AN IDEOLOGICAL READING OF THE

TENSIONS IN AMOS 7:10-17

A Thesis Presented to the

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Bachelor of Divinity with Honours

by

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ABSTRACT

Authority is a fundamental part of any society. It comes with privilege and benefits, so some aspire to acquire it. It creates political tensions, economic gaps, religious problems, and social injustice in society. The book of Amos contains conflicts related to the issues mentioned above. This thesis aims to analyse these conflicts in Amos 7:10-17 from an ideological point of view. Identifying these conflicts within the text will hopefully offer implications for the prophetic role of the EFKS church and its mission in addressing these conflicts in the Samoan context.

DECLARATION

I declare that this work has not used without due acknowledgment

of any material that has been previously submitted for a degree or diploma

in another institution. I also declare that the work has not used any material,

heard or read, without proper acknowledgment of the source.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

DEDICATION

To those whose heritage I share and who have walked this path before me,

Rest in Love, I salute you,

Rev. Vaiaso & Mema Vaiaso

Rev. Elder Saio & Lemafo'e A'eau

Rev. Reti & Fialelei Simanu

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Acknowledgments

Faafetai ma viia le Alofa Tunoa o le Atua ua mafai ai ona tino mai lenei faamoemoe.

List of Abbreviations

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MTC   Malua Theological College

NRSV   New Revised Standard Version

SBL   Society of Biblical Literature

Introduction

Authority is often used to refer to the person/persons in charge. It grants the power or right to give orders, make decisions, and enforce obedience. Therefore, authority has an oppressive meaning, suggesting someone who holds power over others. In addition, authority has benefits and privileges attached to it and thus make it inevitable for many people to pursue it. This is why I believe authority remains a controversial issue in any context. The pursuit of authority sometimes drives people to practice bribery and corruption. Moreover, sometimes people in positions of Authority often misuse their power, which may oppress the less privileged. From a Samoan perspective, authority struggles have shaped the Samoan people's identity and status. Samoans are in constant conflict over the authority of land ownership, chief titles, and other cultural rights. These problems are not unique to the Samoan context but are prominent and therefore very important to indicate the church's role and mission in addressing these conflicts.

In an attempt to seek some form of response to the issue mentioned above of authority, I will analyse Amos 7:10-17, the conflict between Amaziah, the priest, and the prophet Amos. This conflict is due to the issue of authority. In the narrative, Amos shows concern for the poor peasants whom the leaders and the elites heavily exploited. The exploitation created a conflict between the two social classes. Amaziah rejected Amos' message and was accused of profiting from the prophetic trade.[1]

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[1] Frank E. Gaebelein, *Daniel – Minor Prophets*, EBC 7 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1985), 275.

I will carry out an ideological analysis of Amos 7:10-17. The importance of carrying out an ideological critique is to identify tensions relating to the ideological world that produced the text. Thus, an ideological analysis shall open up some avenues from economic, political, social, and religious viewpoints to explore the conflicts embedded in the text. We will also explore Amos' reasons for going north to prophesy and why Amaziah rejected him.

The most apparent tension in the text is between two people from different institutions with different roles, i.e. Amos a prophet and Amaziah a priest. But there are implications noted in the language used. This language hints at some fusion of powers and voices hidden in the text. These conflicts can symbolize tensions between different institutions of society. For example, tension between, prophets and priests, prophets and kings, rich and the poor, north and south intolerances.

In this ideological analysis of Amos 7:10-17, I hope to show that tensions in the text are related to the issue of authority. This is the underpinning issue prevalent in the ideological world in which the text was produced.

Ideological criticism tools will be used to examine the text in the context of its historical and social circumstances, including facts about Amos' life and the period in which it was written. In this examination I hope to show evidence supporting my thesis statement.

The thesis will be divided into four chapters. Chapter one will cover the literary review and the methodology used. The second chapter shall contain the first part of the exegetical process. This part shall focus more on the literary analysis of the selected text and a discussion of the tensions that are either stated or implied in the text. The third chapter will be the second exegetical process

focusing on the historical-critical analysis of the text. Chapters two and three might provide sufficient exegetical evidence to answer the questions that I pose regarding the text: What are the tensions evident in the text? Who in the ideological world is represented by Amos and Amaziah? What are the key ideas promoted in the text? Was Amos acting on divine guidance as he claims or was it for his own personal gains? Did the Northern Kingdom's trading and economic pursuits affect Amos as a farmer? Chapter four shall present my conclusions as well as possible implications from the study.

Chapter One

Literary Review and Methodology

This chapter is divided into two main parts. The first part will present the literature review of the selected passage. The literature review will provide general information about what the scholars think of the confrontation between Amaziah and Amos. The second part discusses the methodology chosen for this work, which is ideological criticism.

1.1. Literature Review

The focus of the review is to get an overview of the scholarly debate regarding the tension between these two characters – Amos and Amaziah, more importantly, who/what class they represent in the ideological world that produced the text.

To begin with, Couey states a combination of issues lies at the heart of the encounter between the priest and the prophet. These are: identity, belonging or being an outcast, each element on its own and/or one versus the other. Identity here has to do with a relationship to the people of Israel; that is, being an insider or outsider, included or excluded, in physical, social, and spiritual terms.[1] Couey makes a compelling summary of the various tensions either stated or implied in the text. For Couey, identity highlights several different issues. The most obvious being that of the offices of the priests versus the offices of the prophets and the north versus the south. Identity also implies associated issues, for example, land,

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[1] J Blake Couey, "Amos Vii 10–17 and Royal Attitudes towards Prophecy in the Ancient Near East," *Vestus Testamentum* 58 (2008): 300–314, doi:101163/1568533308X301971.

material wealth, and the temple. These issues are directly related to the social-political, economic, and religious practices of the world in which the text was produced.

Tucker claims that Amaziah challenges the right of Amos to speak the prophetic words at a particular time and place and that from his response, it is clear Amos takes the issue to be one of authority.[2] Tucker notes authority as the underpinning issue and the cause of the confrontation. However, his reference to time and place; suggests that the prosperity of the Northern Kingdom had impacted Amos and prompted him to breach jurisdictional rights to prophesy in Bethel. Amos' breach of jurisdictions indicates further tensions existing in the text. Amos was a foreigner in Amaziah's view, and he refuses to allow him to prophesy in Bethel.

Wazana, in her article, also notes that the issue of authority stands at the center of the narrative, the conflict between prophets and their opponents. The high officials who confront the prophets are as bad as false prophets and are destined to die for their mistrust of the true prophet and their attempts to silence him.[3] Wazana presents Amaziah as the antagonist who tries everything in his authority to prevent Amos from prophesying in the north. The main issue creating the tension between the prophet and priest is authority. The tension between priests and prophets is given, also implied, is the tension between the North and the South (Israel and Judah).

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[2] Gene M. Tucker, "Prophetic Authenticity: A Form-Critical Study of Amos 7:10–17," *Interpretation 27* (1973): 423–34.

[3] Nili Wazana, "Amos against Amaziah (Amos 7:10–17): A Case of Mutual Exclusion," *Vetus Testamentum* 70 (2020): 209–218, doi:10.1163/15685330-12341432.

This point is supported by Eidevall when he states that there are allegedly conflicting authorities at play, especially between the priest and the prophet.[4] Eidevall concentrates his efforts on the synchronic and diachronic analysis of the book of Amos, guided by his interest in exposing the rhetorical function of each passage and the theological and ideological aspects of the parts of the book, which he views as a multi-layered composition.[5] Edival believes the book of Amos has undergone many changes. To him, the confrontation merely reflects the theological and ideological views prominent in the author's time.

Matthews introduces the office's King into the conflict, saying that Amaziah was exercising his power to control speech within the sacred grounds of the temple at Bethel. His authority was granted to him by the King.[6] The mention of the king brings another dimension to the tensions in the text, which is the authority of the King. Here, we can see the relationship between the three leading institutions[7] of Ancient Israel. Moreover, Amaziah is seen to be associated with the highest authority in the land, making it clear that he is part of the ruling elite class.

In a similar narrative analysis, Smith and Jones[8] explain that Amaziah's versus Amos' conflict is due to their different loyalties. Amaziah is loyal to the king who appointed him temple priest, whereas Amos claims devotion to God,

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[4] Göran Eidevall, *Amos: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (Yale University Press, 2017), 182.

[5] Eidevall, *Amos*, 182.

[6] Victor H. Matthews, *Social world of the Hebrew prophets* (Ada, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2001). See also, James Nogalski, *The book of the twelve: Hosea-Jonah* 18 (Macon, Georgia: Smyth & Helwys Pub, 2011), 340.

[7] Kings, Priests and the Prophets.

[8] William Robertson Smith and Robert Alun Jones, *The Prophets of Israel and Their Place in History* (Abingdon, Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2017).

who called him despite him not being a prophet or prophet's son. The King holds the higher authority over Amaziah, the Temple priest at Bethel. Amaziah viewed Amos's prophecies as challenging the king's authority and immediately acted to stop him. This point is supported by Andersen and Freedman, saying that maybe the priest was only interested in impressing the king with his diligence and loyalty in protecting the king's name from defamation.[9] Even though King Jeroboam is silent in the conversation, the fact that he is mentioned implies that the office of the King is as much a part of the tension as the offices of the priests and prophets.

Hayes states that Amaziah was caught in between his fear of the King and heeding the powerful prophetic message. Ultimately, he acted in the best way possible to resolve the issue by notifying the King and warning Amos to leave Bethel.[10] Hayes presents Amaziah as a diplomat working in the best interest of all parties involved in maintaining social order. Again, we can see Amaziah representing the nobles and elites of society in his quest to maintain the status quo. He sees Amos as an advocate of change which would disturb social order.

In a critique of these general interpretations, Clines identifies the issue of following the ideology of the texts and failure to ask some critical questions that could lead to other possible conclusions. According to Clines, you can search high and low for metacommentary[11] on Amos and Amos commentators, for it is

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[9] Francis I. Andersen and David Noel Freedman, *Amos AB* (New York, New York: Doubleday, 1989), 771.

[10] James L. Mays, *Amos: A Commentary Old Testament Library* (London, England: SCM Press, 1969), 72.

[11] According to Clines, What is written on the pages of most commentaries is only what the author has chosen to reveal; but to every text there is a subtext, which the author has suppressed, repressed, forgotten, ignored, kept from us and that it has been kept from us and not even told. See David J. A. Clines, "Metacommentating Amos," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series* (1993).

