fixed forms of traditional images suggest. By means of symbols they open up wider possibilities for many-leveled interpretations of the divine word. In this way the visionary message remains new in each new situation." Yvonne Sherwood ("Of Fruit and Corpses and Wordplay Visions: Picturing Amos 8.1-3," *JSOT* 92 [2001] 5-27) offers a recreation of Amos' vision.

⁵ Brevard Springs Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979); idem, "The Canonical Shape of the Prophetic Literature," *Int* 32 (1978) 46-55. idem, "Retrospective Reading of the Old Testament Prophets," *ZAW* 108 (1996) 362-377. For an important sketch of this approach to treating the visions of Amos, see Jörg Jeremias, "Rezeptionsprozesse in der prophetischen Überlieferung."

⁶ See Appendix 1. I presuppose the source-critical model of my book Aaron Schart, *Die Entstehung des Zwölfprophetenbuchs: Neubearbeitungen von Amos im Rahmen schriftenübergreifender Redaktionsprozesse* (BZAW 260; Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 1998).

⁷ Whether this layer of the vision belongs to the oldest layer in the writing of Amos or whether it even goes back to the historical prophet Amos is controversial, but need not be decided for the purpose of this paper. I, for one, do not see sufficient evidence to deny the authorship of the content to historical prophet, although the specific wording and structure may have been altered in order to fit better within the composition of five visions. For an overly skeptical and therefore implausible position, see Uwe

sider. First, the phrase *מנגר עיני* is clearly secondary in Amos 9:3. This phrase was inserted together with Amos 9:4b in order to prepare a contrast between the two verses. Second, the meaning of *ובצעם בראש* (and cut them off on the head) in Amos 9:1 is unintelligible, probably due to an early scribal error. It is clear that the action described should follow quite naturally out of the first imperative: “Strike ...!” This could be done with a second imperative or a *w=qatal*. The subject of the verb could be Amos, but it is at least equally possible that YHWH is the subject, as in the second colon of this line. The object *בראש* may be correct, implying an appealing word play on Amos 2:7; 6:7. In addition, there is an allusion to the verb *רעש* (Amos 9:1) that arouses the reader’s attention, because it was mentioned in the superscription (Amos 1:1). The initial verb, however, cannot be recovered. Third, it is questionable whether the passage is a literal unity. Some scholars believe that vv. 2-4a are secondary.⁸ Admittedly, some observations may point in this direction, but I doubt the hints are significant enough to justify this hypothesis.

Turning to the content of this oldest layer, the first line depicts the vision proper. The rest of the account quotes the speech God has delivered to Amos. The vision proper starts with an extraordinary statement: Amos claims to have seen God.⁹ No preparations for this direct visual encounter are mentioned. Very probably the previous four visions are seen as such a preparation leading to the final encounter. It is clear from the outset that such a close contact with God must have an extraordinary message as its outcome. Also the reader expects a temple as the location for such an encounter. The circumstances are mentioned very briefly, making every detail of greatest importance. The prophet only mentions that YHWH has positioned himself on the altar. The verb *נצב* implies that some action by YHWH will follow. Together with the following preposition *על*, the phrase

Becker, “Der Prophet als Fürbitter: Zum literarhistorischen Ort der Amos-Visionen,” *VT* 51 (2001) 141-165.

⁸ Again Bergler (“Auf der Mauer – auf dem Altar,” 452-454) has summarized the arguments. There are verbal and motive parallels with other texts, partly late ones. In most cases one can argue that the priority lies with Amos. Other authors studied his vision cycle, and it inspired them; for example Isaiah (6:1-4). Likewise, Dietmar Mathias has reviewed the arguments and concluded that the direction of dependence is at least possible in both ways. Cf. his “Beobachtungen zur fünften Vision des Amos (9,1-4),” in *Gedenkt an das Wort* (ed. Christoph Kähler and Werner Vogler; Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1999), 150-174, esp. 164; contra Bergler, “Auf der Mauer – auf dem Altar,” 469).

⁹ We leave aside the question whether *אדני* in Amos 9:1 belongs to the oldest layer or, in my eyes more probable, was substituted for an original *יהוה*.

was probably chosen to allude to the *hieros logos* of Bethel, which stands behind the narrative of Jacob's dream in Bethel (Gen 28:10-22; the phrase **נצב על** appears in v.12).¹⁰ **מזבח** is construed with the article. This can best be explained if it refers to the main altar of the temple, probably located in the center of the yard, and not in the temple building itself. That God stands at this place is unusual and frightening. It may be that in Bethel YHWH was imagined standing, instead of seated on a throne as in Jerusalem, but it was certainly not normal for YHWH to stand on the altar. On the contrary, when YHWH left his place inside the temple building, presumably over the cultic image of a golden bull, the harmonic order must have been disturbed.¹¹ God had left the normal place of God's presence. Why would God do this? In addition, God's standing on the altar made a cultic use of the altar impossible. This frightening scene becomes the setting for a shocking instruction in the following bicolon.

As in Isaiah 6, which is in many respects similar, in Amos 9 one finds the commissioning of the person having the vision following its depiction.¹² The imperative **הך** (Strike!) is meant as a command to Amos.¹³ The text mentions neither another human nor heavenly beings accompanying God who could be the addressee.¹⁴ Amos has to strike the **כפזור**, an act which will launch a seismic activity that finally reaches even the **ספים** (thresholds). Both Hebrew words have the article prefixed, although they have not been mentioned before. This can best be explained by assuming that the words refer to objects eternal to the text: while speaking, God points to the things God talks about. As a consequence, both terms must denote essential parts of the temple, which could be seen from the central altar.¹⁵ The reader

¹⁰ See for example Friedhelm Hartenstein, "Wolkendunkel und Himmelsfeste: Zur Genese und Kosmologie der Vorstellung des himmlischen Heiligtums JHWHs," in *Das biblische Weltbild und seine altorientalischen Kontexte* (ed. Bernd Janowski and Beate Ego; FAT 32; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 125-179; his illuminating comparison of Gen 28:12-13,17 with Amos 9:1-4 (and Amos 9:5-6) is on pp. 158-160.

¹¹ In Isa 6:1 God is seen inside the temple building (**היכל**), sitting on a throne.

¹² Compare Jörg Jeremias, "Das unzugängliche Heiligtum. Zur letzten Vision des Amos (Amos 9,1-4)," in *Hosea und Amos: Studien zu den Anfängen des Dodekapropheten* (FAT 13; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), 244-256, esp. 246: "Wo Jahwe andernorts in Visionen direkt geschaut wird, geht es um eine Beauftragung des Propheten (bzw. des 'Geistes') durch den himmlischen Hofstaat, der um den thronenden Himmelskönig Jahwe steht (1 Kön 22,19ff; Jes 6)."

¹³ A modification of the text is not necessary; cf. Bergler, "'Auf Der Mauer - Auf Dem Altar,'" 449.

¹⁴ One must not infer the seraphim from Isaiah 6.

¹⁵ As a consequence, all items are excluded that are located within the temple building; for example the cult image.

needs to imagine the situation concretely, in order to understand fully the significance of the situation (see picture in appendix 2).¹⁶ The altar is probably located in the midst of the yard and is so large that a person can stand upon it. More difficult is the issue of where the ספִּיָּם (the thresholds) are located. Most of the commentators locate them at the entrance of the central temple building proper.¹⁷ However, this suggestion does not fit with the plural of the noun, because that building had only one door. It is much more probable that ספִּיָּם refers to the thresholds in the outer wall of the yard, which marked the entrance to the whole temple precinct (*temenos*).¹⁸ One may assume that at least three gateways existed. It is even more difficult to say what כַּפְתוֹרִים means and where it was located. The term must have a technical meaning denoting some prominent part of the temple. Following the usual interpretation that כַּפְתוֹרִים refers to the top of a column, one has to choose whether the text presupposes a column in front of the door of the temple building or a free-standing column somewhere in the yard.¹⁹ Either way, it is clear that Amos is to deliver a blow or toward the center of the sanctuary. This single blow will initiate a shockwave that shakes the whole precinct as far as the outer wall. The temple in its entirety, from the center to the outer border, from the top to the foundations in the earth, will tremble.

