

CHAPTER IV
FORMS OF PROPHETIC SPEECH

We have already seen that in the interest which is currently focused on the notion of a prophetic 'office', and particularly in the arguments of those who contend that the canonical prophets did, in fact, hold an office, form-critical considerations play a large part.¹ We noted, for instance, Reventlow's contention that the forms of speech in the book of Ezekiel evidence a cultic office of 'watchman'.² Moreover, we noted that the cultic prophet theory, as expounded by Mowinckel, received its original impetus from the presence of certain forms which, it was considered, were essentially prophetic.³ The clearest and most significant example of this form-critical argument is that which envisages the canonical prophet as discharging functions within the cult which are precisely regulated by a pre-existing covenant structure and are concerned with the exposition or 'actualising' of divine law, i.e., that the prophet holds the office of 'law-speaker'.⁴

These examples suggest what is, in fact, the case, viz., that the modern debate about the prophetic office centres on the question of cultic, prophetic functions and cultic, prophetic forms. So, in Reventlow's studies on Amos, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, the argument is for a cultic, prophetic

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1. See above, ch.III, pp.256, passim.
 2. See above, ch.III, pp.248ff.
 3. See above, ch.III, pp.129,181ff.
 4. See above, ch.III, pp.252ff.



office, whilst those who oppose him are devoted to demonstrating that these prophets held no such office.¹ It should be made clear, however, that this is seriously to limit the enquiry into the prophet's functions and position, and in turn the form-critical enquiry. Whilst it is of immense importance, the question of whether the prophets employed cultic forms and held a cultic office is not the only question which may be asked here. The more fundamental question is, what do the forms of prophetic speech tell us about the prophet's position, his relation to God and his relation to his fellowmen? The use made by the prophets of traditional forms of speech raised questions about the nature of prophetic inspiration and the sources of the prophet's knowledge of the divine will. Thus, a consideration of forms is vital to any consideration of the prophetic 'office', but not necessarily and certainly not exclusively in the way in which Reventlow conceives it to be.²

It would be patently ridiculous to attempt any comprehensive survey of this field of enquiry here. The issues involved are so numerous and so vast. Moreover, by its very nature, the form-critical enquiry must be detailed to be useful. The aim is rather than to consider particular examples drawn from Amos and Jeremiah which may shed some light on the 'office' and functions of these prophets. The

1. e.g., Bright on Jeremiah; see below, IV,ii.

2. Nor is the consideration limited to that carried out by Westermann, in Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech, where he concentrates on the use of the 'messenger-formula'. See below, pp.475ff.

main concerns are firstly to establish the settings of these forms and secondly to consider why these forms were used by these prophets in these ways.

i) Passages in Amos which pertain to his relation to the cult.

There are a number of passages in the Book of Amos which have been held to demonstrate that Amos was a cultic prophet. These are Am.1:3-2:16; 4:6-13; 5:8f.; and 9:5f., which, it is claimed, reflect a cultic background, in terms of their form, terminology, and thought; and Am.4:4f.; 5:4-6,14f.,22-24, in which Amos is attacking the cult. This second group of passages is, of course, the primary ground for the argument that Amos, far from being involved in the cult in an official capacity, had no time for it and condemned it in toto. On the contrary, it is argued, these passages show Amos's knowledge of and dependence on the cult and demonstrate how important it was for him that the cult be purified. These passages and the various interpretations of them, as they relate to the question of Amos's 'office' will now be considered.

a) 1:3-2:16

There is first of all here the question of the unity of the passage and, allied to this, the question of what Amos conceives to be the difference between the position of the nations and the position of Israel, in their relationship to Yahweh.

A. Weiser believes that the whole composition is a rhetorical masterpiece.¹ The execrations against foreign

1. Weiser, Die Prophetie des Amos, p.86.

nations in 1:3-2:16 are all leading up to the threat against Israel in 2:6ff. Amos is thus appealing to the popular belief that Yahweh would destroy Israel's enemies, in order to reach a sudden and powerful climax in his attack on Israel. On this assumption, the oracles of woe against foreign nations are of little importance in understanding the message and mission of Amos and are merely the background for the oracle of woe against Israel.

One criticism against this is brought by E. Würthwein.¹ He contends that rhetoric alone is not possible in a world where the word has creative power. The word creates the future; hence the awe and fear aroused by the OT prophets in their proclamation of woe. Würthwein also offers another argument against Weiser and this is that the oracles against the nations lie on a different plane from those against Israel, which is to be explained by the fact that they belong to different periods in Amos's life.²

The apparent unity between the verses against the nations and the verses against Israel is not valid for Würthwein. The former witness to Amos's period as a nabi, in which his task is to proclaim woe against foreign nations. Only at a later point does Amos become a prophet of woe and proclaim a similar word to Israel. Thus the original unit ends with 2:5 and the later unity is redactional.³

This interpretation largely stands or falls with its view of the prophetic office. Würthwein's view is that it

1. Würthwein, in ZAW, 62, 1950, p.37.

2. *Ibid.*, p.38.

3. *Ibid.*, pp.35-52.

is the established function of the nabi to proclaim weal to Israel and that this is, in fact, what Amos is doing in proclaiming woe to the nations. Later, he says, when Amos comes to proclaim woe to Israel, he finds no antithesis between proclaiming woe and being a nabi because Yahweh had revealed to him that woe is what he must now proclaim to Israel. Behind this is Amos's knowledge that God is a living God. He wants weal for Israel, but Israel will not be warned. Woe is the result, not of a change in Yahweh, but of a change in Israel, i.e., their falling away from the demands of their God. Würthwein adds that, in this, Amos shows not a new understanding of God, but a true response to what already exists. His break with tradition is, therefore, not to be overestimated.¹

The important point that the office of the nabi was to proclaim weal for Israel is taken up by Reventlow, in his discussion of this passage. He claims that there is no convincing evidence that the nebiim had the function of creating weal and he inclines to the idea that their message included both weal and woe, on the ground that blessing and curse seem to have belonged together in the cult.² Gunneweg, he says, asks the question whether the whole proclamation of woe in Amos cannot be understood as the legitimate, traditional nabi-office and thinks that there can be little certainty about this until we have a more precise picture of

1. Ibid., pp.44,52.

2. Reventlow, Das Amt des Propheten bei Amos, p.13, and see below, pp.355ff.

the development of the Israelite cult.¹ Reventlow himself thinks that such an agnostic view is unnecessary and that, from a form-critical consideration of Amos, we can give some content to the prophetic 'office'. This, he argues, includes the proclamation of both weal and woe.² He agrees with Wüsthof that woe for the nations signifies weal for Israel,³ but finds unacceptable the idea that there are two phases of prophetic activity represented here, not just because he thinks both tasks are those of the nabi, but because no opposition can be found between the oracles in form and content. Throughout, he says, there is a unity of form, behind which stands liturgical celebration.⁴

The last point made here by Reventlow is obviously of importance and it takes us directly to the question how, if at all, this passage is cultic? It is, he says, a basic fact of the form-critical method that a particular form must correspond to a particular Sitz im Leben.⁵ He takes as his starting-point, in determining this, the study by Bentzen.⁶

Bentzen points out that there were Egyptian execration texts inscribed on earthenware vessels and broken in connection with some magical execration rite (p.85). In these texts, the peoples are enumerated in a fixed order, first the Southern, then the Northern, then the Western nations

1. Gunneweg, 'Erwägungen zu Amos 7:14', ZThK, 57, 1960, pp.1-16.

2. Reventlow, op.cit., pp.19f.

3. See, however, below, pp.330ff.

4. Ibid., p.62.

5. Ibid.

6. Bentzen, 'The Ritual Background of Am.1:2-2:16', OTS, 8, 1950, pp.85-99.

and lastly the Egyptians themselves (p.89). Bentzen stresses at the outset that he is not assuming migrations from Egypt to Palestine of execration formulas, but simply that the Egyptian texts have suggested to him a way of understanding the OT text (p.87). The composition of 1:3-2:16, he claims, seems to indicate that the prophet is following a previously conceived plan, yet there is no explanation of this from traditional OT forms.¹ In this context, the striking resemblance of these texts to the Egyptian execration texts in denouncing the various nations and then denouncing their own country, raises the question whether Am.1-2 can be explained on some similar cultic pattern such as that of the Egyptian rite, 'The breaking of the red urns' (pp.89-91).

This brings him to a consideration of the passage's Sitz im Leben. Wellhausen had suggested that this was an autumnal festival at Bethel, and later scholars followed his example, notably Mowinckel.² Mowinckel urged that in the New

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1. It is also worth noting at this point that in later canonical prophets the pattern of woe against Israel and then woe against the nations is the reverse of what we find in Am.1-2, which makes this passage the more conspicuous and increases the need for an explanation of the form of the passage.
 2. Wolff comments that the context may have been a gathering for a festival. He notes the harvest festival in Bethel (1 Kgs.12:32) and that Amos went to Bethel (Am.7:10ff.) Joel und Amos, p.181. For criticism of Bentzen's view that behind these oracles lies a curse-ceremony, see Wolff, Joel und Amos, pp.175ff., where he concludes that there is no sign in Israel's cult of formulas comparable with those found elsewhere.

Year Festival, in his view also the Enthronement Festival, there was a definite element of judgement, primarily against the foes of the national God and of the nation, but also against the sinners in the chosen people itself.¹ On this understanding, this festival would be the pre-exilic cultic forerunner of the Day of Atonement (p.92). Bentzen writes, 'I assume that such purgatory rites accompanied the judgement section of the Ascension festival at the New Year, and that such rites can be understood as lying behind the different texts as the formal pattern of the oracles against foreign nations in the prophetic books. Most of them are only detached fragments, not preserved in the original cultic setting' (p.93). Amos 1:2-2:16 is the most complete form of the ritual and imitates, 'the execration uttered in a ritual during the New Year festival against the political enemies among Israel's neighbours, regarded as incarnations of the foes of God in his fight against chaos, when he created the world, reiterated in the cultic renewal of his victory in the New Year celebrations'.²

Bentzen makes here an important distinction between an imitation of a liturgy by the prophet and an actual prophetic liturgy. It is our obligation, he says, to perceive the different nuances of tone, even when similarity is at its highest, for 'the use made by a prophet of ritual forms may be identical with the common practice at the sanctuaries, but assume an entirely new meaning when used

1. See below, pp.339ff.

2. See below, pp.328f.

by the prophet, because of his different conception of the God speaking through the words taken from time-honoured ritual of his people, but in the moment of inspiration coming to the mind of the prophet as expressions of the will of God' (p.88). This means that not only may the ancient formulas be used with a quite new interpretation by the prophet, but also that, even if they are shown to be cultic formulas, this in no way demonstrates the actual presence of the prophet in cultic activity.

Bentzen goes on to stress this second point in relation to 1:2. He points out that it is also found in Joel 3:16 and has resemblances with Jer.25:30. Its context in Jeremiah is that of Yahweh's being conceived of as judge of all the world, especially the heathen, and it is, therefore, in Amos, a most appropriate introduction to an execration of foreign nations.¹ Bentzen also mentions the theophanies in many of the Psalms, e.g., 50; 97; 76 which, he says, give fresh proof that Amos was here working on a given ritual pattern, 'an ancient ritual of a day of purification or atonement from the pre-exilic cult in the Northern kingdom' (pp.95f.). Further, he says, the ritual of 1:2-2:16 introduces the speeches of Amos in the rest of the book, all of which are variations on the theme of Israel's sin.

He remarks that it is interesting that Engnell, in his classification into liturgical and diwan, puts Amos in the diwan type. Bentzen thinks, however, that there is also an element of liturgy in the book. He argues that it begins

1. cf. Mays, op.cit., p.21.

as a liturgy, but that the thread was lost till the end by the collectors (p.97). It is of great significance that Bentzen, for all this, is most reluctant to concede that Amos was himself officially involved in the cult. Although Amos is under the influence of a 'cultic pattern', we must not, he says, forget his opposition to the cult. Just as Amos uses the funeral dirge without being a professional mourner, so he can use ritual language without being a cultic prophet. 'Amos did not start as a temple nabi. He sought a sanctuary to deliver his message, and stayed there till he was expelled. He uses the language of the temple prophet, the ritual forms furnished by the temple. But that does not make him a prophet "i verdertagen mening"' (p.99).

In emphasising that the relationship of Amos to a cultic pattern does not necessarily establish the prophet's position in the cult, says Reventlow, Bentzen is conforming to the view that the prophets were hostile to the cult.¹ But, he argues, whether the ritual of Am.1-2 is an imitation of a liturgy or an original prophetic liturgy cannot be determined by preconceived opinions, and everything points more to the fact that the prophet finds himself in a real cursing-ceremony, in the exercise of his cultic office. By 'everything', he presumably means the hypothesis that the Covenant feast involved the prophets in the proclamation of both weal and woe. Würthwein himself, he says, in spite of his separating the two sets of oracles, thinks that the prophetic word of judgement has its roots in the Yahwistic cult and that it is

1. Reventlow, Das Amt, p.65.

natural that it should be given through cult personnel, who speak in Yahweh's name.¹ Here, says Reventlow, we find the same word of judgement and both components of the Covenant ritual. The way is, therefore, open for the assertion that in the cursing-ceremony in chs. 1 and 2, Amos operates in the exercise of his prophetic office and this office stands in close connection with cultic liturgy. Both accusation and verdict have their origin in the Covenant feast and their proclamation was obviously a prophetic function.²

There is, of course, involved here another important issue. If it is accepted that the oracles against foreign nations belong with those against Israel and are to be taken seriously, the question arises, in what way do the nations stand under Yahweh's judgement, by what standard are they measured? On the views of Weiser and Würthwein, this is not a question, for they believe that the nations are only condemned because they are Israel's and, therefore, Yahweh's, enemies. In proclaiming the day of Yahweh's judgement on

1. Würthwein, in ZThK, 49, 1952, p.12 and see below, pp. 339ff.

2. Reventlow, op.cit., p.65. Against this Wolff argues that the language of these oracles is that of an individual prophet who comes on the stage irregularly and unexpectedly, and not in the context of Israel's institution(s), Joel und Amos, p.181. Attempts to identify a distinctive covenant lawsuit form and to relate it both to the existence of a cultic ceremony of covenant renewal and also to the suzerainty treaty form should be noted here. For a summary of these attempts and their implications for the prophetic 'office', see Clements, Prophecy and Tradition, pp.14-23. Clements himself is sceptical about the hypothesis and thinks that the similarity between prophetic threats and treaty-curses arises from a common ancient Near Eastern background rather than from direct borrowing (see, e.g., p.19).

them, the prophet is fulfilling his task as a prophet of weal for Israel. But this is immediately contradicted by the oracle against Moab (2:1-3). As Kapelrud puts it, 'There is no reason to believe that Amos had any warmer feelings towards Edom than towards the other neighbouring nations'.¹ Nor, it may be added, did these nations constitute a serious threat to Israel at this time.

There is much debate about the significance of these oracles against foreign nations. On an older interpretation, Amos is set against the people, as universalist against nationalist. In a great move towards ethical monotheism, Amos came to see Yahweh as the God of the whole world, the guardian of universal morality.²

An interesting discussion of this is given by Kapelrud, in his study of Am.1 and 2.³ On the points already mentioned, Kapelrud has this to say. He believes, with Bentzen, that 1:2 is an appropriate introduction to an execration on foreign nations and that it may well be a necessary part of the execration. He adds that he finds a hint of the Deuteronomistic claim that Jerusalem should be the only cult-place for Yahweh (pp.17f.). He is convinced by Bentzen that that text is paralleled in Egyptian execration texts and that it imitates the execration uttered in a ritual during the New Year festival (p.19). He immediately gives an example of his own tendency to assume a point he has not proved, however, in saying that אֲנִי יְהוָה, as found

1. Kapelrud, Central Ideas in Amos, pp.25f.

2. So T.H. Robinson, Prophecy and the Prophets, p.69.

3. Ibid., pp.17-35.

at the beginning of each oracle, is 'the old formula used by the prophets and priests in the cult when they had to convey the oracles of Yahweh to the cult audience' (p.20). He implies that this is a piece of evidence for Amos's involvement in the cult and yet he neither demonstrates the truth of this sweeping statement about *הוֹרֵה אֶת-יִשְׂרָאֵל* nor does he differentiate between Amos's imitating a ritual and being involved in one. In his more honest moments, he confines himself to asserting that 'Amos delivered a series of oracles, and the style and the composition of them, were taken over from the cultic execration texts' (p.21).

On the main point under consideration at the moment, i.e., the significance of Amos's oracles against foreign nations, Kapelrud disagrees with a number of opinions, for instance, Weiser's, that the oracles here are nationalistic and show only a naïve, ethical standard (p.23). Against this he brings the obvious citation of 9:7, which shows that Amos did not share the usual nationalistic point of view. So, he says, on chs.1-2, it was in no way part of popular belief that Yahweh would pronounce sentence on Moab for having committed a crime against Edom (pp.25f.). The question that arises is, how did Amos conceive this idea?

He points out that it was established in the ancient Near East that the national god was responsible for the moral order of his own country and also that he could withdraw his help from his people because they had in some way offended him, and let their enemies have their will.¹ On the Mesha stone,

1. Ibid., p.27 and Kapelrud, 'God as Destroyer in the Preaching of Amos and in the Ancient Near East', JBL, 71, 1952, pp.35f.

for example, it is said that Omri, King of Israel, afflicted Moab for a long time, 'because Kemosh was angry with his land'. But Amos was new in proclaiming that Yahweh, the god of Israel and Judah, and according to popular belief acting for them alone, interferes in matters between Moab and Edom. Amos believes that Yahweh has the power to act everywhere and that he is God for more than the covenant people, and this obviously has corollaries for his ideas of ethical standards. The question is then, however, how can Amos assume that these demands, to which the covenant people had pledged themselves, must be accepted by everybody, everywhere? There are, Kapelrud thinks, several possibilities. Weiser's idea of a naïve ethical standard he has already rejected and he now rejects the idea that certain ethical standards were found everywhere, existing independently of the national gods, and that here we see the beginning of an autonomous morality, in which Yahweh becomes equated with justice. We must take our clue, he says, from the integrity of Amos's ideas. We must look, for example at 9:7, where there is a clear break with the idea of national gods for different peoples, as all are under Yahweh's sway. It is because of his idea of God, his belief that Yahweh is unlimited, that Amos assumes that the other peoples know the will of Yahweh.

Kapelrud does, therefore, see something new appearing in Amos. Yet, he thinks that this must not be exaggerated. The oracles, he says, have a markedly original stamp. 'They bear the stamp of a creative spirit', but this spirit is 'well versed in the cultic-poetic language and style of his

time', (p.32). No doubt, he continues, these traditions by which Amos was influenced were found in the temple cult, especially in the New Year Festival. He refers here to Mowinckel's 'Enthronement Psalms', in which oracles against foreign nations appear.¹

It is not altogether clear from Kapelrud's analysis, however, whether he differentiates between nationalistic and universalistic oracles against foreign nations in the cult and whether he thinks that both viewpoints are expressed there. He seems to be urging that the source of Amos's 'universalism' is the tradition found in the cult and yet he implies that Amos's belief, as seen particularly in the oracle against Moab, is a break-away from this. Thus, he writes, 'in his first execrations against foreign nations, Amos seems to adhere faithfully to the national idea of Yahweh. His introductory words in 1:2 must have sounded highly recognisable to the hearers, taken from the temple cult as they seem to be'.² Surely, if this is true, it suggests that Amos's oracle against Israel must have come as something of a shock to his audience. It was quite different from that to which they were accustomed. If, on the other hand, Amos is using a current formula as the pattern for his speech, the oracles against Israel would not be the surprise that they have often been assumed to be. The question is, were Amos's ideas on Yahweh's total sovereignty and his consequent punishment of foreign nations alongside of Israel, originated, or at least originally expressed, by Amos, or were they already

1. Mowinckel, Psalmenstudien, II, pp.65-77.

2. Kapelrud, Central Ideas in Amos, p.35.

present in the cult? This question will arise again when the 'doxologies' come into consideration, but an answer has been suggested in relation to the present passage. According to this, it is possible to distinguish between popular belief and cultic tradition. Reventlow, for instance, concurs with Kapelrud's view that Amos's idea of God is universalistic and that, in so being, it goes beyond popular belief. Yet, he says, this universalism is not new, but stands in a tradition, shown especially in the Psalms, which is related to the cultic institutions of Israel. It is present in the Covenant celebration, where Yahweh's Lordship over all peoples is affirmed. (This, therefore, gives us the Sitz im Leben of the oracles in Am.1;2.) All are under Yahweh's rule and subject to his will. This will become concrete in the Covenant Law of Israel, so the judgement ritual of Am.1 and 2 belongs to the proclamation of the Covenant revelation. But Reventlow takes this a step further. This proclamation of the Covenant revelation made in the celebration is, he says, part of the prophetic office. Thus, the prophetic office belongs in the sphere of Covenant proclamation of God's judgement over foreign nations as part of the liturgy.

We see here disclosed in Amos, he asserts, a new side of the prophetic office, in which the central task is the proclamation of the Law, both the accusation and the verdict. The prophet is, therefore, institutional. This understanding, he says, restores unity to the current picture of the prophets. It is not that only prophets of woe (nebiim) belong to the institution and the free, inspired, 'writing' or woe prophets

are set against it. Amos's office is shown to be a comprehensive one. It encompasses both weal and woe proclamation, the same message to his own and to foreign peoples. God's will is for the world. But it is the Covenant God of Israel whose will he declares; hence, these oracles belong to the Covenant-feast, in which Yahweh's will is given public proclamation.¹

From this discussion of Am.1:2-2:16, three main points emerge, but the fact is that they still take the form of questions and not assertions. Firstly, what is the aim of the passage and in what relation do the foreign nations stand to Israel and Israel's God? As we have seen, there are strong arguments for the unity of the passage, in which case the oracles against foreign nations are to be taken seriously. But they can surely be taken seriously without being regarded as the main point of Amos's preaching. It could still be that these oracles create the setting for the announcement of Israel's judgement. This is not to say that they are merely a homiletical trick, and not of any real importance. Rather, as Mays puts it, 'they are announced as a word from Yahweh', the point being that Yahweh is against all sin.² Thus Israel is put in the general category of sinful kingdoms (cf.9:8), subject to Yahweh's wrath. Mays goes so far as to say, '...it would be difficult to imagine a setting for the oracles against the nations apart from the Israel oracle'. His main reason for this is

1. Reventlow, Das Amt, pp.71-75.

2. Mays, *op.cit.*, pp.26ff.

that the Israel oracle breaks the form of the series. Being much longer, it departs from the pattern whose structure shaped the oracles.¹ 'The folk who are the ultimate concern of the entire sequence are finally in focus. The word to Israel breaks through the formal structure which has carried the series to this point'.

It would certainly appear that this passage, whether or not it is rhetorical or homiletical, has as its climax the oracle against Israel. The implication is of one moral law, the source of which is Yahweh, the God of the world. Other nations should have known this law; but they have flouted it. Israel has not only flouted this law, but rebelled in the face of God's special favour and treatment (cf. 3:2). This understanding makes possible a consistent interpretation of the passage. Reventlow argued that these oracles against foreign nations function in a way directly comparable to the prophecies proclaimed to Israel; and he located them in Israel's cult, in an annual covenant celebration.² One difficulty about this is that these oracles would not then be heard by the peoples concerned, in which case they can hardly have the same intention as those against Israel. As we have seen, it is alternatively suggested that the primary significance of these oracles of woe against foreign nations is weal for Israel,³ in which case we do wrong to attach any importance to these oracles as such. The specific historical

1. Ibid., p.44.

2. Reventlow, Das Amt, p.265.

3. See above, ch. IV, pp.330f., and Erlandsson, The Burden of Babylon, pp.65f.

acts and situations referred to are immaterial. The oracles represent a cultic pattern and evidence the activity of the cultic prophet securing weal for Israel. This interpretation makes it impossible to regard 1:2-2:6 as a unity and depends on there being a radical break between two phases of Amos's prophetic activity.

This takes us to the second question, which concerns the possibility of this passage's having a cultic background. It is to be remarked that the main argument, as expressed by Reventlow, for example, for such a background is not so much the form of the passage as its universalism. Where does this universalism come from? The answer offered is, from the cult. Now Mays's view would seem to be less biased in its approach to this passage. Perhaps he goes too far and almost ignores its universalistic implications, but at least he acknowledges that Amos's main concern is Israel. True it is, he says, that Amos assumes that other nations are subject to Yahweh's norms, but, he argues, the term

יָשׁוּב, rebellion, connotes the flouting of authority and belongs pre-eminently to the language of politics rather than the cult.¹ The nations are in revolt against Yahweh's authority over them. Thus Amos is using the basic form of the proclamation of judgement and there is no need to try to construct a cultic ritual situation or background for the announcement of these oracles.

1. Mays, op.cit., p.27. He cites von Rad, OT Theology, I, p.263. It may be remarked that the fact that a legal term is used to express the idea of rebellion against authority does not necessarily exclude a cultic background.

This raises the third question, which concerns the element of judgement in the cult and particularly in the covenant festival. We saw in relation to the Psalms that there is considerable debate about the nature and the extent of the judgement on Israel pronounced in the cult. Jeremias, in particular, presses the distinction between judgement against individual members of the nation and judgement against the nation as a whole. We have also seen that many scholars regard wholesale judgement on Israel as constituting the new element in Amos, as the earliest canonical prophet whose words have come down to us.¹ It is surely remarkable that the chief advocate of the idea that in the oracles against foreign nations Amos is functioning as a cultic prophet securing weal for Israel is also the chief advocate of the idea that the prophetic Gerichtsrede against Israel finds its origin in the cult.² Würthwein argues that the Gerichtsrede (which he regards as a special form of the Scheltrede) is a clear example of the way in which the use of a particular form in the prophets indicates a particular function, in this case, a cultic form indicating a cultic, prophetic function.³ He contends that we see this cultic origin of the Gerichtsrede in the enthronement psalms (e.g. 96:11-13; 98:7-9; 76:8-10) and also in Ps.50:1-7. There, heaven and earth are called as witnesses and the sacred event of judgement is enacted in the cult. The words of woe are spoken by cultic personnel in Yahweh's name.⁴ He

1. See above, ch.II, pp.89-93, and see, for example, Westermann, op.cit., p.137.

2. Würthwein, in ZThK, 49, 1953.

3. Ibid., pp.1-7.

4. Ibid., pp.10-13.

prophets are,¹ which further indicates the radical difference between cultic and classical prophets.²

Hesse further objects to Würthwein's differentiation between the tasks of delivering Yahweh's accusation and of proclaiming woe,³ and he thinks that the cultic prophetic function was to proclaim weal to Israel and that Würthwein is, therefore, right in thinking that Amos's proclamations of woe cannot belong to his being a nabi.⁴ This objection is also brought by Westermann, who contends that the Gerichtswort has a legal derivation.⁵ Westermann agrees with Würthwein that the prophetic Gerichtswort is to be perceived as a whole in two parts:- the proclamation of woe and the accusation, and that the words of Amos, a cultic prophet or prophet of weal, are to be clearly distinguished from the words of Amos, the prophet of woe.⁶ Now, Hesse argues, in attempting to tie the prophetic Gerichtswort to a cultic event, Westermann gives evidence of formal inconsistency by taking into consideration only the accusation. Further, this obliterates the valuable distinction made in Würthwein's earlier article between the speeches of the salvation nabi and the prophet of judgement. Westermann writes, 'The particular prophetic situation in which God appears as an accuser against his own people certainly does not correspond to the office of the cult prophet whose problem is, according to Würthwein's

1. cf. above, pp. 233, 237, 239.

2. Ibid., p. 47.

3. Würthwein, in ZAW, 62/63, 1949/51.

4. Hesse, in ZAW, 65, 1953, pp. 50f.

5. Westermann, op.cit., pp. 77ff.

6. See Würthwein, in ZAW, 62/63, 1949/51, pp. 56f.

'Amos-Studien', to bring about salvation in the cult for his people'.¹

Hesse finally objects to the basis of Würthwein's thesis that the accusation of Yahweh against Israel was to be proclaimed by the cultic prophets. This lies in the fact that in the Israelite cult the Law was proclaimed and Israel's obligations renewed.² Because Israel was breaking the Law, the cultic prophets had to proclaim the accusation against the people. Hesse argues that whilst it is true that Amos is proclaiming well-known norms,³ the whole point of Amos's proclamation is that Israel, including cultic prophets, has become ignorant of this Law. They do not hear it and obey it.⁴

Hesse concludes that it was not a function of the cultic prophets to proclaim Yahweh's accusation to Israel. In the cult, the accusations were against foreign nations and $\square\iota\lambda\psi$ was proclaimed for Israel. In the cult, Yahweh was proclaimed as judge of the nations and saviour of Israel. This was the popular theology of the cultic prophets and it was opposed by the prophets of woe. He thinks, therefore, that classical and cultic prophets must be clearly distinguished, that the accusation against Israel was new with the classical prophets and separated them from the cultic prophets.⁵

1. Westermann, *op.cit.*, p.80.

2. Würthwein, in *ZThK*, 49, 1952, p.12.

3. cf. Würthwein, in *ZAW*, 62/62, 1949/51, pp.47ff.

4. Hesse, in *ZAW*, 65, 1953, pp.51f.

5. *Ibid.*, pp.52f. It is interesting that Hesse is not concerned to ask whether this accusation was against the nation as a whole or only part of it.

In conclusion, it may be remarked that, if it is accepted that Amos brings something startlingly new into the realm of Israelite prophecy and religion, in terms of wholesale judgement on Israel, then this surely precludes the possibility that this thorough, judgemental element was already present in the festivals. It cannot be both traditional and new, though it could be, of course, that Amos is the first to take this element seriously and to bring home the fact that it is not good news that Yahweh is judge (see 5:18ff.). The arguments against inferring that Amos held a cultic position, however, are numerous. Even if the cult did contain the proclamation of woe to Israel, and even if the universalistic view of Am.1-2 did exist in the cult, this in no way proves that Amos was a cultic official. As already seen, the evidence for a prophetic law-speaker in the cult is inconclusive¹ and even if this office were shown to exist it is far from obvious that Amos held it. The strongest argument against assuming a cultic form in Am.1-2 is that these concerns of woe against the nations and judgement against Israel are not exclusively cultic. Whilst some have argued that conflict with the nations is a distinctive cultic theme,² others have sought the origin of these traditions in the institution of the holy war.³ Clements,

1. See above, ch.III, pp.257ff.

2. Notably Mowinckel, Ps.St., II, pp.126ff.

3. Though, as Clements remarks, these possibilities are not mutually exclusive since a very prominent cultic activity formed a part of the praxis relating to the Holy War, Prophecy and Tradition, p.66. See further, pp.69-72 for a discussion of this and form the main works concerned with the idea. See also above, ch.II, p.73.

Wright has argued that Samuel provided the most complete model for the tenth-ninth century prophets' self-under-

who thinks that neither setting adequately explains the oracles against foreign nations in the prophetic books, suggests rather that we 'regard these prophecies as a distinctive genre of their own which drew from many aspects of Israel's life'.¹ Similarly, it cannot be maintained that the Gerichtsrede against Israel was exclusively cultic. Jeremias, for example, argues that the prophetic Gerichtsrede, with which Würthwein deals, is only a special form of the whole prophetic proclamation of judgement.² Finally, as will be maintained throughout this enquiry, even if the form is shown to have been originally cultic, the cult cannot be assumed to be its permanent Sitz im Leben.

b) Amos 4:13; 5:8f; 9:5f.

The style and content of these passages has led scholars

Contd.) standing, 'The Nations in Hebrew Prophecy', Encounter, 26, 1965, pp.225-237. In a recent study, Ackerman has taken up this argument, linking Bach's claim that the prophetic oracles against the nations have their setting in Israel's Holy War traditions (Die Aufforderungen) with Richter's suggestion that these are connected with the prophetic call traditions (Traditions-geschichtliche Untersuchungen zum Richterbuch, Bonner Biblische Beiträge, 18, 1966; Die sogenannte vorprophetischen Berufsberichte). Ackerman takes Jgs.4:4-10, 5:12 as the key passages for demonstrating that the Israelite prophet was involved in assuring victory or in giving advice for achieving victory, 'Prophecy and Warfare in Early Israel: A Study of the Deborah-Barak Story', BASOR, 220, 1975, pp.5-13. See also appendix.

1. Ibid., p.72.
2. Jeremias, op.cit., p.156.

almost unanimously to the conviction that these passages constitute parts of a hymn.¹ The use of the participles, e.g., $\gamma\zeta\eta'$ (v.14) and the refrain in 4:13;5:8; 9:6, $\gamma\eta\eta'$ are very much in the hymnic style and form. There is division, however, over who wrote the hymn(s), Amos or someone else. The prevailing view is that they were later additions to Amos's words.²

It has been suggested, however, that the relevant question is not whether Amos composed them but whether Amos himself used the strophes of the hymn.³ This it would seem is true, so long as one is not trying to establish from these texts that Amos was involved in cultic activity. As we shall see, this has been attempted and, in this case, the question of their composition is indeed relevant. Nonetheless, for many, the question is certainly whether Amos could have used these strophes.

In answer to this, Kapelrud asserts that the hymns fit well into their context.⁴ Kapelrud himself, however, thinks that this proves nothing, and far more persuasive is the fact

1. e.g. Mays, op.cit., p.83.

2. Mays, for instance, thinks the fragments were probably added later to equip the book for liturgical use: op.cit., p.14. cf. Wolff, Joel und Amos, pp.254ff. The arguments commonly adduced against regarding these doxologies as being by Amos are i) that they are contextually difficult, ii) that they are unlike Amos in style, containing, for instance, words such as $\chi\eta\eta$, iii) that the idea of Yahweh as creator comes too early. The fact that the doxologies are contextually awkward could also be used, however, as an argument against their being interpolations, as can the fact that they are so fragmentary. These facts may suggest that they were actually used by Amos and so constituted part of the material the collectors had in their Amos traditions.

3. Kapelrud, Central Ideas in Amos, p.38.

4. This view is clearly not unanimous.

that they are in full conformity with Amos's idea of God (cf. 9:1ff.).¹ In Amos, he says, we find a universalism, not in the modern sense, but in the sense of a practical universalism. The question then arises, as in the consideration of the passage, 1:3-2:16, what is the origin of this idea of universalism? Kapelrud is unwilling to find this in Amos's vocation, as it is alluded to in 3:8 and 7:14f., although he thinks the vocation may be one factor in Amos's universalist understanding. Nor does he find its origin in the tradition of prophets, such as Elijah, who 'preached a Yahweh who could not be identified with Baal'. Strangely, he says, we find no such polemic against Baal in Amos. In contrast with Hosea (e.g. 2:10ff.), it is not the relationship to other gods which is the problem in the preaching of Amos. Rather, the strong feature of universalism in his view brings only Yahweh into his focus and leaves all other gods without interest to him.²

There is a discussion of the doxologies in Amos by Horst which is also concerned with the question of the origin of the concepts expressed in these fragments.³ It must be said that the views of Kapelrud just outlined are not only generally rejected but also say nothing about the possible Sitz im Leben of the hymn and therefore, have little bearing on the question of Amos's relation to the cult. Horst's views, on the other hand, are of significance here.

1. Kapelrud, Central Ideas in Amos, p.39.

2. Ibid., pp.40-43.

3. Horst, 'Die Doxologien im Amosbuch', ZAW, 47, 1929, pp.45-54.

He begins with the usual view that these hymnic fragments stand in isolation from their surroundings and he mentions the attempt of Budde, in particular, to show that the fragments must belong together and to reconstruct their original unity. Thus, Budde conceives of one original, complete hymn: /9:6a; 5:8; 4:13a; 9:5a; 4:13b=9:6b, in praise of the Creator-god, Yahweh. Horst, while agreeing that the outlook of all the doxologies is so similar that they must have had the same origin and have come from one hand, feels doubtful whether a collector interrupted the original unity. He finds Budde's reconstruction unnecessary and says that we can proceed to examine the hymn in the structure in which we find it. Nonetheless, he thinks that the fact that the same closing-line occurs (5:8b and 9:6b) could suggest that this line would occur as a refrain in an original hymn, (pp.45-46).¹

Horst also finds unsatisfactory Budde's statement that this hymn is in praise of the Creator-god, Yahweh. If this were the sole purpose of the hymn, then Yahweh's destruction of the earth (e.g., the earthquake, in 9:5), would not come into it. It has rather, he thinks, a greater overall meaning. This is the glorification of the power of Yahweh, who makes known the world's dependence on him not only through creation, but through destruction. Such transcendence is expressed very clearly in spacial terms in 9:6.

1. cf. Mays, op.cit., p.83.

The question remains, however, why should these doxologies occur where they do? Why have they been placed with 4:12 and 9:4? He finds unrealistic the view that their position is explained by the activity of the redactors' using them to end various collections of Amos's speeches.¹ Similarly, the view that they occurred wherever the sanctuary at Bethel was denounced² is untenable. There is no threat to Bethel in 4:13 (pp.49f.).³

There is, he believes, a reason for their position and this he expounds as follows. We see from the story of Achan in Joshua 7, that, according to the law, on being found guilty, a man is required to give thanks and to make a public confession (Joshua 7:19). The presupposition of this doxology and confession is that Yahweh is about to approach. Also, the doxology has a finality about it. It brings the case to an end. There is no possibility of a re-hearing.

Another example of a confession and doxology, as belonging to the sphere of holy law, occurs in literary form in Job 4 and 5. In 4:1-11, it is made plain that God is against sin and will punish. Then, in 5, Yahweh's insuperable omnipotence is confessed. There is also a similarity between Am.5:8b and 9:6b and Job 5:10, which speaks of Yahweh's giving rain.

This then offers the Sitz im Leben of the doxologies in

1. The view of Guthe, 'Der Prophet Amos', Die Heilige Schrift des alten Testaments, p.37.
2. As suggested by Sellin, Das Zwölfprophetenbuch, p.225.
3. There are at least two other suggestions which are not mentioned here. Firstly, that of Weiser, that they are linked with the predominance of the earthquake in Amos's thinking. Secondly, the view that they set the scene for a theophany; so, for example, Mays, op.cit., p.84.

Amos. They are confessions required in the process of sacred justice. In the light of this, 4:12b is a sensible introduction to the first doxology. Just as Achan has to submit to God's judgement, so Israel has to 'prepare to meet her God'. Israel's sins are declared by the prophet in Am.4:6-11. Now the penalty has to be accepted. Then Israel has to speak the doxology, expressing the fact that the case is ended. The doxology here means, therefore, the acceptance of the penalty. In 9:5ff., the confession is missing, but the penalty is clearly expressed in the vision, vv.1-4.

Horst goes on to suggest that the post-exilic community would see a positive value in these doxologies. For them the catastrophe of the exile would be proof of the power of God. Further, the case is finished. There need be no guilt for the sins of the fathers.

Therefore, the roots of the doxologies are to be found in the sacred law. They acknowledge that the basis of salvation is founded on the acceptance of the majesty of God, which punishes sin. In this way, Amos reveals a perceptive and deep understanding of God's way with men (pp.51-54).

Now this study does not have implications for Amos's position as a prophet, or if it does, they are not given expression. Throughout, it is implied that Amos, or his collectors, are using the doxological form and are not necessarily involved in sacral law. The discussion of these passages by J.D.W. Watts, however, does have consequences within the realm of the prophetic 'office' and these are drawn out by him.¹

1. Watts, op.cit., pp.51-64.

Before looking at Watts's suggestions as to the Sitz im Leben of the doxologies, his attempts to set their limits should be mentioned. 4:13, he thinks, is closely related to v.12 and there is no good reason to separate the two verses. But there is good reason to question the unity of v.12, as one complete clause appears in duplicate:- 'Therefore thus I will do to you; O Israel; Because I will do this to you,...'. The first part, he says, is the climax of the Yahweh-word of Amos, whilst the second appears to be a quotation, making the transition to what follows. It becomes an appropriate element of the hymnic portion, with its imperative call to assembled Israel, because such an imperative is a common characteristic of Hebrew hymns.¹ The quoted hymn strophe then becomes vv.12c-13. He summarises the theme of this as Yahweh's authority and power. Such a God as is described in v.13 is Israel's God, whom she must prepare to meet (pp.52-54).

He sees a similar duplication in 5:4ff. Verse 5 is the climax of the previous oracle and verse 6 repeats the phrase from v.4, again with a hymnic imperative. Watts also wants to include v.9 in the doxology and to exclude v.8b, as it is found more suitable in 9:6. The theme of the whole is Yahweh's cosmic control, in relation to the turn of the seasons.

Our task is then, he argues, to find a setting which adequately explains the hymn's basic themes:- the expectancy of Yahweh's coming (4:12c), the possibility of judgement or

1. Gunkel, Einleitung, p.43.

trial by ordeal (5:6), praise of the creator (4:13), praise of the Lord of nature (4:13; 5:7-9; 9:5), expectancy of rain (5:9; 9:5f.) and the omen of fate (4:13; 5:9; 9:5a; 9:6a). He argues in the following way.

Yahweh's coming in judgement fits most naturally into the Autumn Festival, whether this festival is conceived as one of enthronement or of Covenant-renewal. The climax of the festival is the Day of Yahweh, on which he appears, judges and, in assurance of Covenant-renewal, lays the basis for blessing throughout the following year. As this fell at the end of the dry summer season, the subject of rain and renewed fertility in the fields would be of general interest. With nature's renewal, it would be the obvious season for celebration and teaching about creation and the control of nature. It was a season of change and the changing patterns of the heavens revealed the coming change of seasons. It was also a time of expectancy and this is supported by the participles and imperatives in the doxologies, which suggest that the people are challenged to prepare for an experience that is imminent.

Watts then makes some rather enormous leaps. The hymn from which we now have the fragments is, he says, 'a prophetic psalm', which bands of prophets might have sung in preparation for the great celebration. The only support he offers for this is the existence of A.R. Johnson's views and the argument that the hymn's 'themes run parallel to those loved by the prophets'! If these themes were so dearly loved by the prophets, one wonders why their appearance in the Book of

Amos should occasion such debate. It is their very dissimilarity from prophetic themes that constitutes part of the problem.

Watts continues that the hymn implies a fully formed doctrine of Yahweh as creator prior to Amos, i.e., that a monotheistic faith and expression predate Amos. Thus Amos's deep conviction that Yahweh was absolute Lord of all was nourished by such hymns as this. He did not originate the doctrine, it was his inheritance. The obvious question provoked by this is, if it is a psalm from the Yahwistic cult, why bring prophets into it at all? Watts is surely too vague throughout this argument. He goes on, for instance, to say that in these doxologies we have 'a good opportunity to study a prophet's use of cultic materials'. Provided that the hymn is cultic (as seems likely) then this statement may be valid. But it is a non-sequitur to write that Amos 'must have' taken part in prophetic activities in the cult. He expands the latter assertion in reply to why a doxology occurs in 4:13 after 4:12 at all. He replies that the natural answer is that they were actually presented in this way. The prophet's speech of judgement led up to the singing of the hymn at its appropriate place in the celebration. Yahweh's judgement was announced, followed by a call to preparation and repentance before Yahweh, God of Hosts. He then writes, however, 'One might think of Amos speaking the words of the hymn, but it seems more fitting to think of the prophetic band as picking up the chant or song at the close of this message'. This may be imaginative but it is not consistent. If Amos was involved in the cult and if the cult

was the setting for Am.4:1-12, why should he not have spoken the hymn? If, on the other hand, there is this gap between vv.12 and 13, we are back to the position in which the doxologies appear to be unrelated to their contexts and nothing to do with Amos (pp.63-65).

For the sake of completeness, Watts's further thoughts on the matter should be outlined. He writes, 'The hymn is here quoted to fill a necessary part of the picture of Amos's activity. The prophet's message did not stand alone in its original setting. It contributed an important element to the great religious experience of the festival. The prophetic protest against insincere religious observance came from inside, not from outside the religious structure'.

He makes the point that in Am.5:4-9, we see Amos using the liturgy and expanding it to give the particular emphasis needed for that hour. Thus Amos gives variations on the original hymnic quotation, 'Seek me and live', in 'Seek Yahweh and live; but do not seek Bethel...'. The question remains, could Amos not have been making use of the liturgy, outside the cult, just as he could use the dirge without being in a funeral cortège? All that this, in fact, shows is that Amos had as a background to his thought these ideas of God as creator of all. It is probable that they came from the cult, particularly from the Autumn Festival in which creation was so important. There is nothing, in fact, remarkable in Amos's holding ideas and using forms derived from the cult.

The last part of Watts's study, however, is valuable, whichever view one holds. He writes, 'Often the prophet's

words ran parallel to cultic procedure and phrasing, even when his real intention was quite opposite to popular or contemporary understanding of the cult'. So, he conceives of the prophet's picking up portions like this hymn, which were of 'true Yahwistic content', even as he derided and condemned cultic practices which were heathen in both form and intent. Amos knew the cult to be syncretistic and he used its valid portions to condemn the invalid parts. He emphasised a call to faithful obedience, rather than simply a call to participate in temple rites, which more nearly represented the worship of Baal than the true worship of Yahweh'. This suggests that Amos appeared in cultic sanctuaries, as we know from 7:10-17, and actually there used the cultic language to 'give the particular emphasis needed for that hour'. This is a far cry, however, from the suggestion that Amos was an official cultic prophet. Nonetheless, it is to be brought into consideration in any interpretation of Amos's and other prophets' condemnations of the cult. Is not this the message of Watts' concluding words? Adhering now to the view that the position of the last two doxologies indicates that their quotation must have been by the collectors (or editors) and not by Amos, he writes, 'These collectors (or editors) were careful...to preserve those things which would help to make the words of Amos readily understandable to generations far removed from the setting in which he spoke' (pp.65-67), and we belong to such a generation. If Watts's last statements about the use of cultic material are correct, however, this suggests that behind these doxologies, whether quoted and positioned by Amos or by

collectors, is an attack on the cult of the day.

c) Am.4:6-11

Again it is Reventlow who interprets this passage as saying something about the office of the prophet.¹

He begins by stating that this passage presents many exegetical problems. There is firstly the question of its limits. According to the old school, the passage was one extensive composition of 4:4-13 and 5:4-6,² in which case 4:6-11 fell between the words against the cult in 4:4f. and 5:4-6. This was first opposed by Weiser, who said that, although it was indisputable that in the present text, 4:6-11 belonged with the preceding words against the cult and also 5:4f., nor indeed could it be excluded that in the original form, 4:4f. was the introduction and 5:4f. the conclusion of this section, the relationship was probably later than Amos.³ The theme of vv.6ff. is completely separate from that of vv.4ff. There is no mention of the cult in vv.6-11 nor is the refrain 'טַוּ אֲנִי - אֵלֹהִים to be understood cultically. There is no hope of return in the passages. Also, if it were such a refrain, suggesting the return to Yahweh in the cult, it is strange that it should appear between passages rejecting the cult. This could, of course, explain the position of the passage, if the literary compositor understood it to be such a refrain and set it between the cult words,

1. Reventlow, Das Amt, pp.75-90.

2. e.g., Budde, 'Zu Text und Auslegung des Buches Amos', JBL, 43, 1924, pp.94ff.

3. Weiser, 'Zu Amos 4:6-13', ZAW, 46, 1928, pp.49-59.

but the connection was not made in the verbal proclamation and v.5 is clearly the concluding formula of the first word against the cult. The end is also disputed, but Reventlow thinks that the original unit was clearly vv.6-11, as the recurring refrain shows (p.76).

With this question of unity, he says, belongs the other question of the meaning of the declarations. One of the main difficulties here lies in deciding whether the plagues referred to belong to the past or the future. Weiser thinks that the sense of the refrain demands the past, but then there is the problem that there is no mention of Israel's having experienced these catastrophes.¹ Weiser replies that we find here a rhetorical way of describing past experience. But, as Reventlow says, this only accommodates the difficulty and does not remove it (p.78).² Yet, Reventlow thinks that the perfects and imperfect consecutives make it impossible to understand a future reference here. So, he says, the problem that the passage sets us is that it conveys neither a future significance as a threat nor a past significance as a historical demonstration (p.80).

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1. Whilst Reventlow regards this as a genuine difficulty, it may be remarked that, since our historical records are far from complete, the fact that there is no mention of these catastrophes is inconclusive in the argument about the tense of these verses.
 2. Also against Weiser's suggestion is Würthwein's argument already mentioned that pure rhetoric was out of the question in the time and place of Amos's proclamation.

He solves the dilemma to his satisfaction in the following way.

The passage exhibits a stereotyped form similar to that already met with in Am.1-2. It is characteristic of the picture that everything is colourless, general, and typical, without respect to concrete, individual cases. The main stress lies, not on individual plagues, but on their totality. In the original scheme, there was no climax, but simply the monotony of identical refrains. Yet, we must distinguish between the origin of the form, the Sitz im Leben of cultic celebration,¹ and the use to which it is put. In the latter, vv.6-11 are related to v.12, in which the prophet moves from a monotonous and general form to concrete address (pp.80-82).²

Amos is using a tradition of plague-language (cf. Jer. 14:12 and Ex. 7:15 etc.) and also the blessing and cursing formula (cf. Lev.26), which constituted a chief component of the Covenant Festival.³ Originally there were the two parts of the formula, but in the present text we just have the curse. This curse-formula gives the history of the disobedience of the people, the reason for the necessity of a new word of judgement (cf. Ezek.20). Amos is speaking here, therefore, about not an historic but a cultic reality. He is referring back to a component of the Covenant-Festival proclamation; the Blessing and Cursing ritual. It is the proclamation of

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1. This he slips in almost in passing, with a reference also to Gressmann, who first suggested it; Der Ursprung der israelitisch-jüdischen Eschatologie.
 2. It is not made clear at this point whether Reventlow thinks that Amos himself actually makes this move, in which case v.12 would be original, at least in its position.
 3. Against Reventlow, Clements maintains that we possess only very limited literary evidence of the use of solemn acts of blessing and cursing in Israel's cult, Prophecy and Tradition, p.10.

the Covenant law, on which depends the relationship between God and the people (pp.83-89). It is not the prophet's task, however, to deliver the cursing-formula, but this cursing is rather the basis of the prophet's proclamation. In worship, the prophetic word is spoken and brings the judgement of God direct to the people, after the cursing-formula. The prophet is the messenger of God, presenting his sovereign will as the basis of the whole existence of the Covenant relationship. He proclaims direct to them what has again and again emerged from the curse. Thus the content of the prophetic office represents the old tradition and not a radical break with it. The prophet stands in the succession of a firmly established office, in which his task is to actualise the divine curse, as exemplified in Am.7:10ff. (pp.89f.).