David J. A. Clines, "Metacommentating Amos," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series* (1993): 142.

a rare scholar who will step outside the ideology of the text and notice how severely the outlook of the text has constrained traditional commentary.[12] Clines seem to mean the book's unwillingness or inability to reveal or evaluate the presuppositions. Amos is the hero who represents God, and Amaziah is the mean guy acting against God's will. This forms the basis of most, if not all, interpretations of the Amos versus Amaziah narrative.

In support of Clines, Mays noted that perhaps Amos is in the right, but maybe he is not. However, to conclude that he is in the right, not a scholarly procedure, it is simply the reflex of an uncritical religious belief that assumes that what a prophet in the Bible says must be the truth. And yet that very Bible gives us plenty of evidence about the existence of false prophets in ancient Israel and the capacity for error, even of genuine ones.[13]

Clines and Mays both believe there is no doubt, in Amos's own time, there were those who 'attributed his appearance to his bold self-will. Although the text tells us only of those who demanded that Amos go home and stop prophesying at Bethel. So, whether they implied that it was not God who brought Amos to Bethel or Amos's self-will is somewhat harder to determine. But it presents a case supporting Amaziah's reaction towards Amos since he says he is neither a prophet nor a prophet's son.

Therefore, any modern readers, by the same token, who attribute Amos's appearance at Bethel to his self-will or even say, more modestly, that they suppose Amos just thought it was a good idea to go to Bethel and say what he believed, they too stand condemned by the prophet himself. Amos's rhetorical

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[12] Clines, "Metacommentating Amos," 142.

[13] Mays, *Amos: A Commentary*, 72.

question is unanswerable. No matter that it is only a claim. No matter that you can't prove the validity of one claim by making another. God has driven Amos, and Yahweh has constrained him; this is a historical fact.[14] As Bruggemann claims, using the messenger formula and the call narrative are all attempts to authorize the prophetic utterance. The prophet's followers authenticated Amos' words by telling the story of how the prophet dealt with the legal and jurisdictional challenges by heavily depending on and trusting the highest authority, i.e., Yahweh's commission.[15]

Moreover, Roberts suggests, much of the older discussion of prophetic conflict, which often assumed clear distinctions... [such] as cultic versus non-cultic, professional versus non-professional, group versus individual, salvation versus judgment, was never convincing and deserves to be consigned to oblivion.[16] Roberts poses the challenge that conventional views on the book of Amos are founded on the belief that God had actually spoken to the prophet. This is what he claims by '*Thus says Yahweh.*' It is an amazing claim and a shocking one. Most of our acquaintances, we ought to recall, think that people who claim to hear voices from the sky should be locked up. Commentators are hardy souls, however, not easily alarmed and generous of spirit. How else to explain the fact that most textbooks on Amos accepts Amos's claim, the book's ideology?[17]

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[14] Clines, "Metacommentating Amos", 142.

[15] W. Bruggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Fortress Press, 2012), 632.

[16] J. J. Roberts, "Exegesis: a Note on Amos 7:14 and Its Context" *Restoration Quarterly,* 8 (1965): 175–178.

[17] Roberts, *"*Exegesis: A Note on Amos 7:14 and Its Context," 175–178.

1.1.2. Summary

We can infer two major arguments regarding the significance of the confrontation from the literature review. On the one hand, the understanding of the Amos versus Amaziah conflict mostly from a narrative perspective, explains the tensions arising in the text due to several issues. The majority of scholars point towards the issue of authority as Tucker and Wazana argued. Smith and Jones stated loyalty as the underpinning issue, while Hayes simply said that Amaziah's actions were simply common sense. Moreover, other issues such as identity, land, and temple, as presented by Couey, are all common interpretations of the selected text.

On the other hand, as Clines explains the tensions in the text can be better understood when discussing all the hidden ideologies in the text rather than naturally following the obvious ideology of the text and its theological intent. Through that process one can ask critical questions to get a holistic view of the issue and to provide a fair assessment of the confrontation between Amos and Amaziah. A point that is supported by Mays and Bruggerman, when they stated that all of Amos' supporters emphasize the divine aspect of Amos claim to authorise his prophecies. Fredric Jameson refers to this as the power of the text to resolve tensions the text.[18] It does a good job of reminding the reader of Yahweh's authority which shall always prevail, but it papers over the real struggles and issues faced by Amos himself. For example, the text presents Amos as this fearless and loyal servant to Yahweh who, in the end is victorious

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[18] Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (New York, New York: Cornell University Press, 1981), 17.

because Amos does share the word of God. However, the texts hide the real struggles and headaches Amos faces on a social level.

This thesis will follow Clines' implications to add to the usual interpretations that Amos went to prophesy in the northern kingdom following a divine call, as he claims in the text. Clines moves away from the dominant theological norm of the narratives to highlight the hidden ideologies representing ideologies of the world that produced these texts. Therefore, we will follow Gale Yee's procedure and study these hidden ideologies in the text (intrinsic analysis) and then relate them to the ideologies of the world which produced the text (extrinsic analysis), i.e. the author's world.

1.2. Methodology

Ideological criticism will be the primary method of interpretation used for this work. The paper will follow Gale Yee's approach to ideological criticism. Intrinsic Analysis will appropriate literary-critical methods necessary to find the ideologies embedded in the text. Extrinsic Analysis shall appropriate all historical-essentials necessary to relate the literary findings to the social world of the author.

1.2.1 What is Ideology?

First and foremost, the word ideology combines two Greek words, *idea,* and *logos,* to imply its most straightforward meaning, "knowledge of ideas."[19] According to Eagleton, the "term ideology has a whole range of useful meanings, not all of which are compatible with each other. Compressing this wealth of

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[19] William L Reese, "Ideology, in Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion," in *Eastern and Western Thought*, ed. William L Reese (New York, New York: Humanity Books, 1999), 328.

meanings into a single comprehensive definition would thus be unhelpful...”[20] Eagleton then provided a comprehensive list[21] to indicate the variety of meanings that have been proposed. For Eagleton, the belief of Ideology falls under two categories: ideology as an illusion that supports the idea of denying its existence and later, the denial of its immateriality; and practical political force.[22]

In a similar way, in neutral terms, the word ideology may be said to refer to a system or network of ideas and values a system which generates praxis. He further explains ideology in two strands; one, that ideology could either serve as a valuable or progressive factor when it is in a kind sense. In this case, to say something is ideological is to say that it belongs to a more significant view or worldview involving general beliefs, outlooks, values and social practices. Two, it could connote negativism, which is when it tends to be a bad thing. Carroll explains that in this regard, ideology remains, for many people, a term describing false beliefs as science and knowledge.[23]

Clines also classified the meaning of ideology into two categories; firstly, are those he considered as “good denotations of the word” or the direct meanings of the word, and secondly, are those he considered “the connotations of the term ideology.” He also listed his direct meanings according to what he termed “their

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[20] Terry Eagleton, *Ideology* (London, England and New York, New York: Longman, 1994), 1.

[21] (a). the process of production of meanings, signs and values in social life (b). a body of ideas characteristics of a particular social group or class (c). ideas which help legitimate a dominant political power; (d) false ideas which help to legitimate a dominant political power; (e). systematically distorted communication; (f). that which offers a position for a subject; (g). forms of thought motivated by social interests; (h). identity thinking; (i). socially necessary illusion; (j). the conjuncture of discourse and power; (k) the medium in which conscious social actors make sense of their world; (l) action-oriented set of beliefs; (m). the confusion of linguistic and phenomenal reality; (n). semiotic disclosure; (o). the indispensable medium in which individuals lived out their relations to a social structure; (p). the process whereby social life is converted to a natural reality. See Eagleton, *Ideology,* 1–2.

[22] Eagleton, *Ideology,* 7.

[23] R. P. Carroll, “An Infinity of Traces: On making an inventory of our ideological holdings. An Introduction to Ideologiekritik in Biblical Studies,” *JNSL* 21, no. 2 (1995): 15–34.

degree of generality or specificity." The list of direct meanings: **1**. A more or less connected group of ideas, **2.** A relatively coherent set of ideas amounting to a world-view or outlook on life, **3.** A set of such ideas special to a particular class or group and **4.** The set of ideas held by the dominant group in the society.[24]

Clines also noted a list of meanings under what he perceives as what the term ideology connotes: **1**. Ideas which are shared with others **2**. Ideas serving the interests of a particular group, especially a dominant group **3**. Ideas which are wrongly passed off as natural, obvious or common sensual **4**. Ideas which are assumed rather argued **5**. Ideas which is often unexpressed and unrecognised by those who hold them. **6**. Ideas oriented towards actions ideas controlling or influencing actions **7**. A representation of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence. **8**. False ideas **9**. Ideas, different from our own, that other people have **10**. Rationalistic or metaphysical ideas, as distinct from practical politics. **11**. A romantic view of the world, idolizing the ideal and scouring the actual, **12**. A totalitarian attitude, **13**. A pseudo-scientific to history and social scientific.[25]

Clines and Carroll conceptions of ideology could simply be viewed in two categories, either with a positive or a negative implication. In the same manner, Manheim's presents his concept of Ideology and Utopia. Ideology is perceived as the norm and it is the view of the minority or the ruling elites. Utopia represents the hopeful view of the majority or those being oppressed.[26] Thus, ideology is

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[24] D. J. A. Clines, "Interested Parties: The ideology of the writer and readers of the Hebrew Bible" *JSOTS* 205 (1995): 9–10.

[25] Clines, "Interested Parties," 10.

[26] Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia* (London: Routledge & Keegan Paul Ltd, 2013), 240.

therefore associated with the negative side and utopia is more towards the positive side.

