

Religious worship in the Book of Amos (1)

CULT in the book of Amos holds a prominent place; in it the prophet saw the source of all the trouble in the religious life of the people. It was the chief stumbling block to right living. The people believed firmly that by propitiating Yahwe by plenty of sacrifices and feasts they would receive thereby his good favour since His interests were closely bound up with theirs. Amos tried all means to eradicate this idea from their minds and hence he launched a powerful attack against such practices as a first step in the upward march to higher conceptions of God and to a right way of living.

In this short study we shall try to examine carefully all available evidence in this book and outside it to draw out a picture of the religious life of Israel in the times of the prophet; we shall see what the beliefs of the people were and what Amos himself thought about such beliefs; we shall compare these practices with the requirements of Mosaic Law to see what one might learn therefrom with respect to the date of the Pentateuch (2).

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- (1) Commentaries: A. VAN HOONACKER (1908); J. KNABENBAUER S.J., (1924); P. RIESSLER, (1911); J. THEIS, (1937); E. TOBAC, (1919); T.H. ROBINSON (1938); E. SELLIN, (1929); R.S. CRIPPS, (1929); S.R. DRIVER, (1915); W.R. HARPER, (1910); V. HERNTRICH, (1941); L. KOHLER, (1920); B. KUTAL, (1933); J. TOUZARD, 1908; A. WEISER, (1928); other works: K. BUDDE, *Zu Text und Auslegung de Buches Amos*, JBLit 43 (1924) 119; C.C. TORREY, *On the Text of Am 5, 26*, JBLit 13 (1894) 61-63; P. VETTER, *Die Zeugnisse der voralexandrischen Propheten über den Pentateuch, I Amos* Theol. Quartalsschrift 81 (1899) 512-522; CHARLES F. JEAN, *Le milieu biblique*, Paris 1922-36; F.M. ABEL, *Geographie de la Palestine*, Paris 1933-38; W.F. ALBRIGHT, *From the Stone Age to Christianity*, 1946; *Archeology and the Religion of Israel*, Baltimore, 1946; S.A. COOK, *The Religion of Ancient Palestine in the Light of Archaeology*, London, 1930; P.R. DE VAUX, *Le schisme religieux de Jer. Ier*; G.B. GRAY, *Sacrifice in the OT.*, Oxford, 1925; J.M. LAGRANGE, *La nouvelle histoire d'Israel et le prophète Osee*, RBI (1893) 203-238; W.O.E. OESTERLEY-T.H. ROBINSON, *A History of Israel*, Oxford, 1945; J.S. SKINNER, *Prophecy ad Religion*, Camb., 1926; W. ROBERTSON SMITH, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, Lond., 1907; L.H. VINCENT, *La notion biblique du haut lieu* RB 50 (1948) 245-278, 438-445; A.C.

Historical Antecedents (3)

When Jeroboam I (929-909) gained independence for the ten tribes he tried all means to wean the common people from Jerusalem the former capital of united Israel. He exploited all the latent tendencies in the heart of the people against the centralisation of worship and instituted new shrines whither they would go and carry out their religious duties.

He chose for the purpose the cities of Bethel and Dan. Bethel had already been a shrine of old standing, being connected with the Patriarchs Abraham and Jacob Gn 12, 8; 13, 3; 28; 35. In the period of the judges Yahwe was consulted here Jud 20, 18; 21, 2. It was the place where the ark stood for some time 20, 26-27; Samuel visited it once a year 1 Sam 7, 16. At Dan the Danites had set up an idol which they put under the charge of a levite priest Jud 18, 1-31; this idol was still there in the times of Samuel 1 Sam 18, 31. These shrines were intimately connected with the religious life of the northern people much more than far away Jerusalem which was associated with the tyranny of Solomon.

Here Jeroboam set up two golden calves 1 Kg 12, 28; cfr. Ex 32, 17. In Canaanitish religion the bull was the symbol of strength and fertility and hence the symbol of *Ba'al* (4). Moreover, he restored the *bamoth* with their *masseboth* and the *ashe-*

WELCH, *The Religion of Israel under the Kingdom*, Edinburgh, 1912; A. CHAREN, *Le diatribes d'Amos*, Coll. Nam. 31 (1937) 237-47; A.B. DAVINDSON, *The Prophet Amos*, The Expositor 3rd Ser .5 (1887) 161-179; 6 (1887) 161-173; L. DESNOYER, *Le Prophète Amos* RB 26 (1917) 218-246; G.R. DRIVER, *Linguistic and Textual Problems in the Minor Prophets*, JThSt 39 (1938) 145-166; 260-73; 393-405; W.A. IRWIN, *The Thinking of Amos*, AmJSemLg 49 (1932) 102-114 H.H. KRAUSE, *Der Gerichtprophet Amos*, Zts. Alttest. Wiss. 9 (1932) 221-39; J. MORGENSTERN, *The Historical Antecedents of Amos*, Cincinnati. 1941; W. MUSS ARNOLT, *Amos 5, 26 (21-27)*, The Expositor, 6th Ser 2 (1900) 414-428; S. OETTLI, *Amos und Hosea*, Beiträge zur Förderung christlicher Theologie 5 (1901) heft 4; L.B. PATON, *Did Amos approve the calf-worship at Bethel?* JBibLit 13 (1894) 80-9L; N. SCHMIDT, *On the Text and Interpretation of Amos 5, 26-27*, JBLit 13 (1894) 1-15.