Reventlow offers no evidence for the existence of such a prophetic task in worship. Rather, he assumes it and then proceeds to interpret Am.4:6-11 on this basis. Surely, therefore, all he can say is, like Bentzen on Am.1-2, that the so-called cursing ritual has given him a way of understanding Am.4:6-11. It may be reasonable to suggest that such a ritual existed and that vv.4-11 are based on this, but, as Reventlow himself admits, Amos is only using this. If this is so, why need Amos be involved in a cultic event at all? Presumably, Reventlow is resting his case on the position of v.12, which in his view shows Amos in the cult, fulfilling his prophetic task after the cursing-ritual. This is surely to set too much store by this verse and its position, which, it is to be observed, has by some been connected with the following doxology and by others been regarded in isolation

from both passages, without its seeming altogether impossible that it should so exist. As with the other passages, there is no evidence afforded here to give content to Amos's prophetic office.

Now J.L. Mays thinks that Amos may have been making use of the curse tradition, as found in Lev.26 and Dt.28, in giving an account of God's dealings with Israel, which stood in stark contrast with the Heilsgeschichte that would be recited in the cult. This would seem to be a more acceptable interpretation which takes full cognisance of the fact that vv.6-11 have the nature of a quotation with the features described above. Similarly, Mays rejects the view that v.12, which he thinks could belong here, reflects Amos's involvement in a Covenant-making ritual.¹ He feels that this is very unlikely, in view of Amos's criticism of the cult. Amos, he says is concerned not with Covenant-making, but with Covenant-keeping. לִקְרֹאת־אלֹהִים may be a cultic summons but here it is displaced and applied to history, just as the words were in vv.6-11. This is surely the conclusion to be drawn from these passages in which Amos seems to be using cultic material. It is a far more interesting

1. The suggestion that v.12 is such a summons to a ritual of Covenant renewal is made by Brueggemann 'Am.4:4-13 and Israel's Covenant Worship', VT, 15, 1965, pp.1ff. It should be noted, however, that Brueggemann himself thinks that Reventlow's judgement that Amos held a cultic office in which he pronounced curses is premature, emphasising that the use of forms and traditions does not necessarily indicate a particular 'office' (p.1). He accepts, however, Reventlow's contention that vv.6-11 is a recital based on ancient covenant curses (pp.6-8). Mays himself points to Ex.19:11,15 and 34:2, where 'prepare' deals with the qualification of persons for cultic participation in the ritual of Covenant-making.

and well-founded study to consider the use to which Amos puts this cultic language and the implications of this than to scavenge from these passages anything which gives content to a hypothetical cultic prophetic office.

d) Am.4:4f.; 5:4-6,14f., 21-24

This is not the place to embark on a general discussion of the prophets' attitude to the cult. It would be impossible, however, to look at Amos's position, without some consideration of the passages in the book of Amos, in which he makes some sort of attack on the cult.

The first of these, 4:4f; does not allow much room for debate. It is clear that Amos thinks that the cult at Bethel and Gilgal is merely an expression of the people's own love of religiosity - '...for so you love to do, O people of Israel'. It would seem that this oracle could well have been delivered at a cultic assembly at Bethel and that this passage, more than any of those previously discussed, has the cult as its Sitz im Leben. This not merely because only at such a gathering would such a message be truly immediate and relevant, but because it would seem that Amos is here parodying words which would be said on such an occasion. This has been argued by Mays, who thinks that the four lines are formulated in the style of the priestly exhortation. He writes, 'Speaking in divine first person, "the priest" addresses the people with plural imperatives, setting forth instructions concerning the cultic ritual to be performed at the shrines'. Thus Amos here usurps the rôle of the priest and exhorts the congregation in a shocking parody of this. He substitutes Israel's own pleasure for the expected

formula 'for I am Yahweh your God' or a reference to Yahweh's delight in the cult. This shift is, in effect, a charge that the sacrificial cult has nothing to do with Yahweh. Mays goes so far as saying that the pilgrims would actually take him at first for a cultic functionary, playing his usual rôle.¹ The point to be noticed is that Amos, on Mays's interpretation, in using cultic language is usurping not a prophetic but a priestly rôle.² There is nothing to suggest and we need not search for anything to suggest that this was, in fact, a prophetic function.

The next passage, 5:4-6, and the related passage in vv.14f., raises rather more controversy, largely centred on the vexed question of whether Amos is setting up ethics in opposition to the cult. A useful study of this, which raises many of the important questions is one by Hesse.³

He begins by mentioning Weiser's thesis, in which Amos is thought of as the representative of a new understanding of God and his nature. This, thinks Weiser, is seen in this passage, which shows Amos representing to the people two diametrically opposed views of God. Thus, Amos uses the

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1. Mays, op.cit., p.74; cf. Wolff, Joel und Amos, pp.249f. Würthwein believes it is, in fact, the task of the cultic prophet to announce whether or not an offering of the community pleases the deity and is acceptable, in Tradition und Situation, pp.115-131. The idea of the prophet's using and radically changing the priestly liturgy is also suggested by Mays in relation to 5:21-24. Here, he thinks, the prophet is imitating a liturgy of admission, op.cit., pp.109f.
 2. cf. Jeremias, op.cit., pp.156-162, and see above, ch.III, pp. 239f., passim.
 3. Hesse, 'Amos 5:4-6,14f.', ZAW, 68, 1956, pp.1-17.

words, 'Seek Yahweh and live', which the people will understand to mean, 'seek the sanctuaries'. But this is precisely what Amos does not mean, as v.5 shows. So, in this challenge to seek Yahweh, lies an ironical paradox. Amos, through his personal experience of God, understands something which sets him apart from his contemporaries in his attitude to God. But his words are purposely open to misunderstanding.¹ Hesse is rightly doubtful whether this represents the prophetic method of conveying truth (pp.1,7f.).

Before him, Würthwein is sharply critical of Weiser.² He asserts that Amos is not making a break with the popular conception of God. The break is rather in Amos's own proclamation, owing to a change in God's attitude. The time of grace is over and the time of wrath is imminent. The time of preparation is at an end. Now is the time of Yahweh's destructive will. There is the dilemma, however, that in this passage, judgement and hope are mixed. It is, therefore, only logical when Würthwein says that we must be doubtful whether 'seek me', in 5:4, before 5:5, is a call to repentance. Moreover, 5:14f. stands in the face of a proclamation of pure judgement, such as we usually have in Amos. Because of this the elements of hope stand under the suspicion of being secondary.

Hesse finds this method of dealing with the dilemma unacceptable. We cannot just reject one element as being unauthentic. Rather, he thinks, we must seek a new interpretation which allows us to accept the whole as authentic.

1. Weiser, Die Prophetie des Amos, pp.191-194.

2. Würthwein, in ZAW, 62/63, 1949/51, pp.10ff.

This interpretation is important here not primarily because of its view of Amos's message of hope, but because of the corollaries it has for Amos's attitude to the cult.

It starts with the assumption that vv.4f. contain a formula, recognisable as Yahweh's word, an exhortation, with a closely connected promise of salvation. It is not just that Israel must seek Yahweh and that there is also the possibility that she may live. It is an exhortation to seek Yahweh and a statement that in this case, if the exhortation is responded to, Israel will live, as Yahweh intends. We have here a promise of weal on condition of the preceding exhortation. This exhortation is also linked, in v.5, to a warning, though it is to be remarked that Amos does not warn them against seeking the sanctuaries because these will be destroyed, but because seeking them and seeking Yahweh stand in opposition to each other (pp.4f.).

Hesse goes on to show that the prophet's words which follow are an extension and, in fact, an interpretation of the Yahweh word, which he has just delivered. For instance, the exhortation 'seek me' becomes 'seek Yahweh...' (v.6) and 'seek good...' (v.14). Similarly, the warning, 'but do not seek Bethel' is expanded, 'seek...not evil' (v.14) and 'Hate evil' (v.15), as is the threat. Amos also elaborates the promise of weal in his own words, yet it is significant that this does not take the form of a more certain divine promise of weal. Rather, the uncertainty is increased (vv.14). Hesse then considers why this should be. It is not, he thinks, that Amos's view of Yahweh is one of an essentially wrathful God, as against the people's understanding of a God of

salvation for Israel. Amos is a member of this people and knows with them that Yahweh, their God, ultimately wills Israel's welfare. But Amos's whole proclamation witnesses to his conviction that the time of wrath is here. This hope can no longer be. Now it is this which stands behind his reserve and caution. It is as if the prophet hits in amazement upon the word of hope, even of certainty, that they will live when Yahweh is sought. He is the unwilling agent of a message of weal. This is why the message breaks through, although the dominant impression of these verses and of Amos as a whole is that his commission is to proclaim woe. Thus, thinks Hesse, Amos can only repeat the word of weal mechanically, without interpretation, because it is the message which he must deliver for another, without his own support. Amos is more concerned with the fate of his hearers, if they do not comply with the admonition. Amos's hesitation is due to the fact that the promise of weal stands in tension with his whole proclamation (pp.9-12). Hesse goes on to suggest that the remnant-concept in Amos is an attempt to make this tension more bearable and is an expression of the inner polarity already present in the religion of Israel, in which Yahweh is at the same time the God of wrath and the God of mercy (pp.13-17).¹ Of more immediate importance is what Hesse says of Amos's view of the cult, as expressed here.

1. Hesse makes the interesting suggestion that the majority (presumably, he means both of people and of prophets) concentrated on the consequences of weal, whilst the minority, the so-called, prophets of woe, drew out the judgemental consequence of Yahweh's claim on Israel, in ZAW, 68, 1956, p.16.

He thinks that the basic Yahweh-word and its expansions must mean that seeking Yahweh in the cult is useless. It is not that Yahweh is not present in cultic activity, but that there is no longer any possibility of seeking Yahweh in the cult. Yahweh is no longer to be found in the sanctuaries. In opposition to searching for Yahweh in the cult, stands a true searching for Yahweh, in which lies the only possibility of salvation (p.10). We are still left with the question, however, of what 'to seek Yahweh' and the parallel statement, 'to seek good' mean. Is Amos playing off cult and ethics against each other? Hesse's view is that Amos is not attacking the cult in toto, but is expressing his belief that, in this situation, in the time of God's wrath, the cult offers no way to God. The way that is open is through just, ethical dealings (v.15). Amos is not saying that there is no way except through a general moral code. 'To seek good' means, in fact, to hold to the established rules, to return to the keeping of the old and always valid ordinance of God. It is not a basic alternative between cult and ethics, but, in this present time, between cult and law. The way to Yahweh is not through the sanctuaries, but through conformity with the much-neglected divine laws (p.12). Yahweh is a God with a final moral claim. He cannot tolerate the people's turning away from his law (p.15).

The total picture to emerge from this interpretation is that the cult is to Amos not indispensable. Indeed, it is a dangerous diversion from the true search for Yahweh. It lulls men into a false sense of security, by giving them the illusion that they are seeking Yahweh, when, in fact, they

have not begun to do this. This seeking Yahweh is no longer possible in the cult, thinks Hesse. He does not make absolutely clear whether he thinks this is because cult is in itself corrupt. But, as he implies, this is not, in fact, the issue. The issue is that at this time of judgement, Israel must truly seek Yahweh and that this can only be done in returning to Yahweh's law. In so far as the cult is a distraction from this obligation, it is to be dispensed with.

There are, of course, other ways of seeing this, or, at any rate, different emphases are possible. So, Kapelrud gives a similar interpretation of 5:4ff. and 5:14f. to Hesse's and yet emerges with a different estimate of the cult's importance to Amos. With reference to 5:4ff., Kapelrud mentions the possibility that Amos is here asserting that Yahweh is to be sought in Jerusalem, rather than in Bethel and Gilgal.¹ He rejects this, on the ground that it is not the thrust of the rest of Amos's preaching. What Amos is concerned to stress, he says, is that the people must seek Yahweh and, obviously, in places where his real will could be learnt. Amos is clearly of the opinion that Bethel and Gilgal are cult places where foreign cult practices have become dominating. They could only lead the people away from Yahweh, instead of back to him.

Kapelrud goes on, however, to make the peculiar statement that 'Amos did not consider the cult practice as anything of importance. To him all kinds of cult practice seem

1. Kapelrud, Central Ideas in Amos, pp.35-37; cf. Engnell, who thinks that Amos's criticism of cult practices is, to a very high degree, a criticism of a foreign cult, namely that of the god, Bethel, in the Northern Kingdom.

to have been completely irrelevant' (p.37). To see why this is so strange coming from Kapelrud, it is necessary to turn to his comments on the passage in 5:21-24.

Amos is here, he says, not substituting morality for religion, but rejecting a cult which is emptied of its content (p.75). This vagueness continues as he says that Amos is objecting to their concentration on the festivals and sacrifices etc. and their neglect of 'other sides of the worship, namely those which consist of a life of justice and righteousness'. Kapelrud seems here to be using 'worship' in a very comprehensive sense. However true it is that the ancient Israelite would not make our division between religion and ethics, I fail to see that such loose statements bring clarity to this difficult area of prophetic study. Kapelrud does then go on, in fact, to make a division between cult and ethics, writing, 'Cult in itself was not sufficient, it had to be combined with ethics. The aim of the prophet was not a final abolition of the cult, but to have it set in its proper place and in due proportions' (p.76). It is, he says, a rather academic discussion to ask whether the prophet aimed at a complete abolition of the cult or just its purification. The point is that the present cult was part of Israel and was thus not exempted from the general destruction which had to come over her. The attacks on the cult have to be seen in the context of the whole book, where doom dominates (e.g. 7:9). Again this is somewhat muddling. The fact remains that Amos is condemning the cult and the question is, why?

Having said that it is academic to ask whether Amos aimed at a complete abolition of the cult and that we must simply concentrate on the specific cult condemned at Bethel and Gilgal in the general proclamation of woe, Kapelrud himself gives some discussion of this question. He concludes with the general statement that Amos was attacking sacrifices and offerings because they were not accompanied by the ethics 'which in his eyes were more essential than the sacrifices' (p.77). This leaves Kapelrud in no position to dismiss the question of Amos's total attitude to the cult as academic. He has answered the question. Amos believes that cult should be accompanied by ethics. Without this, the cult is useless.¹ Further, ethics are more essential. All this surely militates against the idea that Amos could have been officially involved in the cult. Unless one is going to argue that Amos was a cultic prophet in the South and that, there, there existed a right relationship between worship and ethics, it is impossible to deduce such an office from these texts. For, if Amos was involved in the cult, it must have been in this cult that he is condemning. As Kapelrud, and many others, say, there can be no doubt that this particular cult, at this particular time, is for Amos an offence to Yahweh. The rejection of the present cult is total and unqualified. Yet, as we shall see, Kapelrud is to argue that the cult was of immense importance to Amos

1. cf. Watts, op.cit., pp.82f., for the view that Amos is saying that ritual presentation must correspond to living reality. The ethical requirements which were affirmed in the cult must find real expression in the actual life of the people; otherwise the cult is empty and meaningless.

and that he was involved in it. Even in the middle of the statements just referred to, he calmly says that, 'the cultic acts were part of life also to the prophet, and he could hardly imagine life without them'...It is as if Kapelrud cannot give in to his own conclusions.

Mention has already been made of Würthwein's suggestions for understanding these seemingly anti-cultic passages.¹ This must now be elaborated, for here, too, we are confronted with the major difficulties involved in ascertaining the purpose and position of the prophet in delivering a message such as that of Am.5:21-24. Würthwein believes that it was the task of the cultic prophet to give the favourable divine response in worship, though he stresses that it should not be assumed that an unfavourable message could not be uttered by cultic prophets.² He then suggests that the criticisms of worship by the canonical prophets which, in his view, betray a dependence on this cultic tradition, are the imitation in negative form of the Gattung of the favourable cultic message.³ He says that he is not concerned in the first instance to decide whether these represent genuine cultic messages or are merely imitations or literary formations. He argues that whilst this question may be important in the discussion of the relationship of the classical prophets to

1. See above, p. 361, and ch.III,p.239.

2. Würthwein, in Tradition und Situation, pp.128ff. and see above, ch.III, p.237.

3. Ibid., p.129. This insight was begun by Rendtorff, 'Priesterliche Kulttheologie und prophetische Kultpolemik', TLZ, 81, 1956, cols.339ff., who drew attention to the distinctive cultic terminology used by the prophets in their polemic.

the cultic prophets, it is not decisive for the understanding of the prophetic utterances which he is here investigating.¹ What is decisive is rather the recognition that the prophets speak in stereotyped terms and are to be understood on that basis. These terms are native to the cultic context and acquire their significance from it; but they do not express judgements on the cult from outside. This means, he says, that the prophets do not make pronouncements of principle to the effect that sacrifice (and prayer!) are irreconcilable with true Yahweh-worship, but reject the cultic actions and prayers of particular men at particular times, because these men have offended against Yahweh's arguments and thus broken his covenant, and because, for that reason, the time of visitation and with it of affliction has come.² All this, of course, confirms the view already presented that in Am.5:21-24 the prophet is condemning the cult, as it exists at that particular time and in those particular circumstances. It confirms what many people have argued, both that verses such as Am.5:2~~ff~~^{ff} must be taken in context and cannot automatically be taken to indicate total condemnation of the cult³ but also that the contemporary cult is definitely

1. It is clearly important from the point of view of the present enquiry. It is worth noting that this demonstrates that Würthwein cannot accept that a form remains bound to its Sitz im Leben.
2. Ibid., pp.129f.
3. By, for example, Jellicoe, 'The Prophets and the Cultus', Exp T, 60, 1948/49, pp.257f., who makes the valuable observation that in looking at the attitude of the canonical prophets to the cult, we should not assume them to have been indisputably unanimous. He refuses, therefore, to take Am.5:21ff.; Hos.6; Isa.1:11-17; Jer.7:21ff.; Mic.6:6-8 as all passing exactly the same judgement; cf. ch.III, p.194.

being rejected and this because of the people's misunderstandings of the divine requirements, and because the true knowledge of Yahweh is not to be found there.¹

Würthwein concludes that for the canonical prophets the decision about the relationship with God, and about the question of wellbeing or affliction, is made not in the cult (there it is only pronounced), but in the life of obedience towards the requirements of the covenant. To this extent, he says, their attitude naturally implies a depreciation of the cult. The relationship with God can in some circumstances be so disturbed that all cultic expressions of penitence can achieve nothing further. Nevertheless, we have to do in our texts not with fundamental rejections of cultic acts, but with a rejection expressed in cultic forms and addressed to particular men.²

Before leaving these passages, brief mention should be made of an article by J.P. Hyatt, in which he seeks to show that Am.5:21-24 does not set the cult against social justice.³ The verb, in v.24, he says, is not an imperative but rather expresses purpose. In the usual interpretation, the ל of $\text{לֹא יִי$ is given adversative force, which he claims, it seldom has. He gives examples of where the simple ל + the jussive is used to express purpose (e.g. Ex.9:1 - לֹא יִיָּדָע). The other main part of his argument is that the nouns מִשְׁבֵּט

1. So, for example, Clements, Prophecy and Covenant, pp.96ff. and Hentschke, op.cit., e.g., pp.52f., 73-77, 174f.
2. Würthwein, in Tradition und Situation, p.130.
3. Hyatt, 'The Translation and Meaning of Amos 5:21-24', ZAW, 68, 1956, pp.17-24.



and הַרְפִּיץ often describe aspects of divine action, and not merely human qualities, and that only then is the figure of their rolling down natural and appropriate. It is clear that in many OT passages הַרְפִּיץ , and its synonym רָפָא , does not mean simply moral uprightness, but deliverance, salvation (e.g. Isa.51:1). Similarly he says, the rendering of justice for צְדָקָה is far too narrow and he cites evidence from Dt.33:20f. and Qumran. Both terms, he says, describe the 'right-order' and condition of 'rightness', which God actively seeks to establish in the society of men. He then derives from the passage the assertion that Israel must cease her preoccupation with feasts etc., in order that Yahweh may cause to flow down upon them his deliverance and salvation. Fair dealings are thus only a part of $\text{הַרְפִּיץ} - \text{צְדָקָה}$, which is that constant and dependable salvation that Yahweh will send, when they 'Hate evil and love good, and establish justice in the gate;' (5:15). Verses 23f. are therefore, he argues, a conditioned promise of salvation. This is indeed a possible answer to the question whether Amos plays off cult and ethics against each other. But the fact of Amos's rejection of the cult remains, as vv.21f., the beginning of the oracle of which vv.23f. are the climax, makes abundantly plain.

The total impact of these passages does not decide once and for all whether Amos was or was not a cultic prophet, but it does make it seem highly improbable. It is certainly difficult to argue, as was done before the re-evaluation of Israel's cult was begun in OT scholarship, that Amos was totally opposed to all cult, and, therefore, could not possibly

have been involved in a cult, such as he here describes. It is here that the point about Amos's attacking a particular cult has value. By no stretch of the imagination can it be allowed that Amos was an official at Bethel, in the light of 4:4 and 5:5 etc., and it is Bethel that most advocates of the cultic prophecy view propose as his location.

The main trouble with all the views that have been discussed is that they start with presuppositions whilst not acknowledging that these are all they are. There are those who, determined to get completely away from the old view of the absolute hostility of the prophets to the cult, try to find a possible cultic office which Amos might fill and then find evidence of this in anything in the book which is remotely connected with the cult in form or content. So, Watts brings as evidence the fact that Amos seemed to appear regularly at the sanctuaries of Samaria (e.g. 4:1-3) and Bethel (e.g. 3:14; 7:10-17), mention of other sanctuaries such as Gilgal and Carmel and the intimate acquaintance with cult functions and abuses, reflected in his messages (e.g. 2:14; 2:7f.).¹

He goes on to ask the basic question, 'Was it possible to be a prophet and to fulfil a prophet's functions without being related to the cult in some way?' and proceeds to answer this by saying that the OT gives a picture of priests and bands of prophets, both preserving the right relations between Yahweh and Israel within the Covenant. He admits that there is no sign of Amos's having any group affiliation,

1. Watts, op.cit., p.18.

and that there are too many gaps in our knowledge of Israel's prophetic practice, yet he still feels able finally to come down in favour of there being a cultic prophetic office! This is that of the Covenant-mediator. In this, the king or the priest holds the actual 'office', but he is accompanied by a 'charismatic speaker'. This is the position of the prophet and in these terms we ought to picture Amos's ministry.¹

Similarly, Kapelrud brings as evidence the cultic terminology and style of the passages discussed and says that this would not have been possible if Amos had not been 'closely connected with the cult, in some way or other'. Also 4:4f. and 5:18ff. reveal a knowledge of the different features of the cult. He admits that it was only natural for Amos to address the people at the sanctuaries, where he was sure to be heard, but he still hankers after Amos's being connected with the cult, in spite also of the fact that the knowledge of it revealed is probably no greater than the average Israelite's.² He too says that we must not conceive the cult too narrowly. It is more than festivals, sacrifices and offerings. 'The cult has its ideas, its contents, and several acts which cannot be classified in the categories mentioned'. He also brings as support for Amos's being involved in the cult the passages in Jer. (e.g. 29:26), where the prophet is seen in association with the priest.

1. Ibid., pp.19f., 76. He cites Kraus, Gottesdienst in Israel, pp.61ff., and Noth, in Festschrift für Alfred Bertholet, pp.404ff. For discussion of the 'office' of Covenant-mediator, cf. ch.III, pp.251-261.

2. Kapelrud, Central Ideas in Amos, pp.69ff.

These he takes as conclusive evidence that the prophets were part of the temple personnel. It is significant, however, and in this study typical, that Kapelrud does not finally commit himself to the view that Amos was a cultic prophet in an official sense. Rather, he concludes only with the general assertion that 'Amos built his...oracles, contents and style, upon a long and solid tradition, mainly preserved in the cult'.¹

I do not think that the cultic genres of the passages against the cult in any way indicate that Amos had a cultic office. These passages do not even solve conclusively the problem of whether Amos thought the cult was altogether wrong in itself, let alone answer the question of Amos's position. It is indisputable that the cult was an important part of Amos's polemic and it could reasonably be argued that this was because it was important to him that the cult be purified. The dominant impression, however, is that he thinks the present cult is part of the nation's intolerable immorality, an offence to Yahweh and to be destroyed. If the liturgical style and language of some of the messages belongs to Amos himself, then it would seem that this is his skilful way of proclaiming just how far the cult is from Yahweh. It is unbelievable that he could have had an official position within this cult.

1. Ibid., p.81.

ii) The 'Confessions' of Jeremiah and his prophetic Office

The other prophet who demands our attention is Jeremiah, because, as we saw in chapter III, it has been claimed that he exercised an intercessory function, possibly located within the cult and because it is sometimes argued that he uses cultic forms of speech. We shall, therefore, consider whether Jeremiah does, in fact, employ cultic language and enquire in what sense, if any, he can be said to exercise a mediatory office. As stated in the introduction to the chapter, however, the concern is not exclusively with the possibility of the prophet's holding a cultic office, but with the possibility of his holding an 'office' at all. What do the forms used tell us about the prophet's position in Israelite society, his relationship with God, his inspiration and the function(s) which he as prophet had to perform?

In the examination of the passages in which Jeremiah is presented as some sort of a mediator, an 'intercessor', it was seen that there are two main ways of approaching the study of this prophet. One approach, as exemplified by Duhm and Gunkel, for instance, is the psychological, which stresses the humanity of the prophet, his temperament and his particular sensitivity which made him so ill-suited to be the prophet of Yahweh's inexorable judgement. This approach has now been largely abandoned, partly because a timid and retiring prophet is not the picture of Jeremiah given to us by the book as a whole, and, more importantly, because there has been a general move away from emphasising the psychology of the

prophets, on the grounds that it is not something easily accessible and intelligible to us,¹ nor something with which the prophets and those who collected and edited their message were concerned.² The other approach, exemplified in extreme form by Reventlow, takes account of the forms which the prophet uses, which, no one would deny, are not peculiar to prophetic literature nor do they find their origin there, and stresses the representative and official position of the prophet.

Now if there is one area of prophetic study where these two views confront each other particularly it is that constituted by the so-called 'Confessions' of Jeremiah. If Jeremiah has for so long been regarded as the individualist, the most human of the prophets, it is undoubtedly due to the occurrence of these passages (i.e., 11:18-12:6; 15:10-21; 17:12-18; 20:7-18). They are the sections with which the individualistic, psychological significance of the prophet is most strongly connected.³ John Bright writes of them, 'Here the prophet speaks in his own name rather than God's and gives vent to his anguish, complaining of the abuse the prophetic office has brought him, bitterly cursing his enemies and crying out for his own vindication, and even accusing his God of having deceived and failed him'. Thus, the 'Confessions' reflect actual experiences in the prophet's life and afford glimpses of his innermost feelings, making

1. e.g., Porteous, in Record and Revelation, p.227.

2. e.g., Lindblom, PAI, p.292, 'The importance of the prophets in the religious history of mankind arises from their inspired messages, not their personal confessions'.

3. Reventlow, Liturgie und prophetisches Ich bei Jeremia, p.205.

Jeremiah the best known and most human of all the prophets'.¹

In introducing his own quite different view of the matter, Reventlow offers a useful summary of the changing approach to these passages.² He mentions Gunkel's view that it is natural that Jeremiah, the most personal of all prophets, has found for his individuality a new form, the lament.³ Baumgartner establishes that it is not a matter of simple imitation of the psalms of lament but of deliberate composition in and adaptation of this form for Jeremiah's purpose.⁴

Before going any further, it is important to clarify what is meant by a) a lament and b) a confession. Following Gunkel's definition of the Klagelied des Einzelnen,⁵ the lament is an appeal by a worshipper to Yahweh, to deliver him from affliction. In some psalms of this type there is a confession of sin, in others a profession of innocence. Often the prayer for help passes over into an assurance that it will be given and into thanksgiving or a vow of some kind. Two themes which recur frequently in the descriptions of the worshipper's plight are sickness and malicious enemies. Immediately, we can see that there are parallels here between the lament and the 'Confessions' of Jeremiah. But are then

1. Bright, in Proclamation and Presence, p.189. See, e.g., Skinner, *op.cit.*, pp.212f.

2. Reventlow, Liturgie, pp.205ff.

3. Gunkel, in SATA, II, 2, pp.LXf.

4. Baumgartner, Die Klagegedichte des Jeremia.

5. The Klagelied des Volkes will obviously be similar to and yet differ from this type.

the lament and the confession identical? The use of the term 'confession' for these passages in Jeremiah comes from the use of the term by St. Augustine to describe his accounts of personal, inner experience of God. A characteristic of the 'confession' is dialogue. Clearly, 'lament' and 'confession' are not, therefore, synonymous terms. Perhaps the best way to define the 'confession' in the Jeremianic sense is as a prophetic form of lament, the dialogue being the prophetic element. Whilst in biblical studies the term 'confession' is largely confined to certain passages in Jeremiah, suggesting that they are unique, it is worth noting that Lindblom describes other passages as prophetic confessions. He writes, 'The second Servant Song may be classed with a number of passages in the prophetic literature where a prophet speaks of himself in the first person, describing how he has been called, appointed and endowed for a high task, how in a spiritual crisis he has fought with his God and been consoled and strengthened by God. Such prophetic confessions we find, for example, in Isa.6 and 49; Jer.1; 15; 17; 20 and Ezek.1-3'.¹

Lindblom also speaks of Isa.50:4-9 as a prophetic confession, a literary category which he defines as one dealing with inner prophetic experience.² It seems to me that this definition of a 'confession' is so wide that the category has then to be sub-divided to be precise enough to be useful. Nonetheless, the point is made that the 'confession' describes

1. Lindblom, The Servant Songs in Deutero-Isaiah. A New Attempt to Solve an Old Problem, pp.24ff.

2. Ibid., p.32.

inner experience of and dialogue with God and to this degree Jeremiah's 'Confessions' are paralleled in the prophetic call narratives. There remains a sense, however, in which the 'Confessions' of Jeremiah can be said to be unique and unparalleled.

Reventlow quotes Skinner who says of the 'Confessions', 'There is nothing quite like them in the range of devotional literature. Communings of the soul with God as tender and intimate, meditations as profound, prayers as fervent and sincere may be found in the Psalms and the great classics of the spiritual life, but Jeremiah's experience is unique in this respect, that it springs out of a prior official relation to God which he had in virtue of his prophetic vocation'.¹ This evaluation, which regards the 'Confessions' as originally private and not for public proclamation is, Reventlow recognises, widely accepted (by, for example, Rudolph, Weiser, and von Rad), but it is Skinner's point that Jeremiah's 'Confessions' are in some way closely related to his prophetic vocation that Reventlow agrees with and wants to stress. The importance of this fact is, he says, brought out by von Rad, who believes that the 'Confessions' are not the outcome of an extraordinary religiosity, detached from his prophetic commission, but come out of this commission.²

Reventlow mentions at this point the article by S.H. Blank which propounds the view that the form of the

1. Skinner, op.cit., p.202.

2. von Rad, 'Die Konfessionen Jeremias', Ev Th, 3, 1936, p.273.

confessions is legal.¹ He plays down Blank's statement that the similarity between these confessions, which are essentially prayer and God's answer to prayer, and the language of the law-court is no more than linguistic and formal² and emphasises Blank's tentative suggestion that there may be a cult procedure reflected here, one patterned on the juridical process, according to which the litigant lays his case before the judge, makes his plea, and awaits the verdict.³ Blank, as Reventlow admits, allows no cultic Sitz im Leben for the 'Confessions', such as that suggested by Eissfeldt, in which a professional group, 'cult prophets', hear and answer prayers in worship.⁴ So, then, the question remains as to why such a form is used. This, he says, is taken up by Weiser and Stamm who both recognise a direct link between the forms in Jeremiah and the cult and worship, but neither of whom gives a clear solution. We still lack, therefore, a satisfactory Sitz im Leben for the 'Confessions' and their arrangement in the proclamation material in the book of Jeremiah.⁵ Reventlow refers to Stoebe's assertion that it is astounding that these outbreaks of doubt and rebellion against the prophetic commission should be given expression and appear in the name of prophecy,⁶ and we must,

1. Blank, in HUCA, 21, 1948.

2. Ibid., p.336.

3. Ibid., pp.355ff.

4. Eissfeldt, The OT: An Introduction, p.117.

5. Reventlow, Liturgie, p.208.

6. Stoebe, 'Seelsorge und Mitleiden bei Jeremia', WuD, 4, 1955, p.131. For further elaboration of Stoebe's views see below.

therefore, seek for an explanation.

Stoebe is right, Reventlow thinks, in observing that Jeremiah is one with his people and the representative of the community in the lament, but, he says, this has greater significance when we set the office of the prophet in the Sitz im Leben of the forms employed. The intercession passages in Jeremiah give proof, he claims, of the intermediary office of the prophet which is rooted in the cultic Sitz im Leben. In them we see the representative 'I' who laments on behalf of the community. So, he says, we must see the 'Confessions' in close proximity to the rest of the book and not set them in splendid isolation. This is very true and it would surely be dangerous to isolate the 'Confessions'. But it may be said of Reventlow himself that he isolates the 'Confessions', together with other passages such as those involving intercession, and works backwards from them to establish a cultic Sitz im Leben for Jeremiah's whole activity. If, as Reventlow says, the 'Confessions' are of central importance for the interpretation of Jeremiah, then it is begging the question to begin with a cultic Sitz im Leben and accommodate, often with great difficulty, every element of the 'Confessions' within it. As Bright says, the matter can finally be settled only exegetically¹ and it is exegetically that Reventlow presents his case. This must obviously be looked at in some detail, as must some of the views only touched on here, but the main points at issue emerge clearly enough from this preliminary glance

1. Bright, in Proclamation and Presence, p.190.

at the two ways of approaching the 'Confessions'.

Bright succinctly summarises the situation - '...the realisation that the Confessions employ conventional forms of address has made recent scholars far more cautious in extracting psychological and biographical details from these pieces than some of their predecessors were. Nevertheless, it has remained wellnigh^t the consensus among scholars that the Confessions do in some way relate to specific experiences in the life of the prophet. In recent years, however, this consensus has been attacked'.¹ The question which emerges is, 'where, if at all, does the prophet or the man Jeremiah emerge as a fully-fledged person?',² or, as in the title of Bright's article, are Jeremiah's complaints 'liturgy or expressions of personal distress'?

Before turning to the 'Confessions' themselves, it should be indicated that the either-or of Bright's question has important implications for the prophetic office. As Bright himself says, Reventlow's understanding of the 'Confessions' is but an aspect of his understanding of the prophetic office in general. He sees the prophet as one who discharges an official cultic function, that of mediator

1. Ibid., p.190. Whilst mentioning Gerstenberger's argument that the 'Confessions' are the product of later reflection on the part of exilic Deuteronomists, he concentrates on examining Reventlow's position. Both, it could be said, are concerned to expose 'the fallacy of the idea that Jeremiah was a religious genius, the champion of personal, inward and spiritual religion' (Gerstenberger, 'Jeremiah's Complaints. Observations on Jer.15:10-21', JBL, 82, 1963, p.393).
2. McKane, 'The Interpretation of Jer.12:1-5', Transactions of the GUOS, 20, 1963/4, (pub.1965), p.38.

between God and people. The office is two-sided in that it involves the dual task of bringing the divine word to the people and equally of presenting their complaints and prayers before God as their official intercessor. In his 'Confessions', we see the prophet as he discharges the latter half of his function, namely, as he addresses God on behalf of the people.¹

Now, if we reject Reventlow's interpretation of the 'Confessions' as reflecting Jeremiah's prophetic office and thus enabling us to gain some idea of its nature, what is the alternative? Are we left only with the alternative of resorting to the earlier psychological interpretation which saw in the 'Confessions' the cries of Jeremiah the man rather than of Jeremiah the prophet? It is my contention that we are not. Rather, as was perceived as early as Skinner (see above), the 'Confessions' spring from Jeremiah's position as a prophet. Because of this, they are of crucial importance for a consideration of his prophetic office.² As was seen

1. Bright, in Proclamation and Presence, p.191.

2. It could, of course, be objected that the issue is one of prophetic vocation rather than of prophetic office and that to speak of Jeremiah's calling and position as a prophet does not necessarily imply a prophetic office. This is largely a question of definition, and reference should be made to the earlier discussion of the appropriateness or otherwise of the term 'office'. The reasons for its use in the present discussion of Jeremiah's 'Confessions' are firstly, that it is employed by the scholars whose treatment of the passages is here examined and secondly, that it may be argued that the 'office' and the 'vocation' of the canonical prophets amount to the same thing. See below, ch.V, pp.497ff.

in relation to intercession in Jeremiah, it is not a matter of man or prophet, inclination or office. So here, the 'Confessions' do allow an attempt to establish the nature of Jeremiah's office, but not necessarily in the way which Reventlow envisages. The question is not so much whether the 'Confessions' concern the prophetic office as what sort of prophetic office do they concern? Is this office in any sense cultic? As already stated, the matter can only be settled exegetically. Close similarities, both formal and verbal, between the 'Confessions' and the psalms of lament are not in question. As Bright says, 'That the Psalms of Lament have a cultic Sitz im Leben is likewise taken for granted'. But, he asks, 'do the Confessions exhibit the cultic form without modification or is there evidence of a private adaptation of the form by a prophetic individual?... Can these passages, without forcing, really be interpreted as liturgical pieces uttered in the context of the cult?'.¹

a) Jer.11:18-12:6

Before considering Reventlow's exegesis in detail, some mention should be made of the main problems of the passage. Clearly the text as it stands presents difficulties. It begins very abruptly and it would seem to require either an introductory word or a continuation other than that which it now finds in v.19. Also, 12:6 would sensibly precede 11:18 in time. One of the simplest solutions is to assume that the material has been placed in reverse order and that 12:1-6 should read before 11:18-23.² It yields good sense and

1. Ibid., p.198.

2. So Peake, following Cornill, and a view which now recommends itself particularly to Bright, Jeremiah, pp.89f.

makes unnecessary any extensive rearrangement of the text. One rearrangement has been to remove 12:6 from its present context, placing it in the middle of 11:18.¹ Many scholars believe v.6 to stand in isolation. von Rad, for instance, examines 12:1-5 without making mention of v.6. Some, on the other hand, believe it to stand with v.5 as Yahweh's answer to Jeremiah's lamentation.²

As already noted, it is difficult to read 11:18-12:6 as a continuous unit because in 12:6 Jeremiah is informed of what he already knew in 11:18, namely that a plot against him existed. This, together with formal considerations, suggests that 11:18-23 and 12:1-5(6) should be regarded as formally independent units.³ This Reventlow does and he is further to be commended, says Bright, for seeking to interpret the text as it lies before us and not (like Volz, Rudolph, Weiser, etc.) assuming extensive dislocations in the text, such as transferring 12:6 or making deletions or transpositions in the case of 12:3f.⁴ What then does Reventlow do with 12:1-6?

Reventlow regards vv.1-4 as a complaint in the form of a legal process, a communal lament in individual dress.⁵ The prophet speaks as the cultic representative of the pious

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1. So Volz. Berridge notes that most commentators who have followed Volz place 12:6 between vv.18 and 19 of Jer.11, op.cit., pp.166,126, where he cites those who do so.
 2. e.g., Cornill, Baumgartner, and Reventlow, Liturgie, p.249.
 3. See Bright, in Proclamation and Presence, p.207.
 4. Ibid.
 5. Reventlow, Liturgie, pp.242-249.

people. Reventlow finds his main evidence for this in v.4, where, he claims, it is the whole land that is suffering and this from drought, a situation which demands a public lament. There is here, he thinks, a statement by an individual with personal enemies but he only appears as a representative worshipper. Verse 5 further testifies to the collective nature of the passage. Here, the nation is told that something worse than the drought is coming upon them.¹ Horses Reventlow links to the foe from the North and, with some very forced argument, so also the reference to the jungle.

The difference, he says, between the other lament-liturgies and the 'Confessions' seems to be that here the individual comes forward in person with his own suffering to represent the people. The main concern is not the personal fate of Jeremiah the prophet but that of the nation, and the enemies are not his personally but the godless more generally. So the divine reply is given to Jeremiah as a representative worshipper and is not, as commonly held, a personal reply to Jeremiah and his position.

It is Reventlow's interpretation of v.5 that Bright finds most questionable. For, he says, v.6 contradicts this collective interpretation so completely that Reventlow has to get rid of it, claiming that it belongs to some other, unknown context and was added by someone to give an individual interpretation. But, claims Bright, there is not the slightest form-critical ground for removing v.6. Moreover,

1. cf. Stoebe, in WuD, 4, 1955, p.130.

some explanation of the metaphor of v.5 is logically required and to suppose that it is a reference to the foe from the North is altogether far-fetched and makes the prophetic oracle unusually cryptic. 'The natural interpretation of vv.5f. is the only defensible one; it is a word addressed to Jeremiah personally'.¹

A more thoroughgoing criticism of Reventlow's exegesis is offered by McKane,² who first summarises the earlier interpretations to which Reventlow is objecting. Weiser, for instance, sees here the prophet recalling that Yahweh has always in the past given a satisfactory account of himself when any issue affecting his justice has been raised and he is confident that his dialogue with Yahweh will clarify this new problem of rights and that Yahweh will be seen to be just (Das Buch Jeremia). If Weiser's exegesis creates a submissive prophet then Rudolph's creates a rebellious one (Jeremia). 'The verse is...a blend of faith and questioning, trust and doubt, submissiveness and rebelliousness.'³ Baumgartner also thinks of a rebellious prophet and, like Rudolph, believes that Jeremiah speaks from a position of great isolation and loneliness, springing from the disintegration of the faithful Israelite community.

1. Bright, in Proclamation and Presence, pp.208f.
2. McKane, in Transactions of the GUOS, 20, 1963/4, pp.39-48.
3. Ibid., p.39. The two exegeses rest on two translations of 12:1, respectively:- 'Thou art always seen to be righteous, O Yahweh, whenever I submit an argument to thee; surely then I shall discuss rights with thee...' and 'Thou art righteous, O Yahweh, (even) if I engage in (legal) argument with thee; only I would discuss rights (equity) with thee. Why does the way of the wicked prosper? Why do all who practise perfidy enjoy tranquillity?'

Reventlow's exegesis, says McKane, challenges many of the assumptions of the foregoing analysis, chiefly in its assertion that in all important respects Jeremiah is no more than a prayer-leader or intercessor performing a ritual function as the representative of the congregation. He says that Reventlow admits that something of the prophet's individuality may emerge in so far as 'his experience at the hands of personal enemies is given paradigmatic significance within the context of this communal lament...he is involved in a special way and makes his own innocence and perplexities an exemplar of the righteousness which the people as a whole claim before Yahweh'; yet the interest focuses on the land and its fate.

McKane's main criticism here is that Reventlow runs into difficulties in reconciling the liturgical lament which he professes to see in Jer.12:1-5 with the elements of legal contest which the passage (especially v.1) contains and which Reventlow himself emphasises.

This problem recurs in Reventlow's interpretation of v.3. He may be justified, says McKane, in interpreting v.3 as a formal element of the communal lament, for, as Baumgartner and Mowinckel have noted, the 'motive of innocence' does occur in certain psalms of lamentation. But again Reventlow's detailed exegesis is in terms of legal contest, which, McKane claims, cannot very easily be subsumed under the form of the communal lament. Reventlow insists that it is not as a pious individual that Jeremiah speaks (as Baumgartner has supposed), and he speaks not as a messenger but as an intercessor, filling a prophetic rôle.

Reventlow also parts company with Baumgartner in his interpretation of v.4. The latter had taken it to refer to Jeremiah's awareness of the hardness of the message given him to proclaim. Reventlow makes the most of its enigmatic nature, however, and seeks to elucidate it as a fragment of a drought ritual. The verse is, therefore, to be explained as a fragment of a communal psalm of lamentation associated with a condition of drought and this confirms him in his opinion that the other verses, whose formal affinities are rather with the individual lament, are also communal in intension. If the idea is correct that Jeremiah's personal suffering and his suffering as a member of the nation overlap and are interrelated,¹ then v.4 is surely an illustration of this and requires no such explanation.

McKane further understands v.5 as a reference to the coming intensification of the prophet's ordeal. He thinks that this should be interpreted in a general way and not be related to the enmity of his family in v.6.²

Reventlow is here attacked on the ground that he uses Baumgartner's tools mistakenly and stubbornly. For Baumgartner, v.5 is the final confirmation that it is Jeremiah himself who communicates with us in these verses and 'the intention of Baumgartner's exegesis is not to reduce Jeremiah's intense and original individuality to vanishing point and to promote a cultic functionary'. Reventlow, on the other hand, is determined to find traces of the communal lament in v.5

1. See below, pp. 414f.

2. Skinner, op.cit., p.112 thinks that the intensification of the prophet's ordeal comes from official rather than family opposition.

and so finds them. But even if v.4 is identified as a fragment of a communal lament, this does not prove that vv.1-5 are such. McKane continues, 'The forensic elements in the passage accord better with the agonising of the perplexed individual than with the representative role of an intercessor'.

McKane becomes even more sceptical because of the fact that Reventlow makes so little of the oracle of v.5. He regards this as evidence that Reventlow wants to avoid admitting that v.5 is an oracle pointing to adversity and insecurity rather than one supplying guarantees of vindication, a Heilsorakel such as would be compatible with the liturgical form of the psalms of lamentation.¹ McKane thinks that Jeremiah is deliberately using the form of communal lament 'to call in question the machinery of the cult, and to deny the validity of the Heilsorakel'.

McKane concludes that there is no doubt that 12:1-5 deals with a personal predicament of Jeremiah. 'Jeremiah could not', he says, 'have appropriated the disclosure of v.5 unless he had been exercised and even tortured by the question which he asks in v.1'. He has to learn that the way of faith can be a way of utter insecurity. von Rad makes a similar point about the obedience demanded of the prophet here. Suffering is part of his task; it is not a theoretical problem and does not have a theoretical answer.² Thus, the passage undoubtedly refers to the trials which Jeremiah has to bear as a prophet.³

1. Ibid., p.46.

2. von Rad, in Ev Th, 3, 1936, p.267.

3. von Rad, OT Theology, II, p.203.

As for 11:18-23, it has already been indicated that there is discussion of the order and the limits of this passage. Some have thought, for instance, that vv.21-23 show signs in style and phraseology of having been composed by the authors of the prose in the book and are perhaps an addition, interpreting vv.18-20.¹ Alternatively, these verses have been regarded as Yahweh's answer to the prophet's preceding lamentation, constituting a word of judgement.²

Reventlow sees in vv.18-20 a fragment of a psalm of lament, which, as elsewhere, he interprets collectively. (He stresses the parallels, pointed out by Baumgartner, between these verses and the Psalms, e.g. the image of sheep being led to the slaughter in Ps.44:12,23). He regards vv.21-23 which would seem to contradict this as secondarily connected by the redactor. These verses do refer to an experience of Jeremiah, but they belong to some other context and even then are still a reference to the general fate of the people, as indicated by the occurrence of the words $\text{ל} \text{ו} \text{ו}$ and $\text{ל} \text{ו} \text{ו}$.³

Commenting on this, Bright agrees that vv.21-23 constitute a formally separate piece, which has been bonded to vv.18-20 editorially because the situation was believed to be the same. But he thinks that vv.21-23 cannot be dismissed from the context in this way.⁴

Further, Reventlow assumes that a Klage and Heilsorakel

1. Nicholson, Jeremiah, 1-25, p.114.

2. See, e.g., Berridge, op.cit., p.167.

3. Reventlow, Liturgie, p.256.

4. Bright, in Proclamation and Presence, pp.209ff.

must once have stood before v.18, but have now been lost. Vv.18-20 are then interpreted as the Danklied that follows upon the Heilsorakel and brings the piece to a conclusion.

Bright thinks that vv.18-20 cannot properly be understood as a liturgical Danklied in response to a Heilsorakel because the note of assurance and praise characteristic of the Danklied is absent from these verses. Rather, 'we have here a complaint and protestation of innocence (vv.19-20a), plus a cry for vengeance (v.20b) that still awaits a divine answer'. Further, 'it is difficult to think of a Heilsorakel (!) bringing the supplicant news that he is being plotted against, as is clearly the case here (cf. vv.18f.)'.

Bright believes that a divine word to the prophet is clearly presupposed by vv.18f. and that, in view of the context, this can only be understood as a private revelation informing the prophet that a plot had been made to kill him. Certainly to avoid this conclusion a more convincing proposal than Reventlow's is required. It seems far more reasonable and demands far less ingenuity to understand these verses as having personal reference to Jeremiah in his position as a prophet. von Rad says that they contain 'a complaint about attacks on the prophet himself and a plea that the one to whom he has committed his cause should protect him'.¹ 'It is a prayer which might have been made by anyone suffering persecution'² but, he adds, 'this cannot be said of the prayer contained in Jer.15:10-18'; and it is to this passage that we now turn.

1. von Rad, OT Theology, II, pp.201f.

2. It is interesting that Stoebe feels that although we see in 11:18-23 the recognised form of the Lament, Jeremiah is making use of it in his own situation. His own life and experience establish differences in the use of this form, in WuD, 4, 1955, pp.125f.

b) Jer.15:10-21

von Rad's interpretation of this passage is as follows. The lament contains many of the conventional requests, but they are so intimately expressed (especially vv.16f.) that they can only have come from Jeremiah's personal experience.¹ So, in v.16, Jeremiah is speaking not of the relationship of men to revelation in general but only of his situation as prophet. There is both the delight and the suffering of the prophetic commission, the isolation from man because of his closeness to God. He is filled with Yahweh's wrath and this suffering is part of the office given him by God. Against this Jeremiah complains.² From Jeremiah's own words it is clear that he has forsaken his prophetic office and Yahweh's reply calls him to return to it.³ This answering by God of the complaint also corresponds with the usual order of events in the liturgy, where, through the mouthpiece of the priest, Yahweh answered a prayer of lamentation with an 'oracle of weal' (e.g. Pss.42:6; 25:3,21; cf. Lam.3:25-7). There is a difference here, however, from cultic ritual form, as Yahweh answers with a rebuke; he tells Jeremiah that he has betrayed his prophetic calling (v.19) and needs to return.⁴

On von Rad's interpretation, this passage is clearly vital for understanding the nature of Jeremiah's prophetic office; but there are other quite different interpretations which attach another significance to the passage. The main

1. von Rad, OT Theology, II, p.202.

2. von Rad, in Ev Th, 3, 1936, pp.265f.

3. Ibid., p.267.

4. von Rad, OT Theology, II, p.202.

question at issue is, in what capacity does Jeremiah here speak?