Barr went on to conduct an analysis of the various ways that the term ideology has been applied by different people.   The aim of his analysis was to find out whether different usages have any point of common meaning with one another. From his analysis, he came up with several ways in which ideology could be viewed by different people. One of the definitions he came up with is that ideology is a world-view or set of ideas that is so intensely held that factual realities and practical considerations have no power to alter or affect it. He linked his definition to politics and how ideology has made people sceptical of political activities.[27]

From the definition presented above, ideology is a set of ideas or belief systems (either positive or negative) that influences or even controls the way a person lives or the way a group of persons live. This definition highlights the negative and the positive influence of ideology in directing social proceedings. Important to note, that what is considered a positive idea by one person may be considered negative by another person. Simply put, Ideology is considered the negative and Utopia is seen as the positive ideology. The utopian views of those struggling from below oppose the ideological views of the dominant minority known as the elite from the top. In society, while the elite desire the maintaining of the status quo, the peasants or lower-class citizens long for change. This creates a conflict of interest, which is why there will always be tension in society, and in the process, any literature that comes from this ideological world also

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[27] J. Barr, *History and Ideology in the Old Testament: Biblical studies at the End of a Millennium* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2000), 102–104.

inscribes this tension within. Therefore, this work will attempt to find all sorts of tension in the rhetoric of the text, as they have a connection to the real social tensions in the world that produced the text. So for Amos, the tensions we find in our literary analysis will also be connected to the tensions in the time of the author of the book of Amos, which will be the discussion in the extrinsic analysis. This thesis will utilize aspects of these definitions to help the exegetical process.

1.2.2 Ideological Criticism

Ideological Criticism is a form of criticism that usually targets rhetoric within a particular work or speech to understand the ultimate substance of the work better. The rhetoric of a work can either be particular words or images, which have a greater, symbolic meaning that is understood and observed on a cultural level. The primary goal of the ideological critic dealing with biblical text is to discover and clarify the dominant ideology or ideologies embedded in a text and the ideologies being muted in it.[28]

As argued by Foss, the theory of ideological criticism encapsulates the use of ideographs as the main unit of analysis. The ideograph is just a symbol representing an ideological concept that may be positive or negative. The best meaning applicable to a particular ideograph depends on the environmental setting of the origin in which it was used.[29] Tate added that Ideology Criticism can unveil hidden messages and produce many interpretations through angles of ideology like political, socio-economic, and religious ideas to make up the main idea of what is behind every text. In addition, the main purpose of the ideology

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[28] Sonja K. Foss, *Rhetorical Criticism: Exploration and Practice* (Long Grove, Illinois: Waveland Press, 2004), 239–52.

[29] Foss, *Rhetorical Criticism: Exploration and Practice,* 239–52.

critic is an attempt to uncover ideologies and dominant ideologies and influences that occupied the context of the text.[30] Through this criticism, ideological criticism can draw out other possible interpretations enclosed behind the text.

This work will follow Yee's two-fold approach; ideology can be approached in two sections, the intrinsic and the extrinsic analysis.[31] The intrinsic analysis will focus on the text at the literary level. The words and phrases used in the text, placement of the text and structure. This analysis will emphasize the ideologies hidden in the text. The extrinsic analysis will focus on the social and historical world of the text. The areas covered are political, social, economic, and religious in an attempt to explain the social structures and the conflicting ideals that have shaped the ideologies in the text.[32]

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[30] William R. Tate, *Biblical Interpretations: An Integrated Approach* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 2008), 325.

[31] Gale A. Yee, "Ideological Criticism: Judges 17-21 and the Dismembered Body", in *Judges & Method: New Approach in Biblical Studies*, ed. Gale A Yee (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Fortress Press, 1995), 149.

[32] Takaira, "The Ideology of Hospitality in Nehemiah 5:1-19", 24.

Chapter Two

Intrinsic Analysis: Ideologies in the Text

Intrinsic analysis will look at the placement of the text, the different structures, and how the structure reveals tensions within the text. A word study and language analysis will be carried out to identify ambiguities related to the dominant elite views and the utopian views of the peasants. The characters and their roles will also be discussed from a narrative perspective (i.e. Amos and Amaziah). An evaluation of these elements shall reveal the text's tensions and help make analytical claims about the text to support my thesis.

2.1 Translation

> **10.** And he sent Amaziah the priest of Bethel to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying, Amos has conspired against you in the midst of the house of Israel. The land will be unable to endure all his words.**11**. For so said Amos; Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel, shall be exiled off its land.**12** And Amaziah said to Amos, Seer, go, run away to the land of Judah and eat bread there; and prophesy there. **13** But do not continue to prophesy in Bethel for it is the sanctuary of a king and the capital of the kingdom. **14** And Amos replied and said to Amaziah, "I am neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet, but I am a herdsman and an inspector of sycamores. **15** And the Lord took me from following the flock, and He said to me; go, prophesy to my people Israel. **16** And now, hearken to the word of the Lord. You say, "Do not prophesy concerning Israel and do not prophesy concerning the house of Isaac."

> **17**. Therefore, so said the Lord, Your wife shall play the harlot in the city, and your sons and daughters shall fall by the sword, and your land shall be divided by lot, and you shall die on unclean soil, and Israel shall be exiled from its land.

2.2 Placement of the text

Constable presents a three-fold division of the book of Amos, Prologue (Chapter 1:1-2), Prophetic Messages that Amos delivered (Chapter 1:3- Chapter

17

6:14) and the Visions that Amos saw (Chapter 7- Chapter 9).[1] In this structure, the focus is on the prophet Amos. The selected text lies in the third part and is inserted between the third and fourth visions. Its placement in the present context has a specific purpose despite its apparent misfit, namely it has a theological intent rather than historical or chronological purpose.[2] But Mowvely suggests it has been included as a contribution to a discussion on the authority of different groups of people: prophet, priest and king and above all the authority of Yahweh.[3]

Carson also proposed a three-fold division for the book of Amos, where an inclusio marks each division. The first part is the lion's roar (1:2, 3:8), second part talks of the enemy around the land (3:9, 6:14) and the third part contains the judgement that and the hope (7:1, 9:15).[4] Carson classification promotes the Judahite idea that Jerusalem is the only place true worship and therefore, implicating the tension of cultic worship and identity which are issues about other offices. It promotes the authority of Jerusalem over Bethel and Dan. This idea is supported by Sweeney when he stated that the book of Amos:

> …presents a Judean political and religious critique of the north and a statement concerning the nation's future course, i.e., it must return to Judean rule and religious observance.[5]

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[1] Thomas L. Constable, *Amos* (2015).

[2] John H Hayes, *The Eighth Century Prophet: His Times & His Preaching* (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 1988), 231.

[3] Harry Mowvley, *The Books of Amos & Hosea*, *Epworth Commentaries* (London, England: Epworth, 1991), 79.

[4] Donald Arthur Carson, *New Bible commentary: 21st century edition* (Westmont, Illinois: InterVarsity Press: 1994), 794.

[5] Marvin A Sweeney, *Berit Olam: The Twelve Prophets: Volume 2: Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2000), 251.

Furthermore, Moller also believes that the sole rhetorical aim of the book of Amos is to persuade Judean hearers at some time after 722 BCE to avoid Israel' fate.[6]

To highlight this point in Carson's structure, the first *inclusio* is framed by the lion's roar, associated with the tribe of Judah. In Genesis 49:9[7], Jacob blessings of his son Judah and his promise to Judah that his brothers will praise him and that they will bow down to him. The tribe of Judah is known as the kingly tribe (King David was of the tribe of Judah). The lion of Judah represents strength, courage, royalty, power and victory.[8]

The second *inclusio*, is framed by the idea of a shattered Kingdom[9] pointing to the neighbouring cities including Israel as enemy around the land. Again the centrality of Jerusalem is propagated in the second part Carson's structure. All the neighbouring countries including Israel lived under the authority and judgement of Judah. Finally the third part of the structure presents two contrasting points, judgement and hope.

From the discussion of the placement of the text, it is noted from Constable's structure that it disrupts the book's organization. As pointed out by Mowley, its purpose is related to the discussion of authority of the different institutions in Ancient Israel. In addition, as shown in the division of Carson's structure, the promotion of Judahite ideologies in the book of Amos. Thus, from the placement, we can see the issue of authority flashing out. There is also the existence of

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[6] See Karl Möller, *Prophet in debate: The rhetoric of Persuasion in the Book of Amos* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 2009).

[7] You are a lion's cub, Judah; you return from the prey, my son. Like a lion he crouches and lies down, like a lioness—who dares to rouse him? (NRSV Bible)

[8] "Notes: Amos." ZLIBARY.TO, 2023, accessed May 25, 2023, https://zlibrary.to/dl/notes-amos.

[9] Carson, *New Bible Commentary*, 794.

tensions and conflict between the north and the south. We now shift our discussion on the structure of selected text to elaborate further on the tensions identified and issue of authority being noted.

2.3. Structural Analysis of the text (Amos 7:10-17)

We start our discussion with Harper's two-fold structure of the passage.[10]

A. verses 10–13: Amaziah's speech

B. verses 14–17: Amos's Speech

Harper's structure is straight-forward in presenting the obvious conflict in the narrative. That is, the conflict between the priest and the prophet. The structure clearly identifies the two main characters in the passage. Section **A** discusses what Amaziah's said in the narrative whilst section **B** discusses what Amos's said. The differentiation of speech into two distinct sections indicates that there is a tension existing between the two said characters.

Mays classified the text in three primary speech units:

A. the priest's report to the king (vv. 10–11),

B. the priest's command to the prophet (vv. 12–13),

C. the prophet's reply to the priest (vv. 14–17).[11]

Mays arrangement of the text indicates the three institutions in Ancient Israel and how they relate to each other. In this structure, the priest collaborates with the king and then commands the prophet on what to do. Then the prophet gives a simple reply to the command. From this structure, we can see the power dynamics existing in the text. There is a hierarchy evident, where the King is on

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[10] W. R. Harper, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Amos and Hosea* (London, England: T&T Clark, 1905), 168.

[11] J. L. Mays, *Amos: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969), 134.

the top, followed by the priest and the prophet is at the bottom of the structure. There is also an implication related to the social-political society that produced the text. That is shown by Amaziah's report to the King. Wazana believes he is implementing his authority, strengthening the already apparent social and personal gap between himself and the foreign prophet and his unsettling words.[12]

Tucker treats Amos 7:1 – 9:15 as a whole unit which is framed as a report in the third person. However, with regards to the passage, Tucker divided into two parts;[13]

A. verses 10-11: Amaziah charge against Amos presented to the King

B. verses 12-17: Amaziah dispute with Amos.

Amaziah is the main character behind all the unfolding events of the narrative. Tucker emphasizes Amaziah's role against Amos in the passage. Part **A**, Amaziah involves the king in the by giving negative report of his prophecies to the king. Part **B**, Amaziah is engaged in a verbal disagreement with the prophet Amos.