Special emphasis, however, is placed on the shaking of the thresholds. They mark the border between inside and outside, between the holy place and the profane world. A holy place needs to be cut off from profane space, because the profane has the potential to contaminate the sacred. That is why

¹⁶ In order to help the reader imagine the situation, I have drawn a picture (cf. Appendix 2). This picture is not meant as an archaeological reconstruction of the site at Bethel, but as a visualization of the image that the text creates in the mind of the reader. In order to visualize it, one has to add many features not noted within the text; e.g., the relative measurements, the forms, and other things.

¹⁷ The main argument is that the כַּפְתוֹרִים and the ספִּיָּם need to have an architectural connection, so that a strike on the one part can have an effect on the other; Hans-Walter Wolff, *Dodekapropheten 2: Joel und Amos* (BKAT 14/2; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 3rd ed. 1985), 390: "Es muß sich hier um einen der Köpfe von Säulen handeln, die die Torschwellen flankieren. Sonst könnten darüber nicht die Säulenbasen und damit die Schwellen erbeben." See also Jörg Jeremias, "Das unzugängliche Heiligtum," 250; Bergler, "'Auf Der Mauer - Auf Dem Altar,'" 451. However in a visionary context it is normal that some rules of the ordinary reality are broken.

¹⁸ This is also true for Isa 6:4.

¹⁹ Archaeological evidence for a sole column in a temple precinct is lacking. The text does not exclude the possibility that two or more columns are present, but God's command singles out one Amos is to strike.

custodians for the thresholds and temple entrance liturgies are necessary.²⁰ If the thresholds do שָׁטַח (shake) – like an earthquake – they give up their function and can no longer block out the profane.²¹ As a result, the holy place as such, which is the obligatory foundation on which a temple can be erected, ceases to exist. The temple is completely out of order.

Since the temple is the center that gives refuge, stability, and prosperity to life to the land, its elimination sets off disorder and death that will reach to its borders. Amos 9:2-4a* spells out this scenario in detail.²² Shockingly, the temple is no longer a place of harmony with God and a source of protection. Instead, the deity residing at the sanctuary hunts down and kills the people, sparing no one.

At this point the decisive question arises: who are the people who will be killed? The vision report only speaks of כָּל־ם (all of them). The pronominal suffix must refer to the last mentioned group in the immediate context. Assuming that the main stream scholars are correct that the five visions originally formed a literary composition into which later redactors inserted the passages Amos 7:9-17; 8:3-14; 9:4b-15, the suffix refers to the fourth vision, where the end of “my people Israel” is announced. The reader must identify “all of them” with “my people Israel” (8:2). The expression “my people Israel” is no longer employed within the fifth vision, thereby signaling that the personal relationship between God and Israel has come to an end.

In sum, the oldest layer portrays YHWH as having left the place inside the temple building. Standing on the altar he commands his prophet to strike the top of a column (or something similar) in the center. This blow will initiate a shockwave, which will ruin the whole temple precinct. The shaking of the thresholds implies the nullification of the border between holy space and profane world, thereby expressing the total elimination of the sanctuary.

²⁰ Friedhelm Hartenstein (*Die Unzugänglichkeit Gottes im Heiligtum. Jesaja 6 und der Wohnort JHWHs in der Jerusalemer Kultradition* [WMANT 75. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1997], Exkurs 4, pp. 116-122) has collected material from the Ancient Near East that illustrates the function of the thresholds.

²¹ Here is an important difference from the vision in Isaiah 6. There the lexem שָׁטַח is used, which does not imply that the thresholds give up their function entirely.

²² Cf. Jörg Jeremias, “Das unzugängliche Heiligtum,” 255: “Es ist nun freilich keineswegs zufällig, daß diese Durchführung bis in kosmische Dimensionen ausgreift, weil der künftig unzugängliche Tempel eben kosmische Dimensionen besitzt.” Also cf. Friedhelm Hartenstein, “Wolkendunkel und Himmelsfeste: Zur Genese und Kosmologie der Vorstellung des himmlischen Heiligtums JHWHs,” in *Das biblische Weltbild und seine altorientalischen Kontexte* (ed. Bernd Janowski and Beate Ego; FAT 32; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 125-179, esp. 154.

All people of Northern Israel will share its fate.²³ The name of the temple is not mentioned, but in the context of the oldest layer it can only be Bethel. No reason is given why YHWH would give up his temple, and nothing gives the impression that Bethel is not an authorized sanctuary of YHWH. Most likely the oldest layer depicted YHWH discarding Bethel because the sanctuary and its cult “covered up” the oppression in the land, instead of empowering the people to stop it.

B. The Tradition Bearers (*Tradenten*) of Amos, Amos 8:14 and 9:4b

The next stage of redaction activity was the insertion of Amos 8:14 between the fourth and the fifth visions. The same redactor probably added Amos 9:4b and, less likely, the phrase נגד עני in Amos 9:3. This frame around the fifth vision is heavily influenced by concepts from Hosea.²⁴

The first of these concepts is that the wickedness of the capital Samaria (Hos 7:1) is the foundation of all the sins of Northern Israel, among which the monarch and the cult image are outstanding examples. Therefore, in Hos 10:7 the king is characterized as “*Samaria’s* king” and the cult image of Bethel is designated as “*Samaria’s* calf” (Hos 8:5-6). Reading the fifth vision after Amos 8:14 makes it obvious that the temple at Bethel had to be eliminated most of all because of the sin of Samaria. At the same time, the redactor insists on mentioning the sanctuaries at Dan and Beersheba, which also are involved in the sin of Samaria. The temple that is eliminated in the fifth vision attains the role of an example to all of the godless במות (high places, Amos 7:9). They too will be punished by YHWH.

The second point is that Amos 8:14 proposes, albeit in short statements, reasons why the temple will be eliminated. The mention of swearing alludes probably to juridic activities of an essential kind, including important economic transactions. Behind the MT must stand oath formulas directed towards a deity. If the accused people do not swear by other gods, they at least invoke local manifestations or variants of YHWH at other sanctuaries. This view, that the basic sin is seen in turning to other gods, is inspired by Hosea. His critique that the accused persons have turned to Baal (Hos 2:10; 13:1) or to the Baalim (Hos 11:2) is relevant here.

Third, the ones who will be targets of YHWH’s sword are defined anew. Because of the insertion of Amos 8:14, the Hebrew כלם (all of them) in Amos 9:1 no longer refers to “my people Israel” mentioned in

²³ See Wolff, *Dodekapropheten 2: Joel und Amos*, 391: “Jeder Restgedanke ist so auf das entschlossenste zurückgewiesen.”

²⁴ See Schart, *Entstehung*, 126-128.

Amos 8:2, as in the previous layer, but to הַשֹּׁבְעִים (those who swear) instead.²⁵ Only the people who rely on the false Northern cult in their juridic activities will “fall and never stand up.”²⁶ Finally, the “eyes of God” in Amos 9:4b allude to Hos 13:14, where they also observe without mercy the destruction of the sinners through a hypostasized sword (Amos 9:4a; Hos 14:1).