Reventlow regards the piece as a unit which has the form of a liturgy.¹ It opens with a complaint (v.10), but this is not an expression of the prophet's personal anguish, as the 'I' is corporate. In vv.11-14, the complaint is answered by an oracle which is addressed to the people collectively. The nation is to be destroyed at the hands of the foe from the North. Many exegetes, of course, assume vv.13-14 to be a duplicate of 17:3-4 and to be out of place in the present context.² Reventlow's view, however, finds the dialogue of vv.13-14 to be quite possible. It concerns the destiny of the people as do the preceding verses. $\text{לַיְהוָה יִשְׁעֵנוּ}$ and יְהוָה יִשְׁעֵנוּ refer not simply to Jeremiah's but to the people's time of distress. The idea is of the people's day of judgement, corresponding to 'that day'. So 'their good' in v.11 is collective and v.12 is rightly understood by the commentator as a reference to the foe from the North. Reventlow reminds us here of 10:19-25 where similarly, he says, the need and suffering are those of the whole people (cf. especially 10:19 and 15:10). But what, he asks, brings together the individual and communal at this point? The answer lies, according to Reventlow, in the fact that the prophet is seen here in a particular rôle which requires particular forms. This rôle is that of intercessor and so, at

1. Reventlow, Liturgie, pp.210-228. In this, he disagrees with Baumgartner who sees two independent units: vv.10-12; 15-21, and Stamm who sees three units: vv.10-12; 15-18; 19-21.

2. e.g. Nicholson, Jeremiah 1-25, p.138.

v.15 the lament is resumed with the prophet again speaking as intercessor for the people. He cries for their deliverance from the godless among them (v.15), protests their innocence (vv.16-17a), laments their misery (vv.17b-18a) and concludes with a bitter reproach against God (v.18b).

The complaint is then answered by a further oracle (vv. 19-21). This is not a private rebuke to Jeremiah but a word that is proclaimed to the people. God rejects their lament; both prophet and people must repent. The oracle does relate to the prophetic office, but not as usually understood. As cultic mediator, the prophet is both the representative of the people before God and of God to the people. It must now be enquired how Reventlow arrives at this interpretation and whether the text will bear it.

v.15. He stresses here, of course, Psalmodic parallels to the terminology employed by Jeremiah, e.g., ׀׀׀׀׀ (cf. Ps.25:6f.) and ׀׀׀׀׀׀ (cf. Ps.106:4).¹

v.16. As Reventlow says, it is this verse which is particularly instructive and informative for deciding whether the lament concerns the position of Jeremiah as a prophet or is a more general formula. The traditional interpretation is that Jeremiah here testifies to his ready reception of the word and his readiness in following the prophetic calling.²

1. Reventlow, Liturgie, pp.218f. These parallels have been fully outlined by Baumgartner, op.cit., p.35.

2. So Rudolph (who points out that ׀׀׀׀׀ is used of the prophetic revelation in Lam.2:9) and Weiser. Berridge thinks that the 'words' of v.16 are a reference to 'such literary works as Judah possessed at this time including in particular, earlier prophetic words', op.cit., pp.119f. (cf. Stoebe, in WuD, 4, 1955, pp.122ff. and in ThZ, 20, 1964, pp.403f.). He thinks that the niph'al form of

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Reventlow questions the understanding of the 'word' of Yahweh in this connection. Reading the singular, 'word'¹ he believes it to refer to the word of God in a general sense and, following Hölscher, points to the use of ׀׀׀ in the Psalms (e.g. 17:4; 130:5), in the sense of command, precept. The complainant protests that he has received God's command and gladly obeyed it.

The expression 'לֵב יְהוָה אֶרְפָּא' is also, according to Reventlow, to be understood corporately, since it is not otherwise used of God's claim upon an individual.² We must ask why it is used here with what appears to be an individual reference and the solution is found in 10:19-25 and the notion of 'corporate personality'. So in this lament, the 'I' is a representative 'I' and in v.16 the prophet speaks as a member of the people, representing them in their piety.³

This combination of individual and collective references is, he claims, found again in v.17a, a further protestation

Contd.) ׀׀׀ indicates that Jeremiah is not referring to his direct reception of the word. (Certainly the niph'al is not a commonplace for inspiration and this is the only place where it occurs in the Prophets.) See also Holladay, 'Jeremiah and Moses: Further Observations', JBL, 85, 1966. Berridge contends that this interpretation is supported by Ezek.2:8-3:3 where the 'bookroll eaten by Ezekiel undoubtedly contained the words of former prophets' (so Eichrodt and Zimmerli).

1. Nicholson here follows LXX (ὑπὸ τῶν ἀθετούντων τοῦς λόγους σου) and renders, 'I have to suffer those who despise thy words', Jeremiah 1-25 in loc.
2. Bright says that the expression has a legal background (so Reventlow, Liturgie, pp.220f.) and means 'to lay legal claim to something, to claim possession of something'. It is usually corporate but not necessarily so, in Proclamation and Presence, p.201.
3. Reventlow, Liturgie, pp.220f.

of innocence. It has usually been interpreted as expressing the anguish of the prophetic individual who, because of the divine word which he must speak, suffers isolation and loneliness, as Jeremiah's personal lament over his lonely, joyless life.¹

Reventlow rejects this, arguing that the roots $\rho \pi \psi$ and $\text{ל} \text{ל} \text{ל}$ have a predominantly unpleasant connotation and refer to the scoffing of the godless. The idea of harmless and unpremeditated mirth, at one time denoted by these verbs, ultimately disappears and here as, for example, in Ps.26:4f., the worshipper is protesting his innocence and affirming his piety in the face of the enemies of Yahweh. So v.17a is to be taken in an impersonal, exemplary sense and to be understood with the neighbouring verses. We must, he says, not become entangled with a picture drawn from Jer.16, where the reference is to symbolic action and is not of biographical interest for the life of Jeremiah.²

Bright says that at this point Reventlow's interpretation appears decidedly forced. The pi'el of $\rho \pi \psi$ is, he contends, not used in the sense of 'to scoff' and in the majority of occurrences it has the perfectly harmless connotation of 'being glad', making merry, rejoicing'. (e.g. Zech.8:5; Prov.8:30f.; Jer.30:19; 31:4). $\text{ל} \text{ל} \text{ל}$ does sometimes have an unpleasant connotation but it is most frequently used of exulting, rejoicing in God and his deliverance (e.g. Pss.28:7; 68:5). Both words, like the English 'laugh', can have either connotation and only the

1. Bright, in Proclamation and Presence, pp.199f. So also Rudolph, Cornill, and Baumgartner.

2. Berridge, however, cites Jer.16:1-9 as offering considerable support for this literal interpretation, op.cit., p.201. cf. J. Bright, in Proclamation and Presence, p.204.

context can determine what is intended.¹

Bright is also strongly antagonistic to Reventlow's interpretation of the rest of the verse. Reventlow rejects the usual view that this refers to the compulsion of the divine, prophetic inspiration (the sense borne by T' in Jer.8:11 and elsewhere). Rather, v.17b elaborates v.17a. In opposition to the mirth of the godless the worshipper stays in his own suffering. T' is the divine chastisement (as in Pss.32:4; 28:3; 39:11) and here, as in v.18, the reference is to the people's pain, which the prophet is bearing as cultic representative. Similarly, $\text{'}\text{N}\text{1}\text{U}'$ $\text{T}\text{T}\text{1}$ indicates illness, the sickness which the divine chastisement has brought.

Again Bright finds this forced. The verb $\text{1U}'$ with $\text{T}\text{T}\text{1}$ never appears as a figure for illness in the Psalms and, in fact, occurs only once in the entire Psalter (4:9), where, according to Bright, it is not in a lament and has nothing to do with sickness.² From other examples, there is nothing to suggest that it ever meant anything but 'to sit (or dwell) by oneself'.³

It is, he thinks, very difficult to understand God's 'hand' as his chastisement, when it so often refers to the divine compulsion laid on the prophet (1 Kgs.18:46; 2 Kgs. 3:15; Ezek.1:3; 3:4,22; 8:1; 33:22; 27:1; 40:1).

1. Ibid., p.202. cf. Berridge, op.cit., pp.123f.

2. It may also be remarked that in Ps.4:9 $\text{T}\text{T}\text{1}$ is more probably connected with $\text{N}\text{1}\text{U}$ than with $\text{'}\text{N}\text{1}\text{U}'$.

3. J. Bright, in Proclamation and Presence, pp.203f. cf. Berridge, op.cit., p.125.

So, Bright concludes, this verse cannot possibly accommodate Reventlow's interpretation. 'Thy words were found and I ate them' is more naturally taken as referring to the reception of the prophetic word and the prophet is filled with God's own wrath ($\square \vee \checkmark$) which he must proclaim; and this makes it impossible for him to sit with his fellows and participate in their joys. Similarly, Berridge writes, '...Jeremiah's exclusion from the normal fellowship which every Israelite could expect to enjoy was imposed upon him by Yahweh. In his life, he symbolically portrayed the judgement which Yahweh would bring upon Judah'.¹

v.18. Reventlow continues with his liturgical interpretation, claiming that the background to v.18a is the same as that of the intercessions. The pain is that of the nation and Jeremiah intercedes before God on the nation's behalf. This, he says, is confirmed by v.18b in which we see the accusation of God, a typical component of the communal lament.²

Bright, on the other hand, thinks that v.18b must be read as an emphatic statement³ and that it constitutes an accusation against God of a kind unthinkable in a liturgy. The Psalmist frequently cries out, 'Why hast thou forsaken me?' or, 'Why art thou far from me?'. 'Sometimes, indeed, his lament heightens in intensity until it becomes a reproach (notably in Pss.44:88). Yet even here reproach is uttered in the context of fervent appeal to God, and the confidence

1. J. Bright in Proclamation and Presence, pp.200,204 and Berridge, op.cit., p.128.

2. Reventlow, Liturgie, p.225.

3. Bright in Proclamation and Presence, pp.204f, 'You are indeed to me like a deceitful brook...'. This, he says, is the most natural reading and is followed by LXX.

that he can even yet save. Never do we hear the flat accusation: "God, you have failed me!". Similarly, he says, v.10 (apostrophising his mother and not addressing God) could not possibly introduce a liturgical text.¹

vv.19-21. Bright describes these verses as a 'private oracle addressed to Jeremiah, telling him, in effect, that he must purge himself of such sentiments' (those expressed in v.18) 'if he wishes to continue in the prophetic office, and renewing to him the promise of divine aid if he will obey'.²

Most scholars are agreed that these verses constitute the divine reply to the lament but they make different evaluations of this fact. Reventlow, not surprisingly, thinks that it confirms that we find here not the private communings of the prophet with God but a liturgical event. What we find here is not the inner voice of Jeremiah's reason but a real, liturgically proclaimed answer.³ He refers to Stoebe's point that the stress belongs to the divine reply and not to the lament, indicating that what is involved is not a private record, not even one for public view, but proclamation itself, directed to the people. The prophet and the people are one. The word of judgement is to the whole people. Yet, says Reventlow, the passage does deal with the prophetic commission, and this is made particularly clear in these verses. The prophet has a special relationship to his people, both as their representative and

1. Ibid., p.205.

2. Bright, Jeremiah, p.111.

3. Reventlow, Liturgie, p.226, against Rudolph and Baumgartner. More correctly, he says, Quell and Weiser recognise it as a true revelation and Stamm admits its liturgical function.

as God's. This office is, he insists, cultic and we see here Jeremiah performing his liturgical function, as indicated by the phrase לפני יהוה which, according to Reventlow, suggests worship before Yahweh (see 1 Kgs.17:1; 18:15; 2 Kgs.3:14) and כי יאמר . The prophet now proclaims Yahweh's will not because it is the wish of the people but because it is the word of Yahweh. In this way, this passage is closely related to Jeremiah's prophetic office.¹

Berridge agrees that vv.19-21 correspond to the salvation oracle which was spoken by the cultic functionary in response to the lamentation of the individual. 'Indeed...it is probable that even the form taken by vv.19-21 has been governed by the structure of this cultic oracle.'² He also believes that Jeremiah's bond with his people is of great importance here. Thus, Jeremiah is called to 'repent' as is all Judah in Jer.4:1 and 3:22.³ Further, אשר suggests that it is not a matter here of restoring Jeremiah to his office. 'Rather, the emphasis lies upon Yahweh's making Jeremiah's own repentance possible, and upon His restoration of the prophet to Himself. When the relationship between Yahweh and Jeremiah is restored, then Jeremiah can again stand before Yahweh.'⁴ Berridge fails to make clear why this should preclude the idea of Jeremiah's being

1. Ibid., pp.227f.

2. Berridge, op.cit., p.114.

3. cf. Stoebe, in WuD, 4, 1955, p.132, who stresses that Jeremiah, in his own rebellion against the will of God, participates in the rebellion of the nation.

4. Berridge, op.cit., pp.132ff.

restored to the prophetic office. Surely this is 'the relationship between Yahweh and Jeremiah'.

Before leaving this passage, mention should be made of its interpretation by Gerstenberger.¹ Regarding vv.19-21 as Deuteronomistic, he says that the whole must be interpreted in this light. It is, he claims, a complex structure and shows signs of a long growth. 'It is the divine office and Jeremiah, the authorised officeholder, that occupy the Deuteronomist's mind', but the central theme of the whole passage is the suffering of the people and Yahweh's response to their cry. Verses 10f. were incorporated by the editor who saw in Jeremiah's sufferings an analogy to the agony of the people. He writes, 'The linking together of lament or complaint and divine oracle certainly reflects the liturgical pattern of prayer and oracle answer although it is by no means clear whether such "prophetic liturgies" had been "performed" in actual worship or whether they were only literary products'. As will be seen again later, Reventlow refuses to take account of this ambiguity.

c) Jer.17:12-18

Reventlow's exegesis of this passage is as follows. It has been questioned whether vv.12-13 belong to the 'Confession'. They have been thought to be unJeremianic in view of Jeremiah's rebuke of false trust in the temple; but a relationship between the prophet's proclamation and the cult and liturgy has already been established and chs.7 and 26 must be recognised as speaking of a special situation. Thus, these

1. Gerstenberger, op.cit., pp.393-408.

verses belong to the lament spoken in the temple.¹ Verse 13b is recognisable as the Yahweh-speech, answering the lament. (Reventlow fails to comment here on the fact that on this understanding the usual order of the liturgy is reversed, i.e., the oracle comes before the lament.) We can then go on to see the liturgical function of the following individual lament. Again the prophet represents the people in their need and innocence. That it is not a matter of the personal prophetic suffering and endurance of Jeremiah is shown by the text. אֲנִי בָקִיעַ is a cry for help found in the Psalms (e.g. 6:3; 41:5). Although it has been commonly taken to refer there to individual illness, usage shows that it has a wider application. Hosea, for example, speaks of Yahweh's healing Israel of her infidelity and of the illnesses which follow as consequences; and the well-known affinity between Hosea and Jeremiah lends credence to the idea that Jeremiah uses the verb with collective significance, speaking of the relation between God and the people. Also, in Jeremiah 3:22; 30:17 and 33:6, Yahweh heals Israel. So the prophet in ch.17 is the mediator of the healing appealed for in 15:18. It is precisely the same with the parallel word אֲנִי בָקִיעַ and God is both the אֱלֹהֵינוּ and אֱלֹהֵי אֲרָצְנוּ of Israel.

In the light of this, the interpretation of v.15 as a

1. Reventlow, Liturgie, p.230. Berridge similarly disagrees with those, such as Rudolph, who take chs.7 and 26 as evidence that Jeremiah was diametrically opposed to the temple. He thinks that there is '...no reason for denying these words to the prophet', but stresses that Jeremiah did not share with his people the 'mechanical and distorted understanding of the temple and its apparatus' reflected in chs.7,26. He rejects, however, the view that Jeremiah's prayer was probably offered within a cultic setting, op.cit., pp.150f.

personal reference to Jeremiah is not valid. It was seen in 15:16 that ךלך must be taken in a more general sense than that of the prophetic word. It is rather the sustaining power of Yahweh as in Pss.33:4; 56:5,11; 107:20 and 130:5 and there is nothing specially prophetic about it. Certainly the prophetic message is the concern of Jer.17:15ff. but it is not a matter of the people's mocking the prophet because this does not come to pass. Precisely vv.15f., which for Baumgartner and others have strong prophetic significance, show exactly the opposite. The enemies are those of the godly, like the $\text{לְעֵבְרֵי אֱלֹהִים}$ of the Psalms. The day referred to in v.17 is the day of judgement between the worshipper and his enemies.¹

It is in form an individual lament but the worshipper's piety is exemplary. Again we see the prophet in his intercessory rôle. The office of the prophet is a liturgical office.²

This interpretation is unsatisfactory on many counts and it is with vv.14-18 that the main problems lie.

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1. It should be noted that there is debate about the translation of v.16. The Hebrew has, 'As for me, I did not press from being a shepherd after thee' ($\text{וְאֲנִי לֹא-אֶעֱלֶה אַחֲרָיִךְ מִלְּבַשׁ רֹעֵה}$), from which only a forced meaning can be derived. Most scholars read לְרֹעֵהוּ (cf. 15:11), but another proposal is to read יִם רֹעֵהוּ ($\text{לֹא-אֶעֱלֶה אַחֲרָיִךְ}$) instead of לְרֹעֵהוּ omitting the following אַחֲרָיִךְ . So Skinner, op.cit., p.205 and Bright, Jeremiah, p.116. Nicholson translates, 'It is not the thought of disaster that makes me press after thee', understanding a reply by Jeremiah to the accusation that he was a prophet of evil who actually wished disaster upon the nation, Jeremiah 1-25, p.151.
 2. Reventlow, Liturgie, pp.229-240.

It is true that the form and vocabulary correspond to those of the psalms of lament, but v.15 reads like the complaint of one who has spoken God's word and been humiliated because it has not come to pass, i.e., a prophet. Jeremiah is questioned because of the failure of his word to materialise (see Dt.18:22 and Jer.28:9) and, therefore, his own authenticity is placed in question. Surely Jeremiah's individual experience is primary here?¹ All except Reventlow think that the 'word' spoken of in v.15 is the prophetic word. As we have seen, he thinks that v.15 is the scornful reply of the evildoers to the cry for help of v.14; 'When is your God ever coming to your aid', comparable to the taunt in Ps.42:4,11, 'Where is your God?'. But he fails to recognise that on every occasion where the verb אָלַל is used of God's word, purpose or a prophetic word, it has the force of 'come to pass, come true, happen' (cf. Jer.28:9). At no place does אָלַל when used with אָלַל ever have the force which Reventlow wishes to find here.

This attack is made particularly by Bright who concludes by saying that this passage means what it seems to mean; 'Jeremiah's foes taunt him with the fact that his dire predictions have not come true'. The speaker in v.15 has to be a prophetic individual and if in v.15 then in the entire lament.²

Similarly, Berridge believes this to be a pure lamentation of the individual. The personal pronouns show, he says,

1. Bright, in Proclamation and Presence, p.206 and Berridge, op.cit., p.138.

2. Bright, in Proclamation and Presence, p.207.

that Jeremiah clearly sets himself apart from and over against his 'enemy', a phenomenon often witnessed in the lamentations contained in the Psalms.¹ Certainly, it is far more natural to understand the passage as a complaint by the prophet about the lack of confirmation of his message and the ridicule to which this exposes him.

d) Jer.20:7-18

The traditional interpretation of this 'Confession' is to the effect that we see clearly reflected here experiences of the individual Jeremiah, experiences which have come to him because of his position as a prophet. So in the first part (vv.7-13) Jeremiah describes the feeling he has of living under Yahweh's constraint. The call to be a prophet is not a matter of choice, but of Yahweh's compulsion.² Jeremiah uses an interesting choice of expressions to describe how his calling was forced upon him by Yahweh (v.7).

יָנַח in the pi'el is used by Hosea to describe Yahweh's allurement of Israel in the wilderness. So, it has been argued, Jeremiah, because he is so conscious of his bond with his people 'adopts here the word which Hosea had earlier used with reference to Yahweh's allurement of Israel herself. Jeremiah was enticed by Yahweh and submitted to him'.³

Whether or not this echo is deliberate (as seems somewhat doubtful in view of the fact that Jeremiah's image is far removed from the picture of Yahweh's leading Israel into the wilderness and speaking tenderly to her), יָנַח has the

1. Berridge, op.cit., p.137.

2. e.g. von Rad, in Ev Th, 3, 1936, p.270 and Lindblom, PAI p.195.

3. So Berridge, op.cit., p.151.

force of 'to appeal irresistibly' and, in some contexts, 'to seduce'.

The extreme imagery is continued in $\rho \nu \pi$, the verb used of a man's exercising force resulting in sexual assault (see Dt.22:25; 2 Sam.13:11).¹

The picture of Yahweh's enticement and overpowering of the prophet surely would suggest his experience of being called. One can go further, however, and argue that 20:7 relates not only to Yahweh's initial display of force, but also to Jeremiah's repeated experiences of this during the course of his ministry.² This is supported by v.9 which focuses upon Jeremiah's powerlessness to escape Yahweh's hold on him.³

Lindblom makes the point that the divine constraint did not exclude personal freedom; hence Jeremiah's attempts to try to avert Yahweh's judgement.⁴ There would certainly seem to be in v.8 the implication that Jeremiah experiences a tension between his natural inclinations and the message his vocation demands that he proclaim. The message is one of rebukes and threats and this brings him reproach and derision.⁵ Verse 10 continues Jeremiah's outcry against

1. Ibid., p.152 and Rudolph, Jeremia, p.113.

2. So Berridge, op.cit., p.152.

3. Lindblom, PAI, pp.195f., discusses the character of this feeling. His main point is that it is not necessary to draw a sharp dividing-line between a normal sense of moral obligation and the anguish of an ecstatic state. 'Purely psychological and ordinary moral elements may well have combined'.

4. Ibid.

5. So, for example, von Rad, in Ev Th, 3, 1936, p.271. Skinner translates here, 'Whenever I speak I am mocked,' reading with LXX $\rho \tau \tau \upsilon \chi$ for $\rho \nu \tau \chi$.

the derision and abuse that the prophetic office has brought him.

Thus, Jeremiah bitterly laments the nature of his prophetic ministry and the control which Yahweh exercises over his life. Of vv.18f. Berridge writes, 'It is unmistakably the individual Jeremiah who speaks....The form and content of this passage indicate quite clearly that these words were not spoken by a cultic functionary'.¹

It is significant that this passage is not discussed by Reventlow. The obvious reason is that the conclusion expressed by Berridge cannot be avoided. It is true that parallels, both formal and verbal, are evident here, but the bond with the individual lament is loose² and ch.20, as also ch.18,³ goes far beyond anything in the traditional form of lamentation.⁴ Bright says that it would be quite

1. Berridge, op.cit., p.155.

2. Ibid., p.151.

3. Again, Reventlow omits this passage from his consideration. Bright (in Proclamation and Presence, pp.210f.) suggests how Reventlow would interpret 18:18-23. He would, he says, regard v.18 as secondarily linked to vv.19-23, for v.18 clearly relates the passage to a personal experience of Jeremiah. He would interpret vv.19-23 as a liturgical lament uttered by the prophet in the name of the people in his rôle as cultic mediator. The impossibility of dissolving the prophetic 'I' into a collective 'I' is made plain here, since if we take the 'I' of 18:20 as corporate, as Reventlow invariably wishes, then 'the entire righteous community is represented as the cultic intercessor'. Bright concludes, 'The obvious interpretation is the natural one: Jeremiah, who, as we know, did intercede for the people, complains that they have repaid him evil for good'.

4. von Rad, OT Theology, II, p.203.

impossible to interpret the piece as a liturgy. וְלֹא יִתְקַדֵּשׁ
(v.7), for example, is, he says, unthinkable in a liturgical text. 'No liturgist could possibly accuse the God to whom his prayer is directed in such rough language'.¹

Further, he argues, the 'word of Yahweh' in vv.8f can only be the prophetic word, the speaking of which has brought the prophet abuse.² Reventlow's 'God's commandments or saving help' will not do here. The prophet was the one called to speak in God's name and we see here what we seem to see: a prophet's personal struggle with the word.

Bright regards v.13 (sometimes taken to be a secondary addition)³ as the end of the first complaint in chapter 20 and thus sees this complaint ending on a note of confident trust and praise. But then, in vv.14-18, we have another complaint which shows Jeremiah at the end of his resources.⁴ Bright is surely right in thinking that this passage could not by any stretch of the imagination be interpreted as a liturgy. It has, he says, none of the earmarks of the psalms of lament except for a few words in v.18 and none of their characteristic vocabulary. It is not addressed to God; there is no complaint against wicked and godless men, no protestation of innocence or plea for divine aid, no assurance of being heard, but just unrelieved despair. The only real parallel in the Bible is, he thinks, in Job 3 which

1. Bright, in Proclamation and Presence, pp.212f. In view of the strong language in the psalms of lament, Bright goes too far in saying that a liturgist could not use such language.

2. Ibid.

3. By, e.g., Baumgartner against, e.g., Rudolph, Jeremia, p.115.

4. Bright, Jeremiah, p.134.

is certainly not a liturgical text. Therefore, to interpret 20:14-18 as a collective lament, uttered by a cultic mediator, would be absurd.¹

But if the 'Confession' of chapter 20 must be interpreted as having individual and personal reference to the prophet Jeremiah, then it is surely reasonable to interpret the other 'Confessions' along the same lines. For, as Skinner long since suggested, there is a continuity in the passages, in that they exhibit in its different aspects one great spiritual conflict. Their central interest is in Jeremiah's struggle to fulfil the prophetic vocation. There is the failure and rejection of the prophetic message (17:15; 20:8) and the opposition which unmans him (15:10; 18:18; 20:7f.). There is the resentment and anguish which this causes, the cry for vindication of the cause he represents, and the need for the renewal of his vocation if he is to continue in his office as prophet.²

As seen above, however, Skinner thinks that the struggle in Jeremiah is one between 'fidelity to his prophetic commission and the natural feelings and impulses of his heart'.³ For reasons indicated at the outset of the discussion this is in some ways an unsatisfactory description of what we find reflected in the 'Confessions'. Why this is so needs now to be examined more closely.

It is, in the first place, misleading to set Jeremiah

1. Bright, in Proclamation and Presence, p.213.

2. See Skinner, *op.cit.*, pp.210ff. 19

3. *Ibid.*

the man and Jeremiah the prophet over against each other. For one cannot say that in Jeremiah the prophetic task and human self-consciousness are at odds. Rather, the opposite is the case.¹ The whole man is involved in the prophetic task. In view of von Rad's emphasis on the prophetic office and on the way in which the 'Confessions' illuminate our understanding of this it is strange that he is found to say, 'With Jeremiah the man and the prophetic task part company'.² It is strange because von Rad is elsewhere reluctant to distinguish Jeremiah the man from Jeremiah the prophet and rightly so. On the other hand, it is true that the 'Confessions' indicate that the prophet is no longer at one with his office and his tasks.³ The whole man is involved in the prophetic task, but this involves a certain amount of inner conflict, since he does not find it congenial to announce the message with which he is commissioned. The prophetic task is what brings the prophet pain, disillusionment and even despair and he rebels against it. A helpful discussion of this is offered by Mihelic,⁴ and because of its attempt to show how this human suffering and rebellion are actually part of the prophetic task, it is worth quoting in some detail.

We need, he says, to see Jeremiah's 'Confessions' in the light of the account of his call to the prophetic service. This personal encounter transformed his life, placing him in God's possession and under his compulsion to proclaim the

1. So Stoebe, in ThZ, 20, 1964, p.393.

2. von Rad, OT Theology, II, p.205.

3. Ibid.

4. Mihelic, 'Dialogue with God', Interpretation, 14, 1960.

word of God to men and nations irrespective of the consequences of them and to him personally (p.43). In the call itself we see a tension between Jeremiah the man and Jeremiah the prophet and we see this tension continued in the 'Confessions'. Against his own desires he had to pronounce doom and destruction upon his people. Consequently, 'the prophetic office brought him only an unbearable loneliness and a grief which made him cry out in anguish...' (15:18) (pp.44f.). Moreover, there were opponents trying to discredit his prophetic ministry (20:7f.) and Jeremiah is in a dilemma between wanting man's approval and fulfilling the task imposed on him by God. 'As a human being he craves for the former but as an instrument of God he must perform the latter, else he will be burned out inwardly' (p.48).

Mihelic's most valuable comments come towards the end where he asks how the 'Confessions' are to be treated, as the expression of a tortured soul or as the revealed word of God'. He writes, '...the fact that his inner struggles arose precisely in connection with his prophetic ministry means that they were part of his prophetic witness to God. They were an intrinsic part of his intellectual and spiritual make-up, and, therefore, cannot be separated from his prophetic function. Furthermore, these conflicts began with his call, and were intensified rather than diminished in his prophetic activity...'. We have here, he says, the whole gamut of human suffering; fear of shame and failure, despair, disillusionment, loneliness and even hatred towards God and 'all came to him because of his prophetic office and not in spite of it'. It is, therefore, not possible to set them aside as

simply the subjective expressions of the prophet's emotional temperament. Rather, the 'Confessions' show that God used not only Jeremiah's mouth as a medium for the proclamation of his word but his entire life (pp.49f.).¹

This fact of the prophet's humanity being an integral part of the prophetic office and itself a witness is further clarified by Stoebe. Jeremiah, he says, is involved in a two-fold suffering. He suffers with his people in their sin and punishment, yet he also suffers with God. He is truly a Seelsorger. He knows that judgement must come and yet, at the same time, hopes it may not. Thus, tension is within the vocation itself.² The distinctive significance of Jeremiah as the Seelsorger of his people lies, according to Stoebe, in his suffering's being part of his proclamation.³ His compassion for his people springs not from sentimentality but from the seriousness of the judgement which he, as prophet, has to proclaim to his people. His own life is devoted to God's message and to his hearers. In thought and feeling he is bound to his people, to whom he has to proclaim judgement.⁴ Whilst we must seek the speciality of Jeremiah's task as Seelsorger in his historical situation which makes

1. It is in this that Jeremiah becomes a prototype of the Servant in Dt.Isa.
2. Stoebe, in Th.Z., 20, 1964, pp.405ff. See also earlier discussion of Stoebe's understanding of Jeremiah's rôle as intercessor. Again we see Jeremiah as a prototype of the Suffering Servant. See, for example, North, The Second Isaiah, p.255, on Isa.50:1-7, 'The word of the prophet is the word of God, his indignation God's indignation, his sorrow God's sorrow. It is pre-eminently in this that we have in the OT anticipations of the Incarnation, the Word become flesh'.
3. Stoebe, in WuD, 4, 1955, pp.117.
4. Ibid., p.133.

his position as a prophet unprecedented,¹ what is most important and most distinctive is that he suffers the pain of the judgement from God whilst remaining with and suffering with God.²

The idea of Jeremiah's suffering being part of his office receives a number of different treatments. Berridge, for his part, stresses the bond which unites the prophet with the people to whom he speaks. He sees this reflected in the 'Confessions' in their use of language which echoes that elsewhere applied to Judah as a whole.³ The texts, he says, relate to Jeremiah's own personal situation as prophet and the answers he receives relate in the first instance to his own preceding lamentations and are, initially, intended for Jeremiah himself. But he himself is involved in portraying Yahweh's judgement, in his own life. 'In his "Confessions", Jeremiah repeatedly wrestles with some aspect of Yahweh's word of judgement'. Thus, the 'Confessions' have 'more than merely a private validity'.⁴

von Rad also thinks the 'Confessions' concern God's whole way with Israel. 'For the sufferings here set forth were not just the concern of the man Jeremiah who here speaks, as it were, unofficially, as a private individual, about experiences common to all men. In every instance the confessions grow out of his specific situation as a prophet;

1. Ibid., pp.126,134.

2. Ibid., p.134.

3. Berridge, op.cit., pp.159f.

4. Ibid., p.159. cf. von Rad in Ev Th., 3, 1936, pp.275f.; Stoebe, in ThZ, 20, 1964, p.393 and Mihelic, op.cit., pp.49f.

what lies behind them is a call to serve in a quite particular way, a relationship of particular intimacy with Yahweh and, therefore, they have in the highest degree a typical significance for Israel'.¹

von Rad does not make absolutely clear what he means by this. Is he suggesting that Israel needs to learn the meaning of suffering as part of her witness? Clearly, however, he is stressing that both prophet and nation are threatened with Yahweh's abandonment. Jeremiah here occupies a mediatorial rôle, bearing both the nation's and God's grief.²

The question that now springs to mind is, what does all this tell us about the prophetic office and, in particular, about Jeremiah's prophetic office? Many scholars make the point that Jeremiah was conscious of the fact that he stood both within and at the close of a chain of prophets (1:11ff.; 6:19-21; 7:25; 28:8).³ Both aspects of this awareness need to be looked at, and the implication behind the statement (i.e., that with Jeremiah something new entered the prophetic office) needs to be worked out.

von Rad writes, '...the prophetic calling as it had been known up to Jeremiah's own time entered upon a critical phase of its existence'. This he understands in terms of the increased element of sensitivity, vulnerability and of the refractory in Jeremiah, in which he was a child of his age.⁴

1. von Rad, OT Theology, II, p.204.

2. Ibid., p.274.

3. cf. Berridge, op.cit., p.213; von Rad, OT Theology, II, p.205. The first part particularly is explored by Macholz, in Probleme Biblischer Theologie.

4. von Rad, OT Theology, II, p.205.

Because of this, 'it was no longer possible for Jeremiah to resign himself to the will of Yahweh; he had to question and to understand'. 'In the period to which Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Deutero-Isaiah belonged', he says, 'the prophetic office itself had become the subject of theological reflection'.¹ Similarly, Mihelic writes, 'Jeremiah's confessions put the whole prophetic ministry into a new light. No such intellectual and spiritual difficulties are credited to Jeremiah's prophetic predecessors'.² Yet, at the same time, he continues, this is not to say that they were exempt from these inner conflicts. Jeremiah's 'Confessions' may be indicative of similar turmoil in other prophets. This is a necessary corrective to von Rad's tendency to suggest that the prophetic office was at this time breaking up and the prophet becoming more vulnerable as a man. von Rad sees a development from the period of Amos when, he thinks, 'to be a prophet was something which carried with it its own evidence and required no justification, when a man prophesied because Yahweh had spoken'.³ Although it is certainly true that by Jeremiah's day there was an increased concern with the problem of false prophecy (whether one ascribes the references to Jeremiah himself or to a Deuteronomistic editor is largely immaterial here), it is hardly accurate to suggest that earlier prophets were self-authenticating. Had they been so, the

1. Ibid., p.273; cf. Mihelic, op.cit., pp.43f., and Macholz, op.cit., pp.306,331-334.

2. Mihelic, op.cit., p.48.

3. von Rad, OT Theology, II, p.273.

existence of a passage such as Am.7 with its conflict between authorities, is hard to explain.¹

von Rad himself is not altogether happy in speaking of a 'breaking-up' of the prophetic office and elsewhere speaks of a 'widening' or an 'extension'. This is seen, he contends, in 'the way in which their office increasingly invaded their personal and spiritual lives'.² The prophetic office assumed by Jeremiah was far greater in its range and depth than that of any of his predecessors'.³ He admits, however, that we must not exaggerate the difference here. Ezekiel, for instance, suffered in the discharge of his office (e.g. Ezek.4:4-8).⁴ Similarly, Lindblom says that it is wrong to think of the 'Confessions' as representing a later stage of religious development to which individual religion belonged. There is, he says, no reason why Hosea should not have had experiences like those of Jeremiah⁵ and Mihelic thinks Jeremiah's anguish would be 'likely in other prophets, as men who loved their people intensely and were called to be God's spokesmen'.⁶ Stoebe also takes up this point. He comments that it used to be said that until Jeremiah the

1. See below, ch.V, for full discussion of this passage, including the question whether this represents Amos's own or a later understanding of the prophet's position.

2. von Rad, OT Theology, p.274.

3. Ibid., p.206, and in Ev. Th., 3, 1936, p.275, where he says that Jeremiah carries out in a new way the divine action. His whole life conveys God's word.

4. Ibid., pp.274f.

5. Lindblom, PAI, p.298.

6. Mihelic, op.cit., p.49.

prophetic task and the human life were separate, but this is not so. Amos's whole life was involved and of Hosea was demanded an extraordinary personal obedience. He does think, however, that the sufferings which Jeremiah had to undergo represented inroads into the prophet's life of an unprecedentedly incisive kind.¹

What Stoebe sees as really differentiating Jeremiah from earlier prophets is his prophetic responsibility. It is not that Jeremiah has a new human consciousness, but that the time of judgement is now, not in the future. He lives and suffers in its actual presence. His individuality lies not in his coming at the end of a line of prophets or in his personal experience but in the fact that he was called to be a prophet at the point in time when God had taken the decisive step.²

Perhaps it is after something similar that Skinner is feeling when he suggests that Jeremiah was impelled to seek a deeper foundation for his prophetic relation to God than was to be found in the Jewish state which was shaken and ready to pass away.³ This, of course, rests on Skinner's presupposition that prophecy was once a theocratic institution and that the prophet had 'a recognised position and function

1. Stoebe, in *ThZ*, 20, 1964, pp.390f. He admits that the interpretation of symbolic action, especially with regard to Hosea, inevitably influences this evaluation.
2. *Ibid.*, pp.394-400. cf. Berridge, *op.cit.*, p.213, where he says that Jeremiah's proclamation was constituted by the same message of judgement which had been announced by former prophets, but the people had refused to repent and it was now necessary that Yahweh actualise his long-prophesied judgement.
3. Skinner, *op.cit.*, p.218.

in the unwritten religious constitution of the Hebrew state'.¹ He sees Jeremiah as coming at a time when public recognition had altogether ceased to form a basis for the prophetic position. Skinner goes on, of course, to assert that because his religious bond with his nation was broken, Jeremiah was forced to realise that he stood alone on the side of God and that in this way, 'the prophetic vocation became to Jeremiah the centre of a new and more intimately human relation to God'.²

Whatever their particular emphases, all the scholars whose views have just been outlined, have in common their contention that the personal laments of Jeremiah spring from his position as a prophet and his execution of the prophetic commission, that they constitute a thorough part of the proclamation itself,³ and this in a way which is unique in the OT record. Stoebe even goes so far as to speak of them as representing the kernel of his proclamation, in that Jeremiah's humanity is a witness to God. They show him as Seelsorger bearing both the need of men and the divine passion.⁴

The relationship between the prophet's experience and his message, which this raises, is obviously of great importance. It is being urged in this thesis that the day for disregarding prophetic experience and inspiration is not yet over and, indeed, never can be, since man and message

1. Ibid., pp.215f.

2. Ibid., pp.219ff.

3. Stoebe, in ThZ, 20, 1964, p.394.

4. Ibid., p.393.

cannot be separated in this way.¹ The fact remains that our first concern must be to understand the message itself and to recognise that even where we are presented with narratives about the prophet, the character of the prophetic literature is that of 'message'.² This is what makes it so hard to piece together any very precise evaluation of the prophet's psychological experiences and it should remind us that where we are given such information it is not for its own sake. So, J.M. Berridge says of the 'Confessions' that, though they are dialogues between the individual prophet and Yahweh, they cannot be of solely private validity. They were, he says, 'undoubtedly spoken in public, constituting a part of his proclamation' and it is not fortuitous that they are recorded.³

Lindblom argues that it is not in the least surprising that 'private revelations which had reference only to the personal life of a prophet' should be preserved and written down. For 'it is of the very nature of a revelation that it should be made known to others. A prophet is never allowed to be a private person; he is always a herald, who has to bring his Lord's message to men. Every revelation is at the same time a message. For this reason the prophet

1. See above, ch.I, pp.2, etc., and ch.V, pp.495ff. In reaction against the trend towards ignoring the experience of the prophets and concentrating on the message that they delivered, a number of scholars are now stressing the relation between the two, e.g., Clements, Prophecy and Tradition, p.24, though he still tends to underestimate the importance of the actual experience.

2. Ibid., p.30.

3. Berridge, op.cit., p.157.

never kept a revelatory experience to himself. Everything that he saw and heard in his revelatory state of mind was regarded by him as a word from God, and a word from God was not his personal property but something imparted to him for the benefit of others'.¹

Although we are now emphasising the individual nature of the experiences reflected in the 'Confessions' this is a far cry from the older view which saw them as passages from which we could glean psychological and biographical information about Jeremiah. But it is also a far cry from Reventlow's view in which they become liturgical texts telling us nothing about the individual Jeremiah except that he exercised a liturgical function. Reventlow's argument that the 'Confessions' relate to the prophet's public ministry, since the collectors of the prophetic books were interested only in the preached word and not in the prophet's personal feelings² has much truth in it, but it does not lead inevitably or even naturally to the conclusion that Jeremiah occupied an official position in the cult.

Whilst, as has been indicated, the fact that we do not find similar pieces in every prophetic book, does not allow us to deduce that no other prophet had similar experiences, the fact remains that they are peculiar to Jeremiah, and this throws further doubt upon Reventlow's assumption that Jeremiah is found here engaging in a typical prophetic activity. As Bright argues, we are, therefore, entitled to ask the question, could it be that they are peculiar to Jeremiah because they

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1. Lindblom, PAI, p.220, where he mentions the 'Confessions' as being particularly striking examples of this.
 2. Reventlow, Liturgie, p.208.

are expressive of that prophet's peculiar personal struggle.¹ He continues his refutation of Reventlow's opinions, saying that the prophets are not quite the disembodied voices Reventlow would have them to be. They suffered scorn, abuse, and even physical persecution because of the word they preached and on occasion found themselves in tension with the word and with God's dealings. It is no wonder that they sometimes lashed out in bitter complaint to God. He mentions here, as the closest parallel to the Jeremiah of the 'Confessions', the Elijah of 1 Kgs.19. Here Elijah 'utters a personal lament regarding his plight, a plight that he is in because of his faithfulness to his calling'. Though Horeb is a holy place, his lament can hardly be regarded as cultic.² Further, he points out, the only place where tradition has preserved the content of a prayer offered by Jeremiah (32:16-25), has a setting which is anything but cultic. The fact that there are continuous reminiscences of the vocabulary of the Pss. of lament does not alter the fact that Jeremiah is in jail. That the only recorded prayer of Jeremiah is a private complaint to God regarding his word, uttered in a non-cultic setting at least shows that Jeremiah was remembered as addressing his God in this way. He writes, 'It would, therefore, seem more reasonable to regard the Confessions as the texts of just such complaints rather than as utterances of a liturgical mediator, a function the biographer never depicts Jeremiah as performing'.³

1. Bright, in Proclamation and Presence, pp.195f.

2. Ibid., p.197.

3. Ibid., p.198.

This draws attention to the major flaw in Reventlow's argument, that it proceeds on the indefensible assumption that the cultic form necessarily remains bound to and reflects the cultic institution; and 'he arrives at his conclusions only by forcing or ignoring the evidence'.¹ It is indefensible both generally and with specific reference to the 'Confessions'. Firstly, it has been established that forms of speech need not remain bound to an established institution, even if it is their original Sitz im Leben. Moreover, forms of speech are adapted and used and we must, therefore, distinguish between form and function.² Secondly, the free and individual use which Jeremiah makes of the various forms bears witness to the prophet's individuality and negates the thesis that he was a cultic functionary.³

Reventlow, says Bright, has reminded us that we must take with full seriousness the cultic form in which the 'Confessions' are cast, and the fact that they employ conventional forms and locutions warns against too quickly finding biographical or psychological details in each turn of phrase. But, he continues, 'Conventional forms can be expressive of real experiences and real emotions. In this case, we are forced to see behind the conventional forms a prophetic individual, persecuted because of the word,

1. Ibid., p.214.

2. So Fohrer, in JBL, 80, 1961, pp.311f, and see W. Johnstone, op.cit., pp.50f. who, although he inclines to a cultic setting for Jeremiah's activity, rejects Reventlow's argument that there is a direct step from Gattung to Sitz im Leben.

3. So Berridge, op.cit., p.210, where he argues this strongly and with detailed illustration.

suffering mental and physical anguish, and lashing out at his persecutors - and God'.¹

There are few scholars who do not relate Jeremiah's 'Confessions' to his prophetic 'office', however they may interpret the term, and this because the 'Confessions' so obviously arise from out of this office. But the light which the passages shed on its nature is not as clear as Reventlow would have us believe. It is just not possible to establish from them an official position with clearly defined tasks. On the contrary, they suggest that the prophetic office, or at any rate, Jeremiah's prophetic office, lacked such official and recognisable limits. They testify to the fact that Jeremiah was having to work out for himself what his prophetic vocation meant and what it meant to be faithful to it. They reflect the insecurity and doubt of a man without human appointment or recognition; and they reflect the constraint and compulsion of a man who knows himself to have been appointed by God.

iii) The Call of Jeremiah

As we have observed, there are few scholars today who are prepared to allow their study of Jeremiah to be governed by psychological considerations. This is largely a reaction against the last century, when scholars concentrated on Jeremiah, the man, and his temperament and felt able to claim for him a position at the beginning of a new stage in the history of prophecy. For Ewald, Sellin, Duhm and

1. Bright, in Proclamation and Presence, p.214.

Hölscher, for instance, Jeremiah was the man of strong emotions so ill-fitted to be a prophet.¹ Whether Jeremiah's sensitivity was a weakness or a strength (as Skinner argued), the fact remained that he was the individualist among the prophets and stood at the end of a line of development.

H. Gunkel, although he too spoke of the prophet's timid and retiring nature, marks the start of a move away from this approach in directing attention to the various Gattungen, which the prophets adopted and adapted.² In particular, he said that Jeremiah was the first to avail himself of the Gattung of the individual lament.³ This was then examined in detail by Gunkel's pupil, W. Baumgartner, who stressed the freedom with which Jeremiah used both the form and content of this Gattung.⁴

The inadequacy of a psychological approach to the study of Jeremiah was later argued by H.W. Wolff,⁵ and since then there has been a feeling after new approaches, many of which emphasised Jeremiah's bond with his people.⁶

These two trends, that towards examining the Gattungen which Jeremiah used and that towards stressing the bond between the prophet and his people, have not travelled separately. Rather, they have jointly focused attention on

1. e.g. Ewald, Die Propheten des Alten Bundes.

2. Gunkel, in SATA, II, 2, p.XLVI.

3. Ibid., p.LX and see above, p.378.

4. Baumgartner, op.cit.

5. Wolff, 'Die Begründungen der prophetischen Heils- und Unheilssprüche', ZAW, 52, 1934, and Das Zitat im Prophetenspruch.

6. e.g. Stoebe, in WuD, 4, 1955 and ThZ, 20, 1964; Stamm, 'Die Bekenntnisse des Jeremia', Kirchenblatt für die reformierte Schweiz, III, 1955; von Rad, in Ev Th, 3, 1935, pp.215-276.

the way in which the Gattungen which Jeremiah uses reflect his relationship with his people even, as will be shown, to the extent of denying that Jeremiah as an individual can be known at all from the Jeremianic material.¹ It must be stressed at the outset that the debate which now takes place regarding Jeremiah, on a form-critical basis, is not between regarding Jeremiah as an individual and regarding him as bound to his people. It is a far more complex debate, in which attempts are made to define Jeremiah's exact position as a prophet. Both the major views examined here share the belief that Jeremiah can no longer be seen as the great religious individualist, poles apart from his nation and heritage, yet they differ widely in what they see as Jeremiah's position and function within this nation and heritage.

It is obvious that of central importance in this debate will be the call narrative in Jer.1:4-10, and it is to an examination of this passage that this section of the chapter will be confined. It is generally agreed that in Israel the certainty of being called by Yahweh is one of the most characteristic features of the prophetic consciousness. We are not given the account of the call of every one of the canonical prophets, but 'we have enough evidence to reach the reasonable conclusion that their careers began in some experience of inescapable constraint'.² Furthermore, the legitimacy of the true prophet and the authority of his

1. Reventlow, Liturgie.

2. Rowley, in The Servant of the Lord, pp.118f., cf. Lindblom, PAI, p.182.

message are established by his call (Jer.14:14). It is, of course, possible to attach to the individual calls of the prophets individual psychological significance, as did Volz, Rudolph, and Weiser in relation to Jeremiah's call, extracting the characteristics of Jeremiah's individuality. But, though the days for this sort of approach may be over, attempts are still being made, with the methods of psychology, to penetrate to the peculiar form and significance of each call and, indeed, of all revelatory experiences.¹ Nonetheless, the exploration of the call Gattung by form-critical method is of great importance here and its results are undoubtedly pertinent to the issue of the prophetic 'office'.

The point has been made that, considering the prominence given in the prophetic books to the prophet's call, remarkably little attention was long paid to the literary category of the call narrative.² One of the first moves in this direction was made by von Rad. Speaking generally about the variety of forms which the prophets used and even minted, he urged that the innovations involved demonstrated that the prophets were non-cultic. 'Such improvisation was quite unknown in the cultic sphere where all utterance, be it of God or of man, was regulated by convention and standardisation'. Their use of forms, he thinks, is a symptom of the development of 'a totally new understanding of God, of Israel and of the world'.³ The call form is, in his opinion, one of these

1. cf. Seierstad's use of the methods of depth psychology, op.cit.

2. Meagher, in The Irish Theological Quarterly, 39, 1972, p.164.

3. von Rad, OT Theology, II, p.53.

innovations and the main reason for thinking that 'the prophets were much more independent than those who held a fixed office in the organised life of a sanctuary'. Of course, von Rad's premises could be and are disputed, but what is significant here is his point that behind the innovation in the realm of form stood a new experience - 'The prophetic call gave rise to a new literary category, the account of a call'.¹ Moreover, he says, the 'I' of the prophetic calls is not that 'used in old cultic forms as a broadly collective and inclusive first person, but the "I" of which the prophets speak is expressly exclusive'. This is completely at odds with the view taken by Reventlow, but before considering the latter in detail, a number of other studies on the call-Gattung require mention.

In 1965, E. Kutsch published an article dealing with the structure of the narrative of Gideon's call.² In this, he claimed that Ex.3:10-12; Jgs.6:11b-17; 1 Sam 10:1-7; Jer.1:4-10 were structured according to the same pattern:- commission, objection, reassurance, and sign.