Tucker went on propose that the unit of the prophetic book of Amos which consists of the chosen pericope (i.e. Amos 7:10-17). It is significant to note that the given pericope being a narrative is inserted between two sets of visions.[14] The structure of the pericope is as follows:[15]

I. The background: Amaziah's charge against Amos to Jeroboam (10-11)

    A. Introduction (What Amaziah did and said) (10a)

    B. Amaziah's message (10b-11)

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[12] Wazana, "A case of Mutual Exclusion", 218

[13] Gene M. Tucker, "Prophetic Authenticity: A Form Critical Study of Amos 7:10-17," 427.

[14] Tucker, "Prophetic Authenticity," 425.

[15] Tucker, "Prophetic Authenticity," 425.

        1. Accusation or Charge against Amos (10b)

        2. The evidence (a citation of Amos' words) (11)

            a. Introductory formula (11aa)

            b. Prophesies of punishment (11ab)

                1) Against Jeroboam

                2) Against Israel

II. Amaziah's dispute with Amos (12-17)

    A. Amaziah's speech (12-13)

        1. Introductory formula (12aa)

        2. Speech (12ab-13)

            a. Address ("seer")

            b. Commands (12ab)

            c. Prohibition (13)

                1) Prohibition itself

                2) Reasons

    B. The prophet's response (14-17)

        1. Introductory formula (14aa)

        2. The speech (14ab-17)

            a. The reply (14ab-15)

                1) Negative response (14ab)

                2) Positive response: report of call and commission (15)

                    a) What Yahweh did

                    b) What Yahweh said

            b. Logical transition and messenger formula (16-17)

1) Transition and call to attention (16a)

2) The prophesy (16b-17)

    a) Accusation or reasons for punishment (16b)

    b) Logical transition and messenger formula (17aa)

    c) Announcement of punishment against Amaziah and Israel (17ab)

Tucker notes the centre of the story and its key issue lies in verse 15, Amos' statement of his vocation and calling. Tucker believes the tension is very clear at this point and is also resolved within this verse. What he is saying is that God took him from behind the flock thus he is acting on God's will.[16]

However, we can observe from the periscope, events happening as court like proceedings where Amaziah is presented as the one playing the role of the plaintiff, King Jeroboam is the Judge whilst Amos is the lawbreaker causing chaos. The middle part is where Amaziah presents his case against Amos and Amos subsequent reply. In Spiegel's own reconstruction of the confrontation of Amos and Amaziah as a trial, he states that the priest played the role of both prosecutor and judge issuing the sentence.[17] Ironically, the case ends with Amos playing the role of the judge. We can see a reversal of roles in the structure, which further highlights tensions at play within the text. Eventually it is Amos who comes out as the winner in this dual. Again the authority seems to favour the foreigner who gets the last say in the narrative. In this, the idea of Judahite superiority is evident in this structure.

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[16] Tucker, "Prophetic Authenticity,"428.

[17] Shalom Spiegel, "Amos Versus Amaziah," *Essays in Judaism 3, ed. and introduction by J. Goldin* (New York: 1970), 12.

In an attempt to further understand the tensions that are embedded, I have formulated the following chiastic structure of the passage;

A   v. 10-11: Amaziah, reports the fall of Israel and exile

   B v. 12-13: Amaziah, do not prophesy

     X v. 14-15: Amos, God's will

   B' v. 16: Amos, do not prophesy

A' v. 17: Amos, fall of Israel and the exile

From the chiastic structure above, we can infer from the central idea (X) that Amos is the key figure in the narrative but also indicating God's role in the proceedings. Other key ideas that are framing the chiasm are the fall of Israel and the exile. **A**, are the words spoken by Amaziah as part of his accusation report to the king whereas **A'** are the words of the prophet Amos pronouncing judgement on Amaziah and his family.   These points (**A** and **A'**) clearly shows the existence of opposition and conflict in our text. Furthermore, it supports the southern agenda that Amos stands for and the issue of land being proposed as one of the key issues in the narrative. Land is repeatedly mentioned in the narrative. Verses 11 and 17, forms an *inclusio* framed by the idea of being exiled away from the land. Land is also linked to the covenant between ancient Israel and God.

B, Shows Amaziah's command for the Amos not to prophesy in Bethel, which he refers to as the King sanctuary and **B'** shows response that he was not a prophet by trade but *the Lord took him* from behind the flock. From this, we can see that Amaziah's loyalty lies with King Jeroboam and Amos loyalty is to YHWH. There is also the case of Amaziah, talking down to Amos. He orders Amaziah to flee away to the land of Judah and go earn his bread there, as if he was telling

Amos to get legitimate job. He speaks with authority as though he was the king himself and not like a priest. Amos on the other hand continues to show humility by maintaining his agricultural background and that he was only elevated to this prophetic work by God alone.

From a structural point of view, we have identified the tension between the named characters in the passage. We have also established that at the core of the tension appears to be the issue of authority. We shall look further into the language of the text to further support this.

2.4. Family Language and Royal Language

We can locate a number of words or phrases which can be identified either with family language[18] or royal language[19]. On the one hand, the family language is mostly used by Amos in his response to Amaziah's accusations. The presence of agricultural language which relates to the familial setting and it also provides an insight into the socio-economic life of the people during the time of the author.

First, the word herdsman (v.14) comes from Hebrew word *boqer*, which refers to one who raises or tends cattle.[20] In the Old Testament shows the herdsmen lived in tents (Isa 38:12; Jer 6:3) and watch-towers for the herdsmen,

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[18] Family language is closely associated with the context of the family unit, it represents the general community. In terms of ideological perspectives, family language is normally associated with a ruled social class. The presence of family language indicates the existence of family ideals in contrast to that of the nobles. (Takaria, 2022), 42.

[19] Royal language is associated with the elite or ruling social class. It represents the minority of society. From an ideological perspective, their ideals are the governing ideals of society. (Takaria, 2022), 45.

[20] In Chapter 1:1, Amos is referred to as being among the shepherds. Shepherd comes from Hebrew word noqed, which was a word used to describe a man who tended a particular small, rugged, speckled variety of sheep (called naqod) which required less food and could live well in the desert, and which produced a wool of superior quality and of great value. ("NOTES: Amos" 03/06/2017, https://zlibrary.to/pdfs/notes-amos, 60.) See also, Elizabeth Arthemeier's view of Amos as a noted, implying that he was rather well off. Elizabeth Achtemeier, *Minor Prophets I* (1996),174.

so that they can observe coming danger (Mic 4:8; Nah 3:8). Herdsmen have to be alert to the threat all the time to make sure the herd is secured otherwise they will face the wrath of the owner who is most likely from the elite group. Thus the herdsmen work is reminiscent of the familial struggle and service. Struggle that the majority of the people or peasants can relate to and understand very well.

Second, the phrase *dresser of sycamore trees*[21] (v.14), which indicates a vocation that is also related to farming and is commonly associated with familial ideals. A vocation that requires a lot of hard work for a very little outcome, again an indication of the struggle that the common people endure during most their lives.

Third, the word *flock (v.15),* a word often used as a metaphor to represent a crowd or a multitude of people. In the Old Testament, Israel is often referred to as the Lord's flock (Isa 40:11, Jeremiah 13:17, Ezi 34:8). Therefore the word could be used to represent the majority and thus confirms the existence of familial ideals. In addition, the word flock in Hebrew is derived from a root word meaning, to migrate.[22] People migrate to other places seeking better conditions and a better life. It is an implication of struggle and the need to move away from a current situation.

Moreover, sheep's frequently serve as a symbol for the people of God (Num 27:17). The imagery indicates the people are naive and must be led and protected by a compassionate shepherd (Psa100:3). The sheep too have the

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[21] Cultivator of Sycamore Figs (Amos 7:14) -This was the wild fig (siq-mim in Hebrew) which exuded a ball of sap when nipped at the right season, and which hardened into a sort of edible fruit which the lower classes were able to afford. This tree was found at a lower altitude than Tekoa, so Amos undoubtedly had to do some traveling (perhaps down to the Dead Sea region) to tend these trees.

[22] James Strong, *Strong's Hebrew Dictionary* (*USA: AGES Software*, 1999), 603.

responsibility of responding to the voice of their master (Psa 95:7). When they are wayward, they must confess their wrong and return to the Lord (Isa 53:6).[23]

On the other hand, the royal language is also present in the text and is especially used by Amaziah in his accusation of Amos (v.10-11) and his speech to Amos (12-13). The royal language serves to justify Amos' pronouncement of doom for the nation of Israel.

First, the use of the word king (*melek)*, which also denotes royalty; which is derived from a primitive root; to reign; inceptively, to ascend the throne; causatively, to induct into royalty; hence (by implication) to take counsel: — consult, X indeed, be (make, set a, set up) king, be (make) queen, (begin to, make to) reign(-ing), rule, X surely. The King is generally used to denote one invested with authority[24]. The OT notions of kingship relates to the social structures and system of rule. These systems are centrally controlled, under single will and well-ordered power relationship.[25] Amaziah send word to king Jeroboam accusing Amos of conspiring against the king. The king is seen as the highest authority of the land in the view of Amaziah. His loyalty is clearly to the King and in doing so, is portrayed as disloyal to God. Amaziah states that the Temple at Bethel is the King's sanctuary. Ironically, the Beth-el means the house of God yet according to Amaziah it is the King's sanctuary and Temple of the kingdom. The state temple was one in which the king himself participated in the ritual activities and it has become a common place for idolatry.

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[23] Robert L Harris, *Theological wordbook of the Old Testament* (1981).

[24] Strong, *Strong's Hebrew Dictionary*, 403.

[25] G. Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren Johannes, and Fabry Heinz-Josef, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament: Volume V* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2004), 360.

Second, the sword *(hereb)*, is broadly defined, as a weapon utilized in armed conflict. Sword is mostly used by the military that mostly controlled by the monarch or ruling group. The sword is also a simple strength and power which is always held by the ruling class.[26] It may also be used as a symbol of judgement executed by God.[27] It is often used as metaphor for things that can cause injury to others such as the tongue. (Ps 57:4; Pro 12:18)

Three, the verb conspire *(qashar)* have several meanings; to bind, to tie, to league together[28], which implies Amos is part of group who have come together in agreement to do something illegal or evil. Ironically, Amos went alone but Amaziah seem to have overstated his report to the king or maybe he was thinking that Amos represented a certain group. The fact that Amaziah used this word was to incite Jeroboam to act against Amos. Obviously, portrays Amos as a real threat to the King. According to Douglas Stuart, the word 'conspired' is certainly used to arouse the king. Amaziah uses the word for 'conspiracy' which is politically loaded.[29]

Moreover, other words and phrases in the text, provides insights into the socio-economic and the socio-religious situation of the time in which the text was produced.