- (2) Cfr. P. POHL, *Historia Populi Israel*, Romae 1933 36ff; OESTERLEY-ROBINSON, *History of Israel*, Oxford 1945, p. 31.
- (3) S.A. COOK, *The religion of Ancient Palestine*, Lond. 1930 p. 27f; cfr H.L. VINCENT, *Canaan*, p. 169ff.
- (4) R. DE VAUX, *Le schisme religieux de Jeroboam Ier*, Angelicum 20 (1943) 82.

ra. The feast of the tabernacles was transferred to the eighth month while at Jerusalem it was celebrated on the seventh month Lv 23, 39ff; Nm. 29, 12.

It cannot be said that Jeroboam wanted to reject Yahwism and introduce Canaanite cults and religion. It seems that he simply tried to represent Yahwe by the bull. The danger however was evident; the people practically were not bent to make such a fine distinction. Thus the way was opened for all sorts of syncretism.

This state of affairs remained until the coming of the Omrides on the throne of Israel; these princes attempted to substitute Yahwism by Baalism 1 Kg 17-21; 2 Chr 21, 12-20. The breach was opened by an alliance between the Israelites and the Phoenicians as a sort of a defensive agreement against Damascus. The climax was reached in the times of Ahab the puppet of his queen Jezabel, who was too strong for the weakling-king. The faithful to Yahwe were unmercifully persecuted or forced to seek refuge elsewhere even after such a resounding victory of Eliah on mount Carmel. Finally a revolution took place; Jehu took possession of the throne strengthening his position by the most cruel means. He restored Yahwism but the schism remained with all its attendant dangers, until the coming of Jeroboam II when a new spell of prosperity was given to Israel.

The frontiers of Israel were extended northwards nearly as far as those of David's Kingdom Am 6, 14. Religious conditions however remained as before. Against this background of material prosperity and culture must be analysed and studied those sections in the book of Amos dealing with the religious life of the people. It was a period of great material well-being and hence a false confidence in one's self was engendered, which in its turn fostered a distorted view of God's relations with mankind. The Israelites came to believe that there was a necessary interdependence between their own existence and prosperity on one hand and God's honour on the other. Here lies the key to the correct interpretation of Amos' standing with respect to external religious practices.

The Texts

In this section we shall examine all the relevant texts, as to their importance in reconstructing the religious life of the people of the Northern Kingdom in the eighth century B.C.

2, 4 *Thus saith the Lord: For the three transgressions of Judah and for four, I will not turn away the punishment there-*

of. Because they despised the Law of the Lord and have kept not His commandments and their idols caused them to err, after which their fathers had walked.

Critics generally, such as J. Wellhausen, W. Nowack, S.A. Smith, Cripps and others, reject this verse as an interpolation because Amos would not be interested in the promotion of Cult; its language is very insipid being the same language used after Jeremiah's reformation; there is no elaboration of punishment and Amos as a Prophet would consider Judah and Israel as one nation. Others, such as S.R. Driver, A. Van Hoonacker, Robertson Smith, Katal accept it as original. It would be an *a priori* argument to say Amos would not be interested in cult as such; each word in this text has a corresponding contemporary parallel; moreover, although really the two kingdoms were but one nation, in the popular mind they were two, and hence the prophet would pronounce an oracle against Judah as of the neighbours of Israel. Were it not for pre-established principles critics would never have rejected such a text. The mode of expression, as Katal remarks, recalls such passages of undoubted authenticity as 1, 3-5; 1, 13-15; 2, 1-3

Tôrâh fundamentally means *direction or instruction in general* Is 8, 16; Prov 1, 8. Later it acquired various secondary meanings: a) *Moral and religious doctrine given by God Himself through His prophets* Is 1, 10; Jer. 16, 19; Hos 4, 6-8; b) *the summary of the Law as contained in Dt or the Law itself contained therein* Dt 1, 5; 4, 8; c) *oral direction about religious observances given by a priest* Lv 6, 8; 6, 14; 11, 46; 14, 54; 15, 32; Nm 5, 29; Jer 18, 18; Ez 7, 26; Hag 2, 11; Mal 2, 7; d) *a code of Laws* Neh 8, 1. 3. *Hoq* may mean: a) *the way of carrying out ritual observances* Lv 18, 3. 30; 20, 23; 1 Kg 3, 3; 2 Kg 17, 8. 19. 30; Jer 10, 3; Mic 6, 16; b) *an order to be carried out by someone* Ps 18, 23; 89, 32; c) *statute, precept or natural law* Jer 5, 24; 31, 35; 33, 25; Job 38, 33 or, in the plural, *positive law especially Mosaic law*. To determine what each of these terms actually means in this context one must take them together because the phrase is one whole with a single meaning. They occur together in Dt 17, 19; 30 accompanied by the verb *shamar* to indicate the law as summarised in Dt. Moreover, here the two terms are synonymous being placed in the different parts of the parallelism to explain each other. It is very probable that Amos by these terms is referring to a written code of

laws. *Kizbêhem* refers to idols, cfr Jer 8, 19; 14, 22, especially *Ba'alim* which were in use in those times, whether they represented Yahwe or false gods (Sellin). Marti paraphrases "*the delusion gods or imaginary gods*". The first two meanings are both possible: Israel alternates the worship of Yahwe with that of *Ba'al* 1 Kg 11, 4-8; 15, 12; 2 Kg 11, 18; 2 Ch. 15, 8; 21, 11; 23, 17; 25, 14. *'abôtham* their forefathers who apostasised several times.