N. Habel, working independently of Kutsch, produced in 1965 the first well-based study of the call narrative as a distinct literary form.³ He argued that in the call form evident in the call narratives of Moses and Gideon and exemplified in the commissioning of Abraham's servant to go

1. Ibid., p.54.

2. Kutsch, 'Gideons Berufung und Alterbau, Jgs.6:11-24', TLZ, 81, 1956, pp.75-84.

3. Habel, 'The Form and Significance of the call narratives', ZAW, 77, 1965. Also a comprehensive bibliography of more recent literature on the subject is given by Vogels, 'Les récits de vocation des Prophètes', Nouvelle Revue Théologique, 95, 1973, p.3.

to Laban (Gen.24), are contained most, if not all, of the elements of the call form to be found in the call narratives of Jeremiah, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Deutero-Isaiah, i.e., the divine confrontation, the introductory word, the commission, the objection, the reassurance, and the sign. This form is, he claims, borrowed from diplomatic usage, whereby an envoy presented his credentials in a specific order and manner. So, he thinks, the prophetic call narratives are much more than autobiographical records. They are public proclamations in which the prophet announces his divine commission. 'The call form is designed to be preached or read'. 'It would seem...that Jeremiah and other prophets utilised the ancient commission form to announce their own message and call to Israel'.¹ He also makes the point, which is not insignificant for a consideration of Jeremiah's prophetic office, that by employing the form and some of the language of the call of Moses (Ex.3), Jeremiah claims to stand in the prophetic succession of Moses, as not only a messenger, but a mediator.²

W. Vogels, who also makes the assertion that the call accounts are important in determining the prophetic role, rejects Habel's attempt to group all the accounts into one genre.³ He mentions Zimmerli's attempt to classify the narratives into two genres, one in which the word and the other in which the divine council, seen in a vision, predominates.⁴ He himself proposes four categories:- type

1. Habel, op.cit., p.306.

2. Further discussion of this will be given when considering the relation between Jer.1:4-10 and Dt.18:18.

3. Vogels, op.cit., p.260.

4. The Jeremianic and the Isaianic type respectively. Zimmerli, Ezekiel, pp.13-21. Zimmerli claimed that Ezek.1-3:15 showed features of both types of call report. See below, pp.431f.

officier (militaire), type maître (serviteur confident plénipotentiarie), type roi (counseiller), and type maître (disciple), but, whilst he avoids the difficulties of trying to make everything fit into a mould (e.g., Habel's finding the sign element of Isaiah's call in the Immanuel sign in ch.7 because it is absent in ch.6), he runs into difficulty because of the many points of similarity between his four categories. It leads one to doubt whether the categories really are so separate. It should be mentioned, however, that he places Jeremiah's call in the second category, that in which the prophet is the servant, trusting in his all-powerful master. In this he thinks that the dialogue is of particular importance and also the servant's confidence in his master. He too regards the calls of Moses and Gideon as being related to that of Jeremiah.

In 1971, K. Gouders took up the relationship, earlier suggested by Zimmerli, of the dependency of the call forms in Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel in the call of Moses (Ex.3-4).¹ Our particular interest is in what he says about the Jeremianic type of call narrative. He attempts through a form-critical examination to understand the theology of the prophetic call and to reach the self-understanding of the prophets as messengers of Yahweh.²

Firstly, he examines the Elohist call of Moses (Ex. 3:1b,4b,6,9-15; 4:10-17,20b-23,27-30a). He contends that this account has no theophany of its own. It was originally an account in which audition was all-important. Behind the

1. Die prophetischen Berufungsberichte Moses, Isaias, Jeremias und Ezechiel.

2. Ibid., p.14.

reference to Mount Horeb (3:1), however, stands a reference to a theophany. This visionary element he believes to have influenced the Elohist strand of tradition.

At this point, brief reference should be made to an attempt by Burke O. Long to relate the call traditions to the reports of visions.¹ Long accepts a suggestion made by Richter² to the effect that there is not one call form but rather a 'call-schema' taken up in varied circumstances and brought into texts belonging to other genres. Long argues that the growth of Ex.3 shows that the call traditions should be related to the history of another genre, namely vision report. He writes, 'The latter often included epiphany, and was commonly used as a legitimating device in prophetic and royal circles, in Israel and the ancient Near East.'³ Long's conclusion is that both versions of Moses's call have been shaped by a pre-existing 'call-schema', but also by conventional reports of dreams and visions. The E version clearly shows this, and the J version only indirectly; but we have to do not with two types of call report (Zimmerli), but rather with essentially one type.⁴

Gouders then goes on to point out other features in the Elohist call narrative which are also found in the account of Jeremiah's call, e.g., the objection, and which, to his mind, are a part of a recognised form.⁵

1. 'Prophetic Call Traditions and Reports of Visions', ZAW, 84, 1972, pp.494-500.

2. Richter, Die sogenannten vorprophetischen Berufungsberichte; cf. above, p.343, note 1.

3. Long, op.cit., p.495.

4. Ibid., p.500.

5. Gouders, op.cit., pp.28-35.

Turning to the call of Jeremiah itself, Gouders maintains that it represents a carefully organised structure. It is characteristic of this type of call narrative that attention is concentrated on the call itself and not on a vision. It is the word of commission that legitimates the appearance of Jeremiah as a prophet. 'וְהוֹרֵא אֵלַי' represents a terminus technicus for the prophetic reception of the word. So we find in v.4 the strict formulation for the event of the experience of the word.¹ Here we find (v.7) the characteristic words of the divine commissioning with a message or a task - $\pi\lambda\psi$, $\gamma\zeta$, $\gamma\lambda\tau$.² In this type of call narrative, the dialogue between Yahweh and the called always centres in the sending-commission (contained implicitly in Jer.1:5). The called seeks to avoid the task by an objection, whereupon he receives the assurance of divine support, confirmed in a symbolic action. Then there is a repetition of the commission.³ Further elaboration of Gouders's views will be reserved until the discussion of the text of Jer.1:4-10.

An article by K. Baltzer has as its main object a clarification of the office of the prophet as, he thinks, demonstrated by that of the Egyptian vizier.⁴ His preliminary remarks are of interest. It has already been assumed that the call narratives are the place to look for information

1. Ibid., pp.65f., and see below, pp.472ff.

2. Ibid., pp.142ff., and see below, pp.473ff. (See Ex.3:10; 6:11; Jer.7; Isa.6:9; 1 Kgs.22:22; Jgs.6:14).

3. Ibid., pp.155ff.

4. Baltzer, op.cit., pp.567-581.

about the 'office' of the prophet because of the fact that the call was of such central importance in the life and work of the prophet. So Baltzer writes, 'If we can expect to find information about the essence and function of the prophetic office anywhere, it is the stories of the prophet's call and commission'.¹ This is, he says, because these narratives have a programmatic character, placed at the beginning of the traditions of the works and words of the prophet. Now this immediately raises a question about the experiences behind the narratives. The example that springs most readily to mind is Isaiah 6. Is it correct, for instance, to see here Isaiah's initial experience of God, in which holiness was so important, and then to see how this concept is worked out in the rest of his prophecies? Could it not rather be argued that Isaiah's call narrative was formulated later as a summary of and introduction to Isaiah's theology?² How genuine, in the sense of being real and actually experienced, is the experience behind the form? This question is also raised by the second aspect of the function of the call narratives which Baltzer mentions. This is that the real point of the narratives is not the personal experience but the vindication and legitimation of the prophet in his office. If, as Habel puts it, the narratives are 'the product of later reflection, as the prophets concerned announced their credentials to Israel at large...', what does this say about the genuineness of the experience?

1. Ibid., p.568.

2. It has also been questioned whether Isa.6 represents the prophet's introductory call at all. See below, ch.V, pp.547f.

Could the narrative not just be a form, a way of asserting authority as a prophet of Yahweh? Habel himself answers this question in the negative - 'The employment of the literary form in no way negates the reality of the call encounter itself, but underscores the relevance of this form for the public affirmation of the claims which the prophet is making as Yahweh's spokesman'.¹ If this is so, it would seem that we should not make too much of the details of the call narratives, regarding them as the individual experiences of each of the prophets. The prophets are using the relevant form to announce their credentials and this form contains certain elements. But the question of whether they experienced a call at all remains, for the prophets could use such a form without having had a call as such. The view that behind the form is a genuine experience will be discussed in more detail below, but enough to say for the moment that for the canonical prophets it would seem that their call is the ground for their conviction that they are legitimate prophets. What they are concerned to affirm, not only in their call narratives, but elsewhere (e.g. Am.3:3-8; Jer.23:22), is that they are prophets not of their own choosing but because of a real and irresistible experience of Yahweh's compulsion.² A Gattung is clearly being used, but the questions are in what Sitz im Leben did the form originate

1. Habel, op.cit., p.317.

2. Even Reventlow thinks that the call is a genuine experience of the prophet. The reception of the word of God pertains particularly to his office and the prophet is given a special call to fulfil this commission; Liturgie, p.24. But, of course, Reventlow sees this office as cultic.

and how is it used by the prophets? The answers to these questions are clearly crucial not only with regard to the prophetic office, but with regard to the issue of 'false' prophecy and indeed to the whole subject of prophecy.

It should be stated that only vv.4-10 of Jer.1 are being treated here as the call narrative. Berridge states that it is improbable that Jeremiah's call experience is to be limited to the experience reflected in the narrative form in 1:4-10, but admits that the visions of the almond rod (vv.11-12) and of the seething-pot (vv.13-16) and the further commissioning (vv.17-19) were not necessarily experienced on one occasion.¹ Bright, for his part, feels sure that 1:4-19 is not an original unit and that it tells not of one experience but of several. The call itself he confines to vv.4-10 and he thinks that the visions took place later.² It should also be mentioned that Bright believes that the material of vv.4-19 unquestionably derives from the prophet's own reminiscences and may have been brought together by him.³ Similarly, Nicholson finds four separate units, which have been subsequently linked together in the formation of the call narrative as it now stands. He thinks, however, that at least some material in vv.17-19 may possibly have belonged to the original call narrative of vv.4-10. Contrary to John Bright, Nicholson believes that the call narrative in its present form was 'compiled as a brief anticipatory interpretation of the message of Jeremiah as it is presented in the

1. Berridge, *op.cit.*, p.30.

2. Seierstad (*op.cit.*, p.44) thinks that the visions were part of the call experience.

3. Bright, *Jeremiah*, pp.6f.

ensuing chapters of the book, and in addition...there is also evidence for the possibility that as such this call narrative assumed its present form at the hands of those by whom the Jeremianic tradition was developed and composed...'.¹ Nicholson's view of the 'authenticity' of Jer.1:4-10 rests, of course, on his conviction that the prose material in the book 'may be plausibly regarded as the deposit of the tradition which embodies the oracles of Jeremiah as they were transmitted and used by a circle of traditionists as well as material which is the direct product of such a circle'.² Though Nicholson argues this view very persuasively, it must be stated that his most cogent evidence for it does not lie in Jer.1:4-10, which contains evidence which is currently debated. The direct dependence of vv.9f. on Dt.18:18 is not, for example, unanimously accepted.³ Such details can only be discovered by an examination of the text and it is to this that attention must now be given. The two form-critical studies on which this will be based are those by Berridge and Reventlow.

Reventlow's study challenges the consequences reached by all earlier Jeremianic research by claiming that the 'I' which confronts us in the text has no personal or individual

1. Nicholson, Preaching to the Exiles, pp.113ff. cf. Neumann, 'Das Wort, das geschehen ist...', VT, 23, 1973, where he states that 1:4-10 is a comprehensive definition of the prophet's office given later. He, in fact, sees it in relation to the whole of 1:4-2:3, which he believes has been edited and all presented as the call narrative. He also believes that behind 1:4-10 is an actual dialogue between Yahweh and the prophet.
2. *Ibid.*, p.10.
3. It is rejected, for example, by Berridge, *op.cit.*, p.55.

reference. He lays stress on the bond which united the prophet with his people, but thinks that this is based, not on Jeremiah's solidarity with his people (as argued by von Rad, Stoebe and others), but on his being the holder of a liturgical office. This is grounded on his contention that Jeremiah adhered strictly to both the form and the content of cultic Gattungen. This is challenged by Berridge, who claims that Reventlow's position is based on a limited number of passages. Moreover, he thinks that he makes a mistake in presupposing that Gattungen remain forever rooted in their Sitz im Leben.¹ He quotes here Fohrer (in JBL, 80, 1961, p.311) - 'In Is.5:1-7, Isaiah utilises the type of the love song and in 28:23-29 the type of the wisdom instruction. But as a prophet he certainly did not have the office of a minnesinger or troubadour or that of a teacher of wisdom'. The argument here is that most commonly used in the rejection of the idea of cultic prophets, that is, that it is only to be expected that the prophet's background provided him with an intimate knowledge of Israel's sacral traditions and forms. Berridge himself thinks it highly unlikely that, because a salvation-oracle appears in 1:5, Jeremiah himself exercised a priestly function. The main bone of contention between these two studies is the degree to which Jeremiah made use of or was governed by these forms. Whence did the prophet derive the forms and what freedom did he exercise in shaping them? Further, what does his use of the forms tell us about his position in Israelite society?

1. Berridge, op.cit., p.9. This, he points out, had already been rejected by Gunkel, in SATA, II, 2, pp. LVff.

Did he, in fact, have an official position and, if so, what was it?

v.5. In his search for the Sitz im Leben of the call narrative, Reventlow directs attention to the literary parallels in the OT to the motifs which here appear. The motif found in v.5 is that of creation-preservation, which is frequently found in the affirmation accompanying the Heilszuspruch of the salvation oracle. In Deutero-Isaiah, he argues, this priestly salvation-oracle is recognisable (42:6; 49:1ff.) and especially in the Psalms, where its Sitz im Leben is most certainly the cult. It is part of the 'certainty of a hearing', an assurance of help following the prayer (p.30). The creation-formula is the introduction to the salvation-oracle and assures the worshipper that his prayer has been heard because it speaks of the close relationship which already exists between Yahweh and himself, with the implication that Yahweh will naturally be the refuge of this creation (p.31). Reventlow goes on to discuss the origin of this creation-motif in the priestly salvation-oracles and then to consider the use to which this is put in Jeremiah. The salvation-oracle is, he says, of a general and communal nature, in that it was received by each individual worshipper after the lament in which each individual joined when he came to the sanctuary.¹ In Jer.1:5, however, we have to do with

1. Gouders argues that the objection here is not like the laments of the Pss. In the Pss., he says, the worshipper takes the initiative in bringing his prayers. In the call of Jeremiah all the initiative lies with Yahweh. The prophet speaks not on the basis of a cultic practice but because of his encounter with Yahweh's word, which compels him to speak in spite of inner conflict, op.cit., p.182.

the part of the call narrative in which Jeremiah is called to a definite office and we must, therefore, discover the bridge whereby the general salvation-oracle was transferred to a special call (p.37). He refers to the Scandinavian view that the individual laments were originally royal psalms and were only later put to general use, i.e., 'democratised'.¹ He is concerned to show that the process is rather the reverse, that what is valid for all Israel is particularised with regard to those in special office. (It may be remarked here that this suggests that the king becomes the important figure, as God's son. It is surely rather that the people as a whole are God's sons and the king is important as their representative. Reventlow's argument about the particularisation of the prophetic office is similarly misleading, as we shall see.) So, in Isa.49:5, it is not just that Yahweh has created the prophet, but has created him for a special purpose, to lay upon him an office. In fact, the word used in 49:1 for both creating and calling is the same ($\times \gamma \rho$). Similarly, he says, the verbs in Jer.1:5 ($\text{׀} \text{׀} \text{׀}$ and $\text{׀} \text{׀} \text{׀} \text{׀}$) signify that Jeremiah is selected for a special task. Further terminology makes visible the bond between the motif of creation in the mother's womb and the call to a particular office, i.e., the use of the verbs $\gamma \text{׀}$ and $\text{׀} \text{׀} \text{׀}$ in Jer.1:5; Isa.42:6; 49:5f. That this is not a late 'democratising' is borne out, he argues, by Jgs.16:17, in which Samson is said to have been a Nazirite 'from his mother's womb' ($\text{׀} \text{׀} \text{׀} \text{׀}$). So we are

1. So, for example, Mowinckel, Birkeland, Bentzen, Engnell, and Kraus.

dealing with a well-established designation which characterised a life-long position (pp.37-40).¹ Thus, he thinks, the speciality of the office lies only in a special case of the election which is valid for every Israelite as a member of the elected people of God. What is true for the whole people is true for each individual member.² There is, therefore, no special numinous experience or spiritual consciousness constituting the background to the testimony of Jeremiah's call. Verse 5 expresses in a formula the certainty of divine guidance and pre-election from his mother's womb, which was part of the election belief of his people. Therefore, 'Das Amt des Propheten ist nichts anderes als eine spezielle Funktion des im Bund für das gesamte Volk begründeten Gottesverhältnisses'. (p.41). It is to be remarked that Reventlow does not hesitate to speak of a special task, even a special office, for the prophet. To some extent there is then a special relationship between the prophet and Yahweh. It is true that he shares the bond which exists between the people and Yahweh. This is abundantly clear in Jeremiah. It is also surely healthy that Jeremiah is not regarded as a religious expert, distinguished from his people because of his particular, esoteric religious experiences. Nonetheless, as Reventlow

1. Berridge finds support for this in the occurrence of נָזִיר and נָזִירִים in parallel in Am.2:11; and in 1 Sam.1:11, where the prophet Samuel appears also to be a Nazirite. He disputes the suggestion that נָזִיר signifies a permanent office.

2. See below, pp.442-444.

admits, he is 'set apart', in so far as he is called to a special task. He and he alone is called to be God's mouth.¹

Reventlow's argument here concerning the relation between the prophet and the nation, as 'set apart' by God, is somewhat misleading and seems to miss the point. It is not that the prophet is a particularisation of the community, a special case of what already exists between Yahweh and the nation as a whole. Rather, the prophet is what the people are intended and expected to be. Reventlow is correct in suggesting that the prophetic experience is not for the privileged few (though, as will be discussed below, there is a sense in which this is surely true).² The prophetic experience, in the sense of a relationship between man and God is intended for all Israelites (see Num.11:29). As Heaton puts it, 'God had admitted the prophets into the essential relationship which constituted the reality of his people's vocation. Israel had been chosen as they had been chosen' (Dt.4:37; 7:6-8; 10:15; 14:2). 'In the immediacy of their awareness, Israel was known to be a prophetic community with all the privileges and responsibilities of a

1. Thus many scholars, whilst recognising the parallels here with passages concerned with the nation stress that Jeremiah has a particularly close relationship to Yahweh, a special relationship of trust and knowledge as his prophet. See, e.g. Gouders, op.cit., pp.66; I.P.Seierstad, op.cit., p.111.

2. See below, ch.V, pp.500ff.

prophetic vocation.¹ It is worth noting, however, that the actual idea that the nation is prophetic is late and only comes to the fore in Deutero-Isaiah. Earlier, the nation was conceived of as a kingdom of priests (Ex.19:6). In Deutero-Isaiah, the common inheritance and common task of the prophet and of the nation are particularly prominent. It is here above all that the same language occurs to describe both Israel's and the prophet's calling. This is most noticeable in the common use of the term 'servant' to describe both Israel and the people and this, of course, constitutes the major difficulty in deciding whether the servant in Deutero-Isaiah is to be identified as the prophetic community or the prophetic individual. It is worth considering briefly here the use of the term ַדַּבָּר.²

It is often said to be a common designation for the prophet. He is the ַדַּבָּר / ַדַּבָּר.³ Its use is, in fact, very wide. ַדַּבָּר 'ַדַּבָּר is used generally of the faithful, the worshippers of Yahweh (e.g. of Abraham, Gen. 26:24). It is used of kings (e.g. of David, 2 Sam.3:18) and it is used of Israel the nation (Isa.41:8,9; 44:21; 49:3; Ps.146:22; Isa.44:1,2; 45:4; 48:20; Jer.20:10; 46:27,28).

Then it is used in a special sense, usually of prophets,

ַדַּבָּר 'ַדַּבָּר (2 Kgs.9:7; 17:3; Jer.7:25; 26:5; 29:19; 35:15; 44:4; Ezek.38:17; Zech.1:6) and ַדַּבָּר 'ַדַּבָּר (2 Kgs.17:23; 21:10; 24:2; Jer.25:4; Am.3:7; Dan.9:10) and

1. Heaton, op.cit., p.61.

2. For full discussion of the application and denotation of the term ַדַּבָּר in the OT, see Lindhagen, The Servant Motif in the OT. See also Zimmerli and Jeremias, The Servant of God.

3. See e.g. A.B. Davidson, OT Prophecy, pp.79f. and Muilenburg, Peake's Commentary on the Bible, 412c.

אֲנִי עֹבֵד יְהוָה (Ezra 8:11; Dan.9:6) and specifically of Ahijah (1 Kgs.14:18; 15:29), of Elijah (2 Kgs.9:36; 10:10), of Jonah (2 Kgs.14:25), and Isaiah (Isa.20:3). The only place where a prophet calls himself the servant of Yahweh is 1 Kgs.18.36. It would seem to be the case that certain terminology designed to express a particular relationship and function is used of both the nation and individuals within the nation. Just as עֹבֵד is not applied exclusively to prophets and yet is a significant term for them, so אֲנִי and עֹבֵד in Jer.1:5, whilst having a wider usage, may well suggest here a peculiar relationship or task.

Berridge similarly examines parallels in concept and language between v.5 and other OT passages. The words אֲנִי and עֹבֵד, for instance, occur in parallelism in Job 3:11; 10:18f.; 31:15; Isa.46:3; Pss.22:11; 58:4, but Berridge is reluctant to see complete parallels to Jeremiah's thought in these passages.¹ Yahweh's formation (אֲנִי) of someone 'in the womb' (אֲנִי) does occur within salvation-oracles (e.g. Isa.44:2), but, Berridge argues, although the mother's womb motif finds frequent expression in the salvation-oracle, it may not have its roots there (pp.39f.). Thus, he thinks, Jeremiah made use of this - 'It is probable that the declaration of v.5 has been modelled after the creation-preservation motif frequently found in the affirmation accompanying the Heilszuspruch of the salvation oracle'. He also mentions Isaiah 49:1-6 and Jgs.13:3-6, in which the

1. Unlike Holladay, who regards Ps.22 as having influenced Jeremiah's formulation of his call - 'The Background of Jeremiah's Self-Understanding. Moses, Samuel and Ps.22', JBL, 83, 1964, p.156.

'Servant' and Samson are elected to specific tasks, but he thinks that these parallels must not be pressed too far. In fact, he argues, every instance of Yahweh's creation involves a plan for that which he has created (p.41).

Berridge then considers the verbs ׁוּט and ׁוּטַר . ׁוּט is, he says, probably to be considered as being related to the OT use of ׁוּט as a term for Yahweh's election of Israel (e.g. Am.3:2).¹ He, therefore, agrees with Reventlow that Jeremiah recognises here the bond which unites him with his people. Similarly, ׁוּטַר is, he thinks, related to the use of ׁוּטַר ׁוּ (Dt.7:6; 14:2), showing that Jeremiah is very conscious of the fact that he belongs to his people.² He disagrees with Reventlow, however, when Reventlow says that Jeremiah's election is only a special case of his people's election, for 'Yahweh's election before creation to a specific task (...the focal point of Jer.1:5) at once removes the recipient of this Divine election to a singular and individual level' (p.41).

Berridge believes that this bond between the prophet and his people is further seen in the task to which he is appointed

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1. So also Rudolph, Jeremia, p.5. NEB has sought to capture something of the peculiar scope of the word by translating, 'I knew you for my own'.
 2. Rudolph, *ibid*, comments that ׁוּטַר is, in the Bible, in the first place a religious concept. Thus, Jeremiah is here called from a relationship to the world and set apart in communion with God (cf. Jer.15:17). Similarly, Weiser comments that ׁוּטַר means to 'set apart' in a special relationship to God who is holy (Das Buch Jeremia, p.11) and Snaith that 'the reference is not primarily to an act of separation, but rather to the fact that the object has now gone into the category of the separate' - The Distinctive Ideas of the OT, p.30.

(ןַתְּתִיב םִיגִוִל אִיִּל).¹ This task, says Berridge, corresponds closely to the purpose for which Israel was elected.² In this way, Jeremiah's 'life and ministry cannot be detached from this larger frame of reference', that is, the plan of Yahweh for all Israel (p.43).

The treatment which this part of v.5 receives in Reventlow's study is far more extensive and yields different conclusions. He argues that the phrase 'to the nations' is further evidence that the call account belongs in a cultic Sitz im Leben. The grounds on which he rejects the singular reading, אִיִּל, are worth mentioning. Firstly, he says that it is unlikely that the word אִיִּל should be used for Israel. Secondly, the universality of the prophetic task is seen in other places in Jeremiah, e.g. 36:2; 25:15ff.; 18:8ff. Thirdly, it rests on an understanding of the nature of nebiism which is untenable. This understanding is that held by H. Bardtke in relation to Jeremiah and by E. Würthwein in relation to Amos,³ whereby the prophets Jeremiah and Amos are firstly prophets of weal to Israel and only later prophets of woe, in a world-setting. But no such division can be discerned anywhere in Jeremiah. As Bright says, the prophet's ministry confirms the test (p.7). There is, says Reventlow,

1. Although some LXX mss. read the singular, εἰς ἔθνος, all recent commentators abide by the MT's plural reading.
2. cf. Rudolph, Jeremia, p.5. Berridge cites Vriezen, op.cit., p.76.
3. Bardtke, 'Jeremia der Fremdvölkerprophet', ZAW, 53, 1935, pp.209-239; and Würthwein, ZAW, 63, 1950.

no reason to suppose that $\square' \lambda \gamma$ is unauthentic. That this is already part of the prophetic task is seen clearly in Amos (p.42).

Weiser, in his commentary, believes the continuity of the prophetic task to stretch back to Elijah and Elisha,¹ whilst Streane comments that Jeremiah stands at the beginning of something new, in proclaiming blessings for all (23:5; 33:15).² Not only are Streane's references ambiguous in that it is not clear what is included in $\gamma \gamma \lambda \lambda$, the land of Judah or the whole world,³ but his argument rests on a tendentious understanding of Jeremiah's function as a prophet. If it is a matter of how far God's blessings extend, then perhaps there is a case for regarding this universal element as late, but if, as most commentators assume, Jeremiah is being commissioned as the prophet of Yahweh's judgement, then there is little doubt that this concept preceded Jeremiah. Weiser says that the concept of God's judgement over the nations was already in the tradition of the Covenant liturgy (e.g. Ps.17:36f.)(p.11). He continues, the universal task of the prophet is not due to the fact that Judah inevitably existed in a world-setting, but to the fact of God's sovereign rule of history, as Lord of the world. God is active in the world and the prophet has to say what God does.⁴

1. Jeremia, p.11.

2. Streane, The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah, p.3.

3. See Rudolph, Jeremia, p.126, where he comments that $\gamma \gamma \lambda \lambda$ in Jer.23:5; 33:15 is not likely to mean 'in the earth', as it is followed in v.6a by a reference to only Israel and Judah.

4. cf. Welch, Jeremiah: his Time and his Work, pp.117ff. - 'The universality of his mission corresponded with the universality of the judgement he was commanded to announce', and others.

Now Reventlow is not content with this. He too stresses that prophecy rests on a theological fact, which is valid for all the members of the people, that Yahweh is Lord of the world. Hence, universality of mission belongs to the prophet from the beginning and the view is false that it was first limited to Israel and only later had its horizons widened (p.45). But he is then determined to show that the prophetic office corresponds here to the office of king, in fact, that it is a royal office,¹ and in this he blurs any distinction between the ideas of the prophet's bringing judgement, the king's bringing justice to Israel and the king's bringing justice to the whole earth. Perhaps he is right to blur these distinctions, but the impression given by his argument is that the distinctions are ignored to serve his own purpose.

He finds his main evidence for the view that the prophetic office is a kingly office in Deutero-Isaiah (42:6; 49:6; 42:4), where it is the office of the servant to be 'a light to the nations'. Recent research has shown, he says, that what are involved here were originally royal predicates. Further, it was expected at the enthronement of a king in the ancient Near East that a new period of well-being would be established, not only for his own people, but for the whole world.² The stress, he says, is not only on lordship, but

1. This is somewhat strange, in that earlier he was at pains to stress the differences between the kingly and prophetic office, op.cit., p.40 and see below, pp.459ff.
2. Not only does he fail to give any evidence of this expectation at the enthronement of kings in the rest of the ANE but the examples he cites for this expectation in Israel are Psalms which speak not of the new king's bringing wellbeing to all nations, but of his bringing the nations into submission before Israel, 'dashing them in pieces...and filling them with corpses...', viz. Pss.2:110. See further, pp.459ff.

on the justice which it is the task of the king to bring (p.89:15). This two-fold task of the king is also seen in Jer.1:5b and 1:10, where the prophet is commissioned to execute both the woe-creating and the weal-creating activity of the prophetic word. So, he concludes, the prophetic office is a royal office (p.43). The division that exists between the two offices lies not in the nature of the dependency and representativeness, but in the special commission of the prophet, as the bearer of Yahweh's word. Both king and prophet exercise Yahweh's lordship over the peoples,¹ but only the prophet is Yahweh's mouthpiece (p.44). He moves rapidly over his assertion that the prophets proclaimed not only threats of judgement but promises of wellbeing to the nations - inevitably for he has little evidence - , but after all this turns to other observations to help in determining the passage's Sitz im Leben (p.46).

Here he makes one of his major points, that is, that the dialogue between Yahweh and the prophet in the narrative belongs more naturally to liturgy and the cult than to a vision. The wording of the experience is, he says, in terms of a vision, but it seems to conceal behind it a real event, a cultic act, bound to the sanctuary. He goes on to say that in the corresponding narrative in Isa.6, such a Sitz im Leben is very much in evidence. Isaiah's vision of the heavenly court is based on the transformation of the earthly sanctuary and, therefore, it is likely that he was actually present there when he received his call. It is, however,

1. This idea is rejected by Gouders, op.cit., p.69, where he says that it was not the function of the prophet to exercise Yahweh's lordship but only to speak his word of weal or of woe.

not self-evident that Isaiah was in the Temple, let alone taking part in a cultic celebration, installing him in his office. Against this, the only argument Reventlow gives is that dialogue is unusual in vision narratives.¹ Moreover, he admits that proof of such a setting in Jeremiah is more difficult, yet he claims to find the indications sufficiently cogent.

v.6. Reventlow's exposition of v.6 is equally aimed at demonstrating the cultic Sitz im Leben of the narrative and that it, in fact, represents an actual liturgical ritual. Firstly, he separates יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ from the rest of the verse, claiming that it stands on its own as the complaint - 'Die Antwort Jeremias auf den gottlichen Anruf hat die Form eines Klageworts' (p.46). He then tries to show that יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ is a typical introduction to intercession, citing Amos's intercessory visions, Jer.4:10; 14:13; 32:17ff.; and Joshua 7:7 as evidence that intercession is involved where יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ occurs. Though this evidence is limited, and though he does make too much of יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ , it is true that intercession is implied in these passages. He then claims that intercessions as laments belong to the cultic situation, bound to the sanctuary. This is not, he admits, explicitly stated, but in the majority of cases it is clearly presupposed (e.g. Ex.9:8; Isa.6:11). Why, he then asks, is such a lament and intercession in the call narrative and what function does it serve there? The answers to these questions are to be found, he thinks, in Jgs.6:11ff., in which Gideon is called to

1. In contrast to Neumann, op.cit., p.182, who thinks that dialogue is common in vision narratives.

the charismatic office of the Nazirite (p.47). There is, he says, a close correspondence between these offices and in Jgs.6:22 there occurs the same expression of fear at having encountered the living God, the numinous, followed (v.23) by the reassurance **אל - תירא לא תתחנת**. Similarly, in Isa.6:5, the fear of death appears as an important part of the call experience and there is the objection in the form of a lament, followed by the assurance. Further, he writes, it is important for the interpretation of Jeremiah that Gideon's lament is not personal but collective; it is concerned with the destiny of the whole people. Hence, when he repeats the promise in question form, he uses the plural - **וְיִשׁוּ הַהוֹה עִמּוֹנוּ** (v.13). Gideon cannot see his office except in relation to the community of the whole people. So, he thinks, the occurrence of the form again represents a particularising of the basic relationship between God and his people in a special office, whether it be that of the Nazirite or that of the prophet.

Now Berridge rejects this interpretation on two counts. Firstly, he thinks that v.6 is a unity and that the fear expressed in **הוֹה לֹא - אִהְיֶה אֲדֹנָי יְהוֹה** is related to **הוֹה לֹא - יִדְעַתִּי דַרְךְ כִּי-נֶעַר אֲנֹכִי**.¹ Secondly, he points out that this fear is not identical with Gideon's nor Isaiah's. Whilst the fear of Gideon (in Jgs.6:22 and 13:22) is caused by an epiphany, as Reventlow stresses, in Isaiah's case, the

1. Gouders, op.cit., p.70, similarly thinks that **אִהְיֶה אֲדֹנָי** does not itself have the character of the lament and is rather part of the objection to the call, p.179.

fear is because of his own guilt at being 'unclean'.¹ So, in Jer.1:4-10, there is no divine epiphany indicated and Jeremiah's cry is to be attributed solely to the immensity of the task which Yahweh has already stated is his (p.44). Nonetheless, Berridge derives his way of understanding the rest of v.6 from Reventlow.

This is based on the close correspondence between Jer. 1:6 and 1 Kgs.3:7 and takes the latter as the key to the former. Here Solomon states $\text{וְאֶנֶכִי נָעַר קָטָן לֹא אָדָע}$ $\text{וְאַל יִתְאַזְּרֶנּוּ}$. Neither Reventlow nor Berridge thinks that נָעַר refers to Solomon's age as such, nor to Jeremiah's in Jer.1:6. Berridge compares the phrase $\text{וְאֶנֶכִי הָיִיתִי לְנָעַר אֲבוֹתַי}$ in Jgs.6:15, where the word נָעַר signifies the lowly position rather than the youth of Gideon (cf. 1 Sam.9:21; Mic.5:1; Jer.14:3). So, in Jer.1:5, they think, we are wrong to see a reference to Jeremiah's youth as his objection, indeed to see an objection at all. נָעַר is rather part of an established form expressing submission and acceptance (Berridge, p.45; Reventlow, p.53). Berridge writes of 1 Kgs.3, 'The full expression constituted both a confession of the monarch's dependence upon Yahweh from whom the qualifications which he required as leader of his people were received, and simultaneously his request for the same'.

1. It is questionable whether such divisions should be pressed. Isaiah's feeling of 'guilt' is caused by his experience of the numinous. His feeling of being unclean is produced by the contrast between the nearness of God and the distance between human sin and God's holiness. But see further, pp.484-486.

So here Jeremiah is applying Solomon's prayer or at least the same form to his situation. There is no suggestion of an attempt to withdraw from the task in 1 Kgs.3, nor is there here. It is 'a word of submission and acceptance and not of withdrawal', a 'request that Yahweh endow him with those qualifications which he will need for the execution of the prophetic ministry' (p.48).

Past exegesis found in Jeremiah's objection an indication of his temperament.¹ The present interpretation takes the stress away from this and directs attention to the element of submission which appears in other call narratives. Many scholars turn particularly to Ex.3:11 and 4:10, where there are striking parallels. Reventlow simply states that here too the words of Moses are not based on his special psychology, but are part of the call-formula, in which there is a stress on his unworthiness for his office (p.51).² Some, however, think that the close verbal and thematic similarity between the commission in the calls of Moses and Gideon demand that the parallels be examined in more detail. W.L. Holladay, for example, points out the verbal similarities between Jer.1:6 and Ex.4:3 - both have an interjection followed by $\text{׃ } \text{J } \text{T} \text{X}$. Both have a form of the root $\text{׃ } \text{T} \text{T}$

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1. e.g. Rudolph, Jeremia, p.5, thinks that Jeremiah's shrinking from the universality of the task is '...ein erster Beweis für seine schüchterne, zurückhaltende Natur...'
 2. Gouders also thinks that the phrase is not to be understood as pure objection and that it has a theological rather than a psychological importance, op.cit., p.70. Gouders adds, however, that the reference to unsuitability or incapability to speak the word is part of the scheme of the Jeremianic type of call narrative, p.71.

followed by אָל and both end with וְיָבֵן . Also in Ex.2:6, Moses is spoken of as a נָבִיא .¹ Further parallels will appear in the discussion of the ensuing verses of Jeremiah's call narrative.

v.7. It is in verse 7 that Berridge finds evidence that Jeremiah is not just using but also freely adapting the call narrative form, for in Ex.3 and Jgs.6 the commission is given prior to the objection, whilst in Jer.1:4-10 the objection comes in v.7a, whilst the commission with the typical verb פָּלַשׁ and הָלַךְ , is not found until v.7b, in reply to the objection (p.49).² Reventlow, on the other hand, rearranges the text, so that v.7b follows upon v.5b, with 7b being the objection to the commission of v.5b. He thinks that 7a and 7b were only later joined by וְ . The change in order from that usual in the call narratives is, he thinks, not evidence of Jeremiah's adaptation, but of a later recasting (pp.50f.).

Rejecting Reventlow's view as requiring too drastic textual surgery, Berridge concerns himself with the similarities between Jer.1:7 and Joshua 1:16 and Dt.18:18. Joshua 1:16 reads, 'And they answered Joshua, saying, "All that you command (הָלַכְתָּ) us, we will do (וְעָשִׂנוּ), and wherever you send (פָּלַשְׁתָּ) us, we will go (וְהָלַכְנוּ).' Berridge thinks that Jeremiah's terminology in v.7 is not to be considered as fortuitous. Rather, it is dependent on a terminology, not necessarily coined by the Deuteronomist, which was rooted in the relationship which existed between

1. Holladay, in JBL, 83, 1964, p.155. cf. Meagher, op.cit., pp.170ff., and Habel, op.cit., pp.306ff.

2. Similarly, Habel, op.cit., p.308.

Yahweh and his people, Israel. Thus, he believes that Jeremiah was conscious of earlier call narratives and their commissions and the rôle played there by the two verbs $\Pi\upsilon\psi$ and $\uparrow\prime\eta$, but that, combined with this background of call narrative, Jeremiah was influenced by terminology connected with Yahweh's relationship with Israel - 'Here Jeremiah acknowledges the fact that he is united not only with these earlier charismatic and prophetic figures, but also with his people' (p.51f.). It must be admitted that Berridge jumps almost as quickly as Reventlow to the conclusion that Jeremiah was bound to his people, and perhaps plays down the fact that Jeremiah does have a special commission as prophet. However, he does show how it is possible to see Jeremiah in close relationship with his people, a fact which the book of Jer. bears out, without necessarily assuming for him a cultic setting and office.

The other parallel to 'all which I command you, you shall speak (Jer.1:7,17) occurs in Dt.18:18, as does a parallel to 'I have placed ($\int\uparrow\int$) my words in your mouth' (Jer.1:9). Berridge thinks that this may possibly attest that Jeremiah knew himself to stand within, and at the close of, a line of prophets, but he is himself doubtful whether a bond exists between Dt.18:18 and Jer.1:7,9,17. He mentions a number of scholars who have argued that such a bond does exist and these include W.L. Holladay, already referred to.¹ Holladay stakes his claim, not so much on the obvious association of $\eta\uparrow\psi$ and $\uparrow\prime\eta$ in Jer.1:7, but on the other parallel phrase

1. Holladay, in JBL, 83, 1964, pp.153-164.

in v.9. He stresses that, although the phrase 'put (God's) words in the mouth (of a prophet)' is common in the OT (e.g. Num.22:38; Isa.51:16), the usual verb is $\square \dot{\imath} \psi$, but the verb used in Dt.18:18 ($\int \aleph \aleph$) occurs elsewhere only in Jer.1:9 and 5:14. Holladay goes on to assert that Jeremiah had in mind not only the form of Moses's call and the Deuteronomic promise to Moses but also the prophetic rôle of Moses. Dating the formulation of Jeremiah's call after Josiah's reform of 621, Holladay adds that Jeremiah would also be aware of Moses's freedom in speaking to God (Ex.32:11, Num.11:11) and his rôle as intercessor before God (e.g. Ex.32). Furthermore, Jeremiah's announcement of a New Covenant stems from his reflection on Moses's institution of the first Covenant. Jeremiah is, therefore, claiming in his call to be the 'prophet like Moses'.

Not only are these weighty conclusions to draw on the basis of the replacement of $\square \dot{\imath} \psi$ by $\int \aleph \aleph$, but Holladay's whole argument is unconvincing. Firstly, in order to counter the accusation that Dt.18:18 would not be available to Jeremiah at the time of his call in 626, he argues that Jeremiah 'verbalised' his call at a date after 621, when he had access to Dt.18:18. Moreover, at this later date, Jeremiah realised that his real call was at his birth and, therefore, looked back to and reported this call in the light of Dt.18:18. However, it is difficult to find a reference to his birth in Jer.1:4-10. The point of v.5 is Yahweh's preparation of the prophet before birth and the call is clearly now. Holladay's picture of the young Jeremiah contemplating Dt.18:18 and Ps.22 is far-fetched. Also he exaggerates the uniqueness of the parallels. More damagingly,

so far as obtaining a clear picture of Jeremiah's prophetic office or function is concerned, he takes for granted the fact that Moses has a prophetic function. He has a perfect right to take seriously the use of א'ל with regard to Moses, but he ought to mention the suspicion under which this stands.¹ This question will be taken up later with regard to the use of the term 'office' for Jeremiah's position as a prophet.

v.8. Returning to the text of Jer.1:4-10, it is v.8, which according to Reventlow, provides the surest evidence that Jeremiah is using the salvation-oracle in his formation of the call narrative. For here occurs the Heilszuspruch, ...א'ל-אל, which is the kernel of the salvation-oracle. Berridge follows Reventlow here, but again disagrees on the question of the use which Jeremiah makes of the formula (pp.52f.). Reventlow writes, 'Das א'ל-אל ist genau das gleiche, das auch den privaten Beter in Heiligtum von der antwortenden Kultperson in Namen Jahwes zugesprochen wird' (p.53). This follows on from the cry of the worshipper ...אל, consequent to the divine epiphany. The cultic background is, he says, clearly visible in individual salvation-oracles (e.g. Isa.35:4; 44:2; Jer.46:27f.; Hag.2:5).²

1. e.g. Kuhl, op.cit., p.9; Nicholson, Preaching to the Exiles, pp.46ff. and the works mentioned there. It is possible, of course, that Jeremiah might have been aware of the tradition of Moses as א'ל whether or not it represents an historical reality and whether or not it was mediated by Deuteronomy as we know it. A further argument against Holladay is that Dt.18:15ff. more probably refers to a line of prophets than to one specific prophet. So S.R. Driver, Deuteronomy, in loc. cf. above, ch.III, pp.307ff.

2. Gouders objects to Reventlow's arguments concerning the sequence of lament followed by salvation-oracle. As we have seen he rejects the idea that אל in v.5 is a
(Contd.)

He then follows von Rad, who links such lament and salvation-oracle to Holy War (pp.55ff.) and argues that 2 Chr.20:11f. provides a reminder to the original Sitz im Leben to the salvation-oracles. In this narrative, the Moabites and Ammonites are at war against Judah. Jehoshaphat proclaims a fast and speaks in the temple a prayer, in all points typical of a communal lament (vv.6ff.). Then follows the divine answer through the agency of a Levite, who here appears with the function of a cultic prophet. This contains both parts of the salvation-oracle - אָרַךְ לַיָּמִים and וְהָיָה עִמָּךְ. V.17 especially, says Reventlow, shows that this belongs to the tradition of Holy War. There is, he thinks, no question here that the situation is cultic; moreover, the institution of Holy War is linked with the sanctuary and the liturgical association of lament and salvation-oracle spoken by a cultic functionary. He mentions Num.21:24 and 2 Kgs.19:6 as other places where, before a Holy War, a salvation-oracle was delivered by a charismatic leader (pp.56f.).¹ This offers, he says, a clue to the office of the prophet, which is confirmed in Jer.1:5, where Jeremiah is called to be 'a prophet to the nations'.¹ The אָרַךְ לַיָּמִים of the salvation-oracle becomes united with the official task of the recipient of revelation, but here the

Contd.) lament, but he also says that the salvation-oracle is paralleled only in Deutero-Isaiah and the Pss. The calls of Moses and the election tradition in Jgs.6:12-23 cannot, he says, be used in this argument. He, therefore, rejects Reventlow's notion of a prophetic initiation by a cultic official, with the priestly salvation-oracle being the common ground of the prophetic call narratives, op.cit., p.179. See below, p.471.

1. See above, pp.448f.

enemies, whom the prophet must not fear, are the enemies of his office. They are not the prophet's private enemies as such, but the enemies of Yahweh. Hence, there is a Holy War, in which the prophet's weapon is not his own, but Yahweh's word. (He finds confirmation of this fact, that the enemies are not those of a private worshipper, but of Yahweh, in a number of Pss., e.g. Pss.91:5; 89:20ff., where a similar reassurance is given to the king as the representative of the people.) Before leaving Reventlow's analysis, it should be mentioned that he regards vv.17-19, which also contain fragments of the Heilszuspruch, not as part of the original call, but as coming part way through the prophet's activity (pp.60f.). There are a number of difficulties here. One is Reventlow's view of 'the enemies'. It is convincing, but it is not entirely consistent with his previous arguments about the prophet's having the royal office of bringing wellbeing to all the earth. There are surely two distinct ideas involved in his view; firstly, that contained in v.5, that Jeremiah is commissioned to bring Yahweh's justice or judgement to all nations (cf.1:10) and, secondly, that contained in the present verse, that Jeremiah is not to fear the opponents of his office. If, as Reventlow argues, these opponents are all those against Jeremiah, who is commissioned with Yahweh's powerful word, then this is not naturally connected with his commission to the nations, as the royal bringer of wellbeing to all the earth. Reventlow's interpretation of vv.5,10 leads most naturally to the conclusion that Jeremiah is being commissioned with the task of bringing Yahweh's standards of justice to

bear on all nations either for weal or for woe. This universality is based on the theological fact of Yahweh's universal sovereignty. As we saw in relation to v.5, confusion arises when Reventlow introduces the notion of Jeremiah's having a kingly office, which involves a new age of prosperity for all nations. It is true that prosperity was expected in the ancient Near East at the accession of a new king. Although not explicitly worked out universally this reign tended to be thought of as such, especially as it was conceived in cosmic terms (e.g. Ps.89). However, it is never explicitly said of an historical king that he was coming to establish justice or prosperity in the whole earth. Reventlow too easily lumps together early and late references to kings, references to prophets and references to the Servant in Deutero-Isaiah (whatever figure he might be).

We saw earlier that the division between the 'offices' or at least the functions of prophet, priest, and king was never watertight, though there we were mainly concerned with the relation between prophet and priest.¹ Here the important question is the relation between prophet and king, especially as this is raised by the Servant Songs in Dt.Isa.. Put briefly, the question about the Suffering Servant passages is whether we are to relate the Servant to the Davidic theology (as, for example, Engnell), seeing him as a royal figure, or to place him in a prophetic succession (as, for example, Westermann, Bentzen, and Buber). The terminology

1. See above, ch.III, pp.176, etc.

used of the Servant figure is in itself no clear guide. Looking at Isa.42:1-4, for instance, $\gamma' \Pi \Gamma$, found there, is used particularly of the monarchy (e.g. Ps.89:4), $\Gamma \Delta \Upsilon$, as we have seen, is used of both kings and prophets, the reference to the endowment of Yahweh's spirit could suggest either a royal figure (see especially Isa.11:2) or a prophetic figure (cf. above, ch.I, pp.35ff., and ch.III, p.169.). Isa.49:1-6 clearly suggests the prophetic vocation. In this and the third song (Isa.50:4-9), the Servant speaks himself.¹ The suffering to which the Servant is called as part of his vocation (see especially 52:13-53:12) is reminiscent of the suffering undergone by Jeremiah,² further suggesting a prophetic figure. McKane writes, 'It is arguable that the servant is in important respects a prophetic figure and that his appearance represents a further development of the thought already present in the call narratives of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel (Isa.6; Jer.1; Ezek.1ff.), namely, that the prophetic vocation is sorrowful and demanding and that the prophet has to endure in the face of opposition and rejection. We may see in Deutero-Isaiah the affirmation that such prophetic suffering is not merely sublime or tragic, but that there is contained in it a source of healing for the prophet's ministry'.³

Prophetic or royal are not necessarily, however, exclusive alternatives, since it can be argued that the

1. We saw earlier that Lindblom describes these as 'prophetic confessions', see above, p.379.
2. See above, p.414.
3. McKane, 'Prophecy and the Prophetic Literature', in Tradition and Interpretation (forthcoming).

characteristics of the Servant differ from song to song and that he is portrayed now as king, now as prophet. Thus, whilst on balance, it would seem that a prophetic figure is being described, we do wrong to ignore the royal elements in the picture. It is interesting to note in passing that Noth asks with regard to Isa.61:1 whether the speaker is a king or a prophet. He says that it seems to come partly from a king and partly from a prophet, that anointing and amnesty suggest the sovereign right of kings, but that the notion of being 'sent' and the task of bearing tidings are prophetic. He concludes, 'the speaker is both at one and the same time a prophetic king and a royal prophet, but in this dual role he is endowed with the spirit, and therefore is one who has been called and chosen a charismatic'.¹

Thus, it would seem that, for all the overlap which may exist between the 'offices' of king, prophet, and Servant in the OT, Reventlow's interpretation of Jer.1:4-10 involves too many points which he neither evidences nor clarifies. This is particularly so with regard to his notion of the prophet's having a kingly office.

Other difficulties in his interpretation of v.8 are pointed out by Berridge (pp.52f.). He feels, for example, that, although the lamentation/salvation-oracle Gattungen are clearly being used here, the Heilszuspruch of v.8 cannot be said to be exactly the same as that given to the private worshipper in the sanctuary. Rather, it is being put to a new use, with a new and individual significance. It is not

1. Noth, in The Laws in the Pentateuch and Other Essays, p.248.

quite clear here what it is that Berridge objects to in Reventlow's statement. Is it that, in view of Reventlow's previous assertions, the Heilszuspruch delivered in the sanctuary to the individual is, in fact, communal and not really individual at all? Or is it that Berridge refuses to accept that this use of the formula need be rooted in the sanctuary? He fails to make this clear at this point, but his general approach leads one to think that he would make both objections and certainly they are valid. As stated near the beginning of Berridge's study, his main disagreement with Reventlow is that what is rooted in a cultic and communal setting can be and is used outside the cult with reference to the individual Jeremiah.¹ Berridge has no doubt that the Gattungen were known to Jeremiah and influenced the formulation of his call and he finds further evidence of this in the phrase - כִּי־אֶתְךָ אֲנִי לֵהֲעֵלֶךָ
Elsewhere in Jeremiah the verbs וָשׁוּ and נָשׂוּ occur, e.g., 15:20; 42:11; 30:11, and these are found together in Pss.7:2, 31:3 and 71:2.

v.9. With reference to v.9 Berridge again claims that Jeremiah is adopting older terminology 'in order to give expression to his own new and personal experience' (pp.53ff.). He argues that although the terminology is similar to that in Isa.6:7, it is here used to describe a quite different experience. In Jer.1:9, he says, all attention is focused upon Yahweh's word and upon Jeremiah's direct reception of this word. The primacy of this experience for the true prophet is evidenced elsewhere in Jer. (e.g. 23:21f.).²

1. Gouders, op.cit., p.72.

2. See below, pp.472ff.

Berridge is content to say that 'the nature of Jeremiah's experience which is recorded here must remain for us an unknown', but he is not happy with the idea that this is merely the 'sign' element, as in Habel's call-Gattung, corresponding to Ex.3:2 and Jgs.6:17ff. as if all signs were the same.