The word *seer* comes from to two Hebrew terms. First the word *ḥōzeh*, from a rare Hebrew root meaning "*to see in a vision.*" and is regularly used to describe the experiences of many of the prophets (see for example Isa 1:1; Amo

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[26] Baker Warren, and Eugene E. Carpenter, "The complete word study dictionary: Old Testament," (2003).

[27] Warren and Carpenter, "The complete word study dictionary: Old Testament," (2003).

[28] Botterweck, Helmer, and Heinz-Josef, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament: Volume XIII*, (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2004), 196.

[29] Douglas Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah (WBC 31)* (Waco: Word Books,1987), 376.

1:1; Mic 1:1; Hab 1:1). Stuart claims that the word *hozeh* was an honourable one in ancient Israel and was no insult to Amos.[30] The other term for the word seer, is *ro'eh* stemming from the general Hebrew term to see. This person understood God's ways and plans and was consulted to ascertain God's will in a matter.[31] But, according to Harper the other term *ro'eh* seems to be used as the oldest designation for prophets, generally to Samuel. It is quite probable for him to call Amos with the intention of mockery.[32] In Amaziah mind, Amos is not a prophet and therefore should not be doing the work of a prophet. Hence, the reason why he did not call Amos a *navi*, the common term used for prophets in the North.

Eat bread there, the word bread *(lehem)* means solid food but from its verbal root it means 'eat'. Bread was at the heart of every Hebrew banquet, in fact *lehem* itself could also mean banquet. Bread is commonly used as an idiom as an expression of love to give one's bread for a stranger (Gen 18:5) but also to refuse bread for those who don't deserve it or the wicked (Sir 12:5).[33] Amos was denied bread by Amaziah in the same sense that he does not deserve the bread from Bethel. The statement eat bread there has economic implications. Amaziah seem to imply that Amos is not a genuine prophet but someone who is looking to make a living out of the trade. This point is supported by Amos response.

I have discussed Tucker's pericope from a structural point of view, but the language in the pericope is also packed with legal (law related) vocabulary.

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[30] Stuart, *Hosea – Jonah*, 375.

[31] David Noel, Freedman, and A. Herion Gary, *The anchor Bible dictionary*, ed. David F. Graf and John David Pleins, vol. 6 (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 906.

[32] William R. Harper, *Amos and Hosea* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1905), 169.

[33] Botterweck G. Johannes, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry eds., *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament VII* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2004), 521.

Words like accuse, evidence, charge, punishment are legal terms that represent the law which is often dominated and controlled by the ruling class in society.

Overall, the royal language clearly dominates the text, however, the coexistence of the agricultural language although sporadic offers the challenge and tension in this regard.

2.5. Roles of Amos and Amaziah in the Narrative

It is evident in the story that the confrontation between Amos the prophet and Amaziah the priest with regards to Amos pronouncement of doom for the King and the Northern Kingdom. This act triggers Amaziah rejection towards Amos. This conflict thus raises questions pertaining to the roles and responsibilities. Does Amos have the authority to prophesy in Bethel? According to Amaziah, he does not possess this privilege. The narrated roles and responsibilities of these two characters are important to further understand the tensions that exist in the text. This serves to provide a viewpoint of this paper on the question above, but will also form a foundation to assist in the discussions of Amos' agenda to prophesy in Israel.

2.5.1. Amos the Prophet

The prophet Amos[34] lived among a group of shepherds in Tekoa, a small town approximately ten miles south of Jerusalem. Clearly he is an outsider who has crossed the border given the Northern and Southern Kingdom have already separated after the reign of King Solomon. There was also the Syro-Ephraimite

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[34] Amos in Hebrew meaning 'burden'

War[35] which Amos would have very familiar with. Therefore the tension between the two Kingdoms could not have been more volatile at the time of Amos, yet against all these odds he conjured the courage to go and prophesy in the North.

Amos is unique in this regard compared to other 8th Century BCE prophets such Isaiah, Micah and Hosea all of whom plied their trade within their own jurisdictions. There is no mention of prophet in Israel during Amos's ministry, which implies Amos knew the situation in Israel perhaps found a reason to go up north.

Amos also made clear in his writings that he did not come from a family of prophets, nor did he even consider himself one. Rather, he was "a grower of sycamore figs" as well as a shepherd (Amos 7:14–15). His occupation as a farmer could have been affected along with poor peasants that he represents by the North's forceful economic pursuit.[36]

2.5.2. Amaziah the Priest

Amaziah is a respectable priest, the priest of the central sanctuary of Israel at Bethel, connected with the king. Amaziah sought advice of the King which shows that he is the main person behind the confrontation. This attitude is common in the ANE, the Zim-Li letter shows how priest collaborates with Kings.[37] As alluded to earlier, the office of the priest is responsible for cultic worship. Their major religious functions consisted of the maintenance of purity by the sacrificial

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[35] The Syro-Ephraimitic war (734–732 BCE), Syria and Israel had joined forces against Judah. The prophet Isaiah's advice to the young King of Judah was to place his trust in Yahweh. Apparently Isaiah believed that Assyria would take care of the northern threat. Syria and northern Israel annexed by Assyrian Empire; Judah becomes a tributary state of Assyrian Empire.

[36] Dr. Thomas L, Constable. *Notes on Amos*. 2023 Edition

[37] S. B. Parker, *Official Attitudes toward Prophecy at Mari and in Israel* (1993), 52.

system at the Temple. Priests in the Old Testament officiated at various rituals, oversaw sacrifices, and regulated communal festivals, ensuring that society engaged in its due diligence to Yahweh in exchange for that deity's protection, support and blessings.[38] They also have other functions such dispensing oracles and teaching.[39]

2.5.3. Tension Prophet and Priest

The two main characters Amos and Amaziah are engaged in a verbal dispute. Amos being a prophet reports judgement for the Northern Kingdom as well as the Southern Kingdom. A prophecy that was not received well by Amaziah the Temple priest at Bethel. Amaziah does not seek advice from a prophet; in fact the text does not mention any active prophet in the North. Amaziah immediately send word to Jeroboam II the King (verse 10), accusing Amos of conspiracy and inciting doom on the King himself and Kingdom. It is not clear in the text whether the King responded to Amaziah's accusations but Amaziah proceeded to expel Amos from prophesying in Bethel. At face value Amaziah, is clearly presented as the bad guy whilst Amos is perceived to be the one acting upon divine guidance. However, both the priest and prophet are men of God and should have at least agreed on some common grounds to work together albeit their different roles. Tensions between prophets and priests are very common in the ANE context, for instance the prophet Malachi's message makes reference to the three kinds of reprehensible misdeed against which the prophet gave his

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[38] Blessing Onoriode, Boloje and Alphonso Groenewald, "Perspectives on priests: cultic and pedagogical malpractices in Malachi 1: 6-2-9 and their consequent acts of negligence," *Journal for Semitics* 22, no. 2 (2013): 376–408.

[39] Botterweck et al (eds), *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament,* 67.

address the neglect of the cult, lack of economic support of the clergy, and malpractices of mixed marriages and divorce.[40] The prophet Micah attacks the Jerusalem aristocracy for teaching for hire, where the thoroughness of instruction depends how much is paid.[41] Jeremiah was also gotten rid of by the priest and sages for prophesying that the Torah will perish from the priests.[42]

Looking at the placement of the text, the preceding visions of doom were due to the injustice that Amos claims, especially the exploitation of the poor by the elites. The pronouncement of doom hardly provides any sort of justice for poor that Amos represents. As Huston rightly says the invasion was a disaster for everyone, and above all for the poor, who had no way of replacing the wealth lost in the devastation of fields and orchards, olive groves and vineyards, and who would succumb first to famine, the threat of war as judgement is a threat levelled at the whole society.[43] In fact, if Amos prophecies come to pass, the poor will be in the worst position compared to the elites who have much land and wealth to bargain with.

2.6. Summary

This chapter has shown the existence of tensions in text at the literary level. The text itself reveals the most obvious tension is between the priest and the prophet. The prophet is acting upon divine instruction while the priest presumably is acting on behalf of the king's interest. Therefore indicating another tension, that is between the prophet and the king. Inferring from Amaziah's actions, the

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[40] J. Blenkinsopp, *A history of prophecy in Israel* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983), 210.

[41] Botterweck et al (eds), *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, 67.

[42] Botterweck et al (eds), *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, 67.

[43] See Walter J. Houston, "Contending for Justice": *The Ideology and Theology of Social Justice in the Old Testament* (2006).

King is the one holding all the authority of the land and the Temple at Bethel. However, from a narrative perspective, the King remains passive whilst the priest is the active character. From this view, we can say that the priest can manipulate the authority granted to him by the King to serve his own interests and agendas.

In addition, from the structural analysis we can see the existence of territorial tension between the North and the South around the issue of authority. The text seems to suggest the centrality of the Temple in Jerusalem against Bethel. At the same time, it promotes the interests of the southern kingdom of Judah.

Moreover, the discussion shows how the presence of royal language and family language reveals further tensions and struggle evident in the rhetoric of the text. Family language is mostly associated with the poor peasants looking to challenge the norm whereas the royal language is associated with the rule of law, authority and control.

As a result of the intrinsic analysis, we have identified the issue of authority as the main cause of the tensions in text. The conflict between Amos and Amaziah (also between Amos and the King) relates to the question of authority. Other issues that are also important are the land and the Temple. These elements are very important to the Jewish community. The fact that these elements are shown in the structural analysis and language confirms their importance to the tensions evident in the text. The extrinsic analysis will then proceed to discuss these conflicting views in relation to the social classes that they represent.

Chapter Three

Extrinsic Analysis: The Ideological World

The extrinsic analysis focuses more on the context from which the text was produced. The ideas of the ideological world that the text was produced will always find its way into the text. Therefore our task in this chapter is to identify the groups that represent the ideological and utopian views.

3.1. Historical Situation

Amos 1:1 attributes the work to Amos the prophet. He lived and worked in Tekoa; a town 10 miles south of Jerusalem in the Judean range.[1] However, there are several theories that account for the final form of the Book of Amos. First, there are those who support the eighth century BCE context as the world in which the text was produced. The whole book of Amos is attributed to the prophet Amos himself. It reflects Amos's real preaching. His oracles were preserved by disciples; almost everything dates from the eighth century.[2] Second, an eighth-century BCE stratum of judgment oracles against Samaria has been progressively expanded, particularly by a pro-Judean, anti-Bethel redaction in the seventh century and an idealistically hopeful redaction in post-exilic times.[3] Third, most of the writing was done in the post-exilic period, utilizing earlier (possibly anonymous) poetic collections and traditions of the prophet Amos;

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[1] Frank E. Gaebelein, *Daniel – Minor Prophets,* EBC 7 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1985), 275.