The prophet then is reminding Judah that she also no less than the other nations will be punished for having neglected the law of God. Whether this was a written law or simply natural law the text alone does not show; but is it probable that in the 8th century Israel had not yet some sort of written law which she would attribute to God Himself? The existence of such a law is a necessary presupposition in a well organized state, as the kingdom of Israel was. The nature and extent of this law will be determined further on.

2, 7-8 *And a man and his father go to the maid to profane my holy name. And they lay themselves down upon clothes laid to pledge by every altar; and drink the wine of the condemned in the house of their God.*

There is no difficulty with respect to the text. This verse forms part of the first oracle against the Northern Kingdom, which may be divided into three parts: a) 6-8 enlist the sins of Israel; b) 9-12 remind them of their ingratitude and c) 13-16 outline the punishment in store for them. Our text forms part of the first subdivision; 6b and 7a deal with sins against one's neighbour; 7b and 8 seem to combine these same sins with others directly against God himself as the *shem qodshi* and *bêth elohêhem* seem to imply. The literal meaning does not present any considerable difficulty; both the son and his father approach the *same* maid "to profane my holy name". The emphasis is laid not so much on the fact itself, although it was prohibited by law Gn 35, 22; 49, 4; Lv 18, 7; 20; 11; but on the aim of the sinners: *in order to, lem'an*. Another sin follows: they used to make use of pledged garments, which they were required by law to return to their poor proprietors by nightfall Ex 22, 25; Dt 24, 12 to sleep on near the altars in their shrines. Moreover, they availed themselves of the bribes they received, to administer injustice instead of justice, against the poor to carry on with their feasting in "honour" of God, Israel would

transform sin into an act of worship! It is important for us to determine more exactly the meaning of 7b. Evidently, it deals with prostitution; note the article with *na'arah* cfr Gn 38, 21. Was it Canaanite "sacred prostitution" so common amongst the Phoenicians? Sellin, Hoonacker, Kutal and others give a negative answer; the word *na'arah* by itself does not connote any religious practice; the prophet is rather laying emphasis on the fact that the same maid is the object of both father and son. Eward, Wellhausen, Touzard, Fischer, Riessler, S.R. Driver, Oesterly-Robinson (5) hold it to be a reference to sacred prostitution common in the ritual of *Ashteroth* called *Qedeshoth* cfr Gn 38, 21; Hos 4, 14; 1 Kg 14, 24; 15, 12; 22, 46; 2 Kg 23, 7; Dt 23, 17. The second view is more probable when the text is examined in its whole context: v 8 implies some religious practice; *mizbah* and *bêth-elohêhem* correspond to *shem qodshi* with which they are parallel.

3, 14 *That in the day that I shall visit the altar of Bethel; And the horns of the altar shall be cut off and fall to the ground.*

Sellin would transfer this verse making it follow 4, 12 to which it would have been a conclusion; '*alaw* is struck off on rhythmic grounds; it was introduced here to join this verse with 3, 13. This seems too exaggerated. Moreover *mizbehôth* would be a later addition since multiplicity of altars was still legal in the 8th cent.; but this is exactly what is to be proved. We do not believe that the text should not be accepted as it stands.

The prophet is foretelling in glowing colours and forceful language the punishment to come on the house of Israel. Nothing would escape the wrath of God, for the sins of Israel are too great. Their beloved altars will share the general ruin.

Mizbehôth. The plural here is somewhat strange. In 2 Kg 23, 15. 16. 17. we read that there was only one altar in Bethel. It might be either that Amos is using a plural for emphasis' sake or the text was modified later on. The latter alternative is more plausible, hence we cannot define exactly the number of altars in Bethel.

Qarnôth hammizbeah. This expression indicates the complete destruction of this sanctuary. Horned altars are mentioned several times in ritual prescriptions; the horns were the most

(5) W.O.E. OESTERLEY-Th. H. ROBINSON, *History of Israel*, Oxford, 1945 p. 368 No. 3.

sacred part of the altar 1 Kg 1, 50; 2, 28. They conferred the right of asylum upon those who laid hands on them 1 Kg 1, 50. 51; 2, 28; even this refuge would now fail cfr Jer. 17, 1; Ez 53, 15. 20; Ex 27, 2; 30, 2; Ps 118, 27. They were an important part of the altar; the atonement ceremonial could not be performed unless on them Lv 4, 7. 8. 25. 30. 34.

Béth-el. This is the first occurrence of Bethel in Amos. It was the principal shrine in Israel and the centre, although not exclusively, of the worship of Yahwe under the symbol of the Bull. It was a royal sanctuary 7, 15, as Samaria was the political capital. It was a shrine of long standing dating from the days of the Patriarchs themselves Gn 12, 8; 13, 1; 28, 19; 31, 13; 35, 3. 8. 15. After the division of the kingdom together with Dan it was chosen by Jeroboam I as the site for one of the golden bulls to be worshipped by his subjects 1 Kg. 12, 29ff; 13, 1ff. Here a new priesthood was established; it was condemned several times by the prophets Am 5, 5-6; 7, 10. 13; Hos 4, 15; 5, 8; 10, 15; Jer. 48, 13. It was the most popular of all the other shrines since it enjoyed royal protection 7, 13. This sanctuary would be completely destroyed including its most holy altar. The people would not have any more a place of refuge. Sellin thinks this verse to be out of place; considering, however, the absolute confidence which the sinful people placed in these sanctuaries one would realise that Amos went straight to the heart of the matter; if these sanctuaries, presumed to be an earnest of prosperity and salvation, would not escape the wrath of Yahwe whom they tried to bribe in their favour, how much less would the rest of the Kingdom?!