That this is precisely what v.9 represents is argued by Reventlow (pp.64ff.). He regards it as a symbolic act, which was actually part of the cultic ceremony (cf. Isa.6:6f.; Ex.2:9-3:3; Num.22:38; 23:5,12; Dt.18:18; Isa.51:16; 59:21). Although it is presented in visionary form, the event is a real ritual event. He goes on to derive from this evidence of a prophetic ordination, rejecting the view that this is a personal matter between the prophet and Yahweh. He says that there is no doubt that the promise of Yahweh's benevolent nearness, even when given in the 'I-speech' of Yahweh, would be proclaimed by the mouth of priest or prophet to those participating in the cult. Thus, the visionary nature of the call form is only a clothing for a process which takes place between the cultic officials in the form of a ritual action. It is clear, he asserts, especially in Isa.6, that what is involved is a purification and initiation, through which the prophet is made fit for his function as the speaker of the word of God.¹ He admits that we have no direct evidence of this prophetic ritual, but asserts that it existed in Israel and the ANE for the king (and later for the High Priest) and that the functions of king and prophet are very similar at this point and both require the purification

1. He cites Engnell who gives extra-Israelite parallels for this, The Call of Isaiah, pp.40f.

of the lips.¹ Even for the prophets, he says, we have similar reports, e.g. 1 Kgs.19:19ff., and 2 Kgs.2:8ff., which represents a mythologising of the same real procedure.² He agrees with Würthwein that we have to break free from the idea that the prophetic call is only conceivable in the form of a personal experience of God.³ It is strange, however, that, if the prophets did not experience a direct commission from Yahweh, they were so anxious to assert that they did. The notion of cultic officials' conveying this commission surely assumes some sort of cultic hierarchy among the prophets and priests and, as many scholars point out, the constant stress of the canonical prophets on Yahweh's irresistible constraint and on their independence makes it difficult to regard them as having such an established position in the cult (e.g. Am.7).⁴

1. This is related to his view of the king as Sprecher des Rechts.
2. This is discussed and disputed by Noth, in The Laws in the Pentateuch and Other Essays, pp.229-249. See above, ch.III, pp.170f. It should be remarked that the king's initiation resembles the initiation of the priest much more nearly than that of the prophet. Usually it is a house which is established, the permanency of a succession. Saul is an exception to this (as argued above, ch.III, pp.165ff.) The king also differs from the prophet in that he is never Yahweh's spokesman. He is a different sort of representative. Eaton has claimed that the king has the tasks of teaching, exhorting, and warning, and also the task of witnessing to Yahweh; but he differentiates between the world-wide commission of the king who addresses mankind and the commission of the priest or prophet to address Israel. He does, however, conceive of the king as bearing witness for Yahweh 'before the congregation' from his 'uniquely rich experience' of him, Kingship and the Psalms, pp.181ff. Nonetheless, the prophet would seem to have a unique position as Yahweh's messenger; see below, pp.488ff., and ch.V, pp.495,584.
3. So Würthwein, in ZAW, 62/63, 1949/51, pp.25f. cf. Reventlow, Das Amt, p.21.
4. So, for example, Baltzer, op.cit., p.57.

Reventlow finds another parallel to this act of commissioning in Num. 27:12ff. He admits that it is not a prophetic calling, but, again stressing the prophetic points in Moses's office, asserts that offices overlap. We can conclude, he says, that the prophetic call is linked with similar acts of ordination.

The question remains, he says, which cultic functionary in the sanctuary is the ordaining figure? In 1 Kgs.19:9ff., this figure is clearly the forerunner in the office. He concedes that this does not take place in a sanctuary, but he claims that the epiphany¹ of 2 Kgs.2 makes it likely that the event happened in a holy place. In Num.27:15ff., we see co-operation between the charismatic ordainer and the priest, whilst in other call narratives this figure appears as an angel (Jgs.6), or just a hand (e.g. Isa.6:6), as the narratives become more visionary in form! But even here, he says, it is clear that in reality there was a cultic official representing Yahweh (p.76)²

v.10. Before piecing together the various elements of the call liturgy which Reventlow discovers in Jer.1:4-10, a few further comments should be made on v.10.

1. 'Epiphany' is Mowinckel's term. Weiser speaks instead of 'theophany'. Both these terms, however, denote a public event, whilst what seems to be involved in Jer.1:4-10 is a private revelation to the individual. It is also noteworthy that Reventlow fails to differentiate between vision and audition. It is the latter which is important in Jer.1:4-10.
2. Gouders sensibly points out that the action underlying the promise of support symbolises most naturally not cultic initiation but rather divine assurance (op.cit., p.179). He also argues that it is too hypothetical to see an indirect call and transmission of office in Num.27:19 (op.cit., p.180). cf. Clements, Prophecy and Tradition, p.37, 'A divine call and ceremony of divine ordination are not one and the same thing'.

This is assumed by Habel to be part of the sign.¹ It is a summary of his career - he is to speak the prophetic word which not merely announces these changes in history but also brings them about. Now whilst most scholars agree that the reference here is to the creative and destructive activity of the prophetic word as the word of Yahweh, there is some discussion about the origin of the idea. The series of verbs which appears in this verse² also occurs in Jer.18:7,9; 24:6; 31:28; 42:10; 45:5. Berridge agrees with Bach that the two poles of Yahweh's activity of judgement and salvation which appear here are probably based on the prophet's reflection on Yahweh's message of judgement towards Israel, combined with his reflection on Yahweh's earlier acts of salvation towards Israel (p.56). But 1:10 and 18:7-10 are conspicuous in that they fall outside the original frame of reference of the series, with their inclusion of, or possibly even exclusive reference to, the foreign nations. Consequently, it would appear that they represent a later stage in Jeremiah's use of the series, where the scope has been enlarged.

Another scholar, S. Herrmann, has argued that each passage in which this series occurs is the product of Deuteronomic redaction.³ Berridge, therefore, proceeds to examine the

1. cf. Meagher, op.cit., pp.172ff., who also notes the similarity between Jer.1:9 and the sign in the calls of Gideon and Moses.
2. This has been examined by Bach, 'Bauen und Pflanzen', Studien zur Theologie der alttestamentlichen Überlieferungen, 1961, pp.7-32. It should be stated that most scholars delete $\text{וְיִבְנֶה וְיִטַּע}$ here as having come in from 18:7 and 24:6.
3. Herrmann, Die prophetischen Heilserwartungen im Alten Testament, especially pp.162ff.

prose passage Jer.18:7-10 in relation to the Deuteronomic literature. The problem of the prose material in Jeremiah is far too large to be discussed here,¹ but brief reference must be made to it, because of the relation between Jer.18:7-10 and Jer.1:4-10. Berridge's conclusion is that 'on the basis of the terminology employed in 18:7-10, it is clearly unjustifiable to conclude that the hand of the Deuteronomic school is clearly evidenced here' (p.61). Further he thinks that 1:10 is a more succinct formulation of 18:7-10, adapted to fit into the call narrative by the use of נָתַתִּי . He emphasises, however, that Jeremiah's conception that his commission was to the nations and not just to Judah was not later, for instance reflecting the actual Babylonian period, but that, from the beginning, Jeremiah knew himself to be a 'prophet to the nations'.

Nicholson, on the other hand, finds support here for his view that the Deuteronomic traditionists have developed the prophet's own record of his call in the light of the Jeremianic tradition as a whole. The combinations of v.10, he says, occur in Jeremiah only in prose and never in poetic passages. They represent one of the main themes of the book, the theme of judgement, and salvation after judgement and the series 'was intended by those who gave the call narrative its present form as an anticipatory statement of one of the central themes of the Jeremianic tradition as a whole'. (It is noticeable that Nicholson thinks that behind the present narrative stands

1. A summary of the main positions is given by Berridge, op.cit., pp.58-60.

'the prophet's own record of his call'.)¹ The main point at issue here is whether the understanding of Jeremiah's activity represented in v.10 belongs to him or to an editor. Without a detailed examination of Jer.18:7-10 in relation to the Deuteronomic material, all that can be said here is that this understanding is consonant with the rest of Jeremiah and does not demand later influence. As Weiser puts it, the full power of the prophet is no less than that of God's word. There are two poles to Yahweh's activity, not alternative but juxtaposed. These two poles of activity, weal and woe, God's grace and his judgement, it is the prophet's task to announce.²

Reventlow's conclusions on the basis of his examination of Jer.1:4-10 are as follows. There is a prophetic office which represents a particularising of the relationship with God which is valid for all Israelites.³ The prophet is given the special commission to be God's mouth and proclaim his word and this is added to the general salvation-oracle. Nazirite, judge, and king also have particularised, charismatic offices, and the call liturgies of all these offices have as their common foundation the general salvation-oracle (p.68). The call ritual of the prophets can be reconstructed

1. Nicholson, Preaching to the Exiles, pp.114f. cf. Neumann, op.cit., pp.184ff., - He believes that the universal commission of v.10 was not part of the original call, but a theological interpretation of a later time. But he points out that this obviously means a later dating for v.5 also. Seeing 1:4-10 in relation to the whole section 1:4-2:3, he comments that the second 'prologue' in v.13 makes plain that the editor believed that Jeremiah's commission was initially to Israel-Judah, but that this is set against the background of his mission to all the nations.

2. Weiser, Jeremia, p.14. Gouders comments that the proclamation of both weal and woe is part of the tradition of prophecy and it is this tradition in which Jeremiah stands, op.cit., p.75.

3. cf. above, pp.441ff.

thus. There is firstly the epiphany of Yahweh (Ex.3:1-4; Isa.6:1, Ezek.1; Jgs.6:12 and inferred from Jer.1:4), from which it can be concluded that the ritual takes place in a sacred place. There is the lament, owing to the fear of the recipient at the epiphany (e.g. Isa.6:5; Jgs.6:22 etc.). There is then the introduction to the salvation-oracle, including both the command not to fear and Yahweh's gracious promise. There is the commission itself. (In Jeremiah's case this appears earlier, i.e., 1:5b, in its usual place before the objection to the call). The objection to the call follows and this is not related to the individual misgivings of the recipient but to his fear before the divine epiphany. Then follows the repetition of the call by Yahweh and finally the symbolic action, expressing the fact that Yahweh has put his word in the prophet's mouth (pp.70-75).

It can, he thinks, no longer be doubted that the Sitz im Leben is the actual cult and that the liturgical formulas are part of cultic usage. It is only debatable whether the functionary delivering the salvation-oracle is a priest or a prophet. The prophet, as all charismatic office-bearers in Israel, is installed through a regulated liturgical act of ordination. This is true even for the prophet who is regarded as the great individualist. In view of this, a stress on Jeremiah's character and personality in the call becomes absurd (pp.76f.).

Berridge's main arguments against this view are as follows. Such a ceremony remains quite hypothetical and finds no support in Jer.1:4-10. There is no suggestion of an epiphany and

textual surgery is required to obtain an isolated complaint in v.6. He writes, 'The two elements of the salvation oracle represented here (in vv.5,8) do not answer a lamentation as they originally did in the cult (p.29). Thus, Jeremiah is adapting the cult-based salvation-oracle and lament and applying it to a non-cultic situation.¹ The call does not follow the pattern Reventlow proposes and this is due to the fact that Jeremiah has used the call form in an individual manner. Hence, the commission does not come till v.7 after and not before the objection. Finally, the OT really offers no support for the thesis that the prophets were holders of an office.² The prophet's sole claim to authority lies not in his holding an institutional office but in his commission by Yahweh.

Now this is nowhere more apparent than in the call narratives, which certainly seem to have as their purpose the prophet's defence of his authority and the announcement of his credentials. The assertion is that his prophetic activity is the consequence not of his own meditation and decision or of human appointment but of the initiative and constraint of God. He is Yahweh's man and it is from him that he takes his orders. The legitimacy of the true prophet and the authority of his message are established by his call (Jer.24:14; 23:21). His assurance is not on the basis of his position in the community but because of God's compulsion (Am.3:3ff.; Jer.20:7-9).³

1. He cites Begrich's similar comments on Deutero-Isaiah, in ZAW, 52, 1934, pp.90f.
2. See above, ch.III, where this is discussed in detail.
3. See further, pp. 492-494.

Now the major part of this section of this chapter has been concerned with the form in which the prophets expressed this conviction, the call form. If, as seems very probable, this existed as a distinct and recognisable form, of which the prophets made use, what does this mean for the genuineness of the experience behind the call narrative? What of the experience of call itself? Did it exist and, if so, what was its nature. These questions should be asked with reference to each of the main points of the call narrative as they emerge.

Firstly, the reception of the word. As we have already seen, the endowment with Yahweh's word is central to the prophet's position and commission. Whatever else they may be, the prophets are first and foremost bearers of the word.¹ We saw that in his article, "'The Spirit' and the 'Word' in the pre-exilic reforming Prophets", Mowinckel speaks of the special and express call from Yahweh to preach his word. The powerful word of Yahweh is the basic reality for the prophets.² His suggestions as to how the prophets come to the certainty that what they speak is indeed the word of Yahweh and not the expression of their own wishes are somewhat vague and inconsistent.³ Nonetheless, he is surely correct in his assertion that the OT testifies to the prophetic sense of the compulsion of the word, a word which is not consonant with the prophet's own desires and which may bring him great

1. cf. above, p.433, passim.

2. See above, ch.I, pp.47ff.

3. Mowinckel, in JBL, 53, 1934, pp.213-226. We saw earlier that criteria for distinguishing between true and false prophecy are defective.

suffering. Now Jeremiah furnishes the clearest example of this. The words which he proclaims are not his own words. As has been pointed out, no one would be such a fool as to invite the disasters which his speech entails, e.g., curses (15:10), flogging (37:15), taunts (15:15; 17:15; 20:7f.), arrest and imprisonment (37:15; 38:6). He would say quite different things were he to obey his own impulses (see 6:11; 20:9).¹

It is abundantly plain that in Jeremiah's call experience the endowment with the divine word is the central feature. Further, the divine confrontation with the word of Yahweh and the reality and the overwhelming force of this word is attested throughout the book (e.g. 2:1; 15:16).² The introductory formula of Jer.1:4 and, in fact, the formulas used throughout the book, are the subject of P.K.D. Neumann's study already referred to. The significance of the formulas used for introducing the reception of the divine word and, indeed, the importance of the word for Jeremiah generally now require some detailed attention.

We have seen that Gouders particularly stresses the element of audition and the reception of the word in the call narrative.³ The theophany, he says, seems only to have the purpose of introducing the audition, in which all the decisive

1. Blank, "'Of a truth the Lord hath sent me": An inquiry into the source of the Prophet's Authority', Interpreting the Prophetic Tradition, pp.12ff. and see above, p.408, etc.
2. So, Habel, op.cit., p.307 and Meagher, op.cit., p.170. cf. Gouders, op.cit., p.226ff. who stresses the contrast between Yahweh's word and man's word as we see it in Jeremiah. The divine word comes upon the prophet with terrific force (e.g. Jer.15:14; 23:29) and the initiative always lies with Yahweh.
3. See above, p.431.

communication between God and man and Jeremiah's prophetic call and commission take place. Attention is focused on God's word.¹ Behind the formula, וַיְהִי דְבַר יְהוָה אֵלַי (1:4) may be supposed a direct personal address. Jeremiah is called to a personal relationship of service and trust.² Gouders argues that although the event of the transmission of the word is difficult to describe,³ it is clearly experienced by the prophets as a fact. The prophet's whole life is determined by Yahweh's word and its reception is always the point of the prophet's call. The word is the pre-supposition and content of prophetic existence. Yahweh's word comes to men through the prophets; hence, the superscriptions (e.g. Jer.1:4; Ezek.1:3; Hos.1:1 etc.) proclaiming the unity of Yahweh's word and the prophet's word. The prophet can only prophesy because of his possession of Yahweh's word. As the bearer of the word of God, the prophet has an intermediary position between Yahweh and men.⁴

It is part of his contention that behind the use of the formulas, such as that in Jer.1:4, lies the prophet's self-understanding as Yahweh's messenger. Gouders is in this

1. Gouders, op.cit., p.215.

2. Ibid., p.217.

3. This point is of great importance and confirms what we found to be the case in ch.I, viz. that what is important is not the nature of the prophetic experience but its reality. So Clements writes, (Prophecy and Tradition, p.30), 'The various formulas by which the prophets affirm the divine origin of their messages are so brief and stereotyped a kind as to provide virtually no indication of the nature of the experiences to which they refer'. This is not to say, of course, that the experiences behind the formulas are not real, but simply that we cannot and need not know much about their nature.

4. Ibid., pp.221-224.

accepting the conclusions of Westermann's important study, The Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech. The swing away from a psychological approach involved,¹ has led in recent years to a concentration on a form-critical approach to the prophets, with interest focused on the recurring forms of the prophetic proclamation, and especially with the introductory formulas, the hope being that we might find here the key to understanding the essential nature of prophecy.² So Westermann turned to a consideration of the form of the prophetic utterances, believing that these forms say something essential about the prophet's meaning and significance. He examines the treatment given to this by many scholars this century, but our main interest is in the researches of three of these, Lindblom, Köhler, and Wildberger. Only the salient features of their researches can be mentioned here. Lindblom,³ Westermann believes, marked a new period in the research on the prophetic speech forms. Though he finds Lindblom's category of 'revelation literature' too broad and artificial, he thinks that Lindblom makes a significant step in the right direction in investigating a single structural element of prophetic speech, אָדָרָה אֵלֶיךָ יְהוָה and that Lindblom is correct in thinking that this form must tell us something about the nature of prophecy as this is understood in the prophetic books themselves, viz., that the prophet is a

1. See above, pp.425-427.

2. For mention of the works pertaining to the prophet's position as messenger, see Clements, Prophecy and Covenant, p.24, notes 1 and 2.

3. Lindblom, 'Die prophetische Orakelformel', Die literarische Gattung der prophetischen Literature, Appendix.

messenger.¹

Köhler² also holds that the character of the prophet is that of a messenger, but he goes further than Lindblom. Lindblom investigates the respective formulas for the illumination of the history of prophecy. Köhler finds in this messenger style an important characterisation of prophecy as such; the prophets are messengers. This is not anchored in arbitrary, subjective interpretation derived from various kinds of 'prophetic experience', but has an objective starting point.³ Westermann writes, 'If one can begin the inquiry about the speeches of the prophet with the basic knowledge that they are messengers who bring a message and speak in the style of a message, then there is a foundation of formulas, speech forms, and speeches which have been passed down, where we can be assured of encountering the self-understanding of the prophet and of being on solid ground'.⁴

This methodological starting-point is accepted in the work of Wildberger.⁵ Wildberger concentrates on the relation of the word of God and the word of the prophet in Jeremiah as the book has been passed down to us. Westermann argues, however, that the criteria which Wildberger suggests to distinguish God's word from man's word, viz., the formulas

1. Westermann, op.cit., pp.34f.

2. Köhler, Deuterojesaja stilkritisch untersucht, and Kleine Lichten Fünzig Bibelstellen erklärt.

3. Westermann, op.cit., pp.37f.

4. Ibid., p.39.

5. Wildberger, Jahewort und prophetische Rede bei Jeremia.

used in proclamation, the style form, and the literary genres, remain uncertain. The emphasis of Wildberger's work lies, he says, in the investigation of the proclamation formulation, the messenger's speech, but the situation is, in fact, a confused one, as the messenger formula is not always used where, on Wildberger's reasoning, it would be expected. Wildberger writes, 'We must presume that it (the messenger formula) is at the head of each word of Yahweh which is declared by the prophet to the public'.¹ But, Westermann argues, this does not correspond to the actual situation.² He believes Wildberger to be correct, however, in his tendency to designate not only the proclamation but the whole prophetic speech as the word of God.³

Westermann's own observations are as follows. Firstly, he asks, what does it mean that the prophets understand themselves as messengers of God? To what extent is the prophetic speech to be understood as a messenger's speech? Does the prophetic office consist only of service as a messenger?⁴ There is an increasing tendency, he says, to undermine the claim that prophetic speech is the word of God, on the ground that the introductory formulas that identify

1. Ibid., p.53.

2. Westermann, op.cit., p.50. See also Wheeler Robinson, Inspiration and Revelation, p.166, where he says that it is not possible to separate rigorously prophetic oracles accompanied by the formula אָמַר יְהוָה from those records from which it may be absent.

3. Ibid., p.51. The elements of this speech are a) Revelation formula, b) Prophetic commission, c) Summons to hear Yahweh's word, d) the messenger formula, e) the messenger speech itself, f) the middle or concluding formula (Wildberger, op.cit., pp.49f.).

4. Westermann, op.cit., p.93.

the speech of the prophet as the word of God are more numerous in the later books and in the later period. But Wildberger's attempts have, he argues, shown the impossibility of a literary separation between the word of God and the word of the prophet.¹ Westermann says that the messenger formula authorises the message, which is repeated by the messenger before the addressee, to be the word of the sender. It is used twice. The sender first introduces his speech with it, and, when he has arrived, the messenger introduces his message with it. The prophets, he believes, deliberately designated themselves as messengers of God and are understood as such by those to whom they bring their messages. Westermann points out that direct reference to the prophets as messengers is avoided. We find it rather in the verbal formulations (e.g. Isa.6:8; Am.7:10-17), which describe the sending of the messenger. They are definite and evident forms which make the prophetic speech into the speech of a messenger, but the prophets are not given the name of messengers, since this idea would be awkward to the ancient world.² One of his concluding remarks here is of the utmost importance to our general enquiry. He writes, 'It is...certainly characteristic of Israel that even though there was a series of such messengers of God which followed one another, and in some

1. Ibid., pp.94f.; cf. Reventlow, in ZThK, 58, 1961, pp.281f., where he gives examples to show that these formulas appear in the earlier prophetic books.

2. Ibid., pp.100-115. He says that the exception of Mal.3:1 is to be explained by its coming at the end of prophecy. (Contrast A.B. Davidson, OT Prophecy, p.80).

cases, worked at the same time, a continuing institution or a prophetic office did not develop'.¹ It is appropriate here to look at a consideration of the same ground which comes to the opposite conclusion.²

Reventlow is very doubtful whether the messenger formula in itself offers much help in clarifying the position of the Israelite prophet. The concern needs to be, he argues, with the Sitz im Leben in the use of this form, the realm of the form as it is used by the prophets addressing particular people at particular times.³

He accepts Wildberger's scheme,⁴ but rejects his view of its significance. Wildberger, he says, supposes that at the root of the use of the messenger formula in Jeremiah lies an attempt to legitimate his word as from Yahweh, that what is involved is the reflection by the prophet about the reception and transmission of the divine word.⁵ On the other hand, Wildberger sees here a strongly characteristic form, already lying to hand and which the prophet uses to present his message as a prophet, as the spokesman of Yahweh.⁶ This assumes, Reventlow says, the personal authorship by the prophets of the form. But, he argues, such an individual interpretation contradicts all the conclusions of recent form-critical examination of the OT, viz., that behind the

1. Ibid., p.116.

2. Reventlow, in ZThK, 58, 1961.

3. Ibid., pp.271f.

4. See above, p.477, note 3.

5. Wildberger, op.cit., p.41.

6. Ibid., p.49.

characteristic form is hidden an established institution. This then leaves open the question, in which Sitz im Leben is this distinctive form rooted? What is Jeremiah's relation to this Sitz im Leben? It was previously accepted, he says, that we have in prophecy an institutionless realm. In reality, precisely the existence of these formulas in the prophetic texts shows that even the prophets are bound in quite definite ways institutionally.¹ So, he contends, the existence of these schemes for the transmission of the word brings us to a new way of understanding the institution of prophecy and the prophetic office.²

Whilst disagreeing with some of Wildberger's inferences, Reventlow gives some discussion of Wildberger's scheme of the prophetic speech which he finds generally acceptable.³ An important feature perceived by Wildberger is, he says, that there are two stages in the communication of the word. There is firstly the reception of the word by the prophet and then his communication of it to his hearers. The answer to the question about the significance of the scheme is to be found, he believes, in the fact that this process is paralleled in the stereotyped introductory formula in the priestly legislation.⁴ The elaboration of this view as an argument for the prophetic office of covenant-mediator has already been given.⁵ What

1. Reventlow, in ZThK, 58, 1961, p.273. For criticisms of the view that a distinctive form remains bound to a distinctive Sitz im Leben, see above, pp.424f.

2. Ibid., p.274.

3. Ibid., pp.274-6.

4. Ibid., p.278.

5. See above, ch.III, pp.254-256. For further criticism of this, see Gouders, op.cit., pp.172ff.

needs to be reaffirmed here is that the OT offers very little evidence of such a prophetic office.

If Reventlow's arguments are accepted in toto then in the reception of the word by the prophet and his commission to deliver it to the people, we have in the call narrative in Jeremiah testimony to an institutional prophetic office of messenger. There are such weighty arguments against this view, however, that it is extremely difficult to believe that this is, in fact, the case. There is, on the other hand, much to suggest that the prophets considered themselves as messengers in a less institutional way and without a regulated 'office'. If, as the foregoing discussion has indicated, the prophets cannot be fitted into one watertight office, there is nonetheless the persistent testimony, particularly in the call narratives, to the prophet's claim to be Yahweh's messenger in delivering his word. It seems to be more than feasible that the purpose of Jeremiah's call narrative is to record the prophet's initial reception of this word, to claim for him the authority which necessarily follows from this, which is his only authority. The stress on this would seem to indicate a background against which this claim was made with difficulty.¹ The chief importance of the call narrative is, therefore, to attest that the prophet without status, authority, and office has status, authority, and office, those established by God. It goes without saying that this claim cannot be authenticated any more than can the reality and the authenticity of the

1. Berridge, for example, sees v.4 as a reflection of the tension between true and false prophecy which had reached a peak at this time, op.cit., pp.32ff.

prophetic experience.

This leads on to the next feature of the narrative, the idea of the prophet's preparation (v.5). If, as has been demonstrated, the creation-preservation motif is part of a form, how far does its use here represent an actual experience? We need firstly to be clear what is meant by preparation. Many scholars have made the point that the dominant impression of the call narratives is that the call comes to the prophet without any prior preparation.¹ Through God's direct and very personal address the prophet is removed from previous conditions without any transitional stage. This is emphasised by von Rad, who writes, 'Being a prophet is never represented as a tremendous intensification or transcendence of all previous religious experience. Neither previous faith nor any other personal endowment had the slightest part to play in preparing a man who was called to stand before Yahweh for his vocation'. For example, he says, Jeremiah, by nature a lover of peace, was commissioned to threaten and reprove.² On the other hand, there is Lindblom's assertion that the personal religion of the prophets was an indispensable condition of their prophetic calling. 'Their personal faith in the living God supplied them with a knowledge of God without which they could not have been messengers of God to their people'. He continues, the revelatory experiences of the prophets, important as they are, do not create new religious and moral ideas. 'The God of the prophets is essentially the same as the God of

1. e.g., Meagher, op.cit., pp.167-169, with reference to the calls of Gideon and Moses.

2. von Rad, OT Theology, II, p.57.

Israel'.¹ The end of this quotation and its context make plain that what is at issue here is the degree to which the prophets were special men, set apart from their fellows by their capacity for unusual religious experiences. Lindblom, though careful to stress that the prophets were part of their nation's tradition, does think that the prophets were prepared in so far as they had a personal faith, whilst von Rad, in his concern to stress the uninvited and unexpected nature of the divine commission, denies that this preparation is related to previous religious experience. Though of interest, this is all rather speculative. However are we to discover the previous religious experience of the prophets? In any case, it is very doubtful whether this really matters. Moreover, it is certainly not the main issue in relation to the question of whether or not this element in the call narratives is merely a formula or represents an actual experience. It is clear from these narratives, particularly Jeremiah's, that the prophet is asserting that he is driven not by some ecstatic feeling, but by the word of Yahweh. 'The account and form of his call is a testimony to this assertion'.² This word comes not of his own choosing, but entirely at God's initiative. Yet, at the same time, a persistent thematic element in these narratives is the preparation of the prophet.

There are surely two elements here existing side by side. On the one hand, the prophet is a member of the nation, itself created and prepared by God for a purpose. On the other hand, the prophet is given a special status, not because of his

1. Lindblom, PAI, p.298.

2. So Habel, *op.cit.*, p.319; cf. Meagher, *op.cit.*, pp.167-170.

extraordinary gifts but because of his experience and understanding of this God and this purpose. It would seem far more reasonable to us to lay stress on the rational element of preparation and to say that the prophet had an aptitude for religion and this was gradually developed until his call. But, whether this corresponds to reality or not, this is not the message of the call narratives. Just as the nation was not chosen by virtue of her advantages, but by virtue of God's choice (Dt.7:7), so the prophet is chosen and subject to a call which comes at God's initiative. If there is any preparation involved, then it is by God. It is surely one of the virtues of the form-critical analysis to have shown us here that the commission of the prophet must be seen in relation to the commission of the nation. This gives the explanation of the use of this creation-preservation motif in the call narrative. It can be a formula and yet at the same time testify to a real experience. By using it, the prophet is affirming that God has made him aware of the purpose of all that has happened to him. He has been created for the prophetic commission. This is, however, just part of the great historical plan of God. The God who is the creator of all existence, who rules the destiny of nations, is also the creator and ruler of the lives of individuals and, in particular here, of the life of his prophet.¹

The objection (v.6), as already noted, has received two main treatments. Not all those who understand it as having

1. This is brought out by Seierstad, op.cit., pp.110f.

a personal and particular reference go to the lengths of asserting that here we have evidence of Jeremiah's timid and shrinking nature. Lindblom, for instance, says that Jeremiah stands in contrast to Isaiah in his reaction to the call, for Isaiah obeyed willingly.¹ Thus, he thinks, we see revealed the different personalities of the prophets in the manner in which they receive their call. He continues, 'The divine constraint did not exclude personal freedom. The prophets often appeared as free personalities before Yahweh...'. Moreover, he takes the reference to Jeremiah's youth at its face value - 'The dialogue between Jeremiah and Yahweh...indicates Jeremiah's inner resistance to the call and how it was overcome. Jeremiah's hesitation because of his immaturity was removed by a new command...'. Similarly, von Rad says that we can see that the different prophets had different reactions. Yet, he adds, it is possible to pick out certain common features.²

Berridge and Reventlow, on the other hand, stress that Jeremiah's objection is part of a formula, related particularly to 1 Kgs.3. As such, it is not strictly speaking an objection, but an expression of humility and submission. But are these two interpretations really so different? It may be important to recognise that v.6 has parallels and seems likely to be part of a formula, but it is also important to ask why this formula has become part of the call form. Surely, it is because such feelings of humility and submission (which after all are not so far removed from feelings of

1. Lindblom, PAI, p.186; cf. Kaiser, Isaiah 1-12, p.82.

2. von Rad, OT Theology, II, p.56.

unworthiness and misgiving) are part of the experience of the prophet. We are, therefore, wrong to derive from the individual objections information about the prophets' personalities (though the fact remains that they were different), yet it seems more than reasonable to suppose that behind the formula, whatever connections with 1 Kgs.3 it has or has not, there lies a real experience. The obvious reason for the appearance of this 'objection' in the call narratives is that it represents a common experience.¹

This is also probably the case with the reassurance (v.7). Whether or not this indicates a cultic Sitz im Leben for Jeremiah's call, reminiscences of the salvation-oracle are clearly evident. Recognising the form is the first step, but there is then the further step of deciding why this should appear in the call narrative? Though this reassurance is not peculiar to the prophets, is it not particularly vital to them? For all that the prophets were not independent figures towering above their fellow-men and forming a new religion of ethical monotheism, the impression given is that they were set apart. They were set apart by virtue of their commission, their 'office'. This is pre-eminently true of Jeremiah. It is not imagination which depicts Jeremiah as an individualist, but the text. Jer.15: 17, for instance, makes plain that Jeremiah had relinquished normal social life with its securities. This is not to be attributed to his sensitive or retiring temperament, but, as

1. It could perhaps be objected that the use of a formula does not necessarily attest common experience but only sufficient community of experience to warrant a formula. This takes us back to the question whether the significance of the call narratives lies in its individual components or only in its overall assertion.

the verse and its context make plain, to his knowledge of and position in relation to God, which placed him in isolation. Just as the call narrative as a whole represents the prophet's attempt to justify his exceptional status in the face of doubt and opposition, so this element of reassurance may represent the fact that the prophet, cut off from the resources on which the majority of his people live, specially needs and is specially assured of Yahweh's support.

With the 'sign' element (v.9) is raised very sharply the question of formula or experience. Reventlow solves the problem to his satisfaction by positing the existence of a ritual act, in which this feature is the symbolic action, executed by a cultic official on behalf of Yahweh. One of the chief objections to this, besides the main one that such a ceremony is nowhere evidenced, is that we hear nothing in Jer.1:4-10 of an epiphany, which is central to Reventlow's scheme. In this way, Reventlow gets rid of the visionary nature of the experience. It is an actual cultic event. But what are we affirming in rejecting this? Do we think that Jeremiah actually had a vision, in which he was commissioned, assured, and underwent the experience of receiving God's word in his mouth? Or is this just the form such a narrative must take? In other words, is there behind the narrative an actual experience of call at all?

This is not the place to embark upon an examination of the prophet's revelatory experiences, with detailed discussion of ecstasy and all that this involves. Indeed, we have good reason not to, for it is often emphasised that here the prophet does not reflect on the mode of seeing. Everything

is centred upon the content of the vision and no account is taken of the mental process. So it is not the form of the vision which is important but its content.¹ It may also be added that in Jer.1:4-10 it is what Jeremiah hears rather than what he sees which is important. Nonetheless, there is in v.9 a concrete feature of a more markedly visionary character and some attention must be given to it. It is also significant that this demonstrates the fallacy of the argument that we can ignore the personal religion of the prophets and concentrate on their message, that the days are over for study of their experiences. It is at once obvious from the situation here that these experiences cannot be entirely separated from their prophetic calling.

Some of the main issues involved are raised by Seierstad in his discussion of Jeremiah's call.² Firstly, he emphasises that the experience of seeing and hearing is embedded in the totality of an overall vivid awareness of the divine presence. This he regards as an intensification of normal consciousness, in which the prophet is in full possession of his faculties.³ He finds evidence of this in the complaint in v.6, in which, he thinks, Jeremiah

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1. See Kaiser, Isaiah 1-12, p.74, with reference to Isaiah, Rudolph, Jeremia, p.3 with reference to Jeremiah, and Seierstad, op.cit., Preface, where he makes the general comment that the worth of religion is dependent on its inner content and not on its psychological forms and manifestations.
 2. It is not, of course, true that his view of this experience is the only or even the most commonly accepted view. However, the points he makes do bear on the question of reality or form.
 3. cf. Knight, op.cit., in contrast to the idea that consciousness is overcome or suspended, as in Lindblom, PAI, pp.28f., 81.

expresses a normal, human reaction. Jeremiah's personal attitude is involved and this personal concern is a central aspect of full consciousness, not of a consciousness overwhelmed or suspended. There is a tension here, he thinks, between two wills (pp.75ff.). He, of course, assumes here not only an expression of submission but of ordinary human fear. Secondly, this God is directly personal to the prophet. He has been chosen for a relationship of intimacy, namely the trusted personal commission of being partner with God in executing his will (v.10). God has created him for this commission (v.5) and this governing of his life continues (v.6). He stands completely under divine direction (pp.112ff.). Thirdly, he is thereby given an office of the highest degree as the bearer of the word. He has entered into a bond with God, in which his trust is all-important and will remain the sustaining-basis of his prophetic service (p.115f.). He is under Yahweh's command and protection.

Seierstad's main concern here is to demonstrate the reality of this experience and one of the main features of this is the actuality of the word of Yahweh. The significance of v.9 is then the intensely personal experience of receiving this word.¹ How can the prophet's message possibly be separated from this experience? In the call accounts, he

1. Seierstad, op.cit., pp.36. cf. von Rad, OT Theology, II, p.189 - 'The putting of the divine word in the mouth of the prophet illustrates the idea of the objective character of the prophetic word. What a prophet speaks does not come from himself but from God. It has nothing to do with human reflection and speculation'.

says, we have direct reference to the spiritual reality, which forms the background to the prophetic proclamation. He makes mention of the view that the features of the narrative may have been read back, that they were not present in the original experience.¹ But, he says, this fails to take account of the absolute seriousness of all personal experience of God, the consciousness of divine authority and the value of revelation. He points out that the prophets differentiate between God's word and their desires (e.g. Jer. 23:16-32) and claims that it is highly unlikely that the decisive impulses recorded in these narratives have been read back (pp.48ff.). He thinks, therefore, that to doubt the reliability of the narrative is, in effect, to doubt the revelatory experience itself. In reply to the argument that the fact that the prophets used stylistic forms shows that they did not have these experiences, he quotes Guillaume, 'The use of a literary convention is not an argument against the reality of a numinous experience'.² So, Seierstad thinks, the accounts bear close relation to the actual experiences (pp.50ff.).

It is not surprising that Seierstad reaches this conclusion. What is striking, however, is that it is shared by all scholars mentioned in this examination of Jer.1:4-10. They all state that, whilst Jeremiah is employing conventional types and forms of speaking, his narrative is a testimony to genuine experience.³ This experience is one in which

1. He cites, e.g., Hølscher, op.cit., pp.65,231, who thinks that the idea of hardening the heart in Isa.6:9ff. was later than the call itself.
2. Guillaume, op.cit., p.335.
3. e.g., Muilenburg, in The Bible in Modern Scholarship, pp.89f.; Habel, op.cit., p.317.

Yahweh's irresistible constraint instals him into the prophetic office, that of bearing Yahweh's word. Behind his use of a form which presents him as an ambassador of God, is the conviction that this is indeed what he is.

That the call narrative constitutes a particular form which contains many traditional motifs and elements and which has a definite legitimising purpose increases rather than decreases its importance with regard to an examination of the prophetic 'office'. So Clements writes, 'The presence of traditional features in the accounts of how the prophets were called by God certainly need not undermine our confidence in the genuine reality of the experiences which they describe, but they preclude our regarding such narratives as records preserved simply for the sake of recounting the experience'.¹ When an individual prophet asserted the divine origin of his message and affirmed that he had been specially chosen and called of God to proclaim this, he was undoubtedly testifying to a particularly immediate consciousness of God. Yet at the same time, both in its form and content, their message shared a connection with earlier prophetic messages and with other areas of Israel's religious life'.² Clements is here particularly concerned with what the use of traditional forms of speech tells us about the nature of prophetic inspiration and the prophet's knowledge of the divine will, and with the way in which tradition has shaped the formulation of the call narratives. He admits that, 'It is now exceedingly difficult to distinguish

1. Clements, Prophecy and Tradition, p.36.

2. Ibid., p.39.

convincingly between the(se) two ways in which the impact of tradition has been felt. The individual experience and the tradition have become inseparably intertwined'.¹ So far as the cultic motifs and traditions in the narratives are concerned, he concludes that it is far from clear that the cult is the immediate background to the individual call. It is, he says, the function of the call narrative to affirm the unique individual authority which the prophet possesses and this can hardly be the result simply of a ritual. The emphasis throughout Jeremiah's call narrative lies rather upon the uniquely personal character of the prophet's call and commissioning by God.²

The purpose of the prophetic call narratives as legitimation-documents is examined in detail by Gouders and, in conclusion, his major points may be summarised.

The prophetic call narrative is a Gattung sui generis, which serves to legitimize the prophet before the people (p.185). The stress lies on the prophet's sending by Yahweh and through this his authorisation to proclaim God's word. It establishes the event of the prophet's encounter with God as an experience. The writing down of the call narrative is an attempt to establish the active force of such an experience of God (p.186). When one compares the call narratives one comes to the conclusion that here is something new, new in its self-understanding, this newness giving rise to this particular literary form.³ They are the deposits of

1. Ibid., p.36.

2. Ibid., p.37.

3. He refers here to von Rad, OT Theology, II, p.54, Hesse, in ZAW, 65, 1953, pp.45, and Vriezen, Theologie, pp.223f., (cf. An Outline of OT Theology, pp.235f.).

the justification of the prophets before the people; but they must as narratives derive value from real experiences. The schemata which people have detected in these call narratives¹ are not always so clearly defined as some would have us believe. They are not so fixed that the accounts cannot be modified by different forms at certain points. What is characteristic of them is the testimony to a personal, individual encounter between Yahweh and the one called (p.188, and cf. p.230). Thus, the call scheme is largely determined by formulas,² but these are open to inflection and freedom. The question of what is valid as specifically 'prophetic' finds its answer midway between the personal experience of God and the bond with tradition. Within their formal relationship to a fixed scheme, the prophetic call narratives give expression to a personal experience of God. For all their association with pre-given schemes, their kernel must be understood as the representation of the personal experience of the prophets (pp.189f.).

In the case of Jeremiah, the experience is one of deep tension between his inclination and the divine command and faithfulness to Yahweh, between the human and the divine will. We see this most clearly, of course, in the 'Confessions' (pp.238f, cf. p.231).³ The reassurance of Yahweh's strength is not the overcoming of self but the employment of self.

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1. In Gouders's view there are two schemes, going back to the early history of Israel, based on an encounter with God (p.201).
 2. See above, pp.428, passim.
 3. cf. above, ch.IV, ii.

His whole life is involved in his mediatory task between Yahweh and the people. The prophetic life is determined by the divine compulsion. The prophet belongs no more to himself, but, from the moment of his call, is determined by Yahweh. The divine word confronts him with irresistible power, hence, his call stands as the prophet's legitimation for his mission (p.240).

The actual event of the call is important not only for the prophet himself but for his position before his people. The narrative is a witness to the encounter with God, which stands at the beginning of his commission. It speaks of a turning-point, a commission, when God encountered him at a specific moment (cf. Jer.15:10ff.; 20:7ff.; Am.7:15). Moreover, the call narrative aims to set out the legitimation of the prophetic word as Yahweh's word (p.241).¹ The call testifies to the prophet's credentials. His only certainty is that he stands under Yahweh's commission. The narrative presents with clarity the encounter with God in which this awareness is experienced (p.242). The prophets have an individual, personal encounter with Yahweh in which they are commissioned as his messengers. This is how they understand their office. It rests entirely on the personal commission of the sender. Thus their call is their sole legitimation (p.244).

Gouders adequately sums up the conclusions of this enquiry and these will be taken up in the following chapter with reference to Am.7:10-17.

1. See above, pp.490ff.

CHAPTER VCALL AND INSPIRATION

This chapter will be divided into two main sections. In the first, it will be argued that in seeking to ascertain the position of the prophet in Israelite society some attention must be given to the question of prophetic inspiration, since experience, 'office', and function are, in the realm of Israelite prophecy, integrally related. No attempt will be made to discuss in detail the nature and variety of prophetic experience as reflected in the OT, for the concern is not with prophetic experience per se nor with prophetic persons in general, but with prophetic experience as it relates to the question of the prophetic 'office' and with examples of prophets who claim a personal commission and call by Yahweh as their inspiration. Chapters I and II of the thesis were aimed at demonstrating the impossibility of speaking of 'prophets' as if they constituted a homogeneous group, and chapter II in particular drew attention to the vexed question of 'false' prophecy, which plagues any attempt to arrive at the essence of true Israelite prophecy. There will be some attempt to elaborate and to draw together points raised earlier concerning the relation of the canonical prophets to tradition and to what, if anything, constituted their uniqueness.

In the second part of the chapter, detailed consideration will be given to Amos 7:10-17, a passage which, in the present writer's opinion, raises sharply the question of the prophetic 'office' and illustrates the major contentions and conclusions of this thesis.

i) Prophetic Inspiration

It would seem to be fashionable to establish a clear division between the prophet and his message, and to concentrate either on the man, his personality and his inspiration, or on the content of his preaching. Indeed, this is no new fashion, for research appears to have alternated in emphasis between the man, and the message to be proclaimed. We have noted above that the latest swing has been in favour of the message, and many today want to leave behind a consideration of the prophet's personality and inspiration, arguing that this is at worst irrelevant and at best secondary and even then inaccessible to modern analysis.¹ Certainly many now contend that the prophetic message is the only legitimate avenue of approach open to the investigator;² and there is the feeling that, so far as our study of prophetic experience is concerned, agnosticism may have to prevail.

It must immediately be asked, however, if this approach to the study of the prophets is possible and, if so, if it is justifiable. For, as some surveying the scene of recent research have pointed out, the prophet and his message are interrelated.³ Crenshaw expresses this clearly when he writes, '...careful study of the prophetic personality demands intimate knowledge of his oracles, and the total message reveals something about the character of the prophet himself'.

1. See above, ch.IV, pp.376f.; and Wolff, Das Zitat im Prophetenspruch, pp.3,89-91, who argues that we should not expend effort on an explanation of prophetic psychology in order to come to the essence of prophecy since we have a direct way to the prophet through his own word.

2. See, e.g., Westermann, op.cit., pp.63,86.

3. Crenshaw, op.cit., pp.5f.

He continues, 'Indeed, at times it is difficult to determine whether person or message dominates the interest of the author, whether prophetic function or essence is being highlighted. As a matter of fact, this ambiguity rests upon the failure of some prophets themselves to differentiate between their role and person (Jeremiah is particularly guilty of this confusion)'.¹ Moreover, it could be argued, not only are there important points of contact between the prophet and his message, but each is essential to the understanding of the other, and, therefore, even if it were possible, it would be mistaken to dispense with the study of prophetic religion and prophetic experience. The days for research into this area cannot be over. Now this becomes particularly apparent when one considers the question of the prophetic 'office'. It was suggested in chapter III that if the Israelite prophet had an 'office' then this was that of messenger.² This possibility was taken up in chapter IV, where it was argued that the prophet was conceived of, either by himself or others, or both, as Yahweh's messenger. The experience of the man and his message which he delivered are then integrally related. The prophet delivered his message because of the conviction and compulsion of his being called to be Yahweh's messenger to his people.³

It becomes necessary at this point to summarise what has been said at various stages in the thesis about the use of the

1. Ibid., p.6.

2. See above, ch.III, pp.246-248.

3. See above, ch.IV, especially pp.488ff.

term 'office' in connection with the prophets, and, in particular, with the canonical prophets.

It was stated at the beginning of chapter III that 'office' could be understood as the specific task or function attached to a certain position or post, or as the task expected and required of a person who has been given a position by king, state, or public body and that, in effect, an enquiry into the prophetic 'office' becomes an enquiry into prophetic functions.¹ That chapter was devoted to an examination of the various functions ascribed to prophetic persons (and, in particular, to Amos and Jeremiah), with a view to deciding whether any or all of these could be said to constitute an 'office' in the sense defined. It was emphasised that, whilst there were functions which could be regarded as prophetic, in that prophets performed them, it would be wrong to suppose that all the canonical prophets performed all of these functions.² It cannot be assumed that every prophet had an identical view of his function(s).³ It was also acknowledged that the issue of prophetic 'office' is further complicated by the fact that certain traditions about the nature and function of prophecy emerged at different stages in the history of prophecy and that these traditions influenced the presentation of the prophetic 'rôle'.⁴ The

1. See above, ch.III, p.126.

2. Ibid., p.127.

3. cf. von Rad, OT Theology, II, p.50.

4. Ibid., '...behind every prophetic tradition lies a well-defined idea of what constitutes a prophet and his office'. See also, Clements, Prophecy and Tradition, pp.91f.

conclusion drawn from the investigations of prophetic functions and their settings was that the canonical prophets lacked an 'office' in the sense defined above, but that nonetheless there might be a sense in which 'office' was a reasonable term to use in connection with such prophets, viz., as a position with specific tasks to which the prophet was appointed not by any human, institutional authority but by Yahweh.¹

This possibility was further explored in chapter IV, where it was argued that the prophet did, in fact, lay claim to an 'office', in the sense of a special position with specific tasks, an office resting not on formal appointment but on a relationship to Yahweh.² It could, of course, be immediately objected that 'office' and 'relationship' are not identical nor even necessarily interdependent. A man could have a relationship to Yahweh without necessarily having an office, and anyway, how are we to determine or assess a relationship? The suggestion of chapter IV was, however, that the prophets did enjoy a special relationship to Yahweh. Again, it could be objected that this need in no way imply a special prophetic office. Perhaps all that the prophets were claiming was a special 'relationship' not an 'office'. Nonetheless, it was urged that the prophet's special 'relationship' to Yahweh lay in his being commissioned to a special task, that of bearing Yahweh's word and that, as such, the prophet held the supreme 'office', that established by Yahweh.³ The present chapter will elaborate this argument, viz., that

1. See e.g., ch.III, pp.318f.

2. See above, ch.IV, especially pp.477-480,494.

3. Ibid.

whether or not the prophet can be said to have had an 'office' or merely performed particular functions depends on determining his relationship, on the one hand, to God and, on the other, to the people. In what way, if any, was the Israelite prophet set apart from the nation as a whole?

This question surely cannot be answered without reference to the prophetic experience of God. Whilst there has been a departure from the older view of the prophet as a specially gifted person of marked individuality, who stood apart from public expressions of religion and its institutions, and a corresponding shift away from exaggerated emphasis upon revelation's individual and psychological aspects, it is inevitable that attention has been and still is attracted to the figure of the prophet as a man who stood in a unique relationship to God and was endowed with exceptional divine gifts. The question remains, then, what is special about the prophetic experience of God? Considerable discussion of what might be considered the more 'abnormal' and esoteric elements in the prophet's experience was given in chapter I.¹ The question is largely centred on the definition of 'ecstasy'. There is no need to repeat here all that was said there, but one or two of the main points should be reiterated.

sk That there existed in ancient Israel, as indeed there have existed at all time~~s~~, some people who were more psychic than others, particularly open to peculiar or unusual forms of experience, is indisputable. Israelite prophecy, in both its early and its canonical representatives, provides

1. Ch.I, pp.34-48.

examples of such people. Nonetheless, it was argued, what was vital for the canonical prophets was the reception not of the spirit but of the word, the rational word which they were called upon to proclaim. The value and purpose of the prophets' experience of God lay in the message which it enabled them to preach. They were not private seekers after the divine, but had a responsibility to communicate God's word to the community. The prophet's experience of God and his inspiration by God were not for his own private edification but to enable him, indeed to compel him, to proclaim God's message to the people. Prophetic experience, therefore, whether or not it can be described as 'ecstatic', was not experience for its own sake, but in order that the prophets might communicate God's will and purpose to the people. The reception of the word is their claim and the proclamation of this word their function. Our concern with prophetic experience is, therefore, not with how they were inspired but with why they were inspired. We are concerned not with the psychology of their inspirational experiences but with their purpose and their content. We are concerned with the prophet's relationship to God, his experience of God, his understanding of God's will and purpose, in short, with the prophet's 'knowledge of God'.