All of these observations can best be explained by the thesis that early versions of Hosea and Amos together formed a “Two-Prophets-Book.”²⁷ Followers of the prophets must have redacted the records, which they had available, in such a way that the message of one prophet could serve to nuance the understanding of the other.²⁸ Both prophecies now serve as independent but mutually confirming witnesses that YHWH warned his people before his patience came to a definite end (compare the significant phrase לֹא אֹסִיף עוֹד [I can no longer] in Hos 1:6 // Amos 7:8; 8:2). They also explain why he abandoned Northern Israel, especially its capital Samaria and its sanctuary Bethel. Within the writing of Amos alone, it does not become really obvious why the cult center Bethel and the people who relied on the Northern sanctuaries had to face such a harsh punishment, because Amos attacks the people who worship, not the cult or the sanctuary as such (cf. Amos 5:21: “*your* festivals, *your* solemn assemblies”).²⁹ Perceived as the closing section to a Two-Prophets-Scroll, comprising early versions of Hosea and Amos, the fifth vision becomes fully understandable.

In sum, the tradition bearers understood the fifth vision in such a way that the blow that Amos had to deliver was aimed at all sanctuaries that were involved in the sin of Samaria. The unnamed temple was perceived as an example that illustrated the fate of all the others. However, the tradition bearers no longer think of a complete destruction of the whole people of Israel. Targets of God’s punitive actions are only those who rely on the high places and sanctuaries in their juridic activities. This theological concept

²⁵ Mathias (“Beobachtungen zur fünften Vision des Amos [9,1-4],” 170) rightly asks for the referent of the plural suffix, but wrongly finds it in the persons accused in Amos 8:4.

²⁶ The allusion to the famous phrase from Amos 5:2 makes likewise clear who, according to the redactor of Amos 8:14, is meant by the metaphor “maiden Israel.”

²⁷ For the full elaboration of this hypothesis, see Schart, *Entstehung*, 101-155.

²⁸ This is a practice, which is well attested in the Ancient Near East. For Mari, see Aaron Schart, “Combining Prophetic Oracles in Mari Letters and Jeremiah 36,” *JANESCU* 23 (1995) 75-93. For the Neo-Assyrian prophecy, see Karel van der Toorn, “Mesopotamian prophecy between immanence and transcendence: a comparison of Old Babylonian and Neo-Assyrian prophecy,” in *Prophecy in its Ancient Near Eastern Context* (ed. Martti Nissinen; SBLSymS 13; Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2000) 71-87, esp. 73-77.

²⁹ See Mathias, “Beobachtungen zur fünften Vision des Amos (9,1-4),” 172.

stems from the tradition bearers' version of Hosea, which formed the first part of their Two-Prophets-Scroll. In light of the background of Hosea it is most probable that they viewed the holy places of Northern Israel as sinful on the grounds that they had not been founded by YHWH. In addition, the plurality of sanctuaries stood in contrast to the exclusiveness of God's relation to Israel and Israel's devotion to God. And finally, the worship celebrated there was aimed towards other gods or strange local manifestations of YHWH.

C. The D-Layer, Amos 9:7-10

The next layer that interests us here is what may be called the D-Layer.³⁰ This layer added four new verses (Amos 9:7-10), thereby creating a new ending to Amos. Now YHWH no longer speaks to the prophet, but to all the Israelites. The passage takes up keywords from the vision (כַּפְתוֹר in Amos 9:1 // 9:7; "sword" in Amos 9:4a // 9:10; "evil" in Amos 9:4b // 9:10; "eyes of YHWH" in Amos 9:4b // 9:8). In this redactional layer the identity of Israel is deeply rooted within its history. It is within history that God has elected Israel, within history that Israel received its land, and within history that Israel will be punished. To be sure, the specific aim of Amos 9:8 is to deny a unique relationship on the part of Israel to YHWH, who has comparable relationships to other nations as well. Neither the temple nor the exodus guarantees that Israel will not suffer the destruction the fifth vision announces.³¹

The D-Layer has developed a distinctive idea of how the punishment of Israel will be executed, so that the sinful part will be eliminated but the other part will survive. The D-Redactor makes a fundamental distinction between the "sinful kingdom" (הַמַּמְלָכָה הַחַטָּאָה) and the "house of Jacob," which will surely not be destroyed.³² The concept of the "sinful kingdom" expands the idea of the tradition bearers that the political regime is responsible for the downfall of Israel. Whereas in Amos 7:9 a specific

³⁰ In order to avoid an imprecise use of the term "Deuteronomistic," I want to stress that this layer shows affinities to the Deuteronomistic History and its style, but does not use the characteristic phrases that would allow identification (see Norbert Lohfink, "Gab es eine deuteronomistische Bewegung?" in *Studien zum Deuteronomium und zur deuteronomistischen Literatur III* (Stuttgarter Biblische Aufsatzbände 20; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1995) 65-142.

³¹ The wordplay on כַּפְתוֹר in Amos 9:1 and 9:7 must have had a special significance for a parallel between the temple as cosmic center and the historical roots of the Philistines, a parallel that is now lost because of our insufficient semantic knowledge.

³² The formation נָחַ + inf. abs. + yiqtol in Amos 9:8 seems to have this sense.

dynasty, the “house of Jeroboam,” was seen as guilty, in Amos 9:8 it is the Northern kingdom as a whole, and very probably from its origin on, that needs eliminating.³³ At least this is the most plausible explanation for why the redactor cites the phrase “I will destroy it from the face of the earth” from 1 Kgs 13:34. There it is said that an unnamed prophet pronounced the downfall of the temple at Bethel. The D-Layer wants to demonstrate that Amos reaffirmed this message. According to Amos 9:9-10 the sinful kingdom also includes all those who have not believed the prophetic message, especially not the fifth vision (see the allusion to Amos 9:4b with רעה “evil”; cf. Amos 3:6). By contrast, this statement implies that those who do believe the prophet will belong to the house of Jacob.

The process of separating the house of Jacob from the sinful kingdom is described as the shaking of the house of Israel and compared to the shaking of a sieve (Amos 9:9). This concept certainly alludes to and reinterprets the shaking of the temple in Amos 9:1.³⁴ According to this layer, this shaking is only the first step in the process of shaking Northern Israel as a whole.

This layer must be viewed within the context of the D-Corpus as a whole. The four writings of Hosea, Amos, Micah, and Zephaniah present one coherent flow of prophetic critique. This unity is clearly marked, because all four writings not only have the same type of superscription, but also include similar information about their date and their audiences.³⁵ In the case of the Northern sanctuaries it is evident that the D-Redactors perceived them as illegitimate from their foundation by Jeroboam I onwards, and condemned them with the pejorative term “high places” (במות).³⁶ Applying this perspective to the interpretation of the fifth vision, it follows that YHWH never resided in the temple at Bethel. He came from Jerusalem (cf. Amos 1:2), conquered the city walls of Israel (Amos 7:7), and entered the temple yard to eliminate the high places, beginning with the temple in Bethel.

³³ The D-Layer probably was inspired by Amos 7:9, because they understood the “house of Jeroboam” to mean the Northern kingdom. Christoph Levin has described how the D-Redaction has perceived the phrase, but not how the Tradents’ version originally meant it (“Amos und Jerobeam I,” *VT* 45 [1995] 307-317, esp. 309: “Es ist kein Zweifel, daß auch in Am. vii 9 Jerobeam I. gemeint ist”).

³⁴ The phrase בְּכֹל הַגּוֹיִם “among all the nations” in Amos 9:9 was added later. The Hebrew word הַרְבֵּב must have an otherwise unattested meaning, probably a specific type of sieve. It may have been chosen in this context to allude to כְּבֵר, the channel where Ezekiel lived in Exile (Ezek 1:1).

³⁵ See Schart, *Entstehung*, 39-46.

³⁶ Whereas the tradition bearers presumably differentiated between “high places” and sanctuaries, the D-Redactors subsumed the latter under the former.