4, 4-5 *Come to Bethel and transgress;
At Gilgal multiply transgressions
And bring your sacrifices every morning,
And your tithes every three days.
And offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven
And proclaim and publish the free offerings.
For this liketh you, O ye children of Israel, saith
the Lord.*

These verses are embedded in the same context as that of 3, 14. The prophet is speaking to the "cows" of Samaria, that is, the licentious women of the capital. They believed that a simple journey to Bethel or Gilgal would wash away all sins (Sel-

lin), and so they might carry on with their immoral life. But these now no more would avail them, for God would totally destroy them.

Gilgal was an important shrine in the times of Amos and Hosea (Am 5, 15; Hos 14, 15; 9, 15; 12, 11). It may have been either the place where Samuel offered national sacrifices 1 Sam 11, 14; 15, 21; or that where Joshua erected the twelve stones after the crossing of the Jordan, Josh 4, 20; 5, 2-12. Here in the second half of the 8th century were many idols of *Ba'al* and *Ashtarte* (Theis) Hos 4, 15; 12, 11. These places then were the object of frequent pilgrimages.

Pishe'û: the verb *pasha'* is found only once in Amos but the corresponding noun occurs in chapters 1; 2; 3. 14. 12. It means *to transgress, to sin*. Their very coming to these sanctuaries is sinful (Cripps, Sellin). Note the phrase *harebû li-peshoa'*.

Labboqer: the people were required to offer *once* or *thrice* every morning, which is clearly a biting irony (Cripps, Touzard). Sellin thinks that it means simply that they used to bring these offerings on the morning after their arrival.

Lishelosheth yamim ma'shrôthêkhem: these tithes were meant to support the priests, to defray the expenses of the Cult and to help others in need. Nm 18, 26ff; Dt 12, 18; 26, 12. Interpreters do not agree as to the precise meaning of *lishelosheth yamim*: *every third day* (Orelli, Bachmann, S.A. Smith, Horton, Harper, Halevy, Cripps, Vetter, Touzard) or *the third day after your arrival in Bethel or Gilgal you bring your tithes* (Wellhousen, Nowack, Marti, Guthe, S.R. Driver, Sellin); *every third year* (Hoonacker), *yôm* in plural would mean a period of time, *a year*, which interpretation is too far-fetched. The second one is based on Ex 19, 10. 15; the first one is more likely. V. 4b forms a unity with *labboqer* parallel to *lishelosheth*. The former means *every morning* cfr Ps 59, 7. 15 .17, the latter would mean *every three days, on every third day*. The context favours this meaning. Indeed, the prophet is addressing the people in a rhetorical ironical vein based on a biting exaggeration: he is inviting them to go more frequently to Bethel and to Gilgal to multiply their sins, to offer sacrifices, to make free-will offerings and to offer leavened bread. Probably, therefore, a similar hyperbole underlies this expression which is easy to understand in the light of Dt 26, 12, according to which tithes were to be offered every

third year. These ever-zealous Israelites would change the year into a day.

Leavened bread was forbidden Lv 2, 7. 11; 6, 17; Ex 23, 18. In their mistaken zeal the people thought that they were rendering their offerings more acceptable to God. It might be that Amos is condemning such practice not as a transgression of the Law but simply as a part of a totally rotten ritual (Touzard).

Freewill offerings as distinct from vow-offerings Lv 7, 16; Dt 12, 6. In Chr 35, 8 the term is applied to slain animals at the Passover in addition to other offerings prescribed as essential Ex 35, 29. In Hosea 14, 4; Ps. 110, 3 it has a wider meaning. Amos here is referring to the self satisfaction of the Israelites.

5, 4. 5: Thus saith the Lord to the House of Israel: Seek ye me and ye shall live; seek not Bethel, go not to Gilgal; and cross not to Beersheba. Because Gilgal shall be destroyed and Bethel reduced to nought.

There is no reason to reject the reading *Beersheba* as an interpolation; it is attested by all old versions (Touzard, Wellhausen, G.A. Smith, Fischer, Hastings, Horton, Bachmann, Sellin).

This text forms part of an appeal addressed to the whole house of Israel; it is an eleventh hour call to amend their ways and to turn towards God. They should not seek Bethel or anywhere else but simply God the Creator of all things.

Seek ye : *darash*, to investigate, to search, Dt 13, 15; 17, 4; Jud 6, 29; to seek, to carry out something, to seek after somebody Jer 38, 4; Is 1, 17; 16, 5; Jer 29, 7; Est 10, 3. Here it would mean : *seek me, strive hard to come to me and not to your man-made sanctuaries.* The verbs *ba'ah* and *'abar* which are parallel with *darash* show that the attraction of the people towards Bethel, Gilgal and Beersheba was not simply a sentimental one; but they really went in pilgrimages to them.