There have been various suggestions made about the meaning of the term $\square' \text{אלה} \tau \text{ע} \tau$. Dentan, for instance, holds that this term, together with 'the fear of God', denotes 'religion', i.e., the attitude of the whole person towards God, and he cites Hos.4:1 and 6:6 as indications of this meaning.¹ Ackroyd sums it up as 'fellowship', as this

1. Dentan, The Knowledge of God in Ancient Israel, pp.35f.

is described in, 'He has showed you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God' (Mic.6:8).¹ Clements says that '...knowledge of God was not a subjective experience of communion with him, but contained positive and objective traditions of history and law, which defined the nature and meaning of the covenant', though he adds that such objective knowledge was designed to lead to 'the experience of communion with Yahweh'.² Mowinckel, in his illuminating monograph on the subject, similarly thinks that knowledge of God includes knowledge of the covenant, its traditions and requirements but emphasises that it refers to personal communion issuing in obedience.³ Where Mowinckel allows that the term 'knowledge of God' connotes personal communion, Clements suggests that 'knowledge of God' is essentially knowledge of the covenant, and that such communion is only what issues from this knowledge. In this Clements would seem to be missing the element of fellowship or communion which most scholars regard as an integral part of knowledge of God. It is at this point that we must return to the original question, what was special about the prophetic experience of Yahweh? This now becomes, in what way did their knowledge of Yahweh differ from the people's knowledge

1. Ackroyd, in Peake's Commentary on the Bible, 532b. cf. G.W. Anderson, 'A Study of Micah 6:1-8', SJT, IV, 2, 1951, p.197.
2. Clements, Prophecy and Covenant, pp.55f. He mentions particularly the use of the term by Hosea and refers to Wolff, '"Wissen um Gott" bei Hosea als Urform von Theologie', EvTh, 12, 1952/3, pp.545ff.; and McKenzie, 'Knowledge of God in Hosea', JBL, 74, 1955, pp.22ff.
3. Mowinckel, Die Erkenntnis Gottes bei den alttestamentlichen Profeten, p.7. The meaning of the term is fully discussed, pp.5-8.

of Yahweh? If דעת אלהים does, in fact, connote knowledge of the covenant between Yahweh and Israel, then the question focuses on the relation of the prophets to the covenant tradition of their nation. This is, of course, an immense subject, and one to which much attention has been devoted in recent OT research. It would be inappropriate (within the limitations of space of this thesis) to try to summarise here even the major results of this research, but some mention must be made of its salient features as they pertain to the question of whether there existed for the canonical prophets a prophetic 'office'.

It has been said that the great contributions to our understanding of the OT made by Wellhausen and Duhm, and their many followers, did the prophets a disservice by claiming too much for them. 'By regarding the prophets as the greatest products of Israel's religion, and, more significantly, as its real creators, they raised prophecy out of its context in the religious tradition of Israel'.¹ There have since been many attempts at redressing the balance by showing that the prophets were firmly grounded in the tradition of Israel and that what they sought to do was to interpret this tradition, not to originate a new one. So Porteous holds that the prophets were 'inheritors and not creators of a religious tradition, possessed of an experience which is in part to be explained by the fact that other men had walked with God before them and had passed on to them profound thoughts about Him and His ways with men, together

1. Clements, Prophecy and Covenant, p.15. He cites Duhm, Israels Propheten, p.8, and Wellhausen, *op.cit.*, p.474, where the latter claims that the prophets were the first ethical monotheists.

with the language in which to clothe these thoughts...'. They 'came before their fathers in the name and with the authority of a God who had had dealings with Israel for centuries before their time'.¹ It is worth noting in passing Porteous's reference here to 'language'. In chapter IV, detailed consideration was given to the question of the use made by the prophets of traditional forms of speech. It is self-evident that questions of tradition² and questions of traditional forms of speech belong together or, at least, are interrelated. The argument in chapter IV concerned the dependence or lack of it of the prophets on traditional speech-forms, how far they were bound by these forms and how far they adapted and used them. Similarly, here, one needs to consider how far the prophets were bound by the covenant tradition which they inherited and how far they elaborated or reinterpreted it.

The fact remains, however, that recent scholarship has tended to stress that to a great extent the prophets were bound to earlier forms and traditions and that as such they

1. Porteous, in Record and Revelation, p.217.
2. The two different senses of the word 'tradition' in OT study should here be noted. These two senses are defined by Clements as i) the process of handing on, i.e., the circumstances, methods, and circles by which the original material was preserved and adapted until it reached its present literary form, i.e., 'transmission history' (Überlieferungsgeschichte) and ii) the content of what is handed on, i.e., 'tradition history' (Traditionsgeschichte). In OT study the latter, says Clements, 'has come to refer to the isolation and analysis of particular traditions, or themes, which enjoyed a long historical development in Israel, and which were especially related to specific localities, institutions or circles within the nation'. As Clements points out, these different meanings of the word 'tradition' soon pass into one another, and the method of research known as 'tradition history' inevitably becomes concerned with both of them (Prophecy and Tradition, pp.4f.).

were not the founders of a new era in Israelite religion, much less the founders of a new religion.¹ So Clements writes, 'The prophets were the heirs of a very rich and full tradition which was certainly not devoid of theological insight and moral value'.² The reference here to the 'moral value' of Israel's traditions raises one of the central elements in this discussion about the originality and uniqueness of the canonical prophets. Clements, for his part, stresses that the prophets did not regard themselves as teaching a new morality. On the contrary, he thinks, 'their ethical teaching appears incidentally in their condemnation of the people for unrighteous and immoral behaviour, and the prophets clearly expected their hearers to know what they were talking about. Their accusations would have been false had the people not already known the ethical standards which Yahweh demanded. The prophets accuse them of failing to keep what they had long known to be the will of Yahweh'.³ And again, he writes, 'The eighth-century prophets...were certainly not the first to introduce a strongly ethical note into the service of Yahweh and they themselves were able to draw upon a long tradition of ethical teaching in Israel'.⁴

We saw in the discussion of chapter III, however, that one of the major inadequacies of regarding the canonical prophets as spokesmen of the covenant law is that it tends

1. So Engnell, in Critical Essays on the OT, p.172.

2. Clements, Prophecy and Covenant, p.16.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., p.76. He cites here Porteous, 'The Basis of the ethical Teaching of the Prophets', in Studies in OT Prophecy, pp.143ff., and Hammershaimb, 'On the Ethics of the OT Prophets', Oxford Congress Volume, pp.75ff.

to reduce them to mere traditionalists and fails to take account of their own claim that the authentic word of Yahweh's covenant was to be found in their prophecies and not in the teaching of the priests and prophets at the shrine, that is, it plays down the radical nature of their message. We saw in this earlier discussion that Clements is himself not entirely satisfied with the estimate of the prophets' work which follows from regarding them as covenant spokesmen.¹ He seems to be generally uneasy about the tension between prophetic use of tradition and prophetic inspiration. (It should, of course, in all fairness be said that Clements is not alone in this. Indeed, it is this very tension between the continuity and discontinuity of the prophetic faith with the Israelite covenant faith, and the difficulty of establishing the degree of dependence of the prophetic message on tradition which has occasioned such extended and diverse debate.²) He suggests that, whilst the prophets owed much to the historical and cultic traditions which had been preserved in the nation, these same traditions nourished an awareness of direct communication. 'Their prophetic inspiration did not preclude their dependence upon such an inherited form of knowledge, but in every way presupposed it'.³ This would seem, however, to be less than adequate to explain

1. See, e.g., Clements, Prophecy and Covenant, pp.80f., and cf. above, ch.III, pp.260f.
2. See, e.g., Kaiser, 'Wort des Propheten und Wort Gottes', in Tradition und Situation, pp.75-92; and Henry, Prophet und Tradition. Versuch einer Problemstellung, where she raises the whole question of prophetic originality in relation to the use made by the prophets of elements of earlier traditions.
3. Clements, Prophecy and Covenant, pp.52f.

the distinctive vocation of the prophets; and a distinctive vocation they claimed to have. As he himself later writes, 'It is of the very essence of prophetic revelation, as usually understood, that its messages are unique and are not merely inherited ideas and assertions. To interpret as most significant those features of the prophets which they have drawn from earlier traditions is certainly to see them in a light other than that in which they themselves would apparently have wished to be seen'.¹

How then does Clements resolve to his own satisfaction the problem of the newness, the radicality, the originality of the canonical prophets? It is, he contends, misleading to speak of a 'prophetic religion' at all, 'since such a phrase gives the impression that the prophets either created such a religion, or enjoyed a peculiarly unique experience of religion, which separated them from their environment and heritage in a radical way. The religion of the prophets is the religion of Israel, and the unique contribution which they made was to have interpreted the idea of the covenant at a time when it had fallen into neglect and abuse'.² In direct reply to his own question, 'Wherein then lay the distinctiveness of the canonical prophets?', he says that it lay in their 'particular relationship to, and concern with, the covenant between Yahweh and Israel'.³ But this leaves seriously neglected the question of how the prophets became free enough to reinterpret these

1. Clements, Prophecy and Tradition, p.25.
 2. Clements, Prophecy and Covenant, p.126.
 3. Ibid., p.127.

traditions in such a radical way. Why should they have been such rebels? von Rad writes, 'To a much greater degree than any of their contemporaries, the prophets are rooted in the religious traditions of their nation; indeed their whole preaching might almost be described as a unique dialogue with the tradition by means of which the latter was made to speak to their own day'.¹ 'Yet', he continues, 'the very way in which they understood it and brought it to life again is the measure of their difference from all the contemporary religious heritage of their nation'.²

Clements also leaves seriously neglected the questions of how and why the prophets came to have their 'particular relationship to, and concern with the covenant between Yahweh and Israel'. We saw elsewhere that Clements thinks that the canonical prophets, beginning with Amos, were the first to take seriously the threat of the covenant, which the people, under the leadership of priest and wise man, ignored or forgot.³ However, one wants to ask why it is that the prophets should interpret differently, see things clearly, take the matter seriously, when all around failed to perceive this threat? Were they merely men with exceptional insight into historical events? Did they predict disaster and punishment merely because disaster was inevitable and had to be interpreted somehow, if the nation were to survive?

1. On this point, cf. Clements, Prophecy and Tradition, p.4, where he speaks of 'the internal dialogue within Israel in which a number of accepted ideas were subjected to a searching scrutiny'.
2. von Rad, OT Theology, II, p.177.
3. See above, ch.II, pp.89f.

Further, on what rested their claim to be heard? It has been argued in chapter IV that their sole claim to be heard, as more than misguided fanatics or meddling, amateur politicians, was based on their sense of vocation and inspiration for the task of declaring the authentic word of Yahweh. Surely then, if their honesty and authority are to be upheld, the prophets' claim to uniqueness must lie in their relationship not to the covenant but to Yahweh. There is a sense in which they 'enjoyed a peculiarly unique experience of religion, which separated them from their environment and heritage in a radical way'. If the canonical prophets are to be separated from their fellowmen, it must surely be on the grounds of their peculiar experience of, understanding of, and relationship with God, that is, their 'knowledge of God', which equipped them for a particular task.

In the monograph mentioned earlier, Mowinckel, after his attempts to define the wide range of meaning of 'knowledge of God', makes the point that ideally this knowledge is for the whole people (Hos.4:1,6; 5:4; 6:3,6; 2:22; 8:2; 10:12; 13:4f.; Isa.11:9; Jer.4:22; 5:4f.; 8:7; 9:2,5; cf. Hab.2:14, Ps.94:10).¹ The prophet, however, claims to know God in a special way. He has a special knowledge of God, because God has revealed himself to him in special ways (pp.9ff.). Mowinckel gives some discussion of the psychologically 'abnormal' experiences of the prophets, such as visions and auditions, and the 'ecstasy' which cannot be said to be normal human experience (pp.13-17); but his chief concern is with the 'knowledge'

1. Mowinckel, Die Erkenntnis Gottes, p.8. See also discussion in ch.IV, pp.442f., 482-484, etc.

of the prophet as the recipient of the divine word. The prophet, in Mowinckel's view, regards as his legitimation and the source of his vocational equipment the possession of the divine word (e.g. Jer.5:13). In each new situation, the word comes to the prophet as something new and actual - 'The word of Yahweh came to me' (pp.17-19). The fact is, however, that not everyone is a prophet. So, Mowinckel asks, does the word come to a special kind of mind? Whilst Mowinckel does discuss the experiences through which the word comes, what he is at pains to stress are certain features about this word, for instance, its power and reality and the fact that it always comes at God's initiative (pp.19-29).¹ He remarks that the prophet's special knowledge of God and Israel's general knowledge of God must be taken together. What the prophet knows, he knows ultimately as an individual Israelite (p.29). This knowledge is intended for the whole people, however (see Isa.54:13; cf. Jer.31:33f.) and the question is, how are people in general to come to a right knowledge of God? For they clearly lack it. They are disobedient, unknowing sons (Isa.1:2,4) (p.38). The prophet maintains that he, however, in contrast to the people (e.g. Hos.4:1), 'knows Yahweh'. He has really stood in God's 'confidential council' (T^{10}) and knows what his plans and wishes are (Jer.23:18,22).² Because of this the prophet is commissioned with a special task and what makes him a prophet is not a mystical, ecstatic experience, but a step of active

1. cf. the discussion on the primacy of the word for the prophet in ch.I, pp.37f., 48ff. and ch.IV, pp.472ff., and the references to Mowinckel given there.

2. Mowinckel, in JBL, 53, 1934.

obedience (e.g. Isa.6:8), whereby in response to the divine call he takes on the task of leading his people into true knowledge of Yahweh and his covenant (pp.38,51,62f.).

We see in Mowinckel's study, an illuminating and successful attempt to strike the necessary balance between stressing the prophet's relation to the people and stressing the prophet's relation to Yahweh, which, as was argued in the introduction to this chapter, is crucial to any understanding of a prophetic 'office'. On the one hand, the prophet is never allowed to be a private person but is always compelled to proclaim. Heschel writes, '...the significance of prophecy lies not in those who perceive it, as happens in mystical experience, but in those to whom the word is conveyed. The purpose is not in the perception of the voice but in the bringing it to bear upon the reality of the people's life. Apart from, and often against, his own will, the prophet must take over and fulfil his task; he must both apprehend and preach inspired truth'.¹ On the other hand, as the last few words of this quotation suggest, the prophet is primarily a religious man, with a special relationship to God. Whilst it is too easy to put so much emphasis on the elements of ecstasy and the extraordinary that the prophets' concern and relation with the people of their time is ignored, it is also too easy to view the prophets as great religious individuals. It is not as if the religion of Israel stood still and the prophets either represented it or rebelled against it. Rather they were called to use their peculiar insights in the reassertion and the reinterpretation of the

1. Heschel, op.cit., p.445.

traditions of Israel, in a knowledge of God which was developing and growing.

Clements argues that the newness and uniqueness of the canonical prophets was their awakening in Israel a deeper awareness of what the covenant meant.¹ He writes, 'Primarily the significance of the canonical prophets is to be found in the part which they played in maintaining and interpreting the Yahwistic tradition through years of crisis'.² This surely is correct as far as it goes but, as suggested above, it fails to make clear the basis of this prophetic task and the prophetic claim to uniqueness. To determine the part they played in Israel's religious history, we need to determine what kind of men the prophets were. True, they were not the founders of ethical monotheism, but they did have an intensely personal God with a unique character. It was not so much their peculiar gifts or their extraordinary experiences, but their unique understanding of this God that gave the prophets an 'office', in which they had to declare Israel's God to Israel.³ This is what they were commissioned and called to do.

It was argued in chapter IV that the prophets were isolated from the people by the intimacy of their experience and knowledge of God, by their peculiar partnership with God and the responsibility of speaking his word.⁴ So here the

1. Clements, Prophecy and Covenant, p.26.

2. Ibid., p.214.

3. On the way in which prophetic experience, combined with the faith of ancient Israel, gave the prophet a peculiar task as mediator and teacher, see, e.g., Wolff, in ZAW, 52, 1934, p.22.

4. Ch.IV, e.g., pp.441ff., 482ff.

contention is that the prophet is set apart. He is set apart by his relationship to God and his commission by God. If the prophet has any claim to uniqueness, qualification, and authority, this is based on his appointment by Yahweh to the particular task of receiving and proclaiming his word. If there is any prophetic 'office', then it is an 'office' established by Yahweh through divine call and appointment. Call and commission form the prophet's only claim and defence.

Though the question of call and commission may be said to be present in the call narratives which are included in the prophetic books (e.g. Isa.6; Jer.1), it does not arise in any of these as a crucial problem. As we have seen, a motive to defend and authenticate the prophet's position and message may lie behind such call narratives, and the suggestion that the prophet will meet opposition is a recurrent feature in them. Nonetheless, they contain no explicit reference to particular challenges to the prophet's authority. Paradoxically enough, the problem in its most pronounced form occurs in the records of a prophet of whom it is often said that no account of his call has been preserved, viz., Amos. It is, therefore, above all in a discussion of Am.7:10-17 that the nature of the prophetic call in relation to institutional status may most profitably be considered.

ii) Amos 7:10-17

It is my contention that this passage constitutes the classic illustration of the conflict which arose because the canonical prophet lacked official status, appointment, and

authority in society, whilst claiming an 'official' status, appointment, and authority in a different sense. We saw, in our consideration of 'false' prophecy, that when challenged, the prophet responds with his assertion that his authority derives from a personal direct relationship to and commission by Yahweh.¹ Narratives involving such confrontations have been grouped together under the general heading of 'prophetic conflict'.² In them, the prophet has to declare what he is about and why. Now, Am.7:10-17 represents such a passage. The conflict here may not be between prophet and prophet, though, as we shall see, this possibility cannot be ruled out, since one of the most important questions in the exegesis of this passage is whether or not Amos was dissociating himself from one sort of prophet and claiming to be another. Certainly, however, the narrative is about conflict of some sort. It must be admitted, however, that this (and particularly vv.14f.), is amongst the most controverted passages in the OT and in order to show its peculiar relevance to the present enquiry into the prophetic 'office', detailed consideration must be given to its major problems and ambiguities and the solutions and interpretations that have been offered.

There are two main lines of interpretation, depending on the tense used to translate v.14. לֹא-נִנְיָ אֲנִי וְלֹא נִנְיָ אֲנִי כִּי-בִגְדֵי אֲנִי וְבִגְדֵי שִׂמְרֵי is a nominal sentence, which could be translated with either the present or the past tense. The Hebrew text is undoubtedly ambiguous. Verse 14,

1. See above, ch.II, pp.122f.

2. By Crenshaw, op.cit.

however, obviously cannot lie in isolation, nor can the interpretation of the whole passage be determined from this verse alone. Its interpretation is also related to the meaning of Amaziah's attack, in vv.12 and 13, which is not itself uncontroversial, and to the whole tone and purpose of the passage. There are so many possibilities and the questions are so interrelated that it is not really possible to give an answer to any of them until each aspect has been considered in the light of the others. Because of this, it seems almost impossible to begin an examination of the passage. The most natural and arguably the most correct place to begin, however, would be at the beginning, that is, with the words of Amaziah in a report to the king and, more important, in his attack on Amos.

The nature of the sanctuary at Bethel and Amaziah's position and authority there call for some comment. The state sanctuaries at Bethel and Dan were given royal patronage by Jeroboam I to compete with the established religious centre in Jerusalem (1 Kgs.12:26-33). They were part of a deliberate plan to create a religious structure closely associated with Jeroboam's own dynasty and to break the relation of the northern tribes to the central sanctuary in Jerusalem. It is, therefore, true to say that the 'state religion of Israel was an expression of its monarchy and the instrument in its politics'.¹ Mays continues, 'Amaziah's justification of his expulsion of Amos unabashedly states the official view held in Israel's ruling circles'. Amaziah

1. Mays, op.cit., p.135.

is a successor of the state priesthood ordained by the first Jeroboam and he, through the king, has the power that is the real defining concern of the cult at Bethel. This description does seem to show the state religion of Israel in a bad light and to imply that it had no heart whatever, but was merely expediency or, worse, an example of the degradation of the nation. This impression is, in fact, confirmed by other parts of Amos's preaching (e.g. 4:4f.). The exact nature and extent of this degradation is not of vital importance here, however. The point is that Amaziah's words show that he expects to have, at the hand of the king, complete control over the activities at the sanctuary.¹ It is also possible, in this context, that Amaziah judges Amos's message to be part of a stratagem in a political conspiracy to overthrow the government. This fear of conspiracy will be discussed further, when considering Amos's reply. It is enough to state here that, as priest, Amaziah had authority over Bethel's cult and jurisdiction over the personnel who functioned there. He now assumes this jurisdiction over Amos.

There is some debate over the tone of the attack. This is largely centred on the meaning of $\eta\zeta\pi$ and ואכל שם לחם

It has been argued that $\eta\zeta\pi$ was the prophet of the South and that א'ל was the prophet of the North. In this case, Amaziah would be assuming that the professional Southern prophet had no right to assume the function of and usurp the position of the Northern nebiim.² To anticipate the

1. cf. Wolff, Joel und Amos, pp.357f.

2. See Lust, op.cit., pp.249f., cf. ch.I, pp.12f.

next section and to illustrate how difficult it is to isolate the questions, a certain interpretation of vv.14 and 15 would necessarily follow. This would be that Amos did not take up the term נָבִי in his reply, simply because it was an accurate title for him. He was a prophet of the South. He, therefore, did not want to contradict it, but merely to refer to his special call which enabled him to prophesy in the North, although he was a נָבִי from the South. He would be saying, 'No, I am not a nabi (Northerner), but a hozeh, but because of a call, I can prophesy here'.

On this interpretation, Amaziah's use of the word would not be derogatory. Its significance would be that he assumed that the official prophets of North and South were under official control and were, therefore, limited in their activity. Against this, Amos is replying that a special call from Yahweh to prophesy in the North overrides any official limitation and jurisdiction.

H.H. Rowley's view of the matter, viz., that Amos is here asserting that he is a nabi because of Yahweh's call, will be discussed in more detail below, but it is relevant to notice here that it rests upon the notion that Amaziah's words are scornful and that 'to eat bread' means to earn a living and, therefore, to consult self-interest.¹ J. Lindblom, on the other hand, rejects this interpretation precisely because he finds no hint of any scorn in Amaziah's words. He writes, 'His reaction to the terrible oracles of Amos was one of fear and horror. As for the question of payment, it was a normal

1. Rowley, in Eissfeldt Festschrift, p.198.

and legitimate practice for prophets to receive their livelihood from the sanctuaries'.¹ He thinks that in Amos Amaziah saw a genuine prophet, who was sacrosanct and to be taken seriously. It was the content of this message which was intolerable in the sanctuary at Bethel.

Similarly, Würthwein thinks that we ought to break away from the Rowley interpretation of 7:10-17. He says that it is noticeable that the passage, even though written by Amos's friends, is not malicious towards Amaziah. Amaziah is not scornful, but simply exercising his jurisdiction. He thinks that v.12 reflects great tolerance. To 'eat bread' is, he says, simply what Amos deserves for prophesying. Behind Rowley's interpretation of this, he says, stands the picture which Micah gives us of professional liars. The expulsion order rests on the nature of the sanctuary at Bethel. This is such that the sort of message that Amos has preached cannot be allowed to be preached there. Würthwein sees a clash between the kindness of the high priest and his official obligation. Amaziah is advising Amos to go to Judah where his words will be permitted. For a parallel case of such an attitude of genuine regard for the prophet's safety, Würthwein compares the experience of Jeremiah in the Jerusalem Temple (Jer.36).²

1. Lindblom, PAI, p.184.

2. Würthwein, in ZAW, 62/63, 1949/51, pp.19-22. It may be noted that this interpretation fails to take into account the evident hostility of Amaziah to Amos (vv.10-13). It has further been argued that this interpretation of Amaziah's tone is improbable, in the light of Amos's reply. He sees in Amaziah's attack a rejection by the priest of Yahweh's word and messenger. Amos replies that he has no need to earn his living by prophesying. This is then followed by
(Contd.)

An exponent of the view just rejected is Hammershaimb. He contends that the use of $\eta\text{J}\Pi$ is disparaging. It is a scornful reference to Amos's visions. Amaziah, he says, treats Amos as one of the professional fortune-tellers, who sold their knowledge for money (cf. Mic.3:5,11; Jer.6:14, et.). He comments further that some of these belonged to bands, who made their living in this way.¹

It is quite possible to understand $\eta\text{J}\Pi$ as a reference to Amos's visions without its being derogatory. So Mays, who argues that it was an alternative term for prophet (nabi) in the eighth century 'testifying to the experience of visions among the prophets and to one of the roots of the office in the ancient profession of seer of earlier times'.² Mays seems undecided, however, as to how seriously Amaziah takes Amos and his words. In the comments just referred to, Mays implies that Amaziah does not reckon with Amos's presentation of his message as the word of God. He is merely concerned with the decency and order of the cult at Bethel and this is being disrupted by Amos's preaching. However, it is surely fear that Amos's words have power, as Yahweh's word, that would make Amaziah and Jeroboam so adamant that the prophet be expelled. It is, of course, true that the OT shows that the attitude towards prophets is ambivalent. They are

Contd.) a threat on Amaziah and his family, because he has dared to oppose the message which Yahweh commissioned his prophet to deliver, Clements Prophecy and Covenant, p.36. This understanding of Amos's reply will be discussed further, but it cannot be used to elucidate the meaning of Amaziah's attack.

1. Hammershaimb, The Book of Amos, p.115.
2. Mays, op.cit., p.136, and see above, ch.I, for discussion of the meaning of $\eta\text{J}\Pi$.

not only respected and feared, but scorned (e.g. 2 Kgs.9:11 and Jer.29:26, where a prophet is called insane - מלשון).

But even in the apparent scorn, the prophets are taken seriously. In fact, it is probably because of their 'eccentricity' that they are respected and feared. Whatever the prophet may be, he is a powerful man, powerful in that his words have creative power, for good or for evil.

Though there is no clear evidence that Amaziah's words are not derogatory, there is no incontrovertible proof that they are. It would certainly seem less dangerous to base our estimate of them on the total content, that is, the nature of the sanctuary at Bethel and the position of Jeroboam and the priest, rather than on precarious interpretations of מִנְּבִי . . . As we saw in chapter I, the terms used for 'prophet' have never been a great help in achieving clear estimates of the divisions or the common ground between prophets in Israel. This is not, of course, to reject their importance altogether. Amos 7:10-17 would be the last place to do this. The terms מִנְּבִי, אֲנִי, and אֲנִי-יְהוָה are used and must be considered. Nonetheless, as has often been pointed out, we bring to this passage opinions about the function of the nabi and we use these in determining the tense of v.14 and the sense of the passage.¹ Opinions about the function or office which nabi designates cannot be settled by this one text. It is perhaps possible to interpret this text simply on the grounds of terminology, especially if the present tense is assumed in v.14, which consequently becomes

1. Ibid., p.137.

a disclaimer that Amos is a nabi, but we surely make it harder for ourselves if we ignore the context of the passage.

We must ask, what is Amaziah's notion of a man who 'prophesies'? We can suggest many answers, but we cannot be sure; hence the many possibilities about to be considered. What we can be sure of is that there is here a conflict between Amaziah and the prophet. The basis of the conflict is that Amos is ignoring the limitations set, if not by his office, at least by the nature of the sanctuary at Bethel and imposed by the king and his high priest. Amaziah clearly expects to have jurisdiction over and to control the message of men who preach at Bethel. Whether Amaziah's words are derogatory or not, the issue is surely one of authority. Only now can we consider the controversial v.14, for it is essentially a reply to vv.12,13.

As already mentioned, the tense of v.14 is the major reason for the controversy here. H.H. Rowley gives a summary of the views which have been held.¹ It has been contended,² and is still sometimes contended,³ that the only view in accordance with Hebrew usage is the present tense. That it is not really so simple, says Rowley, is indicated by the fact that S.R. Driver and E. König supported the RV rendering, with the past tense. Nor are they without predecessors or followers. The Vulgate reads, 'Non sum propheta, et non sum filius prophetae, sed armentarius ego sum, vellicans

1. Rowley, in Eisfeldt Festschrift, pp.192-194. For a full bibliography, see Wolff, Joel und Amos, p.352.

2. Cripps, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Amos, ad loc.

3. So Cohen, op.cit., p.176 - '...under no conditions can the employment of a personal pronoun without a verb be regarded as anything but present tense'.

sycamores', but Jerome comments, 'Non solum, inquit, non sum propheta, sive non eram (quorum alterum humilitatis, alterum veritatis est) nec filius prophetae, nec de prophetali stirpe descendens; sed cum essem armentarius et ruborum mora distringerem, tulit me Dominus sequentem greges'. Also the Rabbinical commentators favour the supplying of the past tense.

The earliest external witness to the meaning of the text is the LXX, which supplied the past tense:- Οὐκ ἤμην προφήτης ἐγὼ οὐδὲ υἱὸς προφήτου, ἀλλὰ ἡ εἰπόλος ἤμην καὶ κνίζων συγκάμινος

Rowley says that the only possible indication of the tense of v.14 is to be sought in the opening words of v.15, where the strong λ and the imperfect, 'JPP'1 gives the past tense and suggests that the action indicated stands in a temporal sequence after what is expressed in the foregoing words. But this is not conclusive, as the rules which govern the use of the waw consecutive are not so rigid. Rowley gives as an illustration of this Ex.6:2f., where a present tense must be supplied in the noun clause, while the verb of the following clause must certainly be rendered by a past tense - 'JX 'TV' lxl ... ׀הגבא־לא אגאגו הוה', 'I am Yahweh and I appeared unto Abraham...as El Shaddai' (cf. S.R. Driver, Hebrew Tenses, 76(a)). Rowley concludes that the issue cannot be decided on grounds of syntax. It is only 'more syntactically natural if a past tense is supplied...'. Appeal must, therefore, be made to other considerations. These considerations will now be looked at, firstly in relation to understanding the present tense in v.14.

The chief argument for understanding the present tense in v.14 is that it only has real point if it expresses what Amos is or is not at the present, not what he was or was not before he was called.¹ This would perhaps be the end of the matter did v.14 stand on its own, but it does not. Verse 15 expresses what Amos is, viz., a man called to prophesy to Israel. Verse 14 could quite reasonably form a contrast with this.

However, there have been numerous scholars who have understood the present tense, and the meanings which they consequently derive from the passage need to be discussed.

If the present tense is assumed, then Amos is denying that he is a $\text{X}^{\prime}11$ or a $\text{X}^{\prime}11\text{-}\eta$. Now the only thing that is clear, and even this becomes blurred as it is surrounded by all the possible hypotheses, is that Amos is contrasting what he is with the content of the term nabi or ben nabi or both. But v.14 is a reply to vv.12,13, in which Amaziah is in a certain position and says certain things. As already indicated, it is possible to make much of Amaziah's use of the word hozeh. Amos is then objecting to the use of this word. If so, it is difficult to understand the retort that he is not a nabi. Amaziah does not use the noun nabi, although he does use the verb derived from it. Unless it be assumed that the terms hozeh and nabi are here used loosely as synonyms,² the only way in which this statement that he is not a nabi could make sense as a reply to Amaziah's calling

1. So Lindblom, PAI, p.183; and Danell, 'Var Amos verkligen en nabi?', Svensk exegetisk årsbok, 16, 1951, pp.7ff.

2. See discussion in ch.I, pp.12f.

him a hozeh is the one already mentioned, in which hozeh is understood as the Southern prophet and nabi as the Northern prophet, the only one with a right to prophesy at Bethel. Until further evidence is adduced to show that the terms were used in this way, at least for a period, in the history of prophecy, this interpretation will not be convincing.

The other ways of understanding nabi in Amos's reply also make an effort to interpret it as a reply to Amaziah's attack, but are not dependent on any particular understanding of the term hozeh. Rather they see Amos's denial that he is a nabi as the answer to Amaziah's view of him. There are two possibilities here. One is that Amos is objecting to the current understanding of nabi, or, more particularly, Amaziah's understanding of nabi. The other is that he is asserting that he is not a nabi at all. Either way, there is a distinction being established between at least two 'types' of prophet. As Amaziah must have his notion of what a prophet is from somewhere, his notion must surely correspond to an actual prophetic fact.

One of the main ways in which nabi has consequently been taken is to mean a 'professional' prophet. The meaning of the term 'professional' in relation to this passage has already been discussed.¹ Lindblom holds that it denotes a professional, cultic prophet. Thus, in his reply, Amos is denying that he is such a prophet. He is a free and unattached prophet who consequently stands directly under Yahweh's command and is thus exempt from taking orders from a

1. See above, ch.II, pp.85-89.

chief priest. Professionally he is a cattle-breeder both at the time of his call and also when he stands before Amaziah.¹ This view, with differences in detail, is also taken by Wolff, who contends that Amaziah, representing Jeroboam, cannot allow this sort of 'free' prophecy in the North. The sort of message that Amos is delivering is impossible in the king's sanctuary. Amos then makes a sharp distinction between the official prophet, the nabi, and the prophet called by Yahweh, between cultic, official prophecy and free, Yahweh-instituted prophecy. He is not what is understood by nabi.²

The main points of interest here lie in the assumptions which Lindblom and Wolff make. Firstly, they assume the existence of cultic prophets. Secondly, they think that they were professional, in that they were cultic officials, under the control of the high priest at the sanctuary and earning their livelihood in this way. In this context, Lindblom, believes, ben nabi is a parallel expression to nabi, as used by Amaziah and signifies a member of a cultic, prophetic guild. He thinks that Amaziah's misunderstanding has arisen because Amos has temporarily attached himself to the sanctuary prophets at Bethel. He himself sees no particular significance in the fact that Amos should do this. He implies that it is quite natural and in no way indicates that Amos actually was a sanctuary prophet. Although not explicitly mentioned

1. Lindblom, PAI, p.185.

2. Wolff, Joel und Amos, pp.357-361. It is to be noted that Wolff goes further than Lindblom by asserting that hozeh here denotes the free prophet whilst nabi here denotes the official prophet.

by Lindblom, Amaziah's view of Amos, on Lindblom's interpretation, could lend credence to the idea that Amos was, in fact, such a cultic prophet, but out of his own territory. A third point of interest is Lindblom's assertion that Amos is not saying that he is a prophet of an altogether new type. He is not, as has been suggested, filling the term nabi with a new content, but is simply rejecting the interpretation of it in terms of a cultic official. This view surely assumes that there were plenty of nebiim at that time, who were not cultic prophets and with whom Amos identified himself.

We also looked at Morgenstern's definition of a professional prophet as one active in stirring up conspiracy.¹ Amos is, he thinks, rejecting the suggestion that he is such a prophet. He is not a nabi. He is something altogether new in the history of prophecy. On the question of why Amos uses the verb from נ'נן if he rejects the title נ'נן, Morgenstern says that it would have been extremely difficult to find a new term.² In fact, the title נ'נן could happily be kept. The old term would then be invested with a new, divine office. In this respect, Morgenstern and Lindblom agree, i.e., that נ'נן can be used in two different senses. They do, however, differ in their estimate of what this says about the history and phenomenon of prophecy. Morgenstern thinks Amos is claiming to be a startlingly new type of prophet, whilst Lindblom does not.

Würthwein's view on the 'newness' of Amos will be taken up again later in relation to the visions in Am.7;8, but of

1. See, for details of this, ch.II, pp.87ff.

2. Morgenstern, op.cit., pp.32-34.

immediate importance is what he says about the meaning of nabi here. This meaning, he claims, has been left far too vague by Rowley who, he says, uses it in a moderate, general sense to include early prophets, canonical prophets, and those who preserved their message.¹ Thus Rowley only takes us to the beginning of the problem. Würthwein asserts that the nebiim were the representatives of the institution of cult prophecy in Israel.² If this is so, he then asks, what can Amos be saying? The working-hypothesis which Würthwein proposes is built on and, in his view, proved by Amos's visions and by the oracles against foreign nations. It is in some ways a mistake to discuss Würthwein along with those who think that Amos is denying that he is a nabi, for this is not a true description of Würthwein's view. He believes rather that Amos is asserting that he is a nabi 'plus', and that he is here affirming his nebiism. It is Amaziah, he argues, who finds this difficult to accept. The relevance of Würthwein's view here lies in his conception of nabi. The nabi, he believes, had a particular office, which consisted in promoting $\square 15\psi$, weal, in its comprehensive sense. Such a prophet was not a prophet of weal from personal motives, but on account of his office.³ Because of this, a prophet ($\chi'11$) of woe is a self-contradiction. He stresses that this does not demonstrate the difference between the nebiim and the canonical prophets, as some have held, notably von Rad.

1. Würthwein, in ZAW, 62/63, 1949/51, p.18 (on Rowley, in Eissfeldt Festschrift, p.198).

2. Ibid., pp.13,18.

3. Ibid., p.26.

It is not simply that the nebiim are prophets of weal, whilst the canonical prophets are prophets of woe, for the office of the canonical prophets is also one of proclaiming weal. They are to create weal in two ways, by future-proclamation and by intercession. The difference, he believes, lies rather in the fact that for the canonical prophets, this 'office' as such is not enough.¹ They must have a personal commission. Now Amos's personal commission was one of proclaiming woe, not just against Israel's enemies, but ultimately against Israel herself. It is this that Amaziah cannot accept. If Amos is not proclaiming weal for Israel and thus fulfilling the office of the nabi, he cannot be a nabi.² Würthwein himself does not suggest for one moment that the nabi is the 'false' prophet, but the content which he gives to the term nabi is, of course, what some people understand by 'false' prophet, that is, a prophet who proclaims $\text{D}1\text{'}\text{V}$ because that is his official task.³

Related to this is Rowley's consideration of the meaning of nabi in the sense of a 'professional' prophet. Whilst he, of course, belongs with those who argue for understanding the past tense in v.14 and consequently rejects the idea that Amos is here denying that he is a nabi, some of his arguments must be raised at this point. Rowley clearly does not equate nebiism with self-interested, mercenary prophecy. His contention is that Amos is denying that he prophesies from

1. Ibid., p.27.

2. It is worth noting against Würthwein that it is difficult to find this sense in the words of Amaziah.

3. See also, above, ch.II, pp.115-125, and III, pp.235-245, and below, pp.567-569.

self-interest, that is, in order to earn money. Amos is not denying that he is a nabi. Therefore in Rowley's view the nabi cannot simply denote the professional prophet. It is perhaps worth making the point here, however, that Amos could be denying that he prophesies out of self-interest without necessarily denying that he is a professional prophet, that is, if 'professional' is not a derogatory term, suggesting one who prophesies out of self-interest alone.¹ The fact remains, however, that in Rowley's view אָבִי cannot denote something from which Amos wishes to dissociate himself, i.e., a self-interested prophet.

In arguing that Amos cannot be saying, 'I am not a nabi', because there is nothing inherent in the nabi from which Amos could be dissociating himself, Rowley mentions two other suggestions that have been made. One is that Amos was differentiating between himself and the ecstatic. He comments that some scholars (T.H. Robinson, for example) think ecstasy is of the essence of prophecy, of nebiism. Rowley himself is not convinced that nabi had any essentially ecstatic connotation. He believes that the verb originally meant 'to act as a prophet' and the admitted ecstatic significance of the verb was secondary. He continues that, if ecstasy was integral to the delivery of every oracle, then Amos must have exhibited it on this occasion, or Amaziah would not have mistaken him for a nabi. If, on the other hand, it is not integral to the delivery of every oracle, the issue of ecstasy does not necessarily arise here. In either case, there is no

1. On this, see also, ch.II, p.89.

reason to suppose that Amos is merely repudiating the idea that he is an ecstatic.¹

The other suggestion is not quite so effectively dealt with.² This is that Amos is denying that he belongs to a prophetic guild.³ Rowley objects to this on the grounds that Amaziah has not suggested that he is a member of such a guild and that there is no evidence that every prophet belonged to such a guild. Moreover, Amos was here unaccompanied for Amaziah to see.

Rowley does not deal thoroughly with the possibility that, at that time and in that place, נָבִי was understood in a special way, to mean any one of the categories of prophet mentioned above, for instance, professional, 'false', cultic, or guild prophets. Rowley is, of course, rightly dubious whether the tenses or the terms are of the essence here. Nonetheless, not all his arguments against the above possibilities are conclusive. It is surely feasible that if Amos knew or understood Amaziah to have a particular understanding of nabi with which he disagreed, he could be dissociating himself from the nabi. It is not sufficient to say that nowhere has Amaziah charged him with being a 'false' prophet or a member of a guild. This point can only be persuasive when further arguments are brought, as indeed are brought by Rowley, on the possibilities of nabi's meaning 'false' or professional prophet.⁴ One of these is that the

1. Rowley, in Eissfeldt Festschrift, pp.194f.

2. *Ibid.*, p.197.

3. Pedersen, Israel, III-IV, p.133.

4. Rowley, in Eissfeldt Festschrift, p.196.

word nabi cannot possibly mean a 'false' prophet, as Jeremiah, who strongly condemns the 'false' prophets (e.g. Jer.23), is himself called to be a nabi (Jer.1:5).¹

S. Cohen, who, as already mentioned, argues that the present tense must be understood in v.14, on grounds of syntax, both agrees and disagrees with Rowley here. By altering the Massoretic accentuation, he drives a wedge between nabi and ben nabi and thus believes that Amos is claiming the first title, whilst rejecting the other.² Cohen rejects the translation, 'I am not a prophet; that is, I am not a professional prophet, one of the prophetic guild (א'לל ׀)', which, he says, 'though to some extent compatible with the thought of Amos, is extremely forced, in that it does violence to the meaning of the conjunction ׀ , and uses it in a way not found elsewhere in the Bible'. His argument is as follows.

Nabi is used throughout the Bible in the sense of one who professes to declare the will of God to the people; it is used alike whether the nabi is a true or a 'false' one. Ben nabi, however, is seldom used and, except here, is always in the plural. 'Such men were obviously acolytes who received prophetic training and in course of time would be allowed to function as cultic prophets of the type that the literary prophets always denounced'. Amos had not been a disciple of a professional prophet; hence, Amaziah called him ׀׀׀׀ , a lesser title. Amos would resent this term and insist, on

1. But even so, this may be to oversimplify the matter. See the earlier discussion in ch.II; and also ch.I, pp.32f. for the application of the term nabi to Jeremiah.

2. Cohen, op.cit., pp.175-178. See also, ch.I, p.25.

the basis of his direct call from God, 'I am a nabi, even though I am not a ben nabi'. All that is necessary is to ignore the Massoretic accentuation of this verse and to break the opening words of the reply of Amos into two phrases: - 'No! I am indeed a nabi (prophet), but not a ben nabi (professional prophet)'.¹ Amos's reply is then an emphatic negation of the entire speech of Amaziah. In reply to the suggestion that he could earn his living by prophesying elsewhere, he says that he has other ways of getting his sustenance. In reply to the command that he must not speak in Bethel, he says that God has bidden him to speak directly to Israel. Finally, the epithet נביא is rejected in favour of the desired term נבי . Cohen concludes by expressing the consequences of this for the history of prophecy. It set, he says, the key for the entire prophetic movement. 'It did not replace the term Navi by a new word, but gave it a new meaning. It was a denial of the prophecy of the past, an affirmation of the prophecy of the future. It repudiated the right of the government to suppress its teaching; it claimed the old title of Navi, not as a professional soothsayer and cultic servant, but rather as one who heard the call of God and was irresistibly compelled to speak His word in defiance of all opposition'.

This would be reasonably convincing, were it not so full of presuppositions. Can it be assumed that the נביא were cultic prophets and that these were the type that the canonical prophets denounced? If this is the case, why was

1. He supports the use of נבי as a plain, unqualified negative by references to Jgs.12:5; Hag.2:12.

the term not used and the division made plain, by Jeremiah, for instance? The link between the guilds and the cult is reasonable, in that 2 Kgs. shows the $\square'x'lj\dot{\imath}\dot{\imath} - 'j\dot{\imath}$ in connection with sanctuaries, but this is the most that can be said. Similarly, Cohen cites no evidence to show that $\dot{\imath}j\dot{\imath}\pi$ was a lesser title than $x'lj$. The most valuable point to emerge from Cohen's argument is the one previously made, that Amos may be investing the term $x'lj$ with a new and significant meaning.

Another way of interpreting Amos's reply with the present tense supplied is to understand an interrogative, the reply becoming not an expression of indignation at a slur on himself or any sort of denial, but rather an emphatic word of explanation - 'Am I not a prophet...? For I am a...and the Lord took me...'. In other words, Amos simply here describes the situation in which he received the special call to prophesy to the people of the Northern kingdom and emphasises the reality of that call. The question as to what he had done previously, whether he had acted as a prophet or not, is not immediately raised. This suggestion is made by Ackroyd.¹ He then goes on to discuss the possibilities which follow.

Unlike Cohen, he assumes that the sense of the first phrase is closely parallel to the sense of the second; - 'Am I not a prophet? Am I not the son of a prophet?'. But then we are back to the meaning of $x'lj - j\dot{\imath}$. The two possibilities which Ackroyd gives are a) I belong to a prophetic family, that is, a guild, a professional group, and

1. Ackroyd, in Exp T, 68, 1956/7, p.94.

b) I have the quality which belongs to a prophet. The argument for this is that... $\text{~} \text{ן} \text{ל}$ is used to mean a man who has the quality of... (e.g., $\text{ל} \text{ן} \text{ל}$, which means, men who have the quality of strength, in Dt.3:18; Jgs.18:2; cf. Ecc.10:17 $\text{-} \text{ל} \text{ן} \text{ל} \text{ן} \text{ל}$ - where $\text{ן} \text{ל}$ is employed with a noun to indicate a type of person. If b) is the case, then Amos has simply said the same thing twice and the question of profession or family is left unanswered. If a) is the case, then we have a precise piece of evidence to suggest that Amos is a professional prophet. And, Ackroyd asks, why should he not be? Would it mean that he was any the less inspired? Ackroyd thinks not, as there were professional prophets who were genuinely inspired (e.g., Micaiah in 1 Kgs. . 22), besides those with an eye to the main chance. The problem then, as now, he points out, was the lack of any satisfactory external criterion for distinguishing between genuine and non-genuine religious inspiration. Amos was arguing with Amaziah that the genuine prophet was he who obeyed the word of God without question and, therefore, felt himself bound to prophesy.

Ackroyd's suggestion that he should understand here 'Am I not a prophet?...' is rejected by Cohen, because of the lack of interrogative particle;¹ but Ackroyd has considerable support from G.R. Driver. Driver argues that the Hebrew interrogative, $\text{h}\bar{\text{a}}\text{l}\bar{\text{o}}$, frequently has affirmative force and is often so translated by the ancient versions, e.g., ἰδοὺ in LXX of Gen.13:9.² At the next stage, the interrogative

1. Cohen, op.cit., p.176.

2. G.R. Driver, 'Amos 7:14', Exp T, 67, 1955, pp.91f.

particle is omitted, e.g. Ex.8:26, where the Hebrew w^elō is translated by the interrogative hālō, 'will not...?'. Lastly, the simple lō' is used with interrogative force, which easily becomes asseverative (e.g. 1 Sam.14:30; cf. Vulgate's nonne). From other examples, Driver claims that this is a well-established idiom. Once this idiom is recognised, he says, Amos's reply in 7:14 is free from difficulty. He supposes that his prophetic commission to prophesy wherever he is sent is being called into question and indignantly replies, 'I not a prophet nor the son of a prophet because I am a pricker of sycamore trees! And the Lord has taken me from following the flock and has said to me: "Go and prophesy to my people Israel!"', i.e., I am a prophet fully commissioned.

Driver himself has been challenged by Vogt who argues that the explanation lies not in lō' but in w^ě.¹ This conjunction seems to have here the explicative sense of 'that is', 'namely'. He cites many examples from BDB, e.g. Gen.4:4. Vogt thinks that nabi at this time bore the double sense of i) a professional and ii) one whom God has called. He believes that Amaziah in his rebuke regards Amos as a professional and Amos replies, I am no nabi, that is, I am no ben nabi, a professional; but I am a nabi in the other sense. I am no professional, self-chosen nabi, but a prophet whom God has called. Vogt argues that the present tense seems to be demanded from v.14b as for v.14a.² Amos is professionally a herdsman and will presumably go back to his herd when he has

1. Vogt, "Waw explicative in Amos 7:14", Exp T, 68, 1956/7, p.301.

2. Ibid., p.302.

fulfilled his commission.

In reply to this, Driver says that Vogt's argument is grammatically convincing, but does not ring true to the circumstances in which the prophet finds himself. It weakens the prophet's protest at the accusation of his not being a prophet.¹

The two features which recur in the interpretations based on the present tense understanding of v.14 are that Amos is stressing his commission and that there is a clash of authority. A feature which occurs in a number of these views is that Amos is saying something new about prophecy. It is now necessary to look at the interpretations which understand a past tense in v.14. Some of these have inevitably been referred to and to some extent discussed in the foregoing analysis.

The main arguments for understanding the past tense are as follows. Firstly, it is syntactically more likely, because of 'יָנִי' at the beginning of v.15.

Secondly, it is difficult to suppose that Amos is denying that he is a nabi, in a bad sense, in the light of his other references to the nebiim in 2:11 and 3:7, which are favourable. In chapter 3, Amos, defending his own activity, expressly states that the intentions of God are revealed to his nebiim. He could not have meant that God revealed his intentions to people from whom he sharply dissociated himself, whether they be thought of as ecstasies, professionals, or 'false' prophets.

1. Ibid. It is, of course, begging the question to assume that Amaziah is accusing Amos of not being a prophet.

Both 3:7 and 7:14 refer to the divine constraint whereby Amos became a prophet, and it would be surprising if the one claimed the title נָבִי, while the other disdained the title while yet claiming the function. It should be remarked that some regard 3:7 as a later addition, because it lacks the form of the other lines, is prosaic, and interrupts the sequence. The argument is not destroyed, however, as the verb is used in v.8. 2:11, if authentic, shows that Amos knew of prophets from whom he would not dissociate himself. It is noteworthy that this verse is rejected by many proponents of the present-tense hypothesis, e.g., Weiser and T.H. Robinson.

Thirdly, it has frequently been observed that it is strange that in v.15 the prophet should use the verb that is cognate with the title which he is said to repudiate in v.14. As Rowley puts it, 'If he denies the title of the nabi he yet claims the function'.¹ As already mentioned, Morgenstern thinks that there was no other term available for use. But, says Rowley, this does not really meet the difficulty. Jeremiah has no problem in finding another expression, when he says וְלֹא אֶדְבָר עוֹד וְשִׁחַר (Jer.20:9) and Amos could have said, 'Go, speaking in my name to my people'. If Amos had wanted to repudiate the title, he would have made a better job of it. On the contrary, he stresses that he was called to prophesy (נָבִי). What is such a man to be called if not a prophet (נָבִי)?

Linked to this, is the argument that a division between nabi and another kind of prophet is not easy to make.