D. The Layer of the Hymnic Fragment, Amos 9:5-6

The next layer inserts a hymnic fragment between Amos 9:4 and 9:7.³⁷ As usual, some keywords and allusions are employed in order to make it obvious to the reader that a new understanding of the fifth vision is intended. Stefen Paas has summed up the allusions between Amos 9:1-4 and v. 5-6:³⁸

- The earthen and heavenly temple stand in opposition.
- The striking of the כַּפְתוֹרֶיךָ paralleling the touching of the earth.
- The power of YHWH extends in all dimensions of the cosmos.
- The shaking of the threshold corresponds to מוּגַג (staggering) of the earth.
- God controls the water, sea (Amos 9:3,6).
- Both use the tripartite model of the cosmos: heaven, earth, sea.

In addition, Paas shows that at least some elements fit well in a chiasmatic structure comprising all of the verses Amos 9:1-6.³⁹

The insertion of the hymnic fragment expresses a new understanding of the fifth vision. As in the earlier layers, here also there is an allusion to the shaking of the thresholds. God touches the earth, with the consequence that the earth staggers (מוּגַג). But now the shaking of the temple is seen as part of a cosmic action of YHWH himself. The action is no longer aimed specifically at Israel, but at “all inhabitants of the earth.” In addition, the action of YHWH is compared to the rising and falling of the Nile. This leads one to ask whether YHWH’s action is seen as a recurring phenomenon. At least one can be sure that after this particular period of ruin a period of restitution will follow.

Most importantly, the hymnic fragment contrasts what happens in the heavenly temple with what happens on earth. Whatever the exact concept of this heavenly dwelling place is, it is safe to say that YHWH is perceived as residing at a place in a different dimension of the cosmic building.⁴⁰ When-

³⁷ So also Wolff, *Dodekapropheten 2: Joel und Amos*, 393.

³⁸ Stefan Paas, “Seeing and Singing: Visions and Hymns in the Book of Amos,” *VT* 52 (2002) 253-274, esp. 260.

³⁹ The allusions to the following passage are not so significant. Egypt, however, is mentioned in Amos 9:5 and 7, and עַל פְּנֵי הָאָרֶץ in Amos 9:6 alludes to הָאָרֶץ in 9:8. The destruction of the sinful kingdom is paralleled with the pouring out of the waters on the earth.

⁴⁰ The meaning of the building parts mentioned in Amos 9:6 is difficult to determine. A scribal error may even have been involved. The most intriguing interpretation is that given by Hartenstein (“Wolkendunkel und Himmelsfeste,” 152-166). Following him, one can assume that the D-Redactors used concepts rooted in the self-understanding of the sanctuary at Bethel to correct the concept of the temple in Jerusalem.

ever YHWH touches the earth, it staggers. The heavenly waters are poured out, but heaven itself is not affected by those destructive actions. God does not need a special location on earth in order to communicate with human beings. The downfall of mediating institutions between God's own sphere and the earth, of whatever kind, calls into question neither God's universal power nor God's accessibility. The hymnic recitation of God's name expresses astonishment and distance, but at the same time dependability and devotion. God's awe-inspiring transcendence is inconceivable from an earthly perspective. Belief in God's identity expressed in God's name and titles enables the reader to accept even destructive actions of cosmic proportions.

This portrayal of strict opposition between God and an earthly temple that can be eliminated by God without serious consequences for the communication between humans and God can best be understood as an answer to the question: How can YHWH possibly eliminate his *own* sanctuary? This opposition stands in sharp contrast with the D-Layer. To the redactors that added the hymn fragment, the temple of the fifth vision was not a dwelling place of YHWH, but one of the Northern high places where the people served other gods. If the hymn fragment recognized in the temple of the fifth vision YHWH's own sanctuary, that temple had to be the temple in Jerusalem. From there one may proceed to ask, then, whether for this layer there was a clear distinction between Northern Israel and Judah anymore.

Continuing further, this redaction must be seen in the wider context of Amos and the Nahum-Habakkuk-Corpus. Within Amos the hymnic fragment belongs to the same layer as the other fragments (Amos 4:13, 5:8, and 8:8). Together they implement a new cosmic framework that surfaces not only in Amos, but also in Hos 4:3, Hos 12:6, Mic 1:3-4, Zeph 1:2-3, and in a very elaborated way in the hymns in Nah 1:2-8 and Habakkuk 3. The prophetic message is no longer confined to the relation of YHWH and Israel. Instead YHWH is seen as the creator, ruler and sustainer of the whole cosmos. As such he is concerned with all forms of disturbances of the cosmic order. Among these disturbances one has to reckon the transgressions of Israel, but also the cruel imperialism of Nineveh (cf. Nahum) and Babylon (cf. Habakkuk). Similar accusations could be launched against Israel and

They picked up the concept of a heavenly dwelling place, but in contrast to Bethel, where it was believed that the heavenly place of God needed a firm connection to a specific holy place on earth (compare the "ladder" in Gen 28:12), the D-Redactors could imagine God without a fixed communication channel with an earthly basis. A praying person could get in contact with YHWH by invoking his name. In fact the process of reading the writing of Amos after the insertion of the hymnic fragments will eventually lead to places where YHWH's name and titles are invoked (Amos 3:13; 4:13; 5:8; 5:14,15,16; 5:27; 6:14; 9:5-6).

against foreign nations. Impressive is that the woe oracles, which Amos (5:18; 6:1) and Micah (2:1) direct against Israel, are picked up by Nahum (3:1) and Habakkuk (2:6,9,12,15,19) but they address foreign nations that suppress Israel. Sometimes there are even verbal parallels (יום צרה) in Nah 1:7, Hab 3:16, and Zeph 1:15; “to build a city with blood” in Mic 3:10 and Nah 2:12; “Woe to the city” Nah 3:1 and Zeph 3:1).

In sum, according to this layer the fifth vision occurs in Jerusalem. It depicts YHWH, who had left his place in the holiest part of the temple building, where he sat on his throne over the Ark of the Covenant, now standing upon the central altar in the yard. From there YHWH, with the help of the prophet, sets off a shockwave of destruction, before he retreats to his heavenly temple. As a result, the whole earth staggers. However, reciting YHWH’s name will help to end this period of frightening distance from God. Then a new period will begin with the judgment of the nations that so forcefully conquered Israel and Judah: the Assyrians (as spelled out in Nahum) and the Babylonians (as elaborated in Habakkuk).

E. The Restitution Layer, Amos 9:11-15*

The next revision of the writing of Amos is no longer interested in the elimination of the temple, but elaborates on what will happen afterwards. In contrast to the vision of downfall, the redactors added Amos 9:11-15* as new ending.⁴¹ With the well-known phrase “on that day” the passage portrays a future, in which the “fallen booth of David” will be rebuilt.⁴² The phrase “booth of David” introduces a metaphor not known elsewhere in the OT. It is difficult to determine precisely what the redactor had in mind. It was certainly his intention to introduce a new entity, which was to be identified neither with the “sinful kingdom” nor with the “house of Jacob” (both in Amos 9:8) nor even with the temple of Amos 9:1. It would fit well within the context if the “booth of David” were taken to refer to a small version of the Davidic dynasty (“house of David”). Then the future would not bring a restoration of the old glorious kingdom, but a modest version of political independence.⁴³ However, assuming that the metaphor of rebuilding is con-

⁴¹ The text in Amos 9:12a and 9:13 (without the introductory formula) was added later; see James Nogalski, *Literary Precursors to the Book of the Twelve* (BZAW 217; Berlin, New York: de Gruyter, 1993) 108-110.