'abar : to cross over, i.e. over the frontier between Judah and Israel, is a very realistic expression.

Be'ersheba; here Abraham settled for a while Gn 21, 28ff; 22ff. It was a holy place with trees consecrated to *El-'olam*. It was associated with Isaac Gn 26, 23; 21, 33; 46, 1-4. It was a shrine in the southern Kingdom attracting pilgrims even from

the North (6).

5, 21-27 *I hate, I despise your feasts
 And I will not smell your solemn assemblies
 If ye offer me burnt offerings.....
 And your meal offerings I will not accept.
 Neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your
 fat beasts.*

*Take away from me the noise of thy songs,
 For I will not hear the melody of thy viols.
 And let judgement run down as waters
 And righteousness as an overflowing stream
 Have ye offered unto me (only) sacrifices and
 offerings in the wilderness forty years. Oh house
 of Israel!?*

*Ye have borne the tabernacle of your king and
 your images:
 The star of your God which you made for
 yourselves.
 And I will lead you beyond Damascus, saith the
 Lord
 God of Hosts is His name.*

Verse 22 presents a slight difficulty. It begins with a conditional particle 'im introducing a subordinate clause which does not seem to have the corresponding principal clause. Proksch believes that it had fallen off; Cripps considers it a gloss; Harper retains it, holding the suffix with *minhah* to qualify the whole phrase. The first explanation is more reasonable, it would explain why 'olôt has no suffix; 22a cannot be held as a gloss; the text without such a supposed gloss would have been sufficiently clear; neither can the pronominal suffix of *minhah* qualify the whole phrase, for v 22b forms a unity in which *minhôtékem* corresponds to *meri'ékem* and it would be a rather queer construction.

Verse 26 is very difficult to reconstruct. It cannot be said that it is simply a gloss for it is found in all ancient versions, although in different forms. Hoonacker basing himself on the LXX reading, pointing *Sukkôt* for the Massoretic *Sikkût* and transferring *kiyyun salmékem 'elohékem* reconstructs the

(6) Cfr. P.F.-M. ABEL, *Geographie de la Palestine* Vol. II, 1938, p. 263.

text thus: *ú mesa'tem et-sukkôt malkékem u et kôkab 'elohekem kiyyun salmékem asher 'asitem lâkem kôbak 'elohékem.* *Kôkab 'elohékem* is qualified by *kiyyun* and *salmékem* by the relative clause *asher 'asitem lakem.* Proksch deletes *malkekem* and *kôkab elohékem*; reads *keyon* for *kiyyún* and *sakkút* for *sikkút.* Schmidt reads *kiyyún.* (MT, Trg, Aq., Sym., Pesh). *Kôkab* would be an explanatory gloss preceding the LXX, so also *salmékem*; the relative clause would refer to *sikkút* and *kiyyón.* *Malkékem* has the support of MT, Theo Sym. x, cfr Jer 32, 35 *Molok* The reading proposed by Hoonacker is preferable; but is it not possible that the text preceding the LXX was already corrupt? Sellin admits not only the possibility but also the fact. He believes that *sikkút* and *kiyyón* are marginal glosses to explain *sukkôt* and *ken* respectively. Sellin is basing his proposal on a theory which is not proved although it may in some way correspond to reality, that is, of the annual feast of the enthronization of Yahwe. *Sukkôt* would be the baldachin protecting the idol and *ken* the pedestal on which it was placed. The glosses would be introduced later by someone familiar with the Assyrian deities and with 2 Kg 17, 30. The solution of Hoonacker, therefore, would reconstruct the text underlying the LXX but not necessarily the original text. We shall examine the whole problem further on. Some writers would change the order of the verses; we do not see any reason for it (7).

This section forms part of a subdivision of a larger section in which the prophet is addressing a last minute appeal to the people. It follows immediately the description of the awful days of the Lord. These worshippers who believe that the day of the Lord would be a joyful feast are bluntly told that Yahwe is by no means pleased with their pompous ritual. This truth would sound more shocking to the audience if they thought that during their feasts Yahwe *came* down to share in their rejoicings.

Haggékem your feasts or solemnities Lv 21, 31; Is 11, 3; 1. Kg 8, 2. 65; 12, 32; Ez 45, 23; Ex 13, 6. These festivals imply a pilgrimage Ex 23, 4; 23, 17; Am 8, 10; cfr Arabic *'el Hag.* It might refer to the three feasts enumerated in the Pt of the unleavened bread Ex 23, 16; of the Booths Lv 23, 34; of the Weeks Dt 16, 16.

(7) W. MUSS-ARNOLD, *Amos 5, 26. (21-27)* in *The Expositor* 6 Ser (1900) 414-428.

'ariah to smell, as a mark of pleasure Gn 8, 21; Lv 26, 31; Is 11, 3. Here simply to be pleased.

Be'astrotékem, your solemn religious assemblies, nowhere else is used in the plural Lv 23, 26; Nm 8, 18; Is 1, 13; Joel 1, 14; 2, 15; 2 Ch 7, 9; Neh 8, 18. It emphasises the idea of holiday 2 Kg 10, 20; Sm 1, 13; Job 1, 14.

'olot lit. something that goes up, hence it designates a whole burnt offering Dt 33, 10; Ps 50, 21. The one who offered ate no portion 1 Kg 18, 38 thus expressing entire consecration.