1. Rowley, in Eissfeldt Festschrift, p.194.

Reventlow mentions the fact that some, notably Lehming,¹ argue for a distinction between the substantive, which they think is a technical term for the prophet of weal, and the verb, which they think is used of all prophets.² Reventlow argues that in reality such a division rests upon a false understanding of the nature of canonical prophecy, viz., that it was characteristically prophecy of woe and not weal. Reventlow says that canonical prophecy includes the function of proclaiming both weal and woe, and that woe is a legitimate function of the nabi.³ Reventlow concludes that the distinction between prophets of weal, identifying them with cultic prophets and institutional prophets, and free, 'writing' prophets and prophets of woe is just not possible.⁴

Gunneweg had earlier argued strongly against Lehming's attempt to argue that the verb was used in a wider and less technical sense than the noun.⁵ He says that there is no evidence to suggest such a separation of the two forms derived from the same stem. He quotes at this point Rowley who says of Amos, 'He was so like a prophet that Amaziah thought he was one, and he himself felt so like one that he could only use the term, "prophecy" for what he was engaged in doing'.⁶

1. Lehming, 'Erwägungen zu Amos', ZThK, 55, 1958, pp.146ff.; cf. Wolff, Joel und Amos, p.361, where he says that the use of $\text{X}11\text{,}7$ in v.15 does not go against the present tense understanding of v.14, as $\text{X}'11$ has the limited sense of an official prophet.
2. For details of Reventlow's argument here see, Das Amt des Propheten bei Amos, pp.16ff.
3. As we have seen at various points in this thesis, Würthwein's view is at odds with this idea, and see further, below, pp.567-569.
4. Reventlow, Das Amt des Propheten bei Amos, pp.16-22.
5. Gunneweg, in ZThK, 57, 1960, pp.4ff.
6. Rowley, in Eissfeldt Festschrift, p.195.

Gunneweg goes on to consider the suggestion that nabi denoted the cultic prophet, whose task was the proclamation and creation of weal. This, he says, raises the question of judgement in the cult and the prophetic judgement speech which suggest that judgement is a genuine function of the nabi, whether or not this is in connection with the cult.¹ Lehming, he says, attempts to show that Amos separated himself from the earlier nebiim, since his message was one of woe, whilst theirs was one of weal.² He gives as evidence against Lehming the other references to nebiim, the blessing and cursing in the cult, and the ambivalence of weal and woe in Yahwism which, he says, has its classic expression in Am.3:2. He is adamantly against any cleft between cultic nebiim and prophets of woe. Like Reventlow, he claims that the proclamation of both weal and woe was the function of the nabi.³ Whilst he admits that whether the whole proclamation of woe in Amos is to be understood as a function of the legitimate, traditional nabiamt must remain an open question, he says that Amos clearly understands himself as a prophet delivering the message of Israelite prophecy.⁴ Although he thinks that Amaziah is treating Amos as a cultic prophet, he maintains that the point of Amos's reply is simply that he is a prophet not by his own choice but by Yahweh's call.⁵

1. Gunneweg, in ZThK, 57, 1960, pp.6ff. Also see more detailed discussion of this question in ch.III, pp.235-245, and IV, pp.339ff., 357-359.
2. Lehming, in ZThK, 55, 1958, pp.145ff.
3. Gunneweg, in ZThK, 57, 1960, pp.11-15.
4. Ibid., p.16.
5. Ibid., p.15.

A fifth argument, which is adduced by Rowley, is that the two usual philological suggestions about נָבִי indicate that Amos could not here be repudiating the title.¹ If it is connected with the Accadian word nabû (call, announce), and is passive, it is hard to see how Amos can be supposed to be repudiating the title of prophet in the very moment of recounting the experience of his call and, therefore, of the fundamental experience that made him a nabi. If the word is active and means, 'One who speaks, announces a message from God', again it is not likely that Amos makes a denial in the very moment when he is insisting that he is charged with God's message. Against this it can be argued, however, that Amos was not necessarily conscious of the etymology of the word. Semantics and not etymology is what is important here.

What then is the meaning of Amos's reply, if it is, 'I was not a נָבִי ...'? Rowley, as indicated, thinks that it is a reply to Amaziah's insinuation that he should consult self-interest. The emphasis is then on the fact that he is indeed a prophet. He had not chosen the calling of a prophet, or trained to be a prophet, but God laid his hand on him. He is not saying that he is a new sort of prophet, that is, unusual or unique in having a special call, but just that he is a prophet, stands in the prophetic succession, precisely because he is under divine constraint.²

It surely must be admitted that the past tense gives good sense here. Amos would not have evaded the priest's authority by claiming to be a layman. The emphasis of his

1. Rowley, in Eissfeldt Festschrift, pp.195f. For discussion of these suggestions, cf. ch.I, pp.17f.

2. So Rowley, p.198.

answer lies on the command of Yahweh, with which he counters Amaziah's command. 'The authority is not yours, but Yahweh's; the place is not there in Judah, but here in Israel'. The past tense does fit the context and gives as the whole point the divine constraint which is the prophet's sole authority.¹ But we have already seen that the issue of authority can clearly emerge from understanding the present tense in v.14. Amos could be saying, 'I am not a nabi, as you understand the term, who is controlled by the king or the priest, but I am a nabi called by Yahweh', or he could be saying, 'I am not a nabi at all, as unlike the nebiim I am called by Yahweh'. If the past tense is read, Amos could be saying, 'I was not a nabi by profession, and self-interest is not involved, but Yahweh called me to be a nabi and I obeyed'. Surely all these possibilities lay stress on Amos's commission and the question of authority. The consequences of the past and the present tense are not entirely opposed. A difference does exist if it is held that Amos in saying that he is not a nabi is saying something new about prophecy, and this must be looked at further and used in deciding which is the better understanding. The only obvious advantage, at the moment, in understanding the past tense here, is that it meets Amaziah's attack on authority adequately, without being dependent on unclear terminology. This is not conclusive, however, and other, closely related, aspects of the issue must now be considered.

1. So, e.g., Clements, Prophecy and Covenant, who says that the translation on the basis of the past tense is not only permissible in the Hebrew text but 'apart from the grammatical possibilities, it is the interpretation which does fullest justice to other statements which Amos made concerning prophecy' (p.37). Amos is here referring to his call to his task (p.38).

It has so far been assumed that the words of v.15 וַיִּקְחֵנִי וַיְהִי כִּי הָיָה לִּי הַנִּזְוָה אֶל-עַמִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל are a reference to Amos's call. There are, however, two ways of taking this. It could be taken as an allusion to the prophet's initial call, in the same way as Jer.1 and Ezek.2 tell of prophetic calls, or as a reference to a specific commission. The former understanding is given some support by the fact that there is no prophetic vocation report in the Book of Amos and some of the language in the prophet's response to Amaziah resembles that found in such reports. This is argued particularly by G.M. Tucker, with reference to Habel's study which was discussed in chapter IV.¹ He suggests that the words, 'Yahweh took me...', are an allusion to the prophet's call, whilst the remainder of the verse reports his commission (cf. Isa.6:9ff.; Jer.1:7; Ezek. 2:3ff.; Ex.3:10; Jgs.6:14). It is to be noted that his reference to Habel's article on the prophetic call narratives is rather vague. Habel does not, in fact, make this comparison in terms of Amos 7:14. He only mentions Amos to reject the idea that the visions in Amos exhibit the structure of the call form.² Tucker's general point, however, is clear, that vv.14,15 do have some of the features of the call reports. He adds to this a tentative suggestion that, 'in this context, v.14 may recall the objections frequently found in vocation reports', (e.g. Jer.1:6; Ezek.3:11; Jgs.6:15).

It should be mentioned in passing that this raises the question which was considered in chapter IV, concerning the

1. Tucker, 'Prophetic Authenticity', Interpretation, 27, 4, 1973, pp.430f. On Habel's article, see above, ch.IV, pp.429f.

2. Habel, op.cit., p.306.

actuality and reality of the call experience behind the form. It was there argued that the existence of an established call form in no way invalidates the call experience.¹ It could be added here that the allusions to calls, such as Am.7:15, support the claim that such an experience was vital for the canonical prophets, whether or not a form or parts of a form are to be seen in their reports or allusions. This in no way proves, of course, that the reports came directly from the prophets themselves. They could well have been written up by prophetic disciples, friends, or schools; and indeed, many who hold that Am.7:15 does contain a reference to the prophet's call suggest that Am.7:10-17 was written as a defence of his prophetic activity.² Again this in no way invalidates the experience.

It could well be, however, that Amos is here referring to his call, since he is appealing to Yahweh as his highest authority and as the reason for his exercising the prophetic 'office'. This appeal is certainly present in other call narratives and the motive to authenticate does, as we saw in chapter IV, seem to lie behind these narratives. Tucker suggests that the narrative in Am.7 is apologetic, its task being to authenticate the words of Amos, especially the harsh prophecies, in the face of opposition.

It is interesting that attempts have been made to explain Amos's reference to a personal call as evidence of his newness. Rowley mentions the claim of George Adam Smith that newness lay in the fact that an ordinary member of society had been

1. See ch.IV, especially pp.428f., 434f., 491-493.

2. On this, see below, pp.574-577.

called by God from his civil occupation for a special purpose by a call which had not necessarily to do with gifts or a profession. To this Rowley replies, 'But precisely the same terms could be used of Moses, and it is hard to see wherein the newness lay'.¹ Rowley further blurs the attempted distinction by saying that, although the call is of great importance, there is insufficient evidence that every prophet had an experience of vocation. We cannot, he says, even distinguish sharply between prophets and priests in this respect² and one wants to add 'let alone between prophets and prophets!'. Though Rowley's final point is open to debate,³ his argument is persuasive against Adam Smith's suggestion.

Würthwein similarly refers to the personal call of prophets other than the canonical prophets, for example, Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha, and also to the calls of priests and kings (e.g. 2 Sam.7:8; Jer.29:26). As already mentioned, Würthwein does see a distinction between the nabi and the canonical prophet, but he thinks this lies, not in the fact that only the canonical prophet has a call, but in the fact that the nabi has an indirect call, in that it is a call to be the holder of a particular office, that of proclaiming weal, whilst the canonical prophet has, in addition, a particular, personal commission.⁴ Whilst we have seen some

1. Rowley, in Eissfeldt Festschrift, p.197.

2. Ibid., p.196.

3. See the discussion of the divisions between priest and prophet, 'office' and charisma in ch.III.

4. Würthwein, in ZAW, 62/63, 1949/51, pp.24ff. See above, pp.526-528.

of the difficulties attendant upon this sharp distinction between prophets of weal and prophets of woe, the fact remains that we have no evidence that prophets before Amos, as the first known representative of canonical prophecy, experienced personal calls. It is an argument from silence. Further, if Am.7:15 does, as Tucker argues, bear similarities with the call form which Habel finds to be evident in the call narratives of Moses and Gideon and the commissioning of Abraham's servant,¹ then it is difficult to argue that a personal call is what distinguishes the canonical prophet. Tucker writes, 'By employing here the traditional language of a commissioning report, our text places Amos in a traditional Israelite role'.² However, it is not exactly proven, as mentioned above, that Am.7:10-17 uses the language of a commissioning report and, against the notion that this is a prophetic 'traditional, Israelite role', is the fact that it is with the call narratives of later prophets that this text bears similarities and not with the 'calls' of such prophets as Nathan, Elijah, and Micaiah.

Clements's arguments for seeing in Amos's call a degree of newness are somewhat vague. He thinks that it is most probable that all 'types' of prophet, of whatever period, regarded their work as a divine vocation, and that they claimed to have received some kind of call to the task of prophesying. He says that the way in which this call came to them must have varied in individual cases, and in some

1. See ch.IV, pp.429f.

2. Tucker, op.cit., p.432.

instances may have been 'no more than a consequence of social pressure or family tradition'. In other cases it is likely that 'some dramatic experience resulted in the adoption of a prophet's vocation, as we find described by some of the canonical prophets'.¹ Turning to Amos, Clements thinks that 'in his conviction that his prophetic standing was the result of a special call experience directly received from Yahweh, Amos was not claiming a new authority for his words which other prophets could not have paralleled'.² Though one is left wondering who these 'other prophets' are, Clements's views would be reasonable and would do justice to the lack of detailed evidence for 'calls' of prophets before Amos. They would also be consonant with his contention that Amos was not introducing a new kind of prophecy, except perhaps in the degree to which Amos prophesied woe.³ But Clements then goes on to argue that Amos did differ from these 'other prophets'. In answer to his own question, 'Wherein?', he writes, 'We can only conclude that it was in the intensity of his conviction, and in his willingness to submit his entire personality to the authority of the divine call. Amaziah, as priest-in-charge of the royal shrine, was usually able to have his orders carried out, even over the prophets who appeared there. Yet with Amos he encounters a new integrity and firmness of purpose, which he could not manipulate to his will. Here was one who was not different from other prophets in claiming another, and more weighty, authority than theirs, but who differed solely in the fact that he

1. Clements, Prophecy and Covenant, p.33.

2. Ibid., p.38.

3. Ibid., pp.39f.

believed this divine authorization to be enough'.¹ It would seem, however, that questions of degree are, when it comes to such matters as 'intensity of conviction', vague, impossible to answer, and, therefore, of little weight in important arguments such as this concerning Amos's call. If there is value in the last quotation from Clements, which I believe there is, it lies in its suggestion that Amos is claiming his divine call as his sole justification for being a X'11] and this suggests that, unlike the prophets to whom Amaziah is normally accustomed, viz., prophets at the shrine and under his command and in this sense official and cultic, Amos was a prophet lacking any human, institutional, official authority and, therefore, had no claim to prophesy save that Yahweh had called him. Whether Amos was the first prophet in this position and with this claim will long be argued about and never be proved.

It was stated at the beginning of this discussion of the possible allusion to Amos's call in v.15 that one might understand it as referring not to a vocation to act as a prophet generally, that is, to a permanent position, but to a specific commission. As was mentioned in chapter IV, the fact that the so-called 'call narrative' in Isaiah appears in ch.6 rather than at the beginning of the book could suggest that Isa.6 is concerned not with an inaugural vision, but with a specific mission in which the prophet is told to 'make the heart of this people fat, and their ears heavy, and shut

1. Ibid., pp.38f.

their eyes...'.¹ Because this mission is so unusual and paradoxical, the vision is told (as in 1 Kgs.22) to authenticate this method and mission in terms of 'I have been there and, therefore, I do this'. It could then suggest that Isaiah was a man occasionally called to prophesy, rather than a man permanently set apart. Was Isaiah by profession something else, a courtier, for instance? There is, however, no evidence of Isaiah's being a courtier except in late tradition. It is, as we saw in chapter II, a romantic notion resting simply on his associations with and meetings with kings.

Similar questions are raised in connection with the passage presently under consideration. As we have seen, the lack of a call narrative in the Book of Amos can be adduced as evidence that in Am.7:15 we have an allusion to Amos's call to be a prophet. The same fact can be used, on the other hand, to argue that Amos was not a prophet in any permanent way but received a temporary commission. In support of this, it has been argued that Amos's activity in Israel was short, not more than a year, and this because it is the impression given by the reference to a point two years before a catastrophic disaster, in 1:1.² Kapelrud thinks that, although the

1. cf. above, ch.IV, p.434. There have, of course, been alternative suggestions made to explain the position of the call narrative, not all of which carry the implication that Isa.6 represents a specific commission rather than an inaugural call. See, for instance, Bright, 'Isaiah - I', Peake's Commentary on the Bible, 427a - 'Were the words of Isaiah arranged chronologically we should expect this chapter to stand at the beginning of the book. Probably it begins a collection (6:1-8:18), partly in autobiographical style, which records Isaiah's experiences down to the Aramaean-Ephraimite crisis (735-733), and which circulated separately for a time'; cf. Kaiser, Isaiah 1-12, p.73. The view taken on this matter necessarily affects the view one takes of the purpose of the narrative.

2. So Mays, op.cit., p.20.

narrative of 7:10-17 probably reflects the tension not of just one occasion but of a number of exchanges, the period of Amos's preaching at Bethel must have been brief, as Amaziah was not likely to have permitted this preaching to go on for a long time.¹ Into this enters the complex question of whether or not Amos formerly preached a message of weal as a nabi (Würthwein) and then through a series of visions came to learn that his message must be one of woe. This question will be taken up again in relation to the positioning of Am.7:10-17 between the vision narratives.

The fundamental question here concerns Amos's calling to be a prophet. Does it refer to something temporary or to something permanent? It was mentioned earlier that the past tense of this verse suggests that we should understand the past tense in v.14, in which case Amos is saying, 'I was not a prophet, but Yahweh called me to be one', (that is, rejecting that there is any important differentiation to be made between the noun and the verb from the root אָנִי). Whilst this could suggest that Amos was called from one permanent profession, viz., that of a נָבִי and דָּבָר (whatever these terms may mean), to another 'profession', that of being a permanent prophet, it is certainly no conclusive evidence that we have here, or anywhere else for that matter, a case of once a prophet always a prophet.

Nor, however, does understanding the present tense in v.14 solve the matter conclusively, for as we have seen 'I am not a prophet...' could mean 'I am not the sort of prophet you think I am, one to whom you can give orders, as you can to

1. Kapelrud, Central Ideas in Amos, pp.11f.

your cultic prophets. But I am a different sort of prophet, since I prophesy not because of official position or employment, but because Yahweh called me'. Or it could mean 'I am not a prophet at all in normal circumstances, but Yahweh called me to deliver a particular message and I obeyed'. The first possibility is supported by, for instance, von Rad's suggestion that their stress on their call shows that the canonical prophets did not hold a regular cultic office. They felt very much cut off from the religious capital on which the majority of the people lived and dependent instead on their own resources.¹ With regard to Amos, he says that Am.7:14 is not meant as a disparagement of the nebiim as a class, but only to explain the strange fact that he suddenly began to speak by inspiration, though as a peasant 'he was not entitled to do so' (7:15).² This surely implies that after prophesying, Amos, not permanently a prophet, would go back to his flocks. This view is definitely held by Batten who says that not every prophet exercised his office permanently. Amos was called to prophesy to Israel for a brief time and then probably returned to his herd. He adds, however, that most prophets were called to a life office and not permitted to give it up, notably Jeremiah.³

What does all this have to say about the use of the term 'office' with regard to the canonical prophets and, in particular, to Amos? Firstly, it has been argued in this thesis that the prophetic stress on their call shows that

1. von Rad, OT Theology, II, p.55.

2. Ibid., p.131.

3. Batten, The Hebrew Prophet, pp.36f.

they held not only no cultic office (von Rad), but no office at all, in the sense of a position with particular tasks established by and controlled by human authority. If a prophet is, in fact, someone called to 'prophecy' only on particular occasions, then this is even more likely to be the case. There is then no institutional prophetic 'office', whether or not this is linked to the cult. But if to be a prophet is so spasmodic and temporary, is it reasonable to speak of a prophetic 'office' in the sense of a position with tasks established by and controlled by Yahweh? It seems to me that whilst the first sense of the word 'office' in connection with the prophets is seriously affected by the question of whether the position and task are temporary or permanent, the second sense is not. So then whether or not there were such people as full-time prophets does not necessarily weaken the argument that the second sense of the term 'office' can reasonably be used of the canonical prophets. It could well be that some canonical prophets were given a life-long and extensive commission and others a specific and limited commission. There is also the valuable point mentioned by Clements that it is conceivable that a person who was already a prophet could subsequently receive a call by Yahweh to fulfil a special task committed to him.¹ This, of course, has particular relevance to Amos and Isaiah, in the way already indicated.

One point which has frequently emerged from this consideration of Am.7:10-17 is the interrelation of so many questions and answers. With regard to vv.14 and 15, however,

1. Clements, Prophecy and Covenant, p.33, note 4. He cites Danell, in SEA, 16, 1951, pp.16.

one thing remains clear, i.e., Amos, to a challenge about his authority, replies with an affirmation of his call or commission by Yahweh. Affecting both the question of whether or not this was a permanent call or a specific commission and the question of Amos's links with the cult is a question about the significance of the other words in v.14. Together with the title of the book (1:1), v.14 offers four words describing Amos's original professional status, but only one of the four is clearly beyond question, viz., $\lambda\sigma\iota\eta\ \gamma\pi\tau\lambda$, which is clearly related to the care of sheep. Even so this reference to Amos's care of sheep, together with the term $\tau\pi\lambda$, which will be discussed shortly, has had its significance debated. Clements says that Amos's reference to being or having been a shepherd is an incidental point. Amos was simply saying that he had no necessity to earn his keep by prophesying.¹

Hermann Schult offers an interesting suggestion that speculation about Amos's occupation is unimportant since the call from being a shepherd represents not biographical detail but a traditional motif.² He considers call narratives in biblical, ancient oriental, and classical literature, e.g., David (1 Sam.16:11), Moses (Ex.3:1ff.), Elisha (1 Kgs.19:19-21), Gideon (Jgs.6:11ff.), Hesiod, Theocritus, and Caedmon.³ He

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1. Clements, Prophecy and Covenant, p.38. It is worth noting in passing that this would perhaps suit the present rather than the past understanding of v.14, whilst Clements, in fact, inclines to the latter.
 2. Schult, 'Amos 7:15a und die Legitimation des Aussenseiters', Probleme biblischer Theologie, p.463.
 3. Ibid., pp.463-469. The value of his parallels, especially his non-biblical ones, cannot be entered into here.

says that it is so common and stereotyped a motif that it cannot be understood as an historico-biographical point. In many instances, there is reason to doubt the historicity of the shepherd tradition, e.g., Hesiod.

What, he asks, is the function of this motif? He considers the realm of the political, military hero and suggests that it has the aim of legitimating and of giving historical continuity to those called by God.¹ It is made clear that the outsider owes his call to God and that on earth there is no higher authority. These men are not the representatives of a particular institution, class, or way of thinking. Through this analysis of the call-motif in the political realm he asserts that we can pass to recognising a legitimating function in the other realms.² It belongs to the call of the outsider and is less conceivable in the strongly organised realms of cultic worship, e.g., of the priest. So in Am.7:14,15, he says, we see the motive of legitimating the outsider who is without institutional backing.

τπρ ῥ stresses that the vocation was at God's initiative and must have come as a strong emotional experience.³ He goes on to consider the relation of 2 Sam.7:8 to Am.7:15 and the latter's dependency on the tradition of David as shepherd. He thinks that the dependency is not direct and that all we can say is that the traditions of Amos and David are inter-related. There is no mechanical taking-over. The motif is

1. Ibid., pp.469ff.

2. Ibid., p.472.

3. Ibid., pp.473ff. He understands Amos's reply to be, 'I am no professional, organised prophet'.

not biographical but ideological, with the purpose of giving legitimation.¹ Whilst Schult perhaps overstates his claim that there is no biographical and historical value in the reference to Amos's being a shepherd, it does seem more than likely that the narrative of Am.7:10-17, like the call narratives discussed in chapter IV, does have a legitimating function and the stress is on Yahweh's call.

We must now turn to the actual text of v.14 where Amos describes himself as a shepherd ($\gamma\rho\lambda$). In 1:1, the word used is $\tau\rho\lambda$. The earliest versions show confusion in translating this. The LXX has a reading which is variously transcribed, $\acute{\epsilon}\nu$ 'Ακκαρεῖμ (Swete); $\acute{\epsilon}\nu$ βακκαριμ (Rahlfs). Aquila, Cyril, and Symmachus all have variations of the word 'herder'. They translate $\acute{\epsilon}\nu$ ποιμνιοτρόφῳς , $\acute{\epsilon}\nu$ τοῖς κτηνοτρόφοις , and $\acute{\epsilon}\nu$ τοῖς ποιμέσιν respectively. The Targum has 'sheep-master'. This confusion, says Watts, indicates that the word was little-known, yet obviously designated a profession.²

Attempts have been made to establish a cultic meaning for $\tau\rho\lambda$. The argument is that it cannot denote an ordinary peasant shepherd and this because of its only other occurrence in the OT, where it is used of King Mesha of Moab (2 Kgs.3:4). It is said of him that he provided the king of Israel with 100,000 lambs and 100,000 rams, which is quite a gift for a 'herdsman'. Moreover, the narrative makes it clear that this particular $\tau\rho\lambda$ was the highest in the land. The term must, therefore, mean 'sheep-owner'.

1. Ibid., pp.476ff.

2. Watts, op.cit., p.6.

Moreover, there are Mesopotamian parallels that show that under the main supervisors of the temple herds were several naqidu. They had under them the rē'ū, who actually herded the flocks. The naqidu was very often an official at the temple and might be responsible for 500 cows and 2000 sheep and goats. Ugaritic parallels also indicate that the position of the nqdm was important and that ~~he~~ ^{they} had a close connection with the temple. The Ras Shamra texts, where the nqdm are classed with priests, point in the same direction. Kapelrud writes, 'There can be little if any doubt at all that the nqdm are mentioned among the temple personnel because they were an important guild in the service of the temple'.¹ 'So', he continues, 'in Judah in the time of Amos, a noqed may have been a person of high rank who was responsible for a large part of the temple herds'.

Not surprisingly, Kapelrud, and the other exponents of this view, have been accused of being vague. Even if it were proved that Amos was 'responsible for a large part of the temple herds', in terms of supplying sheep, it is in no way shown that Amos was a cultic functionary.²

Further, even if Amos came from amongst such functionaries, the point of 1:1 is surely that he was, and no longer

1. Kapelrud, Central Ideas in Amos, pp.5f.; cf. Engnell, Studies in Divine Kingship in the Ancient Near East, p.87, and Halдар, op.cit., p.79.
2. e.g., Lindblom, PAI, p.182. Clements also, e.g., says that the attempt on the part of Engnell to find in the term TPJ a reference to a class of cultic personnel must be termed a failure (cf. Danell, in SEA, 16, 1951, p.8). 'It simply denotes a shepherd, who may, or may not, have been in the employ of a sanctuary, and in Amos's case we must conclude that he was not', Prophecy and Covenant, p.38.

is, amongst them. He is a nabi. Similarly, 7:14 cannot be used as evidence that Amos was a cultic prophet, especially if the past tense is understood. For Amos would then be contrasting his former state of being a $\tau\rho\lambda$ with his present state as a $\kappa' \lambda\lambda$. Alternatively, if the present tense is read, Amos would be saying, 'I am not a $\kappa' \lambda\lambda$ but a $\tau\rho\lambda$...'. An attempt could conceivably be made to eliminate the contrast between Amos the $\kappa' \lambda\lambda$ and Amos the $\tau\rho\lambda$ by saying that $\kappa' \lambda\lambda$ at that time meant a non-cultic prophet. These contortions show that 7:14 can be used only very tentatively, if at all, in efforts to show that Amos was a cultic prophet. It could possibly be used to support the idea that he was very familiar with and dependent on the cult. But the only argument from 7:14 to suggest that Amos is linked with the cult as a functionary is the fact that he is found at the sanctuary at Bethel. The fact remains, however, that this is not altogether surprising, in view of the nature of his message and his need to secure a hearing.¹

The word $\tau\rho\lambda$ is not, in fact, the word that exists in the Hebrew text of 7:14, but rather $\gamma\rho\lambda\lambda$. The noun $\gamma\rho\lambda$ means ox, bullock, and the active participle would then surely mean, one who cares for, or raises, oxen. This would, however, contradict the two designations just discussed, viz., $\tau\rho\lambda$ and $\gamma\rho\lambda\lambda$, and most emend to $\tau\rho\lambda$.² $\gamma\rho\lambda\lambda$ is a hapax legomenon and the ease with which λ could become λ and

1. For elaboration of the argument that Amos is familiar with and linked to the cult, particularly at Bethel, and yet cannot be regarded as a cultic functionary, see ch. IV, i.
2. LXX, most scholars believe, shows the beginning of $\tau\rho\lambda$'s corruption in 1:1, where the text from which it was translated had γ for τ .

T become ׀ supports the emendation. If this is the case in 7:14, it only takes us back to the earlier discussion of T P J in 1:1. It should also be noted that not all scholars accept the emendation. Lindblom, for instance, does not agree that it is easy to explain ׀ P 11 as a scribal error for T P J ,¹ and Watts suggests that ׀ P 11 need not be a denominative verb from ׀ P 1 meaning ox, bullock. He points out that the root appears elsewhere with the simple meaning 'to examine carefully, to care for' (Lev.13:36). It could still, therefore, refer to the care of sheep. Then the three words would give a clear description of Amos as one whose profession was the care of sheep.² Certainly Amos was one who either owned, raised, or just cared for sheep, but we have no way of measuring his wealth or position. Nor is it so important whether he was a sheep-owner or just a herdsman.

The other word used of Amos, ׀ ל 11 , is also a hapax legomenon and lacks definition. It is clearly related to an Arabic word for 'fig', but it is not clear whether a ׀ ל 11 would be a simple worker or a substantial owner.

So, all that can be said on the basis of 1:1 and 7:14 is that Amos had some connection with herds and figs, but exactly what this connection was we do not know. It is worth noting the point, however, that the fact that he had two occupations, viz., as T P J and ׀ ל 11 , seems to indicate that he was a poor man, and militates against the suggestion

1. Lindblom, PAI, p.182. See also Schult, op.cit., p.463, where he argues that the conjecture in 7:14 of T P J is unlikely and an attempt to harmonise. He believes the MT must remain.

2. Watts, op.cit., p.7.

that he was a temple official.¹ There is certainly very little terminological support for the notion that Amos held a cultic office. Again, the essential point to emerge from Amos's reply is that he felt himself called by Yahweh to abandon his previous tasks and go to work as a prophet among the Northern tribes.²

There are two other sections of the Book of Amos, which have sometimes been related to Am.7:10-17, in that they also speak of Yahweh's call and authority over Amos, or, at least, have been seen to do so.

The first of these, already referred to because of its use of the term nebiim, is Amos 3:3-8. Morgenstern, in particular, thinks that the two passages belong together. Not only are they related, he contends, but 3:3-8 actually belongs between 7:15 and 7:16.³ 7:7-10 as it stands is, according to Morgenstern, incomplete. There is no explanation of how Amos came to his stern message of doom nor of why he cannot

1. So Hyatt, 'Amos', in Peake's Commentary on the Bible, 546d.
2. Though no attempt will be made to answer the question, it should perhaps be asked throughout this discussion of Amos's call to prophesy to Israel, what exactly is the meaning of 'Israel' in the Book of Amos? Since the few allusions to Jerusalem and Judah in the book seem to be either incidental to the prophet's message or later additions, it would seem that the whole of Amos's ministry was to Israel as the Northern kingdom. If this is so, then what we have is not material from his prophetic ministry in the South and then references to a short ministry in the North, and in particular at Bethel, but material only about his ministry in the North. It could be that Amos never exercised a prophetic ministry in the South, in which case he either receives an initial call to be a prophet in Israel on a permanent basis or a specific commission to be a prophet to Israel, the suggestion being that this is for a limited period.
3. Morgenstern, op.cit., pp.45ff.

obey Amaziah's command not to prophesy. Am.3:3-8 fills in these gaps. The passage has, he says, often been understood in terms of cause and effect, but this is not what it is about. It is about Yahweh's compulsion and it takes its place in the dialogue between Amos and Amaziah. Amos replies to Amaziah's command that he desist from prophesying by speaking of Yahweh's constraint. He is in this way representing Yahweh against Amaziah, who is representing the king. In this way, Amos's authority is recognised.

It is perfectly true that Am.3:3-8 does speak about Yahweh's constraint and authority and is, in this sense, related to Am.7:10-17, but there are two difficulties in Morgenstern's analysis. Firstly, the explanation of why Amos cannot desist from prophesying is given quite clearly in v.15. Secondly, there is nothing at all to suggest that, as a result of Amos's awesome words (3:3-8), Amos's authority is recognised and the case won. The picture is one of conflict, a conflict which has probably taken place before and could easily recur. There is no suggestion in Am.7:10-17 that Amos has produced a trump-card. On the contrary, the issue of authority is the subject of the dialogue precisely because authority is not self-evident. It is a matter for debate and the debate will always continue so long as prophets speak what is undesirable to the authorities or what is in conflict with other men's words. Certainly, Amos speaks of his call as a justification of his action and words, but such a justification can never be proved. That is the difficulty and the cause of prophetic conflict.

The second section is that containing the visions (7:1-9; 8:1-9:4). It is not the present purpose to make any attempt to analyse the psychological form of these experiences¹ or even to discuss in detail the much debated problem of where these visions belong and just what relation they have to Amos's call. Nevertheless, these latter two features obviously have some bearing on the major issues involved in this enquiry into Am.7:10-17, and, therefore, must be considered.

We noted in an earlier discussion that the consensus of opinion among scholars now is that the visions, or at any rate the first four, should be taken as a unity, as they share common structural features and are organised into a logical sequence.² Am.7:10-17 disrupts this unity and interrupts their sequence, coming between the third and fourth vision reports. The most specific formal connection with the context is the catchword 'Jeroboam', which occurs in both 7:9 and 7:10. The theme of prophecy against the house of Jeroboam in vv.9 and 10 is another connection between the story and its context.³ Whilst some would be content to leave it at that, others have seen the interruption as very significant. It has been suggested, for instance, that the visions are themselves connected with the call of Amos.⁴

1. It is, of course, argued that this may well be impossible and even if it were possible, it would be of little importance. See, e.g., Mays, *op.cit.*, p.125, where he says that the narratives offer almost no clues about the time and place of the experiences themselves, the details of Amos's life being of no importance. Contrast Weiser, Die Profetie des Amos, p.9, where he contends that the visions give insight into the prophet's experience.

2. See discussion on intercession in Amos, ch.III, pp.274-278.

3. See further, below.

4. e.g., Kapelrud tentatively suggests that the vision in Am.9 could be linked to his call, because of the comparison with Isa.6:lff.

This is difficult, for none of the reports can be attached to the call with any confidence, as none of them contains the slightest hint of any commission or commencement of a prophetic ministry.¹ Nonetheless, the position and significance of the vision-reports in relation to Am.7:10-17 have received much attention and some of the main views, with what they have to say about Amos's prophetic 'call' and 'office', will now be outlined.

According to Mays, the block of material in 7:1-8:3 is made up of five narratives.² Embedded in the narrative reports are sayings, an oracle against Amaziah, and two fragmentary announcements of punishment in 7:9 and 8:3. Four of the narratives are vision reports, composed in autobiographical style (7:1-3,4-6,7-9; 8:1-3). The other (7:10-17) stands between the third and fourth vision reports, its subject being a confrontation between Amos and the priest at Bethel; it is told in biographical style. This difference in style indicates in Mays's view that the block is not an original oral or literary unit and that the biographical narrative has been set in its present place simply because of the connection between 7:9 and 7:11.

After giving some attention to the two pairs of vision reports which, he claims, are distinct from each other in the nature of what is seen, the order of the dialogue, and the

1. So Mays, op.cit., p.126, where he says that no overt element of a call appears, and see above, p.542, where it was noted that the visions do not exhibit the structure of the call form.
2. Ibid., p.123. He regards the fifth vision report (9:1-4) as set apart from the sequence of 7:1-9; 8:1-3 by its distinctive form.

outcome of the experience,¹ Mays asserts that the phenomenon of vision was a constitutive element in the prophetic experience and that 'the experiences of Amos in seeing and hearing under divine constraint were a fundamental source of his message and were formulated themselves as word'. He contends that the vision reports have been prepared with conscious art and show similarities to vision reports from other prophets. He continues, 'The formal character of these narratives requires that a distinction be made between the reports and the experiences behind them. The visions themselves belong to one moment in Amos's career; their formulation and use as part of his prophetic activity belongs to another'.² It is significant that what Mays is saying here is not that the visions belong to Amos whilst the vision reports do not, as numerous scholars suggest; but rather that the reports were formulated at a later stage and we must distinguish between their purpose and the purpose of the visions themselves. The purpose of the reports is, he says, 'the vindication of the proclamation itself'. It is to vindicate the message of judgement to Israel as God's word, intercession now being forbidden, as weal is no longer a possibility. If Mays's assessment of the purpose of the visions reports is correct, however, this is surely an indication that Am.7:10-17 may not be out of place between these reports, since it, too, seems to have the purpose of vindicating an unpalatable message. Certainly the block of material (7:1-8:3) may not be 'an original oral or literary unit', but the positioning of Am.7:10-17 amongst this block

1. Ibid., p.124.

2. Ibid., p.125.

may well have more significance than Mays seems prepared to allow, when he suggests that the link is simply the connection between 7:9 and 7:11. He does not carry to their logical conclusion his own arguments about the purpose of vindication and authentication in these narratives, though it must be admitted that, whilst he rules out the possibility of a call's being involved in the vision experiences, he seems to be assuming in them a specific commission, viz., to proclaim judgement on Israel.

In a much earlier commentary on Amos, R.S. Cripps was also concerned to distinguish between the vision reports and the visions themselves. He writes, 'The testimony furnished by the prophetic writings makes it difficult to hold that the descriptions of such visions were, as a rule, merely written up'. Those in Amos are, he says, peculiarly brief, naïve and real.¹ It is, however, equally wrong to assert that they correspond to actual events and nothing more - to which the prophet gave a symbolic meaning, as, for example, does Battenwieser.² After some discussion of forms of prophetic visions, he states that not a few scholars hold that the visions of Amos constituted his call. He does not himself indicate whether he accepts this view, but says that if it is correct it is easy to find parallels to the receiving of a call by means of a vision.³ This, of course, is true enough, though, as we have seen, there is little in Amos's visions to link them with those such as in Isaiah 6. Cripps

1. Cripps, op.cit., p.83.

2. Ibid., p.84 (He cites, Battenwieser, The Prophets of Israel, pp.142,223.).

3. Ibid., p.93.

says that almost certainly the visions should be interpreted together and that they indicate either how there came to the prophet the belief that Israel was doomed, or, how he was confirmed in such a conviction already held by him.¹ This assessment of their significance suggests that Cripps does not, in fact, associate them with a prophetic call, though, it does not rule out the possibility that there came to him during the course of the visions a new conviction or a re-confirmed conviction that it was woe which had to be proclaimed to Israel and, as we have seen, this could perhaps be said to constitute a particular commission.

Weiser's view, which, as we saw in an earlier chapter,² is of great importance with regard to understanding the prophetic function or 'office', resembles that just outlined, though he is far more definite than Cripps in what he says about the relation of the visions to the prophet's call. Weiser assumes in the present Book of Amos the existence of two books representing two literary forms. He believes that the visions belong to the first 'book' and represent the earliest utterances of the prophet, his religious experiences before his prophetic call. His argument is, as we saw above,³ that Amos's whole proclamation as a prophet was one of woe and, therefore, the visions, including as they do intercession for weal, must antedate his call to be a prophet. He

1. Ibid., p.99.

2. See above, ch.III, pp.274-276.

3. Ibid.

recognises, of course, that intercession occurs only in the first two visions. Why, he asks, in the second group of visions is intercession no longer possible? The answer lies, he believes, in a development in the prophet's understanding of Yahweh and of his purpose which came through the visionary experiences.¹ He does not think that any of the visions is specially connected with the call of Amos, but he does think that through the visions Amos came to a new experience and understanding of God, especially between the second and third vision, which prepared him for his call. It is in this sense that Weiser sees in the visions, experiences which had crucial significance for his call as a prophet.²

We saw in our examination of intercession as a prophetic function, that others have argued that the visions could not have come before the call, as in the first and second visions Amos is an intercessor and, in this, is already exercising the office of the prophet.³ This is mentioned by J.D.W. Watts, who suggests that we should understand the visions as formative experiences following the prophet's call and marking chapters in his development.⁴ In his general criticism of Weiser's view, Watts takes us back to the relation of vision and biography in Am.7:1-8:3. He believes that there is no necessity to think of the four visions as having originally formed a unit, but, he says, the question which inevitably

1. Weiser, Die Prophetie des Amos, pp.72f. (That all the visions and the task of intercession date from before Amos's call is also argued by Seierstad, op.cit., pp.71ff., 54f., etc.).
2. Ibid., p.69.
3. Notably Reventlow. See above, ch.III, pp.275f.
4. Watts, op.cit., p.16.

arises is whether the biographical passage (7:10-17) cannot be justifiably left and interpreted where it is, i.e., does its presence at this place not have a significance for our understanding of Amos? He himself is against regarding it as an interruption. He mentions the common suggestion that the basis for its placement here is the similarity between Amaziah's report and the 'word' fragment in v.9, but, he says, the presence of v.9 at this point is left unexplained.¹

Watts argues that there is significance in an intended relation of biography and vision in this block of material. Their juxtaposition indicates that vision set the stage for Amos's message at Bethel which earned him his expulsion. It may suggest that these visions were recited there and that the fragment of his message was spoken there on the occasion related in 7:10-17. The third vision marked the tone and message on which he closed his ministry there, not that on which he began it. The beginning of his ministry was on the basis of his call to be a prophet to Israel with no reference to the nature of his message; but by the time he preached in Bethel that last time, he had been given to see judgement without mercy as the sign of Israel's future. Watts assumes here a later Judaeen ministry in which period the later visions were added.² He thinks that the purpose of the vision narrative is not to explain how Amos became a prophet (Weiser), but to explain and authenticate his message.³ The visions

1. Ibid., p.32.

2. Ibid., pp.33ff.

3. Ibid., p.35.

are better understood as recording critical turning points in the ministry of Amos than as steps leading to his call. The 'two books' theory suggested by Weiser is, he thinks, valid, though these two books represent not simply two literary forms. The Bethel story tells us why there had to be two books. Amos's ministry in the Northern Kingdom was interrupted before God had finished speaking his message concerning Israel. The visions, words, and biographical section of the last three chapters were gathered together later at some Southern sanctuary.¹

Whilst interesting, Watts's suggestions rest on Amos's having exercised a prophetic ministry in the South and we have noted some of the difficulties of this view.² Nonetheless, Watts's exposition does make a genuine effort to explain the setting of Am.7:10-17 amongst the vision reports and brings out the fact that a major feature of this narrative is an attempt at legitimation and authentication. The implication of his saying that Amos was first called to be a prophet in Israel, i.e., in the North, and that in this call there was no reference to the specific content of the message he was to proclaim, is that neither Am.7:10-17 nor the visions, represent this call, though v.15 may well be an allusion to it.

The other major view on this subject of the relation to the visions and Am.7:10-17 to Amos's call is that propounded by Würthwein. The details of this and the criticisms made of it have been given at various points in the thesis and need only be summarised here. He believes that the five

1. Ibid., pp.49f.

2. See above, p.558, note 2.

visions allow us to see Amos's development from a nabi, i.e., a cultic official whose task was to proclaim weal, to a prophet with a personal commission from Yahweh which was to proclaim woe. He thinks that the visions lie after the 'call' to be a nabi, but before the call to be a prophet of woe and that Amos becomes the latter because it becomes plain to him through the visions that Yahweh plans woe. This rests on Würthwein's distinctive theory that a nabi is essentially a prophet of weal and that is why Amaziah could not accept that the woe-proclaiming Amos was a nabi. He believes that there were two phases in Amos's activity. In the first, he was a nabi proclaiming weal for Israel and woe for her enemies, whilst in the second, after the visions, he proclaimed woe to Israel because he had received this message through a particular commission.¹ The general outcome of the attempted assessment of Würthwein's view is that Würthwein is inconsistent in his views about the element of judgement in the Israelite cult and is, consequently, unconvincing in his argument that Amos represented a nabi 'plus' a special commission to proclaim woe. Whilst I believe there to be value in his suggestion that Amos did constitute something different from the official, cultic prophecy with which Amaziah was accustomed and this because he had a personal commission (as will be argued below), his notion of a change from Amos's being a nabi to more than a nabi on account

1. See above, pp.52-58, where this is elaborated and for Reventlow's and Gunneweg's arguments that the proclamation of weal is a legitimate function of the nabi. See also, for discussion of the relation of the task of proclaiming weal to the cult, ch.II, pp.115-125, ch.III, pp.235-245, ch.IV, pp.324f., 339ff., 357ff., 362.

of the visions is unsatisfactory. Again, however, his arguments represent a genuine attempt to explain the setting of Am.7:10-17 amongst the vision reports and do suggest that Amos is, in the former, trying to defend his proclamation of woe to Israel.

An interesting study, which concentrates not so much on the setting of Am.7:10-17 between the visions, as on its purpose and on the general concerns of form criticism, is executed by G.M. Tucker.¹ His article considers so many of the vital points which this passage raises with regard to the prophetic 'office' and gives such a clear understanding of the passage, based on form critical methods, that it will be quoted at length.

Form criticism, which 'looks for the typicalities of linguistic expression...in order to relate the texts to their environment...and to understand the intentions of typical expressions (genres) of specific texts', offers answers, he contends, to many fundamental questions concerning the OT. For instance, did a prophet proclaim repentance or doom? What was his relation to the cult? What did the prophets understand themselves to be? Tucker does not suggest that form criticism alone can answer these questions, but a form critical analysis, in this instance of Am.7:10-17, can, he thinks, take us directly to the centre of such issues. The passage provides direct insight into how the prophets were perceived by their followers and their opponents and indirect insight into how the prophets perceived themselves (p.424). This is surely very true and the reason why Am.7:10-17 has
 1. Tucker, op.cit., pp.424-434.

been the subject of so much study. It is not merely that it is ambiguous and controversial, but that it is one of the few passages which shed some light on how the prophets were perceived by others and how they perceived themselves, and, consequently, on the prophetic 'office'. Tucker sums up the issues as 'the prophetic role, the broad question of authority and validity in religious language and the specific issue of the authentication of prophetic words' (p.425).

7:10-17, he says, stands out in terms of genre from its context. It is the only report 'about' prophetic activity, from the perspective of a third person, in the Book of Amos. As already mentioned, its present context is the series of five vision reports in chapters 7-9. The only transition from the vision reports to this narrative is the word in 7:10, coupled with a shift in person. In Tucker's opinion, this suggests that 'the unit represents a special and independent tradition about Amos which could, of course, have existed side by side with the transmission of the prophet's speeches and his vision reports' and this has led to speculation about the original extent of the literary content of the story. T.H. Robinson, for example, believes that the account begins as if it were a piece from a larger unit.

Tucker says that the most obvious feature of the structure is its division into two parts (vv.10,11; 12-17), each reporting a different event. He thinks that, as it stands, the first scene serves primarily to set the stage for the second. Amaziah, we are told, sent a message to the king which consisted of an accusation of unlawful activity against Amos, along with supporting evidence in the form of a

citation of the prophet's words. These verses, Tucker suggests, establish the context for what follows, by showing in general that the words of Amos encountered opposition and in particular that he was opposed by Amaziah.¹

There is also, he says, a certain incoherence between the two scenes. Though Amaziah alludes to the king's prerogatives (v.13), he does not repeat the accusation to Amos himself; nor does Amos deny it. We ask the questions, what happened between the two scenes? How did Jeroboam react? Was Amaziah given orders to expel Amos, but not to try him for conspiracy? But these issues are clearly beyond the interest of the text.

Further, subtle developments in the focus of the controversy can be discerned (p.428). In the report to Jeroboam, Amaziah has accused Amos of unlawful activities, but when he addresses Amos he speaks in terms of jurisdiction: you are not allowed to speak here. Chief significance lies, however, in the fact that, in his response, it is clear that Amos takes the issue to be one of authority. In the face of questions of legality and jurisdiction, he asserts that Yahweh himself sent him (v.15).²

Tucker asks, what is the centre of the unit (vv.12-17), its primary focus? Is the report merely an introduction to the prophetic speech (vv.16,17), or was the speech preserved

1. cf. Mays, op.cit., p.5, where significance is attached to the form here. The confrontation with Amaziah represents a situation which must have occurred at other times with different groups, and 'the stress of controversy over the message has entered into the formulation of the messenger's speech'.
2. cf. Wolff, Joel und Amos, pp.353ff., where he gives an analysis of the two scenes, vv.10f. and 12f. and contends that the central issue is the problem of authority.

to fill out a 'biography' of Amos?¹ He thinks that the answer is to be found by viewing the whole for what it is, i.e., a story, and looking for the line of a plot. He breaks it down thus:- vv.10,11 - a crisis and heightening of tension; v.15 - a dénouement in which the conflict is resolved; vv.16,17 - a conclusion in the form of a prophetic speech which presents the results of the conflict and its resolution. Then, the centre of the story and the key is found in v.15, with Amos's affirmation of his vocation and commission. To the assertion, 'Yahweh took me...', no response by the priest can be allowed. This is, in fact, the impression which is given by the story. In the minds of Amos and those who preserved the incident, there is no more to be said on the issue of authority, and Amos goes on to proclaim his message. This is not to say with Morgenstern, however, that Amos's divine authority is so overwhelming that the day is won, simply with his affirmation of this authority. Even if Amaziah's opposition had been silence, there would yet be Passhur's opposition to Jeremiah (Jer.20; cf. 26,28). Nor is Am.7:10-17 the first record of prophetic conflict (e.g. 1 Kgs.22).

What kind of a story then is Am.7:10-17? It has been classed as biographical narrative,² (a term often loosely

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1. Weiser has discussed these alternatives and discovered some elements of both, Die Profetie des Amos, pp.261ff. Wolff thinks that it is not to be understood as a fragment of prophetic biography, but as a 'klare Form eines Apophthegma'. He even goes so far as saying that Amaziah and not Amos is the theme of the narrative, Joel und Amos, p.354.
 2. So Watts, op.cit., pp.2,31; and Hammershaimb, Amos, p.15, and see discussion by Weiser already noted.

applied to third person narrative material in the Prophets) but it lacks an interest in the life and person of another individual. As we have seen, our biographical and historical curiosity is not satisfied. Most of the biographical data are presented allusively and indirectly. In fact, the biographical concerns are not as high as those of the superscription to the book (1:1) which in the scope of a single verse contains more information about the life and times of Amos than do 7:10-17 and the remainder of the book combined. Nor is it a prophetic legend, on the analogy of 2 Kgs.2-7, for it lacks interest in the miraculous and Amos is an individual not a type. So, Tucker concludes, we 'must be content to link a broad general term to a reference to the theme'. It is a story of prophetic conflict (p.430).

This, as we have already seen, is the term given by Crenshaw to narratives in which prophets come into conflict with either other prophets or some other authority.¹ It is worth considering at this point what Crenshaw has to say about the reasons for such conflict. Why does it arise? It arises, he says, because the prophet has no adequate means of self-validation.² The prophet is solely dependent on God to vindicate his claim. Crenshaw sees an increase in this conflict as the years go on, leading finally to prophecy's

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1. See above, p. 514. It should be noted that such narratives do not constitute a separate literary category but are just one 'category' with the general category of third person narratives.
 2. Crenshaw, op.cit., p.110, and see above, ch.II for his discussion of the impossibility of distinguishing between true and 'false' prophecy.

decline. Its claim about history, he says, is not borne out in daily experience. Hence, there is increased polarisation of prophet against prophet, and people against prophet, followed by claim and counter-claim, self-assertion and inner turmoil.¹ The graphic illustration of the failure of prophecy is, he says, Zech.13:2-6.² He writes, 'the irony of this passage is that appeal for the eradication of the prophetic voice echoes Amos's well-known response to Amaziah (lō' nabi' 'anoki'), and in the very process of ruling out prophecy as a present valid means of religious expression the author indirectly shows his indebtedness to prophecy'. So the prophets are both silenced and venerated. It may be added that this passage, whatever else it has to say about prophecy and its decline, suggests that the prophet lacked an established 'office', or one would have expected it to have continued.

I think that the most important point that Tucker makes for understanding this passage and for gaining from it some understanding of Amos's prophetic 'office' is that the focus of the passage lies in v.15. The narrative has presumably been composed and preserved by the prophet's 'disciples', who were concerned with a challenge to the prophet's authority.