[2] S. M. Paul, *Amos*, *Hermeneia* (Philadelphia: Fortress,1991).

[3] H. W. Wolff, *Joel and Amos, Hermeneia* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), 89–392. See also, R. B. Coote, *Amos among the Prophets* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981).

historical and biographical information is not necessarily to be taken at face value.[4] This view is the majority's position on the issue of dating. Though the topic of dating is far from settled, I am inclined to support a post-exilic view, given the conception that most prophetic literature was compiled during this period. This is a view that Davies supports in his proposal that in the fifth century BCE, there were five scribal colleges in Yehud, one of which dealt mainly with politics, and it was that college which composed Amos (along with all the other prophetic literature).[5] Watts also supports the post-exilic period in which he divides Amos's careers into two divisions; a Northern and a Southern phase. Chapters 1-6 are the literary deposit of Amos' preaching in Israel until his expulsion (7:10-17). Chapters 8-9 reflect his preaching in Judah after his extradition, when he also received his fourth and fifth visions. The two books existed independently and were combined to form a single whole in the post-exilic period at the time when Amos was incorporated into the Book of the Twelve.[6]

Therefore, the thesis will follow this proposal that the book of Amos in its final form was compiled in the post-exilic period during the Persian era. Following the post-exilic period as the context in which the text was produced, we can now focus on the historical situation within the period of the Persian Era. The Persians are now the imperial power after conquering the Babylonian Empire around 539-333 BCE.[7] It was a critical period in Jewish history as they were allowed to return

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[4] P. R. Davies "Prophetic Literature," in J. Rogerson and P. R. Davies (eds.), *The Old Testament World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 278.

[5] James R. Linville, "Amos among the 'Dead Prophets Society': Re-Reading the Lion's Roar," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 25, no. 90 (2000): 55–77.

[6] Watts, "Origin of the Book of Amos," 109–112.

[7] Megan Moore and Brad E. Kelle, *Biblical History and Israel's Past* (United Kingdom: Cambridge, William B. Erdmans, 2011), 396.

to Jerusalem to rebuild their city walls, especially their Temple.[8] This rebuilding phase in Judah was made possible by King Cyrus's policy of toleration. Cyrus treated people generously and, allowed practice of traditions and even encouraged worship of Marduk.[9] Despite this show of generosity by King Cyrus from the perspective of its subject nations, including Judah, it was merely serving imperial interest as Stevens suggests the idea of financial growth as a Persian motive for the return of the nations. For instance, the return of Judah will increase agricultural production and tribute paid to the imperial power.[10]

It is important to note that at this point, the Jewish community is dispersed throughout the Mesopotamian region, Egypt, the Persian Empire, and those Judah.[11] The people of Judah may have hoped to return to their homeland, but they also have to accept that they still remain under the imperial rule of the Persian Kings. While the supreme rule of the Persians is clear, the issue of authority within the Jewish community remains a matter of Persians' interest.

3.2. Political Situation

The issue of authority will be discussed further in this subsection to indicate how much political freedom the Jews enjoyed and how it relates to the ideological situation. To establish an understanding of the political situation, we must first consider the larger context in which the Jewish community was part of. That is the Persian governance and administration.

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[8] David Hinson, *History of Israel: Old Testament Introduction I* (London, SPCK, 1973), 161.

[9] Martin Noth, *The History of Israel* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1960), 302.

[10] Marty E Stevens, *Temple, Tithes and Taxes* (Massachussetts: Hendrickson Publisher Inc., 2006), 43.

[11] Soggins, *An Introduction to the History of Israel and Judah*, 296

3.2.1. The Imperial Rule

Upon inheriting a very big empire, Darius I made some changes to maintain a more solid control over the Empire. He implemented a system of provincial areas called "satrapies," which, in its most straightforward meaning "*is the protector of the crown.*"[12] Thus indicating that the functions of the nations or the satrapy is to serve under the imperial rule. The satrapy exists to protect the interests of the imperial power. An essential aspect of the satrapy is that the high-ranking officials within the empire were all of Persian ethnic origin. The offices of the various satraps normally occupied those of Persian origin.[13] In light of this fact, the Persians carefully monitored and controlled the satrap's freedom. Carter elaborated on a system of management influenced by the monarchy. The empire set up central places, such as Jerusalem in Yehud, from where governing and administration is carried out.[14] On top of this, the imperial rule directly influenced the proceedings of their provinces to maintain order and assure that their subjects function to serve Persian interests.[15] So, whatever form of local governance and leadership in Judah existed only as the Persians saw fit to serve their empire.

3.2.2. Semi-Autonomous Rule

We now turn to the local governance in Judah and its administration. According to Hinson the priesthood was responsible for local governance where

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[12] Hinson, *History of Israel*, 161. See also, Henry Sayce, *Social Life among the Assyrians and Babylonians* (London, England: Religious Tract Society, 1893), 41.

[13] Pierre Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander; A History of the Persian Empire* (New York, New York: Eisenbrauns Incorporated, 2002), 350–351.

[14] Charles E Carter, *The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period: A Social and Demographic study* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffiled Academic Press, 1999), 90–97.

[15] Samuel Balentine, "The Politics of Religion in the Persian Period," in *After the Exile: Essays in honour of Rex Mason,* ed. John Barton and David J. Reimer (Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1996), 138.

the high priest was the leader. They were responsible for the religious and political affairs of the province of Judah.[16] The elders of the community and villages were also prominent leaders at this period.[17] Despite this understanding, it doesn't remain easy to envisage any authority and level of freedom practiced by the local officials given the control rendered by the Persians. As Grabbe explains, the Emperor made sure that he took steps to keep the satrap loyal to the empire and also to keep an eye on their activities.[18]

Weinberg states that the nature of the governance allowed was autonomous.[19] This is a view disputed by M. Dandamayev's suggestion that the imperial power employed a system of micro-management in the provinces to maintain respect.[20] Blenkinsopp's argument falls in between the two extremes suggested by Weinberg and M. Dandamayevs. He presents a semi-autonomous concept of local leadership in Judah.[21] Albeit their different positions, they all agreed that the local leaders indeed had a vast extent of authority granted to them. They were also very loyal to the imperial power that played an essential role in their operations. From this understanding, the local governance including priests and village elders were loyal to the empire. Their loyalty, of course would have been rewarded with some benefits and advantages. This means that the local leaders are more likely to adhere to the Empire's needs than the community's general needs.

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[16] Hinson, *History of Israel*, 161.

[17] R. Albertz, *History of Israelite religion in the Old Testament Period*, 374–375.

[18] Grabbe, *A history of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple period*, 133

[19] Weinberg, *The Citizen-Temple community*, 29.

[20] M. Dandamayev cited in Lisbeth S Fried, *The Priest and the Great King: Temple-Persian Relations in the Persian Empire* (San Diego:Eisenbrauns, 2004), 129.

[21] Blenkinsopp, *Temple and Society in Achaemenid Judah*, 26.

Benedikt makes an interesting argument regarding the provinces, including Yehud and Samaria. He states that during the Persian epoch, Samaria grew into the largest town in Palestine and accrued moderate influence. Under the Babylonians, and then from 538 BCE onwards under the Persians, Samaria was the administrative center of the southern Levant. It was the seat of the Persian governor who ruled over the wider region.[22] Yehud, on the other hand, was essentially insignificant in the Persian period, its influence being limited mainly to the provincial level.[23] Knoppers is, therefore, right when he says,

> During the Achaemenid era, members of the Judean elite were not dealing with a depopulated outback in the north. Quite the contrary, they were dealing with a province that was larger, better-established, and considerably more populous than was Yehud.[24]

Samaria is a more important place than Yehud from the Persian perspective. It is more likely that the Samarian local leader's gains favour from the provincial Persian governor residing in Samaria. Therefore, we can see a form of conflict between the Yehud province leaders and the Samarian province leaders.

From this discussion, two essential points must be elaborated about the said conflicts in the text. First, the local leaders' loyalty to the empire allowed for some advantages, mostly on their class as local elites. Secondly, the Samarian province is much more established than the Yehud province in the same satrap.

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[22] Benedikt Hensel, "On the relationship of Judah and Samaria in post-exilic times: A farewell to the conflict paradigm," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 44, no. 1 (2019): 19-42.

[23] Stephen N. Gerson, "Fractional Coins of Judea and Samaria in the Fourth Century BCE," *Near Eastern Archaeology* 64, no. 3 (2001): 106–121.

[24] Knoppers, "Revisiting the Samaritan Question in the Persian Period," in O. Lipschits and M. Oeming eds., *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* (2006), 273.

3.3. Social Situation

The discussion of the Political situation in Judah confirms how the Persian's interests cascade through local governance and leadership. What is clear from the Political situation is that the local administration indeed had some advantages that allowed for them as community leaders but were carefully monitored by the Persians through their governors placed in each satrap.

This political situation directly influences the social situation of Judah during the post-exilic period. This was due to the community in Judah being a province in a large empire. Therefore, social lives would be directed towards serving the larger interests of the imperial power. Basically for the Jews, returning to their homeland to rebuild their homes and their Temple was mainly to ensure economic growth for the empire.[25] Grabbe noted that the Persians treated their subjects as milking cows, they were cared for as long as they produce milk.[26] He also explained the Jewish community as an agrarian based economy, noting the lifestyle and status depending on the class that they are part of in society. Worthy to note from Grabbe's explanation of Jewish post-exilic social classes, is the family based farming operations which was a great deal of their daily lives.[27]

3.3.1. Persian Officials

From this discussion of the social situation of the post-exilic Jewish community, we can identify three main social groups. First, are the Persians with

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[25] Kim, *The Relationship between Temple and Agriculture in the Book of Haggai*, 90–97.

[26] Grabbe, *A History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period*, 191.

[27] Grabbe, *A History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period*, 167.

their self-serving motives for their subjects to sustain their empire. According to Williamson the Persian Empire administered the overall socio-political and economic affairs of the entire empire, including provinces subjected to its lordship, such as Yehud.[28] Then there is the local governor overseeing the satrapy holds the authority over the provinces under satrap. The local governance would be reporting to the governor matters pertaining to law and order.