⁴² The different suffixes in this passage are very difficult, because their referent is not clear. The Septuagint has only 3. pers. sg. fem. pronouns, which refer to the “booth of David.” That is what one would expect. The MT is either due to scribal error or the changing of referents. See James D. Nogalski, “The Problematic Suffixes of Amos IX 11,” *VT* 93 (1993) 411-418.

⁴³ This is the interpretation of Jeremias, *Amos*, 134.

nected to the immediate context, one may see an allusion to the temple in Amos 9:1. The redactor would have understood the blow against the building to cause its destruction; however some ruins would remain. Whereas the downfall of the old temple initiated a shockwave of death, the erection of the “booth of David” is accompanied with prospering life and secure existence in the land. Whereas in Amos 8:2 the “end for my people Israel” was announced, in the new era YHWH will restore the covenant relation (Amos 9:14 “my people Israel”; Amos 9:15 “your God”).

This concept fits well with Haggai and Zechariah, who proclaimed that the punishment of Israel was finished, that the temple lying in ruins (Hag 1:4, 9) will be rebuilt, albeit not in its former glory (Hag 2:3), and that YHWH will bring a new period of covenant relationship (e.g. Hag 2:5) and well being (e.g. Hag 2:18-19). Writings under their names were added to the Nahum-Habakkuk-Corpus, yielding what I call the Haggai-Zechariah-Corpus.⁴⁴ Within this corpus the vision cycle in Zech 1-6 forms a counterpart to the vision cycle of Amos. In five visions Amos saw the destruction of Israel coming, but in eight visions Zechariah sees the restitution of Israel and its glorious future. Certainly there are many differences between the two cycles, since they derive from different times and authors. However, as vision cycles they stand out from the rest of the prophetic words in the HZ-Corpus. In addition, there are some allusions from the later cycle to the former. Allusions to the fifth vision of Amos are found, for example, in the first vision of Zechariah (יָרָאִיתִי [I have seen] in Zech 1:8 // Amos 9:1; לְרָעָה [for evil] Zech 1:15 // Amos 9:4b⁴⁵). Admittedly, the allusions are not very significant, but the over-arching composition of the book as a whole demonstrates that YHWH destroyed the first temple, and in the Persian Period reestablished it in Jerusalem. The prophecies of doom do not apply any longer to Israel. Instead, Zechariah expresses the distinct feeling that the period of the “former prophets” (Zech 1:4; 7:7) has come to an end and a new era of prophecy has begun. Now it is the primary goal of the prophet to offer comfort (Zech 1:17).

In sum, this layer perceived the fifth vision as the announcement of the Babylonian destruction of the temple in Jerusalem. However, the shaking of the thresholds did not result in a total elimination of the sanctuary, but only in a period during which the building stood in ruins. Amos 9:11-15* and the visions of Zechariah demonstrate that now a new era had begun, in which the temple would be rebuilt as well as the community around it.

⁴⁴ Schart, *Entstehung*, 252-260.

⁴⁵ Holger Delkurt, *Sacharjas Nachtgesichte. Zur Aufnahme und Abwandlung prophetischer Traditionen* (BZAW 302; Berlin / New York: de Gruyter, 2000) 81.

F. The Eschatological Layer, Amos 9:12a,13

Once again a redactor added a new ending to Amos (9:12-13*), alluding to the shaking of the thresholds by employing another image in which the hills loose their stability so that they “flow” (זָרַח, cf. Amos 9:13).⁴⁶ The staggering of the earth, which in Amos 9:1,5 is perceived as a frightening loss of stability, is now envisioned as sign for overwhelming fertility. A restitution of Israel in its land must be part of a fundamental transformation of nature. Otherwise it would not address the deepest sources of Israel’s sin. In addition, Amos 9:12a expresses the idea that all the nations “over whom YHWHs name is called” must be come under the control of Israel. This is especially so for Edom, who is viewed as the ultimate enemy of God’s people. The scale of this transformation is of such a character that it supersedes everything that could be realized within the course of history. Instead it envisions only the end of history to bring the solution to the deepest problems of Israel within its world. Therefore it may be labeled an eschatological understanding of the restitution of Israel.

This redaction is very closely related to Joel and Obadiah. Amos 9:13b is an almost verbatim citation of Joel 4:18. Both passages now form a kind of frame around the writing of Amos. Further, as Nogalski has noticed, “Amos 9,12a contains the essential elements of the message of Obadiah.”⁴⁷ Joel and Obadiah are very closely connected in verbal and thematic aspects. Most of the verbal agreements are clustered around the concept of the “Day of the Lord” (“near is the day of the Lord,” Joel 4:14 and Obad 1:15).⁴⁸ The redactors want the reader to perceive Amos within this hermeneutical frame. Reading the fifth vision from this point of view, the temple in Amos 9:1 cannot be identified with the one on Zion, because the Zion temple is unconquerable. In contrast, Joel 3:5 and Obad 1:17 clearly state that Zion will be the only place where one can safely escape destruction. This redaction must therefore interpret Amos 9:1-4 as the destruction of Bethel, which probably is understood as an example for all places where the name of YHWH is not called (compare Joel 3:5). Whereas the former layer of Amos 9:1-4 saw the vision of Amos fulfilled when the Babylonians conquered Jerusalem, the Joel-Layer views it as something what will happen when the day of the Lord comes. As Joel 4 spells out, the “day of the Lord” will bring

⁴⁶ To be sure, the redactor’s allusion works by way of Amos 9:5, where the word זָרַח is used. A nice, almost humorous allusion contains the phrase עָנִי וְרָךְ, which is found also in Amos 2:7 with only one consonant difference.

⁴⁷ Nogalski, *Literary Precursors*, 113; cf. the close thematic parallel to Obad 17-19 with “house of Jacob” in Obad 17-18 and Amos 9:8.

⁴⁸ See Schart, *Entstehung*, 272-274.

about a final battle, in which the evil forces of the world will invade and devour the land. Only at the last moment, when they gather in the valley Jehoshaphat in order to conquer Zion, will God defeat them forever. As the command in Joel 4:13 suggests, the people of God will be involved in this final battle, although the commands are highly metaphorical. This last battle is also depicted as a gigantic earthquake, which shakes “heaven and earth” (Joel 4:16 uses the same verb שׁעַר as Amos 9:1).

In sum, from the standpoint of the Joel-Obadiah-Corpus, which is essentially informed by the dramatic events of Joel 4, Amos sees in his fifth vision YHWH, who has come on his day from Zion to fight the final battle against the evil forces of the nations. Since only Zion is the dwelling place of YHWH, all other sanctuaries and the people who seek refuge there will not escape destruction. Although it is God’s irresistible voice that will cause the final shattering of heaven and earth (Joel 4:16), the people of God are called to take part in the last battle (Joel 4:13). The command to Amos to strike the top of the column then has to be seen as an example of how humans can be involved in God’s final punishment. After this battle, however, those who have found refuge on Zion, together with the rest of nations (Amos 9:12) that have not taken part in the campaign against Zion, will live in peace within a nature that opens up abundant resources to human labor (Amos 9:13).

II. The Septuagint Version of Amos 9

The oldest Greek translation, the Septuagint, brought a new understanding of the fifth vision. Inevitably, every translation looses some semantic and structural elements that cannot be represented in the new language system. In addition, the translator of the Septuagint apparently had a poorly transmitted Hebrew Vorlage before him. Most significant for this paper, however, are *deliberate* changes in meaning made during translation. Those modifications can be classified as redactional activities. To be sure, in most cases it is impossible to decide whether a different sense of a Greek passage goes back to a Hebrew Vorlage different from MT, was incorporated within the process of translating, or was inserted within the transmission history of the Greek text. For the purpose of this paper I will concentrate on the verses Amos 9:1 and 9:11-12.