Minhah a gift to anyone, a tribute to the king, a gift or offering to God Gn 4, 3-5; 1 Sm 2, 17; 26, 19; 1 Kg. 18, 29 and here. They may be either cereals or animals Gn 4, 13; Nm 16, 15; 1 Sm 2, 17, 29; 26, 19; Is 1, 13. In liturgy it indicates cereal-offerings either crude or in the form of bread Lv 2, 1ff; 6, 7ff; 7, 9f; 10, 12.

Shelem may indicate either a) a sacrifice to obtain peace or to express peace with God (LXX *eirenika*) or b) connected with *'alah* to requite, to pay Prov 7, 14; Ps 116, 14: *I will pay my vows*. Both meanings may stand here; the former one is more in accord with the spirit of the merry-makers of Jeroboam II's times. These *shelamim* were always *'abotém* i.e. slaughtered animals eaten in part by the one who offered at the social feasts; at times they were associated with burnt-offerings in times of rejoicings 2 Sm 6, 17.

'erseh to have pleasure in a sacrifice or to be pleased with the one who offers Mic 6, 7; Ps 51, 18; 2 Sm 24, 23; Hos 8, 13.

Hamón the murmuring sound of a moving throng of people Is 17, 12; 31, 4; Job 39, 7, hence a crowd of people 2 Sm 2, 18f. It may mean any sound v.g., of singing Ez 26, 13. The latter meaning is found here, without losing its association with the noisy crowd of Bethel's festivals.

Zimrat: *zamar* in Ps to sing holy hymns to the accompaniment of the lyre Ps 47, 7; 66, 4; 71, 23.

Mishpat u sedaqah, judgment and righteousness. The literal translation is easy. Do these terms mean subjective virtues or objective justice, i.e. that of God which would punish the sinners? Many accept the latter meaning Theodoret, Keil, Hitzig, König, Hoonacker, Tobac, Sellin, Camerlynck (8) and others;

(8) A. CAMERLYNCK, *Explication d'Amos 5, 24-27*, Collationes Bruggenses 1906, p. 79.

others the former one G.A. Smith, Driver, Harper, Marti, Filion, Touzard. The terms taken by themselves may mean either *objective* or *subjective* virtues; in this context, however, *subjective* virtue, i.e., *holiness* and *righteousness* are preferable. V24 is nothing more than an antithesis to v 23; holiness and righteousness would take the place of riotous festivals. They must do away with their noisy ritual that they may live better cfr 5, 4. 5. 6. 15. Verse 25 presents no textual difficulties; the meaning of the single words is clear, but for the particle *ha* prefixed to *zebahirn*. Is it an article or an interrogative particle? And if it is an interrogative particle does it imply an affirmative answer or a negative one? Dahe, Maurer and Struense have it as an article and translate: *you did offer me sacrifice etc.*; but, first of all, *minhah* would require an article; for *ha* cannot qualify both words at the same time; secondly it would be rather astonishing for Amos to tell them that they offered sacrifice in the desert when he had just blamed them for their noisy ritual; some opposition is required by the context. *Ha* is rather an interrogative particle. Hoonacker believes that it expects an affirmative answer; the meaning would be: *you did offer sacrifice in those days, therefore you should not do now*. Others as Welch, Macdonald (9), Vetter, Henderson, Knabenbauer state that it is only a relative negative: *you did offer sacrifice in the desert yet you remained wandering in the desert for forty years*. Hoonacker cites the examples of 1 Sm 2, 27; Job 20; Jer 31, 20; Ez 20, 4 which expect an uncertain reply; here, however, the prophet is already foreseeing a reply, otherwise there would be no rhetorical effect. Even if the prophet really did not consider the desert period as the golden age of Yahwism the people were not of his view and therefore such a question would be out of place. A negative answer is required; is it an absolute negative implying the non-existence of sacrifice or simply a relative one implying a contaminated sacrifice? Basing themselves on the old versions (LXX, Targum, Syr., and the Vulgate) and on their *a priori* arguments Wellhausen, Marti, Nowack, Driver, Schmidt (10) Cripps and others affirm that an absolute negative is required: *You did not offer sacrifice but you practised idolatry or you did*

(9) D.B. MACDONALD, *Old Testament Notes* in JBLit 18 (1899) 212-215.

(10) N. SCHMIDT, *On the Text and Interpretation of Amos 5, 26-27*, in JBLit 13 (1894) 2-3.

offer sacrifice but not with good dispositions. Before going further we must examine v 26 to see whether it might not be taken together with v. 25.

There are two problems to be dealt with a) the grammatical function of *u nesá'tem* and b) the presence of the names *Kiyýón* and *Sikkút*. With respect to the first we must determine whether it refers to the present or to the future; with regard to the second whether they are original. An answer to the second would shed light on the former problem. We may accept Hoonacker's reading and retain that the LXX translators read these names in their Hebrew text. *Sakkút* and *Kawá* designate Assyrian deities. *Kawan* indicates Saturn cfr Arabic *Kaiwani*. *Ka-ai-va-nu* in Assyrian denotes *Adar*, called also *Sakkúth* (11). The Israelites, therefore, would have carried or would carry the image of *Sakkúth* their king and the idol of the sidereal god *Kevan*. When did this happen? In the desert or at that time or would it happen in the future? It is not probable that the Israelites after such a long sojourn in Egypt would adore Assyrian gods; nor does it seem to have happened in Amos' time when the power of Assyria was not yet felt in Palestine and the Israelites would rather have chosen *Ba'at* (cfr Hos 11, 2). Nor does it seem to refer to a future time, for, far from carrying their idols into captivity, they themselves would be carried away as serfs (Ewald, Bathgen, Otli, Orelli) cfr Hos 10, 5; Is 46, 2; Jer 48, 7; 49, 3. Therefore we may admit Sellin's reading without any *ken* or *sakkút* thus :

u nesá'tem et-malkékem u et-salmékem
kókab 'elohékem 'asher 'asitem lakem.