3.3.2. Local Leaders

Second, the local leaders existing as middle group in the province facilitating the interests of the Persians. For the Judean province, the high priest and priesthood as well as the elders of the community holds the authority of the province. As Middlemas explained that after the return from exile, the leadership of Judah (or Yehud as it was to be called), fell to the priesthood and to those repatriated through the policies of the Persians.[29] One of the first prominent leaders was Zerubbabel[30] appointed as local governor. There is uncertainty about the authority and responsibilities of the governor but one can accept that the governor was officially appointed by the Persians to be responsible for administrative matters in a specific geographic area.[31] It is probable that Zerubbabel as governor had the respect of the Persian leaders and that they

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[28] H. G. M. Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah: Word biblical commentary* (Waco: Word. 1985).

[29] Jill Middlemas, *The troubles of templeless Judah* (OUP Oxford, 2005), 1.

[30] Stern suggests that Yehud enjoyed a brief period of independence as a province at the time of Zerubbabel, the Persian-appointed governor. Ephraim Stern, "The Persian Empire and the Political and Social History of Palestine in the Persian Period," in *The Cambridge History of Judaism* 1; W. D. Davies and L. Finkelstein, *Introduction: The Persian Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 70-87.

[31] Daniel F. O'Kennedy, "Haggai and Zechariah 1-8: Diarchic Model of Leadership in a Rebuilding Phase," Scriptura 102 (2009): 584-585.

assumed loyalty to them. His role as expected is be a loyal promoter of imperial interests.[32] In the time of Persian rule, members of former ruling elites or dynasties were reinstated and placed in positions of authority.[33] Berquist also states that the local administrators had to maintain political and economic loyalty to the Persian Empire, and they had to sustain sufficient political stability and internal social control so as not to present a threat to their overlords.[34] Therefore it is fair to say that in order to maintain their positions; they would have to show loyalty and commitment to the Empire. They would also have to be very strict on the poor farmers and keep them in order to serve the Empire's interests.

3.3.3. The Ruled Classes

Thirdly, the poor farmers or the *ruled class* who are responsible for the farming operations that is central to the economic situation during this period. It is important to point out that the poor farmers included the people who returned from the exile upon Cyrus' decree and those who remained in the land during the exilic period.[35] They are the ruled class responsible for the hard work in the farms as well the hard labour required for the restoration of the Temple. On top of the hard work, they serve two layers of authority; the local governance and the

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[32] Michael Floyd and Robert D. Haak, eds., *Prophets, Prophecy, and Prophetic Texts in Second Temple Judaism* vol. 427 (A&C Black: 2006), 105.

[33] Middlemas, *The troubles of templeless Judah*, 1.

[34] J. Berquist, *Judaism in Persia's shadow: A social and historical approach* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 131–137.

[35] At least three components of the community are recognized. The first group consisted of those on the land who had remained in Judah throughout the course of events. The second group included those who may have returned from Babylonia with Sheshbazzar early in the reign of Cyrus (Ezra 1:7-11). The third one was the late comers who returned from Babylonia with Zerubbabel and Joshua only a few years before Haggai's preaching. (Peter Ross Bedford, Discerning the Time: Haggai, Zechariah and the Delay in the Rebuilding of the Jerusalem Temple, *The Pitcher is Broken: Memorial Essays for Gosta W. Ahlstrom*, ed. Steven W. Holloway and Lowell K. Handy (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 72.

Persian governance. These are the people who are being used and manipulated by the system. Cataldo expresses the view that poverty was worsened by oppression from the priests and the Judean governors who served as "rulers" for the Persian provincial administration.[36] The ruled class appeared to be in constant conflict with the Persian leaders as well as their own local leaders.

3.4. Economic Situation

From the discussion of the social situation of the Jewish community during the post-exilic period, we can infer a number of economic tensions existing. Given the people's responsibility to the rebuilding of the community and to the Imperial power, it is clear that the people at lower class levels are facing economic problems. To put this into perspective, Grabbe states that the Persian Empire was constantly upgrading their infrastructure (roads and harbours, etc) to maintain effective control over the empire. Thus taxation, tributes and military were major characteristics of any imperial rule.[37] This imperial commitment to development impacted heavily on their provinces in terms tax and tributes. Darius I time was specially noted for his aggressive attitude towards the accumulation of wealth. An attitude that did not sit well with Judah and the rest of the subject nations.[38] The economic ambitions of the empire filtered down to its subject nations especially the poor farmers, as they are one's likely to bear the brunt of the cost required to maintain the empire.

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[36] J. W. Cataldo, *A theocratic Yehud? Issues of government in a Persian period* (New York: T and T Clark 2009), 172.

[37] Grabbe, *History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple*, 191.

[38] Malutafa Fa'alili, "The Ideological Function of the Asylum Legislation in Deuteronomy 19:1–13," (Master's Thesis, Pacific Theological College, 2009).

3.4.1. Modes of Productions

Gottwald proposed three modes of production present during this period. That is the communitarian and the tributary that is further divided into two forms; native and foreign.[39] In the communitarian mode, the farmer's primary concern is with family interest. The farmer works to provide food for the family and sells the extra produce to earn money for other family costs.[40] This mode of production is the main socioeconomic practice in Judah. However, given the economic demands of the empire, the farmers would most likely sell most of their produce to pay their tributes to the empire. As a result they barely have enough for their own families.

The imperial rule favours the tributary mode of production to sustain their empire. As Simpkins pointed out, most of the surplus seems to have been extracted for taxes to the Babylonian and Persian courts through a tributary mode of production. This mode functioned as a parasite on the local political economy. It functioned to benefit only the Persian administrations, and perhaps also a few local elite who were loyal to and supported by the imperial courts.[41]

It is very clear from the discussion of the modes of production that the Persians and the local elites benefits from the hard work of the peasant farmers. The communitarian mode of production which is preferred by the poor farmers is heavily exploited by the leaders as a means to facilitate the tributary mode both native and foreign. Although the communitarian mode of productions co-exist

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[39] Gottwald, *"Social Class and Ideology in Isaiah 40-55, An Eagletonian Reading,"* 52–55.

[40] Gottwald, "Social Class as an Analytical and Hermeneutical category in Biblical Studies," *JBL* 112, no. 1 (1993): 7–8.

[41] See Ronald A. Simkins, "Family in the political economy of monarchic Judah," *The Bible and Critical Theory* 1, no. 1 (2011).

with the tributary mode but it is merely enough to serve its secondary purposes.
Thus in this notion it is the ruled class who are facing economic hardships.

3.5. Religious Situation

As noted before, King Cyrus edict allowed freedom to practice traditions and
religious beliefs for their subject nations. One of the important aspects of returning
for the Jewish community was to rebuild their Temple. As long as the Temple
stands, the people always have hope. The exile put an end to the religious
structures that was prominent in Judah. According to Hanson, through the
trauma of national disaster, the traditional community structures which supported
the social life of the people suddenly collapse.[42] Hanson goes on to state that;

> In the wake of this collapse, formation of two primary groups the
> visionaries (prophetic) and the hierocrats (priestly) competed for
> a position of dominance through which to legitimate their
> respective models for social reconstruction.[43]

Ploger's provides a similar assessment in his deprivation theory, stating a conflict
between a theocratic group (priestly) and the anti-establishment (prophetic)
group in post exilic Yehud.[44]   Thus, implying a conflict between the priestly and
prophetic institutions that we shall discuss further. But let us first consider the
significance of the Temple.

3.5.1. The Temple

Schader observes that the temple was regarded as the chief place of God's
presence on earth and as an earthly representation of his heavenly abode, and

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[42] Paul D. Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic: The Historical and Sociological Roots of Jewish Apocalyptic Eschatology* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 211.

[43] Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 212.

[44] Otto Plöger, *Theocracy and Eschatology,* translated by S. Rudman (Oxford: Blackwell, 1968), 109–10.

most likely, the place to where he would ascend.[45] With the fall of the first temple in 587 BCE, the religious role of the temple as a cultic center of the whole community was lost. However, the temple remains an important element in the lives of the Jewish people. This significance of the Temple remained an integral aspect of Jewish religious identity even during the exilic period. As Scheffler remarks that, although the temple was in ruins and not rebuilt during the exilic period, it must be assumed that the worship of Yahweh continued, and that sacrifices were made. (probably on the temple site; see Jr 41:4-6).[46]

However, after the exile the Jewish conception of the Temple takes on a new meaning. The second temple which was rebuilt on the site of the former one, however, was not any more a religious center but an economic and political location for a limited group of people called the civic-temple community. As a part of the apparatus of imperial control.[47]

As Clement sums it up nicely, the postexilic religious life of Judea and the formation of Judaism, could not return to Jerusalem with the same attitude and beliefs with which the exiles had gone forth. Not even their enthusiasm could restore the conditions that had pertained before Jerusalem was destroyed. They could rebuild the temple, but they could not restore the prestige and significance it had previously enjoyed.[48] Inferring from Clement's view, it does not really matter whether the returning community kept their faith in the Temple tradition of old.

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[45] J M Schader, "A spatial reading of Psalms 46-48," *Old Testament Essays* 23 no. 1 (2010): 147.

According to Mare – "the negative situation in which the exiles found themselves does not mean the end of worship, but an emphasis of a different aspect of worship." (L P Maré, Psalm 137: Exile – Not the time for singing the Lord Song. *Old Testament Essays* 23, no. 1 (2010): 116–128.

[46] E. H. Scheffler, *Politics in ancient Israel* (Pretoria: Biblia 2001), 136.

[47] Blenkinsopp, *Temple*, 39.

[48] R. E. Clements, *God and the temple* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell,1965), 129–130.

The Jewish community are no longer independent and thus the Temple and its ideals has become subject of imperial interests.