As is typical for the Septuagint of Amos, we find in Amos 9:1 a very literal translation, following closely the word order of the Vorlage, which almost certainly was identical with the MT.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ There is only one difficult case: כַּבֵּעַל. There is a good chance that the Vorlage did not contain the 3rd m. pl. suffix, since it is not represented in the Greek translation,

רֵאִיתִי אֶת־אֲדֹנָי	Εἶδον τον κυριον
נֹצֵב עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ	Εφεστῶτα ἐπι του θυσιαστηριου
וַיֹּאמֶר הֵךְ הַכַּפְתֹּר	και ειπεν Παταξον ἐπι το
וַיִּרְעֵשׂוּ הַסְּפִיִּם	ιλαστηριον
וּבִצְעָם בְּרֹאשׁ כָּל־אֶחָד	και σεισθησονται τα προπυλα
וְאֶחָדֵיהֶם בַּחֲרֵב אֶהְרֵג	και διακοψον εις κεφαλαις παντων
לֹא־יָנוּס לָהֶם נֶס	και τους καταλοιπους αυτων
וְלֹא־יִמְלֹט לָהֶם פְּלִיטָה	εν ρομφαια αποκτενω
	ου μη διαφυγη εξ αυτων φευγων
	και ου μη διασωθη εξ αυτων
	ανασσωζομενος.

In two cases, however, equivalents for Hebrew words are chosen, which imply a deliberate new meaning. First, כַּפְתֹּר (top of column) is translated as ἰλαστήριον (mercy seat). The translator probably intended to correct a scribal error. Since the Hebrew, probably written defectively as כַּפְתָּר, was known to the translator as a geographical name (see Amos 9:7 where the word כַּפְתֹּר is translated as Cappadocia), he switched the last two letters of the word, which yielded the word כַּפְתָּר (mercy seat).⁵⁰ Second, סְפִיִּם (thresholds) was translated as προπυλον (porch). The translator probably had difficulty imagining the scene: how could it be that the pieces of the thresholds, which were located on the floor, hit people on the head? Therefore the translator inferred that here סְפִיִּם must have a technical meaning, denoting an architectural part of the temple building above their heads. Both cases indicate that the translator identified the temple of the fifth vision with that of Jerusalem. It was there where the mercy seat, which was built at Sinai, was brought, and it was there where the mercy seat in post-exilic time was of most importance for the ritual on Yom Kippur. In addition, a προπυλον was located in front of the temple building in Jerusalem. In Zeph 1:9 the translator used the lexem again, only this time it clearly referred to the

which otherwise represents every morpheme. It is sad, however, that at this point the LXX does not help to recover the original text, which must have meant something like "(And) I will smash the heads."

⁵⁰ As many examples show, the Vorlage of the Septuagint was written much more defectively than the MT; e. g., כַּפְתָּר was written כַּפְתֹּר. Cf. Emanuel Tov, *The Text-critical Use of the Septuagint in Biblical Research* (2d rev. and enlarged ed.; Jerusalem Biblical Studies 8; Jerusalem: Simor, 1997) 144-146.

temple in Jerusalem.⁵¹ The destruction of this temple was, according to the Septuagint, specifically aimed at ending cultic propitiation, for which the ἱλαστήριον was used.⁵²

In Amos 9:11-12 also there are two intentional modifications. In the first colon of Amos 9:12 the Septuagint changed ירשו (they will possess) to ירשו (they will seek) and vocalized אָדָם (human being, humankind) instead of אֶדְוִם (Edom).⁵³ Due to the first change, the subject of the sentence had to be modified, yielding a totally new understanding of Amos 9:12: “the ‘rest of human beings’ will seek....” The object of the seeking process is not explicitly mentioned because the literal style of translating did not allow inserting a word for clarification. The translator had in mind as the object either the “tent of David” or “YHWH,” based on passages like Hos 3:5; Joel 2:32 (MT 3:5), and Zech 8:22.⁵⁴

Unfortunately, it is very difficult to determine how the Septuagint understood the phrase “booth of David.” The first point to be made is that σκηνη (tent, booth) has a wider meaning than the Hebrew סוכה (booth). It also is used as the equivalent for the Hebrew אֹהֶל (tent) and sometimes מִשְׁכָּן (dwelling place). It is especially relevant that the first sanctuary for YHWH, which Israel built at Sinai, is a σκηνη (Exod 25:9; 26:1). In Chronicles (1 Chron 15:1; 16:1; 2 Chron 1:4) this tent was seen as a precursor to the Jerusalem temple. It was David’s task to erect this tent within Jerusalem before Solomon built the temple. In some psalms the building itself is metaphorically described as a tent (σκηνη; Ps 26:6 = MT 27:6; 28:1 = MT 29:1; 30:21 = MT 31:21; 41:5 = MT 42:5). The exact phrase “booth (σκηνη) of David,” however, occurs again only once more, in Isa 16:5 where it translates אֹהֶל דָּוִד. The passage there envisions an eschatological

⁵¹ Although it was sometimes doubted, the hypothesis is nowadays generally accepted that the Book of the Twelve was translated by only one translator. The consistent use of προσηλον, which is not attested elsewhere in the Septuagint, may serve as an additional support.

⁵² For the translation of כַּפּוֹרֶת and the meaning of ἱλαστήριον, see Klaus Koch, “Some Considerations on the Translation of kapporet in the Septuagint,” in *Pomegranates and Golden Bells* (ed. David P. Wright, David Noel Freedman, and Avi Hurvitz; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1995) 65-75.

⁵³ In the first case, the very common interchange between Resch and Dalet established a difference between the Septuagint and MT. In the case of Edom, the Septuagint-Vorlage may have been written defectively so that there would be only a difference of vocalization between LXX and MT.

⁵⁴ Only later, presumably by early Christian scribes, “TON KYRION” was added as an object. This object was probably inferred by comparing passages with a similar theme, e.g. Hos 3:5; Joel 3:3; Zech 8:22.

ruler sitting on a throne within the “booth of David” striving intensely for truth and righteousness. As in Amos 9:11-12, this is the time when harmony between God’s people and a foreign nation is established. So, on the one hand it is very probable, that the “booth (σκηνη) of David” in the Septuagint was viewed as a sanctuary in continuity with the temple of Jerusalem. On the other hand, the “booth of David” is the place where an unspecified future judge will enforce truth and justice, even between nations. If one is allowed to combine these two aspects, it would follow that the Septuagint perceived the “tent of David” as an eschatological equivalent to the Sinai tabernacle and the Jerusalem temple, providing a place where an unspecified eschatological figure will enforce God’s justice.

In sum, from the point of view of the Septuagint the fifth vision foresees the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem, which is especially perceived as the place where the propitiation of YHWH takes place. In the end time, the ruins will be rebuilt to form a new religious center where an eschatological figure will judge (Isa 16:5). As a consequence, the “rest of human beings” will seek the “booth of David,” especially the judge residing in it. Whether cultic activities or propitiation rites will be performed again is not mentioned.⁵⁵ This will have consequences not only for Israel but for all nations.

III. The Christian Redaction of Amos 9

A Christian redaction critic is not finished with the task of reconstructing the literary growth of the text until the context of the Christian Bible is reached. Christian redactors inaugurated a new understanding of the Greek canon of Jewish Scriptures by renaming it the “Old Testament” and attaching to it a collection of writings they called the New Testament. Even if the redactors had not changed a single letter of the Jewish Septuagint, they would have created a new sense of it through this redactional activity.⁵⁶ However, the Christian redactors made additional modifications in order to guide the reader towards a new understanding of Israel’s scriptures.⁵⁷ Again I will focus on the opposition between Amos 9:1 and Amos 9:11-12, because in this case we have an explicit quotation in Acts 15, which allows us

⁵⁵ A reader of the whole Septuagint collection may speculate whether propitiation outside the temple cult through the death of the martyrs still remained a possibility (4 Macc 17:22).