Rhythmically it would be excellent. The glosses would have been introduced later under the influence of 2 Kg 17, 30. Budde's remark (12) that here is mentioned only *Sakkúth* and that it was worshipped not by the Israelites but by the immigrant Babylonians is not to the point; it seems that even after the capture of Samaria the remaining numbers of the people of Israel still kept away from Yahwism 2 Chr 30, 11 and it may be that besides these principal deities others took place beside them later on. *Malkékem* may stand for *Molok* indicating an image in ge-

(11) Cfr E. SELLIN, *Das Zwölfprophetenbüch*, Leipzig 1929.

(12) K. BUDDE, *Zu Text und Auslegung des Buches Amos*, in JBLit 43 (1924) 119.

neral cfr LXX, Syr, Aquila. Having established this reading we may return to v 25. There is no reason for combining them together: v 25 would refer to the desert period and v 26 to contemporary behaviour, just a reference to their religious processions.

The interpretation of v 25 does not only depend on the interrogative particle *ha* but also on the order of words in the sentence; moreover it seems impossible that the people offered no sacrifice in the desert Ex 5, 13; 24 5, or that the contemporaries of the prophet believed so. In this section Amos is insisting on right living, apart from worship itself v 24. Would it not be likely that he would fall back on history to prove his point? He recalls the desert period. It was certainly the idea of the people that in the desert sacrifice was offered Ex 5, 13; 7, 16; 24, 5ff. Amos then would never put a question implying the non-existence of sacrifice. They would evidently retort: "Our fathers offered sacrifice; we are following in their footsteps". The prophet would mean: Did you offer *only* sacrifice by itself? Was it not accompanied by right living?

MacDonald (13) proposing this solution bases his arguments on two facts: a) the order of words and b) the force of the verb *nagash*. The emphasis lies on the two extremes, i.e. *béthyisrael* and *minhah*; the latter prefixed by *ha* marks the main point of the sentence. *Nagash*, *qal*, means *approach to God* in worship or otherwise; *hiphil* means *to bring into one's presence*; it is applied in this sense meaning *to bring to the altar* not to *offer on the altar*. The usual term to express the act of offering a sacrifice is *'alah*. In using the former therefore the prophet wanted to indicate something else. In verse 25 he is reminding them that in their wandering in the desert together with their offerings they brought right conduct near the altar of Yahwe.

7, 9: *And the high places of Isaac shall be laid desolate
And the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste.*

This verse forms part of the plumbline vision. God, seeing that the conduct of Israel was rotten, would destroy the whole nation and its sanctuaries.

bamóth (14) were local sanctuaries, usually placed on hills

(13) D.B. MACDONALD, *Old Testament Notes in JBLit* 18 (1899) 214.

(14) Cfr. R.P.H.-L. VINCENT, *La Notion Biblique du haut-lieu*, R.B. 55 (1948) 245.

1 Kg 14, 23; 2 Kg 17, 10ff; outside the city but not far distant 1 Sm 9, 12; 9, 14. 19. 25. Sometimes artificial mounds served for the purpose Jer 7, 31; 2 Kg 17, 9. The custom of having such *high places* was copied from the Canaanites Dt 12, 2; it prevailed also in Moab Is 15, 2; 16, 2; Mesha inscription. They consisted of the shrine itself and of homes for the priests attached to them 1 Kg 12, 31; 13, 32; 2 Kg 17, 29. 32; 23, 19. These edifices are further indicated by the verbs *banah* 1 Kg 11, 7; 14, 32; 2 Kg 21, 3; Jer 19, 5; *'asah* 2 Kg 23, 8; 2 Chr 31, 1; or *'abad* Ez 6, 3. They were popular places of worship 1 Kg 22, 43; 2 Kg 12, 3; 14, 4; 15, 4; Canaanite sanctuaries were the places of a licentious cult and hence the Israelites already before their occupation of Canaan were warned to destroy them; they had to destroy *natas*, the altar; to destroy *shabar*, the steles; and to cut down the *'asherim* Ex 34, 13 and destroy the *hammim* Lv 26, 30.

The reason for the destruction of these sanctuaries is given in 7, 8: God would destroy Israel because their conduct could not stand the test to which God subjected it.

7, 13. *And at Bethel prophesy not any more for it is the king's chapel and the sanctuary of the realm.*

Amos has been preaching in Bethel for some time; Amaziah the priest of this sanctuary became jealous and sent word to the king informing him that Amos was threatening the realm with destruction. He was not satisfied with the result; he was too impatient seeing that his prestige was being undermined and his source of revenue cut off. He sent for the prophet and charged him to leave Bethel for good and to cross the border into Judah where he might earn a living. Bethel was the sanctuary of the king and of the realm; therefore Amos had no right to preach there.