As alluded to earlier, King Cyrus identified himself with the worship of Marduk the Babylonian god. As Balentine notes; the temple function as the religious centre from an imperial perspective. Prayers for the Imperial King and Empire became part of local liturgies. Furthermore, the primary function of the Temple was to serve the economic needs of the Empire.[49] Weinberg also supported this conception of the Temple as the centre of administrative affairs including collection and re-distribution of taxes.[50] The perception of the Jewish community[51] is far from what the imperial rulers had in mind regarding their allowance to return. The Persian Empire were more economically driven than genuinely trying to re-establish Jewish religious system. The Persian ruler understood that the Temple is important to all Jewish and therefore use it as a means to unite the people in order to satisfy their economic agendas. The main idea behind the release of the captives is to increase agricultural production and tributes to the empire. Stevens list of the economic income of the Temple during the Persian period included land ownership, tithes, taxes, gifts and trade.[52]

The temple during this period was much more than just a place for cultic worship of God. It also functions as a trade centre. Whilst the Judean community view the re-building of the Temple as a divine favour; the idea was utilised by the

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[49] Balentine, *The Politics of Religion in the Persian Period*, 141–142.

[50] Weinberg, *The Citizen-Temple Community*, 126.

[51] The Jewish community regarded their returns as a blessing from YHWH. Cyrus had been referred as the Messiah. However, Cyrus credited Marduk the Babylonian deity for his ascension to power. Thus, indicating conflicting views of the Jewish community and the Imperial leaders.

[52] Marty E Stevens, *Temples, Tithes and Taxes: The Temple and Economic Life of Ancient Israel*, (Massachussets: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.,2006),82-135.

imperial power to facilitate their own agendas. This in turn creates conflicts between the social classes.

3.5.2. The High Priest & Priesthood

The Priesthood became a significant leading group in this era but given the firm control of the imperial power; it is fair to say their obedience and loyalty lies with the Persian Empire. One of the first to be appointed High Priest was Joshua.[53] According to the books Ezra-Nehemiah, Joshua was the leader of the first group that returned to Jerusalem from Babylon and began to work on rebuilding the temple (Ezr 2:2, Neh 7:7).[54] According to Tollington, there is a strong possibility that the Persians knew of Joshua's religious background (Ezra 2:2). They must have seen him as a respectable religious leader and someone who would not cause too many problems for the Persian Empire.[55] Again the authority in the religious circles seems to follow the Political situation. It is very difficult to see how the priests could carry out their religious obligations considering their political affiliations.

The hierocrats' (priestly) plan for restoration focused on the centralization of society on the temple and on regulating the cultic life of the province.[56] According to Hanson, this plan would ultimately give the priesthood social, political and religious authority.[57] He states that as the hierocrats, who were from the Zadokite

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[53] Daniel F O'Kennedy, "Leadership in a time of transition: An analogy between post-exilic Judah/Yehud and post-apartheid South Africa" *Old Testament Essays* 30, no. 1 (2017): 128–150.

[54] O'Kennedy, "Leadership in a time of transition," 128–150.

[55] Janet E. Tollington, *Tradition and Innovation in Haggai and Zechariah 1-8* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 125-126; O'Kennedy, "Haggai and Zechariah 1-8," 583.

[56] Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 220-228.

[57] Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 220-228.

tradition, rose in power, they alienated many Levites.[58] The ruling classes, because of their vested interest in the institutional structures of the immediate past, construct a program for restoration on the basis of those recently disrupted structures so as to preserve their positions of supremacy.[59] The priests were trying to re-establish the religious structures before the exile as a way to maintain their authority and suppress the voice of the ruled class.

3.5.3. The Prophets

The post-exilic prophets were rather promoters of the ritual and predictors of the coming glory of Judah.[60] They were particularly concerned with the social and religious reconstruction of Judean life after its destruction, and many advocated for the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem and for the people to support these efforts.[61] According to Sara Japhet, the prophet Haggai took a different stand from the view that all misfortunes, including the depressed economy, were punishments for the national sin in the past. Instead, he regarded the sin of Israel as the failure to rebuild the temple.[62] In a way, the message of the prophets generally follows the ideologies of the imperial rule. What is not clear at this point is whether they were genuinely advocating the restoration of the Temple due to its significance to the religious life of the Jewish community.

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[58] Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 220-228.

[59] Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 212.

[60] Lewis B. Paton, "The Religion of the Post-Exilic Prophets." *The Biblical World* 22, no. 4 (1903): 258–67.

[61] Paton, "The Religion of the Post-Exilic Prophets," 258–67.

[62] Japhet Sara, *The Temple in the Restoration Period: Reality and Ideology*, Vol.44 (Union Seminary Quarterly Review, 1991), 195-252.

In addition, Hanson projects the prophetic role as the voice of the oppressed community looking to effect change. He states that the lower classes (the visionaries or the prophetic voice) looked to religion to usher in a social transformation and to put an end to oppression.[63] He further explains that the alienated and oppressed classes look to the more distant past for models which call into question the position of power claimed by the ruling classes, and readily adhere to prophetic figures calling for revolutionary change on the basis of such archaic models.[64] From this discussion we can presume the prophetic institutions in conflict with the priestly institution. Their message reinforces the Temple restoration which appears to follow the Imperial ideologies. But given their preference on the structure of society, they too have opted for a time when prophets were prominent in Israel's history.

3.6. Summary

From an extrinsic standpoint, we situated the text at the post exilic period during the Persian Era (539 – 333 BCE). It was an important period for the Jewish community after the exile. Though the benevolence of King Cyrus seems like divine intervention from the Jewish perspective. The Jewish community would never be the same again as they remain under foreign rule.

Politically, Judah existed as a province in a satrapy within the Persian Empire. Thus the Imperial King held the highest authority over all the Empire. The governors (who are also of Persian ethnicity) of each satrapy looks after the satrap which included several provinces. Judah as a province was allowed local

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[63] Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 216.

[64] Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 212.

governance semi-autonomously, but even the local leaders were carefully chosen and monitored to promote the empire's interests. As a result, they contributed to the oppression of the poor peasants in their community.

Socially, we have identified three classes co-existing in the post exilic Jewish community. At the very top end is the Imperial King and the Persian officials, including the governor overseeing the satrapy. Then there are the local leaders including priests and the community elders. Finally at the lowest end we have the ruled class, or the peasant farmers exploited by the other two classes. The Persian officials and the local officials prioritize their own interests, leaving the poor peasants in a vulnerable economic situation.

Economically, the exploitation of the ruled class is evident in the analysis of modes of production. The communitarian mode of production that the peasant farmers favour could not sustain the needs of the poor farmers. However, this communitarian mode barley exists in a world dominated by the tributary mode which emphasizes taxes and tributes as the main source of income for government. These taxes burden the local farmers who struggle to make ends meet and rely on a subsistence way of living.

Moreover, the religious situation also reveals how this exploitation is maintained by the priesthood and the prophets, especially in their push for the restoration of the Temple. However, as suggested by Hanson, there is a conflict between the priesthood and prophets in their idea of rebuilding the religious cult. The priesthood tried to re-establish the religious cult prevalent in the pre-exilic period to maintain their authority. The prophetical circles wanted to go further back when prophetic authority was noticeable. Albeit their different positions, there is an indication that both institutions take interest in the issue of authority.

Conclusion

I have posed several questions in the beginning to guide this work. Most importantly is the thesis statement which I have attempted to show the issue of authority as the key ideology creating conflicts in the Amos versus Amaziah narrative. These conflicts have been revealed through the intrinsic analysis of the text.

The intrinsic analysis shows the presence and the nature of the conflicts in the text. The two main characters in the narrative represent different institutions, classes and ideals of the ideological world. This is shown in the structural analysis where there is a clear distinction of actions and sayings between Amos and Amaziah. The language analysis shows the presence of both the familial language and royal language which reflects the social classes of the ideological world. The inclusion of the King in the narrative indicates another social class. Although, the King's presence in the narrative is at best described as passive, it remains important that his opinion is somewhat sought after. I suppose in the ideological world, it reflects the political situation. That is the relationship between the local leaders and the Persian leaders. The ambiguity of the King's role in the narrative also reflects the attitude of the local leaders (Amaziah behaviour in the narrative) who use the king's authority to enhance their authority.

From a socio-political stance, that Amaziah represents the ideals of the local elites who are more concerned with their advantages than being responsible for their traditional cultic roles. In that regard, Amos represents the utopian view of the poor peasants longing for change. The voice of the poor farmers oppressed and exploited by the elites creates a conflict of interest between the

two social groups. Although the exiles were finally restored in Judah, real freedom did not prevail in the Persian province of Judah. Class struggle, between the local elites and ruled class is a prominent feature of the post-exilic community.

The economic analysis also reveals how the poor peasants have been exploited and oppressed. The communitarian mode of production is evident in the presence of familial language in the text but it is merely serving Imperial purposes as opposed to its familial obligations. Therefore, the dominant mode of production is the tributary mode which is causing suffering for the poor.

Ethnic conflict is also noted in the extrinsic analysis. Samarians and Judeans ever since the kingdom split have always tried to establish superiority. From the extrinsic analysis, Samaria is the more established than the Judean community in the post exilic period. Jerusalem is not the same as it was before the exile. Therefore, Amos challenge of Amaziah reflects this tension between the North and the South. Thus, the Temple at Bethel and the Temple in Jerusalem are portrayed as iconic places in the North and South respectively. In this case, Amos advocates Jerusalem's superiority over Bethel as the true centre of cultic worship and the dwelling place of God. Ideologically, these conflicts evident in the text all relate to the struggle between the elite and peasants in the land of Judah. The local leaders accused of acting like the historically disliked Samaritan, like the people of the Northern kingdom, who remained in conflict with the returnees despite the northern kingdom no longer in existence.

Moreover, we have noted a conflict between prophets and priests in their attempt to validate their authority through theological standpoints. Despite these differences, the common issue for them is to legitimize the authority of their institution over the other.

Implications of Study

Authority is daily exercised in governmental and all other social spheres. Authority has many faces, but to deny its existence is to deny the reality of life. It is an important part of our social structures. Authority is key to creating fruitful and prosperous societies.

It comes with advantages and favour, so it remains an integral part of any society. People's pursuit of authority in political arenas, religious organisations, and social organizations is very much influenced by the benefits and privileges attached to such positions. Therefore, it is very common that positions of authority are directly linked to other issues such as corruption, exploitation, oppression, discrimination, etc. When these issues arise, they create conflicts and tension in any society.

What is certain is that political influence on authority will always be part of any society. People in power will have their agendas and interests to serve. They may also serve the interest of another party who may have aided their elevation to a position of prestige. Therefore, the prophetical voice of the church must remain firm in any society. The church should always be vigilant to the abuse of authority and be able to respond freely and constructively to maintain social stability. While the dominant ideology of the elite minority will always dominate society, it should not suppress the voice of the majority. The church is the voice of this majority. If divine justice is to prevail, the role of the church is clear.

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