⁵⁶ As we have seen so far, adding new closing sections to an existing text corpus was an established redactional method already within the growth of the writing of Amos.

⁵⁷ See David Trobisch, *Die Endredaktion des Neuen Testaments: Eine Untersuchung zur Entstehung der christlichen Bibel* (NTOA 31; Freiburg (Schweiz) / Göttingen: Universitätsverlag / Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996).

to elaborate the understanding of the Amos passage within the Christian Bible. I will confine myself to a few main points.

First of all, Christian scribes employed a special scribal technique to write the so-called *nomina sacra*. Throughout the Christian Bible a set of words the referents of which are closely related with the Trinitarian God (e.g. Kyrios, Jesus, Christ, the Spirit, David) are written in contracted form together with a horizontal line above.⁵⁸ This is probably meant as a signal to the reader that the three persons of the Trinitarian God are identical with YHWH, the God of Israel, his messiah and his spirit. It is the task of the reader to establish how precisely this identity can be conceived in every passage. One can safely assume that in cases where the New Testament quotes the Old Testament the reader has to use the NT understanding as starting point.

Amos 9:11-12

(11) Ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ
 ἀναστήσω
 τὴν σκηνὴν ΔΑΔ τὴν πεπτῶκυιαν
 καὶ ανοικοδομησῶ
 τὰ πεπτῶκοτα αὐτῆς
 καὶ τὰ κατεσκαμμένα αὐτῆς
 ἀναστήσω
 καὶ ανοικοδομησῶ αὐτὴν
 καθὼς αἱ ἡμέραι τοῦ αἰῶνος
 (12) ὅπως ἀν ἐκζητήσωσιν
 οἱ καταλοιποὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων
 τὸν ΚΝ Ἀλεξανδρινῶς
 καὶ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη
 ἐφ' οὓς ἐπικεκλητὰ τὸ ὄνομα μου
 ἐπ' αὐτοὺς
 λέγει ΚΣ
 ὁ ποίων ταῦτα

Acts 15:16-18

(16) Μετὰ ταῦτα ἀναστρέψω
 καὶ ανοικοδομησῶ
 τὴν σκηνὴν ΔΑΔ πεπτῶκυια
 καὶ τὰ κατεσκαμμένα αὐτῆς
 ανοικοδομησῶ
 καὶ ἀνορθώσω αὐτὴν
 (17) ὅπως ἀν ἐκζητήσωσιν
 οἱ καταλοιποὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων
 τὸν ΚΝ
 καὶ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη
 ἐφ' οὓς ἐπικεκλητὰ τὸ ὄνομα μου
 ἐπ' αὐτοὺς
 λέγει ΚΣ
 ποίων ταῦτα
 (18) γνωστὰ ἀπ' αἰῶνος

⁵⁸ See Colin Henderson Roberts, "Nomina Sacra: Origins and Significance," in *Manuscript, Society and Belief in Early Christian Egypt* (London: Oxford University Press, 1979) 26-48; Larry W. Hurtado, "The Origin of the Nomina Sacra: A Proposal," *JBL* 117 (1998) 655-673. In this paper it is not important to differentiate between the different stages of the development of the set of nomina sacra. By the time of the great Bible codices Alexandrinus, Vaticanus, and Sinaiticus the third level of development was universally in use.

Second, when one compares Acts 15:16-18 with Amos 9:11-12, it becomes obvious that the NT quotation differs significantly from the Septuagint text.⁵⁹ Some variants are probably due to the fact that the author of Acts used for Amos 9:11 some other text tradition, presumably from a testimonia collection, in which Amos 5:25-27 also was included.⁶⁰ The redactors of the Christian Bible, although they included the Septuagint version of Amos in their Old Testament, did not harmonize the passage in Amos with its quotation in Acts, therefore admitting a tension between Amos' original vision and James' presentation of it at the summit meeting in Jerusalem.⁶¹

Let us consider the deliberate modifications.⁶² First, Acts changed the opening formula. Instead of "on that day," Acts 15:16 states that the predicted things will happen "when God returns after these things." Unfortunately, it is not clear to what "these things" refers. The natural explanation would be that it is assumed the hearer of the quotation is familiar with the original context of the quotation and therefore knows that what Amos had predicted will happen before the booth of David will be rebuilt, namely the destruction of the Jerusalem temple and the survival of "the rest" called the "house of Jacob." Indeed, the author of Acts seems to have used many aspects of Amos, especially of chapter 9, to describe the *heilsgeschichtliche* situation of the new Christian community. Stephan is accused of preaching that Jesus would destroy the temple (Acts 6:14). By implication, the fifth vision is reapplied and now directed against the Herodian temple in Jerusalem!

Two reasons are given as to why this will happen. First, according to Stephan other gods are worshipped in the official cult of Israel from the

⁵⁹ For careful comparisons see Sabine Nägele, *Laubhütte Davids und Wolkensohn: Eine auslegungsgeschichtliche Studie zu Amos 9:11 in der jüdischen und christlichen Exegese* (AGJU 24; Leiden, et al.: Brill, 1995). Significant differences in comparison to the LXX and mixed quotations ("Mischzitate") are typical for the early Christian use of scriptures (see Ernst Dassmann, "Umfang, Kriterien und Methoden frühchristlicher Prophetenexegese," *Jahrbuch für biblische Theologie* 14 (1999) 117-143, esp. 123-124). On the one hand the Christian communities had neither the money nor the social standing to have access to the official manuscripts. On the other hand they were not interested in accurate wording, but in the sense of the scriptures.

⁶⁰ See Martin Stowasser, "Am 5,25-27; 9,11f. in der Qumranüberlieferung und in der Apostelgeschichte: Text- und traditionsgeschichtliche Überlegungen zu 4Q174 (Florilegium) III 12/CD VII 16/Apg 7,42b-43; 15,16-18," *ZNW* 92 (2001) 47-63. He has shown that Amos 5:25-27 belonged to the same testimonia collection that contained Amos 9:11.

⁶¹ The Codex Alexandrinus, however, has adopted the variant *των κυριων* from Acts and inserted it into Amos 9:12. See Wilhelm Rudolph, *Joel, Amos, Obadja, Jona* (KAT 13,2; Gütersloh: Mohn, 1971), esp. 279.

⁶² For the purpose of this paper we do not need to differentiate between variants made in the testimonia collection and those made by the author of Acts.

time in the desert on (Acts 7:40-43). In this case the cult critique of Amos is adopted with the quotation of Amos 5:25-27. Second, the temple in Jerusalem *never* was a legitimate place for worship, since God does not inhabit a building made by human hands (Acts 7:48). Although there is no clear allusion to it, the hymnic passage in Amos 9:6 probably was read as referring to a heavenly sanctuary of God not made by human hands.

Another deliberate change seems to be the elimination of the phrase “according to the former times” from Amos 9:11. This may be explained with the assumption that the author of Acts did not want to stress the continuity between the New and the Old. The tent of David will have a new quality, although this newness is “known from old.”

A further deliberate change is that the seeking process of the “human beings who remain” is perceived as being aimed towards “the Lord.” The “Lord” may be YHWH. In this case, the author of Acts may have inferred from passages like Hos 3:5, Joel 2:32 (MT 3:5), and especially Zech 8:22 that the object of the seeking must be God. However, from the point of view of the redactors of the Christian Bible the “Lord” may also be Jesus Christ! This is obvious, for example, in Rom 10:13, where the citation of Joel 2:32 (MT 3:5) is understood in this way. It is clear from Rom 10:9 that “the Lord” is identified with Jesus. It is noteworthy that Paul states in this passage from Romans that there is no difference between Jews and Greeks “because they have the same Lord” (Rom 10:12). This is also what the James of Acts wanted to show (Acts 15:19) according to the redactors of the Christian Bible.