Before continuing with this account of Tucker's analysis, the points which he here raises concerning who composed and preserved the narrative of 7:10-17 and why should be taken up.

1. Ibid., and cf. pp.93f., where he discusses the decline of prophecy, following the lack of fulfilment.
2. Ibid., pp.105f. (cf. Lindblom, PAI, p.218, where he comments that prophecy has become disreputable to such a degree that if anyone had ecstatic experiences he would be anxious to keep them secret).

Clements asserts that the passage 'provides us with information about his call, and about the conflict which arose over his preaching in his own day'.¹ As we have seen, scholars are not unanimous about the nature of this 'call', whether it was to a permanent or a temporary position and whether it was related to his visions. Nonetheless, the vast majority would agree that there is in vv.14f. an allusion to the prophet's call. Clements further comments that it is significant that it is with a reference to his call that Amos responds to hostility and adds that it is likely that this same motive, viz., to legitimate and validate the prophet, lies behind the other call narratives.² We need not re-enter the detailed discussion of the composition and purpose of the call narratives;³ but there are a number of observations which should be made here since they relate to the importance or otherwise of Am.7:10-17 for our understanding of the prophetic 'office'.

von Rad remarks that the writing down of the call was something secondary to the call itself and served a different end.⁴ 'The call commissioned the prophet: the act of writing down an account of it was aimed at those sections of the public in whose eyes he had to justify himself'. The accounts do give us insight into the experience that made a man a prophet, but we must remember that they were probably

1. Clements, Prophecy and Covenant, p.35.

2. Clements, Prophecy and Tradition, p.35.

3. See ch.IV, iii.

4. cf. the earlier discussion about the visions and the visions reports.

not transcripts of what was experienced at the time. They served definite ends and contained stylised features.¹ It is important to notice that von Rad is implying both that there was a real experience behind the account and moreover that the account came from the prophet himself, since he thinks that it does actually afford 'insight into the experience that made a man a prophet'. On this last point, however, there is considerable debate and many contend that the accounts come from prophetic 'disciples' or 'schools'.

Now many believe that Am.7:10-17 comes not from Amos himself but from the Amos-school. So Tucker writes, as we saw above, that it was presumably composed and preserved by the prophet's 'disciples', who were concerned with a challenge to the prophet's authority. Similarly Weiser says that it is an apology, at the hands of understanding friends, for why Amos has fearlessly to deliver the word of God.² Wolff also contends that this account of the response of the prophet in a debate about authority is later than the prophet. It comes from the disciples in the tradition of the master.³

The question which arises from this is, is it important whether or not Am.7:10-17 comes from the prophet himself? If it does not come from the prophet himself but is a later presentation of the prophet, does it tell us anything about the prophet's self-understanding? As we saw in relation to the call form, this question involves many issues and has

1. von Rad, OT Theology, II, p.55.

2. Weiser, Die Profetie des Amos, p.262.

3. Wolff, Joel und Amos, pp.355, 364.

received many answers. Nonetheless, here, as there, the general feeling is that the narrative does tell us something about the prophet's self-understanding. For, after all, is the presentation of the prophet going to give so inaccurate a picture of what the prophet was, said, and did? Is how he appeared to his disciples or was remembered by them or their successors going to be so very different from how he actually was? It is indisputable, of course, that traditions grew up around prophets and about the prophetic rôle, notably those attributed to the Deuteronomist(s). It is also the case that a narrative with a defined purpose, especially where this is polemical, might be said to be little concerned with giving an accurate picture of an historical reality. If this is accepted without qualification, then we have perhaps to admit almost total defeat in attempting to arrive at the prophet's self-understanding. The fact remains, however, that from criticism, particularly with regard to the messenger-formula and the call narratives, leaves us with considerable evidence that the prophet was regarded not just by others but by himself as Yahweh's messenger, called and commissioned to deliver Yahweh's word.¹

Returning now to Tucker's analysis of the passage, it is surely not possible to separate vv.14 and 15 completely and to see the climax only in the latter. Tucker suggests this and implies that v.14 is, therefore, incidental. This would, indeed, make things easier, for its tense and its terms are ambiguous. But the fact remains that v.14 exists in relation
 1. See above, ch.IV.

to v.15 and its meaning does give a different meaning to the whole. The meaning of v.14 is important when considering the institutional location of Amos and of the canonical prophets in general. As we have seen, reading the clauses in the present tense can be used to support the view that Amos opposed not only monarchy and priesthood but prophecy as well. Reading the past tense can even be used to show that Amos was a cultic prophet.¹ Yet, if the question could be resolved on strictly grammatical grounds, it would have been solved long ago. The result is that our preconceived notions of a nabi, of Amos, of prophets before, with, and after him, all come into play and it becomes almost impossible to keep hold of the few fundamental facts that we have. Before we know it, our hypotheses have become our facts and we forget which way we are arguing.² Alternatively, the possibilities become so many and so complex that we feel that nothing can be established from the passage. Surely our only salvation lies in setting the whole issue of Amos's position and his relation to other prophets in the broader context of the purpose of the whole passage, and this is what Tucker seeks to do. The tenses and the terms are not all-important in understanding the passage. If they are, then we can only make guesses as to the possible consequences of the passage for the subject of Amos's 'office'. For, as Tucker says, while each of these translations supports

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1. So Würthwein, and see earlier discussion of the many possibilities.
 2. See, for instance, Snaith, The Book of Amos, Part 2, pp.125f., who demonstrates this tendency by making the odd comment that here nabi must mean a professional prophet as it is clearly something Amos is not. Surely, the more obvious inference would be that Amos is not a nabi.

a particular interpretation of the relationship of Amos to a prophetic office, it does not prove it (p.432). But we can do more than guess. Verse 15 has Amos speaking unambiguously on the basic point: Yahweh called him and commissioned him to prophesy. Verse 14 cannot be ignored. It is part of Amos's reference to his commission, but it is not all. Together with v.15, it makes the point for which the incident has been recorded and preserved. As we have seen, the consequences of understanding either the past or the present tense in v.14 are not entirely opposed. They meet at the point where Amos is emphasising Yahweh's call and his authority, in reply to a challenge from Amaziah.

One of the major points of disagreement over the tense of v.14 is centred on the question of whether or not Amos represents anything new in prophecy. We have discussed some of the views taken on this issue, for instance, that Amos proclaims a more far-reaching judgement on Israel than did any of his predecessors.¹ Another suggestion was that Amos was the first to regard a personal call from Yahweh as his sole authority.² Whilst this second suggestion was seen to have its flaws, it also has its value and is related to Würthwein's suggestion which will now be reiterated.

Würthwein argued that Amos was new in that he was not bound to the office of the nabi, which consisted of proclaiming weal, but had, through personal experience, expanded and radically altered this office, by his conviction that Yahweh

1. See above, pp.505ff., and ch.II, pp.89ff.

2. See above, pp.546f.

wanted him to proclaim woe and by his obedience to Yahweh's personal commission. He stresses that Amos had not severed himself from his office as nabi. Rather, Amos had the new task of proclaiming woe in connection with it. It is an old office with a new message.¹ This was, he says, impossible in Bethel; hence Amaziah's attempt to expel Amos, since he could not regard and treat him as a nabi. The office of the nabi is fixed and only those who fulfil it can be nebiim. The old office cannot have a new content for Amaziah.²

It seems to me that to some extent Amaziah was right and that Amos, by his reply was implicitly claiming something new, which lay beyond the official. Würthwein's suggestion is that Amos was claiming to be a nabi 'plus', i.e., to be an official prophet 'plus', that he had something more than an office such as that held by the prophets at the shrine. Could it not be, however, that what Amos is claiming is not something more than such an office but something other than such an office? As we have seen, it seems more than likely that Amos had no official position, status, and authority at all. Could Amos's newness not lie not in any distinct separation from a particular 'type' of prophet but in his feeling after a new 'office', an unofficial office?³ This

1. Würthwein, in ZAW, 62/63, 1949/51, p.34, and see above, pp.526-528.
2. It is worth noting that the corollary of this for the use of the term נביא by Amaziah would be that it carried a derogatory sense, suggesting that Amos was less than, or at any rate different from, a נביא.
3. This could be so whether or not Amos was actually investing the term with a new significance as some have suggested, e.g., Cohen. It is also highly questionable, of course, whether Amos can be said to be the first to lack an official, in the sense of an institutional, position. See the earlier discussion on, for instance, Elijah, in ch.II.

would, of course, break down if it were shown that Amos was official, in the sense of being a cultic functionary, but most of the arguments militate against his idea and certainly it has yet to be shown to be anything more than remotely possible. Meanwhile, it seems reasonable to suppose that Amaziah's attack on Amos was caused by the fact that Amos had no obvious official status and authority. In reply to this, Amos claimed that he had an 'office', a status, and authority, one given by Yahweh. His new 'office' lay in being completely unofficial. t/k

It has been said that 'the prophetic office in Israel was doubtless as complex as it was ancient' and that 'one does better to speak of prophetic rôles and offices'.¹ Some, of course, would conclude that it was better not to use the term 'office' at all. In the discussion of this passage, however, the term 'office' has occurred frequently and in the context of widely differing views, and it would seem that a clash of 'offices', one understanding of it against another, could well be what the passage is all about.

Again, the only firm ground is the context of Amos's words and the nature of the narrative. In terms of tone and content, the narrative is partisan and apologetic. Its purpose is to authenticate the words of Amos, to show how he was challenged and how he met this challenge. The challenge was that he had no official right to speak at Bethel. Amos's reply is that the only right he can claim is the supreme right, that of having been commissioned by Yahweh. He is not

1. Tucker, op.cit., p.433.

interested in other people's estimate of him, nor, it is true, in claiming or disclaiming a specific 'office'. But his only reply can be that he has an 'office' (for what else can it be called?), one instituted by Yahweh, which demands obedience in proclaiming Yahweh's message, whatever it may be. The story is one of prophetic conflict. The question is, which is the indisputable authority, the state's, with its king and high priest, or Yahweh's? Whatever the situation before or after, at this time, in this place, these authorities clash. Morgenstern implies that the indisputable authority is Yahweh's and the conflict is resolved by this affirmation. In fact, the indisputable authority in terms of its being obvious and demonstrable is surely the state's. Yahweh's authority may be supreme but it is never demonstrable. That is the cause of the conflict. Perhaps this is to bring to the passage too many modern questions, but I think not. The point of the passage is that the authentic prophet is the one commissioned by Yahweh. The modern question is, 'will the contemporary interpreter find this solution to be satisfactory?'.¹ The question of authority itself is not new. The conflict between prophets and authorities and between prophets and prophets in the OT amply demonstrates this.

We saw, in chapter III, the difficulties involved in distinguishing between the 'official' and the 'charismatic' and what emerged was that these terms are not, unless clearly defined, of much help in discussing the position and function

1. Ibid., p.434.

of the prophet in ancient Israel. Nonetheless, whatever terms are used (and it is being maintained here that 'office' is a valuable term when it is clearly defined), the issue focuses on the prophet's authority and appointment. Also mentioned in the earlier discussion was Noth's argument that a distinction between human and divine appointment in ancient Israel was not possible.¹ It seems to me that, whilst this distinction may not be clearcut, and whilst there are plainly the difficulties attendant upon the fact that divine appointment can never be proved, only asserted, Am.7:10-17 and other passages which seem to have the purpose of meeting a challenge to the prophet's authority have at their centre a claim to divine appointment which is truly valid and overrides any authority which a king or priest might exercise.² This appointment and authority is linked by the prophets to their divine calling. Now whatever tense is understood in v.14, there is implicit in Amos's way of describing his call, a claim to be a different kind of prophet from the ones with whom Amaziah is acquainted. Amos is not concerned with categories of prophets. He refuses to define himself on the basis of what others say he is or was, but defines himself 'by means of what his God has said and done'.³

1. See above, ch.III, pp.168ff.

2. See, for instance, Weiser, Die Profetie des Amos, p.261, where he says that the clash in Am.7:10-17 is between God's power of authority and the human authorities; and Wolff, Joel und Amos, where he says (p.364) that the debate is one about authority and (p.361) that it is Yahweh who gives Amos the content of the message which he has to proclaim and the place where he has to proclaim it.

3. Tucker, op.cit., p.434.

This thesis is not an attempt to go back to the days when the prophets were thought to be originators and quite unique, but to suggest that Amos, for one,¹ does make a claim to 'uniqueness' and that this lies in the position in which Yahweh has set him, the authority which Yahweh has given him, and the task with which Yahweh has commissioned him, that is, his office. His sole claim is that behind him is Yahweh. He possesses an authority beyond what he can win for himself. Amos cannot demonstrate this to Amaziah. All he can do is simply make the claim. The claim is that his office has its place, not within the framework of Jeroboam's kingdom, in which Amaziah and his state prophets function, but within the structure of Yahweh's rule over Israel. To Amaziah's '...never again prophesy at Bethel', Amos can only reply, '...the Lord...said to me, "Go prophesy to my people Israel"'. The office of the prophet is the supreme office of being Yahweh's messenger.² This is the only office which he possesses. If this sense of the term 'office' is rejected, then the prophet has no office, but only a function.

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1. Because of the vast scope of the subject of this thesis, attention has been directed in the main to the canonical prophets and even then to only Amos and Jeremiah.
 2. cf. above, ch.IV, pp.477ff., 491ff. It is significant that the other prophet who best illustrates this fact, viz., Jeremiah, is also the one who, so it was argued in ch.IV, lacked institutional status and authority, found himself in conflict with other authorities, and asserted his claim, and moreover his constraint, to speak Yahweh's word.

APPENDIXANCIENT NEAR EASTERN PROPHECY OUTSIDE ISRAEL

It was once believed that the background to OT prophecy was to be found primarily in Canaanite religion and that Israelite prophecy had its origin there. One of the principal exponents of this view was Hölscher.¹ More recently, however, there have been discoveries which have led scholars to turn to other areas of the ANE in their efforts to trace this origin.² It is not the purpose of this appendix, however, to try to establish the origin of the type(s) of prophecy examined in the thesis. Rather, we shall look briefly at some of the parallels to this Israelite prophecy which have been adduced by those who have studied the texts relating to 'prophecy' in the ANE. There are no pretensions here to first-hand study. We shall simply mention particular features in this extra-Israelite prophecy, e.g., terminology, inspiration, which relate to the enquiry of the thesis, viz., in what sense if any was the Israelite prophet, and more particularly the canonical prophet, official? We shall ask whether these features are, in fact, parallel to those of Israelite prophecy, early and/or canonical. We shall also ask if the prophecy of the ANE sheds any light on the enquiry itself. Is there evidence of prophets outside Israel who had an official position? What were the status, functions, and authority of these 'prophetic' figures? Many

1. Hölscher, op.cit.

2. See Noth, 'History and the Word of God in the OT', The Laws in the Pentateuch, pp.180f.

scholars would now claim that such a consideration is not only fruitful but also necessary in any attempt to understand OT prophecy.¹ Whilst, as stated in the preface, it has been assumed in this thesis that Israelite prophecy can be considered independently, some attempt should now be made to sketch the ancient Near Eastern background and to take account of possible parallel phenomena. The areas to be considered are Egypt, Arabia, Canaan, and Mesopotamia and especially Mari, which, as we shall see, affords what would seem to be the most significant evidence of prophecy outside Israel and the nearest parallels.

i) Egypt

It has been claimed that we find in Egyptian texts prophetic oracles similar to those of the biblical revelation.² Gressmann suggested that in these oracles we see 'the messianic hope in Egypt' and that the oracles not only correspond to, but may actually form, the models for some Israelite prophetic oracles. Similarly, Ramlot suggested that the threats to the king and the promises to the people in these texts constitute a framework similar to that of the prophecies of Immanuel. In one, we find Neferti, an expert in the art of telling what has been and what is to come, who is attached to the service of Bastet, one of the divinities of the delta. This figure seems to be a priest, employed in the temple of this divinity. After quoting the oracle, Monloubou tries to assess the significance of the

1. Monloubou, in Introduction à la Bible, II, p.332.

2. Ibid., pp.332-334 and see the works there cited.

text. The king wants to be entertained by beautiful and choice phrases and so sends for a priest. The priest claims to bring words concerning the future and the traditional royal hope of Egypt. He would seem to be a skilful propagandist who is under the king's command and who flatters the king and who, by exploiting contemporary fears and hopes, consolidates the dynasty. Neher describes this 'prophecy' as 'dynastic eschatology'. It is prophecy in the service of the monarchy; the new king is greeted as the one who will fulfil the prophecies about the ideal king. Neher regards this as constituting a parallel to the 'dynastic prophecy' in the Bible as delivered by Nathan who, he says, wants to recognise in David the ideal king.¹

Another text concerns Ipuwer, an important functionary in the royal treasury.² Gressmann sees in this an authentically prophetic text, whilst others think that it is stylistic, an example of a political pamphlet rather than a prophetic oracle. Monloubou comments that if Ipuwer envisages an ideal government, then it is in the manner of a political theoretician and he does not need for this a charisma, nor does Ipuwer himself claim that his theories are the expression of an utterance or promise of a deity. He concludes that whilst there is a certain similarity between Israelite prophecy and these declarations of Egyptian orators, viz., anguish in the face of the suffering of the people,

1. Neher, L'essence du prophétisme, pp.21f.

2. Quoted by Monloubou, op.cit., pp.333f.

preoccupation with the dynasty, the association of nature with history, etc., there are also divergences.¹

Apart from these similarities in the content of the message (which, it may be noted, are with canonical prophecy, e.g. Isa.11, rather than with the oracles of early prophets such as Nathan), there is very little here which reminds us of Israelite prophecy. Neher's description of Nathan is inadequate not to say misleading, and these Egyptian figures, one of whom seems to be a priest and one a politician, constitute poor parallels to Nathan, even if it is accepted that he was an official prophet in the employ of the king (see ch.II).

ii) Arabia

Pedersen has drawn attention to certain similarities between Israel and Arabia in respect of 'prophetic' persons.² He stresses the position of these 'prophets' in the social order of their age and regards the three main types upholding Arab society as corresponding to the three main types in Israel, i.e., chiefs, prophets, and priests (pp.130-132). The available material about the Arabs has, he says, been analysed by Wellhausen, Hölscher, Lammens, and Haldar; but he is concerned simply to outline the positions and functions of these three types. Both prophet and priest in Arab society, he says, had to procure counsel and guidance (p.130), but the priest had also the task of guarding the sanctuary (p.132). Concerning the prophet, Pedersen refers to a story

1. Ibid., p.334. He refers particularly to S. Herrmann, 'Prophetie in Israël und in Aegypten', (SVT, 9), 1963, pp.47-65.

2. Pedersen, in Studies in OT Prophecy, pp.127-140.

in which a female seer forms, he holds, a 'complete parallel to the Israelite prophet or seer'. The seer involved is well-known and has great authority and is one to whom people come a long way to seek her advice. This reminds us of Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha. She has a 'follower', tābi, who gives her advice and who, according to Pedersen, corresponds to the rū^ah speaking to the Israelite prophet. Other important points are that she collaborates with the oracle-priests and her authority rests on inspiration. It may be remarked that this figure reminds us of early prophetic figures, particularly of Samuel, rather than of the canonical prophets. It is significant that one of the terms used of the 'prophetic' figures in Arabia is hāzī, which reminds us of the Hebrew hōzēh (see ch.I).

The other term which is used most frequently of 'inspired persons' in Arabia is kāhin. The kāhin was a diviner, as demonstrated in the term al-kihāna, which means the art of divination. A tribe, according to Pedersen, normally had its kāhin, who was addressed by his fellow-tribesmen as master and with great reverence. He was consulted in every possible matter, especially concerning illness and, Pedersen urges, he interfered just like the Israelite prophet in political matters and spoke both when he was asked and when not (p.135). In this, Pedersen is clearly denying the claim that, outside the OT, only the Mari 'prophets' appeared unsolicited.

Pedersen argues that there is nothing to show a necessary connection between the kāhin and the sanctuary. He stresses the fact that the kāhin had his peculiar character as the

result of inspiration. On the other hand, he says that there was no contrast between him and the servant of the sanctuary, 'identical powers lay behind the activities of both, and we must suppose that a kāhin often was priest and guardian of the sanctuary' (p.135). He admits that we seldom hear anything positive about it, but cites an example in which it is said of the conqueror of Mekka, that he was chief, kāhin, and leader of the sanctuary.¹ It is interesting that the Hebrew term most resembling kāhin, kôhēn, refers to a priestly, non-prophetic figure. In Arabia, the priest is called either sādin or ḥāgīb, and his tasks, like those of the Israelite priests, are to guard the sanctuary and secure the oracle saying. Lindblom comments that the kāhins were attached to the cult of various gods and could occasionally function as sacrificial priests. He writes, 'The Arabian kahin was seer, prophet, priest and even judge in the same person'.² This takes us back to the discussion of the presentation of Samuel as seer, prophet, judge, and priest (see ch.II), and would seem to confirm that in the early stage of Israelite prophecy, the functions of different 'types' of figure overlapped. If, as seems likely, there are parallels between the seer type of Arabia and of Israel, both having cultic links and 'priestly' functions, this cannot be used to support the notion of official cultic prophecy in Israel, even in the early period.

Pedersen mentions another prophetic type in Arabia, the poet. The poet, like the kāhin, speaks through personal

1. cf. Lindblom's assessment of the position, inspiration, and tasks of the kāhin, PAI, pp.8,86f.

2. Ibid.

inspiration (p.137). He is important in war, in strengthening and encouraging the tribe. This type was often united with that of the chief (p.138). We saw in ch.IV the argument that the Israelite prophet was linked with war, in giving advice and encouragement. Again, however, the parallel is with early prophecy, particularly Samuel, and there is nothing here to support the notion that the canonical prophets exercised official functions in connection with 'Holy War'.

Pedersen's final comment is of great importance. Prophecy in Israel, he says, came to be of a different kind. Its purpose was not simply to give advice in certain situations, but to work for a genuine Israelite form of life (p.140).

Pedersen's analysis of the prophetic types in Arab society suggests that the terms used of these types are very flexible and that functions inevitably overlapped. If this is so, it is doubtful whether we can set much store by these terms and functions, and, more important here, whether we can gain any clear impression of the relation of the prophet to chief or priest. The question of whether or not these prophets were official seems impossible to answer, for to use the word 'official' of them implies that they were installed in the prophetic office by some higher authority and there does not seem to be any distinct higher authority in this sort of society. The chief, prophet, and priest seem to have functions which not only overlap, but are interchangeable and no one seems to wield supreme power.

iii) Canaan

There are two texts which are of importance here. Firstly, there is the Zakir stele, in which we see the king consulting 'prophetic' figures in connection with grave happenings.¹ J.F. Ross considers there to be close parallels both in general content and in specific terminology between this 'prophecy' and OT prophecy.² The two types of inspired persons mentioned in the text are the]'JΠ, 'seers', and the]TTV, 'messengers'. He thinks that the former correspond to the □'JΠ of the OT (see ch.I), and he argues for OT parallels for the 'office' of the TTV.³ We have seen that it is unlikely that the Israelite prophets were institutionally appointed messengers, but that if they have an 'office' it would seem to lie in their being Yahweh's messengers.⁴ Ross sees further parallels in the formulas which occur on the Zakir stele and in the OT. 'Do not fear', for instance, is, in his opinion, an ancient formula of 'Holy War' theology in the OT,⁵ and is mediated by a prophet (e.g., Isa.10:24; cf. 2 Kgs.6:16). He suggests that Isa.7:4 presents us with a response to a situation almost exactly parallel to that of Zakir when faced with the North Syrian coalition. We noted in chapter IV the argument that it is prophetic figures who are involved in this activity,

1. For details of the text and for bibliography, see Monloubou, *op.cit.*, and Ross, 'Prophecy in Hamath, Israel, and Mari', HTR, 43, 1970, pp.1-28.
2. Ross in HTR, 43, 1970, pp.3-11, where he lists these.
3. *Ibid.*, pp.4-8.
4. For an exposition of the idea of the Israelite prophet as an official messenger, in the political realm, see J.S. Holladay, 'Assyrian Statecraft and the Prophets of Israel', HTR, 43, 1970, pp.29-51.
5. See von Rad, Der Heilige Krieg in alten Israel, pp.9f.

giving assurance of, and sometimes even detailed advice for, achieving victory in battle.¹ Ackerman notes that Weippert includes the Mari texts in his study of 'Holy War' motifs and cultic practices in Assyria,² but, he says, the most detailed description of an assurance oracle is in the Zakir inscription.

Even without accepting the 'Holy War' hypothesis, there would seem to be real parallels here to the advice and assurance given by some Israelite prophets to the king. Formulas and terms are also paralleled, though it may be questioned whether such correspondence testifies to corresponding phenomena in Canaan and Israel. Certainly, however, some would still claim that Canaan exercised the greatest influence on Israelite prophecy,³ though many argue that it is extremely unlikely that there was any mutual 'borrowing' of prophetic terminology or function(s) between Israel and Canaan, pointing out that the phenomena of prophecy are so widespread, both historically and geographically, that it is more likely that the prophecy of Israel and Canaan had a common origin elsewhere rather than that prophecy was part of Canaan's legacy to Israel.⁴

There is secondly the well-known instance of 'prophecy'

1. Ackerman, *op.cit.*, pp.6f.

2. "'Heiliger Krieg" in Israel und Assyrien', ZAW, 84, 1972, pp.470-474. He claims that the Assyrian inscriptions show us the rôle that oracular guidance played in military preparations, sometimes naming the personnel and means by which the oracles were received.

3. So Monloubou, *op.cit.*, p.341.

4. Ross, in HTR, 43, 1970, p.11, and G.W. Anderson, The History and Religion of Israel, p.83.

at the Phoenician city of Byblos. The Egyptian Wen-Amon, describing his voyage along the Palestine-Syrian coast, says; 'Now while he [the king of Byblos] was making offering to his gods, the god seized one of his youths and made him possessed. And he said to him: "Bring up [the] god! Bring the messenger who is carrying him! Amon is the one who sent him out! He is the one who made him come"'.¹ The importance of this incident is that it involves a divine message announced spontaneously. However, it seems to be somewhat isolated. Moreover, '...the emergence of this man in Byblos is not wholly clear, and thus observations cannot be made with any certainty'.² Most scholars point out that what we find here is ecstatic prophecy which appears unsolicited and suddenly, but that we know very little about this Western Semitic prophecy.³ It seems to represent part of the setting for the prophetic movement in Israel rather than a parallel phenomenon. If ecstatic inspiration is indeed the importance of this text then the resemblance is with the (early) ecstatic prophecy of Israel rather than with canonical prophecy (see ch.I).

iv) Mesopotamia

It is in this area that Halдар finds the basis for his argument that the Israelite prophets had an official status within the cult.⁴ He holds that the king was at the head of

1. Quotation as in ANET, p.26.

2. Noth, The Laws in the Pentateuch, pp.184f.

3. e.g., Monloubou, op.cit., pp.338f.; cf. Neher, op.cit., pp.29ff.

4. Halдар, op.cit.

associations of cultic prophets and that the canonical prophets belonged to such groups. He regards priests and prophets as two different kinds of priest; one working by technical methods of oracle, the other by ecstatic inspiration. Whilst Haldar's view is obviously extreme, his consideration of the two types of priest in Mesopotamia, the bārū and the mabbū, is important in that it raises many of the issues involved in the discussion of cultic prophecy in Israel (see ch.III), nor is he alone in thinking that Mesopotamia offers 'prophetic' phenomena parallel to those in Israel.

In his introduction, Haldar claims that he is trying to unravel the functions of the various 'classes', to determine the significance of the most important 'priest titles' which can be associated with divination.

The chief function of the bārū was, he asserts, to acquire and communicate knowledge of the will of the gods concerning future events. Their means were primarily technical.¹ Lindblom comments that the Mesopotamian bārū nearly corresponds to the Hebrew rô'ēh, one who has the power of seeing.² As we saw in chapter I, there is disagreement about whether the seer's divination was by technical or non-technical means. Lindblom also says that these Mesopotamian 'seers' were intimately connected with the temple

1. Ibid., pp.2ff.; cf. Lindblom, PAI, pp.85f., where he adds that the bārū could on occasion receive the divine answer by intuitive knowledge without the aid of external means, even in a state of trance. For details of their methods of divination, see Guillaume, op.cit., p.40 and Monloubou, op.cit., p.335. See also Ezek.21:26; Isa.47:12-14 for divination techniques in Mesopotamia.

2. Lindblom, PAI, p.85; cf. Guillaume, op.cit., p.40.

cult, forming a particular class among the temple priests.¹ Haldar says that they often bear names indicating that they were specially attached to the cult of a particular god, e.g., 'the man of Ishtar'. We come here, however, to the difficulty of distinguishing between the bārū-priests and the mahhū-priests and, indeed, in the discussion of many scholars, it is not clear whether the suggested parallels with Israelite prophets are with the bārū or with the mahhū, nor on what grounds, e.g., function or inspiration, these parallels are adduced.

The mahhū is generally described as the 'ecstatic', the 'prophetic' figure.² Yet, Haldar claims, the mahhū, like the bārū, officiated in both divinatory and sacrificial rites (p.28). Further, the mahhū occurs with the bārū in a list of synonyms and Haldar, therefore, infers that 'there was no clear distinction in Mesopotamia between "priest" and "prophet". Both communicate the word of God and are possessed by the spirit' (p.63). He goes on to say that no fixed distinctions can be drawn between the different 'priest classes' with reference to the rites in which they officiate. In view of this, the question arises, why does Haldar introduce the term 'prophet' at all? It is surely wrong to use this term of a type of priest and then to argue that there is, therefore, a close relationship between priest and prophet. Surely the most that he can soberly say is that, in Mesopotamia, there were priests who had prophetic, in the sense of ecstatic, elements. This supports the argument of ch.III that the

1. Lindblom, PAI, p.85; cf. Haldar, op.cit., pp.28ff.

2. So Haldar, op.cit., passim; Lindblom, PAI, p.86, etc.

'prophetic' elements in the Psalms could well come from priests and that we do better to speak of priestly rather than prophetic oracles here. Further, Halдар's main point, as expressed in his conclusion, is the 'cumulation of functions' (p.199). He writes, '...no clear distinction can be made between "sacerdotal" and "prophetic" oracles; the Accadian bārū-priest can take part in the ecstatic rites and the mābhū-priest busy himself with divination by the observation of omens...'

Nonetheless, some would try to maintain a distinction between two types of figure if only then to show that their functions overlapped. So Lindblom writes, 'Scholars have rightly emphasised that the distinction between bārū priests and ecstasies was not so great that the one would not perform the function of the other'.¹ He finds here support for his view that, in Israel, the seer and prophet were united in the same person, giving oracles and performing cultic actions.² In Halдар's notion that the seer and prophet were essentially different in their method of receiving oracles and yet overlapped in position and function (pp.124,199), we are reminded of Mowinckel's distinction in the introduction to Psalmenstudien, III. As argued in chapter III, however, it is less than convincing to suggest that the distinction between direct and indirect, non-technical and technical inspiration, is at once important and insignificant in establishing whether the oracles were given by priestly or prophetic figures. The parallels provided by Mesopotamia are in the main with the

1. Lindblom, PAI, p.86.

2. Ibid. See the discussion above of 'seer' in ch.I and of Samuel in ch.II.

'seer' in Israel, notably Samuel,¹ and they would seem to support Mowinckel's argument that in early Israel the figures of prophet and priest overlapped. There is nothing in Mesopotamia to suggest parallels to canonical prophecy.

That the parallels, if they exist, are with early prophecy is further evidenced by the position of the mahhū and bārū in official life. Haldar points out that they acted as physicians to the king and as judges. They had, he says, a 'political' rôle in connection with the royal succession and they could also effectively contribute to the fall of a king who was insufficiently devoted to the cult (pp.68-70). Haldar does not make clear whether he thinks that these functions were part of the office of the priests, as appointed by the king. Is their authority derived from the king, who, after all, according to Haldar, is leader of the cultic associations, or from the deity? As Neher comments, however, Mesopotamian divination seems to be very much an institution of the state. He goes further, saying that 'La Mésopotamie semble avoir été le terrain du prophétisme institutionnel dont l'histoire biblique atteste également l'existence, à certains moments, au sein de l'État d'Israël'.² The reference here must surely be to the period of early prophecy and suggests such figures as Nathan and Gad. It is interesting that Guillaume, who does see similarities between Mesopotamian and Israelite 'prophecy', suggests that

1. See also the non-Israelite Balaam (Num.22-24) whom many regard as representing Mesopotamian divination; e.g., Monloubou, op.cit., p.335; Lindblom, PAI, pp.90ff.; Guillaume, op.cit., pp.133f.

2. Neher, op.cit., p.24.

there was an essential difference, in that in the former 'it is the schemes of men that are the concern of gods, not the will of God that is the concern of man'.¹ As we saw in chapter II, it is difficult to establish the degree of subservience to the king and of institutionalism in the prophetic activity of Nathan and Gad and to clarify the cultic links of Elijah, Elisha and the $\square'x'111\bar{u}-'11$.

The main fact to emerge from this is that in Mesopotamia there were official cultic figures who received the oracle by either ecstatic or technical inspiration. This, together with the 'cumulation of functions', may suggest that there were in the Israelite cult figures who could be called 'prophetic'; yet it equally well suggests that priestly figures in Israel could, in their utterance and action, have 'prophetic' features. As we have seen, the respective positions and functions of the Mesopotamian mabbū and bārū are not altogether clear and even if they were clear we cannot assume that they form parallels with Israel. Few would accept Haldar's extreme claim that all Israelite prophecy falls within the categories of the bārū and mabbū types of divination.

v) Mari

Over twenty documents from Mari are concerned with the appearance of 'prophets'. The 'prophets' appear as emissaries of Dagan, deity of Terqa, of Adad, patron god of Kallasu, located in the vicinity of Aleppo, and the god Adad, of Aleppo proper. It is now necessary to consider what light these texts shed on the 'prophets'' position and status in Mari life

1. Guillaume, op.cit., p.47.

and, more important, whether parallels exist between these figures and Israelite prophets. The parallels which are commonly adduced are in the realms of terminology and formulas, inspiration, status, and content.¹

One of the most striking features about these documents is that they present a number of different designations of 'prophets' and a variety of types. These must, therefore, be distinguished.

There is firstly the āpilu (fem. āpiltu). In an administrative document, the āpilu is listed, among others, as having received vestments from the royal court, though there is no evidence here of direct access to the king.² One text gives evidence of an āpilu engaged in the cultic framework of Adad of Kallasu. It may be conjectured, therefore, that the āpilu is part of the cultic staff, supported by the crown.³ The texts concerning this figure do not tell us the means of inspiration. In two instances he is connected with either a cultic ceremony or a shrine and we may, therefore, infer that the āpilu 'responded with an oracle received by unstated means to a cultic act or even a specific request for an oracle. But the texts nowhere specifically indicate such a request'.⁴ Huffmon also points out that the oracle

1. For the text of many of these documents and for a summary of the titles, responsibilities, and relations of these 'prophetic' figures, see Huffmon, 'Prophecy in the Mari Letters', in The Biblical Archaeologist Reader, III. See also the works there cited.

2. See Malamat, 'Prophetic revelations in new documents from Mari and the Bible', (SVT, 15), 1966, pp.207-227.

3. Ibid.; cf. Huffmon, op.cit., p.204.

4. Huffmon, op.cit., p.208.

may be critical of the king for failing in his proper recognition of the god(s), may generally admonish the king to rule justly, or may declare against a foe and in favour of the king. He adds that these oracles were regarded as less reliable means for divine revelation than the usual technical divination of Mesopotamia.¹ Malamet comments that the āpilu seems to have functioned both individually and in groups.²

One text is of particular significance in connection with Israelite prophecy. In this, the god, Adad, using a 'prophet' as his mouthpiece, not only claims to have put the king on his throne, but also informs the latter that he can revoke the appointment at will.³ The āpilu is said to receive oracles, but we are not told by what means.⁴ Lods thinks that the figure is a functionary of the king, and is comparable to the cultic prophets attached to the Israelite Temple.⁵ (He is here accepting Mowinckel's arguments for the existence of cultic prophets, even allowing that Joel, Nahum, and perhaps Habakkuk were amongst their number.) Lods goes on to say, however, that this text leads us to believe that the Mari prophets played a rôle in the political matters of the Mesopotamian court, 'secondant l'élévation de

1. Ibid., p.209.

2. Malamet, op.cit., p.210.

3. On this text, see especially Lods, 'Une Tablette Inédite de Mari, intéressante pour l'histoire ancienne du prophétisme sémitique', in Studies in OT Prophecy, pp.103-110.

4. It is sometimes suggested that this was in an ecstasy, with the implication that the figure was an ecstatic, i.e., a mubhū (see Monloubou, op.cit., pp.335f., and von Rad, OT Theology, II, pp.10f.), but the text nowhere gives evidence of this.

5. Lods, op.cit., pp.106ff.

certaines dynasties ou exigeant leur renversement selon qu'elles se montraient plus ou moins dociles aus ordres divins qu'ils leur transmettaient'. In his opinion, this particular text reveals that in Mari there were inspired persons who from the time of Hammurabi took an attitude of independence vis-à-vis royalty analogous to that which in Israel was a preparatory stage for the great prophetic movement.¹ This, however, makes us think of prophets such as Nathan and Gad, and it is with these figures that most scholars see the parallel.²

A second 'prophetic' type at Mari is the assinu. He also probably forms part of the cultic personnel, though his means of inspiration and, indeed, his general position and function are uncertain. He warns the king of plots against him and assures him that the god(dess) will deal with the matter.³

Of particular interest is the muhhū (fem. muhhūtu). Huffmon says that this class is probably of lower status than the first two classes, in that the person's name is never given. As he occurs in one ritual text, Huffmon considers the muhhū to be part of the cultic personnel (p.211). He writes, 'The inspiration may come in association with the sanctuary, perhaps in connection with some ritual..., but as with the other classes, the oracle giving is not confined to a sanctuary' (p.213).

The muhhū is, in fact, the 'prophetic' type which, it is

1. Ibid., pp.109f.

2. e.g., von Rad, OT Theology, II, p.11.

3. So Huffmon, op.cit., pp.209f.

often claimed, constitutes the closest parallel to the Israelite prophet. Whilst Huffmon thinks that the equation between the Mari muhhū and the Mesopotamian mahhū is not exact (p.201), he and many others think that the meaning of the terms is the same (p.211), 'frenzied', 'one out of his senses', i.e., an ecstatic.¹ Certainly, the stress is on ecstasy and not on technical divination as a means of revelation.² Malamat comments that mahhū is similar both in connotation and form to the Hebrew word, מְאֻמָּן, possessed, mad, which in some biblical instances is a synonym for prophet (2 Kgs.9:11; Jer.29:26; Hos.9:6).³

The mahhū appears to be connected not only with the cult but also with the court.⁴ Whilst the oracles are on various topics, e.g., the cultic interests of the god, the general safety of the king, whether or not to build a city gate, they are addressed almost exclusively to the king. Malamat notes, however, that for the muhhū no direct contact with the palace is as yet attested. His primary function is to proclaim, unbidden, the word of the god.⁵

This prophetic type reminds us not of the canonical prophet, however, but of earlier Israelite prophets. If the stress is on ecstasy as the means of inspiration, then the resemblance is with the prophets referred to in 1 Sam.10;19 (see ch.I). If the stress is on his relation to the court

1. See Lindblom, PAI, pp.30f., who regards the muhhū as a prophetic type.

2. See Monloubou, *op.cit.*, pp.335.

3. Malamat, *op.cit.*, p.210.

4. So von Rad, OT Theology, II, pp.10f.; Ross, in HTR, 43, 1970, p.13.

5. Malamat, *op.cit.*, p.211.

and his message to the king, then the resemblance is with Nathan and Gad (see ch.II).

Finally, there are what Huffmon calls 'private persons'. They are not identified as members of a priestly or temple class, but have such designations as the citizen of a certain town, a man, or a man's wife (pp.213f.). Malamat says of them, '...they were no professional prophets but..., typical examples of personal charisma, contingent neither upon class, sex or age'.¹ Whilst these figures are generally regarded as unprofessional and non-cultic, their oracles are concerned with cultic and royal affairs. In one text, a 'youth', claiming to be the mouthpiece of the god(s), opposes the (re)construction of a temple. In another, the 'wife of a [free]man' seems to have served as a divine emissary without being a professional prophetess. Malamat compares her with the OT prophetesses, Deborah (Jgs.4:4), Noadiah (Neh.6:14), and, particularly, Huldah, the wife of Shallum (2 Kgs.22:14). Huldah's prophecy, like that of the Mari text, concerned itself with the fate of the sovereign, although, in contrast to the Mari visionary, she was charged with seeking out the word of God, on the initiative of the king, who sent a special delegation to her for this very purpose (2 Kgs.22:12ff.). Malamat also emphasises the occurrence here of the typical formula, 'Dagan has sent me', which is found in other Mari oracles and which reminds us of the OT formula (see, e.g. Ex.7:16; Jer.26:12,15).² A third text is important because it represents a prophetic revelation by means of a dream.

1. Ibid., p.220.

2. Ibid., p.221.

Huffmon claims that the majority of private persons received their messages in a dream. The dream was apparently the primary means of communication for non-technical and non-cultic persons (pp.215f.). He claims that we find here the same mixture in content as with those messages from 'official' sources. Most of the revelations are intended for the king. They may admonish him for neglect, specifically request certain cultic acts or political reports, warn him of danger while promising help, comfort and encourage him, or being him bad news (p.220).

How far then do the Mari letters evidence prophetic figures parallel to those in Israel? We have already noted certain similarities, but these should be examined and their significance estimated.

It has been argued that 'prophecy is a uniquely Israelite phenomenon' and that 'it is divination and not prophecy that finds its parallels in the Mari...documents'.¹ In rejecting this view, Huffmon says that the 'Mari phenomena include what surely is cultic prophecy as well as prophecy by non-cultic persons and illustrate a wide range of content'. He stresses the variety of modes of inspiration illustrated in these texts, for instance, dreams and ecstasy, and suggests that Israelite prophecy also was not characterised by one mode of inspiration. He sees at Mari both official and unofficial prophecy and thinks that the prophets Gad and Nathan, who, he considers, must have been attached to David's court, 'represent a continuity with the official prophets of the

1. So Orlinsky, 'The Seer in Ancient Israel', Oriens Antiquus, 4, 1965, p.170.

Mari letters'. He continues, 'the cultic prophets, now well-known within Israel, also have their forerunners in the Mari letters'. Prophecy, he says, is a multifarious phenomenon and the Mari letters shed light on the 'prehistory' and early history of Israel's prophetic revelation.¹ In these remarks are raised most of the major issues in this consideration of the possible parallels between Israelite and Mari prophecy.

Perhaps the most important is the remark that prophecy in Mari, like prophecy in Israel, was not a homogeneous phenomenon. In our examination of 'types' of prophecy (ch.II), we saw that Samuel, Nathan and Gad, Elijah, Elisha, the prophetic groups, and various canonical prophets, have varying means of inspiration and varying degrees of attachment to the court and the cult. We also saw that the divisions between types of prophet cannot be assumed to be clearcut or chronological. So at Mari, we see inspired figures, some of whom appear to be official and cultic and some of whom appear to be laymen. Now it might be argued that only the latter are prophetic persons and that the former are priestly rather than prophetic figures, acting as temple functionaries. It could then perhaps be urged that these prophetic figures represent parallels to the canonical prophets who, as we have seen, seem best described as laymen. But who then are the unofficial, non-cultic prophets of Mari? For we have seen that cultic concerns enter the messages of all the four categories discussed above and that it is not clear whether certain figures are truly official and professional, in the sense of being employed by the king. This

1. Huffmon, op.cit., pp.222f.

is especially true of the muhhū, who, after all, is the type in whom most see the parallel to Israelite prophecy. They stress that in this type we see intuitive prophecy, direct revelation, as distinct from the standard mantic practices, magical and oracular techniques of Mesopotamia.¹

Clearly there is confusion about professional and non-professional prophets, and priestly and non-priestly diviners, at Mari and in Mesopotamia in general, and perhaps it is precisely in this confusion that significance lies for our understanding of Israelite prophecy. The figures delivering oracles in the Israelite cult may be prophets or they may be priests. The evidence is ambiguous (see ch.III). The prophets attached to the court in Israel may be official, in the sense of professional or institutional, or they may be independent, with less established links with the king and his cult (see ch.II).

The most important point to emerge from the Mari texts, however, is that there appeared figures who, whatever their degree of officiality, 'took their stand before the authorities in a spontaneous manner and upon the initiative of their god'.² claimed to be the mouthpieces of a particular god, and to deliver his message. Noth particularly has stressed that the significance of Mari lies in the fact that here 'the figure clearly emerges of a divine messenger, in a realm which seems to have a historical connection with later Israel'. 'For a long time', he says, 'we have been able to point to different religious phenomena such as soothsayers, oracles, seers, and ecstasies in any comparison with Old Testament prophecy,

1. e.g., Malamat, op.cit., p.208.

2. Ibid.

thereby explaining certain elements in our picture of this prophecy; the very essence of the question, however, is that the prophets saw themselves as messengers of God and formulated their decrees accordingly'. Thus, he claims, 'even the figure of the prophet as the central agent of the word of God in the Old Testament had its prehistory outside Israel'.¹ The Mari prophets, he says, state categorically that they are divine messengers and they seek to prove their authenticity by saying, 'The god Dagan has sent me' and by other formulas which remind us of the OT.² (It may be noted here that there is no instance of a Mari prophet stressing his call as authentication that he is a divine messenger in the same way as some of the canonical prophets do; though this is perhaps to exaggerate the difference between commission and call. (See chs. IV and V).

We should at this point consider Westermann's views on the significance of the Mari parallels.³ We saw in ch. IV that he holds that there was no explicit institutionally defined office in Israel for the prophet as Yahweh's messenger. Only seers, mantics, and oracle-priests had an office (p.116). He does believe, however, that the Israelite prophet understood himself to be Yahweh's messenger and that this is demonstrated by the forms of speech which he used. Turning to the Mari texts, he says that many scholars (e.g., von Soden, Noth, Wolff, Schmökel) all agree that formally they represent a genuine parallel. In regard to their content, however, the

1. Noth, The Laws in the Pentateuch, pp.186ff.

2. Ibid., pp.185f.

3. Westermann, op.cit., pp.115ff., and see works there cited.

distinctive character of OT canonical prophecy appears even more clearly against the background of these formal parallels (p.117). Noth comments that 'The Mari texts deal with political and cultic matters of very limited and ephemeral significance'. He admits the similarity between the message of some of the Mari prophets and that of Gad (2 Sam.24:11ff.) and Nathan (2 Sam.7:4ff.; 12:1ff.) but he claims that Nathan's rebuke over Uriah the Hittite 'shows a depth and earnestness which go far beyond anything we know about the divine messengers of Mari'. He states that this is even more so with the canonical prophets whose 'particular decrees...have some connection with the larger field of God's planned intervention in history', and who 'stand on an incomparably higher plane than Mari's divine messengers'.¹ von Soden, says Westermann, thinks that the Mari prophecy does not go beyond the scope of the cultic prophecy which was condemned in the OT. Westermann himself then examines the texts.

In one letter we see the reception of revelation in the framework of a cultic action. We find no parallel to this in the OT and the nearest we have is Isa.6, where revelation was received in the cult (pp.118f.). (This is a poor parallel, however, when one considers that this narrative is about the reception not of general revelation but of a call.) Westermann sees in a number of letters 'salvation prophecy' which is directed to the king. He regards this as forming a

1. Noth, The Laws in the Pentateuch, pp.187f.; cf. Wolff, 'Hauptprobleme alttestamentlicher Prophetie', Ev Th, 15, 1955, pp.448ff.; Malamat, op.cit., p.208.

parallel to the court prophecy of Nathan and Gad and says that the messages of the Mari prophets are reminiscent of promises of political success given by the court prophets in Israel (see 1 Kgs.22:11; Jer.28; Isa.37:29). He stresses, however, that the parallels are not with canonical prophecy, but with prophecy which developed in an earlier period (pp.121ff.). The explicit cultic demands of Mari prophecy indicate, he says, a connection between salvation prophecy and cultic prophecy (pp.124f.). He goes on to say that the Mari letters show that the prophecy of weal in Israel had an earlier history in the Near East in a type of prophecy which was related to the cult and whose addressee was the king. They show at the same time, however, that judgement and salvation prophecy cannot be understood merely by placing them in opposition to each other. In several of the Mari letters what is decidedly salvation prophecy is connected with a reproach against the king (cf. 2 Sam.12) (p.126). Nonetheless, he insists that there is a distinction. The unconditional announcement of judgement is completely missing in the Mari letters, and the canonical prophecy of Israel is of a quite different kind (pp.127f.).

We are reminded here of the debate over the differences between canonical and early prophets, true and false prophets, cultic and non-cultic prophets (chs. II and III). It has yet to be proved, of course, that official cultic prophets did exist in Israel and even if they were shown to exist in Mari, as seems likely, this in no way shows that a corresponding type of prophet existed in Israel. Nonetheless, as we saw in our discussion of the cultic prophecy hypothesis, it would

seem that if they existed their message was characterised by the proclamation of salvation and that the canonical prophets proclaimed judgement to a degree unknown in the cult (ch.III).

What then is paralleled at Mari? Westermann claims that the character of the prophetic speech as 'messenger-speech' is now fully confirmed by the religio-historical background shown in the Mari letters, and that there is no longer any reason for doubting the definition of prophetic speech introduced by Lindblom and Köhler (see ch.IV). He would seem here to be suggesting that the Mari prophet, like the Israelite prophet, did understand himself to be a divine messenger, but Westermann's stress that the parallels are formal shows that he does not regard the two as being the same type of messenger in actuality. Indeed, he would seem to agree with those who argue that the Mari prophet is to some extent an official, professional messenger, whilst he insists that the Israelite messenger lacked an office.

It would seem, therefore, that the Mari parallels are with early rather than canonical prophecy and even then are not exact. Where the parallels are with the canonical prophets, viz., in the formula employed, these are simply formal and serve to confirm the view that prophecy in Israel was, or at least became, something markedly different from anything known to us in Israel's environment. (It is worth noting that Mari prophecy is often spoken of as representing Israelite prophecy's 'prehistory', and since we cannot assume a straight line of development from early Israelite to canonical

prophecy, this suggests that the parallels are not with the latter, even if with the former.) Whilst it can no longer be claimed that the canonical prophet is unique in appearing unsolicited as a divine messenger and with a sometimes unpalatable message, it still remains true that he is unique in his so appearing, not to satisfy human curiosity about the future, nor to give advice about human schemes, but to proclaim and interpret what Yahweh is doing and is about to do. Although the Israelite prophet does address the king, particularly in the earlier period, his proclamation is to any and all who require it and it is very seldom what they want to hear.

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