Here then we have a reference to the priesthood of these sanctuaries and to the eminent position that Bethel enjoyed in the Northern kingdom, *miqdash mamlakah*, it was the principal sanctuary, as Jerusalem was in Judah. Jeroboam I instituted it as a rival to Jerusalem 1 Kg 12, 38; but Bethel was not juridically the exclusive place of worship in Israel as Jerusalem was in the kingdom of Judah. It enjoyed however royal protection.

(15). K. BUDDE, *Zu Text und Auslegung de Buches Amos* in JBLit 44 (1925) 96.

The priesthood of Bethel was established by Jeroboam himself and the priests were chosen outside the tribe of Levi 1 Kg 12, 31; 2 Chr 11, 15. The shrine was under the charge of one priest, who probably was at the head of a group of priests.

8, 5: *Saying: when will the new moon be over and we shall sell our wares; and we shall open the corn...*

The prophet is enlisting the chief sins of Israel; they were so eager to carry on with their unjust transactions that they were annoyed with the rest-days of the *Sabbath* and of the New Moon. The first was prescribed by Mosaic Law as a rest-day Ex 20, 8ff; Is 1, 13-14; Nm 10, 10. In Amos there is no reference to its religious character Lv 28, 11-15; Nm 10, 10; 28, 11-15. The coupling together of the Sabbath and the New Moon day does not prove that the latter was a sacred day; the prophet is interested only in the eagerness with which these merchants carried out their transactions.

8, 14: *They swear by the sin of Samaria and say: Liveth thy God, Dan, and liveth the god of Beersheba; even they shall fall and never rise again.*

The text as it stands presents a difficulty: *Wehê derek* seems rather strange, for people do not swear by impersonal dead things. LXX reads *your god*, which is more in harmony with *'elohékah dan*. We would prefer *dödekah* Is 5, 1; Canticle *passim*; Mesha inscription line 12.

These lines form the conclusion of a long list of calamities in store for the evil-doers. Among these there are included those who have confidence in the gods of these sanctuaries. They would be thrown to the ground not to rise again.

Swearers: Israel should swear by Yahwe Dt 6, 13; 10, 20; Jer 6, 2; 12, 6; idolatrous Israelites swear by *those which are not gods* Jer 5, 7 or by *Ba'al* Jer 12, 6; or *Milkom* Soph. 1, 5.

'ashmat shomeron the guilt of Samaria. This reading presents some difficulties. It is not clear what is meant exactly. Smith, Budde and Stade refer it to *Ashera* of Samaria planted near the altars 2 Kg 13, 6; Wellhausen, Cheyne and others substitute Samaria by the god of Bethel. Others identify it with Ashima of Hamath 2 Kg 17, 30 which was worshipped as *'ish bêthel* in the 5th cent. B.C., according to the Elephantine papyri. The glossator would, as in the case 5, 26, have put it here; in this case, however, he should have put *bêthel* instead of Samaria. We may with Sellin identify this *'ashmat* with the schis-

matical worship at Bethel cfr. Hos 8, 5, where the bull of Bethel is called *the bull of Samaria* Hos 10, 5; Dt 4, 21, 22.

Dan, a town at the extreme north of Israel. It was called *Lais* before its conquests by the Danites Jud 18, 29; Jos 19, 47. Here Jeroboam I installed one of his golden bulls 1 Kg 12, 28; 2 Kg 10, 29. In the times of Amos, it was still a popular sanctuary and the people swore by its god, that is, the golden bull.

Beersheba cfr sup 5, 5.

Dereq: generally this reading is accepted by many (Duhe, Harper, Budde etc.) who would draw a parallel with the swearing of the Arabs by the way of Mecca. *Hay* however is never used with an inanimate object, if not in later Judaism Mt 5, 33; LXX reads "your god"; hence Hoffman and Winckler read *dódeka*, *god* cfr 2 Chr 20, 37; 2 Sm 23, 24.

Hé goes back to the Massora; originally it might have been *hay* 1 Sm 19, 6; 20, 3; 25, 26.

9, 1: *I saw the Lord standing on the altar and He said: Smite the chapiters that the threshold may shake and cut them off on to the heads of them all.*

Amos had a vision in which he saw God standing on the altar ordering him to shake the building as a start to the terrible calamity which was to befall Israel.

hammizbeah, *the altar of holocausts*. It is not likely that Amos had in mind the altar of Jerusalem, but rather that of Bethel.

hakaftór. *The chapiter*, properly *a knop*; the word is used for a spherical ornament on the stem and branches of the golden candlestick Ex 25, 31-36; 37, 17-22. Hence here it would have the meaning of the ornamental chapiter of a column. Budde (16) takes the article of indicating *generality* (Ges-Kautzsch 12 g-s). After the excavations of the temple in Sichem we can form an idea of the structure of the temple in Bethel (17). Two rows of three columns each divided the hall into three parts; each of these columns was adorned with a chapiter and served above all to support the wooden ceiling for which the length of the planks would not suffice. Yahwe or the prophet would shake these columns and the temple would collapse at once cfr Jud 16, 28-30 with reference to the temple of Dagon.

basa', *to cut down, to cut short an assembly* Job 6, 9; 27, 8. The temple would collapse on the congregation.

(*To be concluded*)

C. SANT.

(16) Cfr. E. SELLIN, p. 265.

(17) E. SELLIN, *ibid.*, ad locum.