Turning now to the implicit adaptations of Amos 9:11-12, one may ask first how the redactors of the Christian Bible perceived the term “booth of David.” In this case it is unambiguously clear that they identified David with Jesus Christ, because “David” is written as a *nomen sacrum*.⁶³ The background for this identification is that Jesus was seen as the true “son of David” (Lk 1:27; Rom 1:3). In addition, the body of the risen Christ could be metaphorically described as a new temple, which will replace the old destroyed one after three days.⁶⁴ The rebuilding of the “booth of David” was therefore viewed as the resurrection of Christ.

The last implicit modification of meaning I want to mention is the new understanding of the phrase “over whom my name is called” in Amos 9:12.

⁶³ To be sure, “David” belongs to the *nomina*, which were applied only late in the transmission process of the Bible. Within the great codices Alexandrinus, Vaticanus, and Sinaiticus, which attest the phenomenon of the Christian Bible in extant manuscripts, “David” is already among the *nomina sacra*.

⁶⁴ Act 6:14 alludes to this concept; see also Mk 14:58; 15:29; Mt 26:61; 27:40; Joh 2:19-22.

According to the redactors of the Christian Bible this must refer to the Christian mission, including specifically the act of baptism (see Acts 2:38; 19:5; Jas 2:7).⁶⁵ Through the Christian mission the gentiles receive the status as God's people ($\lambda\alpha\omicron\varsigma$ Acts 15:14) without being obliged to observe the Mosaic Law in full. It is sufficient to practice a very limited set of stipulations, which were laid down in the letter to Antioch.

In sum, according to the Christian redactors Amos foresaw in his fifth vision the destruction of the Jerusalem temple by the Romans. This destruction was seen as punishment for worshipping other gods. In addition, it was seen as the necessary precondition to erecting the sanctuary that will truly be a dwelling place for God, namely the "booth of David." This is what David had prayed for, but did not receive (Acts 7:46). This eschatological "booth" will not be made by human hands like the old temple, and, although this is not stated explicitly but may be inferred, does not need a "mercy seat" anymore. The metaphor "booth of David" refers to the body of the risen Jesus Christ, the true son of David.⁶⁶ Whoever responds in belief to the Christian mission will be included in the eschatological community out of Jews and gentiles. In the time when the author of Acts wrote, the process of realization of this end time prediction was impressively and irresistibly on the way.⁶⁷

IV. Conclusion

In this article I have tried to show that the original sense of the oldest literary layer of the fifth vision only existed for a couple of years. The claim to go back to a direct visible encounter with YHWH's real presence, something that even prophets did not experience in every generation, the challenging images, together with the paucity of details, albeit important ones, served as a source for new inspiration in comparable situations. Since the claim of a direct encounter with God was proven valid in the course of history, many generations tried to find their own situation in the sparse wording and meager imagery of this vision report. As a result, generations of redactors elaborated their own experience with God in close connection to the

⁶⁵ Jostein Ådna, "James' position at the summit meeting of the apostles and the elders in Jerusalem (Acts 15)," in *The Mission of the Early Church to Jews and Gentiles* (ed. Jostein Ådna and Hans Kvalbein; WUNT 127; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2000) 125-161, p.148. A good example how "calling God's name upon someone" can work is given in Acts 3:6-7 (cf. Acts 19:18).

⁶⁶ According to Paul every believer is part of the body of the risen Christ (1 Cor 12:27).

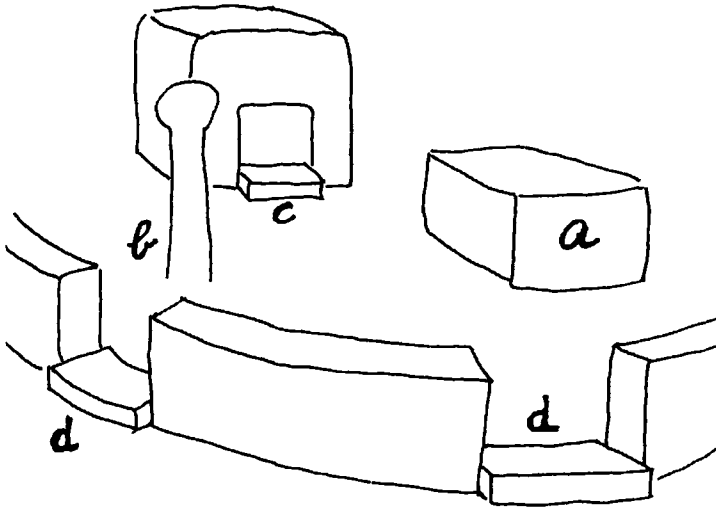
⁶⁷ The Hebrew text of the fifth vision was extraordinary faithfully transmitted by the Masoretes. Nevertheless some changes were made by the way of vocalization. The Masoretes, therefore, may not be classified as redactors.

famous predecessor. From early on this vision was perceived under the impression of other prophetic texts. Some of them were included within a growing Multi-Prophets-Book, thereby providing a new context out of which the sense of the fifth vision must be construed anew by the reader. Every stage of this redaction history and its version of the Multi-Prophets-Book deserves full attention. However, the redaction critic must not stop reconstructing this process at the end of the writing of Amos, or the Book of the Twelve, or the corpus propheticum, but has to reach the final canonical shape. This final stage is different for Jews and Christians. For both, however, the fifth vision helped readers imagine that God can destroy God's own temple. For the Christians any holy place and any cult became obsolete after the risen Christ had shown an alternative way to God the father. The new community out of Jews and gentiles, for whom the temple is employed as metaphor, will replace the temple, and their spiritual worship (Rom 12:1) will substitute for the temple cult. For Jews and Christians the fifth vision could serve as a reminder that God is greater than any manifestation God established in history. Both should be jointly on the way to the eschatological encounter with God face to face (1 Cor 13:12).

Appendix 1: The Growing Context for the Fifth Vision of Amos

1. Oldest literary layer: Amos 9:1-4a*
Book context, writing of Amos: Amos 1:1*; Amos 1:3-9:4a*
2. Tradition bearers layer: Amos 8:14 and 9:4b
Book context, Two-Prophets-Book: Hos 1:2-14:1*; Amos 1:1*; 1:3-9:4*
3. The D-Layer: Amos 9:7-10
Book context, D-Corpus: Hos*; Amos 1:1-9:10*; Mic*; Zeph*
4. The layer of the hymnic fragment, Amos 9:5-6
Book context, Nahum-Habakkuk-Corpus: Hos*; Amos 1:1-9:10*; Mic*; Nah*; Hab*; Zeph*
5. The restitution layer, Amos 9:11-15*
Book context, Haggai-Zechariah-Corpus: Hos*; Amos 1:1-9:15*; Mic*; Nah*; Hab*; Zeph*; Hag*; Zech*
6. The eschatological layer, Amos 9:12a,13
Book context, Joel-Obadiah-Corpus: Hos; Joel; Amos 1:1-9:15; Obad; Mic; Nah; Hab; Zeph*; Hag; Zech
7. The Septuagint version of Amos 9
Book context, Jewish collection of authoritative Greek books
8. The Christian redaction of Amos 9
Book context, Christian Bible comprising Old and New Testament.

Appendix 2: A Rough Sketch of the Temple
 Presupposed in Amos' Fifth Vision



- a: central altar, located in the yard, on which a person can stand
- b: column in the yard; the word כַּפִּיזוֹר may refer to the top of it
- c: threshold at the door of the temple building
- d: thresholds in the outer wall of the temple precinct